

UPDATE COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4th September 2019

ITEM NO.12
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Ward: Kentwood

Application No.: 181377/REG3

Address: Norcot Community Centre, Tilehurst, Reading

Proposals: Erection of a three storey building comprising 18 (8x1 and 10x2 bed) residential units (Use Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage, a 96.4sqm (NIA) building for community use (Use Class D1), vehicle parking, landscaping and associated works.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date Application Valid: 13th August 2018

Application target decision date: Extension of time to 31st October 2019

RECOMMENDATION

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Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 31st October 2019 (unless the assessing officer on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

1. At least 30% residential units as Affordable Rent Units in perpetuity
2. Employment Skills Plan for the construction phase of the residential development in accordance with the Council's SPD, to be submitted and approved at least one month prior to works commencing. Or contribution in lieu (in accordance with levels as set out in the adopted SPD).

Conditions and informatives as per the original committee report.

1. Affordable Housing Amount

- 1.1 The main Agenda report confirms that all 18 units as proposed will be for Affordable Housing and terms set out for the S106 required 100% provision to be secured. However, whilst that may ultimately be RBC Housing's intention, this would be in excess of the adopted affordable housing policy and spd requirement.
- 1.2 Therefore, the S106 terms, as amended above, reflect the policy compliant figure of 30%. This will not prevent the developer from providing all the dwellings as affordable rent units.

2. Affordable Housing Tenure Update

2.1 The original recommendation referred to the 18 residential units as being social rent affordable housing units. Subsequent to this, it has transpired from discussions with RBC Housing that they are actually seeking for these units to be termed as affordable rent units, as outlined in the recommendation above. In short, this is so the applicant has greater flexibility in setting rental levels for these new build properties, mindful of the mandatory annual 1% rent decrease for all social housing imposed by Government in 2015 for 4 years, whilst still fitting within the definition of Affordable Housing. The proposed approach is consistent with the position agreed by Policy Committee in November 2018 in respect of proposed rents for local authority new build properties.

3. Conclusion

3.1 This change in the recommendation from 100% to 30% and the definition of the affordable units is considered acceptable by officers as the scheme remains compliant with relevant policies. Recommendation remains to grant.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys