

# The Meadway Centre Planning Brief

Supplementary Planning Document  
Adopted November 2013



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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Meadway is a district centre located in West Reading. The centre is split into two parts. The northern part of the centre is a purpose-built precinct opened in 1967, containing retail and leisure uses and a number of flats, with an area of car parking. The southern part of the centre is made up of an Asda superstore and its car park. The precinct is now dated and in poor condition, as well as being physically unappealing and failing to make the most of its location in design terms. The Asda store, whilst not necessarily being in as urgent need for regeneration as the precinct, nevertheless represents an important opportunity for providing a comprehensive development of this District Centre.

1.2 The overall strategy for the Borough involves a focus on a network and hierarchy of identified centres, of which the Meadway is one. As well as being a location for a significant range of local services and facilities, including retail, leisure and community provision, such centres should be places for people to live.

1.3 In recent years, there has been some interest in full or partial redevelopment of the Meadway precinct. Given the importance of the district centre location for the local area, it is important to set down the broad principles for the form that such development should take. The purpose of this Planning Brief is therefore to ensure that beneficial development at the Meadway takes place that makes maximum contribution to the local area.

1.4 The Brief was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013. It provides guidance which supplements policies in the Core Strategy (adopted 2008) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012) and should be read in conjunction with those documents.



## 2. The Site and its Surroundings

### Description of the Site

**2.1** The Meadway is a district centre located on Honey End Lane in West Reading, close to Prospect Park. It is approximately 3 km west of the centre of Reading, and 3 km from Junction 12 of the M4. Figure 1 shows the location of the site. It serves a residential area around the streets of Honey End Lane, the Meadway, Cockney Hill and Usk Road.

**2.2** The centre comprises two parts:

- A purpose built shopping precinct based around a central courtyard, with approximately 30 shop units, flats above the shops and car parking to the side and rear;
- An ASDA superstore with car parking to the rear.

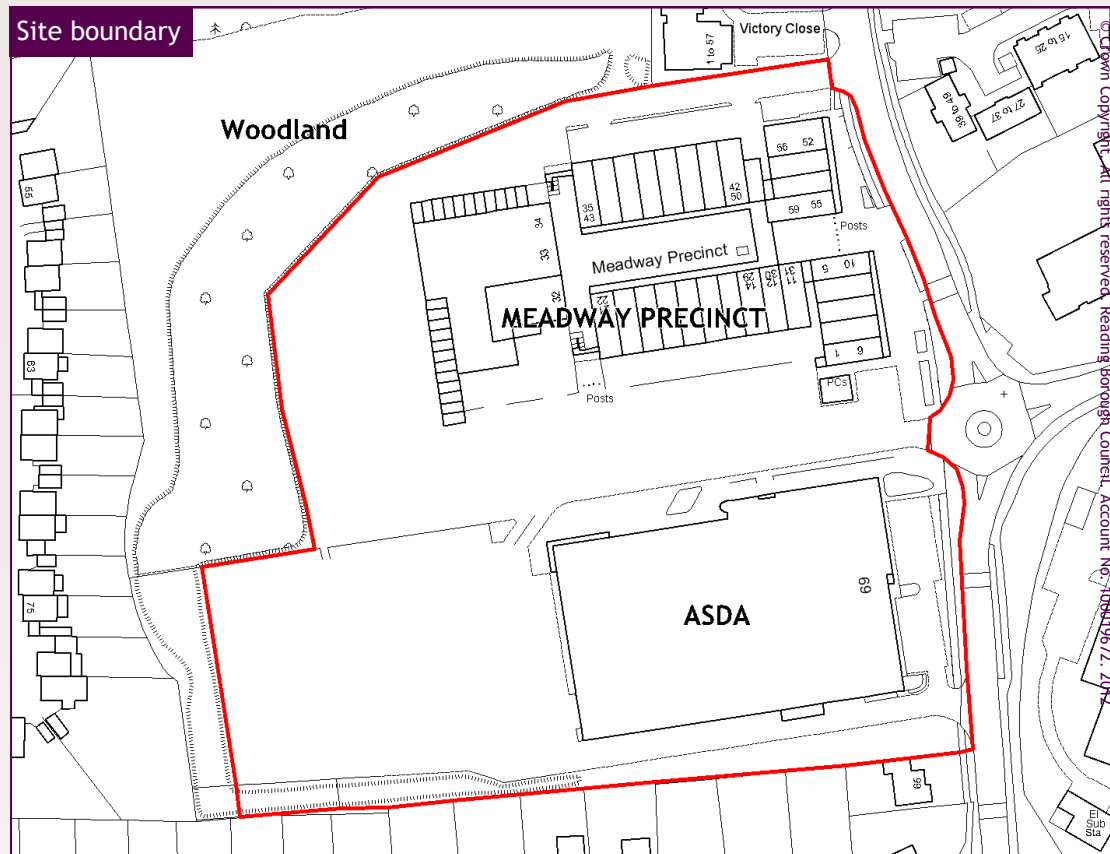
These two parts are in separate ownerships, which gives rise to challenges in terms of linking the sites together.

**2.3** Basic information about the site is below:

Address:	Honey End Lane, Reading, RG30 4AA
Ward:	Norcot
Grid Reference:	SU683727
Site Area:	3.0 ha
Freeholders at 2013:	Chillingham Ltd (Meadway Precinct) and Barrett Estate Services Ltd (Asda site)



Figure 1: Location of the Meadway Centre



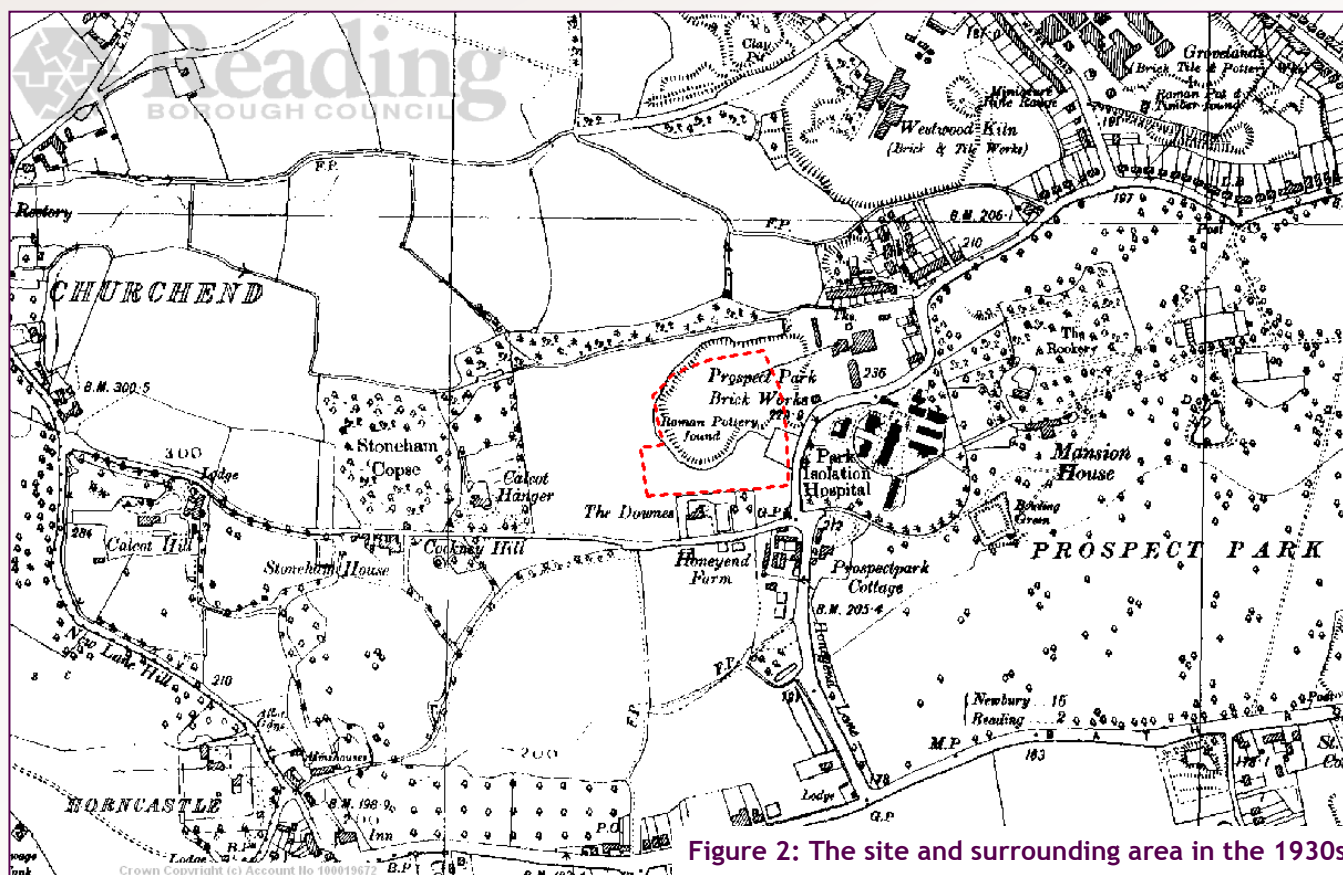
## History of the Site

- 2.4 Historic maps of the Borough show that the Meadway centre site (“the site”) was an area of parkland linked to Prospect Park up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2.5 The Prospect Park brickworks were established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, on the site now occupied by the recent development of Chimney Court, one of a number of such brickworks that made up one of the key industries for which Reading was known. The brickworks were on the opposite side of Honey End Lane from the site, although this part of the road did not exist before the development of the precinct. Excavations associated with the brickworks started pushing into the site in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and by the 1930s most of the site was covered by these excavations. This is the reason for the unusual topography of the site.



- 2.6 Figure 2 is a historic map of the area from the 1930s, before most of the surrounding development took place. At this point, the site was very much on the edge of the urban area of Reading. However, most of

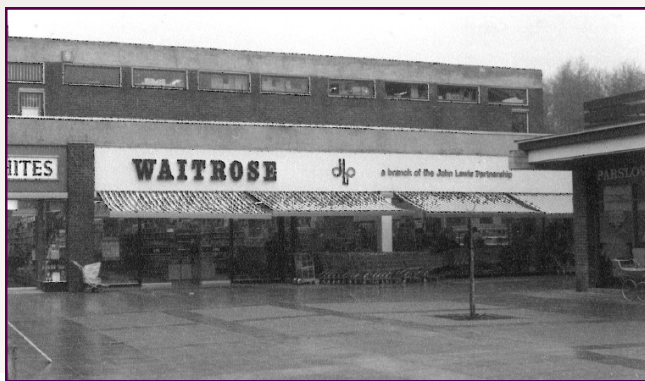
the surrounding residential streets were developed by the end of the 1950s, leading to a very different character for the area over a short period, and bringing the site into Reading itself.



**2.7** The Meadway precinct itself was constructed slightly later than most of the surrounding residential, in the 1960s, and opened in 1967. The development of the adjacent site now occupied by Asda took place slightly later again than the precinct, in the 1970s.

**2.8** The area of woodland to the northwest of the centre was originally part of Stoneham Copse, a larger woodland encompassing the area now covered by the middle part of Severn Way and Walmer Close.

**2.9** Since the construction of the centre, various developments have taken place in recent years, including the redevelopment of the brick kiln (the last such kiln in Reading to be demolished) for residential use, and some infilling in surrounding residential areas, e.g. along Cockney Hill.



**2.10** Little development has occurred at the Meadway Centre itself in recent years. However, it has been subject to a number of development proposals since 2000. In 2000 and 2001 there were a string of applications<sup>1</sup> for a new retail unit on the car park site, which would have comprised a Lidl store of between 1,000 and 1,500 sq m at the rear of the precinct. These applications were either withdrawn or subject to appeal against non-determination (and the appeal subsequently withdrawn).

**2.11** More recently, a planning application (05/01183/FUL) was submitted in 2005 that would have resulted in an additional 1,500 sq m of retail, 39 additional residential units and refurbishment of the existing precinct. However, this was refused for a variety of reasons, including that it was a piecemeal and poorly-designed solution that did not make the most of the opportunities available to enhance the precinct, and concerns about the level of parking. A subsequent appeal was withdrawn. A fresh application was submitted in 2007 (07/00044/FUL) for an additional 1,385 sq m of retail and 34 flats, but this was withdrawn after insufficient information was submitted.

<sup>1</sup>00/00241/FUL; 00/01322/FUL; 01/00097/FUL; 01/00101/OUT; 01/00270/FUL



1968 photos of the precinct. The site now occupied by Asda was not yet built and can be seen behind the car park on the bottom photo.

Figure 3: Characteristics of the Site and Surroundings



### Characteristics of the Local Area - Physical

- 2.12 The area around the Meadway centre is primarily residential in nature, with some sites in community use including Prospect College, St Michaels Primary School and Prospect Park Hospital. Prospect Park, one of Reading's most important and historic open spaces, is also nearby, with an entrance onto Honey End Lane just south of the Meadway Centre.
- 2.13 The woodland to the rear of the centre, part of the old Stoneham Copse, is covered by a variety of wildlife, landscape and tree protection designations. It forms part of the wider West Reading Woodlands, which is a chain of small woodlands running south east to north west through much of west Reading. Whilst important in its own right, it is vital as part of this green network.

*Characteristics of the Local Area - Social and Economic*

- 2.14 The area around the Meadway centre is mixed in terms of socio-economic characteristics. Some areas have no particular deprivation issues, but there are also pockets of some of the highest levels of deprivation in Reading, e.g. Usk Road, Dee Park and Coronation Square. Particular deprivation issues are education, training and skills, health and income<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.15 According to demographic information, the population of the three wards covering the majority of the area served by the Meadway centre (Norcot, Southcote and Tilehurst) is expected to increase by 3.6% between 2011 and 2015. This is slightly less than the overall forecast population increase for Reading Borough (3.9%). Most of this increase will take place in the Dee Park area due to a Homes and Communities Agency-funded residential development which is currently underway.

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<sup>2</sup>Deprivation can be measured using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, published by the Office of National Statistics. The most recent version dates from 2007. Each geographical area is given a deprivation score, based on various measures, and areas in England can then be ranked in order of deprivation. The lowest-level areas for which information is available are Super Output Areas (SOAs), and the approximately 32,000 SOAs in England can then be ranked.

### 3. Policy Context

**3.1** This Brief provides site-specific guidance for the Meadway Centre, but forms part of a wider planning policy framework for the area, and should be read in conjunction with the other documents within that framework.

**3.2** This Brief is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), meaning that it supplements and expands upon higher level planning policies. A SPD should therefore be linked to a 'parent' policy in a development plan. The two main policies that this Brief supplements are therefore policy **CS26 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres)** in the Core Strategy, adopted in 2008, and policy **SA15 (District and Local Centres)** in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document, adopted in October 2012. The two policies are set out in full in Appendix 1, which also includes more detail on the planning policy context. The main message is that this is an important district centre, in an accessible location, that will be appropriate for a significant development incorporating a wide range of uses.

**3.3** However, the Brief also links to a number of other policies. The relevant policies for the Meadway Centre can be summarised into a list of main policy principles, set out below. These are expanded on in more depth in terms of how they relate to the site in the Development Principles section.

**3.4** Appendix 2 shows an extract from the submission Proposals Map, showing the site-specific planning designations that affect the Meadway area.

<b>Land Use</b>	1	Development should result in an expanded, rather than contracted, offer of centre uses such as retail, leisure and community uses, retaining a strong retail character (CS26, CS27, CS31, DM13, DM15, SA15).
	2	There should be no loss of housing (CS17), and should preferably be an overall increase in centres (CS26, DM13).
	3	Housing will include an appropriate element of affordable housing (CS16) and will be built to Lifetime Homes standards (DM5).
<b>Layout &amp; Design</b>	4	High quality design emphasising safety, quality public realm and permeability (CS7) and protecting residential amenity (DM4).
	5	Intensity of development reflecting accessibility and character, meaning that a district centre location could be developed relatively intensely (CS4, DM15).
	6	Development should be sustainable in nature, and should reduce its effects on, and adapt to, climate change (CS1, DM1, DM2).
<b>Transport &amp; Movement</b>	7	Safe access, and no new access points onto Honey End Lane (DM12).
	8	Promotion of travel by sustainable modes (CS22, CS23, SA14).
	9	Adequate levels of car parking (CS24).
<b>Natural Environment</b>	10	Protect areas of biodiversity importance, and seek opportunities to link areas of importance into a green network across Reading (CS36, DM17).
	11	Existing important trees will be retained, and additional trees planted (CS38, DM18).
	12	Maintain the character of Major Landscape Features (CS37).
<b>Community</b>	13	Effects on pollution levels, and effects of pollution levels on proposed uses, will need to be mitigated (CS34, DM19).
	14	Development should contribute to social inclusion (CS3) and mitigate its effects on the need for infrastructure (CS9, DM3).

## 4. Vision

### 4.1 The vision for the Meadway is set out below:

The Meadway Centre will be developed to provide a high-quality, thriving and inclusive district centre for this part of West Reading. It will serve a number of vital different, but complementary roles:

- It will provide a widened range of services and facilities for the local community;
- It will act as a much-needed community hub for the local area, providing somewhere that local residents can meet, and serving all residents of all ages;
- It will be a desirable place for people, including families, to live;
- It will be easy and safe to move around for pedestrians, including people with disabilities, and will connect well to the surrounding areas by all modes of transport, including foot, cycle and public transport;
- It will be designed and laid out in a way that attracts visitors, connects well to its surroundings, provides high-quality public realm and is sustainable and durable; and
- It will take any opportunities to help to address deprivation issues within the local area.

Redevelopment and regeneration of the Meadway Centre is an important objective for the local community and for the Council. To that end, the Council will work positively and proactively with any landowner or developer seeking to progress a proposal that will improve the way that this site serves its local community and which fulfils the vision and principles for the site.

## 5. Development Principles

5.1 This section summarises the main development principles that should be taken into account in developing the site, whether for a comprehensive or a more partial development. Figure 4 (end of this section) illustrates some of these principles in map form where it is useful to do so.

### 5.2 Amount of Development

1. This Brief does not place any specific limit on the amount of floorspace that could be accommodated on the site. The overall planning strategy for Reading includes district centres as an important location for future development. In addition, an increase in overall floorspace may be required to make a development of the site viable. Where an increase of floorspace complies with the principles in this document and other policies, it will be appropriate.

### 5.2 Land Use

2. This is an identified district centre, and there should therefore be a wide mix of 'centre uses'<sup>3</sup> on the ground floor of the

site, in particular on key frontages. There should be no reduction in the overall diversity of uses and units. Uses should include retail, leisure and community facilities. A strong emphasis on retail would need to be retained, with, as an indication, at least 50% of the frontage to the main public areas in A1 retail use.

3. Uses such as cafes and banks and similar services have been identified as key uses to include where possible. Whilst planning has little control over the occupiers of shop units within the centre, there has been a large response to the Options Consultation specifying the types of occupiers that local people would wish to see. Appendix 3 contains the answers to this question, which may well be of use to inform any future development.
4. Retention of some shop units for smaller retailers is important to ensure diversity of units and to retain as wide an appeal as possible. It will also potentially enable existing occupiers, who have built up strong local customer bases, to remain within the Centre, which was a message which emerged strongly through public consultation.

5. The Meadway Centre, as an accessible district centre, is an appropriate location for an intensification of uses including housing. A net increase in residential is sought on the site. At the very least, there should be no net reduction in residential, either in terms of number of residential units or floorspace. There should also be retention of some residential units of a suitable size for families.
6. Redevelopment should make provision for affordable housing, in line with the Council's adopted policies (currently CS16 in the Core Strategy for developments of 15 or more dwellings, or DM6 in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document, as supplemented by the Affordable Housing SPD, for smaller sites).
7. All housing should be built to Lifetime Homes standards, in line with the Council's adopted policy DM5 in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

<sup>3</sup> 'Centre uses' are defined in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document paragraph 7.1.5 as being those uses within use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1 and D2, as well as those uses within 'sui generis' that are typically found in centres.

### 5.3 Layout and Design

#### Layout

8. The centre should function as a single entity, with much improved linkages between key elements. This is clearly easiest to achieve with a comprehensive development of the whole Centre. However, if a comprehensive scheme is not possible, development on either the precinct site or the Asda site must be orientated and designed so that the constituent elements function together in a way that benefits the whole Centre.
9. The Centre should be arranged around a new public space. The fact that the Centre has a courtyard at its core is popular with many local residents, even if the specific way it is arranged, facing away from other public areas, is not ideal. This does not necessarily need to be a sizeable area of open space, but it should serve as a focus for the Centre, providing attractive public realm, connecting well to all parts of the centre as well as surrounding streets. Such an area will also be capable of providing an area for some community events. The public realm should include external seating.

10. The precinct currently turns its back on the Asda store and the main approach from the car park and Honey End Lane. This should not be the case in future development schemes. Key active frontages should face onto the public realm and Honey End Lane. In the event that only the precinct part of the centre comes forward for redevelopment at one time, active frontages should also face the Asda site, to ensure that linkages are improved.

#### Landscape

11. The principles in the Council's Tree Strategy will need to be adopted and include tree planting within the design, with consideration given to species (in terms of climate change, form, size) and their long-term retention (available space above and below ground, quality of rooting environment, maintenance and aftercare). Tree planting should be included throughout the site to improve the overall appearance and quality of the scheme, but with the following priorities:
  - Within an area of open space at the heart of the centre;
  - On the Honey End Lane frontage;

- Along the landscaped strip at the south of the site;
  - Within the main car parking area (unless this is not possible due to, for instance, deck parking).
12. Landscaping will need to be considered at an early stage and incorporated as part of the new layout. Incorporation of green elements in particular will help avoid creation of a bleak urban environment similar to the current precinct, as well as helping to adapt to climate change and improve health.



**Density and Mix**

13. District centres should be locations of higher density development than surrounding residential areas, and should be linked to levels of accessibility by non-car modes of transport, in line with the Core Strategy. Therefore, the Centre will be appropriate for higher density development (which does not necessarily mean higher buildings - see below).
14. As a district centre, it is appropriate for uses to be mixed vertically, bringing activity and surveillance to the Centre at different times of day. Residential will mainly be on upper floors, but there is some potential for ground level residential away from key frontages, depending on the exact layout of any development.

**Scale, Height and Massing**

15. Height and massing of the site should take account of its topography and surrounding uses. Parts of the north and northwest of the site are well screened from surrounding residential uses by slopes and woodlands, and could house somewhat higher buildings than other parts of the site. Likewise, there may be scope for some higher elements on Honey End Lane to emphasise the entrance(s) to the centre. However, development should reduce in height towards the residential gardens on Cockney Hill, as any higher development here would have a significant effect on these properties due to the topography.

**Architectural Details and Materials**

16. Materials should be high-quality and should be of a type that will not date as quickly as the existing precinct has. In particular, there is an opportunity to highlight the important history of the site in brick and tile production through careful use of materials.



Examples of patterned brickwork in Reading. Reading was a major producer of brick from sites such as the current site of The Meadway Precinct.

### Sustainability

17. Development should exhibit a high level of sustainability of design and construction, in line with the Council's adopted policies (CS1, DM1, DM2). In particular, a mixed-use development on this scale offers good potential for decentralised energy to be incorporated into the scheme, which could for example include combined heat and power. The topography of the site, receiving run-off from surrounding slopes, and the current amount of hard surfacing, means that there are potential surface water drainage issues. There is therefore the potential for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to improve surface water drainage, including measures such as permeable paving and green roofs.

### Safety and Security

18. Safety and security was a key concern raised during consultation. Therefore, the aim should be to design out crime and anti-social behaviour where possible. The police's Secured By Design principles provide guidance on designing out crime<sup>4</sup>, and these

principles should be adhered to in schemes for the Meadway Centre. The key points from these principles are set out in Appendix 4. The Council will expect developments to achieve the Secured By Design award.

19. Thames Valley Police provided detailed guidance on aspects of designing for safety and security at the Meadway Centre. These should be taken into account in the design, and are summarised in Appendix 5.

## 5.4 Transport and Movement

20. An increase in overall number of trips to the Centre is anticipated, and may well in fact be a sign of a successful development. However, it is important that impacts upon the transport network are fully mitigated, in line with policy. This will mean that the development, if it generates additional trips, will need to incorporate enhanced provision for non-car modes of transport.
21. Honey End Lane is a classified road, and the Council's policy is that there should be no new entrances onto classified roads. Therefore, development on the site will need to, insofar as is possible, utilise existing vehicle access points.



22. A roundabout at the junction of Honey End Lane and the entrance to the Meadway Centre should be retained. It provides an important highways function for u-turns. It also provides a convenient point for buses to turn, if a more direct bus service were to be provided.
23. Car parking should be provided in line with the Council's Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document<sup>5</sup>. The headline requirements for this location are as follows:
- A1 food, and A1 non-food over 1,000 sq m - 1 space per 30 sq m
  - A1 non-food less than 1,000 sq m - 1 space per 40 sq m
  - 1-2 bed flat - 1.5 spaces per dwelling
  - 3+ bed flat - 2 spaces per dwelling

<sup>4</sup> See design guides for individual uses:  
<http://www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/guides.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.reading.gov.uk/documents/servingyou/planning/local\\_development\\_framework/21420/Revised-Parking-SPD-Adopted-1011.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/documents/servingyou/planning/local_development_framework/21420/Revised-Parking-SPD-Adopted-1011.pdf)

24. New areas of public car parking should represent an improvement over the current public parking area. In particular, it should avoid significant slopes, and pedestrian movement within the car park should be safe. Terracing of car parking may be one means to deal with the slope issue. Parking charges are not a matter that can be dealt with through planning, but current parking charges have been cited by many in public consultation as part of the reason for the underperformance of the Centre.

25. Redevelopment of the site should enhance the facilities and access for cycling. Cycle access to the site should be planned into any development from the outset, and should be safe and secure.



26. Cycle parking should be also provided in line with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD. The headline requirements for this location are as follows:

- A1 food, and A1 non-food over 1,000 sq m - 1 space per 6 staff and 1 space per 300 sq m
- A1 non-food less than 1,000 sq m - 1 space per 6 staff and 1 space per 250 sq m
- 1-2 bed flat - 0.5 spaces per dwelling
- 3+ bed flat - 1 space per dwelling

27. Provision should be made to ensure good quality pedestrian access to bus stops on The Meadway and Honey End Lane. This could potentially include a footpath through the woodland to the west of Victory Court, which would offer a more direct route to the bus stop - this should be well-lit and laid out in a way to mitigate the slope. This is subject to land ownership issues. If such a path is proposed as part of development, it should be ensured that the Centre does not turn its back on this entrance to the precinct and allows for a safe and attractive link.

28. The centre should benefit from good quality pedestrian access to and from Prospect Park, which would include signage.



Prospect Park

29. Improved lighting along Honey End Lane is one measure which will be important to improve both pedestrian and cycle access to the centre. Lighting should be to the most recent standards of the highways authority.

30. Servicing arrangements will need to be in compliance with the policy set out in the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD. Development should avoid servicing arrangements that are directly adjacent to residential gardens, in particular those along the north side of Cockney Hill.

## 5.5 Natural Environment

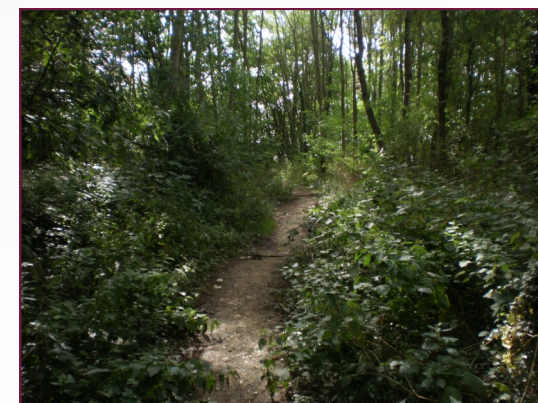
31. The woodland to the west and north of the site is covered by a number of designations. It is an area of open space protected under SA16, a Major Landscape Feature identified under CS37 and SA17, is covered by an area Tree Preservation Order, and most of it has identified wildlife importance as both a Local Wildlife Site and a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The policy presumption is therefore that the woodland be retained.

32. There are opportunities to enhance the woodland. It has been identified as part of the West Reading Woodlands Biodiversity Opportunity Area, meaning that targets for improvement apply. The main priority in these woodlands is management of the woodland to achieve a favourable or recovering condition on 65% of native broadleaved woodland. There is also the potential for restoration of grassland habitat on the steep slope.

33. There is an excellent opportunity to help stitch together parts of the green network, namely by creating a landscaped strip along the southern boundary of the site, to link the wooded/grassy slope to the west with the entrance to Prospect Park. This should not be blocked by physical barriers (i.e. a grassed area is currently fenced off).

34. Important trees should be retained - please see Figure 3 showing Tree Preservation Orders.

35. Development should take account of the location of the northern edge of the site within an Air Quality Management Area. This designation does not necessarily prevent the location of residential development within it, but there will be an expectation that both the effects on air quality, and the effects of low air quality on proposed sensitive uses, particularly residential, will be mitigated. See policy DM19 in the SDPD.



## 5.6 Community and Social Role

36. The Centre should have an enhanced role as a centre for the local community. In part, this can be achieved simply by inclusion of a range of shops and services, in line with the criteria set out under 5.2. However, it should also be capable of hosting limited community events, and should be designed in a way that encourages public interaction in the public realm at the core. As well as through community facilities, this can also be achieved by commercial uses that encourage interaction, for instance cafes, as well as by inclusion of facilities such as children's play, within a single area.

37. Particular local deprivation issues include education, skills and training, and health. Development presents an opportunity to help to address some of these local issues. This can be through provision of community facilities, e.g. for adult education or primary healthcare. However, it can also be through other measures through improving the skills of the local labour force during the construction process (see Draft Employment, Skills and Training SPD), improving the pedestrian

and cycle environment to promote healthy travel choices, and high quality public areas.

38. The centre should appeal to a wide range of potential users. In particular, facilities for elderly people and families with young children (for instance play equipment as part of the design of the public realm) would fit well with the demographic profile of the local population.

39. Disabled access is a key concern locally, raised through public consultation, and this should be reflected in the design of the Centre. All elements of the Centre should be accessible to people with disabilities. This will mean level access to shops and services, within the public realm and to and from adjoining areas and areas of car parking.



40. It is vital that development mitigates any adverse impacts that it has on local infrastructure provision. At the time of drafting, the Council is in the process of drawing up its Community Infrastructure Levy, which may be in place by the time any specific proposals are made. However, even with CIL in place, the Council will continue to seek Section 106 agreements to deal with any site-specific impacts not covered in CIL. Contributions sought will depend on the development proposed, but priorities for Reading in DM3 include affordable housing, transport, education, employment and skills, and open space. At the Meadway Centre, this may also include decentralised energy and health infrastructure, in line with other development principles. Please refer to the latest versions of the following documents for the up-to-date picture of requirements, which at the time of adoption were:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, February 2013)
- Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under S106 (Adopted November 2013)
- Affordable Housing SPD (Adopted July 2013)
- Employment, Skills and Training SPD (Adopted April 2013)



## 5.7 Management and Maintenance

41. One of the most significant contributors to the decline of the precinct has been lack of maintenance. Therefore, there should be clear proposals for maintenance of any development, in particular of the public realm.
42. Retail and other commercial uses should be managed to avoid causing detrimental impacts on local residential properties in surrounding streets, through, for instance, disturbance by delivery lorries, or through disposal of shopping trolleys.

Figure 4: Development Principles Map

## 6. Development Options

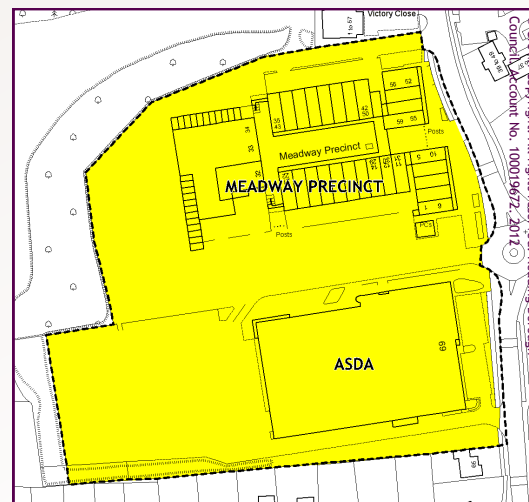
6.1 The Council wishes to see as comprehensive development of the site as possible. A comprehensively-designed centre will best meet the needs of the local area through provision of uses that complement, rather than compete with one another, and by ensuring that the Centre as a whole is as viable as possible. For this reason, the Council's preference is for a redevelopment of the whole centre as one proposal, including both the precinct and the Asda site.

6.2 However, planning guidelines need to be flexible to meet new circumstances as they arise. It must be recognised that the site is under two separate ownerships, which may come forward for development at different times. In the event that a comprehensive development of the whole centre is not possible, the Brief needs to contain guidance on other potential development options that could fulfil some of the aims for the Centre.

### OPTION 1: REDEVELOPMENT OF WHOLE CENTRE

6.3 Redevelopment of the whole Centre is the clear preference of the Council. This will give the best opportunity for a new centre that addresses the needs of the local area, maximises its own potential for development in line with its accessibility, and which offers the best opportunity for a centre that will survive and thrive into the future.

6.4 The development principles in this document have largely been devised with a redevelopment of the whole Centre in mind. Therefore, no further guidance is required here.



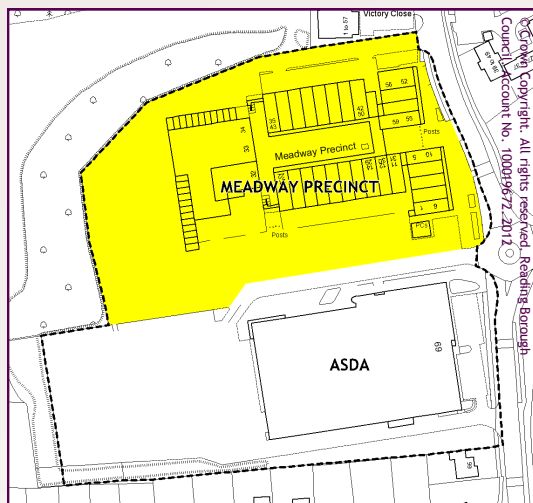
### OPTION 2: REDEVELOPMENT OF PRECINCT ONLY

6.5 This option is not the Council's preference, as it limits the potential for a single centre that functions as a whole. However, land ownership and viability issues may well mean that a redevelopment of the precinct on its own is the only achievable option in the short term.

6.6 In this instance, one of the most important considerations will be how the new development relates to the Asda site. This will need to be considered not only in terms of the relationship with the existing building, but whether or not the development prejudices future development layouts on the Asda site, as and when it comes forward for redevelopment. Active frontages featuring main town centre uses, rather than rear service entrances, should face towards Asda, and towards the main entrance from Honey End Lane. There should be an entrance to the development that relates well to the current and any likely future frontage of the Asda site, and which is a welcoming and inviting design for Asda shoppers. The crossing of the road should be safe and easy to negotiate for pedestrians. Measures to improve this crossing could include the use of a porte

cochère, covered walkways etc, as well as the pedestrian crossing. Pedestrians should not be forced to walk through car parking areas to move between the precinct site and the Asda site.

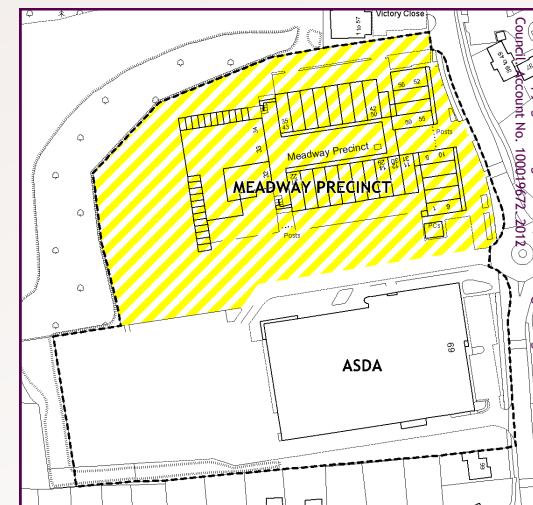
- 6.7 Apart from the above, the development principles in this document (unless they apply only to the Asda site) should be capable of being applied on a redevelopment of the precinct only.



### OPTION 3: PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF PRECINCT

- 6.8 It is not considered likely that a partial redevelopment of the precinct will adequately address the existing precinct's failings, unless that partial redevelopment is very extensive. Certainly, the retention of parts of the precinct such as the southern block facing away from Asda is likely to prevent a suitable development being achieved, and is only likely to reinforce the impression of the precinct as being patched up at best.

- 6.9 Partial redevelopment will therefore only be acceptable if it adequately fulfils all of the development principles in this document. At this stage, the Council does not see how that can occur, and cannot give any further guidance. However, if acceptable partial redevelopment proposes leaving the current courtyard in place, the trees within that courtyard should be retained.



## 7. Implementation

### *Pre-Application Discussions*

- 7.1 On a site of this importance, the Council will expect applicants to engage in pre-application discussions before submitting a planning application. These discussions should include consultation with the local community, in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement<sup>6</sup>, and reflecting the strong community interest in the future of the site.

### *Information Requirements for Planning Application*

- 7.2 Pre-application discussions will reveal in more depth the information which is likely to be required to be submitted. The Council has a Validation Checklist, available on the website, which sets out the general information requirements that need to be submitted with different types of application. However, some information particularly required for a major redevelopment including the Meadway includes:

- Design and Access Statement;
- Potentially an Environmental Impact Assessment<sup>7</sup>;
- Supporting planning policy statement;
- Draft heads of terms for section 106 agreement;
- Affordable housing statement;
- Sunlighting/daylighting assessment (where appropriate<sup>8</sup>);
- Transport assessment and Travel Plan, or Transport Statement<sup>9</sup>;
- Parking and Servicing Details;
- An Air Quality Assessment may be required (see comments in paragraph 9.2.9 of the SDPD);
- Retail Impact Assessment: whilst this is generally not a requirement for in-centre development, a redevelopment of a whole centre could potentially have detrimental impacts on other centres. An impact assessment would therefore be helpful;
- Flood Risk Assessment (where development site is greater than 1 hectare);
- Biodiversity Survey and Report;
- Tree Survey;
- Hard and soft landscaping details;
- Pre-Assessment Estimator (incorporating a 3% buffer);
- Sustainability Statement and Energy Statement;
- Utilities and Drainage Statement;
- Ventilation/Extraction Details<sup>10</sup>;
- External lighting details;
- A statement of community involvement<sup>11</sup>;
- Statement of construction waste and materials recycling.

- 7.3 The above list is not necessarily comprehensive. Depending on the nature of the proposal, other information may be required.

<sup>6</sup> Most recent version adopted 2006, although a new version was published for consultation in November 2013

<sup>7</sup> Development here may be EIA development under Schedule 2 as an urban development project including the construction of, among others, shopping centres and car parks on a development area over 0.5 hectares, if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

<sup>8</sup> Where buildings exceed 4 storeys, where development adjoins other developed land, or elsewhere if specified in pre-application advice.

<sup>9</sup> Transport assessment and Travel Plan required for over 80 dwellings/2500 sq m of business floorspace; Transport statement required for over 50 dwellings/1500 sq m of business floorspace.

<sup>10</sup> For any scheme involving A3, A4 or A5 uses, or where commercial development is proposed to have substantial ventilation and extraction equipment.

<sup>11</sup> This is generally a validation requirement for developments over 50 dwellings or 2500 sq m, but in the case of the Meadway Centre, which has significant implications for the local community, it will be expected for a significant development below this threshold.

**Masterplan**

- 7.4 The relationship between the precinct and Asda sites is key to the success of any development. The ideal solution is a comprehensive development of both sites at once. However, where this is not proposed, proposals for one of the two sites should be accompanied by details of the relationship between the sites, both before and after development. Ideally, this should include a masterplan of the whole site, showing how the proposal would fit into a wider development.

**Section 106 Requirements**

- 7.5 In accordance with Policies CS9 and DM3, any development will be expected to make appropriate financial contributions towards infrastructure provision made necessary by the development. The Council's Supplementary Document on Planning Obligations outlines the Council's requirements, as well as the Employment, Skills and Training SPD and the Affordable Housing SPD. Appropriate provision or contributions will be expected for the provision of transport, education and open space improvements, arising from any more intensive use of the site compared to its current use.
- 7.6 Applicants should note that the Council is currently preparing its Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. Over time it is anticipated that developer contributions will operate alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy where there are site-specific impacts requiring mitigation, other than for site-specific impacts.

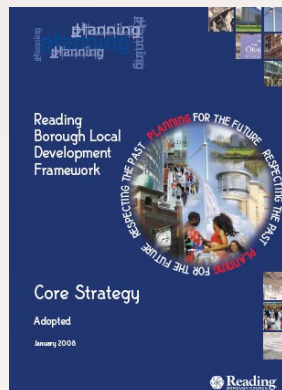
**Phasing**

- 7.7 The site has a number of existing occupants, both residential occupiers and businesses. In the case of local businesses, many of these are important facilities for the local community, who have expressed a wish for them to be retained (see Statement of Consultation). Where businesses or residents are to remain on site, it would be preferable if development could be phased in order to allow them to do so. It is also important that the Centre should continue to fulfil a district centre role throughout as much of the development process as possible, as any substantial break in this role could result in changes in shopping habits that may be difficult to reverse. The Council would therefore wish to see details of the proposed phasing of the development at the planning application and, preferably, pre-application stage.

## Appendix 1: Relevant Development Plan Policies

### Main Policy Relationships

- A1.1 The two main policies that this Brief supplements are policy **CS26 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres)** in the Core Strategy, adopted in 2008, and policy **SA15 (District and Local Centres)** in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document, adopted in October 2012. The text of the two policies is set out below.



### CS26: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

The following network of centres is identified: -

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

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

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

### SA15: DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES

The following District, Major Local and Local Centres, as identified in the Core Strategy, are defined on the Proposals Map:

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

Although some intensification of town centre uses within all centres will be acceptable, the centres which will be the main focus for intensification, change and additional community facilities will be The Meadway and Whitley District Centres, and Dee Park Local Centre.

The following improvements will be acceptable in all centres:

- Accessibility and transport improvements;
- Broadening range of facilities; and
- Environmental enhancements.

**A1.2** In addition, the supporting text to policy SA15 (paragraph 14.5.5) makes specific mention of the Meadway precinct, as follows:

*“The Meadway is an ageing shopping precinct which would benefit from substantial physical improvement (or, potentially, complete redevelopment) to allow it to continue its District Centre role. There should not be a net loss of ‘centre uses’ or residential on this site.”*

**A1.3** It is therefore clear that significant development and change at the Meadway centre is envisaged in policy, and that change will support and reinforce its district centre role.

#### Other Policy Relationships

**A1.4** There are a number of other policies in the Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document that are relevant, as are some topic-related Supplementary Planning Documents. Figure A1 below lists the main relevant policy principles that should be taken into account in considering development on this site:

CORE STRATEGY (Adopted 2008)		SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES DOCUMENT (Adopted 2012)	
CS1: Sustainable Design and Construction (as supplemented by Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, 2011)	Development should be sustainable in nature, use resources efficiently, and meet a number of more specific requirements. The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD contains more specific guidance.	DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change	Development should adapt to climate change, e.g. orientation, shading, drainage.
CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity	Development should demonstrate how it will address issues of social exclusion.	DM2: Decentralised Energy	Large developments (over 20 dwellings or 1,000 sq m) should consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision.
CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development	The density and intensity of development should reflect the level of accessibility by sustainable forms of transport.	DM3: Infrastructure	Identifies priorities for infrastructure provision. These priorities will be developed further in the Community Infrastructure Levy and a S106 SPD.
CS7: Design and the Public Realm	A high quality of design is required that reflects principles such as high quality public realm, permeability and safe environments.	DM4: Safeguarding Amenity	The amenity of existing and future residents will be protected.
CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities	Development will mitigate its impacts on infrastructure, services, resources and amenities. More guidance will be set out in a SPD.	DM5: Housing Mix	New housing to be designed to Lifetime Homes standards
CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix	Density and mix of housing will be related to character, accessibility, mix and environmental impacts. An indicative density range for an ‘urban’ area is 40-75 dwellings per hectare.	DM12: Access, Transport and Highways-Related Matters	New or altered accesses will be considered in terms of safety, congestion and the environment. Reference is made to the Council’s adopted standards, which include no new access points on classified roads - Honey End Lane is classified.
CS16: Affordable Housing	Developments of 15 units or more should provide 50% affordable housing.	DM13: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres	Defines a key frontage in centres, and specifies that, for the Meadway, no less than 50% of that frontage will be in A1 use. There are also a number of other requirements, including no loss of ground floor centre uses to non-centre uses.
CS17: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock	There should not be a net loss of housing.	DM15: Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses	There should be no loss of leisure facilities within centres, which means that the gym should be retained.
CS22: Transport Assessments	Development proposals should make provision for an adequate level of accessibility and safety in accordance with an agreed transport assessment.	DM17: Green Network	The network of areas of existing and potential biodiversity significance should be retained and enhanced through provision of green links.
CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans	Major development proposals should promote and improve sustainable transport facilities.	DM18: Tree Planting	Development should result in an increase in tree planting.
CS24: Car/Cycle Parking (as supplemented by Parking Standards and Design SPD, 2011)	Parking standards for specific uses are set out by zone. The Meadway falls within zone 3.	DM19: Air Quality	Part of the site is within an Air Quality Management Area (see Appendix 2). Therefore, applications will need to address the air quality issue, and, potentially, identify mitigation measures.
CS26: Network and Hierarchy of Centres	See above.	SA14: Cycle Routes	Maintain and enhance identified cycle routes. A route along Honey End Lane has been identified (see Appendix 2).
CS27: Retail Character of Centres	A strong retail character should be retained in smaller centres.	SA15: District and Local Centres	See above.
CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities	New community facilities will be acceptable. Loss of an existing facility only acceptable where there is no need for it.		
CS34: Pollution and Water Resources	Development will not damage the environment through pollution. Proposals sensitive to pollution will not be in areas with high levels of pollution.		
CS36: Biodiversity and Geology	Protection of sites with biodiversity or geological value, including Local Wildlife Sites. Protection and enhancement of the network of wildlife links and corridors.		
CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space	Development should not detract from the Major Landscape Features, including the West Reading wooded ridgeline.		
CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodland	Protects trees, hedges and woodland		

Figure A1: Other Main Relevant Policies

## Appendix 2: Extract from Adopted Proposals Map



## Appendix 3: Results of Consultation on Land Use

(see <http://www.reading.gov.uk/documents/servingyou/planning/supplementary-guidance/23536/Meadway-Report-of-Consultation-0612.pdf>)

### 5. What uses would you like to see on the Meadway site in the future?

The following data relate to the ten uses listed on the questionnaire. The information on the left shows the number of respondents who wanted to see the use on site. The information on the right gives the average ranking by those who ranked uses in order, with 1 being the highest priority. Only 15 respondents ranked uses in order, and the number in brackets relates to the number of respondents who ranked that particular use.

Number of respondents			Average Rank (No of times ranked)	
Small local shops	239		1.8	(10)
Banks and other services	228		3.7	(13)
Cafes and restaurants	225		2.4	(12)
Community facilities and meeting spaces	136		4.3	(6)
Larger shops e.g. foodstore	106		2.8	(6)
Improved parking	102		5.3	(7)
Leisure facilities	93		4.8	(5)
Public spaces	90		6.3	(4)
Housing (smaller)	83		4.6	(5)
Housing (family-sized)	45		5.4	(5)

There were three clear favoured options of the ten set out in the leaflet, namely small local shops, banks and other services and cafes and restaurants. A number of people selected larger stores, although it was clear from comments that some simply wanted the retention of the existing superstore. The two housing uses were the least popular, although some respondents also specified housing generally, which is listed on the following page.

*Additional Comments: Popular answers, by number of times given (5 or more respondents only)*

Other comments		
No housing	28	
No Tesco	7	
No large foodstore in addition to Asda	7	

The following data relate to uses that were not listed on the questionnaire but were specified by respondents. The data relate to number of times each use was suggested only. Although these uses were occasionally ranked by respondents, they were not ranked by sufficient respondents to be able to report on overall patterns.

Post office	108	
Health centre / GP surgery	39	
Chemist / pharmacy	35	
Newsagent	35	
Free parking	34	
Children's play area	27	
Hairdresser / barber	24	
Bakers	21	
Dentist	21	
Hardware / DIY shop	21	
Housing (where not specified above)	21	
Butchers	19	
Market (including farmer's market)	17	
Seating	16	
Takeaways	14	
Dry cleaners	11	
Greengrocer	11	
Gym	11	

Pub / bar	11	
Trees / planting	11	
Clothes shop	10	
Swimming pool / leisure centre	10	
Toilets	10	
Affordable housing	9	
Council office / advice centre	8	
Library	8	
Card shop	7	
Charity shops	7	
Cash machine	6	
Pet shop	6	
Shoe shop	6	
Bowling alley	5	
Craft shop	5	
Cycle parking	5	
Nursery / creche	5	
Travel agent	5	

The use which was listed by the most respondents was a post office, which, despite not being an option on the form, was specified by almost one third of respondents. Other uses not currently present which received significant support included a health centre or GP surgery, play area, free car parking and some form of market.

Many of the other uses specified were specific types of shop, e.g. newsagent, butchers, bakers or DIY shop. Planning guidance would not be able to specify this type of matter, but it is still useful information to inform any development on site.

Other selected answers:

- Facilities for elderly people, including daycare;
- Adult learning/New Directions;
- Holiday play clubs;
- Sure Start;
- Mother and baby facility;
- Housing for elderly people;
- Offices or small business units;
- Live/work units;
- Police office;
- Petrol station;
- Vet;
- Wool shop;
- Internet café; and
- Ice rink.

## Appendix 4: Secured by Design Key Points (source: <http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf>)

### Integrated Approach

- Investment in a well integrated and co-ordinated approach to design and project planning will pay dividends through resolution of potentially conflicting interests;
- The best available advice should be utilised, from the earliest stages of a project.

### Environmental Quality and Sense of Ownership

- Sensitive design that takes full account of the social and environmental context and encourages positive community interaction can help foster community spirit and a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. Where possible, the local community should be involved in the planning and design process;
- Provision of high quality landscape settings for new development and refurbishment, where external spaces are well-designed and well integrated with the buildings, can help create a sense of place and strengthen community identity;
- Well designed public spaces which are responsive to community needs will tend to be well used and will offer fewer opportunities for crime;
- Long-term maintenance and management arrangements must be considered at an early stage, with ownerships, responsibilities and resources clearly identified

### Natural Surveillance

- Public and semi-private areas should be readily visible from nearby buildings or from well used rights of way;
- Natural surveillance is to be strongly encouraged, but care is needed particularly in residential development to ensure that privacy is not infringed;
- For residential development, parking should be provided close to and visible from the buildings where the owners live.

### Access and Footpaths

- Superfluous and unduly secluded access points and routes should be avoided;
- Access points to the rear of buildings should be controlled, for example by means of lockable gates (see also The Alleygater's Guide to Gating Alleys, link from SBD website);
- Roads to groups of buildings should be designed to create a sense of identity, privacy and shared ownership;
- Footpaths and cycleways should only be provided if they are likely to be well used;
- Footpaths and cycleways should be of generous width and have a suitable landscape setting to avoid creating narrow corridors which could be perceived as threatening;
- In terms of security, the design of the footpath is of equal importance to the design of the building. Where possible, the footpath should be at least 3 metres wide with a 2 metre wide verge on either side. Any shrub planting should start at the back of the verges.
- The position of planting and choice of species should be such that hiding places are not created. Thorny species of shrub can help to deter intruders;
- Good visibility should be maintained from either end, and along the route of footpaths and cycleways. Sharp changes in direction should be avoided;
- Footpaths and cycleways should not generally be routed to the rear of buildings, but if this is unavoidable a substantial buffer should be planted between a secure boundary fence and the footpath's margins, with planting designed so as to discourage intruders;
- Where developments adjoin waterways or rivers with towpath/footpath access, the buildings should 'face both ways', i.e. overlook the watercourse as well as the street;

- Footpaths and cycleways should be lit in built-up areas, except where the route is passing through woodland or an ecologically sensitive area, in which case an alternative lit route should be made available, such as a footway alongside a road;
- Alternative routes to important destinations may be beneficial, although a balance has to be struck between the advantages of greater choice and perceived security against the disadvantage of providing additional means of escape or of encouraging inappropriate movement of people

### Open Space Provision and Management

- In the urban setting, open space, footpaths and cycleways should preferably be overlooked from buildings or traffic routes. Buildings should preferably face onto these areas, provided always that acceptable security for rear elevations can still be ensured;
- Property boundaries, particularly those at the side and rear, which adjoin public land, need to be secure. Windows should not provide easy access from public land. A substantial buffer planted on the outside of the fence line may help to discourage intruders;
- Long term management responsibilities and resources must be clearly identified at the planning stage to the satisfaction of the ALO/CPDA.

### Lighting

- Improved lighting can be effective in reducing fear of crime, and in certain circumstances reducing the incidence of crime;
- Different lighting sources need to be considered for different environments - the character of the local environment must always be respected.

## Appendix 5: Summary of Guidance from Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor

There will need to be consideration given to the following elements of the design:

- CCTV - public realm CCTV should be included;
- Car parking<sup>11</sup> - public car parking at The Meadway Centre should seek to achieve the police's Safer Parking award;
- Cycle parking - this should be in areas with good natural surveillance;
- Service yards and bin/storage areas - service yards should be secure with lockable gates and bin/storage areas should be designed to prevent concealment and arson;
- Access to upper floor residential areas - the design of these can cause anti-social behaviour, often due to the presence of open staircase access to flats along open landings and no access control to upper areas (as well as other factors discussed elsewhere);
- Shutters - roller shutters should be avoided<sup>12</sup>;
- Hard landscaping - this should be secure to avoid being used to damage properties;
- Soft landscaping - this should not hinder CCTV or natural surveillance. These factors are already taken into account in the Tree Strategy;
- ATMs - consideration should be given to placement, CCTV coverage and parking provision for reloading the machine;
- Public realm doorways - these should not be set back, to allow for surveillance, and entrances to upper floor residential should be from safe, well-lit, well-used locations;
- Public toilets - careful consideration should be given to their location;
- Public art - if this is proposed, it should avoid being a target for anti-social behaviour, e.g. littering and climbing.

<sup>11</sup>The comments provided by TVP on design of car parking are already reflected in the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD - see [http://www.reading.gov.uk/documents/servingyou/planning/local\\_development\\_framework/21420/Revised-Parking-SPD-Adopted-1011.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/documents/servingyou/planning/local_development_framework/21420/Revised-Parking-SPD-Adopted-1011.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 10.4.5 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document suggests alternative measures such as lattice grilles and internal shutters, which create a more open frontage.

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