

Planning Applications Committee

07 October 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0958/FUL
Site Address:	Abattoirs Road, RG1 7BL
Proposed Development	Extension of the temporary planning permission, as approved under PL/21/1010, for the now constructed and fully operational 40 no. sleeping units and 3 no. support units for rough sleepers until 31st March 2028. (amended)
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Alison Amoah - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	Original target expiry of 9 th October 2026, with an agreed extension of time to 23 rd October 2026.
Recommendation	GRANT Full Planning Permission.
Conditions	To include: 1. Temporary Time Limit– All occupiers to vacate the site by 1st September 2027. All buildings removed and the site restored to its former condition by 31st March 2028. 2. Approved Plans 3. Landscaping – retained 4. Boundary Treatment – retained 5. External Lighting – retained 6. Vehicle Parking – retained 7. Cycle Parking – retained 8. Vehicle Access – retained 9. Refuse and Recycling – retained 10. Secure Access system and CCTV – retained 11. Litter Management Strategy – compliance 12. Management and Decommissioning Plan to be submitted for approval within one month of the date of

	permission. To include a timetable for implementation. Compliance at all times thereafter.
Informatives	To include: 1. Terms and Conditions 2. Community Infrastructure Levy 3. Network Rail Advice 4. Positive and Proactive

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The proposal is to retain the existing temporary rough sleeper pods and support services, which were granted permission in September 2021 (subject to a condition requiring their removal by 17 September 2026), and to grant permission until the end of March 2028. It is proposed that all occupiers would vacate the site by September 2027 with the buildings removed and the site restored by March 2028.
- 1.2 This new permission is sought to allow for a managed and coordinated cessation of the use, including the relocation of residents into more permanent accommodation and the preparation of the site for future redevelopment.
- 1.3 Following the publication of the original committee report objections were received from neighbouring residents setting out several significant anti-social, criminal and security issues with the operation of the site. The application was deferred from the September 9th 2026 Planning Applications Committee in order that the issues raised could be investigated and assessed.
- 1.4 It is acknowledged that there have been a number of anti-social behaviour and criminal incidents, which have created a significant level of harm to residential amenity over the period of the site's operation. There is evidence that this has reduced more recently, attributed in part to the measures put in place which sought to address incidents that had occurred, but also due to a reduced number of occupants on site. It is acknowledged that the site should have been closed by the date set in the current permission (17 September this year). This has not been done. Whilst regrettable, it is considered that the best practical outcome in the circumstances is to grant permission for a further period to ensure that the site is closed down in a structured, managed way in Planning terms.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site description and context are as set out in the original committee report appended at Appendix 1.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal remains as a scheme to retain the temporary site, known as Caversham Road Pods, originally granted temporary permission for 5 years from September 2021 (ref: PL/21/1010). The proposed extended period would be up until the end of March 2028, with Pods vacated by September 2027, with the remaining period for the clearance of the site.
- 3.2 The extra temporary period sought is for the formal legal steps to end tenancies of those people currently living in the scheme, who will also be supported to move into alternative accommodation as the current scheme is decommissioned.
- 3.3 This is a full planning application, which is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee for determination, as the applicant is the Council's Housing Service (Regulation 3). The main report prepared for September 2026 Committee is appended at Appendix 1 and the update report at Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Submitted Plans and Documentation:
These are as listed in the main report at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 Community Infrastructure Levy: As set out in the main report at Appendix 1.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 This is as set out in the main report at Appendix 1.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 In addition to the consultations recorded within section 5 of the main report at Appendix 1, further consultation was undertaken with Thames Valley Police (TVP) with respect to the matters raised within the two objections from residents, received within the relevant consultation period, but after the main September committee report had been prepared. The TVP comments and the objections are set out below.

Non-Statutory

- 5.2 Thames Valley Policy (TVP) – There is no objection to a phased closure and managed wind down of the Pods subject to improved transparency and communication from the relevant RBC teams regarding the future of the site, alongside delivery of the previously agreed environmental improvements and continued partnership working to address crime and Anti-Social Behaviour. The approval of a proposed Management and Decommissioning Plan is welcomed.
- 5.3 TVP recognise that an immediate closure and displacement of residents would risk simply displacing residents and the associated vulnerabilities elsewhere and

that it is, therefore, important that the closure is managed carefully, with appropriate accommodation, provision and support in place for residents as they transition away from the Pods, in the interests of the individuals concerned, partner agencies or the wider community.

- 5.4 TVP advise that they have undertaken considerable work to reduce offending within the Pods and offending by residents of the Pods impacting neighbouring communities. In addition, following a series of serious violent offences at the Pods last year, TVP undertook their own Environmental Visual Audit and identified necessary improvements to the site to improve natural surveillance and lines of sight, and requested the installation of additional CCTV. TVP was also asked to increase patrols and visits to the site and undertake more regular engagement with staff, which they supported and implemented.

Neighbour Consultation

- 5.5 As advised in para 5.7 of the September 2026 report, the consultation period expired on 8th September 2026 and this resulted in two objections, which were received following the preparation of the committee report and, therefore, the item was deferred to allow the objections to be reviewed and assessed. The following is a summary of the objections from residents within the adjacent Malcolm Place. The full objections are included at Appendix 3:

- Repeated trespass onto private property to access the pods and unauthorised access to residential areas with serious incidents around the shared boundary.
- Individuals entering or remaining within communal areas of our building without permission
- Threatening and intimidating behaviour towards residents
- Theft and security problems
- Drug use
- Regular noise and disturbance, including late at night, overnight and during the early hours
- Litter, waste (including drug paraphernalia) and general anti-social behaviour around the site.
- The cumulative impact on residential amenity, safety and security
- Pods were originally introduced as a temporary response during the Covid-19 pandemic. After approximately five years of operation, the proposal to extend the use until 2028 risks turning what was intended to be a temporary arrangement into a long-term or semi-permanent use, despite the ongoing impacts experienced by neighbouring residents
- Is the continued use of the site compatible with the reasonable expectations of neighbouring residents?
- Are there alternative accommodation solutions available that would have less impact on established residential communities?

- Is a further extension justified given the significant period for which the temporary permission has already been in place and appears inconsistent with the temporary nature and planned closure of the site?

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 In addition to the policy and guidance set out in Section 6 of the main report, and in light of the matters raised through the submitted objections, the assessment has also been undertaken against the following relevant policies related to amenity considerations and crime prevention.

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026).

Policy P3: Living Conditions and Pollution

Policy P5: Maintaining Public Safety and Security

Policy H05: Meeting the Needs of Different Groups

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Housing Needs of Different Groups

7. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- i) Residential Amenity Impacts**
- ii) Approach to Site Decommissioning**

i) Residential Amenity Impacts

- 7.1 As set out under the consultation section above several significant amenity concerns have been raised leading to objection from local residents.

- 7.2 It is acknowledged, and evident from the objections and information gathered through subsequent liaison by the Planning Officer with colleagues within Rough Sleeping, Housing and Estates Management, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Launchpad and TVP, that there have been a number of site management, significant antisocial behaviour (ASB), security, litter and community issues, which have occurred within and adjacent to the site during its operational period to date including:

- ASB concerns involving individual residents.
- Unauthorised access to the site and neighbouring areas.
- Litter accumulation in and around the site.
- Security concerns relating to boundary areas and vacant pods.
- Concerns regarding visitors and movement in and around the Pods.
- Concerns relating to possible drug dealing at the site.

- 7.3 It is clear that these incidents have had a significant detrimental impact on the adjacent residents and presumably the residents of the pods.
- 7.4 Although it cannot be confirmed that all incidents or crime of ASB recorded within the immediate area originated from residents of the site, the evidence demonstrates that a number of incidents have been directly or indirectly associated with the operation of the Pods, including incidents involving residents, visitors and associates. These incidents are relevant to the assessment of the amenity impacts of the use.
- 7.5 The following sets out the issues raised, how these have been addressed and proposed further measures.

Trespass and Site Security

- 7.6 In terms of issues with trespass onto private property it is acknowledged that users of the site exploited shortcomings in the original perimeter and security infrastructure. In response the applicant has confirmed that such issues have been actively managed through regular multi-agency partnership working between Thames Valley Police, RBC Community Safety, RBC Housing and Estates Management, RBC Housing Property Services and Launchpad Reading where there has been the review of:
- Perimeter security;
 - Visitor management;
 - Routes of unauthorised access into the Pods site; and
 - Measures required to prevent individuals bypassing the authorised site entrance;
- 7.7 The applicant advises that strategic multi-agency meetings held, at least every three months, have focused on these issues, alongside additional monthly operational meetings involving Reading Borough Council Housing and Estates and Housing Needs Teams, and Launchpad Reading to coordinate actions, monitor risks, and implement agreed security improvements. There are Council records and meeting minutes evidencing that these concerns have been discussed and reviewed.
- 7.8 The applicant advises that this has, as a result of the issues raised, resulted in a number of measures being implemented as follows:
- Installation of additional perimeter fencing designed to prevent access into the Pods site from adjoining land;
 - Raising of security fencing in areas identified as vulnerable to unauthorised entry;
 - Application of anti-climb paint to deter scaling of boundary structures;

- Installation of additional lighting and floodlighting to deter unauthorised movement around boundary areas and to improve surveillance;
- Review and enhancement of CCTV coverage to monitor perimeter areas and identify recurring access routes;
- Approval of mobile CCTV deployment to improve coverage of identified blind spots;
- Automatic CCTV footage retrieval processes where incidents require investigation, allow quick access to TVP.
- Removal of fob access from the main entrance. Individuals wishing to access the site must now use the intercom/buzzer system, improving control of visitors.
- Replacement locks fitted to individual pods to prevent access to vacant units.
- Investigation and monitoring of known access points and perimeter vulnerabilities;
- Completion of anti-climb measures to the flat roof area that had been identified as a potential means of gaining access to the site;
- Clearance of vegetation to improve natural surveillance and CCTV coverage.
- Clearance of void spaces between the Pods site and neighbouring premises to improve security.
- Ongoing review of service gate security, perimeter meshing and alleyway surveillance arrangements; and
- Ad hoc overnight security deployed to provide additional support to 24/7 site staff during periods of elevated risk, helping to maintain site safety, manage challenging behaviour, and respond to incidents effectively.
- Sharing of incident information by Launchpad with Housing Management.

7.9 Officers recommend that these measures are retained and that relevant maintenance is continued, and any additional measures as required, are implemented in accordance with the recommended Management and Decommissioning Plan to include an agreed implementation timetable.

7.10 The measures set out above are relatively recent. It is not yet clear that they have been effective in resolving the Police or neighbour concerns. However, since the intention is to close the site, the report recommendation focuses on this and it is considered that any additional measures, over and above those set out above, should be given relatively little weight in this Planning decision. The focus is closure of the site in the most appropriate and managed way given the circumstances.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Noise Disturbance

7.11 Regarding reports of threatening, intimidating and anti-social behaviour, this has involved both residents of the site and their visitors and associates of residents accessing or congregating around the site.

- 7.12 The Pods operate as 24-hour staffed accommodation, with support, risk management and behavioural oversight provided by Launchpad Reading. The applicant advises that residents are required to comply with tenancy conditions and house rules, including expectations relating to behaviour, anti-social conduct and visitor management and actions that may be taken where the standards are not met. There are also tenancy conditions setting out expectations regarding behaviour, visitor management, community safety, property use, and engagement with support services. Nevertheless, it is apparent that actual behaviour on site has not always met these conditions or expectations and that the Police have been required on occasion to step in to resolve incidents and focus additional resources to discourage anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- 7.13 Various records exist relating to site operation and management, including:
- Incident logs maintained by Launchpad
 - Housing Management records relating to incidents and complaints received
 - ASB monitoring and tracking records
 - Visitor logs
 - Maintenance of an incident and action tracker
 - Records of measures undertaken
 - Information shared with and received from Thames Valley Police
- 7.14 The applicant advises that a number of partners have been involved with managing issues arising from the site including Launchpad, RBC Housing, the RBC Rough Sleeping Initiatives Team, TVP, Probation Services, RBC Highways, RBC Community Safety and other Council services where appropriate. Measures put in place have included:
- Formal ASB investigations, support interventions and warnings through to the use of eviction action where necessary, and where appropriate, possession proceedings;
 - Enhanced liaison with TVP resulting in a Single Point of Contact Officer (SPOC) and better relations with Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) with regular intelligence provided to TVP;
 - Increased monitoring and partnership working with Probation in specific cases where additional support and oversight were required.
 - Regular intel reports from Launchpad to the Police re dealing and other suspected illegal activity.
 - Provision of additional security staff for a period following an incident outside of the site but in the vicinity; More targeted work with Probation Services to address behaviour concerns involving specific individuals.
 - Formal recording of incidents on Launchpad's ASM monitoring log a live ASB tracking system.
- 7.15 TVP has confirmed that following several incidents they have increased patrol visits and visits to the site. TVP confirm that there has been a reduction in

reported drug-dealing activity at the Pods as well as fewer complaints of ASB in recent weeks. This is a recent change, and it is not possible to confirm that this is a consistent trend currently.

- 7.16 The applicant confirms that there has been a reduction in the number of residents on the site in recent months from 40 to 27, with further planned move-ons continuing.
- 7.17 The applicant advises that vacant pods will be locked and secured as occupancy further reduces during the site decommissioning process. This would be a matter to be addressed in the Management and Decommissioning Plan to be secured by condition.

Litter

- 7.18 Although the applicant has advised that there is regular clearance of rubbish and weekly litter picking organised through RBC Housing and Estates Management within and surrounding the site, it is evident from both the neighbour objection and RBC Environmental Protection as internal consultee, that this remains a concern. A condition requiring submission and approval of, and adherence to a litter management strategy, is recommended to cover the remaining time applied for, although it would appear that this will not be fully resolved until the site has been closed.

Further Measures Proposed

- 7.19 The only way a positive recommendation can be achieved for the current proposal is for a suitable Management and Decommissioning Plan for the closure of the site to be submitted for approval and implemented. This would need to set some clear time-bound milestones and define clear roles, responsibilities and reporting frameworks. TVP welcome this approach and it is, therefore, recommended that such a framework includes the following key sections:
- Introduction
 - Aims and Objectives
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Support During Decommission – Staff ratios, security provisions, management oversight,
 - Governance and Reporting – including engagement with Thames Valley Police.
 - Timeframe for Decommissioning – to include formal service of Notice to Quit to residents – by end of 2026, for residents not already under notice; Notice served on the support provider (Launchpad) by December 2026; All occupiers to vacate the site by 31st August 2027; Physical removal of the Pods and site restoration by 31st March 2028.
 - Move-on Pathways
 - Support and Wraparound Services
 - Health and Safety

- Site management and Incident Management
- Data Sharing and Monitoring

7.20 The applicant advises that no new referrals are being accepted, move-on planning is underway, and the site is being actively decommissioned with a planned closure date of 31 August 2027. The applicant states that the proposed time extension represents the minimum period necessary to enable the approved decommissioning programme to be completed in a safe, lawful and managed manner. Work has commenced on the Management and Decommissioning Plan document. If an acceptable version is available by the time of the Committee meeting this will be reported in an Update. If not, the document will be secured by condition, requiring submission for approval within a month of permission being granted as set out in the recommendation above.

ii) Approach to Site Decommissioning

7.21 The relevant policy framework support for the principle of use was set out in Section 7 (i) of the main report from September Planning Applications Committee. However, the amenity concerns raised above came to light following the publication of the September committee report. It therefore needs to be demonstrated that the new temporary permission, to enable the planned wind down and closure of the site, would not lead to significant ongoing harm to the amenity of surrounding residents. This needs to be balanced against the ongoing provision of a site providing accommodation for vulnerable people, which is supported by NPPF Policy H05 and RBLP Policy H6.

7.22 The resident objections raise relevant concerns regarding whether the continued use to the end of March 2028 is justified, whether its use is compatible with the expectations of neighbouring residents, and whether there are alternative solutions with less impact on established residential communities.

7.23 Notwithstanding the improvements already implemented and any further measures as required, Officers recognise the very real and understandable concerns of neighbouring residents regarding any further extension of the temporary permission. Given the significant amenity impacts experienced during the operation of the pods, substantial justification is required for allowing the use to continue, even if for a further temporary period. In this case such justification must be presented in the context that the extension is sought to facilitate the managed closure of the site rather than its continued operation on a longer-term basis.

7.24 It is acknowledged that there have been a range of amenity, safety and security issues and that there have been operational challenges during the lifetime of the Pods. The Council's own review of the service identified limitations and significant operational challenges associated with the existing model with larger numbers of

occupiers in one location and identified the benefits of smaller more diverse approaches. These informed the recommendation approved by Policy Committee on 13 July 2026 that the Pods should be decommissioned, aligned with the Council's recently adopted Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and associated action plan. The purpose of the current application is to provide sufficient time to implement the transition set out within that Strategy rather than to continue to use the site indefinitely.

- 7.25 The Council (in its role as Local Housing Authority and Social Services Authority) has statutory responsibilities towards vulnerable residents experiencing homelessness and the proposed extension of the temporary permission is to enable existing residents to be supported into alternative accommodation and allow for a staged and planned closure process rather than an unmanaged and accelerated cessation of the accommodation. The Council also has a responsibility to comply with the terms of the planning permission and to act responsibly in that regard. The failure to comply with Condition 1 of permission 211010 is therefore regrettable.
- 7.26 Immediate closure would create significant risks for residents including: increased chances of rough sleeping; safeguarding concerns; loss of continuity of support; create legal and tenancy management difficulties; undermine planned move-on arrangements for residents with disabilities and complex needs; and produce risks to vulnerable women and couples. A managed decommissioning approach would reduce these risks and it also enables the Council to fulfil its housing management responsibilities, adhere to tenancy rights and provide residents with a reasonable opportunity to engage with move-on planning and alternative accommodation options. Active decommissioning includes that no further referrals are being accepted; a dedicated move-on programme is underway with fortnightly meetings since July with all key stakeholders present; and individual move-on plans being developed by Launchpad in conjunction with the Council's Commissioners and Homelessness Prevention Teams.
- 7.27 The applicant advises that an abrupt cessation is not possible due to the legal processes involved beyond the planning process. This is noted and whilst it is arguable that these processes should have begun sooner to ensure compliance with the planning permission, it is apparent that this is now not possible in terms of actual move-ons for other legal reasons. This does not constrain the Local Planning Authority who may still decide not to grant permission. However, it is considered desirable that the closure remains under planning control with suitable conditions imposed whilst the legal process is followed, therefore a practical solution to a managed closure is considered necessary.

8. EQUALITIES 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 a managed reduction in the occupancy as described in this report would minimize the likelihood of harm to residents with protected characteristics. The time-limited continued supply of this specialist accommodation is in direct response to the need to accommodate marginalised groups in the Borough.

9. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposal involves a time limited ongoing temporary use of modular housing units (pods) for temporary accommodation for those who have transitioned out of rough sleeping. This would continue to provide stable self-contained shelter with appropriate sanitation, heating and support services including healthcare, which aligns with National Policy, which focusses on reducing health inequalities and ensuring vulnerable groups have access to safe, inclusive housing and social infrastructure and supports the public health duty to prevent rough sleeping.
- 9.2 In respect of neighbouring residents, the continued operation of the site carries the potential for further impacts on their health through anxiety and fear of crime, related to anti-social behaviour, noise, security concerns, unauthorised access and other disturbance. However, a range of measures have been implemented during the course of the site's operation including improved lighting, enhanced CCTV coverage and surveillance, and safety controls, seeking to improve amenity/health impacts.
- 9.3 An abrupt or unmanaged closure could result in housing instability, disruption to existing support arrangements, increased safeguarding risks and, for some individuals, a risk of returning to rough sleeping. A managed decommissioning process would enable existing residents to continue receiving support while appropriate alternative accommodation and move-on arrangements are progressed.

- 9.4 These considerations support a time-limited and carefully managed decommissioning process, subject to appropriate measures to minimise the impacts on neighbouring residents through the remaining period of operation, which is recommended as part of an Management and Decommissioning Plan, currently in preparation.

10 CONCLUSION & PLANNING BALANCE

- 10.1 The concerns raised by neighbouring residents are substantial and are afforded significant weight in the planning balance. The evidence available, including the advice of Thames Valley Police, demonstrates that the operation of the site has resulted in significant anti-social behaviour, security and other amenity impacts which have adversely affected neighbouring residents and public security in the environs of the application site. While not all incidents within the surrounding area can be attributed to residents of the Pods, there is sufficient evidence of incidents associated with the operation of the site, including residents, visitors and associates, to demonstrate that the use has caused significant harm during periods of its operation.
- 10.2 The proposal is not for the permanent or indefinite retention of the use. The applicant has resolved to decommission the Pods, no new referrals are being accepted, occupancy has already reduced and individual move-on arrangements are underway. In parallel, enhanced security, site management, tenancy enforcement, Police liaison and monitoring measures have been introduced, with evidence of some improvement recently, although it is too early to identify a positive trend. These factors have the potential to reduce rather than eliminate, the potential for further amenity impacts during the remaining period of occupation. Although cessation of use was required by 17 September 2026, under the terms of the current permission, this has not occurred. Whilst regrettable, legal and practical requirements beyond the Planning process mean that move-ons will not occur immediately even if permission is not granted.
- 10.3 Throughout the period of operation of the Pods the applicant, with its various partner organisations, has sought to minimise impacts on neighbouring occupiers through a multi-agency partnership, although it is apparent that this has not been wholly successful. Significant interventions have already been undertaken in response to the problems experienced, although it is considered by officers that such measures have been reactive rather than proactive and has required Police intervention. Occupancy has now reduced from 40 to 27 residents, and no new referrals are being accepted. There is some indication that recent physical and management improvements, have resulted in an improvement in the operation of the site more recently albeit not over a long enough period to confirm their long-term effectiveness.

- 10.4 There remains potential for further incidents and disturbance during the period of occupation applied for, particularly while residents are moved on and the site is progressively decommissioned. A further temporary permission could, therefore, only be regarded as acceptable if accompanied by robust controls which secure and build upon the measures already implemented, noting that these cannot realistically mitigate all harm identified, and this is something which only the ultimate closure of the site will achieve. These controls should be set out in a Management and Decommissioning Plan (secured by condition) to include, continued monitoring and liaison with stakeholders, effective site and visitor management, appropriate security measures, arrangements for securing vacant pods and a satisfactory litter management regime. The management framework should establish clear responsibilities, reporting arrangements and key milestones leading to the cessation of the use.
- 10.5 Officers therefore conclude that there are exceptional circumstances, including practical and legal constraints which justify a strictly time-limited continuation of the use solely to facilitate its managed decommissioning, subject to appropriate planning controls and mitigation and management measures identified above being secured and implemented.
- 10.6 The proposal is, therefore, recommended for approval subject to the conditions as set out in the recommendation above.

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT SEPTEMBER 2026

**Planning Applications
Committee**

09 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0958/FUL
Site Address:	Abattoirs Road, RG1 7BL
Proposed Development	Extension of the temporary planning permission, as approved under PL/21/1010, for the now constructed and fully operational 40 no. sleeping units and 3 no. support units for rough sleepers until 31st March 2028. (amended)
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Alison Amoah - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	9 th October 2026
Recommendation	GRANT full planning permission.
Conditions	To include: 1. Temporary Time Limit until 31^s March 2028 2. Approved Plans 3. Landscaping – retained 4. Boundary Treatment – retained 5. External Lighting – retained 6. Vehicle Parking – retained 7. Cycle Parking – retained 8. Vehicle Access – retained 9. Refuse and Recycling – retained 10. Secure Access system and CCTV – retained
Informatives	To include: 1. Terms and Conditions

	2. Community Infrastructure Levy 3. Network Rail Advice 4. Positive and Proactive
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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The proposal is for the continued use of the existing temporary rough sleeper pods and support services, which were granted permission in September 2021 for a period of 5 years
- 2.2 An extension of time for the siting of the pods until the end of March 2028 is sought to allow for a managed and coordinated cessation of the use, including the relocation of residents into more permanent accommodation and the preparation of the site for future redevelopment.
- 2.3 It is not considered that extending this use for a period of 18 months would have any detrimental material effects and it is, therefore, recommended for approval subject to conditions.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.2 The application site is located to the west of Caversham Road and to the south of Abattoirs Road and is existing accommodation for rough sleepers operated by Launch Pad on behalf of Reading Borough Council. It is made up of stacked residential pods (with the appearance of shipping containers), which house 40 accommodation pods (2 pods in height) comprising single person studio accommodation and a bathroom. In addition, there are welfare office pods, a laundry and switch room, staff car parking, landscaping, seating, bin and cycle storage. There are two secure access points – one to the eastern boundary on Caversham Road and one to the north on Abattoirs Road.
- 2.3 The development of the site for temporary pods arose from the Government's response to Covid-19 'Everyone in' requiring local authorities to house all rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. This site was one of the options developed to meet a client group with more complex needs for whom intensive support on site was necessary.
- 2.4 To the south is a mixture of industrial and residential buildings and to the west a large area of hardstanding associated with the Cattle Market buildings. The application site is owned by Reading Borough Council.
- 2.5 The site is potentially contaminated land, within an Air Quality Management Area and is part of the Cattle Market area allocated under Policy CR12a within the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) 'West Side Major Opportunity Area' (Area A – see extract below).

CR12a, CATTLE MARKET: This site will be developed for a mix of edge-of-centre retail uses, and residential development, along with public car parking. The retail may include bulky goods, but should not include a significant element of non-bulky comparison goods retail. It must be designed to reflect the urban grid layout and built form of the centre and a single storey retail warehouse will not be permitted. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment. Site size: 2.46 ha Indicative potential: 330-490 dwellings, 10,000-15,000 sq m net gain of retail.

West Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy



- 2.6 It should be noted that under the emerging policy within the Local Plan Partial Update Submission version (May 2025) the policy is proposed for amendment to the following:

“This site will be developed for primarily residential development. It must be designed to reflect the urban grid layout and built form of the centre Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment. Development should deliver a fitted out primary healthcare facility where this is viable and where there is a realistic prospect that an occupier to operate the facility can be found. Site size: 2.46 ha Indicative potential: 560-840 dwellings, primary healthcare.”

- 2.6 The first reason for the change is to remove the significant retail element, which is no longer required as the level of need for retail development has substantially reduced in large part due to the increase in online retailing. Retention of the retail requirement would have likely made the allocation undeliverable. The second reason is that the basis for assessing appropriate densities has changed across the board, based on more up-to-date information on achievable densities, and this has resulted in an increase in the assessed capacity of most allocations in the plan.
- 2.7 It is within Flood Risk Zone 2.



Site Location

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is to retain the temporary site, known as Caversham Road Pods, as originally granted temporary permission for 5 years from September 2021 (ref: PL/21/1010), for a further 18 months until the end of March 2028. There would be no change to the existing scheme, which would continue to provide supported accommodation for vulnerable individuals to support their progression towards independent living.
- 3.2 The timing of individual move-ons varies significantly depending on the personal circumstances and the availability of suitable next-step housing. The submitted Planning Statement sets out that some of the most recently housed residents are still progressing through these interventions and are not yet ready to transition. Additional time, in terms of extending the temporary permission period, is, therefore, required both for them to reach that stage and for appropriate accommodation options to be identified and secured.
- 3.3 The formal legal steps to end tenancies could not take place until the Council's decision to close the scheme had been made public. People currently living in the scheme will be supported to move into alternative accommodation as the current scheme is decommissioned by September 2027. This approach was agreed at a meeting of the Council's Policy Committee on 13th July 2026 and reflects priorities in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031, adopted earlier this year. The Strategy places a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, alongside providing longer-term housing and support solutions for those who need them. Current national best practice favours a shift away from large-scale, intensely populated supported housing models, towards dispersed approaches where possible.
- 3.4 It is expected that the service would be fully decommissioned by September 2027, with reinstatement of the site to a cleared state taking place thereafter.
- 3.5 This is a full planning application, which is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee for determination as the application is the Council's own

application (Regulation 3). The original application was reported to your meeting on 8th September 2021, and the relevant report and update report are attached as Appendix 2 and 3 to this report.

- 3.6 It was not possible for this to be submitted as a S73 application (variation) due to the original description of development including reference to a five-year temporary period. However, although a full application, it has been examined much as a S73 would have been in terms of considering any material changes since the original temporary permission was granted, rather than a wholesale reassessment of all issues.

3.7 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

The submitted plans and documentation are as follows:

- Drawing no: 201123-101.01 - Site Location Plan, received 28th July 2026
- Drawing no: 2606-001 – As Built Site Block Plan, received 27th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-114.04 - Site Layout, received 14th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-015.02 - Site Elevations A, B & C, received 14th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-016.01 - Site Elevations D, E, F, G & H, received 28th July 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-017.02 - Site Elevations J, K, L & M, received 14th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-110.01 - Layouts and Elevations: Unit Types A&B, received 28th July 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-111.01 - Layouts and Elevations: Unit Types C&D, received 28th July 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-113.02 - Layouts and Elevations: Laundry, received 14th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-112.01 - Layouts and Elevations: Offices, received 28th July 2026
- Drawing no: ASD-DN-MR-0920-003 Sheet 1 of 1 Rev R01 - Exterior Lighting, received 14th August 2026
- Bin Storage Metrostor, PBM-3_LHH_SWG_GW_EU Issue 1, dated 29/4/21, received 12th August 2026
- Bin Storage Metrostor Data Sheet, PBM36601-12801, received 12th August 2026
- Drawing no: 201123-103.02 - Site Vehicle Tracking, received 14th August 2026

Other Documents:

- Design and Access Statement, dated 18th March 2021, prepared by Williams Architects [as submitted under the original application], received 17th July 2026
- Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement, received 17th July 2026
- Photos, received 12th August 2026
- Photos of Cycle Storage received 14th August 2026



- 3.8 Community Infrastructure Levy: In relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. As the proposal is for temporary buildings there is an exemption from CIL liability.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The relevant planning history is as follows:

PL/14/1475/FUL – Use of land for storage of cars – Refused 18th May 2015

PL/17/1315/FUL - Demolition of existing out buildings on site and the provision of a new public car park with access acquired from Abattoirs Road, with egress onto Great Knollys Street Land off Abattoirs Road, Reading –Finally Disposed Of 2nd August 2018

PL/19/1384/REG3 - Demolition of existing outbuildings and the provision of a new public car park with access required from Abattoirs Road with egress on to Great Knollys Street, Reading –Withdrawn 18th November 2021

PL/21/1010/REG3 - Retrospective application for the erection of 40no. sleeping units and 3no. support units for rough sleepers, to be used temporarily for a period of 5 years – Approved 17th September 2021

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Consultations have been undertaken with the following:

Statutory

- 5.2 Network Rail - No comments/ objections.

Non-Statutory

- 5.3 RBC Transport Strategy - The existing access arrangements remain unchanged from those previously approved and implemented. Vehicular movements associated with the site are limited and relate primarily to staff access, servicing, and support functions. Given the nature of the development, traffic generation is minimal, and the proposal would not result in any changes that would increase

vehicular activity or affect the current access arrangements. There are no transport objections to this application.

- 5.4 Thames Valley Policy – Designing out Crime Officer - A response was provided to the original application (Ref 211010/REG3) in relation to:
- Management procedures to address crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Formal surveillance
 - Visually permeable vehicle and pedestrian gates at entrances with access controls
 - Boundary fencing.
- 5.5 The requirement to provide a secure access system and CCTV was conditioned on the original permission. It is presumed that these have been implemented, are retained on site, and are operating effectively. A condition may be required to ensure that the approved CCTV and access control system are retained and maintained should planning permission be granted for this application.
- 5.6 RBC Environmental Protection, and RBC Planning (Natural Environment) were also consulted. Any further consultation responses will be reported in an update report.
- 5.7 Two site notices were displayed on 18th August 2026. No comments have been received. The consultation period expires on 8th September, and any comments received prior to committee will be reported in an update report.

6. **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 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) which states at Paragraph 11 *“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.
- 6.2 Section 72 1 (b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables local planning authorities to grant planning permission for a specified temporary period.
- 6.3 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026).

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

4. Achieving Sustainable Development

6. Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes (H09 Specialist Forms of Accommodation)

12. Making Effective Use of Land

15. Promoting Sustainable Transport

18. Managing Flood Risk and Coastal Change

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

- Use of Planning Conditions

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

The relevant 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

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

EN18: Flooding and Drainage

H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

CR2: Design in Central Reading

CR12: West Side Major Opportunity Area

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Other relevant documents:

- Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update – Sequential and Exception Test [in relation to flood risk] (May 2025, RBC)
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A Strategy for Reading 2026-2031
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: An Action Plan for Reading 2026-2031
- Housing Strategy for Reading 2020- 2025, RBC
- Reading Borough Council Policy Committee Report 3rd August 2020

- Reading Borough Council Policy Committee Report 13th July 2026

6.4 Local Plan Update

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 updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024. A submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025, and it is currently at 'Examination' stage.

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 this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy. Of those listed above Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, CC7, EN14, EN18, H6, TR4, TR5, CR2, CR12 and CR12a are proposed for amendment, but the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan, and at present, due to the status of the emerging Local Plan have limited weight in decision making. The current policies can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'. As noted above, Policy CR12a in relation to the Cattle Market is proposed to be altered and this is discussed further below.

7. **APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

- i) Principle of Continued Use**
- ii) Other**

i) Principle of Continued Use

- 7.1 As described above the application site forms part of an allocated site within the current local plan. This allocation is being carried forward to the emerging Local Plan Partial Update under Policy CR12a, albeit it would focus primarily on residential use.

- 7.2 Under Section 72 1(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) there is the provision to enable permissions to be granted for temporary periods and the principle of the temporary use was established as acceptable under the original temporary permission ref: PL21/1010 and there are no material matters which would lead to an alternative position.
- 7.3 However, under the National Planning Policy Guidance (Use of Planning Conditions - Para: 014 Reference ID: 21a-014-20140306) it states that although a temporary planning permission may be appropriate *“to enable the temporary use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward (a ‘meanwhile use’). It will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission (except in cases where changing circumstances provide a clear rationale, such as temporary classrooms and other school facilities). Further permissions can normally be granted permanently or refused if there is clear justification for doing so. There is no presumption that a temporary grant of planning permission will then be granted permanently.”*
- 7.4 The ongoing use for rough sleeper pods as move-on accommodation and on-site support, until suitable next-step housing becomes available, continues to be supported by National Policy in terms of contributing towards supporting the social objective of sustainable development (Para 17.) by supporting *“strong, vibrant and healthy communitiesand communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”*
- 7.5 The proposal accords with the aims and priorities set out within the Council’s Housing Strategy and, Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by providing suitable accommodation to meet ongoing need until long term accommodation can be sourced.
- 7.6 It also meets Policy H6 of the RBLP through the ongoing provision of accommodation for vulnerable people.
- 7.7 The site remains part of the allocation under Policy CR12a. The application seeks to extend the temporary use, which continues to offer a unique opportunity for a valuable scheme as a meanwhile/ temporary use on an underused piece of land in central Reading, after which it will be cleared and available for development. The extension of the temporary permission until the end of March 2028 is consistent with the expiry date of the current leases on the wider allocation site. Its ongoing temporary use would, therefore, not impact on the delivery of a scheme/s in accordance with the allocation and would ensure that the site continues to provide a valuable resource for specialist accommodation in the meantime.
- 7.8 It is considered, therefore, that in this case there is a clear rationale for further extending the temporary permission.

ii) **Other**

- 7.9 In terms of other matters previously considered with respect to design, amenity, transport, landscaping, sustainability, and environmental, there is no proposed change to the site, and these matters have already been assessed and found to be acceptable subject to conditions previously imposed. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be suitable in terms of the policies of the Local Plan set out above and officers advise that in the majority of instances, the conditions can be adjusted from those which originally required submissions, to those which are now simply restrictive in nature.
- 7.10 The proposal includes an amended site plan, as the implemented scheme varies very slightly from the original approved layout with respect to the amount of green space, number of bins and parking and the amended plan also reflects the actual lights and cctv cameras in situ.
- 7.11 Community safety and effective site management are integral to the operation of the Pods. A robust management regime has been in place since its occupation, including 24-hour on-site supervision, controlled access arrangements, and provision of support services tailored to residents' needs. Such measures will continue unchanged throughout the extended period of operation and have proved effective. Where any issues have arisen, these have been resolved and dealt with in a timely manner.
- 7.12 The recommended conditions include compliance with the existing site plan and the facilities already in situ.

8. Equalities Implications

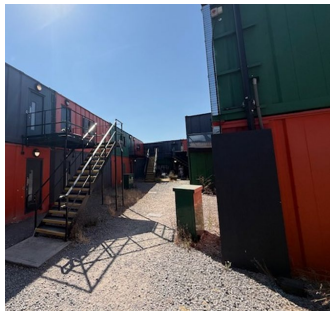
- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons 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. Indeed, the continued supply of this specialist accommodation is in direct response to the need to accommodate marginalised groups in the Borough.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal would provide for a short-term, continued temporary use for much needed move-on accommodation for vulnerable people with on-site welfare support. There are essentially no changes proposed to the existing scheme, which has operated for 5 years without any significant residential amenity effects. It would continue to be a sustainable development in line with national and local policies and would also continue to meet Council priorities with respect to homelessness and rough sleeping and a suitable 'meanwhile' use on an underused piece of land.
- 9.2 The extended period would allow for a managed conclusion to the use at the end of which the site would be available to be able to bring forward proposals according the with long-term site allocation for housing.
- 9.3 The proposal is, therefore recommended for approval subject to restrictive-type conditions being attached.

APPENDIX 1: PLANS & PHOTOGRAPHS

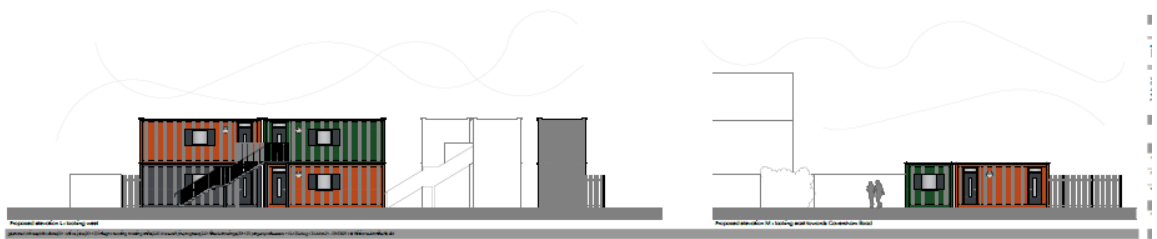
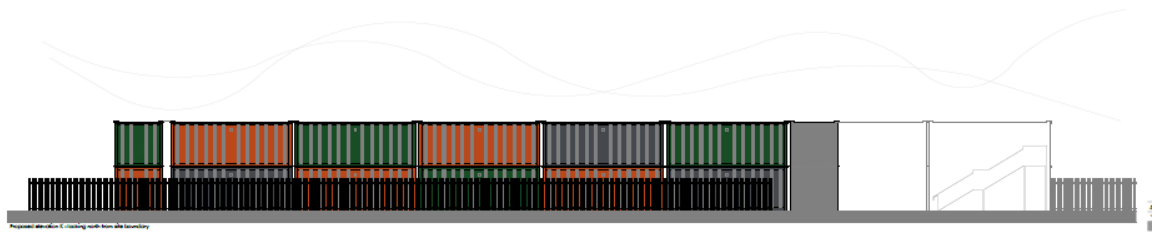
Photos

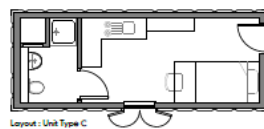
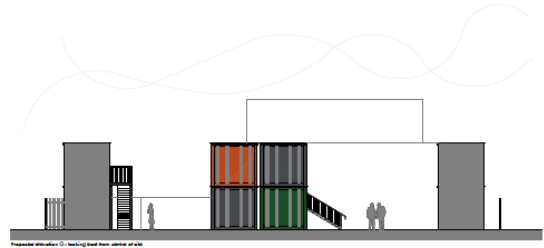


Existing/ Proposed Site Plan

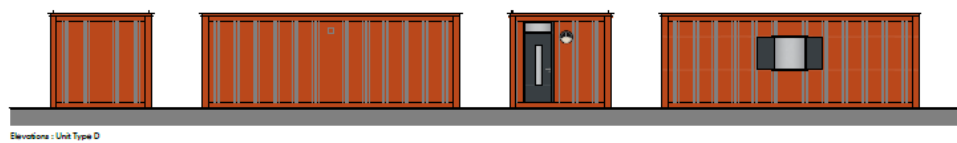
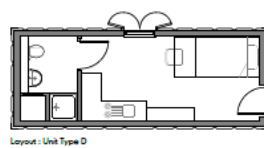
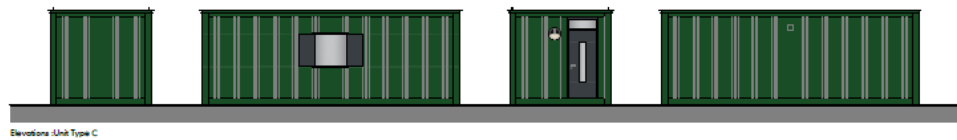


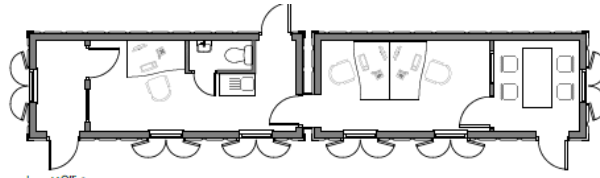
Existing/ Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations



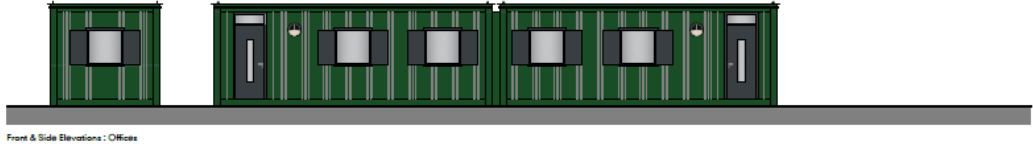


- Colour 1 : RAL 2001 red-orange
- Colour 2 : RAL 7024 graphite grey
- Colour 3 : RAL 6035 pearl-green





Layout : Office



Front & Side Elevations : Office



Rear & Side Elevations : Office

APPENDIX 2: PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT PL/21/1010

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO.8

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 8th September 2021

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 211010

Address: Land to the west of Abattoirs Road

Proposal: Part Retrospective application for the erection of 40 no. sleeping units and 3no. support units for rough sleepers, to be used temporarily for a period of 5 years.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 14/9/2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 18/1/2022

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) TL1 - 3 yrs
- 2) Temporary permission - five years
- 3) Use approved is as temporary homeless shelter accommodation only
- 4) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 5) M1 - Materials as submitted
- 6) Landscaping scheme to include large plants in planters to be submitted, approved and implemented prior to occupation
- 7) L3 - Boundary Treatment - as shown and retained
- 8) Details of lights to be submitted and approved prior to occupation
- 9) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified prior to occupation
- 10) DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 11) DC7 - Cycle Parking as specified prior to occupation
- 12) Refuse and Recycling as specified prior to occupation
- 13) Secure access system and CCTV to be provided prior to occupation and retained with 24-hour on-site monitoring

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 2) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 3) I11 - CIL
- 4) IF3 - Highways
- 5) IF8 - Encroachment
- 6) IF1 - Positive & Proactive.
- 7) Network Rail advice

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site is a brownfield site partially bounded to the north by the railway line and partially by 59a Caversham Road (believed to be short term residential use), to the east by the A329 Caversham Road, to the south by a mixture of industrial and residential buildings and to the west by a large area of hardstanding associated with the Cattle Market buildings and appears to be being used informally for vehicle storage and parking. The application site is owned by the Council.
- 1.2 It has an abandoned character with scrubby vegetation recolonising the area through cracks in the hardstanding. Boundaries to neighbouring sites comprise a mix of palisade fencing, brick walls and corrugated metal structures.
- 1.3 There are a mix of scale of buildings with the buildings to the west associated with the Cattle Market being predominantly low rise in nature of one and two storeys and those to the east comprising several multi-storey buildings. The railway tracks are at an elevated position above the ground level of the application site.
- 1.4 The site is identified as potentially contaminated land, within an Air Quality Management Area and is part of the Cattle Market area allocated under Policy CR12a within the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) 'West Side Major Opportunity Area'. It is within Flood Risk Zone 2.
- 1.5 In March 2020, as part of the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was announced that local authorities should house all rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping so that they could socially distance effectively and self-isolate if they needed to do so. As a result of the national 'Everyone in' response, over 260 people in Reading Borough, who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, were accommodated in B&B/hotel accommodation in Reading during the course of the pandemic. This created a significant pressure on the Council's resources and solutions were required to move people on to alternative accommodation.
- 1.6 A range of 'move on' options were utilised and in order to meet the needs of a large number of the client group, with more complex needs, The Council's Housing Department proposed a temporary development of 40 units of modular accommodation with intensive support on site at this site. The authority, to spend Housing Revenue account monies to progress the development, was provided by Policy Committee on 3rd August 2020.
- 1.7 The original timeline for delivery was August to October 2020. Crown Commercial Service, the public procurement arm of Government, offered assistance in procuring the modular housing solution both in terms of drawing up a specification and drawing from their established frameworks for supply and construction to help reduce costs. Tenders were sent out in August 2020, but a contractor was not appointed until November 2020 and the contract was not agreed until January 2021.

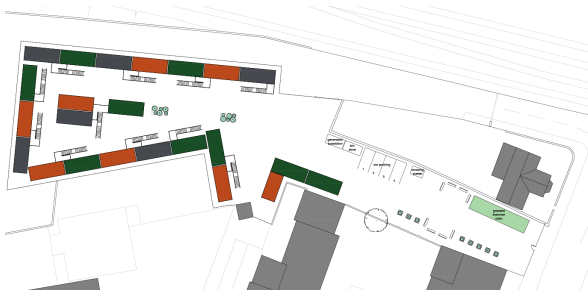
- 1.8 Legal issues and the arrival of travellers on site significantly hindered the availability of the site. The manufacturer suffered delays in the production of the units, which are all manufactured offsite, so although a significant number of the units are already on site the development is not likely to be completed until early September 2021.
- 1.9 The application is referred to committee as it is a Council own development (Regulation 3), as well as being a 'major' development.

Location Plan



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for:
- A total of 40 accommodation pods (2 in height), each comprising single person studio accommodation and a bathroom
 - 2 site welfare office pods - 45.8sqm GIA
 - Laundry & Switch Room (electric distribution point) - 22sqm GIA
 - New pedestrian gate onto Caversham Road
 - 4 no. staff car parking spaces
 - Bin storage, cycle storage and landscaping
 - 6 staff



- 2.2 Submitted plans and documentation received 18th June 2021 unless otherwise stated (including amended details) are as follows:
- Site Location Plan - Drawing no: 201123-101.01
 - Site Block Plan - Drawing no: 201123-102.03

- Site Layout - Drawing no: 201123-114.03
- Site Elevations A, B & C - Drawing no: 201123-015.01
- Site Elevations D, E, F, G & H - Drawing no: 201123-016.01
- Site Elevations J, K, L & M- Drawing no: 201123-017.02
- Layouts and Elevations: Unit Types A&B - Drawing no: 201123-110.01
- Layouts and Elevations: Unit Types C&D - Drawing no: 201123-111.01
- Layouts and Elevations: Laundry - Drawing no: 201123-113.02
- Layouts and Elevations: Offices - Drawing no: 201123-112.01
- Exterior Lighting - Drawing no: ASD-DN-MR-0920-003 Sheet 1 of 1 Rev R01, received 20th July 2021
- Exploratory Hole Plan - Drawing no: 20260-PW-AG-00-XX-DR-G-1001 Rev P01, received 20th July 2021
- Foundation Plan and Details Two Storey Sleeper Pods - Drawing no: 20260 - PWA-00-XX-DR-S-1001 Rev P01, received 20th July 2021

Other Documents:

- Design and Access Statement, dated 18th March 2021, prepared by Williams Architects, Document ref: 211123-130.01

- 2.3 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. As the proposal is for temporary buildings there is an exemption from CIL liability.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

171315/FUL: Demolition of existing out buildings on site and the provision of a new public car park with access acquired from Abattoirs Road, with egress onto Great Knollys Street Land off Abattoirs Road, Reading - 'Disposed Of' 2/8/2018

191384/REG3 - Demolition of existing outbuildings and the provision of a new public car park with access required from Abattoirs Road with egress on to Great Knollys Street, Reading - Pending

4 CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

Network Rail

- 4.1 No objection. Lighting - Any lighting associated with the development (including vehicle lights) must not interfere with the sighting of signalling apparatus and/or train drivers' vision on approaching trains. The location and colour of lights must not give rise to the potential for confusion with the signalling arrangements on the railway. Following occupation of the development, if within three months Network Rail or a Train Operating Company has identified that lighting from the development is interfering with driver's vision, signal sighting, alteration/mitigation will be required to remove the conflict at the applicant's expense.

- 4.2 Drainage - Soakaways / attenuation ponds / septic tanks etc, as a means of storm/surface water disposal must not be constructed near/within 5 metres of Network Rail's boundary or at any point which could adversely affect the stability of Network Rail's property/infrastructure. Storm/surface water must not be discharged onto Network Rail's property or into Network Rail's culverts or drains. Network Rail's drainage system(s) are not to be compromised by any work(s). Suitable drainage or other works must be provided and maintained by the Developer to prevent surface water flows or run-off onto Network Rail's property / infrastructure. Ground levels - if altered, to be such that water flows away from the railway. Drainage is not to show up on Buried service checks.

Non-statutory

Environmental Health

- 4.3 Officers are awaiting comments at the time of writing. This will be reported in an update report.

Natural Environment (tree officer)

- 4.4 The site is within a low canopy cover ward (Abbey with reference to the adopted Tree Strategy) and within the AQMA - as such, sufficient greening of any development is more important. Whilst I appreciate the temporary nature of the use, greening can still be incorporated to both meet policy requirements, aims of our Tree Strategy and to make the site more pleasant for users. The use of planters would enable any trees or shrubs within these to be re-used by the Council after use of the land ceases too.
- 4.5 Landscape principles should be established prior to a decision. The site would benefit from planting / green screening on the Caversham Rd /IDR frontage to help filter pollution. The type of tree planting in planters could include dwarf fruit tree varieties which would provide, wildlife value, softening of the site and fruit for the users. Planters will have to be of a sufficient size - details of which could be secured via condition.
- 4.6 Given that the site is already being set up, it would seem reasonable to see if the full details could be resolved prior to a decision to avoid a pre-occupation condition.

Thames Valley Police - Crime Prevention Design Adviser (Berks)

- 4.7 Awaiting comments at time of writing. Any response received will be reported in an update report.

RBC Transport Strategy

- 4.8 The site in question has no existing planning use and therefore there are no vehicle trips associated with the application site, the principle of this was agreed as part of previous applications on the site. The proposal will increase vehicle movements to and from the site and therefore it must be established that the access illustrated is sufficient. This application is for the same site where the extended RBC car park is proposed to be located and I note this application is still undetermined. Therefore, details of how the two sites could co-exist need to be provided and the new vehicle access to the site assessed

and visibility splays provided. I am happy that speeds would be low and as such visibility should be provided at 2m x 25m in either direction.

It is also noted that no cycle parking has been provided, irrespective of the demographic cycle parking should still be provided at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit. The agent has confirmed that A small shed will be provided adjacent to the management suite for secure bicycle storage. Details of this need to be provided.

It will also need to be clarified how refuse will be collected, it is noted that the refuse store is located half way into the site which would assume that a refuse vehicle would travel along Abattoirs Road. If this is the case then a dedicated on site turning facility will be required. It should also be noted that a refuse vehicle will need to get to within 10m of where refuse is to be collected from.

In addition, and to be consistent with other applications for this site the applicant should implement a no right turn ban at the junction of Abattoirs Road and Caversham Road as the proposal increases vehicle movements to and from the site. Other applications have been required to undertake this prior to commencement of the use on the site however as this proposal is already partially in operation I would suggest that they implement this within 2 months of permission being granted given the statutory processes have already commenced in relation to the car park. I recommend a condition is used.

Public consultation

- 4.9 The following addresses were consulted by letter: Arches Club, Abattoirs Road; Flats 1 & 2 59A Caversham Road; Flats 1-32 Malcolm Place, Caversham Rd; Flats 1-30 Jeffrey Place, Caversham Road; 1-29 Regent Court, Caversham Road; Reading Cattle Market, Great Knollys Street; Reading Auction Market, Great Knollys Street; Cattle Market Café, Great Knollys Street; and 18 Great Knollys Street.
- 4.10 3 objections were received. Full neighbour consultation comments are available to view on the Council's website. The following is a summary of the key issues raised:
- Built without prior planning permission; not informed of the intent to use the land for this purpose prior to the units being erected.
 - Major concerns about the security of property and the increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour
 - Already a significant issue with bicycle theft and attempted theft as well as unwanted intruders into the neighbouring residential block (previous rough sleepers in the hallways). This wall gives direct access to the internal areas of the block of flats and totally undermines the locked front door!
 - What safety and security measures are being put in place to protect neighbours and property?

- There are already existing container sleeping units built on the same sites building additional 40 units will create an over concentration of homeless unit in the area. This is done without further supporting amenities in the area, and the council is making a decision without a detailed plan for hosting a high density homeless pods site.

Planning Officer comment: It appears that the objector has misunderstood the proposal which is not for a further 40 units but is seeking permission for just 40 pods - including those already on site.

- Since the temporary container sleeping units were built I have observed increasing amounts of trespassing to our property area and people going through our rubbish in the middle of nights and left rubbish on the ground in our residential area. this has created health & safety issue for the local residents of Regent Court.
- As Regent Court is a listed building, accumulation of rubbish in the area and building of sleeper pods nearby may impact the appearance and character of a listed building.
- The area is next to the railway line and surrounded by a commercial area. The dirty and noisy living conditions would not be suitable and respectable.
- Concentrating all homeless in one area will hamper the effort for integrating them into the wider community.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 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) (2021) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:
- 5.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

National Policy

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

- 5.3 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure
Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
Policy EN15: Air Quality
Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
Policy H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading
Policy CR12: West Side Major Opportunity Area

5.4 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:

- Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (December 2019)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

5.5 Other Documents:

- Sequential and Exception Test of Sites in the Submission Draft Local Plan (March 2018, RBC)
- Reading's Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2020 - 2025
- Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024, RBC
- Housing Strategy for Reading 2020- 2025, RBC
- Reading Borough Council Policy Committee Report 3rd August 2020

6 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Transport**
- **Landscaping**
- **Sustainability**
- **Environmental Matters**
- **Equalities impact**
- **Other Matters**

- 6.1 Residents have raised issues that work has commenced on site prior to planning permission being sought and granted. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2020 introduced part 12A which states that emergency development by a local authority or health service body is permitted development if that is:

A. Development by or on behalf of a local authority(3) or health service body on land owned, leased, occupied or maintained by it for the purposes of–

(a)preventing an emergency;

(b)reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency; or

(c)taking other action in connection with an emergency.

- 6.2 This, therefore, allowed for works to commence to provide emergency move on accommodation for those rough sleepers housed in B&Bs during the pandemic, without first applying for planning permission. This was as long as permission was sought and secured by 31st December 2021. As at 11th August 21 pods had been installed. The remaining pods are due to be delivered by the end of the first week in September.

Principle of Development

- 6.3 The NPPF states (para. 10) that *“at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”* and at para. 11 that for decision-taking this means: *“approving development proposals that accord with an up -to-date development plan without delay;”*. The overarching objectives are economic, social and environmental. *The proposal would contribute towards supporting “strong, vibrant and healthy communities...”* and through the provision of move-on accommodation and on-site support, would support health and social well-being.
- 6.4 The proposal meets the Council’s Corporate Plan priority of safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable. In addition, it contributes to the Council’s strategic aims of promoting equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment. The proposal also accords with the aims and priorities set out within the Council’s Housing Strategy, Preventing Homelessness Strategy and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 6.5 Policy H6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) relates to accommodation for vulnerable people and states that *“i).....Other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will address the identified needs, which are primarily for accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible....ii) Development for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will fulfil the following criteria: • Developments will, where possible, locate accommodation close to.... relevant community facilities.....; • Development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people....iv) Affordable specialist housing for vulnerable people that meets the needs of the most up to date Housing Strategy may count towards affordable housing provision in line with policy H3.”*
- 6.6 The temporary proposal would provide accommodation for vulnerable people with a specialist service, commissioned to provide relevant on-site support, akin

to a C2 use class, which includes residential institutions where a level of care is provided. The site is part of the allocation under Policy CR12a as follows:

CR12a, CATTLE MARKET: This site will be developed for a mix of edge-of-centre retail uses, and residential development, along with public car parking. The retail may include bulky goods, but should not include a significant element of non-bulky comparison goods retail. It must be designed to reflect the urban grid layout and built form of the centre and a single storey retail warehouse will not be permitted. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment. Site size: 2.46 ha Indicative potential: 330-490 dwellings, 10,000-15,000 sq m net gain of retail.

- 6.7 Whilst the proposal would not provide the permanent housing sought by the allocation, it would contribute to addressing more complex and immediate needs by providing safe accommodation for rough sleepers and on-site welfare support on a temporary basis, which would accord with Policy H6. This is a relatively unique opportunity to deliver a valuable scheme as a meanwhile/ temporary use on an underused piece of land in central Reading. It is also relevant that there has been no alternative proposal, which meets the allocation requirements, which has come forward for this site in over 20 years.
- 6.8 In conclusion, the principle of the use of the site as proposed on a temporary basis is considered acceptable. It would provide a form of affordable accommodation for vulnerable people in accordance with Policies H6 and H3, which weighs in favour over fulfilling the aims of the site allocation in this case. It would also provide employment benefits in the short term for the support staff for the site. The report goes on to consider the proposal against other relevant policies.

Design

- 6.9 The NPPF (Para 126) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 6.10 Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, requires all development to be of a “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”
- 6.11 The proposal includes pods at two storeys, mostly arranged around the perimeter of the site. They will have a utilitarian and basic appearance, although they will be colourful. They will sit comfortably within the surrounding context and their scale at 5.7m in height is acceptable. The layout maximises the use of this irregular shaped site, and the appearance will be softened by some planting in above ground pots and amenity space. The site will also include bin storage and parking.
- 6.12 Officers accept that the scheme will not meet the requirements of Policy CC7 in terms of high-quality design, but this has been weighed against the nature of this temporary development, which will meet a specific and specialist accommodation need, which is considered to make this scheme acceptable in this instance.

- 6.13 The site benefits from being in a highly accessible location with the necessary local infrastructure already in place. The existing vehicular access point on the northern side, from Abattoirs Road, will be retained and a new pedestrian access point will be installed on the Caversham Road frontage.



- 6.14 In terms of achieving a design which is safe and accessible the proposal includes secure palisade fencing of 2m high around the site and access-controlled entrances and 24hr on site supervision.
- 6.15 The development of the site for the temporary pods, with some landscaping and on-site amenity, will provide improvements to the appearance of the site, and although not wholly in accordance with policy CC7, this is considered on balance to be suitable given the positive social benefits of the proposal.

Residential Amenity

- 6.16 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety. The nearest residential properties to the proposal are adjacent to the boundary with the site at Jeffery Place and Malcolm Place.
- 6.17 Policy EN16 states that *“proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution”*.
- 6.18 The pods themselves will be orientated such that there will be no overlooking, no overbearing effects, or loss of daylight/ sunlight of adjacent properties.
- 6.19 Issues have been raised through consultation with respect to crime and safety. The site will be bounded by 2m high palisade fencing and the entrances will be controlled through a door entry system, with CCTV, to prevent access to anyone other than those who will live or work there or who are required for providing services, e.g doctors. The site will be subject to 24/7 on-site support from the homeless charity, St. Mungo’s, who will provide staff for individual support for the residents of the site, which will take place within the offices, and staff for building services and incident response.

- 6.20 Each of the units will be externally lit for safe access to the units and there will be additional lighting to the site entrances and around communal areas. A condition is attached requiring the submission of the final lighting details and implementation prior to occupation.
- 6.21 For the occupants of the site, each of the pods will have a window to provide sufficient levels of daylight/ sunlight.
- 6.22 The windows and doors of the pods will be double glazed and will be located facing inwards and away from the railway to mitigate the impact of noise from that source.
- 6.23 In terms of amenity space there will be communal courtyard areas in front and around the pods as well as seating and a grassed area.
- 6.24 With the conditions proposed, the scheme is considered not to cause undue harm through noise disturbance or security concerns to the future occupants and nearby residents and is considered to provide an acceptable standard of temporary accommodation to the users. The proposal will not fully accord with relevant amenity policies, but it is considered it will provide sufficient measures when balanced against the benefits of the provision of a temporary scheme of this nature.

Transport

- 6.25 The Application Site is in a very sustainable location within walking distance of the centre of Reading. There is a pedestrian point across Caversham Road very close to the site and access to public transport.
- 6.26 The proposal will retain access points for vehicles and pedestrians from Abattoirs Road and Caversham Road respectively and will include 4 no. car parking spaces for staff and covered cycle storage. The only vehicles visiting the site will be staff and support services and subject to clarification on traffic circulation, trip generation and suitable safety measures, it is likely that these could only turn left from the site onto Caversham Road. Bin storage is proposed as an open fronted, covered canopy structure and will be sited to enable easy proximity/ access for refuse vehicles. Transport comments have been provided (see consultation section of this report) and some questions remain. These will be addressed in an update report.
- 6.27 However, there was no in principle objection on transport grounds and therefore subject to the details sought being provided the requirements of the relevant policy TR5 will be met.

Landscaping

- 6.28 Policy H6 states that development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people. Policy CC7 requires developments to include appropriate landscaping and EN14 requires new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage and in areas such as this which have low tree coverage and are within Air Quality Management Areas EN15.

- 6.29 This proposal is for an emergency welfare accommodation project and bearing in mind the temporary (five year) nature of the accommodation, a landscaping solution which is appropriate needs to be considered.
- 6.30 The site is a relatively constrained urban site with no existing meaningful landscaping. The proposal will focus the siting of the pods adjacent to the site boundaries. The proposal will include some planting within above ground planters within the site, between the pods, and to boundaries. A condition is included for the submission and approval of a satisfactory detailed landscaping plan for implementation prior to occupation.
- 6.31 It will also involve the removal of scrub, particularly at the Caversham Road frontage. This will contribute to improving the appearance of the site.

Sustainability

- 6.32 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC2 requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials and states that *“All minor non-residential developments is required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard as a minimum;..... Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.”*
- 6.33 Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 6.34 As a temporary scheme of this unique type of development it will not be possible to meet BREEAM standards. However, the proposals do offer a range of measures as follows contributing towards policy requirements:
- The pods have been manufactured off-site using modern methods of construction to minimise waste and maximise efficiencies of the build process.
 - The units are well insulated using high performance rigid insulation boards lining the walls, roof and floor and windows are double glazed both for thermal and acoustic reasons.
 - They will be heated via electric panel heaters and hot water will be provided through an instantaneous electric water heater ensuring no heat loss on the hot water system through stored water.
 - LED lighting will be used both internally and externally. Other appliances installed in the pods will be low energy.
- 6.35 Although temporary in nature they are robustly manufactured, and they could be re-used.

Environmental matters

- 6.36 ***Air Quality:*** Policy EN15 requires developments to *“have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality”*. The pods are sited well back from Caversham Road and set away from the railway line and the direct impacts of poor air quality will therefore be minimised. The units

are temporary and as an allocated site for housing it has been assessed as suitable for accommodation.

- 6.37 **Contaminated land:** Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources states that *“Development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.”* Some sampling of the ground conditions was undertaken in February 2021 and this showed no contaminated material. Excavations have been kept to a minimum and generally to nominal depths of 300mm to 450mm and limited to installing foundation pads to each corner of the pods and for connections to required existing services. These excavations have not revealed any contaminated material or evidence of contaminated ground. No excavated material has been removed from the site during the works. Any comments received from Environmental Protection will be reported in an update.
- 6.38 **Flood Risk:** The site is in Flood Risk 2. It is part of an allocated site for residential and commercial uses and has therefore passed the sequential test. The proposed use is defined under the ‘more vulnerable’ classification of use for which flood risk standing advice is to be followed. Under the NPPG¹ it states that all vulnerable developments should follow the advice for: surface water management, access and evacuation and floor levels. There will be a permeable top surface across the whole site and the pods utilise eaves drop for rainwater fall to the blank elevation sides to manage surface water on site. There will be an emergency evacuation plan in place for staff and residents. It is considered that there will be no worsening of surface water run off as the pods will be located on areas which are existing hard surfacing, and existing drainage will be utilised. The ground floor pods will have an internal floor level above estimated flood levels.

Equalities Impact

- 6.39 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.
- 6.40 In developing of the scheme it was agreed that ambulant disabled and disabled persons requiring such accommodation will continue to be housed within more accessible hotel accommodation as is currently the case.

Other Matters

- 6.41 **S106:** There are no obligations which are required for the site to accord with Policy CC9.

¹ Preparing A Flood Risk Assessment: Standing Advice, February 2021 (NPPG)

- 6.42 ***Impact on Listed Building:*** An objector has raised concern over the impact of litter and the pods themselves on the appearance and character of the listed Regent Court.
- 6.43 Regent Court is sited ca 30m from the closest point to the site and its current setting is overwhelmingly dominated by the existing flats of Jeffery Court and Malcolm Court. As the pods are sited alongside and behind Jeffrey Court are only 2 storeys in height it is not considered that would be any detrimental effect with respect to the setting and the character and appearance of the listed buildings.
- 6.44 With respect to litter, there are currently no occupants of the site, and as a construction site should be left secure at the end of each day. During the operation of the site there will be sufficient bin storage and refuse will be collected regularly on-site by a refuse vehicle. The process of developing the site for a temporary use, which will have 24/7 on-site supervision, should minimise any likelihood of litter from the site being dumped in other locations.

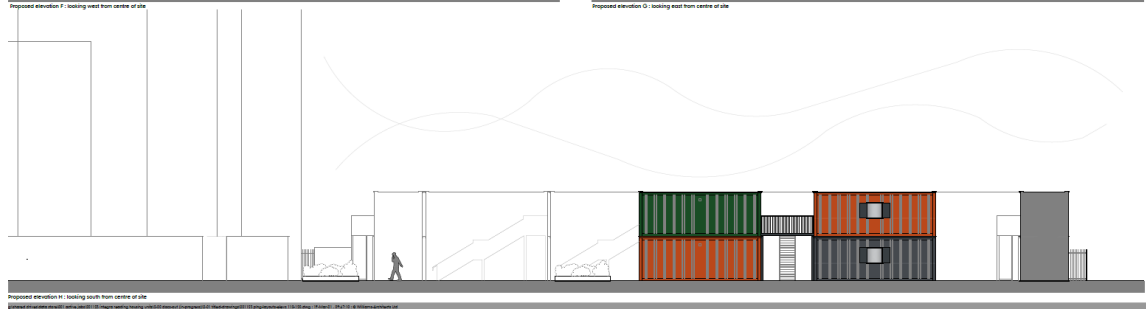
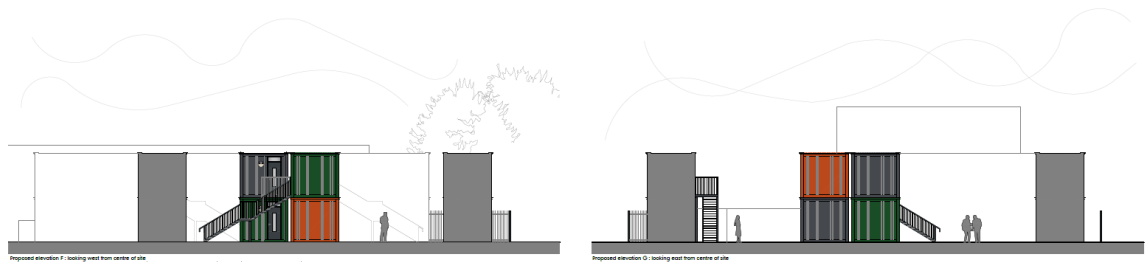
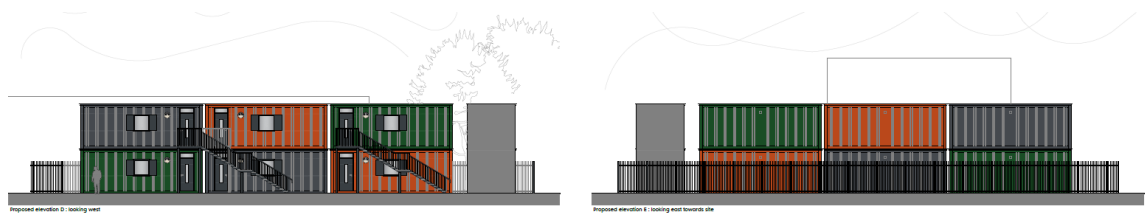
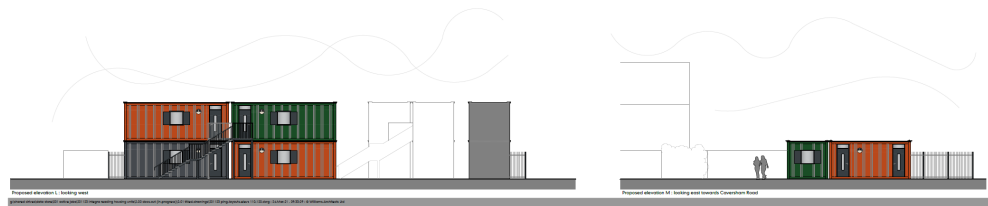
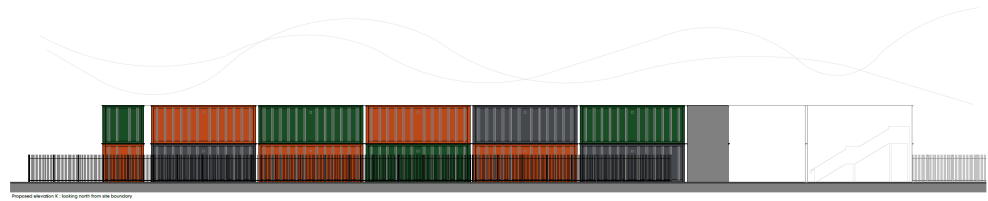
CONCLUSION

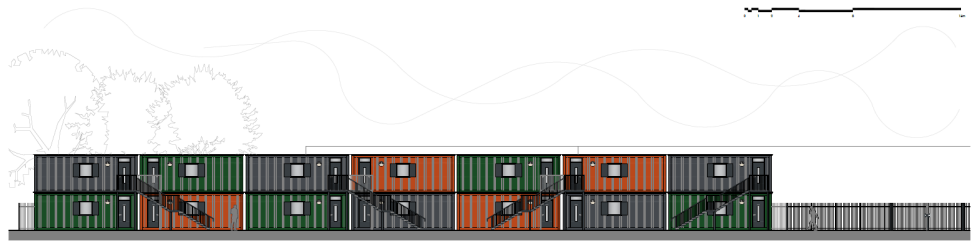
- 7.1 The proposal is for much needed temporary move-on accommodation for vulnerable homeless people with on-site welfare support. Although the scheme does not wholly meet some of the adopted planning policy requirements it is considered that delivering a proposal which meets an exceptional issue and for which there is an overriding public need, outweighs meeting normal policy requirements in this instance. Indeed, it responds very positively to a number of Council priorities with respect to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 7.2 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme, which accords with relevant national and local policy. The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: Plans

Floor Plans & Elevations

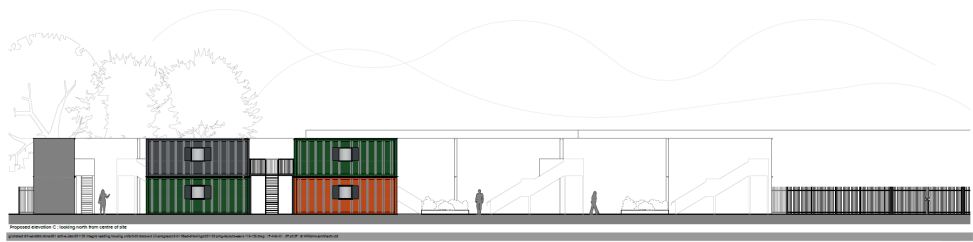




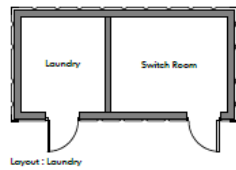
Proposed elevation A: looking north towards existing fence



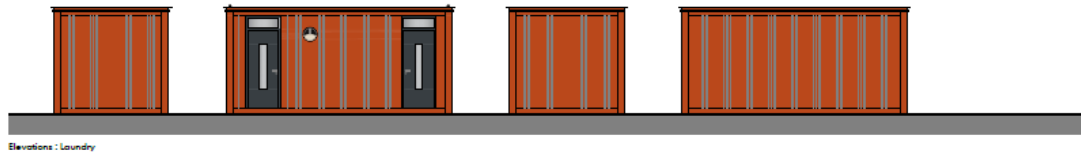
Proposed elevation B: looking south from north site boundary



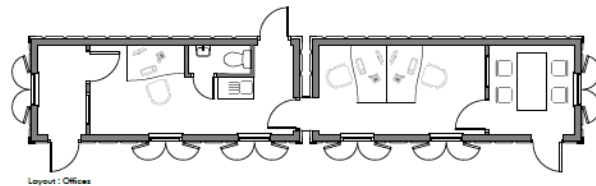
Proposed elevation C: looking north from centre of site
Proposed elevation D: looking south from centre of site



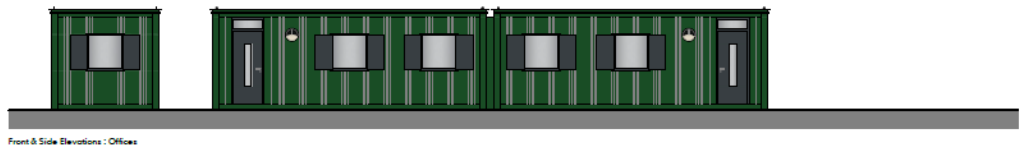
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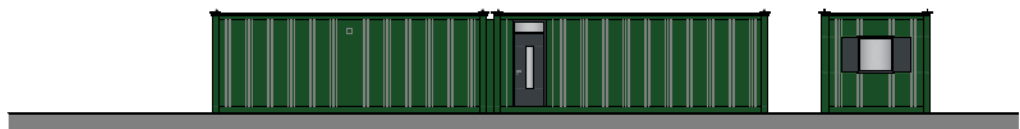
Elevations : Laundry



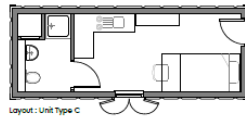
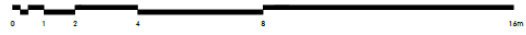
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Front & Side Elevations : Offices

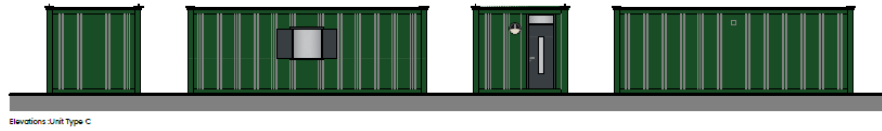


Rear & Side Elevations : Offices

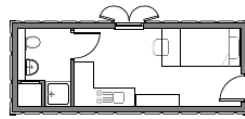


Layout : Unit Type C

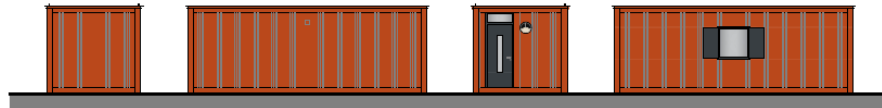
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 - Colour 3 : RAL 6035 pearl-green



Elevations : Unit Type C



Layout : Unit Type D

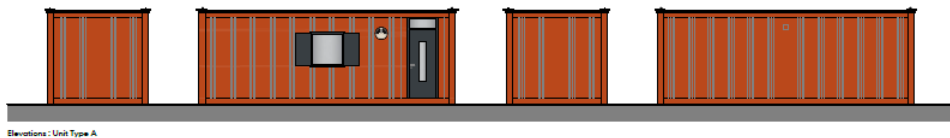


Elevations : Unit Type D

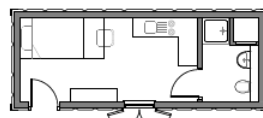


Layout : Unit Type A

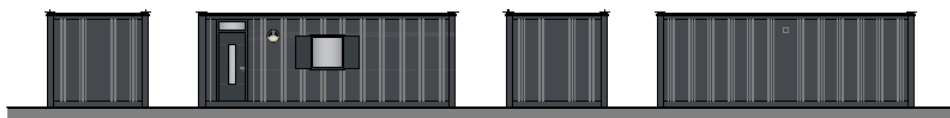
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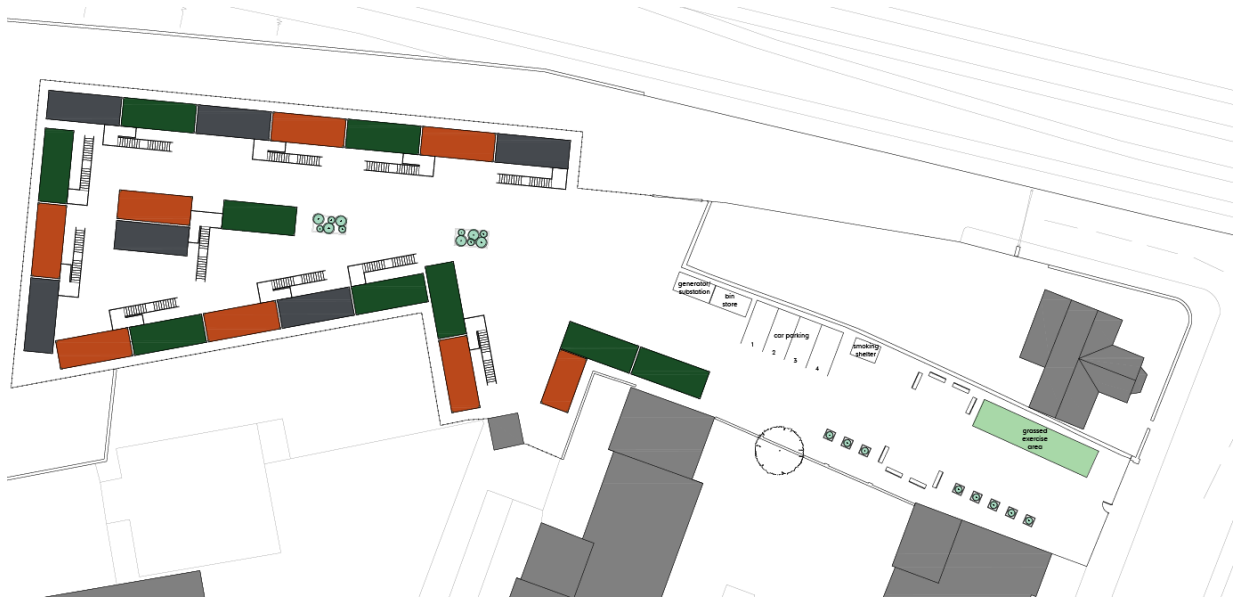
Elevations : Unit Type A



Layout : Unit Type B



Elevations : Unit Type B



Site Plan



APPENDIX 3: PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT PL/21/1010

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 8th September 2021	ITEM NO. 8
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Ward: Abbey

App No.: 211010

Address: Land to the west of Abattoirs Road

Proposal: Part Retrospective application for the erection of 40 no. sleeping units and 3no. support units for rough sleepers, to be used temporarily for a period of 5 years.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 14/9/2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 18/1/2022

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

As on main report with amended and additional conditions as follows:

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

Amended

- 7) DC76 - Cycle Parking to be submitted and approved as specified prior within 3 months of occupation
- 13) Secure access system and CCTV to be provided prior to occupation and retained with 24-hour on-site monitoring and the cameras to be of a standard which enable good image capture and are sited appropriately for unobstructed views.

Additional

- 14) DD6 - Visibility Splays as submitted.
- 15) Within 2 months of occupation the Traffic Regulation Order for a no right turn at the junction of Caversham Road and Abattoirs Road shall be installed.

1. AMENDED/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Transport

- 1.1 Amended plans have been received, which the Transport Development Control Manager has confirmed resolve the matters raised regarding:

- Refuse vehicle tracking for accessing the site;

- Visibility splays for the junction of Caversham Road and Abattoirs Road and at the entrance to the site; and
 - Location of the refuse storage.
- 1.2 No cycle storage has been provided and, therefore, a revised drawing is still required illustrating a dedicated cycle store for both staff and residents. The Transport Development Control Manager would accept this in the form of lockable sheds and has recommended a condition as included above.
- 1.3 With reference to Transport's comments in the main report (para. 4.8) in terms of the requirement for a no right turn at the junction of Abattoirs Road and Caversham Road, an additional condition is included above.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor, Thames Valley Police

- 1.4 Comments have been received from Thames Valley Police as follows and they have no objection to the scheme:

"Having discussed the application with my colleague Sgt Cutler we have no significant concerns in relation to the site and therefore, do not wish to object to the application. However, we do make the following comments and recommendations.

Whilst this is a residential development our understanding is an office will be present on site and staffed at all times to support the residents. Management procedures, therefore, should be robust and address the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour ensuring the security of both occupants, staff and the community as a whole.

We understand formal surveillance will be present. Consideration should be given to conducting an operational needs assessment to ensure cameras meet the required standard for a good image capture and are sited appropriately.

The application refers to secure vehicle and pedestrian entrances. Again, our understanding is that these are via dedicated entrances without the need to utilise the access for any of the neighbouring residential blocks. Vehicle and pedestrian gates should be able to prevent unauthorised access, however, these should be visibly permeable to allow surveillance into and from the site and vehicle gates should be constructed to prevent pedestrian access. Access controls must be present and managed via electronic fob or card to allow staff to quickly and easily manage the development allowing access to be provided or revoked with limited delay. Pin pad codes should not be used as it is not possible to know who the access code has been passed to whilst over time the keys can show wear and tear making it possible to identify codes. A visitor entry system should be present connecting to staff and allowing them both an audio and visual communication prior to allowing access.

That is the case

The application refers to the use of 2m palisade fencing which is usually more appropriate for industrial settings. Visibly permeable vertical railings (1.8m minimum) would provide a level of security better suited for a residential setting.

Planning Officer comments:

With respect to the proposed CCTV system and quality of image an amended condition is recommended as included above (no.13).

In terms of vehicle and pedestrian gates these will prevent unauthorised access and will be visibly permeable. It is the case that the access controls would be either a fob or card system.

TVP has made comments on the industrial nature of the fencing, however, this is largely as existing and its replacement would be unviable for such a scheme. The fencing would be visibly permeable.

Plans and other information

1.5 Further amended plans were submitted as follows:

- Site Vehicle Tracking - Drawing no: 201123-103.02, received 7th September 2021
- Site Elevations: A, B & C - Drawing no: 201123-015.02, received 6th September 2021
- Site Layout - Drawing no: 201123-114.04, received 6th September 2021
- Site Block Plan - Drawing no: 201123-102.04, received 6th September 2021

Conclusion

1.6 The recommendation remains as in the main report save for further suggested and amended conditions as included above.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 2: PLANNING APPLICATIONS UPDATE COMMITTEE REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2026

**Planning Applications
Committee**

09 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0958/FUL
Site Address:	Abattoirs Road, RG1 7BL
Proposed Development	Extension of the temporary planning permission, as approved under PL/21/1010, for the now constructed and fully operational 40 no. sleeping units and 3 no. support units for rough sleepers until 31st March 2028. (amended)
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Alison Amoah - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	9 th October 2026
Recommendation	As per the main agenda report
Conditions	As per the main agenda report plus the addition of a further condition as follows: 11. Litter Management Strategy -compliance
Informatives	As per the main agenda report

1. Consultations

- 1.1 Since the main report was prepared consultation responses have been received from RBC Planning (Natural Environment) and Environmental Protection officers.
- 1.2 ***RBC Planning (Natural Environment)*** – raised an issue that the original permission (PL/21/1010) had included a condition 5 requiring approval of a landscaping scheme, but this was not formally discharged. However, officers advise that there is some existing planting in above ground planters, and this is considered to be appropriate and proportionate for the development. A condition is recommended to ensure this planting is retained for the remainder of the permission period sought and this is as set out in the recommendation of the main report.
- 1.3 ***RBC Environmental Protection*** - Concerns were raised over observed issues of litter to the front of the site to the Caversham Road frontage.
- 1.4 The applicant will prepare a Litter Management Strategy. The Environmental Protection Officer confirmed that they were satisfied, subject to a recommended condition requiring the Strategy.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 The issues raised do not alter the overall recommendation other than for the inclusion of an additional condition.

APPENDIX 3 (To October 2026 Planning Applications Committee Report): NEIGHBOUR OBJECTIONS

OBJECTION 1

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to planning application **PL/260958** and the proposed extension of the Caversham Road temporary accommodation pods until March 2028.

I live in the residential property immediately adjoining the site and have experienced first-hand the impact the facility has had on neighbouring residents since it was established. While I fully support the provision of accommodation and support for vulnerable people, I do not believe this use is appropriate in its current location given the cumulative effects on adjacent homes.

Over the approximately five years that the pods have operated, residents have experienced a range of persistent issues affecting safety, security and residential amenity, including:

- Repeated trespass onto private property and unauthorised access to residential areas.
- Individuals entering or remaining within communal areas of our building without permission.
- Threatening and intimidating behaviour towards residents.
- Regular noise disturbance, including late at night and during the early hours.
- Litter, waste and general anti-social behaviour around the site.
- Frequent use of neighbouring private property as a route of access to and from the pods.

These are not isolated incidents but recurring problems which have significantly affected residents' ability to enjoy their homes peacefully and to feel safe in the area immediately surrounding their properties.

The cumulative impact has been substantial. Residents have had to contend with ongoing concerns about security, intimidation, noise and anti-social behaviour for several years. In my view, this demonstrates that the use has not operated without causing unacceptable effects on neighbouring residential properties.

I would also ask the Council to consider relevant information held by Thames Valley Police, Community Safety teams and Housing Services regarding incidents, complaints and anti-social behaviour associated with the site during its period of operation. Such evidence is highly relevant when assessing whether the use remains appropriate in this location.

A further concern is that the pods were originally introduced as a temporary response during the Covid-19 pandemic. After approximately five years of operation, the proposal to extend the use until 2028 risks turning what was intended to be a

temporary arrangement into a long-term or semi-permanent use, despite the ongoing impacts experienced by neighbouring residents.

When determining this application, I ask the Council to consider:

- Whether the continued use of the site is compatible with the reasonable expectations of neighbouring residents.
- The cumulative impact on residential amenity, safety and security.
- Whether alternative accommodation solutions are available that would have less impact on established residential communities.
- Whether a further extension is justified given the significant period for which the temporary permission has already been in place.

For these reasons, I respectfully object to planning application PL/260958 and request that planning permission for the proposed extension is refused.

OBJECTION 2

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a resident of the property immediately adjoining the Caversham Road temporary accommodation pods to register my **strong objection to planning application PL/260958 and to any proposal to extend the use of the site until March 2028.**

I am also a member of the Right to Manage company responsible for the management of our building. As part of that role, I am in regular contact with residents and leaseholders regarding matters affecting the property, including security, maintenance, access and residents' general concerns.

I want to make clear that **this objection is submitted by me personally and not formally on behalf of the RTM company.**

However, my involvement with the RTM is relevant because it means I regularly hear directly from other residents about their experiences. Over the period in which the pods have operated, residents have repeatedly raised concerns with me which are consistent with my own experiences, including trespass, unauthorised access, threatening behaviour, noise disturbance, drug use, security problems and other serious impacts on residential amenity.

The specific incidents that I describe below as having personally experienced or witnessed are my own evidence. Other residents have their own experiences and, where appropriate, can provide statements, photographs or other supporting evidence as part of an evidence pack. Some residents may also choose, or may already have chosen, to submit separate objections to the application in their own names.

My objection is not to the principle of providing appropriate accommodation and support to people experiencing homelessness. I recognise both the importance and difficulty of that work.

My objection is to the continued operation of **this particular facility in this particular location**, immediately adjacent to established residential accommodation, following approximately five years during which I and other residents have experienced repeated and serious impacts on our safety, security, residential amenity and ability to enjoy our homes peacefully.

The matters described below should **not be regarded as an exhaustive account**. Many incidents occurring over the approximately five years of operation have not been formally recorded. Residents have not necessarily reported every instance of noise, trespass, intimidation or anti-social behaviour, particularly where incidents became frequent or where residents did not believe that reporting each individual occurrence would lead to meaningful action.

I therefore respectfully request that the Council considers not only the incidents I am presently able to describe, but also its own housing, community safety, anti-social behaviour and other relevant records, together with information held by Thames Valley Police and any evidence provided by other residents.

1. Repeated trespass and unauthorised entry into our residential premises

Since the pods became operational, residents of our building have experienced repeated trespass onto our private property and attempts by individuals associated with or visiting the site to gain access to the building.

I have personally witnessed and experienced incidents involving unauthorised access to the property.

There have been occasions where individuals have forced their way into the building and subsequently refused to leave. Individuals have slept within the internal communal hallways. I hold photographic evidence of such incidents and can provide this to the Council if required.

On another occasion, an individual gained unauthorised access to the residents' bin store and slept inside it, causing significant alarm to a resident who unexpectedly encountered the individual while taking rubbish out.

Other residents have reported similar problems to me through my involvement with the RTM.

These are not abstract concerns about what might happen as a consequence of the use. They are impacts that people living immediately adjoining the site have actually experienced during its operation.

2. Theft and security problems

Residents have experienced persistent security problems during the period in which the pods have operated, including the theft of numerous parcels from the residential building.

While I appreciate that responsibility for every individual theft cannot necessarily be attributed conclusively without police evidence, these thefts have occurred alongside repeated unauthorised access and trespass affecting the building.

Through my involvement with the RTM, parcel theft and building security have been recurring concerns raised by residents.

The result has been a substantial and continuing security problem and a level of vigilance that residents should not reasonably be expected to endure indefinitely within their own homes.

3. Open drug use and drug-related paraphernalia

I have personally witnessed open drug use in and around the immediate vicinity of our property.

Other residents have also raised similar incidents with me, together with concerns regarding discarded drug-related paraphernalia.

This is particularly concerning because **children live within the building**, and residents and their families necessarily use the adjoining external and communal areas on a daily basis.

The presence of drug use and associated waste immediately adjoining residential accommodation represents a serious deterioration in residential amenity and raises legitimate community-safety concerns.

4. Threatening and intimidating behaviour and the impact on personal safety

Residents attempting to prevent trespass or asking unauthorised individuals to leave the property have on a number of occasions been met with threatening and intimidating behaviour.

This has included serious verbal threats, including threats involving stabbing. I have personally experienced threatening or intimidating conduct associated with individuals trespassing on or around the property. Other residents have separately described similar experiences to me.

My partner has also personally experienced repeated incidents which have caused her to fear for her safety. She has been followed and screamed at in the vicinity of our home, and these experiences, taken together with the wider pattern of threatening and unpredictable behaviour around the property, have had a profound and lasting effect on her.

The impact has reached the point where she no longer feels comfortable making the short journey home alone from Reading station. Our home is only approximately a five-minute walk from the station, yet I now regularly feel it necessary to meet her and accompany her home because of her fear of encountering further threatening behaviour.

This is an important illustration of the effect the current use has had on our ordinary daily lives. Residents should be able to enter and leave their homes without fear, and a short walk from a major transport hub to one's own front door should not require another household member to act as an escort because of repeated experiences of intimidation.

The cumulative effect should not be underestimated. This is not simply a question of inconvenience or occasional disturbance. For my partner, these incidents have been genuinely traumatic and have materially affected her sense of personal safety in and around her own home.

Other residents have also reported feeling intimidated within and immediately outside the building, including when entering and leaving the property.

Through my involvement with the RTM, I am aware that in some instances the wider problems associated with the site have contributed to long-standing tenants choosing to terminate their tenancies and leave the building.

For the avoidance of doubt, my concern is not based on assumptions about people experiencing homelessness. It arises from specific conduct that I, my partner and other residents have personally witnessed and experienced over an extended period, and from the very real effect that conduct has had on people living immediately next to the site.

5. Trespass associated with access to the pods and serious incidents around the shared boundary

Our property directly adjoins the pods and shares a boundary wall with the site. There have repeatedly been incidents of individuals trespassing across our property in an attempt to gain access to the pods.

This has been a recurring issue discussed within the building and through the RTM. I also understand that at least one particularly serious incident in the vicinity involved a stabbing.

I do not ask the planning authority simply to accept residents' recollections of that incident. Instead, **I specifically request that Reading Borough Council obtain and review relevant Thames Valley Police incident and crime information associated with the site and its immediate surroundings during the period in which the pods have operated.**

Police attendance in the vicinity has, in my own experience and from accounts given by other residents, been frequent. That history is relevant when assessing the actual consequences of continuing the use.

The Council is also already aware of difficulties associated with the boundary. At one stage, those responsible for our building were asked to consider increasing the height of the boundary wall as a response to individuals gaining access.

I consider that request particularly significant.

The burden of mitigating problems arising from the operation and management of the adjoining site should not simply be transferred to neighbouring residents and leaseholders by requiring them to spend their own money continually increasing the security of an established residential development.

If a particular land use can only operate without unacceptable effects on its neighbours by requiring those neighbours to further fortify their property, that should itself cause the planning authority serious concern about the suitability of the continued use in this location.

6. Persistent noise and disturbance, including overnight

I have personally experienced substantial and repeated noise disturbance associated with the site and individuals in its vicinity.

This is not confined to reasonable daytime activity.

There have been instances of shouting and screaming late at night and during the early hours of the morning, at times continuing for prolonged periods.

I have personally experienced sleepless nights as a result.

Other residents have repeatedly raised similar complaints with me as part of my involvement with the RTM.

Persistent night-time disturbance affecting the occupants of immediately adjoining residential accommodation is a direct residential-amenity issue and should be afforded

significant weight when considering whether this use should continue for a further period.

7. Waste, litter and discarded drug paraphernalia

There has also been repeated dumping and accumulation of rubbish in the vicinity of the property, together with drug-related paraphernalia.

These concerns have been raised by multiple residents.

Aside from the visual impact, this affects residents' ability to use the area safely and comfortably and further contributes to the cumulative deterioration in amenity arising from the operation of the site.

8. The cumulative impact is critical

I ask the Council not to assess each of these matters in isolation.

A single episode of noise, trespass or anti-social behaviour might reasonably be regarded as an isolated management issue.

What I have personally experienced, and what other residents have independently reported to me over a period of years, is a **recurrent pattern** encompassing:

- unauthorised entry and trespass;
- individuals sleeping within our building and private facilities; repeated security incidents and theft;
- open drug use;
- discarded drug paraphernalia;
- threatening and intimidating behaviour;
- serious threats of violence;
- repeated use of our private property to access the pods;
- police attendance and serious incidents in the vicinity;
- persistent late-night and overnight noise; and
- substantial waste and litter.

The fact that residents have independently raised the same types of concerns is important.

I do not seek to present myself as speaking formally on behalf of every resident.

Rather, through my role within the RTM, I am aware that **my own experiences are not isolated**.

Other residents have their own experiences which they can provide directly to the Council, whether through separate planning objections, resident statements or an evidence pack.

The relevant planning question is therefore not whether any one individual incident could theoretically occur beside any residential property.

It is whether the **continued operation and management of this particular use has, in practice, demonstrated that it can coexist satisfactorily with the residential properties immediately adjoining it.**

My own experience, reinforced by the concerns repeatedly raised with me by other residents, is that it has not.

9. A supposedly temporary use has already continued for approximately five years

The pods were introduced in extraordinary circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic as temporary accommodation to assist people sleeping rough.

Residents accepted that a temporary response was being implemented during an unprecedented emergency.

Approximately five years later, however, the temporary use remains immediately beside our homes.

There must be a meaningful distinction between genuinely temporary planning permission and the repeated continuation of a use which causes substantial adverse effects on its immediate neighbours.

Residents have already borne those effects for a considerable period. We should not now simply be expected to accept further extensions as though the experience of those preceding years were irrelevant.

10. The proposed extension appears inconsistent with the temporary nature and planned closure of the site

The pods were established as a temporary response and there has already been a public expectation that the site would be closed.

I am therefore extremely concerned by an application which appears to seek permission for the pods to continue until **March 2028**.

I request that the planning officer expressly addresses:

1. why a further extension is necessary;
2. why this temporary use remains appropriate after approximately five years of operation;
3. what planning justification exists for extending a demonstrably problematic temporary use immediately adjacent to established homes; and
4. why adjoining residents should be expected to bear the documented adverse effects of the site for a further period.

A temporary facility should not become effectively semi-permanent through successive extensions without proper consideration of the real-world consequences experienced by those living immediately beside it.

11. Information I request the Council obtains before determination

Given the seriousness of the issues raised, I request that the Council does not determine this application without obtaining and considering, insofar as legally available:

- Thames Valley Police incident and crime information relating to the pods and their immediate vicinity during the period of operation;
- Council anti-social behaviour and community-safety records associated with the site;
- complaints and incident reports held by the Council's Housing/Homelessness services and the operator;
- records concerning boundary-security problems between the pods and our residential property, including the previous suggestion that the boundary wall should be increased in height;

- noise complaints associated with the site;
- records relating to waste, needles or other drug paraphernalia in the vicinity; and
- information demonstrating how the site has been managed and what measures have previously been introduced in response to reported incidents.

I would also ask the Council to take into account evidence submitted separately by other residents of the building. As noted above, some may submit their own planning objections, while others are able to provide supporting statements or evidence if requested.

I would welcome a **site visit by the planning case officer**, including viewing the relationship between the pods, our boundary and the adjoining residential accommodation, as the proximity of the two uses is central to understanding the effects described above.

Conclusion

I have lived beside what was presented as temporary accommodation for a substantial period.

During that time, I have personally experienced a number of the problems described in this objection. Through my role within the building's RTM company, I have also regularly spoken with other residents who have independently reported similar experiences and concerns.

These include repeated trespass, unauthorised entry, security problems, theft, drug use, threatening behaviour, serious threats of violence, substantial noise disturbance, discarded drug paraphernalia, rubbish and repeated problems associated with the shared boundary.

The fact that similar concerns have been raised by multiple residents over an extended period is important. It demonstrates that these are not simply isolated complaints from one neighbour.

The impact is not limited to individual incidents recorded in an incident log. It has changed how we live our daily lives. My partner has experienced these problems personally and has, as a result, become fearful of returning home alone. Despite our home being only around a five-minute walk from Reading station, I now regularly meet her and accompany her back because previous incidents of being followed, shouted and screamed at have left her deeply distressed and fearful of further encounters.

No resident should reasonably be expected to accept that level of disruption and fear as a normal consequence of living in their own home. The fact that a supposedly temporary use has continued for years while neighbouring residents have had to alter ordinary aspects of their lives in order to feel safe should, in my view, weigh heavily against any further extension.

I recognise the Council's responsibility to support vulnerable people and people experiencing homelessness, and I fully support the provision of suitable, properly managed accommodation for those who need it.

However, fulfilment of that responsibility does not require the indefinite continuation of a particular temporary facility where years of experience demonstrate significant adverse effects on its immediate residential neighbours.

For these reasons, **I strongly object to planning application PL/260958 and request that planning permission for the proposed extension be refused.**