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# Reading Borough Local Development Framework



## Core Strategy

Adopted

January 2008

With Alteration Adopted 27th January 2015



## FOREWORD TO THE ADOPTED CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT BY COUNCILLOR TOM CRISP

This document sets out the Council's adopted planning strategy for the Borough. It sets out how planning and development will achieve the Reading 2020 Vision for the town. It provides a framework for how Reading can grow in a sustainable way in the future. It also sets out how Reading will accommodate the growth expected of it in the emerging South East Plan and through the council's commitment to New Growth Point status.

As part of our strategy, future development will be focused in the Central Area and in South West Reading. Such development will grow hand in hand with improvements to the transport network. The strategy also includes the strengthening and enhancement of District and Local Centres in the Borough and the potential redevelopment of land currently used for employment use into mixed use or predominantly residential communities. The strategy will also develop an appropriate framework for controlling new development in existing suburban and other residential areas. In line with emerging government policy, it aims to improve the design and environmental performance of all new development.

The Council will continue to support the development of Central Reading as the leading regional centre in the Thames Valley. The opening of the Oracle has already established Reading as the foremost shopping destination in the region. Considerable new commercial development is currently taking place in the centre. More is planned for the future. Many new homes are being delivered in the town centre. With major improvements to the transport network, with increased capacity at Reading Station and improved public transport measures being planned, the attractiveness and potential of the centre to new development will continue into the future.

Flagship developments in South West Reading are being constructed with new homes being delivered

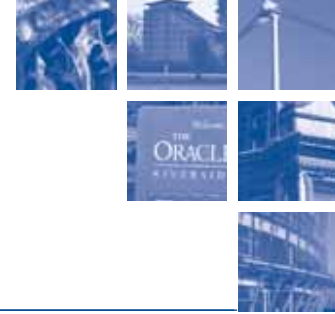


at Kennet Island and Green Park. The strategy proposes further major development on the western side of the A33 to provide a new, attractive gateway entrance to Reading from the south. It also proposes new residential development at Green Park 3, which will in addition provide a new railway station and other essential transport infrastructure.

The Adopted Core Strategy includes a number of policies designed to provide a planning framework for implementing the Strategy for sustainable growth. It includes policies seeking ambitious targets for sustainable construction and design and a new framework for achieving high quality design in new developments.

The Core Strategy has been subject to extensive community involvement. It has also been subject to a testing examination of its soundness. The Inspector who conducted the examination found the Strategy to be sound subject to only a few minor wording changes that have now been incorporated. I believe that this strategy provides an excellent framework for achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for Reading, which will make our town a great place to live, work and play for people living here now and in the future.

**Councillor Tom Crisp**  
*Lead Councillor for Strategic Planning and Transport*



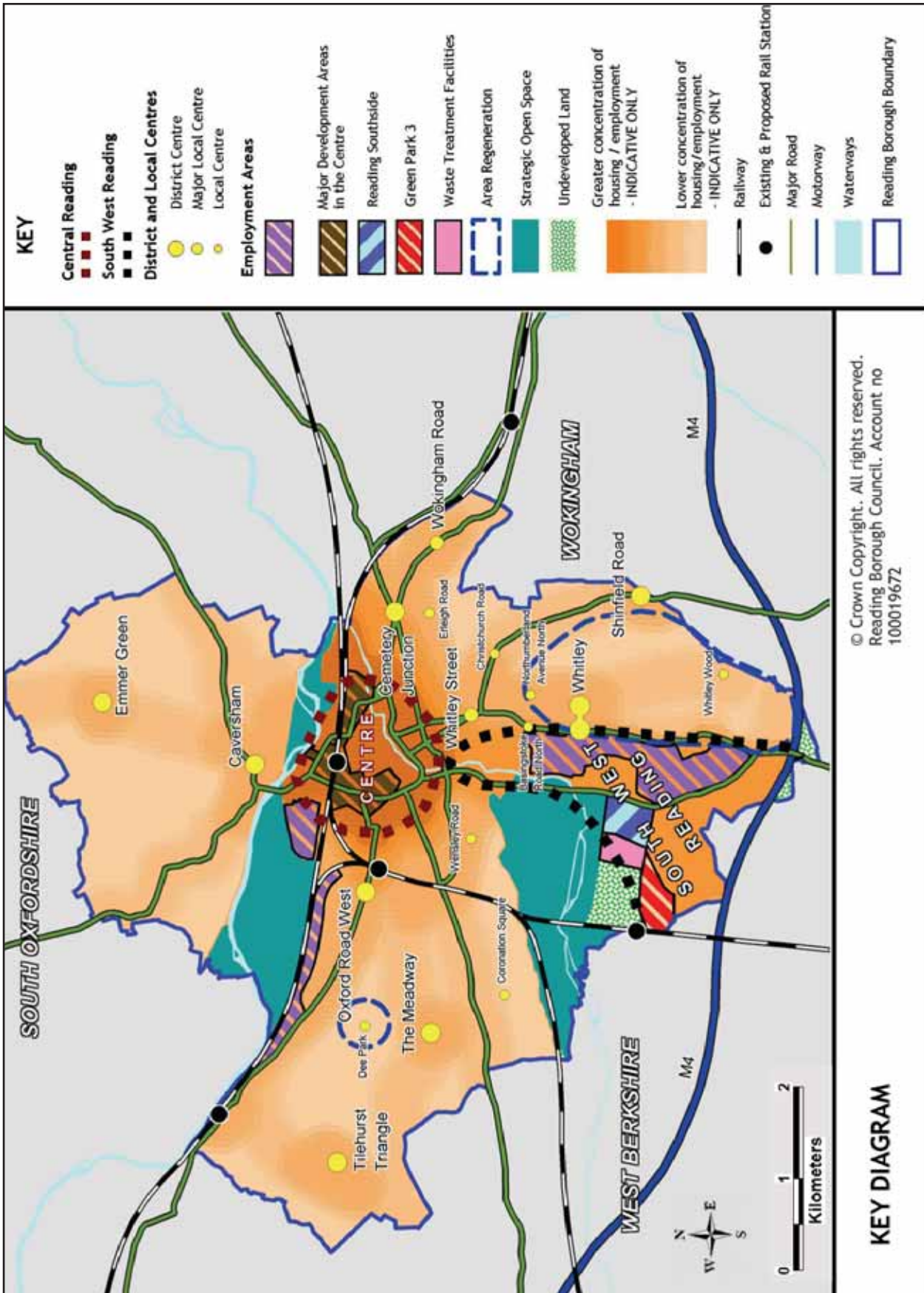
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*The Core Strategy was originally adopted on 29th January 2008.*

*Following this, the Council carried out a review of its affordable housing policies, in conjunction with introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy. This meant alterations to policy CS16 of this document, as well as policy DM6 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document. The alterations were adopted on 27th January 2015. This version of the Core Strategy contains the revised CS16.*

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## 1 Introduction and Background

**1.1** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>1</sup> requires local authorities to prepare local development frameworks for their areas. Under the new system, the development plan will now consist of: -

- Regional Spatial Strategies prepared by the regional planning bodies; and
- Development Plan Documents prepared by district Councils, unitary authorities and, in the case of minerals and waste Development Plan Documents, by County Councils or joint arrangements.

These documents will replace the former system of County Structure Plans, Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans.

Development Plan Documents must be in conformity with Regional Spatial Strategies, in the case of Reading Borough, that means in conformity with RPG 9 (Regional Planning Guidance for the South East). At the present time, it should also be in conformity with the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016. It should also have regard to the need to eventually be in conformity with the emerging South East Plan, which is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)<sup>2</sup>, and which will eventually replace RPG 9 and the Structure Plan.

At the District level, local authorities are required to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will comprise a series of Local Development Documents (LDD's) for an area. It will form a portfolio of documents that collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area. The new system is intended to streamline the local planning process and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development.

Strategy Document, will set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. It should comprise a spatial vision and strategic objectives for the area; a spatial strategy; core policies related to the implementation of the strategy; and a monitoring and implementation framework with clear objectives for achieving delivery.

**1.2** Prior to preparing the Core Strategy Document, authorities are advised to involve their communities in considering issues and alternative options, and then again on the preferred options. The preparation of the Core Strategy has been influenced by community involvement on Issues and Options that took place during Summer 2005, on Preferred Options during Spring 2006 and on the Submission Draft Core Strategy published in January 2007 and the Examination that took place during Autumn 2007. The soundness of the Submission Draft Core Strategy was examined by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State during September/ October 2007. The Inspector found the Core Strategy to be sound, subject to a small number of binding recommended changes to the document.

**1.3** At the same time as preparing the Core Strategy Document, the Council is preparing a "Reading Central Area Action Plan" to provide a framework for the future development of the Reading Central Area. This is programmed to be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2008. The Council is programmed to commence preparation of a Development Control Policy Document and a Site Allocations Document during 2008. It has also prepared a Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design and Construction. It will also be preparing a Design Supplementary Planning Document. Local Development Documents, together with the Regional Spatial Strategy, make up the development plan for Reading.

## The Core Strategy

The first document to be produced, the Core

## SA/ SEA

1.4 In the new planning system, a sustainability appraisal must accompany every development plan document that the Council produces. A sustainability appraisal is a tool that highlights any significant environmental, social or economic effects of the plan. It assesses the plan against a number of sustainability objectives in order to identify these impacts. The appraisal needs to be fully integrated into the plan process, so that it can inform and influence the plan as it progresses. Planning authorities are also required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of local development documents, in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC. The environmental report required by the SEA Directive has been incorporated within the Sustainability Appraisal Report, which assesses the wider effects of the plan. This is consistent with Government advice, which indicates that both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment can be carried out in a single appraisal process. Thus the Sustainability Appraisal meets all the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment. Community involvement on a Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report took place during Summer 2005. The Council consulted on a revised<sup>3</sup> SA Scoping Report again in March 2006. This revised report took account of community responses and updated guidance. The Revised Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (March 2006) was further updated in January 2007 through relatively minor amendments, to take account of the relevant results of community involvement carried out in conjunction with the Core Strategy Document Preferred Options, prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

## Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

1.5 The Council has produced a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that was submitted to the Secretary of State in

October 2005 and adopted by the Council in July 2006. The SCI sets out the principles on which the Council will consult on LDF documents<sup>4</sup>.

## Community Involvement on the Core Strategy

- 1.6 Community involvement was carried out on an Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy in the early part of 2003 as a first stage in a review of the Reading Borough Local Plan. A report of the results of that community involvement was prepared (which is available on the Council's website<sup>5</sup>). The review of the Reading Borough Local Plan was not progressed because it was clear that the government's proposals for the new planning system might produce a very different form of development plan document and it was decided to await the introduction of the new system. However, the results of that consultation exercise informed the start of a process for developing new planning policy for Reading.
- 1.7 Community involvement was carried out on Issues and Alternative Options for a Spatial Strategy for Reading during Summer 2005. A report of the results of that consultation is available on the Council's website at [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk). The community involvement comprised a printed leaflet, report and diagrams sent to those on the Council's Community Involvement Database; documents on the Council's website; publicity and news reports; and a series of workshops.
- 1.8 Community involvement was then carried out on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, during Spring 2006. This process included a number of workshops with the public and the business community; a series of drop-in events held at the Council Offices, local libraries, supermarkets etc.; presentations to relevant committees and stakeholder groups; and distribution of the document (and other consultation materials) to those on the Council's database. The Core Strategy Preferred Options document and supporting

<sup>3</sup> Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Statement of Community Involvement, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk) <sup>5</sup> Results of Consultation, RBC, 2004

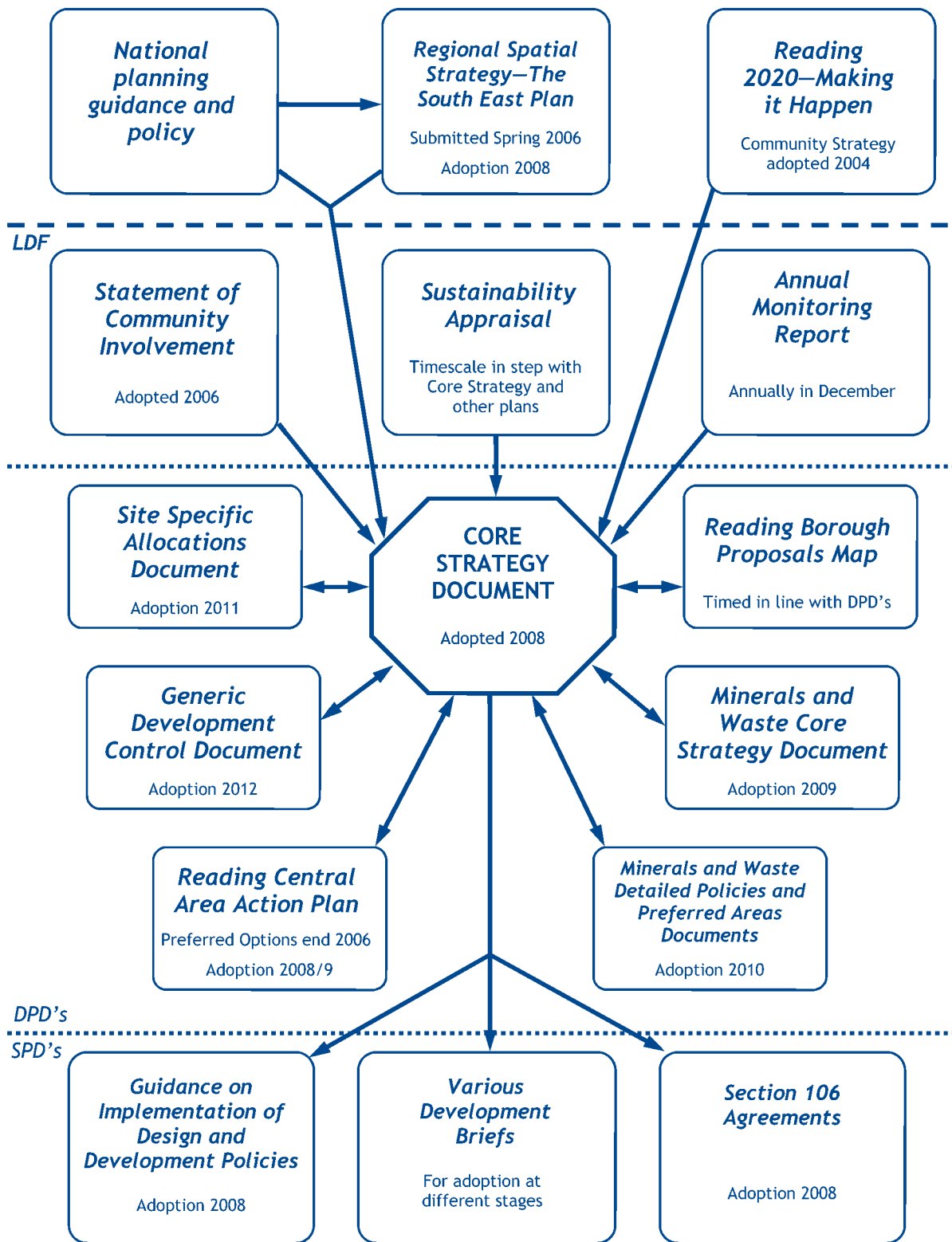
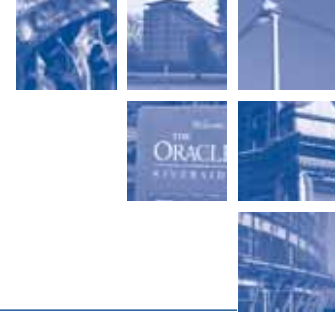


Figure 1: Relationship of the Core Strategy to Other Plans and Strategies

documents (including the Sustainability Appraisal Report) were also made available on the Council's website. Further public participation also took place following submission of the document to the Secretary of State. Any representations made were considered at the examination held in September/October 2008.

## Monitoring and Review

1.9 The Council is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in December every year. The first Reading AMR was published in December 2005. The AMR will monitor the effectiveness of policies in local development documents. For example, the report will show whether the policies are impacting on development control decisions, and whether they are helping to achieve the Council's targets<sup>6</sup>.

## Local Development Scheme

1.10 As part of the building blocks for preparing the LDF, the Council was required to prepare a Local Development Scheme setting out the documents that would be produced as part of its LDF and indicating the scope of each of those documents. The Reading Borough LDS indicated that the Core Strategy would be the first document to be produced as part of the LDF. It indicated that the Core Strategy "will cover the whole of the Borough and contain the Vision, Spatial Strategy, Sustainability Framework and Core Policies for the Borough". It is envisaged that the document will contain a small number of key development control policies, including design and sustainable development policies, followed by policies and proposals set out in sections dealing with individual strategic subject areas, housing, economy, transport etc.

1.11 The Core Document complies with the scoping set out in the LDS. The Strategy sets out a vision up to 2023, to correspond with the Reading City 2020 Vision and to meet the

requirements for housing supply set out in PPS 3.

## Processes and Procedures

1.12 A glossary defining key terminology is included in *Appendix 1*.

Figure 1 shows how the Core Strategy relates to other documents in the hierarchy and the various other documents that will make up the Reading Borough LDF, along with indicative dates. New style LDF's are a partnership of clear, concise DPD's underpinned by a robust evidence base.

The Core Strategy's Spatial Strategy and policies are supported by relevant evidence. The Council's evidence base is available to view on the planning pages of the website, at [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk). Updated information on various characteristics of Reading Borough is also available on the Council's website, or can be obtained by contacting the Council's Planning Department.

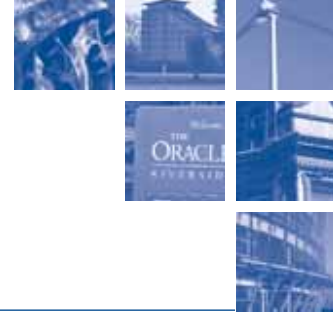
## Key Facts about Reading

1.13 In 2001, 144,100 people lived within the Reading Borough boundary, while around 220,000 live in the contiguous urban area centred on Reading (2001 Census). The population is now estimated to be 147,000 (Greater London Authority). Reading's population is ethnically diverse, has a high proportion of young adults (20-35 year olds) and a growing elderly population. Reading ranks fourth in the South East (see Office for National Statistics) for population density, with 35.4 people per hectare. Over 13% of the population is made up of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

1.14 Unemployment is relatively low at 2.2% (August 2006), however this disguises the fact that unemployment is relatively high in a number of more deprived areas. Although, as a whole, Reading is an affluent town, two wards

<sup>6</sup>Annual Monitoring Report: 2006-2007, RBC, 2007, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)





within the town are considered relatively deprived in national comparisons (2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation). The town has good general health, although there are pockets of poor health in several parts of the Borough. Over 40% of Reading's households have a gross income of less than £15,000<sup>7</sup>.

- 1.15** Reading is an ancient town with over 1000 years of history, and contains a wealth of archaeology and historic buildings. The historic environment has been, and is, important in forming the identity of the town and its people. The historic environment – all the archaeology, buildings and landscapes that surround us – contributes to the underlying framework that creates a sense of place for Reading.
- 1.16** The housing market in Reading continues to boom with rapidly rising house prices well above the UK average. This market is increasingly putting sale and rental levels above those that can be afforded by many sections of the population.
- 1.17** The completion of the Oracle Shopping Centre propelled Reading's retail ranking from 26th in 1998 to 8th in 2001, although that ranking has slipped back in recent years. Property rents in the centre compare favourably with competing centres in the South East.
- 1.18** Reading is extremely well connected in terms of the rail system. Over 2 million people arrive at or depart from the station every year. It is the second biggest interchange station outside London on the UK rail network and offers direct services to 360 towns and cities nationally. Reading Buses carry over 20 million customer journeys a year.
- 1.19** Reading, as the capital of the Thames Valley, is an important cultural centre, with a growing range of facilities and attractions. Its historic and built environment are seen as significant cultural assets of the town.

<sup>7</sup>Experian Income profiles, IdeA Knowledge, 2004

## 2 Developing the Vision and Preferred Strategy

### National, Regional and Local Context

- 2.1 Planning policies for Reading need to be framed in the context of national, regional and strategic policies. National policies on planning matters are contained in various Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) and Statements (PPS's) issued by the Government. These are backed up by companion documents and best practice advice. In preparing the Core Strategy, the Council has had regard to this guidance and advice.
- 2.2 The government has also issued regional guidance in the form of Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9), published in March 2001. The Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016, produced jointly by the six unitary authorities in Berkshire was adopted in July 2005. This provides the current framework for preparing the Core Strategy. The South East Plan that is currently emerging will eventually replace the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) and the Structure Plan, as the strategic planning framework. It is a requirement that the Core Strategy is in conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. As far as possible, the Core Strategy has been prepared to be in conformity with RPG9 and the emerging South East Plan, although it has to be borne in mind that the South East Plan was subject to examination and change before the Core Strategy was adopted.

### South East Plan

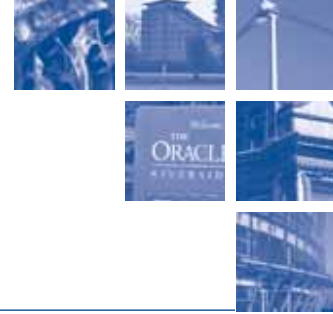
- 2.3 Part 1 of the South East Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2005. The final Draft plan, containing the proposed housing distribution and a number of other changes, was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2006. An examination into the Plan was held between November 2006 and March 2007. It will be taken forward by the Secretary of State during 2008.

- 2.4 The South East Plan covers the period to 2026. Its vision is for a Healthy Region as follows: -

"Through the Plan and other measures, the South East will show a sustained improvement in its quality of life over the period to 2026, measured by the well-being of its citizens, the vitality of its economy, the wealth of its environment and the prudent use of natural resources".

- 2.5 This has been developed into a strategy for sustained housing and economic growth that is strongly linked to the provision of infrastructure and services. One key element of this will be the reduction in the economic and social disparities between parts of the region.
- 2.6 The spatial strategy has an urban emphasis, alongside more appropriate rural development. Intra-regional disparities will be addressed (which include pockets of deprivation in otherwise affluent urban areas such as Reading), and agreed growth areas will be supported. Continued economic growth of a type that minimises pressure on land and labour will be supported. Key environmental, cultural and heritage assets will be protected. Spatially, the South East Plan proposes to develop existing identified transport hubs and to concentrate development in existing urban areas of more than 10,000 population while enabling sustainable rural development to support the maintenance of thriving, mixed rural communities.

- 2.7 In terms of housing policies, the main role of the Plan is to set a figure for how much housing will be provided. Overall, this equates to an annual average of 28,900 dwellings up to 2026. The annual average for Reading will be 521. The overall transport strategy is based around the network of inter-regional and international corridors, and the regional hubs (including Reading) and 'spokes' that link them. The other main aspect of the transport strategy is trying to



rebalance transport patterns in favour of alternatives to the car, including the application of restraint-based parking standards.

**2.8** The South East is split into sub regions for the purposes of spatial planning. Reading lies within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley Sub Region. The Plan indicates that the strategy for this sub region is: -

“To reflect the existing and long-term needs of this large and economically very important sub-region, building on its current strengths, to address in particular urban deprivation in parts of Reading and Slough and the need for more affordable housing, and to ensure that the economy continues to grow in a sustainable way with limited additional pressure on land and labour resources. Further consideration also needs to be given to the longer-term future of the Blackwater Valley and the southern parts of the Thames Valley bearing in mind the possible release of MoD land and the SPA designation”.

**2.9** The strategy seeks to continue the economic success of the sub-region without compromising any of the reasons for that success in the first place, particularly in terms of the transport system, the labour force, infrastructure and environmental assets.

## Consultation on a Regional Housing Distribution

**2.10** In September 2005, local authorities undertook consultation on initial housing distributions. In Berkshire, authorities consulted on district figures that reflected existing allocations under the Structure Plan up to the year 2016 and assumed a continuation of the same annual rate of provision to 2016 for the period 2016 –2026. For Reading, this results in an annual rate of 521 dwellings up to 2026. That district figure for Reading has been carried through into the Draft Plan submitted to the Secretary of State.

## Themes of existing and emerging National, Regional and Strategic Policies

**2.11** This national, regional and strategic policy framework covers a wide range of matters and issues, all of which must be considered and applied in the process of preparing the Reading Borough LDF. However all the documents put forward a number of overarching themes relevant to an urban area such as Reading, including: -

- Sustainable development and climate change;
- Improving quality of life and creating sustainable communities;
- Urban focus and renaissance, with centres such as Reading being designated as hubs, and centres that will develop to serve wider catchment areas; and
- Meeting economic and social needs for development.

These must be addressed in preparing the Reading Borough LDF.

## Sustainable Development and Climate Change

**2.12** The planning system has a key role in implementing the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development. The strategy revolves around 5 guiding principles: -

- Living within environmental limits;
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- Achieving a sustainable economy;
- Promoting good governance; and
- Using sound science responsibly.

Four priority areas for action are identified in the Strategy:

- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Climate change;
- Natural resource protection; and
- Sustainable communities.

On climate change, the Government's strategy states that: -

"Scientific evidence points to the release of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere by human activity as the primary cause of climatic change. We will seek to secure a profound change in the way we generate and use energy, and in other activities that release these gases".

- 2.13** Sustainable development (including climate change) will be a central consideration in the preparation of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework. The framework will take forward the principles of sustainable development. The Council is applying a sustainability appraisal to the emerging documents, to ensure that economic, social and environmental issues are appraised holistically.

## Improving Quality of Life and Creating Sustainable Communities

- 2.14** Improving quality of life and creating sustainable communities is an inherent part of sustainable development. Sustainable Communities means putting sustainable development into practice. *"Sustainable Communities must combine social inclusion, homes, jobs, services, infrastructure and respect for the environment to create places where people will want to live and work now and in the future".<sup>8</sup>*
- 2.15** The Reading Community Strategy sets out the themes and priorities for creating sustainable communities and improving the quality of life in the Borough. The Reading LDF will be seeking to implement the physical development aspects of the Community Strategy.

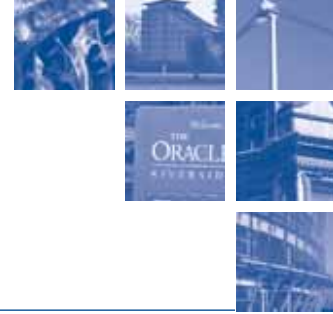
## Urban Renaissance

- 2.16** A common theme running through the national, regional and strategic planning framework described above is the promotion of "urban renaissance", a theme appropriate to a large urban area such as Reading.
- 2.17** For Reading, urban renaissance is about creating a high quality of life in towns and cities, making them places where people want to spend time and to live. It is about more sustainable living, putting people close to services and facilities, reducing traffic and reducing the need to travel by car. It is about maintaining and creating attractive living environments. It is about reducing the contributors to climate change. It is about social well-being, housing and jobs for all sectors of the community that need them; valuing diversity; having good transport; promoting good urban design; and meeting community needs. It is about making the best of the advantages of urban living and tackling the disadvantages. It involves change. Many of these recognised themes of urban renaissance have been taken up in the development of the vision for Reading (see below).

## Meeting Economic and Social Needs for Development

- 2.18** The South East Plan indicates that Reading is characterised by a very buoyant economy based on high-tech ICT industries that have a key role in sustaining the wider national economy. Despite the relative affluence of the area there are local pockets of deprivation within the area. The area also suffers from a very tight labour market, traffic congestion and a shortage of housing. The South East Plan requires that the economy be enabled to grow in a sustainable way that minimises the pressure on limited resources and maintains an environment that remains attractive to future investment in the area. The policy of the South East Plan for this area is for positive

<sup>8</sup>Rt. Hon. John Prescott, MP Feb 2005 from National Sustainable Development Strategy, HMSO, 2005



management to sustain the economic strengths of the area. It advocates that a balanced and thriving economy should be maintained without fuelling unsustainable development.

- 2.19** The level of new housing for Berkshire reflects the emphasis on the reuse of previously developed land within existing urban areas. Within this provision, there is a very substantial need for affordable housing to meet the needs of households unable to afford market price housing.
- 2.20** Transport and accessibility will be improved through better integration of different modes of transport and greater choice of means of travel, with reduced dependence on the private car. Quality of life will be improved through safeguarding and improving the quality of buildings, streets, squares and green open spaces within towns, and improving access to services and facilities. Opportunities for all will be improved through a variety of measures.

## Other Plans and Strategies

- 2.21** The preparation of the Core Strategy has also had regard to the Berkshire Minerals Local Plan and the Berkshire Waste Local Plan. The Council is also working closely with the other Berkshire Unitary Authorities, through the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit in the preparation of a Joint Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework for Berkshire. Land allocated in the Spatial Strategy does not include land required for minerals extraction<sup>9</sup>. Green Park 3, a former extraction site proposed for development in this document, lies within an identified preferred area. However, its development would not sterilise strategic resources.
- 2.22** All the authorities adjoining Reading, namely South Oxfordshire, Wokingham and West Berkshire, are also actively producing Local Development Frameworks. The three Berkshire Authorities are liaising closely on

the evolution of their LDF's and are aware of pressures and issues on cross boundary matters. Regard has been had to cross-boundary matters in the evidence base. There has also been correspondence with South Oxfordshire over the Third Thames Crossing proposals.

## Development of the Reading Borough LDF Policy Framework

### Reading City 2020 Vision

- 2.23** In 1999, the Council published its holistic vision for "Reading City 2020". The Vision is of a city and capital of the Thames Valley that will provide the highest quality range of shops, leisure, educational, cultural and sporting facilities for all residents, businesses and visitors. It will be a city for all. The city centre will be clean, safe and easy to get around with more green spaces; within which more people will live. It will be a city that is based around a series of sustainable communities that will be set within a safe network of footpaths, cycleways and public transport. Reading will be dynamic and constantly changing. Due respect will be paid to the town's past. The city will offer a good quality of life to people of all ages, backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. As a city, Reading will be a centre for innovation and excellent design that will improve the lives of those who live and work there. The vision foresaw that, as Reading continues to grow in regional importance, the centre would need to expand and become a true city centre.

### Sustainable Communities Dialogue

- 2.24** In order to underpin the Reading City 2020 Vision, a comprehensive consultation exercise known as the Sustainable Communities Dialogue (SCD) was undertaken to establish the essential elements of a sustainable community in Reading. The "Moving Forward in Partnership" Council Meeting in October 2001 took on board the

results of the SCD and identified the following 4 key issues as amongst the most important matters affecting the community: -

- A number of areas of Reading are experiencing high levels of deprivation, crime and disorder, poor environmental quality, restricted access to jobs and uneven levels of community facilities and services;
- There is a serious shortage of suitable and affordable housing;
- There is increasing pressure on key infrastructure and public services, many of which are at, or over, capacity; and
- Labour and skills shortages are worsening and there is growing divergence between the skills and qualifications of residents and those required by the labour market.

## Community Strategy for Reading

**2.25** The LDF will be one of the principal mechanisms in the implementation of the objectives of the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy for Reading, "Reading 2020, Making it Happen", was published at the end of 2004. The Strategy takes forward the City 2020 Vision and the Sustainable Communities Dialogue. It is based on 4 principles revolving around the aim of improving quality of life in the Borough: -

- Sustainability and sustainable development
- Equality and Social Inclusion
- Creativity and Cultural Diversity
- Responsibility and Active Citizenship

**2.26** The Strategy sets out a number of themes: -

- Making it connect – will improve transport and access
- Making it better – will improve health and care
- Making it fair – will reduce disadvantage and inequality
- Making it smart – will improve education and skills

- Making it green – will improve environments and sustainability
- Making it safe – will reduce crime and disorder
- Making it flourish – will increase prosperity and employment

**2.27** The Community Strategy Vision is as follows: "By the year 2020, Reading will be established as the capital of the Thames Valley and as a gateway between the United Kingdom, the rest of Europe and the World. It will provide the highest quality services and facilities for all our residents, businesses and visitors across all of Reading's neighbourhoods.

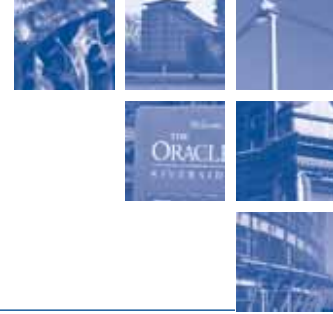
Our vision is to maintain and improve the quality of life in Reading, embracing the challenges of a dynamic, inclusive urban community of the 21st century. Everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from all that Reading can offer. Everyone has a part to play in shaping our future".

**2.28** The Community Strategy is being reviewed during 2007/8. As part of this review, 2 new themes are being put forward to reflect their importance to the local community and to provide a heightened, joined up approach to achieving progress. The 2 new themes are: -

- Affordable and Quality Housing
- Leisure, Sport and Recreation

**2.29** At the same time, it is likely that the theme of "making it fair," with its concerns for equality and reducing disadvantage, will be integrated as part of the principle of equality upon which the Community Strategy is based, and to which all the themes will have regard.

**2.30** The development of the LDF seeks to contribute to achieving the aims and actions of the Community Strategy and each of the themes contained within the strategy. The relationship between the Community Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy is set out in the various background papers that can be found



on the Council's website. As part of the preparation of the Core Strategy, the Council has consulted LSP Partners and given presentations to the LSP Board. Comments made by the various partners have been taken on board.

## Growth Point Status

**2.31** During 2006, the government sought applications from major urban areas to submit proposals for Growth Point Status and to bid for specific allocations of infrastructure funding that would enable additional housing provision to be made over and above the housing requirements set out in RPG up to 2016. The authority has to be able to demonstrate that it can provide at least 20% additional housing above the RPG 9 figure. For Reading, this means that it has to be able to demonstrate that an average of 572 dwellings per annum can be provided in the period to 2016. This matter is dealt with in more detail in the Housing Section at Section 6 of this document. Reading Borough has been designated as a proposed growth point and has received an allocation of funding towards various capital and revenue infrastructure projects.

## Issues arising from Community Involvement on Issues and Options

**2.32** Community involvement on the Core Strategy Issues and Alternative Spatial Options was carried out during Summer 2005, and responses were collated, analysed and considered in drawing up the Draft Preferred Options. The results of consultation are outlined in the Council's Report of Consultation (dated March 2006), available on the Council's website.

**2.33** Consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report resulted in a total of 27 written responses and 86 questionnaire responses. The written responses raised a number of matters, as follows: -

- The large amount of flatted development in the town centre;

- Back garden infill development;
- Council should direct long term development outside the Borough boundaries;
- Need for infrastructure investment to cope with increased numbers of users;
- Appearance of arterial routes which should be more green; and
- Confusion over the role of district and local centres.

**2.34** On the various development options put forward, there was general support for the option of concentration. A number of comments disliked the option of dispersal, commenting that the suburban parts of Reading are being turned into urban areas. Others felt that some development in the outer areas was important to support local centres although inevitably such development would cause a change in the local character of these areas. Generally representations supported a range of options being used, accepting the reality that one should make use of available resources in an urban area. There were few comments on the options for employment areas although there was comment on the potential redevelopment of such areas to housing.

**2.35** The questionnaire responses largely support the Council's preferred strategy that involves a hybrid of approaches with a mix of the housing options. The majority thought that strategies of concentration and use of employment land for housing should be supported. There was strong support for the statement that housing should minimise its impact by reflecting the character of the area. The majority agreed that the conversion of houses to flats should be more tightly controlled. Respondents wanted to see housing reduce its environmental impact. Workshops also produced very worthwhile responses and comments on issues and options. All the results from the various sources are detailed in the final Statement of Consultation on Community Involvement undertaken during June/ July/ August 2005<sup>10</sup>.

## The Preferred Options

**2.36** The Preferred Options were developed in light of the national, regional and strategic planning framework, the local community framework including the Community Strategy, the results of consultation on the Issues and Options, the results of sustainability appraisal of the various options and further consideration of alternatives.

**2.37** Based on an appraisal of predicted impacts of alternative options, it became clear that the most appropriate (and sustainable) spatial strategy for the future of Reading that would comply with national and regional policy; the policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan; and the emerging South East Plan (including meeting the development requirements proposed for the Borough), would consist of a mixture of various spatial development options (i.e. a 'hybrid' approach). The strategy would need to use both concentration options (H1 and E1), and dispersal options (H2 and E2), to comply with relevant policy and to reduce the potential adverse impacts of following one particular form of development. In addition, the strategy would need to encompass an option to consider the reallocation of some employment land mainly for residential purposes. That is the option that has been developed in more detail in the preparation of the Core Strategy Document.

**2.38** The following options involving the reallocation of employment sites were examined: -

- a) Develop employment land for housing
- b) Continue to allocate and develop employment land for employment-related purposes only.

Developing employment land wholly for housing would not represent a sustainable outcome for Reading Borough, as this is likely to result in the reallocation of too much employment land, resulting in an oversupply of housing land, and an undersupply of land

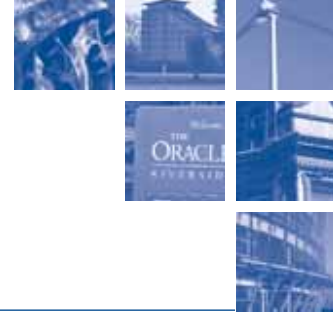
for employment uses. This is likely to be associated with negative impacts on the local economy and employment,

**2.39** Alternatively, if there were no opportunities to redevelop employment areas, existing operations have the potential to remain inefficient, and there would be a substantial oversupply of employment land, potentially adding to pressures on housing, transport and labour supply. This would in turn prevent the extension of residential development into nearby areas, and place pressure on the development of land elsewhere for housing (to meet targets), which may include less accessible sites, or undeveloped (greenfield) land. Greater pressure is also likely to be placed on existing residential areas to accommodate increased densities.

**2.40** Based on this assessment, it was considered that an element of both H3 and E3 (area restructuring and site reallocations) should form part of the strategy. In accordance with recent government guidance, consultants have been commissioned to examine the Borough's employment allocations, and to determine whether they could be more appropriately used for residential uses. Whilst the specific particulars of this strategy (i.e. the selection of sites) will be developed with regard to the results of the Employment Land Review (ELR), it is considered that the reallocation of some employment land for residential will assist in meeting housing targets, and make better use of underutilised land or inefficient forms of development.

**2.41** The other main option that needed to be considered and assessed was the need for, and alternative options for, greenfield land. Whilst the community involvement exercise revealed the least support for Options H4 and E4 (out of all the options) that proposed development on greenfield land, it is considered that some development of previously undeveloped (or greenfield) land was an option that needed to be considered in more detail for accommodating growth in





Reading Borough. Therefore, the following alternative development options were examined in detail: -

- a) Significant development of greenfield land
- b) No development of greenfield land
- c) Small element of greenfield land development

**2.42** The implications of significant greenfield development include the loss of designated open space and areas of landscape value, lack of supporting services and facilities (and therefore, increased demands for additional infrastructure or increased capacity), and the fact that much of Reading's greenfield land lies within the floodplain. Significant development of greenfield land would be highly unsustainable and is an alternative option that should be resisted.

**2.43** The Housing Chapter of the Core Strategy and the Housing Background Paper outline the Council's housing strategy. Essentially, the housing requirements of the Borough up to 2016 and beyond can be accommodated on previously developed land within the Borough. Beyond 2016, housing land supply becomes less easy to predict, but based on various assumptions, there is no reason to expect that the Borough Council needs to allocate greenfield land to meet overall requirements up to 2021 or 2026. No development of greenfield land is therefore a sustainable development alternative.

**2.44** The preferred option incorporates one element of greenfield development at Green Park Phase 3. This allocation recognises the many positive sustainability benefits of this development (including the provision of a new rail station), and the fact that, subject to confirmation from the Environment Agency, the site is not subject to flood risk. The development of the site, which comprises despoiled land of a former mineral extraction site for residential and associated uses, will facilitate the provision of a new Green Park Station early in the plan period, and assumes

that the development of a sustainable and accessible community can be provided. The development of Green Park 3 will of course contribute to providing for the housing requirements of the Borough, and does provide some additional flexibility in achieving development requirements.

**2.45** The Core Strategy was formulated having considered and appraised all the various alternatives (and no other realistic alternatives were put forward as a result of community involvement).

## Summary of Key Findings from Preferred Options Consultation

**2.46** A significant level of support was received for the Core Strategy Vision and Core Objectives. Respondents expressed support for the continuation of small-scale housing development. Concerns over traffic congestion, increased demands on local services (including public transport) and quality of life were highlighted as key potential outputs of development involving the concentration of higher densities.

**2.47** Some concerns were expressed in terms of the impact of further development on the existing transport network. Specific mention was made of development in South West Reading (given its non-centralised location and close proximity to Junction 11), particularly potential impacts on the operation and safety of the junction. Concerns were also expressed over the poor accessibility of some of the Borough's existing employment areas.

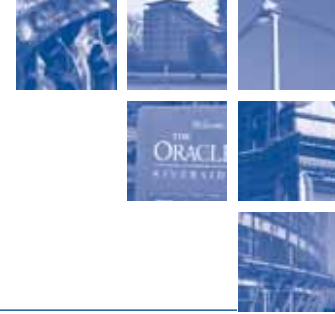
**2.48** Respondents suggested minor amendments to the sustainability objectives, including a greater emphasis on climate change, and the need to facilitate access to the Borough's open spaces and waterspace.

**2.49** A large proportion of written consultation responses referred to the Core Strategy's Cross Cutting Policies, and other topic-

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based policies. Specific comments of note are outlined below: -

- Strong support was received for Policy CS1 (Sustainable Development), although mixed opinions were recorded as to the desired strictness of approach (i.e. some respondents considered that the requirements were too prescriptive, whilst others called for stricter requirements to achieve higher standards). More than one respondent suggested that the policy requirements may be too onerous in terms of cost.
- Support for the change of use of existing industrial areas to mixed-use redevelopment (subject to the results of the Employment Land Review) was received. Respondents appeared to be generally supportive of the locational hierarchy for employment development, including concentration around the A33 corridor and Central Reading.
- Comments were received regarding the housing targets set by the Core Strategy, with one respondent questioning whether the strategy would be able to meet key objectives on the basis of the rate identified. Respondents also called for stronger guidance on the expected mix of dwelling types (Policy CS17).
- The need for additional retail capacity in the Borough (as revealed by the Retail and Leisure Chapter) was also questioned.



## 3 The Spatial Strategy for Reading

### Introduction

3.1 The Spatial Strategy aims to provide an integrated planning and transport framework that will focus future development on the most sustainable locations, in line with the key principles. The Strategy sets out a vision up to 2023, to correspond with the Community's own 2020 vision. However, for the purposes of housing requirements and supply and to meet the requirements set out in the PPS 3, housing provision is considered up to the year 2026.

### Core Strategy Vision

3.2 The previous section sets out visions for Reading derived from the City 2020 Vision, which set out a vision for the Central Area at the heart of a sub regional capital, the Structure Plan (which added components for a vision for the wider urban area), and the Community Strategy. All three are complementary. For the purposes of the LDF, it is proposed to combine these visions to produce an overall vision as follows: -

*"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 and education), 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, study 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 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 people usually take the form of improved public transport. Green corridors along the Rivers Thames and Kennet will be protected and enhanced as a recreational and ecological resource".*

### Core Objectives

3.3 Delivering the vision along with the priorities set out in the South East Plan and the Reading Community Strategy will require a policy framework designed to work towards the following core objectives: -

- 1 Strengthen the role of Reading, including the Central Reading Area, as the regional hub for the Thames Valley, providing an accessible focus for the development of employment, housing, services and facilities, meeting the needs of residents, workers, visitors, those who study in Reading Borough, and the wider area, in accordance with the South East Plan;
- 2 Improve the quality of life for those living, working, studying in and visiting the Borough, creating inclusive, sustainable communities with good access to decent

and affordable housing, employment, open space and waterspace, transport, education, services and facilities (such as sustainable water supplies and wastewater treatment, healthcare services, sport and recreation, etc.) to meet identified needs;

- 3 Ensure new development is accessible and sustainable, in accordance with the LDF sustainability appraisal objectives;
- 4 Maintain and enhance the historic, built and natural environment of the Borough through investment and high quality design;
- 5 Improve and develop excellent transport systems to improve accessibility within Reading and for the wider area by sustainable modes of transport;
- 6 Offer outstanding cultural opportunities, which are based on multiculturalism, local heritage and high quality, modern arts and leisure facilities; and
- 7 Ensure that Reading is a multi-cultural city where significant social inclusion exists and where the needs of all its citizens are met by high quality, cost effective services and outstanding levels of community involvement.

## Spatial Strategy Key Principles

- 3.4** A sustainable spatial strategy that accords with the vision and objectives will seek to maximise development opportunities within the built up area of Reading to deliver the overarching objectives of the plan. The strategy is intended to provide a framework that will enable the objectives of the Community Strategy to be delivered in a way that complies with the strategic priorities for the area. To achieve this, the spatial strategy must reflect a number of key principles.
- Major development should be located in areas of high accessibility where it does least harm to the environment and delivers most benefits to the wider community.

**3.5** The pressures placed on urban areas like Reading to accommodate future development justify an approach that seeks to minimise the impacts of development and maximise the benefits. For example, sustainable, mixed use developments in highly accessible locations, such as transport hubs, that can enhance the quality of an area or local centre by providing environmental improvements, better and more affordable housing, improved community facilities, enhanced public open spaces, local services and other infrastructure such as transport improvements, are a priority. Conversely, highly accessible locations providing a range of services for the community can benefit from increased populations located within their proximity, both in terms of vitality and viability.

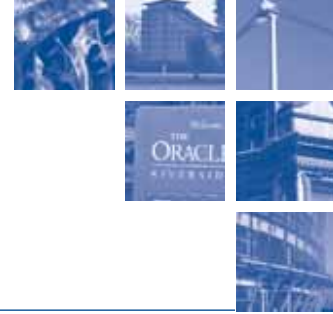
- Development should be directed to those areas in most need of physical, economic or social regeneration.

**3.6** The predominantly urban character of Reading Borough, exacerbated by tightly drawn boundaries, means that the vast majority of any future development will be in the form of redevelopment and regeneration of previously developed land. In particular, there are areas or sites that are currently under-utilised, and/ or are visually and environmentally detrimental which need to be brought forward for mixed-use schemes and developed at an appropriate density with appropriate infrastructure provision.

- Development must have excellent access to effective and efficient public transport.

**3.7** In order for development, and particularly uses such as employment, retail and leisure (that generate high levels of trips), to be sustainable, it must be accessible to an efficient and effective public transport system that offers real alternatives to the private car.

**3.8** This Core Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the formulation of the Council's Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.



This was approved and submitted in March 2006. The plan includes area action plans for the Central area and transport corridors that run through most parts of the Borough. These plans will primarily examine ways of improving public transport, including a mass rapid transit system where appropriate, with access to the centre of Reading and around the various sectors of the town.

**3.9** The Plan proposes 8 core infrastructure projects: -

- Cow Lane Bridges
- Green Park Multi Modal Interchange
- Inner Distribution Road Management
- M4 Junction 11 Improvements
- Park & Ride
- Quality Bus Corridors/ Mass Rapid Transit
- Reading Station Interchange
- Measures to improve cross Thames travel, which may include a bridge

These projects form an integral part of the Spatial Strategy for Reading. Future development in Reading depends on the implementation of these and complementary schemes and programmes. These projects may be delivered to different timescales and in different forms to that currently envisaged within Reading Borough Council's Local Transport Plan (2006-2011).

## The Spatial Strategy

**3.10** Following on from the objectives and key principles, various alternative development options were considered. Four distinct, but well-connected areas present themselves as sustainable locations for future development:-

- The Reading Central Area;
- South West Reading including the development of Green Park 3;
- District/ Local Centres; and
- Redevelopment of parts of existing employment areas.

Other alternatives were considered, mainly revolving around the potential use of greenfield sites, as discussed in Section 2.

## Reading Central Area

**3.11** The centre of Reading is the most accessible location in the Western Corridor Sub Region. Its excellent links to London, and airports at Heathrow and Gatwick by bus and rail, as well as good local bus, cycle and pedestrian links, make it the principal location for a range of major development opportunities. The Oracle and the pedestrianisation schemes have spearheaded the regeneration of the centre.

**3.12** Development in the centre will typically be medium to high-density, accessible mixed-use schemes, incorporating housing and public spaces of an excellent and sustainable standard of design, that will improve the quality of life of those who live, work in or visit Reading. Private parking space will be limited, due to the proximity, frequency and choice of public transport options. Significant parts of the Central Area, including parts of the major opportunity areas described below lie within zones of medium and high flood risk. Proposals for development or redevelopment within areas that lie in those zones will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

**3.13** A separate Reading Central Area Action Plan is currently being prepared. Community Involvement commenced during Summer 2006 and preferred options will be consulted on at the end of 2006. It is proposed that the Council's Strategy for the Central Area will identify three major opportunity areas (MOAs) at: -

- **West Side & Chatham Street Area**

The Council has worked with its development partner to produce a detailed Development Brief for phase 1 of this western part of the City Centre. Planning permission has been

granted for a mixed-use scheme comprising housing, commercial and leisure uses. It includes the provision of a major new public space bridging the Inner Distribution Road and strengthening links with the centre. The wider development area comprises other land to the west of Caversham Road, including the Cattle Market Site and the area between Oxford Road, St Mary's Butts, Castle Street and the IDR, containing the Hexagon, Civic Offices and the Broad Street Mall.

- **Station/ River Project Area**

Reading Station is a nationally important rail interchange that cannot accommodate current or forecast future demand and is in need of upgrading. Likewise, much of the surrounding area is inaccessible, underutilised and of a very poor architectural and environmental quality. The town centre has very poor connections with the River Thames, which should be a better-utilised asset in relation to the Central Area of Reading. The Council has identified the Station as the focus of a major multi-modal interchange and "Transport Development Area".

The redevelopment of the station itself is a critical infrastructure improvement with regional and national significance. This gives an opportunity for a wider development forming a top class gateway to Reading. In order to promote the redevelopment of the station and the surrounding areas, the Council has published an Interim Development Framework and is undertaking further feasibility work. In addition, the Council has adopted a development brief to guide the development of the Station Hill/ Station South area that is being brought forward by developers.

Regeneration of the wider area around the station, along with changes to the IDR, will also provide opportunities to establish links across the current barriers of the railway and Vastern Road, and create new public spaces that will connect the centre with the environment of the River Thames. Future

uses may include housing, commercial, leisure, retail and community facilities.

- **East Side**

This area adjoins the Station redevelopment area, and includes the former Energis site, the Forbury Retail Park, the industrial units along Kenavon Drive and the gasholder site and recently vacated Transco Site. The Kenavon Drive area is covered by an urban design concept statement, which forms supplementary planning guidance. There is one outstanding outline planning permission in the area for 542 dwellings on 42 Kenavon Drive, at the eastern end of this area.

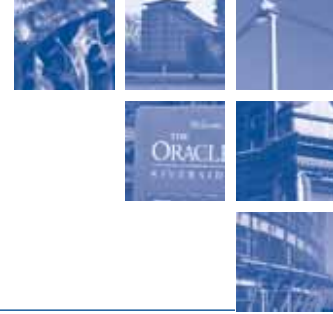
Beyond the central core and these MOAs, redevelopment will continue to be predominantly residential in nature, thereby concentrating uses that attract journeys such as business, retail and leisure in the most accessible locations. Critically, further residential development in these areas should aim to strengthen existing mixed communities, not undermine them, and should support improvements to local community facilities and services.

Further details on broad proposals for these areas are set out in the Reading Central Area Action Plan<sup>11</sup>.

**3.14** Development in these opportunity areas will be mixed use but they will contain major commercial elements including employment, retail and leisure developments, as well as residential development that will serve the needs of the area. Development will depend upon the provision of critical transport infrastructure set out in the Local Transport Plan, including improvements to the Station, improvements to the IDR, implementation of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) works and other public transport improvements.

**3.15** Within the central area, varying levels of accessibility will be one of the important factors in locating uses that attract large

<sup>11</sup>Reading Central Area Action Plan, RBC, 2008, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



numbers of journeys, such as those uses identified as major generators of travel demand in PPG13. This will be considered in more detail in the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

## South West Reading

**3.16** The opening of the new A33 linking Junction 11 of the M4 with the centre has transformed this part of the Borough, and enabled the construction of Madejski Stadium, Green Park and the Reading International Business Park. However, as the principal southern approach into Reading, the A33 has also exposed some now highly visible sites that are in urgent need of regeneration. In response to this, the Council revised its South West Reading Development Brief in 2002.

**3.17** Although this corridor already has frequent park and ride services into and out of the centre, there are proposals to significantly upgrade the accessibility of this area through the introduction of a dedicated public transport route, new Park and Ride outside the boundaries of the Borough and a new Green Park rail station to the west of Green Park. In the longer term, there are options to upgrade and extend these services to provide a Mass Rapid Transit System (MRT) along a dedicated public transport route linking the southern employment area with the western residential areas, north of the Kennet Valley. There is also a need to develop an orbital transport service that directly links the suburbs of Reading, thereby complementing the strong radial service that currently exists. Not only will these initiatives significantly improve the accessibility of this area by public transport, they will play a pivotal role in providing a step change in the level of public transport throughout the town. However, these improvements will need to be funded by appropriate development in the wider area. The A33 corridor will be an appropriate location for additional housing and employment development in particular. Significant parts of South West Reading, particularly on the western side, lie within

zones of medium and high flood risk. Proposals for development or redevelopment within areas that lie in those zones will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

## Reading Gateway/ Southside

**3.18** The new sewage treatment facility is operational on the western side of the A33. Planning approval has been granted for a waste treatment facility on land to the west of the sewage treatment facility. Regeneration of this important gateway into Reading will include a mixed scheme of residential, business and hotel uses, along with appropriate supporting retail and community facilities, on the site of the former sewage treatment works at Manor Farm Road. This will be complemented by the sustainable redevelopment of the land to the west of the A33 for commercial space, to upgrade this principal approach into Reading. New development will need to be supported by considerably upgraded public transport provision, including contributions towards the provision of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system. Planning permission has been granted in principle for a replacement speedway stadium on land to the north of Island Road.

**3.19** In order to consolidate the residential environment of Reading Gateway/ Southside and to strengthen links with existing communities, further residential development on adjoining sites is promoted. In the longer term, the regeneration of the area between Rose Kiln Lane and Elgar Road to mixed-use, with a substantial amount of housing, is also a possibility. However, further consideration of the results of a review of employment land in Reading and implementation of new transport infrastructure may mean that this proposal should be reassessed as part of the Site Allocations Document.

## Green Park

**3.20** Green Park Business Park is still under construction. It continues to be a significant location for high technology and knowledge-based businesses. There is an opportunity to extend the development of Green Park westwards, beyond the current settlement boundary. Current proposals for Green Park 3 North include substantial housing and associated infrastructure, including a new rail station and transport interchange complemented by a mixed-use centre providing local services and facilities. This is, technically, a greenfield site, although part of the site has been excavated. The results of community involvement on the Issues and Options did not favour greenfield development, although there was only one representation that questioned the inclusion of Green Park 3 in the Preferred Options.

**3.21** Any such development would need to be accompanied by substantial improvements in public transport including the new railway station and transport interchange, and social infrastructure such as education facilities and other local services. Permission will also be dependent upon confirmation from the Environment Agency that there are no outstanding flooding issues relating to the area.

## District/ Local Centres

**3.22** One of the key messages to come out of the Sustainable Communities Dialogue and the more recent community involvement on the LDF was the importance of accessible facilities, services, employment and housing in local centres around Reading. Surveys of several district and local centres have shown that many of them are in need of enhancement and/ or regeneration. Some centres contain high levels of vacant shop units. Others are not pedestrian-friendly or lack facilities, such as parking and public space. In other cases, inappropriate building design has led to poor environmental quality and standards of residential accommodation,

and this exacerbates noise and disturbance from late-night commercial activities.

**3.23** The principal centres are relatively well-served by public transport, and may have the potential to be redeveloped to provide a higher-density mix of homes, shops and other services offering limited local employment that can bring wider benefits, such as environmental improvements and community facilities. Higher density residential accommodation in these more sustainable locations would also help address local housing need by widening the choice of housing in what are often predominantly low-density suburban areas. However, development in these centres would be of a much smaller scale than those in the centre or South West Reading. Planning officers are working closely with transport officers to examine means of improving the accessibility of district and local centres.

## Existing Employment Areas

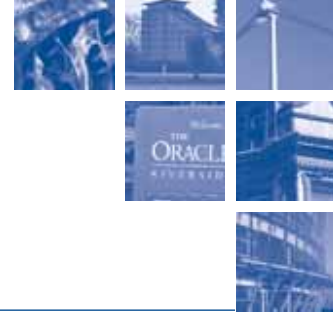
**3.24** The majority of Reading's older industrial areas provide commercial accommodation for a range of industrial, service, distribution and storage activities that support the local economy. The three principal areas are shown on the key diagram and are characterised typically by poor environmental quality. In many cases, premises are in need of renewal to provide more up to date, efficient and flexible space. In general, the strategy promotes the regeneration and environmental enhancement of these areas so they can continue to meet the needs of those firms that support the local economy and that require lower-density accommodation.

**3.25** Recent government guidance<sup>12</sup> requires local planning authorities to examine their employment allocations and to test whether they could be better used for residential use<sup>13</sup> and thus contribute to housing land supply. This prospect was highlighted in the Issues and Options Report. Although some opposition to the loss of employment areas

<sup>12</sup>e.g. PPS3, "Housing"

<sup>13</sup>Employment Land Review, Roger Tym and Partners, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)





was expressed, there was general support for investigating this further. Work has been undertaken to estimate future need for employment land and premises and to survey the potential use of some areas of employment for residential use. Further consideration will be given to the future of individual employment areas in the Site Specific Allocations Document, which will define the Core Employment Areas.

## Other Development

**3.26** In addition to the major development areas outlined above, development will continue to occur on previously developed land throughout the urban area in accordance with national government policy. Residual areas will be considered for allocation for redevelopment for mixed use or residential purposes.

## Suburban Renewal

**3.27** Some residential areas in Reading are at risk of decline and in need of regeneration. In particular, parts of Whitley/ South Reading are currently the focus of a housing improvement initiative that is complimented by other social improvement programmes. Some smaller shopping centres, such as Lyon Square on the Dee Road Estate, are also relatively isolated and poorly-connected and are failing to provide a focal point for the local community.

**3.28** There are proposals for regeneration of the Dee Road Estate. Other suburban areas are under pressure from development proposals and other factors that affect their functioning and character. It is important that a spatial strategy for Reading raises awareness of these areas so that the opportunities presented by future development proposals can be harnessed effectively.

## Small-scale Housing Development

**3.29** Although the spatial strategy focuses on the location of major development and the role of different areas of Reading, much of the development that occurs in the Borough is

relatively small-scale and piecemeal and this is particularly true for housing development. A significant proportion of new homes result from infill and back land development, redevelopment of existing accommodation (both residential and commercial), conversion of larger properties to flats and the change of use of commercial buildings. The strategy expects this type of development to continue throughout the built-up area, although the nature, scale and density of the development will vary according to its location, character and relative accessibility. National government policy seeks to enable this development to continue to make efficient use of urban land and to reduce the need to use greenfield sites. The LDF will examine how such development can be appropriately and satisfactorily integrated within existing residential areas, maintaining and enhancing the character of these areas, but avoiding the problems with some developments that have been experienced in recent years.

## Strategic Open Space

**3.30** The Thames Green Corridor and the Kennet Valley function as two major areas of green space that penetrate the urban area and provide a tangible and enduring asset to the wider community. These open areas serve many roles, including a rich and varied habitat for flora and fauna, a diverse recreational area for both residents and visitors, and an important visual and physical landscape amenity for all those who experience them. The open valley landscapes also provide an important setting and edge to the urban area. The Council sees these areas as being protected and enhanced as a long-term recreational open space and ecological community resource. A network of smaller open spaces throughout the urban area will compliment these major areas of open space. These areas of open space will be linked, where possible, by footpaths and cycle routes. Provision and enhancement of open space will continue to play an important role in delivering sustainable communities and reflecting the objectives of the emerging Open Space Strategy.

## Policies to Support the Core Strategy

Implementation of the Core Strategy along with its vision and objectives will be supported by a set of strategic level policies. These policies will be supplemented by more detailed development control policies set out in a Development Control Policies Document that will form part of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework.

## 4 Cross Cutting Policies

- 4.1 This section details various cross cutting policies that will apply to all developments.

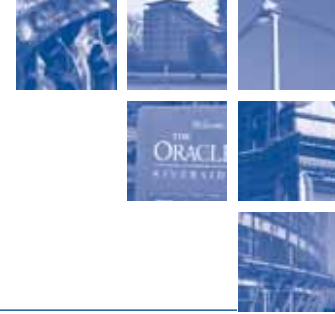
### Sustainable Development

4.2 The Council's LDF Sustainability Objectives were originally derived from work on the Community Strategy. They have since been refined to conform to the Integrated Regional Framework and the Berkshire Structure Plan and to acknowledge the Audit Commission's Quality of Life Indicators. Consultation has been undertaken on a Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. A revised scoping report puts forward a list of 18 objectives divided into 2 groups, environmental objectives, and social and economic objectives. These will be used as the basis for policy development and to appraise the policies and proposals in the local development framework. It should be noted that the objectives have not been ordered according to priority.

4.3 As sustainability is at the core of the planning system, it follows that the objectives of the sustainability appraisal framework should be fully represented in the policies of the Core Strategy and in subsequent LDF documents. The objectives fall into two categories as follows: -

### Living within Environmental Limits (Environmental Objectives)

1. Use energy, water, minerals and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care.
2. Minimise the consumption of, and reduce damage to, undeveloped land.
3. Minimise the generation of waste and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management.
4. Minimise air, water, soil/ ground and noise pollution and address the factors that contribute to climate change, recognising the heightened knowledge of the severity of climate change related impacts.
5. Manage the risk of flooding and minimise detrimental impacts upon drainage.
6. Value, protect and enhance the amount and diversity of habitat and wildlife and other contributors to natural diversity.
7. Create, enhance and maintain safer, cleaner and greener environments, which include diverse and distinctive places, spaces and buildings.
8. Create buildings and environments that work well, look well, wear well and are easily maintained.
9. Value, protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment.



## Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society (Social & Economic Objectives)

10. Protect and promote human health and well-being through healthy lifestyles and healthcare provision.
11. Promote safer and stronger communities through measures to reduce crime and the fear of crime and enhance community cohesion.
12. Provide high quality housing of a type and cost appropriate to the needs of the area.
13. Reduce the need for travel and transport particularly by car or lorry while providing good physical access for all to services, facilities and other people.
14. Value the social and cultural diversity and the local distinctiveness of communities.
15. Ensure accessible opportunities for all to engage in culture, leisure and recreational activity, particularly open space and waterspace.
16. Provide employment opportunities for all and support a successful, balanced local economy that meets the needs of the area.
17. Maximise access for all to the necessary education, skills and knowledge to play a full role in society.
18. Provide opportunities for all to participate fully in society including local democracy and decision-making processes.

**4.4** At the core of the Strategy will be a principle that development is sustainable in the context of the 18 sustainability objectives. Most of the objectives will be promoted by policies in the Core Strategy Document and they will require all development to demonstrate how proposals positively contribute towards meeting each of the objectives or, where that is not the case, how it mitigates its impacts against that objective.

**4.5** The following policies cut across all aspects of development, picking up elements of the 18 sustainability objectives that do not fall

elsewhere within the document. This section includes policies on construction, waste, social inclusion, accessibility, design, waterspace and the provision of infrastructure, services and amenities.

## Sustainable Construction and Design

**4.6** In relation to sustainable buildings, the main thrust of National (PPS 1 and PPS 22), Regional (RPG 9 and the emerging South East Plan) and Strategic (Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016) policy is to address the causes and potential impacts of climate change. This is to be achieved through reducing energy use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting high standards of energy efficiency, promoting increased development of renewable energy sources and making efficient use and re-use of existing resources.

**4.7** Sustainable development is at the core of the Council's Community Strategy (Reading 2020 – Making it Happen), which highlights that, at present, Reading consumes large amounts of energy from non-renewable fossil fuels and contributes to global warming through greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide emissions. The key aims of the Community Strategy relevant to this section are: -

- To encourage best practice in sustainable building design and construction;
- To ensure that new development is sustainable and well-designed, and incorporates measures that make a positive contribution to the environment; and
- To limit and respond to the impacts on climate change by reducing energy consumption and encouraging the use of renewable sources of energy.

## Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design

Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

To meet these requirements: -

- All new housing is required to meet the most up to date Eco-Homes 'Very Good' as a minimum standard, and all new commercial developments are required to meet the most up to date BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum standard;
- On larger developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, ensure that 50% of the provision meets the most up to date Eco-Homes and BREEAM 'Excellent' standards;
- All new developments maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation measures in their design, layout and orientation to reduce overall energy demand;
- All developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace incorporate on-site generation of energy from renewable sources and energy efficient design measures (including the use of CHP where appropriate) to off-set at least 20% of predicted carbon dioxide emissions from the estimated energy usage of the completed and occupied development;
- All developments reduce mains water use and demonstrate that water conservation measures are

incorporated so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the appropriate levels set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes or BREEAM Standards

- Developments incorporate sustainable urban drainage facilities and techniques as part of the layout of a development as appropriate and as advised by the Environment Agency, including minimising the size of impermeable areas so that peak run-off and annual water run-off is reduced where possible and in any case is no greater than the original conditions of the site. Particular care will be needed in areas of flood risk where different solutions may be required.

4.8 The future growth of Reading in terms of the number of new homes to be built and the significant regeneration of parts of the town have the potential to impose a large environmental footprint in terms of the consumption of resources and materials, the use of energy and the associated emission of greenhouse gases that contribute towards climate change. In a recent study, Reading was identified as having the highest emissions per dwelling of the selected cities.<sup>14</sup> As such, the incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques are essential in order to minimise this impact in the context of Reading.

4.9 The policy incorporates the use of Eco-Homes and BREEAM standards. These standards cover a wide range of matters including building fabrics and materials, energy and water use, amenity areas and ecology, waste recycling, the location and accessibility of developments, daylighting, sound insulation etc. However, the current standards give high scores in urban areas to using previously developed land that is close to services, amenities and public transport routes. Developments in Reading will therefore naturally score relatively highly

<sup>14</sup> Domestic Carbon Dioxide Emissions for Selected Cities, produced by Best Foot Forward and conducted for British Gas, Simmons and Gonzalez, February 2006



before any consideration of the impact of the development itself. Reading Borough Council believes that development should mitigate effects further by reducing greenhouse gas and other polluting emissions and providing higher energy conservation, hence the requirement for Eco-Homes and BREEAM 'Very Good' and 'Excellent' ratings. The government have consulted on a Draft Code for Sustainable Buildings that is partially based on the BREEAM Ecohomes standards for residential buildings. The Council will consider evidence based on these standards where it can be shown that they produce similar results to the relevant Ecohomes Standards.

**4.10** In light of the Council's Community Strategy's aims to ensure that development is sustainable and limits the effects of climate change, it is necessary to ensure that major development proposals are designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and incorporate renewable energy sources. This will also contribute towards achieving the regional and sub regional targets set for the generation of electricity from renewable energy sources contained within RPG 9, The South East Plan and the Berkshire Structure Plan. These require that a minimum of 8% of energy is generated from renewable sources by 2016 and 16% by 2026 for the Region as a whole, and that the Thames Valley Sub Region produces 140MW of renewable energy by 2010 and 206MW by 2016.

**4.11** As a significant part of Reading is at high risk from flooding, increased emphasis on water holding and water recycling is justified to reduce the growth of that risk arising from new development.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be promoted and implemented through the development control process in conjunction with policies contained within the Council's Development Control Document and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design and Construction.

#### Targets:

- Increase in levels of new development achieving Eco-Homes and BREEAM 'Very Good' and 'Excellent' ratings to 100% by 2012
- Increase in the generation of energy from on-site renewable sources to 100% of major developments by 2012
- 50% of all minor and major applications to contain sustainable drainage systems, bearing in mind that not all sites are suitable for the installation of sustainable drainage systems.

#### Indicators:

- Renewable energy capacity installed by type from application details
- Percentage of major developments achieving Eco-Homes and BREEAM 'Very Good' and 'Excellent' ratings
- Number of planning applications that include sustainable drainage systems.

## Waste Minimisation

- 4.12** “Sustainable waste management is one of the most pressing environmental challenges we face...” (PPS10<sup>15</sup>). This is evident from European policy and legislation (e.g. Landfill Directive), which along with national policy including the Waste Strategy (England and Wales) 2000 and PPS10, seek to achieve a more sustainable approach to methods of waste management and specifically place waste minimisation at source, at the top of what is referred to as the waste hierarchy. Waste minimisation is also included within the main themes of the draft SE Regional Waste Management Strategy (‘No Time to Waste’), which also reaffirms national policy and targets.
- 4.13** Continuing with existing patterns of waste management is recognised as being clearly unsustainable and the main thrust of policy is to increase the value recovered and decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill. In light of this and the fact that development and re-development are significant contributors to waste production, policies at the regional, strategic and local levels (RPG9 alterations, emerging Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Development Framework (JMWF), Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-16) translate this into specific policies regarding waste minimisation in development design, construction and demolition.
- 4.14** The sustainable use of resources and waste minimisation are clearly identified within the Council’s Community Strategy (Reading 2020 – Making it Happen, 2004) as key issues for improving the environment. This includes the key action of reducing the amount of waste generated and increasing the proportion reused or recycled. The Berkshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework will set out targets and indicators for non-construction waste.

### Policy CS2: Waste Minimisation

**Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the**

**construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.**

- 4.15** The Council’s Community Strategy has highlighted that building materials and other non-renewable resources are being taken up at a rapid rate and that increased re-use and recycling is essential in order to reduce waste and to manage future extraction and its impact on the environment. In light of this, and the Community Strategy’s aims to reduce the amount of waste generated and to increase the proportion of waste that is reused or recycled through better waste management, it is considered necessary that a policy is in place that will achieve these aims. As a consequence, the beneficial restoration and reuse of existing buildings should always be considered before demolition and redevelopment.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be implemented through the development control and building control processes in conjunction with policies within the Council’s Development Control Document and the Council’s Supplementary Guidance concerning sustainable design and construction.

#### Targets:

Targets for Construction and Demolition waste:

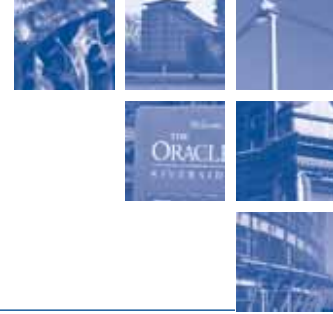
	2010	2015	2020
<b>Recycling</b>	50%	50%	60%
<b>Reuse</b>	33%	36%	28%
<b>Landfill</b>	17%	14%	12%

Source: ‘Update of the Model for Future Waste Management Capacity needs in the South East: Final Report’, ERM for SEERA, September 2005.

#### Indicator:

The amount of construction and demolition waste that is reused, recycled and that goes to landfill.

<sup>15</sup> Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, ODPM, 1999



## Social Inclusion

- 4.16** In promoting development that creates socially inclusive communities, planning policies must address a number of elements, including the impact of development on the social fabric of communities; accessibility to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities; and the needs of all the community. Policies should seek to reduce social inequalities; and deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live<sup>16</sup>.
- 4.17** The Draft South East Plan's vision is for a healthy and socially inclusive region, within which economic and social inclusion is strengthened, and disparities reduced. Local Planning Authorities therefore have a recognised role to play in improving the well-being of people. Reading Borough Council's Accessibility Strategy makes a contribution to the framing of policies at a local level, by promoting social inclusion through participation in activities and the provision of access to key services or desired facilities. This is reinforced by the Council's Community Strategy, which seeks to provide the highest level of accessibility to facilities as possible (under the theme, 'Making it Connect'), address health inequalities and tackle other inequalities ('Making it Better'), to enable everyone to participate in and benefit from Reading's economic and cultural prosperity ('Making it Fair'), to develop as a learning city ('Making it Smart'), and to make Reading a place where people feel safe and are safe ('Making it Safe').
- 4.18** The Council is involved with various partners in tackling disadvantage and associated issues through area policies and action in areas such as Whitley, East Reading and Dee Park. Planning proposals should be particularly sensitive to the diversity and needs evident in such areas.
- 4.19** Planning for diversity is a key element of social inclusiveness. In order to promote equality of opportunity, diversity and

difference needs to be recognised and valued. However, translating diversity issues into planning policies remains a challenge, as does the need to take account of the changing social context for spatial planning. This issue was also highlighted during the recent consultation exercise.

### Policy CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity

**Major developments<sup>17</sup> should demonstrate measures to enhance social inclusion in terms of access to housing, employment, services, community facilities, leisure, health, education, and other services and facilities. Development should recognise and take account of the social and cultural diversity of the area in which it is located, and contribute to the enhancement of local distinctiveness. All members of the population should be provided with access to good quality health, education and other social facilities. New housing development will be co-located with a range of accessible facilities, or appropriately planned and located to ensure that access to such facilities is provided. Public involvement in planning will be encouraged, including participation by a range of representation groups.**

- 4.20** Planning for social inclusion means planning for all age groups, cultural diversity, and pockets of deprivation, as well as facilitating employment inclusion and accessibility. A socially inclusive environment contributes to an overall sense of well-being and an increased quality of life.
- 4.21** Planning processes must recognise the potential for disparities and deprivation, ensuring that new development does not result in, or increase the potential for, economic and/ or social disparity. The spatial distribution of deprivation must be taken into account, i.e. pockets of deprivation existing on a local level. Demographic changes highlight the need to take account of the ageing population, with subsequent increased demands for elderly accommodation, health and social support,

and transport. New developments should be planned, located and implemented having regard to the varying needs of the population, including the elderly, disabled people and the young.

**4.22** Development must be supported by appropriate access to a range of services and facilities, recognising that access requirements and degrees of mobility vary. This includes the provision of access for disadvantaged and socially excluded groups. There is a particular issue over housing provision for the elderly in the light of the changing age structure of the population. Planning processes and the assessment of proposals must have regard to needs that are likely to arise, in addition to existing identified needs.

**4.23** There is a need to ensure that facilities are located in places where they best serve the community, when planning for the location of services. The Council will require that organisations and bodies delivering public services have fully considered the consequences of their location, and have also had regard to sustainability implications.

**4.24** Employment opportunities should be concentrated in areas of high accessibility wherever possible, to prevent problems of exclusion and poor accessibility, and facilitate convenient access, including the increased use of non-vehicular modes of transport. Provision for skills and other training will be important to ensure that all members of the community can gain access to jobs, including jobs in construction.

**4.25** The Council will encourage active participation in planning and decision-making processes by all members of the community (including 'hard to reach', disadvantaged, and socially excluded persons and groups). Wherever possible, the Council will work in partnership with local communities and other organisations in making planning decisions.

## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through the Site Allocations process, in terms of planning for new facilities and areas of major employment and housing growth. Development control processes will also have an implication on the delivery of this policy, given the potential for development outcomes to influence the achievement of social inclusiveness.

### Targets:

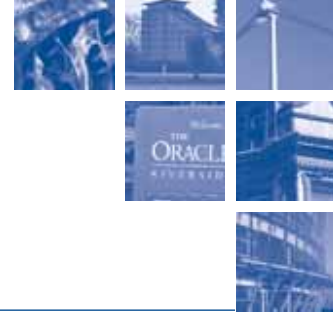
- Improvements in level of relative accessibility to a range of services and facilities;
- Provision of a range of services and facilities to meet the diverse needs of stakeholders
- Meaningful community consultation processes, which include the involvement of a wide cross-section of respondents.

**Sources:** planning application records, records of community involvement exercises associated with LDF production, information on levels of accessibility, employment and unemployment statistics, etc.

### Indicators:

- Percentage of new development that is accessible to housing, employment, services, community facilities, leisure and education (measured using Accession software)
- Participation levels in planning decisions, and representation in consultation responses over the plan period (i.e. the characteristics of respondents).
- Results of corporate residents satisfaction surveys.





## Accessibility

- 4.26** The planning system is central to the delivery of sustainable development. Accessibility is a prime requirement of sustainable communities. Planning has a key role to play in reducing the need to travel, in terms of shaping the pattern of development, and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses. The Council's Accessibility Strategy (March 2006) aims to promote social inclusion, enabling everyone living in, working in or visiting Reading to participate in activities, access key services or reach desired facilities. The strategy drives forward the Government's core priorities of accessibility planning (access to healthcare; education; employment and healthy & affordable food shopping) at the local level.
- 4.27** PPG13 essentially aims to promote accessibility by alternative modes of transport, and reduce the need to travel by car. In order to deliver this objective, there is a need to actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport; reduce the physical separation of key land uses; focus major generators of travel demand in town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges; and accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased development intensity at highly accessible locations. The South East Plan and Policy DP1 (Spatial Strategy) of the Berkshire Structure Plan informs this policy at a regional/strategic level. The RBC Local Transport Plan provides some guidance as to how planning and transport can be successfully integrated at the local level, to improve accessibility.
- 4.28** The need to plan for accessibility emerged as a key issue during consultation exercises. Comments revealed a general preference for higher density residential development in sustainable locations (where alternative transport modes are available), and emphasised the importance of focusing new

development/ large scale restructuring in areas with excellent accessibility. Similarly, employment uses should be focused in areas supported by good quality public transport.

### Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

**The scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities. Sites will be assessed in terms of their level of accessibility to a defined district or local centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and to a bus stop served by a strategic bus service.<sup>18</sup> Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility as set out in other policies in this document, other Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents.**

- 4.29** It is important that development is accessible by a choice of modes of transport. This means that the primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses. Ideally, healthcare facilities should be located at the centre (or as close as possible to the centre) of new and existing communities, to maximise relative accessibility.
- 4.30** A good level of accessibility is considered to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency

<sup>18</sup> Strategic bus service includes those services on the radial urban transport corridors, the Park & Ride routes and cross-boundary/ inter-urban services where there is no rail link. The RBC Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-2011 confirms that key routes comprise those elements of the network that provide important local links: services to district centres, major employment, educational and medical facilities, evening and night buses. Minimum frequencies and hours of operation have been defined for these services. Refer to LTP 2006-2011 for more information

of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.). In many parts of Reading (particularly the central area), it will be important to ensure that access to a range of facilities is unimpeded, and not affected by existing barriers (such as the River Thames, IDR and railway).

**4.31** Relative accessibility within the Borough has been analysed and mapped using computer models. Levels of accessibility will continue to be monitored. Zones of relative accessibility can be identified. Proposals for new development will be assessed in terms of the level of accessibility that exists or will be achieved by the time a development becomes operational, usually by reference to the defined zones. The Key Diagram includes an indicative illustration of the implications for the distribution of high density development in the Borough.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control decisions and Section 106 agreements, (particularly for larger scale, higher density development proposals), which take into account factors of scale, density, and intensity of development relative to levels of accessibility. The policy is also deliverable through the Site Allocations process, which would seek to allocate areas of major future development or those capable of accommodating increased densities; district or local centres to support an intensification of uses; and the identification of strategic opportunities for major activity or employment-generating uses.

**Targets:**

- Improvements in the level of accessibility to a range of local services and facilities, bringing about a reduction in vehicular usage and a long-term reduction in vehicular reliance

**Sources:** planning application records, information on levels and zones of accessibility – possibly obtained from the “Accession Model”

**Indicators:**

- Changes in levels of accessibility over time by “Accession Model” or similar source.
- Value of works and contributions towards transport and accessibility improvements.

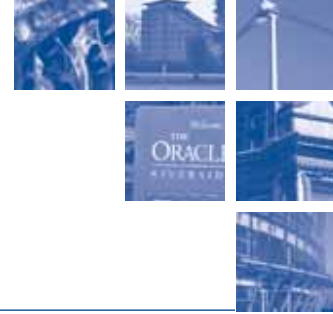
**Inclusive Access**

**4.32** Inclusive access, both in terms of location and physical access, is identified as one of the key principles of planning at the national level, which can contribute to delivering sustainable development (PPS1). It is also reiterated throughout other national policies including within PPS3, PPS6, PPS12, PPG13, PPG15, and PPG17. The principle of opportunity and equity is also included within the visions and cross cutting policies at the regional spatial strategy (RPG9 and the South East Plan) and Strategic levels (Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016) and is reflected within the policies throughout the Plans.

**4.33** This is also supported at the local level through the Council’s Community Strategy (Reading 2020-Making it Happen), which includes a key theme of equality and social inclusion and refers to fairer access for all.

**Policy CS5: Inclusive Access**

**All buildings should be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.**



**4.34** PPS1 specifically states that “Development Plans should contain clear, comprehensive and inclusive access policies”, which in turn “... should consider people’s diverse needs and aim to break down unnecessary barriers and exclusions in a manner that benefits the entire community”.

**4.35** This is further supported by good practice guidance (Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide, ODPM, 2003), the primary purpose of which is to ensure that the Planning system “...successfully and consistently delivers inclusive environments as an integral part of the development process”. It identifies an inclusive environment as one that “...can be used by everyone regardless of age, gender or disability and recognises and accommodates differences in the way people use the built environment”.

**4.36** This policy aims to complement the requirements for access to and within buildings under the Building Regulations and of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## Settlement Boundary

### Policy CS6: Settlement Boundary

**No development will be permitted outside the settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map.**

**4.37** The existing Reading Borough Local Plan includes a Settlement Boundary that defines areas outside which development will not be allowed. For Reading, the Settlement Boundary defines relatively small areas adjacent to the boundary of the Borough that broadly accord with open space, wildlife, floodplain and major landscape designations, where it is unlikely that development would be acceptable. A settlement boundary is normally a powerful policy tool preventing development beyond defined boundaries. The settlement boundary is also defined to enable Structure Plan policies to be carried out. The Draft South East Plan, which, when approved, will eventually replace the Structure Plan, does not currently refer to settlement boundaries. Such boundaries may be less applicable in the future. Nevertheless, the boundary makes clear where development will and will not be allowed, regardless of other constraints. The alignment of the boundary will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocations Document, preparation of which is due to commence during 2007. It will inevitably have to be adjusted to take account of any allocation of Green Park 3, the development of which is put forward as part of the Core Strategy.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be implemented through development control, in particular in light of changes to legislation which came into effect from 10th August 2006 requiring design and access statements to accompany planning applications for certain types of permission and consent (ref DCLG Circular 01/2006). It will also be implemented through building control processes in conjunction with policies within the Council’s Development Control Document and the Council’s Supplementary Guidance concerning sustainable design and construction.

**Targets:** 100% of major and minor applications to provide suitable access and facilities for disabled people.

**Indicator:** the number of major and minor planning applications approved, which demonstrate suitable access for disabled people.

## Design and the Public Realm

**4.38** Reading is an historic town with at least 1000 years of history. It is a town that has evolved over time. It contains many historic areas and a diversity of areas of different ages often with their own distinctive character. This strategy promotes development within the Borough but requires that development should positively contribute to making the Borough a better place. It needs to involve the highest quality design that is sensitive to, and contributes to enhancing, the character of the area in which it is located.

**4.39** PPS1, Delivering Sustainable Development states that, "planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design ..... design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted".

**4.40** PPS1 goes on to state that good design is indivisible from good planning. Good design should: -

- Address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- Be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
- Be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
- Create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and
- Consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.

In planning for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design, planning authorities should have regard to good practice set out in a number of documents<sup>19</sup>.

**4.41** The South East Plan indicates that development should actively encourage the conservation, and where appropriate the enhancement, of the character,

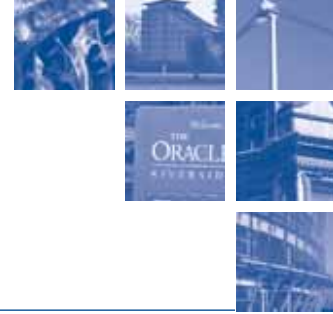
distinctiveness, and sense of place of settlements and landscapes throughout the region. Opportunities for creating a high quality environment should be sought, based on a shared vision that places emphasis on good design, innovation, sustainability and achieving a high quality of life.

**4.42** The Berkshire Structure Plan (Policy DP4) indicates that the development of urban and suburban areas should produce a relationship between buildings and open spaces which provides an attractive sense of place and ample safe public space for walking, recreation and other leisure or civic activity. It goes on to indicate that urban and suburban areas should be characterised by buildings of good design, which are accessible to all members of the community.

**4.43** The Community Strategy indicates that maintaining and enhancing the quality of the built environment and securing adequate infrastructure improvements in Reading is a principal objective. It indicates that the design and layout of the buildings must be of the highest quality and include tree and shrub planting that will positively enhance the local environment. Reading has a wealth of built cultural heritage that needs to be respected and integrated as Reading continues to evolve. New development should not only mitigate its impacts on infrastructure, but also deliver positive benefits to the wider community.

**4.44** There have been some very good flatted residential schemes in Reading over recent years. However, the high proportion of flatted developments over recent years has raised concerns, particularly in areas outside the central area. The perception of consultees on applications for new development often sees proposals as unattractive overdevelopment of a poor standard, detrimentally affecting the character and appearance of areas, particularly in the more suburban areas. Proposals are also seen as likely to intensify activity and to lead to problems related to parking, traffic congestion, noise and

<sup>19</sup> By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice, DETR, 2000, By Design: Better places to live, ODPM, 2001, Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide, ODPM, 2003, Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention, ODPM, 2004.



nuisance, lack of open space, etc., and otherwise failing to provide infrastructure to keep pace with the level of development occurring. Many would question whether such developments are contributing to improving the quality of life of people living and working in the Borough. The LDF is seen as an opportunity to focus on improving the quality of new development in the future by adopting a more systematic approach to promoting and assessing quality design.

**Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm**

All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -

- **Layout: urban structure and urban grain;**
- **Landscape;**
- **Density and mix;**
- **Scale: height and massing; and**
- **Architectural detail and materials.**

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -

- **Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place**
- **Continuity and enclosure**
- **Quality of the public realm**
- **Ease of movement and permeability**
- **Legibility - clear image and easy to understand**
- **Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time**
- **Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.**

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- **Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing**

**the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;**

- **Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;**
- **Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them; and**
- **Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.**

Applications for major and minor developments should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deal with all the above matters.

4.45 The Borough contains many established, attractive areas which are highly valued by residents and which are worthy of protection from damaging and insensitive new development or redevelopment. Many parts of the Borough exhibit a particular character including: -

- Historical characteristics;
- Mature suburbs/ other residential areas;
- Spaciousness including distinctive/ consistent plot widths;
- Attractive or consistent style of buildings;
- Regular building lines;
- Regular heights (including rooflines);
- Distinctive style and appearance;
- Individual frontages; and
- Landscaping, fencing, other boundary treatments etc.

This should not be damaged or lost by insensitive new development. While there may be capacity to accommodate new development in many parts of the Borough, it should only occur where proposals are of a scale, density and design that would not cause damage to the qualities, character and amenity of the areas in which they are situated. Such development should also

provide attractive high quality buildings and public realm that positively contributes to the area in which it is located, in accordance with good urban design principles.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

Improved quality of design will be delivered through the Core Strategy Policy, a more detailed policy in a Development Control Policy Document and through an SPD on Design that is programmed to be prepared. The policy will be delivered through development control decisions. The Council also seeks design and access statements that will be assessed against the above criteria.

##### Targets:

- 100% submission of Design and Access statements with major and minor planning applications
- Improvements in perception of the quality of new development

##### Indicator:

- Percentage of applications accompanied by Design and Access Statements
- Market research records, which address people's perception of quality

of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, and waterfronts, which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity<sup>20</sup>. The guidance also recognises the multiple functions that can be performed by open space (including both strategic and local functions), and requires that the visual amenity, heritage and nature conservation value of water resources be protected. PPS23 provides a context for water quality and contamination issues and PPS25 deals with flood risk (refer to Environmental Protection Chapter). The Draft South East Plan forms the main regional context, seeking to avoid adverse effects of development on the water environment, and recognising the opportunities for sustainable tourism and leisure provided by the River Thames and other inland waterways. At a local level, the policy is framed by the Council's Waterways Plan (partly updated by The Kennet Valley Management Plan (2003)), The Thames Parks Plan (2005) and the Kings Meadow Development Brief (2006)), as well as the Council's Waterways Vision<sup>21</sup>, which sets out a strategy for the management of waterways through Reading, between Caversham Lock on the Thames, and the County Lock on the Kennet. The Vision reinforces the need for accessibility, legibility, strengthening of character, protection and enhancement of biodiversity, high quality public realm, local community ownership, and the diversity of uses on or along the waterspace.

## Reading's Waterspaces

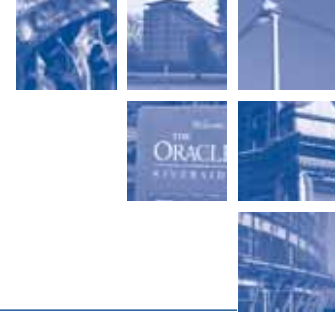
**4.46** Reading's waterways are a part of the fabric of the town and a significant asset. The waterways and riverbanks have several functions, including water-related recreation and leisure, biodiversity and ecology, and contributions to local character and distinctiveness. The waterways are also established transport corridors with a navigation function, facilitating sustainable access and movement to and within the town.

**4.47** PPG17 recognises that the concept of open space should include all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas

**4.48** Consultation results revealed a desire for strategic commitment to the protection and enhancement of rivers and corridors. Respondents also emphasised the need to focus on providing and facilitating access to waterspace; protecting and promoting associated recreational and amenity values; protecting and enhancing green corridors along the Rivers Thames and Kennet; and improving the quality of rivers (this matter is addressed by Environmental Protection Policies).

<sup>20</sup> Planning Policy Statement 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, ODPM, 2002

<sup>21</sup> The Waterways Vision, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



## Policy CS8: Waterspaces

Reading's waterspaces will be protected, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, local character and visual amenity, and the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities.

Where development in the vicinity of waterways is acceptable, it will provide: -

- **Appropriate, attractive uses and buildings that enhance the relationship of buildings, spaces and routes and creates a high quality public realm;**
  - **Positive contributions to the distinct character, appearance, landscape and amenity of the waterways;**
  - **A strengthened role for waterways as important landscape features, wildlife corridors and recreation opportunities;**
  - **Good, level access to the waterways for all those who want to use them; and**
  - **Improved quality of waterway environment through protecting habitats and ensuring that habitat creation is balanced with access and urban uses.**
- 4.49** Reading is built on two main rivers that contribute to the distinct character of the Borough as highlighted in the Waterspace Vision. Each provides a very different character and role. The Thames remains largely natural in character, bounded by parks, open spaces and fields. The Kennet maintains a stronger attachment to the town centre. The open character of the Thames and the urban character of the Kennet will be acknowledged and strengthened, where possible. Development proposals that detract from the appearance of Reading's water bodies and their settings will not be supported.
- 4.50** Land uses adjoining the waterways will contribute to the creation of attractive and highly accessible waterside environments,
- within which people can feel safe and comfortable. Buildings should face onto the waterspace and present active frontages along the Kennet, with ground floor uses designed to enhance activity and life along this corridor. Uses and facilities along the Thames waterspace will be diversified, seeking to provide a greater variety of leisure activities and facilitating public use and recreation.
- 4.51** In addition to the two main rivers, the Holy Brook contains a unique character and links to the town's ancient history. Development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access.
- 4.52** The role of waterways in attracting and catering for visitors and local people of all ages and backgrounds must be recognised. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that development adjoining the waterways provides public access to, or contributes towards improving the pedestrian facilities to, along or across the waterways. Where relevant, the Council will seek to promote schemes that facilitate linkages between the Thames, and the town and the Kennet. Overcoming this existing separation will also be reliant upon strategies and larger schemes centred around Reading Station and the railway line.

## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through strategic planning and site allocation processes, including the designation of areas for new development and/or facilities, and areas of strategic open space. Development control decisions made on land adjoining waterways will also contribute to the delivery of this policy.

### Targets:

- Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of waterspace, including ecological and landscape studies in conjunction with work arising from the implementation of the Waterways Vision
- Net increase in the accessibility of waterside areas

**Sources:** planning application records, character appraisals and analysis.

### Indicators:

- Surveys of the condition and quality of waterspace, including changes in biodiversity/ecological values
- Percentage of waterside areas accessible to the public
- Market research, which addresses people's perception of quality

## Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

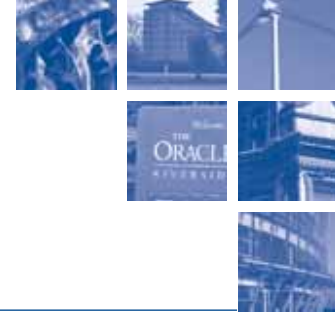
**4.53** Development impacts on local amenity and the provision of infrastructure, affordable housing, services and facilities, etc. Development is required to play a role in delivering sustainable development. Development should minimise damage, loss and impact upon existing infrastructure and environmental assets. As such, developers should compensate for loss or damage created by a development and mitigate any impact caused. Developers will usually be required to make provision through entering into an agreement with the local planning authority.

**4.54** National government policy on planning obligations is contained in Circular 5/05. This indicates that in some instances, it may be possible to make acceptable development proposals that might otherwise be unacceptable, through the use of planning conditions, or, where this is not possible, through planning obligations. The Circular sets out principles and policy tests under which planning obligations may be sought.

**4.55** The South East Plan (Policy CC5) indicates that contributions from development will be required to help deliver the necessary infrastructure. To provide clarity for landowners and prospective developers, local authorities should include policies and prepare clear guidance in their Local Development Documents, in conjunction with other key agencies, on the role of development contributions towards infrastructure.

**4.56** The Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 indicates that authorities will be required to be satisfied that infrastructure, services and amenities made necessary by the development are provided, or will be provided, at the appropriate time, so as to ensure the proper planning of an area.





**Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities**

Proposals for development will not be permitted unless the local planning authority is satisfied that infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided or re-provided at the appropriate time, in order to ensure that the development is both sustainable and contributes to the proper planning of an area in accordance with relevant planning policies. Such contributions may be pooled, in order to allow necessary infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way.

The local planning authority will require planning obligations entered into by agreement or other means to secure the replacement and enhancement of additional physical and social infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared that will detail: -

- The scale and form of obligation;
- The financial contribution sought;
- The role of pooled payments;
- Maintenance payments; and
- Charges for preparing agreements.

4.57 Future development in Reading Borough will put pressure on infrastructure, services, resources, amenities and other assets including water supply and wastewater management, other utility services, transport, education, leisure and recreation, health, community facilities, etc. Without appropriate investment, further development will be neither sustainable nor acceptable. The Council will therefore seek direct developer provision of necessary works and investment before development takes place. In many cases, this will be provided by developers through the form of contributions made in accordance with the principles and policy tests set out in Circular 5/05 or subsequent government guidance.

4.58 The Circular indicates that where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, it may be reasonable for the associated developers' contributions to be pooled, in order to allow the infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way. Pooling can take place both between developments and between local authorities where there is a cross-authority impact. This is certainly the case in terms of transport and open space for which it is essential that development contributes collectively towards major projects in order that sufficient additional capacity is created to enable the level of development anticipated in the strategy to take place.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

This policy will be delivered on its own, and through a more detailed policy in a Development Control Policy Document, and through an updated SPD on Planning Obligations. Investment will be sought through the development control system.

**Targets:** to achieve levels of investment and contribution that will enable investment in infrastructure, services, etc., commensurate with the level of development that takes place.

**Indicators:** planning application records, records of Section 106 agreements and other planning obligations.

## 5 Economic Development and Employment

### Introduction

- 5.1 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, such as high-tech and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) companies. Over recent years, this increasing prosperity has led to Reading changing from a net exporter to a net importer of workers. In turn, this has meant further commuting into Reading, and longer travelling distances, as well as greater demand for housing. It has also led to skills shortages within the area. Reading now has an opportunity to continue its economic success story in a way that contributes to the sustainable development of the Borough.
- 5.2 Policies on economic development and employment have been framed within the context of national, regional and local policy. At a national level, PPG4 is relevant, but PPG13, PPS6 and recent amendments to PPG3 give a more up-to-date context. The Economy section of the draft South East Plan, with the Regional Economic Strategy, forms the main regional context. At a local level, one of the seven key themes of the Community Strategy is 'Making it flourish', which is concerned with increasing prosperity and employment, and this frames the Council's policies on economic development. These policies are articulated through the Local Development Framework and through the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy.

### Vision

- 5.3 In line with the Community Strategy vision, Reading will be a sustainable, modern 21st Century urban centre, which serves as the capital of the Thames Valley and a nationally significant economic hub. It will be the

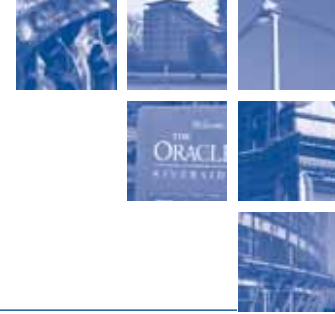
headquarters of a number of major national and international companies. Employment development should enhance this role, should contribute to meeting the overall vision, and should aim to provide modern, flexible business space that fulfils up-to-the-minute demands. Key regionally significant economic sectors which have high added value to the local economy will be particularly encouraged, along with uses which bring regeneration benefits or address Reading's pockets of deprivation and disadvantage.

- 5.4 An essential component of the vision is ensuring that there is still balance in the economy, and that no one sector is dominant. Some uses requiring affordable industrial units are key to underpinning the success of the more glamorous economic activities. In addition, much of the economic growth in the southeast over the coming years is expected to come through 'smart growth', such as innovation and enterprise rather than external investment. Therefore, Reading needs to be an environment where new businesses can start up and flourish. It should also ensure that employment development is supported by additional housing provision, and that there are measures to increase economic activity amongst the existing population.

### Role of the LDF

- 5.5 The role of the LDF is to proactively plan for a strong and stable local economy, whilst ensuring that economic, environmental and social needs are in balance. It should ensure that sufficient locations, premises and infrastructure are in place to enable smart economic growth, and to promote high quality sustainable development. This requires the assessment of needs for additional employment land, and the identification of employment land that should be retained in its existing use. An Employment Land Review has been carried out to cover these issues, and this has informed the development of the Core Strategy<sup>22</sup>. This document has also assessed

<sup>22</sup> The Employment Land Review, Roger Tym and Partners, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



the employment needs of the Reading urban area, including areas within West Berkshire and Wokingham Districts.

- 5.6 The key issues which have arisen in community involvement have particularly revolved around the future of Reading's existing employment areas, and the extent to which there is potential for redevelopment for alternative uses in these areas. This poses the question of the contribution that these areas make and will continue to make to the local economy. Another issue raised by respondents is the balance between the level of employment in the Borough and the size of the resident workforce, which broadly equates to concern over the balance between employment and housing provision.

## Overall Strategy

- 5.7 The overall strategy for economic development and employment is informed by the background evidence, particularly the Employment Land Review, carried out in 2006. This research points to a need for some additional provision for office development, alongside a scope for some rationalisation of some of the older, less successful industrial areas, which are more appropriately used for alternative uses, including housing. In addition, there are areas in need of physical regeneration in the centre and the south, and pockets of deprivation, particularly in the south. Therefore, the overall strategy is to seek additional employment provision, particularly offices, in the centre and along the A33 corridor, whilst at the same time allowing the release of areas no longer required for employment use, including some parts of the central area.

## Location of Employment Development

### CS10: Location of Employment Development

**Major office development will take place in the centre of Reading and along the A33 corridor. Office development will also take place in the other centres in the network set out in Policy CS 26, but should be of an appropriate scale to those centres.**

**Other major employment uses, including industrial and storage and distribution will be located in the A33 corridor or in the Core Employment Areas.**

**The site of the former Reading stadium and waste facilities at Southside is suitable for employment development which builds on the improvements in accessibility planned for this corridor. This should contribute to the range of employment facilities available in Reading and the environmental improvement of the A33 corridor. Development should be of an amount and type which does not have a detrimental impact on the regeneration and development of the centre of Reading.**

- 5.8 Employment development which attracts significant numbers of trips should be in highly accessible locations which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport. Major office development (over 2,500 sq m) will therefore be directed to the centre of Reading and along a high-accessibility corridor focused on the A33, a new station at Green Park and proposed mass rapid transit links to the south. Some more limited office development will also be appropriate in district and local centres, in line with the levels of scale for retail and leisure development set out in the policy on the hierarchy of centres (see paragraph 8.15).

**5.9** Major development for industrial, storage and distribution or similar uses (over 2,500 sq m) will be directed primarily to the Core Employment Areas, or to areas along the high-accessibility A33 corridor to the south. These areas are currently relatively successful industrial and warehousing areas which are likely to continue to be needed in employment use. The Core Employment Areas will be defined in the Site Specific Allocations Document, and, until this document is adopted, will be taken to mean the Major Industrial Areas as set out on the saved Local Plan proposals map, along with employment uses on Paddock Road and Marcus Close, which the Employment Land Review found to be particularly worthy of preserving. Advice on dealing with smaller scale employment uses will be contained in more detailed development control guidance.

**5.10** There are opportunities for sites to be developed for employment uses in parts of the Borough requiring regeneration, which would fit in well with the overall strategy for employment. These will include key sites in the centre of Reading, set out in the Reading Central Area Action Plan. In addition, the Reading Southside site to the west of the A33 will be designated for employment use as part of the mixed-use future of this broad area of Reading. This would provide a high-quality entrance into Reading from the south and, subject to the provision of new transport infrastructure, including mass rapid transit, would be highly accessible by non-car means of transport. Development on the site should enhance the variety of premises in Reading, and should not detract from the centre, but its design should contribute to the improvement of the environmental quality of the A33 corridor. Some parts of existing employment areas within the Borough lie within zones of medium and high flood risk. Proposals for development or redevelopment within areas that lie in those zones will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the

exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

**5.11** In order to foster the continued development of linkages between educational institutions and business, and promote innovation and enterprise, the Council sees a role for a university-linked science park. This should be in a location that minimises the need to travel and is accessible by public transport, foot and cycle.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control, through decisions affecting sites in Central Reading, Reading Southside and elsewhere. The Council will also work with Economic Development Partners in promoting Reading as a location for new development and the marketing/ promotion of development opportunities in accordance with this policy.

**Targets:** All major office development should take place in the centre or in the A33 corridor. All major industrial and warehousing development should take place in Core Employment Areas or in the A33 corridor.

**Indicators:** Proportion of major office development permitted which is in the centre or A33 corridor. Proportion of major industrial and warehousing development permitted which is in a Core Employment Area or the A33 corridor.

## Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

### CS11: Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

**Within the Core Employment Areas, the overall level of employment land should be maintained. Proposals that would result in a loss of such land will not be permitted.**

**In other areas, the following criteria will be**



considered when assessing proposals which would result in a loss of employment land: -

- (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?
- (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?
- (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?
- (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?
- (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?
- (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?

**5.12** In order to strike a balance between economic, environmental and social concerns, it will be necessary to allow flexibility for an appropriate balance of uses to develop. Growth in employment spaces should be supported, for instance, by growth in housing levels, in order to prevent increases in travel by car and the length of commuting distances. There is a need for additional housing, particularly affordable housing in the Borough in any case, to meet the existing housing needs.

**5.13** However, the Core Employment Areas provide space that is required to ensure that the Reading economy is balanced and that those activities which support higher value businesses are in close proximity. As a result, an overall loss of employment land in these core areas would risk undermining the local economy, and should not be permitted.

**5.14** Elsewhere, a loss of employment land for other uses may be acceptable, depending on whether the land is still needed for

employment purposes. Each application will need to be assessed on its merits, and the criteria to be considered are set out in (i) to (vi), which should inform a balanced decision, not be used as a checklist where every criterion is fulfilled. Proposals should demonstrate how these factors justify the release of employment land.

**5.15** Factors which may be taken into account in assessing these criteria include: -

- (i): proximity to the strategic road network, particularly for storage and distribution, access by public transport, foot and cycle, future transport infrastructure provision;
- (ii): ownership constraints, prevailing market conditions including vacancy levels, response to marketing of site for employment use, physical constraints of site such as topography, other constraints such as utilities provision;
- (iii): balancing supply and long-term demand, allowing for a degree of vacancy necessary in a healthy market;
- (iv): effects on neighbouring uses of noise, pollution and air quality, intensity of activity;
- (v): need for additional housing, community facilities and other uses; and
- (vi): likelihood of development resulting in 'islands' of other uses in employment areas, whether a better environment would be created through a more comprehensive development.

## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control, informed by existing and future assessments of the need to retain or release employment land, in light of development in central Reading and progress in developing Reading Southside. Further guidance will be given in the Generic Development Control Document and the Site Specific Allocations Document.

**Targets:** there should not be a net loss of employment land in the Core Employment Areas.

**Indicators:** net permitted change in employment floorspace within Core Employment Areas. Proportion of this change that is a loss to residential use.

## Maintaining a Variety of Premises

### CS12: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

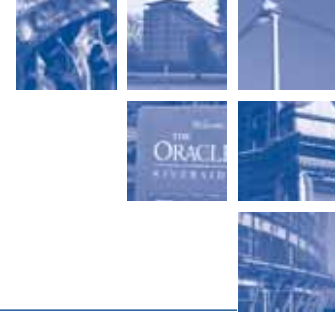
**A range of types and sizes of units should be present in the Borough, and proposals should maintain or enhance this range. In particular, the overall level of start-up and grow-on space should be maintained and, where possible, increased, and any loss of small units should be offset by new provision. Proposals should maintain the overall level of storage and distribution uses in the south of Basingstoke Road.**

**Subject to these considerations, proposals for redevelopment of older industrial units for more flexible employment premises will be acceptable.**

**5.16** In order to ensure a healthy and balanced local economy, we need to make sure that a variety of size and types of employment premises are available, which may include those uses outside the B1-8 use classes for which employment areas are the only possible location. We will seek to widen this variety of premises, including seeking more modern and flexible employment space in the

designated industrial areas. Development in the Core Employment Areas that reduces the range of sites and space available will not be permitted. In particular, the south of Basingstoke Road is an important location for storage and distribution uses, with good access to the major road network, and is a major contributor to the local economy. There should not be a net loss of this use in the south of Basingstoke Road.

**5.17** Adequate space for small-and medium-sized enterprises should be maintained, in order to ensure the future prosperity of Reading's economy. This is a core component of Reading's Community Strategy. There is a need for the continued development of start-up/ incubator and grow-on space in the Borough, and opportunities to provide this will be sought. Whether units are suitable for start-up businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms. However, planning can ensure that enough small units are available to be capable of acting as start-up space. In terms of implementation of this policy, small units are industrial or warehousing units of up to 150m<sup>2</sup> (gross external area). Where proposals anywhere in the Borough would lead to a reduction in this type of space, this will need to be offset by new premises elsewhere. Move-on accommodation is more difficult to define, particularly in terms of space, but a reduction in the range of units of 150 – 500m<sup>2</sup> (g.e.a.) should only occur where it is demonstrated that there is a surplus of such space.



**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control, and will be in line with measures set out in the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy.

**Targets:** there should be a net gain in start-up accommodation in the Borough over the plan period. There should be no net loss of storage and distribution floorspace in the south of Basingstoke Road.

**Indicators:** net change in industrial/ warehouse units of under 150 sq m permitted. Net change in storage and distribution floorspace in the south of Basingstoke Road.

## Employment Development

### CS13: Impact of Employment Development

**Employment development should provide mitigation measures in line with its impacts on the demand for housing (including affordable housing), labour and skills, and on the transport network.**

- 5.18 New employment development or extensions to existing sites may have a wide range of impacts. There are two types of impact in particular which are of concern.
- 5.19 Firstly, the tight labour market of Reading and the wider Thames Valley area means that additional employment development could result in still greater pressures on housing in the Borough, more congestion and longer commuting distances. Pressure on housing can particularly affect those who cannot afford open market housing. One possible way to mitigate these impacts is through maximising the potential of the existing population to fill jobs, through improving skills, changing working practices or providing childcare facilities. In addition, new employment development can contribute to

the provision of affordable housing. Therefore, such development should include mitigation commensurate with its impact on the demand for housing, labour and skills.

- 5.20 Secondly, and related to the above impacts, development may have significant implications for transport and travel in Reading. Transport assessments will reveal the scale and nature of these impacts, and which, including impacts on the trunk road network, will require commensurate mitigation, including demand management measures.
- 5.21 Supplementary Planning Guidance on Section 106 agreements has been adopted that sets out the requirements for developments. This provides more information on what will be required. If this document is in need of replacement with a new Supplementary Planning Document, it will continue to provide the detail for mitigation of all impacts of employment development.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control, particularly through negotiations on planning obligations informed by Council's supplementary planning guidance/ document.

**Target:** adverse impacts of employment development will be fully mitigated.

**Indicator:** level of Section 106 contributions or value of directly provided works arising from employment development.

## 6 Housing

### Introduction

**6.1** Planning for future housing provision is a central aspect of a Core Strategy Document. Housing provision, particularly the provision of affordable housing, is a high local priority. The Council is required to put forward targets for housing provision and demonstrate how it will meet those targets over the plan period.

### Role of the LDF

**6.2** National government guidance in the form of PPG 3, and emerging guidance in the forthcoming PPS 3, provides the overall framework for planning for housing provision. Its emphasis is on making sufficient overall provision to meet forecast needs and demand, including the need for affordable housing, so that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live, creating mixed and balanced communities, and enabling the managed release of land in sustainable locations with a particular emphasis on using previously developed land. Guidance revolves around the principle of Plan, Monitor, Manage.

**6.3** The South East Plan indicates that urban areas should be the main focus for development in the region. It indicates that Reading should provide a total of 10,420 dwellings in the period 2006 –2026 and that LDF's should provide and keep under review Housing Delivery Action Plans. Development should maximise the use of previously developed land and be directed to sustainable locations. It indicates that LDF's should seek a substantial increase in the provision of affordable housing, identify suburban areas in need of renewal, ensure that new development is of an appropriate density, comprises sustainable buildings and that better use be made of the existing

housing stock. It also provides an interim statement on Gypsies and Travellers.

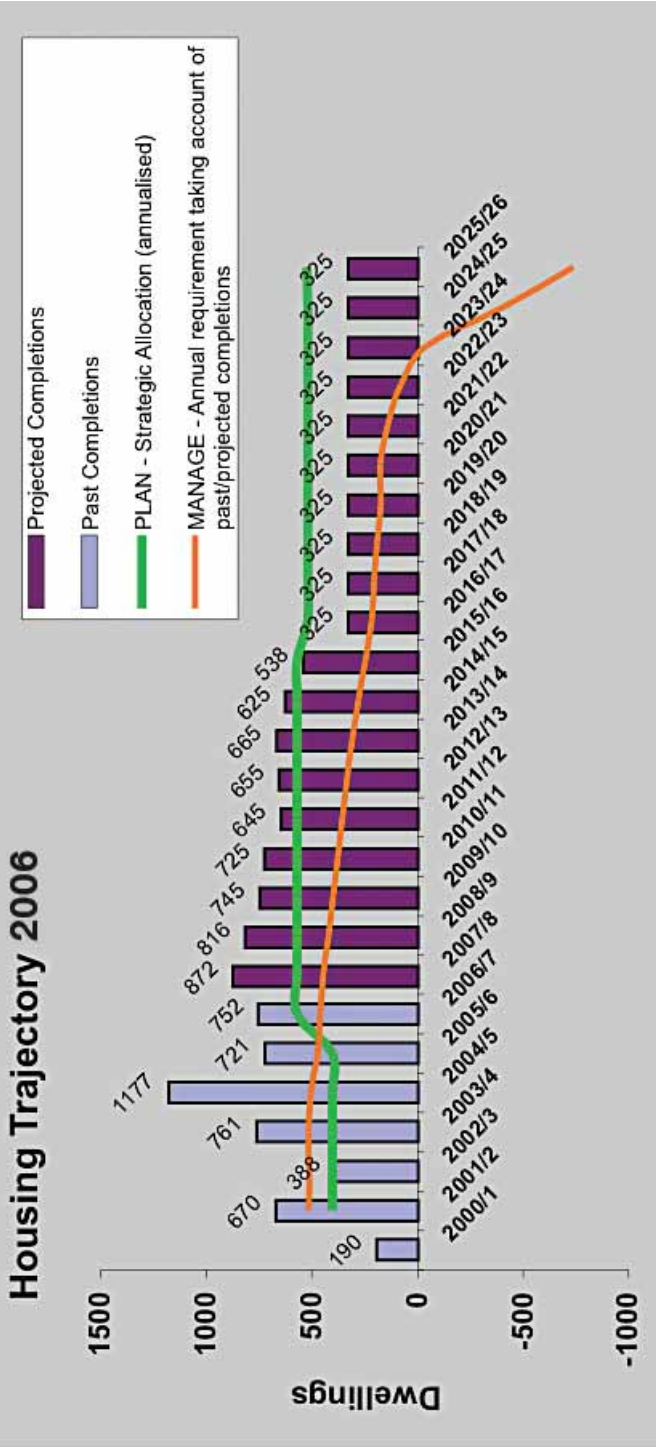
**6.4** In relation to housing, the LDF needs to demonstrate how the quantity of housing required under the South East Plan will be provided, how it will be planned, and how that provision will be monitored and managed. The LDF will play an important role in ensuring that an appropriate level of affordable housing and a range of housing will be provided to meet locally identified needs. It will also deal with other local issues affecting Reading. Along with other policies in the plan, housing policies need to ensure that the housing produced is sustainable, contributes to the creation of sustainable communities, deals with the impacts of new development and is properly integrated into the area in which it is located, including respect for the character and appearance of that area.

### Strategy for the Provision of Housing

**6.5** The BSP 2001-2016 requires the provision of an average of 477 dwellings per year in the period up to 2016. The emerging South East Plan indicates a level of provision for the Borough in accordance with its strategy for making use of urban land and concentrating development in and around regional hubs. The annual requirement under the draft plan will be 521 dwellings each year up to 2026. As part of a new government initiative on growth areas, Reading Borough Council is undertaking to provide a total of 572 dwellings per annum in the period up to 2016 as a means of attracting additional funding towards essential infrastructure provision. This means that the Council will be required to provide a total of 5720 dwellings in the period 2006-2016 and 5210 dwellings in the subsequent period 2016-2026.

**6.6** The LDF strategy for housing provision to meet these requirements will comprise the following components: -





RBC Housing Trajectory 2006

Year	2000/1	2000/2	2000/3	2000/4	2000/5	2000/6	2000/7	2000/8	2000/9	2000/10	2000/11	2000/12	2001/1	2001/2	2001/3	2001/4	2001/5	2001/6	2001/7	2001/8	2001/9	2001/10	2001/11	2001
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- Completions since 2001 (relevant until RPG9 and the Berkshire Structure Plan are superseded by the adopted South East Plan);
- Commitments with planning permission;
- Sites identified in a future Site Allocations Document. This will be made up of: -
  - Sites identified through an updated urban capacity study;
  - Sites allocated as a result of a review of existing employment uses following on from the results of an Employment Land Review;
  - Sites identified as part of the current preparation of the Reading Central Area Action Plan;
  - Other appropriate sites identified by landowners and others, including public sector land holdings, as part of the preparation of the Site Allocations Document.
- Housing produced as a result of the development of Green Park 3;
- An allowance for small unidentified sites;
- An allowance for large unidentified sites (the allowance will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Site Allocations Document); and
- Continuous and careful monitoring and review of provision against the target level of provision through the Council's AMR.

**6.7** The strategy for the provision of housing is translated in broad terms in the Housing Trajectory set out above. More detailed information is available in a separate Housing Background Paper<sup>23</sup>. The trajectory shows housing provision for the period 2001-2026. It takes account of existing completions and commitments. It includes an allowance for Green Park 3 that forms part of this Core Strategy. It does not allow for a number of sites on which pre-application discussions are currently taking place such as the major project at Station Hill in the centre of Reading.

It does not allow for employment sites or other sites that may be allocated as part of a future Site Allocations Document. It does allow for completions on windfalls, for small sites, (a large number of which are already committed) and makes a reasoned allowance for future unidentified large sites. The Site Allocations Document will eventually substitute for a proportion of the unidentified large sites allowance.

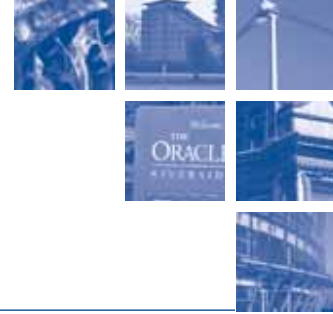
**6.8** As can be seen, Reading is in a healthy housing delivery position, certainly to 2016. It is clear that, subject to continuing favourable market conditions, the Borough will supply, and continue to supply, mostly brownfield housing opportunities at above the required rate until 2016 arising out of existing commitments with an allowance for continuing small and large site commitments. There is clear provision for the five-year period beyond the adoption of the Site Allocations Document. Beyond 2016, the picture is somewhat uncertain and relies on sites identified in an urban capacity study and continuing windfall sites coming forward. Preparation of a Site Allocations Document will eventually provide more detail for the 10-year period beyond 2014, with identified and allocated sites replacing some of the existing large site windfall allowance.

### Policy CS14: Provision of Housing

**Provision will be made for the completion of an average of at least 477 dwellings for the period 2001-2006, 572 dwellings per annum in the period 2006-2016, and 521 dwellings per annum in the period 2016-2026, in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in this Core Strategy Document. This provision will be made up of the following sources of supply: -**

- **Completions since 2001;**
- **Existing commitments with planning permission;**
- **Previously used sites of 0.4 ha or more that will be identified through urban**

<sup>23</sup> Housing Background Paper, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



**capacity studies in a Site Allocations Document, to be prepared commencing in 2007;**

- **Other sites to be identified in the Site Allocations Document including the proposed greenfield development at Green Park 3; and**
- **Development coming forward on large and small previously developed windfall sites including changes of use and conversions.**

**6.9** The future distribution of housing provision will take place in accordance with the spatial strategy outlined in Section 3 of this Document. In accordance with the Spatial Strategy Key Principles (see paragraph 3.4) and the LDF sustainability appraisal objectives, locations for residential development should follow the principles that:

- Major development should be located in areas of high accessibility;
- Development should be directed to areas in most need of regeneration;
- Development must have access to efficient and effective public transport.

**6.10** Recent development trends have seen a rapid increase in the amount of high density residential development in Central Reading, contributing to its urban renaissance. Residential and mixed-use developments are also bringing significant regeneration benefits to other parts of the Borough. South West Reading continues to see high levels of residential development contributing to its regeneration and the enhancement of the physical appearance of a major entrance to Reading. Residential development is also seen as a major vehicle for tackling a range of social, economic and environmental issues in the regeneration of suburban areas such as the Dee Road Estate in West Reading.

**6.11** The existing high levels of commitments for the Borough are split as follows:

- 40% in the Central Area;
- 25% in South West Reading;
- 35% in the other parts of the Borough.

**6.12** This broad distribution of residential supply is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Significant high-density city living is seen as an essential component of the continued urban renaissance of the Central Area. The Reading Central Area Action Plan will promote high-density, mixed-use development primarily through the identification of various Opportunity Areas such as the Station Area, the East Side Area and the West Side Area.

**6.13** A high level of residential development will continue to be delivered as part of mixed-use developments in South West Reading, particularly in the very accessible A33 corridor. This supply will arise from the intensification of existing permissions, such as at the former Manor Farm Development, the proposed development of Green Park 3 (North) for around 700 dwellings and, in the longer term, the possible redevelopment of selected existing employment sites in suitable locations for residential or mixed-use developments.

**6.14** The remaining areas of the Borough will continue to contribute to the overall housing supply. For example, the redevelopment of the Dee Road Estate could provide up to 300 additional dwellings. The spatial strategy encourages development in locations with good access to the Central Area as well as District and Local Centres in the Borough. This seeks to optimise locations with high levels of accessibility to local services. However, opportunities in these areas are somewhat limited by their character and built form. In the longer term, employment areas within, and adjacent to the central area, and to the west of Central Reading will be investigated in detail for their potential to provide new residential or mixed use development. Development will continue to occur in the outer areas of the Borough

through infill developments and redevelopment. Significant parts of the Borough lie within zones of medium and high flood risk. Proposals for development or redevelopment within areas that lie in those zones will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

- 6.15** Continuous and careful monitoring and review of provision against the target level of provision will be carried out through the Council's AMR. Revised LDF documents will be brought forward as early as practicable, where such monitoring shows provision to be significantly at variance with the relevant required annual average rate of provision.
- 6.16** Virtually all development proposed under the Strategy is brownfield land. The only exception is the proposed development of Green Park 3 (North), In view of past mineral working, this is, in any case, degraded land. The strategy does not envisage the need to allocate any other greenfield land. In any case, for the most part, greenfield land within the Borough is covered by other designations (e.g. open space) and/or lies in areas at high risk from flooding or has been previously tipped.
- 6.17** The urban capacity of all parts of the Borough will be thoroughly explored, building on a study carried out in 2003, in preparing the Site Allocations Document. The Council will commence the preparation of its Site Allocations Document during 2007. In preparing this document, the Council will examine in detail potential brownfield development sites such as those identified through an updated urban capacity study, sites allocated as a result of a review of existing employment uses, sites identified as part of the current preparation of the Reading Central Area Action Plan and any other appropriate sites.

- 6.18** As part of its Site Allocations Document, the Council will prepare a Housing Delivery Action Plan that, with the AMR, it will use to plan, monitor and manage the housing supply against requirements. Where and when necessary, the Council will use its powers as far as possible to proactively assist land coming forward for development where there are barriers such as necessary infrastructure or land ownership issues. However, in view of the difficulties of managing or phasing development of brownfield land, which is highly dependent on the state of the market, it may be necessary to quickly review LDF documents to effect a change in the rate of provision.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control, supported by site allocations and promotion through the Reading Central Area Action Plan and a Site Allocations Document. A Housing Delivery Action Plan will be drawn up as part of the preparation of a Site Allocations Document and, with the AMR, will be used as a basis for the monitoring and review of provision. Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared, as appropriate, to assist the preparation of site proposals for major sites.

**Targets:** annual average provision over the plan period in accordance with the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016, the South East Plan and RBC Growth Point undertakings.

**Indicator:** planning application records of completions and commitments.

#### Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix

- 6.19** Over recent years, the Borough has seen increasing densities in all areas. On the one hand, such developments have contributed to the vision of urban renaissance and urban renewal that have brought benefits and increased vitality to the Central Reading Area and some parts of the inner areas of Reading.



In other areas, such development has introduced a better mix and better balance of accommodation, meeting the wider needs of the Borough and assisting in the aim of creating mixed and balanced communities. However, these benefits need to be balanced against some of the impacts that this type of development can have on surrounding areas and residents.

**6.20** The benefits of increased densities, particularly in terms of sustainability are most prevalent in areas of high accessibility to services and facilities. Locations that are highly accessible provide ease of access for residents to services and facilities and conversely benefit from higher concentrations of people. Higher densities in areas with relatively poorer accessibility only encourage more unsustainable travel usually by less sustainable modes of transport. There should therefore be a gradation of densities in relation to relative accessibility.

**6.21** Policy CS4 provides a general policy on development and accessibility, indicating continuing evaluation of the relative accessibility of areas of the Borough. Draft PPS3 sets out ranges of density appropriate to particular locations, having regard to a variety of factors including the character of an area, accessibility, the importance of high quality design, etc.

**Policy CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix**

The appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: -

- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
- Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
- The need to achieve high quality design

- in accordance with Policy CS7; and
- The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in accordance with the findings of a housing market assessment. The mix of dwellings should include an appropriate proportion of units designed to the Lifetime Homes standard.

Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable. Indicative density ranges based on draft PPS3 are set out below:

Location			
Town Centre	Urban <sup>1</sup>	Accessible Suburban <sup>2</sup>	Less Accessible Suburban <sup>3</sup>
Above 70	40-75	35-55	30-50
Density Range (Dwellings per ha)			

Footnotes to Table:

- <sup>1</sup> Areas that are generally denser than more suburban areas and comprise a mix of residential and employment areas.
- <sup>2</sup> Areas of medium housing density, which are predominantly residential in character and are easily accessible to services and public transport routes.
- <sup>3</sup> Areas of medium housing density, which are predominantly residential in character and are not easily accessible to services or public transport routes. This category replaces the rural category set out in Draft PPS3.

**6.22** A Berkshire Housing Market Assessment was carried out during 2006, and developments should seek to provide for a range of dwellings based on the results of that assessment. While a high proportion of

future need is for the accommodation for small households, developments should include provision for family accommodation, as well as accommodation for the elderly, the disabled and those with special needs. There are particular pressures for the provision of additional family housing in the social rented market. The constraints of development in an urban area tend to make flatted developments more profitable than houses, and the provision of at least an element of family housing in all developments is therefore a priority. Developments should also include a proportion of units built to Lifetimes Homes Standards in accordance with current best practice.

**In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.**

**In determining residential applications the Council will assess the site size, suitability and type of units to be delivered in relation to the current evidence of identified needs. The Council will seek an appropriate tenure mix of affordable housing to include social rented, affordable rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership affordable units. The affordable units provided should be integrated into the development.**

**Priority needs, in 2014, are for family sized housing, specialist accommodation for vulnerable people and extra care housing. The Council will regularly monitor and review the need for, and delivery of, affordable housing.**

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control, through guidelines on allocated sites set out in a Site Allocations Document and, where appropriate, through guidelines site out in any Supplementary Planning Documents prepared for specific sites.

**Targets:** levels of densities for individual planning applications meeting PPS3 density guidelines. Annual housing mix proportions meeting indicative mix set out in agreed Housing Market Assessment.

**Indicator:** planning application records of completions and commitments.

#### Aim of the Policy

**6.23** The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that in order to boost significantly the supply of housing, local authorities should ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. It goes on to indicate that local planning authorities need to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

#### Reason for the Policy

**6.24** The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2007), along with the Housing Needs Assessment published in 2012, provide evidence of the high level of need for affordable housing that exists in Reading and the surrounding areas. The Berkshire SHMA has informed the preparation of the Reading Borough Housing Strategy 2009-2014 that sets out strategic housing objectives and priorities for housing

## Affordable Housing

*[This section was amended on 27th January 2015—see note on page 3]*

### Policy CS16: Affordable Housing

**All developments of 15 dwellings and above will provide 30% of the total number of dwellings in the form of affordable housing to meet the needs of the area, as defined in a housing needs assessment.**

**Affordable housing is subsidised housing that enables the asking price or rent to be substantially lower than the prevailing market prices or rents in the locality, and is subject to mechanisms that will ensure that the housing remains affordable for those who cannot afford market housing.**



provision within the overall needs identified. The provision of family sized housing, specialist accommodation for vulnerable people and extra care housing for the elderly have the highest priority under the Strategy.

**6.25** Affordable housing is defined (in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)) as, “Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.” Where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, authorities have to set policies for meeting this need and contributing to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities<sup>24</sup>.

**How will the Policy be achieved?**

**6.26** Affordable housing contributions will be sought from residential-only developments and mixed-use developments. On-site provision (serviced land or completed units) of affordable housing will always be sought in the first instance. Where there are exceptional reasons, the provision of surrogate sites (serviced land or completed units) or commuted sums that will enable the provision of a commensurate number and mix of affordable units, will be considered. In the case of commuted sums, the Council will choose the registered provider to which to direct the funding.

**6.27** The target set in the policy has been determined as the result of an assessment of the viability of development of sites of various sizes in the Borough during early 2014 in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. This will be the expected level of affordable housing provision.

**6.28** However, the Council will be sensitive to exceptional costs of bringing a site to market such as for reasons of expensive reclamation, or infrastructure costs, or high existing use values. Where applicants can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Council, exceptional difficulties in bringing a site to market, the Council will be prepared to consider detailed information on the viability of a particular scheme and, where justified through an open

book approach, to reduce the affordable housing requirement. As development costs are usually reflected in the residual land value, the purchase price of a particular site will not, on its own, be a reason for reducing the affordable housing requirement. The Council will generally secure provision of affordable housing through a Section 106 agreement.

**6.29** The tenure, size and type of affordable housing provided as part of any scheme should respond to the identified need for affordable housing taking account of the details and specific priorities set out in an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document or other Supplementary Planning Document. New development should therefore include a range and mix of tenures, sizes and types (e.g. house types, flats) of affordable housing (as appropriate depending on site size) to reflect local needs and to reflect the range and mix of house types in the scheme as a whole (i.e. the mix of dwelling sizes in the provision of affordable housing should reflect the mix proposed for the private housing).

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

This policy will be delivered through site allocations in the Reading Central Area Action Plan and the Site Allocations Document; through an existing SPG on Planning Obligations; through the future preparation of an SPD on Section 106 agreements; and development briefs for major sites. The policy will also be delivered through the development control system.

**Target:** 30% provision on sites to which the policy threshold applies.

**Indicator:** planning application records of completions and commitments detailed in AMR and Housing Delivery Action Plan.

**Protecting the Existing Housing Stock**

**6.30** As indicated, the provision of housing is a priority in meeting the requirements of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the emerging South East Plan. Strategically, efforts to meet those requirements could be made more difficult if existing residential uses are lost to other uses. Policy H7 of the Berkshire

<sup>24</sup> DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012). See paragraph 50 and Glossary.

Structure Plan 2001-2016 seeks to avoid the loss of housing. It is therefore necessary to seek to protect the existing housing stock and avoid the undue loss of residential use.

### Policy CS17: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

**Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area.**

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control.

**Target:** no net loss of residential units or gross floor area in any proposal.

**Indicator:** planning application records of completions and commitments.

## Residential Conversions

**6.31** Part of the housing supply is provided through residential conversions and this does benefit the housing supply and mix of dwellings in the Borough. However, it has become evident since 2000, that, in certain areas of the Borough, large numbers of houses have been converted to flats. It is now becoming apparent that larger numbers of conversions in a small area can have a significant effect on the character of an area or street.

**6.32** This has become a significant issue in the Borough. While it is not the intention to prevent conversions, there is a need for a balance to be struck between allowing such conversions and maintaining the character

and appearance of an area. A policy is therefore included in the Core Strategy that seeks to address the very real effects that a proliferation of conversions is having on the character and appearance of various parts of the Borough. A future LDF document will include a more detailed policy that seeks to facilitate the conversion of appropriate properties, where such conversion will not add to the damaging effects on the character of an area.

### Policy CS18: Residential Conversions

**Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking, and the treatment of bin storage areas.**

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The Council will undertake a study of flat conversions to identify all areas where the character and appearance of an area is threatened by continuing flat conversions. The policy will be delivered through the application of development control in areas identified as under threat.

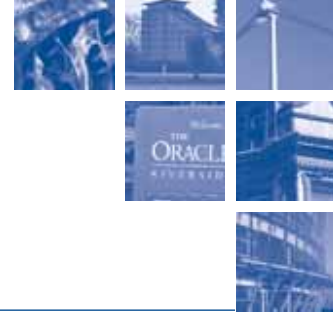
**Targets:** separate monitoring of conversions, particularly for areas identified as under threat. Assessments of the character and appearance of areas identified as under threat.

**Indicator:** planning application records of completions and commitments in identified areas.

## Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

**6.33** Reading Borough Council is part of a consortium of authorities in the Thames Valley that have collaborated in carrying out a needs assessment of the Thames Valley, in relation to the provision of accommodation for





gypsies and travellers. The Council is now working collaboratively with adjoining authorities to actively identify, plan and bring forward suitable sites to meet the need identified in the wider area. At this stage, there is no strategy for provision within the Borough. The level of need identified in respect of the Borough is relatively small, and there are considerable practical and cost difficulties in identifying and bringing forward a site within the tightly drawn boundaries of the Borough.

### Policy CS19: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

**In the event that Reading Borough Council needs to make provision for permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites within the Borough, they will be identified in the Council's Site Specific Allocations Document.**

**In addition to the relevant National and Regional planning guidance, sites will be judged against the following criteria. They should: -**

- i. Meet an identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the Borough;**
- ii. Have safe and convenient access onto the road network;**
- iii. Be located within a reasonable distance of facilities including education and health provision;**
- iv. Have access to facilities by a range of transport modes;**
- v. Not have an unacceptable impact on the physical and visual character and quality of the area;**
- vi. Not have an unacceptable impact on adjoining properties or neighbouring land; and**
- vii. Not result in the loss of important trees or wildlife.**

**In planning for housing, everyone should have the opportunity of living in a decent home<sup>25</sup>. This includes meeting the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities within the Borough.**

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with adjoining authorities to agree and implement a joint strategy. Through the identification of sites, if appropriate, through the Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. Through the Development Control process.

**Target:** appropriate provision for Gypsies and Travellers to meet agreed identified needs.

**Indicator:** details of appropriate provision for Gypsies and Travellers to meet agreed identified needs.

- 6.34** Reading Borough Council, in conjunction with the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) has completed a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which was carried out in accordance with the Government's GTAA Draft Guidance issued in February 2006. The focus of this study was to identify accommodation needs at a local and regional level and consider the education, health and housing related support needs.
- 6.35** The results of this assessment demonstrate that the estimated number of pitches to be accommodated within Reading Borough over the next five years is relatively few, i.e. six. The Council is currently investigating opportunities for the accommodation of these pitches with neighbouring authorities. Should it be required, a site or sites to accommodate these pitches will be identified and included in the Council's forthcoming Site Specific Allocations Document.

## 7 Transport

7.1 PPG 13<sup>26</sup> neatly sums up the issues of transport in its first paragraph: "Our quality of life depends on transport and easy access ... but the way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic is damaging our towns, harming our countryside and contributing to global warming". The message of PPG13 is *integration*: within and between different types of transport; with policies for the environment; with land use planning; and with policies for education, health and wealth creation.

7.2 At the national level, starting with PPG13 and running through various other guidance, programmes and best practice<sup>27</sup>, the planning role in transport is related to three areas: -

- **Promoting sustainable transport choices** - in land use decisions, by promoting and developing centres in urban areas; by providing the necessary infrastructure; in providing information; in dealing with crime and safety issues etc.;
- **Promoting the accessibility of sites to essential facilities by transport, specifically walking, cycling and public transport** - by providing facilities; improving information; safeguarding land for future transport developments; and
- **Reducing the need to travel, especially by car** - by provision of alternative transport infrastructure and/ or services, through car parking policies, managing travel demand etc.

7.3 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

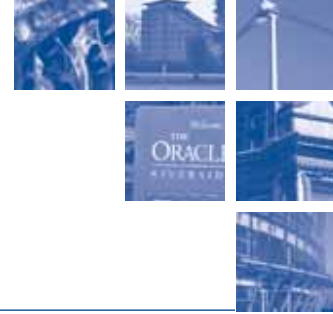
those accessing services and facilities. Reading is identified as a hub. In pursuing its strategy, the RTS gives priority to the development of public transport systems in the region, including public transport interchanges, mass rapid transit systems, travel planning advice, and information services. Policies also cover mobility management in relation to public transport service development; car parking provision and the management, availability and quality of pedestrian and cycle routes; transport charging mechanisms, freight movement etc. The Strategy sets out a framework for parking provision.

7.4 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. Policy DP2 sets out sequential criteria for the location of new development, firstly in or adjoining the centres of the Major Towns, then at principal intersections of public transport routes or district centres within the major towns, and then elsewhere on public transport corridors within the urban areas. In addition, it indicates that the scale of the development shall be related to the accessibility of the site by cycling, walking and public transport.

7.5 Policy T1 indicates a strategy to concentrate on the improvement of transport nodes and the multi-modal spokes that link them, in order to assist the concentration of development in the Major Towns, to assist the objective of urban regeneration and to ensure that best use is made of modes of travel other than the car. It goes on to require that Councils use their planning powers to: -

- (i) Reduce the need to travel, especially by car;
- (ii) Promote alternative modes of travel to the car;
- (iii) Increase the safety of travel;
- (iv) Provide improved access to jobs, leisure opportunities and services for all members of the community; and

<sup>26</sup> PPG13: Transport, ODPM, 2001 <sup>27</sup> See LDF Transport Background Paper, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



(v) Secure the reliable movement of goods, in a manner compatible with the principles of sustainable development.

**7.6** Policy T4 requires that developments take appropriate measures to offset any adverse effects they might have for the transport network. Policies T5 and T6 deal with car parking and park and ride.

**7.7** These national, regional and strategic themes are taken up in the **Reading Transport Strategy and Reading Borough Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011<sup>28</sup>(LPT2)**. The Local Transport Plan is built around the following themes: -

- Accessibility Strategy;
- Parking Strategy (in preparation);
- Bus Strategy;
- Sustainable Distribution;
- Rail Strategy;
- Urban Traffic Management & Control;
- Interchange Strategy;
- Road Safety;
- Bus / Rail Partnerships;
- Local Safety Schemes;
- Cycling Strategy;
- Safer routes to school;
- Walking Strategy;
- Local area enhancements;
- Mobility Management;
- Signage;
- Passenger Information;
- Air Quality Action Plan;
- Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy;
- Community Strategy Partnerships; and
- Highway & Bridge Maintenance.

**7.8** The Plan proposes 8 core infrastructure projects: -

- **Cow Lane Bridges** - a major bottleneck to the west of the town centre will be removed to allow use of this strategic route for public transport and freight, provide safe pedestrian and cycle links, and a segregated MRT corridor;

- **Green Park Multi Modal Interchange** - a new railway station will be built on the Basingstoke line, reducing congestion and improving accessibility to major employment sites and future housing in South Reading;
- **Inner Distribution Road Management** - the road 'collar' around central Reading. Measures to reduce congestion and severance and deliver significant environmental enhancements;
- **M4 Junction 11 Improvements** - the main junction serving Reading from the M4 motorway and the south will be upgraded to provide segregated pedestrian, cycle and public transport links, and a managed solution to traffic congestion;
- **Park & Ride** - a series of new Park & Ride sites and local transport interchanges will be provided, possibly in conjunction with adjoining authorities on the main approaches to Reading, as part of an integrated network management plan to reduce congestion and improve accessibility;
- **Quality Bus Corridors/ Mass Rapid Transit** - high quality public transport connections will be provided between main travel generators and Park & Ride sites, reducing congestion and improving accessibility;
- **Reading Station Interchange** - track and platform capacity will be increased to reduce this significant bottleneck on the national rail network. The railway station will become a high quality, accessible gateway to the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe. It will be a major station on the national rail network, providing an easy-to-use interchange for all types of transport; and
- **Measures to Improve cross Thames travel** - Options for measures to improve cross Thames travel, which may include a bridge, will be developed with adjoining authorities to provide alternatives for north-south movement across the river.

**7.9** All of these core projects will be developed, but may be delivered to different timescales and in different forms to that currently envisaged within Reading Borough Council's Local Transport Plan (2006-2011). These, and other projects, including travel management proposals and proposals falling under the Quality Travel for Reading Approach (that is a central feature of LTP2) are detailed in a number of Area Action Plans for seven areas of Reading. The transport strategy on which LTP2 is based will largely be implemented through these area action plans.

**7.10** As part of preparing LTP2, the Reading Transport Model has identified various levels of the potential scale of growth in local travel movements associated with regeneration and development proposals referred to in this Strategy, to assess their impact on the transport system. It is clear that future developments will add a substantial number of additional daily trips to the transport network over the LTP2 timeframe, and up to 2020<sup>29</sup>.

## Role of the LDF

**7.11** The role of the LDF will be in implementing the transport strategy for Reading, by ensuring that development is accessible (see Policies CS4, CS11, CS14); reducing the need to travel especially by car; promoting travel plans and connections from a development via sustainable transport modes; and ensuring that development contributes towards infrastructure provision that helps to promote safe, sustainable transport choices, and enables the transport system to deal with the additional trips arising from that development.

## Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)

**7.12** The Council's aims for transport set out in the Local Transport Plan are: -

- Improve accessibility to central Reading and to neighbourhood centres for all modes of transport, ensuring access to essential facilities for all members of the community and continuing sustainable economic growth;
- Reduce the impact of congestion on key radial routes, through the provision of justified additional capacity for each mode, thereby enhancing travel choice;
- Make relevant information widely available in a range of formats, to enable travellers to make informed choices about their journeys and use that information to manage the network efficiently;
- Ensure that travel in Reading is made as safe as possible, particularly for vulnerable road users, through timely maintenance and traffic management;
- Protect the natural and built environment through effective long-term planning to reduce the need to travel;
- Support the delivery of the regional spatial strategy, managing and investing in inter-regional corridors to deliver urban regeneration and sub-regional objectives; and
- Promote management of and investment in the local transport system, delivering continuous and sustainable improvements through efficient use of resources, effective use of existing networks, and long term planning for future travel needs.

New development has a role to play in helping to achieve that vision, particularly in relation to the additional trips generated by individual developments.

<sup>29</sup> Local Transport Plan, RBC, 2006, [www.reading.gov.uk/transport](http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport)



## Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)

Planning permission will not be granted unless the proposed development contributes appropriately to the provision of a balanced transport network as outlined in the Reading Transport Strategy, including the implementation of the core transport infrastructure projects and area action plans. Such projects and plans will include the provision of measures that make alternatives to the use of private cars (such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport) more attractive, and contribute to improved accessibility and transport safety in accordance with Policy CS4.

**7.13** The scale of development envisaged in Reading up to 2020 will have significant impacts on the transport system, in addition to the general forecast growth in trips arising from the existing population. That growth in trips can only be accommodated through major investment in all modes of transport. There will continue to be significant investment in roads and travel management measures. The Reading Transport Strategy sees reliable, convenient and safe public transport contributing to a cleaner environment, providing a realistic alternative for travelling into and around Reading. Considerable investment is also proposed in implementing other strategies such as strategies for cycling and walking. New development should make appropriate provision for works that contribute to the programmes developed as part of the strategy, either directly or through making appropriate contributions.

## Major Transport Projects

**7.14** The major, and some of the other, transport projects set out in the Transport Strategy and LTP2 will require the use of land other than existing highway land. Junction improvements and public transport improvements such as MRT and Park and Ride will inevitably involve the use of non-highway land. The planning system needs to be able to ensure that development proposals do not inhibit the provision of new transport projects. These will provide extra capacity to meet the growth in the need for transport arising from new development. The implementation of the Transport Strategy will, therefore, rely on the safeguarding of some land and alignments.

### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

Through development control, either through direct provision by applicants in carrying out works or paying for public transport services, or through making appropriate contributions as part of Section 106 agreements made in line with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations or an updated Supplementary Planning Document.

**Targets:** appropriate provision or contributions towards transport works by all relevant permissions.

**Indicators:** monitoring of the Local Transport Plan, monitoring of planning permissions and Section 106 agreements.

## Policy CS21: Major Transport Projects

As a regional transport hub, priority will be given to the implementation of the priority transport projects identified in the Local Transport Plan, particularly the upgrading of Reading Station Interchange, Park and Ride Sites, Mass Rapid Transit, road improvements, Quality Bus Routes and associated transport improvements. Land needed for the implementation of priority transport projects will be safeguarded from development, to enable their future provision.

**7.15** As the transport strategy is developed and projects reach the design stage, there will inevitably be a need to safeguard land needed for the implementation of projects. Where projects are advanced sufficiently, safeguarded land or safeguarded lines will be identified on proposals maps accompanying the Site Allocations Document that is due to be published during 2008. Those lines will be safeguarded from future development. The Council will seek agreement on cross boundary projects with the adjoining local planning and highway authorities.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

Safeguarded land and lines will be defined as part of particular projects and further information will be available through the Council's Transport Development Control Team. Available information will be set out and identified in the Site Allocations Document due to be published as an Issues and Options Paper during 2008. Safeguarding will be implemented through development control.

**Target:** identification and safeguarding of land through the planning system

**Indicators:** monitoring of planning permissions and Section 106 agreements.

**Transport Assessments**

**7.16** All developments need to fully consider their transport impacts and include measures to mitigate those impacts. It is important that all modes of transport are considered, particularly sustainable modes that will usually require improvement (or even establishment). It is important that all developments ensure that sustainable choices can be made.

**Policy CS22: Transport Assessments**

**Planning permission will not be granted unless development proposals make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling, in accordance with an agreed transport assessment submitted as part of the application.**

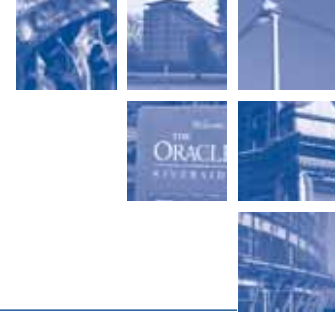
**7.17** All developments will be assessed for their impact upon the transport network including the local and trunk road and motorway networks. Development should provide mitigation measures in line with their impacts on these networks. It will be a condition of planning permission that appropriate measures are in place to secure any remedial transport measures required. Where necessary, a transport assessment of the scheme will be required. This will measure the impacts both of the development proposal and of any remedial measures proposed by the developer to address those impacts. Once a satisfactory package of remedial measures has been negotiated, contributions may be sought from developers to secure their delivery.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

Through development control either through direct provision by applicants in carrying out works or paying for public transport services, or through making appropriate contributions as part of a Section 106 agreement made in line with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations or an updated Supplementary Planning Document.

**Targets:** appropriate provision or contributions towards transport works by all relevant permissions.

**Indicators:** planning permissions and Section 106 agreements.



## Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans

### Policy CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans

Planning permission will not be granted for major development proposals unless there is a commitment to implement measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities, such as through provision to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport; and through agreed travel plans, safe routes to schools, safe routes to parks and similar measures.

**7.18** For major development proposals, it is important that transport assessments give priority to enabling users of, and visitors to the development, sustainable travel choices using non-car modes of transport. This should include provision that enables walking, cycling and the use of public transport from the development. For developments that are likely to have significant transport implications, Green Travel Plans will be sought. These will involve undertakings from developers and occupiers, to implement measures for promoting the use of sustainable transport, in accordance with best practice. Measures will vary from scheme to scheme, and innovative solutions will be encouraged. Travel plans should include robust measures to ensure that the proposals in them are implemented, monitored and reviewed as necessary. Major residential proposals should also examine and include proposals to enable the promotion of safe routes to schools, as well as sustainable travel to local services and facilities, including access to public transport.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control processes.

**Target:** 100% of major planning applications to implement measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities.

**Indicator:** planning permissions and Section 106 agreements.

## Car/ Cycle Parking

**7.19** The Reading Parking Strategy is currently being reviewed and developed in the context of national policy in PPG13, the Regional Transport Strategy and the Berkshire Structure Plan. The emerging draft strategy is in three parts, covering central Reading, outer Reading and park-and-ride. The Central Reading Parking Strategy sets out to manage car parking and to encourage appropriate travel by car into central Reading and discourage inappropriate travel. For areas outside central Reading, the emerging policy is taking account of planned major development in the context of the overall transport strategy. It will take account of accessibility and will provide a consistent framework for Development Control management of parking standards.

### Policy CS24: Car/ Cycle Parking

**Maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.**

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

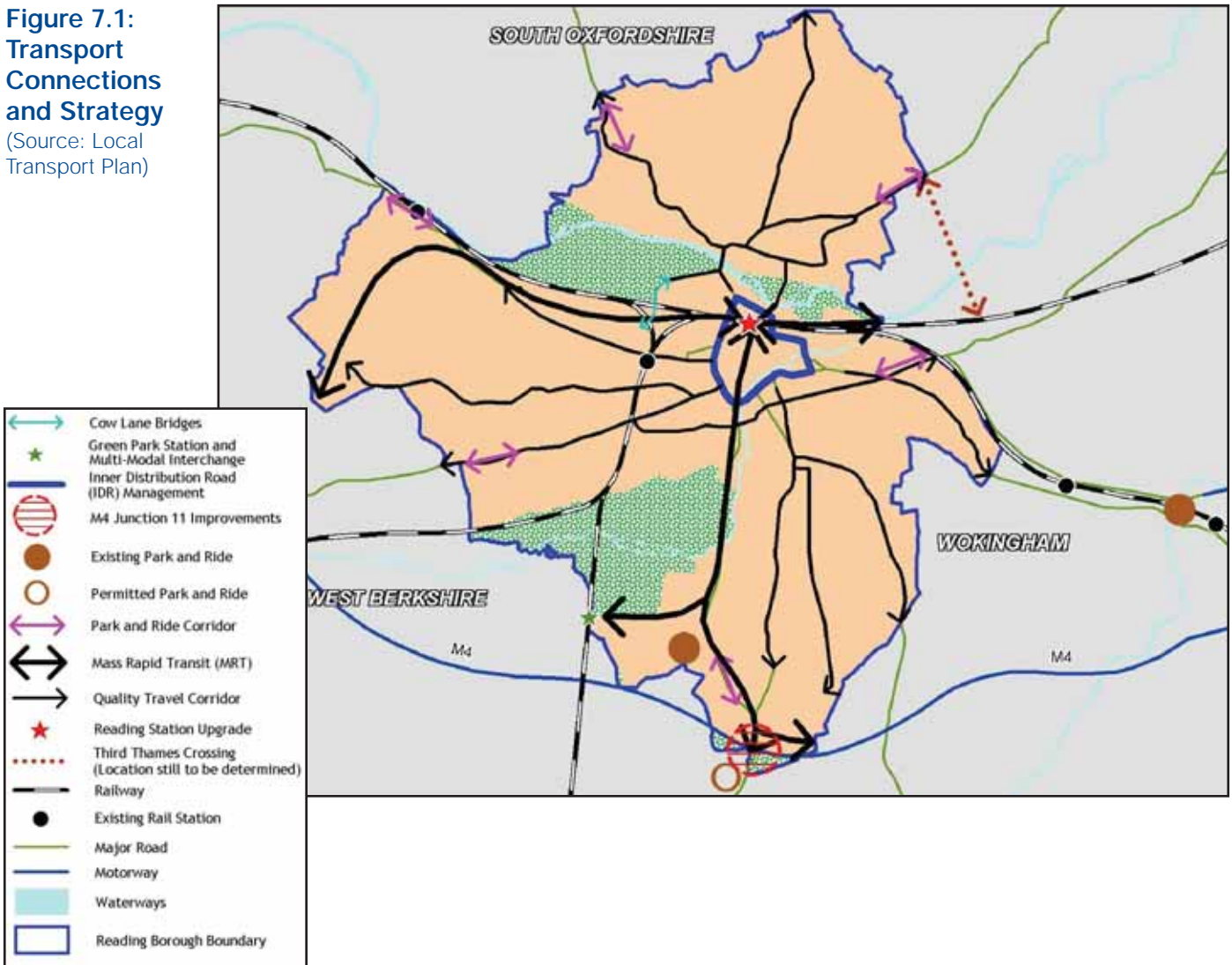
Through development control, and through a new Supplementary Planning Document on Parking Standards.

**Target:** appropriate provision in relation to SPD standards.

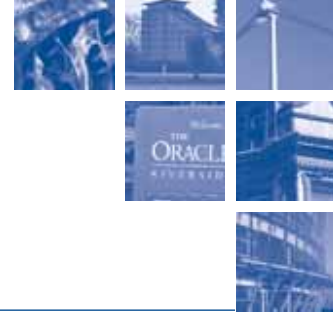
**Indicator:** monitoring of planning permissions against adopted standards, when available.

**7.20** Work on a parking strategy is ongoing and, once approved, it is intended to take it forward as a Supplementary Planning Document.

**Figure 7.1:**  
**Transport**  
**Connections**  
**and Strategy**  
 (Source: Local  
 Transport Plan)







## 8 Retail, Leisure and Culture

### Vision

#### Introduction

**8.1** Over recent years, Reading has been transformed into one of the leading retail centres in the UK, with a catchment that spreads far beyond the urban area of Reading. The opening of the Oracle in 1999 was one of the key moments in this rise in prominence. In addition to the centre, and a wide range of smaller centres and shopping parades, Reading also has six retail parks, four of which are in out-of-centre locations. A wide range of goods is sold from these facilities.

**8.2** Certain types of leisure and cultural development share many locational characteristics with retail, and these uses are often complementary. Leisure and culture in the context of this section means main town centre uses as defined in Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6): -

- *Leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls)*
- *Arts, culture and tourism (theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)*

**8.3** Policies on retail, leisure and culture have been framed within the context of national, regional and local policy. PPS6 provides the main national planning context for these uses, alongside PPG13. The draft South East Plan gives a regional focus to policy, particularly the Town Centres and Tourism sections. The Community Strategy provides the overall context for the Borough, within which strategies such as the City Centre Strategy and Action Plan operate.

**8.4** Retail and leisure will be expanded in the Borough in line with identified need, and the range of leisure and cultural facilities will be increased. The centre will house a wide variety of retail, leisure and culture uses, so that uses that attract large volumes of people are in close proximity in a highly accessible location. Smaller centres should be the focus for facilities serving local communities, and should retain a retail character. They should be capable of acting as an alternative to the centre for a variety of services.

#### Role of the LDF

**8.5** The role of the LDF is to positively and proactively plan for retail, leisure and culture provision in Reading. This involves assessing the need for additional uses, identifying gaps in provision and setting out where new development will be focused. This will be achieved through policies in this document, and, in more detail, in the Reading Central Area Action Plan and Site Specific Allocations document.

**8.6** Many of the comments received at previous community involvement stages have related to the importance of a strong network of local centres. These centres form centrepieces for their local area, and community involvement has shown the need for a wide range of facilities in these areas. Other issues that have provoked debate are the scale and nature of overall retail development needed in the Borough, and whether new centres need to be designated to fulfil gaps in the hierarchy. The Retail and Leisure Background Paper includes a full discussion of the results of community involvement.

## Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture

### Policy CS25: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development

Major retail and main town centre leisure and culture development will take place in, or as an extension to, the centre of Reading. Where a need for additional development has been identified, and no sites are available in or adjoining the centre of Reading, a sequential approach should be adopted to identifying alternative sites.

All development will comply with the relevant tests for retail, leisure and culture development set out in government guidance.

**8.7** The most suitable location for retail, leisure and culture development is in existing centres. These centres already have a range of facilities, and are generally accessible by a choice of means of transport. Development in these centres should maintain and enhance the centres' vitality and viability. The centre of Reading is the most accessible location in the Borough, and is among the most accessible locations in the South East, and therefore represents the best location for major development of this type. Major development in this case refers to development of 2,500 square metres gross floorspace or over.

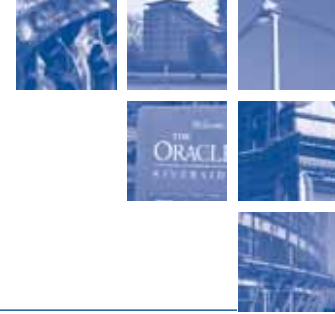
**8.8** The Council commissioned consultants to identify the need for additional retail and leisure development in Reading. This report was produced in 2005<sup>30</sup>, and is available on the Council's website. It identified a need for a maximum of an additional 100,250 square metres of gross retail floorspace by 2016. This would represent a significant growth of the retail on offer in Reading. In terms of leisure, the study identified strong need for a swimming pool/ leisure centre and an ice rink, and more limited need for improved ten-pin bowling and a theatre/ concert hall. The Council must allocate sufficient sites to meet

the identified need for at least the first five years from the adoption of their development plan document. Since the documents within the LDF will run to 2023, it makes sense to plan for the entire identified need for retail and leisure uses.

**8.9** The identified retail and leisure need is therefore directed primarily to the centre of Reading. The specific location of this development within the centre is a matter for the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP), where a primary shopping area will be defined. The RCAAP document will also set out town centre boundaries for other town centre uses. Other identified centres within the Borough are appropriate locations for retail, leisure and culture development, subject to the levels of scale set out for each level of the centre hierarchy. Parts of the Central Area lie within zones of medium and high flood risk. Proposals for retail development or redevelopment within areas that lie in those zones will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

**8.10** Retail, leisure and culture development outside designated centres will only be allowed in those exceptional circumstances, where the provisions of PPS 6 (published in 2005) are met. In these cases, proposals will need to demonstrate: need for the proposal; that the proposal is of an appropriate scale; that a sequential approach has been adopted to site selection; that there will be no adverse impact on existing centres in Reading Borough or elsewhere; and that the proposal will be accessible by a choice of means of transport.

<sup>30</sup> Reading Retail and Leisure Study, Colliers CRE, 2005



**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control and through the spatial strategy, and the identification of a Primary Shopping Area in the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

**Target:** all major development for retail, leisure and culture development covered by this section is to take place in or adjoining the centre.

**Indicator:** proportion of major retail, leisure and culture development permitted, which is within, or adjoining Reading centre.

## Hierarchy of Centres

### Policy CS26: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

The following network of centres is identified: -

<b>Regional Centre:</b>	Reading Centre
<b>District Centres:</b>	Caversham, Cemetery Junction, Emmer Green, Meadway, Oxford Road West, Shinfield Road, Tilehurst Triangle, Whitley
<b>Major Local Centres:</b>	Whitley Street, Wokingham Road
<b>Local Centres:</b>	Basingstoke Road North, Christchurch Road, Coronation Square, Erleigh Road, Dee Park, Northumberland Avenue North, Wensley Road, Whitley Wood

The vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced. This will include widening the range of uses, environmental enhancements and improvements to access.

Development for main town centre uses in or adjoining these centres should be of an appropriate scale. Where proposed levels of development would be of a greater scale, it should be clearly demonstrated that the

catchment the development will serve is in keeping with the role of the centre.

**8.11** In order to ensure that shops and services are as accessible as possible to the people of Reading, and that they provide a level of facility appropriate to their role, it is important to identify a network and hierarchy of centres within Reading Borough. The Core Spatial Strategy notes the importance of local centres in achieving sustainable development and providing services and facilities close to where people live. It notes the importance of strengthening the role of centres and enhancing their attractiveness to their local populations. This policy sets out how centres relate to one another in the hierarchy and what their roles are. The policy will seek to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres.

**8.12** Reading is identified as a primary regional centre in Policy TC2 of the South East Plan, in line with previous definitions of the centre. This will be the focus for major retail, leisure and culture provision.

**8.13** The next level in the hierarchy, present in Reading, is district centres. It is considered that, whilst only three or four centres currently qualify as district centres according to the PPS 6 definition, it is appropriate to designate more district centres in order to encourage an increase in the range of facilities. This will mean that centres capable of acting as alternatives to the centre of Reading will be accessible to a greater number of people. The Whitley district centre has frontages on Basingstoke Road (including Morrisons superstore, but excluding the Brunel Retail Park) and Northumberland Avenue.

**8.14** There are a number of smaller concentrations of shops and services across Reading. These are designated as local centres, which fulfil the next tier in the hierarchy from district centres. Whitley Street and Wokingham Road are larger centres than other centres in this list, and they are therefore designated as

major local centres, where a greater scale of development will be appropriate.

**8.15** It is necessary to set out the scale of 'main town centre' development (as defined in PPS 6) that will be appropriate at each level, in order to ensure that the hierarchy is strengthened. The following upper limits in terms of scale are considered appropriate for each tier of the hierarchy: -

- Regional centre: no limit
- District centres: 2,500 sq m
- Major local centres: 1,000 sq m
- Local centres: 500 sq m

Individual applications above these scales of development will need to be accompanied by compelling evidence that the catchment that they serve is appropriate to the role of that centre in the network and hierarchy of centres.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control.

**Targets:** all development for retail, leisure and culture taking place in these centres should be of an appropriate scale. Vacancy in these centres should be lower than 10%.

**Indicators:** proportion of retail units in each centre which are vacant; proportion of retail, leisure and culture development in each centre which is within the scale limits (up to 2,500 sq m in district centres, up to 1,000 sq m in major local centres, up to 500 sq m in local centres).

## Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres

### Policy CS27: Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres

**A strong retail character will be maintained in the centres identified as being part of the network. Significant groupings of non-retail uses in one part of a centre will not be allowed.**

**8.16** Reading is characterised by a largely affluent and highly skilled population. However, there are some small but significant pockets of deprivation in the Borough which should not be overlooked, and which have been identified as a priority to address at the regional level. The strategy of ensuring that there is good accessibility to a range of services and facilities in smaller centres is significant in addressing these deprivation issues.

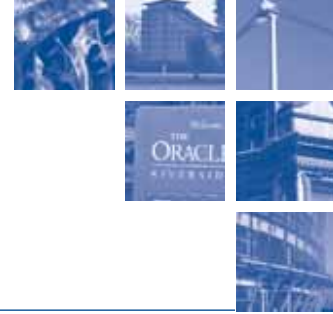
**8.17** Retail uses form the main contributor to the vitality and viability of these centres. Therefore, to ensure the overall health of these centres, they need to continue to maintain a strong retail character. Whilst other uses play a valuable role, there should not be an over-concentration of non-retail uses in one part of the centre. The Generic Development Control Document will provide greater detail on how this strategy is to be applied at a local level. Until that stage, saved policies RET3A and RET3B of the Local Plan will continue to be applied.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control decisions in district and local centres.

**Target:** 50% of A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and sui generis units within each centre should be in A1 use.

**Indicator:** proportion of A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and sui generis units within each centre that are in A1 use.



## 9 Open Space and Recreation

**9.1** The Open Space Background Paper, which is adapted from work undertaken in preparing the Reading Borough Open Spaces Strategy, suggests that the Borough is generally well served by its existing open spaces in terms of overall supply against need, albeit that overall provision is less than recreational guidelines recommend. However, an audit of open space and analysis of need suggest that there is an uneven distribution of open space across areas of the Borough in terms of access and in certain types of open space, particularly provision for children's play areas. In addition, many existing open spaces are in need of upgrading to improve the facilities offered.

**9.2** The Reading Open Spaces Strategy<sup>31</sup>, carried out in accordance with the provisions of PPG17 and published in 2006, raises the following issues with respect to open space provision in the Borough: -

- Notable deficiencies in public open space in Central Reading and the residential areas surrounding Central Reading;
- Poor access to formal children's play facilities in a number of areas of the Borough, particularly in North Reading;
- Barriers that reduce residents' access to open space;
- Many local open spaces that do not meet users' aspirations with respect to variety, quality and facilities, causing a significant number of people to travel to more attractive recreational open space further afield; and
- Concerns expressed in residents surveys over the possible loss of open spaces to new development.

**9.3** Making up deficiencies identified in the Strategy faces difficulties. The dense urban fabric of parts of Reading is an inheritance. It is difficult to provide new public open space in a heavily built-up area with very tightly drawn boundaries. Public sector acquisition

of land within the urban area for new public open space is likely to be prohibitively expensive. Improvements and additions to the stock of public open space will therefore need to be achieved as and when opportunities are presented, as well as through some changes in the way in which existing public open space is used and managed.

**9.4** The strategy makes a number of recommendations relevant to the planning for open space in conjunction with future development in the Borough: -

- Protection of existing open spaces and replacement of open spaces when development takes up existing open spaces;
- Provision of new open space as part of new large major development proposals, and to deal with identified deficiencies such as in the provision of play areas;
- In the central area and other densely built up areas where open space provision is deficient, the priority should be the pedestrianisation of streets, enhancement of civic spaces and street planting;
- Improvement of the layout, planting and appearance of existing open spaces with the provision of new facilities, including the development of low intensity open space uses and more intensive open space uses;
- Improved cleanliness and maintenance;
- Improved and safe access to open spaces;
- Protection and enhancement of the biodiversity of open spaces; and
- Safe routes to parks.

### Vision

**9.5** Open spaces in their nature, extent and quality contribute significantly to defining the character of the Borough and the quality of life of its residents. Open spaces give emphasis to the attractiveness of the Borough, helping to define its natural assets

of the Thames and Kennet Rivers overlooked by wooded ridges that influence views of, and from, the town. They provide a valuable resource for recreation and leisure for those living and working within and visiting the Borough. They contribute significantly to the environmental quality and townscape of the Borough and to providing essential habitats for maintaining and enhancing local biodiversity.

**9.6** As part of its strategic policy commitment to the creation of a “Green City”, the vision for open space is to enhance the quality and accessibility of existing and potential public open spaces, including those associated with the waterspace of the River Thames and Kennet<sup>32</sup>, to ensure a high level of accessibility to good quality open space and associated facilities for all those living and working within and visiting the Borough. It is vitally important to maintain and enhance open space provision within the Borough in the light of the development pressures that face the Borough over the plan period to be able to accommodate a rising population increasingly living in higher density environments.

**9.7** The role of the Core Strategy Document will be: -

- To protect existing valuable areas of open space and recreation facilities in contributing to the character and biodiversity of the Borough and the quality of life of its residents;
- To make provision for the improvement of existing open space and recreation facilities to serve the population of new development, to contribute to the aim of a green city, and to preserve areas of ‘naturalness’ as an important aspect of the urban area;
- To make provision for new open space and recreation facilities and their continued maintenance, to meet the needs of new development and to tackle inadequate provision in areas of deficiency;

- To make community access to non public open space (e.g. school grounds) possible, where practicable, particularly in areas of deficiency;
- To make improvements to road and other crossings to improve access to green space overcoming severance lines;
- To improve and link up off-road links to open space for cyclists and pedestrians;
- To establish safe routes to open space, especially in those areas underserved by green spaces.

**9.8** According to PPG 17, open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity. As a visual amenity, even without public access, people enjoy having open space near to them to provide an outlook, variety in the urban scene, or as a positive element in the landscape.

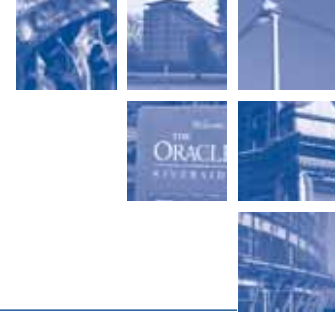
## Loss of Open Space

### Policy CS28: Loss of Open Space

**Development proposals that will result in the loss of open space or jeopardise its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, to a similar standard, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space. The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land.**

**9.9** In a densely populated and growing urban area, where existing provision of open space is below standard and in some areas deficient, it is essential that, as far as possible, the overall amount of open space is retained and protected. Open space

<sup>32</sup> Reading 2020 – Making it happen, Local Strategic Partnership, 2004



provision should actually increase, at least in line with population growth, if not to rectify existing deficiencies.

- 9.10 This policy relates to all open space in the Borough; public or privately owned. It includes the areas of strategic open space shown on the key diagram. The most significant providers of recreational open space in the Borough will be identified in the forthcoming Site Allocations LDF Document. However, this does not imply that other areas of open space or recreational land serve no purpose and need less protection from development.
- 9.11 Exceptionally, where a development proposal involves losing open space, appropriate replacement space should be provided where it is easily accessible to the people most affected by the lost space. Alternatively, compensating improvements could be made to existing open space in the area. However, this should not be the case where the existing location of the open space is key to preserving the setting of Reading, as is the case in the Kennet and Thameside Meadows. They will be identified as Strategic Open Spaces, and the boundaries will be defined in the Site Specific Allocations document.
- 9.12 PPG 17, at paragraph 16, indicates that the recreational quality of open spaces can be eroded by insensitive development. It indicates that local authorities should seek to ensure that all proposed development takes account of, and is sensitive to, the local context. The trend for higher density development in recent years has led to a number of insensitively sited buildings close to existing open space that has detracted from the appearance of the open space and sterilised use of the areas of open space in close proximity to the development.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The areas of open space to be protected will be identified in detail through the Site Allocations Document that is due to commence during 2007/8. This will consider all sites currently protected through saved policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The policy will be delivered through development control and through Section 106 agreements governing the provision of open space by developers, or through contributions to new provision or the improvement of existing provision.

**Target:** a net increase in the overall amount and quality of open space over the plan period in line with standards to be set out in future LDF documents.

**Indicators:** planning application records of provision, future open space audits.

## Provision of Open Space

### Policy CS29: Provision of Open Space

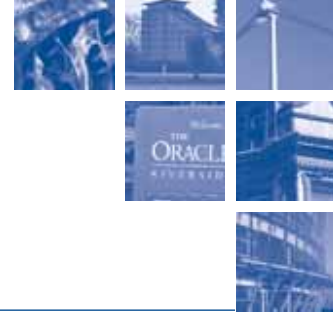
All new development should make provision for the open space needs of the development through appropriate on or off-site provision, or through contributions towards the provision or improvement of leisure or recreational facilities, including open space. New provision will be sought on residential sites of 50 or more units, or for developments where the availability and quality of existing provision has been identified as deficient in the provision for open space. The provision and improvement of Children's Play Areas and Neighbourhood Recreation Areas should be made, as appropriate, in order to ensure a satisfactory level of provision within the urban area. On sites of less than 50 dwellings or in areas not identified as deficient in the provision of open space, new open space provision/ improvements/ enhancements will be sought through appropriate contributions.

**9.13** A good quality of life requires space for sport and recreation, leisure, quiet enjoyment and relaxation, children's play, educational experiences, visual stimulus and amenity, and places in which to enjoy nature, biodiversity and the elements. People living in urban areas need access to open spaces, to parks, to sports pitches, to places to relax in and places to play. In the current era of high-density developments that reduce external amenity areas and open space, the need for proper open space provision, and safe and easy access to such spaces, is even more imperative. Consequently it is essential that new developments make provision for open space to meet the needs of the residents/ occupiers of the development. With a growing population resulting from new development, it follows that the amount and quality of open space in the Borough should increase over the plan period. Qualitative improvements might include the provision of supporting amenities e.g. benches, refreshments, etc. Appropriate provision is

discussed in the Council's Open Space Strategy and standards will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space and a revised SPD on Planning Obligations and/ or the forthcoming Development Control Document. PPG 17, at paragraph 20, sets out general principles to consider in determining where to locate new provision of open space.

- 9.14** Improvements to the quality and facilities of existing open space and/ or the provision of new open spaces should be secured through Section 106 agreements as part of smaller developments. As a minimum, the provision of safe access for new households to new or existing enhanced public open space should be a requirement. In larger scale commercial/ retail developments, the integration of additional public spaces (such as civic squares) should be required.
- 9.15** Regeneration initiatives and housing redevelopments sometimes create opportunities to provide new open space or reorganise space through land swaps, and there should be a requirement that the feasibility of this alternative be considered in areas deficient in public open space.
- 9.16** A hierarchy of recreational open space creates variety in the available facilities in each neighbourhood. In parts of Reading where there are no larger parks offering a wider range of amenities, consideration should be given to 'upgrading' existing open space, through investment, to the status of 'district' or 'borough' parks, serving both the immediate neighbourhood and the wider community. The use of Section 106 contributions should be investigated to contribute to the funding of a range of open space improvements, including both local and district spaces. Contributions for parks more remote from the immediate development site should be pursued in some cases, on the grounds that larger parks in Reading serve a much wider catchment.





**9.17** The Open Space Audit carried out as part of the preparation of the Open Space Strategy found significant deficiency in the provision of play areas and safe access to play areas in several parts of Borough. Special consideration needs to be given to ensuring adequate provision of play space as part of all development proposals.

**HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?**

The policy will be delivered through development control and planning agreements in consultation with the Parks Section and in partnership with developers and landowners.

The policy will be delivered through development control and through Section 106 agreements governing the provision of open space by developers or through contributions to new provision or the improvement of existing provision.

**Targets:** the targets will be to show: -

- Net additions to the number and amount of open spaces, children’s play areas and neighbourhood recreation areas within the Borough, particularly in identified areas of deficiency, commensurate with the rise in population, in accordance with the Reading targets set out in the Open Space Strategy; and
- Contributions to the improvements of existing and new open spaces, Children’s Play Areas and Neighbourhood Recreation Areas and access to such facilities, leading to improved satisfaction over the plan period with open space provision, compared with the levels found in the 2005/ 06 survey.

**Indicators:** planning application records of provision, future open space audits.

**Access to Open Space**

**CS30: Access to Open Space**

**In areas with relatively poor access to open space facilities (possibly as a result of severance lines), new development should make provision for, or contribute to, improvements to road and other crossings to improve access to green space and/ or facilitate the creation or linking of safe off-road routes to parks.**

**9.18** The Open Spaces Strategy identifies numerous severance lines that act as barriers to access to open space. Further work on accessibility to open space will continue to be undertaken to identify other barriers to access. New development proposals should be assessed in terms of accessibility to open space (as well as other services and facilities). Opportunities should be identified for that development to improve or contribute to the improvement of access to open spaces, such as through providing or funding the provision of improvements to crossings, green routes, tow paths or pedestrianisation of streets. It would also be appropriate to provide safe links between open spaces that would also act as green wildlife corridors.

**9.19** The creation of a network of safe green links for pedestrians and cyclists, that improves access to a choice of open spaces, is a key objective and an integral part of the Open Spaces Strategy. Not only will these routes increase open space usage and reduce trips by cars, but they should be considered an intrinsic component of the overall open space structure and experience that Reading offers. Paths alongside the Kennet and Thames in particular, provide a unique opportunity to enhance the network of green links and corridors across the Borough.

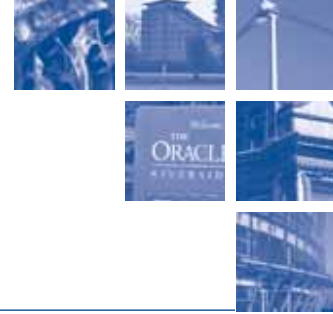
## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control and planning agreements in consultation with the Parks and Transport Sections of the Council, and in partnership with developers and landowners.

**Targets:** The targets will be to show: -

- Incidences of the provision of new crossings and other improvements within the Borough, designed to improve access to open space;
- Contributions to the provision of new crossings and other improvements within the Borough, designed to improve access to open space;
- Barrier-free access to public open space for all new developments.

**Indicators:** planning application records of provision, future rights-of-way audits.



## 10 Community Facilities

### Introduction

- 10.1** Quality of life for the residents of Reading is one of the key considerations of the Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. A good quality of life is not only desirable in itself, but also ensures that Reading remains attractive to investment. The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and to continue living. Additional development will place further pressure upon these facilities.
- 10.2** Community facilities mean different things to different people. The term could encompass health facilities, education and training facilities (at all levels), youth and community centres and meeting places, libraries, places of worship, civic and administrative facilities and recycling facilities and civic amenity sites. Other uses such as open spaces, sport and recreational facilities, leisure facilities or pubs are often centrepieces of a community, although these are dealt with in other sections of this document.
- 10.3** Policies on community involvement have been framed within the context of national, regional and local policy. PPS 1 provides the main national context for these policies, encouraging development that supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of communities with good access to jobs and key services. PPG 13 also contains guidance on the location of, and access to community facilities. The draft South East Plan provides guidance for the provision of community facilities in the region, identifying the need to work with Primary Care Trusts to meet the anticipated primary care needs of communities and to work with the education sector, including higher and further education, to ensure that educational needs are met.

### Vision

- 10.4** A high quality of life will be maintained in the Borough, partly through ensuring that there are sufficient facilities to meet the needs of the community. It is vital that healthcare, education (including higher and further education), community meeting places and other community facilities are available and accessible.

### Role of the LDF

- 10.5** The role of the LDF is to consider the needs and problems of their communities and apply these to the development of land. In seeking to achieve social inclusion, the LDF should address accessibility for all members of the community to health, education and community facilities.
- 10.6** The need to continue to provide a range of services, including community facilities, remains a key objective of spatial planning. Additional issues arising from the preferred options consultation include the need to address the reuse, redevelopment or loss of community facilities, and to place greater emphasis on the value of higher and further education.

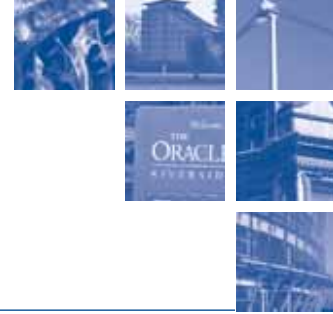
### Additional and Existing Community Facilities

#### Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities

**Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible.**

**Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.**

- 10.7** The Council should continue to work internally and with its partners to keep the need for community facilities, including health, education and training facilities under review. Key partners include, but are not limited to, the Primary Care Trust, Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospital Trust, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust and Royal Berkshire Ambulance NHS Trust, the University of Reading and Thames Valley University.
- 10.8** Policy in the Core Strategy will generally encourage proposals that would increase the range or improve the quality of facilities serving Reading's communities, as long as there would not be significant adverse impacts on the amenity or character of surrounding areas. The provision of a mix of compatible community services on a single site will also be encouraged. These facilities should be located in areas that are well serviced by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling. In the case of healthcare facilities, this should include the car. The most appropriate location for community facilities will be in or on the edge of existing centres identified in the network in Policy CS26, which will maximise access for the greatest number of people. This will be particularly important for developments that seek to provide a range of different community uses. However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which an existing centre is not the most appropriate location, such as where there is a need to provide for an area that does not contain a defined centre. In these cases, community facilities should be located in areas of high accessibility, such as public transport corridors or within close proximity of public transport nodes.
- 10.9** Major developments will be required to contribute towards mitigating their impacts on the need for community facilities, such as education and health. In some cases, this may require the provision of new facilities. Whilst the preferred location for community facilities is generally the network of identified centres, there are cases where developments may be isolated from such centres. In these cases, on-site provision may be required.
- 10.10** There are some types of community facilities that are essentially residential in character, such as nursing homes. These may be suitable uses to be located in residential areas, where they are served by a choice of means of transport. Where these facilities would cater for people with limited mobility, they should be located close to essential services. Developments must respect the character and amenity of the surrounding residential areas.
- 10.11** There are some significant sites in Reading where specific policy provision may be needed. In terms of hospital facilities, hospital provision has now largely been consolidated at the Royal Berkshire Hospital site. Some further development is likely to be required at this site during the plan period, in accordance with a master plan for the site. In terms of primary care, there is a need for new combined primary healthcare facilities to serve south Reading.
- 10.12** In addition, Reading College has recently merged with Thames Valley University and a new role and course content is evolving. The University currently operates from two sites in the Borough, the main site at Kings Road and a smaller site off the Wokingham Road. It is anticipated that the merged institution will involve development and change, possibly at both sites.
- 10.13** In a limited number of cases, should facilities not be serving their purpose or where there is no longer a need for the facility, their redevelopment for purposes other than community uses may be appropriate. The appropriate use for such sites will need to be determined on a site-by-site basis.



## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control decisions on proposals for additional community facilities or the loss of existing community facilities. It will also be delivered by working in conjunction with key partners to review the need for additional facilities and seeking sites through the Site Specific Allocations Document.

**Target:** a net increase in the overall amount of floorspace in use for health, education and youth and community activities.

**Indicator:** net change in the floorspace in use for health, education and youth and community use.

schooling facilities, taking account of the needs of future new housing development, to serve the different parts of the Borough. There should therefore be a policy that recognises the need to mitigate impacts of developments on the need for community facilities of all types, including healthcare and youth and community centres. In some cases, on-site provision may be required.

## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control decisions on any applications which would increase the need for additional community facilities. The use of Section 106 agreements may be the appropriate mechanism for addressing significant impacts.

**Target:** adverse impacts on the need for additional community facilities will be fully mitigated.

**Indicators:** level of Section 106 contributions or value of directly provided works relating to community facilities.

## Impacts on Community Facilities

### CS32: Impacts on Community Facilities

**Where development would have an adverse impact in terms of increasing the need for additional community facilities, or the extension or upgrading of existing facilities, mitigation measures should be provided in line with the scale of the impact.**

**10.14** Continued development in Reading places demands on community facilities. For example, planning for schools and education in Reading already faces numerous pressures and challenges. These challenges include: adaptation to changing school rolls; the need to restructure primary schools in parts of the Borough, often to improve accommodation to make them suitable for modern teaching standards; restructuring at secondary school level; issues in post 16 provision; and the need for additional nursery and special school provision. New development, and the pupils resulting from such development, exacerbates those challenges, as well as increasing pressures to expand useable classroom and recreational space to meet educational needs. Considerable investment needs to be made to provide modern

## 11 Built and Natural Environment

**11.1** The built environment of Reading has a direct influence on the quality of life of its residents. It is therefore important that the built environment is managed and developed in a way that reinforces and enhances its functions, including the provision of employment opportunities, access to a wide range of essential services and facilities, and the provision of housing for residents. The built environment also contains and largely supports elements of historic significance. A high quality natural environment contributes to quality of life, in terms of visual amenity and character, recreational opportunities, biodiversity etc. Both the built and natural environments of Reading are key assets to the local and regional economy.

### Historic Environment

**11.2** Physical survivals from our past are a central part of our cultural heritage and sense of national identity, as well as contributing to formal education, and understanding and appreciation of both the past and present. The presence of these remains enhances local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of Reading; and contributes to leisure and tourism.

**11.3** Reading Borough contains over 850 Listed Buildings, two (2) scheduled ancient monuments and fifteen (15) Conservation Areas of varying character. Updated information on these features is available on the Council's website, or can be obtained by contacting the Council's Planning Department. Planning is an important instrument for maintaining and enhancing the environment, and preserving the built and natural heritage. Planning policy must therefore reconcile the need for development with the need to protect the natural and historic environment.

**11.4** PPG 15 and PPG 16 provide detailed policy guidance at a national level for the

identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and other elements. PPS 1, PPS 7 and PPS 12 also provide some context for planning policies. The Draft South East Plan's cross-cutting spatial Policy CC21 and Policy BE7 encourage the formulation of local planning policies that support the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness. Policies have also been formulated having regard to local plans and strategies, including the relevant objective of the Community Strategy ('Making it Green' theme); the existing policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan; and the mechanisms available for protecting and enhancing the local historic environment, such as the designation of Conservation Areas.

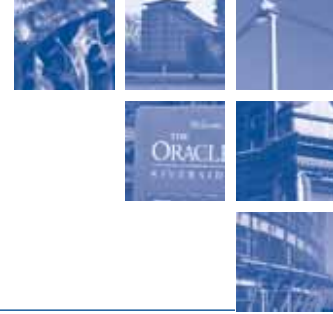
### Vision

**11.5** The vision for the historic environment in Reading is to protect and, where appropriate, enhance features of the historic environment, including features of archaeological significance.

### Role of the LDF

**11.6** The role of the LDF is to proactively protect and enhance the historic environment, recognising the pressures of continued infill development. This entails recognition of the value of historic features that are desirable for retention, ensuring that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection, and other locally valued areas of landscape are provided with adequate protection.

**11.7** Generally, respondents to previous consultation processes identified the need to retain and protect designated historic assets and their settings. Particular reference was made to the significant historic character of the Town Centre (including conservation



areas and historic buildings), and the need to protect these areas from future development. 'Concentration' patterns of development have the potential to lead to a change in the character of Reading, whilst the 'intensification of previously developed land' (dispersal) option may ultimately alter the character of existing residential areas and their context. It was recommended that the impact of development be minimised, by ensuring that new development reflect the settings of buildings and surrounding areas, and be of a very high quality design. The value of other elements of local significance (i.e. those that are not formally designated) should also be recognised and taken into account when planning for new development.

### Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

**Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include: -**

- **Listed Buildings;**
- **Conservation Areas;**
- **Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.**

**Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.**

**11.8** The Borough Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate, enhancing, the Borough's historic environment. This includes ensuring that buildings and features of local architectural and historic interest (which are not necessarily recognised components of the historic environment) are taken fully into account and safeguarded, as appropriate. Regard must also be had to

Reading's buried archaeological evidence, some of which is known, and much of which remains to be discovered.

**11.9** The character and integrity of listed buildings will be preserved, and the Council will seek to enhance the settings of Listed Buildings wherever appropriate, by ensuring that new development in their vicinity is sympathetic.

**11.10** In making decisions on development proposals in Conservation Areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that particular area. As such, new development in Conservation Areas will be expected to make a contribution to the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities, and achieving a high standard of design. The Council will therefore have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.

**11.11** Sites and settings of scheduled ancient monuments and other important ancient monuments and archaeological remains will be preserved, and development that would adversely affect such sites and settings will not be permitted. The Borough's five historic parks and gardens will continue to be protected, maintained and restored, where required.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

The policy will be delivered through development control processes involving (or with the potential to affect) features of the historic environment. The spatial strategy ensures that areas of future development are not located within (or within close proximity of) designated Conservation Areas.

**Target:** protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

**Sources:** planning application records; Conservation Area character appraisals, surveys of Listed Buildings.

**Indicators:** surveys of the quality and integrity of existing Conservation Areas; number of instances where the historic environment is not protected.

## Environmental Protection

**11.12** The objectives of the Core Strategy will see a high level of development within Reading. This necessitates particular consideration of the issues of potential associated pollution, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the quality of the environment, that development mitigates its impacts, and that development is sustainable.

**11.13** The vision is for Reading's environment to continue to improve and become a clean, attractive and desirable place in which to live, work and visit, and that will contribute to a better quality of life for all.

### The Role of the LDF

**11.14** The role of the LDF is to ensure that new development is carried out in a sustainable manner. This means ensuring, amongst other things, that it does not have a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment, or result in the increased risk of flooding. This will include ensuring that air and water quality is maintained and enhanced; that the rate and location of development is in keeping with planned water supply; that any land affected by contamination is suitably remediated so that it is suitable for redevelopment; and preventing inappropriate development within the flood plain. This will be achieved through policies within the Core Strategy document and, in more detail, in a separate development control document.

### Pollution

**11.15** The effective protection of the environment is one of the Government's four aims for sustainable development. The overall drive of National (PPS 1, PPS 23, PPG 24), regional (RPG 9 and the South East Plan) and strategic planning policy (Berkshire Structure Plan) is to prevent harmful development, mitigate the impact of potentially polluting developments and ensure that developments that are

sensitive to pollution are separated from sources of such pollution.

### Policy CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

**Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution; where it would preserve or ideally enhance ground and surface water quality; and where existing water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure are adequate to support the proposed development.**

**Proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of air, noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution.**

**Development will be permitted on land affected by contamination where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the LPA, that the contamination can be satisfactorily remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use.**

**11.16** The Environmental Protection background paper has highlighted that there are pockets of poor air quality within Reading caused by vehicles emissions, and that some ground and surface waters are experiencing a degree of pollution. It is therefore important to ensure that future development does not result in any further deterioration of air and water quality and where possible, results in an improvement in overall quality. In line with the predicted level of new development within Reading, it will be important to ensure that this does not place an undue burden on existing water resources or result in a deterioration in potential yield of surface and ground water resources. In order to improve the quality of life of those living and working within Reading, it is important to avoid any detrimental impact from development in the form of noise and light pollution.





**11.17** The Environmental Protection background paper has highlighted that land affected by contamination does exist within the Borough as a result of previous land uses. In order to make the most effective use of previously developed land within Reading, it will be important to ensure that, where possible, such land is remediated through the development process so that it is suitable for redevelopment.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

- Through the Development Control process
- Through more detailed guidance in the Development Control Policies Document
- Through working in consultation with the Council's Environmental Protection Team and the Environment Agency.

#### Targets:

- An improvement in air and water quality within the Borough
- Meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive i.e. achieve a 'good' status by 2015
- No reduction in the quantity or quality of water resources
- A reduction in the amount of land affected by contamination that exists within the Borough.

#### Indicators:

- Results of air and water quality monitoring provided by the Council's Environmental Protection Team and the Environment Agency;
- Number/ percentage of planning applications dealt with where air quality was a material consideration;
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on water quality and pollution grounds;
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environmental Protection Team on either noise or pollution grounds;
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on ground contamination grounds

## Flooding

**11.18** PPS25 indicates that proposals for development in areas of a medium and high risk of flooding need to be assessed against a sequential test and, if appropriate, an exceptions test.

**11.19** The overall drive of National (PPG and PPS 25), regional (RPG 9 and the South East Plan) and strategic (Berkshire Structure Plan) policy is to direct development away from areas that are liable to flooding. Where this is not possible, i.e. in circumstances where there is nowhere else for development to be accommodated, development should be directed towards the areas of lowest flood risk through the application of the sequential test and, if appropriate, an exceptions test.

### Policy CS35: Flooding

**Planning permission will not be permitted for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.**

**11.20** The policy will exclude small-scale householder developments. Appropriate weight will be given to the redevelopment of land at risk of flooding that provides significant regeneration benefits on previously developed land.

**11.21** A significant area of land within Reading is at risk of flooding. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken for the Borough. This describes and analyses how the Borough is affected by flood risk and the nature of that risk. A copy of the SFRA is available to view on the Council's website. The flood plain plays an important role in protecting the built up area of Reading as it accommodates floodwater and reduces the risks of water levels rising and affecting properties in a wider area. This capacity should not be reduced by development or the raising of land levels. The movement of water across the flood plain is also important, and

obstructions to this will place a greater burden on other parts of the flood plain to cope. Any proposals for development or redevelopment within areas that lie in zones of medium and high flood risk shown on the SFRA will be considered against Policy CS35 and will need to demonstrate that the sequential test has been applied and, if appropriate, that the exceptions test has been passed, in accordance with the relevant guidance in PPS25.

#### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

- Through the Development Control process
- Through more detailed guidance in the Development Control DPD
- Through working in consultation with the Environment Agency.

**Target:** prevent all inappropriate development within the flood plain.

#### Indicators:

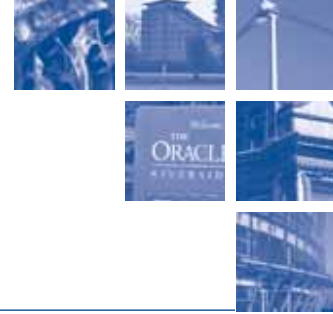
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds;
- Number of planning permissions granted for development within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

## Natural Environment

### Introduction

**11.22** Reading forms part of the wider south east region, which supports a diverse and high quality natural environment. The effective protection of the natural environment and prudent use of natural resources is crucial to maintaining a high quality environment and ensuring that the region's key environmental assets are protected and enhanced. There are also several recognised economic benefits associated with a high quality natural environment.

**11.23** There are many factors that have the potential to impact on biodiversity, including habitat



destruction and degradation, pollution, climate change and introduced species. Key issues impacting specifically on Reading Borough's natural environment and biodiversity are largely attributable to the town's considerable growth and continuing development.

**11.24** Whilst development has the potential to harm biodiversity, it also has the potential to assist habitats and species, for example, though the incorporation of nature conservation measures and improvements.

**11.25** The overall strategy for the natural environment and biodiversity is informed by background evidence, with policies being framed within the context of national, regional and local policy. At a national level, PPS 1, PPS 7, PPS 12, PPG 17 and PPG 21 are relevant, with PPS 9 providing a particularly relevant policy context for protecting biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. Core regional policies forming part of the draft South East Plan (pertaining to the conservation and improvement of biodiversity and woodlands) form the main regional context, recognising the need to maintain and enhance the region's biodiversity, to achieve targets in the national and local Biodiversity Action Plans. At the local level, the State of the Environment Report for Reading provides key facts and figures on the local environment (identifying areas of concern), whilst the Community Strategy's 'Making it Green' theme outlines key actions for valuing the diversity of the natural environment. The Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), informed by the UK BAP, is particularly relevant at the local level.

## Vision

**11.26** The vision for biodiversity and the natural environment in Reading is to maintain and enhance the quality of the Borough's landscapes and biodiversity features, so that they contribute to the provision of a

distinctive character, make an important contribution to quality of life, and provide opportunities for education and awareness, recreation (particularly open space) and visual amenity. Achieving the overall vision should have minimal impacts on biodiversity. Developments should seek to enhance biodiversity wherever possible.

**11.27** Components of biodiversity will be used sustainably, in a way and at a rate which does not lead to long-term decline, and which maintains the potential to meet the needs of present and future generations. Sustainable communities will have access to good quality recreational and ecological resources.

**11.28** Previously developed land containing significant biodiversity or geological interest will be retained and incorporated into development.

## Role of the LDF

**11.29** The role of the LDF is to proactively protect and enhance landscape and habitat areas, whilst balancing the pressures of developing land for urban purposes. This entails recognition of the value and distinctive nature of the Borough's landscapes, biodiversity and geological features. In the same way that development needs to be managed, the positive effects of growth and continuing environmental improvements also need to be adequately managed, so as to maximise potential and capitalise upon opportunities.

**11.30** There is an ongoing need to ensure that the impacts of climate change on the natural environment are considered.

**11.31** Natural environment policies contained within this document will contribute to the wider aims of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), whilst also being consistent with the objectives of the Reading BAP.

**11.32** The community involvement exercise reinforced the need to protect the natural environment, ensuring that planning policy reflects the hierarchy of protection afforded to, and the different approaches appropriate to, the maintenance of locations with biodiversity and nature conservation interest. Respondents also emphasised the need to create appropriate wildlife corridors and green access routes through Reading Borough.

## Biodiversity and Geology

### CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

a) Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes.

On sites with recognised biodiversity or geological value, development will not be permitted where there would be a direct or indirect adverse impact on the site, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: -

- i. The need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and
- ii. Appropriate compensation, impact minimisation, mitigation and compensation are provided.

b) Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Heritage Sites will be safeguarded and where possible, enhanced. Permission will not be granted for any development that would adversely affect a designated nature reserve or Wildlife Heritage Site.

c) Any development that would sever or threaten the integrity of an established wildlife link, as indicated on an adopted proposals map, will not be permitted. Where applicable, developments should be designed to protect, consolidate, extend and enhance the network of wildlife links and corridors in and adjoining the Borough, working with neighbouring authorities where appropriate.

**11.33** There is a recognised need to attain a balance between accommodating development activity, and preserving significant elements of the natural environment. Therefore, whilst inappropriate forms of development will be resisted in accordance with PPS 9, there may be some cases where alternative sites (which would result in less environmental harm) cannot be identified for development and hence, it may be necessary to allow sensitive development to proceed. However in these circumstances, it must be demonstrated that features are being retained, incorporated and (where possible) enhanced, and that appropriate compensatory and mitigation measures are being implemented, to ensure that development is making a positive contribution, and cannot reasonably be located on any alternative site/s that would result in less harm.

**11.34** PPS 1 recognises that habitats and natural resources with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection. Whilst Reading Borough does not contain any nationally or internationally designated conservation sites or sites of regional significance, the Borough contains many sites that are important to the local and strategic context, and therefore need to be protected. Protected species identified by the Species Action Plan of the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and their habitats must also be protected from any direct or indirect harm resulting from development. Updated information on Reading Borough's features of biodiversity and geological interest is available on the Council's website, or can be obtained by contacting the Council's Planning Department.

**11.35** The nature conservation value of Reading's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHSS) will be maintained, and the Council will manage these sites, to ensure that they remain protected against the adverse effects of development or related activity. This applies to any other Local



Nature Reserve or Wildlife Heritage Site that is subsequently designated. The Council reserves the right to bring forward further sites for Local Nature Reserve and Wildlife Heritage Site designation and/ or to de-select any existing designated sites as appropriate, and will work with local interest groups and English Nature to manage and promote existing and future wildlife sites.

**11.36** Opportunities will also be sought in conjunction with development proposals, to enhance the quality and integrity of LNRs and WHSs. Proposals should seek ways to enhance and restore biodiversity and geology, and enhance the quality and integrity of LNRs and WHSs (where appropriate), by maximising the inclusion of significant biodiversity and nature conservation features, as part of good design. In addition, it must be clearly demonstrated that such measures will be effectively managed and maintained, to a high standard. This contributes to meeting the aims of the Reading BAP.

**11.37** Networks of natural habitats are identified as valuable resources, providing linkages (or 'stepping stones') for migration or dispersal. The provision of linear and continuous landscape features, and linkages between nature conservation areas has several intrinsic ecological benefits (reduced habitat isolation, movement of wildlife), as well as making positive contributions towards visual amenity, the provision of recreational opportunities, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, and the retention of natural landscape values. The fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats should be avoided, with such networks being protected from development, and where possible, strengthened. Proposals are therefore likely to be resisted, where having an adverse impact on the function of wildlife corridors. Sensitive design and planning will be required, where sites are within close proximity of, or have the potential to fragment corridors. High levels of accessibility to green networks and spaces should also be maintained.

### HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

Through development control-related decisions affecting/ with the potential to affect sites of biodiversity and geological value, protected species, Local Nature Reserves or Wildlife Heritage Sites, and established wildlife links and corridors. Decisions made regarding the introduction of nature conservation measures will also assist in delivering the policy, and the imposition of planning conditions to protect wildlife and habitats throughout the construction phase will assist in their protection. The policy will also be delivered through spatial land use planning, specifically through application of the spatial strategy (identification of land use and development opportunities etc.).

The protection of wildlife links will be reliant upon intergovernmental cooperation, when dealing with corridors that extend across LPA boundaries (these are primarily based around existing waterways). There may also be opportunities to pursue joint projects on areas crossing administrative boundaries.

**Targets:** tangible increases in the quality and integrity of the Borough's biodiversity features, including: -

- Retention and enhancement of LNRs and WHSs, and identification of new LNRs and WHSs, where appropriate;
- Incorporation of beneficial biodiversity or geological features and/ or nature conservation measures into the design and planning of new development;
- Consolidation and strengthening of existing green network, and improvements in the condition of wildlife links (leading to their enhanced function) over the plan period;
- Improved accessibility to green corridors and networks.

**Sources:** planning application records (decisions within close proximity of nature conservation areas, significant wildlife habitats, biodiversity and geological features etc.); data supplied by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (facilitating the reporting on core and contextual

indicators relating to biodiversity, such as species distribution and population size); data collected through TVERC and other monitoring processes.

Indicators: -

*Biodiversity and Geological Features*

- Changes in the area and populations of biodiversity importance, including changes in local output indicators for Reading (Core Indicator 8 of the AMR);
- Quality of life indicators pertaining to biodiversity (used in measuring the delivery of the Community Strategy);
- Measures secured to implement biodiversity improvement, including application of Conditions or Planning Obligations. Monitoring of nature conservation associated with completed schemes.

*Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Heritage Sites*

- Surveys of the quality and condition of existing LNRs and WHSs to validate their status, and comparison with previous survey results to identify improvements and/ or deterioration;
- Changes in the area of existing sites designated for their intrinsic environmental value;
- Changes in the number of/ total area of designated WHSs across Reading Borough (i.e. to identify new WHS designations).

*Wildlife Links*

- Borough-wide maps showing extent of wildlife links;
- Surveys of the condition of green networks.

For all areas: monitoring on the progress of the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

## Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space

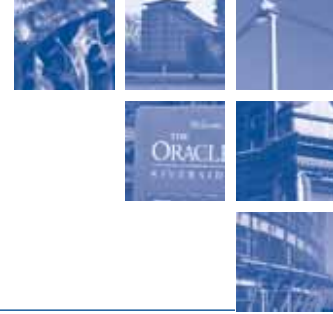
### CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of areas designated as a Major Landscape Feature. The designated areas are: -

- The Thames Valley;
- The Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows;
- The West Reading wooded ridgeline;
- The East Reading wooded ridgeline; and
- The North Reading dry valleys.

**11.38** This Policy continues the existing policy in the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Major Landscape Features are designated on the Local Plan Proposals Map. Their boundaries will be reassessed in preparing the LDF Site Allocations Document.

**11.39** New development should seek to maintain and enhance the natural beauty and visual amenity of the Borough's open space and landscape areas. Development resulting in the loss of existing landscape features or detracting from the character or appearance of the Borough's major landscape areas will be resisted. The extent to which new development prevents or lessens the visual impact on major landscape features and other landscape values is largely dependant on the location, design and scale of proposals.



## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

Through development control-related decisions affecting/ with the potential to affect major landscape areas. The policy will also be delivered through spatial land use planning, specifically through application of the spatial strategy (identification of land use and development opportunities etc.).

**Target:** protection and where possible, enhancement of the Borough's major landscape features.

**Sources:** planning application records (decisions within close proximity of major landscape features); data supplied by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre; data collected through TVERC and other monitoring processes.

**Indicators:** results of landscape character assessments and other tools used to evaluate the visual impact of proposals within close proximity of locally valued landscape features; monitoring on the progress of the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

## Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

### CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

**Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended.**

**11.40** Reading contains a number of woodlands, including Lousehill Copse, Blundell's Copse, The Rookery, Prospect Park and Round Copse in West Reading, and the Warren Woodlands in Caversham. Clayfield Copse LNR has been included in English Nature's 1995 Inventory of Ancient Woodland and is noted as supporting 20 Ancient Woodland indicator species. In addition to being valuable for reasons of nature conservation, Reading's woodlands are significant landscape features, often sited in prominent positions.

**11.41** The nature conservation and landscape value of woodlands will be protected and their quality enhanced, wherever possible. Enhancement and extension of woodlands will be achieved in conjunction with relevant development proposals, and may include measures such as new planting and management plans. The effective management of new woodland areas will be promoted, recognising the economic, environmental and social benefits that woodland management and tree planting can provide.

**11.42** In addition to their biodiversity value, the Borough's network of trees and hedgerows making up green corridors make a significant contribution to Reading's urbanised character, as well as contributing to the wider landscape, amenity, recreation and historical values. The continued protection of woodlands and trees will be sought. Proposals should also minimise impacts on hedgerows, wherever possible.

**11.43** The current practice of protecting trees through Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) and safeguarding existing TPO's will be continued. Significant trees will be protected in conjunction with new developments.

**11.44** The Council will seek to retain and improve the quality of waterside vegetation, recognising its contributions to ecology and landscape character.

## HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?

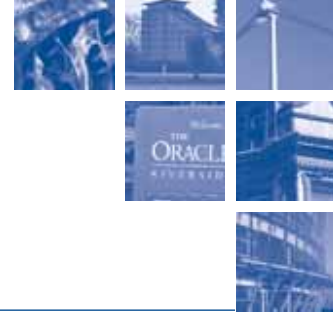
The policy will be delivered through development control, including the continued designation of TPO's and identification of new TPO's, where relevant. The policy will also be delivered through the spatial strategy, ensuring that Reading's woodlands are effectively protected and managed.

**Targets:** continued retention of trees, hedgerows and woodlands; increases in woodland cover across the Borough.

**Sources:** TPO listings/ records; surveys of the condition of woodlands and vegetation, planning application and enforcement records.

**Indicators:** compliance with the objectives of Council's Woodlands Plan (specifically pertaining to woodlands management); changes in the number of designated TPO's over time; reported results of TPO-related enforcement cases/ enquiries; monitoring on the progress of the Reading BAP.





## 12 Implementation and Monitoring

### Implementation

**12.1** To ensure that the spatial objectives of this document are delivered, it is important that clear implementation mechanisms exist. Each of the policies contained within this document include a corresponding section detailing how and by whom they will be delivered, including reference to any other plans and partnerships that will assist in their delivery.

### Monitoring and Review

**12.2** Effective monitoring and review is also essential to the successful delivery of the objectives and policies contained within this document. It will provide an important feedback mechanism to assess the performance of the policies, identify any unforeseen circumstances and enable adjustments and revisions to be made if necessary. In addition, monitoring will be key to updating the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy.

**12.3** In producing this Core Strategy, the Council has adopted an objectives – policies – targets – indicators approach. The objectives of the Core Strategy are set out on section 3 of this document and against this the policy framework has been derived. Each of the policies contained within this document have a corresponding section relating to targets and output indicators. These have been set to measure movements towards or away from the policy objectives over time. Wherever possible, the core output indicators contained within the Government's good practice guide to LDF monitoring<sup>33</sup> have been included.

**12.4** The monitoring and review of the policies will take place within the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The first AMR was published in December 2005, and this will be updated on an on-going basis, with

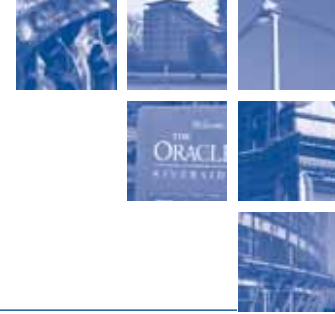
subsequent reports being published annually. The AMR will be developed so that it can monitor and review the targets and indicators detailed within this document. The indicator for each policy details what information or data is to be gathered and included within the AMR. This mechanism will allow for the effective review of the performance of policies and highlight any need to adjust or revise them.

**12.5** One of the key core indicators to be monitored is for housing delivery. The Council have included a housing trajectory within the AMR, which will be updated on an annual basis. The trajectory monitors both past and anticipated housing completions across the plan period and will help to identify at an early stage whether any steps need to be taken to ensure planned requirements are met. In the event that the planned requirements are not predicted to be met, the Council will use development briefs and supplementary planning documents in order to bring sites forward for development.

**12.6** The AMR will also include the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal monitoring for the Core Strategy. The significant effects of the Core Strategy that were predicted as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process will be monitored using the targets and indicators set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report<sup>34</sup>. This will provide a further feedback mechanism to review the performance of the policies in relation to the Council's Sustainability objectives and highlight any need to adjust or revise them.

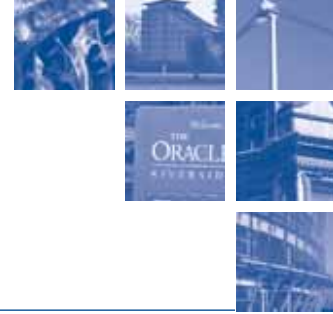
## GLOSSARY

<b>Accessibility</b>	The ability to access places and services, to be able to get about Reading or get to specific facilities.
<b>Accessibility Strategy (RBC)</b>	Published in March 2006, this strategy forms part of the Council's transport strategy and aims to promote social inclusion, allowing everyone in the Borough to access key services or reach desired facilities.
<b>Adoption</b>	Adoption is the point at which a planning document becomes official policy.
<b>Affordable housing</b>	Housing provided at below market price to meet the identified needs of an area.
<b>AMR</b>	Annual Monitoring Report. A yearly report showing how the Council are keeping to their timetable and what the effects of their plans are.
<b>Binding report</b>	The report that a Planning Inspector gives on a development plan document after an examination – the Council must make the recommended changes.
<b>Brownfield</b>	Land that has been previously developed.
<b>BAP</b>	Biodiversity Action Plans. Plans that set out a methodology to protect, conserve and enhance the diversity of wildlife. A UK BAP applies across the United Kingdom, and Reading is also covered by a local BAP (Reading BAP).
<b>BREEAM</b>	A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. BREEAM assessment methods generally apply to commercial developments (industrial, retail etc.).
<b>City Centre Framework</b>	A study report by consultants Llewelyn Davies, which makes recommendations for the development of the centre. It has no policy weight.
<b>Climate Change</b>	Changes in our climate, which have been identified since the early part of the 1900's. Changes in recent years however are thought to be mainly as a result of human behaviour, rather than due to natural changes in the atmosphere.
<b>Commitments</b>	A term used to describe sites that have planning permission, and those that have been identified in principle as being suitable for development. Commitments apply to both housing and employment uses.
<b>Community cohesion</b>	A term often used to describe the state of a community. A cohesive community is a community that is in a state of wellbeing, harmony and stability.
<b>Community involvement/participation</b>	Involvement of various individuals, groups and organisations and the general public in preparing planning documents.
<b>Community Strategy</b>	A document that all local authorities are required to produce. It should aim to improve the quality of life for local communities through partnership working and improvements in service delivery.
<b>Conservation area</b>	Areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
<b>Core Objectives</b>	The overarching objectives of the Core Strategy that will help in delivering the Core Strategy vision.
<b>Core Strategy</b>	The document setting out the main principles and spatial strategy of the LDF. See LDF below. At this stage of the process, the Core Strategy is referred to as the 'Core Strategy Submission Draft'.
<b>Cross cutting policies</b>	Policies dealing with key issues, and cutting across a number of topic areas. The cross cutting policies will apply to all developments.
<b>CHP</b>	Combined Heat and Power. A fuel-efficient energy technology that puts to use the by-product heat that is normally wasted to the environment.



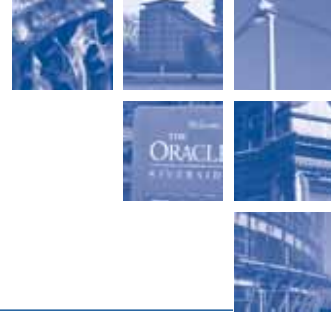
<b>Design and Access Statement</b>	These accompany a planning application to explain the design of the proposal.
<b>Development Briefs</b>	Documents setting out planning principles for a specific site. Also known as planning briefs.
<b>Development Control Policy Document</b>	This document will contain detailed development control policies that will be used when determining planning applications.
<b>Development density</b>	The relative concentration of development within particular areas. Development density is often classified according to low, medium and high-density categories.
<b>Development Plan</b>	This will consist of regional spatial strategies and development plan documents contained within the local development framework.
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document. A document that is the main consideration in deciding planning applications.
<b>EcoHomes</b>	A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. EcoHomes provides an authoritative rating for new and converted or renovated homes.
<b>Employment Land Review</b>	A review commissioned by the Council, to investigate the requirements for employment land, as well as the areas/ sites that should be retained or used for alternative uses. The results have informed the strategy for employment land in the Local Development Framework, and will be used when determining planning applications on sites in employment use.
<b>Greenfield Land</b>	Land that has not been previously developed, and is therefore typically in a natural state.
<b>Green Travel Plan</b>	Plans outlining actions to encourage travel to employment and other services and facilities, by means other than private transport.
<b>Growth Point Status</b>	Status awarded to a number of Local Planning Authorities (including Reading Borough), which has resulted in Reading receiving an allocation of funding towards various infrastructure projects, in exchange for agreeing to additional housing provision over requirements expected during 2003.
<b>GOSE</b>	Government Office for the South East.
<b>Housing Delivery Action Plans</b>	Plans to be prepared in accordance with policies in the South East Plan, which will be used to plan, monitor and manage housing supply against requirements.
<b>Housing Market Assessment</b>	An assessment of need and demand for housing, to assist in developing long term strategies for planning and housing for an area.
<b>Housing Trajectory</b>	An assessment of the projected future supply of housing against requirements for provision.
<b>Hybrid</b>	A mixture of various options. In the case of the Core Strategy, the 'hybrid' approach incorporates a mixture of the various spatial development options.
<b>Implementation</b>	The means by which aims and strategies are carried out.
<b>Infill development</b>	The continuation of development within existing (developed) urban areas.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.
<b>Issues and Options</b>	The first consultation stage in producing development plan documents.
<b>IDR</b>	Inner Distribution Road – the road circling Reading's core, made up of Queens Road, Caversham Road, Vastern Road, Forbury Road and part of Watlington Street.
<b>Key Diagram</b>	Strategic diagram illustrating the Council's spatial strategy. A key diagram is contained within the Core Strategy Submission Draft.

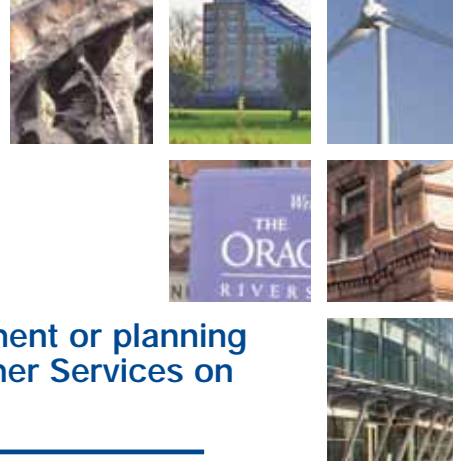
<b>Listed building</b>	Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Permission is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II* and II, with I being of exceptional interest.
<b>Local distinctiveness</b>	Elements or features of a local area that make it distinct from other local areas.
<b>Local Plan</b>	The main planning document for a District or Borough. These are being replaced by the new system of LDF's.
<b>Locational hierarchy</b>	A hierarchy applied to the location of uses. In the case of the Core Strategy, this is used (for example) to describe those locations to which retail development should be directed.
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document. A document making up part of the planning strategy.
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework. A set of documents which together makes up the planning strategy for an authority.
<b>LDS</b>	Local Development Scheme. The programme for producing planning documents.
<b>LNR</b>	Local Nature Reserve.
<b>LSP</b>	Local Strategic Partnership. A partnership of service providers, the community, the voluntary sector and businesses that help to identify local priorities for action and devise strategies for delivery.
<b>LTP</b>	Local Transport Plan. A five year plan setting out the strategy and priority for transport.
<b>Multi-modal interchange</b>	A transport interchange that is served by a number of modes of transport.
<b>MRT</b>	Mass Rapid Transit. A proposal in Reading for a completely new or hybrid public transport system to complement the existing provision.
<b>Open Space Strategy</b>	A strategy prepared by Reading Borough Council, which seeks to strengthen the existing protection given to open space, and bring about additions and improvements to open space provision and distribution across Reading.
<b>Planning Inspector (Inspector)</b>	A Planning Inspector is appointed by the Secretary of State to examine planning proposals and documents, and issue a binding report.
<b>Plan period</b>	The period of time to which a document relates.
<b>Planning Obligation</b>	A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
<b>Population density</b>	A measurement of the number of people in a given area.
<b>Preferred Options</b>	The second community involvement stage of a DPD. The general preferred approach is presented without details such as policy wording.
<b>Proposals map</b>	A map on an Ordnance Survey base, which shows the sites and locations to which policies apply.
<b>Public Examination</b>	DPDs are assessed at an examination, during which the Planning Inspector assesses the soundness of the document.
<b>Public realm</b>	'The parts of a village, town and city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks' ( <i>Source of definition: By Design</i> ).
<b>PINS</b>	Planning Inspectorate.



<b>PPG/ PPS</b>	Planning Policy Guidance/ Statements. Documents containing national-level planning guidance.
<b>Regional hub</b>	A regional hub is a location identified at regional level as a focus for transport services and economic activity. 21 are identified in the South East.
<b>Regional Planning Body</b>	The body responsible for preparing the Regional Spatial Strategy. In the South East, this body is the South East England Regional Assembly.
<b>Regional Transport Strategy</b>	The regional framework that will ensure that the investment programmes of local authorities, transport providers and other key stakeholders in the transport sector complement and support the wider regional objective of delivering a more sustainable pattern of development.
<b>Renewable energy</b>	Energy supplies that are able to be renewed i.e. used over and over again. The use of renewable energy helps to reduce carbon emissions. Examples include solar energy and wind power.
<b>RCAAP</b>	Reading Central Area Action Plan. The planning framework for Central Reading.
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy. A strategy that sets out Government's planning and transport policy for a region, for a 15-20 year period. In the South East, the RSS is the draft South East Plan.
<b>SA Scoping Report</b>	The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report provides baseline information and data about Reading Borough, and also contains the Council's sustainability appraisal framework. The Report was revised in March 2006, and then again in November 2006, to take on minor alterations suggested by respondents to the Preferred Options public consultation process.
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monument</b>	Legal protection for specified nationally important archaeological sites and monuments (by being recorded on a statutory list or 'schedule').
<b>Section 106 Agreement</b>	Derived from Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A voluntary agreement between the local planning authority and any other body with an interest in land in their area. Its purpose is to restrict or regulate the use of land, or to make other such arrangements (such as financial contributions) as the Local Authority considers to be necessary.
<b>Sequential approach</b>	A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.
<b>Settlement boundary</b>	A planning tool, which prevents development beyond defined boundaries.
<b>Site Allocations Document</b>	A document that deals with the development of land or buildings on sites within the Borough, which may come forward during the lifetime of the Local Development Framework.
<b>Social inclusion</b>	Reducing inequalities between the least advantaged groups and communities, and the rest of society.
<b>Soundness</b>	When holding an examination into planning documents, the role of the Inspector is to decide whether the documents are 'sound'. The Planning Inspectorate has set out a list of what makes up 'soundness', referred to as the 'tests of soundness'.
<b>South East Plan</b>	The emerging main regional planning document for the South East.
<b>Spatial planning</b>	The bringing together and integration of policies for the development and use of land, with other policies and programmes that influence the nature of places and how they function.
<b>Spatial Strategy</b>	A strategy for the future development of Reading Borough, also illustrated on a plan, which identifies broad locations for various forms of development, key principles, and strategic-level policies governing development and land use.

<b>Statement of Consultation on Community Involvement</b>	A report outlining the results of consultation on the Core Strategy Document Preferred Options.
<b>Structure Plan</b>	Development plans prepared for a County. Reading Borough Council is covered by the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016.
<b>Submission</b>	The stage at which a draft DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.
<b>Supplementary Planning Document</b>	Provides supplementary guidance for policies contained within Development Plan Documents.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal</b>	A sustainability appraisal should be completed for all local development documents, at all stages. It highlights the main environmental, economic and social effects of the document.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for current and future generations.
<b>Sustainable Economic Development Strategy</b>	A document prepared by Reading Borough Council, designed to establish the role that the Council can play in helping to shape a sustainable economy and in supporting the businesses and residents who contribute to the local and sub-regional economy.
<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	The eighteen objectives against which policies and documents are appraised in the sustainability appraisal.
<b>SCI</b>	Statement of Community Involvement: sets out the standards which the plan-making authority intend to achieve in relation to involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and in major development control decisions.
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment. Sustainability Appraisal is required for all LDD's. Sustainability Appraisal needs to be undertaken in a way that incorporates the requirements for SEA. SEA is a generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. This is a statutory requirement under the European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC).
<b>SEERA</b>	South East England Regional Assembly.
<b>SPG/ SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents. Planning documents that provide more detailed information than DPD's, but do not have the same weight. The new planning system in 2004 replaced SPG with SPD, but they play similar roles.
<b>Transport Assessment</b>	A Transport Assessment report that provides detailed information on a range of transport conditions and related issues, taking into account proposed development. The assessment is often used to show whether developments will cause problems of congestion, danger etc. and are therefore also used in the determination of planning applications.
<b>Urban Capacity Study</b>	A tool that local authorities can use to identify urban land for housing development.
<b>Urban design</b>	'Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, ... and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development' ( <i>Source of definition: By Design</i> ).
<b>Urban renaissance</b>	Making towns and cities places where people want to spend time and live.
<b>Waterspace</b>	The areas alongside and close to main river and canal corridors.
<b>Woodlands Plan</b>	A plan outlining management objectives for the protection and enhancement of woodlands in Reading.
<b>WHS</b>	Wildlife Heritage Site.





If you need help to fill in or understand this planning document or planning application form, please call 0118 955 3717 or visit Customer Services on the Ground Floor of the Civic Centre.

Osoby, które nie rozumieją treści dokumentu lub potrzebują pomocy w wypełnieniu formularza wniosku o pozwolenie na budowę (planning application) proszone są o kontakt telefoniczny pod numerem 0118 955 3717 lub zgłoszenie się do recepcji (Customer Services) na parterze budynku administracji rady miejskiej (Civic Centre).

*Polish*

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*Portuguese*

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਯੋਜਨਾਪੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਜਾਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਬੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਅਰਜ਼ੀ ਭਰਣ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0118 955 3717 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਵਿਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੇਠਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਤੇ ਗ੍ਰਾਹਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੋ।

*Punjabi*

اگر آپ کو پلاننگ کی اس دستاویز یا پلاننگ کیلئے درخواست کے فارم پُر کرنے یا سمجھنے کیلئے مدد درکار ہو تو براہ مہربانی 0118 955 3717 پر ٹیلیفون کریں یا سوک سنٹر کے گراؤنڈ فلور پر واقع کسٹمر سروسز پر تشریف لائیں۔

*Urdu*

**This leaflet is also available in large print or audio format.**

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January 2008

