

**READING TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY UPDATE NOTE 2018**  
**March 2018**

**CONTENTS**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction  | 2  |
| 2. Policy Context  | 3  |
| 3. Baseline Review   | 8  |
| 4. Analysis of Character Areas                               | 18 |
| 5. Design Guidelines   | 19 |
| 6. Other Changes   | 20 |
| 7. Conclusion on Strategy                                    | 21 |
| Appendix 1: Updates to Townscape Analysis of Character Areas | 22 |
| Appendix 2: Changes to Identified Views                      | 49 |
| Appendix 3: Photographs of Changes to Identified Views       | 53 |
| Appendix 4: Updates to Analysis of Character Areas           | 66 |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2008 Tall Buildings Strategy was produced by Entec UK Ltd to inform the Reading Central Area Action Plan and related documents. Rather than producing an entirely new Tall Buildings Strategy, this brief note considers changes in the ten years since 2008 and assesses the degree to which the conclusions of the Tall Buildings Strategy (TBS) remain relevant.
- 1.2 The purpose of the TBS was to help to fulfil a gap in Council policy, in response to increasing interest in tall buildings in Reading, in providing an evidence base to support a new policy in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP). As a result, policy RC11 on Tall Buildings was included in the RCAAP, which was adopted in January 2009.
- 1.3 This note generally considers the various stages of the TBS and asks whether there have been changes that would have altered the conclusions of the document. The TBS has been considered at the Examination of the Reading Central Area Action Plan, and was considered to be a robust basis for planning policy on tall buildings, so this note does not seek to make changes to the baseline approach. Instead, its focus is narrowly on the ten years since the TBS publication.
- 1.4 At the outset, the TBS settled on a definition of ten commercial storeys or equivalent<sup>1</sup> as a 'tall building'. This was based on analysis of the urban form of Reading as being a height which across the whole of the central area, within the context of Reading, could be termed 'tall'. Whilst there have been new developments since the TBS was written (mainly during 2007), there has not been an overhaul in the surrounding context, and it is considered that ten storeys remains an appropriate definition of a tall building.

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<sup>1</sup> Generally equates to around 12 residential storeys

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Since the TBS was produced in 2008, virtually all of the documents referred to within the policy context have been replaced. Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1, 3, 6, 15 and 22, along with all other planning policy guidance notes, has been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Regional Planning Guidance was replaced by the South East Plan, which itself was revoked some years ago.
- 2.2 There are too many specific differences in terms of the wording of policy context to look at individually, so it makes sense to consider at a high level whether the overall direction of policy has changed. In 2008, national and regional policy could be summarised as follows:
- a) Policies should promote high quality inclusive design and development should take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area (PPS1);
  - b) Planning has a key role to play in tackling and adapting to the effects of climate change. This role incorporates aspects such as securing energy and resource efficiency in development and ensuring a development pattern that promotes sustainable transport modes (PPS2);
  - c) Promotion of the role of town centres in meeting many of the needs of the area, including through higher density, mixed use developments (PPS6);
  - d) Making the most efficient use of sites that are accessible by a choice of means of transport (PPS13);
  - e) The need to preserve and enhance the historic environment, and a recognition of the contribution that heritage makes to the economy (PPG15);
  - f) Identification of Reading as a major regional hub, and therefore a location for continued major development and infrastructure provision (RPG9/South East Plan).
- 2.3 Most of these messages remain broadly consistent within the NPPF. The consolidation of policy within the NPPF has enabled the importance of the relationship between good design and historic character to be drawn out more clearly, ensuring that developments “respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation” (paragraph 58). Developments which attract the greatest number of visits continue to be focused on town centres, where high density, mixed use development on sites accessible by a choice of modes of transport is appropriate.
- 2.4 National policy on heritage has changed somewhat, and, rather than reactive protection, the focus in the NPPF is on setting out a positive strategy for the historic environment, which should inform the whole plan. In Reading, this has led to a change from a single policy on protection of heritage assets in the Core Strategy, to a more wide-ranging suite of policies in the emerging Local Plan. This more positive approach is compatible with the approach of the TBS, which seeks to understand the relationship of new tall buildings with the historic environment.
- 2.5 One of the major changes to national planning policy has been the requirement for an objective assessment of needs for development, including housing. In Reading, this has resulted in a significantly increased need for new housing, and therefore more pressure to make the most efficient use of available sites. This issue is dealt with in more detail in paragraphs 2.14 to 2.26 below.

- 2.6 With the removal of the regional planning tier, there is no regional expectation of growth in central Reading. However, an overall approach of focusing development on the locations where they are most accessible, particularly by sustainable modes of transport, clearly implies that central Reading, as one of the most accessible locations in South East England, is subject to significant levels of development.
- 2.7 In terms of specific guidance on tall buildings, the relevant document at the time of the TBS was the Guidance on Tall Buildings by English Heritage and CABE, published in 2007. This has now been replaced by Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4<sup>2</sup>, published in 2015. This is good practice guidance and advice, rather than being part of formal Planning Practice Guidance.
- 2.8 Advice Note 4 reiterates the message of its predecessor, that a plan-led approach to tall buildings which identifies appropriate areas for tall buildings and sets out appropriate heights is appropriate. The guidance continues to advocate detailed urban design modelling, tied to heritage assessment, to understand where tall buildings might be appropriate and what the height parameters should be.
- 2.9 In terms of planning applications, Advice Note 4 moves away from a dedicated list of specific criteria for evaluation set out in the 2007 guidance. However, broadly, the message remains the same, that matters such as local context, historic context, design quality, sustainable design and construction, the credibility of the proposal, and the relationship with public space be considered.
- 2.10 Local policy has, of course, evolved from that described in the TBS, in particular with the adoption of a policy on tall buildings in the RCAAP. However, the degree to which policy from the 1998 Local Plan influenced the TBS is extremely limited, as it was understood that the aim was replacement of this policy. The TBS does refer to a 'City 2020 Vision' document, a non-planning vision document that aspired to establish Reading as a city and capital of the Thames Valley, and recognised the potential of many areas of the town centre to contribute to these aims, some of which were included within the tall buildings clusters in the RCAAP. This document influenced the RCAAP vision and strategy, and has a continued inheritance through the continued approach in the new Local Plan.
- 2.11 The proposals for the Station Cluster, originating in the TBS and identified in the RCAAP, were supplemented with much more detailed guidance in the Reading Station Area Framework, adopted in 2010<sup>3</sup>. This looked at a number of matters critical to the approach to tall buildings in the area, such as height, scale and massing and key views. It identified sites suitable for 'district and local landmarks', and provided clarity to the approach that a cluster of tall buildings is proposed, generally forming a 'dome' pattern with the highest buildings on the sites closest to the station. The Local Plan proposes that the Station Area Framework will continue to apply.
- 2.12 In general, the overall policy context message remains valid, even if the individual documents have changed. The NPPF still seeks high quality design, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, a focus on town centres and efficient use of the most accessible sites.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tall-buildings-advice-note-4/heag037-tall-buildings.pdf/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1674/Reading-Station-Area-Framework/pdf/Reading-Station-Area-Framework.pdf>

2.13 Therefore, there is not considered to have been sufficient change in the planning policy context to render the TBS out-of-date.

#### Objectively Assessed Need

2.14 One of the most significant changes to national planning policy in recent years has been the introduction in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework of the requirement for local planning authorities to objectively assess their own development needs and then provide for them wherever possible and where compatible with the provisions of the NPPF.

2.15 The Council, together with neighbouring authorities, has undertaken assessments of its housing and economic development needs, and has undertaken an assessment of the capacity to meet these needs through its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). Whilst it is considered that the economic development needs can be met, there is an identified small shortfall in meeting housing needs. It is considered that, of the identified need of 699 homes per annum between 2013 and 2036<sup>4</sup>, 671 homes per annum can be delivered within Reading. This assumes a number of developments including tall buildings on sites within the identified clusters. This leads to a total shortfall of 644 dwellings over the plan period, which would need to be met elsewhere within the Housing Market Area.

2.16 The argument has been made in a number of representations to the Local Plan that, were Reading's approach to tall buildings to be relaxed, this would deliver significantly greater numbers of homes, and might help to reduce or eliminate this shortfall. This merits some further investigation.

2.17 It is clear that a substantial number of additional tall buildings could eliminate the shortfall, although whether this would be viable and deliverable is a different matter. The main issue, however, is the effects that such an approach would have, in that it would both conflict with the approach of the NPPF and be a highly inefficient way of delivering housing. The limited advantages of such an approach would therefore be far outweighed by the substantial disadvantages.

2.18 The NPPF is clear in paragraph 14 that objectively assessed needs should be met unless:

- "any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."

2.19 Among the core planning principles in paragraph 17, the NPPF highlights the need to "always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings" and to "take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas".

2.20 The NPPF then goes on to state, at paragraph 64, that:

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<sup>4</sup> Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment, February 2016

“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”

2.21 Furthermore, the NPPF also states at paragraph 126 that:

“Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.”

2.22 It is clear, therefore, that the NPPF recognises the need to balance meeting needs with ensuring that design is of high quality, the character and distinctiveness of important areas are maintained and enhanced, and that heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced. These considerations were all part of the HELAA process, and it is balancing these important considerations that has led to the level of development proposed. In short, the HELAA seeks to demonstrate that proposed housing provision is what can be achieved without falling foul of the important considerations in the NPPF, as well as in local policy.

2.23 The issue with seeking to boost development levels through a less restrictive approach to tall buildings is that the gains can be relatively small, whilst the potential impacts are far reaching. Those sites where a less restrictive approach than in the proposed policy have been advocated are generally already proposed for high density development including significant levels of residential, so the number of additional dwellings that can be achieved are small.

2.24 This can be illustrated with the example of two proposals. The proposal on the Homebase and Toys R Us site at Kenavon Drive was initially consulted upon at pre-application stage with a proposal including a residential tower of 19 storeys. This proposal would have delivered in between 700 and 800 dwellings. However, the proposal was amended, in part in order to comply with the tall buildings policy, and the amended scheme which has been subject to a resolution to grant permission would still deliver 765 dwellings. The removal of a tall building therefore had a negligible effect on the capacity of the site, through a different distribution of density whilst still complying with policy.

2.25 Another example is the refused application at the Cooper BMW site, reference 150120. This site was already recognised in policy as a potential site for a tall building, but the planning application sought three towers of between 24 and 28 storeys, linked together at the lowest storeys. This would have delivered 352 dwellings. The proposal for three towers on the site rather than one was considered to fall foul of the Council’s tall buildings policy RC13 as well as the Reading Station Area Framework and other policies. A new scheme was submitted in 2016, which would deliver 315 dwellings, in a development that would contain a single tall building, at 23 storeys shorter than any of the three towers initially proposed. This was considered to comply with the policy and was permitted. Therefore, a reduction in only 37 dwellings resulted in a significantly improved development with far fewer adverse impacts on a wider area.

2.26 The difference between the two schemes on the Cooper BMW site can be illustrated with the below graphic (figure 1) from the second application, showing the permitted proposal alongside the silhouette of the original application (in orange).

Whilst the specific design issues are clearly peculiar to the site and proposals, it does illustrate a wider point. This is that accommodating a relatively small amount of additional dwellings can result in a development which has much more significant effects on the surrounding townscape and landscape, far outweighing the relatively minor gains in dwellings. On the loose assumption that a tall building on a site might result in an additional 50 dwellings (bearing in mind that sites are already identified for high density development), it would take an additional 13 tall buildings to wipe out the identified shortfall. This would result in a very different town centre, dominated by tall buildings and with significant harmful effects often on heritage assets.



**Figure 1: Comparison of the two proposals at Thames Quarter site**  
(Image provided by Lochailort for Thames Quarter planning application 162166)

### 3. BASELINE REVIEW

- 3.1 The baseline review contained in chapter 4 of the TBS looked at a number of the significant inputs to the analysis. In particular, it looked at the townscape sensitivity of areas of central Reading and drew conclusions on which areas should be excluded from further consideration for this reason. However, before assessing how the considerations of the baseline review have changes, it is worth examining the changes to tall buildings that have occurred or have been agreed within the last ten years.

#### Changes to Tall Buildings in Reading

- 3.2 This section describes changes that have happened on the ground, or are expected to happen, with regard to tall buildings in Central Reading, to understand how the context for the Tall Buildings Strategy may have changed.

#### *The Blade*

- 3.3 The TBS makes reference to a planning permission (040758) known as Abbey Mill House, permitted in 2004, for a new tall office building. The site is at Abbey Square, which is within the Eastern Grouping as defined in the TBS/RCAAP. Development started shortly after publication of the TBS, and completed in 2010.
- 3.4 Abbey Mill House has now become known as The Blade, and is a well-known local landmark. The building includes 16 storeys of offices, but has a pointed roof spire which is around 25m tall, meaning a total height above ground level of 86m. As such, it is currently Reading's tallest building, and is visible from many locations around Reading. An 8-storey residential block was also part of the development.



Figure 2: The Blade from near Abbey Gate



### *Chatham Place*

- 3.5 The development of Chatham Place was a residential-led scheme on the eastern edge of the centre, within the Western Grouping defined in the TBS/RCAAP. At the time of the TBS, a Planning Brief set out the approach to the development. A first stage was expected to include residential and car parking. A second stage was to include decking over the Inner Distribution Road (IDR), provision of a new swimming pool, and further residential. A final stage proposed a tall building on the site of the current roundabout where Chatham Street meets the IDR.
- 3.6 Phase 1, under construction at the time of the TBS, was completed in 2010, and was largely as originally envisaged. It comprises 307 dwellings, a new multi-storey car park and ground floor retail and related uses, and the highest point of the development reaches 11 residential storeys.
- 3.7 Phase 2 differed substantially from what was originally proposed and had planning permission at the time of the TBS. The plan of decking over the IDR was abandoned, as was the proposal for a swimming pool. Instead, the development consisted of two residential blocks, comprising a 19-storey tower and a 9-storey building, comprising 184 dwellings. It was completed in 2016. As a tall building was part of phase 2, the proposal for a tower on the roundabout site has not been taken forward.



From Design and Access Statement, John McAslan and Partners

Figure 3: CGI image of Chatham Place from Chatham Street/IDR roundabout

### *Thames Tower*

- 3.8 Thames Tower was an 11 storey office building directly opposite the entrance to Reading station, within the Station Cluster as defined in the TBS/RCAAP. Its large footprint combined with its dark colour meant that it was prominent in many views of Reading, and did not make a particularly positive contribution.
- 3.9 Although the preference in the RCAAP, and the expectation at the time of the TBS, would have been for redevelopment, permission 141043 was granted for an additional four storeys, refurbishment and re-cladding, to form a modernised office facility. Development was completed in 2017. The increased height has therefore made the building more visible from some key views and improved its appearance.



Figure 4: Thames Tower before and after (from planning application file)

***Kings Point***

- 3.10 At the time of the TBS, Kings Point at 120 Kings Road was a 7 storey office building, showing considerable signs of ageing and partly vacant. Permission had already been granted at the time of the TBS for redevelopment for a residential building of between 11 and 13 storeys, so this was expected to be a tall building location. It fell within the Eastern Grouping as defined in the TBS/RCAAP.
- 3.11 The permission at the time of the TBS was not implemented, and there was no change on the site until 2015, when a new permission (150019) was granted for a 17-storey residential buildings, which would reach 94.1 AOD. This development is now under construction, and the structure has already reached close to its full height.



From Design and Access Statement, Assael

Figure 5: CGI Image of Kings Point from the north

***Three Forbury Place***

- 3.12 Forbury Place is a modern office development along the north side of Forbury Road, opposite Forbury Gardens. The westernmost of the three office buildings, and the first to be constructed, Three Forbury Place is an 11-storey building. Permission was granted in December 2007 (reference 070930), slightly after the bulk of the TBS was written but before the tall buildings policy in the RCAAP was adopted, and

development was completed in 2010. The remaining two buildings at Forbury Place, which were constructed more recently and completed in 2017, are 8 storeys and therefore fall below the tall buildings definition cut-off.



Figure 5: Three Forbury Place from Forbury Gardens

#### *Station Hill and Western Tower*

- 3.13 The Station Hill site is an extensive area immediately to the south west of Reading station, which at the time of the TBS comprised offices, retail and leisure uses, a former bus station and car parking. The site included Western Tower, containing 17 storeys of offices and at the time Reading's tallest building. Much of the site at the time of the TBS was vacant. A Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief, adopted in 2007, had supported the principle of tall buildings on the site, and at the time of the TBS there was a live planning application for a development comprising a number of tall buildings. The site falls at the heart of the Station Cluster, as identified in the TBS/RCAAP, which identified these locations adjacent to the station as being suitable for the tallest buildings in Reading.
- 3.14 Whilst the principle of the site accommodating the tallest buildings in Reading has remained consistent, proposals for Station Hill have evolved through various iterations, and outline permission was granted for the third version of the scheme (SH3) in January 2015, which also contained the adjacent vacant Friars Walk shopping centre. This comprises seven buildings, of which up to six may qualify as tall buildings. The uses and height parameters from the outline permission are set out below. It should be noted that, although plot C would still be the tallest building in Reading, the heights are significantly lower than were permitted within the SH2 scheme.

| Plot | Use                 | Building height range AOD |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| C    | Offices, retail     | 109-128m                  |
| B    | Offices, retail     | 94-121m                   |
| D    | Offices, retail     | 75-105m                   |
| A    | Offices, retail     | 67-91m                    |
| F    | Residential, retail | 63-85m                    |
| E    | Residential, retail | 63-85m                    |
| G    | Car park, retail    | 72-83m                    |



- 3.15 Additional land fronting Friar Street was acquired, and outline planning permission (151426) was granted to bring this land into the development, although this part of the site would not include tall buildings.
- 3.16 Demolition of the part of the site north of Garrard Street has now taken place, other than the multi-storey car park which is to be retained in the permitted development. This included Western Tower, so this building, referred to frequently in the TBS, has been removed. Construction has not started. The site was placed on the market in 2017, so it is not clear whether the existing permission will be implemented or another version will be proposed.



From Design and Access Statement, Allies and Morrison

**Figure 6: Model of Station Hill development**

(please note that this image includes proposed development on adjacent sites that did not receive planning permission)

#### *Thames Quarter*

- 3.17 The site known as Thames Quarter is at the junction of Napier Road and Forbury Road. This was previously known as the Cooper BMW site, a low-rise vehicle dealership. It falls within the Station Cluster as identified in the TBS/RCAAAP, but there were no known proposals for a tall building at the time.
- 3.18 Planning permission (162166) was granted in 2017 for a long residential block rising to 10-12 storeys, with the western end closest to the IDR and station housing a single 23-storey residential tower. The development would comprise 315 dwellings. An application had previously been refused for a taller residential scheme for three towers linked at lower floor level. The car dealership has now been demolished and the site is in temporary use for car parking.



Figure 7: CGI image of Thames Quarter from Vastern Road (from application submission)

#### *Royal Mail Sorting Office*

- 3.19 Outline permission was granted in 2012 for a mixed use development including residential, office, hotel, retail and leisure on the former Royal Mail sorting office site, north of the station. This would have delivered up to 35,400 sq m of offices, 3,800 sq m of retail, 10,000 sq m hotel, 500 sq m of leisure and 434 dwellings. The heights and massing shown were illustrative only, but included a 16-storey office building, with the remainder of the site between 8 and 10 storeys. However, this permission was unimplemented and has now expired.

#### *Conclusion*

- 3.20 There have been a number of changes to tall buildings in the centre of Reading since publication of the TBS. Of the four tall buildings in the centre at 2007/2008<sup>5</sup>, one has been demolished and four new buildings have been constructed<sup>6</sup>. Permission now exists for up to seven more. However, much of this was known at the time of the TBS - The Blade had planning permission, and permissions also existed at Station Hill and Kings Point, albeit that those schemes have evolved. The principle of a tall building at Chatham Place had been established through the Planning Brief. All tall buildings that have received planning permission are considered to accord with the strategy that emerged from the TBS and was enshrined in policy RC13 of the RCAAP, and none have been permitted outside the identified clusters. In fact, the policy, supported by the TBS, has proven effective in resisting tall buildings in inappropriate locations, and inappropriate developments within identified areas. Therefore, it is not considered that developments that have taken place on the ground render the TBS out-of-date.

<sup>5</sup> Western Tower, Fountain House, Reading Bridge House and Ibis/Novotel

<sup>6</sup> The Blade, Three Forbury Place, Chatham Place and Kings Point



## Townscape

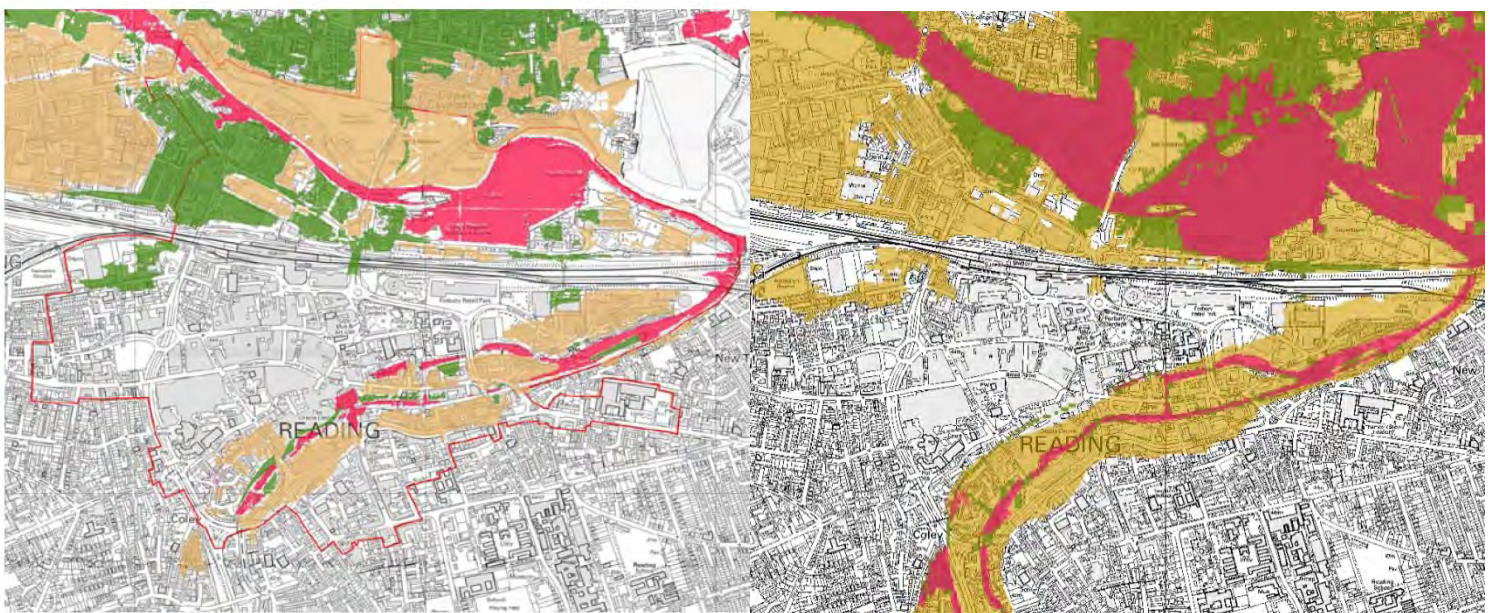
- 3.21 The TBS identified 26 character areas within the town centre, and assessed their townscape sensitivity to, and therefore capacity to accommodate, tall buildings. It came to the conclusion that eight character areas had low sensitivity to tall buildings, and should therefore be subject to further consideration. This was a key element of the TBS analysis.
- 3.22 The assessments of each character area have been re-examined in the context of any changes to the townscape of the area, including changes to tall buildings highlighted in paragraphs 3.2-3.19. The resulting consideration is set out in Appendix 1. Whilst there have been, in some cases, quite substantial changes to townscape, this has not fundamentally altered the conclusions on which sites have low sensitivity, and the following eight character areas continue to have townscape capacity:
- 1: Station Hill
  - 2: Station Area East
  - 15: Chatham Place
  - 16: Civic Centre
  - 18: The Oracle
  - 19: Mallard Row to Fobney Street
  - 21: Forbury South
  - 22: Vastern Road

## Topography

- 3.23 There have been no changes to topography since the publication of the TBS

## Flooding

- 3.24 At the time of drafting of the TBS, a draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was in preparation, and this was published during 2007. A new SFRA to inform the Local Plan has now been published, and this can be viewed on the Council's website<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>7</sup><http://www.reading.gov.uk/ec17.pdf>

**Figure 8: Comparison of Flood Risk 2008 and 2018**

The left hand image, from the 2008 TBS, is derived from the Draft SFRA at the time. The right hand image shows flood extents from the 2017 SFRA by PBA.

- 3.25 As can be seen from the above map, the functional floodplain has been defined as being much broader than within the 2007 SFRA (although it is worth noting that the image is from a draft version, and the final 2007 SFRA did define a broader extent). However, this will not substantially affect the conclusions, because the greater extent is generally in either riverside open spaces not expected to be subject to development, or in areas of Lower Caversham, not part of the area assessed in the TBS.
- 3.26 The extent of Flood Zone 3 has been reduced, in particular in the area north of the station and around Caversham Road, which affects character areas 12 and 22 in particular. Meanwhile, the extent of Flood Zone 2 has somewhat increased, affecting areas around Napier Road (character area 11) and areas around Caversham Road south of the railway and Great Knollys Street (character areas 7 and 13).
- 3.27 The 2018 SFRA also looked at how flood zones would change taking account of various climate change scenarios. These are not shown on the map above, but where they are particularly relevant to the consideration of particular character areas, these are set out in Appendix 4.

### **Historical Assets and Conservation**

- 3.28 There have not been significant changes to historical assets and conservation in the area covered by the TBS. No heritage assets have been lost in the last ten years, and there have been no significant new or extended designations.
- 3.29 The main change that relates to heritage in the town centre relates to the Reading Abbey and its surroundings. The Reading Abbey Revealed project is a project to reopen the Abbey ruins and develop the Abbey quarter area, which covers the whole former Abbey precinct including Market Place and surrounding areas, into a heritage destination. This includes conservation work, interpretation, signage, volunteering and public activities. The adjacent Reading Prison site, which closed in 2014, has significant heritage significance as part of the former Abbey precinct and a listed building in its own right, and offers an opportunity to enhance the heritage offer of this destination. As the project aims to pull individual elements together into a coherent destination, clearly tall buildings in close proximity must be carefully considered to avoid intruding on this.

### **Visual Context**

- 3.30 The TBS assessed 44 views - 16 views within central Reading, and 28 long range views where buildings in central Reading were, or could become, visible. Of these views, 23 were considered to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings, which would require careful consideration in any proposals.
- 3.31 Each of these views (with the exception of a view from Caversham Park in private ownership) has been re-assessed in January 2018, to see whether elements of the view have changed, and whether the overall sensitivity to tall buildings has changed as a result. Appendix 2 itemises the changes, if any, that have taken place. In many cases, new tall buildings have come into view. The Blade and Thames Tower in particular are now prominent in many of these views. However, in general this has rarely had the effect of changing the sensitivity of the view to the introduction of tall buildings, often because the view already had tall buildings visible, or because the view was identified as being one where tall buildings could enhance the view.

There were three cases where the assessment resulted in change in the sensitivity, all of which changed from medium to low sensitivity. These are as follows:

- Viewpoint 1: From Green Road, south west of central Reading overlooking playing fields - change from medium to low sensitivity;
- Viewpoint 3: From the grounds of the University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus - change from high to medium sensitivity; and
- Viewpoint 22: From footbridge over the M4 - change from high to medium sensitivity.

3.32 These changes are relatively minor in the overall context of the many views identified, and the overall assessment therefore remains of relevance. Ultimately, the changes that have happened in many of these views were already anticipated in some form or another at the time of the TBS, as many of the sites were already proposed for tall buildings.

### Social Infrastructure

3.33 The conclusions of the TBS, that substantial investment in social infrastructure will be required to support a growing town centre population, remains as relevant as ever. The main change in social infrastructure provision in the town centre has been the construction of a new primary school on Hodsoll Road, the Civitas Academy, which opened in 2017. However, the Local Plan identifies that more investment in education, as well as other infrastructure, will be required, and particularly notes the need for a new secondary school close to the town centre.

### Sustainable Travel

3.34 The TBS looked at accessibility by sustainable modes of travel as a way to distinguish which areas may have more potential for tall buildings. In general, most of Central Reading was highly accessible by a choice of means of travel, and this remains the case, but the following major sustainable transport measures have been implemented since the TBS was prepared:

- **Reading Station improvements:** A major improvement to Reading Station has been undertaken to remove a bottleneck on routes west out of London, and to increase capacity, and this has been accompanied by the provision of transport interchange facilities. This has made Central Reading as a whole even more accessible by rail, but has also made a number of changes to sustainable travel within the centre itself:
  - A new northern station entrance has been provided, which enables much better access by foot and cycle from areas north of the railway line to the station.
  - Three public transport interchanges have been provided, two to the south and one to the north of the station. The northern interchange is the major change, and this serves in particular buses to and from Caversham.
  - An underpass under the station has been opened up, which improves links by foot between the northern and southern sides of the railway.
- **Christchurch Bridge:** A new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Thames was opened in 2015, and this improves links from Caversham and the riverside open spaces to the centre from the north. When the Riverside site comes forward for development, this will enable a direct north south link through to the station and under the railway into the core of the centre.
- **Napier Road underpass:** An underpass under Napier Road has been opened to the public, linking Kings Meadow to the Kenavon Drive area.



- **Park and ride:** A new park and ride has been opened at Mereok, to the south of Reading. The bus service from the park and ride stops at St Mary's Butts, Reading Station and Market Place.
- **Readybike:** A cycle hire scheme has been introduced across much of Reading. Cycle hire stations are provided within the town centre at Reading Station northern and southern entrances, Town Hall Square, the eastern end of Broad Street, Broad Street Mall, the Civic Offices, the Oracle riverside and Reading College, with a number of other stations further out around Reading, particularly at employment, leisure and education sites.

3.35 There has therefore been substantial investment in sustainable transport in the centre. Most of the schemes above were already planned at the time of the TBS. In terms of differentiating between the accessibility of different areas of the centre, the key change have been to north-south links, in particular across the Thames and railway, and areas to the north of the station now have much improved foot and cycle links to the rest of the centre.

#### **Open Space**

3.36 The consideration of impacts on open spaces was largely contained in the townscape analysis. Generally, open spaces have changed little since the 2008 TBS. However, the main changes have been the delivery of squares at the northern and southern entrances to the station. Again, these were already planned at the time of the TBS.

#### **Market Analysis**

3.37 No new tall buildings market analysis has been carried out. There continues to be interest in the provision of additional tall buildings, as shown by representations to the Local Plan on certain sites, and no reason to believe that the situation has changed substantially since 2008.

## 4 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER AREAS

- 4.1 After undertaking a baseline analysis, the TBS looked in more detail at the eight character areas that were considered to have low townscape sensitivity to tall buildings, and considered the other elements that arose during the baseline review to understand the suitability as a location for tall buildings.
- 4.2 As the previous section has identified, the eight character areas with lowest townscape sensitivity to tall buildings remain as in the original TBS. They are as follows:
- 1: Station Hill
  - 2: Station Area East
  - 15: Chatham Place
  - 16: Civic Centre
  - 18: The Oracle
  - 19: Mallard Row to Fobney Street
  - 21: Forbury South
  - 22: Vastern Road
- 4.3 The schedules in Appendix 4 present the conclusions of the further analysis in the TBS and consider any changes that have taken place over the last ten years to once again understand whether the conclusions would change. As set out in those schedules, there have been no changes that would alter which of these areas are considered to be potentially suitable for tall buildings, and the conclusions of the TBS thus remain relevant.

## 5. DESIGN GUIDELINES

- 5.1 After establishing the locations with potential for tall buildings, the TBS goes on to generate design guidelines to feed into a tall buildings policy. It deals firstly with general guidelines, applicable to all tall buildings, and then considers more area-specific guidelines.
- 5.2 In terms of general guidelines, there are not considered to have been substantial changes that would alter these. The guidelines identified are straightforward elements of good design which continue to be applicable. Some have been developed from the good practice guidance, and whilst this may have been superseded, the key aspects of what constitutes good design remain in place.
- 5.3 The site-specific principles for those areas which were identified as having potential for tall buildings were developed out of all of the previous analysis of matters such as townscape character, key views, heritage and sustainable travel. These matters have been discussed in the previous sections, and, as they are still broadly relevant, there is not considered to be any reason to substantially amend the site-specific principles.

## 6. OTHER CHANGES

- 6.1 One change that has significantly affected the production of planning policy since the publication of the TBS has been the introduction of the duty to co-operate, which requires ongoing liaison with key partners. Reading is bounded by Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, and South Oxfordshire District Council, and there are points in all three authorities where tall buildings in the centre of Reading are visible. Views 8, 9 and 11 are within South Oxfordshire, views 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18 are in Wokingham and view 22 is in West Berkshire. For that reason, tall buildings have been identified as a strategic matter in the Duty to Co-operate Scoping Strategy.
- 6.2 The engagement that has taken place under the duty to co-operate is summarised in the Duty to Co-operate Statement, published in November 2017. In general, concerns from those authorities have been relatively limited in discussions, and have not led to concerns being raised during consultation. There is an acceptance that there is some visibility of Central Reading. However, South Oxfordshire District Council did emphasise the sensitivity of views from the Chilterns AONB, and two of the viewpoints within the TBS (views 8 and 9) are within the AONB. This issue also came up in discussions with Natural England.
- 6.3 Broadly, there are not major concerns with the policy approach specified, but partners may well be concerned were there to be an unrestricted approach to tall buildings. The Civil Aviation Authority has not expressed any concerns about the Council's approach. Therefore, the introduction of the duty to co-operate is not considered to have affected the circumstances of the TBS.
- 6.4 Other than the above, there are not considered to be any major changes affecting the way the TBS was carried out that have not already been considered.

## 7. CONCLUSION ON STRATEGY

7.1 This note has identified the following:

- Although planning policy documents have changed, the overall approach of local and national policy remains the same;
- One major contextual change is the principle of meeting objectively assessed needs, but as discussed here, tall buildings are far from the only way of delivering high density development;
- A number of new tall buildings have been constructed or are planned, and as a result Reading has physically changed substantially in places. However, all of these are in areas that the TBS considered appropriate locations for tall buildings, and many were planned in some form or another at the time of the TBS;
- Analysis of the various sub-areas of the centre for their townscape character has concluded that the same areas still have potential for tall buildings;
- There have been some changes to matters such as flood risk and sustainable travel across the centre, which particularly serve to emphasise the suitability of areas around the station;
- The sensitivity of key views remains largely as originally assessed, other than in three cases; and
- The operation of the duty to co-operate has not raised any new issues.

7.2 For this reason, it is considered that the overall evidence and approach that was set out by the TBS and resulting RCAAP policy is still generally valid. As a result, the TBS, accompanied by this note, remains a valid piece of evidence for policy making in 2018, and it should continue to underpin the policy approach of the Local Plan.

## APPENDIX 1: UPDATES TO TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER AREAS

### Character Area 1: Station Hill

| Consideration                                   | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|---|---|---|
| Land Use  | A mixture of offices and retail land uses   | These uses remain, although residential uses have also been introduced around Garrard Street.   |
| Historical significance                         | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce: post 1840.<br>The Station building, Edward XVII statue and Great Western House (now Malmaison) are all listed.   | No change   |
| Architectural style                             | The architectural style is predominantly 1970s. Concrete is a widely used material. Ramps and staircases navigate the awkward spaces and level changes.   | Much of the 1970s concrete architecture has now been demolished ahead of redevelopment, although the multi-storey car park remains and demolition has temporarily made it more prominent. The new station building is of a modern architectural style.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                 | The large block size and occasionally tall buildings, the tallest being Thames Tower (11 storeys) and Western Tower (17 storeys) create a large townscape scale.  | Thames Tower has been extended by four storeys to 15 storeys (2017). Western Tower has been demolished in advance of Station Hill redevelopment. A large townscape scale remains, including new station building and Station Square south.  |
| Townscape condition                             | The buildings are occasionally derelict and all are either of a poor condition or an unexceptional design quality. The spaces between the buildings are awkward shapes and sizes and poorly maintained. The overall effect is of a poor quality townscape.  | The area is in the process of improvement. The station itself has been much improved with the new station having been completed together with a new station square and transport interchange. Thames Tower has been re-clad and is in improved condition. Most of the poorest quality areas have been demolished, and await development.  |
| Key views within the character area             | -   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area               | Views of current buildings within the character area are possible from the A4, A327 and A33 when travelling into the city. From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings | Thames Tower and Western Tower both form localised focal points to views.   | Western Tower has been demolished. The new Station building, although not tall, forms a focal point and landmark within the area. Thames Tower's increased height makes it more of a focal point  |
| Tall buildings planning applications            | The 2007 application for the Station Hill site proposes residential units together with The proposed development at the Station Hill site would comprise no less than 577 and no more than 624 residential units together with office, retail, cultural and leisure land uses. The tallest building would range from 150-161 metres. There are two planning applications for tall buildings which have been approved. | There have been two subsequent iterations of the Station Hill scheme. Permission 090622 proposed up to 782 dwellings, 80,000 sq m offices plus retail and leisure. It included eight buildings, of which six qualify as tall buildings. The tallest building, B1, would have been 28 commercial storeys, and this would have been the tallest building in Reading.<br>This was then superseded by a new permission, 130436, amended in 151426, which took in some adjacent buildings. This proposed up to 475 |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   |   | <p>dwelling, 122,000 sqm of offices plus retail and leisure uses. This comprises seven buildings. Although six would potentially qualify as tall buildings, heights would be reduced from the previous scheme, with the tallest building, plot C, being 40m shorter than permitted in the previous scheme, and heights of other plots also reduced. However, plot C would still potentially be Reading's tallest building. The planning permission for 22 residential storeys on 29-35 Station Road (in place at the time of the TBS) has now expired.</p> |
| <p>Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings</p> | <p>Low: The large townscape scale, the absence of historic townscape features and the precedence for tall structures, all contribute to this area having a high capacity for the development of further tall buildings in terms of townscape character.</p> | <p>Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b>. Planning permissions have continued to establish this as the primary opportunity for tall buildings in Reading.</p>   |

## Character Area 2: Station Area East

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Offices  | No change.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce: post 1840<br>Adjacent to Forbury Gardens  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | 1970s - late 20th century office blocks.   | Addition of four more modern office blocks - three at and adjacent to the former Energis site, and one at former Aldwych House on Blagrave Street.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The individual buildings within the character area e.g Apex Plaza and Queens House are large and blocky structures which create a sense of large scale townscape.  | The new additions to the area have only served to reinforce this large scale townscape.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings within the character area are of an unexceptional design and quality.  | The more recent office additions are of reasonably good quality, and have generally enhanced the overall condition of the area.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been defined for this area.  | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Apex plaza is a local landmark due to its height and distinctive pink colour.<br>The Energis/Metal box is a local landmark due to its prominence and distinctive shape.  | The Energis/Metal Box/Queens House building has been demolished, and replaced by two 8-storey office buildings which were completed in 2017. Adjacent to this is 3 Forbury Place, an 11-storey office building which was completed in 2010. |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The high density of development within the character area, the characteristic large block size and the absence of historic townscape features within the area ensures a low sensitivity to the development of further tall buildings. The absence of any key views also contributes to this being an appropriate location when judged against townscape character criteria. | Townscape sensitivity remains low.  |



### Character Area 3: Friar Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update  |
|--|---|--|
| Land Use   | Friar Street is a shopping street   | No significant change, although there is now some residential use of upper floors, and this would increase substantially as a result of new planning permissions.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | The street has been redeveloped over many decades and as such the building frontage line has not been retained consistently and the architectural style is very varied. Some Victorian facades remain above the shop frontages but in many cases the architecture is undistinguished.   | No change.   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The tightly packed buildings and the relatively low skyline (generally 4-6 storeys) creates a medium scale townscape.   | No significant change. Redevelopment has occurred along northern frontage on corner of Greyfriars Road, but this fits in with the assessed townscape scale. The Station Hill outline permission would mean buildings on the Friar Street frontage of approximately 6-8 storeys and increase further back, so this could lead to some taller elements.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings and public realm along the street is generally in good condition  | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views along Friar Street eastwards towards the Market Place and St. Lawrence's church.  | Views to the west along Friar Street are now terminated by the tower at Chatham Place.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The Ibis hotel is 14 storeys high<br>Greyfriar's Church (at the western end of Friar Street)  | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | As above, the Station Hill planning permission covers part of the area, although the development within the area would not qualify as tall buildings. The resolution to grant permission at 52-55 Friar Street 162210 would include development of 10 residential storeys, although the highest elements would be set back from Friar Street and not prominent from street level.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: There is a fairly consistent, low rise roof line which is occasionally punctuated with views of taller structures e.g. Ibis hotel. Where the tall structures are visible, they detract from the cohesive character of the shopping street and are overbearing features of an uncharacteristically large scale. Therefore further tall buildings would exacerbate this characteristic further. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>medium</b> . There is likely to be an increase in height in parts of the area due to permissions, however efforts have been made to ensure that the Friar Street frontage itself is more in keeping with the existing roof line. Likewise, the appearance of the Chatham Place development from a view along Friar Street appears as a more distant element, and tall buildings in closer proximity would exacerbate effects on the area. |

#### Character Area 4: Station Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Predominantly retail, administrative and leisure use   | No significant change, although residential use, previously almost non-existent in the area, is increasing on upper floors.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.   | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | The architectural styles are representative of the variety of historical periods during which buildings were erected. The row of Victorian, sandstone buildings on Queen Victoria Street are a notable townscape feature.  | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The building pattern is fine grained creating a sense of a high density of development, although the buildings are generally only 3 storeys. The townscape scale is medium.  | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings are generally in a good condition, notably on Queen Victoria Street. The public realm differs between Station Road and Queen Victoria street, the later being pedestrianised.  | No significant change, although the environment of Station Road has been improved and the footway widened.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Key townscape features provide focus to views both to the north and south along Station Road and Queen Victoria Street. To the north the original station building is visible. To the south the façade of the John Lewis building is a focus to the view.  | No significant change. The changes to Thames Tower have slightly altered the view north along Station Road. There are glimpses of the Blade from the eastern end of Friar Street behind St Laurence's Church.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The sandstone buildings on Queen Victoria Street and the façade of the John Lewis building.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: Due to the positioning of the character area adjacent to the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area, tall buildings would not be an appropriate land use. They would be an uncharacteristically large scale feature and would become a prominent feature on the skyline. This would detract from the open skyline which is a fundamental feature of the historic character of the conservation Area. In addition, tall buildings along Queen Victoria Street would detract from the consistent architectural style and the roofline. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> . Although there are views of some taller structures as background features, buildings within the area itself would remain uncharacteristically large scale and would detract from the overall townscape and heritage assets. |

## Character Area 5: Broad Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update                           |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Land Use   | Broad Street is a main shopping street in Reading town centre, containing many primary shopping outlets.  | No change                             |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the St. Mary's Butts/Castle Hill Conservation Area and the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.   | No change                             |
| Architectural style                                      | At street level the character of the frontages is determined by the branding of the retail outlets. Above, there are examples of Victorian and Georgian frontages together with examples of redeveloped frontages from various decades.   | No change                             |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The consistent built form on either side of the road is composed of medium sized shop units. In addition, the relatively low roofline creates a medium scaled townscape.  | No change                             |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings and public realm along the street is generally in a good condition.   | No change                             |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been identified for this character area.  | No change                             |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change                             |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | -   | No change                             |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | There are no landmark features within the character area.   | No change                             |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The existing block size and scale of buildings on Broad Street ensures some capacity for the development of tall structures. However, the positioning of the character area adjacent to two Conservation Areas provides some constraints. Any tall buildings should be located in a position which ensures it will not become a dominant feature of the skyline above either Conservation Area. | Townscape sensitivity remains medium. |

### Character Area 6: St Laurence and Market Place

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | Predominantly retail, administrative and leisure use.   | No significant change, although residential use of upper floors is increasing, particularly in Market Place.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.  | No change   |
| Architectural style                                      | The architectural styles are representative of the variety of historic periods during which buildings were erected. Notable features are the cluster of buildings which surround the market place, particularly the Town Hall and St Lawrence's Church.                           | No change   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | This is a small scale area of townscape. The building pattern is fine grained, the roofline is low and although there are areas of open spaces in front of the church, Town Hall, and at Market Place, these are also small in scale and contained by the surrounding built form. | No change   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The cluster of historic buildings focused around the market place is in a good condition and create a strong townscape character.   | No change   |
| Key views within the character area                      | View across Market Place to the Town Hall and St Lawrence's church.   | The Blade in area 21, completed after the TBS was published, is visible as a background feature from parts of the character area.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | St Lawrence's Church and the spire of the Victorian Town Hall.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: There is no capacity to develop tall structures in this character area as a result of the fine grained, small scale nature of the built form and the low rise, open skyline above the buildings which is a fundamental element of the historic character.                   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> . Although the Blade appears as a background feature in places, the scale of the townscape area itself remains small, and contains a significant cluster of historic buildings. |

### Character Area 7: Station Area West

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Residential land use   | No change  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town: AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.   | No change  |
| Architectural style                                      | Victorian 2-3 storey terraced residential properties interspersed with more recent small scale office/commercial development.  | The south side of Tudor Road has now been redeveloped for a 4/5 storey apartment block. However, the remainder of the character area remains as described. |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The low rise, terraced housing creates a fine grained, small scale townscape.  | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | Buildings on Tudor Road are largely derelict creating a degraded character. To the south of the character area the terraced housing is in good condition and creates an area of strong residential character as the backdrop to views of Greyfriar's Church. | The derelict buildings on Tudor Road have now been redeveloped into a modern apartment block. Otherwise, no change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views towards Greyfriar's church.  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Views along west street to Greyfriar's Church which creates an attractive focal point. From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.          | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Greyfriar's Church is located in this character area.  | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: The small scale, low rise and residential character of this area makes it inappropriate for the development of tall buildings.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> .  |

### Character Area 8: Forbury Gardens and Surroundings

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | The gardens comprise a Victorian formal garden, partially walled with a pond, bandstand and Maiwand Lion Statue. To the east of the gardens are the remains of Reading Abbey.  | No change.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo Saxon Foundation: AD 500-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change. The Abbey Quarter Project, to better reveal the historical significance of the area is well underway.   |
| Architectural style                                      | The remains of the abbey in the east of the character area date from 1121. To the south of the character area the building style and age is variable, including the 5 storey, glass fronted office buildings on Forbury Square.  | No change.   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The park is the largest area of open space within the centre of Reading. The surrounding built form is visually prominent and has a large block size. These factors combine to create a large scale townscape.   | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The well maintained gardens and surrounding built form is well managed and in good condition.  | The Abbey Ruins have been closed to the public for a number of years due to their dangerous condition. However, conservation of the ruins is well underway, and they will reopen in Summer 2018.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | Glimpsed views of Western Tower and Thames Tower above the vegetated skyline.<br>View from Forbury Gardens towards Abbey Gate  | Western Tower has been demolished and will be replaced by new tall buildings at Station Hill. The Blade in area 21, completed after the TBS was published, is prominent in the background from much of the character area, as are new office blocks north of Forbury Road.                                   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | There are no landmark structures within the character area.  | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | A proposal for a 19 storey tower on what is now Forbury Square was refused in October 2000.  | No change.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: There is no capacity to develop buildings of this scale within the majority of the character area due to the townscape designations. Any tall buildings must consider the potential impact upon views to and from the designated townscapes/landscapes and must not dominate views of the Abbey and Forbury Gardens. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> . Tall buildings have been visible from this area for many years, and this has been accentuated by the arrival of the Blade. However, they are very much features of the background, and the townscape designations of the area continue to have high sensitivity. |

### Character Area 9: Reading Prison

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Reading prison   | Vacant   |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo Saxon Foundation: AD 500-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the remains of Reading Abbey and Forbury Gardens, both designated sites. | No change  |
| Architectural style                                      | The main body of the prison is red brick and was constructed during the Victorian period   | No change  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The buildings within this character area have a large block size, although are separated by paved areas which creates a sense of openness.   | No change  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings are intact and occupied.   | Reading Prison closed in 2013, and is vacant (apart from some temporary uses). The condition remains reasonable. |
| Key views within the character area                      | View from Kenavon Drive to the red brick wall and facade of Reading Prison.  | No change  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The prison buildings themselves are a landmark structure, locally visible from character areas in the east of the study area.  | No change  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The existing Victorian buildings are attractive townscape features which create a localised historic character. The development of tall buildings would detract from the historic character.   | Townscape sensitivity remains medium.  |

## Character Area 10: Forbury Retail Park

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Land use includes recent large scale office developments, retail warehouses, car parks and commercial/office developments.   | There has been residential development at Kenavon Drive to the east, and further residential developments are expected.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.   | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Buildings are predominantly late 20th century, corrugated iron and plastic clad retail units.  | The buildings described remain present, although the new residential development is modern houses and apartment blocks, more in keeping with the architectural style of the adjacent area 24 (Kennet Walk).   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The block size is large and there are numerous large warehouse buildings. This creates a large scale townscape.  | As above, the large blocks remain but there has been addition of much finer-grained townscape at the eastern end.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | All of the buildings are intact and occupied, but the scattered building, separated by expansive parking areas creates an indifferent townscape condition.   | Townscape condition has improved within the residential development, but most of the area remains as described.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | From Kenavon Drive to the red brick wall and facade of Reading Prison.   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Although a number of tall warehouses are present within the character area, their frequency results in none of them being particularly discernible as a landmark structure.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | The Council has resolved to grant permission for 765 dwellings on the Homebase/Toys R Us site subject to S106 agreement. The overall height is 7-8 storeys, but there would be three 11-storey residential buildings. These do not qualify as tall buildings under the Council's definition, although one of these buildings, at 36.1m high, is right at the threshold. The height of the tallest building in this scheme has been greatly reduced from the 19 storeys that was subject to public pre-application consultation, in order to comply with the Council's policy. |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The area is characterised by large blocky structures. Therefore a tall building would not appear uncharacteristic in terms of urban grain and townscape scale. There are few key views which characterise the area and therefore tall buildings would not jeopardise the visual experiences of the area. However, there are no buildings over 10 storeys within the area. A significantly taller building would become visually prominent, although assuming careful consideration is given to the design and placing, the building could provide focus to the area. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>medium</b> . The new proposals at Homebase/Toys R Us together with the adjacent Forbury Place offices establish 8-10 storeys as a character of new development at the westernmost extent of the site   |



## Character Area 11: Napier Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | Residential and retail (Tesco's).   | No change.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Late 20th century/early 21st century.   | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The buildings are fairly tightly packed and wedged between the railway line, Napier Road and the River Thames. Although the built form is tall, the individual block sizes are not very large.<br>The numerous medium sized blocks separated by parking and landscaped areas creates a medium scale townscape.                                      | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The position of the character area squashed between the railway embankment and Napier Road creates the sense of this being a forgotten area. The combination of building heights and style, none of which are distinctive townscape elements, creates a weak townscape character.   | A car dealership at the western end of the character area has been demolished pending redevelopment, and is currently used temporarily for car parking.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been defined for this character area.   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The 10 storey apartment blocks of Luscinia View.  | No change within character area. New office buildings along the north side of Forbury Road are visible across the railway from Napier Road.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | A planning application (150120) for three tall buildings on the former Cooper BMW site at the western end of the site of between 24-28 storeys, totalling 352 dwellings, was refused. Permission was subsequently granted on the same site for a residential development featuring a building of 23 storeys at the western end of the site (162166), with 315 dwellings. Development has not yet started. |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: Existing 10 storey apartment blocks are prominent features and ensures that buildings of a similar height would not appear uncharacteristic. However, the consistent height of the existing roofline and the residential character of the area ensure that significantly taller buildings would appear uncharacteristic in townscape terms. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>medium</b> . There is a clear distinction between the site of the permitted development (which the TBS subsequently proposed as part of the Station Cluster) and the remainder of the area where there are stronger townscape and landscape considerations.  |

## Character Area 12: Caversham Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update                                 |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Residential  | No change.                                  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.                                  |
| Architectural style                                      | Two storey, red brick, terraced housing  | No change.                                  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The low rise, terraced housing creates a small scale townscape.  | No change.                                  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings are in good condition. The consistent architectural style create a strong townscape character.   | No change.                                  |
| Key views within the character area                      | View from Caversham Bridge westwards   | No change.                                  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.                                  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | There are no landmarks structures within the character area.   | No change.                                  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.                                  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: There is a low capacity for the development of buildings of this scale due to the low rise, small scale residential character which predominates. Taller buildings would dilute the townscape pattern and would be uncharacteristic. The area is also inappropriate in terms of market demand and transport connections. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> . |

### Character Area 13: the Cattle Market

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update  |
|--|---|--|
| Land Use   | Mixed use   | No change.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | The Architectural style is variable including the large sheds and expansive car parking on the site of the Cattle Market and depot which is to the north of the character area and 3 storey residential blocks along Weldale Street   | No change.   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | Buildings are of a variable height and block size but cumulatively create a medium scaled townscape.  | No change. Recent development has reinforced the pattern of the higher buildings (4-6 storeys) on the Caversham Road frontage.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The variety of building styles, block sizes and materials creates a weak townscape character.   | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been defined for this area.   | No change. Buildings in Station Hill will be prominent from much of this area.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | There are no landmark structures within the character area.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | The Council has resolved to grant permission for 427 dwellings on the land south of Weldale Street subject to S106 agreement. The height varies across the site, but has a maximum of 12 residential storeys at the south eastern corner close to Chatham Place. The height of the tallest building in this scheme has been greatly reduced from the pre-application scheme, in order to comply with the Council's policy. |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The existing large block sizes of built form at the cattle market site and the degraded townscape condition all contribute to a high capacity for the development of tall buildings. However, despite the suitability of this area, the height would be restricted by the surrounding small scale residential areas. Consideration should be given on a case by case basis to the appropriateness of tall building height in relation to these areas of strong residential character. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>medium</b> . The issue has been explored in the recent planning application, which confirmed the south eastern corner as the greatest potential for height, albeit still within policy parameters.  |

#### Character Area 14: Oxford Road and surroundings

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | Residential and some retail on Oxford Road  | No change.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Russell St./Castle Hill Conservation Area<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Red brick, low rise terraced housing  | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The low rise, terraced housing forms a small scale townscape  | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The consistent architectural style and use of red brick creates a strong townscape character. The individual buildings are generally in good condition, although the signage associated with some of the units on Oxford Road clutters the townscape.   | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been defined for this area.   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Views along the Oxford Road to Fountains House<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | Chatham Place development is now prominent in views eastwards along Chatham Street.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Fountains House acts as a focal point to views from Oxford Road.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: There is a high sensitivity to the development of tall buildings within the character area which has a small scale, low rise, and residential townscape character. Tall buildings outside of the area are currently visible (Fountains House) and highlight the location of the central area. Tall buildings within this area would weaken this relationship. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> . Views of Chatham Place perform a similar role to those of Fountain House, i.e. highlighting the location of the central area, so this does not change the assessment. |

## Character Area 15: Chatham Place

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Retail   | Significant increase in residential use since 2008.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading; AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to St. Mary's Butts Conservation Area  | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | 1970s concrete blocks  | Modern blocks have replaced some of the 1970s concrete structures. Some other ageing structures have been re-clad, e.g. Yell House.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The block size is large, incorporating the covered Broad Street Mall shopping centre. Above the Broad Street Mall shopping centre is a 12 storey tower. These features combine to create a large scale townscape   | Recent developments at Chatham Place and Yell House have underlined the large scale townscape.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | Currently the character area is intersected by the IDR. The individual townscape elements are either large, blocky buildings or construction sites. There are no notable townscape features.   | Condition of the character area has been improved through new development, although parts of the character area remain cluttered. The plan to deck over the IDR as part of Chatham Place was never realised, and this crossing remains a less hospitable part of the area. |
| Key views within the character area                      | Along West Street to Greyfriar's Church  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | The tower at Chatham Place is now visible in most panoramic views of central Reading, and from many parts of the centre, including terminating views eastwards along Friar Street.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Fountains House acts as a focal point to views from Oxford Road.   | The Chatham Place development has resulted in one tall building (19 residential storeys) within the area, and a general increase in height around it. Yell House has also increased in height, although it is below the ten storey threshold.                              |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No current applications.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The existing built form is large scale and blocky, ensuring that tall buildings would not result in a significant change to the urban grain. The absence of notable townscape features ensures a suitability for re-development. However, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how tall buildings would impact upon key views along West Street to Greyfriar's Church and to how they would be viewed from and impact upon views of St. Mary's Church. It is proposed that new building directly abutting St. Mary's Butts should not be tall structures. Any tall buildings should be set back from this road and the Conservation Area. | Townscape sensitivity remains low, although the sensitivity of the key views mentioned remains as described in the TBS.  |

## Character Area 16: The Civic Centre

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | The area is dominated by large scale buildings including the Civic Centre, the Hexagon Theatre and Fountain House   | The Civic Centre, the most dominant feature of the area, has been demolished and the civic uses relocated.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo Saxon Foundation: AD 500-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | 1970s concrete blocks   | Demolition of one of the principal 1970s blocks has taken place.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The cluster of buildings with a large block size, and the elevated roofline created by Fountains House forms a large scale townscape.   | The Civic Centre has now been temporarily replaced with a large open expanse, which continues to contribute to a large scale townscape.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The large concrete blocks which characterise this area are unexceptional in terms of design and quality. This creates a poor townscape character.   | Demolition of one of the principal blocks has taken place.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views from the Civic Centre to St Mary's Church and Conservation Area   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Fountains House acts as a focal point to views from Oxford Road.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | A planning application is expected to be submitted for a new civic centre and mixed use development in this area during 2008. Previous consultations on the masterplan for this area have included one or two tall buildings (up to 30 storeys), but proposals are still evolving.  | The planning application referred to (which did not include tall buildings) was approved, but the Council moved into an existing building elsewhere and the permission expired. Discussions on the future of the site are still underway, but no planning application is expected imminently. |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: Due to the large scale of the individual elements of the character area, a tall building would not appear uncharacteristic. A tall building could provide structure and focus to the character area which is currently composed of poor quality, undistinguished buildings which creates a weak townscape character. However, careful consideration should be given to retaining glimpsed views to St. Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area and it is essential that the building does not become an intrusive and dominant feature of the skyline of views towards St. Mary's Conservation Area. | Townscape sensitivity remains low, although the sensitivity of the key views mentioned remains as described in the TBS.   |

### Character Area 17: St Mary's and Castle Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | The building uses are varied, but mainly comprise retail and small offices creating predominantly active frontages.   | No significant change, but there are increasing residential elements due to conversions.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo Saxon Foundation: AD 500-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Within St. Mary's/Castle Hill Conservation Area   | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Varied including red brick and half timbered  | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The low rise skyline and tightly packed buildings create a fine grained, small scale townscape.   | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The cluster of historic buildings is in good condition and creates a localised area of strong historic character.   | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views along Castle Street eastwards<br>View along St. Mary's Butts to St. Mary's church   | No significant change, although the spire of The Blade now appears as a distant feature in views eastwards along Castle Street. |
| Key views into the character area                        | View from Character area 16 (the civic Centre) towards St. Mary's Church Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading. | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | St. Mary's Church   | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: The Conservation Area designation makes this an inappropriate area for the development of tall buildings. The tall buildings would detract from the historic character.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> .   |

## Character Area 18: The Oracle

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update                        |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Land Use   | The Oracle is a single development that fills the space between Broad Street, Mill Lane, Bridge Street and Duke Street. It provides a major shopping centre for Reading town centre, with the main access from Broad Street. The Kennet and Avon canal flows through the centre of the development. It is a key feature of the site and forms the focus of a civic space which includes seating, play spaces and cafes. | No change.                         |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area  | No change.                         |
| Architectural style                                      | Late 20th century. Buildings materials are variable including concrete, brick and glass.  | No change.                         |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The large expanse of covered shopping centre and occasionally tall structures creates a large scale townscape.  | No change.                         |
| Townscape condition                                      | Although the design of the Oracle building is unexceptional, the public realm along the River Kennet is an attractive and well used resource which is in good condition.  | No change.                         |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views along the Kennet and Avon canal eastwards   | No change.                         |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.                         |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The general roofline of this character area is 3/4 storeys, with occasional taller buildings up to 9 storeys.<br>The rooflines of these taller buildings are designed in such a way that their design, as well as their height stands out from the surrounding roofscape. For example the angular, glass structure which is located on the roof above the Oracle on the south side of the Kennet and Avon Canal.        | No change.                         |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No change.                         |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The large block size and existing landmark structures (e.g. spire on the car park) create a high capacity for the development of tall buildings. However, consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how the development would impact on the skyline above St Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area.   | Townscape sensitivity remains low. |



### Character Area 19: Mallard Row to Fobney Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Predominately residential apartments which are located on the north and south banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal although there is also some office use.   | No significant change, although the largest office is now used as the Civic Offices. |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo-Saxon Foundation: AD 50-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the St. Mary's Butts Castle Street Conservation Area  | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | The buildings are predominantly late 20th century, brick structures.   | No change.   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The apartment buildings separated by small blocks of ornamental planting create a medium scale townscape.  | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The Buildings within the character area are occupied, functioning buildings. They do not either contribute to a sense of good quality townscape or detract from it.  | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been identified for this area.   | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | Although the apartment buildings are taller than those in some of the surrounding areas such as the St Mary's Butts Conservation Area, the consistent rows of apartment blocks, and their location immediately to the west of the Oracle, ensures that the apartment buildings blend into the general elevated roofline, and are not in themselves distinctive features.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     |  | No change.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The area is characterised by apartment block buildings which are taller than the average residential built form in Reading. The apartment blocks create a medium sized townscape scale and urban grain. Buildings up to 10 storeys would not appear uncharacteristic in townscape terms. However, should built form taller than 10 storeys be proposed, careful consideration should be given to how the increased scale and density of development would impact upon St. Mary's Butts Conservation Area. | Townscape sensitivity remains low.   |

## Character Area 20: London Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | Residential   | There has been a significant move from office towards residential in this area since the TBS, with further permissions expected to exacerbate this.                                 |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Red brick, low rise terraced housing  | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The fine grained residential area has a small townscape scale.  | No significant change. The development of the hotel at Letcombe Street (2009) has resulted in a 7-storey building, but this is visually related more to the Oracle and IDR flyover. |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings within the character area are fairly consistent in architectural style creating a strong, residential townscape character. The townscape is generally in good condition, although the busy A327 and associated road signage and advertising boards create a localised cluttered character.              | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been identified for this area.  | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.                        | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | St. Giles Church is a key feature of views both within the character area and from surrounding areas.   | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: The small scale, residential nature of this character area makes it inappropriate for the development of tall buildings. tall buildings in central reading are visible from parts of the area as a skyline feature. The development of tall buildings within the character area would weaken this relationship. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> .   |

## Character Area 21: Forbury South

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Predominantly large office use interspersed with smaller scale buildings such as Blake's cottages and a pub.   | There has been a substantial move from offices towards residential uses along Kings Road.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD 1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading; AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | Predominantly 1970s - late 20th Century concrete blocks.   | No change, although a number of blocks have been refurbished and converted.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The large block size of the buildings creates a large scale townscape.   | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The variable building style, heights and materials creates a weak townscape character. The busy A329 intersects the area and creates a disjointed character. There are a number of vacant buildings along the kings Road which creates a slightly degraded character.  | No change to the overall conclusion of a weaker townscape character, although character has been improved as a result of conversions and refurbishments.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | View along Wallington Street to the twin spires of St John's Church and the Methodist Chapel.  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | The Blade and Kings Point are now prominent from many viewpoints around central Reading and beyond.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | King's Point is a 7 storey building which is visually prominent feature on Wallington Street.  | King's Point has been demolished and a replacement 17 storey building is under construction. The Blade (15 storeys but with a significantly higher spire) is a landmark, not only for the area but for Reading as a whole. In addition, the redevelopment of offices at 80-82 Kings Road (completed 2015) has resulted in a ten storey residential block which is prominent particularly from the Kennet and Avon Canal. |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | Abbey Mill House is a 15 storey building with planning permission.<br>Planning permission has been granted for a building of up to 14 storeys on the site of the existing King's Point building.   | The Blade (Abbey Mill House) has now been built out in the form expected at the time, and is a major Reading landmark. Development of a tall building at King's Point is underway, although this will now reach 17 storeys.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The existing large block size and the presence of buildings up to 7 storeys and construction of a building up to 15 storeys ensures that a building of up a similar height would not be uncharacteristic. However, due to proximity to Reading Abbey, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to potential visual impacts which may result. | Townscape sensitivity remains low.   |

## Character Area 22: Vastern Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Warehouses and retail park   | Major land uses remain the same, although the opening of the northern entrance to the station has brought a public transport interchange into the heart of the site.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | The predominant material is coloured, metal cladding   | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The building blocks have a large floor space, although the buildings are not high rise and there is extensive car parking adjacent to the buildings. These features combine to create a medium scale townscape.  | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The large, blank faces of the warehouses create an unexceptional area of townscape which does not respond well to the surrounding residential land use. Although the buildings are occupied and function well for their purpose, their design is unattractive and creates a weak and uninspiring area of townscape.  | Although the new entrance to the station and adjacent square have improved the townscape condition of a small part of the site, the surrounding buildings remain unchanged.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | There are no key views defined for the character area.   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The large, warehouse structures create a consistent, unexceptional townscape. There are no landmark structures. Although the warehouses create a roofline which is elevated above the surrounding residential buildings, there is no one structure which is notable as a tall building.  | The new northern entrance to the station is a landmark, albeit not particularly high. It will become more prominent as development of surrounding sites allows views of it to open up. The new Christchurch Bridge is a landmark on the river, but is currently visually separated from the rest of the area.                                   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | Outline planning permission (110024) was granted on the sorting office site for a major mixed use development including residential, office, hotel and retail. The plot adjacent to the station entrance would have been up to 16 commercial storeys or 21 hotel storeys, with heights decreasing to the west. This permission has now expired. |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The large block size which exists within the character area and the absence of any key views or visual focal point makes this an appropriate location for tall buildings. However it is proposed that tall structures should not be developed along the north and western boundaries of the character area as these boundaries are shared with small scale residential areas. any proposed built form should respond in terms of height and scale to the residential area. The tallest structures should be located to the south of the character area, adjacent to the railway line. In this area the townscape features are larger scale, and adjacent to large scale features outside of the area e.g. existing station buildings, Thames Tower and Western Tower. | Townscape sensitivity remains low, albeit with the caveats expressed in 2008 continuing to apply.   |

### Character Area 23: King's Meadow

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | Sports ground and river meadows  | No change.   |
| Historical significance                                  | -  | Kings Meadow Baths, an unused listed Victorian facility at the time of the TBS, has been reopened as Thames Lido.  |
| Architectural style                                      | N/A  | No change.   |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The large expanse of open meadows creates a large townscape scale.   | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The meadows are a well maintained recreational resource and contribute positively to the townscape character.  | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | The open views across the meadows to the wooded skyline created by bankside vegetation, has been identified as a key view.                                   | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading. | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | -  | The Christchurch Bridge, opened in 2015, is a new prominent landmark on the Thames that links Caversham and central Reading. The 39m high bridge support is tall within a local context. |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: The majority of the site is protected open space and therefore inappropriate as a location for tall buildings.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> .  |

### Character Area 24: Kennet Walk

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Land Use   | Residential  | No change.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Late 20th century apartment buildings  | No change.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The apartment buildings separated by small blocks of ornamental planting create a medium scaled townscape. The quiet, narrow roads create a 'homezone' type character.   | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The Buildings within the character area are occupied, functioning buildings. They do not either contribute to a sense of good quality townscape or detract from it.  | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | There are no key views defined for the character area.   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.                             | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The gas storage facility in the east of the character area.  | No change. The Gas Holder remains in place, although it is no longer required and there are plans to decommission it. |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | High: There is a high capacity for the development of buildings of ten storeys as the existing skyline is composed of a number of buildings of this scale. However, the residential 'homezone' character make this an inappropriate location for a very tall building which would dominate and become an iconic structure. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>high</b> .   |

### Character Area 25: IDR West

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Land Use   | The IDR and immediately adjacent buildings which include an office building and two churches   | No change.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.   |
| Architectural style                                      | The IDR is the dominant feature of the character area. The office building is of mid to late 20th century design   | No significant change. The office building has been re-clad. |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | N/A  | No change.   |
| Townscape condition                                      | The IDR is an overpowering feature which detracts from the quality of the townscape.   | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | There are no key views defined for the character area.   | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading. | No change.   |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | The most dominant feature of views is the IDR  | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.   |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The built form to the western side of the IDR is small scale, low rise residential. Any tall buildings developed on the western side of the IDR would overshadow this land use and would be uncharacteristic in terms of height, block size and building materials.                    | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>medium</b> .                |

## Character Area 26: King's Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Land Use   | Office buildings  | A significant number of office buildings have been converted to or redeveloped for residential, such that residential is possibly now more prevalent than office.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.  |
| Architectural style                                      | Predominantly late 20th century design  | No change, although some additional 21 <sup>st</sup> century developments.  |
| Urban grain and townscape scale                          | The large block size of the buildings and the wide A329 create a large scale townscape  | No change.  |
| Townscape condition                                      | The buildings within the character area are generally occupied, functioning buildings. They do not either contribute to a sense of good quality townscape or detract from it.   | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | There are no key views defined for this character area  | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west. From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading. | No change.  |
| Landmark structures and existing tall buildings          | There are no notable key landmark features  | Two new residential blocks, adjacent to one another, have been constructed. Q, a 9-storey residential building terminates views westwards along Kings Road, and was largely complete at TBS publication in 2008. The adjacent Q2, a 10-storey residential building, was completed in 2010 and is prominent in views eastwards along Kings Road. Both are adjacent to and prominent from the conservation area, and demonstrate the effects that even limited height can have. |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | There are no known tall building applications for this area.  | No change.  |
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Medium: The large block size of existing built form ensures that a tall building would not be uncharacteristic in terms of townscape scale, or detract from the existing urban grain.   | Townscape sensitivity remains medium, although the presence of the conservation area and listed buildings means that the sensitivity increases in the east of the area.   |



## APPENDIX 2: CHANGES TO IDENTIFIED VIEWS

| Viewpoint<br>(see section 3.2 of Appendix 1 of the TBS)   | Description of changes and their significance  |
|---|--|
| Viewpoint A: View along Market Place towards St Laurence's Church                                   | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint B: View along Friar Street to St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall                      | The view has only been altered by the appearance of The Blade on the skyline between the town hall and church. The spire of the Blade appears as a clearly uncharacteristic element of the view, although it remains in the background and remains clearly subservient to the towers of the church and town hall. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint C: View of St Mary's Church and churchyard from St Mary's Butts                           | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint D: The tower of St Mary's from Castle Hill  | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint E: View from the Civic Centre towards St Mary's Church and Conservation Area              | This view has changed significantly with the demolition of the Civic Offices in the foreground. This has opened up some of the view behind, which is mainly of the Broad Street Mall. Thames Tower, now extended by four storeys, comes into the view behind the Mall. Despite the demolition of the Civic Offices, the view is dominated by concrete in the foreground, and there remains scope for improvement. It continues to have a medium sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint F: From Forbury Gardens towards Abbey Gate  | This view has changed significantly from the TBS, as The Blade is now highly visible behind the Abbey Gate, significantly taller than all other elements of the view. The impression is now clearly of a historic foreground, and a modern, high density background. The prominence of The Blade and the degree to which it differs from the remainder of the view (which is not to say that the contrast is unappealing) indicates the need for considerable thought to be given to how any tall buildings might appear in this view. It therefore continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings. |
| Viewpoint G: view along Queen Victoria Street towards John Lewis building                           | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint H: view along Kennet and Avon Canal towards Blake Cottages                                | The main change to this view is that the residential development at 80-82 Kings Road is now visible in the background of the view, behind some office buildings. This does not fundamentally alter the composition of the view, and the stepping down towards the low-rise Blakes Cottages described. It continues to have a medium sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint I: view along the Kennet and Avon Canal from Duke Street westwards                        | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a low sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint J: view along the Kennet and Avon Canal from Duke Street eastwards                        | Whilst the foreground remains the same as the view shown in the TBS, the background has changed. The riverside residential development at 80-82 Kings Road is now a prominent feature of the view, and the tip of the new tall buildings at Kings Point can also be seen rising behind it. This further emphasises the characteristic noted in the TBS, of being framed by buildings with a large block size. It continues to have a low sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint K: view along West Street to Greyfriars Church  | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint L: view along Watlington Street to the twin spires of St. John's and the Methodist Church | The main change to this view has been the construction of the residential 10-storey Q2 building on the left hand side of the view. From this viewpoint, Q2 dominates the two church spires which had previously been the highest points of the view, and affects the historic character of the view. However, this view had already been degraded by wide streets, large office blocks and signage, and it is considered that the continued features of the church spires and surrounding conservation area  |

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|  | means that it continues to have a medium sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint M: view eastwards along Castle Street  | The foreground, featuring a key part of the St Mary's and Castle Street conservation area, has not been altered from that shown in the TBS. However, in the background, the spire of The Blade is now visible above the roofline. This is clearly an uncharacteristic element of the view. However, it should be noted that modern development which is higher than the prevailing roofline was already visible at the end of the street, and this should be seen in that context. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.                            |
| Viewpoint N: view north westwards across Kings Meadow                                  | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. The only buildings currently visible are the apartments on Napier Road. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint O: View from Kenavon Drive towards Reading Prison                            | The obvious change is that the top floors and spire of the Blade now appear prominently directly behind the prison, providing a competing focus to the prison and breaking the open skyline described in the TBS. Although this is a significant change, the prison is still the most prominent feature, and as it is a very significant heritage asset, the view continues to have a medium sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint P: View westwards from Caversham Bridge                                      | This view remains virtually identical to the view shown in the TBS. No tall buildings are currently visible. It continues to have a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 1: From Green Road, south west of central Reading overlooking playing fields | This view has been fundamentally altered by the development of Regis Park Road. Panoramic views across the playing fields as shown in the TBS can no longer be gained from Green Road. Glimpsed views past the buildings reveal the spire of The Blade visible in the background, but also new education development along Crescent Road at the other side of the playing field. It is considered that, as a result of the fundamental changes to the view, the sensitivity to tall buildings has changed from medium to low.   |
| Viewpoint 2: From the A329, south east of central Reading                              | The only change to the view is that The Blade is now visible in the background, although only from a point around 20 metres north west from where the original photo was taken. As expected in the TBS, it is noticeable as an uncharacteristic background feature. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 3: From the grounds of the University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus        | The foreground has changed with the construction of new halls of residence on the campus, of a greater height than existing buildings in the view. This has changed the context of the view, and its sensitivity to tall buildings would be somewhat reduced. However, it is still the case that there are no tall buildings in the view. It is considered that the sensitivity to tall buildings has changed from high to medium.  |
| Viewpoint 4: From The Mount towards Caversham Park                                     | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 5: From the A327, south of central Reading                                   | The feature which is now most apparent at the background of the view is The Blade, which is clearly higher than other surrounding elements of Central Reading, although Three Forbury Square is also visible to its left. The original analysis noted the potential for tall buildings to form a focus to this tunnelled view, and this is the role that The Blade now plays. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 6: From Caversham Bridge   | The largely low-rise foreground of the view remains unchanged, but the tall buildings in the background have had some significant alterations. Western Tower has been demolished. Meanwhile, Thames Tower's extension makes it a clear focus to the view, with The Blade also clearly visible and the outline of Three Forbury Place also in view. The original analysis of the view noted the opportunity for tall buildings to add character and focus, and this is what the newer tall buildings are starting to do. There continues to be a medium/low sensitivity to tall buildings. |
| Viewpoint 7: From the Thames Path west of Reading                                      | Previously, the only tall building visible from this view was Western Tower. This has now been demolished, but the extension to the nearby Thames Tower, formerly not visible, has brought it into view, in a similar position and scale as was previously the case for Western Tower. There have been no other significant changes to the foreground and overall context of the view, and there therefore continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 8: From rural road north of  | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a   |

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| Mapledurham  | high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 9: From footpath east of Mapledurham                           | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. Slightly further west, Chatham Place comes into view, although these are glimpsed views through trees. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 10: From A329 adjacent to Gower Street                         | Fountain House remains the focus of this view, but the additional storeys on former Yell House create the perception of a higher basic roof level surrounding it. No particular changes have been made to the foreground. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 11: From Dunsden Way, south of Dunsden Green                   | Tall buildings are now visible in the distance as part of this view. The Blade, Thames Tower, Chatham Place and Kings Point together with its crane are all clearly distinguishable. However, the impression is still generally of a strong rural character, which is assisted by the fact that the existing buildings in the view are not significantly above the treeline across the fields. Significantly taller buildings would be much more prominent. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 12: From Hurst Road, east of Reading                           | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 13: From The Horse Close, Caversham                            | Changes to tall buildings are all visible from this viewpoint. The new buildings of The Blade, Chatham Place, Three Forbury Place, Kings Point and the extended Thames Tower are all clearly visible, and Western Tower, formerly visible, has been demolished. From this point, the beginnings of the three clusters are distinguishable, which emphasises the panoramic nature of the view as highlighted in the TBS. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 14: View from Balmore Park                                     | Changes to tall buildings are all visible from this viewpoint. The new buildings of The Blade, Chatham Place, Three Forbury Place and the extended Thames Tower are all clearly visible, and Western Tower, formerly visible, has been demolished. Kings Point is not currently visible from the point at which the picture is taken, but can be seen by changing position within the park. From this point, the beginnings of the three clusters are distinguishable, which emphasises the panoramic nature of the view as highlighted in the TBS. This is probably the best panoramic view of central Reading and any new tall buildings will be highly visible from here. As such, there continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings, and their appearance from this vantage point both on their own and as part of a whole will require particular consideration. |
| Viewpoint 15: From the footbridge over the A329, north of Earley Station | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 16: From the B3350 at the bridging point of A329               | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 17: From the A4 east of Reading                                | Whilst the foreground has not changed, virtually all significant changes to tall buildings in Reading can be seen from this point. Kings Point (under construction), The Blade, Thames Tower and Three Forbury Place are all prominent, with Fountain House and Chatham Place further in the background. The gas holder remains a prominent feature. As large structures within central Reading continue to be a feature of the view, there continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 18: From the Thames Path, east of Reading                      | No significant change to features in background or foreground. No tall buildings visible in view, although the Blade comes into view if one travels 200m or so to the west. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 19: From Palmer Park   | No significant change to features in foreground. The Blade is now visible through the trees at the edge of the park in winter, although in summer when there is more foliage it will be much more difficult to see. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 20: From Hemdean Rise, Caversham                               | No significant change to features in background or foreground. Napier Road apartments remain visible in view. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.  |

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| Viewpoint 21: From Reading Bridge  | Although there have been significant changes in the vicinity of this view, these changes have taken place behind the two large buildings in the foreground, and are not visible in the view. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 22: From footbridge over the M4                                      | The original view was described as a pastoral landscape, but for various reasons the view in 2018 is somewhat different. In the foreground are active gravel workings, which may have previously been somewhat masked by the foliage in a different season. The residential towers at Coley Park, which are three 15-storey residential towers in a suburban location, are also visible, and were probably obscured by trees in 2007. In the far background, it is possible to make out Chatham Place, the extended Thames Tower, the very tip of the Blade (behind the Coley towers) and the crane on the Kings Point construction site. With the motorway in the foreground, gravel workings behind and visible built form in the background, it is considered that the sensitivity to tall buildings has changed from high to medium. |
| Viewpoint 23: From the A4155, adjacent to Coley Hill                           | The view remains framed by vegetation, and little has changed in the conservation area surroundings of the foreground. The highest feature on the skyline is now the building under construction at Kings Point, although this is to one side and is likely to be partially obscured by foliage in summer. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 24: From Caversham Park  | Private property, unable to gain access. Viewpoint is similar to from the Horse Close, but with a much more tranquil, rural context. Assumed that there continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.  |
| Viewpoint 25: From bridge over the Kennet and Avon Canal, east of the A33      | The foreground continues to constitute scrub-like vegetation with visible warehouses. Fountain House was visible in the background in 2007, and this has now been joined by Chatham Place, and, from a few metres further west, Thames Tower. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 26: View along the A33, towards Reading                              | The view continues to be dominated by the A33 dual carriageway with no townscape features of particular note. Western Tower was visible in 2007, and this has been demolished. Chatham Place and Thames Tower are now visible to the left and right of the A33, but neither are tall or centrally located enough to form the focal point mentioned in 2007. There continues to be a low sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 27: View from Coley Place towards central Reading                    | The original view analysis notes the variety in the skyline, and new developments have resulted in greater variety. The Blade provides a modern counterpoint to the spire of St Giles Church (appearing to be of a similar height from this point). The new building under construction at Kings Point is also prominent halfway between the two. Other visible changes are the Premier Inn at Letcombe Street and the Q2 building (both under construction at the time of the original analysis and with cranes visible) and 80-82 Kings Road. Consideration to how tall buildings will affect this skyline remain important. There continues to be a medium sensitivity to tall buildings.   |
| Viewpoint 28: View towards Reading and Caversham Bridge from Caversham Gardens | The only significant change is the appearance of the Chatham Place tall building in the middle of the view. Other new buildings are screened by the Reading Rowing Club building. The tranquil, undisturbed character remains. There continues to be a high sensitivity to tall buildings.   |

### APPENDIX 3: PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHANGES TO IDENTIFIED VIEWS

Viewpoint B

The Blade now visible



Viewpoint E

Civic Offices in foreground demolished

Extended Thames Tower now visible





Viewpoint F

The Blade now prominent



Viewpoint H

80-82 Kings Road development now visible in background





Viewpoint J

Kings Point under construction

New development at 80-82 Kings Road



Viewpoint L

Q2 building now prominent in the view





Viewpoint M

The Blade visible in background



Viewpoint O

The Blade appears behind the Prison





**Viewpoint 1**

New development in foreground

New education development in background



**Viewpoint 2**

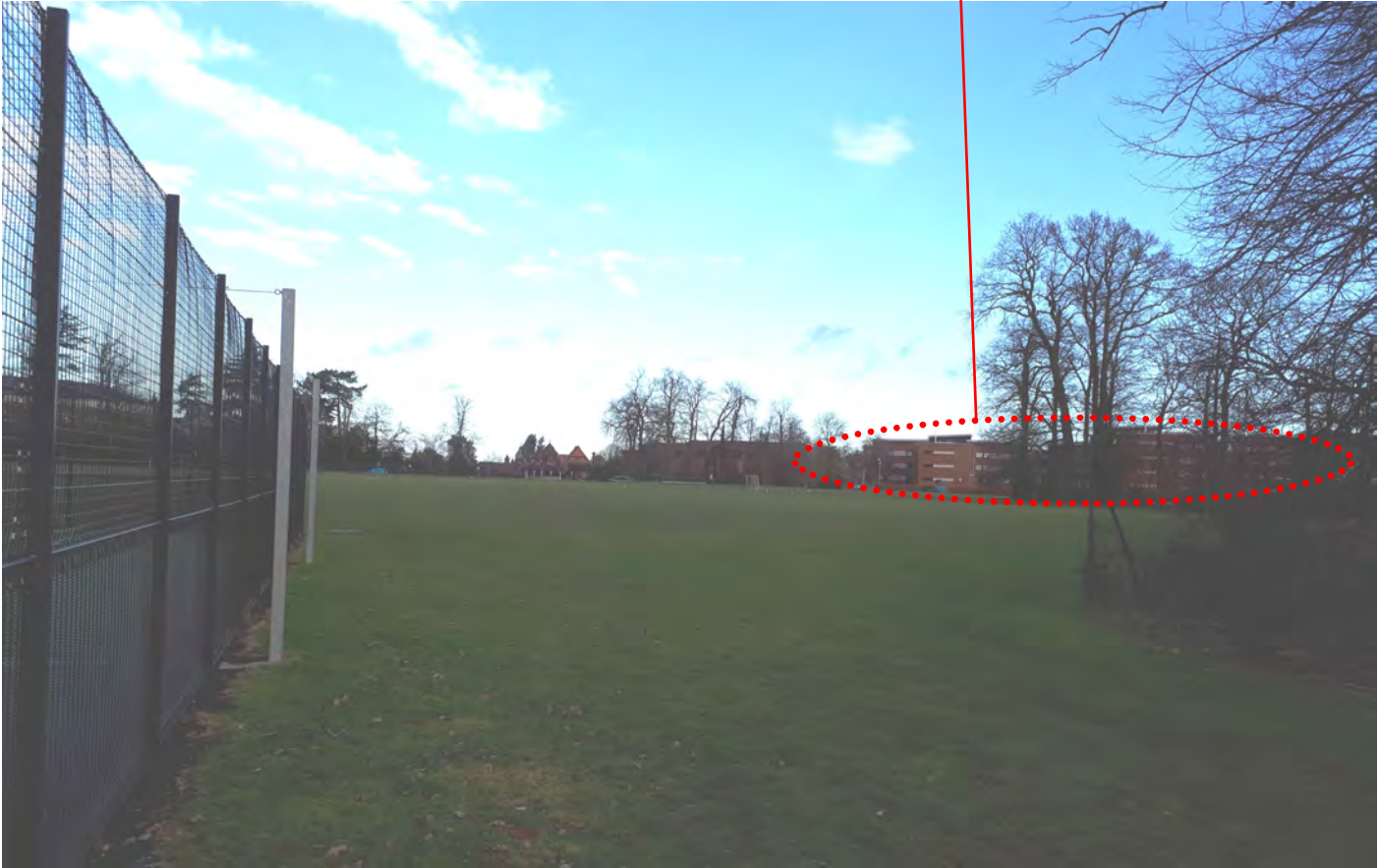
The Blade now visible (if position moves 20m north west)





Viewpoint 3

Redeveloped halls of residence now prominent



Viewpoint 5

The Blade now significant feature of background





**Viewpoint 6**

3 Forbury Place

The Blade

Extended Thames Tower

Western Tower demolished



**Viewpoint 7**

Extended Thames Tower now visible

Western Tower demolished





Viewpoint 10

Extended and refurbished Yell House



Viewpoint 11

Kings Point

The Blade

Extended Thames Tower

Chatham Place





**Viewpoint 13**

Kings Point

The Blade

3 Forbury Place

Thames Tower

Western Tower demolished



Chatham Place

**Viewpoint 14**

The Blade

3 Forbury Place

Extended Thames Tower

New station building



Western Tower demolished

Chatham Place

Viewpoint 17

Kings Point

The Blade

Chatham Place

Thames Tower

3 Forbury Place



Viewpoint 19

The Blade visible through trees





Viewpoint 22

Chatham Place

Thames Tower

Tip of the Blade, behind Coley Towers

Crane at Kings Point



Active gravel workings in foreground

Viewpoint 23

Kings Point under construction





**Viewpoint 25**

Chatham Place

Extended Thames Tower behind trees



**Viewpoint 26**

Chatham Place

Western Tower demolished

Extended Thames Tower





**Viewpoint 27**

The Blade

80-82 Kings Road

Kings Point under construction

Premier Inn

Q2



**Viewpoint 28**

Chatham Place now visible



## APPENDIX 4: UPDATES TO ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER AREAS

### Character Area 1: Station Hill

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
|--|--|--|
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The large townscape scale and the precedence for tall structures, contribute to this area having a high capacity for the development of further tall buildings in terms of townscape character.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> . Planning permissions have continued to establish this as the primary opportunity for tall buildings in Reading.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce: post 1840. Any tall building development should be sensitive to the setting of the listed station building and Great western House (now Malmaison).   | No change.   |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The character area is located approximately 250m away from Forbury Gardens at its nearest point. Tall buildings within the character area e.g. Thames Tower, already form a feature of views from the park, creating a strong identity as a central Reading park.<br>The character area is located approximately 100metres away from the Market Place at the nearest point. Any tall building development should consider the potential impact of tall buildings on views experienced within the Market Place. | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been defined.  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Views of current buildings within the character area are possible from the A4, A327 and A33 when travelling into the city.<br>Buildings within the character area form elements of the view from various points within central Reading, including Forbury Gardens.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | The 2007 application for the Station hill site proposes residential units together with office, retail, arts and leisure uses. The tallest building would range from 150-161 metres.   | There have been two subsequent iterations of the Station Hill scheme.<br>Permission 090622 proposed up to 782 dwellings, 80,000 sq m offices plus retail and leisure. It included eight buildings, of which six qualify as tall buildings. The tallest building, B1, would have been 28 commercial storeys, and this would have been the tallest building in Reading.<br>This was then superseded by a new permission, 130436, amended in 151426, which took in some adjacent buildings. This proposed up to 475 dwellings, 122,000 sqm of offices plus retail and leisure uses. This comprises seven buildings. Although six would potentially qualify as tall buildings, heights would be reduced from the previous scheme, with the tallest building, plot C, being 40m shorter than permitted in the previous scheme, and heights of other plots also reduced. However, plot C would still potentially |

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|  |  | <p>be Reading's tallest building.</p> <p>The planning permission for 22 residential storeys on 29-35 Station Road (in place at the time of the TBS) has now expired.</p>  |
| Market demand                                | This location is considered prime in terms of the office market due to its proximity to the station and core amenities in the centre.  | This is still considered a prime location. This is confirmed by recent planning permissions on Station Hill, with the latest iteration having a greater emphasis on offices, and the changes to Thames Tower.   |
| Flood Risk                                   | The area is not covered by either the Zone 3A, 3B or 2 flood risk zones.   | For the vast majority of the site, there has been no change. However, the SFRA has identified that a very small corner of the site would become part of Flood Zone 3 under a climate change scenario. However, this is not a significant enough change to alter the overall conclusion. |
| Transport                                    | Very good: The area is in the main within 10 minutes walking distance of the train station.  | If anything, the accessibility of the area has been enhanced further with the changes to the station and a new transport interchange within the character area itself.  |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings | High: The large townscape scale and the precedence for tall structures, all contribute to this area having a high capacity for the development of further tall buildings. There is a good level of market demand for the site and it is a sustainable location in terms of transport provisions. As has been noted, any tall building development should seek to mitigate potential visual effects on surrounding sensitive heritage features e.g. the Market Place and Forbury Gardens. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b> , subject to the points made in the TBS.   |

## Character Area 2: Station Area East

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
|--|--|---|
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The high density of development within the character area, the characteristic large block size and the absence of historic townscape features within the area ensures a low sensitivity to the development of further tall buildings. The absence of any key views also contributes to this being an appropriate location when judged against townscape character criteria.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> .  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce: post 1840   | No change.  |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | Forbury Gardens is located immediately to the east of the character area.  | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been identified within the character area.   |   |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change. An 11 storey office building (Three Forbury Square) has been permitted and constructed since the TBS.  |
| Market demand  | This location is considered prime in terms of the office market due to its proximity to the station and core amenities in the centre.  | No change. There has been considerable office investment since the TBS, with the development of three large office buildings at Forbury Place, much of which is now occupied, including by occupants who have moved within Reading, and the new office building at former Aldwych House, so this remains a prime office area. |
| Flood Risk   | The area is not covered by either the Zone 3A, 3B or 2 flood risk zones.   | No change.  |
| Transport  | Good: More than half of the area falls within 10 minutes walking distance of the train station, is relatively close to central Reading and the station area amenities and has relatively good provision and access to public transport. In addition, a future National Cycle Network route is proposed.  | If anything, the accessibility of the area has been enhanced further with the changes to the station and new transport interchange facilities.  |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | High: The high density of development within the character area, the characteristic large block size and the absence of historic townscape features within the area ensures a low sensitivity to the development of further tall buildings. The area performs well in terms of sustainable transport provisions.<br>Although, as has been noted, the character area is located in close proximity to Forbury Gardens, any impacts resulting from the development of tall buildings within this character area would be experienced indirectly by receptors in Forbury gardens. Views of tall buildings within Reading are an existing and characteristic feature of the Gardens. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b> , subject to the points made in the TBS.   |

## Character Area 15: Chatham Place

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The existing built form is large scale and blocky, ensuring that tall buildings would not result in a significant change to the urban grain. The absence of notable townscape features ensures a suitability for re-development. However, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how tall buildings would impact upon key views along West Street to Greyfriar's Church and to how they would be viewed from and impact upon views of St. Mary's Church. It is proposed that new building directly abutting St. Mary's Butts should not be tall structures. Any tall buildings should be set back from this road and the Conservation Area.    | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> , although the sensitivity of the key views mentioned remains as described in the TBS.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town: AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840   | No change.  |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The St Mary's/Castle Hill Conservation Area is located to the south.  | No change, although this should have referred to the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Along West Street to Greyfriar's Church   | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | No current applications.  |
| Market demand  | The occupier perception of the area is very poor.   | Occupier perception is likely to have improved with the redevelopment, which has enhance the environment. However, it remains something of a fringe location for office uses.                       |
| Flood Risk   | The area is not covered by either the Zone 3A, 3B or 2 flood risk zones.  | No change.  |
| Transport  | Significant infrastructural improvements required: This character area is cut off from the station and city centre and has poor provision of public transport and cycle routes.   | No significant change to the conclusion (it should be noted that conclusions about poor provision of public transport are compared to other areas of the town centre only, not Reading as a whole). |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | High: The existing built form is large scale and blocky, ensuring that tall buildings would not result in a significant change to the urban grain. The absence of notable townscape features ensures a suitability for re-development. However, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how tall buildings would impact upon key views along West Street to Greyfriar's Church and to how they would be viewed from, or impact upon views of, St. Mary's Church. It is proposed that new buildings directly abutting St. Mary's Butts should not be tall structures. Any tall buildings should be set back from this road and the Conservation Area. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b> , subject to the points made in the TBS.   |

## Character Area 16: the Civic Centre

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment  | 2018 update   |
|--|---|---|
| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: Due to the large scale of the individual elements of the character area, a tall building would not appear uncharacteristic. A tall building could provide structure and focus to the character area which is currently composed of poor quality, undistinguished buildings which creates a weak townscape character. However, careful consideration should be given to retaining glimpsed views to St. Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area and it is essential that the building does not become an intrusive and dominant feature of the skyline of views towards St. Mary's Conservation Area. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> , although the sensitivity of the key views mentioned remains as described in the TBS.   |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo Saxon Foundation: AD 500-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840  | No change.  |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | St. Mary's Church in the St. Mary's/Castle Hill Conservation Area is located adjacent to the character area. Castle Street to the south of the area contains numerous Listed Buildings.   | No change.  |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views from the Civic Centre to St. Mary's Church and Conservation Area  | No change.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.  | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -   | The planning application referred to in the townscape analysis (which did not include tall buildings) was approved, but the Council moved into an existing building elsewhere and the permission expired. Discussions on the future of the site are still underway, but no planning application is expected imminently. |
| Market demand  | This area could be developed for tall buildings but should be considered as a long term aspiration. Tall buildings would have to be developed following, or alongside significant urban renewal and public realm enhancements.  | This is still considered to be something of a fringe location in office market terms, but there is potential market demand for residential buildings. Urban renewal and public realm enhancements are still required.   |
| Flood Risk   | The area is not covered by either the Zone 3A, 3B or 2 flood risk zones.  | No change.  |
| Transport  | Infrastructural improvements required: This character area is within walking distance of the centre and main bus routes but is relatively distant from the railway station and existing cycle routes.   | No change. The environmental quality of pedestrian routes through the area require particular attention.  |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | High: Due to the large scale of the individual elements of the character area, a tall building would not appear uncharacteristic. A tall building could provide structure and focus to the character area which is currently composed of poor quality, undistinguished buildings which creates a weak townscape character. However, careful consideration should be given to retaining glimpsed views to  | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b> , subject to the points made in the TBS.   |

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|  | St. Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area. It is essential that the building does not become an intrusive and dominant feature of the skyline of views towards St. Mary's Conservation area. |  |
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## Character Area 18: The Oracle

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
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| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The large block size and existing landmark structures (e.g. spire on the car park) create a high capacity for the development of tall buildings. However, consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how the development would impact on the skyline above St Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area.  | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> .   |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area   | No change.   |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The character area is adjacent to st Mary's/Castle Street Conservation Area.   | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | Views along the Kennet and Avon canal eastwards  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.   |
| Market demand  | -  | No evidence of market demand for tall buildings on this site.  |
| Flood Risk   | The area is covered by small pockets of zones 3a and 3b flood risk, and the majority of the area falls within the zone 2 flood risk area.  | The areas of functional floodplain, close to Yield Hall Place have reduced somewhat. Otherwise, no significant change.                   |
| Transport  | Infrastructural improvements required: the area is within walking distance of the centre and main bus routes, signed on-road cycle routes and the National Cycle network traffic free routes, but the majority of the site is relatively distant from the railway station.   | No significant change, although improvements to National Cycle Network 422 which passes along south of site, have enhanced cycle access. |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | Moderate: The large block size and absence of historic features within the site create some capacity for tall buildings. However, consideration should be given to the sensitivity of the adjacent St. Marys Butts and Conservation Area. The area does not perform well in terms of sustainable transport provisions, and there are also significant flood risk considerations. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>moderate</b> .   |



### Character Area 19: Mallard Row to Fobney Street

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
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| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The area is characterised by apartment block buildings which are taller than the average residential built form in Reading. The apartment blocks create a medium sized townscape scale and urban grain. Buildings up to 10 storeys would not appear uncharacteristic in townscape terms. However, should built form taller than 10 storeys be proposed, careful consideration should be given to how the increased scale and density of development would impact upon St. Mary's Butts Conservation Area.                     | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> .   |
| Historical significance                                  | Anglo-Saxon Foundation: AD 50-1121<br>Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840<br>Adjacent to the St. Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area.   | No change.   |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The St. Mary's/Castle Street Conservation Area is adjacent to the northern boundary of the character area.   | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views within the character area have been defined.  | No change.   |
| Key views into the character area                        | Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west.<br>From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | No change.   |
| Market demand  | The perception of this area by occupiers is poor.  | This area is primarily a residential area. The Council has taken one of the few office buildings, and there is no indication of an increase in market demand.                |
| Flood Risk   | The area is covered by small pockets of zones 3a and 3b flood risk, and the majority of the area falls within the zone 2 flood risk area.  | There is a small patch of the area which is now considered to be part of the functional flood zone. Otherwise, the area is within Flood Zone 2 with patches in Flood Zone 3. |
| Transport  | Infrastructural improvements required: the area is within walking distance of the centre and main bus routes, but the majority of the site is relatively distant from the railway station and existing cycle networks.   | No significant change, although improvements to National Cycle Network 422 which passes along south of site, have enhanced cycle access.                                     |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | Moderate: The presence of existing tall apartment buildings ensures that buildings of a similar height would not be uncharacteristic. However, should built form taller than 10 storeys be proposed, careful consideration should be given to how the increased scale and density of development would impact upon St. Mary's Butts Conservation Area. The area does not perform well in terms of sustainable transport provisions. The poor market perception also detracts from the suitability of this area for tall buildings. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>moderate</b> .   |

## Character Area 21: Forbury South

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update   |
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| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The existing large block size and the presence of buildings up to 7 storeys and construction of a building up to 15 storeys ensures that a building of up a similar height would not be uncharacteristic. However, due to proximity to Reading Abbey, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to potential visual impacts which may result.   | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> .  |
| Historical significance                                  | Ecclesiastical Town; AD 1121-1539<br>Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840<br>Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.<br>Blake's cottages are listed structures within the character area.   | No change.  |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The character area is located approximately 150m from Reading Abbey (Scheduled Ancient Monument).  | No change. There is an ongoing project to improve heritage assets in the Abbey Quarter area to the north, and pull them together as a destination area.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | View along Wallington Street to the twin spires of St. John's Church and the Methodist Chapel.   | The view of Blakes Cottages was identified as a key view in RCAAP policy RC13.  |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.  |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | Abbey Mill House is a 15 storey building with planning permission.<br>There is an application for a building up to 14 storeys on the site of the existing King's Point building which has been permitted.  | The Blade (Abbey Mill House) has now been built out in the form expected at the time, and is a major Reading landmark. Development of a tall building at King's Point is underway, although this will now reach 17 storeys.   |
| Market demand  | The site is not located ideally for tall buildings due to the distance from the station. There is some potential for the site as a secondary office location, although it is considered that when Abbey Mill House is developed, it may satisfy the market need for tall buildings without the need for further development.   | The developments at Abbey Mill House and Kings Point have demonstrated an interest in tall buildings, although there remains availability at the Blade. There has been no interest shown in tall buildings on other sites within the area.  |
| Flood Risk   | The majority of the area falls within zone 2 for flood risk. The area closest to the Kennet falls within zone 3a.  | No significant change.  |
| Transport  | Significant infrastructural improvements required: The site has good access to public transport routes that link to the centre and station area but is otherwise poorly situated in terms of alternative and sustainable means of travel. A National Cycle Network traffic free route crosses through the length of the area and a link to the centre signed on road route is proposed for the future.   | No significant change to the conclusion (it should be noted that conclusions about poor provision of public transport are compared to other areas of the town centre only, not Reading as a whole).   |
| Suitability as a location for tall buildings             | High: Although the area is not currently considered to be optimum in terms of market demand, the development of Abbey Mill House will raise the profile of this part of Reading, The existing large block size and the presence of buildings up to 7 storeys and construction of a building up to 15 storeys ensures that a building of up a similar height would not be uncharacteristic. However, due to proximity to Reading Abbey, careful consideration should be given on a case by case basis to potential visual impacts which may result. | The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b> , subject to the points made in the TBS. However, it should be noted that the conclusions of the TBS were that the area could accommodate two tall buildings only, and, once King's Point is completed, this will have been met. |

## Character Area 22: Vastern Road

| Consideration  | Original Tall Buildings Strategy comment   | 2018 update  |
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| Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings | Low: The large block size which exists within the character area and the absence of any key views or visual focal point makes this an appropriate location for tall buildings. However it is proposed that tall structures should not be developed along the north and western boundaries of the character area as these boundaries are shared with small scale residential areas. any proposed built form should respond in terms of height and scale to the residential area. The tallest structures should be located to the south of the character area, adjacent to the railway line. In this area the townscape features are larger scale, and adjacent to large scale features outside of the area e.g. existing station buildings, Thames Tower and Western Tower. | Townscape sensitivity remains <b>low</b> , albeit with the caveats expressed in 2008 continuing to apply.  |
| Historical significance                                  | Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840.   | No change.   |
| Surrounding historical sensitivities                     | The nearest historical designation is the Market Place conservation Area which is located approximately 300m to the south.   | No change.   |
| Key views within the character area                      | No key views have been identified for this area  | The reading Station Area Framework looked in more depth at key views in the area. In particular, it identified a number of points where views could be improved, and, of most significance, opportunities to create new lines of sight through the area, from the Christchurch bridge southwards and from the northern station entrance northwards, so assist in creation of the north-south link. |
| Key views into the character area                        | From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.   | No change.   |
| Tall buildings planning applications                     | -  | Outline planning permission (110024) was granted on the sorting office site for a major mixed use development including residential, office, hotel and retail. The plot adjacent to the station entrance would have been up to 16 commercial storeys or 21 hotel storeys, with heights decreasing to the west. This permission has now expired.  |
| Market demand  | Currently not considered a major office location although should development around the station be successful in delivering 360 degree accessibility (rather than focusing on the established links to the south of the train line) the location would be sought after by occupiers.   | The 360 degree accessibility has been achieved with the northern station entrance and the pedestrian underpass, and interest has been expressed in this as a tall building location, including the now expired planning permission. It is considered likely that there is potential tall building market demand.   |
| Flood Risk   | The majority of the area falls within the zone 2 flood risk zone.  | The flood risk across the site has been reduced in the 2018 SFRA, with most of the site now within Flood Zone 2 and very few areas in Flood Zone 3. However, assessment of climate change scenarios show that flood risk would increase across most of the site in these eventualities.  |
| Transport  | Infrastructural improvements required: Although this area is close to  | This site has benefitted from significant improvements to  |

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|   | <p>the railway station, access across the railway is poor and will require improvement to take full advantage of its location. The links to the city centre are also poor but two main bus routes cross the area at either end. A future National Cycle Network traffic free route is proposed that would link the existing National Cycle Network traffic-free route along the river to the station area and city centre from one side of the character area.</p>  | <p>accessibility, as a result of the new northern station entrance, underpass linking the area to the core of the town centre to the south, the public transport interchange adjacent to the station entrance, and the Christchurch Bridge linking the site to Caversham. Transport accessibility is now very good.</p> |
| <p>Suitability as a location for tall buildings</p> | <p>High: The large block size which exists within the character area and the absence of any key views or visual focal point makes this an appropriate location for tall buildings. There are no key views which could be blocked by development of tall buildings. In order for tall building development within this area to be viable in terms of market considerations, there would need to be associated public realm enhancements and enhanced accessibility to improve market perception of the area.</p> | <p>The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains <b>high</b>, particularly with improvements to transport access. A new station square north also helps to enhance public realm, although redevelopment of adjacent buildings will be needed to fully realise this.</p>                                      |