

**Gypsy & Traveller Transit Site
Planning Application**

Design & Access Statement
November 2021

E03883

Reading Borough Council: Gypsy & Traveller Transit Site
Design & Access Statement November 2021

A Report by:

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In association with the

Ramboll Group A/S
and
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for
Reading Borough Council

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1.00 Introduction



Location Plan

Background

1.01 This Design & Access Statement is provided in support of the application for planning permission for a new Gypsy & Traveller Transit Site at land south of Island Road, Reading.

1.02 The report should be read in conjunction with other documents supporting this planning application as set out in Section 3.00.

Project Context

1.03 Reading Borough Council has identified through its Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment a requirement to ensure adequate transit Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision within the Borough, for which there are currently no pitches.

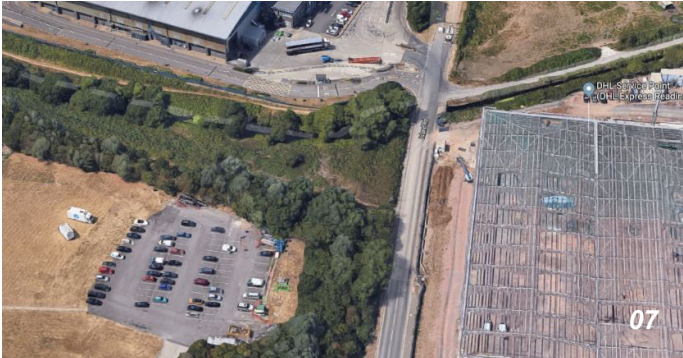
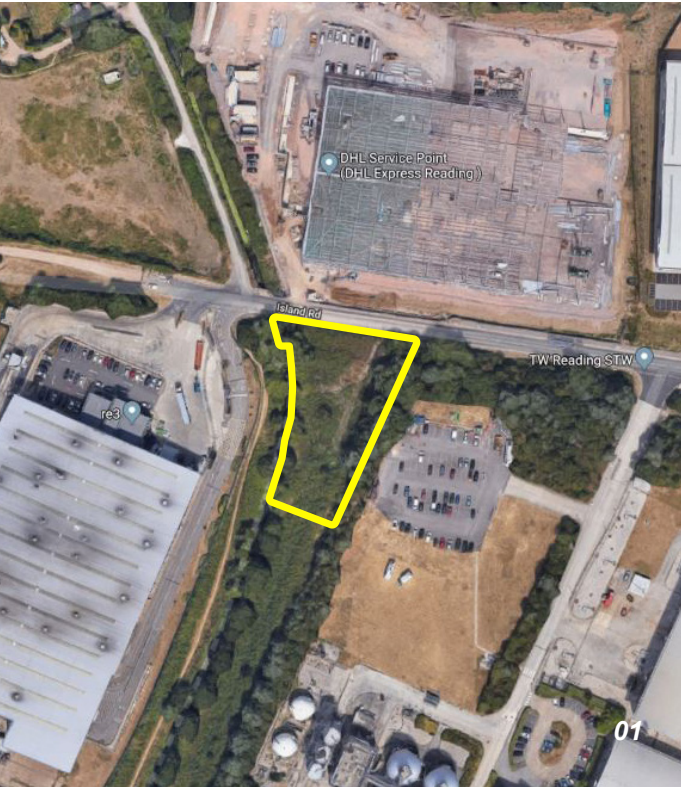
1.04 Following an exhaustive review of all available sites in Reading, land has been identified south of Island Road in Reading for the Transit Site

1.05 Transit site provision, by nature has to be of simple and resilient design, allowing for adequate facilities of a robust nature reflecting a high turnover and heavy use of site infrastructure.

2.00 Site Context

Location and Surroundings

- 2.01 The Application Site is overgrown non developed scrub-land.
- 2.02 The immediate surroundings comprise mature, dense tree belts to the east and west which will be retained.
- To the north is Island Road which leads to the A33;
 - To the east is car parking serving the Reading Sewage Treatment Works;
 - To the south the scrub-land narrows and continues;
 - To the west is a watercourse beyond which the Reading Waste Management Park located within a large warehouse building.
- 2.03 There are no utilities or other features on the site.
- 2.04 There is currently no pedestrian or vehicular access.



- 01 Aerial plan
- 02 Aerial oblique view from north
- 03 Island Road - future site access road location
- 04 Island Road - future site access road location
- 05 Island Road - future site access road location
- 06 Aerial oblique view from south
- 07 Aerial oblique view from east
- 08 Aerial oblique view from west

3.00 Supporting Statements

Generally

3.01 The following supporting information has been produced having regard to National and RBC Local Planning Authority Local Information requirements published on the authorities planning website. These documents should be read with this report and the associated drawings included.

Air Quality Assessment

3.02 Refer
RAMBOLL report dated 26 Oct 2021, titled:
Gypsy and Traveller Site, Reading.
Air Quality Assessment
ref RUK2021N00646-RAM-RP-00001

Archaeology Assessment

3.03 Discussions with Dr Edward Peveler of Berkshire Archaeology, have identified there is a potential for underlying intact archaeological deposits below a deep layer of existing made ground. However based on borehole survey information which defines the depth of the made ground, along with preliminary structural proposals which show a worst case excavation depth, Dr Peveler has confirmed no archaeological works will be required.

Contaminated Land Survey

3.04 Refer
Terraforma (south) report dated Aug 2021, titled:
GROUND INVESTIGATION REPORT
Proposed Residential Development
Land off Island Road, Reading
ref 6683 - Smallmead Reading GIR (FINAL)
Rev02

Ecological Assessment

3.05 Refer
HCCET report dated 04 Oct 2021 titled:
Ecological Appraisal - Land at Smallmead, Island Rd, Reading FINAL
ref 20.0280

External Lighting Details

3.06 Refer
RAMBOLL report dated 03 Nov 2021, titled:
Reading Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site,
Land South Island Road, Reading,
Discipline Input Plan Lighting
ref 1620009874-RAM-ZZ-ZZ-RP-EX-00001

Flood Risk Assessment

3.07.1 Refer
RAMBOLL report dated Nov 2021, titled:
Land South Island Road, Reading,
Flood Risk Assessment
ref 1620009874-ZZ-XX-RP-WA-00001

Drainage Strategy

3.07.2 Refer
RAMBOLL report dated Nov 2021, titled:
Land South Island Road, Reading,
Surface Water Drainage Strategy
ref 1620009874-RAM-ZZ-XX-RP-WA-00002

Heads of Terms

3.08 To be ascertained by RBC Planning / RBC during planning application process

Landscape Principles

3.09 Refer
Section 5.00 of this DAS

Materials Details

3.10 Refer
Section 5.00 of this DAS

Noise & Vibration Impact Assessment

3.11 Refer
RAMBOLL report dated Nov 2021, titled:
Land South of Island Road, Reading.
Noise Impact Assessment
ref RUK2021N00646-RAM-RP-00006

Planning Statement

3.12 Refer
Planning Statement prepared by Robert Shrimplin, Planning & Development,
ref RP20211116 Planning Statement

Transport Statement

3.13 Refer
Island Road, Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site,
Transport Statement
ref RUK2021N00646-RAM-RP-00004

Tree Survey / Arboricultural Assessment

3.14 Refer
SJStephens Associates report dated 31 November 2021, titled:
Arboricultural Statement
ref Island Road Transit Site Arb Impact Assessment 30-11-2021

Utilities Surveys and Proposals

3.15 The site is undeveloped with no existing site Infrastructure or services utilities present. New services will be brought onto the site available from Island Road.

Vehicle Parking & Waste Collection Details

3.16 Refer
Section 5.00 of this DAS

Other Statements

3.17 It has been considered that the following reports are not applicable given the nature and type of development proposed:

- Affordable Housing Statement
- Daylight / Sunlight Assessment
- Energy & Sustainability Statement
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Vent / Extract Details
- Viability Assessment & report

4.00 Options Appraisal & Brief

Options Appraisal

4.01 Reading Borough Council completed a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in 2019 and subsequently carried out an exhaustive review through 2019 and 2020 to identify all sites in Reading, suitable for a Transit park Facility.

Working with Hampshire County Council, Reading Borough Council identified a limited number of sites for further study. Preliminary options were developed, appraised and evaluated, and the Island Road site was finally identified as the most feasible option for the Authority to take forward.

4.02 In parallel, RBC and HCC carried out a review of existing transit parks, reviewing site layouts, operational issues etc and along with other specialists, developed a preferred brief for the new site.

The existing Transit Park facility at Westhampnett in West Sussex provided a useful reference project and has proven most successful.



Gypsy & Traveller Transit Facility, Westhampnett, West Sussex

Client Involvement

4.03 Regular project design review meetings have been held during the evaluation and design development period with officers from Reading Borough Council.

4.04 At project reviews, brief presentations tabling the current scheme drawings and technical reports permit open discussion covering a wide range of topics including:

- Access
- Massing
- Materials;
- Landscape;
- Security
- Noise
- Layout vs. 'long life/loose fit';
- Health & Safety
- Environmental
- Operations
- Cost
- Programme

4.05 Feedback from these sessions is incorporated as agreed.

4.06 In addition, HCC hold an internal review process culminating in a formal Gateway prior to a planning submission. Here the project is assessed and declared whether fit to proceed or not. There are certain key criteria that must be met regarding time, quality, risk and cost.

Pre-Application Planning Advice

4.07 An informal pre-planning application advice meeting was held with Reading Borough Council planning department. Items discussed included:

- identifying adopted / emerging policies relevant to the development.
- Identify relevant planning considerations.
- Reviewing 'local requirement' documents required for the submission.
- Scope of development
- Provide an indication of any financial contributions (if any) likely to be sought.

Project Aims and Issues

4.09 To develop the option will require capital investment from the Borough Council. Grant funding may be available from central government, but this is uncertain.

4.10 Operational management of the development requires revenue and staff resource, which for permanent accommodation can be mitigated in partnership with private site operators, but for transit facilities such commitment would be the Borough Council's.

4.11 Development of transit facilities would not only

satisfy the demands of the GTAA, but also manage the problems associated with unauthorised encampments in the Borough. For clarity, permanent site facilities only address the demands of the GTAA but do not support management of unauthorised encampments.

Transit Provision

4.08 Transit site provision, by its nature has to be simple and resilient in design, allowing for limited facilities reflecting the impact of high turnover and potential disinterest in the integrity of the site infrastructure. Where transit sites have been constructed the success and longevity of infrastructure has been found to be varied.

Brief

4.12 Key features of the brief include:

- 7no transit pitches
- Bin / recycle waste store zone, easily accessible for use and also for waste collection.
- Simple, clear internal site orientation with easy access to roadways
- Pitch sizes and related accommodation based on a similar provision at Westhampnett Transit facility
- Each pitch to include a sanitary block with private toilet, basin, shower and washing / sink provision
- Power and water connections, with waste disposal facilities
- Play area for younger children
- Picnic area
- Secure boundary
- CCTV security coverage
- Fire precautions measures

4.13 Specialist Senior Gypsy Liaison Officers have assisted developing the following additional commentaries and requirements for the facility to help define appropriate design parameters:

- Transit Site pitches are by agreement between the council and local residents and subject of a licence for site residents for a pre-determined length of stay.
- Height barrier system required for caravan entry / exit to control access / pitch usage
- Pitches should include hard standing / space for a large touring caravan allowing for extended family/ children along with space for 2no vehicles per pitch
- Pitch demarcation with separating walls for fire

resistance (height to be determined) with painted ground lines for parking sub-division.

- Caravans to be centered within pitch zones with cars and trailers to either side to afford fire protection to neighbouring pitches. (Management control).
- Hard standing for Residence to be subject of a site licence stipulating length of stay (weeks / 1 - 3 months)
- Licence to stipulate / be specific to identify the pitch, number of residents per pitch, caravans per pitch and vehicles per pitch
- Basic facilities to include:
 - Connections (prepay / metered) for:
 - potable water
 - electric power
 - Sanitary Block with:
 - light
 - heating (pull cord electric / fan)
 - washing sink
 - toilet
 - basin, mirror, bath / shower
 - Waste disposal
- Sanitary block constructions to include a lockable room (separate access) providing service zone for the water and bathroom plumbing and electrics / consumer unit etc for independent secure maintenance access.
- Electricity by way of prepayment / card – waterproof cabinet inset into building for use by residents with management access, as above
- All internal fittings to be stainless steel and smooth finish with a robust and durable construction on the basis of a wet room design.
- Appreciate and recognise the various members of the community taking up residence – Romany Gypsies / Irish Travellers / New Travellers etc. with a need for clear identification of pitches to avoid potential issues
- Recognition some users will only want a basic pitch not utilising the electric hookup etc – used by those who wish to run of generators. Include stand pipe for water and separate sluice for toilet waste.
- Facilities for rubbish disposal to prevent fly tipping
- Licence to stipulate no business on site including exclusion of bringing commercial waste on to site
- Establish close liaison with local Housing Officers and Police for access, availability and management of pitches
- There are no Government guidelines on prescriptive sizes for transit pitches but a good practical size has been determined working off West Sussex transit pitches which has been included here.

5.00 Design

Approach to Design

5.01 The overall aim of the design programme has been to achieve a design that works in all aspects. This draws upon the particular context and constraints of the site area involved, its accommodation brief, technical requirements, particular site constraints and the objective to maintain a good quality and functional environment within a natural setting, which is functional and in which families can feel safe and secure.

Site Layout

5.02 The proposed layout aims to make best use of the site by drawing upon its configuration, location and surroundings.

5.03 The site is to be fully protected with a new 2m high brick boundary wall, including appropriate pedestrian and vehicle access gates of Island Road. A new vehicular site entrance will be formed with appropriate sight lines suitable for caravan use and with pedestrian pathways with dropped kerbs and tactile paving to ensure safe and unencumbered pedestrian access.

5.04 The main vehicular entrance will be controlled via an automatic rising barrier with overhead height restriction. This barrier will be controlled via appropriate access control systems. This vehicular opening can also be secured with a full height sliding metal gate if required, controlled by RBC Housing officers managing the site, however it is anticipated this will be kept open generally.

5.05 Suitable polyester powdered coated steel pedestrian gates will permit general open public access to the site at all times. Generally these are not to be locked unless agreed otherwise and with suitable safeguards.

5.06 Ground levels are to be raised generally across the site to form a level accessible and safe access into and across the site. Please refer the Ramboll Flood Risk Assessment included in this submission which clarifies how site levels are to be raised to counter potential flood risk.

5.07 An additional maintenance access gate is provided on the southern boundary to provide access to the Swale area and associated landscape environments beyond.

5.08 A broad central roadway leads down the western side of the site affording access to each family pitch.



Site Facilities

5.09 Seven dedicated pitches are provided within the walled site, accessed from Island Road.

5.10 Each pitch provides parking space for a number of standard typical domestic vehicles and caravans etc, arranged in rows, sited across the front / end of the

associated sanitary block. Two cars and two caravans have been assumed per pitch. All outfit configurations, including any cycles, motorbikes and other possessions etc. will be restricted to the area allocated within the pitch, unless agreed otherwise with Housing Officers.

5.11 A children's play area and general picnic area is included for use by site residents only.

5.12 A dedicated waste and recycle bin storage area is also provided with direct internal site access, as well as external access adjacent to Island Road for ease of waste collection.

5.13 Each pitch will be one hour fire protected from the adjacent pitch with a 2m high masonry dividing wall. Services will include electric and water hook up facilities, along with the dedicated sanitary block. This block includes kitchen washing and toilet facilities which are for the sole use of the pitch user. This will provide domestic level facilities. A separate sluice facility is also included accessed from the waste bin compound.

5.14 Each pitch sanitary block facility is typically housed in one half of a larger block for reasons of construction economy. Each pitch unit is fully separated from the adjoining unit with a one hour fire resisting party wall in between. Each side includes a dedicated service zone only be accessible to site managers and other maintenance staff.

The internal layout of each sanitary block is kept simple and efficient in form with direct access prioritised to the kitchen washing area with the supporting private toilet and shower wet room accessed beyond.

Form, Massing & Scale

5.15 The sanitary blocks are simple units with pitched roofs and low key in nature to compliment the scale of the site.

External Appearance & Materials

5.16 For details of the Sanitary blocks, refer drawing number: E03883-HCC-00-XX-DR-A-2000 Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations

5.17 New buildings will comprise single storey cavity brick and block walls, with polyester powder coated heavy duty steel glazed and louvred doors, with simple concrete tiled pitched roofs.

5.18 Perimeter walling comprises solid masonry walling. The sliding metal gate and pedestrian gates with

5.00 Design



Aerial View Looking South

be polyester powder coated. Solid full height double timber gates are provided to the bin area to facilitate easy waste collection.

Sustainability & Environmental Control

5.19 The design promotes the efficient use of water and energy, whilst reducing carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions. It encourages recycling, and the reduction of waste.

5.20 The design of the environmental control systems for the new buildings focuses on providing satisfactory levels of comfort while minimising energy consumption. The design makes use of passive systems for environmental control, reducing the dependence upon mechanical plant where possible. Features include:

- Good levels of external wall and roof insulation to reduce heat losses;
- Utilisation of efficient electrical heating and hot water systems;
- High efficiency light fittings with automatic controls;
- High level sound absorbent finishes providing comfortable acoustics.

5.21 A mixture of manual/automatic control systems are proposed, allowing user choice and selection to suit.

Soft Landscape

5.22 The following soft landscape principles are proposed for the development.

5.23 By its nature and due to the constricted width of the site area available, there is very little opportunity for landscape within the boundary of the transit park inside the proposed boundary wall line. The majority of the park requires to be a hard surface concrete finish suitable for vehicular movement and parking. Opportunities are limited to the small pic-nic area and play ground which will include some new tree planting, amenity and soft play woodchip type surfacing. The Transit Park's only real opportunities lay outside the proposed boundary wall line and draw on the recommendations made in the Ecological Assessment.

5.24 Having regard to each boundary condition the following landscape works are proposed:

East 'tree' boundary

- All existing 'crack willows' to be coppiced to 0.5m above ground level. All other small trees to be retained and protected by Tree Protection fencing. Bramble thicket to be cut back to ground level to allow for clearance of debris, rubbish and broken fencing, then allowed to re-grow naturally.
- Maintenance contract to be put in place to keep a 1.2m wide pathway clear on the outside of the wall to allow for maintenance and access.

West 'brook' boundary

- All existing 'crack willows' to be coppiced to 0.5m above ground level. River bank to be re-instated at 45 degrees with site won topsoil and allowed to re-establish with vegetation naturally.
- No maintenance works would be anticipated to this embankment and new saplings, reeds and other vegetation would be allowed to re-grow fully without disturbance. Any tree works required to keep the brook clear and un-blocked would be carried out annually and would be accessed from the opposite river bank.

North 'road' boundary

- Bramble thicket to be cut back to ground level to allow for clearance of debris, rubbish and soil mounding. Wildflower seeding re-instatement to this frontage would provide Ecology mitigation habitat.
- Wildflower meadow areas would be cut back twice a year in mid-autumn and early spring to encourage summer flowering species and prevent saplings/brambles from taking over.

South 'Swale' boundary

- All existing 'crack willows' to be coppiced to 0.5m above ground level. Bramble thicket to be cut back to ground level to allow for clearance of debris, then allowed to re-grow naturally. Ten new trees (8-10cm standards) to be planted around the new Swale to speed up the

regeneration process. Species to be selected from native cherry, maple, alder and hawthorn varieties.

- Swale and surrounding banks would need to be trimmed twice a year to prevent clogging with vegetation. New trees would be established with five years RBC maintenance care. Wider embankment habitat would be allowed to regenerate naturally with no maintenance required.

Hard External Works

5.25 Roadways and parking areas to plots will generally be concrete with suitable line markings. The exceptions being the play ground which will be suitable woodchip.

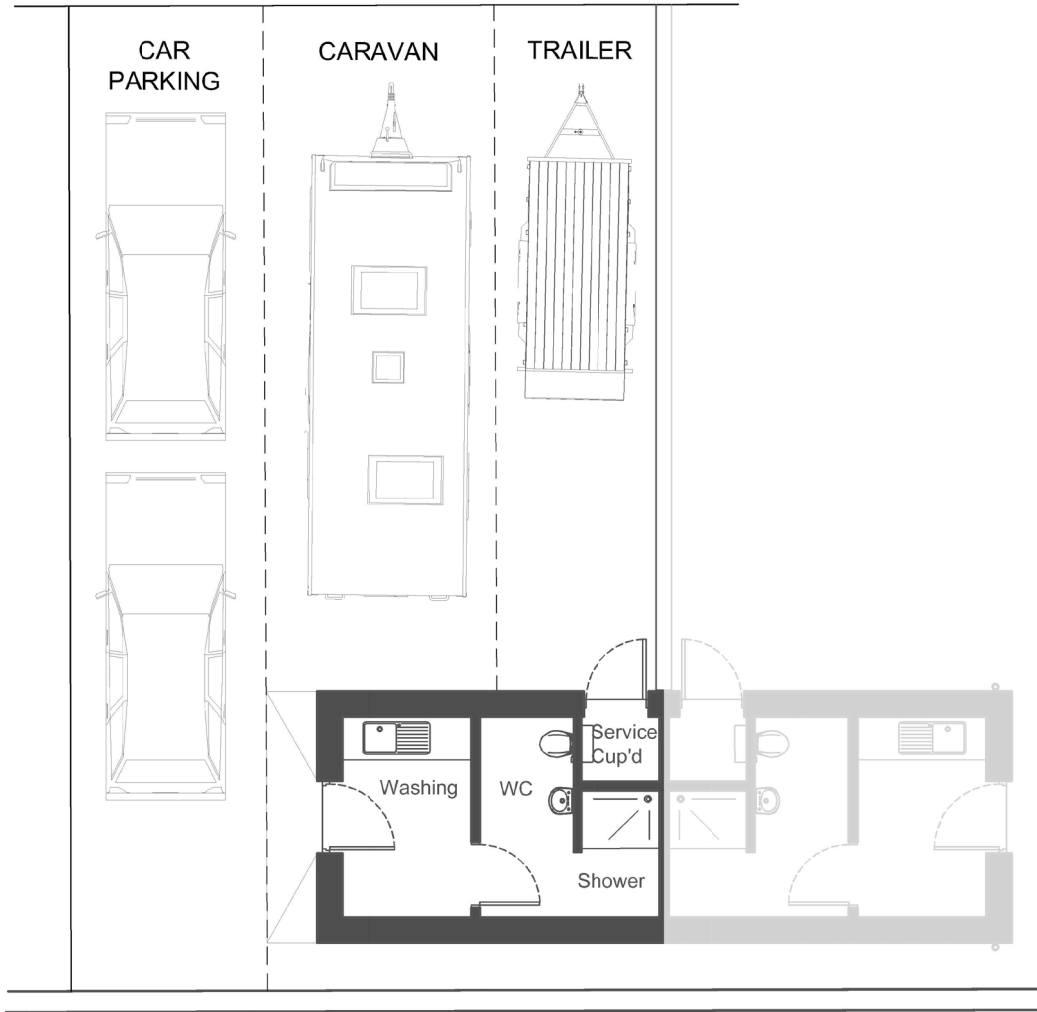
5.26 For parking arrangements please refer site plan drawings along with the Transport Statement.

5.27 A bespoke recycle and waste bin compound is included with separate internal and external access. Waste collection lorries will not enter the site but draw along side in the sites bellmouth entrance to allow for direct and easy bin emptying, limiting disturbance or potential confrontation to transit residents.



Aerial View Looking North East

6.00 Access Proposals



Typical Pitch Layout

Approach to Inclusive Access

6.01 An integrated approach has been adopted, in which the design has been developed in consultation with Reading Borough Council to reflect operational requirements. The objective is to develop an accessible design which is functional and sustainable in the longer term.

6.02 The approach adopted is intended to incorporate, where relevant, the best practice principles and objectives for inclusive and accessible design.

These are:

- To achieve optimum accessibility for all users of the site’s facilities;
- To create a secure and welcoming place;
- To design the buildings and the external areas for beneficial use generally;
- To provide spaces which are reasonably flexible in use and adaptable to change;
- To ensure facilities are robust and durable and suited to their use.

Vehicle and Transport Links

6.03 Transport links to the site are described in the Ramboll Transport statement accompanying this application.

Facilities within the Building

6.04 Physical measures incorporated at this stage of the design to aid access include:

- Simple, direct circulation routes to allow unimpeded and unobstructed horizontal movement.
- Level access provided to all building areas, and including level thresholds..

All such elements will be designed in accordance with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

Security

6.05 A key design consideration is site and building security. The following passive and active measures are included:

- CCTV coverage of the main entrance, general site area and external building façades, mounted on anti climb poles
- Effective lighting.
- Separate facilities to each plot to avoid misunderstandings re access rights;
- Clear pitch segregation and demarcation;
- Open and visible external circulation around the site and buildings which are well-lit;
- Direct routes of communication to RBC Housing Support officers.
- Site fully enclosed
- Direct pedestrian and vehicular access

Site Operations

6.06 It is proposed users will be able to contact RBC housing support officers from a suitable intercom device at the site entrance as well as via mobile phone, email etc.

6.07 Plots will be allocated and managed by RBC Housing Officers, who will monitor availability, booking, site set up, site use and departure arrangements and include management of any associated matters.



Aerial sketch view looking south



Aerial sketch view looking north west

