

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P16/S0720/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	4.3.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Joan Bland Stefan Gawrysiak Lorraine Hillier
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Your Life Management Services
<b>SITE</b>	345 Reading Road Henley-on-Thames, RG9 4HE
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Redevelopment to form 53 Assisted Living Extra Care apartments for older persons including communal facilities, associated car parking and landscaping.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>OFFICER</b>	Amanda Rendell

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application has been referred to Planning Committee as the views of Henley Town Council differ from the Officer's recommendation.
- 1.2 The application site is located at the junction of Reading Road and Mill Lane and is around 0.54 hectares in size. It sits close to the southern edge of Henley (approximately 1 mile south of the town centre) but within the built up limits of the town. The site is not within a conservation area.
- 1.3 The site is currently vacant having previously been used as a petrol filling station, body repair shop, tyre fitter and MOT testing station. The petrol station was the last business to close on the site in June 2014. The other businesses closed in 2013. All the buildings on the site were demolished in October 2014. Today the site lies vacant and surrounded by security hoardings.
- 1.4 The surrounding area is of mixed character with the contemporary 2-2½ storey residential apartments known as Henley Gate adjoining the site on Reading Road with further relatively low-density residential development opposite. To the rear of the site lies a timber yard and a sports clubhouse associated with the hockey club. To the east of the site lies the Tesco supermarket with playing fields beyond to the south east. To the north lies the Newtown Road business park.
- 1.5 Reading Road is a major arterial route into Henley town centre and is serviced by public transport.
- 1.6 The western frontage of the site along Reading Road is approximately level. The site falls away sharply from this high point, with the south eastern corner of the land being around 3.5 metres lower than Reading Road. There is an existing access to the site from Mill Lane, in the north eastern corner of the site.
- 1.7 A location plan is **attached** as Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application proposes the erection of 53 assisted living extra care self-contained apartments for older persons (over 70's) including communal facilities (laundry, refuse room, mobility scooter store, guest suite, a homeowners' lounge, a full service restaurant and a function room), associated car parking and landscaping.
- 2.2 The building will be divided up into 24 x 1-Bed Apartments and 29 x 2-Bed Apartments over 3-4 storeys. The building will be constructed from a mix of red brick with some render, slate roof and white UPVC windows.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the development will be via Mill Lane to the north and a parking area for 40 cars and drop off area is proposed at the rear of the building finished in asphalt.
- 2.4 The building will front onto Reading Road with a pedestrian entrance plaza finished with flag paving. The self-contained apartments will be linked by heated level corridors from a secure entrance to facilitate ease of movement throughout the proposal. Communal facilities would all be accessible without residents having to leave the building. Dedicated self-contained staff rest facilities are also provided including accommodation for overnight stays. The site will have secure boundaries and a single secure entrance, with a video link to each apartment so homeowners can see who is requesting entry to the premises.
- 2.5 The applicants state that the average age on entry to a McCarthy and Stone Assisted Living (Extra Care) development is 85 years of age. Under the McCarthy and Stone standard lease, the entry age for Assisted Living (Extra Care) is set at 70 years of age, allowing for a younger spouse / partner where necessary. In addition the resident must meet the Qualifying Person Criteria set out in the lease and agree to sign up to a residency agreement.
- 2.6 Amenity space is broken up around the site. Semi-private garden spaces are provided along the front elevations with patio area and perennial and shrub planting. A 1.5-1.8m high deciduous hedge is proposed to provide privacy screening where required. To the rear two small communal garden spaces are proposed either side of the drop off area with sensory planting and seating. A 1.8m high deciduous hedge will provide screening to the drop off area. To the south of the site a food growing area is proposed incorporating 600mm high raised beds suitable for wheelchair users.
- 2.7 A public space with seating is proposed on the corner of Reading Road with Mill Lane. This will incorporate perennial and shrub beds and a specimen tree on the street corner.
- 2.8 The development will employ a mix of full time and part time staff providing between 14-17 full time equivalent posts.
- 2.9 The building has been designed to be energy efficient utilising the latest construction materials, in addition Community Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed to meet the heating and hot water demands of the communal areas and a 12.68kWp Photovoltaic array is proposed to provide renewable electricity.
- 2.10 Reduced plans of the layout, street scene and sample elevations of house types are **attached** as Appendix 2. All plans, elevations and supporting documentation can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Oxfordshire County Council Single Response** – No objections to the proposal subject to conditions regarding Sustainable Urban Drainage systems, revised parking plan showing cycle parking and refuse storage, a construction travel management plan and vision splays.
- 3.2 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** - Recommend refusal. The Committee strongly objects to this application as it does not comply with the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan recently given a mandate by local people at referendum. The Committee were also concerned about the potential change of class from C3 to C2 use, which would mean no Community Infrastructure Levy and no affordable housing provision or contribution. The Committee unanimously voted to recommend this application for refusal.
- 3.3 **Thames Water Development Control** – recommend the imposition of a grampian condition requiring a drainage strategy to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to groundwater courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. It is recommended that an informative be added regarding water pressure.
- 3.4 **The Henley Society** – Object to this application for the following reasons.  
1. It would replace a planning permission that has already been granted (P14/S3766) with a scheme that would be less appropriate for the town and less consistent with the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan: these aims include achieving a balanced community and meeting the needs of those age and income groups who have difficulty finding homes in Henley.  
2. It does not provide affordable housing for young people which is the main requirement for Henley.  
3. Even if this type of development were deemed suitable for Henley, this is an unsuitable location, being too far from facilities such as the cinema, theatre and library.  
4. This scheme does not, and could not readily, incorporate the target 40% of affordable dwellings.  
5. In addition, the scheme should be considered in the context of other developments such as the Care Home and the planned 34 Assisted Living apartments on the Townlands site (P15/S2956 and others), the planning application for a Care Home to replace the gym in Newtown Road (P15/S3385) and the acquisition of the Youth Centre site by B&M Care.
- 3.5 **Drainage Engineer (Monson)** some questions raised regarding foul and surface water drainage.
- 3.6 **Waste Management Officer** – No objections pending further information on waste storage bin sizes.
- 3.7 **Countryside Officer** –There are no significant ecological constraints on this site and therefore no objections. If permission is to be granted then a condition should be imposed to require the mitigation and enhancement measures as detailed in the

application to be implemented.

- 3.8 **Equalities Officer** – no objections
- 3.9 **Forestry Officer** no objections following the submission of revised information.
- 3.10 **Environmental Health - Air Quality** –Based on the size of the proposed development and the proximity to an 'Air Quality Management Area', mitigation is required in order to help mitigate against the adverse air quality impacts of the development along with the potential cumulative effects of piecemeal developments and to enable future proofing of the development. No objections are raised to the principle of the application providing a pre-commencement condition requiring measures to mitigate the impact upon air quality in the area to be agreed with the LA in writing is applied.
- 3.11 **Environmental Health - Land Contamination**- No objections raised. The remediation reports have been read and it is recommended that a condition be imposed to cover remedial works. They also recommend that the Environment Agency are consulted to ensure that they are satisfied with all remedial works in relation to controlled waters
- 3.12 **Environmental Health -Environmental Protection**- Request further noise mitigation schemes from the car valeting service on Mill Road, sawmill to the rear of the proposed development and traffic noise on Reading Road, to the front of the property. Any mechanical noise impact such as the car valeting and sawmill should be assessed using BS4142: 2014 methodology. Traffic CRTN would be appropriate method to measure noise. In all instances internal ambient noise levels should meet BS8233:2014 table 4 page 24, particularly resting sleeping levels. External areas used for amenity should be 50dBA or less.
- 3.13 **Urban Design Officer** - The proposal represents an increase in scale along Reading Road in comparison to the previously approved scheme in P14/S3766/FUL. However this is not an issue because the buildings mass has been broken up well with the different modules of the building comprising gables, dormer windows and lower linkage buildings. The detailing of the public facing elevations has resolved the potential conflict between the need for privacy and security and an active frontage. It is suggested that there should be a careful selection of materials with a simple palette reflecting the local context. Red brick and natural slates for the roof would be appropriate. Concern is raised about the potential use of render and the long-term quality and maintenance issues this can have. A more robust alternative like tile hanging or metal cladding could be used. Timber fencing should not be used as a boundary treatment for the perimeter of the site where this will be so visually prominent. Instead, a brick wall should be used which is far more robust and attractive.
- 3.14 **Henley Town Football Club**- express concern regarding the impact of the development on roadside parking spaces and parking used by the football club in general.
- 3.15 **Neighbour Representations**-No letters of objection have been received from individuals but eight letters of support have been received raising the following benefits:
- Low impact development and not enough provision of housing like this in Henley.
  - This type of development long overdue in Henley. Ageing population would be safe, secure and looked after in this type of development.
  - Development would bring life to a brownfield plot and improve the entrance to Henley from the Reading Road area.

- Shortage of accommodation for retired people in Henley.
- Proposals offer an attractive alternative for the elderly.
- Although no affordable housing, it will provide much needed accommodation for the elderly and when they move it will free up housing for families. Traffic implications more favourable from this type of development.
- Proximity to Tesco
- Brings jobs to the area.

Two letters have raised the following comments:

- Not enough parking probably too ambitious with number of units.
- No parking should be allowed on Reading Road.

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P14/S3766/FUL](#) - Approved (03/02/2016).Erection of 55 residential units (Class C3) with associated under-croft car parking, landscaping and highways works (As amended by Drawings and Information accompanying previous agent's letter of 13 March 2015 and clarified by certificate of ownership accompanying letter from new agent dated 8 October 2015)

[P08/E0825](#) - Approved (29/10/2008).Demolition of 3 existing dwellings and erection of 12 flats. (Proposed amendment of planning permission P08/E0291 in order to create an additional 2 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flat inside roof space together with amended parking layout). (As amended by drawing 08.245/201.Rev B received 19th September 2008).

[P08/E0291](#) - Approved (04/06/2008).Demolition of existing 3 No dwellings and erection of six two bedroom flats, one three bedroom dwelling and two one bedroom flats(as amended by drawing nos. 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307 and 308 accompanying letter from Agent dated 8 April 2008 and drawing no.301B accompanying letter from Agent dated 24 April 2008 and clarified by Arboricultural Report dated 2 May 2008)

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

##### 5.1 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies**

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy  
CSHEN1 - The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames  
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSG1 - Green infrastructure  
CSH3 - Affordable housing  
CSH4 - Meeting housing needs  
CSR1 - Housing in villages  
CSM1 - Transport  
CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans  
CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction  
CSQ3 – Design

##### 5.2 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;**

G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
G4 - Protection of Countryside  
C4 - Landscape setting of settlements  
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity  
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
D1 - Principles of good design  
D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area  
D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers  
D6 - Community safety  
D12 - Public art  
EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment  
EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration  
EP6 - Sustainable drainage  
EP7 - Impact on ground water resources  
H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt  
R1 - Outdoor sport or play areas  
R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users  
E6 - Loss of employment uses  
CSI1-Infrastructure Provision

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

5.4 **Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP) policies**

H1-Allocate land for 500 new homes (Mill Lane former Jet garage-around 55 homes)  
H2-Design Brief for all allocated sites  
H3-Type and size of new housing  
T1-Impact of the development on the transport network  
E1-Supporting Henley's Economy  
EN1-Biodiversity  
DQS1-Local Character  
SP2-Mill Lane Former Jet Garage (Site H)

On 14 April 2016 the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan was officially made or adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council and is now part of the Development Plan. The plan seeks to allocate around 400 houses in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The main planning issues in relation to this application are:

1. Principle of development – including the Neighbourhood Plan allocation and loss of employment land
2. Developer Contributions
3. Design and layout
4. Highway safety, convenience and traffic
5. Impact on neighbours
6. Amenity of future occupiers
7. Drainage
8. Trees, Protected species and biodiversity
9. Contaminated land
10. Air quality
11. Archaeology
12. Sustainability and Energy Efficiency
13. Noise

6.2 **Principle of Development, Neighbourhood Plan and loss of employment land.**  
Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that applications for

planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 6.3 The adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Policy CSHEN1 confirms that land is to be identified for 400 new homes during the period up to 2027 at Henley, being 450 homes if land without constraints can be found, which the District Council has indicated to be the case. The Core Strategy recognises that it is difficult to find appropriate sites in Henley to the constraints of the River Thames floodplain and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates sufficient land to meet the requirements of Policy CSHEN1.
- 6.4 Policy SP2 of the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (JHHNP) allocates the site for 55 dwellings at the Mill Lane, Former Jet Garage. This policy requires the scheme to maximise the opportunity presented by the change in levels across this site, deliver a high quality design in terms of built form and public realm and to contribute to new and improved cycle and pedestrian links to confirm with Policy T1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5 The application under consideration proposes 53 assisted living extra care apartments for older persons including communal facilities, rather than 55 individual flats as previously approved on the site. Clearly both the allocation as set out in the JHHNP and the use now proposed fall within the category of housing (C3 and C2 respectively), albeit one comprises general needs and affordable units and the other a specialist form housing aimed at a particular age range.
- 6.6 Whilst it is disappointing that the previous permission has not been implemented for what is understood to be viability reasons, this application has to be assessed on its merits. The JHHNP does not specifically detail the type of housing supported under policy SP2, however the primary objective of Policy H4 is to “deliver an appropriate range and mix of housing to achieve a balanced community and in particular help meet the needs of those age and income groups who have difficulty finding homes in Henley.”  
All the letters of representation from members of the public have supported the proposed scheme citing a demand and need for such accommodation.
- 6.7 Indeed, policy H3 of the JHHNP requires development proposals to show how the proposal provides an appropriate choice of homes that contributes towards meeting the specific housing needs of Henley and Harpsden, detailing how it meets the needs of different groups such as, but not limited to, young people, local workers, small families, older residents and people with disabilities. The type of development is clearly for designed for older residents.
- 6.8 The 2011 Census established that there are 11,619 residents in Henley and 560 in Harpsden, totalling 12,179. The 16 to 29 year old age group is under represented in the area whereas residents in the 65 to 90 year age group are over represented. The 2011 Census also established that there are 5,457 households in the Henley and Harpsden area, of which 200 are in Harpsden. A relatively high percentage (34%) of all Henley and Harpsden dwellings have only a single occupier and a higher than average proportion of these are aged over 65 years.
- 6.9 Older people have a wide range of different housing needs, ranging from suitable and appropriately located market housing through to residential institutions (Use Class C2). Whilst it may be true that when elderly persons purchase a McCarthy and Stone apartment it usually frees up another home, it could not obviously be guaranteed that these would be residents already living within Henley.

- 6.10 National Planning Policy Guidance states that “Older people have a wide range of different housing needs, ranging from suitable and appropriately located market housing through to residential institutions (C2s). Local planning authorities should count housing provided for older people, including residential institutions in Use Class C2, against their housing requirement. The approach taken, which may include site allocations, should be clearly set out in the Local Plan. “
- 6.11 The core strategy policy CSH4 states that ‘specialist accommodation for older people should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in the strategy and will be permitted at other suitable locations.’ The supporting text to this policy at paragraphs 7.41 and 7.42 highlight that a range of models can play a part in providing specialist accommodation for the elderly and gives some examples.
- 6.12 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) considers older person needs are as part of the OAN (Objective Assessment of Housing Need) (population projections and projected demographic changes). The SHMA identifies a key driver of change in the housing market over the next 20 years will be the growth in the number of older persons. The population projections upon which the OAN is based show the number of older people is expected to increase significantly over the next few years.
- 6.13 The SHMA identifies issues of under-occupancy in the HMA (Housing Market Assessment) and the increased trends in down-sizing freeing up more general needs stock. Chapter three identifies ‘a notable trend in older households downsizing and potential for provision for this group to release larger family homes for others’ (para. 3.101). The analysis in the SHMA of average bedrooms by age sex and tenure (chapter 7) show that the average dwelling size decreases in the older ages groups and this is attributed to the number of people down-sizing as they get older.
- 6.14 The SHMA also identifies that relative to the current stock there is a slight move towards a greater proportion of smaller homes being required. The SHMA report highlights the link to downsizing and the increased proportion of older people which is carried into the forecast for future household sizes to drop.
- 6.15 It identifies key groups including older people which may have housing needs which differ from those of the wider population. The SHMA suggests that moving forward a greater emphasis could be placed on meeting the needs of older people through a range of accommodation types including C2 use, extra care, open market and affordable housing units.
- 6.16 Your officers are therefore satisfied that there is a need to provide accommodation for older people within the District.
- 6.17 With regard to policy E6 of the Local Plan 2011, the loss of employment land has been addressed under the extant permission for development on the site (P14/S3766/FUL).

**Developer Contributions.**

- 6.18 The previous consent granted for the construction of 55 flats on the site secured the provision of 21 affordable houses on the site and a financial sum equivalent to one unit representing 22 units of affordable provision and 40% of the total scheme in line with policy.
- 6.19 Whilst there are no policy requirements within the Development Plan for C2 use class development to provide any contribution towards affordable housing or Community Infrastructure Levy, the applicant acknowledges the impact of the development upon



the local area and the objectives of JHHNP for the local area. Subsequent to discussions with the Town Council, the applicant has made on a without prejudice basis a financial offer of £800,000 towards community infrastructure/affordable housing. An update will be provided on this at the meeting.

- 6.20 The County Highways Authority have requested a contribution of £1,000 per dwelling (indicatively £53,000 in total) towards the cost of improving the bus service along Reading Road, Henley. They have also requested £1,240 towards a Travel Plan monitoring fee for a period of five years. These contributions would be secured under a Section 106 agreement with the County Council.

**Design and Layout.**

- 6.21 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people*”. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF also requires new development to create a sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, respond to local character and create a safe and accessible environment. The design policies of the Core Strategy (CSQ3) and the saved design policies of the Local Plan (policies D1-D4) echo these requirements.
- 6.22 Following improvements being made during pre-application discussions no objections have been raised by the District Council’s Urban Design Officer and whilst the proposal represents an increase in scale along Reading Road compared to the previously approved scheme, the buildings mass has been broken up well with the different modules of the building. The detailing of the public facing elevations has resolved the potential conflict between the need for privacy and security and an active frontage.
- 6.23 The proposal makes good use of the change of levels across the site, presenting 2 ½ and 3 storey along the frontage of Reading Road, with 4 storey elements to the rear of the site.
- 6.24 No objections have been received from the Town Council or local residents in respect of design or layout.
- 6.25 The proposed use of red brick and natural slate reflecting local context are welcomed along with the use of a simple pitched roof. A planning condition will be added to require samples of materials to be used in the construction of the building including boundary treatment.
- 6.26 Overall, officers are satisfied that the proposed development represents a high quality scheme on this site which has an important visual role on this part of Reading Road.
- Impact on neighbours**
- 6.27 Policy D4 requires new development to secure an appropriate level of privacy for existing residents. The site itself is largely surrounded by commercial properties, with a timber yard to the east. However, immediately to the north east of the site lies Cedar Lodge, a single detached residential property and commercial workshop at the timber mill. There is the potential for some overlooking from the rear of the block, however given the distance between the two buildings and existing planting along this boundary, it is not considered that this impact would be significant. Again, there will likely be some views to Henley Gate to the south of the site, however given the existing boundary screening in this location and orientation of rooms, it is not considered that this development will impact upon the amenity of existing occupiers and no objections have been received in this respect.

**Highway safety, convenience and traffic.**

- 6.28 No objections have been raised to the proposal on highways grounds and the number of spaces is acceptable. The proposed access is away from Reading Road and any increase in traffic to the site is considered negligible. Parking restrictions are in place on Mill Lane and as such should prevent any indiscriminate parking in the area. Conditions will be imposed to cover Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, width of parking spaces, cycle parking and refuse storage, Construction Travel Management Plan, Travel Plan and Vision Splays.

**Amenity of future occupiers.**

- 6.29 Policy D3 of the Local Plan requires all new dwellings to benefit from either a private garden, outdoor amenity space or a shared amenity area. Guidelines for how much should be provided are set out in the Design Guide. For flatted schemes, the Design Guide advises that amenity space is provided appropriate to the location, type and size of the building and the needs of the occupant.
- 6.30 The amount of private amenity space provided for each occupier in the form of a small private garden or balcony and the addition of communal space is acceptable given the likely age of residents.
- 6.31 The layout of each block of flats ensures an acceptable degree of privacy for future occupiers.

**Drainage**

- 6.32 The proposal will increase the amount of hardstanding on the site and the drainage strategy accords with SUDS principles. Permeable paving is proposed for the access drive and parking areas. In accordance with Thames Water's advice, a condition will be imposed which requires a drainage strategy to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development at the site. In respect of surface water the applicant is advised to ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. An informative will be added to any consent regarding water pressure.

**Trees, protected species and biodiversity**

- 6.33 Policy C9 of the Local Plan seeks to prevent the loss of important landscape features as a result of new development. There are no trees of arboricultural significance on the site and it is not within a conservation area. There are a number of self-seeded on the boundary of the site on adjacent land which will remain. The site is in a very prominent location adjacent to one of the main routes in and out of Henley, so the opportunity to increase the tree cover in this area has been encouraged. In consultation with the Council's Forestry Officer, amended planting plans have now been submitted to incorporate a larger tree species to the rear of the site to become more of a focal point, along with additional tree planting within the site and also to reinforce the boundaries.
- 6.34 Policy CSG1 of the Core Strategy states, "*A net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity will be sought through developer works, developer contributions....*". All the buildings on the site have now been demolished and as the land is cleared the ecological value of the site is extremely limited. The Countryside Officer has confirmed that there are no significant ecological constraints on this site and therefore no objections are raised. A condition is recommended to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures as detailed in the application.

**Contaminated Land.**

6.35 The application is supported by a full remediation report which sets out remediation requirements. The Council's contaminated land officer has reviewed the assessment and has no objections subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring a remediation scheme to be agreed with the local planning authority before any development commences and for all agreed works to be completed before the development is occupied.

6.36 **Air Quality.**

Based on the size of the proposed development and the proximity to an 'Air Quality Management Area', the Council's air quality officer has requested a pre-commencement condition requiring suitable air quality mitigation measures to be provided and agreed in order to help mitigate against the adverse impacts the development along with the potential cumulative effects of piecemeal developments and to enable future proofing of the development.

**Archaeology.**

6.37 The application is accompanied by a Desk based Assessment which concludes that the site lies in an area from which only a modest volume of archaeological sites and finds have been recorded. It also lies on one of the lowest terraces of the Thames and thus has little potential for the Palaeolithic period unlike the higher terraces nearby to the west. Of most significance, however, is that the site has been quarried in the early part of the 20th century and which will have comprehensively removed the archaeologically relevant levels. As such the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

**Sustainability and Energy Efficiency.**

6.38 Retirement Lifestyles have designed the building to be energy efficient utilising the latest construction materials, in addition Community Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed to meet the heating and hot water demands of the communal areas and a 12.68kWp Photovoltaic array is proposed to provide renewable electricity.

**Noise**

6.39 The application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment which established the existing noise climate at the site and formulated mitigation measures to protect habitable rooms of the proposed development. On this basis, as with the previous consent, a condition will be imposed to ensure the recommended noise mitigation measures are implemented.

7.0 **CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

7.1 The application proposes 53 assisted living extra care apartments for older persons including communal facilities, rather than 55 individual flats as previously approved on the site and as allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. Clearly both the allocation as set out in the JHHNP and the use now proposed fall within the category of housing (C3 and C2 respectively), albeit one comprises general needs & affordable units and the other a specialist form housing aimed at a particular age range.

7.2 The report assesses the proposal against the relevant material planning considerations. At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The three strands of sustainable development are set out at paragraph 7 of the NPPF as economic, social and environmental. All these have been considered throughout the report and my conclusions against each of the strands is summarised below.

*Economic role*

7.3 The Government has made clear its view that residential building plays an important role in promoting economic growth. In economic terms, the scheme would provide construction jobs and some local investment during its build out, as well as longer term expenditure in the local economy supporting the ongoing vibrancy of the town. The development itself would also generate 14-17 full time equivalent jobs. I consider that moderate weight should be afforded to this benefit.

*Social role*

7.4 The proposal helps to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of 53 extra care units, half of which would contribute towards the dwelling numbers required to meet the needs of present and future generations. It also does this by creating a high quality built environment, in a sustainable location with accessible local services close by for new residents to use. I consider moderate weight should be given to these social benefits.

*Environmental role*

7.5 In environmental terms, the scheme offers opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement, which is a matter to which I afford moderate weight. Given the very substantial area of the district that is covered by protected landscapes or Green Belt, the opportunity to provide residential development on a suitable site that is not within these designations weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

7.6 The proposed development would significantly improve this corner on Reading Road redeveloping a vacant site with a contemporary high quality building, whilst providing much needed accommodation for older residents which is identified within the Neighbourhood Plan and in National Planning Guidance.

7.7 Taking into account the benefits of the development and weighing these against the limited harm, I consider that the proposal represents a sustainable development, consistent with Para.14 of the NPPF and Policy CS1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. The proposal would contribute towards the objective to boost the supply of housing, consistent with Para.47 of the NPPF. Therefore, placing all of the relevant material considerations in the balance I conclude that the limited adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal and recommend the application for approval. There are no technical objections to the proposal and outstanding matters can appropriately be dealt with by planning condition.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

**To delegate authority to grant planning permission to the Head of Planning subject to:**

- i. **The prior completion of a Section 106 agreement with the County Council and District Council to secure contributions towards bus services and monitoring and affordable housing as detailed in the report.**
- ii. **The following conditions:**
  1. **Commencement three years- full planning permission.**
  2. **Approved plans.**
  3. **Restriction on use - class C2.**
  4. **Slab and ridge levels to be agreed.**
  5. **All sample materials to be agreed.**
  6. **Sample wall panel of materials to be agreed.**
  7. **Landscaping (access/hard standings/fencing/walls) to be confirmed.**
  8. **Tree pits to be agreed.**
  9. **Vision splay to be agreed.**
  10. **Car parking details.**

11. Travel plan.
12. Construction travel management plan to be agreed.
13. Surface water drainage works to be agreed.
14. Decontamination works to be verified by the Council.
15. External lighting to be agreed.
16. Ait quality modelling and mitigation to be agreed.
17. Protection of trees during development.
18. Access details.
19. No surface water drainage to the highway.
20. Cycle parking details.
21. Bins storage details.
22. Noise controls.
23. Foul drainage works.
24. Ecology mitigation.
25. Hours of construction.

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