planning

Reading Borough Local Development Framework

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Annual Monitoring Report 2006/2007

December 2007

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Annual Monitoring Report 2006 / 7
Local Development Framework
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Reading Borough Council

Executive Summary

This Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is the third to be produced by Reading Borough Council, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Annual Monitoring Reports are intended to identify whether policies contained in the Local Development Framework (LDF) are achieving their objectives and targets and whether any unintended consequences can be identified. In addition, the AMR monitors progress against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme and reviews and issues arising from consultation procedures defined in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Given that, in common with many other authorities, Reading BC is currently only part way through the production of a Local Development Framework, this AMR concentrates upon the Core indicators specified by central government, with some local and contextual indicators addressed where relevant. As the LDF becomes established, future AMRs will evolve to reflect the targets and indicators specified within Development Plan Documents. Steps are already being taken to develop a monitoring framework capable of meeting the demands of the new system.

The report for 2006 – 2007 presents a number of key findings. These include:
- The submission draft Core Strategy has been declared 'sound' following examination in September 2007.
- 100% of employment development has taken place on previously developed land.
- Housing completions continue to be above the targets specified in the Berkshire Structure Plan.
- 100% of housing development has taken place on previously developed land.
- Rates of recycling continue to increase.
- The parks of Reading have received their first Green Flag Award, for the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins.
- Reading continues to enjoy good rates of accessibility, with a high percentage of new residential development enjoying good access to important local services.
- Significant progress has been made against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Reading Borough Council is committed to monitoring and review of the Local Development Framework to ensure that it remains appropriate and relevant to current issues of environmental, social and economic importance. The Council will continue to develop its information and monitoring systems so that it can review the targets and indicators of the evolving Local Development Framework and South East Plan.

SECTION A – INTRODUCTION

Section A1 – Background to the Annual Monitoring Report

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to monitor and review the progress made with Local Development Schemes (LDS) and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents (LDD) are being successfully implemented. The published Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) assesses progress towards meeting the timetable and milestones set out in the LDS and reports on a number of indicators, which measure the effectiveness of planning policies. This technique of measuring, reviewing and adjusting policy is part of the Governments 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to the planning system.

This AMR is now the third to be produced under the new planning system and, as with previous years, the Local Development Framework is still evolving (with the submission draft Core Strategy having been subject to examination in September 2007). This AMR therefore concentrates on monitoring the core indicators as required by central government.

Future AMRs will see more detailed monitoring systems being developed, suitable to meet the requirements of the continued implementation of the new planning system. Additional local indicators will be introduced in order to effectively monitor the effects of policies within DPDs and SPDs, and significant effects indicators, as identified in Sustainability Appraisals, will also be reported upon.

The 2007 Reading BC Annual Monitoring Report takes the following form:

Section A provides the outline to the Report, including introduction, background and detail on the planning context.

Section B gives an overview of the Local Development Framework, and includes monitoring of the implementation of the Local Development Scheme, detail on the Statement of Community Involvement and an overview of the continuing development of the monitoring framework.

Section C reports upon the Core, Contextual and Local Indicators, across the nine key policy themes of business development, housing, transport, local services, minerals, waste, flood protection, biodiversity & renewable energy. For each section, some contextual information is usually given, along with detail of relevant objectives and policies form regional and local planning documents. A commentary, along with an appraisal of policy effectiveness and detail of actions required, is also given where relevant.

Section A2 – Reading: Characteristics, Issues & Challenges

Population – The 2001 census reported 144,100 people living within the Reading Borough boundary, with around 220,000 living in the Greater Reading urban area. Mid-range population estimates for 2006 have suggested a population of 142,800; however, alternative sources, such as the Greater London Authority, detail a population of 149,671. The latter figure would appear to more closely match the increased demand for local services, such as primary schools, seen in the past five years. The Borough is also densely populated, with a figure of 35.4 people per hectare placing it fourth amongst the local authorities of the south-east. The population is relatively young, with high numbers of 20 – 35 year olds, and quite diverse, with an estimated 15% of the population made up from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.[1]

Economy – On the whole, Reading is an affluent town, with concentrations of knowledge-based businesses and high-end employment opportunities. However, there are some pockets of deprivation within the town, along with an unemployment rate (1.9%)[2] above the average for the south-east. Eight out of 93 Strategic Output Areas within the town are in the 20% most deprived areas in England.[3] The Council is geared towards tackling these issues throughout its full range of activity. The town centre continues to perform strongly, consistently producing a retail ranking of around 10th in the country. Property rents continue to compare favourably with competitors in the south-east.

Housing – The value of houses in Reading continues to increase, with an average price of £223,000 in October 2007[4] placing prices way above the national average (although slightly below that of the south-east). The Council continues to work to tackle affordability problems through planning policy and, as a New Growth Point, its commitment to delivering extra housing numbers.

Transport – Reading benefits from good public transport links, with a well-connected rail station offering direct services to 360 towns and cities nationally. Substantial improvements to Reading station will take place over forthcoming years. In addition, Reading Buses carry over 20 million customer journeys a year.

Heritage & Culture – Reading, as the capital of the Thames Valley, is an important cultural centre, with an ever-increasing range of facilities and attractions, including the nationally renowned Reading Festival. The town benefits from over 1,000 years of history, with a wealth of archaeology and historic buildings across the Borough. The historic environment continues to be important in shaping the identity of the town and its people.

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[1] neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk – 2005 mid-range estimate
[2] www.go-se.gov.uk - Reading Key Facts
[3] www.gos.gov.uk - South East Fact Files
[4] Land Registry, October 2007

Section A3 – Planning Context

Whilst the Local Development Framework continues to evolve, the existing Development Plan for Reading Borough comprises:

- Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP) 2001 – 2016, adopted July 2005.
- Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) Saved Policies (as detailed in Appendix A).
- Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (RPLP), incorporating alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.
- Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (WLP), adopted December 1998.

Progress with the production of the Local Development Framework is detailed in Section B. Most recently, the submission draft Core Strategy was declared 'sound' following examination in September 2007. In developing a vision for the Core Strategy, elements of the City 2020 Vision, the Structure Plan and the Community Strategy were combined to produce the following:

"The vision is to maintain and improve the quality of life in Reading, embracing the challenges of a dynamic, inclusive urban community of the 21st century. Everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from all that Reading can offer. Everyone has a part to play in shaping its future.

Reading's communities will be sustainable and have good access to a range of local facilities, services (including healthcare), housing and employment. The quality of the environment will continue to improve, and Reading will become a clean, safe and desirable place in which to live, work and visit. Reading will continue to develop as a regional centre serving the wider Thames Valley and provide commensurate opportunities for shopping and entertainment. It will provide headquarters for a number of major national and international companies and will be an environment where new business can start up and flourish. The centre will provide a good quality environment and facilities accessible to all members of society, with good access to open space and waterspaces. The conditions to enable a high quality of life for residents in the centre will be sought as part of developments. The centre will also contribute towards maintaining and improving the quality of life for all those who live in, work in and visit Reading.

In the suburbs, appropriate development of housing and services in locations with good links to public transport services will continue. The district and local centres will perform an increasing role of providing services to local populations. Travel from the suburbs to the centre will for many usually take the form of improved public transport. Green corridors along the River Thames and Kennet will be protected and enhanced as a recreational and ecological resource."

The vision will continue to guide the emphasis and ethos of future Local Development Documents.

Further developments in 2006/07, which influence the planning context for Reading, were the granting of New Growth Point (NGP) status and the adoption of an SPD on Sustainable Design and Construction. NGP status was dependent upon Reading being able to successfully demonstrate that it can provide additional housing, at least 20% above the RPG 9 figure. Locally, this equates to an average of 572 dwellings per annum in the period 2016. The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks to encourage best practice in design and construction, and strengthens the requirements placed upon developers towards this end. The policies contained within the SPD are also reflected within the submission draft Core Strategy.

SECTION B - CREATING THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SECTION B1 - Monitoring of Local Development Scheme Implementation

This Section reviews the progress of documents evolving under the Local Development Scheme, and contains other requirements from section 35 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 48.

The original Local Development Scheme gained approval from Government Office for the South East[5] (GOSE) in March 2005. It set out the timetable and milestones for the production of documents within the LDF. The original LDS was replaced by an updated 2006 LDS submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2006. In February 2007, the LDS was again updated, to take account of delays occurring in the original programme and the Council's experience of actually preparing and submitting an LDD. The 2007 LDS was approved by the Government Office for the South East in September 2007.

<u>Documents adopted or approved within the reporting period, April 2006 – 2007</u>

The Core Strategy Submission Document was submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2007. The LDS submitted in February 2006 had anticipated submission of the Core Strategy in October 2006. A slight delay was introduced to ensure that the Core Strategy was fully ready for submission in the light of the Stafford and Lichfield Examination Reports, working through the PINS self-assessment toolkit and advice accepted as a result of discussions / meetings with representatives of GOSE and PINS. The Core Strategy was declared 'sound' in the Inspectors Report, received on 10th December 2007.

The Reading Central Area Action Plan, 'Preferred Options', was published for Community Involvement in January 2007 compared with a date of October 2006 indicated in the submitted 2006 LDS. It was always intended that the programme for preparing the RCAAP would run in parallel with the preparation of the Core Strategy. The slight delay in publishing this document was to ensure that community involvement took place at the same time as the consultation programmed to take place on the Submission Core Strategy. It was therefore affected by the delay in submission of the Core Strategy.

The Annual Monitoring Report 2005-6 was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2006.

The Station Hill (South) Planning and Urban Design Brief was adopted in March 2007. A draft Brief had been published for consultation in May 2006.
A Sustainable Design and Construction SPD was adopted in March 2007. A draft SPD had been published for consultation in September 2006.

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[5] http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/?a=42496

Progress against the Local Development Scheme (February 2006) at March 2007

Local Development Document	Timetable												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Core Document and Spatial Strategy[6]	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓					
Reading Central Area Action Plan	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓								
Site Specific Allocations													
Proposals Map and Sites Schedule													
Generic Development Control Policy Document													
Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Document[7]	▓	▓	▓										
Detailed Waste Development Control Policies and Preferred Areas for Development.[8]	▓	▓	▓										

Local Development Document Preparation Milestones
1. Pre-production, including commencement of document preparation.
2. Preparation of the scoping report for the sustainability appraisal.
3. Preparation of Issues and options and initial sustainability appraisal report, including public consultation.
4. Public Participation on preferred options & Sustainability Appraisal report.
5. Consider representations and discussions with community and stakeholders
6. Preparation of submission development document and any amendments to the sustainability appraisal report.
7. Submission of development plan document and sustainability appraisal report to Secretary of State;
8. Public consultation period on submission development plan document and sustainability appraisal report.
9. Pre-examination consideration of representations
10. Pre-examination meeting
11. Examination period including commencement of examination;
12. Receipt of Inspectors Binding Report
13. Adopting and publication of document & revised proposals map, publication of a statement setting out how the sustainability appraisal and consultations influenced the preparation of the plan and publication of

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[6] www.reading.gov.uk/environmentplanning/planning/strategicplanningservices/General.asp?id=SX9452-A7806486

[7] www.berks-jspu.gov.uk/content/main.asp?pid=27

[8] http://www.berks-jspu.gov.uk/content/main.asp?pid=27

monitoring measures.

Supplementary Planning Documents	Timetable					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Open Space Provision[9]						
Guidance on Implementation of Design and Development Policies	▓					
Review of Battle Hospital Development Brief[10]	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Dee Park Development Brief[11]						
Station Area Development Briefs						
Station Hill South	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Sustainable Design and Construction	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Civic Area Development Brief						
Briefs for sites in East side of Central Reading						
Meadway School Development Brief						

Supplementary Planning Document Preparation Milestones
1. Pre-production, including commencement of document preparation
2. Preparation of the scoping report for the sustainability appraisal.
3. Preparation of draft supplementary planning document
4. Draft supplementary planning document planning document and sustainability appraisal report issued for public participation.
5. Consideration of consultation representations
6. Adoption and publication of document, publication of a statement setting out how the sustainability appraisal and consultation influenced the preparation of the plan and publication of monitoring measures.

Statement of Community Involvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Position	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓

Statement of Community Involvement Preparation Milestones
1. Preparation of Draft Statement of Community involvement
2. Public Participation on draft statement
3. Preparation of submission statement
4. Submission of statement to the Secretary of State
5. Pre-examination consideration of representations.
6. Pre-examination meeting
7. Examination period, including commencements of the examinations
8. Receipt of Inspectors Binding report
9. Adoption and Publication of document.

[9] http://www.reading.gov.uk/environmentplanning/parksandopenspaces
[10] http://www.reading.gov.uk/environmentplanning/planning/strategicplanningservices/
[11] http://www.reading.gov.uk/general.asp?id=sx9452-a780bc27

Although the SCI will be formally reviewed at least every 5 years, it is the role of the AMR to report on any issues arising as a result of the SCI consultation exercises. If necessary certain factors could be identified by the AMR which could trigger a review of the SCI before the five years These could include: demographic changes, changes in the Council's consultation policy or significant changes in best practice. There have been no significant issues arising out of the operation of the SCI since its adoption in July 2006. The SCI is discussed further in section B2.

Policies (including 'saved' policies) that the authority has decided it no longer wishes to include in the LDF.
The authority submitted a request to save existing policies to the Secretary of State in February 2007. The Secretary of State issued a response in September 2007 indicating those policies that are saved until replaced by adopted policies in the Reading Borough LDF. A list of saved policies is given in Appendix A.

Factors affecting the achievement of LDS milestones
There continue to be issues related to staff resources, and the LDF process is proving much more resource intensive than anticipated, however there are no specific issues currently affecting the achievement of milestones as set out in the approved 2007 LDS.

SECTION B2 - Statement of Community Involvement

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 brought about substantial changes to the planning system, including an objective to achieve more effective involvement of the community in planning. As part of this, the Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document sets out how the authority intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of local development documents. The SCI also covers how people and the community will be engaged in decisions on planning applications for major development.

In addition to complying with government guidance, the SCI was developed to comply with the Council's Consultation and Participation Policy and to accord with the advice in the Council's Consultation Guidance Pack.

The SCI was subject to independent examination, as if it were a development plan document. Individuals and groups who have an interest in planning have been able to make representations on this SCI, and these representations were considered by the Planning Inspectorate during the examination.

Pre-production on the SCI commenced in 2004, with pre-submission of the SCI production in June 2005. Submission of the LDS took place in October 2005, and the SCI was officially adopted in July 2006 in accordance with the March 2005 LDS.

The SCI will be formally reviewed at least every five years. Future AMRs will report on any issues arising as a result of the SCI consultation exercises. Factors that could trigger a review of the SCI before the five year period include: demographic changes, changes in the Council's consultation policy, or significant changes in leading practice. At this point in time, there are no issues affecting the implementation of the SCI or indicating that it should be reviewed.

Section B3 – Developing the Monitoring Framework

Annual Monitoring Reports are intended to provide a feedback loop within the process of policy making, and test whether objectives and assumptions behind policies are still relevant. Monitoring allows the actual significant effects of implementation of the Core Strategy and other DPDs to be tested against those significant effects predicted within the documents. This is an important process as it will help ensure that any problems that arise during implementation of the Core Strategy can be identified and future predictions made more accurately. It will also enable, at an early stage, any unforeseen impacts of implementation to be identified, and allow appropriate remedial action to be taken. In addition, monitoring will be key to updating the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy.

At present, the Local Development Framework is still evolving. As such, the current Development Plan still consists of those documents detailed in section A3, until further DPDs are adopted. This monitoring report therefore concentrates, as in previous years, upon reporting the core indicators specified by DCLG, with additional local and contextual indicators reported where appropriate.

However, the mechanisms are being put into place to establish an effective strategic monitoring framework, suitable for future requirements. In producing the Core Strategy, the Council has adopted an objectives – policies – targets – indicators approach. Each of the policies contained within the Core Strategy has a corresponding section relating to targets and output indicators. These have been set to measure movements towards or away from policy objectives over time. Where possible, the core output indicators specified by the government have been incorporated into this. The indicators for each policy detail the information or data which is to be gathered and included within the AMR.

This mechanism will allow for the effective review of the performance of policies and highlight any need to adjust or revise them. Where necessary (e.g. If housing completions were falling below the required level), the Council will also use development briefs and supplementary planning documents to bring sites forward for development.

The AMR will also include the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal monitoring for the Core Strategy. The significant effects of the Core Strategy which were predicted as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process will be reviewed using the targets and indicators set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Report. This will provide a further feedback mechanism to review the performance of the policies in relation to the Councils sustainability objectives and highlight any need to adjust or revise them.

Reading Borough Council continues to recognise the importance of monitoring and evidence building to spatial planning, dedicating increased resources to this end in order to ensure satisfactory future performance. When the Core Strategy is implemented a comprehensive monitoring framework, which will be evident in future AMRs, will support it.

SECTION C INDICATORS

SECTION C1 - Business Development

Context: Reading is at the heart of the economically buoyant Thames Valley and is a centre for a variety of different types of industry which add considerable value to the economy. The Borough has a strong industrial base with new technology industries, a strong service sector and several manufacturing and distribution firms. Reading also continues to develop as the main hub for business, shopping and entertainment within the sub-region.

The employment base of the Borough differs from the national average, with a higher proportion of jobs in transport, storage and communication, financial intermediation, and real estate renting and business. Reading has an under-representation in health and social work and public administration.[12]

Core Indicators 1a to 1f present details of business development within Reading:

Core Indicator 1a - Amount of floor space developed for employment by type in Reading Borough 2006-7

Gross Floorspace* (sq.m.) Completed	B1	B1-B8 Mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8
Total for central Reading	0	0	320	0	590	0	0
Total for rest of Borough	0	2,798	0	0	0	0	3,536
Total for Borough	0	2,798	320	0	590	0	3,536

*Gross floor space calculated here is external floor space as there is currently no means to calculate internal floor space.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1

Relevant Policies: BSP E1 Location of employment development; E3 Diversity of Employment; RBLP EMP1 Proposals for Major Employment - Generating Development outside the Town Centre; EMP3 Acceptability of Employment; EMP4 Maintaining a Variety of Premises; EMP7 Major Industrial Areas.

Commentary: Core Indicator 1a shows that, as in previous years, most employment floor space developed in 2006/7 was for storage and distribution uses. The table also illustrates that, unsurprisingly, most of this was developed outside the area of Central Reading. The major contributors to floor space within the Reading Central Area were office and light industrial uses. The figures are for external floor space, rather than gross internal floor space, as

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[12] neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

this is the data currently recorded on planning applications and for monitoring purposes and data on internal floor space is not available.

Policy Effectiveness: RBLP saved policies have again proven to be effective in the financial year. The policies have effectively delivered the objectives of the RBLP, providing opportunities for continued economic growth and maintaining the variety of jobs in the Borough.

Actions Required: Develop system to monitor internal floor space for future AMRs. Further develop appropriate monitoring systems suitable for policies contained within submission draft Core Strategy & draft Reading Central Area Action Plan.

Core Indicator 1b - Amount of floor space developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas.

Gross Floor space completed	B1	B1-B8 Mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8
Central Reading	0	0	320	0	590	0	0
Forbury Industrial Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gasworks Site	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for Central Reading	0	0	320	0	590	0	0
Acre Road/Bennet Road	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manor farm/Gillette Way	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rose Kiln Lane S/Boulton Road	0	2,798	0	0		0	0
Rose Kiln Lane N/Elgar Road	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Worton Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portman Road/Deacon Way	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,536
Green Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cardiff Road/Richfield Avenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Business Areas	0	2,798	0	0	0	0	3,536
Total for Business Areas	0	2,798	320	0	590	0	3,536

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1, 2.62.

Relevant Policies: BSP E3 Diversity of Employment; S1 Major Retail and Leisure Development in Town Centres; S2 Retail Development outside Major Town Centres, S3 Leisure Development outside Major Town Centres; RBLP EMP3 Acceptability of Employment Development; RET3A District and Major Local Shopping Areas; RET3B Other Local Shopping Centres; RET4 Improvements to Local Shopping Centres; LEI3 The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities; LEI6 New Leisure facilities; and CEN10 Recreation, Entertainment and Leisure Facilities.

Commentary: The above table shows the amount of employment floor space developed in the Employment Areas designated in the RBLP. All new business / employment development is located within these areas.

Policy Effectiveness: Policies are effectively delivering a variety of premises as stated in RBLP paragraph 2.62. This development is effectively concentrated within employment areas.

Actions Required: Develop system to monitor internal floor space for future AMRs.

Core Indicator 1c - Percentage of 1a, by type, which is on Previously Developed Land.

	Total for Central Reading (m²)	Total for rest of Borough (m²)	Total for Reading Borough
B1	0	0	0
B1-B8 Mix	0	2,798	2,798 (100%)
B1a	320	0	320 (100%)
B1b	0	0	0
B1c	590	0	590 (100%)
B2	0	0	0 (100%)
B8	0	3,536	3,536 (100%)

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1.

Relevant Policies: BSP DP1 Spatial Strategy; RBLP EMP2 Control of Major Development throughout the Borough; EMP3 Acceptability of economic development.

Commentary: All new employment floor space developed on Previously Developed Land (PDL) in 2006/7. This is in keeping with the BSP's DP1 Spatial Strategy which advocates limiting developments outside of existing settlements.

Policy Effectiveness: The table demonstrates that 100% of new employment land was on Previously Developed land, and indicates that the policies have been extremely successful.

Actions Required: Ensure future Development Plan Documents continue the emphasis on priority for development of previously developed land.

Core Output Indicator 1d - Employment Land Available by Type in hectares.

Sites in LDF/RBLP/S106 Applications – 2006 – 7:

Gross site area (ha.) – Outstanding	B1	B-B8 Mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8
Total for Central Reading	2.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total for Rest of Borough	0.00	0.00	7.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total for Reading Borough	2.20	0.00	7.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Outstanding Permitted development – 2006-7:

Gross site area (ha.) – Outstanding	B1	B-B8 Mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8
Total for Central Reading	0.00	0.00	4.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total for Rest of Borough	9.88	0.00	16.25	0.00	0.30	0.00	3.27
Total for Reading Borough	9.88	0.00	20.38	0.00	0.30	0.00	3.27

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RCLP Paragraph 2.1.

Relevant Policies: BSP E1 Location of Employment Development; E2 Acceptability of Employment Development; E3 Diversity of Employment; RBLP EMP2 Control of Major Development throughout the Borough; EMP3 Acceptability of Economic Development; EMP4 Maintaining a Variety of Premises; EMP6 Units for Small Firms.

Policy Effectiveness: There is a good supply of land available for employment use. These provide an opportunity for a diversity of employment uses within the Borough.

Actions Required: This data reflects the need for continued review of the need to release employment land for alternative uses, particularly housing.

Core Output Indicator 1e (i): Losses of employment land in employment / regeneration areas:

Gross Floorspace completed	A1	A2	B1	B1-B8 mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Other
Central Reading	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00
Forbury Industrial Park	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gasworks Site	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total for Central Reading	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00

Acre Road/Bennet Road	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manor farm/Gillette Way	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rose Kiln Lane S/Boulton Road	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rose Kiln Lane N/Elgar Road	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Worton Grange	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Portman Road/Deacon Way	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Green Park	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cardiff Road/Richfield Avenue	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Business Areas	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total for Business Areas	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00

Core Output Indicator 1e (ii): Losses of employment land in local authority area:

Gross site Area	B1	B-B8 Mix	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8
Total for Central Reading	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00
Total for Rest of Borough	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00
Total for Reading Borough	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.09	0.04	0.00

Core Output Indicator 1f: Amount of employment land lost to residential development:

All losses were to residential uses.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1; 2.72; 2.76.

Relevant Policies: BSP E4 Future uses of Employment Land; RBLP EMP7 Major Industrial Areas.

Commentary: In comparison to previous years, loss of employment land has been negligible. Where it has occurred, this is a reflection of the strong and sustained demand for housing, relative to the demand for office space, and this

outcome is generally considered acceptable. Whilst both RPG9 and the draft SEP contain policies referring to the need to prioritise the use of previously developed land, neither the BSP nor the RBLP contain policies that refer specifically to this issue. However, policy E1 of the BSP encourages development within the Major Town Centres and within settlement boundaries, effectively channeling development towards previously developed land. Similarly, the RBLP's EMP1 has allocated sites outside the town centre for employment generating potential, again most of which are also previously developed. Policy E4 of the BSP emphasizes the need for local authorities to consider the requirements of communities for other uses of employment land, particularly housing.

Policy Effectiveness: Policies have effectively retained most employment land for employment uses. There is still a reasonable supply of land available for employment use. These provide an opportunity for a diversity of employment uses within the Borough. Employment data in this AMR and other data suggests that there is adequate economic growth in the Borough, and perhaps alternative uses (such as housing) could be considered for some previously developed land.

Actions Required: Future policies should give due assessment to future demand and supply for employment sites, and balance this with the need for land for other uses, including housing. Work to develop this further will take place during the production of the Site Specific Allocations Document, which will define Core Employment Areas.

Contextual Indicators

1g: Full Time Weekly Earnings:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Where Reading is the Place of Residence	Not Available	£452.70	£461.80	£489.10	£471.10	£479.60
Where Reading is the Place of Work	£417.50	£458.60	£445.10	£497.00	£528.20	£516.80

Source: Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings 2006. Figure shows median gross full-time weekly earnings 2001 – 2006.

1h: Number of VAT registered businesses:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Opening Stock	4,385	4,460	4,500	4,470	4,585	4,605
Registrations in Year	460	490	450	505	485	445
De-Registrations in year	390	445	480	590	465	420
Net Change	+70	+45	-30	+115	+25	+25

Source: Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform - stats.berr.gov.uk/ed/

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1; 2.72; 2.76.

Relevant Policies: BSP E3 Diversity of Employment; E4 Future uses of Employment Land; RBLP EMP6 Units for Small Firms; EMP7 Major Industrial Areas.

Commentary: The evidence in the tables above, other government data and more local studies show the economy of Reading is healthy and steadily growing. Earnings for residents of Reading have risen slightly against last years figure whereas, for those who work within the Borough, there has been a slight fall (2.2%). However, the latter figure continues to compare well against national and regional averages.

Actions Required: Develop suitable policies within Reading Central Area Action Plan to ensure continued economic success of the Borough. Develop monitoring system consistent with submission draft Core Strategy and emerging RCAAP.

SECTION C2 - HOUSING.

Context: The housing market in Reading has been buoyant with rapidly rising house prices being well above the national average although, in the latter part of 2007, there are signs of a slowing down in the market. The average house price increased by approximately 44% between 2000 and 2005, thus making it increasingly difficult for low wage earners to find affordable accommodation (HM Land Registry, 2005).

The Housing Needs and Aspirations Survey (carried out in 2002) indicated that over each of the next five years, Reading will require some 6,660 annual housing "transactions" (i.e. sales/ purchases and lettings/ re-lettings) across its entire housing market, to meet both the *demand* for open-market housing and the *need* for affordable housing. This equates to a shortfall in housing supply of some 1,056 units in each of the five years. Approximately 66% of these households would require some form of affordable housing.

The recently published Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Berkshire estimates that there is a need for between 3,000 and 4,200 additional affordable homes across Berkshire per annum. Given the scale of housing need identified, there is therefore a need to prioritise in terms of future affordable housing provision. The level of need in Berkshire exceeds the total annual housing allocations (market and affordable) for Berkshire as proposed in the Regional Spatial Strategy.   Thus, with the current levels of funding and at current levels of housing development, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient provision of affordable housing to both meet current and newly arising need.   There is a need for all types of affordable housing but the analysis shows that between 15-20% of newly forming households will not be able to afford any of the intermediate tenures such as shared ownership of intermediate rent.   The core requirement to address the housing need within Berkshire is for social rented accommodation and it is likely that the authorities will need to prioritise the provision of this type of housing.

National statistics indicate that social housing is across the board more expensive in Reading than the average for both the South East and the rest of England. The majority of households in Reading (60%) have one or two people per household, compared to an average household size of 2.36 for England and Wales. Community concern exists in some areas over the number of modern developments and resulting impact on the character of the area and increased pressure on available services and infrastructure.

Core Output Indicator 2a - Housing Trajectory:

**RBC Housing Trajectory at 31st March 2007**
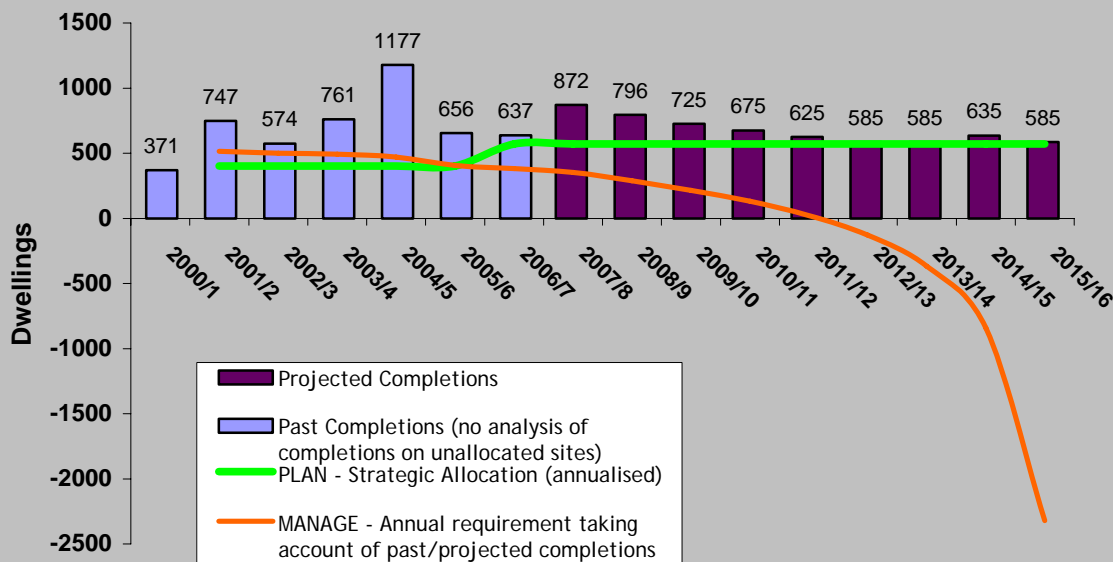
Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.05; RBLP Paragraph 1.47 and 1.19.

Relevant Policies: BSP H1 Overall Housing Provision; H6 Residential Density and Dwelling Mix; RBLP HSG1 Housing Provision and Identified Sites; HSG9 Location of Residential Development.

Commentary: The site-based trajectory compares past performance on housing supply to future anticipated supply. Completions for the year were only slightly lower than forecast in 2005/06, due mainly to later than anticipated starts on some of the larger sites with planning permission.

Current commitments, allocated sites and anticipated windfall sites have been phased over the current plan period. The resultant graph illustrates the anticipated high level of housing completions over the next few years. While a significant element of the total housing provision is expected to be achieved through conversions, changes of use, and redevelopment of existing buildings, Reading will be required to consider the development of 'windfall' sites. Policy HSG9 sets the criteria by which proposals for residential development are judged. The Urban Potential Study (2003) identified some windfall sites, however it is expected that the market will provide additional sites.

Monitoring of Completions against
Berkshire Structure Plan/RSS requirements to 2016.
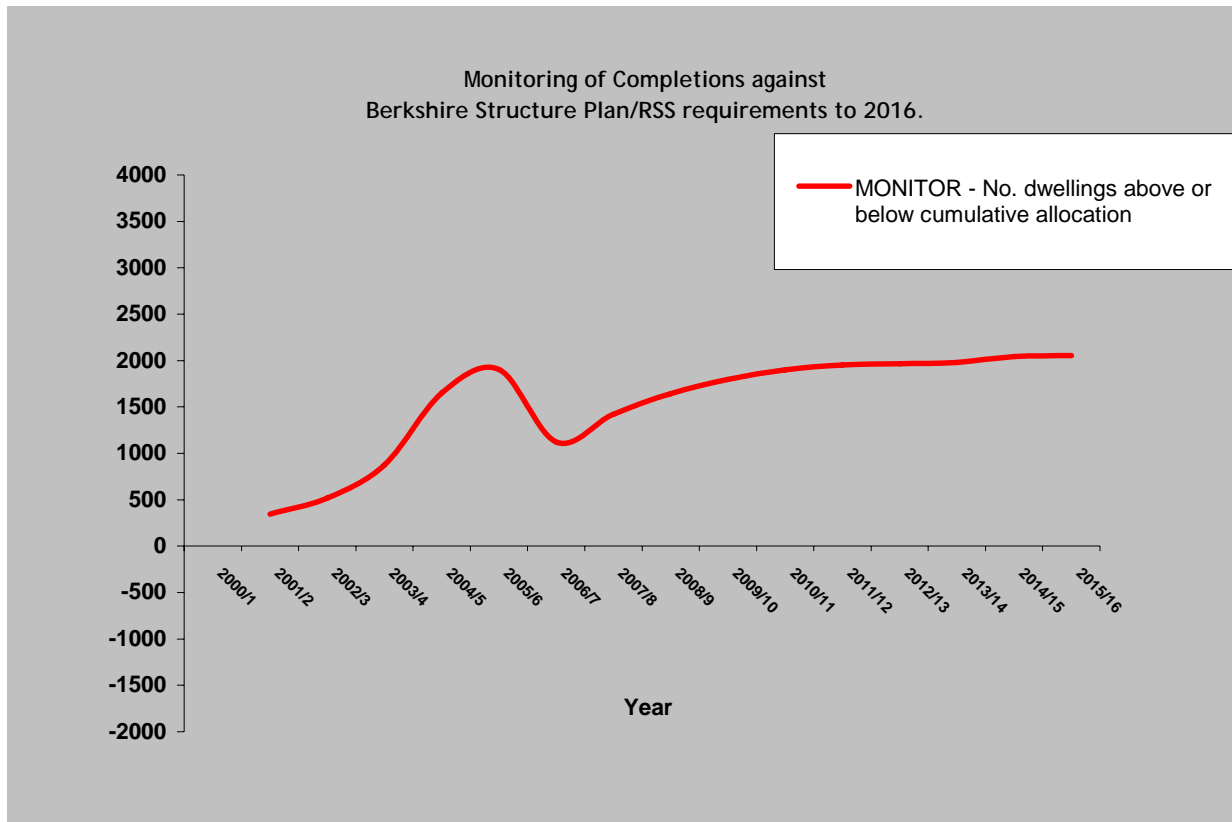
Policy Effectiveness: Local Plan policies have been successful in delivering the Structure Plan housing requirement.

Actions Required: The Site Allocations DPD will need to make provision for additional allocations of housing land for completion in the period post 2016. Conducting a Housing Land Availability Study and further analysis of windfall rates will provide details of sites and numbers likely to become available for housing.

Core Output Indicator 2b - Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land:

Total Net Completions	PDL Completions	%PDL
637	637	100%

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.05; RBLP Paragraph 1.47 and 1.19

Relevant Policies: BSP H3 Location of Housing Development; RBLP KEY 4 Areas of Development

Policy Effectiveness: As the table illustrates, all residential completions have taken place on previously developed land; a total of nil residential on greenfield land indicates that policies are proving extremely effective.

Actions Required: An Urban Capacity Study and Site Allocations DPD are required to inform the development of future residential areas. Continue to monitor the location of development.

Core Output Indicator 2c: Percentage of new dwellings completed at (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare; (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and (iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare.

Dwellings on Large/Medium Completed Sites*	Large and Medium Sites – dwellings per ha					
	<30	%	30-50	%	>50	%
631	0	0%	62	10%	569	90%

* In line with Annual Monitoring Housing returns to SEERA, the figures are gross. Losses through demolition, conversions, changes of use, and sites less than 10 units have been excluded from these figures.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 1.8; 3.1; 3.42; 3.43

Relevant Policies: BSP H6 Residential density and dwelling mix; RBLP HSG5 Residential Design Standards.

Target: Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016. Encourage developments in excess of 30 dwellings per hectare as required in PPG3

Commentary: Reading has a very high population density relative to the rest of England. Government statistics show that the population density (persons per hectare) for Reading is 35.42 compared with for 4.20 the South East, and 3.77 for England[13].

Policy Effectiveness: PPG3 has essentially ensured that the larger housing sites have been developed at densities greater than 30 dwellings per hectare. Only 3% of dwellings were constructed at a density of <30 per hectare, this indicates that the current policies are therefore effective.

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[13] neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

Actions Required: Continue to monitor residential densities and ensure future density policies reflect PPG3.

Core Output Indicator 2d: Affordable Housing Completions

Total Net Completions	Affordable Completions	% Affordable
637	192*	30%

Source: Reading Borough Council, Housing Section.
This figure includes 28 Key Worker Living Homebuy Units.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1; 2.20; 2.21; 3.23; 3.24.

Relevant Policies: BSP H5 Affordable Housing; RBLP HSG2 Affordable Housing.

Relevant Targets: RBLP - at least 2000 homes during the plan period. Normally this is to be achieved by the involvement of a housing association or similar body, and be secured for successive occupiers.

Supplementary Planning Guidance Planning Obligations: On sites of 15 or more dwellings, the Council will negotiate to secure 50% of the units as affordable units, on a site by-site basis, having regard to market and site conditions. In addition, affordable housing contributions may be sought from residential-only developments, mixed-use developments and major B1 employment developments of more than 2,5000 sq.m.

Policy Effectiveness: Existing policies and the SPG have been effective in delivering affordable housing.

Actions Required: Ensure that the Core Strategy continues to set a framework for the future provision of affordable and key worker housing. Consider the impact of the Planning Obligations Circular 5/05, and future revisions to PPG3 on future policies on affordable housing. Develop the evidence base for housing needs and the housing market and consider the implications of the revision of existing policies.

Contextual Indicator - Reading Housing Stock:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Housing Stock	58,346	59,123	59,747	60,292	61,154	61,810	62,466	63,103

Contextual Indicator - Reading Average Residential Property Prices:

Year	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flat / Maisonette	Overall
June 06	363,687	204,397	165,620	150,371	193,479
June 05	352,775	198,265	160,650	145,859	187,674
June 04	338,902	190,468	154,333	140,123	180,294
June 03	325,647	183,019	148,297	134,643	173,243
June 02	300,523	168,898	136,855	124,255	159,876
June 01	256,600	144,213	116,853	106,094	136,510

Source: HM Land Registry

<u>Policy Effectiveness:</u> The continued increase in provision of residential property is in keeping with Reading's housing commitments, however, the increase in price may suggest that supply is still not meeting demand.

<u>Actions Required:</u> Future LDF policies will need to have an emphasis on providing affordable accommodation and investigate releasing land for residential uses to meet market demands.

SECTION C3 - Transport

Context: Reading's small size and high population density combine to make walking and public transport a viable option for many local residents. The Borough is well served through regular services operated by Reading Buses and three railway stations (with planning permission in place for a fourth at Green Park). The largest of these stations, in central Reading, will see major improvement works take place over coming years, removing a significant bottleneck from the national rail network and contributing to the regeneration of central Reading.

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), which formed the basis for the transport policies in the Draft South East Plan, introduces the concept of regional hubs and spokes as priorities for investment. Hubs will encourage the development of concentrations of higher density land uses including interchange facilities to create living centres. Hubs and spokes will support the concentration of future development in existing urban areas and improved access into those areas for those accessing services and facilities. Reading is identified as a hub. In pursuing its strategy, the RTS gives priority to the development of public transport systems in the region including public transport interchanges, mass rapid transit systems, travel planning advice and information services.

The Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 indicates that a good transport system in Berkshire is of key importance, not only for the economy, but also for people's quality of life. The Reading Borough Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 is built around several themes, including an Accessibility Strategy, a Parking Strategy (in preparation), a Bus Strategy, a Rail Strategy, Urban Traffic Management & Control, Local Area Enhancements, Community Strategy Partnerships, and Highway & Bridge Maintenance. The submission draft Core Strategy seeks to implement the transport strategy for Reading through its policies.

Core Indicator 3a - Amount of completed non-residential development within UCOs A, B and D complying with car-parking standards as set out in the Local Development Framework:

Commentary: There is currently no policy framework for car-parking standards, and as such there is no measure for this Core Indicator. Reading currently has a draft Parking Policy, which will eventually be implemented through the LDF.

Actions Required: An SPD on Parking Standards will be consulted upon in 2008. Monitoring systems can be developed once such a document is adopted.

Core Output Indicator 3b - Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP, a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre:

GP	Hospital	Primary School	Secondary School	Employment Area	Major Retail Centre
100%	71%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.05; Paragraph 3.06; RBLP Paragraph 1.8

Relevant Policies: BSP H1 New residential development; M4 Highway measures associated with new development; M6 Cycling and walking; M8 Public Transport; RBLP KEY1 Equality of Access to development; HSG9 Location of Residential Development; TRN1 A Balanced Transport Strategy; TRN2 Bus priority and interchange.

Commentary: As in previous years, the results show an extremely high level of accessibility from newly developed residences. The only area of concern is in accessibility to the hospital, where only 71% of schemes are within 30 minutes public transport time. This is due to a number of developments taking in place in the north of Reading, from which access to the hospital is more difficult. When, however, a calculation is made based upon the number of units, rather than schemes, it becomes apparent that 85% of new dwellings can access the hospital within the specified time.

Policy Effectiveness: The local transport plan and relevant policies have successfully ensured that development is accessible via sustainable transport modes. This is reducing the need to travel by car.

Actions Required: Future LDF policies will continue to place an emphasis on development in sustainable and appropriate locations. Further improvements to public transport facilities will be sought through active pursuit of available funding streams, such as the New Growth Points programme.

SECTION C4 - Local Services

Context: As documented in previous AMRs, Reading town centre has evolved into a regional centre in terms of office, retail and leisure facilities. Over the past decade a great deal of development and investment has been witnessed in the centre of Reading, contributing to its emergence as the major sub-regional centre in the Thames Valley. Reading also has seven smaller town or district centres within the Borough

Reading is generally well served by its existing open spaces in terms of overall supply against need and, in the monitoring year, Forbury Park and the Abbey Ruins have become the first parks within the Borough to achieve Green Flag Status. However, many existing open spaces are in need of upgrading to improve the facilities offered – funding necessary to secure this is being actively pursued through Section 106 agreements and funding streams such as New Growth Points.

Core Output Indicator 4a - Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development:

Floor Space completed* (sq.m)	A1 (Retail)	A2 (Financial and professional services)	B1a (Office other than professional services)	D2 (Assembly and leisure)
Central Reading	201	115	320	840
Rest of Borough	1965	0	0	530
Total	2166	115	320	1370

*Gross floorspace for all uses calculated here is external floorspace as there are currently no means to calculate internal floorspace.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1; 2.64

Relevant Policies: BSP E3 Diversity of Employment; S1 Major Retail and Leisure Development in Town Centres; S2 Retail Development outside Major Town Centres; S3 Leisure Development outside Major Town Centres; S4 Other Sports; RBLP EMP3 Acceptability of Employment Development; RET3A District and Major Local Shopping Areas; RET3B Other Local Shopping Centres; RET4 Improvements to Local Shopping Centres; LEI3 The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities; LEI6 New Leisure Facilities; and CEN10 Recreation, Entertainment and Leisure Facilities.

Policy Effectiveness: The figures show that there has been a fall in the development of A2, B1a and D2 uses from the previous (2005-6) monitoring period. This can, in part, be attributed to the fact that the market for these uses is moving into a new phase of development, with permissions in place and

awaiting commencement at Abbey Mill and Chatham Place. Overall, a variety of uses continue to be secured through current policies, illustrating their ongoing effectiveness.

Actions Required: Better monitoring to measure internal floorspace of new development. Development of appropriate policies within Reading Central Area Action Plan & monitoring framework to accompany these.

Core Output Indicator 4b - Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres:

Gross Floorspace (sq.m) - Completed	A1		A2		B1a		D2	
Central Reading	201	9%	115	100%	320	100%	840	61%
Caversham Centre	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tilehurst Centre	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Oxford Road West	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total for Town Centres	201	9%	115	100%	320	100%	840	61%

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.04; RBLP Paragraph 2.1; 2.64

Relevant Policies: BSP E3 Diversity of Employment; S1 Major Retail and Leisure development in Town Centres; S2 Retail Development outside Major Town Centres; S3 Leisure Development outside Major Town Centres; S4 Other Sports; RBLP EMP3 Acceptability of Employment Development; RET3A District and Major Local Shopping Areas; RET3B Other Local Shopping Centres; RET4 Improvements to Local Shopping Centres; LEI3 The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities; LEI6 New Leisure Facilities; and CEN10 Recreation, Entertainment and Leisure Facilities.

Policy Effectiveness: The figures above suggest that existing policies are, on the whole, effectively directing developments of this nature towards town centres. The only exception to this is the 9% figure for A1 uses – this is due to the development of a large supermarket on Basingstoke Road, towards the south of the Borough. This development, with a floor space of 1635 sq.m, was approved due to the developer successfully demonstrating that they were meeting the need of an under-served area. The large floor space of this one development, outside the town centres, therefore significantly skews the figure given for A1 uses.

Actions Required: Policies contained within the submission draft Core Strategy, and the emerging Reading Central Area Action Plan will seek to ensure that developments of this nature continue to be focused within town centres.

Core Output Indicator 4c - Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award standards:

This figure currently stands at 0.74%. This is an improvement upon last years figure, when there were no Green Flag accredited spaces within Reading.

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.10; RBLP Paragraph 1.8 and 7.1

Relevant Policies: BSP S4 Other Sport, Recreation, Tourism and Leisure Uses; RBLP KEY 2A Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources; LEI 1 Loss of Open Space; LEI 2 Major Areas of Open Space; LEI 3 The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities.

Policy Effectiveness: The award of Green Flag status to the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins represents the first step towards progress in this area. Further improvements should be secured due to the active pursuit of funds devoted to this purpose. Additionally, the core indicator does not accurately reflect the quality of open space management in Reading, with additional research suggesting that the policies for the management of open spaces are effective.

Actions Required: Further improvements in the management of open spaces in order to qualify for further Green Flag Award Status.

Section C5 – Minerals

Context: Minerals issues and indicators are covered in the Joint Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Report prepared by the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit. The six Berkshire Unitary Authorities are together producing a joint Minerals and Waste Development Framework. Details of how this work is progressing, along with an assessment of how effective minerals policies have been in the area, are contained within the Joint Minerals and Waste AMR, which can be obtained from the Joint Strategic Planning Unit website.[14]

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[14] www.berks-jspu.gov.uk

SECTION C6 - Waste

Context: Minerals and Waste issues are covered in the Joint Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Report prepared by the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit. This report is submitted separately, however, relevant core indicator information has been included here for Reading. A significant issue facing the authority, given its status as a New Growth Point & a Diamond for Investment & Growth, is the anticipated level of future waste arising. The six Berkshire Unitary Authorities are working together to tackle this issue and are committed to producing a Joint Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

Core Indicator 6a - Capacity of new waste management facilities by type:

One new waste management facility was approved in the monitoring period. The relevant capacities are as follows:

Materials Recycling Facility -   50,000 tonnes per annum
Waste Transfer Station -   200,000 tonnes per annum
Household Waste Recovery Centre -   30,000 tonnes per annum

Core Indicator 6b - Amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type, and the percentage each management type represents of the waste managed:

		2005 - 06	Percentage	2006 - 07	Percentage
Waste Arising (tones)		80,160		77,614	
Management:	Recycling	17,732	22.12%	21,662	27.91%
	Landfill	61,885	77.2%	55,243	71.18%
	Incineration	543	0.68%	709	0.91%

Source: DEFRA

Local Indicator – Percentage of household waste recycled:

27.64% of household waste was recycled in 2006 – 2007, as compared to a figure of 20.8% in 2005 – 2006.

Commentary: As illustrated by the figures above, substantial progress is being made in the effective management of waste at the local level. Total waste arising has been reduced, recycling rates are moving quickly forward and additional waste management capacity has been developed.

Relevant objectives / policies: An assessment of how effective Mineral and Waste policies have been in the area is contained within the Joint Minerals and Waste AMR. A Joint Minerals & Waste Development Framework is currently

being produced by the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit. Consultation on Core Strategy Preferred Options ended on the 5th November 2007, as did consultation on Issues & Options for a Development Control & Preferred Areas Document.

<u>Actions Required:</u> Ensure that new Joint Minerals & Waste Development Framework contributes towards further progress in this area.

SECTION C7 - Flood Protection and Water Quality

Context: Reading has a number of waterways within the Borough boundary: the Rivers Thames and Kennet; the Kennet and Avon Canal (sharing much of its course with the River Kennet); and the Holy Brook.   These areas are recreational corridors providing leisure facilities for the Borough, and surrounding development ensures a high level of accessibility to this good quality open space.   Council policy does not allow development in the flood plain which would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater, or in anyway increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.

Core Output Indicator 7 - Number of planning applications granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality:

Decisions contrary to flood risk advice	2

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.09; RBLP Paragraph 10.1; 11.37

Relevant Policies: BSP EN6 Prevention of Flooding; EN7 Development and water resources; RBLP WAT 7 Development in the floodplain; LEI2 Major Areas of Open Space; NE9 Environmental Implications; NE8 Environmental Pollution; NE10 Surface Water run-off and development.

Commentary: In this monitoring period, only two applications were granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency, both of which were in the Caversham part of the Borough. In both cases, the Environment Agency objection was on the grounds of dry access. The first of these, at 21 – 21A Star Road, was approved for the following reasons:
- The benefits of securing urban regeneration and development on previously developed land were felt to outweigh the flood risk.
- In a decision letter on the nearby Golden Keys Public House Appeal (January 2006), the Inspector had permitted a development which involved 11 units and a greater section of dry access (600m) under a greater depth of water (up to 300mm).
- The applicant had incorporated flood mitigation measures in the form of a raised slab level, sustainable drainage systems, permeable boundary fencing, electrical cables dropped from first floor and non-return valves for foul water drains.

The second case, at 70 Briant's Avenue, was considered along largely the same lines. The reasons for approval were as follows:
- Permission was given for the same proposal on the same basis in 2001.

- More efficient use would be made of previously developed land, and the ground floor built element of the proposal already existed.
- The extent and depth of the floodwater affecting the dry access route was minimal.
- Decision on the Golden Keys Public House Appeal (as above).

Policy Effectiveness: In the monitoring period, only two applications were granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency (EA), from a total of 22 applications opposed by the EA. The two approvals were exceptional in their nature, and were approved for the reasons outlined above. However, on the whole, it is evident that policies continue to protect against the threat of flooding within the Borough.

Actions Required: Continued vigilance with current policy, ensuring waterways and floodplains are maintained as an asset for recreation whilst not compromising the quality of the waterway. It is anticipated that a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be completed by March 2008, in order to feed into the development of a Site Allocations Document for the LDF.

SECTION C8 - Biodiversity

Context: Although Reading is largely urban in nature, the town contains a number of green areas and semi-developed land and gardens, important for a wealth of urban wildlife. These areas are a valuable resource, providing opportunities for enjoyment and education and giving the Borough its individual character, in addition to providing a refuge for wildlife and maintaining biodiversity. The Borough does not contain any designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs); however there are 26 sites within the Borough currently listed as Wildlife Heritage Sites - the full list is contained in Appendix B. The Council's policy is not to allow development which may destroy or adversely affect the whole or part of these sites, or of any subsequently designated sites. The Council will bring forward other sites for wildlife heritage site designation as appropriate, and may alter existing sites in the light of updated information. Appendix B contains further local information on biodiversity.

The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) has put in place the mechanisms to acquire data in the future through a County-wide habitat and land-use digital mapping project. Mapping has taken place in 2006 and the data obtained is now being used in the management of Reading Borough Council parks, and to inform other projects that look at the networks of open space. Building upon this, future work will link green corridors and make Reading more permeable to wildlife, enhancing the biodiversity of the Borough.

Core Indicator 8: Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:
- i)   Change in priority habitats and species (by type)
- ii)   Change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance:

Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance:

(i) (a) change in priority habitats;	Last year's area of priority habitat: 192.54 hectares This year's area of priority habitat: 184.42 hectares Change: - 8.12 hectares (see below)
(i) (b) change in priority species (by type); and	Last year's number of priority species: 17 This year's number of priority species: 17 Change: None
(ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or	There are no sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional significance. There are, however, 26 Wildlife Heritage Sites, of local significance, which have been maintained for their intrinsic environmental value. WHS have not been monitored in previous monitoring years.

local significance.	Change: None

Priority Habitats in Reading:

Habitat	Occurrence
Urban I: Man-made sites and structures	Railway lines/embankments Old brick walls made using soft bricks Pipes in waterway walls for Sand Martins Brick and stone structures in cemeteries Buildings of all types for nesting of bats and certain birds Contaminated and disturbed ground/rubble areas.
Urban II: Gardens, parks and similar sites	Larger/established private gardens and landscaped areas around buildings and highway. Amenity and recreation areas.
Semi-natural grassland (including water meadows)	Cemeteries/churchyards Golf courses Amenity and recreation areas Meadows/Water meadows Verges
Parkland and veteran trees	Parks such as Caversham Park, Prospect Park, Coley Park and Whiteknights Park
Ancient and/or species-rich headgerows	Isolated lengths of hedgerows exist in various localities, and typically border established areas of open space.
Broad-leaved woodland (including ancient semi-natural woodland)	Much of Reading's woodland is owned by the Council or by major institutions. The woodlands are variable, reflecting local geology/soil conditions and are typified by the West Reading and East Reading Wooded Ridgelines.
Standing open water and reedbeds	Caversham Park Village, Prospect Park, and Emmer Green. Some larger wildlife ponds in private ownership across the borough. Reedbeds at sites such as: - Coley Meadows Kings Meadow River Thames off Scours Lane
Rivers	Such as: - River Thames River Kennet and linked Kennet and Avon Canal Holy Brook Foundry Brook

Priority Species:

Plants		Change
Tower mustard	Arabis glabra	
Invertebrates		

Beetles		
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	
Bumblebees		
Brown-banded carder bee	Bombus humilis	
Moths		
Heart moth	Dicycla oo	
Buttoned snout	Hypena rostralis	
Striped Lychnis	Shargacucullia lychnitis	
Birds		
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	
Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	
Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	
Mammals		
Water Vole	Arvicola terrestris	
Brown Hare	Lepus capensis	
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	
Total numbers of BAP priority species	**17**	

Relevant Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.27; RBLP Paragraph 10.1

Relevant Policies: BSP EN3 Biodiversity; RBLP NE1 Local Nature Reserves; NE2 Wildlife and Heritage Sites; NE3 Wildlife Links; NE4 Major Landscape Features; NE5 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands; NE6 Protecting Wildlife Habitats and Natural Features on or adjoining Development Sites; NE7 Creative Nature Conservation.

Commentary: It is essential that areas of valuable natural environment in Reading are protected from development. The negative change recorded in priority habitats is a result of more detailed assessment by TVERC, representing more detailed mapping rather than an actual, on the ground change in habitat extent. Species types continue to be derived from the priority list of species

selected in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan process, with the existence within the Borough recorded through ad hoc records, as there are no systematic surveys, collated in the TVERC Recorder database. No change has been noted in the period 2006 – 2007.

Policy Effectiveness: At present it appears that policies are protecting areas of valuable natural environment from development; however we do not currently have a method to measure any enhancements that may have arisen. Future AMRs will provide a more valuable tool for measuring biodiversity with these indicators, as assessment and measurement procedures embed and develop.

Actions Required: Digital habitat and land use mapping, project managed by TVERC will continue and this will provide a more complete picture of biodiversity in the Borough. Continued updating of sites of environmental value by TVERC. Continued active support for local naturalists and recording groups from TVERC and other bodies. Further development of local and contextual indicators to measure effectiveness of Policy NE2 Wildlife Heritage Sites, NE6 & NE7.

SECTION C9 - Renewable Energy

Context: As part of a move toward a low carbon economy, the United Kingdom is aiming to have energy from renewable resources account for 10% of total energy by 2010. The current level is in the order of 3%. The renewable energy contribution is required to increase to 20% by 2020. Targets for the production of renewable energy have been agreed by all regions of England and Wales. As the South East Region has very little existing renewable energy generation, a more modest target of 5.5% of total generation capacity has been agreed for 2010 rising to 8.4% by 2016 and 16% by 2026. Reading Borough Council's contribution to the Regional output amounts to generating 1,396 kWe by 2010. Previous Reading BC AMRs have only monitored electrical energy renewables, but we are now also able to include renewable heat as a local indicator.

Core Output Indicator 9 - Renewable energy capacity installed by type (electricity):

Type of Renewable Energy	Capacity installed 2006 - 2007 (kWe)	Total Existing Installed Capacity (kWe)
Biomass	0	0
Wind	1.6	2
Anaerobic Digestion	0	680
Solar Photo Voltaic	2	10
Hydro	0	0

Relevant Policies and Objectives: BSP Paragraph 3.09; RBLP Paragraph 1.8;10.1

Relevant Policies: BSP EN8 Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation; RBLP KEY2A Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources; NE8 Environmental Pollution; NE9 Environmental Implications.

Local Indicator - Renewable energy capacity installed by type (heat):

Type of Renewable Energy	Total Existing Installed Capacity (kWth)
Biogas / Sewage Gas	0
Biomass	0
Solar Thermal	133
Ground Source Heat	0

Local Indicator - Percentage of 2010 renewable energy target achieved:

Target in kWe	Current capacity (kWe)
1,396	692 (49.5%)

Commentary: This data is based on the best information available, and does not wholly accurately reflect the contribution to this total made by household-installed technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels that do not require planning permision. The difficulty in collecting this data stems from the fact that solar panels are permitted development, and from a commonly held but generally incorrect community perception that planning applications are not required for wind turbines.

Policy Effectiveness: Almost 50% of the 2010 renewable energy target has now been met. It is expected that future monitoring years will see further improvements through application of the adopted Sustainable Design & Construction SPD. This was adopted in March 2007 and significantly strengthens the renewable energy requirements placed upon developers.

Actions Required: Continued active implementation of the Sustainable Design & Construction SPD. Improved monitoring of renewable energy capacity through planning applications and building control data. Implementation of the Core Strategy Policy CS1 when adopted.

Appendix A

List of Saved Policies

Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose
KEY 1	Equality of Access to Development
KEY 2A	Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources
KEY 2B	Conservation of Built Environment
KEY 3	The Role of Development in improving the Town
KEY 4	Areas of Development
EMP 2	Control of Major Development throughout the Borough
EMP 3	Acceptability of Employment Development
EMP 4	Maintaining a variety of uses
EMP 6	Units for Small Firms
EMP 7	Major Industrial Areas
EMP 8	Distribution and Storage Space in the Basingstoke Road Industrial Area
EMP 9	Implementation of Mixed-Use development
HSG 1	Housing Provision and Identified Sites
HSG 2	Affordable Housing
HSG 3	Protecting the existing Housing Stock
HSG 5	Residential Design Standards
HSG 6	Residential Conversions
HSG 7	Residential Use of vacant Upper Floors
HSG 8	House Extensions
HSG 9	Location of Residential Development
HSG 10	Housing Provision for People with Disabilities
TRN 1	A Balanced Transport Strategy
TRN 2	Bus priority and Interchange
TRN 3	Park and Ride
TRN 4	Cycle Routes
TRN 5	Cycle Parking
TRN 6	Pedestrians
TRN 7	Rail Travel
TRN 8	Major Highways Schemes and Associated Works
TRN 9	Local Highway Improvements
TRN 10	Provision of Public Car Parking
TRN 11B	Development and Traffic
TRN 13	Off- Street Parking
TRN 14	Car Parking in District Centres
TRN 15	Parking for people with disabilities
TRN 17	On-Street Parking for Residential Conversions
RET 2	Food Superstores and Retail Warehouse
RET 3A	District and Major Local Shopping Centres
RET 3B	Other Local Shopping Centres
RET 4	Improvements to Local Shopping Centres
RET 5	Retail and Catering Uses in Residential Areas
RET 7	Petrol Filling Stations and Other Vehicle Related Uses

|	
CUD 1	Works affecting Listed Buildings
CUD 2	Change of Use of Listed Buildings
CUD 3	Maintenance of Listed Buildings
CUD 4	Setting of Listed Buildings
CUD 6	Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
CUD 7	New Development in Conservation Areas CUD10 Historic Parks and Gardens
CUD 11	Ancient Monuments and other Important Archaeological Remains
CUD 12	Development Impact on Archaeological Remains
CUD 13	Preservation of Archaeological Sites
CUD 14	Standards of Design in Development
CUD 15	Advertisements
CUD 16	Shop Fronts
CUD 17	Telecommunications
LEI 1	Loss of Open Space
LEI 2	Major Areas of Open Space
LEI 3	The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities
LEI 4	Neighbourhood Recreation Areas
LEI 5	Recreational Pathways
LEI 6	New Leisure Facilities
LEI 7	Protection of Existing Facilities
LEI 9	Tourism
COM 2	Health Care Facilities
COM 4	Surplus Educational Land and Property
COM 5	The Dual Use of Schools and other Community Buildings
COM 6	Reading University
COM 7	Community Meeting Places – Priority Areas
COM 8	Day Care for Children
COM 9	Community Facilities
CEN 2	Housing in the Town Centre
CEN 4	Town Centre Shopping Area
CEN 5	Small Retail Units
CEN 8	Public Open Space
CEN 9	Children's Play Facilities
CEN 10	Recreation, Entertainment and Leisure Facilities
CEN 11	Town Centre Hotels and Visitor Accommodation
CEN 12	Business Developments in Residential Areas
CEN 13	Major Development in Residential Areas
NE 1	Local Nature Reserves
NE 2	Wildlife Heritage Sites
NE 3	Wildlife Links
NE 4	Major Landscape Features
NE 5	Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

NE 6	Protecting wildlife Habitats and Natural Features on or adjoining development sites
NE 7	Creative Nature Conservation
NE 8	Environmental Pollution
NE 9	Environmental Implications
NE 10	Surface Water run-off and Development
WAT 1	General Objectives for the Waterways
WAT 2	Waterways Land Use Objectives
WAT 3	Access to the Waterways
WAT 4	Long Distance Waterways Routes
WAT 5	Facilities for People with Disabilities
WAT 6	Waterways Cycling Policy
WAT 7	Developments in the Flood Plain
WAT 8	Water Based Leisure and Recreational Facilities
WAT 9	Waterways Design Objectives
WAT 10	Waterways – Site Specific Proposals

Appendix B

Thames Valley Environmental Records Data
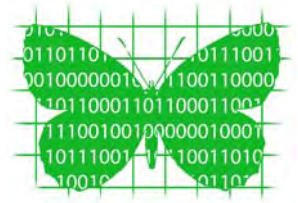
Reading Borough Council

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) figures for 2007 report

Biodiversity Core Output Indicators

General information

This is the third year of data collation and interpretation by TVERC for the Annual Monitoring Reports for each local authority area in Berkshire. A summary of the information collated is provided in a generic spreadsheet and is designed to place, as far as possible, the local data in a national and regional context. This year a more detailed commentary is provided for each area (see below) and comprises a brief interpretation of the information and notes on data quality and sources.

New baseline information is provided for two of the core output indicators as they are either a new dataset (extent of BAP habitats) or are still being reviewed (BAP priority species).

8 (i). Change in area of UK BAP priority habitat

Commentary

The extent of BAP priority habitats in the Reading Borough Council area is given in Table 1.

The work on the production of a digital habitat and land use map for Berkshire has enabled a more detailed assessment of this indicator and the production of baseline figures for each UA area. Any changes to last years figures represent more detailed mapping and not an actual, on the ground change in habitat extent.
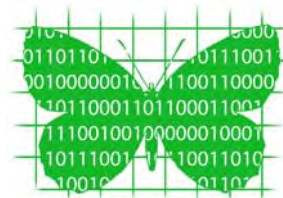
Table 1. Area of BAP priority habitat in the RBC area

UK BAP priority habitat type	Area (hectares)	% of total land area in Reading	County context	Regional context	UK context
Eutrophic standing waters	13.01	0.32	1525.13	No data avail.	1785km2
Fens	16.44	0.41	103.64	No data avail.	No data avail.
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	148.98	3.69	8169.11	No data avail.	No data avail.
Wet woodland	5.99	0.15	444.37	No data avail.	50,000-70,000
Total area of BAP priority habitat	184.42	4.56		No data avail.	No data avail.

NB. Figure for total land surface in RBC area taken as 4,040.0hectares

Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre
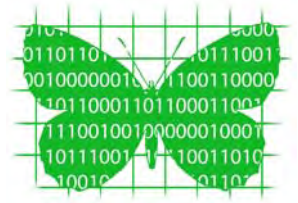
Information sources

Detailed information on the mapping methodology applied and the sources of evidence for the presence of the BAP priority habitats have been produced by TV ERC but are not provided in this document. In general terms BAP priority habitats are mapped by interpretation of aerial photographs (API) and by consultation with existing habitat maps and survey information. BAP habitats are only mapped if the habitat and survey evidence is in place.

Quality of the information

It is important to note that the accuracy of API varies between habitats, e.g. lowland mixed deciduous woodland and parkland can quite reliably be interpreted from aerial photos but fens or grasslands can be very difficult. In the latter case supporting information or evidence is vital in determining habitat type. Whilst TV ERC made every effort to collate existing information there may be other important data sources available that will improve the mapping process in the future. The quality of the mapping process will continue to improve over time as the map is used and fieldworkers feedback information through ground truthing. It is expected therefore that the determination quality for all habitat types should move towards the category "Definitely is" over time and this factor will need to be taken into account in subsequent years when analysing change.

Berkshire has never had a good field by field survey of land use and habitat so it is inevitable that BAP priority habitats will continue to be found. The mapping process has highlighted where these habitats may exist in the County and where future surveys may be targeted. The figures reported here for each habitat type are therefore likely to change in the future – for some the process has underestimated their extent, e.g. lowland meadows and for other overestimated, e.g. lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

TV ERC has introduced a rigorous quality checking procedure for the habitat map and as such given the present state of information on these habitats in the County the quality of the current habitat map is very high.
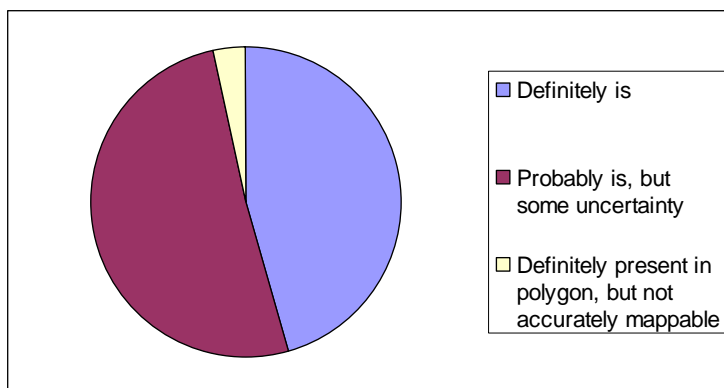
Table 2. Summary of the overall quality of the BAP priority habitat dataset for the RBC area.

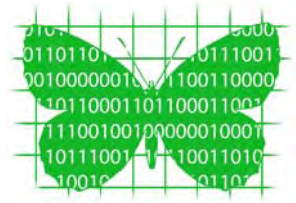| Determination quality category*	Percentage
Definitely is	45.6
Probably is, but some uncertainty	51.1
Definitely present in polygon, but not accurately mappable	3.3

*Derived from the NBN SW Pilot mapping project 2001

Future data needs

Information on the changes in area of these habitats over time is fundamental to this indicator. A monitoring procedure and an approach to recording the reasons for change at Local Authority level are both required and as such resources and time will need to be committed to this work in the future.

Monitoring the change in extent of BAP habitats will require up to date aerial photographic coverage of the County and a continued commitment by the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire to survey and monitor Wildlife Heritage Sites. The majority of BAP priority habitats are found in Wildlife Heritage Sites and the survey and resurvey programme undertaken by TV ERC will be an important element of this monitoring work. The AMR is required to report on changes on an annual basis, yet at the current rate of survey the full complement of WHS in the County are reviewed once every ten years. There are moves in both Oxon and Berks to develop methodologies and the co-operation to be able to accumulate information about change in habitats but these activities lack resources to produce an effective end product.

Information on the reasons for change in BAP priority habitat area is also important in the AMR process. Mechanisms should be put in place both within the local authorities and at TV ERC to record the impact of development and other activities on WHS and BAP priority habitats.

8 (i). Change in number of UK BAP priority species

Commentary

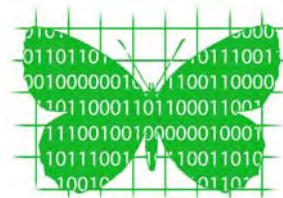The change in number of BAP priority species is given in Table 4. below.

Table 4. Change in number of BAP priority species in the RBC area

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Numbers of BAP priority species	22	17	17

The details of the species are given in Tables 5 below. This list will change next year as the full UK list of BAP priority species has been revised to include more species.
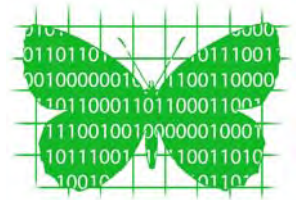
Table 5. Number and type of BAP priority species in the RBC area

| Plants		Change
Tower mustard	Arabis glabra	
Invertebrates		
Beetles		
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	
Bumblebees		
Brown-banded carder bee	Bombus humilis	
Moths		
Heart moth	Dicycla oo	
Buttoned snout	Hypena rostralis	
Striped Lychnis	Shargacucullia lychnitis	
Birds		
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	
Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	
Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	
Mammals		
Water Vole	Arvicola terrestris	
Brown Hare	Lepus capensis	
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	
Total numbers of BAP priority species	**17**	

Table 6 below provides general contextual information about the County and is given for comparative purposes.

Table 6. County-wide list of species in each UA area.

English name	Scientific name	BFBC	Reading BC	Slough BC	WBC	RBWM	WDC
Ferns							
Pillwort	Pilularia globulifera	X					X
Clubmoss							
Marsh Clubmoss	Lycopodiella inundata	X					
Fungi							
Drab tooth	Bankera fuligineoalba					X	
Royal bolete	Boletus regius					X	
Devil's bolete	Boletus satanas					X	
Oak Polypore	Buglossoporus pulvinus					X	
Bearded tooth	Hericium erinaceum					X	
Orange tooth	Hydnellum aurantiacum					X	
Blue tooth	Hydnellum caeruleum					X	
Mealy tooth	Hydnellum ferrugineum					X	
Devil's tooth	Hydnellum peckii					X	
Tooth fungus	Hydnellum scrobiculatum	X					
As opp.	Hydnellum spongiospies					X	
Pink waxcap	Hygrocybe calyptraeformis					X	
Fused tooth	Phellodon confluens	X					
Grey tooth	Phellodon melaleucus	X					
Wooly tooth	Phellodon tomentosus					X	
Nail fungus	Poronia punctata				X		
Greenfoot tooth	Sarcodon glaucopus					X	
Scaly tooth	Sarcodon imbricatus					X	
Tooth fungus	Sarcodon scabrosus	X					
Plants							
Tower mustard	Arabis glabra		X				X
Cornflower	Centaurea cyanus				X	X	
Red Hemp-nettle	Galeopsis angustifolia				X		X

Table 6. continued
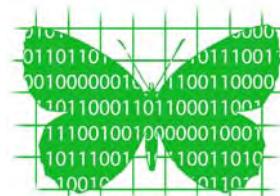
English name	Scientific name	BFBC	Reading BC	Slough BC	WBC	RBWM	WDC
Early Gentian	Gentianella anglica				X		
Juniper	Juniperus communis				X		X
Pennyroyal	Mentha pulegium					X	
Great water parsnip	Sium latifolium				X	X	X
Spreading hedge parsley	Torilis arvensis					X	
Invertebrates							
Beetles							
A click beetle	Ampedus rufipennis					X	
A weevil	Dryophthorus corticalis					X	
A click beetle	Elater ferrugineus					X	
A false click beetle	Eucnemis capucina					X	
Maple wood-boring beetle	Gastrallus immarginatus					X	
A chafer	Gnorimus variabilis					X	
A ground beetle	Harpalus dimidiatus				X		
A click beetle	Lacon querceus					X	
Violet click beetle	Limoniscus violaceus					X	
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	X	X	X	X	X	X
A click beetle	Megapenthes lugens					X	
Bumblebees							
Brown-banded carder bee	Bombus humilis		X				
Flies							
Hornet robber	Asilus crabroniformis				X		X
Butterflies							
Marsh Fritillary	Eurodryas aurinia				X		
Adonis Blue	Lysandra bellargus				X		
Silver-studded Blue	Plebejus argus	X			X		
Moths							
Light crimson underwing	Catocala promissa					X	
Heart moth	Dicycla oo		X			X	
Buttoned snout	Hypena rostralis		X		X	X	
Orange underwing	Jodia croceago				X		
Drab Looper	Minoa murinata				X		
Common fan foot	Pechipogon strigilata						X
Argent and Sable	Rheumaptera hastata	X					
Chalk carpet	Scopteryx bipunctata cretata				X		

Table 6. continued
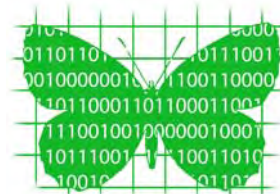
English name	Scientific name	BFBC	Reading BC	Slough BC	WBC	RBWM	WDC
Striped Lychnis	Shargacucullia lychnitis		X		X	X	
Molluscs							
Freshwater pea mussel	Pisidium tenuilineatum				X		X
Desmoulin's whorl snail	Vertigo moulinsiana				X		X
Reptiles and Amphibians							
Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	X		X	X	X	X
Birds							
Aquatic Warbler	Acrocephalus paludicola				X		
Marsh Warbler	Acrocephalus palustris				X		X
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bittern	Botaurus stellaris	X			X	X	X
Stone-curlew	Burhinus oedicnemus				X		
Nightjar	Caprimulgus europaeus	X			X	X	X
Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wryneck	Jynx torquilla	X			X		X
Woodlark	Lullula arborea	X			X	X	X
Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	X	X		X	X	X
Corn Bunting	Miliaria calandra	X		X	X	X	X
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	X	X		X	X	X
Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grey Partridge	Perdix perdix	X			X	X	X
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	X			X	X	X
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mammals							
Water Vole	Arvicola terrestris	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brown Hare	Lepus capensis	X	X		X	X	X
Otter	Lutra lutra				X		X
Common Dormouse	Muscardinus avellanarius				X		X
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total numbers of BAP priority species	80	28	17	11	43	50	33
Percentage of total number of BAP priority species		35	21.25	13.75	53.75	62.5	41.25

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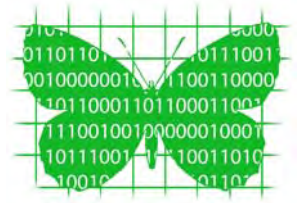
Information sources

The list of BAP priority species in the County is derived from the national "short list" of species which have Species Action Plans associated with them (source: UK BAP website). The list for each UA contains the species most likely to still be extant in the area.

The main source of these data has been the TV ERC Recorder database with a threshold date of 1990 taken to make a judgment, i.e. any records before this date were investigated and in most cases discounted. All species on the list were also cross referenced with the national database of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and recent local publications and atlases, e.g. the Berkshire Flora. Finally in most cases local Recorders were consulted for further verification. A list of publications and sources of information are provided below.

Recorder 2002 database for Berkshire held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

BNCF (1999) A framework for biodiversity action in Berkshire. Annex 1 List of priority species found in Berkshire

NBN (National Biodiversity Network) - data sources listed and mapped on NBN Gateway

Crawley, M.J. (2005) The Flora of Berkshire. Brambleby Books

Harvey, M (1998) A review of BAP invertebrates in Berkshire. BBOWT report

Consultation with Recorders and Recording Groups in Berkshire

http://www.ukbap.org.uk/species.aspx   National list of UK BAP priority species

Quality of the information

It should be recognised that the list of BAP priority species in the County is as much a reflection of the presence and/or the absence of species as the amount of effort applied by Recorders in surveying and observation. Lack of records for a species therefore does not always reflect an absence of that species in the County. The quality of information provided this year has improved with the continued review of the distribution of these species.

Future data needs

TV ERC actively supports recording and recording groups in the County and is building a good overview of the distribution of these species in the County. Recording depends on the commitment and dedication of local naturalists and most of the records held by TV ERC come from this source. Gaps in the provision of information on these species can be identified and TV ERC can assist recorders in targeting field survey effort. This is an ongoing process and is essential for the future monitoring of this indicator.
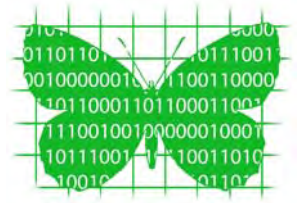
8 (ii). Change in area of sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value – SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS).
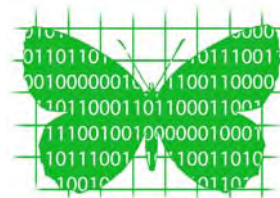
Commentary

In this report change is described in terms of the numbers and areas in each designation in Table 8.

There has been no change in the area of statutory sites, i.e. SSSIs, SPAs and cSACs since the last report, but some significant changes in the extent and numbers of the non statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS) in the County. Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) have remained stable in numbers with one site only and as such are not reported on here.

The trends in change in extent of WHS in the Reading Borough area are difficult to assess, but a slight negative change in numbers and area is evident. Generally in Berkshire the lack of management and/or inappropriate management of WHS continues to be the biggest threat to these areas, an example of this is the site now used for the Reading Festival which was deselected 2006 because it now fails to meet the WHS criteria due to loss of biodiversity interest.
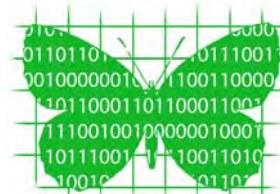
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Environmental Records Centre

Table 8. Numbers and areas of designated biodiversity sites in Berkshire

	No. of SSSIs/SACs/ SPAs/WHS	Approx. area of SSSIs/SACs/ SPAs/WHS in each UA (ha)	% of total land area covered by SSSIs/SACs/ SPAs/WHS in each UA	Details of change
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)				
Bracknell Forest BC	9	1,825.18	16.69	None - stable
Reading BC				
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	11	1,662.92	8.38	None - stable
Slough BC				
West Berkshire DC	51	1,348.86	1.92	None - stable
Wokingham DC	4	27.04	0.15	None - stable
County Total of SSSIs	**75**	**4,863.99**	**3.85**	
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)				
Bracknell Forest BC	1	331.186	3.03	None - stable
Reading BC				
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	2	1,336.45	6.74	None - stable
Slough BC				
West Berkshire DC	3	154.04	0.22	None - stable
Wokingham DC				
County Total of SACs	**6**	**1,821.68**	**1.44**	
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)				
Bracknell Forest BC	1	1,329.48	12.15	None - stable
Reading BC				
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	2	126.15	0.64	None - stable
Slough BC				
West Berkshire DC				
Wokingham DC				
County Total of SPAs	**2**	**1,457.63**	**1.15**	

Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre

Table 8. continued

	No. of WHS 04-05	No. of WHS 05-06	No. of WHS 06-07	Area of WHS ha. 04-05	Area of WHS ha. 05-06	Area of WHS ha. 06-07	Details of change 06-07
Bracknell Forest BC	79	75	74	2,325.00	2302.61	462.19	Negative change in numbers and area. 2 sites deselected (28.61 ha) – and large area of sites reduced (1811.81 ha), but only because WHS overlapped SSSI designation.
Reading BC	30	29	26	311.50	300.37	247.3	Negative change in numbers and area. 3 sites deselected.
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	107	104	116	1,813.00	1439.98	1419.85	Negative change in numbers and area of WHS. 3 sites deselected and review of boundaries due to overlap with SSSIs
Slough BC	11	11	11	74.00	74.00	313.06	Area of one site redrawn to include large resevoir
West Berkshire DC	492	483	508	6,471.00	6395.47	6401.69	Negative change in numbers and positive in area. 6 sites deselected and 3 new sites added
Wokingham DC	124	124	135	1,308.00	1339.56	1337.12	Negative change in numbers but positive change in area - 1 site deselected and existing site boundaries changed to include more land
County Total of WHS	843	826	870	12,302.5	11851.99	10181.21	

|	No. of SSSIs/SACs/SPAs /WHS	Approx. area of SSSIs/SACs/SPAs /WHS in each UA (ha)	% of total land area covered by SSSIs/SACs/SPAs /WHS in each UA
Totals for all designated sites in Berkshire	909 (926)	19,995.29 (20,445.8)	15.8 (16.7)

NB Figures in brackets are the 2004-05 figures

NB the above figures are based on the total land area of each UA as follows:

Unitary Authority	Land Area (hectares)
Bracknell Forest BC	10,938.0
Reading BC	4,040.0
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	19,843.0
Slough BC	3,253.5
West Berkshire DC	70,417.0
Wokingham DC	17,897.0
Total	**126,389**

Thames Valley
Environmental Records Centre
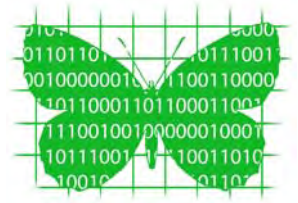
Information sources

All information on statutory sites has been acquired from English Nature. All WHS information is derived from TV ERC, which in Berkshire administers the WHS process on behalf of the Unitary Authorities. TV ERC are committed to survey approximately 10% of the total Berkshire sites each year. The information on change reported here relates to the findings from the surveys in the previous year (in this case 2006).

WHS are being reviewed on a ten year rolling programme of resurvey by TV ERC on behalf of each Unitary Authority and this remains the primary means of assessing change on these sites. The status of a WHS can be changed as a result of being deselected from the list for each Unitary Authority, but new sites can be added as they are discovered and subsequently surveyed. Decisions regarding change are made by a WHS Selection Panel appointed by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum – a partnership of all local authorities and environmental organisations in the County.

Quality of the information

The continued review of WHS in Berkshire by TVERC through field survey and boundary review has enabled an ongoing improvement in quality of this dataset.

Future data needs

There is an ongoing requirement for up to date SSSI, SPA, cSAC and WHS data in the County. The continued support of the Unitary Authorities and English Nature to TV ERC is essential for this indicator to be applied to the AMR process in the future.

TVERC September 2007