

06 December 2023



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Southcote
Planning Application Reference:	230612
Site Address:	Former Alice Burrows, Dwyer Road, Reading
Proposed Development	Redevelopment of the Site at Dwyer Road to deliver 30 new dwellings, alongside new access, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Ethne Humphreys
Deadline:	31/01/2024
Recommendations	Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement and receipt of satisfactory SuDS strategy or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed and satisfactory SuDS strategy not be received by the 31 st January 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
S106 Terms	<p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">To secure all 30 dwellings as affordable housing, social rent tenure, in perpetuity. <p>Employment Skills and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) – payable on commencement <p>Off-site Tree Planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">To secure a biodiversity compensation scheme to comprise sufficient off-site planting for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) purposes to be delivered elsewhere in the Borough to include timetable for implementation – to be submitted and approved prior to commencement <p>All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.</p>
Eh1Conditions include to	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Full - time limit - three years2. Approved Plans3. Pre-commencement details of all external materials to be submitted and approved

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Pre-commencement Construction Method Statement (including EP based matters) to be submitted and approved 5. Provision of vehicle parking as shown prior to first occupation 6. Provision of vehicular access, carriageway and footways as shown prior to first occupation 7. Pre-occupation submission and approval of cycle parking 8. Pre-occupation submission and approval of EV charging point scheme details 9. Provision of refuse and recycling storage facilities prior to first occupation 10. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores 11. Noise Assessment – Mechanical Plant 12. Pre-commencement Contaminated Land Assessment to be submitted and approved 13. Pre-commencement Remediation Scheme to be submitted and approved 14. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification) 15. Reporting of Unidentified Contamination at any time 16. Pre-commencement landscaping (including green roof details) to be submitted and approved 17. Pre-commencement landscape management plan to be submitted and approved 18. Pre-occupation boundary treatments to be submitted and approved 19. Off-site tree planting scheme 20. Pre-commencement Arboricultural Method Statement to be submitted and approved 21. Compliance condition relating to hours of construction works 22. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site 23. Pre-commencement submission of and approval of habitat enhancement measures 24. Pre-commencement badger set survey to be submitted and approved 25. Compliance condition relating to protecting nesting birds 26. Flat roof areas not to be used as roof terraces unless where specified on the approved plans 27. Dwelling Mix restriction 28. Pre-commencement submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy to integrate with tree planting and other landscaping 29. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to first occupation of any part of the development and managed/maintained thereafter 30. SAP Assessment – Major – Design Stage 31. SAP Assessment – Major – As Built 32. Compliance condition obscure glazing to upper floor windows west elevation block A 33. Details of balcony privacy screenings to be submitted and approved 34. PD Restriction Class A, B, D and E <p>Delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission.</p>
Informatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and Proactive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-commencement conditions • Highways • Terms and Conditions • Building Regulations • Complaints about construction • Encroachment • Contamination • Noise between residential properties • CIL
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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal would provide family sized affordable housing units on a previously developed site, which is currently vacant. The proposals would have an appropriate visual design and would provide suitable accommodation for future residents. The sustainability credentials of the proposal are a particularly welcomed feature. Through revisions during the course of the application, the on-site biodiversity enhancements have been maximised as far as reasonably possible, with off-site compensation also contributing to achieving an overall biodiversity net gain.
- 1.2. The assessment has identified elements of harm with the proposals, which is discussed in detail within the report. However, when balanced against the benefits of the scheme, including 100% family sized housing – for which there is a critical need within the Borough – the proposal is considered acceptable in the planning balance.
- 1.3. The application is therefore recommended to the Planning Applications Committee for approval, subject to further satisfactory information relating to SuDS, completion of the legal agreement and the conditions as set out above.

2. Introduction and Site Description

- 2.1 The site relates to land to the north of Dwyer Road. The site comprises land that was previously occupied by the now-demolished Alice Burrows care home and is lies vacant. The site is bound by Appleford Road to the west, Burghfield Road to the east, Dwyer Road to the south and residential dwellings to the north. Opposite the Site to the south fronting Dwyer Road is a small area of Greenfield land with some landscaping.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential. Charles Clore Court to the north of the site comprises a predominantly four storey block fronting Burghfield Road with vehicular access from Appleford Road. The block drops to two storeys closest to the Site. The predominant building height of other dwellings on Dwyer Road and Appleford Road is two storeys, and four storeys along Burghfield Road.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the site is currently provided from both Appleford Road and Dwyer Road via simple priority junctions.
- 2.4 There are several trees that exist on the permitter of the site, including individual TPOs and a group TPO in the north west corner of the site.
- 2.5 The site allocated under Policy WR3p (Alice Burrow Home, Dwyer Road) which states:

*“Development for residential and/or residential care.
Development should:*

 - *Be accessed from Appleford Road only;*
 - *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
 - *Take account of the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
 - *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.48 ha 18-27 dwellings or an equivalent number of residential care bedspaces”

- 2.6 This application is reported to the Planning Applications Committee because it is a Council's own (Regulation 3) development, as well as being a 'major' development.
- 2.7 The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with an aerial view.



Location Plan (not to scale)



Aerial View (not to scale)

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide 30 new homes, alongside new access, soft landscaping and parking.
- 3.2 The proposal would comprise 1 x 4 storey building site to the north of the site, a part 2 part 3 storey terraced row site to the middle of the site and 3 x 3 storey buildings site to the south of the site adjacent Dwyer Road.
- 3.3 The scheme proposes 100% on-site affordable housing and 50% of the units would have 3+ bedrooms.

1 Bedroom Flats	15
3 Bedroom Houses	8
4 Bedroom House	6
5 Bedroom House	1
TOTAL	30 Units

- 3.4 24 car parking spaces are proposed, including 2 disabled bays and access would be from Appleford Road.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.5 The proposed residential units are specified as being affordable housing, the applicant has stipulated that CIL relief will be sought. If relief is given, the CIL liability would then be £zero.
- 3.6 The applicant has submitted the following drawings and documents for consideration:

RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0001 - Site Location Plan-REV B
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0002 - Existing Site Plan-REV B
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0100 - Proposed Site Plan-REV O
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0110 - Proposed Roof Plan-REV C
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0150 - Proposed Street Elevations-Rev B
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0200 - Block A Ground Floor-REV H
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0201 - Block A First Floor-REV H
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0202 - Block A Second Floor-REV C
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0203 - Block A Third Floor-REV C
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0204 - Block A Roof Plan-REV E
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0250 - Proposed Elevations - Block A-REV D
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0251 - Proposed Elevations - Block B-REV D
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0252 - Proposed Elevations - Block C-REV D
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0301 - Dwelling Type - 3B5PH Type B-REV F
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0302 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type A-REV F
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0303 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type B Sheet 1-REV E
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0304 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type B Sheet 2-REV E
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0305 - Dwelling Type - 5B10PH Type A Sheet 1-REV E
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0306 - Dwelling Type - 5B10PH Type A Sheet 2-REV E
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0307 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type D-REV –
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0310 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type A-REV F
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0311 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type B-REV F
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0312 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type C-REV E

RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0600 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 3B5PH Type B
4B8PH Type A-REV B
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0601 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 4B8PH Type B-REV
A
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0602 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 5B10PH Type A-REV
A
RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0603 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - Block A Apartment
Sheet 1-REV B

RBC-DRR_HTA-A_DR_0604 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - Block A Apartment Sheet 2-REV A
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0904_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR_8900_Tree Pit Details
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0900_Tree retention and removal
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0901_Soil Plan
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0902_Landscape Planting Plan
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0903_Landscape Hardworks Plan
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_DR-0904_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_RP-0001_Landscape Maintenance Strategy
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_SH_001_Landscape Maintenance Schedule_Appendix to Landscape Maintenance Strategy
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_SH_002_Soft Landscape Schedule
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_SH_003_Hard Landscape Schedule
RBC-DRR_HTA-L_SH-004_Tree Ratio Schedule

Design & Access Statement	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP010 - DAS	May 2023
Design & Access Statement Addendum	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP_0102 - DAS Addendum	November 2023
Arboricultural Assessment	Impact rt-mme-158951B-02-RevC_(AIA)_DRR_ISSUE	November 2023
Arboricultural Statement	Method rt-mme-160031-01-RevC_(AMS)_DRR_ISSUE	November 2023
Preliminary Assessment	Ecological ADAS PEA (updated) Dwyer Road Reading Borough Council.MPT69105-846 v 02	23 January 2023
GTLA survey	ADAS_Dwyer Road_GLTA_MPT69105-846 (00)	22 March 2023
Reptile Survey	ADAS Dwyer Road Reptile Survey Report	12 May 2023
Badger Survey	ADAS_Badger report_Dwyer Road_MPT69105-846 (00)	22 March 2023
Biodiversity Assessment	Net Gain ADAS_MPT69105-856(01)_Dwyer Road_BNG Report	10 November 2023
Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_Dwyer Road_0500_Detailed DSO studies 20042023	April 2023
Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment Addendum	RBC-DRR_Post Planning Amendment TN - DSO	2 November 2023
Energy and Overheating Assessment	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_0500 Dwyer Road Energy and Overheating Assessment 18042023	April 2023
Energy and Overheating Assessment	RBC-DRR_Post Planning Amendment_TN-Energy Addendum	2 November 2023

Sustainability Statement	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_0501 Dwyer Road Sustainability Statement 18042023	April 2023
Noise Impact Assessment	R9941-1 Rev 1 Dwyer Road Reading - Noise Assessment	18 April 2023
Planning Statement (incl. Affordable Housing Statement)	RBC-DRR- Planning Statement_230518	May 2023
Planning Statement Addendum	RBC-DRR- Planning Statement Addendum- November 2023 Final	November 2023
Statement of Community Involvement	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP011 - SCI	May 2023
Phase 2 Ground Investigation Interpretative Report	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- GE-1001	1 June 2023
Sustainable Drainage Systems Proposal	DWY-HYD-XX-XX-RP-C- 7000-P04	21 April 2023
Transport Assessment	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-4001 P03	25 April 2023
Travel Plan	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-6001 P03	25 April 2023
Transport Statement Addendum	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-4002-P01 - TS Addendum	30 October 2023
Utilities Statement	26888-HYD-ZZ-ZZ-RP- ME-0005 - Utilities Report - R01	24 February 2023

4 Planning history

- 4.1 150317/REG3 Signage informing the proposed future use of the site mounted to Hoarding

5. Consultations

RBC Housing

- 5.1 This proposal has been prepared in conjunction with the Council's Housing Team who are supportive of the scheme.

RBC Transport

- 5.2 Further to revised plans, concerns raised over shortfall in visitor parking. Parking layout and number of parking spaces acceptable. Conditions to secure CMS, cycle parking details, access and vehicle parking to be provided as shown. Discussed below.

RBC Waste & Recycling

- 5.3 Further information was requested relating to the collection of waste and recycling, which was provided and would be secured by condition.

RBC Environmental Protection

- 5.4 No objection subject to a variety of conditions relating to noise, air quality, land contamination, bin storage, hours of construction and a CMS. Discussed below.

RBC Ecology

- 5.5 Further to revisions, no objection subject to conditions relating to nesting birds, badger setts, ecological enhancements and obligation to secure off-site tree planting. Discussed below.

RBC Natural Environment

- 5.6 Further to revisions, no objection subject to conditions securing arboricultural method statement, landscaping, boundary treatments and obligation to secure off-site tree planting. Discussed below.

Public Consultation

- 5.7 Nearby neighbouring properties were consulted by letter and site notices were displayed at the application site.

- 5.8 Four letters of representation received (from two properties), with the issues raised being summarised as:

- Insufficient car parking spaces
- Height along Dwyer Road out of keeping with area
- Overdevelopment of site
- Lack of EV charging points

6. Legal and Planning Policy context

- 6.1 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) – 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).

- 6.2 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).

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

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision-making
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC4: Decentralised Energy
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
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
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
WR3p: Alice Burrows Home, Dwyer Road

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)
Planning Obligations under S106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Other relevant documentation

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)
The National Design Guide (2019)
The National Model Design Code (2021)

7. Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations are:

- Land Use Considerations
- Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix
- Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance
- Residential Amenity
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Trees and Landscaping
- Ecology
- Sustainability and Energy
- Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Environmental Protection Matters – Contaminated Land
- Legal Agreement

Land Use Considerations

7.2 Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives. It is considered that a proposal for new housing would contribute to providing sufficient land for housing, a range of homes and would make effective use of land.

- 7.3 Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) confirms that there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area.
- 7.4 The former Alice Burrows care home has been demolished. The wider principle of re-development of this site is established under Local Plan housing allocation Policy WR3p (Alice Burrow Home, Dwyer Road) which allocates the site for residential development as follows:

“Development for residential and/or residential care.

Development should:

- *Be accessed from Appleford Road only;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.48 ha 18-27 dwellings or an equivalent number of residential care bedspaces”

Principle of Housing

- 7.5 The proposed development, providing 30 residential units on previously developed land, would contribute towards meeting the Council’s housing need requirements in accordance with Policy H1. Given the above, the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is supported by the site allocation. The proposal is considered to represent a valuable development opportunity which can positively contribute to meeting the Borough’s ongoing housing need.

Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix

Affordable Housing

- 7.6 Affordable Housing is a key identified priority within the Borough. Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide 30% affordable housing, preferably on site.
- 7.7 In terms of affordable housing, the applicant has been clear from the outset of the application that the proposals would deliver 100% affordable housing on site. This will be in the form of 30 social rent affordable (Reading Affordable Rent) housing units.
- 7.8 It is relevant to note that affordable housing in the borough is generally secured through legal agreement and legal agreements can only secure what is reasonably required to make a development acceptable in planning terms under Section 122 of Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.
- 7.9 The proposed provision of an 100% affordable housing scheme would be significantly more than the Policy H3 30% on site affordable housing requirement. As such, any provision above the required 30% amount would be considered to be an additional planning benefit of the proposals, in the assessment of the overall planning balance for the scheme as a whole. It follows that, where proposals conflict with other policies in the plan, securing a higher percentage can be justified in order to outweigh other areas of harm identified.
- 7.10 In this instance, there are considered to be a number of factors which justify a higher than 30% affordable housing requirement. As set out elsewhere in this report, there are some areas of harm arising from the proposals, which officers consider need to be mitigated. These include a shortfall in visitor parking, shorter garden sizes and shortfall in open space and landscaped areas within the site.
- 7.11 It is not possible to provide an exact amount of affordable housing that would outweigh the harm. However securing the proposed 100% affordable housing, well in excess of the policy minimum, would carry significant weight given the critical need for affordable housing in the Borough and the existing shortfall in provision. This remains to be weighed in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.

Unit Mix

- 7.12 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) identifies that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting identified needs in respect of housing mix, and in particular, for family homes of 3 or more bedrooms. The Policy seeks that at least 50% of the homes (outside town, district and local centres) will be 3 bed or larger.
- 7.13 The proposal would provide 15 one-bedroom flats, 8 three-bedroom houses, 6 four-bedroom houses and 1 five-bedroom house. This equates to 50% of the overall mix being of 3 bed or larger and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H2 in this respect. The overall mix would provide a variety of unit sizes and types and at social rent which would address the need for housing across Reading. This is considered to be a key benefit of the proposed development - providing family sized housing to meet identified housing needs. The proposed mix of dwellings will be secured by way of condition.

Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance

- 7.14 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. The policy places importance on the layout of the urban structure and urban grain, stipulating that development should respond positively to the local context and create safe and accessible environments. The policy requires a “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located”.
- 7.15 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.
- 7.17 The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of ‘Context’ and it states that “well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones.”

Layout and Scale

- 7.18 The scale and layout of the proposal is the result of detailed discussions at application stage. The layout as originally submitted was not supportable, due to excessive and overdominant road layout and parking areas which led to the houses and residential spaces appearing cramped with very small back gardens, associated privacy issues and overall a poorly considered arrangement for future residents.
- 7.19 Discussions were held with the applicant during the course of the application, and revised plans were received reducing the width of the road and reconfiguring the parking layout, increasing the distance between houses and increasing garden sizes. As a consequence one house was removed from the terrace. The changes allow for a better arrangement of streets and spaces, as well as achieving a less cramped layout and improved appearance overall.

Original Proposed Layout

Revised Proposed Layout



- 7.20 The surrounding area largely comprises 2 storey terraced rows and 2 storey semi detached properties to the east, south and west of the site. Immediately to the north, is the 4 storey Charles Clore Court care home development, with 4 storey buildings continuing beyond. The character of the area is mixed with no one style of development predominating.
- 7.21 The proposals comprise a 4 storey block of flats to the north of the site adjacent to Charles Clore Court, a part 2 part 3 storey terraced row sited to the middle of the site, and 5 x 3 storey houses to the south, adjacent Dwyer Road.
- 7.22 The proposed 4 storey block would be read in conjunction with the larger scale 4 storey buildings to the north, whilst the lower 2 and 3 storey buildings would provide an acceptable transition to the residential scale to the east, south and west. The proposed buildings are not considered to appear excessively large within the context of the site and the surrounding area. Elements of single storey form would help to minimise bulk and the mass of the frontage buildings would be sufficiently set back from the Dwyer Road frontage to provide sufficient relief to the scale of the buildings. Given the change in levels across the site, the scale of buildings would acceptably respond to this as can be seen below:



- 7.23 It is considered that, further to revisions made, the layout has adequately maximised the development potential of the site. The existing mixed character of development in the area perhaps allows for a new, higher density, character to be created.
- 7.24 An area of green space is proposed to the south west corner of the site, adjacent Appleford Road and Dwyer Road. This would help to soften the proposals. However, it is apparent that this is driven by the root protection area of existing tree to be retained and would serve more as an area of landscaping than an area of open space that might serve future residents. The lack of meaningful open space and space for landscaping and tree planting within the scheme is indicative of a degree of crampedness which remains within

the proposals – an area of harm which remains to be considered in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.

Appearance

- 7.25 The proposed buildings would all have flat roofs with regular fenestration and brick detailing. The flat roofs would assist in minimising the mass of the buildings and would also allow for the incorporation of green roofs and solar panels, to assist in the sustainability and ecology of the site.
- 7.26 The buildings would largely be finished in red brick with elements of light grey brick proposed. This would complement the main brick, providing a slightly more contemporary approach, adding a richness to the finished appearance and adding visual interest. The proposals would represent a modern design which marries traditional features with functional buildings which would relate well to the immediate area.
- 7.27 In overall terms, and despite the concerns over crampedness referred to above, the appearance of the proposed buildings would represent good quality design that will enhance the character and appearance of the area, and which will assist in integrating into the surrounding area and the palette of materials would be appropriate. However, to ensure the design quality, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to secure further details of all external materials via condition prior to commencement, to guarantee the design quality of the scheme. In accordance with Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

- 7.28 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

Impact on neighbouring Amenity

- 7.29 The site has residential properties to the north, east and west. The properties to the east and west along Burghfield Road and Appleford Road respectively are located more than 20m from the proposed buildings. It is not considered that there would be any harm to these properties through loss of light, privacy or the increase in scale on the site.
- 7.30 The neighbouring properties most affected by the proposals are No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road a pair of semis to the north west of the site and Charles Clore Court a 4 storey block comprising a care home to the north.
- 7.31 In relation to No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road, the proposed block of flats, at its closest point, would be located a distance of approximately 6m to the rear gardens and 15.4m to the houses themselves. Whilst clearly visible to occupiers of these properties, given the siting of the block to the south east of No.143, no significant material overbearing impacts are considered to arise. Upper floor windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing towards No.143. Given these would be secondary windows to the proposed units, these could be obscurely glazed so as not to result in a loss of privacy. Given this, combined with their small scale, no significant material loss of privacy is considered to arise. Given the position of balconies on the north elevation of the block of flats, it would be appropriate to have some screening from the balcony closest to the rear of No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road. This will be secured via condition.
- 7.32 There would be a distance of approximately 10m from the proposed block of flats to Charles Clore Court at its closest point. Given the siting and orientation of the proposed block of flats, whilst visible, no overbearing effects are considered to arise. Upper floor balconies are proposed on the north elevation facing towards Charles Clore Court. There are windows on the upper floors of the flank elevation of Charles Clore Court. However, as these serve bathrooms and are obscurely glazed, no material loss of privacy is considered to arise.
- 7.33 Shadowing models have been presented which show that given the orientation, scale and design of the proposals, there would be no significant adverse impact as a result of

overshadowing. Similarly, a Daylight/Sunlight report has also been submitted, which demonstrates to officers' satisfaction that there would be no significant unacceptable impact on neighbour's living conditions.

- 7.34 Overall, the proposals would ensure that there would be no significant material harm to neighbour's living conditions, in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC8.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

- 7.35 In addition to Policy CC8 above, Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) also apply. Policy H5 states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 sets out that *"Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens."*

- 7.36 All dwellings would meet the nationally described space standards (as outlined in Policy H5) for the type of dwelling/number of bedrooms and the internal layout of the proposed units are arranged so as to create a suitable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers. It is considered that all dwellings would have good levels of light and outlook.

- 7.37 All units are considered to be provided with adequate levels of privacy. There would be a front-to-front distance between the block of flats and the terraced row of 13.6m which is considered adequate to prevent any undue overlooking. There would be a distance of at least 18m from the rear of the terraced row to the rear two storey elements of the houses fronting Dwyer Road. Whilst this falls just short of the 20m back-to-back separation distance recommended in Policy CC8, the windows have been positioned carefully such that there would be no material loss of privacy.

- 7.38 All the proposed houses would have their own private outdoor garden amenity space. The size of these spaces has increased during the course of the application, further to concerns raised about the quality and scale of the gardens. The amended scheme allows for more spacious gardens, albeit the gardens to the houses fronting Dwyer Road offer width over depth. Whilst there remain concerns about the depth of gardens, they are not considered to be so unduly small to compromise the quality of accommodation for future occupiers.

- 7.39 The flats would have access to communal outdoor space to the rear, as well as benefitting from their own balcony areas.

- 7.40 Overall, officers consider that the proposal would provide suitable future living conditions for residents and is therefore considered to comply with the Local Plan policies above.

Impact on Parking/Highways

- 7.41 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.

Car Parking Provision

- 7.42 24 car parking spaces are proposed across the site, arranged in a mix of parallel and perpendicular parking bays. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the layout is acceptable. An assessment of the car parking data provided shows that this level of provision would be acceptable to serve future residents given the nature of the site and the location of the development. However, based on the Parking SPD, a visitor parking bay should also be provided within the site. Given the constraints of the site and the desirability of providing larger gardens and a less highways-dominated streetscene, there is insufficient space to provide an additional parking bay within the site. The shortfall of one visitor parking bay will be weighed up in the planning balance at the end of this report.

Access

- 7.43 Vehicle access to the new street is proposed off Appleford Road to the west of the site. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable, that the design and visibility splays are compliant, and the access would not result in any harm to highway safety.
- 7.44 The new houses fronting Dwyer Road would have direct access with driveways/crossovers provided which is acceptable. There is a bus shelter within the visibility splays of the driveways to the homes fronting Dwyer Road; however, the Council's Transport Officer does not consider this to represent an issue given the design of the shelter and frequency of traffic movements to and from driveways.

Cycle Parking Provision

- 7.45 The proposed cycle parking provision includes for 8 cycle spaces for the 15 one-two bedrooms units which complies with the Parking SPD. The spaces would be located within a store equipped with Sheffield stands. Whilst this is acceptable, full details of the store are proposed to be secured via condition to ensure that it is fully covered and lockable.
- 7.46 The houses across the site would be provided with on plot cycle stores that allow for two cycle parking spaces per unit which complies with the Parking SPD.

Construction

- 7.47 A condition requiring a Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be attached to any approval, requiring submission and approval before any works commence on-site to regulate the amenity effects of construction. As well as demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the number of HGV movements are managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate that appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.

Waste and Servicing

- 7.48 Servicing, waste and recycling storage would be appropriately located within the curtilage of the dwellings with a collection point provided on street to ensure that bins are presented in a suitable location on collection day to minimise waste collection vehicle reversing movements. The bin store in the flats would be appropriately located internally at ground floor.
- 7.49 Overall, the proposals would represent an appropriate development in transport terms and would largely comply with the Local Plan. As above, the shortfall of visitor parking will form part of the overall planning balance.

Trees and Landscaping

- 7.50 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping. Proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in the tree number.
- 7.51 With regard to trees shown to be retained, the Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that there are no concerns about the impact of the development to existing trees, subject to securing an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement via condition. Further details relating to soil and tree pit details, and service routes are required, which are also proposed to be secured by way of condition.
- 7.52 Further to the above, a landscape masterplan has been submitted with the application. This includes the provision of 43 new trees on site. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the principles of landscape layout and planting, particularly trees, are considered acceptable. A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure planting details to include the species, maintenance, and management schedule.

7.53 There is a lack of planting along the southern boundary. Whilst disappointing, this is due to a lack of meaningful space for tree planting, as discussed above. As well as the 43 on site trees proposed, the applicant is also proposing to fund the planting of off-site street trees on RBC land. Discussions are still taking place as to the number of trees and proposed locations. Further information in this respect will be provided by way of an update report to Committee. In general terms this step is welcomed by officers and this will be secured as part of the Unilateral Undertaking.

Ecology

7.54 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable.

7.55 The proposal is accompanied by an ecological report which demonstrates that there would be no impact on existing species at the site. Conditions are proposed to be attached to ensure that site clearance is to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. A pre-commencement badger sett survey condition is also proposed, as there was previously a badger set on the site, since disused.

7.56 The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation shows that in the absence of off-site mitigation the proposal would result in a net loss of Habitat Units using the DEFRA 4 metric. The applicant has held discussions with the Council's Ecologist and it has been agreed that there are no feasible options for delivering a net gain on the site. As such, and as above, off site trees are proposed on RBC land which would deliver a net gain in habitat units. As above, Officers will continue to discuss tree numbers and more precise locations with the applicant and any further clarification will be report by way of update report.

7.57 It should be noted that using street trees to offset the loss of the grassland habitat does not strictly accord with the trading rules set out in the DEFRA guidance. However, in this instance, the Council's Ecologist considers that this approach is acceptable as the planting of street trees would be a significant benefit for wildlife in Reading and would be in accordance with the Tree Strategy. Subject to a planning obligation requiring the application to deliver street trees, the proposal would comply with Policy EN12.

7.58 Further to the above, the Ecology report includes a number of ecological enhancements including wildlife friendly planting, bat and bird boxes and mammal gaps. Full specifications of bird and bat boxes showing the locations and elevations will be secured via suitably worded conditions. Green roofs are also proposed which is welcomed, and full details including planting and ongoing maintenance will be secured via suitably worded conditions.

Sustainability and Energy

7.59 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that developments of more than 20 dwellings should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.

7.60 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, with financial contribution required to off-set any remaining carbon emissions to zero.

7.61 In bringing this proposal forward, the applicant (RBC Housing in this case) has been clear that minimising energy consumption and carbon emissions for the benefit of the residents was a high design priority for the houses.

- 7.62 An energy and sustainability assessment was submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposal would meet zero carbon targets and be a 'Passivhaus' design through higher fabric standards and the low carbon and renewable energy systems, namely photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps. Details of these additions are to be secured by way of conditions.
- 7.63 Officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of energy sustainability and, subject to conditions, the development accords with relevant policy in this regard.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 7.64 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.
- 7.65 The applicant has submitted a revised Surface Water Drainage Strategy. However, this does not yet demonstrate that run-off rates and method of attenuation would be acceptable, as required, and this is in the process of being updated. The applicant has indicated that drainage can be designed in conjunction with soft landscaping – connecting tree planting pits with proposed soakaways so that trees and smaller plants could filter surface water within the site which would be appropriate. Discussions are on-going in this respect and there is no evidence to suggest that this technical matter could not be resolved and delegated authority is sought to finalise details. Final details of all elements of the strategy would be secured via condition. Conditions will also secure a timetable for implementation and details of management and maintenance of the scheme.

Environmental Protection Matters

Contaminated Land

- 7.66 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.
- 7.67 A contaminated land desk study has been submitted with the application. This concludes that further intrusive investigation is necessary to confirm the risk levels from contamination. The Council's Environmental Protection officer recommends the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement). In accordance with Policy EN16.

S106 Legal Agreement/Unilateral Undertaking

- 7.68 The vast majority of elements to be secured via s106 legal agreement, as per the Recommendation at the outset of this report, have already been detailed in earlier sections of this report. One matter not explicitly referenced is the requirement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phases of the development. This is required in line with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. It is not yet known whether this will take the form of an actual ESP to be progressed by them on site, or payment of an equivalent financial contribution, as per the SPD formula. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.
- 7.69 It is considered that the obligations referred to in the Recommendation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These Head of Terms has been agreed by the applicant and a S106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure this contribution.

8. Equality implications

- 8.1 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.

8.2 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. Furthermore, the proposal would be a positive addition to Reading in terms of its use and the complementary nature of the uses.

9 Conclusion & planning balance

9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9.2 As noted in the above assessment, there are clear benefits in providing family sized accommodation on this site. The report does identify elements of harm, largely due to the lack of open space, slight shortfall in car parking spaces and insufficient space to provide a suitable standard of tree planting and landscaping within the site. There is a general concern that the proposals result in a degree of crampedness and overdevelopment of the site. This harm should therefore be considered against the benefits of the scheme.

9.3 A clear benefit is the proposed 100% affordable family-sized housing for which there is a critical need within the Borough. It is considered that in this instance this clearly outweighs the areas of harm identified. As such, it is necessary to secure all the dwellings as affordable housing.

9.4 On the basis of the above assessment, the application is recommended for Approval, subject to the recommendation above to include conditions, submission of further information relating to SuDs and completion of legal agreement.

Selection of proposed plans shown here:

Design Amendments in response to RBC Planning comments:

Mews Street & Parking - reduced in width, on site turning removed, parking rearranged as mix of parallel and perpendicular bays, substation relocated adjacent to building and relocation of car parking to Appleford Road

Block A - footprint location adjusted to aid reduction in setting out of mews street

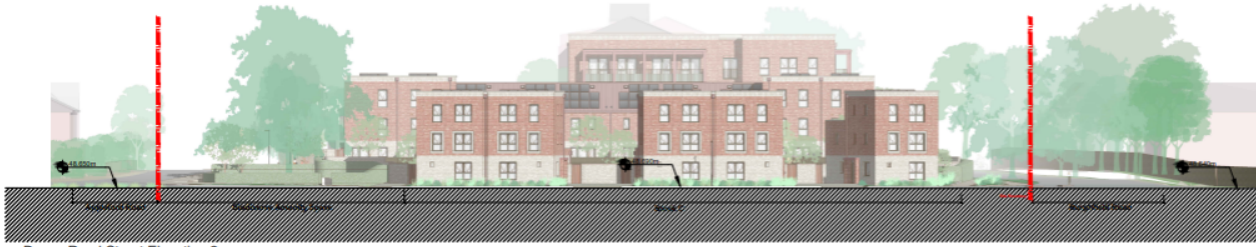
Block B - terrace reduced in size by 1no. 3B5PH-B, footprint location adjusted to increase rear garden size and back to back distances, mix of dwelling types adjusted. Ground floor FFL amended to accord with revised civils design. Stepped approach required for 4no. homes (including 1no. with alternative level access).



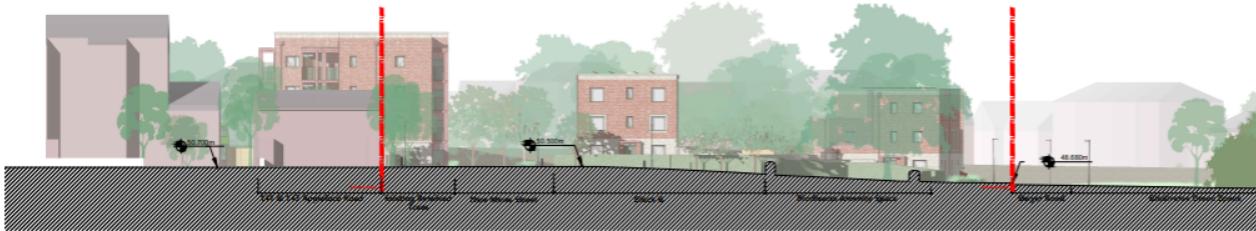
Proposed Site Plan



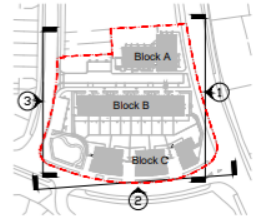
Burghfield Road Street Elevation 1
1:200



Dwyer Road Street Elevation 2
1:200



Appleford Road Street Elevation 3
1:200



Elevation Key Plan
1:1000

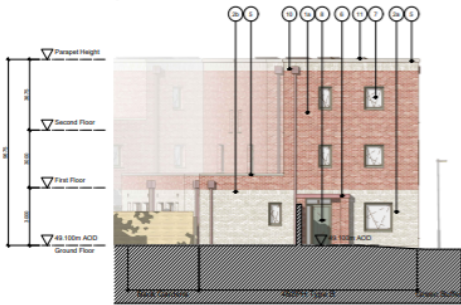
Proposed Street Scenes



South Elevation 1



North Elevation 2



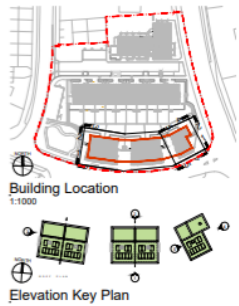
West Elevation 3



East Elevation 4



West Elevation 5



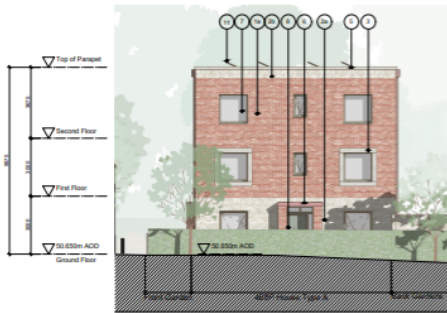
Proposed Dwyer Road Elevations



North Elevation 1



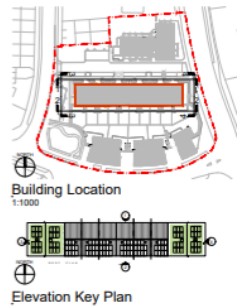
South Elevation 2



West Elevation 3



East Elevation 4



Proposed Terraced Row Elevations



West Elevation 3

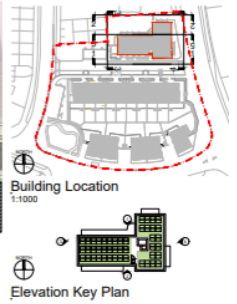
East Elevation 4

North Section/Elevation 5



South Elevation 1

North Elevation 2



Proposed Flatted Block Elevations