

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 February 2018

ITEM NO. 13

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Ward: Redlands

App No.: 171954/FUL

Site Address: 3-5 Craven Road, Reading, RG1 5LF

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to form 25 Retirement Living units (C3 use) for older persons with communal facilities, parking and associated landscaping.

Applicant: McCarthy & Stone

Date valid: 13 November 2017

13 Week Date: 12 February 2018

26 Week Date: 14 May 2018

RECOMMENDATION

As per the main agenda.

1. Affordable Housing

- 1.1 Paragraphs 6.59 and 6.60 of the main report refer to the applicant's viability assessment. The assessment suggests that the scheme is not capable of providing any Affordable Housing on site, but would provide the sum of £168,480 towards off-site provision of Affordable Housing. This equates to a provision of approximately 3.5% Affordable Housing.
- 1.2 The proposed amount falls far short of policy requirements. The extent to which this is justified by financial viability considerations has now been assessed by the Council's Valuer and the Council's external viability consultant.
- 1.3 The findings of this detailed assessment demonstrate that the scheme would be capable of contributing more than the proposed £168,480, or alternatively could provide some affordable housing on site. The current figure is therefore not accepted by the Council's Valuer or planning officers and is considered to be an inadequate contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough, and the policy aims of achieving sustainable and inclusive mixed and balanced communities.
- 1.4 The S106 agreement required to secure Affordable Housing has not been progressed due to the other concerns with the scheme.
- 1.5 Recommended reason for refusal number 5 therefore remains appropriate as set out in the main report. The applicant's justification for providing a level of Affordable Housing below the policy requirement is not accepted. Even if the offered affordable housing provision was acceptable, no S106 mechanism is in place to secure that provision.

2. Letter from Clinical Commissioning Group

- 2.1 A letter of support has been received today (7 February 2018) from the CCG stating:
*"The Council Planning Applications Committee are considering an application for 3 - 5 Craven Road which houses the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. This service is now being relocated to the University Campus and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust need the capital receipt from this site to fund the new facility.
NHS partners are concerned that the paper going to the Planning Applications Committee does not adequately reflect the important benefits to Reading's children and families.*

The CCG is fully supportive of the move of children's health services from 3 - 5 Craven Road to a new site at the Reading University Campus.

The new site offers modern facilities within a new building which is more suited to the accessibility needs of young families and children with disabilities.

The new site also offers opportunities for co-located joint clinics led by Royal Berkshire Hospital clinicians and community staff from Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

We felt it was important to emphasise our support for this service development and hope that the Planning Applications Committee will be able to consider these wider benefits to local children."

- 2.2 Officers consider that paragraph 6.44 of the main report is relevant to this point: *"Although the current proposals would result in socioeconomic and environmental benefits, in the most part these are not inherently reliant on the demolition of the locally listed building and could be achieved through a more sensitive heritage-led approach which converted the existing building and integrated it within a scheme with new accommodation arranged around it."*

Case officer: Steve Vigar