
December 2019



Planning Policy Statement Revision A

Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for means of access) for the partial re-development of the Meadway Centre, Tilehurst, Reading In accordance with Option 2 of The Meadway Centre Planning Brief Supplementary Planning Document (adopted November 2013)

On behalf of
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been prepared on behalf of Chillingham Ltd to support an outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of access, for the partial re-development of The Meadway Centre, in Tilehurst, Reading.
- 1.2 The Policy Statement has been updated to Revision A in response to the adoption of the Reading Borough Local Plan on the 4th November 2019 resulting in changes to policy guidance. This Statement seeks to justify the acceptability of the proposals against the new Local Plan.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to respond to the Option 2 development aspirations set out within Reading Borough Council's adopted Meadway Centre Planning Brief (2013) and builds upon the planning consent granted in 2017 for the precinct (Ref: 15/0945) which sought to expand the retail offering of the centre.
- 1.4 This Statement describes the application site and proposed development before identifying and examining planning and wider policy issues relevant to the application.
- 1.5 A Statement of Community Involvement has been undertaken separately which details the community engagement works that have been undertaken prior to the submission of this application.
- 1.6 In formulating this Statement and assessing the planning merits of the proposal, the starting point has been an assessment against the Development Plan and National Planning Policy before taking account of relevant material planning considerations.
- 1.7 Key considerations include the requirements of the third edition of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF3) (February 2019) and associated guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). Specific regard has also been had to The Meadway Centre Planning Brief SPD adopted in 2013 and statutory development plan policies.
- 1.8 Section 2 of this Report sets out the Site Description and Planning History of the site.

2.0 Site Description and Planning History

Site Description

- 2.1 The Meadway Centre is an established District Centre located on Honey End Lane approximately 3km west of the centre of Reading and 3km from Junction 12 of the M4.
- 2.2 The centre serves a local catchment and comprises two areas. Firstly, and the area which is the subject of this planning application, the northern part of the Meadway Centre comprises a shopping precinct which has a central, linear, pedestrianised courtyard running east-west with approximately 30 retail units framing the courtyard north and south with a larger “bookend” unit at the western extent of the precinct which is currently occupied by Boots and a gymnasium. Above the retail units forming the precinct are a number of residential properties and there is car parking to the side and rear.
- 2.3 The second part of the Meadway Centre which does not form part of this application proposal is home to an Asda superstore with its own dedicated car parking to the rear. As highlighted, both these areas are in separate ownerships and this application solely centres on the Meadway Precinct north of the existing Asda store.
- 2.4 The centre is primarily retail currently and is a typical shopping parade scheme of its time, tired and in need of upgrading.
- 2.5 There are existing public toilets owned by Reading Borough Council which are located fronting Honey Pot Lane between the precinct and Asda.
- 2.6 All approaches to the precinct are via Honey End Lane which runs in a north/south direction to the east of the Meadway Centre.
- 2.7 It is recognised the precinct, which was opened in 1967, has become dated and is in a very poor condition due, in part, to the number of vacant units within the precinct itself. There are long term aspirations for the centre to be modernised.
- 2.8 To the west of the site forming the western boundary is an area of woodland with residential properties beyond on Stoneham Close.

Planning History

- 2.9 The Meadway Precinct was opened in 1967 and since that time the precinct itself has only been the subject of planning applications since 2000. The Meadway Centre Planning Brief (2013) identifies that in 2000 and 2001 a number of applications were submitted for a new retail unit on the rear car park site comprising a food retail store of between 1,000 and 1,500m². These applications are referenced 00/00241/FUL; 01/00097/FUL; 01/00101/OUT; and 01/00270/FUL. All of these applications were either withdrawn or subject to appeal against non-determination but with the appeals subsequently withdrawn.
- 2.10 In 2005, planning application reference 05/01183/FUL was submitted for an additional 1,500m² of retail and 39 additional residential units alongside the refurbishment of the existing precinct. This application was refused on the grounds of it being a poorly designed solution that did not enhance the existing precinct. A subsequent appeal was withdrawn. In 2007, planning application 07/00044/FUL was

submitted for an additional 1,385m² of retail and 34 flats. Again, this application was withdrawn.

- 2.11 It is evident since 2000, a number of applications have sought to improve the retail offer of the Meadway Precinct and improve the precinct from a visual perspective but none appear to have been viable or deliverable.
- 2.12 In 2015, a planning application was submitted by Chillingham Limited (Ref: 15/0945/FUL) who are the landowners for the northern part of the centre. The application sought to re-develop the Meadway precinct including partial demolition, refurbishment of existing retail units including creation of additional floor space through extending existing premises, new shop fronts to extended units, extension to existing precinct to create new retail units within use classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5, laying out of new car park, new servicing arrangements, bin stores, engineering operations including re-profiling of rear of the site and landscaping, re-location of public toilets to within the precinct. The application was approved on the 29th June 2017. The application did not include the Asda Superstore and associated land to the south which is under a different land ownership.
- 2.13 Since the 2017 approval, the site owners, Chillingham Limited, have been in further discussions with the Council to consider additional residential flats above the retail shops to create a more cohesive district centre serving this part of Tilehurst which is the subject of this outline planning application. The proposals seek to deliver a high-quality mixed-use scheme and build upon the 2017 permission which sought to improve the retail offer in this part of the centre.
- 2.14 Section 3 of this Report now details the proposed development.

3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposals seek to re-develop the northern precinct of the Meadway Centre through the refurbishment and re-development of the centre to create a more cohesive community district centre within Tilehurst. The development would not include any works to the Asda superstore or associated parking but would be designed in a way which flowed between the two sites.
- 3.2 The proposed development seeks outline planning permission to bring forward the aspirations (Option 2) of the Meadway Centre Planning Brief, adopted by Reading Borough Council (RBC) in 2013.
- 3.3 Due to the application being in outline, the principle of development alongside access arrangements is sought to be agreed with the Council with a view that a future reserved matters application would agree the design in more detail alongside appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development.
- 3.4 Outline planning permission was approved in 2017 (Ref: 15/0945) which sought to retain key retailers and consolidate the retail offer within the centre via an expanded retail consent. Ongoing consultation between the landowner and the Council's Planning Officers since 2017 has been undertaken to secure the future and viability of the centre in advance of the collation of this outline planning application.
- 3.5 The current proposals seek to build upon the 2017 permission, strengthening and consolidating the retail offer in an open courtyard format. It also increases the residential offering within a hub location, arranged over the shops and in an open, and raised amenity courtyard configuration.
- 3.6 Key retailers such as Boots will be retained and additional shops will be provided leading to and from Asda. A wide range of community uses and services will be on offer including useable public amenity space.
- 3.7 A total of 5293.7m² GIA non-residential floorspace is proposed including existing GIA, proposed new retail, public toilet facilities, new medical and leisure facilities, and a management suite.
- 3.8 Existing housing within the complex will be relocated and provision will be made for an additional 239 new flats and houses to breathe life into the precinct, making a total of 266 new dwellings. It is proposed to provide:
- 13no studio apartments;
 - 121no 1-bed apartments;
 - 117no 2-bed apartments; and
 - 15no 3-bed apartments.
- There would be no reduction of existing housing on site.
- 3.9 Full details of the GIA floorspaces for both the non-residential and residential elements of the scheme can be viewed in the Design and Access Statement. Further information is also provided with regards waste collection and parking for all aspects of the re-development proposals.
- 3.10 Details of market and affordable housing proposed would be provided at the reserved matters stage.

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- 3.11 The landowner wishes to work collaboratively with Council Officers, Councillors and the local community to meet the aspirations of the Meadway Centre Planning Brief (2013). Within the Brief, the Council confirm that they will agree to work positively and proactively with any landowner or developer seeking to progress a proposal that will improve the way that this site serves its local community and which fulfils the vision and principles for the site.
- 3.12 Section 4 of this Report now provides an overview of relevant planning policy.

4.0 Planning Policy Review

- 4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Statutory Development Plan for Reading comprises of the Reading Borough Local Plan with associated proposal maps which was adopted on the 4th November 2019 and guides development in the Borough until 2036.
- 4.3 The adoption of the Reading Local Plan immediately superseded the previous statutory development plan policies held within the Core Strategy (adopted in 2008 and updated in 2015 and The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted in 2012 and updated in January 2015).
- 4.4 In addition to the Development Plan, planning applications are also governed by National planning policy set out by the Government. The third edition of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 4.5 The relevant national and local planning policies applicable to the proposed development are now detailed below.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework Volume 3 (NPPF3)

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework Volume 3 ("NPPF3") was published in February 2019 and supersedes the previous 2012 and 2018 versions published by the Government. The purpose of the NPPF is to provide clear, concise planning policy guidance to guide local development plans and maintain a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.7 Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF3 highlight that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
 - ***an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;***
 - ***a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and***

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- ***an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.***

4.8 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11), which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision taking this means:

“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

4.9 Paragraph 38 confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.10 Paragraph 59 confirms that Local Planning Authorities should support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

4.11 Paragraph 80 confirms the Government’s commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity.

4.12 Paragraph 81 sets out the key principles for supporting economic growth stating that planning policies should:

a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;

b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;

c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and

d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances

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- 4.13 Paragraph 86 states that a sequential test should be applied to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered. The proposal seeks re-development of an existing retail centre and is therefore not required to undertake a sequential assessment.
- 4.14 Paragraph 91 confirms that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.
- 4.15 Paragraph 93 also confirms that planning policies and decisions should consider the social, economic and environmental benefits of estate regeneration. Local planning authorities should use their planning powers to help deliver estate regeneration to a high standard.
- 4.16 Paragraphs 102 – 111 provides guidance on sustainable transport options for new developments. Paragraph 109 makes clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.17 Paragraph 117 sets out policies on making effective use of land confirming that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed land.
- 4.18 Paragraph 122 sets out guidance on achieving appropriate densities within new development confirming that Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land.
- 4.19 The NPPF also considers design matters and confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment (paragraphs 124 and 127).

Statutory Development Plan

The Reading Local Plan (adopted 4th November 2019)

- 4.20 As previously stated, the new Reading Local Plan was adopted on the 4th November 2019 and supersedes the policies within the Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
- 4.21 The following policies are applicable to the proposed development:
- CC1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
 - CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
 - CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
 - CC4: Decentralised Energy
 - CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
 - CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
 - CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 - CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
 - EN8: Undesignated Open Space

EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN10: Access to Open Space
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
H14: Suburban Renewal and Regeneration
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-related matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres
RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development
WR3: Other Sites for Development in West Reading and Tilehurst

- 4.22 Policy CC1 applies the NPPF3's presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 4.23 Policy CC2 requires that new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.
- 4.24 Policy CC3 requires that all developments where possible, will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.
- 4.25 Policy CC4 requires that developments shall demonstrate how consideration has been given to securing energy for the development from a decentralised energy source. Any development of more than 20 dwellings and/ or non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m shall consider the inclusion of a decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision. Where there is existing decentralised energy provision, further developments of over 10 dwellings or non-residential development of 1,000 sq m will be expected to link into the existing decentralised energy network or demonstrate why this is not feasible.
- 4.26 Policy CC5 requires that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.
- 4.27 Policy CC6 states that the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to

be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.

- 4.28 Policy CC7 sets out that development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 4.29 Policy CC8 requires that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. Minimum distances between dwellings will be adhered too and to protect amenity and also other factors such as traffic movements and noise must not be harmful to amenity of existing and proposed residents.
- 4.30 Policy EN8 advises that 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, of a similar standard and function, 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.
- 4.31 Policy EN9 requires that new development on sites of 50 dwellings or more should make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs of the development. This can be achieved through on or off-site provision, contributions toward provision or improvement of existing leisure or recreational facilities. A secure maintenance arrangement shall be demonstrated to ensure that any open space is properly maintained throughout the life of the development.
- 4.32 Policy EN10 states that in areas with relatively poor access to open space facilities (including as a result of severance lines), new development should make provision for, or contribute to, improvements to road and other crossings to improve access to green space and/or facilitate the creation or linking of safe off-road routes to parks.
- 4.33 Policy EN14 requires that new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.
- 4.34 Policy EN15 sets out that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.
- 4.35 Policy EN16 requires that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution; where it would result in no deterioration in, or ideally enhance, ground and surface water quality; and where adequate water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure will be in place to support the proposed development prior to occupation.

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- 4.36 Policy EN18 requires that all developments of 10 or more dwellings must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate and in line with the Government's Technical Standards.
- 4.37 Policy H1 confirms that the Council will make provision for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to ensure that the shortfall of 230 dwellings that cannot be provided within Reading will be met over the plan period.
- 4.38 Policy H2 sets out guidance on how to achieve an appropriate housing density and housing mix based upon the individual characteristics of a site. Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable.
- 4.39 Policy H3 provides guidance on affordable housing on new developments and requires that on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing. This figure is subject to site viability.
- 4.40 Policy H5 sets out standards for new housing unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it would render a development unviable:
- a) All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard;
 - b) All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations;
 - c) All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes;
 - d) All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations;
 - e) All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below); and
 - f) On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be 'wheelchair adaptable' as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be 'wheelchair accessible'
- 4.41 Policy H10 requires that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space. Flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.
- 4.42 Policy H14 advises that proposals that would renew and regenerate existing urban areas including improving the local built environment, improve and modernise existing housing stock and deliver additional homes will be supported.
- 4.43 Policy TR1 requires that new development over 10 dwellings should contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).
- 4.44 Policy TR3 provides guidance on access, traffic and highway-related matters.
- 4.45 Policy TR4 sets out guidance on cycle accessibility and requires new developments to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities.
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- 4.46 Policy TR5 sets out guidance on car parking and cycle parking provision alongside electrical vehicle charging. Full details on car and cycle parking standards are set out within the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD discussed later in this Statement. Policy TR5 also confirms that development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:
- a) All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points
 - b) Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.
- 4.47 Policy RL1 confirms that the Meadway Centre is identified as being a District Centre where the vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced.
- 4.48 Policy RL2 confirms that provision will be made for up to 34,900 sq m of retail and related facilities in Reading to 2036, together with new leisure facilities.
- 4.49 Policy WR3 sets out guidance on individual sites within West Reading and Tilehurst that are proposed to be developed. The Meadway Centre is included under Site Ref WR3o. The site measures 2.99 ha 3,700-4,600 sq m of retail and leisure (net gain). The policy guidance states that: Development of existing shopping centre to provide a new district centre including retail and leisure uses. Development should be as comprehensive as possible. There will be no net loss in residential, and a net gain will be provided where possible. Development should:
- Enhance the diversity of types and sizes of uses within the district centre;
 - Ensure that district centre uses including a strong retail component is provided on ground floors;
 - Improve links within the centre and to adjoining areas, and be designed to draw people into the centre;
 - Not take the form of additional development that does not seek to address the centre's existing design issues;
 - Be arranged around a quality public space which can serve as a focus for the community;
 - Include new tree planting and retain existing important trees where possible;
 - Avoid detrimental effects on the biodiversity and landscape significance of the woodland to the north and west of the site;
 - Provide for an enhanced green link at the south and west of the site between Prospect Park and the Meadway Woodland;
 - Reduce height towards the rear of residential properties on Cockney Hill;
 - Be designed to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour;
 - Be accessed from existing accesses;
 - Enhance cycle access to the site; and
 - Address any contamination on site.

Supplementary Development Plan Policies (SPDs)

- 4.50 Alongside the statutory development plan policies, the Council have also adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents to help guide development in the District.

Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011)

- 4.51 This SPD sets out parking standards and design for new developments.

Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013)

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- 4.52 Provides developers with guidance on affordable housing delivery expectations for new residential developments in accordance with Policy H3 of the Local Plan.

Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (April 2015)

- 4.53 Sets out how planning obligations under Section 106 for new development will be secured, in the context of the Community Infrastructure Levy where the Charging Schedule was adopted on the 1st April 2015.

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011)

- 4.54 Sets out guidance on producing sustainable development and interprets existing policy on matters including climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)

- 4.55 Provides detailed guidance on how the Council expects developers to contribute to employment initiatives, such as creating apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities for the local workforce.

The Meadway Centre Planning Brief SPD (November 2013)

- 4.56 The outline application responds to Option 2 of the Meadway Planning Brief SPD. This is discussed in detail at Section 5 of this Report.

5.0 Planning Assessment

- 5.1 In order to crystallise the aspirations of the Council as regards the re-development of the Meadway Centre, the Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document in November 2013 entitled “The Meadway Centre Planning Brief” which sets out the overall vision for re-development of the centre. The Meadway Centre Planning Brief was adopted by Reading Borough Council on the 20th November 2013.
- 5.2 It highlights the fact the District Centre location for the local area is important and the brief therefore sets down broad principles for the form that any future development should take. The Brief provides guidance which supplements policies in the Core Strategy and the Sites and Details Policies document.
- 5.3 The brief was prepared in response to interest in the full or partial re-development of the Meadway Precinct which is highlighted in the Planning History section of this supporting document.
- 5.4 The landowners and applicants, Chillingham Ltd, gained planning permission in 2017 which sought to expand the retail offer of the centre (Ref: 15/0945), the landowners have been in consultation with the Council to consider how the precinct could be re-developed to provide a viable and deliverable solution that provides a mixed-use community centre. Following much discussion, it has been agreed that Option 2 of the Planning Brief will be pursued which seeks to re-develop the precinct area which is under a single land ownership by the applicants. The separate Asda with associated parking is under a different land ownership and its not included as part of this planning application.
- 5.5 This outline application seeks to follow a more mixed-use approach which includes new retail and residential development in order to make the scheme viable and deliverable that will build upon the 2017 planning permission.
- 5.6 Section 3 of the Meadway Planning Brief sets the policy context and highlights relevant policies which are summarised in the previous section of this supporting document. The table highlights key principles in relation to land use, layout and design, transport and movement, natural environment and community.
- 5.7 In relation to land use, bullet points 1 and 2 suggest that development should result in an expanded, rather than contracted, offer of centre uses such as retail, leisure and community uses, retaining a strong retail character. The response of this application is to respond to bullet point 1, the development proposals retaining a strong retail character whilst expanding the centre such that the vibrancy and vitality can be brought back, centring around national multiple occupiers through a viable redevelopment of the precinct. In relation to bullet point 2, it is maintained there will be no loss of housing as all of the flats will be retained.
- 5.8 In relation to layout and design, bullet point 4 requires a high-quality design which considers and emphasises safety, quality public realm and permeability as well as protecting existing and residential amenity. The Design and Access Statement is comprehensive and highlights the design process that has evolved to ensure the precinct offers the highest quality of environment both in terms of public realm, permeability, but importantly, customer safety. Sharp ninety-degree corners have been removed where possible to allow the precinct to flow in a more open and customer friendly environment. This is evident from the application drawings that accompany the application.

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- 5.9 Bullet point 5 requires the intensity of development to reflect accessibility and character meaning that a District Centre location could be developed relatively intensely. The development seeks to maximise the quantum and size of retail units such that they prove attractive to national multiples of whom several have expressed interest in the site. All of the operators who are considering leasing retail units are ones that customers would expect to be associated and representative in District Centres, widening the retail choice.
- 5.10 In relation to transport and movement, existing access points will be utilised off Honey End Lane, sustainable modes of transport will be encouraged, particularly as the District Centre is accessible to a wide residential area and is close to existing bus stops. Cycle bays are provided to encourage sustainable transport options.
- 5.11 In relation to adequate levels of car parking, the Transport Assessment which accompanies this application highlights the spaces required for the residential properties and retail customers is sufficient and would not compromise highway safety.
- 5.12 As regards the natural environment, it is the case a number of trees need to be removed to facilitate the development proposals. This was considered under the 2017 permission and deemed acceptable in principle. Additional tree planting is proposed throughout the site, details of which would be agreed at the reserved matters stage.
- 5.13 The existing woodland to the west and north of the site is unkept and has been the subject of fly tipping and litter accumulates in significant areas. The area is unattractive and unappealing and could be significantly enhanced off the back of this development proposal.
- 5.14 Section 4 in the draft Planning Brief sets the vision for the Meadway Centre and in the context of this supporting statement, it is considered appropriate to cite this vision in full such that it is clear the application proposals meet that vision in all respects.
- 5.15 The vision states: -

“The Meadway Centre will be developed to provide a high quality, thriving and inclusive District Centre for this part of West Reading. It will serve a number of vital different, but complementary roles:

- **It will provide a widened range of services and facilities for the local community;**
- **It will act as a much-needed community hub for the local area, providing somewhere that local residents can meet, and serving all residents of all ages;**
- **It will be a desirable place for people, including families, to live;**
- **It will be easy and safe to move around for pedestrians, including people with disabilities, and will connect well to the surrounding areas by all modes of transport, including foot, cycle and public transport;**
- **It will be designed and laid out in a way that attracts visitors, connects well to its surroundings, provides high quality public realm and is sustainable and durable; and**
- **It will take any opportunities to help address deprivation issues within the local area.**

Redevelopment and regeneration of the Meadway Centre is an important objective for the local community and for the Council. To that end, the Council will work positively and proactively with any landowner or developer seeking to progress a proposal that will improve the way that this site serves its local community and which fulfils the vision and principles for the site.”

Having due regard to the six bullet points, it is clear: -

- The development proposal does provide a wider range of potential services and facilities for the local community given the range of size of units being proposed of which three of the new units could be A1, A2, A3, A4 or A5;
- The reconfigured precinct allows for much more user-friendly external meeting/seating areas which will encourage coffee shop owners and retailers to take advantage of the pedestrian friendly environment such that local residents can view the Meadway Centre as a community hub which will prove attractive to all ages;
- The scheme retains residential on site and provides new homes which will assist in providing a high quality, mixed use scheme that assists in increasing the desirability of the area as a whole;
- As referred to above, the precinct will be pedestrian friendly and will cater for people with disabilities as well as connecting well to the surrounding areas by all modes of transport;
- The Transport Statement which accompanies the application clearly demonstrates the desire to reduce reliance upon the private motor vehicle, encouraging public transport and cycling as well as walking to the centre;
- As evidenced in the Design and Access Statement, the overall design of the redevelopment of the precinct encourages connectivity to relate to the adjacent Asda such that the District Centre can be read genuinely as one destination with good permeability throughout;
- Visitors to the centre will recognise the improved precinct, new retail facilities and Asda work as a District Centre together and should not be seen as two separate parts of the District Centre. By improving the retail offer, this will attract residents such that the vibrancy and vitality can be brought back into the precinct;
- In terms of addressing deprivation issues within the local area, unfortunately the precinct itself is suffering from deprivation and is in dire need of regeneration. This proposal will not only deliver viable retail units and new homes of a size and scale to meet the market demand for retail occupiers that one would expect to see in a District Centre, but will also improve the existing precinct from a visual perspective.

5.16 Therefore, in terms of the vision for the Meadway Centre, this development proposal adheres to the vision to return the Meadway Centre to the community hub associated with the precinct several years ago. The applicants have worked hard to bring forward a proposal in collaboration with the Council which provides a high-quality mixed-use scheme and a cohesive community district centre whilst also being realistic about the site viability and deliverability of the proposals.

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- 5.17 In relation to Section 5 of the Planning Brief, development principles are established referring to the amount of development, land use, layout and design, landscape, density and mix, scale, height and massing, architectural details and materials, sustainability, safety and security, transport and movement, natural environment, community and social role and management and maintenance. Taking these in turn, the following Planning Assessment is undertaken.

Amount of Development

- 5.18 The proposal seeks to build upon the 2017 permission to increase the retail offering on site and includes residential development. This is necessary to create a more mixed-use coherent District Centre but to also ensure any development of the site is viable.
- 5.19 It will be noted from the application drawings and the accommodation schedule it is the intention to maintain a strong emphasis on retail whilst allowing a degree of flexibility. In addition to the retail offer, residential development is also proposed to provide a high-quality mixed-use scheme which is commonplace in many district centres throughout the UK. The mixed-use proposal and density of development proposed makes best use of the land available and will ensure a healthy mix of uses that you would expect to be found in a District Centre such that the vibrancy and vitality of the centre can be maintained
- 5.20 Full details of the scale and amount of development proposed would be agreed at a future reserved matters stage.

Affordable Housing

- 5.21 Affordable housing provision would be determined at the reserved matters stage.

Layout and Design

- 5.22 The application is made in outline with layout and design subject to reserved matters. However, the layout and design of development has been carefully considered, negotiated and adapted and is fully addressed in the comprehensive Design & Access Statement submitted with the application.

Density and Mix

- 5.23 This density and mix make best use of the land available and is detailed in the comprehensive Design & Access Statement submitted with the application.
- 5.24 Full details of proposed housing mix and density would be finalised at the reserved matters stage.

Scale, Height and Massing

- 5.25 The scale of development proposed including the height of buildings in relation to the neighbouring land uses has been assessed thoroughly and is fully addressed in the Design & Access Statement submitted with the application.

Architectural Details and Materials

- 5.26 The framework of these are detailed in the Design and Access Statement. Final design and materials would be agreed at the reserved matters stage.

Safety and Security

- 5.27 Safety and security are key considerations and it will be noted from the Design & Access Statement CCTV is to be included as part of the proposal. The areas of public car parking are highly visible with natural surveillance from all of the retail units and indeed the residential properties above. The service yards and bin/storage areas will be secured and in relation to the public toilets which are mentioned in the Planning Brief, these are to remain in situ. To that end, safety and security has been taken into consideration as part of this development proposal.
- 5.28 The inclusion of residential development would mean that the site would be accessed over a 24-hour period rather than just daytime shopping hours and would include a night-time economy and footfall of pedestrians, assisting the security of the area.

Transport, Highways and Movement

- 5.29 In relation to transport and movement, a detailed Transport Assessment has been prepared which concludes sufficient car parking has been provided for both the residential and retail aspects of the development alongside cycle parking with good connectivity to bus stops and local residential areas with good pedestrian circulation space throughout the precinct.

Ecology and Trees

- 5.30 The natural environment has been given full consideration in the preparation of the redevelopment proposals and in particular, a full Ecology Report accompanies the application alongside an Arboricultural Report.
- 5.31 Whilst there is a requirement to lose trees at the lower end of the embankment to the west of the site, this will be mitigated by replacement planting and the improvement of the woodland setting towards the north of the embankment. There is negligible to low impact on the species surveyed and as referred to earlier in this statement, this is all set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the Ecology Report

Community and Social Role

- 5.32 Again, as referred to earlier in this statement, the Meadway Centre and in particular the precinct should act as a community hub which, at present, it fails to do so. This redevelopment proposal has a very important community and social role by bringing about additional vitality and vibrancy to the precinct that will encourage active use and significantly enhance its role as a District Centre. As evidenced by the Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the application, local residents are very keen to see positive redevelopment proposals happen such that the precinct can perform the role as a focal point for the community. To that end, this aim and objective of the development principle is adhered to.

Management and Maintenance

- 5.33 A new security and management suite will be located centrally as a first-floor extension to the western unit to oversee the site and provide comprehensive CCTV coverage to improve the security of residents and shoppers. Again, the issue of management and maintenance as a development principle has been adhered to as part of this proposal.

Noise Impact

- 5.34 A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted with the application. The report assesses noise arising from the different uses of the site and sets out mitigation measures where necessary.

Ground Conditions

- 5.35 A Phase 1 Ground Conditions Report is submitted with the application. The Report advises that the site comprises a number of retail units and roads and hardstanding's constructed in the location of an historic clay pit used for brickmaking.
- 5.36 The environmental risk assessment identifies five plausible pathway receptor linkages which may pose a risk. A full environmental site investigation and asbestos survey of the buildings should be carried out prior to redevelopment works. These can be conditioned as required to a permission.
- 5.37 The proposed development includes the construction of new retail units and the cutting back of the existing slope to the western boundary of the site. A full geotechnical investigation would be carried out to provide foundation and retaining wall design data to ensure the adequacy of the building foundations and the stability of the proposed retaining wall to the western boundary. Again, this can be conditioned to an outline permission.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.38 A flood risk assessment and drainage strategy are submitted with the application which detail how flood risk will be managed on site and how the site would be drained of surface and foul water.

Summary

- 5.39 Having due regard to The Meadway Centre Planning Brief (2013) and the development principles as set out in that document, it is maintained this development proposal reflects and respects the aims and aspirations of the Council to deliver a viable and vibrant District Centre to support the needs of the wider West Reading population.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been produced following instructions from Chillingham Ltd to support an outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for the partial re-development of the Meadway Centre, principally focusing on the Meadway precinct and the delivery of a high-quality District Centre.
- 6.2 The application is made in outline with all matters reserved except means of access. Nevertheless, significant design work has been undertaken to create the vision of how the centre would look and operate as a thriving mixed-use retail and residential community centre. Full design details would be undertaken at a future reserved matters stage.
- 6.3 The proposals respond to the development guidance outlined in Option 2 of the Council's Meadway Planning Brief SPD (2013) and the preceding sections of this Statement have fully assessed how the proposed development meets the Planning Brief and the Council's aspirations to regenerate the Centre.
- 6.4 The proposal has a number of significant benefits deriving from it and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority for the following reasons: -
- The proposal makes efficient use of this sustainably located site which is identified as a District Centre in need of refurbishment;
 - The proposal creates a more cohesive mixed-use development to ensure future viability of the site;
 - The proposal fully supports the design principles set out within Option 2 of the Council's Meadway Centre Planning Brief SPD (2013) which seeks to regenerate the Centre into a thriving and viable community hub and encourages additional vitality and vibrancy;
 - The proposal builds upon the 2017 planning permission (Ref: 15/0945) which sought to start improving the centre and its retail and residential offer;
 - The redevelopment will provide a quantum of new retail floor space that will prove attractive to retail occupiers, including national multiples, and in particular those that one would expect to be located within a District Centre; and
 - The re-development will also provide high quality new homes in a sustainable location that will add to the vitality and viability of the district centre.
- 6.5 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies both National and Local Planning Policy and represents a viable and deliverable redevelopment proposal in accordance with Option 2 of The Meadway District Centre Planning Brief SPD.
- 6.6 In this context, the proposals satisfy Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and we would invite the Local Planning Authority to assess the application, offer its full support and grant planning permission for the proposed re-development proposals.