04 February 2026

Reading Borough Council
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Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Emmer Green
Planning Application Reference:	PL/25/0691 Outline planning permission: Some matters reserved
Site Address:	Land West of Kidmore End Road, Oxfordshire, RG4 8SG
Proposed Development	Outline planning application for the development of up to 70 homes (including affordable housing), new vehicular access, associated parking and landscaping (all matters reserved except for access).
Applicant	Fairfax (Reading) Ltd and Reading Golf Club (SODC) Ltd
Report author	Matthew Burns
Deadline:	08/08/2025
Recommendations	The Planning Applications Committee confirm that had they been able to determine the planning application they would have resolved to: Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to: i) **GRANT** outline planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to conditions or such additional conditions required, make such minor changes to Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission; or ii) Refuse outline planning permission had the s106 legal agreement not been completed within a reasonable agreed timeframe (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)
S106	**1. Transport/Highway Matters** A contribution of £50,000 towards upgrading of the operating system and/or improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities at the junction of Peppard Road / Henley Street / Westfield Road / Prospect Street. Payable prior to commencement of development and index linked from date of grant of planning permission. To enter into an agreement under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to provide a surfaced active travel link (footway/cycleway) from the proposed new access points/entrance to the site on Kidmore End Road on the eastern boundary, and Highdown Hill Road on the western boundary, to the carriageway edge. The active travel links

	shall thereafter be constructed and open for pedestrian/cycle use prior to first occupation any dwelling permitted in relation to SODC planning application ref. PL/25/S1431/O. **2. Monitoring Fee** A contribution towards monitoring costs plus a separate commitment to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs and any further viability review costs in connection with the proposed S106 Agreement. To be payable whether or not the Agreement is completed
Conditions	**1.** Outline Time Limit – Reserved Matters to be submitted with 3 years **2.** Outline Time Limit – Development to commence within 3 years or 2 years from date of approval of reserved matters **3.** Outline Reserved Matters – Prior to commencement of development reserved matters in respect of layout, appearance, scale, landscaping to be submitted and approved **4.** Outline Principles – Reserved Matters in respect of layout, appearance and landscaping to accord with principles shown in approved plans and documents and approved access details **5.** No development to commence unless planning permission for the rest of the development within South Oxfordshire, under SODC planning application ref. PL/25/S1431/O, has been granted by SODC (or the Planning Inspectorate) **6.** Approved Plans - Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans only **7.** Hours of Construction – To be as per the Council's standard hours only: 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays **8.** No Burning of Waste on Site **9.** No development to commence until a construction management statement has been submitted and agreed
Informatives	**1.** Requirement to regularise any changes to the approved layout of the development taking place on the adjacent site within Reading under planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR that are necessary to facilitate provision of the proposed accesses to the development **2**. Positive and Proactive Working – approval **3.** Pre-commencement conditions **4**. Highways Act information **5**. S106/S278 agreements relate to this application **6.** Terms and conditions information **7.** Building Control **8.** Complaints about construction **9.** CIL

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report assesses only the elements of the proposed cross-boundary development that fall within Reading Borough, namely the vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access points connecting to a wider development of up to 70 homes located in South Oxfordshire**.** The main body of the residential development lies outside Reading, and South Oxfordshire District Council has refused its part of the application; the applicant has since lodged joint appeals for both authorities' applications. Appealing the RBC application on the grounds of non-determination.

1.2 Within Reading, the proposed access arrangements are considered technically acceptable, making use of an existing road already constructed to serve the 223-home development on the former Reading Golf Club site. Minor modifications would be required to the approved landscaping for that adjacent scheme, but these can be appropriately regularised, and no significant impacts are anticipated on ecology, character, amenity or the natural environment within Reading.

1.3 Transport assessment work indicates that while the development would add modest levels of traffic locally, its impacts can be mitigated—principally through a financial contribution towards improvements at the Peppard Road / Henley Street / Westfield Road / Prospect Street junction. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity of the development would be strengthened through new pedestrian and cycle links, and accessibility to key local services is considered to be acceptable, despite extended walking distances to bus stops.

1.4 Overall, had RBC been in a position to determine the application, officers would have recommended granting planning permission, subject to a s106 agreement for the highway contribution and relevant conditions. The report therefore sets out the recommended stance for RBC's case at the forthcoming appeal**.**

2. Introduction and site description

2.1. The application site is 5.9 hectares in size and is located to the west of Kidmore End Road in Emmer Green. The site forms part of the land formerly occupied by Reading Golf Club, which ceased operations and moved to Caversham Heath Golf Club in 2020.

2.2 The application site traverses the administrative boundaries of both Reading Borough Council (RBC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). The significant majority of the proposed development and application site is within South Oxfordshire with just the access to the site located within Reading Borough. The parts of the application site proposed to accommodate new dwellings and associated areas of open space is all on land within South Oxfordshire.

2.3 As required where an application site crosses the administrative boundary between two LPAs, two identical planning applications have been submitted, to both SODC and RBC with each LPA responsible for determination as to whether or not planning permission should be granted for the parts of the proposed development within their administrative area.

2.4 Access to the development from the existing highway network is proposed to be via the new access leading from Kidmore End Road, which serves the residential development of 223 dwellings currently under construction on the southern part of the former golf course site located within Reading Borough. A cycle route access is also proposed from Highdown Hill Road.

2.5 The SODC application site borders existing suburban residential areas of Emmer Green to the east (Brooklyn Drive and Kidmore End Road) and west (Highdown Hill Road) within Reading Borough and the new residential development under construction on the southern part of the former golf course site, also within Reading Borough, to the south. The land to the north of the site is within South Oxfordshire, where a pocket of woodland known as Cucumber Wood (a designated Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland) adjoins the northern boundary. This land as well as land to the north is within the same ownership as the application site. Beyond this woodland to the north the land is still used as a nine-hole golf course.

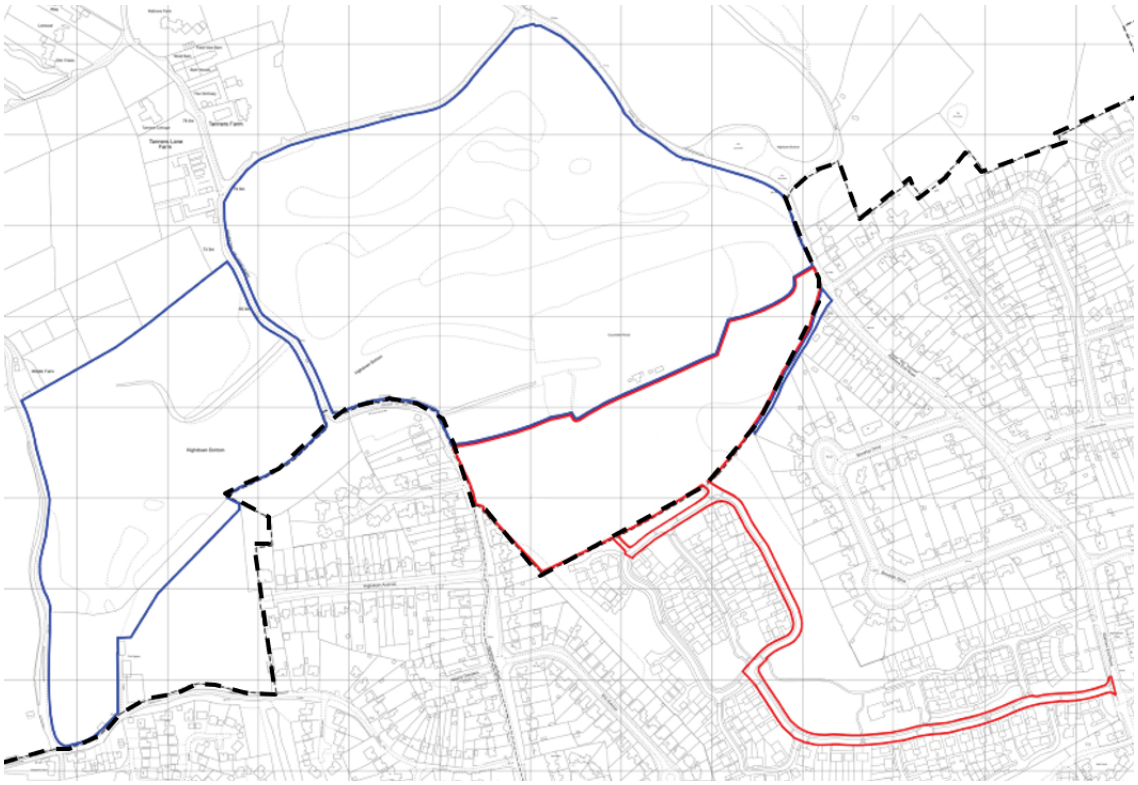


Figure 1A - Site Location Plan showing RBC and SODC administrative boundary (black dotted line)

2.5 The duplicate planning applications submitted seek outline planning permission for the proposed residential development with matters of Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale reserved to be considered at a later date, and just Access-related matters being the only detailed matter subject to consideration at this stage. As the access road connecting the development to Kidmore End Road lies within Reading Borough this matter will mainly fall to RBC to consider, albeit access and movement beyond the main access road within the development site is a matter for SODC. Given all detailed matters apart from access are reserved for consideration at a later date, SODC's decision on the of the application primarily considers 'in principle' issues as to whether the application site can accommodate the nature of development proposed, impacts of the development upon surrounding areas and the countryside and setting any relevant development parameters. The RBC application subject of this report considers the access to the development only which is already in place and serving the existing development under construction on the part of the former golf course site within Reading Borough.

2.6 A Councillor site visit took place on 30th October 2025 to look at progress of the development currently under construction on the part of the former golf course site within Reading Borough.

2.7 At 5th November PAC the Adjacent Authority Consultation (ref. PL/25/0731) was considered which set out RBC comments to be sent to SODC for consideration as part of the determination of the planning application that they are dealing with for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire. The consultation response that PAC resolved to agree set out that RBC did not object to the SODC application subject to SODC and the Applicant facilitating RBC being party to a s106 agreement to secure mitigation for the impacts arising from the parts of the development (the new houses) within South Oxfordshire upon Reading Borough. This included:

- RBC being party to the section 106 agreement linked to the planning permission and that a s106 financial contribution of **£150,000** (index linked from the date planning permission is granted by SODC) is secured as part of the section 106 agreement payable in full to RBC to go towards **upgrading of the operating system (traffic signals) and/or improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities at the junction of Peppard Road / Henley**

Road / Westfield Road / Prospect Street. The contribution to be paid to RBC prior to commencement of development.

- SODC secures a **financial contribution**, in accordance with NHS ICB's multiplier formula (in full) to go **towards increasing capacity at GP Surgeries within Reading Borough and more specifically GP Surgeries within Emmer Green, Caversham or Caversham Heights Wards.** The contribution to be paid in full to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire NHS ICB prior to the commencement of development and index linked from the date planning permission is granted.

- RBC being party to a section 106 agreement linked to the planning permission to secure a **financial contribution**, in line with Sport England's demand Calculator (in full), **towards sport and leisure facilities within Reading Borough**. The contribution to be paid in full to RBC prior to commencement of development and index linked from the date planning permission is granted.

- SODC secures a s106 financial contribution in line with their adopted formula towards **bus service improvements** in the locality and agrees that any future spending of this contribution must be agreed in consultation with RBC

- SODC should request an updated **arboricultural method statement** from the Applicant, in respect of the impact of provision of the necessary visibility splay on Highdown Hill Road upon existing trees and hedgerows and consider any impacts as part of their determination of the planning application.

2.8 The above comments were sent to SODC on 11th November 2025.

2.9 However, planning permission for the main part of the development within South Oxfordshire was refused at SODC Planning Applications Committee on 3rd December 2025 where the committee overturned the SODC officers' recommendation to grant planning permission. The SODC reasons for refusal are set out below:

1. *That, the development is not in accordance with the Development Plan Policies as it is not an allocated site in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan or the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is not infill development and will result in the separation of the settlement. This is contrary to advice set out in Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies STRAT1, STRAT2 and H1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and policy LCI of the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2035.*

2. *Having regard to the landscape setting this development would be detrimental to the character of the area. This is contrary to policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and policies LCSS and LPLV of the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2035.*

3. *Having regard to the distance of the development from the nearest bus stop, this development is not considered to be in a sustainable location. This is contrary to policy TRANS5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.*

4. *In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure affordable housing to meet the needs of the district. As such, the development is contrary to policy H9 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.*

5. *In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement, the proposed development fails to secure infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the development. As such, the proposal is contrary to policies INF1, TRANS4, TRANS5, EP3 and CF5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.*

6. *In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure significant enhancements for the purpose of biodiversity net gain. As such, the proposed development fails to accord with Article 37A of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).*

2.10 SODC issued a refusal of planning permission decision notice on 3rd December 2025 and subsequently on the 5th December 2025 the Applicant submitted a notice of intention to appeal the refusal. The notice also set out the intention to appeal the application being dealt with by RBC on the grounds of non-determination seeking that both the RBC and SODC applications are considered as part of a joint appeal. The Applicant submitted their appeal to the Planning Inspectorate on 22nd December 2025. Whilst at the time of writing this report the appeal has not yet been made valid by the Planning Inspectorate, they have confirmed that it will be a joint appeal and that the appeal procedure will be Public Inquiry. A copy of the SODC officers committee report is attached for information as appendix 1 to this report.

2.12 Once the Applicant lodged the non-determination appeal the LPA could no longer issue a decision on the application with this responsibility now with the Planning Inspectorate. Therefore, this report sets out the assessment of the proposal and what the officer recommendation would have been had the LPA had the opportunity to determine the planning application. This report will form the basis of the Council's Appeal Statement and seeks agreement from Planning Applications Committee to the proposed recommendations to inform the LPA's approach to the appeal.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

2.13 Given all the residential floor space proposed as part of the development would be located within South Oxfordshire the proposals would not generate any levy for RBC with all the levy generated payable to SODC. As the application is an outline proposal where matters such as Layout and Scale are reserved for consideration at a later date it is not possible to know what the levy due would be at this stage.

2.14 There is no formal mechanism to require an authority to share or pass CIL to a different body or authority, such as for SODC to share or pass any levy generated as a result of the proposals, if approved, to RBC. Such sharing or passing of the levy would be entirely discretionary to SODC and cannot be secured or controlled. Therefore, there is no way to guarantee that RBC could share in any CIL generated as a result of the proposed development, nor is there any mechanism to establish how much CIL could be shared. Therefore, Officers have considered the proposals on the basis that no CIL would be generated for RBC.

2.15 However, where there are considered to be direct and demonstrable impacts upon Reading Borough as a result of the proposed development within South Oxfordshire, Officers are seeking that RBC is party to a section 106 legal agreement between the Applicant and SODC to secure necessary mitigation in the form of contributions or works. Where this is the case, this is discussed in the appraisal section of this report below.

3 The Proposal

3.1 As explained above identical planning applications have been submitted to both RBC and SODC seeking outline planning permission for the development of up to 70 homes (including affordable housing), new vehicular access, associated parking and landscaping with all matters reserved except for access.

3.2 Paragraph 006 of The National Planning Practice Guide defines access as *'the accessibility to and within the site, for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the*

surrounding access network'. It is these access related matters that are to be considered in detail as part of this outline planning application with matters relating to layout, scale, landscaping and appearance reserved for consideration at a later should outline planning permission for the development be granted.

3.3 Notwithstanding the above an indicative master plan of the proposed dwellings and external areas within the development (all located within South Oxfordshire) has been submitted with the application which is shown below in Figure 1B below.

Figure 1B – Proposed indicative development Masterplan

3.4 RBC can only consider whether or not to grant planning permission for the parts of the proposed development within its jurisdiction.

3.5 As shown in figure 1A above the part of the development within Reading Borough primarily relates to the access road. It is proposed that the existing road which provides access from Kidmore End Road to the development of 223 dwellings (planning permission ref. 22/1312/VAR) that is already under construction on the part of the former golf course site within Reading Borough would be extended to also serve and provide access to the proposed dwellings within South Oxfordshire.

3.6 Figures 2, 3 and 4 below detail how the proposed development within South Oxfordshire could connect to the road within the development currently under construction within Reading Borough. There would be a small single extension of the existing road northwards in the north east corner of the existing development site within Reading. The road extension would require laying of 12m length of hardstanding 5.5m in width. As shown in figure 4 below a similar footway link between the two developments is also proposed to be provided alongside the road to link the footways between the two developments. A separate secondary cycle and pedestrian access and connection between the two developments is also proposed further to the west along the boundary between the two sites as also shown in figures 2, 3 and 4. This 3.7m wide strip of hardstanding would incorporate collapsable bollards at either end to prevent vehicular access other than in emergencies. Both the vehicular and cycle/pedestrian connections would link with the layout of the residential development currently under construction within Reading Borough.

Figure 2 - Proposed indicative Site Layout Plan

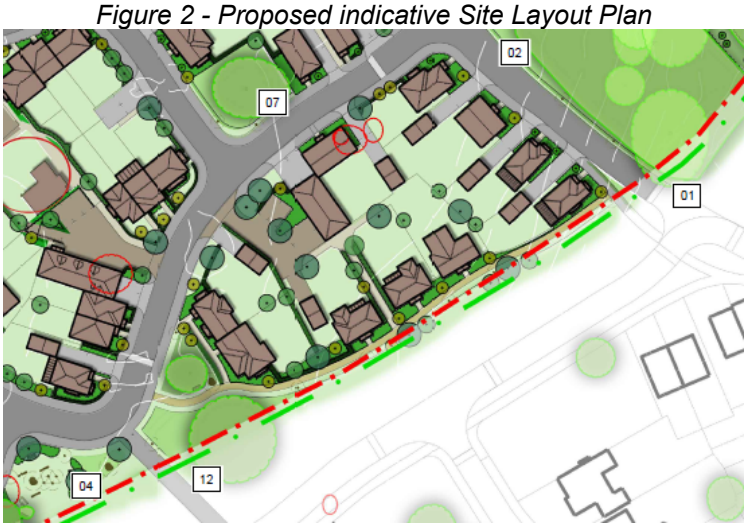


Figure 3 - Zoomed in view of area outlined red in figure 2 above showing proposed connections to the development from the development under construction on the part of the former golf course within Reading Borough

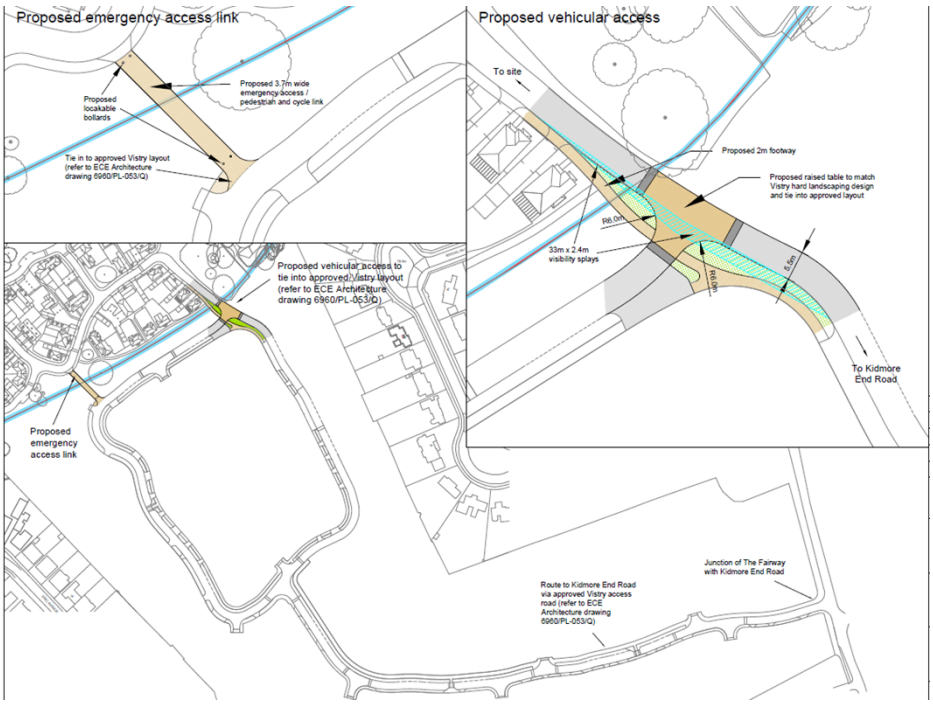


Figure 4 – More detailed plans of the proposed access connections to the proposed development from the development under construction on the part of the former golf course site within Reading Borough

3.7 In addition, the proposals also include a cycle and pedestrian pathway link from the western part of the proposed development connecting to Highdown Hill Road, which is part of the National Cycle Network (route 5). As shown in figures 5 and 6 below the majority of this connection lies within South Oxfordshire, apart from the last 1 metre. The proposed cycle and pedestrian link would require laying of a 3m wide x 17m long strip of hardstanding with a single fixed bollard at each end to prevent use by vehicles.

Figure 5 - Zoomed in view of the area outlined blue shown in figure 2 above showing proposed pedestrian and cycle link connections from the proposed development to Highdown Hill Road (in Reading Borough)

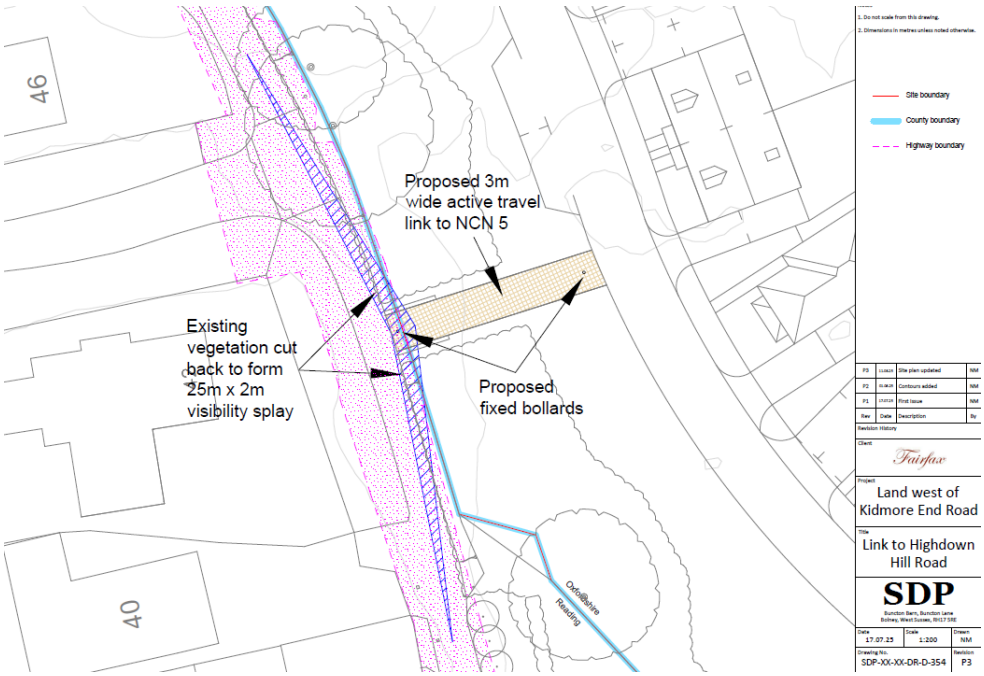


Figure 6 – More detailed plans of the proposed pedestrian cycle link to Highdown Hill Road (within Reading Borough)

3.8 The proposals also include formalisation of an existing pedestrian access in the eastern part of the site which currently connects (currently private land) to Kidmore End Road (see figures 7 and 8 below). It is proposed to re-surface this route with hardstanding at 2m in width to provide a direct pedestrian link into the proposed development from this part of Kidmore End Road. The eastern most 15m of the pathway extends onto part of the site within Reading Borough where the path would join Kidmore End Road.

Figure 7 - Zoomed in view of the area outlined green shown in figure 2 above showing proposed pedestrian footway access and connections from the proposed development to Highdown Hill Road (in Reading Borough)

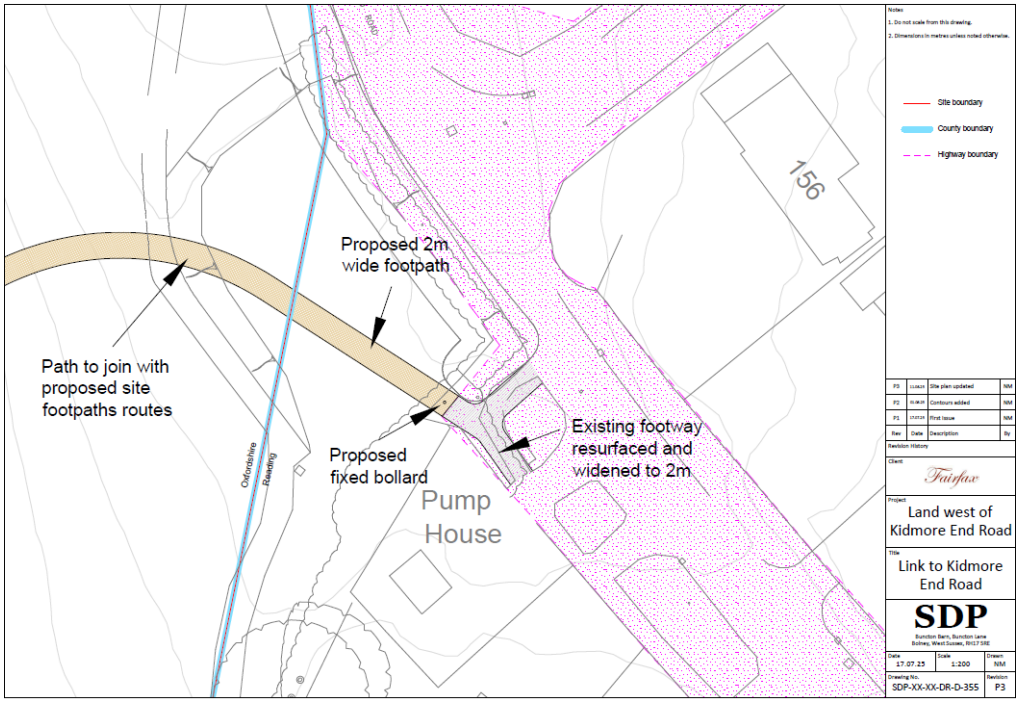


Figure 8 - More detailed plans of the proposed pedestrian connection to Kidmore End Road (within Reading Borough)

3.9 Other than the accesses to the site set out above all other parts of the proposed development are on land within South Oxfordshire.

3.10 <u>Submitted plans and documentation:</u>

Planning and Affordable Housing Statement Prepared by Boyer
Design and Access Statement by Paul Hewitt Architects
Air Quality Assessment by Paul Hewitt Architects
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Ecology Co-op
Ecological Impact Assessment by Ecology Co-op
Landscape Maintenance & Management Specification by Fabrik

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Fabrik
Landscape Statement by Fabrik
Illustrative Landscape Masterplan by Fabrik
Energy Statement by Pinnacle
Land Quality Desk Study by Aqua Terra
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Aqua Terra
Transport Assessment Addendum by SDP
Framework Travel Plan by SPD
Archaeological Assessment by UCL
Geophysical Survey Report by Sumo
Tree Survey / Arboricultural Impact Assessment Sumo Arbotrack
Statement of Community Involvement by Fairthorn

Drawing ref. 2507-PL01 Rev B – Site Location Plan
Drawing ref. 2507-PL03 Rev A – Parameters Plan
Drawing ref. DR D-353 Rev P1 – Site Access Arrangements
Drawing ref. D3456-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-2001, Rev PL04 (illustrative purposes only)

4. Relevant Planning history

4.1. 211843OUT - Outline planning application, with matters reserved in respect of Appearance, for demolition of the existing clubhouse and the erection of a new residential scheme (c3 use to include affordable housing) and public open space at the former reading golf club – Granted. 31/03/2022.

4.2. 221312VAR - Outline planning application with matters reserved in respect of Appearance for demolition of clubhouse and erection of a new residential scheme (c3 use) including affordable housing and public open space at former reading golf club without complying with conditions 5 (Plans), 8&9 (Emissions) 10&11 (SuDS), 12 (Levels), 13 (Mix), 17 (AMS), 19 (Habitat Enhancement), 20 (CEMP), 22 (Biodiversity), 25&26 (Contamination), 29 (CMS), 34 (Cycle Parking), 35 (Refuse), 39 (Car Parking), 41 (Traffic Calming) & 44 (Archaeology) of outline permission 211843 for amendments including changes to layout, mix, parking, drainage, landscaping, open space and energy – Granted. 15/06/2023. Implemented.

4.3. 220930REM - Application for approval of reserved matters (appearance) submitted pursuant to outline planning application ref. 221312/VAR – Approved. 16/06/2023

5. Consultations

5.1 Officer comments in relation to the below are in *italics.*

5.2 <u>RBC Transport</u> – No objection, subject to securing a contribution of £50, 000 towards upgrading of the operating system and/or improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities at the junction of Peppard Road / Henley Street / Westfield Road / Prospect Street to mitigate for the additional transport movements resulting from the development within the Borough.

5.3 <u>RBC Ecology Adviser</u> – No objection, there are unlikely to be any ecological impacts from use of the existing access road for the development or connection to the new site within South Oxfordshire.

5.4 <u>RBC Natural Environment</u> – No objection, subject to an informative to advise the applicant that they would need to regularise the approved landscaping layout of the adjacent development that is under construction on the part of the golf course within Reading Borough (planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR) in order to accommodate the proposed connections between the two developments. This could be achieved by re-discharging the landscaping condition of the planning permission for the development under construction.

5.5 Berkshire Archaeology – No objection to the access which would not impact upon archaeology. The archaeological mitigation works undertaken for the development under construction already mitigate for the access impacts of the proposed development.

5.6 RBC Environmental Protection – The air quality assessment submitted as part of the application demonstrates that the proposals would not result in air quality within Reading Borough exceeding recommended levels. No objection.

5.7 RBC Leisure – The proposed development would result in increased demand upon sport and leisure facilities within Reading Borough. Request a financial contribution, in line with Sport England's demand Calculator (in full), towards sport and leisure facilities within Reading Borough. The contribution to be paid in full to RBC prior to commencement of development and index linked from the date planning permission is granted.

5.8 RBC Education/Brighter Futures for Children – No objection.

5.9 NHS ICB - The application is within the catchment of two GP Surgeries at Emmer Green and Balmore Park both of which do not have capacity for additional patients that would result from the proposed development and additional dwellings. Object unless a financial contribution, in line with NHS ICB's multiplier formula is secured in full to go towards NHS ICB projects to increasing capacity at local GP Surgeries.

5.10 Thames Valley Police Designing out Crime Officer – Does not raise any concerns regarding the proposals in terms of designing our crime. Provides a number of observation regarding the layout of the dwellings and surrounding parts of the site *(but these relate to the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire).*

5.11 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Identify some concerns with the indicative layouts of road around the dwellings *(this relates to parts of the development within South Oxfordshire but for completeness these comments were passed to SODC when RBC provided formal consultation comments on the planning application they determined*).

5.12 South Oxfordshire District Council Building Control – The works would be subject to a Building Regulations application and statutory consultations with the fire services as part of that process where compliance with Building Regulations would be secured.

5.13 Natural England – No objection, the development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation site.

5.14 Forestry Commission – Set out their standing advice in relation to development proposals:

1. Ancient woodlands, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats. Paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF sets out that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. In considering the impacts of the development on Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran trees, the planning authority should consider direct and indirect impacts resulting from both construction and operational phases. Impacts can be caused by activities outside of areas designated as ancient woodland (eg within buffer zones), or within open areas of ancient woodland, which can result in loss or deterioration of ancient woodland.

Please refer to Natural England and Forestry Commission joint Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees, updated in January 2022. The Standing Advice can be a material consideration for planning decisions, and contains advice and guidance on assessing the effects of development, and how to avoid and mitigate impacts. It also includes an Assessment Guide which can help planners assess the impact of the proposed development on ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees in line with the NPPF.

The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 (published January 2024) requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary

of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development, including development that affects ancient woodland: The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2. Existing trees should be retained wherever possible, and opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees into development. Trees and woodlands provide multiple benefits to society such as storing carbon, regulating temperatures, strengthening flood resilience and reducing noise and air pollution.[1] Paragraph 136 of the NPPF seeks to ensure new streets are tree lined, that opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Appropriate measures should be in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees. The Forestry Commission may be able to give further support in developing appropriate conditions in relation to woodland creation, management or mitigation.

3. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): As of the 12th of February 2024, major development (unless exempt) will have to deliver 10% net gain in biodiversity. Paragraph 187(d) of the NPPF also sets out that planning (policies and) decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Paragraph 187(d) encourages development design to integrate opportunities to improve biodiversity, especially where this can secure net gains for biodiversity. BNG offers opportunities for protecting (retaining) trees and woodlands, as well as new planting and enhancement of existing trees and woodlands, and the planning authority also should consider the wider range of benefits trees, hedgerows and woodlands can provide as part of delivering good practice biodiversity net gain requirements *in addition* to contributing to the BNG figure. Ancient woodlands (including PAWS) and ancient & veteran trees are already recognised as irreplaceable habitats and as such are exempt from the net gain requirement.

Public Representations

5.15 Site notices were displayed at the application site on 28th May 2025.

5.16 Given the cross-boundary nature of the proposals public comments received refer to the development as a whole, the majority of which is located on land within South Oxfordshire. As set out above Reading Borough Council was only required to consider whether or not to grant planning permission for the parts of the development within Reading Borough which relates solely to the access to the development. Therefore, comments relating to the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire are not relevant to this report. Where relevant matters are raised these are discussed in the appraisal section of this report.

5.17 The 170 x objections have been received and the issues raised are summarised below:

Principle of development and Infrastructure Issues

- Concern about impact on local services and infrastructure, schools, nurseries, dentists and doctors are oversubscribed
- The development is in South Oxfordshire but will use and impact facilities and infrastructure primarily within Reading Borough
- South Oxfordshire District Council should require the developer to provide a new school and doctors surgery and help pay for a new bridge across the Thames
- The area suffers from lower water pressure so can Thames Water supply enough water pressure to the development
- There are already enough unoccupied houses in and around Reading
- Would set a precedent for building on other golf course in South Oxfordshire
- This is about profit and greed and not the local community
- The site is not allocated for development in any RBC of SODC plan
- Would set a precedent for further building on the Berkshire/Oxfordshire boundary and result in coalescence of Emmer Green and Sonning Common

- The application on the golf course in Reading could not receive enough electricity for air source heat pumps so how will this development received enough
- RBC can already meet its housing targets within the Local Plan and further homes are not needed within neighbouring Boroughs.
- Applicants public consultation on the proposals was not sufficient

Landscape, Tree and Ecology Impacts

- Loss of woodland and trees
- Harm to wildlife with use the current site and nearby woodland
- Harm to landscape setting of the area and nearby Cucumber Wood Ancient Woodland
- SuDS proposed too close to the woodland
- Loss of open space

Character Impacts

- 237 dwellings have already been permitted on the golf course to which there were 4000 objections which were ignored
- Overdevelopment and urban sprawl
- How many dwellings will be affordable housing
- Loss of green space for existing residents
- Housing should be built on brownfield land
- Erosion of semi-rural character of the area

Pollution and Environmental Impacts

- Air pollution and traffic impacts from construction lorries
- Noise, light and traffic pollution from the new houses
- Adverse impact on everyone's mental and physical health
- The proposals do not incorporate low cost zero energy
- The proposals are worsening the climate emergency
- Flooding impacts on the on Highdown Hill Road and Brooklyn Drive have not been considered
- Concerns about rising crime and antis-social behaviour as a result of additional residents and inadequate investment in policing and youth services
- Archaeological impacts

Transport Impacts

- Roads surrounding the site are too narrow and dangerous and already too busy and cannot cope with additional traffic impacts of the development
- Roads are already busy at school times with Emmer Green Primary, The Hill Primary and Highdown Secondary School so close together this will worsen impacts
- A pedestrian cycle path is proposed from the development to connect with Highdown Hill Road which is a narrow single track road with no footpath and lacks lighting and would not be safe
- The junction by the White Horse and Black Horse is already dangerous with buses having problems turning into Grove Road and Peppard Road.
- Courtneay Drive is becoming busier as cars use this as a cut through route
- Infrastructure secured as part of the application on the part of the former golf course within Reading has not materialised
- Poor bus services

5.18 1 x letter of support has been received raising the following issues:

- The development would provide much needed new homes for young people in the area. Demand for exiting houses is so high meaning that prices are out of reach
- Primary Schools in the area are undersubscribed and at risk of closure

- Although the site is currently green space this is a former manicured golf course that was not accessible to the public

Representations from public groups:

5.19 Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA)

CADRA objects to the proposed development at land west of Kidmore End Road, and will make an objection to the South Oxfordshire District Council planning application no. P25/S1431/O with additional information included.

INTRODUCTION
Although the land in question lies within South Oxfordshire, the only access is solely through constricted roads in Emmer Green. This means that residents will look to services including health and education in Reading and all of the burden will fall on Reading Borough Council and the residents of Emmer Green and Caversham.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC
The primary concern is the negative impact on local infrastructure, in particular the additional volume of traffic that will be generated. Due to the geographical position of the proposed development all traffic will have to use the single access and egress on Kidmore End Road through the newly constructed development on the Reading Borough Council land, known as the Emmer Green Drive.

This will place an increased burden on the local roads that are already extremely busy and, to date, have not benefited from any improvement works from the Emmer Green Drive development.

Reading Borough Council itself recognises that the transport and other infrastructure constraints in the northern part of the Borough have long been seen as a significant constraint to significant new development north of the River Thames. Reading is increasingly facing pressures as a result of new houses being built in the neighbouring villages, from which most traffic will regularly travel through North Reading. As the Council knows this has had a cumulative impact on the area, with no solution likely in the medium term.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION
Additionally local provision of sufficient Doctors surgeries remains a concern. This was raised at the time of the application for the development on the RBC land area but again to date no additional provision has been planned for and the Emmer Green Surgery has not been able to expand.

UTILITIES
CADRA were aware that the utility infrastructure providers were initially unable to service the Emmer Green Drive development without upgrade works. To what extent does this additional proposal place a further strain and impact service levels for the local community? Additional development is likely to impede the introduction of further heat pumps in the Reading development which have to date been prevented by lack of electrical capacity.

CONSTRUCTION
While recognising that a Construction Method Statement would be an issue for Reserved Matters, RBC Councillors and Officers will be aware of the many difficulties experienced in Emmer Green over construction traffic and connection of utilities. There are grave concerns that these would continue under the proposed development and be exacerbated by the complexities of coordination between different authorities.

BIODIVERSITY, ECOLOGY AND GREEN SPACE
While recognising that this is formally a matter for SODC, this is an important area of green space which is highly valued by local residents.

These issues have been considered in considerable detail and are well documented as part of the examination of the Kidmore End Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

CADRA recognise the proposal to protect Cucumber Wood and the “Dry Valley” to the north east and hence not be built on.

However, should the proposed development go ahead this may lead to the land to the north west becoming a future development. This raises a major concern as again this would just put further strain on the local infrastructure.

CONCLUSION
The proposed development would place considerable additional pressures on both Reading Borough Council and on local people. We urge Reading to oppose it in the strongest terms.

5.20 Caversham Globe
Caversham Globe objects to this application.

We are concerned at the loss of green space, wildlife habitat and biodiversity
We object to building on what is a green-field site which is not designated for building by either the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Plan or the Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

The Kidmore End local plan denotes this area as “a Locally Valued Landscape”, not as land suitable for building on. Reading’s Local Plan, in relation to protecting the natural environment, specifically states that“Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature” which includes “The North Reading dry valleys and Chilterns Escarpment”. The area in question is part of the Chiltern dry valleys and within the landscape setting of the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB) to the north.

We are also concerned about vehicle access to the proposed development, particularly access through Kidmore End Road – a narrow residential road, as well as additional pressure on already congested junctions, notably the Peppard Road/Henley Road/Prospect Street junction in Caversham.

The difficulty of servicing properties by the neighbouring local authority, which would have to be accessed through residential streets of Reading, is also of concern. Although these properties would be outside Reading, given their proximity they would inevitably add to pressure on services within Reading.

Our over-riding concern is at the loss of green space, wildlife habitat and biodiversity of what is a distinctive Chiltern dry valley, with high landscape and biodiversity value. This area should be protected, not built on.

We strongly object to this proposed development

6. Legal context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF December 2024) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

5.2 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer

the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

5.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF (December 2024, incorporating changes February 2025)
Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-making
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.4 NPPG (2014 onwards)

6.5 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, policies:
CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN10: Access to Open Space
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

6.6 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
Planning Obligations Under s106 SPD (2015)

6.7 Other relevant guidance:
Reading Tree Strategy (2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

Local Plan Partial Update

6.8 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

5.9 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date”

when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

5.10 The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Submission marks the beginning of a process of public examination led by an independent Inspector. Due to the stage of examination, the draft Local Plan can be afforded limited weight. Any incidences where policies relevant to these application are changing or relevance of any new policies proposed to be introduced by the draft Local Plan Partial Update will be discussed within the Appraisal section below.

6. Appraisal

7.1 The following are the main considerations for this application are:

1. **South Oxfordshire' Decision**
2. **Land Use Matters**
3. **Transport and Highway Matters**
4. **Design and Character**
5. **Natural Environment**
6. **Amenity Matters**
7. **Other Matters**

South Oxfordshire's Decision

7.2 The decision made by SODC to refuse planning permission for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire is material planning consideration for this Council in determining what our decision would have been for this planning application relating to the parts of the development site falling within RBC's administrative area.

7.3 Notably without a planning permission for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire the proposed accesses within Reading Borough would not serve a purpose. Notwithstanding this, this report needs to consider (should the appeal be allowed) if the limited parts of the proposed development that are within Reading Borough would be acceptable and comply with relevant policies of the RBC Local Plan. Given the applicant has appealed SODC's refusal of planning permission Officers recommend that if RBC was in a position to determine our application, then a condition would be attached to require that no part of the development commences unless planning permission for the rest of the development within South Oxfordshire, under SODC planning application ref. PL/25/S1431/O, has been granted by SODC (or the Planning Inspectorate) and that permission implemented. This condition would ensure that any planning permission granted by RBC could not be implemented unless the development within South Oxfordshire was commenced.

Land Use Matters

7.4 The proposed access roads and pathway are the only parts of the proposed development located within Reading Borough. The access road (and junction with Kidmore End Road) proposed to be used to provide vehicular access to the development has already been built as this serves the residential development of 223 dwellings that is already under construction under planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR on the adjacent part of the former golf course site located within Reading Borough, with just a small extension to this road required to connect to the part of the proposed development within South Oxfordshire.

7.5 Given that the vehicular access road is already built and in use proving access to existing residential dwellings the principle of the road being used as a residential access is already

established. What will be considered in the following sections of this report is whether there are any technical or other reasons as to why the existing road cannot be used to connect to and provide access to the up to 70 dwellings proposed on the part of the site within South Oxfordshire, as well as any impacts this could have on the highway network and surrounding area within Reading Borough. Any other impacts of the parts of the proposed vehicle, cycle and pedestrian accesses to the development that are within Reading Borough in terms of how they would integrate with adjacent residential development that is already under construction, and the surrounding area will also be considered.

7.6 The change of use of the former golf club land and open space to provide up to 70 dwellings is not a matter for RBC given these parts of the development are located within South Oxfordshire. Having reviewed the SODC reasons for refusal of their planning application they identified that the development would be not be appropriate infill development and would result in unacceptable separation of the Kidmore End Settlement Area part of South Oxfordshire within which the site is located; also noting that the site is not allocated for development within either the South Oxfordshire Local Plan or the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan which are relevant policy documents for SODC.

Transport and Highway Matters

7.7 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR4 (Cycle Routes and Facilities) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters for new development.

7.8 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Transport Assessment Addendum (August 2025) produced by SDP. All vehicular, cycle and pedestrian routes into and out of the development would be via the highway network within Reading Borough.

<u>Site Accessibility</u>

6.9 The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT), provides guidance on acceptable walking distances for various purposes, including for commuting/school journeys, access to town centres, and general areas. Acceptable walking distances are typically between 800m and 2000m, depending on the context. It is important that users of, and visitors to, the development can make sustainable travel choices using non-car modes of Transport. A review of site accessibility and distances to local facilities and bus stops has been undertaken as part of the TA addendum. Emmer Green Local Centre is located within 1250m of the furthest home (around a 15 minute walk). The homes at the southern end of the site are around 1100m from the Local Centre. Local primary and secondary school are within 1100m away from the furthest homes, which would all fall within recommended walking distances.

6.10 CIHT and Active Travel England guidance also recommends that homes are located within 400m of a bus stop. The closest bus stops are located on Kidmore End Road / Courtenay Drive and would be approximately 890m from the furthest home within the proposed development, double the recommended walking distance.

6.11 Whilst Active Travel England (government body) are not a relevant consultee for the planning application given they only comment on applications for over 150 dwellings an Active Travel England Toolkit Assessment has also been undertaken by the applicant as part of the TA Addendum to evaluate the active travel merits of the development against Active Travel guidance. In summary, this concludes that in overall terms the development and site support travel by sustainable modes, although it is noted that some distances, especially relating to access to bus services, exceed the preferred maximum walking distances.

6.12 To mitigate for the longer than recommended walking distances to a bus stop the application proposes to provide a financial contribution towards improving local bus services to help encourage travel by bus. This contribution was agreed to be secured as part of the SODC planning application in line with Oxfordshire County Council's (who are highway authority for SODC) standard public transport services contribution of £1,364 per dwelling with future spending to be agreed in consultation with RBC. It should be noted a similar arrangement was secured and considered acceptable when planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR was granted for 223 dwellings on the part of the golf course within Reading Borough. For that development, walking distances to bus stops were similar to those for the current proposals (800m) and a contribution of £200,000 was secured by RBC, with spending to be agreed in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council, to go towards encouraging travel by bus and was considered to mitigate for the longer than recommended proposed walking distances to the nearest bus stop.

6.13 It is noted that reason for refusal 3 of the SODC decision notice for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire states that '*3. Having regard to the distance of the development from the nearest bus stop, this development is not considered to be in a sustainable location'*. This reason for refusal was put forward by members of SODC PAC in overturning the SODC officer recommendation to approve the planning application. It is noted that within the SDOC PAC report the officer concluded that the site was located within a sustainable location and reached the following conclusion in respect of walking distances to the nearest bus stops:

Bus stops are located on Kidmore End Road close to the access road that runs through the new housing development (The Fairway) on the part of the former golf course that is within Reading. The bus stops will be around 800m from the new homes. Whilst bus stops should ideally be within 400m, people are generally prepared to walk further to a bus stop that offers regular services to key destinations. There are regular services from the this stop into Reading Town Centre.

In terms of bus connections, the 25 and 25a pink service runs from Reading town centre, along Kidmore End Road, through Sonning Common to Peppard Common. The frequency and hours of operation of this service was improved in September 2024 using a combination of Bus Service Improvement Plan and Section 106 funds from Oxfordshire County Council, and Section 106 funds from the existing golf club development in coordination with Reading Borough Council.

As the development currently under construction on part of the golf course is contributing towards improvement of the service, it is appropriate for the proposed development to also contribute. This will extend the life of the enhanced service and provide maximum opportunity for long-term commercial viability.

Oxfordshire County Council apply a standard public transport services contribution of £1,364 per dwelling and this will be used for maintenance and retention of bus services in the vicinity of the site. Oxfordshire County Council are currently working closely with Reading Borough Council on this and have a joint approach to ensuring Section 106 funds from the golf club development are utilised for maintenance and improvement of the local bus network.

6.14 The above assessment is consistent with how the RBC application under planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR for 223 dwellings on the part of the golf course with Reading Borough was considered and concluded to be acceptable in relation to distance to bus stops.

6.15 Officers consider that the contribution towards bus services that has been agreed between SODC and the applicant (with spending to be agreed in coordination with RBC) would assist in preserving and enhancing bus travel opportunities within the local area, should the Planning Inspectorate allow the appeal for the planning application for the parts

of the proposed development within South Oxfordshire. It should also be noted that the development for 223 dwellings currently under construction of the part of the former golf course within Reading Borough was designed to accommodate buses looping through the development to serve the new dwellings. Whilst this has not happened so far, it is possible that the additional dwellings may make such a loop more viable. If the loop did happen it would reduce the distance between the new site and bus stops considerably.

7.16 To facilitate and encourage active travel by foot or cycle, the development also proposes measures to enhance pedestrian and cycle permeability between areas east and west of the site with the provision of active travel links. On the east boundary of the proposed development a pedestrian and cycle connection is proposed on to Highdown Hill Road, which is part of the National Cycle Network (route 5). This would accord with Policy TR4 (Cycle Routes and Facilities) which expects new development to improve access for cyclists to, from and within developments. To the west boundary of the development a pedestrian connection is proposed on to Kidmore End Road, adjacent to the pumping station. This link formalises an existing informal route used to access the private land. Cycle and pedestrian permeability is also proposed to the south with two cycle/pedestrian connections proposed to link in with the adjacent residential development under construction on the part of the former golf course within Reading. Small sections of these pedestrian cycle links are located within Reading Borough where they connect with Kidmore End Road, Highdown Hill Road and The Fairway within the existing development taking place at the golf course. RBC Transport Officers confirm that technically the design of these pedestrian and cycle links is acceptable.

7.17 Notwithstanding that walking distances to bus stops exceed the recommended guidance, it is considered that the proposed mitigation towards bus services in the local area, together with the permeability and choice that the proposed development would provide for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the local area, as well as the convenient location of the development in relation to Emmer Green Local Centre and surrounding schools, is such that in overall terms the development demonstrates that it is in a sustainable location and is acceptable in terms of accessibility. This would accord with Policies CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) and TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) which require new development to include measures to promote and improve sustainable transport and to ensure adequate levels of accessibility in relation to the level of development proposed.

7.18 The TA Addendum submitted with the application also considers the impacts of the development on the Cross-Thames Travel Route. This has been reviewed by RBC Transport Officers who consider that whilst the development will increase the number of trips travelling south via Peppard Road or Caversham Park Road towards the River Thames, the site location and the low number of trips in this direction would not justify or impact upon the ability for any new river crossing to be delivered in future.

<u>Trip Generation</u>

7.19 To determine the total number of person trips the proposed additional residential homes would generate the TA Addendum used the previously agreed trip rates for the residential development currently under construction as part of planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR on the part of the golf course within Reading.

7.20 Table 6.3 presents the number of trips by each mode of travel modelled for a development of 70 homes, which is the maximum number of new dwellings proposed by the current planning application. This are shown in table 6.3 below:

Table 6.3 – Trips by Mode of Travel for 70 Homes

	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way
Driving a car or van	5	23	28	27	11	38
Passenger in a car or van	1	4	5	2	1	3
On foot / Bicycle	4	19	23	5	2	8
Train	0	2	3	3	1	4
Bus, minibus, or coach	1	3	4	4	2	5
Motorcycle or moped	0	1	1	0	0	1
Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**11**	**52**	**63**	**41**	**17**	**58**

7.21 The TA Addendum then cross references the modelled maximum number of projected trips for the proposed development against the current version of the TRICS database (version 7.11.4) to compare the expected trip rates for the proposed development using different methods (see table 6.7 below).

Table 6.7 – Trips by Mode of Travel using TRICS Total People trip rates for 70 Homes

	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way
Driving a car or van	7	24	32	25	13	38
Passenger in a car or van	1	5	6	2	1	3
On foot / Bicycle	6	21	27	5	3	8
Train	1	2	3	3	1	4
Bus, minibus, or coach	1	3	4	3	2	5
Motorcycle or moped	0	1	1	0	0	1
Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**16**	**56**	**72**	**38**	**21**	**59**

7.22 The assessment shows that the predicted total number of vehicle trips in the peak hours when using either approach (as shown in tables 6.3 and 6.7 above) are similar in number. The TA Addendum utilises the highest vehicle trips rates in the highway and junction capacity analysis to present a robust calculation of the vehicle trips from the proposed development. RBC Transport Officers have reviewed the trip generation assessment and consider that this has been carried out to an appropriate standard and methodology to inform the capacity analysis.

7.23 As part of the highway and junction capacity analysis the TA Addendum sets out that traffic surveys were undertaken in March 2025 at the following junctions:

- Kidmore End Road / Chalgrove Way priority junction
- Kidmore End Road / Grove Road priority junction
- Peppard Road / Kidmore End Road priority junction
- Peppard Road / Buckingham Drive mini-roundabout
- Peppard Road / Kiln Road priority junction
- Kiln Road / Caversham Park Road priority junction

7.24 Using the results of the traffic surveys capacity assessments have been undertaken at each of the junctions listed above to determine whether traffic resulting from the proposed development would have a significant impact on the operation of the junctions. At the request of RBC, the TA assesses the junctions of Peppard Road / Kiln Road and Kiln Road / Caversham Park Road separately which have been modelled together due to the

potential interaction between the two closely spaced junctions given the blocking which occurs sometimes already between these two junctions. This was the approach adopted in the Transport Assessment for the development currently under construction on the southern part of the former golf course within Reading Borough.

7.25 The junction capacity assessment for the previous planning application within Reading Borough found that these junctions exceeded their operating capacity and as such a junction improvement schemes were secured to be provided as part of the s106 agreement for that planning permission to mitigate the predicted increases in traffic by widening the junction entries. The junction capacity assessment submitted with the current application indicates that the proposed mitigation scheme at the Peppard Road / Kiln Road and Kiln Road / Caversham Park Road secured under the previous RBC application will ensure the junctions can accommodate the additional development traffic without significant detrimental effect. The developer for the adjacent ongoing development within Reading Borough has agreed and signed a s278 highway works agreement with RBC for the junction improvements as part of the ongoing development and is in the process of providing the various highway works secured as part of that planning permission.

7.26 The previous application within Reading Borough also determined that the signalised control junction at Peppard Road / Henley Street / Westfield Road / Prospect Street operates above the maximum theoretical operating capacity, and a contribution of £100, 000 was secured as part of the s106 agreement for that planning permission to upgrade the junction and mitigate for the impact of that development. This contribution has been paid to RBC.

7.27 At the request of RBC, an assessment of this junction was also undertaken as part of the TA Addendum for the current application which estimates that the proposed development would add 19 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak hour and 20 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak hour to this junction. The results show that taking into account the proposed development the junction is predicted to operate above the maximum operating capacity by the year 2030 resulting in a minor increase in queue lengths. This is shown in table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2 – Peppard Road / Kiln Road and Kiln Road / Caversham Park Road priority junctions

2025 without development	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
	Queue	Deg. Sat %	Queue	Deg. Sat %
Peppard Road	16	89.2	13	84.8
Henley Road	5	49.9	6	44.6
Westfield Road	7	85.8	9	85.5
Prospect Street	17	86.6	16	85.1
2030 without development	**AM Peak Hour**		**PM Peak Hour**	
	Queue	Deg. Sat %	Queue	Deg. Sat %
Peppard Road	23	96.7	17	93.3
Henley Road	5	52.0	6	47.3
Westfield Road	9	92.8	13	96.0
Prospect Street	22	95.1	21	93.5
2030 with development	**AM Peak Hour**		**PM Peak Hour**	
	Queue	Deg. Sat %	Queue	Deg. Sat %
Peppard Road	26	98.9	18	94.6
Henley Road	5	51.5	6	47.3
Westfield Road	10	93.7	14	97.8
Prospect Street	23	95.7	22	94.7

7.28 The TA also identifies that the proposed development would increase traffic and pedestrian/cycle trips going through the junction in peak hours. Therefore, a contribution of £50,000 is considered to be justified, to be secured by way of s106 agreement, to mitigate the impact of the development upon this junction. The contribution would go towards upgrading of the operating system and/or improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities at the junction.

Servicing Requirements

7.29 Servicing and refuse collection for the development would take place via the main vehicular route from Kidmore End Road. Drawings have been submitted with the application to demonstrate that refuse vehicles meeting SODC specifications can safely enter the site, turn and drive out of the site in forward gear. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have raised queries regarding fire truck access within the site which would be a matter for SODC should the appeal be allowed for the part of the development within South Oxfordshire as part of a future reserved matters application for the detailed layout of the development.

7.30 A detailed construction method statement (CMS) will also be essential for the construction stage of the development, as a whole, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the highway network within Reading Borough. Construction traffic would access the site from Reading. The SODC committee report for the application within South Oxfordshire confirms that a CMS condition would have been attached to the planning permission for that part of the development if permission had been granted and RBC in providing consultation comments to SODC formally requested to be consulted on any future CMS. With the SODC application refused and the outcome of the appeal unknown it is reasonable to recommend that a CMS condition be applied to ensure that construction traffic does not harm the amenities or traffic flows within the locality in Caversham.

7.31 From an overall transport perspective the parts of the proposed development located within Reading Borough are considered to be necessary and acceptable from a technical standpoint to provide safe access to and from the development. The vehicular, pedestrian and cycle accesses to the development are considered to facilitate suitable levels of accessibility to Emmer Green Local Centre and facilities, notably providing a direct connection to National Cycle Route 5 along Highdown Hill Road. Whilst the location of the proposed dwellings within South Oxfordshire in relation to the nearest bus stops would exceed recommended walking distances mitigation is proposed towards improvement of bus services within the local area and there is potential for buses to use the adjacent development within Reading, which could significantly reduce walking distances to bus stops in the future. Similar walking distances were accepted under planning permission ref. PL/22/1312/VAR for the development of 223 dwellings that is currently under construction on the part of the former golf course site within Reading, so it would be inconsistent of this LPA to conclude otherwise in relation to a similar residential development on a directly adjacent part of the former golf course site. It is concluded that the number of dwellings proposed would result in minor impacts upon traffic levels on the roads surrounding and a financial contribution towards highways works has been justified to be secured by way of s106 agreement to mitigate for the identified impacts of the proposed development upon the highway network within the Borough.

7.32 Conditions to secure provision of the vehicular, cycle and pedestrian accesses to the development prior to occupation of the dwellings were proposed by SODC. It would not be reasonable or enforceable to apply these conditions in respect of the parts of the development within Reading given all the proposed dwellings would be located within South Oxfordshire.

7.33 Subject to the recommended conditions and section 106 obligation the parts of the proposed development located within Reading Borough are considered to be acceptable and to comply with Policies TR1, TR3, TR3, TR5 and CC6.

Natural Environment

7.34 Impacts of the proposed development upon the natural environment within Reading are limited given majority of the development is located within South Oxfordshire.

7.35 The proposed single vehicle access to the development would connect with the existing road under construction as part of the residential development located on the part of the golf course within Reading. The extension of this road northwards across the boundary into South Oxfordshire would necessitate removal of 4 trees and a small section of hedgerow proposed to be provided as part of the approved landscaping scheme of the development within Reading. These parts of the approved landscaping scheme have not yet been provided on site. Sections of the relevant plans showing the location of the proposed access in relation to the approved landscaping layout for the adjacent development already under construction are shown below in figures 9 and 10. As shown in figure 10 the approved landscaping layout for the development already under construction on the part of the former golf club site within Reading Borough already included a pedestrian link to the land to the north and current application site but the inclusion of the access road necessitates a change to the approved landscaping layout.

Figure 9 – Location of proposed vehicular access road

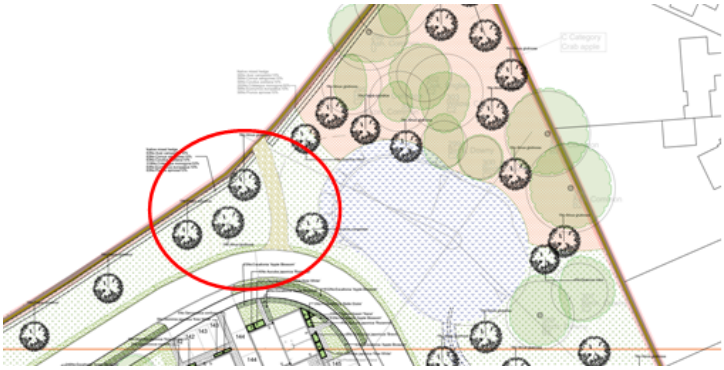


Figure 10 – Approved landscaping layout to adjacent development within Reading

7.36 Loss of these trees and section of hedgerow from the approved landscaping scheme would be a negative change in terms of landscaping and replacement tree planting secured for the existing development within Reading. Failure to provide the landscaping as approved would mean the development within Reading would conflict with the planning permission for that development. Therefore, to facilitate the proposed access to the development in South Oxfordshire the applicant would be required to amend their planning permission to adjust the landscaping scheme accordingly to ensure they are in compliance with the permission. This could be achieved by simply re-applying for approval of a slightly amended landscaping scheme under the relevant landscaping condition of that extant planning permission (ref. PL/22/1312/VAR). The RBC Natural

Environment Officer is satisfied that there is more than sufficient space within the development currently being constructed within Reading to provide equivalent replacement landscaping including tree planting and, given the Applicant for both development sites is the same, an informative would have been attached to any planning permission granted to advise the applicant of the need to regularise the approved landscaping layout for the adjacent development that is currently under construction. Subject to the above recommended informative being used the RBC Natural Environment Officer does not object to the parts of the proposed development within Reading Borough.

7.37 The separate pedestrian/cycle path connection between the two developments to the western part of the site is shown on the approved landscaping layout for the development already taking place in Reading and therefore would require no loss of landscaping.

7.38 In terms of the proposed pedestrian and cycle connection on to Highdown Hill Road the RBC Natural Environment Officer comments that this would necessitate significant cutting back of existing hedgerow along Highdown Hill Road to provide the necessary visibility splay to make the junction safe and that therefore replacement landscaping should be provided. This hedgerow is located within South Oxfordshire and the SODC officer acknowledged this requirement in the officer PAC report noting that this would be a matter to be addressed at the point when an application to discharge the landscaping reserved matter was received. With regard to the proposed pedestrian connection to Kidmore End Road the part of this pathway in Reading relates to an existing informal access that is to be regularised as part of the proposed development and there are no adverse tree or landscaping impacts as a result of this.

7.39 Incidences where the proposed development would result in loss of existing trees and where additional landscaping is proposed are all located within South Oxfordshire and as such are not matter for RBC to determine. RBC provided formal comments on these aspects in the consultation response sent to SODC prior to determination of their planning application.

7.40 In respect of ecology matters the RBC Ecology Adviser raises no objection to the parts of the proposed development within Reading, which given their minor nature are considered unlikely to result in any adverse ecological impacts beyond that considered and mitigated for under the extant planning permission for the development currently being constructed on the part of the golf course within Reading. As discussed above in relation to landscaping the applicant would be required to regularise any changes to the on-site BNG position for the current development taking place in Reading as a result of changes to landscaping scheme for that development but given the minor nature of the works in Reading such changes are likely to be marginal and an on-site net gain would still be achieved. Like for like replacement of the small amount of landscaping needed to be removed to provide the accesses between the two developments would likely mean that the BNG position would not change.

6.41 As confirmed by the SODC PAC report the proposed development as a whole is projected to result in a 40% net gain in biodiversity through both on-site and off-site measures agreed between the Applicant and SODC which would be secured to be provided by way of s106 between the applicant and SODC if the Planning Inspectorate determines to allow the appeal against SODC's refusal of planning permission for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire.

6.42 The parts of the proposed development within Reading are not considered to result in any adverse impacts upon the Natural Environment. It is considered that the proposals demonstrate that impacts within Reading would not be detrimental to the Borough's Vegetation Cover and that there would be no net loss in biodiversity in accordance with Policies EN14 and EN12.

Design and Appearance

6.43 It is not considered that there would be significant impacts upon the character and appearance of the Borough as a result of the parts of the proposed development within Reading Borough. The proposed vehicle, pedestrian and cycle connections with the

existing development taking place on the part of the golf course within Reading would integrate with the approved layout of the development under construction and result in very modest changes to the landscape layout such that no adverse impact to the character and appearance of that development are identified. The proposed pedestrian and cycle junctions on to Highdown Hill Road and Kidmore End Road would not have a significant visual impact upon these roads with the pedestrian and cycle permeability provided by them considered to contribute towards good design in terms of ease of movement in accordance with Policy CC7 (Design and The Public Realm).

7.44 Detailed information and specifications as to the exact appearance and layout of the accesses would be required to be submitted for approval as part of future reserved matters planning applications if the appeal is allowed.

7.45 The proposed development would form an extension to the suburban area of Emmer Green which is part of the wider urban area of Reading. The location of the application site is surrounded by existing (or under construction) suburban residential housing to the east, west and southern boundaries which is all located within Reading Borough. From a pattern of development / urban extension perspective, officers consider that the indicative outline proposals would be in keeping with the character and layout of existing adjacent residential areas within Reading Borough. Matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping would be for SODC to consider at reserved matters stage if the appeal is allowed.

Amenity Matters

6.46 The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment which considers the impact of the maximum number of 70 dwellings proposed upon Reading Borough as a result of the anticipated increased in vehicle movements on roads within Reading. The Air Quality Assessment has been reviewed by RBC Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the assessment has been carried out to an appropriate standard and demonstrates that pollutant levels would be below limit values such that no significant additional adverse air quality implications upon Reading Borough are identified. This would accord with Policy EN15 (Air Quality) which requires that proposals do not have detrimental impacts upon air quality. As discussed in the Transport section of this report the additional vehicle movements associated with the development would be modest and it is not considered that use of existing roads or proposed roads to access the development would result in significant harmful impacts upon existing or proposed occupiers in terms of noise or light pollution or general disturbance beyond that reasonably expected to occur within a residential area.

7.47 If the Planning Inspectorate determines to allow the appeal for the parts of the proposed development within South Oxfordshire, then SODC recommend that a CMS would be secured as part of that permission for the substantive part of the development. However, it is also recommended that a CMS is secured by way of pre-commencement condition for the RBC application given construction vehicles accessing the site would do so via Reading, to ensure that movement of construction vehicles is managed so as not to adversely impact upon existing residents or the highway network.

Other Matters

6.48 This report does not discuss matters such as affordable housing, loss of open space or energy efficiency, as they are not relevant to the part of the development within Reading, which just relates to the site accesses. These and other matters were considered when SODC determined the planning application for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire.

7.49 Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that the proposed works to provide the accesses to the development would not adversely impact upon archaeology at the site and that suitable mitigation has already been carried out as part of the development currently under construction on the part of the former golf course within Reading. This would accord with Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance).

6.50 RBC provided formal consultation comments to SODC prior to determination of their planning application for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire. This outlined that RBC did not object to the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire subject to mitigation being secured as part of the SODC application towards addressing a number of impacts RBC officers had identified that the proposed development would have upon Reading Borough. This included the highways contributions discussed in this report as well as contributions towards impacts upon healthcare and leisure facilities within Reading, given that the location of the development is such that future residents would very likely utilise infrastructure and services within Reading rather than South Oxfordshire.

6.51 It is confirmed in the SODC officer PAC report that SODC and the applicant agree to secure the healthcare and leisure contributions sought by RBC, with RBC being party to a s106 agreement to achieve this. If the Planning Inspectorate determines to allow the appeal and grant planning permission for the parts of the development within South Oxfordshire, then these contributions could then be secured for RBC as part of a s106 agreement to be agreed as part of the appeal process. Given the parts of the development within Reading relate solely to access there is not considered to be justification to secure these contributions as part of the RBC application that is subject of this report given it is the additional dwellings within the South Oxfordshire part of the site that would generate the additional pressure on healthcare and leisure infrastructure.

6.52 However, as set out in the Transport section of this report given the accesses to the development are located within Reading it is considered that is would be reasonable to secure the highway mitigation contribution as part of a s106 agreement for the RBC application given it is the accesses from the site in Reading that would be fundamental to facilitating the additional vehicle, cycle and pedestrian movements within the Borough. Had the appeal against non-determination of the application subject of this report not been submitted officers would have sought to secure the highways contribution as part of this application. Given a joint appeal has been submitted in relation to both the SODC and RBC planning applications officers consider that the most likely outcome in the event that the Planning Inspectorate determines to grant planning permission for the development as a whole is that a joint s106 agreement would be agreed between all parties to secure relevant infrastructure contributions for both RBC and SODC.

7 Equality implications

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Had an appeal for non-determination of the planning application not been submitted by the applicant then officers would have been recommending that the PAC grants planning permission for the parts of the development located within Reading Borough, subject to the s106 obligations and conditions outlined in the recommendation box at the top of this report. Given the non-determination appeal has been submitted this report instead seeks agreement from PAC to the proposed indicative recommendation upon which the

Council's case at the appeal will be based. This report will form the basis of the Council's Appeal Statement and accompanying documents.

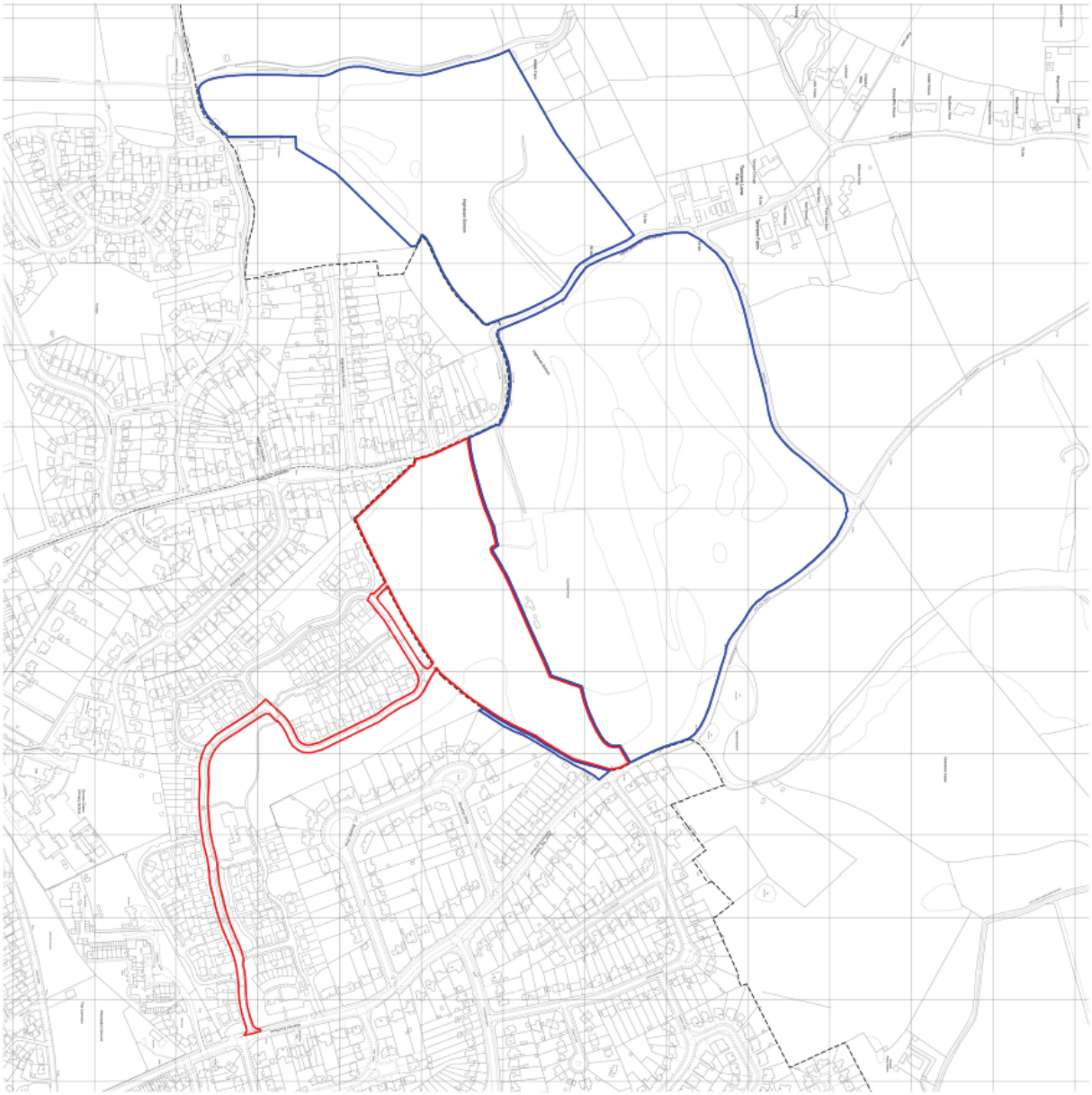
8.2 Whilst it is noted that SODC has refused planning permission for the substantive part of the development that is located within South Oxfordshire (with SODC PAC overturning the SODC officer recommendation to grant planning permission) this decision has also been appealed by the applicant.

8.3 As set out with the report above it is considered the parts of the development located within Reading Borough demonstrate compliance with the relevant policies of the RBC Local Plan 2019. Notwithstanding this, as a cross boundary application for a single development there is a clear risk of unacceptable impacts occurring if only one part of the development is implemented, which for Reading would involve creation of accesses to undeveloped land without a purpose and disturbance to the approved layout of an existing development without justification. Therefore, if a decision were still able to be taken on the application a condition (no. 5 above in the recommendation box at the top of this report) would have been recommended as part of any grant of planning permission to secure that no part of the development commences within Reading unless planning permission for the rest of the development within South Oxfordshire, under SODC planning application ref. PL/25/S1431/O, has been granted by SODC (or the Planning Inspectorate) and implemented. Given the Planning Inspectorate has advised that both the SODC and RBC planning application will now be determined by a joint appeal it seems unlikely that a split decision would occur but nonetheless officers would still recommend to the Planning Inspectorate that this conditions is applied in the event that such a split decision did occur as a result of the appeal.

Appendices and Plans

Appendix 1 – SODC Officer Committee Report

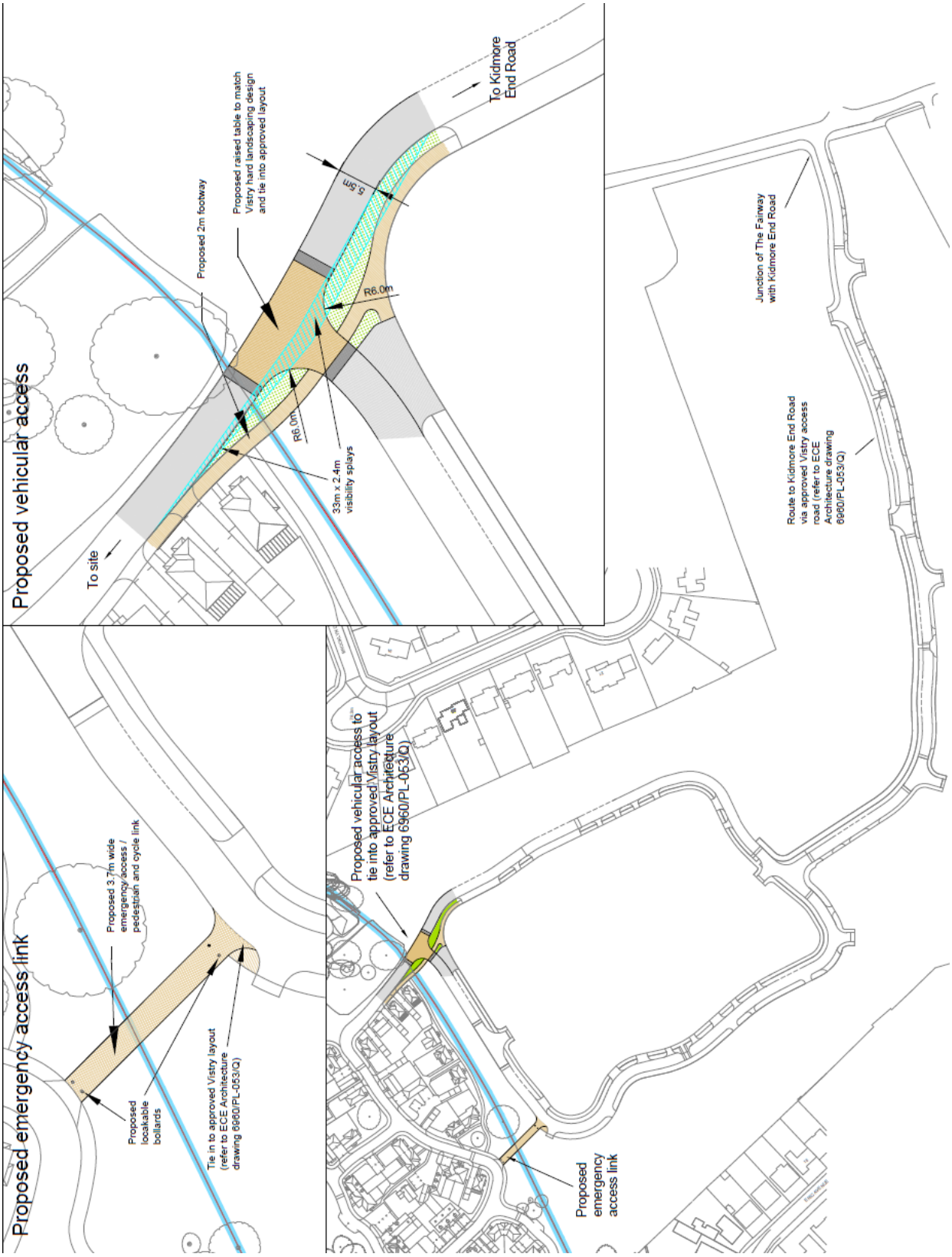
Plans



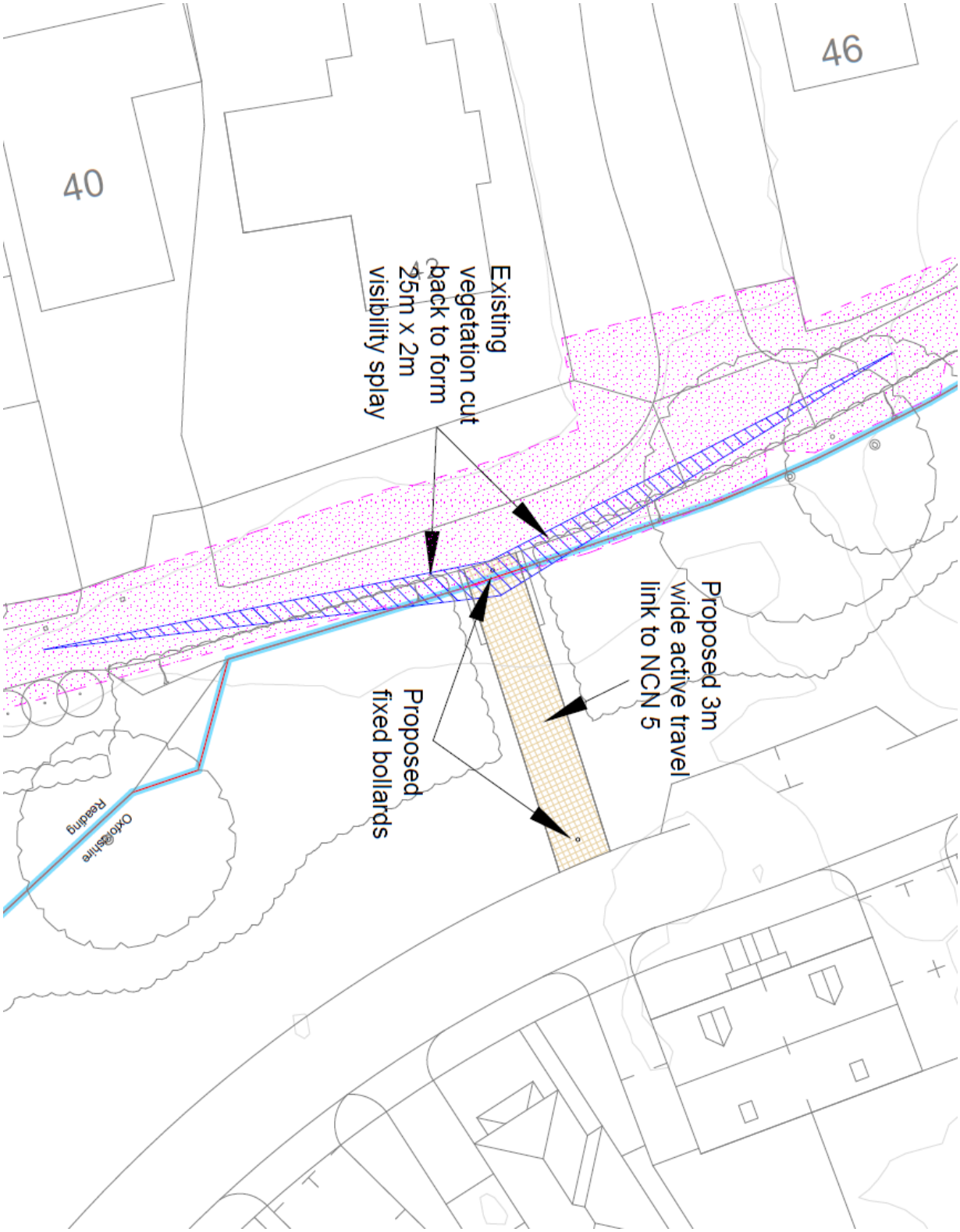
Location Plan

Illustrative Master Plan of Site Layout

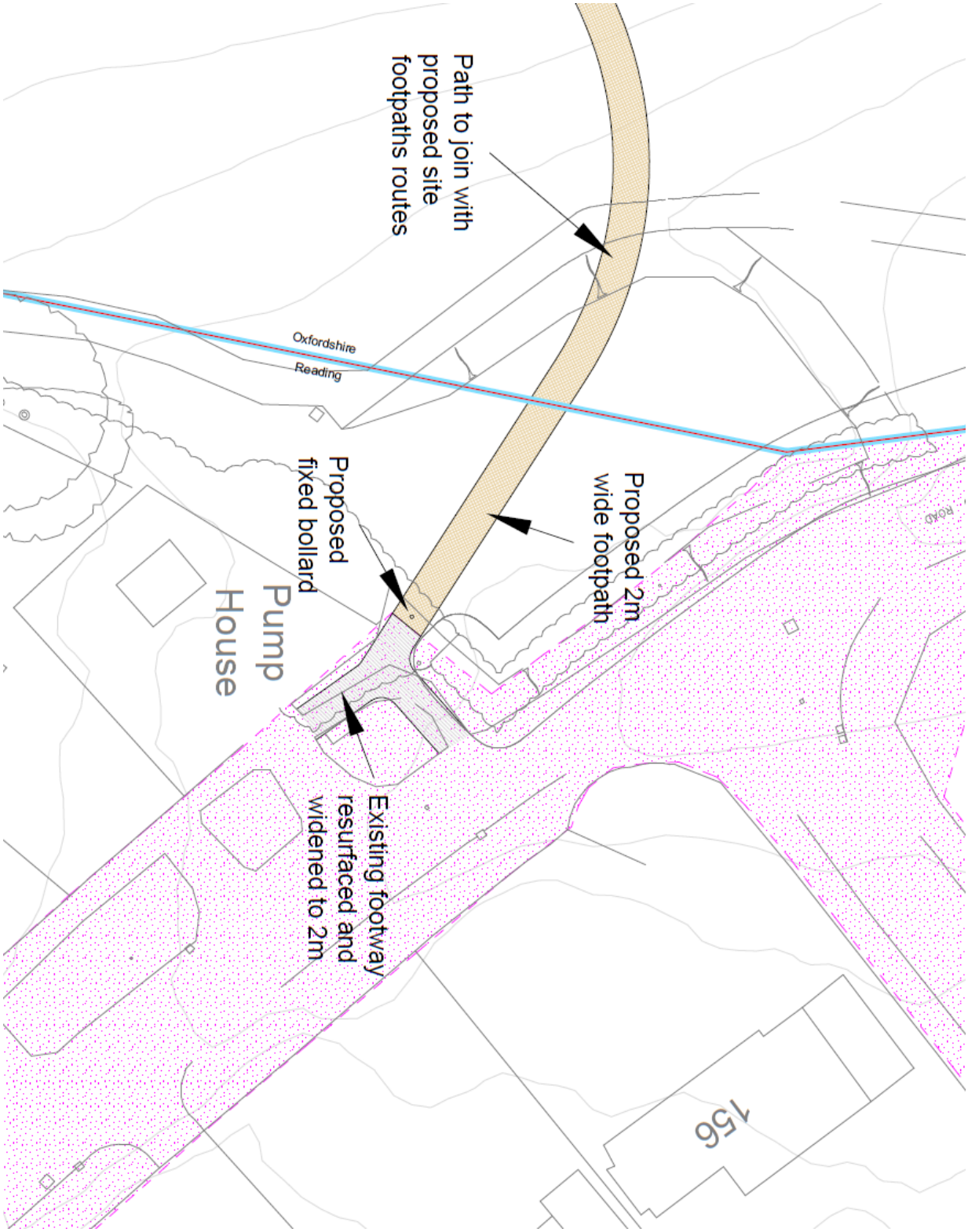
Proposed development parameters plan



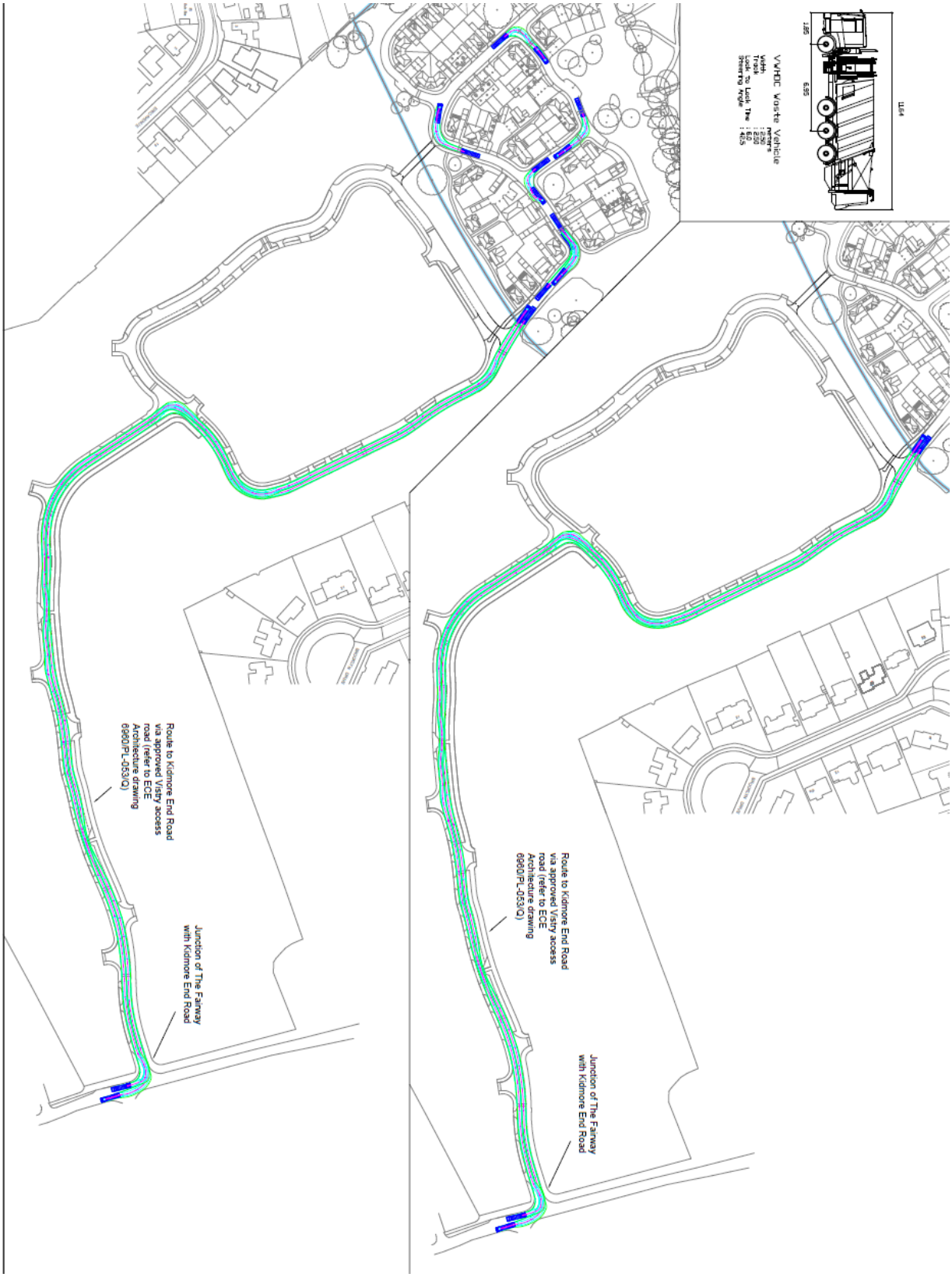
Proposed access roads layout



Proposed pedestrian and cycle connection to Highdown Hill Road



Proposed pedestrian connection to Kidmore End Road



Proposed refuse vehicle tracking plan