

Briefing

Reading Golf Club – Further planning and S106 matters for consideration

2nd July 2021

Introduction

1. This note has been produced further to comments provided by RBC Officers on 1st July 2021 to respond to outstanding matters in relation to the application and to provide details of the final CIL/S106 offer for consideration.
2. As stated before, Reading Golf Club and Fairfax wish to work proactively with the Council to identify the means to support what is a robust application, built around a policy allocation, on land which is white land within the Borough boundary and which requires something to be done to ensure long-term stewardship and appropriate legacy.

Policy EN8

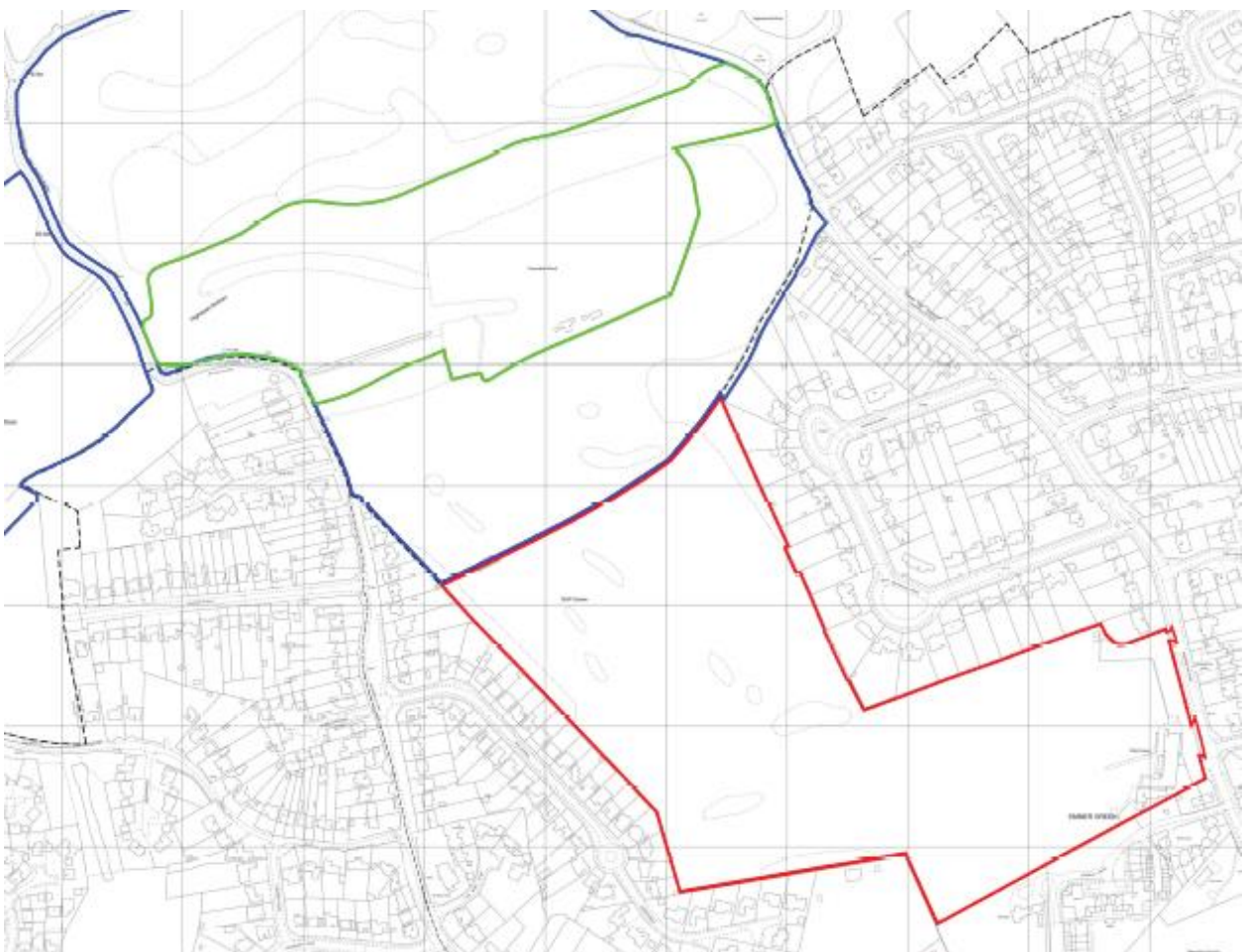
3. Policy EN8 states the following:
4. *“There will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space, which will include allotments. Development should not result in the loss of or jeopardise use and enjoyment of undesignated open space. Development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, to a similar standard, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space. The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land”.*
5. In this respect, there are two policy tests:
 1. Can sufficient replacement open space be provided at an accessible location nearby?
 2. Can sufficient mitigation / compensation be provided on existing open space via improvements to recreational facilities?
6. Taking each point separately:
 1. We consider that the provision of accessible open space on-site is a significant matter in terms of determination. There is 11.44ha of unallocated open space (UOS) on site, with this being inaccessible (in terms of physical access) and visible only to 75 properties in total. Of this, 5 properties have unencumbered views and 13 properties have unencumbered first floor views. All other properties have obscured views (either from ground, first floor or both) or no view. Against

this, 3.62ha will be provided as fully accessible POS, with a LAP, alongside a further 0.49ha of SUDS and street planting. 3.4ha will be retained as garden spaces, which is essentially similar in terms of the UOS (inaccessible and partially visible to a small handful of adjacent residents). Only 3.93ha across the site will be lost in terms of UOS. We consider that the balance of accessibility and usability, being provided in an area of recognised POS and play space deficiency is sufficient to meet the EN8 tests, particularly when its use to the locality is factored in.

2. Nevertheless, in addition to this, as mitigation / compensation we have also proposed a £250k contribution towards 3G pitch provision in the locality. This is a long-term ambition of Sport England, who have been discussing it with RBC. A £50k contribution towards the upgrade of the nearby Emmer Green Playing Fields play area is also proposed.

7. Together, it is considered that the above proposals meet the tests in policy EN8 and allow for significant improvements in accessible open space, leisure and non-car-based travel for the benefit of the majority of Emmer Green residents.

8. However, should RBC not consider that the above satisfies the quantitative tests, we can also provide a significant parcel of land within the applicant's ownership just to the North of the application site, situated in SODC and edged in green on the plan below. This parcel is 5ha in size and would result in a net benefit in terms of open space available to residents in the Borough.



9. The EN8 policy test clearly advises that replacement open space can be provided at an accessible location, close by. It does not state that the land must be within RBC. The land, which is

approximately just 200m from the edge of the application site, is close by and connected by an existing footpath (to the north-west of the development land connecting past the top of the LWS).

10. This additional off-site 5ha parcel can be secured and delivered by:
 1. A planning condition requiring implementation of the land and uses prior to commencement of development.
 2. A pre-commencement S106 obligation to transfer the land into a newly formed Management Company that will manage and maintain the land as Public Open Space in perpetuity, with an appropriate commuted sum paid upfront by the developer sufficient for a 20-year period of maintenance.

The Borough Council will be given a share of the Management Company with sufficient rights that nothing can be done with the land without its consent.

3. A separate agreement under s.33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, which allows for land in the applicant's ownership, but not in the Council's control, to be used for the purposes of regulating the use of land subject to planning application.

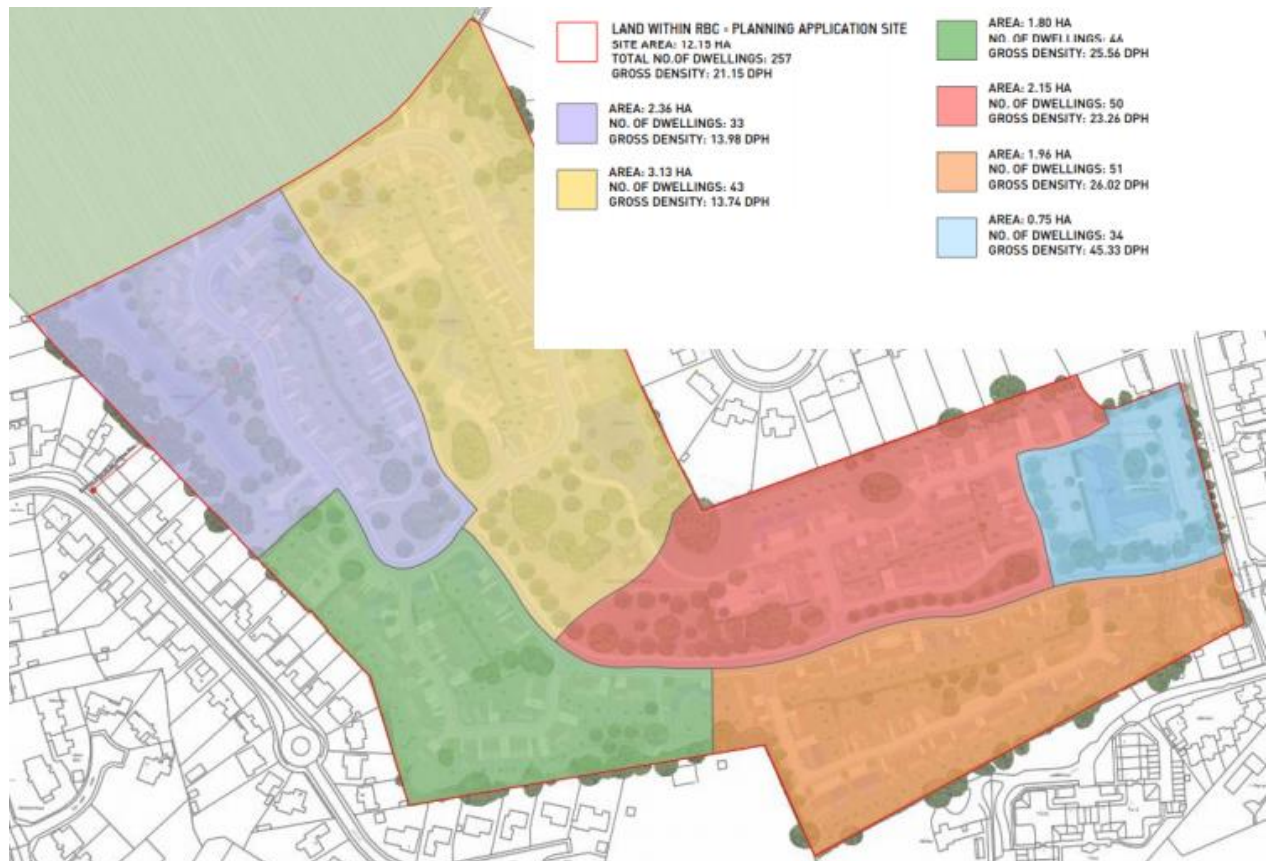
11. SODC has previously confirmed that the use of this land as Public Open Space, the maintenance of it and the addition of hoggins paths if required would not require planning permission. Furthermore, allotments could be created in the future by the Management Company if demand and necessity required them.
12. Notwithstanding the proposals above, it must also be acknowledged that EN8 can also be fulfilled by providing further contributions to upgrade local open spaces and play areas – for instance, Bugs Bottom and Clayfield Copse, both of which are accessible and close by.
13. It is contended that the policy EN8 issue can comfortably be satisfied. The tests clearly identify that the perceived loss can be mitigated. It is important to state that the perceived on-site loss is relatively benign given the previous use of the site as a golf course, which is not ecologically diverse given treating and regular mowing.

Layout

14. An appropriate layout of 257 homes, which accords with Local Plan policy in terms of density, mix, layout and technical standards has been submitted for determination.
15. The planning submission was made in outline initially, following which the Council requested the matters relating to scale, layout and landscaping were submitted, mainly in order to ensure that a development could come forward that was implementable given the high number of mature trees on site.
16. The resultant layout has responded not only to initial DRP comments, which are appended for information, but has enabled a low-density development that responds positively in terms of trees, daylight and sunlight and amenity to come forward.
17. Matters relating to character, materiality and external appearance are essentially ones that fall to be determined at reserved matters stage; the different densities as shown above in what are

generally similar-sized areas (see figure below) will enable significant diversity in materiality, built form, spacings between dwellings, open spaces and infrastructure to emerge. Detailed design will look at each area to consider that appropriate in terms of context and quality. The Council (and DRP) will form part of this process.

18. As such it is considered that the layout has shown that technically the outline application is feasible and acceptable. Further, the RMA stage allows sufficient control over matters to ensure that a scheme that is in keeping with policy and preference can come forward to the Council's satisfaction.



S106 Heads of Terms

19. The information given above helps to set out the policy position and the performance of the site against prevailing policy. To supplement this, we propose a number of planning obligations which are as follows:
1. Provision of **35%** on-site Affordable Housing at a tenure split of 50:50 (Affordable Rent / Shared Ownership) in line with the current Affordable Housing SPD 2013.
 2. Provision of a 600 sqm health centre or a commensurate sum towards off-site provision.
 3. A contribution of £100,000 to either be paid into Cucumber Wood Park Management Ltd or secured via separate legal agreement under s.33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to manage and maintain woodland planting,

allotment provision, open spaces and footpaths and cycleways on land within the Golf Course in South Oxfordshire over 20 years.

4. A contribution of £135,000 to the Carbon Offset Levy to comply with Policy H5.
5. A contribution of £10,000 towards off-site biodiversity planting and ongoing management and maintenance.
6. A contribution of £250,000 towards provision of 3G sports pitch provision, as per Sport England request.
7. A contribution of £50,000 towards upgrade of Emmer Green Playing Fields Play Equipment.
8. A contribution to Employment, Skills and Training of £62,470 (Band 9), based on a construction value of £76.8 million.
9. A contribution of £10,000 to assist funding of a local Car Club provider and provision of two on-site car club spaces.
10. A contribution of £5,000 towards provision of an on-site Cycle Hire scheme, to be located adjacent to the Health Centre.
11. A contribution to Employment, Skills and Training monitoring of £6,134.40
12. A contribution towards S106 monitoring of £5,000
13. A contribution towards RBC Legal Costs of £10,000
14. A contribution towards provision of Public Art of £25,000
15. Off-site highways works and improvements, comprising:
 - Improvements to Kidmore End Road Access, plus new bus shelter and levelled access - drawing number 45675/5510/001A
 - Provision of a secondary access to Kidmore End Road, including informal crossing with tactile paving - drawing number 45675/5510/003.
 - Improvements to the Kidmore End Road / Peppard Road junction - drawing number 45675/5510/006
 - Improvements to the Kidmore End Road / Lyefield Court and Kidmore End Road / Grove Road junction - drawing number 5675/5510/004
 - Upgrading the signal junction at the Peppard Road / Henley Road / Prospect Street junction to MOVA. Exact amount to be agreed during S106 negotiations and once further information from RBCs Network Management team has been provided.

Contact

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