

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 December 2022

ITEM NO.

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Ward: Abbey

App No.: 220856/REG3

Address: Former Family Centre North Street, Reading

Proposal: Development of 37 new affordable dwellings including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, parking and hard and soft landscaping as an amended scheme to the extant scheme for 41 dwellings under planning permission 191659

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: Extension of time agreed until 23 December 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the recommendation in the main agenda Committee report.

1. Additional information regarding Sustainability

- 1.1 Since the publication of the main agenda report, the Council's Sustainability Manager has provided the following comments in respect of the proposals:

The proposals would result in "obvious improved fabric, heat pumps and additional PV. However, we would like to see future proofed by at least making heat network connectable (underfloor heating best running together is connected risers etc to allow future connection). Individual ASHPs do not lend to that typically...ground source should be first priority".

- 1.2 The applicant has acknowledged the above and it is a consideration for all Reading Borough Council housing projects. In this specific instance, however, the project had already been designed and initial sustainability measures considered acceptable under application 191659. Given that the scheme is under construction and largely built out, it was not possible to add ground source heat pumps or provide connections to a future district heating system at this stage. Nevertheless, and as discussed in the main agenda report, the proposals are considered to represent a significant upgrade in terms of the sustainability benefits to be provided over and above that already consented.
- 1.3 The Sustainability Manager advises of a factual error in the main agenda report at paragraph 6.2, which states that there will be a ban on installing gas boilers in new homes from 2025. It is clarified that boilers will not be 'banned', but rather that this is when full Future Homes Standards, a set of standards from 2025 to ensure new homes provide less carbon emissions, come into effect, the use of boilers will become very challenging and this would indicate in favour installing heat pumps and other sustainability measures such as that proposed under this application.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The recommendation remains as set out in the December 2022 main agenda Committee report. The proposal results in an improvement in energy/sustainability within this development and the overall planning balance in the main report remains unaltered. Whilst the comments of the Sustainability Manager regarding connections to the district heating network are noted, unfortunately, in this instance the progress with the build means this cannot be installed retrospectively.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys