

PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

November 2017



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

FOREWORD

By Councillor Tony Page

The Local Plan will be the document that guides development in Reading up to 2036, and it will therefore play a decisive role in how our town evolves over the next two decades. We are publishing this draft of the plan for consultation, and it is important to have your views on it, so that they can be taken into account in finalising the plan.



Over recent years, Reading has had considerable economic success, and this has resulted in considerable investment to the town. However, this success brings its own issues. In particular, Reading faces a housing crisis. There are not enough homes in general, and there is a particularly acute need for affordable housing, which represents more than half of our overall housing need. This document is a major part of our response to this issue, although we continue to work with neighbouring Councils to look at the needs of the Reading area as a whole.

Other critical issues to be considered include how to provide the employment space and supporting infrastructure to make sure that Reading's attractiveness as a place to work, to live and to study can continue. The benefits of Reading's economic success also need to be shared out more equally with those communities in Reading that suffer high levels of deprivation and exclusion. The plan also looks again at the message that Reading's environment sends to visitors and residents, both in terms of revitalising tired and run-down sites and areas, and in placing greater focus on our considerable, but often overlooked, historic legacy.

We sought your views on which issues this plan should address in 2016, and consulted on a draft plan in 2017. This is the version that we propose to put to the Government for approval. We are keen to hear your views, and I hope that you take this opportunity to get involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Page".

Tony Page

**Deputy Leader, Reading Borough Council and
Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Role and status of the document

- 1.1.1** The Local Plan for Reading is the document that contains the policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036, which is the end date of the plan. It identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided.
- 1.1.2** Once adopted, the plan will have ‘development plan’ status. This means that, legally, it will be the main consideration in deciding planning applications in Reading. Decisions should be in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹.
- 1.1.3** The local plan will replace all existing development plans in Reading. This means that the Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2015), Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015) will all cease to be used once this Local Plan is adopted. With the exception of minerals and waste planning, which will be undertaken jointly with neighbouring authorities, it will mean that all planning policies are contained within a single document, which will make our policy substantially simpler.
- 1.1.4** It is important that this document is read as a whole. Whilst there might, for instance, be a policy dealing with a specific type of development (for example, development for schools) or site, other policies in the plan may also be relevant, for instance around amenity or design.

1.2 Context for Reading

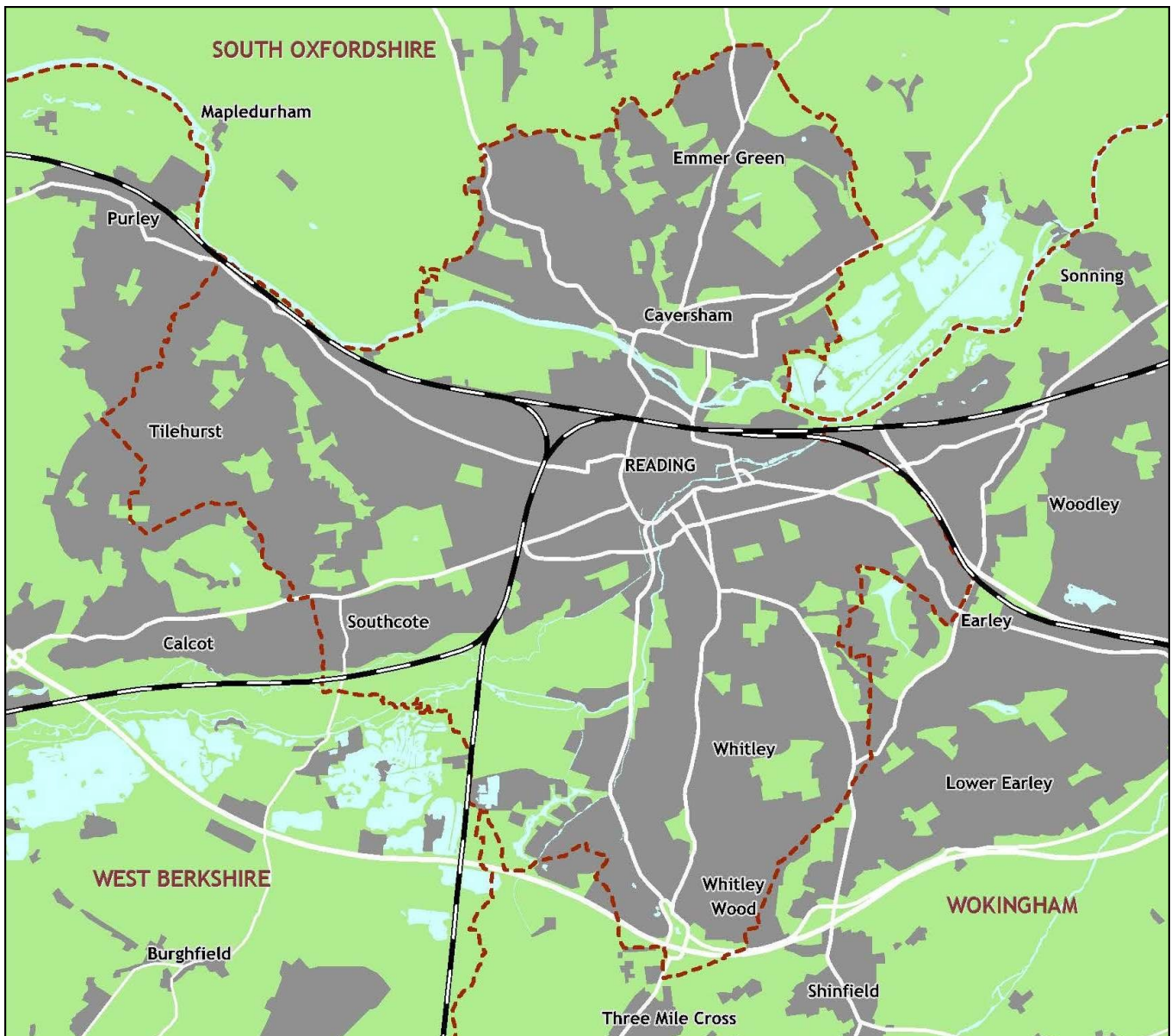
- 1.2.1** Reading Borough cannot be viewed in isolation from its wider context. The Borough itself forms the core, but not the whole, of the urban area that is generally considered to constitute Reading. Figure 1.1 shows how the urban area centred on Reading extends beyond the Borough boundaries, particularly into Calcot, Purley-on-Thames and parts of Tilehurst in West Berkshire, and Woodley and Earley in Wokingham. These areas largely function as suburbs of Reading. In a wider sense, the Reading urban area in many ways functions as a single ‘city region’ with the nearby towns of Wokingham and Bracknell. The relationship to South Oxfordshire is different, in that the Borough boundary forms the edge of the urban area, and partly the beginning of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.2.2** Reading Borough itself was home to 155,700 people² at the time of the 2011 Census, and this was estimated to have risen to 160,800 in 2014³. Whilst, in common with most areas, there is an ageing population, Reading nonetheless has a younger population profile than many of its neighbours. Given the urban nature of Reading, it is unsurprising that it ranked fourth in the South East for population density at the time of the 2011 Census, with 38.5 people per hectare⁴. Affordability of housing is an increasingly critical issue, with rising house prices and rents putting

¹ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

² This compares to 252,900 people in the wider urban area, which also includes Purley, Tilehurst, Calcot, Earley, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Woodley

³ ONS Mid-Year Estimates for 2014, published 2015 - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/2015-06-25>

⁴ 2011 Census (QS102EW)

Figure 1.1: Context of Reading Borough


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housing beyond the reach of many of our residents. This also forms a barrier to economic growth, with access to housing making recruitment difficult in many sectors.

- 1.2.3** Reading is a major centre of employment, with 89,100 people working in the Borough at the time of the 2011 Census. There are more jobs in Reading than workers, which means that Reading typically imports workers from other local authority areas, placing strain on the transport network and on the housing market. This reflects the economic success of the town, which functions as the centre of the Thames Valley, one of the most economically dynamic regions in the country. Reading is a hub for a variety of businesses, including ICT, professional services and pharmaceuticals, and at the same time it still hosts a number of industrial activities, and has an increasing role in logistics. Many of these businesses rely on the high level of skills in the area, and there are also strong relationships with the University of Reading. However, despite the overall economic buoyancy, there are pockets of deprivation within the urban area where there are unemployment issues and concentrations of low skills.

- 1.2.4 Reading town centre is also one of the UK's most important centres. Its importance for retail, boosted by the opening of the Oracle in 1999, is long established, but it is also significant for leisure and culture, and, increasingly, as somewhere to live.
- 1.2.5 Reading is an ancient town with over 1,000 years of history, and contains a wealth of archaeology and historic buildings. The historic environment has been, and is, important in forming the identity of the town and its people. The historic environment - all the archaeology, buildings and landscapes that surround us - contributes to the underlying framework that creates a sense of place for Reading. However, there is a clear need for Reading to make more of those important historic assets.
- 1.2.6 Reading's location on the Great Western main rail line and the M4 motorway makes it a major hub for transport movement. Reading station is one of the busiest stations outside London, and will also mark the western extent of the Elizabeth Line (formerly known as Crossrail), with services to Reading due to begin in 2019. In addition, Reading's location on the Kennet & Avon canal and River Thames and at the meeting point of several national cycle routes gives it significance for a variety of other modes of travel.

1.3 Relationship with other plans and strategies

- 1.3.1 The Local Plan, when adopted, will be the main planning document for Reading. It will replace the three existing development plan documents - the Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2015), Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015).
- 1.3.2 The only topics that the Local Plan will not cover are minerals and waste planning. These will be the subject of a separate Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which is being prepared jointly with Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. More information on the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which went through an Issues and Options stage consultation in June and July 2017, can be found on the website⁵.
- 1.3.3 There will be specific sites or topics that require more detailed consideration, and this will mean the production of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). These may include planning briefs for specific sites, or topic based SPDs on matters such as sustainable design. These cannot make policy on their own, and can only provide more detail on a policy in a Local Plan. Some existing SPDs will continue to apply under the proposed new policies, and the relevant section of the plan states where this is the case.
- 1.3.4 This plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the overall national approach to planning. Local plans should be consistent with the principles and policies in the NPPF, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

⁵ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/berksconsult>

1.4 Process of production

- 1.4.1 Development of the Local Plan commenced when the Council consulted on Issues and Options for the Local Plan between January and March 2016. This was the initial stage, and was a discussion paper around some key topics and questions, rather than a draft plan. The results of that consultation can be found on the Council's website⁶.
- 1.4.2 The second stage of plan production was a full draft plan⁷. This was produced taking account of the responses to the Issues and Options consultation, as well as results of Sustainability Appraisal and other considerations. Consultation took place in May and June 2017, and, again, the results of the consultation are available on the Council's website⁸.
- 1.4.3 This revised draft is the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan⁹, which is the plan that the Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State. This document is open to consultation, and we welcome your views. Please provide any comments by 5 pm on Friday 26th January 2018.
- 1.4.4 Comments should be made in writing, either by e-mail or post. Please e-mail responses to: planningpolicy@reading.gov.uk
- Or send responses to:
Planning Policy
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU
- 1.4.5 The next stage will be that, unless significant changes are required, the Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State. Submission of the document marks the beginning of a public examination by an independent Inspector, which is likely to include a series of public hearings. The Inspector will decide whether the document is 'sound'. If it is, it can be adopted as the Council's official policy. It is currently expected that this will happen by the beginning of 2019.

1.5 Evidence and technical reports

- 1.5.1 There are a significant number of background papers and pieces of research that have informed this Local Plan and provide the justification for the policies. The full justification for each policy or proposal is not included in the plan in order to keep the document as brief as possible, although some key elements may be referenced where relevant. The documents will generally be available on the Council's website, with the full evidence base available at Submission.

⁶ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5409/Statement-of-Consultation-on-new-local-plan/pdf/Statement_of_Consultation_on_Issues_and_Options_May_2016.pdf

⁷ Under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

⁸ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7907/Statement-of-Consultation-on-Draft-Local-Plan/pdf/Statement_of_Consultation_on_Draft_Local_Plan.pdf

⁹ Under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

- 1.5.2 Perhaps the most significant documents are those which identify the development needs. In the case of housing, this is the Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, published 2016)¹⁰, which identifies the ‘objectively assessed need’¹¹ for housing for each Berkshire authority as well as South Bucks up to 2036. For Reading, a need of 699 new dwellings each year is identified. The SHMA also looks at the need for affordable housing, different dwelling sizes and some specific types of housing such as residential care. There are also documents that assess the need for new economic development (Economic Development Needs Assessment, published 2016) and retail and leisure uses (Retail and Leisure Study, published 2017). These inform the overall strategy and are referred to where relevant. It is important to note that economic development and housing are intrinsically linked, and the need for new homes in the area is partly related to the area’s role as a key driver of the national economy. Therefore the evidence seeks to work from the same basis wherever possible.
- 1.5.3 In addition to the development needs assessments, there is a variety of other background information on various aspects of planning in Reading. These include technical reports on matters such as flood risk and transport, as well as general background papers that describe the evolution of policy in the plan. Evidence to support the Local Plan will be set out on the Council’s website¹².
- 1.5.4 This Local Plan is also supported by a Sustainability Appraisal. This assesses the environmental, social and economic effects of the policies and proposals in the plan, and is a legal requirement. The Sustainability Appraisal is open to consultation at the same time as the plan, and can be viewed on the Council website¹³.

¹⁰ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2959/Housing-Market-Assessment/pdf/Berkshire_Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Feb_2016.pdf

¹¹ ‘Objectively assessed’ means resulting from an assessment that looks only at need for development. It does not take account of constraints on accommodating that development, e.g. flooding, physical capacity, policy designations etc, which are matters that must be considered later, when setting the levels of development sought in policy.

¹² <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

¹³ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Vision

- 2.1.1** The vision is the starting point for the Local Plan, in that it sets out how we see Reading in 2036, at the end of the plan period. There have been a number of previous visions, notably that from the 2008 Core Strategy, which informed previous development plan documents. It is considered that this vision is still largely relevant.
- 2.1.2** However, in parallel to the drafting of the Local Plan to 2036, Reading UK, the economic development and marketing company for Reading, has launched a 2050 vision for the town as a smart and sustainable city by 2050. Reading UK have worked closely with two Board member partners, Barton Willmore and the University of Reading, and consulted widely with business as well as citizens and visitors to the town. It has also been considered and supported by the Council. It is not a statutory document but provides a vision for all in the town to participate in and a context for the Local Plan and its policies. It will be the basis for influencing Government, stakeholders, investors and funders to support the Vision.
- 2.1.3** The Reading 2050 Vision will help in establishing Reading as an internationally recognised and economically successful city region. It envisages a place where low carbon living will be the norm, and the built environment, technology and innovation have combined to create a smart, dynamic and sustainable city, with a high quality of life and equal opportunity for all.
- 2.1.4** By 2050 it envisages that Reading will be a smart and sustainable city that
1. Shares success to support and enable thriving communities;
 2. Delivers a real sense of place and identity;
 3. Thrives on cultural and cross-generational diversity;
 4. Is recognised for its heritage and natural assets;
 5. Embeds technology to deliver innovation and low carbon living for all; and
 6. Welcomes ethical and sustainable businesses who support Reading.
- 2.1.5** The project has looked in detail at how this vision may look in parts of the town as an example of how Reading could develop. In particular it has focused on:
1. Reading as a Green Tech City using the area around the Station forecourt
 2. Reading as a City of Culture and Diversity along the Oxford Road as it crosses the IDR
 3. Reading as a City of Rivers and Parks with the example of the Thames between the Caversham and Reading Bridges.
- 2.1.6** This Local Plan looks to 2036, but, where a longer term direction of travel is emerging, it is important to consider the overall vision in that context. Therefore, the headlines emerging above inform the Local Plan vision.
- 2.1.7** In addition, the Council has a Corporate Plan 2016 to 2019. This clearly covers a much shorter time period than both the Local Plan and the Reading 2050 project, but it is nevertheless important to understand current wider priorities. The priorities are as follows:
- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
 - Providing the best help through education, early help and healthy living;
 - Providing homes for those most in need;
 - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active;
 - Providing infrastructure to support the economy; and
 - Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

- 2.1.8 The vision draws on a range of work locally in deciding on the direction Reading is going in, and as such continues the overall approach of previous visions for the Borough, notably in the 2008 Core Strategy.

Reading will be a dynamic, inclusive community of the 21st Century. It will be a clean, green, healthy, safe and desirable place in which to live, work, study and visit. Its economic strength will be harnessed to meet the needs of all in the community. Everyone will have the opportunity to benefit from all that Reading can offer. Everyone has a part to play in shaping its future.

Reading will continue to thrive as an internationally recognised economic centre, and the core of a wider, vibrant urban area and surrounding hinterland within other authorities, that makes a vital contribution to the UK economy. It will be an environment where new business can start up and flourish. It will continue to adapt to ensure its success continues with economic changes and new working practices. The right infrastructure to enable Reading to continue to fulfil this role will be in place, and people will be able to easily move around the town with a comprehensive network of public transport, walking and cycling. The centre will continue as a regionally important shopping and business location, but its role will be widened as a place for culture, leisure and entertainment, as well as a place to live.

Reading's residents, particularly those most in need, will have access to high quality housing that meets their requirements and safeguards their quality of life. All residents will have access to adequate services and facilities, particularly through strong district and local centres, and to open green space. Children and young people will be supported through education and other assistance, whilst people of all ages will have the opportunity to improve their skills to make a contribution to the community. Residents will have all that they need to be able to live a full and active life.

Reading's role as a centre for the arts and culture will expand, drawing on its dynamism and diversity. Reading's extensive heritage importance will be conserved and enhanced and better revealed and integrated into the identity of the town. Green areas throughout the town, including its watercourses, woodlands and open green space, will be protected, enhanced and linked together as a recreational and ecological resource. Reading's environment will be clean and healthy, and this will be balanced against economic and housing growth through a strongly sustainable approach to development including innovative approaches to energy provision.

2.2 Objectives

- 2.2.1 The vision can be condensed into a more specific series of Local Plan objectives, which contain more of a planning emphasis, and which inform the policies that are included and what they should say. Again, these objectives are relatively consistent with the objectives that have previously been in place, notably in the Core Strategy, and give continuity with past and existing strategies.

2.2.2 The objectives for the Local Plan are as follows:

1. *Strengthen the role of Reading, including central Reading, as the hub for the Thames Valley, providing an accessible focus for the development of employment, housing, services and facilities, meeting the needs of residents, workers, visitors, those who study in Reading Borough, and the wider area;*
2. *Make the most efficient use of Reading's limited land, particularly previously developed land, to ensure that as many new homes as possible are delivered to meet identified needs, particularly needs for affordable housing;*
3. *Improve the quality of life for those living, working, studying in and visiting the Borough, creating inclusive, sustainable communities with good access to employment, open space and waterspace, transport, education, services and facilities (such as sustainable water supplies and wastewater treatment, healthcare services, social and community facilities, sport and recreation, etc.) to meet identified needs;*
4. *Form the basis for co-operation with neighbouring authorities to consider the wider West of Berkshire area as a whole;*
5. *Ensure new development and existing areas are accessible and sustainable, in accordance with the sustainability appraisal objectives, including reducing its effects on, and adapting to, climate change;*
6. *Maintain and enhance the historic, built and natural environment of the Borough through investment and high quality design, and capitalise on these assets to contribute to quality of life and economic success;*
7. *Improve and develop excellent transport systems to improve accessibility within Reading and for the wider area by sustainable modes of transport, including walking and cycling;*
8. *Offer outstanding cultural opportunities, which are based on multiculturalism, local heritage and high quality, modern arts, leisure and visitor facilities;*
9. *Ensure that Reading is a healthy, clean, safe and socially-inclusive community where the needs of all its citizens are met by high quality, cost effective services and outstanding levels of community involvement.*

2.2.3 The sustainability objectives mentioned in objective 3 are a separate but related set of environmental, social and economic objectives that have been identified for the purpose of undertaking sustainability appraisal. They are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2014). There is also an important relationship with the objectives of other plans and strategies covering Reading, such as the Climate Change Strategy 2013-2020 (Reading Means Business on Climate Change), which have informed these objectives.

3. SPATIAL STRATEGY

3.0.1 This section sets out the overall spatial strategy for the Borough which has guided the formulation of policies in the plan. The strategy itself does not form part of the policy as such, but shows what the policies in the plan are trying to achieve and how it sits within a wider spatial approach.

3.1 Western Berkshire Housing Market Area

3.1.1 Joint work has been carried out on identifying housing needs up to 2036 across Berkshire, and part of this process involved defining the housing market area(s) that the Berkshire unitary authorities sit within. A housing market area is defined by Planning Practice Guidance as “a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work”¹⁴. The Berkshire SHMA defines a Western Berkshire HMA, of which Reading Borough is part, alongside the unitary authorities of West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest¹⁵.

3.1.2 The four Western Berkshire HMA authorities have therefore undertaken a great deal of joint work together since the production of the SHMA. One of the key pieces of work has been a West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework, which was published by all four authorities in December 2016. This is not a development plan, and carries no statutory weight, but is intended to guide the authorities in pulling their plans together by identifying some key opportunities for major delivery of new development, particularly for housing, and the level of infrastructure provision required.

3.1.3 Figure 3.1 comes from the Spatial Framework, and identifies key development opportunities along with constraints in the Reading area. This helps to guide Reading’s own spatial strategy, both in terms of the opportunities within Reading it highlights, but also in terms of the opportunities close to Reading in adjoining authorities, which would have implications for Reading for matters such as infrastructure provision.

3.1.4 It is clear that continued high and medium density development in central Reading will play a key role in meeting the Borough’s needs as well as the needs of the Western HMA as a whole. As the most accessible location, as well as the retail and employment hub of the area, there is a clear need for the opportunities that exist in central Reading to continue to provide a significant amount of development. Inevitably, it must be recognised that the emphasis in the centre is likely to be on smaller residential units, with the much needed family dwellings likely to be provided elsewhere in the Borough and the housing market area. An area of search for new development in South Reading also features, as there is substantial scope for new employment and residential development in this area.

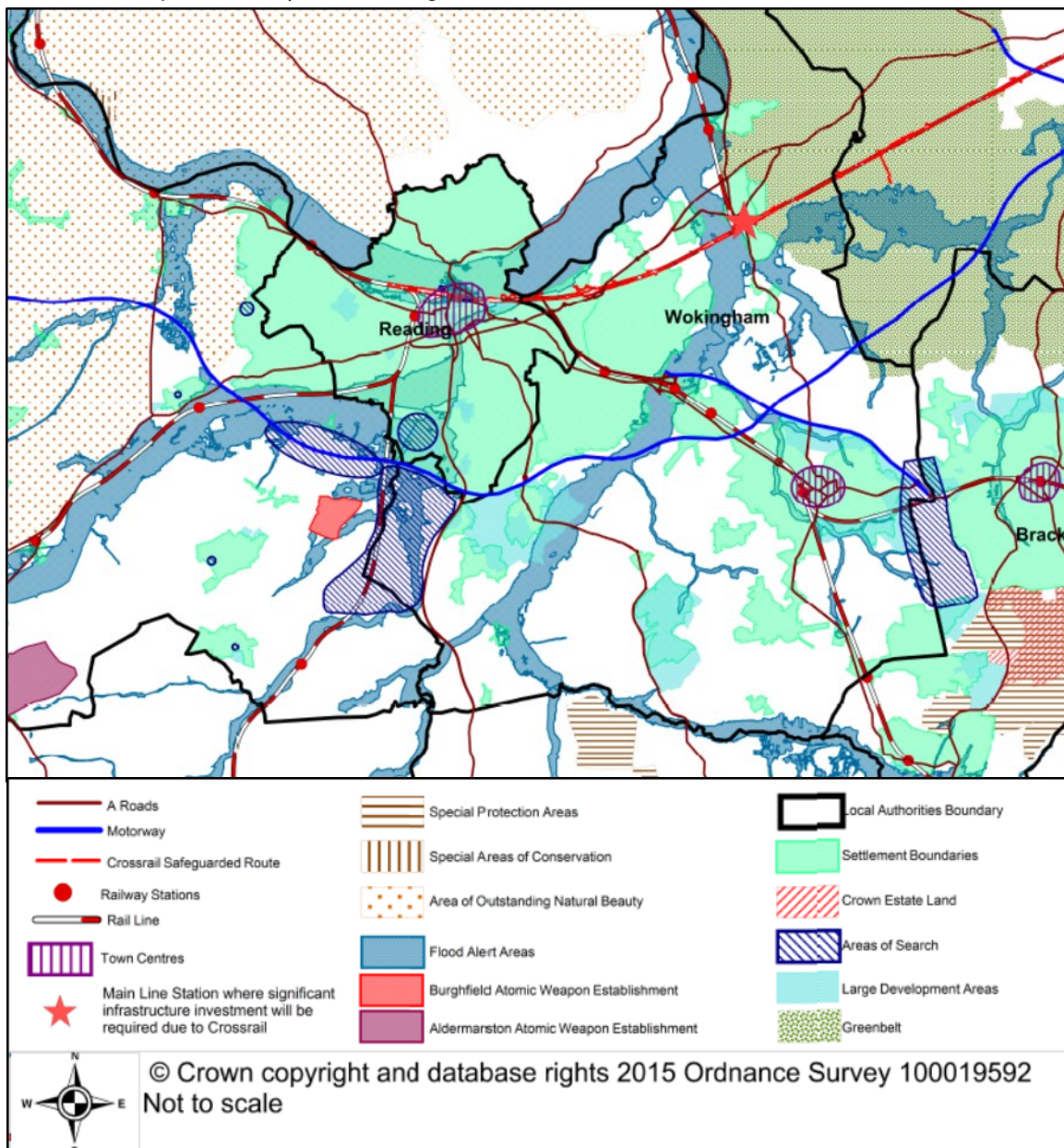
3.1.5 The Framework also identifies a large development opportunity at Grazeley. This area is just outside Reading Borough, located on the boundary of Wokingham and West Berkshire. The Framework considers that this could accommodate approximately 15,000 homes, together with

¹⁴ Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments (ID: 2a-010-20140306)

¹⁵ For practical reasons, a HMA is defined on a best fit to local authority boundaries. There are some areas outside the four authorities, most notably areas of South Oxfordshire around Henley-on-Thames and Sonning Common, that would functionally form part of the Western Berkshire HMA if local authority boundaries were not taken into account, but fall within another defined area for practical planning purposes.

Figure 3.1: Excerpt from Western Berkshire Opportunities and Constraints Map

Source: West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework, 2016



supporting infrastructure and facilities. Whilst a small corner within the Borough could be part of any Grazeley development, the main considerations for Reading are likely to be related to infrastructure and services. Transport connections into Reading will be of paramount importance. The site has excellent potential to promote sustainable transport modes, as it sits on the Reading to Basingstoke railway line and there is the potential for development to tie into and complement proposals for transport improvements to the south such as mass rapid transit. In addition, although the intention would be to provide adequate services, facilities and employment opportunities to meet the basic needs of the residents within the development, there will inevitably be a reliance on Reading as the nearby higher order centre, and this also has implications for the Borough.

3.1.6 The map also identifies an area of search around the M4 to the south west of Reading, between Pingewood and Burghfield, primarily in West Berkshire. No further details are included, but there are substantial constraints around this area, most significantly flood risk, and

considerable work will need to be undertaken to demonstrate that any development is appropriate. Nevertheless, if a development were to come about in the long term, many of the same comments about infrastructure would apply as in paragraph 3.1.5 above.

- 3.1.7 Within the Framework, there is also an identification of the major items of infrastructure needed in the housing market area to support growth. Transport infrastructure features prominently, including a new crossing of the Thames, a new station at Grazeley (or improved links to existing stations), enhanced park and ride provision, mass rapid transit and enhancements to all modes of travel, including walking and cycling. A need for new education provision is identified, including one primary school per 1,000 additional dwellings and one secondary school per 6,000 additional dwellings. Other infrastructure needs include community and leisure provision, green infrastructure and green spaces, waste, utilities and flood alleviation. As proposals are worked up in more detail, more information on infrastructure provision will become available.
- 3.1.8 In addition to the HMA, a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) has been identified, which covers a slightly different area than the HMA, namely the areas of Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and Windsor and Maidenhead. A FEMA is an area which operates as an economic market in its own right, and such economic markets rarely conform to local authority boundaries. In terms of spatial planning, it is the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework which still provides the main context, but there will need to be co-operation with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to ensure that the needs of the FEMA are planned for.

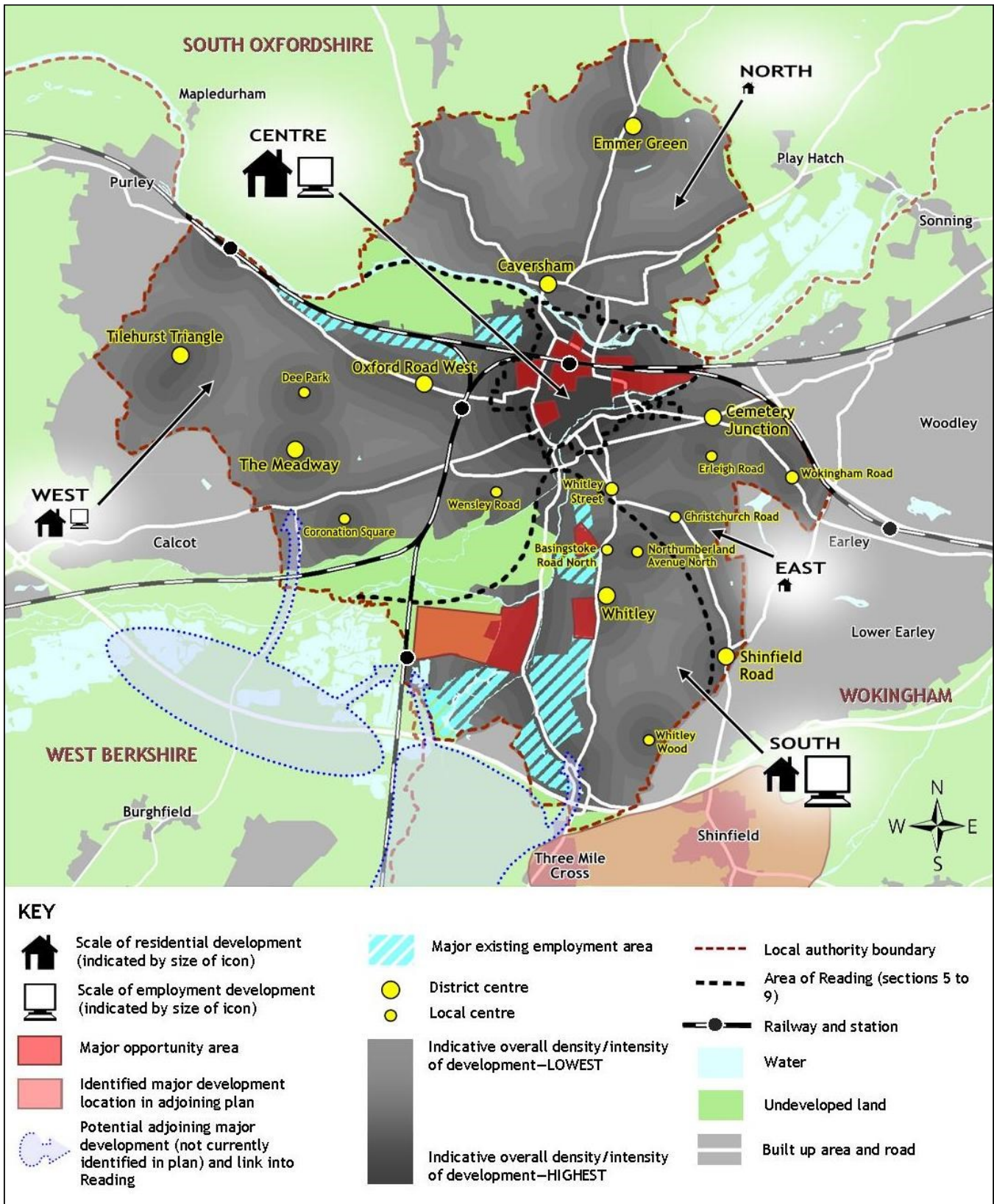
3.2 Spatial strategy for Reading

- 3.2.1 The constrained nature of Reading Borough dictates the spatial strategy to some extent. Significant development can only occur where sites are available, which inevitably means a considerable focus on the centre and south of Reading. Opportunities for large-scale expansion of the town onto greenfield sites within the Borough are virtually non-existent, with the small rural areas within the boundaries subject to significant flood risk. This means a need to look within the existing urban area for opportunities, and to ensure efficient use of land. The spatial strategy for Reading consists of the following elements:
- Central Reading as the focus for meeting much of the identified development needs at a medium and high density;
 - South Reading as a location for meeting much of the remainder of the development needs, and the enhancement of links from the centre to South Reading and to major development locations beyond;
 - Some new development within identified district and local centres, including more diversity of services and facilities and some increase in densities;
 - Limited reallocation of some areas of employment to housing and supporting uses;
 - Increasing densities where appropriate in other areas with high levels of accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling;
 - Ensuring that urban extensions or garden villages close to the Reading urban area are provided with adequate facilities including infrastructure links into Reading.
- 3.2.2 Figure 3.2 summarises the spatial strategy.
- 3.2.3 **Central Reading:** The centre of Reading is the main hub of retail and employment for the Borough and for much of the surrounding area. It is one of the most accessible locations in the

South East, boosted by recent major investment in an upgraded station, new transport interchanges and by the forthcoming arrival of the Elizabeth Line. At the same time, there are considerable areas of underused land around the edge of the centre which offer an opportunity to accommodate a considerable amount of development at a high density, which will include some opportunities for new tall buildings in appropriate locations.

- 3.2.4** Therefore, a significant proportion of the development to be provided in Reading within the plan period will be within the central area. This will include around 7,600 homes (around 49% of the total planned for), 71,000 sq m of offices (around 63% of the total planned for) and up to 27,000 sq m of retail and related uses (virtually all of the total planned for).
- 3.2.5** There are a number of constraints that are particularly applicable in the central area. The town centre represents the greatest concentration of heritage interest in Reading, and the density and design of development will need to reflect this. Considerable areas of the town centre are also potentially at risk of flooding. There are also physical barriers to movement in and around the centre, such as the rivers, railway and Inner Distribution Road. The section on Central Reading (section 5) deals with how these issues will be addressed. In addition, a reliance on Central Reading to deliver housing will inevitably mean that many of the dwellings delivered will be small with little private outdoor space. This means that development that takes place in other areas must give a greater focus on the provision of much-needed family housing.
- 3.2.6 South Reading:** The south of Reading is the other main part of the Borough where there are significant sites potentially available for development, particularly in the area close to the A33. The accessibility of this area is expected to increase substantially with the Mass Rapid Transit scheme linking the town centre with the recently-opened Mere oak park and ride. Many of the sites that could be developed are vacant or underused and of poor visual quality, and offer an opportunity to create a high-quality gateway into Reading.
- 3.2.7** Around 3,700 homes can be provided in South Reading over the plan period, some 24% of the total planned for. However, due to constraints such as contamination, flood risk and noise and disturbance, many of the sites will not be appropriate for residential development. South Reading will also therefore be the location to meet much of Reading's need for new employment floorspace, with a strong focus on industry and warehousing, accommodating virtually all of the new industrial and warehouse space planned for. There is a particular opportunity on land around Island Road.
- 3.2.8 Other areas of Reading:** Development opportunities within the West, North and East of Reading are more limited, with these areas largely consisting of existing residential areas. As primarily residential areas, any development will be generally residential in nature, with some development for community uses. Around 2,400 homes (15% of the total to be provided in the plan period) can be provided in West Reading, with around 700 (5%) in North Reading and 1,100 (7%) in East Reading. The amount of residential in West Reading is substantially higher than the others simply because this is the largest and most populous of the areas, and is where the majority of small housing sites have historically tended to come forward.
- 3.2.9 District and local centres:** The network of smaller identified centres is essential in ensuring good access for the local community to shops and services, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. This network will be maintained and strengthened, and the diversity of

Figure 3.2: Spatial Strategy for Reading



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the centres will be broadened. The centres also tend to have relatively high levels of accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling, and as such are appropriate locations for new residential and employment development which may often be at a higher density than surrounding residential areas. Higher density residential accommodation in these more

sustainable locations would also help address local housing need by widening the choice of housing in what are often predominantly lower density suburban areas. New development will also give an opportunity for environmental enhancements and new facilities within these centres.

- 3.2.10 Existing employment areas:** A high level of need has been identified for new floorspace for employment development, to help ensure the future prosperity of Reading. This means that the majority of our employment areas need to be retained and, where possible, intensified, to continue to provide this role. As such, there is not scope for wholesale redevelopment of employment land to help meet housing needs. However, as an exception, there are some specific areas where there is some potential for residential use, in particular where the current uses are not ‘pure’ employment uses, where there is a difficult relationship with residential land that could be better addressed through development, or where there is little prospect of employment use in the long term. Areas around Manor Farm Road (identified in the previous Sites and Detailed Policies Document), south of Elgar Road and at the eastern edge of the Richfield Avenue area are the main opportunities.
- 3.2.11 Increasing densities:** In locations which are highly accessible by public transport, as well as walking and cycling, there are opportunities to seek to increase density of development to help to meet needs. However, this must be carefully balanced against the existing character of a local area and issues such as heritage. One clear opportunity to increase densities is along the A33 corridor in South Reading, where the MRT scheme will improve public transport accessibility, and where higher density development can frame a high quality entrance to Reading.
- 3.2.12 Major developments outside Reading:** It is likely that there will be significant development of new homes, together with supporting facilities, on the edge of the Reading urban area. A Strategic Development Location around Shinfield and Spencers Wood has already been identified in Wokingham’s development plan, and development of parts of the area is underway. As set out in paragraphs 3.1.5 and 3.1.6, the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework also identifies further areas of search for garden villages or urban extensions to the south and south west of Reading, albeit that the respective Local Plans will determine whether these are appropriate to take forward. Whilst some local services and facilities would be provided within large developments, Reading will inevitably be the main town that these developments rely upon for higher order infrastructure. Consideration of transport links from these areas into Reading should therefore make up a major part of the spatial strategy.
- 3.2.13** Sections 5 to 9 of this plan contain specific policies for, and allocations within, various areas of Reading: Central Reading, South Reading, East Reading, Caversham and Emmer Green and West Reading and Tilehurst. Figure 3.2 shows the location of those areas. More detailed spatial strategies for those areas, where necessary, are included within the relevant chapter.

4. GENERAL POLICIES

4.1 Cross-Cutting Policies

4.0.1 The policies in this section are general policies applicable to the whole of Reading, although some may also refer in part to specific areas.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan (including, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

4.1.1 The Government has placed the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of its approach to planning, and this is articulated in the National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012. This policy aims to ensure that decisions are taken in line with that presumption. In doing so, it helps to achieve all of the core objectives.

Sustainable Design and Construction

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

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

To meet these requirements:

- **All major non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standards, where possible;**
- **All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard as a minimum;**
- **All non-residential development or conversions to residential should incorporate water conservation measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the appropriate levels set out in the applicable BREEAM standard. Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.**

- 4.1.2 The future growth of Reading in terms of the amount of new development taking place has the potential to impose a large environmental footprint in terms of consumption of resources and materials, the use of energy and the associated emission of greenhouse gases that contribute towards climate change. As such, the incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques are essential in order to minimise this impact in the context of Reading. Reading’s Climate Change Strategy¹⁶ (Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013-2020) seeks to tackle the Borough’s contribution to climate change by reducing Reading’s carbon footprint by 34% by 2020 in comparison to 2005 levels. New development has a role to play in achieving these aims.
- 4.1.3 The general principle of this policy in terms of new development applies to both residential and non-residential uses. For non-residential uses and for conversions to residential, this policy incorporates the use of BREEAM standards. These standards cover a wide range of matters including building fabrics and materials, energy and water use, amenity areas and ecology, waste recycling, the location and accessibility of developments, daylighting, sound insulation etc. However, the current standards give high scores in urban areas to using previously developed land that is close to services, amenities and public transport routes. Developments in Reading will therefore naturally score relatively highly before any consideration of the impact of development itself. Reading Borough Council believes that development should mitigate effects further by reducing greenhouse gas and other polluting emissions and providing higher energy conservation, hence the requirement for BREEAM ‘Excellent’ ratings.
- 4.1.4 For a number of uses, including offices, the requirement to achieve ‘Excellent’ ratings is unlikely to significantly affect viability. However, some types of development, such as industrial uses, warehouses and schools might find it more difficult to meet these standards. In these cases, developments must demonstrate that the standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the development, and at a minimum meets the BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard.
- 4.1.5 Expectations for performance of new-build homes in terms of emissions are set out in policy H5 on housing standards. An existing Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document is in place and, and the general principles, where in compliance with the overall policy, will continue to apply. An updated version of the SPD will be prepared to supplement this policy.

¹⁶ Reading’s Climate Change Strategy can be accessed on the Council’s website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1232/Climate-Change-Strategy/pdf/Climate-Change-Strategy.pdf>

Adaptation to Climate Change

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:

- *New buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;*
- *Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;*
- *Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and*
- *All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change*

- 4.1.6 Adaptation is about making sure future communities can live, work, rest and play in a comfortable and secure environment in the face of inevitable climate change. Taking action now to help successfully achieve adaptation measures would help to reduce vulnerability for people, businesses, services and infrastructure to climate change. Adaptation measures need to be built into all new developments to ensure the sustainable development of housing, businesses and the economy of Reading.
- 4.1.7 The impacts of climate change are predicted to increase over time, with winters getting warmer and wetter, while summers become hotter and drier. It is expected that there will be more extreme weather leading to impacts including intense rainfall and floods, heatwaves, droughts and increased risk of subsidence. These impacts will affect people's lives, homes and businesses as well as essential services and supplies such as transport, hospitals, water supply and energy. There will also be significant impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment.
- 4.1.8 Given the anticipated level of growth of the Borough over the coming years, it is imperative that this growth takes place in a sustainable manner incorporating climate change adaptation technologies. Buildings, services and infrastructure need to be able to easily cope with the impacts of climate change. Part of this ability to cope relates to ensuring that new development is designed to adapt to more intense rainfall, the possibility of flooding, plus heat waves and droughts. The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting.

- 4.1.9 Reading is an urbanised Borough with a high proportion of hardstanding/ built form, and is built on two main rivers - the Thames and the Kennet. Other watercourses in the Borough include Foudry Brook and its tributaries, the Berry Brook, Vastern Ditch, Christchurch Ditch, the creek along the base of the Warren escarpment and various ditches on the Kennet floodplain upstream of the A33. In addition the Holy Brook, a smaller waterway, runs through the town centre. As such the Borough is vulnerable to flooding from surface water run-off and while Reading itself was not significantly affected by the floods of 2007 and 2008, around two-thirds of the flooding during the 2007 floods was caused by surface water¹⁷.
- 4.1.10 There is a need to look at the whole community and consider how developments could be affected by rainfall and the different flood pathways. Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA), and the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) should be used to help with this, as well as guidance on how buildings can be made more resistant and resilient to climate change by including features such as green roofs for sustainable drainage or raised floor levels for flood-proofing.
- 4.1.11 Applications for change of use of existing buildings should also incorporate measures to adapt to climate change through for example, being flood repairable, i.e. when refurbishing a building, constructing internal parts in such a way that although flood water enters a building, elements that are damaged by flood water are capable of being easily repaired or replaced; raising the level of sockets above expected flood levels; inclusion of pump and sump systems below floorboards to remove water faster than it can enter the house from below ground level¹⁸. Ultimately, raising the height of flooring above predicted flood levels is a better alternative. All types of flooding (fluvial, surface water and groundwater) must be considered.

Decentralised Energy

CC4: DECENTRALISED ENERGY

In meeting the sustainability requirements of this plan, developments of the sizes set out below shall demonstrate how consideration has been given to securing energy for the development from a decentralised energy source, including CHP.

Any development of more than 20 dwellings and/ or non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m shall consider the inclusion of a CHP plant, or other form of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision.

Where there is existing decentralised energy provision, including a CHP plant or a district energy network present within the vicinity of an application site, further developments of over 10 dwellings or non-residential development of 1,000 sq m will be expected to link into the existing decentralised energy network or demonstrate why this is not feasible.

- 4.1.12 Decentralised energy is a term that covers a variety of technologies, including various renewable technologies, and more efficient energy generation such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), which provides heating and electricity at the same time. This policy promotes the

¹⁷ The Pitt Review: Interim Report, November 2008

¹⁸ <http://www.nhbcfoundation.org>

use of decentralised energy including CHP and district heating, which has particular applications to a dense urban area such as Reading. It provides an explanation of when CHP or district heating should be considered as an energy efficient design measure to achieve the most up to date requirements for residential development and BREEAM requirements for other types of development.

- 4.1.13** Electricity production is currently dominated by a centralised electricity generating system. Centralised electricity generating stations waste around two thirds of the energy in the fuels they use through the production of waste heat in generation then in electricity transmission and distribution to end users. On average around 65% of the energy is lost before it even reaches consumers. If better use could be made of this waste heat, and transmission distances could be reduced, there would be major benefits in tackling climate change and improving security of supply. A decentralised energy system (which might include CHP) can help address these issues.
- 4.1.14** In addition the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions associated with heating requirements can be realised through the use of low carbon fuels such as biomass in the form of woodchip or wood pellets. The use of these fuels is often impractical and uneconomic on an individual dwelling basis but can be feasible when a higher heat load can be supplied from a central heat source with heat distributed to individual users via a pipe network, often termed district or community heating.
- 4.1.15** CHP plants, although often fuelled by fossil fuels, are much more efficient than large centralised power stations, because the heat is used either as process heat in industry or distributed around buildings via a district heating system. The availability of a local district energy network connected to the decentralised energy generation plant means the CHP plant can be integrated with other fuels/technologies such as biomass, geothermal energy, or solar collectors. Much lower levels of energy are lost in transmission compared to centralised generation because distances from the point of generation to the point of use are relatively very short. Given that CHP involves the simultaneous generation of usable heat and power (usually electricity) in a single process, the amount of heat that is wasted is reduced and the heat that would normally be wasted to the atmosphere, rivers or seas can be put to use.
- 4.1.16** By seeing the energy system as a whole and locating energy production close to where it is used, it is possible to use both the heat and electricity generated and provide a doubling in the efficiency of current electricity generation and use as delivered by the mix of centralised power stations.
- 4.1.17** The NPPF actively promotes bringing forward decentralised energy, with an expectation that new development will comply with adopted Local Plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy. The NPPF also refers to identifying opportunities for energy supply for development to be drawn from a decentralised, renewable or low carbon supply system and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.
- 4.1.18** Following the production of heat spot maps, a feasibility study of the Borough, carried out by Thames Valley Energy (TVE), has identified potential opportunities for decentralised energy provision including district heat energy provision and CHP plant, which consider both existing and likely new development in the Borough as currently allocated.
- 4.1.19** The policy is likely to mainly apply to major developments in Central Reading, given the mixed nature and size of schemes being proposed in these locations, with some potential in South

Reading in addition. However, it is possible that appropriate sites could come forward in other parts of the Borough.

- 4.1.20 The success of such a scheme, both in terms of, for example, establishing the CHP plant (as part of a decentralised energy network) and future connections to the plant of both existing buildings and new buildings, will be dependent on the creation of strong partnerships between Reading Borough Council where relevant, the developer or representative of existing businesses and an Energy Service Company (ESCO). The involvement of an ESCO will allow multiple users to access the energy from the scheme and set out the contracts for doing so.

Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

- 4.1.21 European policy and legislation (e.g. Landfill Directive), along with national policy, seeks to achieve a more sustainable approach to methods of waste management and specifically place waste minimisation at source at the top of what is referred to as the waste hierarchy.
- 4.1.22 Continuing with past patterns of waste management is recognised as being clearly unsustainable and the main thrust of policy is to increase the value recovered and decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill. In light of this and the fact that development and re-development are significant contributors to waste production, policies need to translate this into specific policies regarding waste minimisation in development design, construction and demolition.
- 4.1.23 Building materials and other non-renewable resources are being taken up at a rapid rate and increased re-use and recycling is essential in order to reduce waste and to manage future extraction and its impact on the environment. In light of this, and the need to reduce the amount of waste generated and to increase the proportion of waste that is reused or recycled through better waste management, it is considered necessary that a policy is in place that will achieve these aims. The beneficial restoration and reuse of buildings should generally be considered before demolition and redevelopment.
- 4.1.24 The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, adopted in 2011, contains more detail on waste minimisation measures, and this document continues to be relevant. A Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is in preparation, and will cover the waste planning needs of the area.

Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.

- 4.1.25 It is important that development is accessible by a choice of modes of transport. This means that the primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses. Locating development in areas accessible by walking and cycling can serve important public health goals, including:
- increased physical activity;
 - decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;
 - reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;
 - fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;
 - proximity to healthcare services;
 - access to open space for recreation¹⁹.
- 4.1.26 The highest levels of accessibility in Reading are to be found in the town centre, which is also one of the most accessible locations in the South East. However, good levels of accessibility are also to be found within district and local centres and along well-served public transport corridors. For example, in the south of Reading, the delivery of a mass rapid transit (MRT) route will enable development that is at a higher density than in many other out of centre areas, in particular where there are transport interchanges.
- 4.1.27 As a rule of thumb, a good level of accessibility is considered to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.). In many parts of Reading, it will be important to ensure that access to a range of facilities is encouraged, and not affected by existing barriers, such as major roads, rivers and railways.
- 4.1.28 The Spatial Strategy, in figure 3.2, includes an indicative illustration of how the intensity of development relates to the level of accessibility. However, it is important to note that it is indicative only, and that changes to, or more detailed assessment of, accessibility levels over the plan period may enable a different approach to development density in some areas.

¹⁹ NHS Healthy Urban Development Checklist <http://www.healthyrbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Healthy-Urban-Planning-Checklist-March-2014.pdf>

Design and the Public Realm

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

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

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

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

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

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.*

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.

4.1.29 Reading is an historic town with at least 1,100 years of history. It is a town that has evolved over time. It contains many historic areas and a diversity of areas of different ages often with their own distinctive character. This local plan promotes development within the Borough but requires that development should positively contribute to making the Borough a better place. It needs to involve the highest quality design that is sensitive to, and contributes to enhancing, the character of the area in which it is located.

- 4.1.30** The NPPF recognises that good design “is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people” (paragraph 56). It goes on to state that planning should ensure that developments:
- “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
 - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
 - respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
 - create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
 - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.” (paragraph 58)
- 4.1.31** The NPPF importantly further places the onus on development to actively improve the area wherever possible. It states that “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” (paragraph 64).
- 4.1.32** An attractive built environment has been shown to encourage walking, cycling and other healthy behaviours²⁰. A high-quality public realm and a sense of place can incentivise active travel and create a sense of community cohesion by reducing social isolation, fear of crime and incidences of chronic disease. Suitable access allows everyone to participate equally and improves overall health and wellbeing. Sport England have produced a list of ten ‘active design’ principles, which provide a basis for considering how design can contribute to overall activity and health²¹.
- 4.1.33** The Borough contains many established, attractive areas which are highly valued by residents and which are worthy of protection from damaging and insensitive new development. While there may be capacity to accommodate new development in many parts of the Borough, it should only occur where proposals are of a scale, density and design that would not cause damage to the qualities, character and amenity of the areas in which they are situated. Such development should also provide attractive high quality buildings and public realm that positively contributes to the area in which it is located, in accordance with good urban design principles.
- 4.1.34** There will be a strong expectation that design issues will be dealt with at pre-application stage. Some major proposals will be referred to the Design Review Panel where there are significant design implications. Supplementary Planning Documents may be prepared for elements of design where necessary.
- 4.1.35** Where some elements are crucial to good design, but there is a risk that they may be lost or eroded in the future through works not requiring planning permission, planning conditions may be used to secure those elements. Planning conditions will also be used to secure appropriate materials and other details.

²⁰ RTPi Promoting Healthy Cities http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1119674/rtpi_promoting_healthy_cities.pdf

²¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/active-design/>

Safeguarding Amenity

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.*

The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.

As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Proposals which would generate regular movements of HGVs on residential roads will not be acceptable.

Where an otherwise acceptable development could change its character to a use that would have a greater impact on amenity without needing planning permission, conditions will be applied to restrict such changes.

- 4.1.36** One of the key concerns of planning is to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it would affect residential properties. At the same time, ensuring that new development creates a quality living environment for future residents is also critical. The policy aims to ensure that existing and additional residential properties provide an acceptable living environment, which is a key element of a high quality of life. It is applicable to any type of development.
- 4.1.37** Substantial levels of development are planned for Reading in coming years, and the vast majority of it will take place in the existing urban area of Reading. Although the mix of uses sought will be generally beneficial to Reading, this increasing concentration of different types of development may give rise to some tensions between uses.
- 4.1.38** Most tensions can be avoided by careful design, siting and orientation of buildings and spaces, paying particular attention to those aspects which are most likely to cause issues (e.g. car parks, bin stores and noisy equipment), and which are most sensitive to effects (e.g. children's play areas, outdoor spaces or habitable rooms). Planning conditions can also be used to deal

with matters such as the installation of extraction systems, hours of operation, or preventing a development from changing its character.

- 4.1.39 There is not any current policy prescribing the location of employment uses below 2,500 sq m. Such a policy is not required, as long as impacts on residential amenity are carefully controlled. This policy will therefore be regularly applied to new or expanding employment uses. Where HGV movements (vehicles having a gross laden weight greater than 7.5 tonnes) are to be generated, apart from during construction, it is not appropriate that residential roads are used. This policy also seeks to ensure that new development for uses such as residential in close proximity to commercial use is not located or designed in a way that leads to future tensions that would constrain the operation of existing businesses.
- 4.1.40 Amenity levels for new residential development may also be considered. For instance, layouts should avoid locating living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens next to, above, or below proposed and neighbouring bedrooms unless effects can be adequately mitigated through design. Another example is that ‘dual aspect’ units will help to increase access to light.
- 4.1.41 Other policies in this document deal specifically with uses which often have particular amenity impacts, for instance residential conversions (H8) and house extensions (H9). Policy CC8 must be read in conjunction with these policies where they apply.
- 4.1.42 There is good practice guidance available on some of these issues²². The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on House Extensions provides some useful guidance on how extensions can be designed to accord with the principles of this policy, and that SPG continues to be current. For instance, the SPG sets out a basic way to protect light to main rooms in adjoining dwellings, through avoiding extensions that would infringe on an area measured at an angle of 45° from the midpoint of the closest window to a habitable room in a neighbouring property.
- 4.1.43 This policy mainly deals with the end result of developments, but in the meantime, conditions may be applied to regulate the amenity effects of construction.

Securing Infrastructure

CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.

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

²² For instance, reference to the ‘BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice’ document may be of use in ensuring that new development adjacent to residential properties is not of adverse bulk and does not block out sunlight and daylight to habitable rooms and outdoor living spaces.

In determining appropriate provision or contribution, the highest priority will be given to the following:

- *Transport infrastructure, including major cross boundary or sub-regional infrastructure projects;*
- *Open space, green infrastructure and other measures to improve or enhance biodiversity;*
- *Education, including cross-boundary facilities;*
- *Economic development services and infrastructure, including employment, skills and training development initiatives and childcare provision.*

Where relevant a high priority will also be given to the appropriate provision of the following:

- *Energy infrastructure, including decentralised energy projects;*
- *Health provision; and*
- *Police Service infrastructure.*

Other measures, as follows, should also be considered where a specific need is identified and justified:

- *Community facilities;*
- *Leisure and cultural infrastructure;*
- *Reading Central Area infrastructure and amenities, including public realm and street care enhancements;*
- *Environmental improvements outside the Central Area, such as within local centres, including off-site street tree and other tree planting;*
- *Measures to tackle poor air quality or for on-going air quality monitoring; and*
- *Flood mitigation and prevention measures.*

Developers are required to contribute towards the ongoing local authority costs of monitoring the implementation and payment of planning contributions.

- 4.1.44** Development is required to play a role in delivering sustainable development. Development should minimise damage, loss and impact upon existing infrastructure and environmental assets. Should loss or damage occur, developers should compensate for or mitigate any impact caused by a development. Development proposals will be expected to mitigate all relevant impacts in accordance with the criteria and rate of contribution and/or levy as set out in relevant documentation, taking account of levels of development that have already been accepted, and mitigation measures that have already been agreed or implemented. However, where it will not be possible to mitigate all relevant impacts or needs, for example for reasons of viability, the Council will take into account priorities, as set out in the policy, when seeking to agree an appropriate range of measures.
- 4.1.45** Provision will be secured through planning obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy as relevant. Such contributions may be pooled, in order to allow necessary infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way insofar as is compliant with relevant legislation.

- 4.1.46** Government policy on planning obligations is contained in The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 as amended²³. This indicates that in some instances, it may be possible to make acceptable development proposals that might otherwise be unacceptable, through the use of planning conditions, or, where this is not possible, through planning obligations. The regulations set out principles and policy tests under which planning obligations may be sought.
- 4.1.47** Supplementary Planning Guidance on Section 106 agreements²⁴, as well as a CIL charging schedule²⁵, have been adopted and continue to have effect in relation to this policy. These provide more information on what will be required with detail regarding:
- The scale and form of obligation;
 - The financial contribution sought;
 - The role of pooled payments;
 - Maintenance payments; and
 - Charges for preparing agreements.
- 4.1.48** Where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, it may be reasonable for the associated developers' contributions to be pooled, in order to allow the infrastructure to be secured in a fair and equitable way. Pooling can take place both between developments and between local authorities where there is a cross-authority impact. The CIL Regulations place limits upon pooling Section 106 payments, but there is still potential to pool contributions where there is a clear group of related developments.
- 4.1.49** This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan²⁶ and relevant strategies, plans and best practice should be taken into account. In accordance with national policy as set out in the NPPF, requirements must consider their effects on the viability of development. In particular, in considering planning obligations, the relevant tests will need to be applied as set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)²⁷.
- 4.1.50** The tight labour market of Reading and the wider Thames Valley area means that additional employment development could result in still greater pressures on housing in the Borough, more congestion and longer commuting distances. Pressure on housing can particularly affect those who cannot afford open market housing. One possible way to mitigate these impacts is through maximising the potential of the existing population to fill jobs, through improving skills, changing working practices or providing childcare facilities. In addition, new employment development can contribute to the provision of affordable housing. Therefore, such development should include mitigation commensurate with its impact on the demand for housing, labour and skills.

²³ The Community Infrastructure Regulations (2010) can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2010/9780111492390/contents>

²⁴ Supplementary Planning Guidance on Section 106 and Planning Obligations can be found on the council's website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

²⁵ The CIL Charging Schedule can be accessed on the council's website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/planningadvice>

²⁶ The Infrastructure Delivery Plan can be found in Section 10

²⁷ Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2010/9780111492390/regulation/122>

4.2 Built and Natural Environment

Heritage

- 4.2.1 Reading's unique heritage will be at the heart of the town's identity and will be highly visible, valued and accessible by those who live in, work in or visit the town. It will enrich Reading's communities and enable them to interact with, and celebrate, the town's history and historic assets.
- 4.2.2 The role of the Local Plan is to proactively conserve and enhance the historic environment and promote its enjoyment while recognising the pressures of continued development. This entails recognition of the value of historic features that are desirable for retention, ensuring that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection and other locally valued assets are recognised, retained and enhanced wherever possible. Protecting Reading's heritage assets contributes to a sense of place, and doing so can contribute to other important planning goals. Investment in heritage and culture, in turn, generates more spending in the local economy. For example, previous investment in publicly owned heritage assets within the Abbey Quarter, like the Forbury Gardens and Simeon Monument, has created an attractive environment for high-quality commercial investment including Forbury Square and Forbury Hotel²⁸. A vibrant historic environment also contributes to town centre vitality, sustainable transport, residential development, good design and the natural environment. Heritage assets can be a positive force for regeneration. New development can be beneficial to heritage assets through providing or encouraging new uses or better revealing their significance.
- 4.2.3 If we are to properly value our substantial heritage assets, it is important to understand their significance, and this means appreciating how they relate to the history of the town. The following sections therefore summarise the main aspects of Reading's history insofar as they relate to the current built environment.
- 4.2.4 There is evidence of prehistoric and Roman settlement in Reading, particularly around the river valleys. There have been a variety of locations where such evidence has been found, and there is potential for archaeological finds across the Borough.
- 4.2.5 Despite this evidence for earlier settlement, Reading is a Saxon place-name from early Saxon settlers who settled the land near the meeting point of the Thames and Kennet in the 6th century. The historic core retains reminders of its Saxon and medieval origins through its early street pattern and ancient parish churches. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Reading belonged to the king and included a small borough and two manors. In 1121, King Henry I founded Reading Abbey. The Abbey dominated the town and became one of the richest religious houses in England, making Reading a wealthy place, and a centre of religion and pilgrimage. The Dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1538 signalled the beginning of the Abbey's decline.
- 4.2.6 In the centuries following the closing of the Abbey, Reading secured its role as a thriving market town making good use of its road and river links. It played an important role in the English Civil War, as a Royalist garrison in the town was besieged during 1643. In the 18th century, new industries developed, notably brewing, iron-founding and brick and tile making. Early 19th century maps show the town had hardly extended beyond its medieval core, but expansion was stimulated by the development of new transport links. The Kennet & Avon Canal was opened in

²⁸ Reading Borough Council, *Draft Heritage Statement*, 2014 <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1193/Draft-Heritage-Statement/pdf/Draft-Heritage-Statement.pdf> purposes.

1810 bringing London and Bristol into direct communication by water. The coming of the Great Western Railway in 1840 resulted in a rapid growth of major industries, notably Huntley and Palmers biscuit makers and Suttons Seeds, which provided employment for a growing population. The Victorian and Edwardian expansion and prosperity of the town is demonstrated by Reading's distinctive use of locally made coloured brick, terracotta and tile.

4.2.7 Beyond the town centre, formal rural parishes like Caversham and Tilehurst joined the Borough in 1911. For example, St Peter's Conservation Area is the old village centre of Caversham around the medieval parish church and the restored Thames-side Caversham Court Gardens. The parks and gardens of the many country houses that once surrounded Reading also survive within the modern urban townscape, including Caversham Park, Prospect Park and Whiteknights.

4.2.8 Figure 4.1 summarises the main elements of the history of Reading described above in terms of how it impacts on the built environment that is present today, starting with the town's Saxon beginnings. It is intended to help the understanding of the significance of our heritage assets, which is of use both in adequately protecting those assets and in better revealing them through new development.

4.2.9 Nearly all of Reading's heritage assets are owned by private organisations and individuals. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is the responsibility of everyone in the community. The Council owns relatively few historic assets, although some of the assets it does own are very prominent, such as the Abbey Gate and Ruins and Town Hall. The conservation and enhancement of Reading's historic assets must be based in innovative and creative approaches involving high levels of partnership. Many local organisations are already working to enhance the view that Reading is a heritage destination. These policies attempt to address that Reading has not always made the most of its significant heritage.

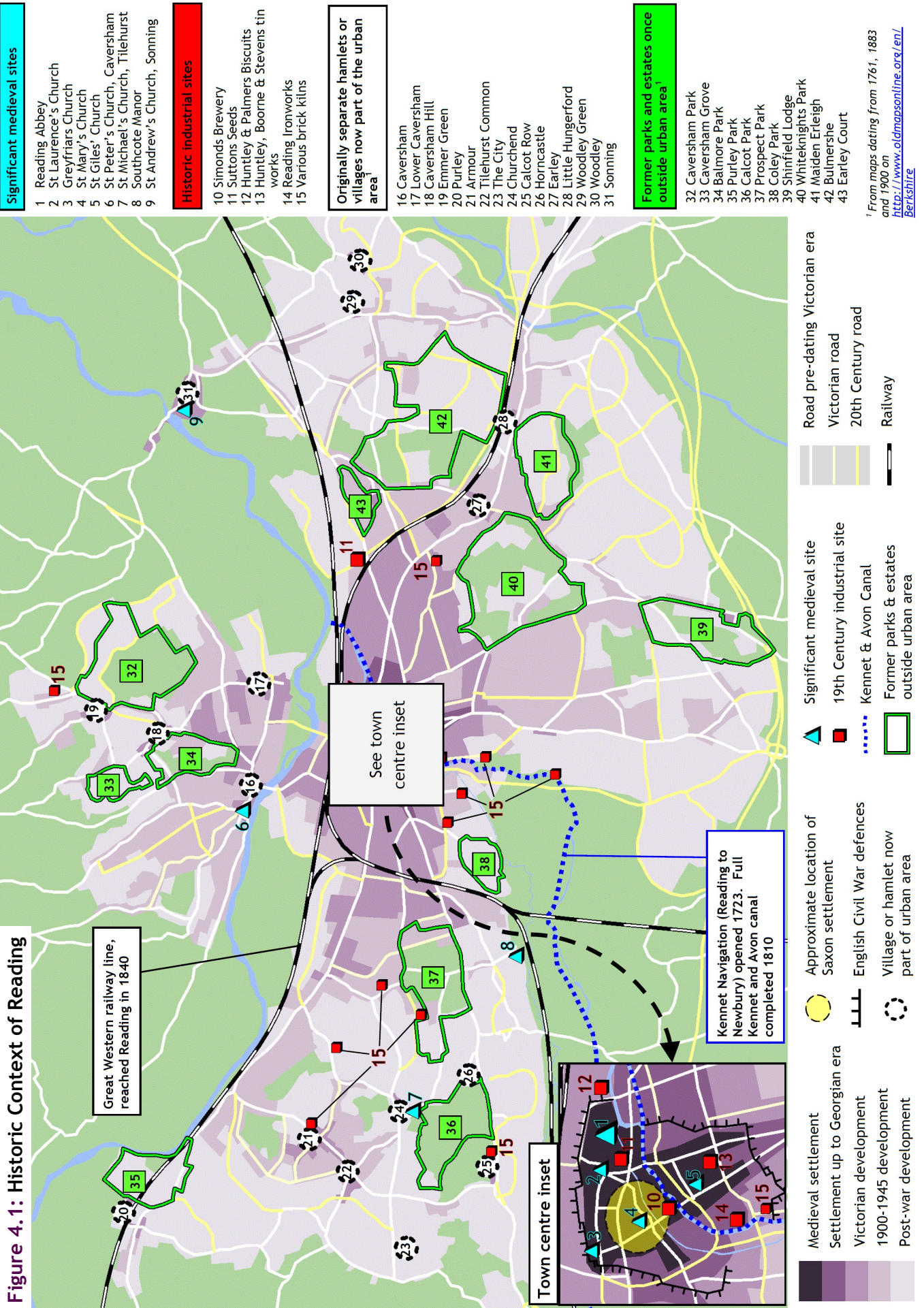
4.2.10 Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as a "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest."²⁹ Heritage assets may be formally designated as being of national importance or of local importance and may include listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, industrial heritage sites, sites of archaeological interest and historic landscapes. The fact that an asset is not identified on a list does not mean it is not of historical significance.

4.2.11 Reading Borough contains a diverse range of heritage assets:

- 800 nationally Listed Buildings (including 30 Grade I and Grade II*);
- 15 Conservation Areas, including Buildings of Townscape Merit identified in each of the Conservation Area appraisals;
- Two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Reading Abbey, including the Civil War earthworks and Reading Gaol, and High Bridge);
- Five Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Locally listed buildings and structures, one of which (3 Craven Road) is protected by an Article 4 Direction;
- 15 Article 4 Directions protecting locally distinctive buildings by removing permitted development rights;
- Various sites of industrial heritage;
- The Berkshire Historic Environment Record³⁰ contains comprehensive records of over 1200 archaeological sites and finds in Reading.

²⁹ NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³⁰ Historic England's Heritage Gateway can be accessed online at <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>



EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Monuments;*
- *Historic parks and gardens; and*
- *Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.*

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

4.2.12 Planning is an important instrument for maintaining and enhancing the environment, and preserving built and natural heritage. Planning policy must therefore reconcile the need for development with the need to protect the natural and historic environment. Planning policy should also seek opportunities for development to secure the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, to better reveal its significance and to increase access to and enjoyment of that environment.

4.2.13 Heritage Statements will be expected to:

- i) describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise; at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal; using appropriate references such as the Historic Environment Record and, if necessary, original survey (including, for assets or archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation); and
- ii) set out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and a suggested mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets as well as recording loss and advancing knowledge.

- 4.2.14** In areas where there is a need to protect character, local authorities have the power to make an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights and require planning applications³¹. There are 15 Article 4 directions currently in place that relate to patterned brickwork and one relating to a locally listed building (plus two which restrict conversions from a house to an HMO) and the Council will continue to consider the implementation of Article 4 directions, particularly in areas where special historic character is threatened³². There is potential to use Local Development Orders (LDOs) in combination with Article 4 Directions in order to allow owners to reinstate features that reflect historic character without having to submit a planning application.
- 4.2.15** Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Unlike buildings listed by Historic England, they are designated at the local level by the local authority. These areas are designated because they have a particularly distinctive character and usually provide a strong link to the history of the area and are considered to be heritage assets for the purposes of applying this policy. The specific heritage interests of Reading's Conservation Areas are set out in Conservation Area Appraisals. These documents serve as a guide for managing development in these areas.
- 4.2.16** Heritage Assets at Risk are identified by Historic England as “vulnerable to neglect, decay or other threats”.³³ Heritage Assets at Risk deserve priority attention. As of October 2017, four assets in Reading have been identified by Historic England as ‘at risk’. These are:
- Sacred Heart, St John’s Road
 - Chazey Farm Barn, The Warren
 - St David’s Hall, Portland Place, 24-30 London Road
 - Remains of Reading Abbey

At the time of writing, three of the four sites identified as ‘at risk’ are either undergoing improvement or have secured funding for improvement (Sacred Heart, St David’s Hall and the Remains of Reading Abbey). The Council is working closely with the owners of the Chazey Farm Barn to develop a plan for its restoration. Should other assets become identified as ‘at-risk’ throughout the plan period, the Council will actively work toward their protection. The most up-to-date list can be viewed on the Historic England website³⁴.

EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Applicants should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance by consulting the Historic Environment Record. This will require an assessment of the archaeological impacts of development proposals to be submitted before the planning application is determined. Planning permission will not be granted in cases where the assessment of the archaeological impacts is inadequate.

Where remains cannot be preserved ‘in situ,’ remains should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded. This will require adequate provision for the identification,

³¹ NPPF

³² A map of areas in Reading under Article 4 Direction can be found at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/planningadvice>

³³ PPG, 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/12-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/>

³⁴ The Heritage-at-risk register can be accessed on Historic England’s website at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk>

investigation, recording and publication of the archaeological resource. Where appropriate, Section 106 agreements will be negotiated to protect, enhance and interpret archaeological remains.

Development proposals which will have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings will not be allowed.

4.2.17 Archaeological excavation is, by its nature, a generally destructive process, so the archive is the unique record of this investigation and needs to be preserved and accessible in perpetuity. Archives from within Reading Borough are usually added to Reading Museum's collection. The Proposals Map shows 'Areas of Archaeological Potential', where there is recognised archaeological potential, although it is also important to recognise that there is a potential for archaeological finds almost anywhere in the Borough. All reports submitted to support the application will be written by a qualified heritage professional and should assess impacts and effects to an appropriate level of detail.

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- *Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture;*
- *Restoring original building features;*
- *Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;*
- *Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees, particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;*
- *Improving signage and street furniture;*
- *Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;*
- *Sympathetic landscaping and planting;*
- *Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area;*
- *Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;*
- *Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance.*

Where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development.

4.2.18 Appraisals were undertaken for all Reading's conservation areas between 2005 and 2010. These identify the special interest of each area and provide a valuable tool for considering development in these areas. The Conservation Area appraisals can be found on the Council's website³⁵. Information for property owners, estate agents and the public is also available online³⁶.

³⁵ The most up-to-date Conservation Area appraisals can be accessed on the Council's website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/conservationareas>

³⁶ More information on Conservation Areas can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/conservationareas>

4.2.19 The Council supports community-led efforts to assess and update Conservation Area appraisals and management plans with limited technical support from officers and will work closely with groups with the aim of adopting updated appraisals and management plans. The Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee is a community-led group separate from the Council and comprised of people with an interest in the built environment and its heritage³⁷. Membership will be drawn from local amenity societies, residents' associations, independent historical, architectural and planning experts, and local residents and businesses.

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

4.2.20 The Council has established and maintains a List of Locally Important Buildings. The local significance of assets may become known at any time throughout the duration of this plan and the list will be revised dependent on any new information. Criteria for inclusion of locally listed assets can be found in Appendix 2. Local heritage assets do not qualify for statutory listing and are not protected from loss in the same way as listed assets³⁸. It should be recognised that seeking the reuse of historic buildings and, where appropriate, their modification to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development, without harming the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, helps to mitigate the effects of climate change. Therefore, buildings on the Local List should be re-used, where possible.

EN5: PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST

New development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance.

The following views merit special protection:

- 1. View from McIlroy Park towards Chazey Barn Farm, the Thames Meadow and the Chilterns escarpment**
- 2. View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church**
- 3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge**
- 4. View northwards down Russell St towards the Church of the Holy Trinity**

³⁷ More information about the Conservation Area Advisory Committee can be found on the Reading Civic Society's website at http://www.readingcivicsociety.org.uk/wordpress/?page_id=186

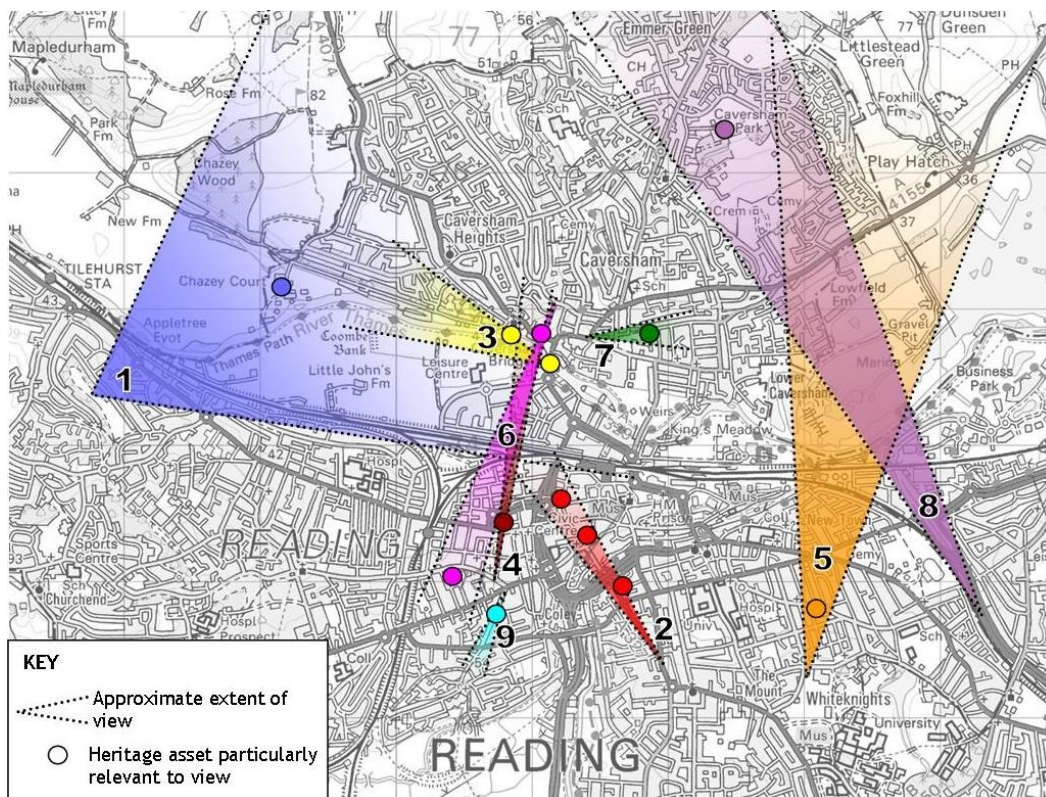
³⁸ More information on locally listed heritage assets can be found on Historic England's website at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/locallylistedhas/>

5. *View over Alexandra Road Conservation Area toward the Chilterns escarpment*
6. *View southwards down St Annes Rd towards Downshire Square*
7. *View of St Annes Church Tower from the west*
8. *View towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M), railway and surrounding streets*
9. *View southwards along tree-lined Coley Avenue*

4.2.21 Development proposals should consider opportunities for view enhancement. Improvements to significant views that take a pro-active role in repairing past damaging conditions or seek to establish and manage accessible viewing places will be encouraged.

4.2.22 The views identified in this policy (shown in Figure 4.2) were selected for their historic significance and describe either a view of a heritage asset itself or a view from a historic viewing place. This list is not comprehensive, but aims to include the most significant heritage views in the Borough that are not protected by other policies, for instance within a Conservation Area. There are a number of other views in the Borough that are important for other reasons, and these are covered by other designations and documents. Policy EN13 deals with major landscape features, of and within which there are many views of importance. There are also a number of views of central Reading, in particular including the station area. The Reading Station Area Framework (chapter 7) identifies both longer and shorter distance views that are of importance³⁹.

Figure 4.2: Significant Views with Heritage Interest



³⁹ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1674/Reading-Station-Area-Framework/pdf/Reading-Station-Area-Framework.pdf>

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*
- b. Sensitivity to historic context;*
- c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*
- d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.*

4.2.23 The Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate, enhancing, Reading’s historic environment. This includes ensuring that buildings and features of local architectural and historic interest (which are not necessarily recognised components of the historic environment) are taken fully into account and safeguarded, as appropriate. New development in the vicinity of historic assets or at the edges of conservation areas should be sympathetic. It should reflect elements of the local historic environment in the form of the new development. This could include a wide range of matters such as footprint sizes, setbacks from the road frontage, landscaping, window placement and size, prevailing building height or architectural features. The aim is not to copy existing heritage, but to use new development to underline key consistent elements of the local historic environment. Good, modern design that is complimentary to the historic environment will be acceptable and preferable to ‘pastiche.’

4.2.24 The Council’s positive approach to promoting Reading’s unique historic character relies on early discussions with stakeholders at the pre-application stage, so that applicants are fully informed of the issues they are required to address.

Local Green Space and Public Open Space

EN7: LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The following Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS), as shown on the Proposals Map, will be protected from development. Proposals that would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted.

| Code | Name | Status | Area (ha) |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| EN7Ca | Christchurch Meadows | LGS | 11.06 |
| EN7Cb | Forbury Gardens | LGS | 1.8 |
| EN7Cc | Hills Meadow | LGS | 4.26 |
| EN7Cd | Kings Meadow and the Coal Woodland | LGS | 16.17 |
| EN7Ce | Kings Road Gardens | POS | 0.16 |

| | | | |
|-------|---|-----|-------|
| EN7Cf | St Laurence's Churchyard | POS | 0.39 |
| EN7Cg | St Mary's Churchyard | POS | 0.59 |
| EN7Ch | View Island | LGS | 1.62 |
| EN7Sa | Cintra Park | LGS | 6.87 |
| EN7Sb | Fobney Island Nature Reserve | POS | 6.18 |
| EN7Sc | Greenham Avenue, Kennet Island | LGS | 0.47 |
| EN7Sd | John Rabson Recreation Ground and The Cowsey | LGS | 26.91 |
| EN7Se | Kennet Island Nature Reserve | POS | 1.62 |
| EN7Sf | Long Barn Lane Recreation Ground | LGS | 3.29 |
| EN7Sg | Shinfield Road Recreation Ground | LGS | 1.15 |
| EN7Sh | South Whitley Park | LGS | 5.31 |
| EN7Si | Waterloo Meadows | LGS | 10.32 |
| EN7Sj | Whitley Wood Recreation Ground | LGS | 4.15 |
| EN7Wa | Arthur Newbery Park | LGS | 13.02 |
| EN7Wb | Battle Square | LGS | 0.54 |
| EN7Wc | Beresford Road Playground | POS | 0.54 |
| EN7Wd | Blagrove Recreation Ground | POS | 0.87 |
| EN7We | Blundells Copse and Meadway Sports Ground | LGS | 9.48 |
| EN7Wf | Coley Recreation Ground | LGS | 5.62 |
| EN7Wg | Courage Park | POS | 1.74 |
| EN7Wh | Great Knollys Street Recreation Ground | POS | 1.49 |
| EN7Wi | Kensington Park | LGS | 4.23 |
| EN7Wj | Lousehill Copse | LGS | 12.67 |
| EN7Wk | Mclroy Park and Round Copse | LGS | 15.02 |
| EN7Wl | Meadway Woodland | POS | 2.6 |
| EN7Wm | Oxford Road Recreation Ground | LGS | 0.69 |
| EN7Wn | Portman Road Playground | POS | 2.32 |
| EN7Wo | Prospect Park | LGS | 46.52 |
| EN7Wp | Rivermead and Thameside Promenade | LGS | 16.83 |
| EN7Wq | Robert Hewett Recreation Ground | LGS | 0.34 |
| EN7Wr | Southcote Linear Park | LGS | 3.47 |
| EN7Ws | Taff Way Woodland | POS | 2.74 |
| EN7Wt | Tofrek Terrace | POS | 2.1 |
| EN7Wu | Victoria Recreation Ground and Kentwood Hill Allotments | LGS | 4.64 |
| EN7Wv | Oxford Road Community Garden | POS | 0.12 |
| EN7Na | Albert Road Recreation Ground | LGS | 1.53 |
| EN7Nb | Amersham Road Recreation Ground | LGS | 2.31 |
| EN7Nc | Balmore Walk | LGS | 7.06 |
| EN7Nd | Beechwood | LGS | 3.65 |
| EN7Ne | Bug's Bottom (Hemdean Bottom) | LGS | 14.23 |
| EN7Nf | Caleta Close Play Area | POS | 0.46 |
| EN7Ng | Caversham Court Gardens and Allotments | LGS | 1.4 |
| EN7Nh | Caversham Pond | POS | 0.73 |
| EN7Ni | Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Woods | LGS | 26.31 |
| EN7Nj | Emmer Green Pond | POS | 1.09 |
| EN7Nk | Emmer Green Recreation Ground and Allotments | LGS | 2.27 |
| EN7Nl | Land at Deans Farm | POS | 2.29 |
| EN7Nm | Land at Stuart Close | POS | 0.73 |
| EN7Nn | Mapledurham Playing Fields | LGS | 10.86 |
| EN7No | Milestone Wood and Milestone Way | LGS | 8.29 |
| EN7Np | Rotherfield Way Copse | LGS | 1.97 |
| EN7Nq | The Warren Woodland West | LGS | 0.99 |
| EN7Nr | Westfield Road Recreation Ground | LGS | 1.45 |
| EN7Ea | Alfred Sutton Playing Field | LGS | 4.9 |
| EN7Eb | Eldon Square | POS | 0.35 |
| EN7Ec | Lorenzo Quelch Park | POS | 0.12 |
| EN7Ed | Palmer Park | LGS | 16.07 |

4.2.25 The National Planning Policy Framework states that local communities, through local plans, are able to identify Local Green Space for specific protection which is of particular importance to them. The aim of this policy is therefore to define the boundaries of Local Green Space, based on the criteria in the NPPF. Local Green Spaces can only be designated during local plan preparation or review and must be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

4.2.26 As outlined in the NPPF, Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and
- Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land⁴⁰.

4.2.27 Individual assessments which test each Local Green Space against the criteria outlined in the NPPF can be found in the relevant background information⁴¹.

4.2.28 Access to high quality open spaces, sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities⁴². Open space policies contribute towards many of the goals of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2020) by supporting residents to make healthy lifestyle choices and reducing social isolation through public open space. Additionally, these policies contribute to the delivery of many other Council objectives in terms of supporting an urban renaissance, defining the character of a town and place, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well-being, climate change adaptation, and the promotion of sustainable development.

4.2.29 This policy has been informed by the Council's Open Spaces Strategy⁴³ where the protection of publicly accessible recreational open space was considered to be of great importance. This is useable space which provides a resource for sport, leisure and informal recreation. This policy therefore deals mainly with those areas which can be accessed by the public, although it includes some exceptional allotment sites where they qualify as Local Green Space in terms of the criteria above. Areas with restricted access, such as school playing fields, are not included, although it is important to note that other policies in the Local Plan, as well as national policy, cover such areas.

⁴⁰ Sections 76-77 of the NPPF available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁴¹ On the Council's website at www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf

⁴² NPPF

⁴³ The Council's most up-to-date Open Spaces Strategy can be found at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/7108/What-is-the-Reading-Open-Spaces-Strategy>

Undesignated Open Space

EN8: UNDESIGNATED OPEN SPACE

There will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space, which will include allotments. Development should not result in the loss of or jeopardise use and enjoyment of undesignated open space. Development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, of a similar standard and function, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space. The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land.

- 4.2.30 Reading has many areas of open space not identified in Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space) in both public and private ownership, which nevertheless provide important recreational and amenity resources. It is important that these areas are retained where possible.
- 4.2.31 This policy relates to all open space in the Borough; publicly or privately owned, apart from the Local Green Spaces and Public Open Spaces identified in Policy EN7. It applies not just to the loss of the space, but to a situation where development prevents the use of open space in close proximity through such effects as preventing public access or leading to unacceptable levels of overshadowing. Where a development proposal involves losing open space that is not specifically designated, appropriate replacement space should be provided where it is easily accessible to the people most affected. Alternatively, compensating improvements could be made to existing open space in the area. Undesignated open spaces within or adjacent to Conservation Areas or the setting of heritage assets are particularly valuable.
- 4.2.32 This policy also covers Reading's various allotment sites (apart from those identified as Local Green Space), with a presumption in favour of their retention. Compensatory provision for the loss of any allotments in line with the policy will need to consider whether it adequately replaces the role of the allotments that would be lost.

Provision of Open Space

EN9: PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

All new development should make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs of the development. This can be achieved through on or off-site provision, contributions toward provision or improvement of existing leisure or recreational facilities.

On sites of 50 dwellings or more, or for developments where the availability and quality of existing open space has been identified as deficient, new provision will be sought. Development must ensure satisfactory provision of children's play areas and neighbourhood parks.

A secure maintenance arrangement shall be demonstrated to ensure that any open space is properly maintained throughout the life of the development. In exceptional circumstances

where the Council agrees to the adoption of the open space, a commuted sum for future maintenance will be required as part of any legal agreement.

On sites of less than 50 dwellings, or in areas not identified as deficient in the provision of open space, new open space provision, improvements or enhancements will be sought, including through appropriate contributions.

The provision of open space for all developments shall satisfy the most urgent need subject to considerations of particular deficiencies. The most up-to-date Open Spaces Strategy should guide provision type and size. New open space should:

- *Be in useable parcels of land and not be fragmented;*
- *Be safely and easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier, including a road;*
- *Be accessible to the general public and be designed so as to feel that it is part of the public and not private realm;*
- *Create a safe environment, appropriately considering lighting and layout to reduce the fear of crime;*
- *Provide some informal landscaping for aesthetic, wildlife and recreational purposes; and*
- *Link into the Green Network where possible.*

4.2.33 It is essential that new developments make provision for open space to meet the needs of the residents/occupiers of the development. With a growing population resulting from new development, it follows that the amount and/or quality of open space in the Borough should increase over the plan period. Qualitative improvements might include the provision of supporting amenities e.g. benches, refreshment facilities, green infrastructure, etc.

4.2.34 The Open Space Audit carried out as part of the preparation of the Open Space Strategy also found significant deficiency in the provision of play areas and safe access to play areas in several parts of Borough, although some of these deficiencies have been addressed since publication of the Strategy. Special consideration needs to be given to ensuring adequate provision of play space as part of all development proposals.

4.2.35 Open space is unevenly distributed across the Borough. People in and around the town centre are still further away from public open space than guidelines recommend and parts of North Reading are very deficient in play areas. In many cases historical development patterns make it difficult to introduce new areas of public open space without large-scale redevelopment.

4.2.36 The Open Spaces Strategy identifies the following main issues:

- Access: the distribution of public open space leaves some areas underprovided:
 - In Central Reading, public open space is, by and large, where residents are not;
 - In North Reading, large areas are lacking children’s play facilities;
 - Areas immediately to the West, North West, South and East of the town centre are amongst the most poorly supplied in the Borough; the problem is exacerbated by very dense housing; and
 - Severance lines, such as busy roads or railways, further restrict residents’ access to open space.

- Quality: some of the existing parks and open spaces are of poor quality and lack facilities.
- Links to public open space: these are fragmented, so that some public open space is not linked by pedestrian infrastructure to homes, and wildlife corridors are incomplete.
- Wildlife: many links between habitats are incomplete and could be improved by wildlife corridors.

4.2.37 The space hierarchy in Figure 4.3 should be used as a benchmark for considering open space provision in the Borough, in terms of both quality and quantity. Its objective is to assist in promoting some consistency in provision across the town, as well as helping to identify where households have limited access to public open space and where the quality of provision is inadequate.

4.2.38 Large, higher-tier parks are not substitutes for a good distribution of local parks. Clearly, an open space labelled ‘district park’ is also a neighbourhood park for households within a reasonable catchment. For residents living further away from a district park, access to local parks and other small recreational open spaces nearby must also be available.

4.2.39 The Open Spaces Strategy states that, ‘All guidelines recommend that at least some open space for children to play, *whether publicly or privately owned*, be available within 100-200m of every home. This will primarily affect very high-density developments, like flats, as almost all other houses have some form of garden’.

4.2.40 Policy H10 seeks to secure private and communal outdoor amenity areas on all residential developments, the extent of which will be guided by the site’s proximity to quality public open space. Conversely, this policy looks to secure public open space. In determining the appropriate form, location and extent of public open space for new development, consideration will be given to the extent of deprivation of private or communal garden areas within the proposed scheme.

Figure 4.3: Hierarchy and typology of open spaces of recreational value, and provision standards for Reading

| | Description | Size | Transport mode | Radial catchment |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Borough Park | Varied character and facilities; open parkland, natural, formal, sport, play and relaxation; catering | 60 ha | Car; public transport; cycle | |
| District parks | Varied character and facilities (but fewer than above); natural, formal, sport, play and recreation | 20 ha | Car; bus; cycle; foot | 1.2 km |
| Local parks | Relaxation, play and ball games | 2 ha or 1-2 ha equipped | Cycle; foot; wheelchair | 0.8 km |
| Neighbourhood park | LEAP + informal space | 0.1-0.2 ha equipped | Foot; wheelchair | 0.4-0.8 km |
| Small recreational open spaces | ‘low-grade’ recreation | 0.1-0.2 ha | Foot; wheelchair | 0.4-0.8 km |
| Linear open spaces | Relaxation; green link | | Foot; cycle | |
| Semi-natural sites | Comparatively undisturbed sites, managed for wild flora and fauna | | Cycle; foot; wheelchair | 1.5-2.0 km |

- 4.2.41** Improvements to the quality and facilities of existing open space and/or the provision of new open spaces should be secured through financial contributions as part of smaller developments, either through CIL or Section 106 agreements. As a minimum, the provision of safe access for new households to new or existing enhanced public open space should be a requirement. In larger scale commercial/retail developments, the integration of additional public spaces (such as civic squares) should be required.
- 4.2.42** Regeneration initiatives and housing redevelopments sometimes create opportunities to provide new open space or reorganise space through land swaps. Feasibility of this alternative should be considered in areas deficient in public open space.
- 4.2.43** There will be a presumption that the Council will not adopt additional areas of public open space except in exceptional circumstances. Developers will therefore need to make provision for the continuing future maintenance of these open spaces.

Provision of green space with development - overview of requirements

Policy EN9 provides for public open space in residential developments of over 50 dwellings. However, there are a variety of policies that ensure that all new residential development within the Borough makes some form of contribution to green infrastructure, through:

- *Private and communal green space in accordance with Policy H10*
- *Landscaping, in accordance with Policy CC7, and linked into a wider Green Network wherever possible in accordance with Policy EN12;*
- *Innovative solutions in the high density town centre such as green roofs, green walls and roof gardens in accordance with policies CR2 and CR10;*
- *Tree planting in accordance with policies CC3 and EN14*

Access to Open Space

EN10: ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

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

- 4.2.44** There are a number of severance lines that act as barriers to access to open space, some of which were identified in the 2007 Open Spaces Strategy. New development proposals should be assessed in terms of accessibility to open space (as well as other services and facilities). Opportunities should be identified for development to improve or contribute to the improvement of access to open spaces, such as through providing or funding the provision of improvements to crossings, green routes, towpaths or pedestrianisation of streets.
- 4.2.45** The creation of a network of safe links for pedestrians and cyclists, that improves access to a choice of open spaces, is a key objective and an integral part of the Open Spaces Strategy. Not only will these routes increase open space usage and reduce trips by cars, they should be considered an intrinsic component of the overall open space structure and experience that Reading offers. Paths alongside the Kennet and Thames in particular, provide a unique opportunity to enhance the network of green links and corridors across the Borough.

Waterspaces

EN11: WATERSPACES

Reading's waterspaces will be protected and enhanced, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character and visual amenity, the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities and, where appropriate, navigation. There will be no adverse impact on the functions and setting of any watercourse and its associated corridor.

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

- *Provide appropriate, attractive uses and buildings that enhance the relationship of buildings, spaces and routes to the watercourse, including through creating or enhancing views of the watercourse, and create a high quality public realm;*
- *Make positive contributions to the distinct character, appearance, historic significance, landscape and amenity of the watercourses;*
- *Provide a strengthened role for watercourses as important landscape features, wildlife corridors, historic features and recreation opportunities;*
- *Wherever practical and consistent with its biodiversity role, provide good, level access to and along the waterside for all those who want to use it;*
- *Be set at least ten metres back from the watercourse wherever practicable and appropriate to protect its biodiversity significance;*
- *Improve the quality of watercourse environment through protecting and enhancing habitats and ensuring that habitat creation is balanced with access and urban uses; and*
- *Pursue opportunities for deculverting of watercourses.*

- 4.2.46 Reading is built on two main rivers that contribute to the distinct character of the Borough. Each provides a very different character and role. The Thames remains largely natural in character, bounded by parks, green spaces and fields for most of its stretch through Reading, although it meets the edge of the town centre on the south bank between Caversham and Reading Bridges. The Kennet is similarly rural in the south west of the Borough, but has a stronger integration into the fabric of the town centre than the Thames. It is important that development recognises and builds on these distinct characters.
- 4.2.47 Land uses adjoining the waterways will contribute to the creation of attractive and highly accessible waterside environments, within which people can feel safe and comfortable. Buildings should face onto the water and present active frontages along the Kennet, with ground floor uses designed to enhance activity and life along this corridor. Uses and facilities along the Thames will be diversified, seeking to provide a greater variety of leisure activities and facilitating public use and recreation.
- 4.2.48 In addition to the two main rivers, the Holy Brook contains a unique character and links to the town's ancient history. Development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access, as well as consider any opportunities for deculverting it, which will provide ecological and potentially flood risk benefits. There are also a number of other small tributaries within Reading, with their own character, and there may again be opportunities to enhance these as well as investigate deculverting.
- 4.2.49 The role of waterways in attracting and catering for visitors and local people of all ages and backgrounds must be recognised. Development adjoining the waterways should therefore

provide public access to, or contribute towards improving the pedestrian facilities to, along or across the waterways. Whilst there may be cases where this is not possible due to particular site-specific constraints, these will be exceptional circumstances only. The Council will seek to promote schemes that facilitate linkages between the Thames, and the town and the Kennet, which will be facilitated through the spatial strategy for central Reading.

- 4.2.50** The wildlife function of the waterways is also vital. There is also a clear relationship between this policy and EN12 on Biodiversity and the Green Network, as the main watercourses are identified as green links within that policy, vital for wildlife movement. In order to enhance this biodiversity role, development should be set back from the bank where possible and appropriate. In this case, development refers to buildings, fences and walls as well as laying of non-permeable surfaces. Ideally, unless direct access to or along the waterside is of particular significance on a site, a buffer should be maintained as a natural or semi-natural habitat free from built development, parking areas, private gardens and formal landscaping. Additionally, where a watercourse runs through a proposed development, a buffer shall be provided on both banks. There should be a long term landscape and ecological management plan for this buffer.
- 4.2.51** Where barriers to fish are present in a watercourse adjacent to development proposals, the design should include measures to allow for the natural movement of fish within the watercourse.
- 4.2.52** The Council has also produced a Thames Parks Plan, which seeks to physically link the significant areas of public park along the Thames in Reading, and increase the number and range of people using the parks. It takes each of the eight parks in turn and makes recommendations, as well as suggesting measures to deal with cross-cutting issues such as access.
- 4.2.53** There are also a number of other plans and strategies that relate to the waterways and land around them. The Thames Valley National Landscape Character Area profile (Natural England)⁴⁴ identifies priorities for enhancement of the landscape. The Thames River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency)⁴⁵ seeks to achieve the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment in the Thames basin, and includes a number of objectives. Meanwhile, the Thames Waterway Plan (River Thames Alliance)⁴⁶ deals with the use of the river and seeks to achieve a healthy growth in its use for communities, wildlife, leisure and business. This document is in the process of being reviewed. In addition, the Environment Agency will also consider proposals affecting watercourses under separate legislation. Development within 8 metres of the riverbank will require the prior consent of the Environment Agency under the Thames Region Land Drainage Byelaws⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3865943?category=587130>

⁴⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289937/geth0910bswa-e-e.pdf

⁴⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289784/geth1205bjyc-e-e.pdf

⁴⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297294/geth0907bndj-e-e.pdf

Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

- a) *The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:*
- *Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and*
 - *Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together - designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links.*

New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.

- b) *On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:*
- *Protect and where possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals where practicable; and*
 - *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) where practicable.*
- In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.*

4.2.54 Despite its primarily urban nature, Reading has a number of important wildlife habitats including woodlands, grasslands and wetlands. These are the remnants of a once much wider and more connected series of habitats that supported a greater diversity of species. As well as larger habitats, individual features of biodiversity interest can be present at a small scale within a variety of types of site. As set out elsewhere in this plan, there are significant needs for new development within Reading, but there is also a need to attain a balance between accommodating development activity, and preserving important biodiversity and geodiversity.

4.2.55 There are two main elements to this policy:

- Identifying the key areas of biodiversity importance and drawing them together into an interconnected ‘Green Network’ across Reading; and
- General development management guidance for all sites on biodiversity and geodiversity.

Existing features

4.2.56 Whilst there are no nationally or internationally designated habitats in Reading, the Borough contains many sites that are important to the local and strategic context, and therefore need to be protected. These include:

- Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites: these are designated by the local authority, in the latter case in conjunction with Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre;
- protected and priority species and their habitats and habitats identified as being important within Reading’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP);
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: these are those LNRs identified by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum and agreed by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF), where biodiversity improvements are likely to have the most beneficial results at a strategic scale. Two BOAs cross into Reading Borough - the West Reading Woodlands and LNRs, and the Kennet Valley East (see Figure 4.4). The BOA designation identifies priorities for enhancement. The priorities for the areas in Reading are available to view on the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership website⁴⁸, and, for these areas and for adjacent development, biodiversity enhancements under this policy should reflect those priorities.

4.2.57 The Council will manage LNRs and LWSs, to ensure that they remain protected against the adverse effects of development or related activity. It should be noted that the above designations are defined outside the Local Plan process, which means that they are potentially subject to change within the plan period, and the adopted Proposals Map may not show the latest boundaries. The Council, together with Natural England, the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum

(BNCF) and Thames Valley Environment Records Centre (TVERC), will continue to keep LWSs and LNPs under review. BNCF will also keep the priorities for Biodiversity Opportunity Areas under review.

4.2.58 As well as the need to protect existing biodiversity value, this policy hinges on the concept of a ‘Green Network’. This stitches together the known areas of biodiversity importance with areas where there is potential for increased

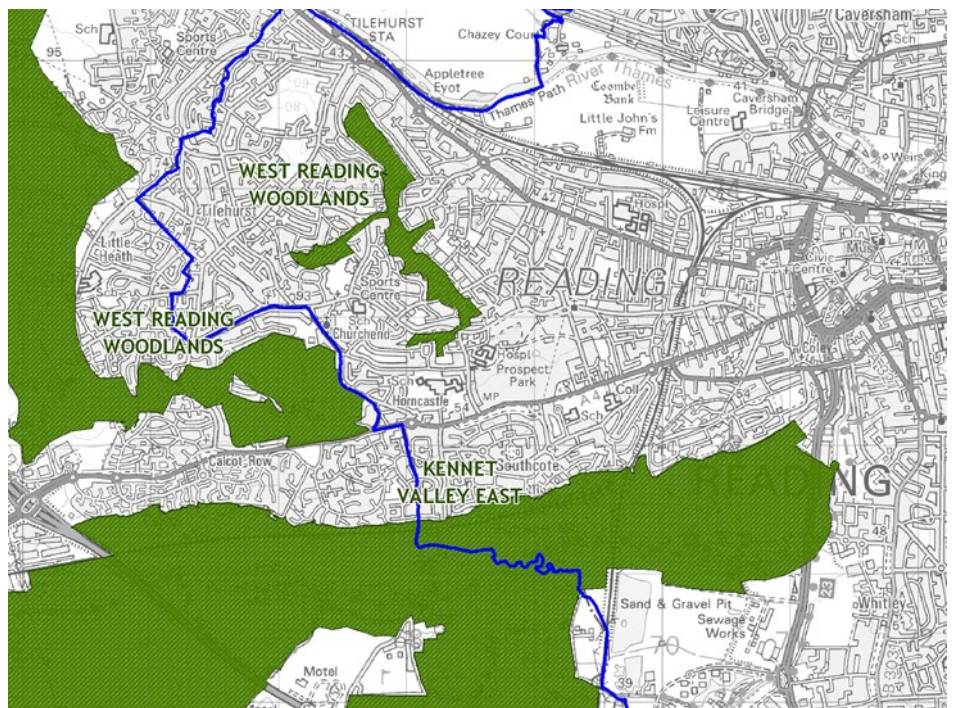


Figure 4.4: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in Reading

⁴⁸ <http://berkshirelnp.org/index.php/what-we-do/strategy/biodiversity-opportunity-areas>

biodiversity significance into a network that allows wildlife to move between sites. This seeks to overcome the issue that sites of wildlife importance have become fragmented into a number of small, unconnected sites with isolated wildlife populations. Climate change is likely to increase the need for linkages, as species will increasingly need to move across the landscape to stay within their climatic range. The Green Network also fulfils other purposes such as storm water control and air pollution amelioration.

- 4.2.59** The Green Network incorporates both the existing designated areas already set out, but also areas with potential for biodiversity value and movement. It has been identified through a desk based study using GIS data held by TVERC and Reading Borough Council. The study was carried out by TVERC. This Green Network policy goes beyond site specific considerations and is aimed towards the broader context acknowledging that for these areas to achieve their true value and potential they need to work as part of a network with one area being successfully linked to another area, rather than remaining as isolated fragments. Therefore, its interconnectedness is critical.
- 4.2.60** Given the importance of the interconnectedness of the Network, new and potential ‘green links’ are crucial. These lie between assets both within and outside the Borough and either link these areas or have the potential to do so (e.g. through re-development or management). They include both public and private land, and may include lines of trees, riverbanks, road and railway verges, a series of well vegetated gardens, stepping stones of small patches of habitat, green roofs or waterways and ponds, or other similar features.
- 4.2.61** The routes identified as Green Links on the Proposals Map either denote an existing link or illustrate an indicative location for where potential Green Links could be located to provide desired connectivity for wildlife between ecologically important areas. It should not necessarily be interpreted as a precise line, rather it may indicate an indicative potential connection between areas. In practice, most Green Links shown on the map are a mixture of existing and potential links, i.e. whilst there are existing aspects that contribute to the Network there is also significant potential for development to make a further contribution to improve the Network. There is therefore little difference in how existing and potential links should be treated in terms of the policy. Green Links do not mean or imply public access.
- 4.2.62** Opportunities will be sought in conjunction with development proposals, to enhance the quality and integrity of the Green Network. Proposals should seek ways to enhance and restore biodiversity and geology, and enhance the quality and integrity of sites (where appropriate), by maximising the inclusion of significant biodiversity and nature conservation features, as part of good design, and by locating those features carefully to best contribute towards the interconnectedness of the Network. In addition, it must be clearly demonstrated that such measures will be effectively managed and maintained, to a high standard, over the lifetime of the development, through the mechanism of landscape and ecological management plans agreed in writing by the Council.

General Considerations

- 4.2.63** As well as those habitats already defined, there are many undesignated sites where there may be important biodiversity interest. The overall principle here is that there should be no net loss of biodiversity, and a net gain, as supported by the NPPF, wherever it can be achieved. Ecological information supplied should be in accordance with the British standard for biodiversity management, BS42020. A mitigation hierarchy approach, as set out in paragraph

118 of the NPPF, will be used to consider the loss of on-site biodiversity. In exceptional circumstances where the benefits of development outweigh the loss, and where the mitigation hierarchy has been followed, off-site compensation may be acceptable. There are established metrics for considering off-site mitigation at a national level, including those described in DEFRA's biodiversity offsetting guidance⁴⁹, and more specific local metrics may be produced during the plan period.

4.2.64 For some types of development⁵⁰, including all major schemes, an ecological survey report and/or bat survey will be required.

Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature. The following areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, are defined as Major Landscape Features:

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

Development which affects the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that demonstrates that there is no detrimental impact on the North Wessex Downs or Chilterns AONBs in terms of scale, design, layout or location. None of Reading Borough falls within an AONB, but where the urban area meets the Chilterns AONB is shown on the Proposals Map.

4.2.65 Reading is primarily an urban area, but it benefits from a number of natural features that have remained largely undeveloped. The urban context means that the preservation of these features as a backdrop is of particular importance. New development should seek to maintain and enhance the natural beauty and visual amenity of the identified major landscape features. The extent to which new development prevents or minimises the visual impact on major landscape features and other landscape values is largely dependent on the location, design and scale of proposals. It should be noted that this policy does not rule out development in or close to these areas, but seeks to ensure that development only takes place where it can preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the feature.

4.2.66 Whilst no part of Reading Borough falls within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), there are two AONBs in close proximity. The Chilterns AONB runs along part of the boundary between Reading and South Oxfordshire, but does not cross it. It is vital that the rural-urban fringe at this point is managed to ensure that development does not jeopardise the characteristics of the AONB. The North Wessex Downs AONB is, at its closest point, 200m west of the Borough boundary at Tilehurst. Therefore there are fewer visual linkages, but development in this area must nevertheless take into account any impact on this AONB.

⁴⁹ See for example https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69531/pb13745-bio-technical-paper.pdf

⁵⁰ Please see the Council's Validation Checklist for when an Ecological Survey Report and/or Bat Survey will be required.

Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.

New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

- 4.2.67** Trees, hedges and woodlands help define the landscape and character of the Borough and provide multiple benefits to the urban environment including maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, absorbing carbon and helping to adapt to climate change. Reading's woodlands are a highly visible feature of the ridgelines and a strong feature in the landscape of the river valleys that shape the urban area. Trees are also an important component of the character of many parts of the Borough particularly its older developed areas and suburbs and especially in Conservation Areas. Many streets within Reading, including primary routes into town, are characterised by their tree-lined nature, which should be protected and enhanced. Whilst Reading has some important woodlands and areas with substantial numbers of trees, including two areas of Ancient Woodland, shown on the Proposals Map⁵¹, other areas lack tree cover. It is therefore vital to ensure that important trees and woodlands are protected and canopy cover extended in areas lacking cover, including in conjunction with new development.
- 4.2.68** Trees can make a positive contribution towards reducing the effects of future climate change by dissipating the impact of heavy rainfall, reducing urban temperatures and providing shade and protection against the detrimental effects of sunlight. New development should seek to incorporate strategically sited trees that will provide shade and cooling to developments, particularly to street frontages, large hard landscaped areas and other areas of public realm. There will be a need to use appropriate large canopy species that are adaptable to future predicted climatic conditions (native species if possible and where appropriate in order to deliver biodiversity benefits), particularly the higher temperatures and potential drought conditions predicted in summer.
- 4.3.69** Trees, hedges and woodlands have multiple wildlife benefits in providing habitat, habitat links and foraging areas for numerous flora and fauna. The protection of these both in the public and private realm, within development proposals, will be sought in order to meet the Council's duties to biodiversity. New development should seek to ensure that new landscaping is primarily of wildlife friendly species and adds to the linking of green areas across the Borough.
- 4.2.70** Due to the value placed on trees in Reading, the Council produced a Tree Strategy in 2010⁵², which seeks to significantly increase the amount of tree coverage by protecting trees from development pressure and through planting both on its own land and through development

⁵¹ Clayfield Copse and the western part of McIlroy Park

⁵² The Tree Strategy can be accessed on the Council's website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/trees>

related landscape schemes. In addition, the Council has produced a Tree Strategy Planting Plan, identifying priorities for new planting in the Borough and highlighting the need for succession planting, which will be updated when required. The Council may make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect single trees or groups of trees, which prevent lopping, topping or felling without the Council's consent. Details on which trees are specifically protected can be found on the Council's website.

- 4.2.71** The Council will seek to ensure that appropriate measures are secured for the successful protection of trees, in line with good practice, where retained as part of development proposals. Developers will be expected to implement agreed measures in accordance with details approved through the planning process.
- 4.2.72** Retention, enhancement and extension of woodlands will be achieved in conjunction with relevant development proposals, and may include measures such as new planting and management plans. The effective management of new woodland areas will be promoted, recognising the economic, environmental and social benefits that woodland management and tree planting can provide.
- 4.2.73** The Council, in conjunction with the Forestry Commission and friends groups, has produced management plans for over 90 ha of its woodlands⁵³. These are available on the Council's website. Implementation of these plans will be part funded by the Forestry Commission.

Air Quality

EN15: AIR QUALITY

Development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.

- i. Development that would detrimentally affect air quality will not be permitted unless the effect is to be mitigated. The following criteria should be taken into account:***
 - Whether the proposal, including when combined with the cumulative effect of other developments already permitted, would worsen air quality;***
 - Whether the development is within, or accessed via, an Air Quality Management Area; and***
 - Whether it can be demonstrated that a local worsening in air quality that would not detrimentally affect human health or the environment would be offset by an overall improvement in air quality, for instance through reduction in the need to travel.***
- ii. Where a development would introduce sensitive uses (such as residential, schools and nurseries, hospitals, care facilities) into, or intensify such uses within, an Air Quality Management Area, detrimental effects on that use will be mitigated. Mitigation measures should be detailed in any planning application. If there are significant detrimental effects that cannot be mitigated, the application should be refused.***
- iii. Where required, planning obligations will be used to secure contributions to measures to tackle poor air quality or for air quality monitoring.***

⁵³ Arthur Newbery and McIlroys Park; Beech Wood, Rotherfield Way Copse and Balmore Walk; Blundell Copse; Bugs Bottom and Furzeplat; Clayfield Copse; Lousehill Copse; Prospect Park and Devils Dip; Southcote Linear Park; Thames Woodlands; The Cowsey; and Warren Woodland Escarpment.

- 4.2.74** Air pollution can have a serious effect on human health and the environment; and as such it is essential that any new development within Reading avoids creating unacceptably poor levels of air quality both inside and outside the Borough boundaries. Air pollution is not only harmful to human health but may also have harmful effects on plants and animals as well as corroding materials and buildings. Whilst there are legal limits, there are no ‘safe’ levels of air pollutants. It is estimated that air pollution reduces the life expectancy of every person in the UK by an average of 7-8 months⁵⁴.
- 4.2.75** The National Planning Policy Framework requires local policies to sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives, taking into account the existence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas (paragraph 124).
- 4.2.76** Although concentrations of PM₁₀ in Reading are below Air Quality Objective levels, there remain concerns about nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels. Road traffic has been shown to be the predominant source of pollution. DEFRA and the DfT produced a UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations in July 2017, and this was accompanied by information on local authorities with roads shown by national modelling to have NO₂ levels above legal limits, and when those roads would be projected to fall within legal limits. Reading was identified as having roadside concentrations exceeding legal limits in 2017-20, but dropping below legal limits from 2021. As such Reading was considered to marginally meet the target and was not one of the authorities considered to have the greatest issue with projected exceedences beyond 3-4 years that would require development of a local action plan. However, local monitoring (not used in the DEFRA model) indicates more areas of exceedance than modelled by DEFRA. The rate of development in the Reading area was also something not taken into account in the DEFRA model. Therefore the concern is that harmful levels of air pollution will persist in Reading for much longer than shown in the DEFRA model unless action is taken. There clearly remain significant concerns about air quality in Reading, and the Council has made clear that it is serious about addressing these issues.
- 4.2.77** Other particles include PM_{2.5}, and, again there is no ‘safe’ levels of these particles. There is a requirement for the UK to attain a national exposure target for PM_{2.5} of 15% reduction between 2010 and 2020. The Council is monitoring these levels,
- 4.2.78** In order to tackle the air quality issue, the Council declared a single Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) across a large area of Reading, and implemented an associated Air Quality Action Plan. The AQMA includes much of the central area and main radial transport corridors. This coincides with many of the areas where the largest amount of development is expected to take place, and a robust policy is therefore required to accompany it.
- 4.2.79** The AQMA, shown on the Proposals Map highlights the main area of concern, and focus for this policy, however it may be that in certain circumstances air quality may be a consideration outside the AQMA. Some schemes may potentially significantly impact air quality outside of the AQMA, or may have effects on the AQMA, for example through large-scale traffic generation.
- 4.2.80** This policy aims to ensure that increased development within the AQMA does not lead to a net increase in emissions as well as ensuring any increased exposure within the poorest areas of air quality is accompanied by appropriate mitigation. Mitigation measures vary for each case, but can include simple measures designed into the scheme from the outset. The most likely mitigation through design involves setting residential units further back from busy roads,

⁵⁴ The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, volume 1, 2007

however, in some circumstances this could also include siting habitable rooms away from the façade fronting the pollution source, or, in the case of mixed use development, limiting the residential accommodation to higher floors. Other mitigation measures may also include travel plans, restrictions in car access or parking, planting, green walls or certain types of paving that absorb NO₂. It does not mean that the development of sensitive uses in the AQMA will necessarily be inappropriate.

4.2.81 In some cases, an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) will be required with a planning application. The requirement for an assessment will depend entirely on the exact nature and location of the application. However, broadly speaking, developments will be likely to require an AQA if they are located within the AQMA and:

- Would lead to a material increase in congestion or HGVs;
- Would include significant amounts of car parking, for example 100 spaces, or would significantly increase current provision, for example by 25%;
- Would emit air pollutants that would affect sensitive receptors, including areas of biodiversity importance; or
- Would locate sensitive receptors, such as residential, in areas of particularly poor air quality, such as on the façade of a very busy road.

4.2.82 The above criteria are meant as a guide only, and in reality there may be schemes which may meet one or more of the above but may not require an AQA. Conversely there may be schemes which do not meet the above but may require an assessment. It is strongly recommended that the Council's Environmental Protection Team is contacted if it is believed an assessment may be required, as they will be able to provide guidance as well as advice on the level of detail required within the assessment and providing monitoring data.

4.2.83 Where it is identified that a scheme will increase emissions within the AQMA, the developer will be expected to identify measures to mitigate the increase in emissions. In some cases this could be achieved through scheme design or through the introduction of a low emissions strategy, comprising a package of measures to reduce transport related emissions. A low emissions strategy will be specific to individual developments and dependent upon the exact nature and location.

4.2.84 It may be appropriate in some circumstances for the developer to fund mitigating measures elsewhere, to offset any increase in local pollutant emissions as a consequence of the proposed development. In general, air quality monitoring will be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy, but where there is a specific issue, this may be achieved through the use of a Section 106 agreement for a specific scheme or measure. On particularly significant schemes, low emissions strategies may be required, which comprise a package of measures to reduce the transport impacts⁵⁵.

4.2.85 This policy is part of a wide package of measures to tackle air quality in Reading, including policies within the transport section of this plan on promotion of sustainable travel. The Air Quality Action Plan 2015⁵⁶ includes transport, planning and other measures to both tackle existing sources, and to promote behavioural change to reduce air pollution. As the Council reviews its approach to air quality, it may be necessary to produce a Supplementary Planning Document that provides more detail on how the policy will be achieved, particularly in the construction phase.

⁵⁵ Low Emissions Strategies (Beacons Low Emission Strategies Group, 2008) <http://www.lowemissionstrategies.org/>

⁵⁶ On the Council's website: http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/6389/Air-Quality-Action-Plan/pdf/AQAP_Update_2016.pdf

Pollution and Water Resources

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution; where it would result in no deterioration in, or ideally enhance, ground and surface water quality; and where adequate water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure will be in place to support the proposed development prior to occupation.

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

Development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site .

- 4.2.86** The effective protection of the environment is a key aspect of sustainable development, and reducing pollution is one of the core planning principles in the NPPF. This policy prevents harmful development, mitigates the impact of potentially polluting developments and ensures that developments and receptors that are sensitive to pollution are separated from sources of such pollution. Sensitive receptors can include particularly sensitive uses, as well as sensitive features such as source protection zones or groundwater aquifers.
- 4.2.87** Air quality is dealt with in Policy EN15, but there are other pollution issues in Reading, such as the fact that some ground and surface waters are experiencing a degree of pollution. It is therefore important to ensure that future development does not result in any further deterioration of water quality and, where possible, results in an improvement in overall quality to help to achieve ‘good’ status in line with the Water Framework Directive. In line with the predicted level of new development within Reading, it will be important to ensure that this does not place an undue burden on existing water resources or result in a deterioration in potential yield of surface and ground water resources. In order to improve the quality of life of those living and working within Reading, it is important to avoid any detrimental impact from development in the form of noise and light pollution.
- 4.2.88** There are a number of sites affected by contamination within the Borough as a result of previous land uses. In order to make the most effective use of previously developed land within Reading, it will be important to ensure that, where possible, such land is remediated through the development process so that it is suitable for redevelopment. Where a development is known to be on historic contaminated land or contamination could be an issue, the application will not be approved unless it is supported by proportionate but sufficient site investigation information in a risk assessment. This will need to determine the existence or otherwise of contamination, its nature and extent, the risks it may pose and to whom/what (the ‘receptors’) so that these risks can be assessed and satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level⁵⁷. The risk

⁵⁷ See DEFRA policy companion document considering the use of ‘Category 4 Screening Levels’ in providing a simple test for deciding when land is suitable for use and definitely not contaminated (<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18341>)

assessment should also identify the potential sources, pathways and receptors ('pollutant linkages') and evaluate the risks. This information will enable the local planning authority to determine whether further more detailed investigation is required, or whether any proposed remediation is satisfactory, requiring a remediation plan and verification report. A risk assessment of land affected by contamination should inform an Environmental Impact Assessment if one is required. Early pre-application engagement with the Council and Environment Agency is strongly advised.

- 4.2.89** The Council has a Contaminated Land Strategy (2011)⁵⁸ in place which sets out how it intends to identify contaminated land across the Borough and remove the potential for significant harm. Addressing contamination on proposed development sites is therefore only part of a wider approach to the issue.
- 4.2.90** Exposure to high levels of noise can have a significant effect on human health. This policy deals with noise issues in general, whilst policy EN17 deals particularly with noise-generating equipment. It is worth noting that there is a Professional Practice Guide on Planning and Noise available⁵⁹ which provides guidance on design of residential developments to take account of noise, and taking account of this from the early design stage will help to reduce noise effects on future residents.
- 4.2.91** The provision of adequate water, wastewater and sewerage infrastructure is critical, and needs to be in place prior to occupation. A Utilities Statement is required for all major development at application stage, and this will need to include the outcome of consultation with the sewerage undertaker. Where there is a capacity constraint and improvements in off-site infrastructure are not programmed, the developer should set out how the infrastructure improvements will be completed prior to occupation of the development. The use of private sewage disposal facilities within publicly sewered areas will only be acceptable if the applicant can demonstrate that the additional cost of connecting to the sewer would be unreasonable, connection is not practically feasible or the proposed private sewerage system would provide additional environmental benefits that would outweigh the potential environmental risks.

Noise Generating Equipment

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

Where noise generating equipment is proposed, the noise source rating level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

- 4.2.92** The Local Plan proposals will see a high level of development within Reading. Reading is a densely populated town with many new planning developments taking place. Residents live in close proximity to commercial activities, therefore it is important to minimise background creep in order to protect the noise environment and maintain quality of life for people living and working in the town. The negative impact of environmental noise on health is becoming better understood (for example WHO 1999, 2009 and 2011⁶⁰).

⁵⁸ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1233/Contaminated-Land-Strategy/pdf/Contaminated-Land-Strategy.pdf>

⁵⁹ IOA, ANC & CIEH (2017) <http://ioa.org.uk/sites/default/files/14720%20ProPG%20Main%20Document.pdf>

⁶⁰ World Health Organisation (WHO) (1999), Guidelines for Community Noise; WHO (2009), Night Noise Guidelines for Europe; WHO (2011), Burden of Disease from Environmental Noise: Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe

- 4.2.93 Planning Practice Guidance on noise states that no specific measures are required to manage the acoustic environment in situations where noise can be heard as a result of a development and there is a slight effect on the acoustic character of the area but there is no effect on the behaviour and attitude of people exposed to the noise. However, the guidance also states that:
- The cumulative impacts of more than one source of noise should be considered; and
 - In cases where existing noise sensitive locations already experience high noise levels, a development that is expected to cause even a small increase in the overall noise level may result in a significant adverse effect occurring.
- 4.2.94 The Council considers that the above two factors apply due to the town being densely populated and there being a high likelihood of subsequent noise generating plant being installed in a particular location. It is therefore necessary for each planning application for noisy plant to protect the acoustic environment and as far as possible prevent the increase in background noise levels because the cumulative impact of installation of noisy plant which causes an increase in background noise level is likely to lead to an adverse effect.
- 4.2.95 The Planning Practice Guidance on noise also states that local planning authorities may decide to develop specific standards to apply to various forms of proposed development in their area. It cautions against the implementation of fixed thresholds because specific circumstances may justify some variation being allowed. Because this policy sets a noise target in relation to the background noise level, this allows variation of the threshold with the local circumstances because it does not set an absolute noise level that the plant must achieve, it relates it to the local noise level.
- 4.2.96 Where the plant noise rating level does not meet this standard, the background noise will increase. When subsequent new plant is added it will be assessed against this higher background level which results in an increasing benchmark against which subsequent new plant is introduced. This leads to an incremental increase in the noise in an area each time new plant is introduced ('background creep'). This policy standard has been applied by Reading Borough Council for a number of years and experience has demonstrated it to be achievable in most cases. In addition, noise control technology is improving, therefore further increasing the achievability of this standard.

Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems

EN18: FLOODING AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance, following the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF, and taking into account the effects of climate change. It will consider flooding from all sources, including fluvial, surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding. Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding. Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site.

All major developments⁶¹ must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate and in line with the Government's Technical Standards⁶². Smaller schemes are

⁶¹ 10 or more dwellings or equivalent non-residential or mixed developments

⁶² Sustainable drainage systems non-statutory technical standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-drainage-systems-non-statutory-technical-standards>

encouraged to incorporate SuDS, where possible. Runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site. Schemes should ensure that the movement of water through vertical infiltration as well as horizontal run-off does not worsen contamination effects. Wherever possible, SuDS provision should maximise ecological benefits, link into the existing Green Network, incorporate tree planting and landscaping and avoid damage to existing significant trees, including through changes to the site hydrology. All new developments in areas of flood risk should give priority to SuDS.

- 4.2.97** A significant area of land within Reading is at risk of flooding, and this is expected to worsen with the effects of climate change. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken for the Borough⁶³. This describes and analyses how the Borough is affected by flood risk and the nature of that risk. The flood plain plays an important role in protecting the built up area of Reading as it accommodates floodwater and reduces the risks of water levels rising and affecting properties in a wider area. This capacity shall not be reduced by development or the raising of land levels. The movement of water across the flood plain is also important, and obstructions to this will place a greater burden on other parts of the flood plain. Even away from the flood plain, inappropriate drainage schemes can exacerbate local flooding problems and increase the amount of water entering watercourses. This results in litter and contamination.
- 4.2.98** The National Planning Policy Framework directs development away from areas that are liable to flood, and states that proposals for development in areas of a medium and high risk of flooding need to be assessed against a sequential test and, if appropriate, an exceptions test. This has already been carried out for those sites allocated within this plan⁶⁴, and there is no need for this to be repeated unless development would differ from the allocation. Development should therefore comply with the requirements of the NPPF alongside this policy. Development proposals on sites greater than 1 hectare or that are in Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 will need to be supported by the following, and, in doing so, will need to take account of the latest guidance on allowances for climate change (see below):
- a) A flood risk assessment which demonstrates that the most appropriate layout of development on site in terms of flood risk has been applied;
 - b) Demonstration that a sequential approach has been taken within the site, directing the most vulnerable uses to the areas of lowest flood risk;
 - c) Demonstration that resilient and resistant construction methods for managing residual risk and delivering an overall reduction in flood risk have been assessed;
 - d) The provision of space for flood water storage through the use of open space or areas above ground (where appropriate);
 - e) The raising of floor levels above flood levels, taking account of all forms of flooding (where appropriate);
 - f) Demonstration that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and where possible reduced;
 - g) Demonstration of safe access and egress to the development; and
 - h) Demonstration that all forms of flooding are taken into account including groundwater and surface water flooding.

⁶³ See www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf

⁶⁴ Available on the Council's website

- 4.2.99** The effects of flooding are expected to worsen with climate change, and this needs to be taken into account when considering development. The Environment Agency has produced guidance on the allowances for climate change to be taken into account for each river basin district. Reading falls within the Thames basin district⁶⁵. Depending on the vulnerability of development proposed, and the flood risk classification, different allowances should be taken into account. The SFRA models and maps allowances of 25%, 35% and 70%, which correspond to the upper end allowances for the Thames basin.
- 4.2.100** The nature of Reading means that there are a significant number of sites in need of regeneration, generally containing vacant, derelict, low density or poor quality buildings, within areas of medium or high flood risk. Where the redevelopment of previously developed land at risk of flooding provides significant regeneration benefits, this will need to be considered in the context of the sequential and, if applicable, exceptions test.
- 4.2.101** Due to recent changes to the planning system, Reading Borough Council serves as a Lead Local Flood Authority and is responsible for approving SuDS schemes for new development. SuDS may be eligible for adoption by the Council, provided they are within public open space or serve more than one property and have been designed in accordance with the CIRIA SuDS manual⁶⁶.
- 4.2.102** Flood risk and other environmental damage can be mitigated by minimising changes in the volume and rate of surface runoff. Sustainable drainage systems can often be achieved at little to no additional cost and may actually decrease landscape maintenance expenses throughout the lifetime of a development. Virtually any new development should be able to deliver SuDS due to the wide variety of techniques available. SuDS can be very effective on brownfield sites, but care must be taken to reduce environmental damage from contaminated land. It is also possible to ‘retrofit’ SuDS for existing developments. SuDS provide opportunities to:
- Reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
 - Guard against the effects of climate change;
 - Enhance biodiversity;
 - Improve water quality by removing pollutants from runoff; and
 - Achieve green space, amenity, recreation and wildlife benefits through water management.
- 4.2.103** Sustainable drainage systems aim to replicate natural drainage as closely as possible and minimise the impacts of development. In the first instance, schemes should consider the provision of SuDS through landscaping, with reference to Part D of the CIRIA SuDS manual, and in any case should consider the following:
- Integration with existing landscape;
 - Tree planting provision fed by groundwater runoff that functions effectively in place of attenuation tanks;
 - Additional capacity to cater for future development; and
 - Techniques including, but not limited to, permeable pavements, swales, basins, rain gardens, green roofs, rainwater re-use, infiltration trenches, ponds and wetlands.
- 4.2.104** Schemes for SuDS need to be careful to avoid resulting in contamination of watercourses and groundwater. Soakaways in contaminated land will not be appropriate. Infiltration SuDS

⁶⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

⁶⁶ Construction Industry Research and Information Association, SuDS Manual http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/SuDS_manual_C753.aspx

techniques should only dispose of clean roof water into clean, uncontaminated ground, should not be used for foul discharges or trade effluent, and may not be suitable within Source Protection Zone 1.

4.3.105 The SuDS elements of the policy apply to major development. Small-scale developments will be encouraged to adopt elements of SuDS wherever practicable, including the provision of permeable surfaces within the site, e.g. on front gardens or car parking areas.

4.3 Employment

- 4.3.1 Reading is the largest population and employment centre in Berkshire, which is one of the economic powerhouses of the UK. The economic output of Berkshire as a whole, in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) equates to around £30bn⁶⁷. The components of continued strong economic growth, such as access to Heathrow airport, strong transport links to London and the west, a highly skilled workforce and a high standard of living, are likely to continue to be in place across the plan period. Continued economic buoyancy is therefore likely, but this will also mean addressing the challenges that limit growth, such as lack of affordable housing, a stretched transport infrastructure and the need for suitable business space.
- 4.3.2 Reading is the main office market in Berkshire, albeit that the Reading office market is also seen as including business parks such as Thames Valley Park, Green Park, Winnersh Triangle and Arlington Business Park, which fall wholly or partly within adjoining areas. As well as the business parks, there is a good stock of modern town centre floorspace, with more developments with planning permission. Reading's offices are home to a strong representation of knowledge-based and ICT businesses, business services and pharmaceuticals, with a range of other multinationals present. Alongside these offices, there is also a substantial amount of industrial and warehouse space. In contrast to offices, this space is primarily within the Borough boundary. There are large older industrial areas around the south and west of the Borough, containing a range of space, much of which is at cheaper rents. Increasingly, there is also a good offer of modern, large distribution space in the south of Reading, and Reading is increasingly being seen as a good location for logistics operators.
- 4.3.3 Within Berkshire, evidence⁶⁸ has pointed to the existence of a Central Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), comprising the Boroughs of Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and Windsor and Maidenhead. Those parts of the Reading urban area (including nearby business parks) that fall within West Berkshire are also strongly related to this FEMA, but for practical purposes West Berkshire has been defined as a separate FEMA in its own right. This is therefore the main grouping of authorities that Reading must co-operate with in considering employment needs, and therefore a Central Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) was produced in 2016 covering this area.

Provision of Employment

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Provision will be made for a net increase of 53,000-112,000 sq m of office floorspace and 148,000 sq m of industrial and/or warehouse space in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.

Development that would exceed the levels of employment development set out in this policy, after existing permissions and allocations are accounted for, will need to either: (a) demonstrate that it will not result in additional need for local housing; or (b) mitigate its impacts on the need for local housing, either through the provision of additional residential or through contributions to affordable housing.

⁶⁷ Thames Valley Berkshire LEP: Strategic Economic Plan: <http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicEconomicPlan/TVB%20SEP%20-%20Strategy.pdf>

⁶⁸ <http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicInfrastructure/StrategicInfrastructure/14793%20Berkshire%20FEMA%20Final%20Report%2029.02.16.PDF>

Proposals to provide a freight consolidation centre in a location with good access to the strategic highway network will be supported, subject to other policies in this plan

4.3.4 An Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) for Central Berkshire⁶⁹ was carried out in 2016, which identified the level of need for additional office and industrial or warehouse space between 2013 and 2036. The results of the EDNA are summarised in the box below, but in summary it is considered that the figures that Reading needs to plan for between 2013 and 2036 are:

- 52,775 of office floorspace; and
- 148,440 sq m of industrial and warehouse floorspace.

Figures are rounded in Policy EM1, as such an assessment can never be entirely precise.

4.3.5 The Council has used its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment process to examine whether this level of need can be accommodated, and it has identified that there is scope to accommodate the full level of need within Reading Borough. There is scope to accommodate substantially more offices (up to 112,000 sq m in total), much of which result from existing permissions. This relies upon development of offices in Central and South Reading, and a significant development of industrial and warehousing space around Island Road. There is not therefore expected to be any unmet need to be provided elsewhere. Reading is also therefore likely to meet a greater proportion of Central Berkshire's need for offices than anticipated in the EDNA, and the overprovision of up to 60,000 sq m can be seen as a contribution to the wider needs of the functional economic market area which may have implications for other Local Plans within the Central Berkshire area.

4.3.6 There is currently a reasonable balance between the levels of employment planned for in Policy EM1 and the levels of housing set out in H1, as the relationship between employment and housing levels formed part of the evidence that supports these policies. That means that planning for levels of employment development over and above the upper amounts set out in this policy (when considered across the wider area) is likely to lead to an imbalance, and a greater need for housing within the area, as well as increasing the need to travel as workers commute from further afield.

4.3.7 Therefore, where a development is proposed that would increase the level of employment development over the upper levels currently planned for, taking account of developments with planning permission and with outstanding allocations in this plan for employment use, the concerns about impacts on local housing need to be allayed. This will need to be achieved either by convincing justification as to why there will be no effects, or by adequately mitigating any effects. The Annual Monitoring Report will inform whether these thresholds have been reached.

4.3.8 Freight consolidation centres are locations which serve as a single point for deliveries to a specific area, which are then distributed within the area by fewer vehicles, potentially low-emission vehicles, thus reducing congestion and helping to improve air quality. Schemes currently operate in London and Bristol and Bath. The Plan should support any such proposals in Reading, and they will be appropriate uses within Core Employment Areas, although specific locations will need to be considered against other policies.

⁶⁹ <http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicInfrastructure/14793%20Central%20Berkshire%20EDNA%20Final%20Report%2028.10.16.pdf>

Calculating Employment Need Figures

The Central Berkshire EDNA used three scenarios for assessing need for new floorspace for economic development:

- Scenario 1: Labour Demand - this was based directly on the employment projections from Cambridge Econometrics
- Scenario 2: Past Completion Rates - this projects forward past completion rates for the ten years between 2005/6 to 2014/15
- Scenario 3: Labour Supply - this takes into account the residential growth outlined in the SHMA

Net employment space requirements for Reading Borough were derived for these scenarios as follows:

| | Scenario 1 | Scenario 2 | Scenario 3 |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Offices | 19,460 | -252,310 | 44,605 |
| Industrial/warehouse | 112,600 | 1,840 | 133,910 |
| Total | 132,060 | -250,470 | 178,510 |

There is clearly a very significant range in these figures, with Scenario 2 at particular odds with the other scenarios. The advice in the EDNA, with which the Council agrees, is that Scenario 2 represents a less robust base for future planning. It is merely the reflection of the previous ten years' change and therefore factors in constraint and policy issues, which cannot represent objectively assessed need. This plan therefore discounts Scenario 2. In addition, Scenario 1 does not fully take account of the changes as a result of the need for housing. Scenario 3, which fully links to housing need, and which presents the highest figures, represents the most robust basis on which to plan.

The EDNA then adds a 'safety margin' for flexibility, which represents one year's average gross completions, which for Reading is 8,170 sq m for offices and 14,530 sq m for industrial and warehousing.

Finally, the EDNA suggests building in an allowance for future losses. Due to the significance of the floorspace losses that have occurred over the last ten years, this has the effect of more than doubling the overall requirement. However, it is not appropriate to incorporate this within the policy for two reasons. Firstly, as for housing, the Local Plan requirement should be based on net change. Many of the allocations in this plan will result in either a loss or gain of employment floorspace, and should be considered in net terms. Secondly, it is within the power of the LPA to prevent much (although not all) of this floorspace loss if it is appropriate to do so.

For this reason, the minimum need figures that should be planned for are the net requirements plus the safety margin. This means planning for the following:

| | Scenario 3 | Plus safety margin | Identified need |
|----------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Offices | 44,605 | 8,170 | 52,775 |
| Industrial/warehouse | 133,910 | 14,530 | 148,440 |
| Total | 178,510 | 22,700 | 201,215 |

It is worth bearing in mind that there have already been four years of completed developments. For offices, there has been a loss of 96,685 sq m up to 2017, whilst there has been a loss of industrial and warehouse space of 6,692 sq m. These figures have not already been factored into the provision figures in EM1. This has the effect of meaning that an even greater net increase needs to be delivered for the remainder of the plan period.

Location of Employment Development

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Major office development will take place in the centre of Reading and along the A33 corridor. Office development will also take place in the other centres in the network set out in Policy RL1, but should be of an appropriate scale to those centres.

Other major employment uses, including industrial and storage and distribution will be located in the A33 corridor or in the Core Employment Areas. Non-employment uses that would support the area's economic function may be located in the Core Employment Areas where they do not result in a loss of employment land.

The Core Employment Areas are shown on the Proposals Map and set out below:

- *EM2a: Green Park*
- *EM2b: North of the M4*
- *EM2c: South of Basingstoke Road*
- *EM2d: Bennet Road*
- *EM2e: North of Basingstoke Road*
- *EM2f: Elgar Road*
- *EM2g: Richfield Avenue*
- *EM2h: Portman Road*
- *EM2i: Wigmore Lane*
- *EM2j: Bridgewater Close*
- *EM2k: Sterling Way*
- *EM2l: Marcus Close*
- *EM2m: Paddock Road*

4.3.9 Employment development which attracts significant numbers of trips should be in highly accessible locations which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport. Major office development (over 2,500 sq m) will therefore be directed to the centre of Reading and along a high-accessibility corridor focused on the A33, a new station at Green Park and forthcoming mass rapid transit links to the south. This A33 corridor is shown on the map for South Reading, figure 6.1 in Section 6, and this includes a number of Core Employment Areas. Some more limited office development will also be appropriate in district and local centres, in line with the levels of scale for retail and leisure development set out in the policy on the hierarchy of centres (RL2). These locations will be the first locations to consider for the respective scale of development when operating the sequential test under paragraph 24 of the NPPF.

4.3.10 Major employment development for industrial, storage and distribution or similar uses (over 2,500 sq m) will be directed primarily to the Core Employment Areas, or to areas along the high-accessibility A33 corridor to the south. These areas are currently relatively successful industrial and warehousing areas which are likely to continue to be needed in employment use. There is some scope for intensification of employment sites within Core Employment Areas, such as development on surplus parking or servicing space, which will be acceptable subject to other material considerations. Smaller-scale industrial and warehouse uses may be appropriate in other areas, but this will be dependent on other considerations such as amenity of residents and the suitability of transport connections, and in practice will not therefore usually be acceptable in residential areas.

4.3.11 The Core Employment Areas are the main areas of employment uses (excluding the town centre) within Reading. They are shown on the Proposals Map, and have been defined through an examination of the contribution that they make to the employment role of Reading. In order for these areas to maximise their contribution to the economy, there may be scope for inclusion of uses that are not strictly within an ‘employment’ classification as set out in 4.3.14 in order to support the economic role of the area, for instance through provision of services and facilities for workers and customers. Where this does not result in a loss of employment land, it will be acceptable subject to other policy considerations, such as the retail and leisure sequential approach. If a loss of employment land is proposed, it will need to be judged against policy EM3.

Loss of Employment Land

EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

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

Where, in exceptional circumstances, it can be demonstrated that a site in a Core Employment Area has no long-term (i.e. over five years) prospect of employment use, a related alternative commercial use may be considered that would employ a similar number of people.

In other areas, the following criteria will be considered when assessing proposals which would result in a loss of employment land: -

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

4.3.12 There is a need for a certain degree of flexibility with existing employment land to allow an appropriate balance of uses to develop in the right locations. For this reason, it is not appropriate to simply apply a blanket protection to all existing employment areas. However, the Core Employment Areas have been identified as those areas of greatest economic significance, providing space that is required to ensure that the Reading economy is balanced and that those activities which support higher value businesses are in close proximity. As a result, an overall loss of employment land in these core areas would risk undermining the local economy, and should not be permitted. It is worth emphasising that this policy does not primarily aim to protect a specific number of jobs (which could be replaced in a non-employment use), but is rather about balance of the economy.

- 4.3.13 The policy recognises that on some exceptional sites within the CEA, there may not be any long-term prospect of re-use or redevelopment for employment, and in these cases it is preferable for a site to be used for an alternative commercial use that complements the area than for it to be vacant in the long-term. For example, some of the older industrial areas contain large sites that were tailored to the needs of a specific type of operation that no longer exists or operates in the same way, making it unviable to re-let, either in its existing form or sub-divided, in the long-term. If there is also no long-term prospect of redevelopment of these sites for employment, alternative commercial uses under this policy may be considered.
- 4.3.14 Elsewhere, a loss of employment land for other uses may be acceptable, depending on whether the land is still needed for employment purposes. Each application will need to be assessed on its merits, and the criteria to be considered are set out in (i) to (vi) which should inform a balanced decision, not be used as a checklist where every criterion is fulfilled. Proposals should demonstrate how these factors justify the release of employment land.
- 4.3.15 Factors which may be taken into account in assessing these criteria include:
- (i): proximity to the strategic road network, particularly for storage and distribution, access by public transport, foot and cycle, future transport infrastructure provision;
 - (ii): ownership constraints, prevailing market conditions including vacancy levels, response to marketing of site for employment use, physical constraints of site such as topography, other constraints such as utilities provision;
 - (iii): balancing supply and long-term demand, allowing for a degree of vacancy necessary in a healthy market;
 - (iv): effects on neighbouring uses of noise, pollution and air quality, intensity of activity;
 - (v): need for additional housing, community facilities and other uses; and
 - (vi): likelihood of development resulting in ‘islands’ of other uses in employment areas, whether a better environment would be created through a more comprehensive development.
- 4.3.16 ‘Employment land’ in the context of this policy is land which is primarily in B1, B2 or B8 use, or is a use not in the above use classes for which an employment area is the only realistic location. This is a judgement that will need to be made on a case-by-case basis, but relevant considerations will include the effects of noise and disturbance, odours etc, HGV movements and whether the use requires a building that would detract from the character of other areas, e.g. with high, blank frontages and very large building footprints.

Maintaining a Variety of Premises

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

A range of types and sizes of units should be present in the Borough, and proposals should maintain or enhance this range. In particular, the overall level of start-up and grow-on space should be maintained and, where possible, increased, and any loss of small units should be offset by new provision. Proposals should maintain the overall level of storage and distribution uses in the South of Basingstoke Road (EM2c).

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

- 4.3.17** In order to ensure a healthy and balanced local economy, we need to make sure that a variety of sizes and types of employment premises are available. This variety of premises should be widened, including seeking more modern and flexible employment space in the designated industrial areas, as well as flexible office buildings in the centre and elsewhere that can easily be subdivided to provide spaces for small and growing businesses. Development should not therefore reduce the range of sites and space available. In particular, the South of Basingstoke Road, as defined in policy EM2, is an important location for storage and distribution uses, with good access to the major road network, and is a major contributor to the local economy. There should not be a net loss of B8 use in this location.
- 4.3.18** Adequate space for small-and medium-sized enterprises should be maintained, in order to ensure the future prosperity of Reading’s economy. There is a need for the continued development of start-up/ incubator and grow-on space in the Borough, and opportunities to provide this will be sought. Whether units are suitable for start-up businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms. However, planning can ensure that enough small units are available to be capable of acting as start-up space. In terms of implementation of this policy, small units are industrial or warehousing units of up to 150 sq m (gross external area). Where proposals anywhere in the Borough would lead to a reduction in this type of space, this will need to be offset by new premises elsewhere. Move-on accommodation is more difficult to define, particularly in terms of space, but a reduction in the range of units of 150 - 500 sq m (g.e.a.) should only occur where it is demonstrated that there is a surplus of such space.

4.4 Housing

Provision of Housing

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,433 homes (averaging 671 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.

The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to ensure that the shortfall of 644 dwellings that cannot be provided within Reading will be met over the plan period.

- 4.4.1 There is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area. The six Berkshire authorities (Reading Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough Council) together with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership co-operated on the production of a Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which reported in February 2016⁷⁰. This study identified the Housing Market Areas within which the Berkshire authorities should work, and set out levels of housing need between 2013 and 2036.
- 4.4.2 The SHMA identifies Reading as being part of a Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, together with West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. Within this area, an ‘objectively assessed need’ is identified for a total of 2,855 new homes every year up to 2036. Reading’s share of this need is 699 homes per year, or a total of 16,077 between 2013 and 2036. The expectation in the NPPF is that local planning authorities should meet their need unless they can demonstrate that doing so is not possible.
- 4.4.3 However, Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough. The Council therefore needs to set targets for housing provision that are capable of being met.
- 4.4.4 It is considered that of the 16,077 homes needed, 15,433 can be delivered in Reading Borough, which equates to 671 dwellings per annum. A Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment⁷¹ has demonstrated that this is the level of housing development that Reading can realistically accommodate in the plan period. The expected provision breaks down as follows:

⁷⁰ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2959/Housing-Market-Assessment/pdf/Berkshire_Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Feb_2016.pdf

⁷¹ Available at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Total need for Reading Borough | 16,077 homes |
| Minus completed 2013-2017 | 2,514 homes |
| Minus permitted or resolution to grant (>10 dwellings) at November 2017 ⁷² | 4,153 homes |
| Minus allowance for small site (<10 dwellings) windfalls at 127 per year 2017-2036 | 2,413 homes |
| Remainder not already identified | 6,997 homes |
| Identified in Local Plan | 6,349 homes |
| Shortfall to be accommodated elsewhere in HMA | 644 homes |

4.4.5 Delivering the level of housing set out in policy H1 will mean that there is a shortfall of 644 dwellings when considered against Reading’s need. This will need to be accommodated elsewhere within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area. The other three authorities within the HMA recognise that there will be issues with Reading’s ability to accommodate its need within its own boundaries, and this issue is set out within the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework to which the four authorities have signed up⁷³. There will be continuing dialogue on this matter between the affected authorities which will inform local plans. Where agreement is reached, it will be for individual authorities’ Local Plans to specify where development will be located.

Density and Mix

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- *the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;*
- *its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *the need to achieve high quality design;*
- *the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and*
- *the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*

Indicative densities for different types of area are set out in figure 4.5, but the criteria above may indicate that a different density is appropriate. Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable.

Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms. As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations.

⁷² Including appropriate non-implementation rates

⁷³ <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/west-of-berkshire-spatial-planning-framework-final.pdf>

Residential proposals for ten houses or more (excluding houses that are to be provided as affordable homes) will be expected to consider making appropriate provision for plots as self- or custom-build, based on the number of entries on the self-build register. The provision of self-build plots will be secured through legal agreement. Any plots that have not been sold after 12 months of appropriate marketing will revert to the developer to build.

- 4.4.6 With the significant need for housing in Reading and surrounding areas, it is important that efficient use is made of the land that is available to boost the delivery of new homes. However, there are other considerations that need to be weighed against this, in particular the character of the surrounding areas and any other particular sensitivities. Each site has its own particular characteristics, and it is not appropriate to set down exact densities in this policy.
- 4.4.7 Nevertheless, some guidance on appropriate densities in different areas can be helpful as an indication, and figure 4.5 therefore sets out some ranges within suburban, urban and town centre sites. For town centres, 100 dwellings per hectare is used as an indication, but, depending on the site, the appropriate density may be significantly greater than this, in view of the need to make best use of accessible sites set out in policy CC6. It is important to note that these will not be applied as hard-and-fast rules, and the particular characteristics of a site when judged against the criteria in the policy may well mean that a density outside these ranges is appropriate. This will particularly be the case where existing buildings are to be converted.

Figure 4.5: Indicative density ranges (dwellings per hectare)

| Town Centre | Urban | Suburban |
|-------------|--------|----------|
| Above 100 | 60-120 | 30-60 |

- 4.4.8 In terms of the appropriate mix, the Berkshire SHMA considered this issue when assessing the level of housing need. The overall percentages needed are set out in figure 4.6. For market housing, it identified a particular need within both Reading and the Western Berkshire HMA for family housing of three bedrooms or more. For affordable housing, the focus of need was on one and two-bedroom accommodation. When taken as a whole however, homes with two or more bedrooms, capable of accommodating families, represent the majority of the need, and this Plan identifies this provision as a priority (see policy H3). One-bedroom accommodation tends to have a higher turnover, meaning that more existing accommodation is likely to become available. In addition, there should clearly be an emphasis on providing homes for families in need. In overall terms, there is clearly a need for over half of new dwellings to be of three or more bedrooms.

Figure 4.6: Estimated size of accommodation type required in Reading (Source: SHMA 2016)

| | 1 bedroom | 2 bedroom | 3 bedroom | 4+ bedroom |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Market | 10.3% | 29.6% | 41.5% | 18.5% |
| Affordable | 43.4% | 32.9% | 21.6% | 2.1% |
| Overall | 18.6% | 30.5% | 36.5% | 14.4% |

- 4.4.9 In terms of a policy requirement, it is not possible to introduce a blanket requirement across the whole Borough. A very substantial amount of Reading's housing need will need to be met in the town centre due to the availability of sites, and delivery of a substantial amount of family

housing on these sites will not be achievable. This places a particular onus on those sites outside centres to help to meet the needs for family homes. As such, a minimum requirement for family homes should be applied to major schemes as a baseline, but, on sites where a greater contribution is possible, the presumption will be that the percentage of family homes should increase, unless other material considerations, such as viability, indicate otherwise.

- 4.4.10** Within the centre of Reading, the considerations will be somewhat different, and Policy CR6 in the Central Reading section sets out specific requirements. Within smaller centres, it is desirable to provide housing above shops for a variety of reasons, and this aim would be difficult to fulfil with a blanket mix requirement.
- 4.4.11** In applying this policy, any room designated as a bedroom should comply with the criteria from the national space standards, set out in the supporting text to policy H5.
- 4.4.12** Inevitably, even with this policy requirement in place, Reading is likely to provide a significantly greater proportion of smaller dwellings than its neighbours in the Western Berkshire HMA. This may mean that some rebalancing across the HMA is appropriate, with other authorities potentially providing a greater proportion of larger family accommodation.
- 4.4.13** National policy in the NPPF places a strong emphasis on supporting self-build housing through planning. In line with statutory requirements, the Council has a register of those wishing to build their own homes, and in the first ‘base period’ (i.e. up to 30th October 2016), there were 41 entries⁷⁴. It is likely that there will be further entries in the future as the existence of the register becomes more well-known. The Council has a statutory duty to grant suitable development permission in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority’s area arising in each base period.
- 4.4.14** It is highly unlikely that the statutory duty to grant enough permissions will be met without some form of policy intervention. For this reason, it is considered appropriate that larger schemes of houses (not including flats and maisonettes) should consider making a contribution to meeting this need. The level of contribution would depend on the scale of the self-build need at the time. The following formula gives an indication of the appropriate level of provision, and is based on an estimate of the expected number of overall houses on sites to which the policy would apply. This is subject to a cap, so that no development would be expected to deliver more than 20% of houses as self-build.

$$N = \frac{(R - P)}{750} \times H$$

*Where N is the indicative number of self-build plots that is appropriate on a given site
R is the number of entries on the self-build register for the most recent base period
P is the number of self-build plots permitted since the end of the most recent base period
H is the number of market houses (not including flats and maisonettes) proposed on a given site*

- 4.4.15** However, it is possible that the entries on the register will not always translate to firm demand on the ground. Households may not be in a position to make an offer on a plot, their circumstances may have changed, or their needs may be met in another authority. The provision of self-build cannot therefore be allowed to unacceptably delay the delivery of new homes. Therefore, if after 12 months of appropriate marketing, a plot has not sold, it will revert to the developer to build.

⁷⁴ The base periods are defined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The first base period is the time between establishment of the self-build register and 30th October 2016 (the day before the commencement of the statutory duty to grant suitable permissions), and the subsequent 12 months is the next base period.

Affordable Housing

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading

- ***on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing;***
- ***on sites of 5 - 9 dwellings, 20% provision of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing; and***
- ***on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.***

For sites of more than 4 dwellings, provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate.

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

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

Priority needs are currently for housing with two or more bedrooms that can house families. The Council will regularly monitor and review the need for, and delivery of, affordable housing.

The following types of residential development will be exempt from the requirement to provide affordable housing:

- ***Replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling; and***
- ***Conversion of a dwelling to self-contained flats where there is no new floorspace.***

4.4.16 Affordable housing is subsidised housing that enables the asking price or rent to be substantially lower than the prevailing market prices or rents in the locality, and is subject to mechanisms that will ensure that the housing remains affordable for those who cannot afford market housing. It is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as, “Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.” The Government has consulted on changes to this definition to classify some other tenures as affordable, including starter homes.

4.4.17 The NPPF indicates that in order to boost significantly the supply of housing, local authorities should ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and

affordable housing in the housing market area. It goes on to indicate that local planning authorities need to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

- 4.4.18** The Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016) has once again emphasised the critical need for affordable housing within Reading as well as the remainder of Berkshire. The SHMA identified a need for 406 new affordable homes per year in Reading, which represents the majority of the overall housing required. The consequences of not providing much-needed affordable homes would be severe, and would include homelessness, households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, overcrowding and younger people having to remain living with parents for increasing periods. Insufficient affordable housing will also act as an impediment to economic growth, as firms will face increasing problems with accommodation for their workforce. Meeting even a substantial proportion of the identified housing need presents significant challenges, and it is therefore critical that new residential development of all sizes makes whatever contribution it can.
- 4.4.19** A Ministerial Statement in November 2014 sought to remove sites of ten or less dwellings from the need to provide affordable housing. Although subsequent challenges in the courts⁷⁵ have upheld this statement, they have also clarified that the statement does not have the effect of overriding local policies where there is evidence of exceptional need for affordable housing. Such a need clearly exists in Reading, and it is therefore appropriate that sites of ten or less dwellings contribute to meeting this need. However, on a practical level, it is more difficult to make such provision from residential conversions and from one-for-one replacement, which means that such developments will be exempted from the provisions of policy H3.
- 4.4.20** Affordable housing contributions will be sought from residential-only developments and mixed-use developments. On-site provision (serviced land or completed units) of affordable housing will always be sought in the first instance. Where there are exceptional reasons, the provision of surrogate sites (serviced land or completed units) or commuted sums that will enable the provision of a commensurate number and mix of affordable units, will be considered. Examples of exceptional circumstances may include sites where there are existing concentrations of particular types of affordable housing, where there are demonstrable benefits to be gained by providing the new units elsewhere (e.g. to create more socially-balanced communities), or where there is an opportunity to provide a particular type of much needed housing elsewhere (e.g. family housing). In the case of commuted sums, the Council will choose the registered provider to which to direct the funding or may use the contribution for Local Authority New Build. Under this policy it is accepted that affordable housing provision can take place off site or through contributions in the case of sites of less than 5 dwellings.
- 4.4.21** Affordable housing contributions must be secured in perpetuity and thus be available to successive generations of households in recognised housing need. The most effective way of doing this is through the involvement of a registered provider (RP).
- 4.4.22** The target set in the policy has been determined as the result of an assessment of the viability of development of sites of various sizes in the Borough in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. This will be the expected level of affordable housing provision.

⁷⁵ <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2016/441.html>

- 4.4.23** However, the Council will be sensitive to exceptional costs of bringing a site to market such as for reasons of expensive reclamation, or infrastructure costs, or high existing use values. Where applicants can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Council, exceptional difficulties in bringing a site to market, the Council will be prepared to consider detailed information on the viability of a particular scheme and, where justified through an open book approach, to reduce the affordable housing requirement. As development costs are usually reflected in the residual land value, the purchase price of a particular site will not, on its own, be a reason for reducing the affordable housing requirement. The Council will generally secure provision of affordable housing through a Section 106 agreement.
- 4.4.24** The tenure, size and type of affordable housing provided as part of any scheme should respond to the identified need for affordable housing taking account of the most up-to-date information, including information in an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document or other Supplementary Planning Document⁷⁶. The SPD may need to be updated to take account of any changes to the affordable housing definition, as well as other matters. Taking account of the 2016 SHMA, housing with two or more bedrooms that can house families is a priority. Paragraph 4.4.8 considers this in more depth. New development should therefore include a range and mix of tenures, sizes and types (e.g. house types, flats) of affordable housing (as appropriate depending on site size) to reflect local needs and to reflect the range and mix of house types in the scheme as a whole (i.e. the mix of dwelling sizes in the provision of affordable housing should reflect the mix proposed for the private housing).

Build to Rent Schemes

H4: BUILD TO RENT SCHEMES

Planning permission will be granted for developments of self-contained, private rented homes which:

- 1. Are secured in single ownership providing solely for the rental market for a minimum 30 year term with provision for clawback of affordable housing contributions should the covenant not be met; and***
- 2. Provide tenancies for private renters for a minimum of three years with a six month break clause in the tenant's favour and structured and limited in-tenancy rent increases agreed in advance; and***
- 3. Provide a high standard of professional on-site management and control of the accommodation; and***
- 4. Meet Reading Borough Council's Rent with Confidence Standards; and***
- 5. Provide for a mix of unit sizes in accordance with Policy H2; and***
- 6. Meet the standards of design set out in Policy H4; and***
- 7. Provide 30% on-site affordable housing, either in accordance with Policy H2 and any relevant Supplementary Planning Document; or in the form of Affordable Private Rent Housing as defined and set out in a relevant Supplementary Planning Document.***

⁷⁶ The most up-to-date Affordable Housing SPD at the time of drafting is that adopted in July 2013: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1063/Affordable-Housing-Supplementary-Planning-Document-Adopted-July-2013/pdf/Affordable-Housing-Supplementary-Planning-DocumentJul13.pdf>

4.4.25 Planning Practice Guidance, under the heading ‘The private rented sector’, indicates that:

“some privately rented homes can come from purpose built schemes held in single ownership which are intended for long term rental. The economics of such schemes differ from build for sale and should be determined on a case by case basis. To help ensure these schemes remain viable while improving the diversity of housing to meet local needs, local planning authorities should consider the appropriate level of planning obligations, including for affordable housing, and when these payments are required. So these homes remain available to rent only, local planning authorities may choose to explore using planning obligations to secure these schemes for a minimum period of time. Local planning authorities should enforce these planning obligations in the usual way.” (reference 10-018-20150326)

4.4.26 A large part of the housing stock in Reading is privately rented although mostly through landlords who own a limited number of separate properties. Development interest in large, institutionally owned, private rented schemes has increased in Reading recently. Thames Quarter, a development of 315 residential units on the corner of Vastern Road and Napier Road was approved in principle in 2017, subject to the applicant entering into a planning agreement to retain it in single ownership and in occupation as a private rented scheme. In line with emerging government policy, including the NPPF, it is considered that the local plan for Reading needs to contain a policy covering this form of development.

4.4.27 Build to Rent developments are long term investment vehicles that it is hoped will be attractive to financial institutions. Financial institutions will be looking for large-scale, professionally managed developments. Such developments will bring new providers into the UK housing market (financial institutions play major roles on housing provision in much of Europe and North America), thus increasing competition. They will bring higher quality and better managed accommodation and associated services to the private rental market. They will operate with longer tenancies as the model seeks to retain occupants for as long as possible.

4.4.28 Private rented sector (PRS) housing meets the housing needs of residents who cannot afford to buy or do not want to buy private homes or who cannot get access to social housing or subsidised housing in Reading. It can benefit the local and regional economy as it enables greater household mobility. However, there are many issues associated with private renting in the Borough revolving around poor quality and poorly managed accommodation with limited security of tenure and unjustified rent increases.

4.4.29 The Council wishes to encourage a private rented sector which provides high quality, professionally managed accommodation and a greater level of security for tenants than that which is offered by much of the current PRS market. We will support institutional investment in the sector where benefits are secured for residents and the economy of the Borough and where this produces high quality development with positive benefits for the Borough. Such schemes will normally be larger scale developments of more than 50 units to achieve the level of quality and facilities and to efficiently provide the high quality of management that is needed to support such accommodation.

4.4.30 It is accepted that as Build to Rent developments are dependent on long term rental income rather than early sales, their funding is inevitably long term, and operates to different viability models compared to for sale schemes. Government policy therefore sees a need for some flexibility, particularly in relation to affordable housing provision. Nevertheless, where such

justification is being made, the Council will expect the viability appraisal to also provide information on the viability of the development as a for sale scheme.

- 4.4.31** The Council will expect rental levels for the affordable housing or Affordable Private Rent housing to be related to Local Housing Allowance rate levels (including service charges) and be affordable for those identified as in need of affordable housing in the Borough. The Council will expect such housing to remain affordable in perpetuity.
- 4.4.32** That policy acknowledges the need to tie such schemes to providing rental accommodation for a minimum period of time, particularly where the planning authority has been flexible over affordable housing provision or in the use of the Affordable Private Rent housing. Therefore, where viability assessments show that the full target affordable housing cannot be provided or where the provider proposes the provision of Affordable Private Rent Housing, managed by the owner of the development, the Council will expect the application to agree to a covenant tying the development to providing solely private rented accommodation for a minimum period of 30 years. Where viability testing demonstrates that affordable housing contributions are unviable, clawback mechanisms will be included as part of the planning permission to recoup the loss of affordable housing if any residential units are sold out of single ownership within the covenant period. A charge towards the provision of additional affordable housing will be triggered where any private rented homes are sold within the development within 30 years of occupation of the completed development.
- 4.4.33** Affordable housing will be allocated to eligible households on Reading's housing waiting list. Affordable Private Rent Housing must be allocated in the first instance to eligible households on Reading's housing waiting list.
- 4.4.34** Any on-site affordable housing (or exceptionally where such housing is provided off-site) will be provided in perpetuity. Affordable Private Rent Housing must be provided in perpetuity.

Standards for New Housing

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

New build housing should be built to the following standards:

- a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.***
- b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations⁷⁷.***
- c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes;***
- d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.***
- e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations where it is viable, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).***

⁷⁷ References are to the 2015 Building Regulations

f. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

- 4.4.35 The Government has sought to consolidate the wide range of standards required for new housing across the country. The approach has been to rely on minimum requirements in the Building Regulations for most matters, but to set a small number of ‘optional’ national standards over and above the Building Regulations minima, which local planning authorities can choose to apply in their areas. These ‘optional’ standards cover internal space, water efficiency and accessibility. Local planning authorities cannot seek any additional, or higher, standards for new housing.
- 4.4.36 These ‘optional’ standards can only apply where a policy is included in a Local Plan. This policy therefore applies those standards in Reading Borough. It should be noted that the standards are only ‘optional’ for the local planning authority to apply in their areas, but that once applied, compliance in line with the policy is compulsory. Conditions will be applied to relevant planning permissions to ensure compliance with the policy. For water efficiency and accessibility, the standards will be applied through the Building Regulations. Planning conditions may be required to secure compliance. Where references to the Building Regulations in the policy change, the requirement shall be taken to refer to the most up-to-date standard. Housing in the centre will also need to consider the requirements of policy CR6.
- 4.4.37 As recommended in Planning Practice Guidance, it is appropriate to avoid immediate application of new standards to allow time for any associated costs to be factored into developments, including land deals, as they emerge. It is considered that the date of adoption of the plan is appropriate, as the draft policy has been public since April 2017.
- 4.4.38 Housing standards serve an important role in ensuring resident health and well-being. Providing the appropriate types of housing at affordable levels can reduce overcrowding, unhealthy living conditions, injuries in the home and social isolation⁷⁸. Deprived residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a result of substandard housing⁷⁹.

Internal space

- 4.4.39 Ensuring sufficient levels of internal space is essential to the quality of life of residents of the Borough, which is a key element of the vision for the Borough. The Council is concerned that a great deal of development has now taken place under permitted development rights that provides inadequate internal space. This cannot be controlled, but, where it is possible to do so, it is important to ensure that there is as much housing with adequate internal space as possible. However, it is considered that there is a distinction between what counts as adequate internal space within the centre of Reading and elsewhere. The expectations of those choosing to live in the centre of Reading, in terms of both internal and external space, as well as issues such as noise, tend to be different to those in other parts of the Borough. In addition, in central Reading, applying the space standard could have the effect of reducing the ability of the area to make its expected portion of the housing need, as many existing developments, including some

⁷⁸ NHS Healthy Urban Development Checklist <http://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Healthy-Urban-Planning-Checklist-March-2014.pdf>

⁷⁹ Shelter, The Impact of Bad Housing on Physical Health http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/why_we_campaign/housing_facts_and_figures/subsection?section=the_impact_of_bad_housing

that are well-regarded, would not have gone ahead in their current form were the space standard in force.

4.4.40 However, even where it does not apply, the nationally prescribed space standard offers a useful point of reference and a good basis for design of new developments. The standard as at March 2015 is set out below, and requires that:

- a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Figure 4.7 below;
- b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom;
- c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sq m and is at least 2.15m wide;
- d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5 sq m;
- e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide;
- f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1 sq m within the Gross Internal Area);
- g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all;
- h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72 sq m in a double bedroom and 0.36 sq m in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement;
- i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

Figure 4.7: Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (sq m)

| Number of bedrooms (b) | Number of bed spaces (persons) | 1 storey dwellings | 2 storey dwellings | 3 storey dwellings | Built-in storage |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1b | 1p | 39 (37)* | | | 1.0 |
| | 2p | 50 | 58 | | 1.5 |
| 2b | 3p | 61 | 70 | | 2.0 |
| | 4p | 70 | 79 | | |
| 3b | 4p | 74 | 84 | 90 | 2.5 |
| | 5p | 86 | 93 | 99 | |
| | 6p | 95 | 102 | 108 | |
| 4b | 5p | 90 | 97 | 103 | 3.0 |
| | 6p | 99 | 106 | 112 | |
| | 7p | 108 | 115 | 121 | |
| | 8p | 117 | 124 | 130 | |
| 5b | 6p | 103 | 110 | 116 | 3.5 |
| | 7p | 112 | 119 | 125 | |
| | 8p | 121 | 128 | 134 | |
| 6b | 7p | 116 | 123 | 129 | 4.0 |
| | 8p | 125 | 132 | 138 | |

4.4.41 The full standard can be viewed on the gov.uk website⁸⁰.

Water efficiency

4.4.42 In terms of water efficiency, there is a clear need to ensure that the highest possible standards are in place, particularly given the likely effects of climate change. The Thames Water area is classed as a ‘water-stressed area’ by the Environment Agency, and the Thames River Basin Management Plan stresses the importance of demand management in the area. For clarity, the tighter water efficiency standard referred to here and set out in the Building Regulations is 110 litres per person per day.

Emissions

4.4.43 Reading’s Climate Change Strategy (Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013-2020) sets challenging targets for tackling the Borough’s contribution to climate change, and aims to reduce Reading’s carbon footprint by 34% by 2020 in comparison to 2005 levels. One of the Strategy’s strategic principles is that buildings in Reading should be built to high standards of energy efficiency incorporating on-site renewable energy where possible. Given the scale of residential development in Reading up to 2036, achieving the aims of the Climate Change Strategy will not be possible without that development having a minimal impact on carbon emissions.

4.4.44 Therefore, the requirement will be that major new housing is built to zero carbon homes standard. A revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD will contain more detail on achieving this requirement, but in general, this will mean as a minimum a 35% improvement over the 2013 Building Regulations⁸¹ plus a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon offsetting within Reading (calculated as £60 per tonne over a 30 year period). Where it is proposed to meet the zero carbon homes requirement in another way, clear evidence should be provided to demonstrate how it will be achieved at planning application stage. Zero carbon homes is an achievable standard that, until recently, was intended to be a national requirement in the Building Regulations. All other housing should be built to a level equivalent to the emissions requirement of former Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, which is a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. Where the 19% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions cannot be achieved on site, an offset may be possible through planning contributions. Further guidance on such an off-set will follow the Local Plan.

Accessibility

4.4.45 There are two levels of ‘optional’ standards for accessibility. M4(2) of the Building Regulations is for accessible and adaptable dwellings, and relates to relatively straightforward design measures that can allow homes to be adaptable as the needs of the occupier change. In that sense, it is broadly in the same vein as Lifetime Homes, although not identical. M4(3) relates more specifically to wheelchair user housing. The specific requirements can be seen in the Part M approved document⁸².

⁸⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf

⁸¹ The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1A: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition)

⁸² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

- 4.4.46** The requirements for wheelchair housing have been set at a level that would allow Reading to meet its expected requirement. The need for wheelchair user housing is expected to grow with an ageing population, and this has been factored into the requirements. In terms of accessible and adaptable homes, it is more difficult to identify a specific requirement. This standard is about more than addressing specific needs, rather it is a changing approach, which enables those who may not have specific needs now to remain in their homes as their circumstances change. Since it involves relatively simple design features, it is considered that 100% of new dwellings can be built to this standard without it being an overly onerous requirement.
- 4.4.47** In terms of applying the 5% requirement, where it would result in a fraction of a wheelchair user dwelling, provision should be to the nearest whole dwelling. For instance, 5% of a development of 35 homes would be 1.75, which should result in provision of two homes.

Accommodation for Vulnerable People

H6: ACCOMMODATION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- i) Provision will be made for at least an additional 253 residential care bedspaces for elderly people between 2013 and 2036, in addition to the overall housing need. Other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will address the identified needs, which are primarily for accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities.**
- ii) Development for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will fulfil the following criteria:**
- **Developments will, where possible, locate accommodation close to, or incorporate, relevant community facilities, such as healthcare services, or day care for elderly people;**
 - **Where development would result in a loss of general housing, it must meet identified needs in the most up-to-date Housing Strategy and be able to accommodate at least an equivalent number of people;**
 - **Larger developments will include adequate provision for ambulance access;**
 - **Development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people;**
 - **Developments within residential areas will be designed to respect the residential character of their surroundings; and**
 - **Where a development requires a new physical link between buildings and where the gaps between buildings form part of the character of a street, the need for a linkage must be clearly demonstrated, and must avoid negative impacts on the character of the street.**
- iii) Development catering for people with limited mobility will fulfil the following criteria:**
- **Developments should be located within 400 metres of an identified district or local centre and a bus stop on a strategic bus route; and**
 - **Development should include secure storage for mobility scooters.**
- iv) Affordable specialist housing for vulnerable people that meets the needs of the most up to date Housing Strategy may count towards affordable housing provision in line with policy H3.**

- 4.4.48 Reading is facing a range of housing needs over the coming years, and it is vital to recognise some of the more complex needs that should be taken account of specifically in future provision. Whilst some of these derive from an ageing population (for instance, the amount of people in Reading aged over 65 is expected to increase by more than 60% to 2036⁸³), they also emerge from the fact that many people with existing needs are in poor or unsuitable accommodation. Groups covered by this section include elderly people, people with learning or physical disabilities, people with mental health problems, young people at risk, children, people with a drug or alcohol problem, ex-offenders, homeless people, asylum seekers and people fleeing domestic violence.
- 4.4.49 The Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assessed the likely level of need for residential care bedspaces for older people (within use class C2), based on projections of how many people are likely to suffer from issues such as reduced mobility and dementia. The SHMA identified a need for 2,226 additional residential care bedspaces in the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to 2036, of which Reading's need is 253.
- 4.4.50 For many groups, accommodation that supports more independent living is required, rather than large new nursing homes. This may include extra-care housing, supported living and sheltered housing. Depending on factors including the level of care provided, this may fall into either the C2 or C3 use classes. The SHMA also assessed the need for specialist accommodation for older people, for example, and identified a need for 1,189 homes to 2036, although these homes would be included within the overall housing need identified in Policy H1. More detailed information on short term requirements (up to 2020) is set out in the Accommodation with Care Commissioning Strategy, where the immediate needs are for supported living, extra care and enhanced sheltered housing.
- 4.4.51 Certain types of development will have specific requirements in terms of determining planning applications, which are set out in (iii) above. However, it is also important to state that these are essentially residential facilities, appropriate for residential areas, to which policies on matters such as residential amenity, outdoor space, flooding and pollution also apply.
- 4.4.52 Some types of facilities, including extra care, will require on-site facilities such as a restaurant, laundry, and staff offices. Where the use of these facilities is dedicated to residents and staff, they are ancillary to the existing use and do not need to fulfil the location tests in national planning policy and elsewhere.
- 4.4.53 In terms of the application of the criterion regarding physical links, possible techniques for avoiding impacts include setting back from the building line, reducing height and using appropriate materials.

Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

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

⁸³ Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, February 2016

4.4.54 As demonstrated in this plan, there are substantial needs for additional housing in Reading, and every effort should be made to meet those needs in line with the NPPF. Therefore, net loss of existing housing would only serve to exacerbate this problem. There may be exceptional circumstances where a loss of a limited amount of general residential would help to meet other key identified needs, for instance for a specific identified need for accommodation for vulnerable groups (see policy H6) or to reinstate a use more appropriate to the significance of a heritage asset, and this should be clearly demonstrated as part of any planning application.

Residential Conversions

H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

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

Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:

- *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*
- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom⁸⁴ for residents.*

Additionally, in the case of conversions of houses to self-contained flats:

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross ;*
- *At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms.*

Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs):

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *There is sufficient communal space⁸⁴.*

Additionally, in areas covered by an Article 4 direction that restricts changes of use from Class C3 to Class C4:

- *Planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site.*

⁸⁴ This is defined in the Council's Residential Conversions SPD – see www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf

- 4.4.55 Residential conversions have an important role to play in housing land supply in Reading. The subdivision of large houses has often enabled renovation and affordable maintenance of properties. Conversion to flats has also added a valuable supply of reasonably low cost private rented accommodation, meeting a need in the market. Generally, conversions provide for a market need for small, flexibly let accommodation reflecting household formation trends in the population and the more transient nature of parts of the labour market.
- 4.4.56 Council Tax data indicates that 27.4% of the dwellings in Reading are currently rented privately, compared to a national rate of only 11.9%. Work on the private rented sector by the Council in developing its Housing Strategy, using data such as Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, shows significant problems and issues associated with private rented sector property in Reading. Whilst the strategy wishes to continue to develop a healthy private rented sector, this must be undertaken in a manner that minimises the potential adverse impacts that high concentrations of conversions and intensification of use can bring to areas of the Borough.
- 4.4.57 There are potential adverse effects from such conversions, particularly where there are concentrations. The significant loss of family housing can erode the character of an area through insensitive individual conversions and the cumulative impacts of physical changes to properties as a result of such use. Such streets are suffering from impacts such as significant car parking problems; clutter and untidiness; unsightly accumulation of satellite dishes; poor building maintenance; increased activity, noise and nuisance, etc. The quality of conversions, particularly where unregulated, can also be poor, with poor standards of accommodation and health and safety concerns.
- 4.4.58 Conversions, either individually or cumulatively, can also have a harmful impact on the character of the area through unduly diluting mixed and sustainable communities. In certain parts of the Borough, there are high concentrations of flat conversions and houses in multiple occupation, in part reflecting the very high student population which is especially prevalent around the University. Given that students are predominantly present during term time only, it can leave some roads and areas feeling quite dormant at other times, failing to achieve a mixed and sustainable community. In locations with already high numbers of flats or houses in multiple occupation, conversions to single family housing could help create a more mixed and sustainable community.
- 4.4.59 This policy relates to both small and large Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in addition to conversions to flats. A small HMO (those occupied by 3-6 unrelated individuals sharing one or more basic amenity/ies) falling within a C4 use class has permitted development rights to change between the C4 and C3 (general residential) use classes without the need for a planning application, unless it is subject to an Article 4 direction (see below).
- 4.4.60 If there are more than six unrelated occupants sharing one or more basic amenities, the property is likely to be classed as a 'large HMO' (sui generis) which will be outside use class C4. Planning permission will always be required for a change to a large HMO.
- 4.4.61 In areas where there is considered to be a need to control the spread of HMOs, the Council can introduce an 'Article 4 direction', which removes the automatic right to convert a dwellinghouse to a small HMO, and means that planning permission is required. Two such directions have so far been introduced - in a large area covering much of Katesgrove, Park and Redlands wards close to the University, and in a smaller area covering Jesse Terrace in west Reading. Details of these areas can be found on the Council's website. If any new directions are introduced after publication of this Plan, those details will also be on the website.

- 4.4.62 In ensuring that any change of use to a HMO within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction, either individually or cumulatively, does not unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing in line with the policy, the following guidance will be used to determine a planning application for change of use from C3 (dwellinghouse) to a HMO.
- 4.4.63 Planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site.
- 4.4.64 The centre of the radius will be the front door of the property. A 50m radius will be drawn from this point and any properties or any part of a building falling within the radius will be taken into account in the assessment. If a part of a building falls within the circle and partly without, then the property will form a part of the assessment.
- 4.4.65 Where the radius includes properties that lie outside Reading Borough's administrative boundaries (for example they fall within Wokingham Borough boundary), they will not be taken into account in the assessment and only those properties in Reading Borough will contribute to the assessment.
- 4.4.66 Where the radius includes entire buildings falling within an A, B, C1 or C2, D or sui generis use class (apart from a sui generis HMO) they will be discounted from the total number of buildings in the radius. Similarly, purpose-built flats will be discounted from the total number of buildings in the radius. Any existing flat conversions will be included in the number of C3 dwellings and will not be included in the number of HMOs for the purposes of the threshold calculation.
- 4.4.67 The Council will use information available to it to identify which properties are within an HMO use (either C4 or sui generis). It is anticipated that the information to calculate the percentage will initially be based primarily on Environmental Health and Council Tax information, given data protection and other regulations preventing the use of certain information. Where there is significant doubt as to whether a property is an HMO, it will not be counted towards the threshold. For the avoidance of doubt, the application property will be taken into account in calculating this percentage of properties.
- 4.4.68 The applicant should also undertake their own estimate of the number of HMOs to accompany the planning application and provide all of their supporting data. It is advised that pre-application advice is sought prior to submitting any planning application.
- 4.4.69 Planning permission will be required to change the use of a small HMO to a large HMO, or to intensify the use of a lawful large HMO (without any physical extension or external alteration to the property) by increasing the number of occupiers. In this instance the threshold limit will not be triggered as the HMO has already been established in the street and, therefore, have no further effect on the concentration of HMOs and balance and mix of households in the local community.
- 4.4.70 It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity, as many of the planning issues associated with house conversions relate to impacts on neighbours. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Conversions provides further guidance on these points. The method for calculating nearby HMOs using a 50m radius reflects current practice, but this may be amended by any future changes to the SPD.

House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION

An extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it:

- *Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;*
- *Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line;*
- *Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas; and*
- *Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.*

In addition to the above, ancillary accommodation, such as granny annexes, will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately.

4.4.71 It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity, as most of the planning issues associated with house extensions relate to impacts on neighbours. Policies on private outdoor space (H10), loss of trees (EN14) and the Council's SPG on House Extensions are also relevant. The policy relates to all types of extension and ancillary accommodation, such as porches, dormer windows and ancillary buildings (e.g. garages and sheds).

4.4.72 Reading is a dense urban area, and there is limited land for new housing development. When household needs change, particularly through growing families, the ability to extend a house can give an alternative to moving to a larger property, often in a less accessible location, or out of the Borough. Such a movement of families can act against creating mixed communities. Therefore, it is important to ensure that, where a household wishes to stay in an existing house, there is as much flexibility as possible to do so. However, extensions can cause undesirable planning issues, and these must be addressed in policy.

4.4.73 Extensions to the side and front of houses are particularly visible, although rear extensions may also be visible from streets, public spaces and footpaths. In these cases, it is important to reflect the character of the street and ensure that an extension is not visually dominant in a way that detracts from its surroundings. Extensions should reflect the building line, or, preferably, be set back from the building line. They should also ensure that, where gaps between dwellings are a key part of the character of the street, they are retained. Some types of additions, for example box-shaped dormer windows facing the highway, are unlikely to be acceptable under the terms of this policy.

4.4.74 A number of demographic trends are also at work in Reading, including an ageing population, as well as less traditional household arrangements. The provision of ancillary accommodation,

such as granny annexes, can be one housing solution to some of these trends. However, this ancillary accommodation should not be a way of introducing new dwellings by stealth. Therefore, planning conditions and, where necessary, obligations will ensure that extra accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling. Ancillary accommodation could be considered a separate dwelling where it:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities e.g. kitchens and bathrooms;
- Has its own front door without internal links to the main house; and/or
- Has its own external facilities, e.g. access, drive, garden; or has scope for these external facilities to be easily created.

- 4.4.75 There is a substantial amount of changes that a householder can now make to their property without needing planning permission. Whilst this policy cannot be applied to developments that do not need permission, it nevertheless serves as a useful guide on how to minimise effects of the development.
- 4.4.76 Some rear extensions, within certain size parameters, do not require planning permission, but rather need to apply for prior approval. If an adjoining neighbour objects to the application, the Council may determine the application on amenity grounds only. In these cases, the principal policy that will be used is CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity).
- 4.4.77 Where a house extension is proposed that would affect a listed or locally-listed building or its setting, the application should be determined in line with relevant policies for heritage (EN1, EN4 and EN6).

Private and Communal Outdoor Space

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

- 4.4.78 Access to private or communal outdoor space can make a vital contribution to a high quality of life. In addition to providing opportunities for outdoor living and enjoyment, amenity space serves functional requirements, such as refuse storage and clothes drying. Outdoor amenity space includes private spaces such as gardens or courtyards (front, back and side), shared communal spaces, balconies and roof gardens.

- 4.4.79** Reading is a comparatively dense urban area, and recent high-density developments have accentuated this pattern. Against this background, the need to ensure that dwellings have sufficient private or communal outdoor space becomes vital to ensure that a high quality of life can be achieved. The need to require provision of private outdoor space was identified by a study of residential developments in Reading⁸⁵ as a key aspect of design quality, as has the need to make sure that it is clear which areas are private, which are communal, and which are public.
- 4.4.80** This policy also fits with other areas of the strategy. For instance, there is an identified requirement for housing which will be suitable for families, and good levels of outdoor space are a necessary element of such housing. In complying with policies on design, developments will have to respect spacing and openness where this forms part of the character of an area. Inevitably that may well dictate requirements for private and communal space. In addition, requirements for privacy, and other amenity considerations may dictate distances between properties that will result in spaces to provide for private and communal space.
- 4.4.81** Flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of Reading, and the sites are usually more constrained in any case. This is because often the needs of residents within central Reading can be different to those of the rest of the Borough. Flats in central Reading⁸⁶ are less likely to attract families, and the ability to walk to public open space nearby reduces the need for private open space.
- 4.4.82** The policy does not just relate to development of new dwellings. Other types of development, such as the conversion of a house into flats, and house extensions that would result in a loss of outdoor space, will also be judged against the policy. Whilst conversions usually only have an existing level of space to work with, they will not be acceptable where they cannot comply with the policy.
- 4.4.83** It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity and Policy H8 on residential conversions, as many of the planning issues associated with the provision of private or communal garden areas have implications in terms of potential impacts on neighbours and in respect of dwelling conversions. It should be noted that requirements in this policy are in addition to requirements for public open space under policy EN9.
- 4.4.84** In determining the appropriate level of private and communal open space for the new development, the constraints of the site and the extent of deprivation of public open space within the proposed scheme will be taken into consideration. Where communal open space provision may not be considered a necessary requirement for flats within Central Reading, suitable balconies and roof gardens should be provided.
- 4.4.85** In the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals:
- (a) Houses: Useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates (measured externally and including garage space).
 - (b) Flats outside central Reading:

⁸⁵ Residential Design and Quality of Life in Reading, Roger Evans Associates and the Survey Shop, 2007

⁸⁶ Central Reading refers to the area shown on the Proposals Map

- 1 and 2-bedroom: 25 sq m per flat
 - 3 or more bedrooms: 40 sq m per flat
 - Sheltered units: 20 sq m per unit
- (c) Development in central Reading will not always be expected to comply with the standards set above. Open space is nonetheless required, unless exceptional circumstances prevail, to accommodate modest sitting out areas and clothes drying facilities.

Development of Private Residential Gardens

H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*
 - *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
- 2) *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
- 3) *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
- 4) *The proposal does not lead to tandem development⁸⁷;*
- 5) *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
- 6) *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
- 7) *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*

⁸⁷ 'Tandem development' is used to describe a dwelling built behind another, the rear building having no frontage and being accessed by a private roadway or track alongside the front building.

- 8) The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and**
- 9) The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.**

4.4.86 This policy deals with new residential development on garden land. Residential development in this policy is defined as excluding 1) House extensions and outbuildings; 2) Subdivision of original dwelling with additional units on the same or similar footprint; 3) Redevelopment of flats for higher intensity development or conversion of a house/s for flats where the original private residential garden land is retained for private communal garden use; 4) Development of garage sites adjacent and/or to the rear of existing private residential gardens.

4.4.87 Residential development of garden land is a component of the overall housing land supply in the Borough, and this will continue to be the case through the plan period. However, such developments can give rise to particular tensions, and, if not designed sensitively, can fundamentally change the character of a local area and worsen the quality of life of local residents. It is therefore important to have a policy to ensure that developments can make a positive contribution to the character of an area. This accords with the NPPF, which states that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, and that 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.

4.4.88 Private⁸⁸ residential garden land is defined as:

- Land within the curtilage⁸⁹ of a residential building(s); and/or
- Land where the previous lawful use was for private residential garden.

4.4.89 The NPPF identifies that design policies should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Policy H11 includes a number of criteria which provide further detail regarding the matters which will be considered when assessing whether a proposal for residential development in garden land makes a positive contribution to the character of an area. These criteria include that a proposal should have a layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot. This particular aspect could include the consideration of the plot widths and lengths of existing properties.

4.4.90 Policy H11 includes reference to high quality materials and elevational details, which where appropriate should be distinctive and/or complementary; there may be instances where the existing prevailing vernacular is poor and a contrasting contemporary style would be an improvement. There will be instances, therefore, where a modern innovative design that complements the surrounding area will be acceptable.

⁸⁸ This includes communal gardens for flats for example, where the use of the garden is for residents only as opposed to general public use.

⁸⁹ Domestic curtilage is generally understood as usually a garden, but can include parking areas, access roads, vegetable plots, children's play equipment, and stables (where the horses are kept for pleasure rather than agricultural use). The domestic curtilage is not necessarily marked off or enclosed, but it should be clearly attached to the house or serve the house in some useful and intimate way.

- 4.4.91 Reference within the policy to principal architectural features includes chimneys, bays etc. All external hard surface areas should be of permeable materials.
- 4.4.92 With regard to physical security measures, this refers to items such as gates, cameras, security railings etc. In particular, gated communities will not be acceptable, because of the impact they have on increasing the fear of crime and reducing community cohesion.
- 4.4.93 There is recognition that private residential gardens can be of significant biodiversity value. When considered in isolation, a single garden may be assessed as being of limited wildlife value, and would not necessarily warrant protection. However groups of gardens often contain a mosaic of habitats supporting a diversity of species and often provide important links or stepping stones for species moving through an urban area, which can contribute to the Green Network. It is accepted that not all gardens are of importance for wildlife, particularly where there is uniformity of habitats, such as driveways or manicured lawn, or where the garden does not form part of a larger block. It is the fragmentation of blocks of gardens which can have an adverse impact on wildlife.
- 4.4.94 Where a Design and Access Statement is required (i.e. for developments of ten or more dwellings, or less than ten in a conservation area), each proposal should include relevant detail within the Statement which addresses the matters included within this policy. It is advisable for applicants to seek pre-application advice in all cases because of the often sensitive nature of garden land developments.

Student Accommodation

H12: STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

New student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation.

There will be a presumption against proposals for new student accommodation on other sites unless it can be clearly demonstrated how the proposal meets a need that cannot be met on the above sites.

- 4.4.95 Reading has a strong student population, drawn by the University of Reading and also by Reading College. This population brings many benefits to the area, in terms of supporting services and facilities, and means a strong supply of well-qualified people, many of whom remain in the Borough after graduation and make a major contribution to its economic success. It is important that sufficient accommodation is provided to enable students to live close to where they study.
- 4.4.96 The SHMA (2016) looked at the issue of need for additional student housing. It anticipates a growth in student numbers at the University of Reading from 13,135 in 2015 to 16,095 in 2018. However, the SHMA notes that, as this is in line with historic high student numbers, that it should not result in the need for significant new accommodation. More recent evidence from the University indicates that this growth will indeed generate a need for new accommodation. It is considered that this need should mainly be met on campus or through reconfiguration and

redevelopment of existing halls of residence, subject to considerations of amenity and character. Additional accommodation beyond this will need to demonstrate why it cannot be met on those sites.

- 4.4.97 However, the need for student accommodation is highly dependent on any expansion of the University. Whilst the University's plans for the next five years are clear, the intentions up to 2036 are less so, and there is therefore potential for change in later parts of the plan period. The need for future expansion of accommodation will therefore need to be kept under review.
- 4.4.98 The provision of new student accommodation needs to be balanced against other types of housing. Whilst it is likely that purpose built student housing can free up some existing homes to meet more general needs, there are many sites where development for students prevents a potential housing site being used to help to meet the more pressing needs for general housing, including affordable housing. Development for students should therefore be limited to established student locations, unless a specific need for a development in a certain location can be clearly demonstrated.

Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

H13: PROVISION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Proposals for new sites or extensions to existing sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will be judged against the following criteria.

Proposals should

- i) Meet an identified need for gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople accommodation within Reading;*
- ii) Have safe and convenient access onto the highway network;*
- iii) Have good access to a range of facilities including education and healthcare by a choice of means of travel, including walking;*
- iv) Not have an unacceptable impact on the physical and visual character and quality of the area;*
- v) Not result in an adverse impact on the significance of a heritage asset;*
- vi) Be located in line with national and local policy on flood risk, and not involve location of caravans in Flood Zone 3;*
- vii) Not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of existing residents in surrounding areas, or on future residents of the proposal; and*
- viii) Not result in the loss of biodiversity or important trees, and provide a net biodiversity gain where possible.*

- 4.4.99 National planning policy requires that the local authority assess the need for accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in its area. As it stands, the only existing site is a site for travelling showpeople at Scours Lane. The Council has undertaken a Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Houseboat Dweller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) that assessed the need for accommodation for these groups, which reported in September 2017. It found a need for:
- 10-17 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers;
 - A transit site consisting of 5 pitches;

- Two additional plots for travelling showpeople; and
- No need for additional residential moorings for houseboats

4.4.100 The expectation in national policy is that, where a need is identified, a local authority should plan to meet that need unless there are exceptional reasons why it should not. In terms of permanent and transit accommodation for gypsies and travellers, the Council has gone through a thorough site assessment process, which culminated in a consultation on gypsy and traveller provision during September and October 2017. The conclusion was that, whilst one site could potentially meet the identified transit needs (which is identified in policy WR4), there were no sites that could meet the permanent accommodation needs. The Council is exploring with its neighbours whether there are options for meeting this need outside the Borough. In terms of travelling showpeople, the small need identified is unlikely to be able to support a new site on its own, and therefore any proposal for expansion of the existing site will need to be considered on its merits.

4.4.101 In addition to an identified site, there is also a need to include a general policy to judge any applications for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The requirements do not differ markedly from the requirements for housing for any other groups, but the need to have good access by foot to education and healthcare (ideally within 400m, but 800m at the furthest) is particularly vital, as is the need for good access to the highway network.

Suburban Renewal and Regeneration

H14: SUBURBAN RENEWAL AND REGENERATION

There is scope for some of Reading's suburban residential areas to undergo renewal and regeneration that would achieve the following aims:

- *Improve the local built environment;*
- *Improve and modernise the housing stock; and*
- *Deliver additional homes.*

Where development would fulfil the above aims, it would generally be supported, provided that:

- *Any loss of undeveloped land would be outweighed by a qualitative improvement in open and green space and by the benefits of development to the community as a whole;*
- *Buildings and features that make a positive contribution to the area's character are retained;*
- *There would be adequate community facilities to serve the resulting community; and*
- *There would not be an unacceptable impact on the highway network as a result of loss of parking areas or garages.*

4.4.102 Reading has a number of older housing estates, many of which are still primarily in Council ownership. With such a substantial need for new homes in Reading, it is logical to look to existing areas to see whether there is scope for these areas to accommodate new housing.

4.4.103 The regeneration of Dee Park (see policy WR1) provides an example of a significant area regeneration that can address existing problems within an area at the same time as delivering new homes. The full development when complete will result in a net gain of almost 350 homes

through demolition of ageing housing and a more efficient layout including development on underused areas. However, Dee Park was a unique opportunity for renewal within the Borough, in terms of its scale, scope for reconfiguration and the large number of vacant and low density sites. The combination of these factors is not replicated to this extent elsewhere. For this reason, there are not likely to be opportunities on a similar scale in other areas in the plan period.

4.4.104 Nevertheless, there may still be opportunities for smaller scale regeneration, renewal and reconfiguration of some of Reading's suburban areas. The principle of this is generally to be welcomed, and the policy aims to provide support to such proposals where they do not result in unacceptable impacts on the existing area.

4.5 Transport

Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Proposed development should contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan or any successor document, including sub-strategies, specific projects identified and the local action plans.

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

All development proposals should make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling, in accordance with any agreed transport assessment submitted as part of the application.

- 4.5.1 The Council's objectives for transport set out in the Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)⁹⁰ are: -
- To facilitate more physically active travel for journeys in a healthy environment;
 - To improve personal safety on the transport network;
 - To provide affordable, accessible and inclusive travel options for everyone;
 - To ensure that the transport network operates safely and efficiently to meet the needs of all users;
 - To align transport and land use planning to enable sustainable travel choices, improve mobility, reduce the need to travel and preserve the natural environment;
 - To deliver balanced packages of value for money transport solutions and make best use of existing transport investment;
 - To offer sustainable transport choices for the Travel to Work Area and beyond, integrating within and between different types of transport;
 - To improve journey times, journey time reliability and the availability of information; and
 - To reduce carbon emissions from transport, improve air quality and create a transport network which supports a mobile, affordable low-carbon future.
- 4.5.2 New development has a vital role to play in helping to achieve those objectives. The scale of development envisaged in Reading up to 2036 would have significant impacts on the transport system, in addition to the general forecast growth in trips arising from the existing population. The predicted growth in trips can only be accommodated through major investment in transport, particularly sustainable modes. New development should make appropriate provision for works that contribute to the programmes developed as part of the strategy, either directly or through making appropriate contributions.
- 4.5.3 Major developments (over 10 dwellings or 1,000 sq m of non-residential floorspace) can make a particular contribution to achieving the strategy. In these cases, it is important that users of,

⁹⁰ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2421/Local-Transport-Plan-2011-26/pdf/Local_Transport_Plan_2011-26.pdf

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

- 4.5.4 All developments will be assessed for their impact upon the transport network, including the local and trunk road and motorway networks and, where relevant, the rail network. Development should provide mitigation measures in line with their impacts on these networks, taking account of levels of development that have already been accepted, and mitigation measures that have already been agreed or implemented. It will be a condition of planning permission that appropriate measures are in place to secure any remedial transport measures required. Where necessary, a transport assessment of the scheme will be required. This will measure the impacts both of the development proposal and of any remedial measures proposed by the developer to address those impacts. Once a satisfactory package of remedial measures has been negotiated, contributions may be sought from developers to secure their delivery.
- 4.5.5 Contributions to a general package of transport improvements in Reading will continue to be made through the Community Infrastructure Levy, but contributions in Section 106 agreements will also have a role to play where there are site-specific issues that need to be addressed, e.g junction improvements, new pedestrian crossings, additional cycle facilities, new public transport infrastructure, or inclusion of land for a transport scheme.
- 4.5.6 The current Local Transport Plan covers the period 2011-2026, but this policy applies to any subsequent plans that may be published.

Major Transport Projects

TR2: MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS

Priority will be given to the implementation of the major transport projects identified in the Local Transport Plan (or any successor document) and other identified major transport projects. Land required for these projects will be safeguarded. These will include:

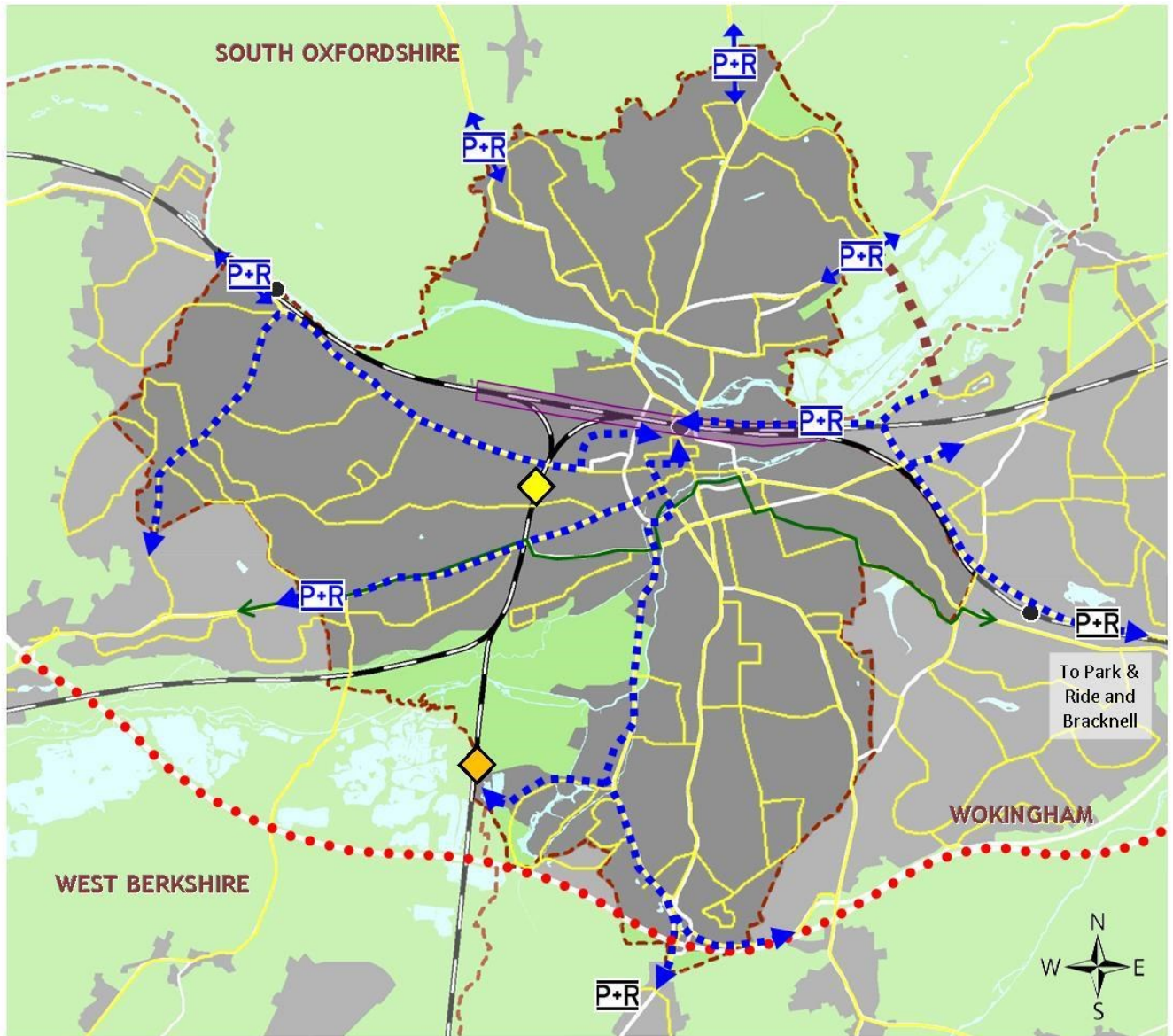
- *Mass Rapid Transit*
- *Park and Ride sites*
- *Green Park station and interchange*
- *Reading West station upgrade*
- *Cow Lane bridges*
- *Crossing of the River Thames*
- *National Cycle Network Route 422*
- *Development of high-quality bus services*

Land to be safeguarded for the following projects is shown on the Proposals Map: southern⁹¹ and eastern Mass Rapid Transit route (TR2a), Green Park Station and Interchange (TR2b), Reading West Station (TR2c), Cow Lane Bridges (TR2d) and National Cycle Network Phases 1 and 2 (TR2e).

- 4.5.7 There has been considerable success in delivering major transport improvements for Reading in recent years, not least the recent upgrade to Reading station, which, as well as increasing capacity and alleviating a key bottleneck on the rail network, has also provided a stimulus for development on surrounding sites, as well as offering the opportunity to make improvements to the transport network elsewhere, including at Cow Lane. However, with the continued growth of the Borough, more investment is needed to ensure that transport infrastructure needs are met.
- 4.5.8 Those transport projects that are highlighted in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 that are likely to have the most significant needs in terms of land use are mass rapid transit, park and ride and Green Park station and interchange.
- **Mass Rapid Transit:** This is a scheme to provide high quality public transport connections between park and ride sites and major travel generators. Wherever possible, this is likely to involve a dedicated route, although it may also use some existing road space in places. The project involves a number of corridors across the Borough (see figure 4.8), but the routes to the south and east are at the most advanced stage, and can therefore be safeguarded on the Proposals Map. Much of the land shown on the route to the South has been secured by Section 106 agreement on major development schemes, and this will continue to be sought on key sites where they come forward.
 - **Park and Ride:** Despite recent new park and ride provision at Mere oak and Winnersh (both in Wokingham Borough), there is a continued need for new provision. Opportunities for new sites will therefore be sought, particularly on the corridors identified on figure 4.8. The constraints of the Borough mean that the sites are most likely to be in adjoining authorities, and the Council will continue to work with its neighbours to bring new facilities forward. These park and ride sites can complement existing bus services, including inter-urban buses, by supporting their use.
 - **Green Park Station and Interchange:** A new railway station at Green Park has been planned for some time, and the development of the station has planning permission, both in Reading and West Berkshire, as it straddles the boundary. The development of a new area of more than 700 homes with supporting facilities at Green Park is now underway, meaning that the delivery of the station and interchange is now vital. The required land is shown on the Proposals Map.
 - **Reading West Station Upgrade:** There is a proposal to upgrade the existing Reading West Station with improved passenger facilities. The Council is working with Network Rail and First Great Western on progressing this project.
 - **Cow Lane Bridges:** Cow Lane Bridges have long been identified as a major constraint on the local transport network. Improvements to Cow Lane Bridges, associated with the new station works, have been subject to some delays but are due to be completed early in the plan period.

⁹¹ Not shown on the version of the Proposals Map, see Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Major Transport Schemes in Reading



KEY

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Green Park Station and Interchange | | National Cycle Network 422 scheme | | Local authority boundary |
| | Reading West Station upgrade | | M4 Smart Motorway scheme | | Railway and station |
| | Future park and ride corridor | | Existing bus network | | Water |
| | Existing park and ride | | Potential additional Thames crossing | | Undeveloped land |
| | Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route | | Safeguarded for Crossrail | | Built up area and road |

- Crossing of the River Thames:** The River Thames is a major barrier to movement, meaning that the existing bridges in the immediate Reading area (Reading, Caversham and Sonning Bridges) are under pressure at peak times. Reading is currently working with Wokingham Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the two Local Enterprise Partnerships to identify measures to improve the situation. This may involve an additional crossing. The most likely route for such a

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crossing would be within Wokingham and South Oxfordshire, but if the work identifies a need for use of land within Reading, this should be taken into account.

- **National Cycle Network Route 422:** NCN 422 is a new national cycle route between Newbury and Windsor, including a section within Reading. The scheme is being developed by Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, Bracknell Forest Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- **High-quality bus services:** Reading has developed a comprehensive high quality bus network to enable effective public transport services to operate, resulting in one of the highest uses of buses in the country. The scale of developments forecast will require that this network is expanded and developed. There are also important inter-urban bus services linking Reading with other towns and cities. The Council will seek support for enhanced bus facilities such as bus lanes and bus stops to both safeguard the existing network from the effects of developments and to enhance the services offered to serve new developments.

4.5.9 The constrained geography of the Borough means that major transport investment virtually always requires significant cross-boundary working. The Council will continue to work with its partners, including neighbouring authorities and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to ensure that these vital schemes are delivered. More detail on the delivery of these schemes, where it is known, is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is in chapter 10 of this plan.

Crossrail and other rail schemes

4.5.10 The Secretary of State for Transport issued a Safeguarding Direction on 29 April 2009, identifying land which should be safeguarded for an extension of the Crossrail scheme from Maidenhead to Reading, the services on which are known as the Elizabeth Line. This land is identified on the Proposals Map, although there is no need to repeat this safeguarding through policy in this document. Elizabeth Line services are expected to reach Reading in 2019. Up to that point, the Council will consult with Crossrail Limited on planning applications that fall within the identified land. Once services are fully operational, the Council will consult with Transport for London.

4.5.11 The Council supports the proposed East-West Rail Link between Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Norwich which would provide greater connectivity to these destinations for rail services from Reading. It is not currently expected that this will require additional land in Reading.

M4 Smart Motorway

4.5.12 Development consent was granted by the Secretary of State in September 2016 for the M4 Smart Motorway project between junctions 3 and 12 of the M4. The scheme uses technology to manage traffic flow, providing better information to drivers and converting the hard shoulder to a traffic lane. Works are expected to take place between 2017 and 2022⁹². Within Reading Borough, works are expected to largely be within the envelope of the existing motorway and junction, as shown on the Proposals Map.

⁹² For more information, see <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m4-junctions-3-12-smart-motorway/#project>

Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

Development will only be permitted where:-

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;*
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;*
- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;*
- iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and*
- v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.*

Proposals involving either the construction of a new site access, or a material increase in the use of an existing site access, directly onto the Classified Highway Network will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.

4.5.13 Reading is a dense urban Borough, containing a broad variety of uses. It has a thriving economy and is a net importer of labour. These factors mean that Reading's transport network is often under significant pressure, and the impacts of new developments therefore require careful management, particularly in terms of new accesses and the effects of additional traffic generation.

4.5.14 It is important to ensure that proposals will not interfere with the free flow of traffic on the highway and that there would be no risk to the safety of people using that road including vulnerable groups such as pedestrians (including mobility-impaired users), cyclists and motorcyclists. The proximity of other accesses is also significant. In particular, creating new access points onto the Classified Highway Network, or changing the nature of an existing access or the type of traffic using the access, is likely to bring about risks to the safety of road users and increase traffic volumes. Where an existing area of the network already exceeds its operational capacity, proposals involving a new site access and/or additional trips likely to worsen the existing situation will not normally be permitted, unless the proposals provide improvements to the transport infrastructure which significantly reduce the effects of potential

private car borne trips on the network.

- 4.5.15 The Council has produced a policy on accesses, which deals particularly with residential accesses onto classified roads, and commercial accesses onto all adopted roads⁹³. The policy, adopted in 2011, endorses the Department for Transport’s Manual for Streets (for lightly trafficked roads within urban areas) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (for access and junction improvements to classified roads from residential developments and to the entire road network for commercial developments). It is too detailed to reproduce here, but compliance with it, or any replacement, is essential. It follows national guidance that avoids access onto main roads wherever possible.
- 4.5.16 The Classified Highway Network is defined by the highways authority, and includes a number of main roads not classified as A or B roads. The Network at the time of this plan is shown on the Proposals Map, but it may change within the plan period, so the Council’s website should be checked for the latest position.

Cycle Routes and Facilities

TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES

Developments will be expected to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities. Development of new facilities for cycling, such as cycle hire points and cycle parking, will be acceptable.

The cycle routes identified in the most up-to-date Cycling Strategy will be maintained, enhanced and added to or extended. Development will not detrimentally affect an identified cycle route. Where opportunities exist, improvements to that route, including the provision of connecting routes, and/or cycling facilities will be sought within developments or through planning contributions.

- 4.5.17 Cycling is one of the most sustainable forms of transport, and forms an important part of Reading’s transport strategy. Opportunities to continue to promote cycling, and enhance important routes, should be seized.
- 4.5.18 The Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 is supported by a full Cycling Strategy, published in 2014. This seeks to enhance cycling in Reading through:
- “new and improved cycle infrastructure that will aim to bridge gaps between existing barriers, including the railway and River Thames
 - cycle hire will give people that do not currently have access to a bicycle the opportunity to cycle to key destinations
 - increased cycle parking facilities to enable to people to park closer to more key destinations
 - positively promoting the benefits of cycling in a compact urban area such as Reading.”⁹⁴

⁹³ Geometric Design Guidance for Residential Accesses onto Classified Roads and Commercial Accesses onto Adopted Roads (Version 2), approved July 2011.

⁹⁴ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1065/Revised-Parking-Standards-and-Design-Supplementary-Planning-Document-Adopted-October-2011/pdf/Revised-Parking-Standards-And-Design-Supplementary-Planning-DocumentOct11.pdf>

- 4.5.19 The Cycling Strategy 2014 continues and builds upon the cycle routes developed as part of the 2008 strategy by identifying detailed policies for delivering infrastructure and route improvements for cyclists on the public highway to enhance the routes. The relevant routes are shown on the Proposals Map, and the Policy therefore applies to these routes. If an updated Cycling Strategy or supporting cycle map shows a different network of cycle routes, these will become the routes to which this policy applies.
- 4.5.20 The measures which the strategy identifies in different areas include minor improvements, new links, maintenance, branding and signing. The Cycling Strategy and the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will be useful to help identify which improvements are required.
- 4.5.21 In addition, a cycle hire scheme was initially introduced in central, north, south and east Reading in 2014. There is the potential for this scheme to be expanded to key destinations in west Reading during the plan period, and this should be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan.
- 4.5.22 Reading is working with the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and neighbouring authorities to provide additional strategic cycle routes as part of the NCN (National Cycle Network) and to provide enhanced linkages between the NCN and local cycle routes within the borough.

Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:

- *All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points;*
- *Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.*

- 4.5.23 Ensuring the appropriate level of car parking in new developments involves striking a careful balance. On the one hand, it is important that enough parking is provided so that there is not a knock-on effect on the safety and function of the highway and public transport network through on-street parking. On the other hand, an over-provision of car parking, particularly at places of work, can lead to less sustainable travel choices.
- 4.5.24 The Council has produced a Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)⁹⁵, which includes different standards in four different zones according to the accessibility of those zones. The SPD also sets out requirements for cycle parking. The document is available on the Council's website. It will continue to apply, until such time as it is superseded by any more up-to-date version.

⁹⁵ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1065/Revised-Parking-Standards-and-Design-Supplementary-Planning-Document-Adopted-October-2011/pdf/Revised-Parking-Standards-And-Design-Supplementary-Planning-DocumentOct11.pdf>

4.5.25 Reading has local air quality issues linked to traffic and congestion, which are highlighted in reference to policy EN15 on air quality. Increased use of low-emissions vehicles would make a major contribution to tackling this issue, as well as helping to tackle carbon emissions. However, one of the main barriers to increased use of low-emissions vehicles is the lack of supporting infrastructure. Therefore, new development should make adequate provision for electric vehicle charging points. Where a house has its own off-street parking, this can be a relatively simple design measure factored into the construction, and should generally be achievable in all cases. Elsewhere, where at least 10 spaces are provided, 10% of spaces should contain active charging points.

Walking

4.5.26 The Council is committed to encouraging sustainable travel choices and to improving the accessibility and quality of sustainable travel infrastructure. Walking is essential for achieving door-to-door journeys and is the dominant mode for movements into and out of central Reading. Outside the central area, walking is one of the main means of travelling to local destinations and forms a key element of wider local journeys made by public transport. Challenges including the provision of local facilities and services, such as shops, schools and healthcare, personal security, attractiveness of public realm as well as footway parking are to be overcome in order to encourage more people to consider walking for local journeys. There is not therefore a specific policy on walking, but consideration of walking has informed many elements of the whole plan. The Council will continue to improve and expand the existing walking infrastructure and provide quality links in order to cater for future demand.

4.6 Retail, Leisure and Culture

Network and Hierarchy of Centres

RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

The following network of centres are identified and defined on the Proposals Map:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Regional Centre: | Reading |
| District Centres: | Caversham, Cemetery Junction, Emmer Green, Meadway, Oxford Road West, Shinfield Road, Tilehurst Triangle, Whitley |
| Major Local Centres: | Whitley Street, Wokingham Road |
| Local Centres: | 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. Some centres are based around a small area of green, and where this is an important part of the layout and function of the centre, it will be retained and where possible enhanced. The following improvements will be acceptable in all centres:

- *Accessibility and transport improvements;*
- *Broadening range of facilities;*
- *Residential use of upper floors; and*
- *Environmental enhancements.*

Central Reading will see the greatest levels of development and change. Development and change, including intensification of town centre uses, will also take place within smaller centres in line with the role of the centre in the network. The smaller centres which are expected to be the main focus for intensification, change and additional community facilities will be The Meadway and Whitley District Centres.

- 4.6.1** Reading has a very strong town centre, along with a network of much smaller but important centres which, although overshadowed by the strength of central Reading, have a vital role in providing easy access to shops, services and facilities, particularly in areas of deprivation. It is important that this network and hierarchy of centres is identified in the plan to ensure that shops and services are as accessible as possible.
- 4.6.2** Reading is clearly by far the dominant centre within the Borough and for much of the surrounding area. It is a centre of regional significance, and was identified by Experian in 2017 as being the centre with the 8th strongest market potential in the country⁹⁶. However, as competing centres continue to enhance their offer, it will continue to be necessary to develop and adapt to maintain its position. The town centre is where the vast majority of town centre development will occur. The Central Reading section of this Plan provides further information.
- 4.6.3** The next level in the hierarchy present in Reading is district centres. It is considered that, whilst only three or four centres may currently qualify as district centres according to the NPPF

⁹⁶ <http://www.experian.co.uk/marketing-services/news-retailscape-uk-retail-centres-best-placed-to-thrive.html>

definition, it is appropriate to designate more district centres in order to encourage an increase in the range of facilities. This will mean that centres capable of acting as alternatives to the centre of Reading for some uses will be accessible to a greater number of people. This approach in the existing plan has seen a recent expansion of facilities in Whitley, for example.

- 4.6.4 There are a number of smaller concentrations of shops and services across Reading. These are designated as local centres, which fulfil the next tier in the hierarchy from district centres. Whitley Street and Wokingham Road are larger centres than other centres in this list, and they are therefore designated as major local centres, where a greater scale of development will be appropriate.
- 4.6.5 Of the centres other than Central Reading, those which have the greatest physical capacity for development are The Meadway and Whitley. Whitley centre is located within one of the concentrations of greatest deprivation in Reading, and within which substantial development will take place over the plan period. There has been recent development of new town centre uses within this centre, and there is scope for additional development, which is dealt with within the South Reading chapter. 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. This site is covered by an allocation in policy WR3, and by a Planning Brief.
- 4.6.6 The boundaries of all centres on the Proposals Map have been deliberately drawn to include a wider area than simply the shopping parades, incorporating facilities such as schools and community centres where possible. Such an approach ties in with the definitions of centres in previous national guidance, which emphasise the importance of a diverse range of facilities. The boundaries also incorporate known development opportunities where they exist. This will ensure that, where the sequential approach is being applied, smaller centres include sites which could actually be developed.
- 4.6.7 When applying the sequential approach as set out in the NPPF, the town centre boundaries are the centre boundaries set out on the Proposals Map, with the exception of Central Reading, where the boundary will depend on the uses proposed (see Policy CR1).

Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development

RL2: SCALE AND LOCATION OF RETAIL, LEISURE AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Provision will be made for up to 34,900 sq m of retail and related facilities in Reading to 2036, together with new leisure facilities.

Retail and main town centre leisure and culture development, where it would mean a net gain of over 2,500 sq m, will take place in, or as an extension to, the centre of Reading, unless it is on a site allocated for such development. Where a need for additional development has been identified, and no sites are available in or adjoining the centre of Reading, a sequential approach should be adopted to identifying alternative sites.

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

- 4.6.8 The most suitable location for retail, leisure and culture development is in existing centres. These centres already have a range of facilities, and are generally accessible by a choice of means of transport. Development in these centres should maintain and enhance the centres' vitality and viability. The centre of Reading is the most accessible location in the Borough, and is among the most accessible locations in the South East, and therefore represents the best location for major development of this type.
- 4.6.9 The Council worked jointly with Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council to commission consultants to identify the need for additional retail and leisure development in the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to 2036. The final Retail and Leisure Study reported in May 2017. It found a positive need for comparison goods floorspace of 54,400 sq m by 2036, much of which is required in the second half of the plan period after 2026. In terms of convenience goods, an overprovision was identified of 19,500 sq m by 2036. Our approach is to consider this as a whole, as no planning permission is generally required to change between convenience and comparison goods, unless it is controlled by planning condition. The Council's approach is also to treat this as very much a maximum, as there is considerable uncertainty about the retail landscape after 2026, when most of the need arises.
- 4.6.10 In terms of leisure provision, the Retail and Leisure Study also identified a need for entertainment uses including bowling and ice skating, and, potentially, additional cinema provision. The need for replacement swimming facilities in Reading is also clear.
- 4.6.11 The identified retail and leisure need is therefore directed primarily to the centre of Reading. The sites and locations that will accommodate the bulk of this need are set out in the site allocations policies, and are mainly contained within the major opportunity areas (CR11, CR12 and CR13). Sites to accommodate approximately 5,500 sq m of retail, leisure and culture floorspace in sites in or adjoining smaller centres have also been identified. The relevant policies are WR3 and ER1. The need for swimming facilities is expected to be met at Rivermead, close to the edge of the town centre policy (WR3), with additional provision at Palmer Park (ER1).
- 4.6.12 Retail, leisure and culture development outside designated centres will only be allowed in those exceptional circumstances where the provisions of national policy are met. In these cases, proposals will need to demonstrate that a sequential approach has been adopted to site selection, and that there will be no adverse impact on existing centres in Reading Borough or elsewhere.

Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

RL3: VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF SMALLER CENTRES

- a) *Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other 'centre uses' will only be permitted where:*
- *There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use; and*
 - *The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is*

in A1 or A2 use would exceed the relevant proportion below:

Caversham, Cemetery Junction, Tilehurst Triangle and Whitley District Centres;

Christchurch Road, Coronation Square, Wensley Road and Whitley Wood Local Centres **60%**

Emmer Green, The Meadway, Oxford Road West and Shinfield Road District Centres;

Wokingham Road Major Local Centre; **50%**
Basingstoke Road North, Dee Park, Erleigh Road and Northumberland Avenue North Local Centres

Whitley Street Major Local Centre **40%**

b) Within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that:

- *There would be no more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use; and*
- *There would be no net loss of ‘centre uses’ for ‘non-centre uses’ at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors) except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential (‘living over the shops’) will be acceptable.*

c) Within and adjacent to district, major local and local centres, all new development should provide some ‘centre uses’ at the ground floor, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be possible or appropriate.

4.6.13 One of the key elements of the spatial strategy for Reading is the protection and enhancement of the identified network of district and local centres in the Borough. These ensure that services are provided close to people’s homes and provide a heart to Reading’s various communities. It also reduces the need to travel to the centre of Reading or elsewhere, particularly in areas of deprivation where levels of car ownership are low. It is vital to ensure that a diverse range of services are available within each centre, but that a strong retail element is maintained.

4.6.14 There are now a wide range of changes of use that can take place under permitted development rights⁹⁷, without needing planning permission, which has meant a need to adapt our policy on smaller centres from previous versions. One of those changes is that there is now no need to apply for planning permission to change between A1 and A2. This means that, for the purposes of the policy, A1 and A2 should be treated as a single category, even though it is the retention of A1 retail that is the greatest concern.

4.6.15 Some other changes can take place under permitted development, with prior approval being needed to determine whether the Council’s approval will be needed. These criteria include whether it is undesirable for such a change of use because of the impact:

“(i) on adequate provision of services of the sort that may be provided by a building falling within Class A1 (shops) or, as the case may be, Class A2 (financial and professional services) of that Schedule, but only where there is a reasonable prospect of the building

⁹⁷ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

being used to provide such services, or

- (ii) *where the building is located in a key shopping area, on the sustainability of that shopping area”*

Where a change of use under permitted development rights would fail to comply with the terms of the policy, this should be treated as a strong indication that criteria (i) and/or (ii) above have been triggered.

4.6.16 The policy makes reference to the distinction between ‘centre uses’ and ‘non-centre uses’, although it should be noted that it does not relate to upper floors, where a wide mix of uses will be appropriate. These are defined as follows:

‘Centre uses’

- Retail (A1 uses)
- Financial and professional (A2 uses)
- Cafes and restaurants (A3 uses)
- Drinking establishments (A4 uses)
- Takeaways (A5 uses)
- Hotels (C1 uses)
- Non-residential institutions such as healthcare, schools, nurseries and churches (D1 uses)
- Assembly and leisure (D2 uses)
- Certain uses falling within the ‘sui generis’ category typically found in centres, including laundrettes, theatres, tattooists, beauty parlours, amusement arcades, betting shops and pay day loan shops⁹⁸

‘Non-centre uses’

- General business uses (B1)
- Industry and storage and distribution (B2 and B8)
- Residential institutions (C2)
- Residential (C3)
- Other uses falling within the ‘sui generis’ category

4.6.17 Criterion (a) of the policy sets out to retain a strong element of retail in the core of each centre, since retail is the primary contributor to vitality and viability. The different retail proportion for each centre reflects the fact that each centre has a unique role and catchment, and is based on the current proportions, albeit with some flexibility built in for other uses to enable greater diversity. Although the ‘key frontage’ may not be contiguous on the Proposals Map, it counts as a single key frontage for each centre. Vacant units will count towards the proportion in A1/A2 use in terms of this policy if A1 or A2 is the permitted use.

4.6.18 Criterion (b) has two purposes. Firstly, concentrations of takeaways can have a negative effect on the amenity of residents, and can also change the character of the street. Its other purpose is to prevent inappropriate uses, particularly housing, from encroaching on centres at the ground floor and permanently removing shop units or other facilities. Elsewhere in the country, whole centres have been lost in this way. However, it is important that uses such as housing and offices are integrated into centres at upper floors to ensure diversity and good access to jobs and housing. Exceptional circumstances are those where it can be clearly demonstrated that the only alternative to loss of the unit to any ‘centre use’ is long-term vacancy (e.g. for longer than 5 years).

4.6.19 Finally, criterion (c) recognises the fact that opportunities for expansion of these centres are

⁹⁸ Policy for betting shops and pay day loan shops is set out in RL4

relatively rare, and therefore, where they do occur, they should be seized, in order to enhance the role of centres in serving their local communities.

- 4.6.20 Where the policy includes the term ‘consecutive’ under (a) and (b), this includes where units are separated by the entrance to a side-street or footpath, or any other small gap between buildings.
- 4.6.21 References to ‘key frontage’ in this policy, e.g. for proportion of A1/A2 use, will not be capable of being applied where there is a comprehensive development of a centre that significantly alters the frontages. In such a case, developments need to be judged against other policies, notably RL1.
- 4.6.22 This policy does not apply to the town centre of Reading. A different approach is required there, which is dealt with in Policy CR7.

Betting Shops and Payday Loan Companies

RL4: BETTING SHOPS AND PAYDAY LOAN COMPANIES

Proposals for new betting shops or payday loan shops will not be permitted where it would result in three or more betting shops and/or payday loan shops within a 150 metre radius of the application property.

- 4.6.23 Betting shops and payday loan shops were formerly classed as being within the A2 financial and professional use class. However, in April 2015, these uses were taken out of the A2 class to form a new use class in their own right, as sui generis uses. This means that planning permission is now required for a new betting shop or payday loan shop.
- 4.6.24 In changing the use class status of these premises, the Government was responding to concerns about a perceived proliferation in such uses in recent years. An individual premises does not necessarily cause issues on its own, and can make a valuable contribution to the range of facilities in a centre, particularly a smaller centre. However, where the uses start to cluster together, the presence of these premises can exacerbate existing economic problems in local areas, as well as having a detrimental effect on the appearance and character of the area, particularly where the shopfronts are obscured.
- 4.6.25 The policy therefore seeks to prevent the clustering of betting and payday loan shops in order to prevent the adverse effects above. The radius should be measured from the closest part of a shopfront, i.e. where the closest part of two or more existing shopfronts are within a 150m radius of the shopfront of the application premises, permission would generally be refused.

Impact of Main Town Centre Uses

RL5: IMPACT OF MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES

Proposals that include more than 1,000 sq m (gross) of new or additional floorspace for main town centre uses in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location should demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on existing centres. Ensuring that centres within areas of deprivation are not adversely affected is of particular local importance.

- 4.6.26 ‘Main town centre uses’, including retail, leisure and offices, should generally be located in centres in the first instance. However, where development does take place elsewhere, it is important that it does not undermine the identified network of centres.
- 4.6.27 The National Planning Policy Framework sets a threshold of 2,500 sq m, above which all proposals for main town centre uses should be accompanied by an assessment of impact on existing centres. However, the NPPF gives local planning authorities the scope to set their own local thresholds if necessary. In Reading, 1,000 sq m (gross) is considered to be the appropriate threshold, as this is the level above which a significant adverse impact on the smallest centres is a strong possibility. The retail floorspace in many of Reading’s local centres is below 1,000 sq m, so a larger development could well cause adverse effects.
- 4.6.28 An impact assessment will be included with every relevant application above this threshold. Matters to be considered in an assessment are set out in national guidance, but the following impacts are particularly significant for Reading:
- Impacts on trade levels;
 - Impacts on the prospect of investment in existing centres;
 - Impacts on centres in areas of deprivation⁹⁹; and
 - Cumulative impacts with other developments and proposals within the preceding five years.

Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses

RL6: PROTECTION OF LEISURE FACILITIES AND PUBLIC HOUSES

Existing leisure facilities or public houses will generally be retained, and there is a strong presumption in favour of retaining leisure facilities or public houses where they are the only facility of their type in a district, major local or local centre. Developments that would result in the loss of a leisure facility or a public house will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- There is no need for this type of facility in this area; or*
- The function of the facility can be adequately fulfilled by an existing facility, or a facility proposed as part of the development, where that facility would be at least as accessible to the same catchment; or*

⁹⁹ Centres where there are recognised deprivation issues are Coronation Square, Dee Park, Whitley and Whitley Wood

c. Unless the site is a sports or recreation facility, the impacts on amenity of residents or on crime and security of retaining the facility could not be dealt with through other measures, and would be so severe as to outweigh the benefits to the wider community of retaining the facility.

- 4.6.29** Facilities that provide opportunities for leisure, recreation, sport and tourism are vital to our physical and mental health, and are a key element of overall quality of life, as well as contributing to the Borough's economic success. Whilst Reading contains a range of facilities, there are areas in which there is substantial room for improvement. Such facilities need to be close to where people live, to reduce the need to travel and, often, to serve a role at the heart of the community (a role often filled by uses such as pubs).
- 4.6.30** Therefore a policy is required that resists the loss of such facilities. This is of particular importance in centres, where a leisure facility or pub can be an important anchor use. Therefore, within centres, it generally resists loss of a facility where it is a use unique within the centre, even if it would be replaced by a different 'leisure' use. A number of such facilities are listed as 'assets of community value', which are of significance to the local community and therefore fulfil an important role, and if a facility is listed as such an asset, this may form a consideration in determining an application. The current list of assets of community value can be viewed on the Council's website¹⁰⁰.
- 4.6.31** This policy deals with built leisure facilities. This includes cinemas; theatres and concert halls; bowling alleys; galleries and museums; bingo halls; snooker and pool halls; pubs, bars and nightclubs; leisure centres, sports facilities and gyms; stadia; tourist attractions; and ice rinks. It does not include open space, playing fields and more informal recreational facilities, which are covered by separate policies, or visitor accommodation, as this does not generally serve a local community need. Loss of community facilities is dealt with in Policy OU1.
- 4.6.32** Evidence to show that there is no need for the facility (a), will need to be based on clear, long-term issues and trends rather than short-term economic circumstances or lack of viability due to poor management. Retention of a facility where there is no need for it can result in long-term vacancy detracting from the centre's vitality and viability or the quality of the local area. Any alternative facilities identified to comply with (b) must fulfil a similar role, have sufficient capacity to adequately serve the existing catchment, and must be at least as accessible by public transport, foot and cycle to the majority of the catchment as the facility to be lost. The purpose of (c) is to ensure that facilities are not lost where there are alternative measures under powers such as licensing and environmental health that could resolve amenity issues whilst retaining the use, and that amenity impacts are intrinsic to the use rather than how the use has been managed - this is particularly relevant to public houses. In applying (c) within Central Reading, the need for the area to fulfil a variety of important roles that may generate some noise and activity later in the evening should be borne in mind, in line with the comments in paragraph 5.3.21.
- 4.6.33** The policy will involve some consideration of how planning overlaps with other Council powers, such as licensing and environmental health to ensure that the loss of a facility is a last resort.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/6211/List-of-Assets-of-Community-Value>

4.7 Other Uses

New and Existing Community Facilities

OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan. Proposals for additional development for further and higher education will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that additional students can be housed in existing or planned student accommodation.

On-site intensification of some facilities, particularly schools, may result in some loss of open areas. This may be acceptable where the impact on open areas is minimised, and the area has no specific use, or where that use can satisfactorily be accommodated elsewhere on the site, subject to other policies in the plan. The above does not include loss of sports pitches and playing fields, which should only be developed where:

- a) an assessment clearly shows the area to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

New community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible.

Where a proposal for a new school meets a clear need, and it would otherwise accord with national and local policy, it will be acceptable on sites identified for residential or other development.

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

- 4.7.1** Quality of life for the residents of Reading is one of the key elements of the vision for the Borough. A good quality of life is not only desirable in itself, but also ensures that Reading remains attractive to investment. The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living.
- 4.7.2** Community facilities mean different things to different people. The term could encompass health facilities, education and training facilities (at all levels), youth and community centres and meeting places, libraries, places of worship, civic and administrative facilities and recycling facilities and civic amenity sites. Other uses such as open spaces, sport and recreational facilities, leisure facilities or pubs are often centrepieces of a community, although these are dealt with in other sections of the Local Plan.
- 4.7.3** The range and quality of facilities serving Reading's communities should be improved. Retaining important facilities will be essential. Some community facilities appear on a list of assets of

community value (under the Localism Act 2011), available on the Council's website¹⁰¹, and this may indicate the importance of a facility. The provision of a mix of compatible community services on a single site will also be encouraged.

- 4.7.4 Given the dense, built up nature of Reading and the lack of appropriate new sites, it is inevitable that some of the Borough's community facility needs will have to be met through intensification of the use of existing sites. This has particularly been the case on school sites in recent years, and this is likely to continue to be an important aspect of new provision. In some cases, this may mean some development on open areas within the site. This can be acceptable in some cases, but needs to be balanced against the provision of adequate sports and play space, bearing in mind the national policy presumption against loss of playing fields in the NPPF, and other issues such as impact on biodiversity.
- 4.7.5 These facilities should be located in areas that are well serviced by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling. In the case of healthcare facilities, this should include the car. The most appropriate location for community facilities will be in or on the edge of existing centres identified in the network in policy RL1, which will maximise access for the greatest number of people. This will be particularly important for developments that seek to provide a range of different community uses. However, there may be circumstances in which an existing centre is not the most appropriate location, such as where there is a need to provide for an area that does not contain a defined centre. In these cases, community facilities should be located in areas of high accessibility, such as public transport corridors or within close proximity of public transport nodes.
- 4.7.6 A need has been identified for new education provision over the plan period, in particular a new 6 form entry secondary school ideally located close to the town centre (see the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for more information). Work is underway on identifying potential locations. Due to the scarcity of development sites in Reading, a site that would otherwise be appropriate may already be identified for development, particularly for residential. In these cases, development for a school should be supported due to the importance of meeting this need.
- 4.7.7 There are some types of community facilities that are essentially residential in character, such as nursing homes. These are dealt with in policy H5.
- 4.7.8 There are some significant sites in Reading where continued development to help fulfil the site's role in providing for the community is likely to be needed, for instance Reading College. This will be acceptable, subject to other policies in the plan. Development at the University of Reading Whiteknights Campus is dealt with in policy ER2 and at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in policy ER3.
- 4.7.9 However, it must be recognised that further and higher education expansion can put pressure on the housing market, through students being housed in existing dwellings, or through new student accommodation on sites that could otherwise be used to address the general housing need. Given the scale of the need for new homes in Reading, this must be carefully managed. Therefore, applications for academic development that would bring additional students to live in Reading must be paired with a corresponding increase in dedicated accommodation. This should be on existing campuses or existing student accommodation sites, in line with policy H12.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/6211/List-of-Assets-of-Community-Value>

Hazardous Installations

OU2: HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS

Proposals for hazardous substances consent, or development in the vicinity of hazardous sites or pipelines, will not be permitted unless it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount, type and location of hazardous substances would not pose adverse health and safety risks to the surrounding population and environment; and that any necessary special precautions to limit other potential societal risks to acceptable degrees would be put in place prior to the development commencing.

- 4.7.10 Substantial levels of development will take place in Reading up to 2036, and the urban nature of the Borough means that developments have the potential to come into conflict with one another. This is especially the case where proposals for housing and hazardous sites, or pipelines, would be in close proximity.
- 4.7.11 The following Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites were located within Reading at the time of publication (2017):
- Gillette UK Ltd. factory - 452 Basingstoke Road
 - Oxkem - 117 Loverock Road
- 4.7.12 Whilst all of these types of sites are often subject to stringent controls under other existing Health and Safety legislation, it is necessary to control proposals for hazardous substances consent and the kinds of development permitted in the vicinity of existing hazardous sites installations through the planning process.
- 4.7.13 In addition, Reading's population has a relatively high multi-ethnicity that would result in additional communication requirements when considering a potential emergency evacuation situation. The 2011 Census (ref KS204EW) established that 23.7% of Reading's population was born outside of the UK/Ireland, compared to 11.4% for the South East as a whole. For this reason, there is an added onus on prevention of such situations.
- 4.7.14 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency (EA), who together form the statutory body of the COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) Competent Authority, provide specialist advice to the Borough on matters relating to hazardous sites. Therefore, both planning applications for development within specified distances of hazardous sites, or pipelines, and/or proposals for new hazardous installations will be referred to the HSE and/or EA. The principal aim of the COMAH Competent Authority is to reduce the risks of potential major accidents that are associated with the handling of hazardous substances.

Atomic Weapons Establishment, Burghfield

- 4.7.15 The Atomic Weapons Establishment site at Burghfield is located in West Berkshire District, just over 1.5 km from the Reading Borough boundary. The activities within the site include final assembly, maintenance and decommissioning of warheads. There is a requirement for consultation with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) for the following types of development in the zones shown in Figure 4.9, having regard to the scale of development proposed, its location, population distribution of the area and impact on public safety:

- Inner Zone (does not affect Reading): Any development leading to an increase in residential accommodation, or likely to cause an influx of non-residential population;
- Middle Zone: Development providing residential accommodation, permanent or temporary, for more than 50 people or likely to cause an influx of non-residential population exceeding 50 people;
- Outer Zone: Development likely to lead to an increase of 500 people in the population at any place.

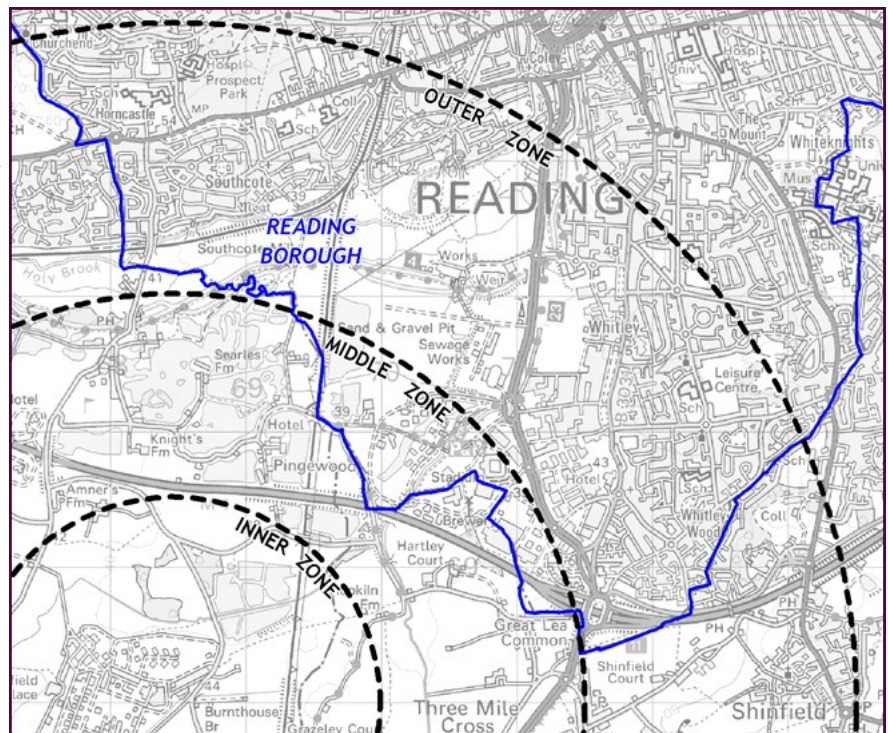


Figure 4.9: AWE Burghfield Consultation Zones at 2016

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4.7.16 The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, Wokingham Borough Council) and the ONR to monitor development proposals and activity, to assess whether or not proposed development can be safely accommodated in areas around the installation.

Telecommunications Development

OU3: TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- *They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;*
- *The apparatus will be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column ‘swap-outs’ or concealment/camouflage options; and*
- *Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that no preferable alternative sites are potentially available which would result in a development that would be less visually intrusive.*

4.7.17 Reading is currently relatively well provided for in respect of mobile phone coverage. However, the anticipated continued expansion of the telecommunications network is likely to require additional ‘infill’ coverage, much of which is likely to be within established residential areas.

4.7.18 Given continuing advances in third and fourth-generation mobile phone technology and increasing trends to send larger amounts of information via mobile phones, additional

telecommunication infrastructure will be required to facilitate this demand. This will most notably be in the form of new telecommunications ‘base stations’ or antennae.

- 4.7.19** In 2003, the Council adopted the approach that the Local Highways Authority would grant licences to mobile network operators under the Highways Act (1980), for lamp column ‘swap-outs’ once planning permission had been secured or the works had been deemed by the Local Planning Authority to be permitted development under the Prior Approval process¹⁰².
- 4.7.20** Since 2003, a number of lamp column ‘swap-outs’ have been implemented within Reading by various operators. These developments have negated the need for freestanding telecommunications structures in those locations, thereby significantly reducing the clutter of street furniture and maintaining the visual amenity of those areas.
- 4.7.21** This policy highlights an ‘in-principle’ support for lamp column ‘swap-outs’ that is specific to Reading and in line with national planning guidance and the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development published by the ODPM (2002). ‘Swap-outs’ will be acceptable where they can genuinely be described as mimicking surrounding lampposts.
- 4.7.22** Applicants will also need to ensure that proposals are supported by an acceptable ICNIRP (International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) declaration which demonstrates that the apparatus would meet the EU Council’s recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0Hz to 300GHz). Where relevant, ICNIRP declarations should be based on the cumulative effects of electromagnetic fields emitted by other nearby base stations and antennae as well as the proposed development.
- 4.7.23** As detailed above, Operators will be required to enter into legal agreements¹⁰³ with the Local Highways Authority for the construction of lamp column ‘swap-outs’ on highways land prior to commencement of development. This will ensure that maintenance details and health and safety processes associated with the installation and upkeep of ‘swap-outs’ would be acceptable to the Local Highways Authority and their contractors.

Advertisements

OU4: ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable. All adverts shall comply with the following criteria:

- a) Advertisements will not obstruct windows any other sign already located on the building, or cut across significant architectural features such as historic fascias, windows, pilasters, cornices or scrolls;**

¹⁰² Under Part 16 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

¹⁰³ Under the New Roads and Streetworks Act (1991) and the Telecommunications Act (1984).

- b) Where a shop or business occupies more than one adjacent unit, the advertisement will not run between the shopfronts;**
- c) Advertisements on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;**
- d) Advertisements will not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway;**
- e) Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway; and**
- f) Advertisements should not obscure the sight lines of cameras installed for public safety.**

4.7.24 National planning policy requires amenity and public safety to be considered for all applications for advertisement consent, but there is scope for authorities to highlight important amenity and safety considerations at the local level.

4.7.25 Reading is characterised by a busy centre, smaller district and local centres, and dense areas of industrial and warehouse development and community uses. These different activities require advertisements and signs to convey their purpose to visitors and passers by, but, given the density of the Borough, this gives rise to potential tensions. It is important that an advertisement policy takes the needs of advertisers into consideration while also protecting visual and aural amenity and ensuring safety to pedestrians and motorists.

4.7.26 Despite the fact that the policy does not deal specifically with types of advertisements, some types are unlikely to be considered appropriate in terms of how visual amenity and safety is defined in the policy. Freestanding advert panels in urban streets, for instance, can have a significant detrimental effect on views of the streetscene. Projecting box-type signs, bulky folded box fascia signs, uplighters and downlighters are also likely to detract from the character of an area. Whole fascia internal illumination should be avoided. Face or halo illumination of individual letters is more appropriate and discreet slim-line LED downlighters may be acceptable. Advertisements above ground floor level are also likely to have detrimental effects on visual amenity.

4.7.27 In areas such as the town centre where there are many advertisements side by side, it is important that the advertisements do not create visual clutter, which can be particularly relevant to projecting signs. It is also important to maintain the pattern of the street. Therefore, if a shop or business occupies more than one shop front, the fascia and advertisements must not extend unbroken across the multiple shop fronts. In all cases, the cumulative effect of advertisements must be considered, particularly in areas of dense commercial activity.

4.7.28 This policy will be applied in conjunction with national guidance, e.g. in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. Conditions relating to matters such as hours of illumination or length of display will be applied where necessary. When an advertisement can be seen from the Strategic Road Network, the Council may be required to consult with Highways England, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007.

4.7.29 In considering illumination levels, the levels of illumination set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers will be applied as maxima for public safety reasons. Lower levels may be sought on a case-by-case basis to protect visual amenity. The most recent report (2001) sets the following levels:

| Illuminated Area (m ²) | Zone E1 (candelas/m ²) | Zone E2 (candelas/m ²) | Zone E3 (candelas/m ²) | Zone E4 (candelas/m ²) |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Up to 10.00 | 100 | 600 | 800 | 1000 |
| Over 10.00 | N/A | 300 | 600 | 600 |

(Source: Technical Report Number 5: Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements, Institute of Lighting Engineers, 2001).

4.7.30 The zones are described as:

- Zone E1: Intrinsically dark areas.
- Zone E2: Low district brightness areas (e.g. rural-urban fringe).
- Zone E3: Medium district brightness areas (e.g. district and local centres and urban areas).
- Zone E4: High district brightness areas (e.g. the core of the centre).

In some circumstances, particularly where listed buildings and conservation areas are concerned, illumination levels may need to be reduced, although this will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The general preference in most cases is for advertisements to be illuminated externally, e.g. through spotlight, rather than internally.

4.7.31 There is an overlap between this policy and OU5 on shopfronts, and, in some cases, both policies will apply.

Shopfronts and Cash Machines

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

Shopfronts, individual features of shopfronts and cash machines will respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. Features that positively contribute to the character of the building and street will be retained and, where possible, restored. Safety and security will be maintained and enhanced.

For shopfronts, the following criteria will be fulfilled:

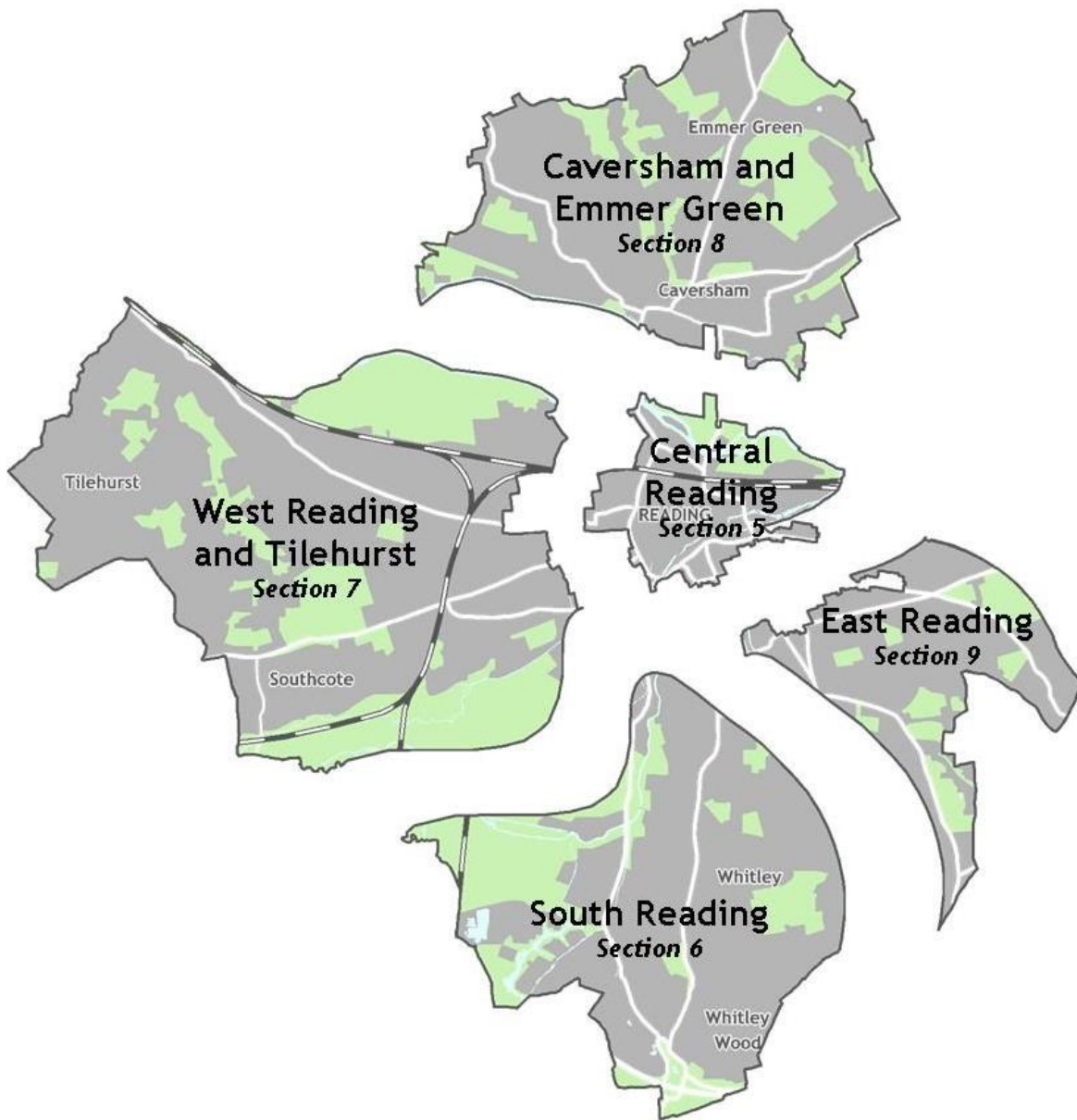
- a) New shopfronts on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;*
- b) Where a shop occupies multiple units, shopfronts will not run in a continuous horizontal line across the different unit façades. The fascia and the shop windows should be broken up to ensure the features of each unit are not lost;*
- c) Fascia boards should be lower than any first floor windows, and reflect the predominant height of historic fascia boards on surrounding buildings;*
- d) Canopies and blinds over windows and entrances should be for the shading of the shop and should be retractable; and*
- e) Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. Where security is essential, security features will be internal, such as internal open mesh grilles. Opaque coverings on shop windows, such as paint and films, will be minimised and will not obscure the window.*

4.7.32 Reading has many good examples of shopfronts, both traditional and modern. To ensure that the heritage character and amenity of the Borough is maintained, the design of shopfronts is vital. The character of a shopping street is often defined by its shopfronts. Given the success of Reading as a shopping destination, many visitors experience Reading mainly as shoppers, and

it is therefore important that shopfronts do not detract from this experience.

- 4.7.33** The overall composition of multiple shopfronts is often of greatest importance, and features such as stallrisers, pilasters and fascia boards can contribute to the character of the building as well as to the streetscape, and should be retained where they already exist. Such features should be included in new shopfronts where they are part of the character of the street. Fixed canopies can obscure such features and are usually inappropriate. Merging of shopfronts can negatively affect the pattern of the street, and, where shop units are combined, the pattern can be maintained by having a gap in the fascia boards and a strong separation between the exterior of the two units by a pilaster or a column.
- 4.7.34** Security is an important consideration and the Council does not seek to hinder the ability of businesses to protect their property. However, in recent years, many shopfronts have been secured by external, solid roller doors. These are often a cheap and easy solution for security, but have detrimental effects on the shopfront and streetscape, presenting a blank wall to pedestrians and reducing natural surveillance. Other methods of security, such as lattice grilles and internal shutters are more appropriate as they still provide the necessary security but also create a more open frontage and allow light spillage after dark. In recent years, there have also been a number of cases where shop windows have been obscured by opaque material, which can have a negative effect on the vitality of the whole street and is not appropriate. Shopfronts should remain active during both the day and night.
- 4.7.35** Safety and security will be a prime consideration in the location of cash machines, which should be located in well-lit, busy areas, away from dark corners or recesses.

AREA-SPECIFIC SECTIONS



5. CENTRAL READING

5.1 Area Context

- 5.1.1 The centre of Reading is one of the most accessible locations in the South East, and contains one of the most successful shopping centres in the UK. It is a location for a number of businesses of national and international importance, and is home to a growing residential community. It has a significant concentration of important heritage assets, some of which are increasingly being better revealed through new investment.
- 5.1.2 The character of the town centre is strongly linked to the history of the town. There is some evidence of Roman settlement, and the name of Reading has Saxon origins, with the original Saxon settlement in the vicinity of St Mary's church. The development of Reading Abbey, founded in 1121, was a major economic stimulus for the town. The historic core of the centre dates from medieval times, around the three medieval churches of St Laurence's, St Giles' and St Mary's. Reading was mostly contained within its medieval boundaries until the end of the 18th century, when the town began to expand as a result of improved transport links (including transformation of the River Kennet into a canal, linking Reading with other areas), and industrialisation. Reading's emergence as an industrial centre is largely attributable to the arrival of the Great Western railway in the mid 19th Century.
- 5.1.3 The opening of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) in 1960 transformed the town centre, with changes to the physical appearance of Reading, including alterations to the historic street pattern, the loss of historic buildings, and dissection of the town centre. Parts of Reading's historic core were demolished during the mid-20th Century, to make way for more modern developments. However, much of historical merit remains.
- 5.1.4 More recently, there has been substantial new development within the centre. The opening of the Oracle centre in 1999 helped to establish Reading as one of the leading shopping locations in the UK. More recently, Reading station has been transformed, increasing passenger capacity and removing a significant bottleneck on the rail network. New public spaces north and south of the station provide a focus for new development. New tall buildings have been developed in the centre, and, with further tall buildings already permitted, the skyline of Central Reading is set to transform.
- 5.1.5 The centre has a wide mix of facilities. Large amounts of comparison retail are present in the centre, and there is a wide selection of leisure, cultural and entertainment facilities. The evening economy is particularly strong, and draws many visitors from outside Reading to the centre's pubs and clubs. The edge of the centre holds large areas of open space, particularly on both sides of the Thames. However, there is much less open space within the core of the centre and to the south.
- 5.1.6 The centre is among the most important employment areas in the Borough. There is a substantial amount of office floorspace in the centre, including a number of freestanding headquarters-type buildings. However, over the last two decades, there has been a trend for older office buildings to be converted into flats, which has accelerated since 2013 due to new permitted development rights. This growing housing role in the centre has been one of the most obvious recent trends in central Reading, and Central Reading as defined here (which is largely the commercial core) had a population of 8,800 at the 2011 Census, but will have

expanded even since that date, and will continue to do so in future. Residents are often young, single, childless and working in managerial and professional occupations, with a low level of car ownership, reflecting the fact that the vast majority of homes in the area are flats.

- 5.1.7 Given the history of the centre, it is unsurprising to find that the most significant cluster of heritage assets are in the area. Around 40% of Reading's listed buildings are in the centre (and many of the remainder are on its fringes), including five of Reading's six Grade I listed buildings, and more than half of the Grade II* listed buildings. Four conservation areas are within or partially within the centre, as are both of Reading's scheduled ancient monuments.

5.2 Strategy for Central Reading

5.2.1 The following represent some key principles for the area:

- a. The centre will contain a broad range of different but complementary uses within an area easily accessed by foot.
- b. The centre will appeal to all sectors of Reading's population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit.
- c. New development will exhibit an excellent, safe and sustainable quality of design that contributes to the attraction of the centre.
- d. The centre will make the most of its waterside areas as a destination for leisure and recreation, and protect and enhance wildlife habitats.
- e. Areas of designated open space within the centre will be protected and new opportunities will be sought.
- f. Access to the centre by foot, cycle and public transport will be improved.
- g. Access within the centre by foot and cycle will be improved and barriers to this improved access will be overcome, particularly in a north-south direction through the core.
- h. Development in the centre will benefit from and contribute towards forthcoming major transport improvements.
- i. Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

5.2.2 The challenge will be to provide an appropriate scale and mix of uses that make a major contribution to meeting Reading's needs, are viable, well connected to the core, particularly the station and the transport interchange, and that help to achieve a modern 21st century town centre while protecting and enhancing the historic interest and other special qualities of Reading.

Movement and transport

5.2.3 Ten years ago, the picture of the centre was one of fragmentation, with barriers such as the IDR, the railway and the River Thames blocking pedestrian movement in many parts, together with uninviting linkages between other parts of the centre. These issues have begun to be

addressed in recent years, with a new underpass under the station, a new pedestrian and cycle crossing of the Thames and improvements to the public realm along streets such as Station Road. However, barriers such as the IDR still exist, and the spatial strategy will continue to seek to overcome these barriers, particularly through expansion of the centre northwards beyond the centre. Emphasising a north-south link through the centre will help to link the centre to the Thames and its adjacent parks, to Caversham and to the rest of Reading.

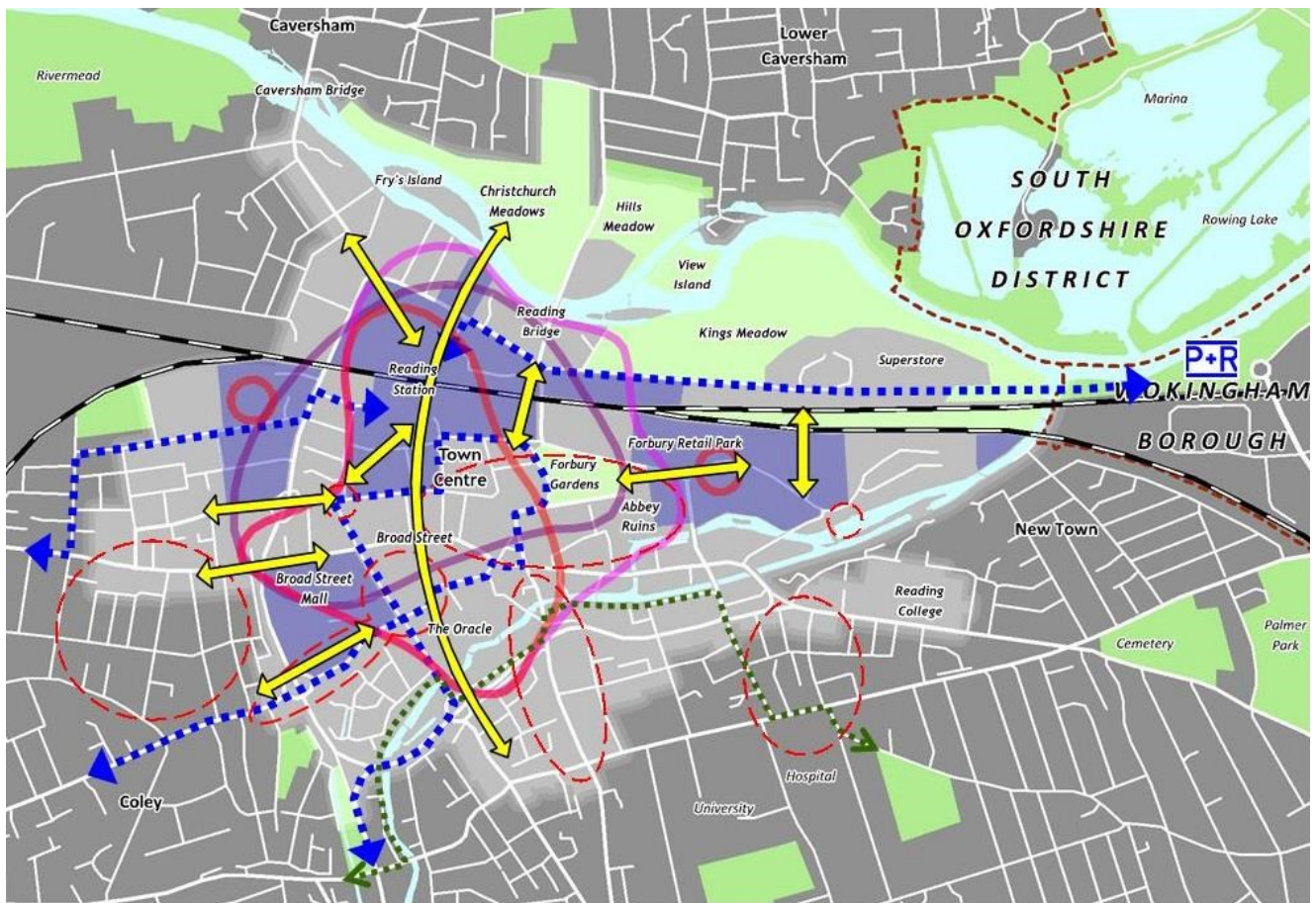
- 5.2.4 Very significant transport investment has taken place in Central Reading in recent years, with the major improvements to Reading station together with new public transport interchanges and resulting changes to routes and services. Improvements are expected to continue with the delivery of a Mass Rapid Transit system, linking Central Reading to the wider Reading urban area and park and ride sites. It may require dedicated space on some of the streets in the centre. However, care must be taken to ensure that this system does not end up creating barriers to movement within the centre and cancelling out the benefits of breaking down barriers elsewhere. The preferred route for MRT in Central Reading is shown on Figure 5.1. Details on implementation are set out in section 10.

Land uses

- 5.2.5 A key theme that underpins the strategy and the context in which it should be read is of a mix of uses across the central area, both vertically and horizontally, although the emphasis will differ in different areas. Where specific uses should be within certain areas (e.g. office and retail), this is provided by policy CR1. If an area is shown for certain uses on the illustrative maps, it does not mean that all areas within that definition are appropriate for redevelopment, it is merely a broad guide to distribution of uses.
- 5.2.6 Housing development on suitable sites will continue to be promoted across the centre, although it will often be part of a wider mix of uses, particularly in the commercial core. It will need to be sensitive to potential environmental problems, noise, nuisance and pollution that occur in certain parts of the centre. Getting an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures across the area will be of great importance, as will providing the essential uses and services to allow the centre to be seen as somewhere where people can live for the long-term. This housing growth is likely to mean increasing levels of community facilities in the centre to support residential development, as well as the continued role of the centre in providing community uses to serve the whole Borough.
- 5.2.7 In the rare event of a conflict developing between uses, certain uses will have priority, as the centre is the only suitable location. Major retail and town centre leisure development, including evening economy uses, will take first precedence, followed by, to a more limited extent, offices. In contrast, housing uses, including supporting social and community facilities, can be located in many places across the Borough.
- 5.2.8 Further major commercial office development will largely be focused in an area centred on, and easily accessible from, the station, to ensure the greatest level of accessibility by means of travel other than the car.
- 5.2.9 In terms of retail, Broad Street, the Oracle and the Broad Street Mall are currently the hub of retail in Reading and have by some distance the highest levels of footfall. It is not expected that this will change significantly, as a retail hub needs to be as compact as possible to ensure that it is viable, although there is scope for this area to be expanded in places to help to meet

the identified needs for additional retail development, particularly to the north of the current shopping core around the station. Some other edge of centre sites may also help to meet more specific retail need.

5.2.10 In the context of changes to retailing, in particular online shopping, the focus of town centres across the country is increasingly on leisure provision, and Reading town centre's leisure offer will need to expand to ensure that the centre can meet this changing role. This will include arts and cultural provision, sport and recreation facilities and additional restaurants and evening uses that appeal to a wide range of users and continue to provide an 18-hour welcome. The centre will continue to provide community facilities to serve the Borough as well as the centre's growing residential population. New development and redevelopment also provides scope for creation of new open spaces and public spaces that will provide settings for buildings and offer increased opportunities for informal recreation and leisure and community events in the centre.



Key

- Concentration of retail
- Concentration of offices
- Concentration of leisure uses
- Opportunity for major development
- ↔ Potential Mass Rapid Transit route
- P+R Future park and ride site
- ↔ National Cycle Network 422 scheme
- ↔ Improved pedestrian and cycle movement
- Particular cluster of heritage assets
- Local authority boundary

Figure 5.1: Area Strategy for Central Reading

Urban design

- 5.2.11 The key to the design approach in the centre is achieving a high quality built environment and public realm. In some areas, for instance much of the existing historic core, this is already present, and in these cases this will be retained and enhanced, particularly in and adjacent to the existing central area conservation areas that cover parts of the centre. The Reading Abbey Quarter project will promote the former precinct of Reading Abbey and its surrounds, a significantly wider area than merely the remaining ruins, as a high quality visitor destination, well-linked into the rest of the centre.
- 5.2.12 However, in many parts of the central area, particularly the three identified major opportunity areas, there are low-quality and underused areas that would benefit from high quality, well-designed new development. Such new development should respect and enhance the character of the central area. It should build on the existing urban grid structure of streets and places in the centre, providing high levels of access and connectivity into the centre and to the public transport interchanges. It should contribute to creating a high quality public realm with the provision of new open and public spaces, high quality landscaping and public art as appropriate. It should provide continuity and enclosure with a high degree of active frontages.
- 5.2.13 Much of the development that takes place in the centre will be high density, to help meet the needs for new development as well as to provide a high-quality area that capitalises on its excellent accessibility by public transport. Accordingly, there will be scope for additional tall buildings in specific parts of the centre, in line with the tall buildings policy CR10, but it is important to bear in mind that achieving high densities does not necessitate tall buildings where they are not appropriate. In general, the tallest buildings will be in the most accessible location, around the station.
- 5.2.14 These principles are illustrated on Figure 5.1.

Summary

- 5.2.15 There is undoubted physical capacity within the centre to incorporate a significant level of new development, by efficient use of underused land through carefully developing at higher densities. This represents the most significant opportunity to accommodate new development within Reading. However, there are a variety of constraints in the centre. As well as the centre's significant heritage, and the importance of protecting the centre's limited open space, these include physical constraints to movement such as the IDR, the rivers and the railway. In addition, much of the centre, including some of the more obvious redevelopment opportunities, lies within the flood plain.
- 5.2.16 It is expected that between 2013 and 2036 Central Reading will accommodate approximately:
- 7,600 homes to 2036 (around 49% of the total planned for - this includes 1,284 homes already completed between 2013 and 2017);
 - 71,000 sq m of office floorspace (around 63% of the total planned for); and
 - Up to 27,000 sq m of retail floorspace (around 77% of the total planned for).

5.3 General Policies for Central Reading

Definition of Central Reading

CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING

The Central Area boundary as shown on the Proposals Map will mark the edge of the town centre in most cases. However, for the purposes of application of the sequential test for main town centre uses, the following definitions as defined on the Proposals Map are used:

- *Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area;*
- *Major office development of over 1,000 sq m will take place in the Office Core; and*
- *Other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core.*

- 5.3.1 The policy identifies the boundaries of the town centre for the purposes of applying the sequential test, as set out in paragraph 24 of the NPPF. These boundaries are distinct from the boundary of ‘Central Reading’ as the area covered by section 5. Need has been identified for additional main town centre uses (see section 4.6) and the overall strategy is that the centre of Reading should be the main location for such main town centre uses. The spatial strategy for Central Reading (section 5.2) and the guidelines on Major Opportunity Areas (policies CR11-13) give guidance on the main locations for this floorspace. However, there is a need to define a Primary Shopping Area to set out the boundaries of what should be Reading’s shopping core, and this will be set out on the Proposals Map.
- 5.3.2 The primary shopping area should be the focus for new retail investment. It will be the first location to be examined in applying the sequential approach to identifying sites for retail proposals, in line with the NPPF.
- 5.3.3 The sequential approach will also be applied to ‘main town centre uses’ other than retail, including leisure, cultural, visitor and arts facilities as well as offices. The general approach to these uses is set out in RL2, and involves concentration mainly on the centre. An office core and a central core will need to be defined to act as the focus for these uses in the centre and in order for the sequential approach to be applied. The office core will be slightly different from the central core for reasons set out in the spatial strategy.
- 5.3.4 It should be emphasised that the designation of, for example, a primary shopping area, does not mean that other types of development will not also be acceptable within this area. Mixing uses within the centre is at the heart of the strategy. The policy is purely in place to allow the application of the sequential test.

Design in Central Reading

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:

- a. Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;*

- b. Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;***
- c. Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;***
- d. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;***
- e. Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety; and***
- f. Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites.***

5.3.5 Part of the strategy for Central Reading is to achieve a distinctive high quality environment, by integrating protection of the historic core, special character and market town intimacy of Reading with modern, intensive, well designed, well connected, highly accessible urban development with first class open spaces and other public realm that will help to cement its role as a modern and exciting 21st Century centre.

5.3.6 The role of high-quality urban design in achieving the vision for the centre is therefore clear. This Local Plan includes general policies that will be applicable everywhere, including Central Reading, including on matters such as design and the historic environment. As the largest concentration of heritage assets in the Borough, policies on heritage will in particular be highly relevant in the centre. In addition, the issue of urban design has been integrated into the whole Central Reading section, as it is not an entirely area-specific issue. However, there is a need for a policy to highlight those elements of the design issue specific to Central Reading.

5.3.7 A City Centre Framework was published in 2002 which set out an urban design framework for the central area. This was updated in 2008¹⁰⁴, and this work, along with the wide variety of documents produced for individual areas within the centre, has provided the basis for much of the Central Reading section of the Local Plan.

5.3.8 Policy CR2 picks up the elements that require more specific detail than is provided in other applicable design policies. For instance, the first criterion relates to one of the key themes, ‘the urban grid’, which was highlighted in the City Centre Framework. The existing grid structure has the advantages of catering flexibly for movement and positive urban place-making, and new development should build on and extend this pattern. Another example would be the need for flexible and adaptable buildings, which is particularly applicable to the centre, as the changing balance between the residential and office markets is particularly pronounced here, and buildings should be able to cope with those shifts through changes of use. Buildings

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2857/City-Centre-Framework-2008/pdf/City-Centre-Framework-2008.pdf>

that are highly tailored to one particular use, would not be able to achieve this. Using urban design principles to enhance community safety and design out crime may also be particularly important in the central area, and the Secured By Design principles will assist in this.

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 5.3.9 Ensuring that the design and construction of new developments is sustainable in nature is an essential element of the strategy for Reading, and the Local Plan provides for this through Policies CC2 and H5. This policy will apply to the central area as much as any other part of the Borough. However, there are certain elements of the sustainable design agenda that are particularly relevant to the type of development typical of the centre, and to which particular attention should be paid. For instance, mixed-use developments and larger buildings tend to lend themselves to Combined Heat and Power systems, and these developments are particularly prevalent in the central area. In addition, the use of green and brown roofs or green walls will enhance the biodiversity value of developments in the centre, and other measures such as swift boxes may be appropriate to the town centre. Brown roofs in particular are of benefit to species such as black redstarts, one of the priority species in the Biodiversity Action Plan, which have been sighted in the central area.

Public Realm in Central Reading

CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING

Proposals for new development will need to make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm of the central area and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. All proposals on sites of more than 1 hectare within the central Reading boundary will need to provide new public open space or civic squares integrated with surrounding development. Smaller developments will contribute towards improvements to the public realm;*
- ii. Imaginative uses of open space and the public realm, which contribute to the offer of the centre, will be encouraged, and new open spaces should be of a size and shape to be flexible enough to accommodate such uses. The provision of water features, trees (including street trees) and other planting, as well as hard landscaping, to create high-quality spaces, will be expected, where appropriate;*
- iii. Development proposals adjacent to or in close proximity to a watercourse will retain and not impede existing continuous public access to and along the watercourses, and will provide legible continuous public access to and along the watercourses where this does not currently exist;*
- iv. The design of developments adjacent to a watercourse, including the refurbishment of existing buildings, will be required to enhance the appearance of the watercourses and to provide active elevations facing the watercourses. Development that turns its back on the waterways and results in blank or mundane elevations facing the watercourses will not be permitted.*
- v. The public realm should conserve and enhance the historic environment of the centre and the heritage assets therein and their setting, including through layout, materials,*

hard and soft landscaping. There may be opportunities for areas of public realm to provide improved access to and visibility for heritage assets.

Pedestrianisation, traffic management and/or environmental enhancements will continue to be implemented on appropriate streets.

- 5.3.10** Open space and well-designed areas of public realm are key contributors to the character of any area, and this applies particularly to large built-up areas such as Reading. Such areas provide opportunities for informal sports and recreation, community focal points and meeting places and space for events to take place.
- 5.3.11** Reading benefits from some substantial areas of open space close to the town centre along the Thames, and some high-quality but smaller areas such as Forbury Gardens. Increasingly, the town centre is seeing new and improved town squares and similar spaces, with the provision of squares at the north and south entrance to the new station, and recent improvements to Market Place and Town Hall Square. Additional open space or generous public realm such as town squares or wider streets that can have multiple functions would assist in creating a sense of place in the centre, and are encouraged. Indeed, these types of space are likely to present the main opportunities for additional spaces in the centre. These can act as locations for leisure activities and public gatherings and events. The provision of new public open space should be accessible and of a usable size and shape. It should be capable of use for a range of activities, across a range of age groups. Improvements to the public realm may include works such as the provision of open space, the improvement of pedestrian access to existing open space, the provision of landscaping and green infrastructure, and wider streets that act as open space.
- 5.3.12** Reading's watercourses are also major assets which need to be built into the strategy, and their distinct characters should be respected. The Kennet generally runs through more urban higher-density areas, whilst the Thames retains its sense of tranquillity. These distinct characters have informed the Local Plan. It is essential that public access along watercourses is retained and expanded in the central area. Policy EN11 deals specifically with development close to watercourses, and applies to development across Reading, including the central area. Policy EN12 relates to biodiversity and the green network, with Reading's watercourses forming significant ecological assets. These policies highlight the importance of development enhancing the watercourses as important habitats, and this applies equally in the centre.

Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading

CR4: LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM IN CENTRAL READING

The Central Core will be the prime focus for major leisure, cultural and tourism development¹⁰⁵. Leisure, cultural and tourism uses that would attract a wide range of people into the centre will be encouraged. Innovative solutions to leisure provision will be encouraged, particularly those that make best use of available (often limited) site area.

The River Thames is a prime location for new or improved non-regionally significant tourist attractions, and as such, this area is suitable for informal recreation and sporting uses and associated small-scale development, as well as improvements to management and access. Development or improvements in this area will be expected to add to or maintain the setting and character of the Thames and to conserve and enhance ecological value.

¹⁰⁵ Leisure, cultural and tourism development are those uses within the 'main town centre uses' defined in the NPPF

- 5.3.13 This policy refers to those leisure, culture and tourism uses that are defined as ‘main town centre uses’ in the NPPF, excluding drinking uses, which are covered elsewhere. These facilities will assist in widening the variety of the offer of the centre, and would, in many cases, help to attract a greater range of people into the centre. For that reason, additional uses should be encouraged. Policy RL2 directs major leisure, culture and tourism uses to Central Reading, and CR1 defines the Central Core as the most suitable part of the centre.
- 5.3.14 In order to diversify uses in the town centre and improve the Centre’s leisure offer, it is important to accommodate leisure, cultural and tourism activities that appeal to a wide range of age and social groups. Leisure and entertainment uses that would contribute to the 18-hour economy will be encouraged, and existing uses maintained. This should include a range of different, yet complementary evening and night-time economy uses to cater for all sections of Reading’s community, and offer alternative activities to drinking.
- 5.3.15 In all cases, new leisure development should be based on the principles of high quality and inclusive design, to assist in making the town centre more attractive and usable for local residents, shoppers, employees and leisure visitors. Blank and/ or uninteresting façades or shed-like structures will not be permitted. New development and/ or redevelopment in the Centre also provides opportunities for the creation of new spaces that may be used for formal or informal recreation and leisure.
- 5.3.16 In some cases, it may be appropriate to incorporate leisure and cultural uses within wider developments, to create effective mixed-use schemes. Where this is the case, the integration of these uses with existing developments will be encouraged, provided they do not give rise to adverse impacts on amenity.
- 5.3.17 Leisure, cultural and tourism development should not give rise to adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residents and other town centre users, or to existing town centre spaces. Proposals will therefore be expected to mitigate any potential issues of noise disturbance (particularly night-time noise), traffic-related congestion, and anti-social behaviour and crime.

Drinking Establishments in Central Reading

CR5: DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS IN CENTRAL READING

A range of complementary evening and night-time uses that appeal to all sections of Reading’s society, and contribute to the 18-hour welcome, will be provided. Such uses should not give rise to adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residents and other town centre users. Those uses that are likely to have an adverse impact on amenity or the character and/ or function of the Central area, will not be permitted.

Proposals for pubs, bars and clubs should be accessible to current and proposed night-time public transport services.

- 5.3.18 Reading has become an important centre for evening drinking uses over recent years, drawing people from surrounding areas as well as from the urban area of Reading. The evening economy is a key part of the overall economy, and drinking uses have therefore been a major factor in Reading’s success. It is important to keep in mind that, despite some local issues, success as a centre for evening socialising has benefited Reading, and that Reading will continue to strive to maintain an 18-hour welcome for a range of users of the centre.

- 5.3.19** There is an identified need to ensure that the offer of the evening economy is diverse, in order to widen the range of people who are attracted to the centre in the evenings. Policy CR4 on leisure uses includes many uses which will widen the evening offer, and the policy on drinking establishments should be read in conjunction with that policy. The policy should encourage greater diversity in the offer of pubs, bars and nightclubs within the policy framework of strengthening leisure, culture and tourism in the centre.
- 5.3.20** Drinking establishments are included within ‘main town centre uses’, and will therefore proposals for new facilities will need to follow a sequential approach in line with the NPPF and policy CR1. The preference in this approach is for a location within the Central Core where there will be fewer detrimental impacts on residential areas, and where those externalities that do result can be better managed and contained.
- 5.3.21** Should a conflict arise between two or more uses in the Central Core, priority will be given to those uses that cannot be accommodated elsewhere, including drinking establishments. Evening uses will still be expected to mitigate impacts on amenity, including anti-social behaviour and crime.

Living in Central Reading

CR6: LIVING IN CENTRAL READING

Proposals for residential development within the central area will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i) All proposals for residential development within the central area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units within the development. This will be measured by the number of bedrooms provided within individual units. Ideally, a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units should be provided. As a guide, in developments of 15 dwellings or more, a maximum of 40% of units should be 1-bed/studios, and a minimum of 5% of units should be at least 3-bed, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable.*
- ii) Proposals for new residential development within the central area will be required to demonstrate how the issue of potential noise disturbance from neighbouring land uses and other sources, and air quality implications of residential development, have been considered and if necessary, mitigated. New residential development should not be located next to existing town centre uses where those uses would give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to the occupiers of the new scheme, unless this can be mitigated.*
- iii) In meeting the requirement to provide affordable housing, in the central area an over-concentration of social renting for single persons will be avoided.*
- iv) Where proposals for serviced apartments and apart-hotels fall outside the C3 use class, they will be located within the Central Core. Such proposals will not be permitted unless the duration of occupation of residents is restricted, to ensure the units are used on a short stay basis and not as residential flats, and information monitoring the implementation of this restriction is regularly supplied.*

- 5.3.22** The centre of Reading is becoming ever more important as a residential location, and this applies not only to the inner areas surrounding the core, but increasingly the commercial and shopping core itself. This is to be welcomed, as it adds vitality to the centre at all hours and ensures that there is some feeling of ownership of the streets and spaces. Housing development in the centre will continue to occur over the plan period, with 7,700 new homes expected to 2036.
- 5.3.23** Town and city centres, unless they are the very largest centres, are never likely to be popular with large numbers of families. However, there will be families wishing to buck the trend, and other groups who would prefer larger accommodation in the centre. The policy therefore ensures that the range of housing in the centre is not unnecessarily limited. Whilst flats are likely to make up the vast majority of new housing development in the centre, developments should not be dominated by one-bedroom units, and a minimum proportion of three or more bed-units will allow for a wider variety of people living in the centre. The Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016) highlighted the need for a range of dwelling sizes.
- 5.3.24** An increasing residential population in the centre raises the issue of conflict with alternative uses, particularly in the evening. Research suggests that, far from being conflicting uses, a busy evening economy is a major attractor of potential residents, who are often young and childless. Measures to maximise the mitigation of potential noise and disturbance should be built into the design of both the potential source, and of those developments, particularly housing developments, likely to be affected. However, where the evening economy is at its strongest, the potential for noise and disturbance may be such that it cannot be mitigated through design and will make for an unacceptable living environment. In these cases, residential development adjacent to these areas should not take place.
- 5.3.25** In some cases, in order for the internal noise levels to be reasonable and not adversely affect health it would be necessary to provide a system of ventilation that entirely removes the necessity to open windows, even in very hot weather. Similarly, in terms of air quality, mitigation of impacts on residential development may be required, including means of ventilation that remove the need to open windows, and draw in the lowest levels of pollution possible, for instance from roof sources. This should be secured through the design of the proposal, and planning condition if necessary. Such systems will require additional energy use, which will need to be offset in order to comply with policy CC2 or H5. Section 106 agreements may be an appropriate mechanism to improve air quality or offset the subsequent environmental impact of the proposed development in the AQMAs, where it is in compliance with the CIL Regulations.
- 5.3.26** In terms of overall provision for affordable housing, new development in the centre will be treated no differently from any other housing development, and will follow Policy H3 on affordable housing. However, the policy seeks a proportion of affordable housing as social rented accommodation. This type of accommodation, particularly where it is for single people, often caters for the most vulnerable in society, who may not be suited to the high-pressure living environment of the centre. While this issue will still need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, there is a need to avoid an over-concentration of one-bedroom social renting.
- 5.3.27** In recent years, Reading has seen a marked increase in proposals for serviced apartments, particularly in the centre. These uses fall halfway between hotels and housing, providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living but also the amenities of a hotel. They are attractive to

people who will stay in the area for weeks or months at a time. However, these uses should not be seen as a way of introducing flats by the back door and therefore avoiding the need to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. There will need to be restrictions applied through Section 106 agreements or conditions to ensure that development does not change its character to a residential development without planning permission, and a requirement to provide regular monitoring information on length of occupancy.

Primary Frontages in Central Reading

CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

Uses on the ground floor along the designated primary frontages as shown on the Proposals Map will be within one of the following use classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses, unless it would be an entrance to upper floors. New developments (or alterations to existing uses) that front onto any of the designated primary frontages will provide an active building frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level, in order to contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre, and provide visual interest.

Frontages should be of a high visual quality. Any frontages that have the potential to hinder movement or cause unnecessary safety risk will not be permitted.

Proposals that would result in the loss of A1 or A2 use such that the proportion of the length of frontage within the street in A1 or A2 use falls below 50% will not be permitted, unless the proposal introduces a use that makes a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre. 50% of new primary frontages as shown on the Proposals Map should be in A1/A2 use.

- 5.3.28** Active frontages at ground floor level are key in creating the impression of a healthy centre, and in ensuring that locations are places that people want to visit and spend time in. On the key streets in the centre, it is vital that new development continues to reflect this, and that it offers visual interest on the frontage even if it is not an A1 retail unit. Ground floor uses on these frontages should be uses that create interest and activity, and typically complement town centre streets. Ensuring that uses contain frontage onto the street is essential in creating safe places and spaces, and making areas feel well-used.
- 5.3.29** Primary frontages (most of which are existing, but some will be created through new development) are illustrated on the Proposals Map. Whilst a wide range of uses, such as housing, are generally appropriate in the centre, the primary frontage should be occupied by those uses that make the greatest contribution to the vibrancy of the centre. These frontages will contain continuous glazed display windows. In the exceptional cases where this is not achievable, entrances and openings should be positioned at regular intervals along the ground floor, to assist in enlivening the street. New development should be designed to accord with existing building facades and lines, and avoid abnormal setbacks and gaps in the frontage. Frontages should remain uncluttered, so that they function effectively for all in society.

5.3.30 It is important that the overall retail character of the centre is maintained. Therefore, the policy seeks to ensure that a loss of A1 or A2 use¹⁰⁶ is not permitted where it would result in the overall proportion of the length of the frontage falling below 50%. For the purposes of applying this policy, existing frontages will be grouped together into the following streets: Broad Street (North and South); St Mary's Butts (East and West); Oxford Road (North and South); West Street (East and West); Friar Street (North and South); Chain Street (East and West); Union Street (East and West); Queen Victoria Street (East and West); Cross Street (East and West); Market Place, Butter Market and High Street; Duke Street (East and West), King Street and Kings Road (North and South); Station Road (East and West); Gun Street (South); and Oracle Riverside (North and South). The proportion will be calculated on the entire length of the frontage shown on the Proposals Map, even where that frontage does not include a use listed above.

Small Retail Units in Central Reading

CR8: SMALL SHOP UNITS IN CENTRAL READING

Small shop units make an important contribution to the diversity of the centre. Some areas of the centre are particularly characterised by small units, of less than 75 sq m. These include the arcades, Cross Street, Queen Victoria Street, Union Street, and any other areas designated in the future.

Within the areas characterised by small shop units, the amalgamation of individual shop fronts will not be permitted.

Major new retail development (more than 2,500 sq m) for multiple units in the Primary Shopping Area should include some provision for a range of small shop units.

5.3.31 In promoting town centres' vitality and viability, national policy in the NPPF focuses development in town centres and promotes "competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres" (paragraph 23). It also states that local planning authorities should actively plan for growth and manage the role and function of existing centres. This includes the range of sizes of shops, which can cater for different and varied retail offers.

5.3.32 Reading is known as being a major shopping destination with a wide offer of national multiple retailers. However, there is also an existing grouping of smaller retailers which adds diversity to the range of the centre, and planning can help to maintain this sector and allow it to grow. Although controlling the occupiers of buildings is not within the remit of planning, it can have an effect on the size of units. Part of the retail mix and character of Reading centre is the presence of a number of small shop units including within the arcades and some of the smaller side streets. In order to ensure that the vitality, diversity and retail offer of the centre of Reading is maintained and enhanced, this policy seeks to retain these small retail units, and the provision of additional small units within new retail development.

¹⁰⁶ A1 and A2 uses are grouped together, as no planning permission is required to change between those uses in either direction

Terraced Housing in Central Reading

CR9: TERRACED HOUSING IN CENTRAL READING

The character of the following areas of traditional town centre terraced housing will be respected:

- *CR9a: Blakes Cottages*
- *CR9b: Crane Wharf*
- *CR9c: Queen's Cottages*
- *CR9d: Sackville Street & Vachel Road*
- *CR9e: Stanshawe Road*

Development should not result in a loss, or have a detrimental effect on the character of, these areas.

- 5.3.33 The centre of Reading contains a number of small groupings of traditional terraced housing within the Inner Distribution Road. These areas make a unique contribution to the character of central Reading, and can be a pleasant surprise to first time visitors. These areas have merit in their own right: for instance, Sackville Street is a fine example of Reading patterned brickwork housing. In addition, Crane Wharf, Queen's Cottages and Blakes Cottages are old waterside housing areas abutting the towpath and displaying a distinct character and fabric worthy of retention and enhancement. However, there are a number of areas of distinct character in Reading, and it is the juxtaposition with the high-density, often modern, context in which these areas are found that marks them out and makes them most worthy of retention. The fact that it is the context of these areas that is the main reason for their significance makes a policy in the Local Plan a more appropriate mechanism than designation as conservation areas.
- 5.3.34 In addition, terraces provide opportunities for people who would not wish to live in a flat, to live in the centre. High land values mean that the development of many further houses with gardens in the core of the centre is unlikely, so these areas, where they are not already converted into flats, are important to preserve in terms of maintaining a mix and variety of housing in the centre.

Tall Buildings

CR10: TALL BUILDINGS

In Reading, tall buildings are defined as 10 storeys of commercial floorspace or 12 storeys of residential (equating to 36 metres tall) or above. Tall buildings will meet all the requirements below.

- i) *Within Reading Borough, tall buildings will only be appropriate within the 'areas of potential for tall buildings' as defined on the Proposals Map. These areas are as follows:*

CR10a: Station Area Cluster

CR10b: Western Grouping

CR10c: Eastern Grouping

Figure 5.2 gives an ‘at a glance’ diagrammatic indication of the principles for each area set out in the following sections.

ii) CR10a, Station Area Cluster:

A new cluster of tall buildings with the station at its heart will signify the status of the station area as a major mixed-use destination and the main gateway to and most accessible part of Reading.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- *Follow a pattern of the tallest buildings at the centre of the cluster, close to the station, and step down in height from that point towards the lower buildings at the fringes;*
- *Contribute to the creation of a coherent, attractive and sustainable cluster of buildings with a high quality of public realm;*
- *Ensure that adequate space is provided between the buildings to avoid the creation of an overly dense townscape and to allow buildings to be viewed as individual forms;*
- *Be designed to fit within a wider planning framework or master plan for the area, which allows separate parcels of land to come forward at different times in a co-ordinated manner.*

iii) CR10b, Western Grouping:

A secondary cluster of tall buildings would be appropriate to create a distinctive grouping, to mark the area as the civic heart of Reading and a gateway to the centre.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- *Contribute to the development of a cluster of tall buildings that is clearly subservient to the Station Area Cluster;*
- *Be generally lower in height than the tallest buildings planned for the Station Area Cluster;*
- *Be linked to the physical regeneration of a wider area and should not be proposed in isolation;*
- *Where buildings are to be integrated or front onto existing streets, include upper storeys of the taller structures that are set back from a base which is in line with the general surrounding building heights, particularly where the structure adjoins a conservation area;*
- *Not intrude on the key view between Greyfriars Church and St Giles Church, and a view from the open space in the Hosier Street development to St Mary’s Church.*

iv) CR10c, Eastern Grouping:

One or two landmark buildings situated at street corners or other gateway sites are appropriate to mark the extent of the business area.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- *Be of a smaller scale than the tallest buildings around the station;*
- *Be slim in nature and avoid dominant massing;*
- *Avoid setting back upper storeys on Kings Road in order to align strategic views into and out of the centre;*

- *Not intrude on the view from Blakes Bridge towards Blakes Cottages.*

One tall building has recently been developed (The Blade), and if the permitted tall building at 120 Kings Road is constructed, there will no longer be scope for additional tall buildings in this area.

- v) *In addition to the area-specific requirements, all tall building proposals should be of excellent design and architectural quality, and should:*
- *Enhance Reading's skyline, through a distinctive profile and careful design of the upper and middle sections of the building;*
 - *Contribute to a human scale street environment, through paying careful attention to the lower section or base of the building, providing rich architectural detailing and reflecting their surroundings through the definition of any upper storey setback and reinforcing the articulation of the streetscape;*
 - *Contribute to high-quality views from distance, views from middle-distance and local views;*
 - *Take account of the context within which they sit, including the existing urban grain, streetscape and built form and local architectural style;*
 - *Avoid bulky, over-dominant massing;*
 - *Preserve and, where possible, enhance the setting of conservation areas and listed buildings;*
 - *Use high quality materials and finishes;*
 - *Create safe, pleasant and attractive spaces around them, and avoid detrimental impacts on the existing public realm;*
 - *Consider innovative ways of providing green infrastructure, such as green walls, green roofs and roof gardens.*
 - *Locate any car parking or vehicular servicing within or below the development;*
 - *Maximise the levels of energy efficiency in order to offset the generally energy intensive nature of such buildings;*
 - *Mitigate any wind speed or turbulence or overshadowing effects through design and siting;*
 - *Ensure adequate levels of daylight and sunlight are able to reach buildings and spaces within the development;*
 - *Avoid significant negative impacts on existing residential properties and the public realm in terms of outlook, privacy, daylight, sunlight, noise, light glare and night-time lighting;*
 - *Provide managed public access to an upper floor observatory and to ground floors where appropriate, and ensure that arrangements for access within the building are incorporated in the design stage;*
 - *Incorporate appropriate maintenance arrangements at the design stage.*

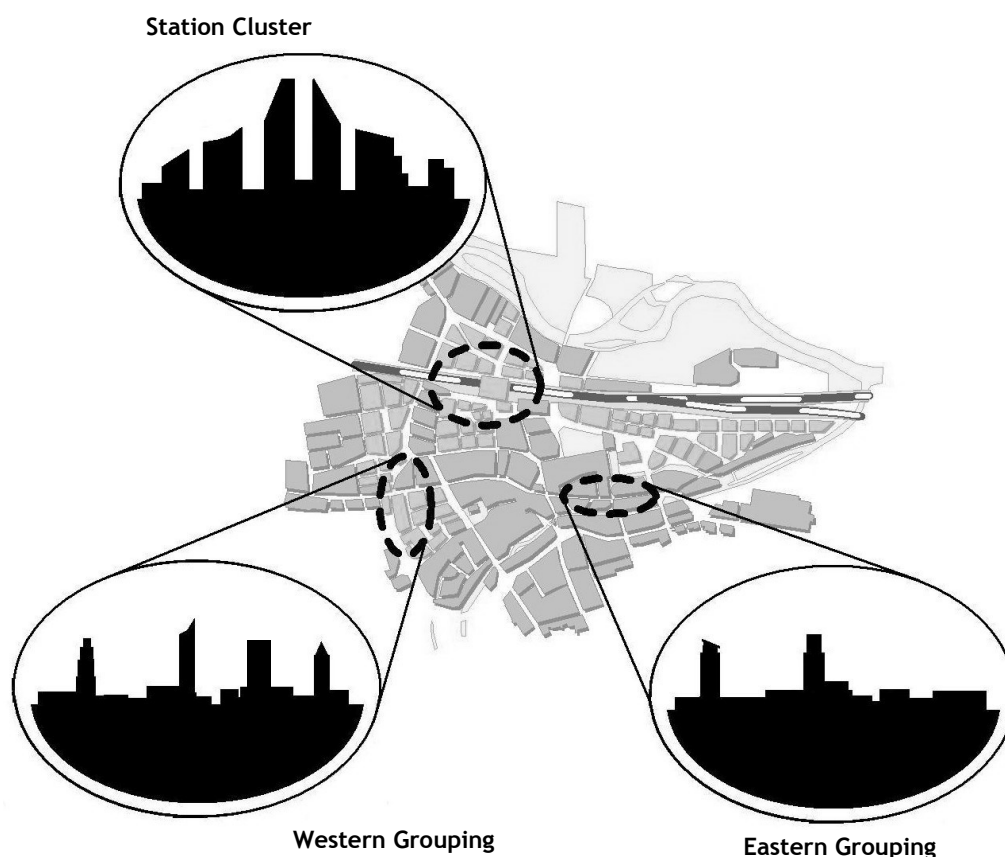
5.3.35 The vision for Reading seeks to build on the status of central Reading as the dynamic and creative core of the capital of the Thames Valley. Tall buildings have an important part to play in achieving this. They have a symbolic role in marking the centre out as a regionally-significant hub of activity, and a practical role in accommodating the level of development that this status entails in a highly accessible location. Within this context, proposals for tall buildings have markedly increased in recent years.

5.3.36 It is therefore essential that there is a strong and clear policy on tall buildings, based on an analysis of the effects of, and opportunities for, such buildings. A Tall Buildings Strategy was

produced in March 2008, and is available on the Council’s website¹⁰⁷.

- 5.3.37** It is vital that, given their prominence, new tall buildings are of the highest architectural quality. Tall buildings of mediocre architectural quality will not be acceptable. They need to make a positive contribution to the character of the centre of Reading and to views into the centre. They will be visible from a wide area and it is therefore essential that they are of the highest design quality.
- 5.3.38** The approach of three clusters of tall buildings with differing characteristics will help to provide variety and interest in visual terms, as well as creating a distinctive character for the business core of the centre. This approach has been subject to a thorough analysis of the suitability of the areas for tall buildings in terms of a number of factors, including townscape character, historic context, local and strategic views, market demand, topography, accessibility and other issues.
- 5.3.39** The heart of the business area, the station area, will be signified by the highest buildings and the densest cluster, due to its proximity to the station and public transport interchange. This will be the most extensive of the three clusters and will make a significant impact on the townscape around the station and on the town’s skyline. It is important that a coherent, attractive and sustainable grouping of buildings is created within a high quality public realm.

Figure 5.2: Diagrammatic indicative representation of the differing approach to tall buildings in each area



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¹⁰⁷ www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf

Tall buildings should be considered within the context of a masterplan or planning framework for the area that, within the context of this policy, will provide further guidance on the relative heights, massing and spacing of the buildings, and the function and quality of public realm around them, along with their relationship with the major transport interchange improvements delivered at Reading Station.

- 5.3.40 The western and eastern groupings are located at the extents of the business area, and each will be signified by a smaller grouping of tall buildings, with a more residential emphasis.
- 5.3.41 The area-specific guidelines set out in CR10 parts (ii), (iii) and (iv) are illustrated in Figure 5.2, which shows ‘at a glance’ and in diagrammatic format the differences between the areas in terms of massing, spacing between buildings and heights. It should not be taken as a prescriptive guideline for the appearance of the skyline, merely a diagrammatic representation of the policy principles.

Skyline and views

- 5.3.42 Different aspects of a tall building’s design are of significance when viewed from different distances, and this will be taken into account when designing and assessing proposals under part (v) of CR10. From longer distances, the overall massing and proportion is most important, and the relationship between the silhouette and the skyline should inform the design. In the case of mid-distance views, the overall composition and detail are perceived in balance, and the hierarchy and articulation of elevations are particularly important. Finally, for local views, the interrelationship of the building’s base and the immediate setting will be particularly visible, and the quality of materials and the detailing will be critical.
- 5.3.43 The contribution that tall buildings can make to views in terms of their locations should also be taken into account. Aligning tall buildings to terminate or frame views can create a strong reference point, allowing greater urban legibility.
- 5.3.44 There are some key panoramic views of the central area that tall buildings should make a positive contribution to. These include the views of the central area from Balmore Park, Caversham Park, Kings Meadow, Reading Bridge, and from Oxford Road to the west of the centre, the Whitley Street area to the south and Wokingham Road to the east.

Street environment

- 5.3.45 Tall buildings need not prejudice the creation or retention of a human scale street environment, provided that they are carefully located, designed with a distinct top and bottom, and have regard to the effects on the microclimate. There are a number of design solutions that can be used to assist in creating a human scale street environment:
- Stepping down a large mass to its neighbours;
 - Setting back the upper floors to create the impression of a continuous streetscape;
 - Ensuring that the ground level is as active and interesting as possible;
 - Ensuring that the public realm is naturally surveyed;
 - Providing legible and accessible entrances;
 - Providing a richness to the detailing and high quality materials;
 - Articulating the lower floors to reflect the character of the street;
 - Mitigating against the adverse impacts a tall building can often make on the microclimate;
 - Providing a continuity of frontage, street line and definition and enclosure to the public realm; and
 - Providing green infrastructure for a comfortable microclimate, cleaner air and visual interest.

Sustainable design and construction

5.3.46 Tall buildings are inherently energy intensive, so there will need to be particular efforts made to ensure that tall buildings meet the requirements of Core Strategy policy CC2 or H5. Tall buildings should exploit opportunities of efficient services distribution and building energy simulation tools to reduce energy usage. Narrow span floor plates improve the availability of daylight and hence reduce dependence on artificial light. Individual control and opening of windows is challenging in taller buildings, but advances in façade technology has made this possible and allows for internal environments to be naturally ventilated at appropriate times of the year.

Wind and solar effects of tall buildings

5.3.47 Tall buildings can adversely affect the environmental quality of surrounding areas, particularly through the diversion of high speed winds to ground level and through overshadowing of other areas. However, good design and siting can successfully mitigate these impacts. A building, or grouping of buildings, should be modelled and simulated within its surrounding context, to examine environmental performance at an early design stage to highlight any potential issues that need to be addressed. Wind should be assessed against the Lawson Criteria. Sunlight and daylight should meet the criteria outlined in the 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice', published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and the British Standard Code of Practice for Daylighting (BS8206-2).

5.3.48 In terms of wind effects, the use of architectural devices such as screens, terraces and awnings as well as façade set-backs can be used to minimise the effects of high wind speed at the base of a tall building.

5.3.49 Solar issues will influence the orientation of a building, and there are various aspects that need to be considered. These will include solar gains where passive heating is desired, shading from solar gains where they are not desired, the need to maximise daylighting, and renewable energy generation by photovoltaic cells. In terms of effects of developments, the Building Research Establishment (BRE)¹⁰⁸ has guidelines on assessing daylight and sunlight effects of development, which the Council will apply flexibly given the high density of the central area.

Other issues

5.3.50 Tall buildings that include residential will need to take account of noise and air quality issues in the same way as all additional residential development. All developments will need to comply with the Civil Aviation Authority's aerodrome safeguarding criteria, where buildings should be below 242 metres AOD.

5.3.51 Given their prominence and to signify Reading's emerging status as regional capital of the Thames Valley, it is essential that the buildings and new spaces are designed to be of the highest architectural quality. Therefore (and having taken into account CABE's and Historic England's guidance on tall buildings) the Council considers that outline planning applications for tall buildings are appropriate only in cases where the applicant is seeking to establish the principle of (a) tall building(s) as an important element within the context of a robust and credible master plan for the area to be developed over a long period of time. In such cases principles must be established within the design and access statement accompanying the application, which demonstrate that excellent urban design and architecture will result.

¹⁰⁸ www.bre.co.uk

5.4 Central Reading Site-Specific Policies

Station/River Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *The station/river area will be a flagship scheme, extending the centre and providing a mixed use destination in itself and centred on the new station and public transport interchange. It will integrate the transport links and areas northwards towards the River Thames and into the heart of the centre.*

CR11: STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will:

- i) Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself and capitalise on its role as one of the most accessible locations in the south east. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;*
- ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-south links through the area centred on the new station, including across the IDR, are of particular importance;*
- iii) Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;*
- iv) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*
- v) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, with green infrastructure, including a direct landscaped link between the station and the River Thames;*
- vi) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings, conservation areas and historic gardens and their settings;*
- vii) Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;*
- viii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and*
- ix) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Development of the station and interchange was completed in 2015. Development in surrounding areas will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area:

CR11a, FRIAR STREET & STATION ROAD:

There will be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street and Station Road, with a mix of uses on higher floors. Development should enhance linkages in a north-south direction to link to the Station Hill area. Listed buildings and their settings in the area will be conserved, and opportunities to improve the environment of Merchants Place will be sought.

Site size: 1.36 ha

Indicative potential: 150-270 dwellings, no significant net gain in offices or retail and leisure

CR11b, GREYFRIARS ROAD CORNER:

There will be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street, with a mix of uses on higher floors and in the rest of the area. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will require careful design treatment.

Site size: 0.37 ha

Indicative potential: 90-140 dwellings, no significant net gain in offices or retail and leisure

CR11c, STATION HILL & FRIARS WALK:

This area will be developed for a mix of uses at a high density, including retail and leisure on the ground and lower floors and residential and offices on higher floors. There will be enhanced links through the site, including in a north-south direction at a single level into the Station Hill area and through to the station, and a network of streets and spaces. Frontages on key routes through the site should have active uses. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will require careful design treatment.

Site size: 2.87 ha

Indicative potential: 380-570 dwellings, 80,000-100,000 sq m of offices, no significant net gain in retail and leisure

CR11d, BRUNEL ARCADE AND APEX PLAZA

This area will be developed for a mix of uses at high density, including residential and/or offices. Retail and/or leisure uses will activate the ground floor facing the southern station square. Development should seek to enhance the setting of nearby heritage assets, and views from within the conservation area and Forbury Gardens should be carefully considered.

Site size: 1.51 ha

Indicative potential: 250-380 dwellings, 3,000-5,000 sq m net gain of offices, 1,000-2,000 sq m net gain of retail and leisure

CR11e, NORTH OF STATION:

There will be retail and leisure development on the ground floor activating the streets and spaces including the new northern station square, with other uses including residential and offices on upper floors. Retail will have good pedestrian links to, and will not have a detrimental impact on, the rest of the retail core of the centre. Public car parking will be provided. A high quality route incorporating a green link should be provided through to the Thames. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment, and should consider opportunities to open up the culverted Vastern Ditch and enhance it as an ecological feature.

Site size: 6.71 ha

Indicative potential: 640-960 dwellings, 50,000-80,000 sq m net gain of offices, 3,000-6,000 sq m net gain of retail and leisure, hotel.

CR11f: WEST OF CAVERSHAM ROAD:

This area will be developed for residential with on-site open space. Densities will be lower than elsewhere in the Station/River area to reflect the proximity to low-rise residential areas, and the edge of the site nearest to the areas of terracing will require careful design treatment and respect the historic context of areas to the west. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Site size: 0.92 ha Indicative potential: 75-115 dwellings.

CR11g, RIVERSIDE:

Development should maintain and enhance public access along and to the Thames, and should be set back at least ten metres from the river. Development should continue the high quality route including a green link from the north of the station to the Christchurch Bridge, with potential for an area of open space at the riverside. The main use of the site should be residential, although some small-scale offices and leisure will also be appropriate.

Site size: 1.24 ha Indicative potential: 250-370 dwellings, 1,000-2,000 sq m of leisure, no significant net gain in offices.

CR11h, NAPIER ROAD JUNCTION:

A landmark building, containing residential and/or offices is appropriate for this site, which may contain an active commercial use on the ground floor. Land on the Napier Road frontage will be safeguarded for Mass Rapid Transit. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Site size: 0.49 ha Indicative potential: 200-300 dwellings, 2,000-3,000 sq m of retail or commercial.

CR11i, NAPIER COURT:

This area will be developed for residential. The design must avoid detrimental effects on the adjacent Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature, and building heights should reduce from west to east across the site. Land on the Napier Road frontage will be safeguarded for Mass Rapid Transit. Development of the Network Rail depot will be dependent on an alternative location at the railway triangle to the west of the centre becoming available. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

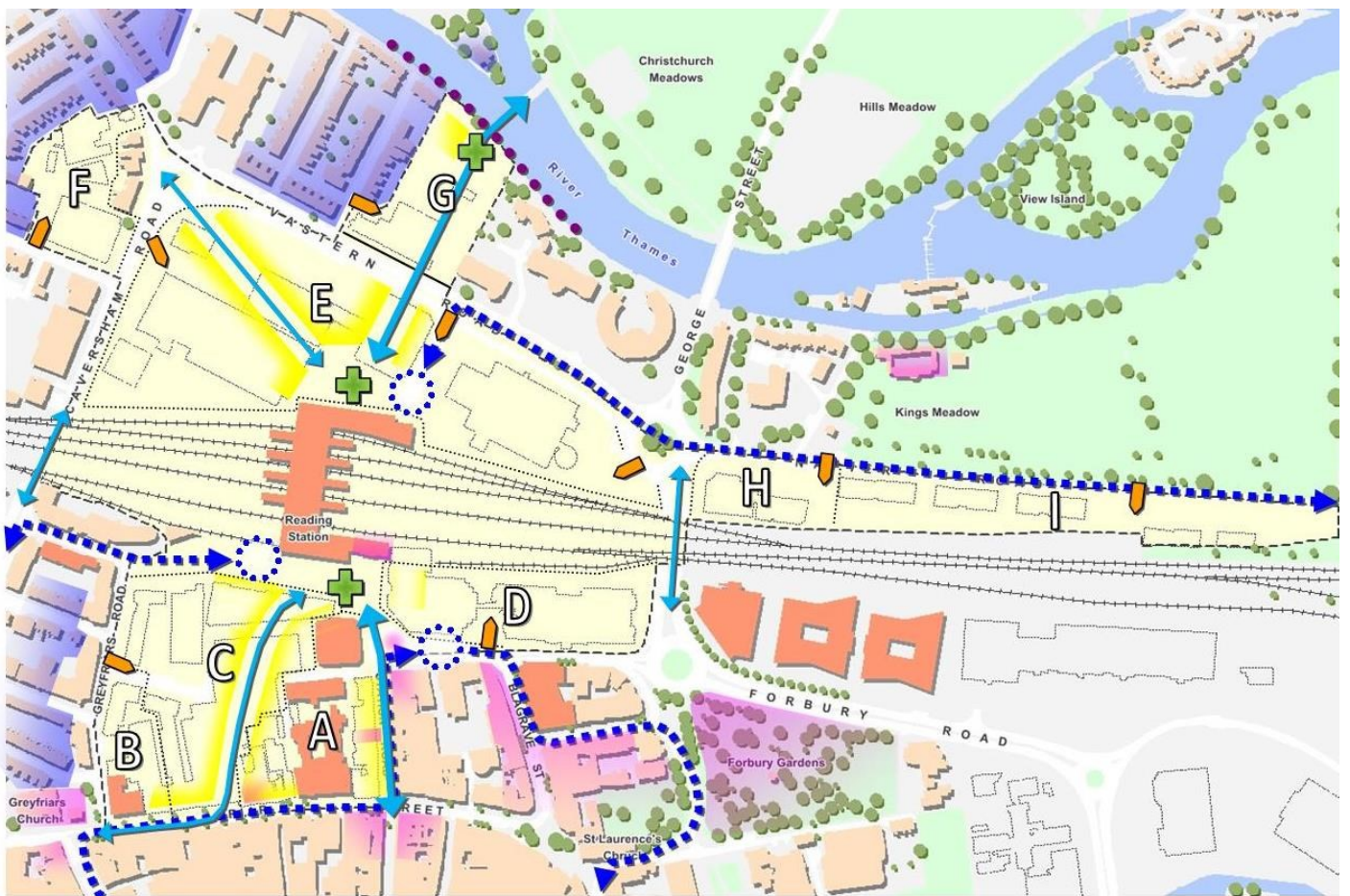
Site size: 1.62 ha Indicative potential: 210-310 dwellings.

- 5.4.1** The Station/River major opportunity area is currently a mix of densities, land uses and character. Large parts of the area are currently of low density, and although many of these are in active use, they represent an inefficient use of one of the most accessible locations in the South East. In other parts of the area there is higher density development, much of which has a detrimental effect on surrounding areas, contributes towards a generally poor environmental quality and is in some cases vacant. It is difficult to move about parts of the surrounding area on foot, particularly north of the station.
- 5.4.2** The area has recently been transformed with the completion of the Reading Station project in 2015, including the opening of the new station in 2014. As well as removing a bottleneck on the national rail network, it has significantly improved passenger capacity, vastly improved the

local environment around the station and improved north-south linkages through opening of the underpass. The arrival of the Elizabeth Line at Reading, timetabled for 2019, will further enhance the accessibility of the area. This provides a strong impetus for development of the surrounding sites, and gives an opportunity to think about the wider station area, stretching up to the River Thames in the north and the shopping core in the south, as a whole. These guidelines should ensure that the area continues to develop in a comprehensive manner, and is brought into the core of the centre.

- 5.4.3 The development of the wider station area allows the significant improvement of north-south links through the centre, and offers the opportunity to expand the core of the centre northwards to help meet development needs.
- 5.4.4 In order for the station area to become a destination in its own right, it should contain a wide mix of uses across the area. This wide mix of uses will ensure that the station area becomes a vibrant central quarter, active at different times of the day. This will mean retail and leisure development, to help draw the station into the core of the centre and activate streets and spaces, new residential development, which will require substantial improvements to the physical environment, and offices. The station area will be the main focus for new office development in the centre, to capitalise on its high accessibility by rail and other public transport. There is also potential for future community uses within the area, including police facilities and health infrastructure.
- 5.4.5 Policy CR11 includes some figures for indicative development capacity. It should be noted that, to an even greater extent than other areas, development capacity can vary significantly on high density town centre sites, and these figures are therefore an indication only. Of greatest importance will be the creation of a high-quality, well-designed mixed use destination, and there is potential for development figures to vary in order to achieve this aim.
- 5.4.6 The successful development of this area hinges on improved accessibility by public transport, and improved permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. In terms of permeability, improving links for pedestrians and cyclists through the centre, particularly in a north-south direction, is one of the key principles for the spatial strategy of the centre, along with removing barriers to access within the centre. If visual links are also provided, this will help change the perception of the area north of the station as a separate entity. The opening of the underpass under the station and the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Thames have recently helped to achieve this vision, but further improvements can still be made. Ensuring active frontages along these routes will assist these to become attractive links, as will the provision of new areas of open space. This is particularly important on the route between the shopping core, the station and the Thames. In particular, on the Riverside site (CR11g), achieving this north-south link is the main priority for the site, and this should be given substantial weight in development management.
- 5.4.7 Improving public transport access to the centre, particularly the station and public transport interchange, is vital, and the provision of a mass rapid transit system linking the centre and station to park and ride sites is a key aspect of Reading's transport strategy. In this area this will mainly be on existing streets, but in some cases there may be requirements in terms of land, and it should be ensured that development does not prejudice the delivery of MRT or other major transport schemes. In addition, some new public car parking is likely to be required in the area, which, due to space constraints and changes in levels, may well in some cases take the form of undercroft car parking.

5.4.8 Parts of the area around the station are appropriate for well-designed tall buildings, in line with the policy on tall buildings (CR10), and the area will be developed at a higher density even where there are no tall buildings. However, schemes in these areas should take account of the fact that there are areas of low-rise housing fringing the area, and this should be reflected in the design of schemes, both in terms of the effect on character of the area and on the amenity of residents. In addition, there are a number of significant listed buildings in or adjoining the Major Opportunity Area, south of the railway tracks, including the historic station building (now the Three Guineas), as well as a conservation area and historic park close by. Development should respect the setting of these features and will need to be carefully designed to avoid detriment to them.



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Figure 5.3: Station/River Major Opportunity Area Strategy

- 5.4.9 Figure 5.3 shows the broad strategy for the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, which indicates some of the elements that need to be taken into account in developing this area. The Proposals Map gives greater detail on some matters, such as boundaries of the Major Opportunity Area and Sub-Areas. A Station Area Development Framework was prepared for most of this area in 2010 to provide more detailed guidance, and a Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief covering sites CR11a, b and c dates from 2007. These documents continue to apply, alongside any future Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 5.4.10 Ideally, development of sub-areas should be undertaken in as comprehensive a manner as possible. Some of the sub-areas are within different ownerships, and it is recognised that parts may be developed with different timescales. However, it is vital that there is clear regard for the rest of the sub-area and that planning applications are accompanied by information that addresses how the development will relate to the potential or planned development of neighbouring sites.
- 5.4.11 Parts of the area may face issues around noise and air quality that will need to be mitigated in relation to new residential development. More information on potential mitigation measures is contained in relation to policy CR6. There is also considered to be a high potential for archaeological finds within the area, including from prehistoric, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. Early consultation on these matters will be required.
- 5.4.12 Parts of the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, particularly north of the railway line, are within both Flood Zones 2 and 3a¹⁰⁹. However, this must be weighed against the vital role that these sites will play in regeneration in the centre. A sequential and exceptions test in line with the NPPF has been carried out in identifying these sites for development, and this will be available on the Council's website as background evidence. Individual applications will need to provide their own Flood Risk Assessment. Detailed proposals on these sites will need to consider how the mix of uses is best distributed taking flooding guidance into account.
- 5.4.13 Sites within this area potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

¹⁰⁹ See the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017

West Side Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *The west side area will be a mixed-use extension to the west of the centre containing high-quality mixed-use environments and fostering stronger east-west links into the central core.*

CR12: WEST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development in the West Side Major Opportunity Area will:

- i) Contribute towards providing a mix of uses including residential. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;*
- ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular on key movement corridors and east-west links through the area and between development areas and the station, including improved crossings of the IDR where achievable;*
- iii) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*
- iv) Provide additional or improved areas of open space where possible, generally in the form of town squares, and provide additional green infrastructure where possible;*
- v) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conservation areas and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings;*
- vi) Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;*
- vii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and*
- vii) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Development at Chatham Place is now complete. Development will be in line with the following provisions for each of the remaining sub-areas:

CR12a, CATTLE MARKET:

This site will be developed for a mix of edge-of-centre retail uses, and residential development, along with public car parking. The retail may include bulky goods, but should not include a significant element of non-bulky comparison goods retail, and must be designed to mesh into the urban fabric and a single storey retail warehouse will not be permitted. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Site size: 2.46 ha Indicative potential: 330-490 dwellings, 10,000-15,000 sq m net gain of retail.

CR12b, GREAT KNOLLYS STREET & WELDALE STREET:

This area will be developed primarily for residential. Any development which would result in the loss of small business units should seek to replace some of those units, preferably on site. There should be a careful transition to the lower density residential areas to the west. Listed buildings and their settings in the area will be conserved and where possible enhanced.

Site size: 3.02 ha Indicative potential: 280-430 dwellings, no significant net gain of other uses.

CR12c, CHATHAM STREET, EATON PLACE AND OXFORD ROAD:

Development of this area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. This area is surrounded by heritage assets or low-rise residential, and inappropriate building scale at the fringes of the site will not be permitted. There is an opportunity to enhance the Oxford Road frontage, including with tree planting.

Site size: 1.15 ha Indicative potential: 180-260 dwellings.

CR12d, BROAD STREET MALL:

The site will be used for continued retail and leisure provision, maintaining frontages along Oxford Street and St Mary's Butts, and improving frontages to Hosier Street and Queens Walk, with uses including residential, with some potential for offices, on upper floors. This may be achieved by comprehensive redevelopment. Alternatively, a development which retains the existing mall with additional development above may be appropriate where it improves the quality of the existing mall frontages.

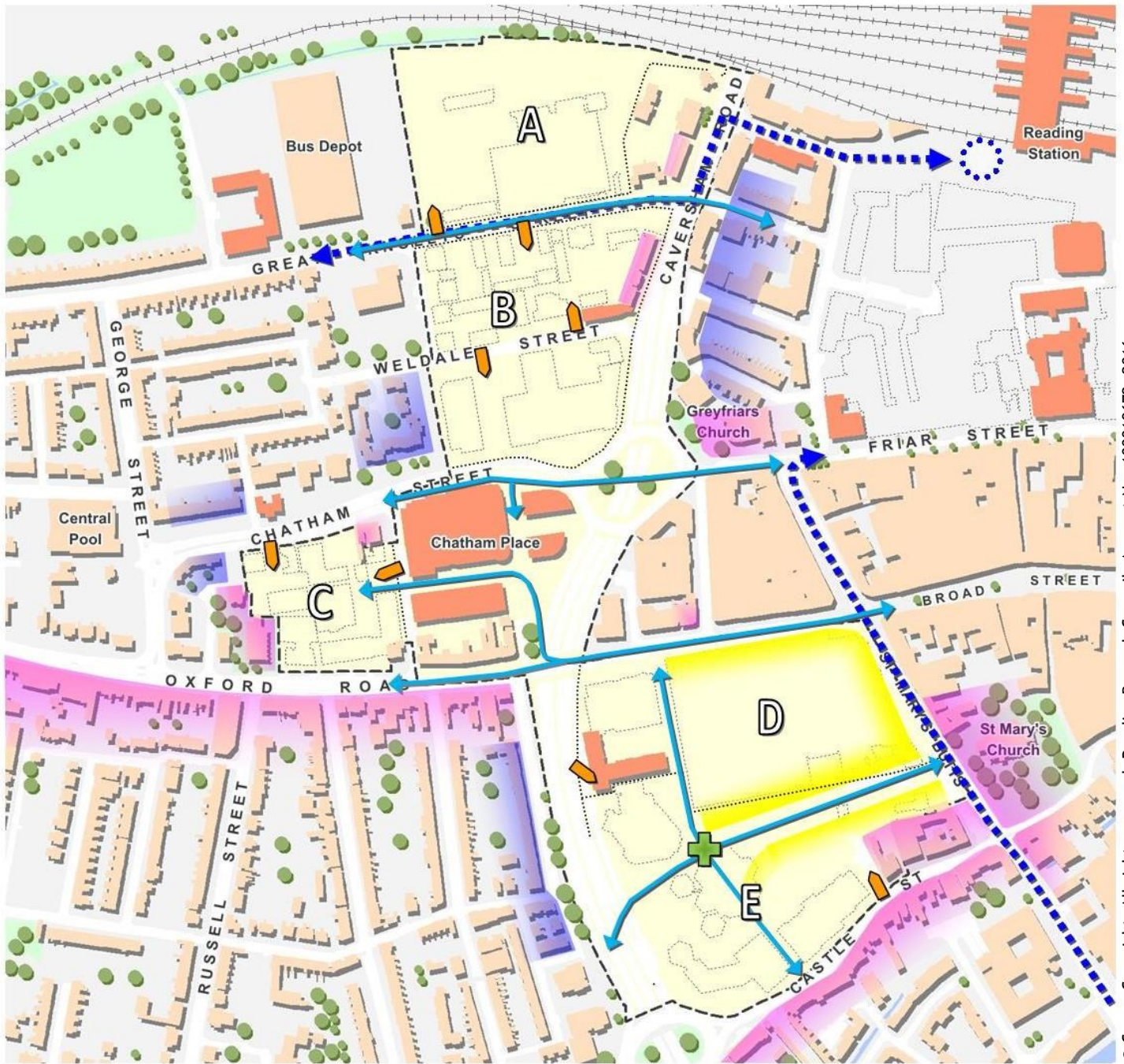
Site size: 2.75 ha Indicative potential: 280-420 dwellings, no significant net gain of retail and leisure.

CR12e, HOSIER STREET:

Development on this site will result in a new residential community centred around an improved area of public open space and a high quality environment, with an improved entrance to the site from St Mary's Butts. The edges of the open space will be activated with retail, leisure and/or other main town centre uses such as hotel use, and development may also include some limited offices uses. The Hexagon theatre will only be developed if a replacement facility for Reading is provided, and approaches to the theatre will be improved. Development will also include a replacement site for the street market. The car parking below ground level will be retained and incorporated into the development.

Site size: 3.41 ha Indicative potential: 500-750 dwellings, 4,000-6,000 sq m of retail and leisure.

- 5.4.14** The West Side Major Opportunity Area is a mix of central area fringe uses along the western edge of the centre. Some of these uses are of low-density, whilst others are of poor environmental quality and are in need of improvement. One of the main features of the area is the Inner Distribution Road, which forms a major barrier to movement. Visitors arriving into the centre from the west will have to pass through these areas of low environmental quality, and this affects the perception of the centre. Regeneration of the western edge of the centre has been a long-held objective, and the development of the Chatham Street area is now complete.
- 5.4.15** In general, a broad mix of uses will be sought in the West Side, given its proximity to the central core, and there is provision for some additional retail or leisure, particularly around Hosier Street. However, it should also be recognised that the West Side is neither as accessible nor as central to the direction of extension of the centre as the Station/River Major Opportunity Area. For this reason, the balance of uses is weighted more strongly in favour of residential than the



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Key

- Sub-area boundary
- Major Opportunity Area
- Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area
- Existing building
- Recent building or building under construction
- Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential
- Nearby sensitive location—heritage assets
- New area of open space
- Vehicle access point
- Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)
- Location of transport interchange
- Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route
- Activation of key routes and spaces with town centre uses

Sub-Areas

- A** CR12a: Cattle Market
- B** CR12b: Great Knollys Street &
- C** CR12c: Chatham Street, Eaton Place & Oxford Road
- D** CR12d: Broad Street Mall
- E** CR12e: Hosier Street

Figure 5.4: West Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy

Station/River. However, in such central fringe locations, changes in the residential and commercial markets are likely to have particular effects, so buildings should be flexible and robust to accommodate different uses. Policy CR12 includes some figures for indicative development capacity. It should be noted that, to an even greater extent than other areas, development capacity can vary significantly on high density town centre sites, and these figures are therefore an indication only.

- 5.4.16** Many of the elements that are key to successful development of the Station/River Major Opportunity Area also apply to the West Side. Improved pedestrian and cycle permeability remains vital, but the key direction through the West Side is from east to west, with the main barrier being the IDR. The presence of low-rise residential adjacent to the site also requires careful treatment, with the added issue of the Russell Street/Castle Hill and St Mary's Butts/Castle Street conservation areas and numerous listed buildings adjoining the West Side. The existence of these historic assets can be viewed as an opportunity rather than a constraint, with a chance to significantly improve parts of the area to better relate to the conservation area. Additional areas of open space will also be provided, most likely in the form of town squares. In addition, land may need to be safeguarded for major transport schemes, particularly the Mass Rapid Transit proposal.
- 5.4.17** In the Hosier Street area, the old civic offices have now been demolished, and the need for replacement of the Hexagon theatre has been recognised for some time. The Hexagon is not suited to modern theatre requirements and is expensive to maintain. The policy proposes replacement within the same area.
- 5.4.18** Figure 5.4 shows the broad strategy for the West Side Major Opportunity Area, which indicates some of the elements that need to be taken into account in developing this area. The Proposals Map gives greater detail on some matters, such as boundaries of the Major Opportunity Area and Sub-Areas. Any Planning Briefs which are produced to cover these areas will expand on policy CR12, and, if appropriate the sub-area aspects of the policy.
- 5.4.19** There is potential for tall buildings on those parts of the area that fall within the Western Grouping as defined on the Proposals Map. Further detail on this is set out in policy CR10. Parts of the area may face issues around noise and air quality that will need to be mitigated in relation to new residential development. More information on potential mitigation measures is contained in relation to policy CR6. There is also considered to be a high potential for archaeological finds within the area. Early consultation on these matters will be required.
- 5.4.20** Northern parts of the West Side Major Opportunity Area are within both Flood Zones 2 and 3a. However, this must be weighed against the vital role that these sites will play in regeneration in the centre. A sequential and exceptions test in line with the NPPF has been carried out in identifying these sites for development, and this will be available on the Council's website as background evidence. Individual applications will need to provide their own Flood Risk Assessment. Detailed proposals on these sites will need to consider how the mix of uses is best distributed taking flood risk into account.
- 5.4.21** Sites within this area potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

East Side Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *The east side area will be a new community at the eastern fringes of the centre, lending a more urban character to the area, and helping to frame the historic east of the central core.*

CR13: EAST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development in the East Side Major Opportunity Area will:

- i) *Provide a more defined urban environment than currently exists, of a medium to high density;*
- ii) *Contribute towards the provision of a new residential community at the eastern fringes of the central area. Development for education will be acceptable within the site;*
- iii) *Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular east-west links through the area and links between development areas and the station, including improved crossings of the IDR and railway;*
- iv) *Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*
- v) *Conserve and enhance the listed buildings, scheduled ancient monument and historic garden in the area and their setting where possible;*
- vi) *Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;*
- vii) *Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space;*
- viii) *Provide additional areas of open space where possible, particularly in the centre of the new community;*
- ix) *Maintain, improve and create new access along the north side of the River Kennet; and*
- x) *Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Development at Forbury Place and 42 Kenavon Drive is now complete. Development will be in line with the following provisions for each of the remaining sub-areas:

CR13a, READING PRISON:

The prison building itself is of historical significance and is listed, and its historic significance will be conserved and where possible enhanced. The building would be used for residential or student accommodation, commercial offices or a hotel, and could include some cultural or heritage element or related retail and leisure that draws on its

significance. The site is part of a scheduled ancient monument, and therefore any additional development will be dependent on a thorough demonstration that it would not have detrimental impacts on the significant archaeological interest. The prison adjoins the Abbey Quarter, and development should therefore enhance that area as a heritage destination.

Site size: 1.44 ha

Indicative potential: conversion of prison could result in 65-90 dwellings. No figures for additional development, as highly dependent on assessment of archaeology.

CR13b, FORBURY RETAIL PARK:

This site would be the focus of the new residential community, and, alongside residential, additional retail, leisure and community uses at a scale to serve the Kenavon Drive area would be appropriate. It should include a new area of open space and enhance the frontage to the canal, including a buffer zone to the canal bank to reflect its wildlife significance. Implementing this policy may involve complete redevelopment or using new additional development to improve the existing urban form of the area. Some parts of the site are likely to be implemented in the long term.

Site size: 6.99 ha

Indicative potential: 1,230-1,840 dwellings, no net gain of retail.

CR13c, KENAVON DRIVE & FORBURY BUSINESS PARK:

This site would be largely residential in nature, although opportunities to create an area of open space close to the Kennet should be sought. Development will link into the newly-opened pedestrian link under the railway to Napier Road.

Site size: 2.07 ha

Indicative potential: 130-190 dwellings.

CR13d, GAS HOLDER:

This area will be used for residential development. Development should enhance the character of the mouth of the Kennet and should maximise the potential of the site to be a river gateway to Reading. Public access along the river to the Kennet Mouth will be sought. Development should be set back at least ten metres from the river and allow for a wildlife corridor along the river. Development should take account of potential contamination on the site

Site size: 0.71 ha

Indicative potential: 46-70 dwellings.

5.4.22 The East Side Major Opportunity Area is characterised for the most part by relatively low-density development in fairly prominent positions, including retail warehousing and business and industrial space, as well as the historic local landmark of Reading Prison. The whole of this area is highly visible from the railway line, and it therefore affects the perception of Reading for people who arrive or pass through by rail. Other aspects which distinguish the East Side from the two other Major Opportunity Areas include the presence of the River Kennet, a more urbanised waterway than the Thames, along the length of the area, and a cluster of historically significant sites, including the Abbey ruins, Forbury Gardens and the Prison, at the western end of the area. Some redevelopment of former industrial and utilities sites for residential has already taken place in Kenavon Drive in recent years, and the development of 42 Kenavon Drive has recently been completed.

5.4.23 Policy CR13 includes some figures for indicative development capacity. It should be noted that, to an even greater extent than other areas, development capacity can vary significantly on high density town centre sites, and these figures are therefore an indication only.

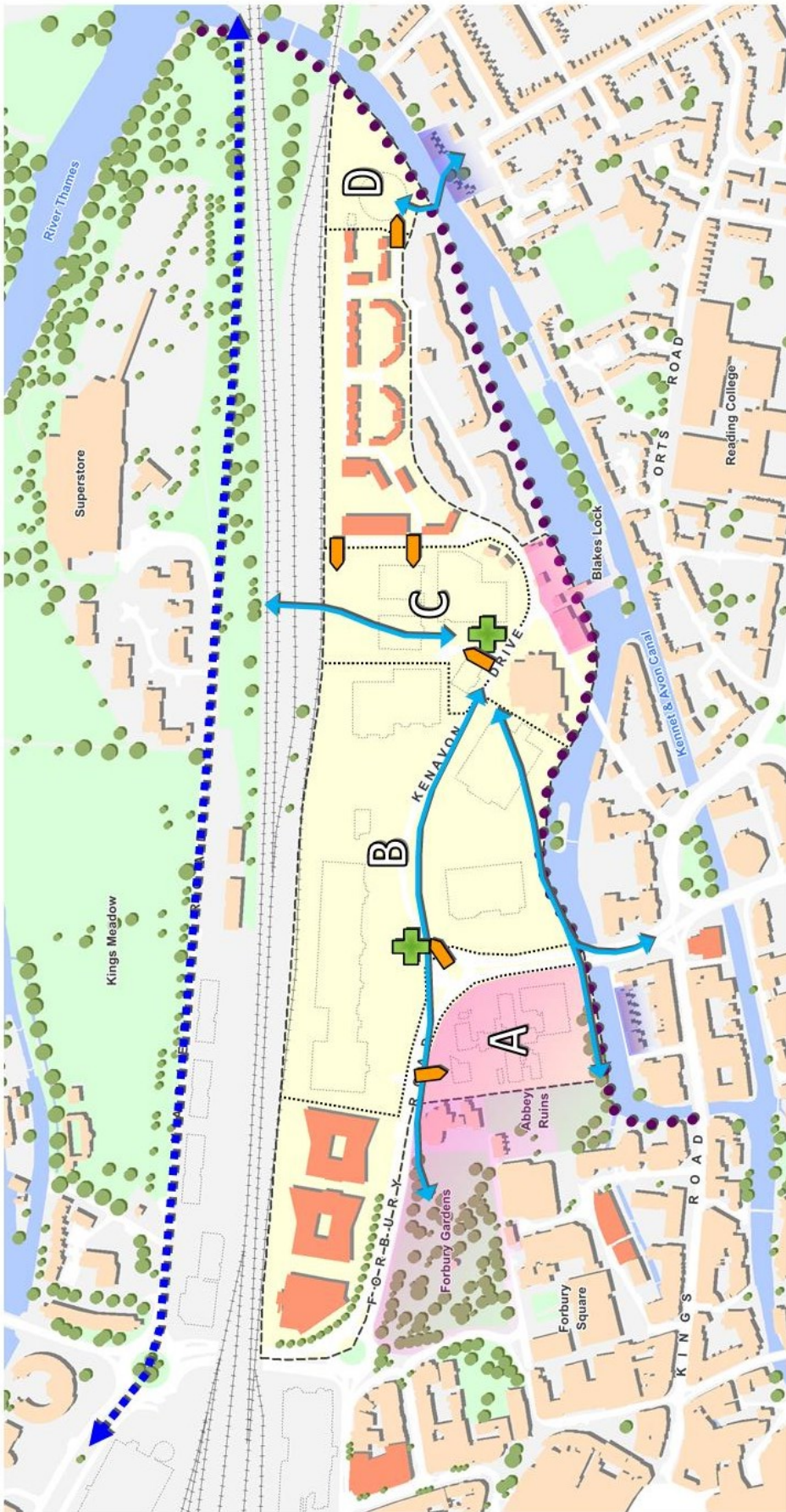


Figure 5.5: East Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy

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- 5.4.24** The East Side differs from the other two Major Opportunity Areas in that it is, by the standards of large sites in the centre, relatively self-contained and separate from the commercial core. Whilst the West Side and Station/River are very significant in terms of important routes through the areas, there are fewer routes through the East Side, albeit that there are opportunities to create more permeability through the site for pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore, there is an opportunity to continue to develop much of the east side as a new, reasonable tranquil residential community making up part of the centre, but with a distinct identity. It is important to maximise these opportunities, using design solutions such as home zones, and by providing a high quality public realm.
- 5.4.25** One of the main purposes of the designation of this area as the East Side is the creation of a more urban feel to what is currently a low-density area of buildings which do not relate well to the streets and spaces. Therefore, development should be of a more urban form, for example perimeter blocks.
- 5.4.26** It has already been noted that the East Side is characterised by the presence of the River Kennet and the historically significant sites on the eastern fringes of the centre. These naturally inform the strategy and policy for the area. Some parts of the banks of the Kennet do not currently have public access, so it is important to ensure that new development seizes any opportunities to create new public routes, as well as enhance the waterside environment for ecology purposes. Policy EN11 provides more information. In addition, any development should take account of its impacts on the setting of historic sites, seeking enhancement where appropriate. The prison site offers a particular opportunity to achieve this, and its integration within the wider Abbey Quarter project offers an opportunity to further enhance this emerging heritage destination.
- 5.4.27** Development in the East Side should also take account of many of the considerations applicable to the other Major Opportunity Areas, such as safeguarding land needed for major transport projects, and facilitating better pedestrian and cycle links. In this instance, east to west links across the IDR are of particular importance. Links across the railway have been improved with the opening of the underpass to Napier Road, but can be further enhanced by providing a high quality approach to this underpass, as well as by public access under the railway at the eastern end of the site. New areas of open space to serve the new community will be required, as will some services and facilities.
- 5.4.28** Figure 5.5 shows the broad strategy for the East Side Major Opportunity Area, which indicates some of the elements that need to be taken into account in developing this area. The Proposals Map gives greater detail on some matters, such as designation of the Major Opportunity Area and Sub-Areas. There are existing Supplementary Planning Documents covering parts of the site. The Reading Prison Framework was recently adopted and continues to be relevant. Reading Prison is a highly constrained site, and the Framework contains much more detailed information on these issues and how they should be addressed. The Kenavon Drive Urban Design Concept Statement also provides useful guidance, but it predates the Local Plan by some years, so where there is any conflict with policy CR13, the Plan policy takes precedence.
- 5.4.29** Parts of the area may face issues around noise and air quality that will need to be mitigated in relation to new residential development. More information on potential mitigation measures is contained in relation to policy CR6. There is also considered to be a high potential for archaeological finds within the area. Early consultation on these matters will be required. In

particular, the location of Reading Prison as part of a scheduled ancient monument means that the substantial archaeological potential is one of the factors to be considered at the very outset of the scheme, and the Reading Prison Framework discusses this in more detail.

- 5.4.30** Parts of the East Side Major Opportunity Area are within Flood Zone 2. A small part is also within Flood Zone 3a. However, this must be weighed against the vital role that these sites will play in regeneration in the centre. A sequential and exceptions test in line with the NPPF has been carried out in identifying these sites for development, and this will be available on the Council's website as background evidence. Individual applications will need to provide their own Flood Risk Assessment. Detailed proposals on these sites will need to consider how the mix of uses is best distributed taking flood risk into account.
- 5.4.31** Sites within this area potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989. Sites CR13a, CR13b and CR13c are also close to a pumping station, and effects on proposed residential properties as a result of odour, noise and vibration will need to be considered.

Other Sites for Development in Central Reading

CR14: OTHER SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL READING

The following sites will be developed according with the principles set out in this policy:

CR14a CENTRAL SWIMMING POOL, BATTLE STREET

Development for residential use once replacement swimming provision has been addressed.

Development should:

- *Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings;*
- *Take account of nearby scale of development, including higher density development to the east;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Avoid overlooking of the rear of existing residential properties; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.55 ha 80-120 dwellings

CR14b FORMER READING FAMILY CENTRE, NORTH STREET

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.23 ha 15-22 dwellings

CR14c 17-23 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET

Change of use of upper floors of listed building from office to residential

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.05 ha 10-16 dwellings

CR14d 173-175 FRIAR STREET AND 27-32 MARKET PLACE

Change of use of listed buildings and development of remainder for residential and/or offices with retail and related uses on the ground floor, retaining the arcade form.

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area and their settings;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.18 ha 36-54 dwellings plus ground floor town centre uses

CR14e 3-10 MARKET PLACE, ABBEY HALL AND ABBEY SQUARE

Development for retail and related uses on ground floor with residential and/or offices on upper floors, designed to enhance contribution of site to Conservation Area. Possible pedestrian link between Market Place and Forbury Square/Abbey Square. Rear servicing and preservation of historic building line.

Development should:

- *Enhance the Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings;*
- *Reflect the prevailing height of Market Place;*
- *Take account of the high potential for archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.29 ha 46-70 dwellings plus ground floor town centre uses

CR14f 1-5 KING STREET

Change of use of listed building to ground floor town centre uses and residential on upper floors

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.08 ha 16-24 dwellings and ground floor town centre uses

CR14g THE ORACLE EXTENSION, BRIDGE STREET AND LETCOMBE STREET

Development of the area between the River Kennet and Mill Lane for retail, with use of site at Letcombe Street for public car park

Development should:

- *Address flood risk issues;*
- *Enhance the setting of the Conservation Area;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 1.67 ha 1,600-2,000 sq m of retail or town centre uses

CR14h CENTRAL CLUB, LONDON STREET

Development for residential with potential for ground floor community provision.

Development should:

- *Make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings;*
- *Retain the iconic mural on the northern frontage;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.05 ha 8-12 dwellings with community use provision

CR14i ENTERPRISE HOUSE, 89-97 LONDON STREET

Change of use of listed building from offices to residential

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.15 ha 8-12 dwellings

CR14j CORNER OF CROWN STREET AND SOUTHAMPTON STREET

Development for residential

Development should:

- *Enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.08 ha 13-19 dwellings

CR14k CORNER OF CROWN STREET AND SILVER STREET

Development for residential and/or residential care

Development should:

- *Enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and the Conservation Area;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Retain and ensure access to existing water mains and fire hydrants; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.38 ha 36-70 dwellings or equivalent level of residential care accommodation.

CR14l 187-189 KINGS ROAD

Change of use of listed buildings from offices to residential or student accommodation

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.1 ha 22-33 dwellings or equivalent level of student accommodation

CR14m CAVERSHAM LOCK ISLAND AND CAVERSHAM WEIR, THAMES SIDE

Development for water-compatible leisure or tourism uses, including some operational development. Potential for enhanced pedestrian access. Potential use of weir for generation of hydropower.

Development should:

- *Address flood risk issues;*
- *Retain important trees on site;*
- *Avoid harm to the setting of the listed Kings Meadow pool;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Avoid a detrimental impact on the biodiversity value of the River Thames, and set buildings back at least ten metres from the top of the bank of the river; and*
- *Retain public access across the site.*

Site size: 0.5 ha 900-1,100 sq m of leisure use

5.4.32 This policy identifies those sites within Central Reading in addition to the Major Opportunity Areas in policies CR11-13 where development will be appropriate. As well as contributing to meeting the identified needs of the Borough, allocation can help provide physical regeneration of sites which are in some cases vacant or underused. In addition, it allows the Council to highlight the issues which need to be addressed in developing sites, set out site-specific requirements and, if necessary, plan for the provision of infrastructure.

5.4.33 Where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in CR14 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan, including, for residential developments, the need to provide affordable housing.

5.4.34 Where there are significant issues that will need to be addressed in any planning applications on the specific sites listed above, these are usually highlighted in the policy. However, it is not a guarantee that there are no other potential issues, and it does not remove the need to address the usual matters that should be dealt with on all sites. Site CR14m is covered by a Caversham Lock Development Principles Supplementary Planning Document, which continues to be relevant.

5.4.35 In some cases, residential development is proposed in areas where noise levels may be an issue. It should be possible to mitigate this through the design of the scheme. In order for the internal noise levels to be reasonable and not adversely affect health, it would be necessary to provide a

system of ventilation that entirely removes the necessity to open windows, even in very hot weather. Similarly, in terms of air quality, mitigation of impacts on residential development may be required, including means of ventilation that remove the need to open windows, and draw in the lowest levels of pollution possible, for instance from roof sources. This should be secured through the design of the proposal, and planning condition if necessary. Such systems will require additional energy use, which will need to be offset in order to comply with policy CC2 or H5.

- 5.4.36** On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for other groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in regional and/or local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory.
- 5.3.37** Site CR14g proposes an extension to The Oracle centre. It is understood that the owners of the centre are considering a range of alternative options for extending the centre, which may involve additional floorspace. These will need to be considered on their merits.
- 5.4.38** Site CR14k potentially contains public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

Sites with existing planning permission

- 5.4.39** At the time of publication of the draft Local Plan, a number of sites in Central Reading had planning permission for ten or more dwellings or more than 1,000 sq m of employment development. There is not considered to be a need to identify most of these sites within a policy, as the permission establishes the principle of the development. Any future applications on these sites will be acceptable where they are substantially the same as the existing permission. Applications for developments will need to be considered against policies in the plan, in particular whether it would adversely impact the likelihood of meeting Reading's identified development needs.

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---|
| Energis House, Forbury Road | 121826 | Redevelopment for two new office buildings of 40,000 sq m total (under construction) |
| Kings Meadow Pool, Kings Meadow Road | 141604 | Extension, alteration and restoration of open air swimming pool for pool, spa and restaurant (under construction) |
| Jacksons Corner, 1-9 Kings Road | 141713 | Change of use and redevelopment for 28 dwellings and retail use |
| 83-85 London Street | 141720 | Change of use of offices to 11 dwellings |
| 60 Queens Road | 141834 | Change of use of offices to 30 dwellings |

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|--|---|--|
| Kings Point, 120 Kings Road | 150019 | Redevelopment for 103 dwellings (under construction) |
| 173-175 Kings Road | 151116 | Change of use of listed offices to 13 dwellings (under construction) |
| Havell House, 62-66 Queens Road | 151455, 151456, 151457, 151458 | Change of use of offices to 13 dwellings |
| Primark, 32-42 West Street | 152269 | Reconfiguration from retail to offices and retail (under construction) |
| 34-36 Crown Street | 160090 | Change of use of offices to 14 dwellings (under construction) |
| Kings Lodge, 194 Kings Road | 160158 | Change of use of offices to 14 dwellings (under construction) |
| 160-163 Friar Street | 160212 | Change of use of offices to 28 dwellings |
| Former Gas Works Building, Gas Works Road | 160378 | Change of use and extension for 20 dwellings |
| Building 1, New Century Place, East Street | 161601 | Change of use of offices to 75 dwellings |
| Building 2, New Century Place, East Street | 161602 | Change of use of offices to 58 dwellings |
| 9 Southern Court, South Street | 162305 | Change of use of offices to 16 dwellings |

Development progress is correct to 31st March 2017

The Reading Abbey Quarter

CR15: THE READING ABBEY QUARTER

The Abbey Quarter will be a major area for heritage and cultural life within the Borough, offering educational, economic and open space opportunities. The Council will pursue any opportunities to reinstate features of architectural or historic significance and remove features that harm the asset and its setting.

Development in the vicinity should promote the architectural, archaeological or historic interest of the Abbey and its setting. The Abbey Quarter will:

- a. protect and enhance the historic setting and frame the Abbey as Reading's most significant heritage asset;*
- b. manage and maintain its heritage assets within a coordinated approach;*
- c. further reveal significance for public enjoyment through enhanced access, interpretation, archaeological investigations or repair of neglected elements;*
- d. mitigate impacts on transportation networks by strengthening pedestrian, cycling and public transport linkages for increased tourism; and*
- e. represent a cohesive heritage destination for tourism and investment.*

The Abbey Quarter should be considered in the context of the adjacent Reading Prison site identified in policy CR13, which represents an opportunity to further consolidate the cluster of heritage interest.

5.4.40 The Abbey is Reading’s most significant heritage asset. This historic site is particularly evocative with layers of history including the burial place of King Henry I, the civil war defences of Forbury Hill, the Abbey Gate where Jane Austen attended school, the Victorian Maiwand Lion and Reading Gaol where Oscar Wilde was imprisoned¹¹⁰. The Abbey Ruins and Forbury Garden area provides a significant opportunity to create a new heritage and leisure quarter including Reading Museum at the Town Hall. This will be accomplished with recently secured Heritage Lottery Funding and matching funds intended to re-open the Abbey to the public and to repair and interpret the site. In 2018, the Abbey ruins will fully re-open to the public. More information on the project, including an overall map of the area, is available at www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk.

Area to the North of Friar Street and East of Station Road

CR16: AREA TO THE NORTH OF FRIAR STREET AND EAST OF STATION ROAD

The area east of Station Road and north of Friar Street, as shown on the Proposals Map, makes a positive contribution to the character of the town centre. The character of the Harris Arcade and the buildings fronting the streets will be conserved and, where possible, enhanced. Whilst there will be potential for some conversion of buildings and, potentially, some development within the site that does not detrimentally affect its overall character, proposals for wholesale redevelopment will not be supported.

- 5.4.41** The area to the north east of the Station Road and Friar Street junction is unusual, in that it makes a significant positive contribution to the townscape of central Reading, but most of the area does not have sufficient historic significance to justify a heritage designation, with the exception of six listed buildings (Great Western House, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 Friar Street). Many of the buildings are more modern than they appear, but nevertheless present high quality frontages to the street. The Harris Arcade is a vital part of the diversity of the shopping offer, and contains many small independent shops (see also policy CR8). Aside from its own merits, the area is of wider significance because joins the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, where there will be large-scale redevelopment and regeneration featuring tall buildings, to the London Street/Market Place conservation area, including the Grade I listed St Laurence’s Church and Grade II* listed Town Hall. It is also the area through which visitors will pass to get from the station to the heritage destination of the Abbey Quarter area.
- 5.4.42** Key principle (i) for Central Reading is that “Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced”. Conservation of the character of this area therefore fits in with the overall strategy. This policy is not intended to prevent any development taking place, and there may be opportunities within parts of the site, particularly away from the main frontages, as well as opportunities for changes of use. However, it does seek to ensure that any such development takes place within the context of the character of the area and conserves those elements that make the greatest contribution.

¹¹⁰ Reading Borough Council, *Draft Heritage Statement*, 2014

6. SOUTH READING

6.1 Area Context

- 6.1.1** South Reading is the area of the Borough between the town centre and Junction 11 of the M4 motorway, bounded by the A327 to the east and with the Kennet meadows to the west. It had a population of 25,500 at the 2011 Census, but is expanding with major residential developments underway.
- 6.1.2** The existing South Reading area includes two distinct elements, separated by the Basingstoke Road. To the east of the Basingstoke Road are the residential areas, including the areas of Whitley and Whitley Wood. With the exception of some Victorian houses at the northern end of the area, most of this area was developed between in the 20th century, much of it as postwar local authority housing.
- 6.1.3** To the west of Basingstoke Road lie Reading's most extensive industrial and commercial areas, clustered either side of the A33 relief road dual carriageway, opened in 1999. East of the relief road are older areas of mixed industrial, warehouse and office space, whilst to the west are more modern business areas including Green Park and Reading International Business Park, as well as the new Tesco distribution warehouse. Various retail parks adjoin the A33, whilst the Madejski Stadium, home of Reading Football Club and London Irish Rugby Club, is one of the major landmarks. These developments sit in and around areas formerly used for minerals extraction and waste management uses.
- 6.1.4** This area has seen significant amounts of development in recent years. The Madejski Stadium, Green Park business park and the relief road all date from around 2000. More recently, new developments have included a new water treatment works and a household waste recycling centre. New communities have broken the traditional divide between residential and employment along Basingstoke Road, with the new community of Kennet Island on the former sewage treatment works nearing completion, and development of the new residential community at Green Park underway since 2016.
- 6.1.5** South Reading represents the largest concentration of deprivation in the Borough, with many neighbourhoods within the 20% most deprived areas in England¹¹¹. There are particular issues with regard to skills and qualifications.
- 6.1.6** South of the M4 motorway are the villages of Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood and Shinfield, all within Wokingham Borough, and this area is identified within Wokingham's Core Strategy as a Strategic Development Location for around 2,500 homes together with supporting facilities. Development of the University of Reading science park is underway, and offers potential to generate growth in the technology sector in the area. Potential has also been identified within the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework for major development around the Grazeley area straddling the Wokingham and West Berkshire boundary, which could accommodate around 15,000 new homes over the next two decades and beyond, which will also require very significant investment in supporting infrastructure. It is important to note that this latter proposal is not at this stage part of the development plan of either Wokingham Borough or West Berkshire District Councils.

¹¹¹ Five lower super output areas within the 20% most deprived according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation January 2015 from the ONS.

6.2 Strategy for South Reading

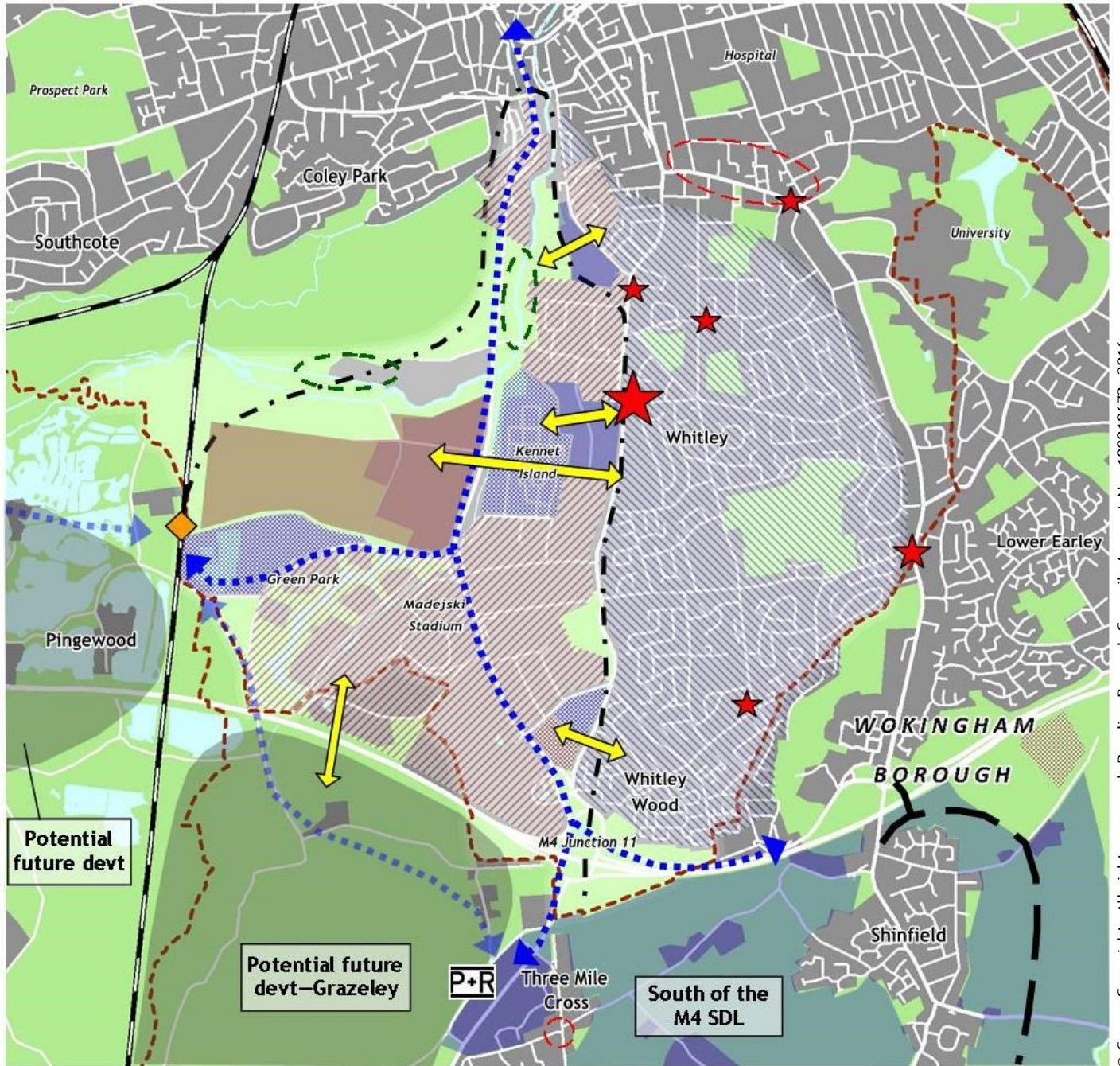
6.2.1 The following represent some key principles for the area:

- a. South Reading will be the location for a significant amount of new residential and employment development over the plan period. It will continue to be the main location for new industrial and warehouse development, and some older industrial areas will be reallocated for residential in a carefully planned manner which addresses tensions between residential and employment.
- b. Development will contribute to revitalising and regenerating the wider South Reading area, by integrating, in a physical sense and in terms of community infrastructure provision, with established residential areas, and by providing new employment opportunities to meet the needs of the local population;
- c. The accessibility of South Reading will be enhanced by provision of Mass Rapid Transit linking central Reading with Mereok Park and Ride and a new Green Park station;
- d. Transport connections out of Reading Borough to the south will be enhanced to connect any large-scale development proposed in adjacent authorities, including any development around Grazeley, to central Reading and to Green Park station;
- e. The environs of the A33 and the Basingstoke Road will be enhanced to provide an attractive entrance into Reading, with densities along the A33 corridor increased to make good use of increased accessibility;
- f. The isolation of some existing and new housing areas in South Reading will be reduced, thereby enhancing it as an attractive and pleasant place to live;
- g. Whitley district centre will be expanded to serve as the main district centre for South Reading;
- h. Opportunities to undertake renewal and regeneration of some of South Reading's suburban areas will be investigated;
- i. The watercourses and water bodies in the area, including the River Kennet and its tributaries, will be protected and enhanced as a multi-functional resource for ecology, landscape and recreation.

6.2.2 The overall strategy is illustrated on Figure 6.1.

6.2.3 There is scope for significant additional development in South Reading, both in terms of residential development on older commercial uses, and new modern employment space, around the A33 corridor. Opportunities for new development within the existing residential areas are more limited, but some potential for renewal of some of the housing areas may exist.

6.2.4 It is considered that South Reading can accommodate around 3,700 homes between 2013 and 2036, around 24% of the total planned for (this includes 479 homes completed between 2013 and 2017). It can also accommodate around 190,000 sq m of employment floorspace, a large majority of the total planned for, although the majority of this will be for industrial and warehousing rather than offices.



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Figure 6.1: Area Strategy for South Reading

- 6.2.5 In terms of a wider spatial strategy, the area is divided into four broad zones.
- 6.2.6 East of the B3031 Basingstoke Road are the established residential communities of South Reading, including Whitley and Whitley Wood. As previously referred to, these include Reading's largest concentration of deprivation. Within this area, there will be continued infill residential development, and there may also be opportunities to renew and regenerate some established residential areas, although this will require further detailed investigation.
- 6.2.7 Between the Basingstoke Road and the A33 is the largest area of employment land within the Borough. Much of this provides a vital resource for small and growing businesses needing cheaper accommodation, and for other uses that support Reading's economy including storage and distribution. However, there are some opportunities, where there are existing high levels of vacancy and where uses make less of a contribution to the economy of Reading, to reallocate some uses for carefully planned housing.
- 6.2.8 West of the A33 and north of the Kennet & Avon canal lie the Kennet Meadows, which are vital for wildlife, landscape and recreation. These contain a network of watercourses, including the River Kennet, Kennet & Avon Canal, Foudry Brook and Holy Brook and their tributaries. These will be preserved, although uses that enhance access and support their recreation function may be appropriate.
- 6.2.9 West of the A33 and south of the Kennet & Avon canal is the area which will see the greatest amount of development over the plan period, particularly for employment uses. Green Park will continue to expand as a premier business location, together with a new residential community, in a high quality setting and supported by a new station. The areas around Island Road to the north offer potential to meet the vast majority of Reading's need for new industrial and warehouse floorspace.
- 6.2.10 Critical to the strategy will be movement between the various parts of South Reading. The north to south links between the south of Reading and the town centre are already strong, but will be further enhanced through mass rapid transit and, potentially, any further transport infrastructure to support a potential garden village south of the M4 (see paragraph 6.2.12). East to west links are much weaker, however, and require enhancement. In particular, those links should allow pedestrians and cyclists from existing south Reading communities to better access jobs within new development further west.
- 6.2.11 Local facilities to support the new development proposed will generally be focused on existing designated centres. In particular, the Whitley district centre is expanding to meet south Reading's needs, and there is scope for this to continue. Efforts should be made to ensure that any new community provision provides for needs of both existing and new communities wherever possible.
- 6.2.12 The West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework identifies an opportunity for a major new garden village containing up to 15,000 new homes on land around Grazeley, south of the M4 and within the areas of Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council. It will be for the local plans for those areas to determine whether such a development is appropriate, and, if so, what the parameters should be. However, whilst such a development would include services and facilities, it would clearly still rely on higher-order services within Reading to meet some of its needs. Links into Reading by all modes of transport will therefore be crucial, and should be supported by the Local Plan.

6.3 South Reading Site-Specific Policies

Island Road Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *The Island Road area will be a major new location for industrial and warehouse development, providing jobs in one of the areas of greatest need.*

SR1: ISLAND ROAD MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development in the Island Road Major Opportunity Area will provide approximately 120,000 to 150,000 sq m of new business space comprising mainly industrial and warehouse uses, with some supporting office uses.

Development will:

- i. Locate the noisiest elements of the development away from any existing or planned residential, and include an adequate landscaped buffer to residential to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects through noise and disturbance;*
- ii. Through sensitive design, layout and landscaping, ensure that development does not detract from the character and appearance of the Kennet Meadows major landscape feature;*
- iii. Avoid negative impacts on drainage, water quality and flood risk on or off the site, including in relation to the river intake and groundwater protection zone of the nearby Fobney Water Treatment Works;*
- iv. Take account of potentially contaminated land and potential odour issues arising from the sewage treatment works;*
- v. Protect and where possible enhance biodiversity, particularly related to any development in close proximity to the watercourses, based on the findings of an ecological assessment;*
- vi. Protect existing public rights of way and enhance links to the east, across the A33;*
- vii. Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*
- viii. Take steps to mitigate any significant adverse impacts on the transport network;*
- ix. Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- x. Provide measures to ensure that the increase in new employment opportunities offers benefits to the local workforce, including through employment, skills and training measures.*

Development in surrounding areas will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area:

SR1a, FORMER LANDFILL, ISLAND ROAD:

The former landfill site will be developed for warehouse uses with some potential for industrial uses where it would not cause detrimental impacts to existing or planned residential. Development on past landfilled areas will need to demonstrate that it will not cause any negative effects on human health or on the wider environment. The noisiest elements of the development should be located away from any existing or planned residential, in particular residential at Green Park to the south, and development should include an adequate landscaped buffer to residential to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects through noise and disturbance, and a 10m undeveloped buffer to the watercourse to the east. Development should be considered as a comprehensive whole.

Site size: 32.13 ha Indicative potential: 95,000-116,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse use

SR1b, NORTH OF ISLAND ROAD:

This site will be developed for industrial/warehouse uses. Development should include a strong undeveloped ecological buffer to the River Kennet, as well as an ecological buffer to the brook to the west, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the biodiversity value of the waterway. A buffer should also be provided to existing residential to the west to ensure that there are no significant negative impacts on residential amenity.

Site size: 3.17 ha Indicative potential: 7,400-9,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse use

SR1c, ISLAND ROAD A33 FRONTAGE:

This site will be developed for commercial use. Proposals for industrial or warehouse use will therefore be appropriate, as will offices in line with the existing permission. Related commercial uses as part of the mix may also be appropriate, although proposals that would involve main town centre uses (excluding offices) will only be appropriate where there is no significant adverse impact on existing centres. The frontage to the A33 will be of high visual quality, and an alignment for a mass rapid transit route through the site in a north-south direction will be a requirement.

Site size: 9.7 ha Indicative potential: 27,000-32,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse uses, or alternative commercial uses.

- 6.3.1** The land around Island Road provides the main opportunity to meet the identified needs for industrial and warehouse land in Reading. It is located in close proximity to some of the areas of greatest concentration of unemployment and low skills, and could therefore potentially provide substantial economic benefits to the town.
- 6.3.2** However, the particular circumstances of much of the land mean that development will need to be sensitively designed and constructed. To the south of the area, over 700 new homes are being constructed at Green Park, and development risks creating tensions between these two uses. The areas to the north are identified as a major landscape feature, and development would potentially be visible from this feature, particularly where land is raised. Much of the site was previously used as sludge beds before becoming landfill, some of which was filled fairly recently, whilst other areas are within Flood Zone 2. For this reason, development will be dependent on adequately overcoming these constraints.
- 6.3.3** In terms of transport, the provision of new mass rapid transit, for which planning has reached an advanced stage in South Reading, provides part of a solution to transport issues in the area, and

land close to the A33 and within SR1c will be required to deliver this measure. The MRT routes will be required to the south to Mere oak park and ride, and to the south west towards the planned Green Park station and interchange. One possible route towards Green Park station, as an alternative to Longwater Avenue, would be through site SR1a, and the potential for this route to be provided will need to be considered.

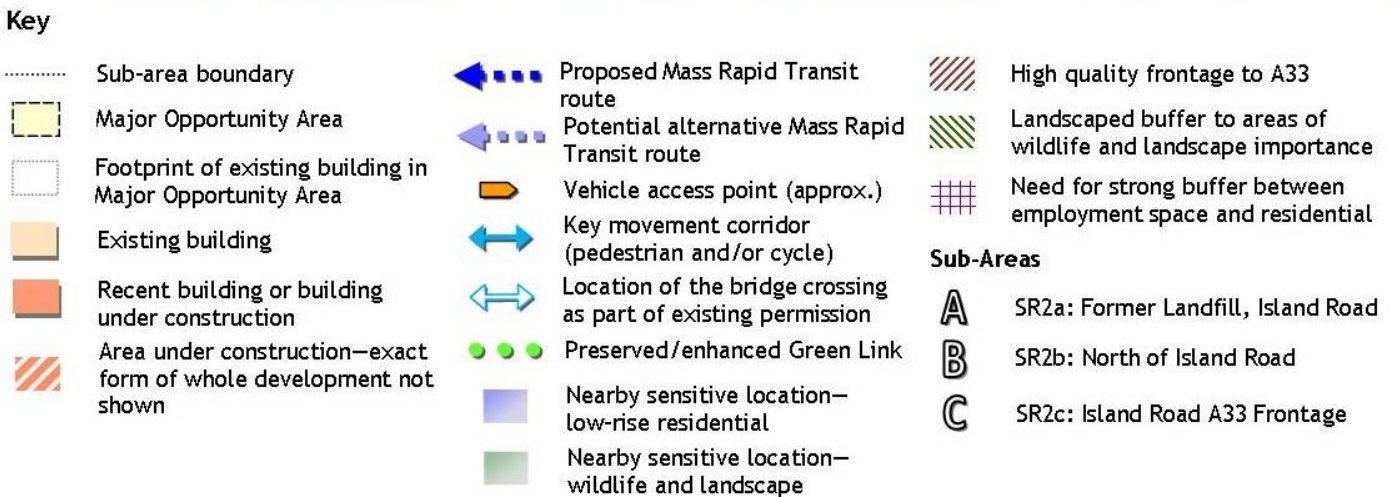


Figure 6.2: Island Road Major Opportunity Area Strategy

- 6.3.4 Planning permission already exists for over 70,000 sq m of offices on site SR1c as part of the Kennet Island planning permission. Whilst implementation of this scheme remains possible, this is not expected. The site is therefore also identified for alternative commercial uses, in particular industry and warehousing, albeit that other uses such as car showrooms or trade counter uses, along with offices in line with existing permissions, will potentially be appropriate. The existing office permission was considered appropriate in terms of transport impacts, and this will be taken into account in assessing schemes. The works to the Island Road and A33 junction were undertaken as part of the infrastructure works associated with this permission. Prior to development taking place, there may be some use of the site for temporary uses, where it would not affect the long term development potential of the site.
- 6.3.5 The location of the site close to the sewage treatment works means that early liaison with Thames Water is likely to be required. Sites within this area potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.
- 6.3.6 Figure 6.2 illustrates some of the key principles from the policy.

Land North of Manor Farm Road Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *Land north of Manor Farm Road will be a new residential community linking to Kennet Island and centred on an extended Whitley district centre.*

SR2: LAND NORTH OF MANOR FARM ROAD MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

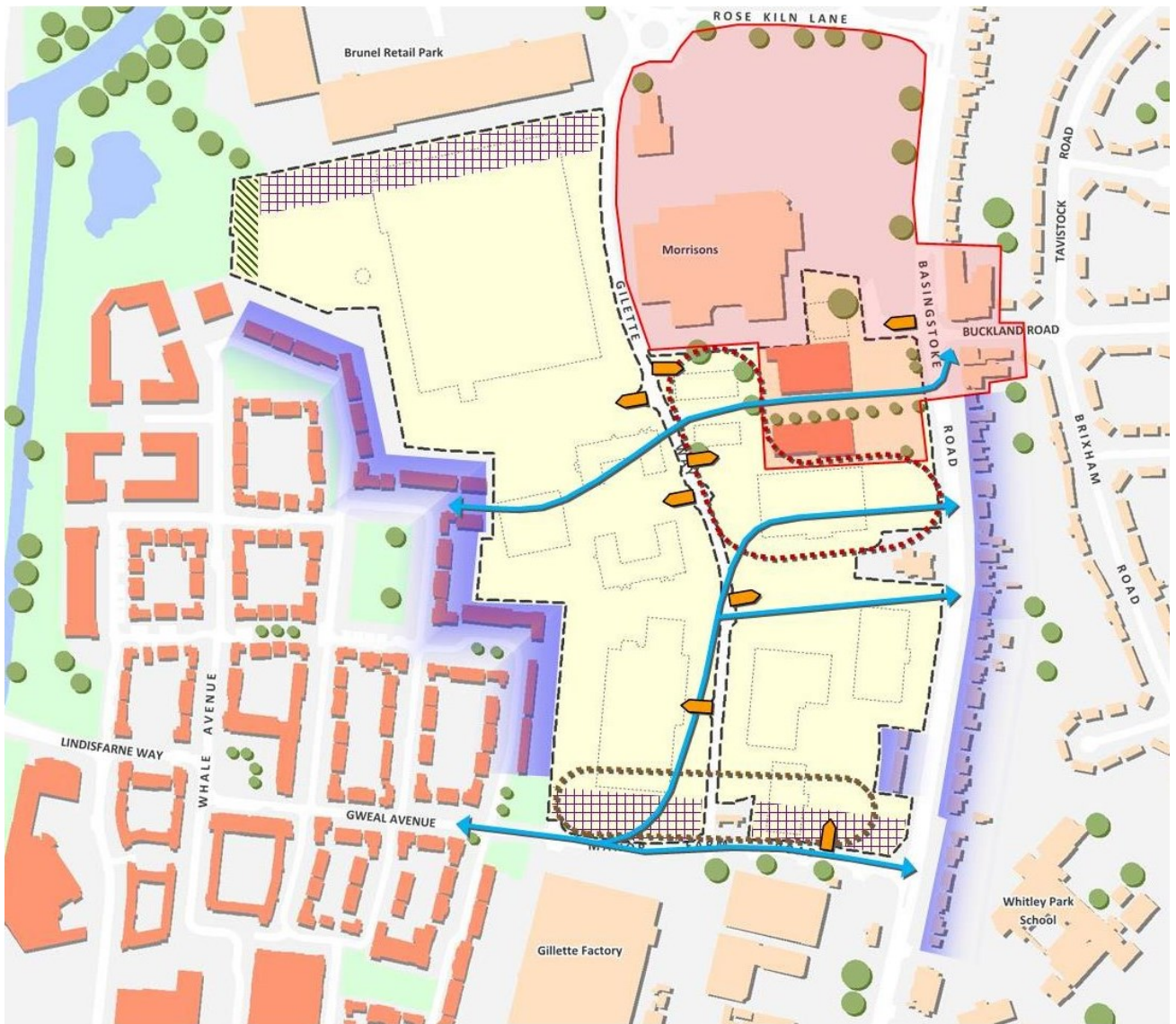
Redevelopment of the Manor Farm Road site will primarily be for housing (between 680-1,020 dwellings), an extension to the Whitley District Centre, school provision and open space and public realm improvements, but also include small employment units to replace the Micro Centre, community uses, in addition to a limited amount of employment uses.

Development will:

- i. Not be piecemeal in nature but will only be in appropriately sized/arranged sites that will promote the integration of Kennet Island with the established areas of Whitley to the east¹¹². Proposals should be designed in the context of a wider development of the area;*
- ii. Incorporate measures to facilitate improved pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular east/west links across Basingstoke Road and through to Kennet Island;*
- iii. Enhance the Basingstoke Road frontage to reflect the scale and character of existing residential development to the east;*

¹¹² This will ultimately be a judgement to make at planning application stage. It is not expected that all sites within SR2 will come forward at once, but the decision on whether particular schemes are acceptable will be based on whether a site can be developed without significantly compromising the living environment of residents of the site, and without resulting in an inward-looking scheme that prevents the development from relating well to future development of adjoining sites. This will need to take into account matters such as the size of the site, the relationship with and use of adjoining sites and whether an appropriate buffer exists or can be created.

- iv. In meeting the Council’s sustainability requirements, secure energy from a decentralised energy source;
- v. Include transitional non-residential uses along the frontage of Manor Farm Road to reflect the commercial nature of land to the south and to avoid introducing new homes into an area where existing commercial activities could detract from the amenities of future residential occupants;
- vi. Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Whitley District Centre through the provision of additional complementary community facilities and smaller retail



Key

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Sub-area boundary | Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential | Potential for town centre uses as expansion of district centre |
| Major Opportunity Area | Vehicle access point | Potential for commercial uses as transition to employment area |
| Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area | Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle) | Landscaped buffer to nature reserve |
| Existing building | District centre | Need for strong buffer to existing commercial uses |
| Recent building or building under construction | | |

Figure 6.3: Land North of Manor Farm Road Major Opportunity Area Strategy

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units, but not retail warehousing, to serve the local community;

vii. Make relevant and necessary contributions to enhance and improve the existing community facilities in the wider Whitley area;

viii. Take account of potential surface water flooding, and potentially contaminated land, and ensure that there is no adverse effect on water quality;

ix. Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and

x. Take account of potential archaeological significance.

Site size: 13.69 ha Indicative potential: 680-1,020 dwellings, potential net gain in retail and leisure.

- 6.3.7** The land north of Manor Farm Road comprises a large grouping of employment premises, a number of which are vacant. An opportunity has been identified for redevelopment to provide an area of new housing to connect the Kennet Island residential area, construction of which is coming towards an end, and the older established residential areas to the east.
- 6.3.8** An opportunity to extend the Whitley district centre was also identified when the site was originally designated, and this has led to the development of former offices for a new foodstore, gym and public house. There may be opportunities to provide further facilities to extend the centre.
- 6.3.9** Sites within this area potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.
- 6.3.10** Figure 6.3 illustrates some of the key principles from the policy.

South of Elgar Road Major Opportunity Area

VISION: *The area will be redeveloped to form a new residential community which improves the relationship with the adjoining meadows.*

SR3: SOUTH OF ELGAR ROAD MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development of the South of Elgar Road site will be for residential (330-500 dwellings), with potential for supporting community uses. The potential for commercial uses to be part of any future mixed-use development hinges on whether a layout can be created that allows the relationship between residential and commercial to be effectively managed.

Development will:

- i. Ensure that there are measures in place, such as an appropriate buffer between new residential development and any adjacent industrial and warehouse uses, to ensure that there are no adverse effects on residents as a result of noise and disturbance and the visual impact of business uses;*
- ii. Provide a high quality landscaped ecological boundary to Waterloo Meadows, and a*

landscaped green link to connect Waterloo Meadows to the vegetated area to the northeast of Elgar Road;

- iii. Enhance pedestrian access between Elgar Road and Waterloo Meadows;
- iv. Retain significant trees on the site wherever possible;
- v. Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;
- vi. Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required;



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Key

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Sub-area boundary | Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential | Landscaped buffer to open space |
| Major Opportunity Area | Vehicle access point | Need for strong buffer to existing industrial uses—location dependent on sites that come forward |
| Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area | Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle) | Local centre |
| Existing building | Preserved/enhanced Green Link | |

Figure 6.4: South of Elgar Road Major Opportunity Area Strategy

vii. Where possible, use existing accesses; and

viii. Take account of potential surface water flooding, and potentially contaminated land.

Site size: 5.38 ha Indicative potential: 330-500 dwellings.

6.3.11 There is an opportunity to redevelop some sites along the southern side of Elgar Road South for residential. This area has historically been part of Reading's employment offer, but in recent years there have been other uses such as retail, and some vacancy. The largest opportunity is the Makro site, which covers most of the major opportunity area, but there are possibilities of extending any development west and east to allow it to better relate to established residential areas. This is likely to represent a longer-term opportunity, arising in the second half of the plan period.

6.3.12 Figure 6.4 illustrates some of the key principles from the policy.

Other Sites for Development in South Reading

SR4: OTHER SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH READING

The following sites will be developed according with the principles set out in this policy:

SR4a PULLEYN PARK, ROSE KILN LANE

Redevelopment of builders merchant and car dealerships for residential, with potential for on-site retail facilities to serve the site.

Development should:

- *Include a landscaped buffer to the River Kennet to ensure no detrimental impacts on the Local Wildlife Site, with development set back at least 10m from the river, retaining trees along the river frontage wherever possible;*
- *Enhance the green link through the site following the stream that links the Holy Brook and River Kennet, including ecological enhancements;*
- *Include a buffer to the commercial uses to the south to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on amenity of residents;*
- *Be designed to avoid overlooking of rear gardens and residential properties to the east of the river on Elgar Road;*
- *Address flood risk issues and not be located in the area of the site at highest risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3);*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise and light impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 1.29 ha 70-100 dwellings

SR4b REAR OF 3-29 NEWCASTLE ROAD

Development for residential

Development should:

- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*

Site size: 0.47 ha 18-27 dwellings

SR4c 169-173 BASINGSTOKE ROAD

Redevelopment of industrial and warehousing for residential

Development should:

- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.8 ha 50-80 dwellings

SR4d 16-18 BENNET ROAD

Development for employment uses, preferably for industrial and warehouse development.

Development should:

- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Address flood risk issues; and*
- *Take account of the location of a pumping station in close proximity, which will require liaison with Thames Water.*

Site size: 0.74 ha 2,200-2,700 sq m of industrial and warehousing

SR4e PART OF FORMER BERKSHIRE BREWERY SITE

Development for employment uses. The site has an existing permission for 33,910 sq m of offices, but would also be suitable for industrial and warehouse development. Related commercial uses as part of the mix may also be appropriate, although proposals that would involve main town centre uses (excluding offices) will only be appropriate where there is no significant adverse impact on existing centres.

Development should:

- *Enhance the setting of the listed Little Lea Farmhouse;*
- *Provide for a green link along the A33 frontage;*
- *Include a landscaped buffer to the watercourses around the site, with development set back at least 10m from the river wherever possible;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Safeguard land which is required for mass rapid transit routes and stops.*

Site size: 3.7 ha 11,000-13,000 sq m of industrial and warehousing

SR4f LAND SOUTH WEST OF JUNCTION 11 OF THE M4

This land may be required for uses associated with any major development around Grazeley if identified in plans of Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council. The form of any development, if identified, is yet to be determined, and therefore no further details can be set out in this policy. Any development will take account of potential archaeological significance and will need to ensure a 10m ecological buffer to the watercourse.

Site size: 3.84 ha No figures for development capacity

- 6.3.13** This policy identifies those sites within South Reading where development will be appropriate. As well as contributing to meeting the identified needs of the Borough, allocation can help provide physical regeneration of sites which are in some cases vacant or underused. In addition, it allows the Council to highlight the issues which need to be addressed in developing sites, set out site-specific requirements and, if necessary, plan for the provision of infrastructure.
- 6.3.14** Where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in SR1 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan, including, for residential developments, the need to provide affordable housing.
- 6.3.15** Where there are significant issues that will need to be addressed in any planning applications on the specific sites listed above, these are usually highlighted in the policy. However, it is not a guarantee that there are no other potential issues, and it does not remove the need to address the usual matters that should be dealt with on all sites.
- 6.3.16** On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for specific groups outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in regional and/or local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory.
- 6.3.17** This policy identifies a site (SR4f) which may be required to make up part of a much larger site around Grazeley, which would mainly be within Wokingham and West Berkshire. This site was identified as an Area of Search within the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework, but it has not been identified within any development plans at this point. It is not for the Reading Borough Local Plan to determine whether the wider site is appropriate for development, but should it be identified in forthcoming adjoining Local Plans, it is important that Reading Borough's section of the site is considered as part of the whole. If an allocation is made, the overall layout of the development would need to be determined, and the role of the part of the site in Reading will depend on the overall layout - it could involve open space or landscaping provision, services or infrastructure, or residential development, although proximity to the M4 is likely to limit potential for new homes.

Sites with existing planning permission

- 6.3.18** At the time of publication of the draft Local Plan, a number of sites in South Reading had planning permission for 10 or more dwellings or more than 1,000 sq m of employment development. There is not considered to be a need to identify these sites within a policy, as the permission establishes the principle of the development. Any future applications on these sites will be acceptable where they are substantially the same as the existing permission. Applications for developments will need to be considered against policies in the plan, in

particular whether it would adversely impact the likelihood of meeting Reading's identified development needs.

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|--|----------------|---|
| Plot 8, 600 South Oak Way | 070488 | Development for offices (20,430 sq m) |
| Madejski Stadium, Royal Way | 101623 | Expansion of football stadium (28,442 sq m net gain) |
| Lok n Store, 5-9 Berkeley Avenue | 101656 | Redevelopment for 112 dwellings |
| Green Park Village, Longwater Avenue | 102172 | Development for 737 dwellings, extra care housing, offices (16,000 sq m), primary school, community use (381 sq m), retail and related facilities (684 sq m) (under construction) |
| Foudry Place and 22 Commercial Road | 120408 | Remainder of permission for development for offices (2,295 sq m) and serviced apartments (1,400 sq m) |
| Kennet Island Phase 3, Manor Farm Road | 121062 | Development for 546 dwellings (under construction) |
| 21 Rose Kiln Lane | 140542 | Redevelopment for retail warehouse (net reduction in floorspace) (under construction) |
| Reading Girl's School, Northumberland Avenue | 140708 | Redevelopment for new secondary school (5,101 sq m net gain) (under construction) |
| Plot 17, 500-600 Longwater Avenue | 141447 | Development for offices (22,540 sq m) |
| Land west of A33 and north of Island Road | 141789 | Development for industrial/warehouse (24,200 sq m) (under construction) |
| Land west of Longwater Avenue | 141944 | New railway station (6,106 sq m) |
| 177 Basingstoke Road | 150715 | Development of student accommodation for 34 bedspaces (under construction) |
| Warwick House, Warwick Road | 151407 | Development for 10 dwellings ¹¹³ |
| Worton Grange | 151944, 161496 | Development of 175 dwellings, industrial/warehouse units (2,452 sq m), car showrooms (2,510 sq m), hotel (4,134 sq m), retail and related uses (6,075 sq m) (under construction) |
| Lancaster Jaguar, Bennet Road, Reading | 152071 | Extension of vehicle dealership (3,078 sq m net gain) (under construction) |
| 400 Longwater Avenue | 160569 | Development for offices (27,207 sq m) |

Development progress is correct to 31st March 2017

¹¹³ Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement

Leisure and Recreation Use of the Kennetside Areas

SR5: LEISURE AND RECREATION USE OF THE KENNETSIDE AREAS

Use of the areas around the River Kennet for low-intensity leisure and recreation will be supported. The following sites in particular offer opportunities to enhance recreation and leisure provision:

- *Former laboratory and fish farm, Fobney Mead*
- *Land north and east of Rose Kiln Lane*

These sites are located wholly or partly in the functional floodplain, and parts of the site and surrounding areas have strong significance for biodiversity. As such, the uses supported by this policy would be low-intensity in nature, with any built development of limited scale, and, within the functional floodplain, water-compatible.

Any proposals will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impacts on biodiversity, flood risk, landscape, public foot and cycle access along the river and the operation and condition of the river. If a proposal results in additional use of the Kennet by boats, it should not have an adverse effect on the River Kennet Site of Special Scientific Interest further upstream.

- 6.3.19** With an increasing residential population in South Reading, as well as in other parts of the Borough, there is an opportunity to use the considerable asset of the River Kennet as a recreational resource to which these new residents have good access. However, these areas are heavily constrained by flood risk, biodiversity and landscape considerations, which means that an allocation for significant built leisure development cannot be made.
- 6.3.20** This allocation is therefore limited to low-intensity uses, where built development is limited. A marina is a potential use, and the area north and east of Rose Kiln Lane was in the past identified for such a use. Other possible uses include visitor facilities (where appropriate to the flood risk designation) and accessible open spaces. The policy does not identify the sites for more intensive built leisure uses. Such uses would not be in line with national policy were they to be located within the functional floodplain, and additionally would need to pass other policy tests such as the sequential test for main town centre uses.

7. WEST READING AND TILEHURST

7.1 Area Context

- 7.1.1** The area covered by this section is the west of Reading Borough, including part of the former parish of Tilehurst. This area is bounded by the River Thames to the north and the Kennet Meadows to the south. The east of the area abuts the town centre around the Inner Distribution Road, whilst the west of the area is the boundary with West Berkshire District.
- 7.1.2** The Reading urban area extends well beyond the Borough boundaries into West Berkshire in the areas of Purley-on-Thames, the parish of Tilehurst, and Calcot, and there is no clear distinction between these areas on the ground. These areas form part of what West Berkshire's Core Strategy calls the Eastern Urban Area.
- 7.1.3** According to the 2011 Census, around 58,300 people live within the West Reading and Tilehurst area, whilst a further 25,900 people reside in the immediate adjoining urban areas within West Berkshire. Housing in the area includes a wide range of types, with older terraces around Oxford Road, and Victorian villas around the eastern part of the Bath Road area, moving into more modern suburban areas and a number of local authority housing estates further west. There are two conservation areas close to the town centre, Downshire Square and Russell Street and Castle Hill, whilst the Horncastle and Routh Lane conservation areas, remnants of former hamlets separated from Reading, are adjacent to the Borough boundary.
- 7.1.4** The area includes two large industrial areas around Portman Road and Richfield Avenue. In terms of transport, the A329 Oxford Road and A4 Bath Road corridors are the main road routes, whilst the main Great Western line towards the West and Wales passes through the area, as well as the lines towards Newbury and Basingstoke. Reading West and Tilehurst stations are both within the area. As well as the very significant flood meadows around the Thames and Kennet, the area also includes one of Reading's main historic parks, Prospect Park, as well as a network of parks and woodlands with wildlife significance threaded through Tilehurst.
- 7.1.5** Outside Reading's boundaries, there is a concentration of retail development at Junction 12 of the M4, as well as one of the Reading urban area's main business parks at Theale. Education facilities in West Berkshire, particularly the secondary schools, draw pupils from within Reading. Beyond the urban area is the eastern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

7.2 Strategy for West Reading and Tilehurst

- 7.2.1** The following represent some key principles for the area:
- Important employment areas will be retained for the most part, although some loss of identified fringe locations will help to manage the tension between employment and residential areas;
 - District and local centres will continue to thrive, and the Meadway district centre will see development to ensure that it is better able to serve the local community;
 - Opportunities to undertake renewal and regeneration of some of West Reading's suburban areas will be investigated;
 - New development will provide or contribute to infrastructure to adequately support the development;

- e. New park and ride capacity will be sought on the A4 and A329 corridors;
- f. Development will enable and support key transport improvements, such as mass rapid transit, the upgrade of Cow Lane Bridges, National Cycle Network route 422 and the upgrade of Reading West station.
- g. Areas of landscape and heritage importance will be preserved, including the edge of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- h. Recreation use of the Rivers Thames and Kennet and their surrounds will be promoted.
- i. Should any future major development take place to the south west of Reading, infrastructure links into Reading should be enhanced.

7.2.2 The strategy for the area is illustrated on Figure 7.1.

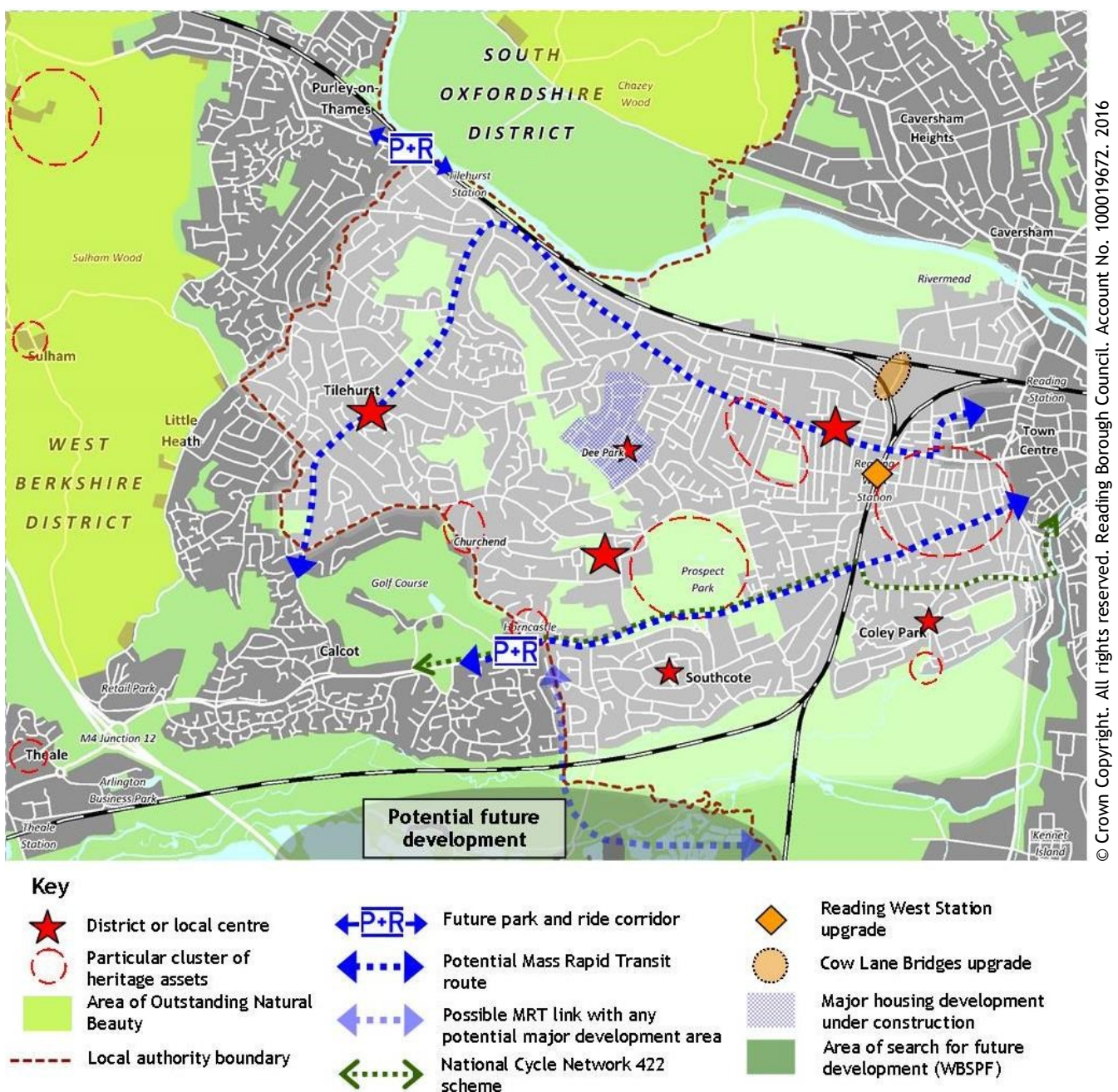


Figure 7.1: Area Strategy for West Reading and Tilehurst

- 7.2.3 West Reading and Tilehurst has some potential for additional development, although not on the scale of Central and South Reading, as it is largely taken up with existing residential areas, industrial areas that need to be retained, and important areas of recreational open green space or flood meadows.
- 7.2.4 It is considered that West Reading and Tilehurst can accommodate around 2,400 homes between 2013 and 2036, around 15% of the total planned for (this includes 554 dwellings that were completed between 2013 and 2017). Enhancement of the Meadway centre, along with other developments, may deliver some commercial development, but this is unlikely to be a substantial proportion of development needs. It is important to note that this is an indication of potential capacity, not a policy target.
- 7.2.5 Opportunities for new development are largely spread out over the whole area, as there are not the same opportunities for large new development sites that exist in South Reading. Much of the development is expected to be in the form of small sites, as has historically been the case. There are potential opportunities for some of the older residential areas to see some regeneration and renewal, although opportunities are not expected to be on the scale of the ongoing development at Dee Park.
- 7.2.6 Provision of local services and facilities will be focused on existing centres, and, of the three district centres in the area, it is the Meadway centre where it is anticipated that there will be the greatest provision of new facilities. The older industrial areas, particularly those around Portman Road and Richfield Avenue, will be retained and protected, although there is scope for some limited release of employment land at the latter to enable a better relationship between industrial uses and neighbouring homes.
- 7.2.7 There are a number of important heritage assets, including four conservation areas and a historic park, which will be conserved. West Reading also has substantial biodiversity interest, with a network of woodlands threaded through the urban area, which would benefit from being better linked together, as well as the biodiversity importance of the Thames, Kennet, Holy Brook and their surrounds including the Kennet Meadows. Most of the same areas also have considerable landscape significance, due to the topography of the area. In a wider sense, the North Wessex Downs AONB is close to the Borough boundary to the west, whilst the Chilterns AONB is on the other side of the Thames, and West Reading has a number of locations with clear views into and from the Chilterns AONB in particular. Development should preserve these features, and where appropriate and possible, enhance them.
- 7.2.8 It is important to recognise the location of a substantial part of the urban area outside the Borough boundaries. The boundary in this location bears little relationship to the function of the area as a whole, and new development in West Berkshire will use facilities in Reading, and vice versa. There is therefore a need for policy on the areas to be aligned, and to ensure that provision of infrastructure on both sides of the boundary is viewed in the context of the area as a whole.
- 7.2.9 The issue of the Borough boundary is illustrated in terms of mass rapid transit and park and ride. Both the A4 (Bath Road) and A329 (Oxford Road) corridors are major entrances to Reading where park and ride provision will be sought, but that will necessitate sites being provided within West Berkshire, linked into Reading by mass rapid transit, which may in some cases require a dedicated route. Reading will continue to work with West Berkshire to address these, and other, important cross boundary transport issues.

7.2.10 It must also be recognised that there is a possibility that, in the long-term, significant development may take place on the edge of the urban area outside the Borough boundaries, potentially taking the form of an urban extension. At the stage of this plan, neither Reading Borough nor West Berkshire District Councils are proposing such development, although the Spatial Planning Framework identifies an area of search to the south west of Reading around the M4. If a large scale development were to occur within the lifetime of the plan, it would be vital to recognise its likely reliance on Reading for high-order services and facilities, and ensure that there is adequate infrastructure provision, including linking into Reading's public transport network.

7.3 West Reading and Tilehurst Site-Specific Policies

Dee Park

WR1: DEE PARK

The Dee Park area, as identified on the Proposals Map, will continue to be regenerated to provide a sustainable community including the following:

- *New and improved housing, which increases the overall density of the site, and provides a greater mix of size, type and tenure, including a higher proportion of family housing than at the outset of regeneration;*
- *A new Local Centre including a range of facilities, integrated with housing development;*
- *Improved community facilities, which would be multi-functional and serve a range of groups, and may include sports facilities; and*
- *Improved quality of open space provision, including greater usability of recreational space, and an area of public realm in the centre.*

Development will be integrated with surrounding areas, provide a safe and secure environment, and enhance transport links to and from the estate. Development will take account of potential surface water flooding.

Development will maintain and enhance the role of Ranikhet Primary School in serving the local and wider community.

- 7.3.1** Dee Park is a mainly 1960s housing estate in West Reading, primarily within Norcot ward. The following physical issues have been identified with the estate:
- A poor quality physical environment that contributes to issues of crime and anti-social behaviour and a lack of integration with its surroundings;
 - Poor quality, energy efficiency and condition of some of the buildings and parts of the public realm;
 - Lack of facilities, and low levels of use of existing facilities, which results in vacancy and lack of viability of the local centre;
 - Lack of a mix of housing, with a high proportion of small units, and a transient population.

7.3.2 Regeneration of the area is therefore essential, and a key objective for the Council. This regeneration is well underway, and at the time of this plan, phases 1, 2a and 2b had delivered 471 new homes (a net gain of around 200) along with new retail facilities, with 44 more homes under construction. The remainder of the scheme as currently permitted would deliver 190 more homes (a net gain of 100), and this has not commenced.

- 7.3.3 This policy is therefore required to support ongoing regeneration plans for Dee Park. This policy does not refer to a comprehensive redevelopment of the entire area, as there are existing buildings and areas which will be incorporated into any scheme. This policy also does not include a target for how many additional dwellings will result from the development, although the current permission is for a total net gain of 342 dwellings (including those already built). This reflects the fact that the key issue is achieving physical regeneration, and it is not therefore appropriate to be prescriptive in terms of how many dwellings will result.
- 7.3.4 The Dee Park Planning Brief, adopted as an SPD in 2008, highlights the issues and proposed solutions in much greater depth. This document continues to be relevant for any planning decisions.

Park Lane Primary School, The Laurels and Downing Road

WR2: PARK LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE LAURELS AND DOWNING ROAD

The existing Park Lane Primary School and associated playing fields, hard play areas, car parking and associated facilities will be reprovided on a single extended site at The Laurels, School Road, Tilehurst, which will include a replacement library and health clinic.

If required to support the scheme, subject to it being demonstrated that the loss of the open space is justified under relevant national and local policy, the Downing Road Playing Fields will be developed for residential (45-55 dwellings) together with appropriate public open space, including a play area, and provide an appropriate setting for the existing public footpath that forms the western boundary of the site. Resolution of highway and access issues on Downing Road will be required. Hedgerows and trees should be retained. Improvements to pitches elsewhere will be necessary to help to offset the loss of playing fields.

The main Park Lane School Site will be redeveloped for residential purposes (15-20 dwellings) with access off Downing Road and Chapel Hill. Development should address the practicality of retaining elements of the existing building within any new scheme.

The Park Lane School Annex will be reused/redeveloped for community or residential purposes, subject to safeguarding the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties.

Development should take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.

- 7.3.5 Park Lane Primary School is a 2 Form Entry (2FE) Primary School. The school currently operates from a split campus across four separate sites. This arrangement provides an unsatisfactory primary education environment. In addition, the suitability and condition of its buildings and outdoor play areas is far from ideal in relation to modern education practice. The total site area of the 4 parcels of land that comprise the existing school extends to 2.67ha.
- 7.3.6 As part of a major rationalisation project, it is proposed to build a replacement 2FE primary school on the site of The Laurels incorporating the existing Blagrove Nursery, Tilehurst Library and Tilehurst Health Clinic and utilising, and reconfiguring, part of the existing recreation

ground for school playing fields and outdoor play. The existing Blagrove Nursery school site would be returned to public open space and incorporated into Blagrove Recreation Ground. The scheme will provide new, bespoke designed school buildings, in conjunction with the required external playing field areas sufficient to meet the minimum requirements for a school of this size along with a new 2-court MUGA hard court provision.

- 7.3.7** The current Junior part of the school comprises two built sites along with a playing field located at the end of Downing Road. The main school site which fronts onto Park Lane, with entrances from Chapel Hill and Downing Road, contains an extended Victorian brick building with a grassed frontage to Park Lane and hard play areas to the rear. The site contains a number of trees. National policy gives further weight to the conservation of local heritage assets even where they are undesignated, and requires that applications affecting heritage assets, including local heritage assets such as Park Lane School, should be accompanied by information on the significance of the asset using appropriate expertise, and that there is a presumption in favour of conservation of the asset. Any development of the site should address the practicality of retaining and converting parts of the existing school building. The site is proposed for residential development although the provision of specialist accommodation, e.g. care home, elderly units, etc., would be appropriate in this very accessible location.
- 7.3.8** The Annex site contains a single storey prefabricated building with frontage to the eastern side of Downing Road. The depth of the site is only 13 metres which is very shallow and it backs on to houses and gardens that front Park Lane/ School Road. The site and existing building is provisionally reserved for a police office and a facility for the Tilehurst Horticultural Association. Residential would be an appropriate alternative use of the land, subject to regard being paid to the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties.
- 7.3.9** The Downing Road Playing Field is a fenced area of private, recreational space. Loss of open space is generally resisted by policy in this Local Plan, which is why specific work has been undertaken on this piece of land. The disposal of the Downing Road Playing Field has been approved by the Secretary of State for Education (under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). In addition, the Playing Pitches Strategy (2017) examined the significance of the site in detail, and considered that its loss for residential development would be justified in this case.
- 7.3.10** The proposal at Downing Road is for residential development, although the provision of specialist accommodation, e.g. care home, elderly units, would be appropriate in this very accessible location. Some public open space provision, including a play area, should be provided as part of any development and provide an appropriate setting for the public footpath adjoining the western boundary of the site. Developers should examine the possibility of serving some of the development via a separate access from Beverley Road.
- 7.3.11** This site potentially contains public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

Other Sites for Development in West Reading and Tilehurst

WR3: OTHER SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN WEST READING AND TILEHURST

The following sites will be developed according with the principles set out in this policy:

WR3a FORMER COX & WYMAN SITE, CARDIFF ROAD

Development for residential, with potential for commercial uses on the western edge of the site, and on-site public open space.

Development should:

- *Take account of access restrictions on surrounding streets and ensure that residential access is generally separated from accesses to commercial areas;*
- *Include all parking requirements within the site to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets;*
- *Ensure appropriate separation or buffers between residential and industrial areas, to improve the relationship between the two uses in the local area;*
- *Use materials on the frontages to existing residential streets that complement the character of those streets, which contain examples of Reading patterned brickwork;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO along Addison Road;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Ensure that development has no adverse effect on water quality.*

Site size: 1.31 ha 70-110 dwellings

WR3b 2 ROSS ROAD & PART OF MEADOW ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Take account of access restrictions on surrounding streets and ensure that residential access is generally separated from accesses to commercial areas;*
- *Include all parking requirements within the site to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets;*
- *Ensure appropriate separation or buffers between residential and industrial areas, to improve the relationship between the two uses in the local area;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment.*

Site size: 0.6 ha 39-60 dwellings

WR3c 28-30 RICHFIELD AVENUE

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Ensure appropriate separation or buffers between residential and industrial areas, to improve the relationship between the two uses in the local area;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required;*
- *Ensure that Thames Water assets on site are retained; and*
- *Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment.*

Site size: 0.78 ha 50-80 dwellings

WR3d RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE, RICHFIELD AVENUE

Additional development to improve the town's leisure offer, including new swimming provision.

Development should:

- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment.*

Site size: 3.75 ha Additional leisure floorspace

WR3e YEOMANRY HOUSE, CASTLE HILL

Change of use of listed building to residential use or to potential office or restaurant use.

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Retain the lawn and wooded frontage to Castle Hill as a key part of the setting of the building and conservation area.*

Site size: 0.44 ha 10-14 dwellings

WR3f 4 BERKELEY AVENUE

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 0.06 ha 10-14 dwellings

WR3g 211-221 OXFORD ROAD, 10 AND REAR OF 8 PROSPECT STREET

Development for residential with district centre uses on ground floor Oxford Road frontage, continuing the existing Oxford Road building line.

Development should:

- *Enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 0.3 ha 6-10 dwellings and ground floor district centre uses

WR3h REAR OF 303-315 OXFORD ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Retain rear access for properties on Oxford Road;*
- *Only take place as a comprehensive development rather than parts of the site;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on trees protected by TPO;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.*

Site size: 0.22 ha 14-20 dwellings

WR3i PART OF FORMER BATTLE HOSPITAL, PORTMAN ROAD

Development for residential, including appropriate open space provision to complement the existing Battle Square.

Development should:

- *Be accessed from the south rather than directly from Portman Road;*
- *Enhance pedestrian and cycle permeability through the site, including provision of a footpath/cycleway along the northern frontage of the site;*
- *Mitigate any impacts on Cow Lane Bridges and the Norcot Road/Oxford Road/Portman Road roundabout;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Provide for a green link along the Portman Road frontage;*
- *Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment, including from surface water;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required;*
- *Take account of the location of a pumping station in close proximity, which will require liaison with Thames Water; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 2.77 ha 160-240 dwellings

WR3j LAND AT MOULSFORD MEWS

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 0.16 ha 10-16 dwellings

WR3k 784-794 OXFORD ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Only take place as a comprehensive development rather than parts of the site;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 0.22 ha 14-22 dwellings

WR3l 816 OXFORD ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.*

Site size: 0.23 ha 13-20 dwellings

WR3m 103 DEE ROAD

Development for residential subject to the fire station being surplus to requirements.

Development should:

- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.85 ha 34-50 dwellings

WR3n AMETHYST LANE

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.57 ha 32-48 dwellings

WR3o THE MEADWAY CENTRE, HONEY END LANE

Development of existing shopping centre to provide a new district centre including retail and leisure uses. Development should be as comprehensive as possible. There will be no net loss in residential, and a net gain will be provided where possible.

Development should:

- *Enhance the diversity of types and sizes of uses within the district centre;*
- *Ensure that district centre uses including a strong retail component is provided on ground floors;*
- *Improve links within the centre and to adjoining areas, and be designed to draw people into the centre;*
- *Not take the form of additional development that does not seek to address the centre's existing design issues;*
- *Be arranged around a quality public space which can serve as a focus for the community;*
- *Include new tree planting and retain existing important trees where possible;*
- *Avoid detrimental effects on the biodiversity and landscape significance of the woodland to the north and west of the site;*
- *Provide for an enhanced green link at the south and west of the site between Prospect Park and the Meadway Woodland;*
- *Reduce height towards the rear of residential properties on Cockney Hill;*
- *Be designed to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour;*
- *Be accessed from existing accesses;*
- *Enhance cycle access to the site; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 2.99 ha 3,700-4,600 sq m of retail and leisure (net gain)

WR3p ALICE BURROWS HOME, DWYER ROAD

Development for residential and/or residential care.

Development should:

- *Be accessed from Appleford Road only;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.48 ha 18-27 dwellings or an equivalent number of residential care bedspaces

WR3q NORCOT COMMUNITY CENTRE, LYNDHURST ROAD

Development for residential and replacement community use.

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental effects on the green link and pedestrian route between Oxford Road and McIlroy Park; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.13 ha 13-20 dwellings with community use provision

WR3r CHARTERS CAR SALES, OXFORD ROAD*Development for residential.**Development should:*

- *Provide access to the site from Lippincote Court;*
- *Avoid adverse visual impacts on views from the north side of the Thames and on the Thames Valley major landscape feature;*
- *Avoid detrimental impacts on the wildlife value of adjoining wooded areas;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Take account of the two-storey character of houses south of Oxford Road.*

*Site size: 0.33 ha 12-18 dwellings***WR3s LAND AT KENTWOOD HILL***Development for residential.**Development should:*

- *Be supported by information showing how development fits within a comprehensive approach to the whole area (including WR3t and the protection of the neighbouring allotments and recreation ground);*
- *Assess and mitigate any impacts on the Kentwood Hill/Norcot Road/School Road junction;*
- *Provide adequate footway/cycleway provision to link into existing routes;*
- *Include a landscaped border to Kentwood Hill;*
- *Provide for well-vegetated green links between the copse and the Victoria Recreation Ground, and between the copse and Kentwood Hill;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees, including those protected by TPO, and on the stream in the copse;*
- *Avoid any detrimental impacts upon biodiversity, and provide for biodiversity net gain wherever possible;*
- *Avoid adverse visual impacts on the West Reading Wooded Ridgeline major landscape feature, and ensure that views can be gained through the site from the recreation ground and neighbouring streets towards the Chiltern escarpment;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

*Site size: 1.43 ha 41-62 dwellings***WR3t LAND AT ARMOUR HILL***Development for residential**Development should:*

- *Be supported by information showing how development fits within a comprehensive approach to the whole area (including WR3s and the protection of the neighbouring allotments and recreation ground);*
- *Ensure that there is no reduction in vehicle access to, parking for and security of the allotments;*
- *Assess and mitigate any impacts on the Armour Hill/Kentwood Hill junction;*
- *Include a landscaped border to Armour Hill;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Avoid any detrimental impacts upon biodiversity, and provide for biodiversity net gain wherever possible;*
- *Avoid adverse visual impacts on the West Reading Wooded Ridgeline major landscape feature;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.45 ha 12-18 dwellings

- 7.3.12** This policy identifies those sites within West Reading and Tilehurst where development will be appropriate. As well as contributing to meeting the identified needs of the Borough, allocation can help provide physical regeneration of sites which are in some cases vacant or underused. In addition, it allows the Council to highlight the issues which need to be addressed in developing sites, set out site-specific requirements and, if necessary, plan for the provision of infrastructure.
- 7.3.13** Where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in WR3 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan, including, for residential developments, the need to provide affordable housing.
- 7.3.14** Where there are significant issues that will need to be addressed in any planning applications on the specific sites listed above, these are usually highlighted in the policy. However, it is not a guarantee that there are no other potential issues, and it does not remove the need to address the usual matters that should be dealt with on all sites.
- 7.3.15** On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for specific groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in regional and/or local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory.
- 7.3.16** The Meadway Centre Planning Brief (adopted 2013) provides more guidance on the development of site WR3o, and this continues to be relevant. Sites WR3i and WR3j also fall within the area covered by the Battle Hospital Planning Brief (adopted 2005). This document continues to be relevant, but it predates the Local Plan by some years, so where there is any conflict with policy WR3, the Plan policy takes precedence.
- 7.3.17** Sites WR3i, WR3m, WR3p, WR3s and WR3t potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

Sites with existing planning permission

- 7.3.18** At the time of publication of the draft Local Plan, a number of sites in West Reading had planning permission for 10 or more dwellings or more than 1,000 sq m of employment development. There is not considered to be a need to identify these sites within a policy, as the permission establishes the principle of the development. Any future applications on these sites will be acceptable where they are substantially the same as the existing permission. Applications for developments will need to be considered against policies in the plan, in particular whether it would adversely impact the likelihood of meeting Reading's identified development needs.

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|--|---------|---|
| 1025-1027 Oxford Road | 070937 | Development of 12 dwellings |
| Government Offices, Coley Park, Wensley Road | 151173 | Redevelopment of offices for 71 dwellings (under construction) |
| Elvian School, Bath Road | 151175 | Development of former school for 118 dwellings and new secondary school (approximately 6,000 sq m net gain of education) (under construction) |
| 1 Castle Crescent | 151924 | Conversion and additional development for 14 dwellings |
| 10 Cremyll Road | 152242 | Change of use from snooker hall to place of worship (under construction) |
| St Georges Hall, St Georges Road | 152301 | Church extension and development of 12 dwellings |
| 26 Portman Road | 160084 | Change of use and refurbishment from car servicing to warehouse (under construction) |
| 62 Portman Road | 161345 | Extension to self-storage facility (under construction) |
| Land at Conwy Close | 161390 | Development of 57 dwellings |

Development progress is correct to 31st March 2017

Potential Traveller Transit Site at Cow Lane

WR4: POTENTIAL TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITE AT COW LANE

This site has been identified as having potential for transit accommodation for travellers. This will continue to be explored by the Council. Any proposed development for transit accommodation should:

- *At a minimum, provide five transit pitches, with each pitch capable of accommodating two caravans;*
- *Ensure that pitches are available to rent on a temporary basis only;*
- *Include access to the highway network that does not detrimentally affect the use of existing vehicular routes or public rights of way;*
- *Not have significant adverse effects on existing operations, in particular the Reading Festival;*
- *Not cause adverse effects on the local area in terms of public amenity and safety;*
- *Take account of the potential for flooding; and*
- *Be provided with a strong landscaped buffer to open spaces, commercial sites and the Richfield Avenue frontage.*

7.3.19 The need for transit accommodation for gypsies and travellers in Reading is highlighted in relation to policy H13 of this plan. A rise in the number of illegal encampments in Reading and the Thames Valley area over recent years has brought the issue of traveller accommodation into sharper focus. The provision of a transit site within Reading would enable the police to make use of powers under Section 62a to e of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

- 7.3.20** The Cow Lane site emerged from a thorough assessment of the potential for provision for gypsies and travellers in the Borough. The site is in Council ownership, and is considered to be the only location in Reading where transit needs could potentially be met. More detailed consideration of the potential of the site, including the likely costs, will be needed before any detailed proposal can be made.
- 7.3.21** It should be noted that there are existing commercial operations that could be affected. In particular, the site is currently used as part of the Reading Festival site, which takes place annually in August. The Festival is a major asset to the town, and any proposal will need to ensure that the ability of the Festival to operate will not be threatened.

8. CAVERSHAM AND EMMER GREEN

8.1 Area Context

- 8.1.1** The area covered by this section is the area of Reading Borough north of the River Thames, comprising the wards of Caversham, Mapledurham, Peppard and Thames¹¹⁴.
- 8.1.2** Caversham grew up as a separate settlement on the north banks of the Thames within Oxfordshire, only becoming part of the borough of Reading in 1911. For this reason, it has a distinct identity, and this history can also be seen in the presence of many road names that are also used in Reading (such as Prospect Street, South Street and Queen's Road). Emmer Green was a smaller settlement in a location at the edge of the Chiltern Hills, featuring a number of chalk mines, before becoming subsumed within the wider urban area.
- 8.1.3** Unlike other suburban parts of Reading, the urban area does not extend beyond the Borough boundaries into South Oxfordshire district, and these areas directly abut the Oxfordshire countryside. For most of its length, the northern part of the Reading Borough boundary follows the exact urban edge. To the west of Caversham, the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty adjoins the Borough boundary.
- 8.1.4** According to the 2011 Census, around 31,700 people live within this area. The area is generally the most affluent part of Reading, although there are some small focuses of deprivation, notably around Amersham Road. The lower part of Caversham is characterised by Victorian terraced housing with some new additions. To the northwest, Caversham Heights contains large homes within sizeable plots, many of which were developed between 1900 and 1930. Later 20th century suburban development is concentrated around upper parts of Caversham, Emmer Green and the Caversham Park area.
- 8.1.5** There are two conservation areas. St Peter's is centred on St Peter's Church and the historic garden of Caversham Court, on the banks of the Thames, and close to the heart of the old settlement of Caversham. Surley Row is further north, and is set out along the route from Emmer Green to the old parish church of Caversham. One of Caversham's most distinctive features is the listed manor house and 38 ha historic park at Caversham Park.
- 8.1.6** The area is defined by its topography. The low lying areas close to the Thames are prone to flooding, and flood risk continues to provide a constraint to future development. However, the ground quickly rises to the north and northwest, as the remainder of the area undulates as it meets the fringes of the Chiltern hills. The 'dry valleys' typically found in the Chilterns also extend into Caversham, and there are a number of wooded and undeveloped areas that help to link the area into the wider Chilterns landscape beyond.
- 8.1.7** The area is largely residential in nature, although there is one small industrial area at Paddock Road as well as the retail and related uses in Caversham centre, as well as a smaller grouping at Emmer Green. There are only two road crossings of the River Thames within the urban area of Reading, and this can lead to congestion within the centre of Caversham. However, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge has helped to further link the areas together. The main roads leading out of the Borough are the A4155 to Henley-on-Thames, A4074 towards Wallingford and the B481 to the nearby village of Sonning Common and towards Watlington. Sonning Common also has a secondary school, Chiltern Edge, which is attended by some Reading residents.

¹¹⁴ With the exception of the meadows adjacent to the Thames, which fall within the definition of the central area in chapter 5.

8.2 Strategy for Caversham and Emmer Green

8.2.1 The following represent some key principles for the area:

- There will be enhanced pedestrian links between central Caversham and Reading town centre;
- New development will provide or contribute to infrastructure to adequately support the development;
- New park and ride capacity will be sought on the A4155, A4074 and B481 corridors;
- The Council will continue to work with its neighbouring authorities towards provision of a crossing of the Thames east of Reading
- Areas of landscape and heritage importance will be preserved, including the edge of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The watercourses in the area, including the River Thames and its tributaries, will be protected and enhanced as a multi-functional resource for leisure, recreation, ecology and landscape.

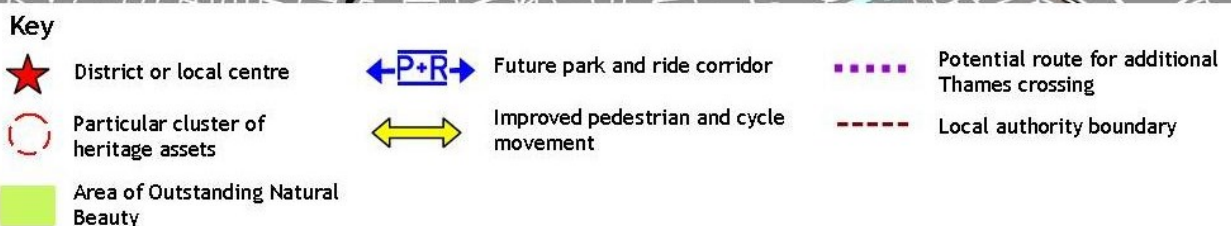
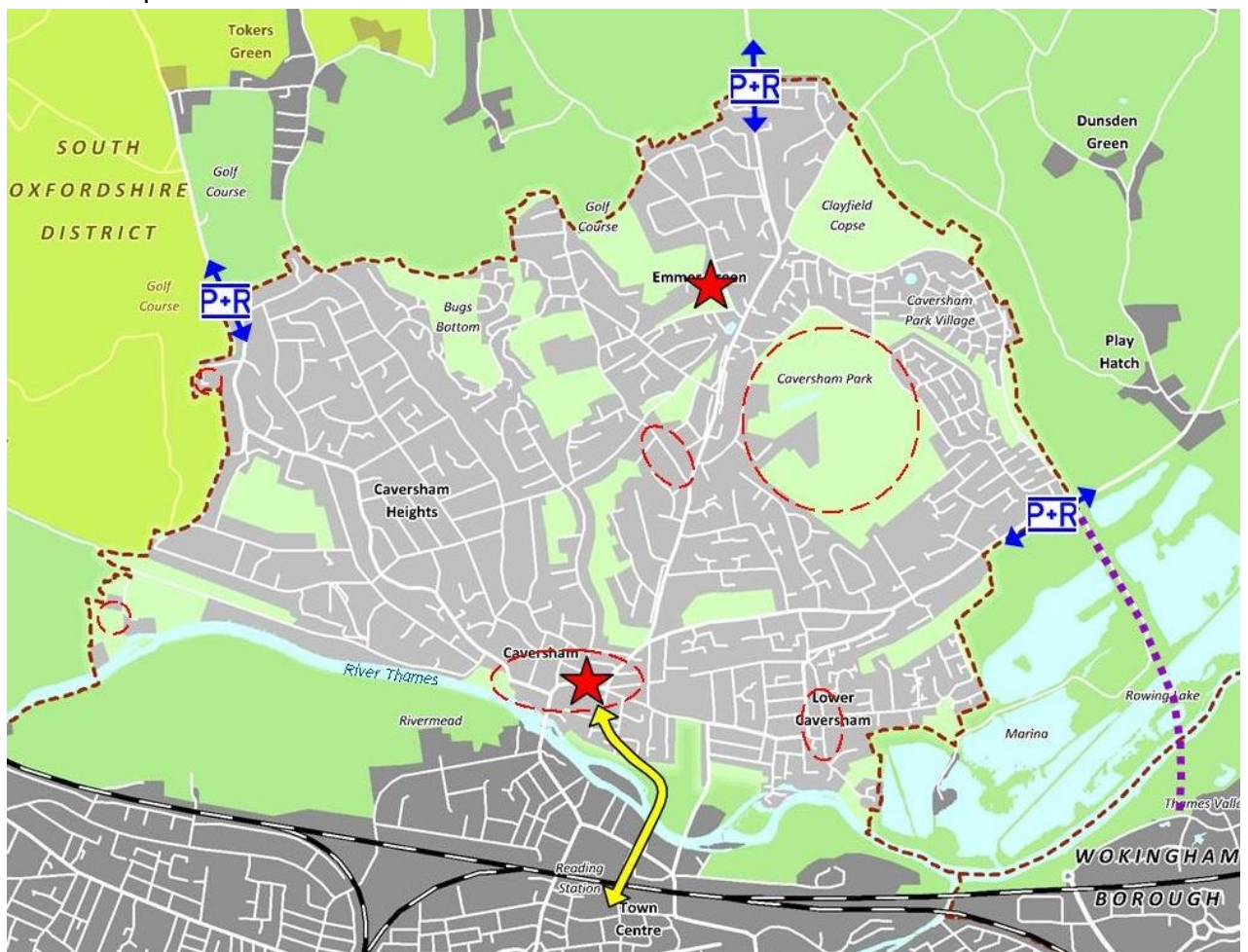


Figure 8.1: Area Strategy for Caversham and Emmer Green

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- 8.2.2** Caversham and Emmer Green have relatively little scope for additional development compared to some other areas of Reading, as virtually the whole area is covered by residential areas with some public open space. Much of lower Caversham is subject to flood risk constraints. There remains potential for infill development and development involving residential gardens, but this is not likely to be able to accommodate a significant proportion of Reading's identified need.
- 8.2.3** It is considered that Caversham and Emmer Green can accommodate around 700 homes between 2013 and 2036, around 5% of the total planned for (this includes 65 homes completed between 2013 and 2017). There is not scope to accommodate any substantial proportion of the non-residential development needs, although development in and around central Caversham may result in additional town centre uses. It is important to note that this is an indication of potential capacity, not a policy target.
- 8.2.4** As a result of the limited development capacity, the overall strategy in this area is largely based around ensuring that, where development is to be accommodated, it is done in a way that prevents adverse effects on the existing areas. Of particular importance in Caversham and Emmer Green are potential effects on landscape, heritage and infrastructure. The relationship of the landscape with the Chiltern Hills and River Thames, described in paragraph 8.1.6, and of the townscape with the former separate settlements of Caversham and surrounding hamlets, will be preserved.
- 8.2.5** The adequacy of infrastructure to support additional development remains one of the most significant concerns in the area. In particular, transport, education and healthcare are issues that would need to be addressed in any development. The Council is working constructively with Wokingham Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP to work up proposals for additional crossing capacity of the Thames, although any proposal would be likely to be largely within neighbouring authorities. An additional crossing could result in measures to increase public transport capacity on existing crossings, which would improve traffic issues. A new park and ride site associated with any additional crossing on the A4155 Henley Road would also help to alleviate issues, and there are further opportunities for park and ride on the A4074 Upper Woodcote Road and B461 Peppard Road.

8.3 Caversham and Emmer Green Site-Specific Policies

Sites for Development and Change of Use in Caversham and Emmer Green

CA1: SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE OF USE IN CAVERSHAM AND EMMER GREEN

The following sites will be developed according with the principles set out in this policy:

CA1a READING UNIVERSITY BOAT CLUB, THAMES PROMENADE

Development for residential, subject to relocation of the boat club.

Development should:

- *Avoid detrimental visual effects on the Thames Valley major landscape feature;*
- *Take account of the risk of flooding, and locate development only in the portion of the site in Flood Zone 2, closest to Abbotsmead Road;*
- *Provide for a green link across the site from Christchurch Meadows to Abbotsmead Road; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance, and be supported by a desk-based archaeological assessment which should inform the development.*

Site size: 0.56 ha 16-25 dwellings

CA1b PART OF READING GOLF COURSE, KIDMORE END ROAD

Development for residential and replacement clubhouse, subject to additional land in South Oxfordshire being secured for replacement holes. On-site facilities should be provided to mitigate impacts on community infrastructure, for instance for healthcare. On-site public open space will be provided.

Development should:

- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Provide a green link across the site from Kidmore End Road to the remainder of the golf course, rich in plant species and habitat opportunities;*
- *Take measures to mitigate impacts on the highway network, particularly on Kidmore End Road;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 3.75 ha 90-130 dwellings, community provision including healthcare and replacement clubhouse

CA1c LAND AT LOWFIELD ROAD

Development for residential¹¹⁵.

Development should:

- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of the potential for biodiversity interest and allow for a green link across the Lowfield Road frontage of the site;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Avoid detrimental visual effects on the North Reading Dry Valleys and Chilterns Escarpment major landscape feature; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

Site size: 0.93 ha 24-36 dwellings

CA1d REAR OF 200-214 HENLEY ROAD, 12-24 ALL HALLOWS ROAD & 4, 7 & 8 COPSE AVENUE

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Be accessed from Overton Drive;*
- *Be designed to retain important trees and groups of trees, and avoid adverse effects on important trees including that protected by TPO;*
- *Avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and provide for a net gain where possible;*
- *Provide for a green link along the eastern boundary of the site adjoining the gardens of Copse Avenue;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.*

Site size: 0.87 ha 17-25 dwellings

¹¹⁵ There is a temporary (5-year) permission for 28 temporary homes for homeless households, reference 160762. This allocation is for the longer-term future of the site.

CA1e REAR OF 13-14A HAWTHORNE ROAD & 282-292 HENLEY ROAD***Development for residential******Development should:***

- *Be accessed from Maytree Walk;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and provide for a net gain where possible;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.37 ha 9-13 dwellings

CA1f REAR OF 1 & 3 WOODCOTE ROAD AND 21 ST PETER'S HILL***Development for residential.******Development should:***

- *Be accessed from Symeon Place;*
- *Retain established trees and vegetation around the edge of the site;*
- *Avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and provide for a net gain where possible;*
- *Take account of the high potential archaeological significance and be supported by assessment work;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.*

Site size: 0.33 ha 8-12 dwellings

CA1g LAND WEST OF HENLEY ROAD CEMETERY***Use for extension of the cemetery******The use should:***

- *Retain important trees on the site;*
- *Retain a green link across the south western boundary of the site; and*
- *Avoid detrimental visual effects on the North Reading Dry Valleys and Chilterns Escarpment major landscape feature.*

Site size: 1.01 ha Use for cemetery

- 8.3.1** This policy identifies those sites within Caversham and Emmer Green where development and change will be appropriate. As well as contributing to meeting the identified needs of the Borough, allocation can help provide physical regeneration of sites which are in some cases vacant or underused. In addition, it allows the Council to highlight the issues which need to be addressed in developing sites, set out site-specific requirements and, if necessary, plan for the provision of infrastructure.
- 8.3.2** Where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in CA1 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan, including, for residential developments, the need to provide affordable housing.
- 8.3.3** Where there are significant issues that will need to be addressed in any planning applications on the specific sites listed above, these are usually highlighted in the policy. However, it is not a

guarantee that there are no other potential issues, and it does not remove the need to address the usual matters that should be dealt with on all sites.

- 8.3.4 On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for specific groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in regional and/or local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory.

Sites with existing planning permission

- 8.3.5 At the time of publication of the draft Local Plan, a number of sites in Caversham and Emmer Green had planning permission for ten or more dwellings or more than 1,000 sq m of employment development. There is not considered to be a need to identify most of these sites within a policy, as the permission establishes the principle of the development. Any future applications on these sites will be acceptable where they are substantially the same as the existing permission. Applications for developments will need to be considered against policies in the plan, in particular whether it would adversely impact the likelihood of meeting Reading's identified development needs.

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|--|---------|---|
| Chazey Farm, The Warren | 030275 | Development of 78-bed nursing home |
| Unit 1, Paddock Road Industrial Estate | 100384 | Development for industrial/warehouse units totalling 1,577 sq m |
| St Martin's Precinct, Church Street | 140997 | Redevelopment for retail (501 sq m net gain), restaurant (524 sq m net gain), leisure (652 sq m net gain), residential (40 dwellings) plus additional works |
| The Arthur Clark Home, Dovedale Close | 152277 | Development of former care home for 43 extra care apartments |

Development progress is correct to 31st March 2017

Caversham Park

CA2: CAVERSHAM PARK

Caversham Park and Caversham Park House are key features of the heritage and landscape of Reading. Caversham Park is a Registered Historic Park and Garden, and the site contains a number of listed features. These assets will be conserved.

Conversion of the house from offices to residential and/or a cultural, community or heritage use will be acceptable if it sustains the significance of the listed building. It is estimated that up to 40-45 dwellings could be accommodated, but the figure will be dependent on more detailed historic assessment of the building and the precise mix of uses.

Any development or conversion proposals should open as much of the park as possible up to public access, including reinstatement of historic public footpaths.

This policy does not allocate the site for additional development over and above conversion of the house. There may be scope for some limited development on previously developed land within the site, which will need to be justified at application stage. Such development must comply with the criteria below:

- ***No development will harm the historic interest or the important landscape value of the site.***
- ***Development will not detrimentally affect protected trees or areas of biodiversity importance.***

8.3.6 Caversham Park is a historic estate in Caversham totalling 38 ha, the origins of which date back to at least Norman times, with the estate featuring in the Domesday Book. It was formerly the home of the Earl of Pembroke and later the Earls of Warwick¹¹⁶. The site is a registered historic park. A succession of manor houses have stood within the site, but the current listed Caversham Park House dates from the Victorian era. The house and its grounds have been used by the BBC as its Monitoring Station, together with the base for BBC Radio Berkshire. Given its location at the top of a hill, it is highly prominent from a number of locations in Reading, in particular the entrance along the A329(M).

8.3.7 In July 2016, the BBC announced its decision to vacate the site¹¹⁷. This leaves a very large area comprised mainly of open green space, to which there has been no public access up to now. There is clearly an opportunity to secure a beneficial use of an important listed building, and also to secure access to a large area of much needed open space of significant historic interest for the local population.

8.3.8 Caversham Park is a Registered Historic Park and Garden¹¹⁸. The Historic England website¹¹⁹ states that:

“Historic parks and gardens are a fragile and finite resource: they can easily be damaged beyond repair or lost forever. Whether in town or country, such places are an important, distinctive, and much cherished part of our inheritance and we have a duty to care for them.”

8.3.9 It goes on to say that:

“The main purpose of this Register is to celebrate designed landscapes of note, and encourage appropriate protection. ... Registration is a 'material consideration' in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character.”

8.3.10 A variety of uses of the existing building may be acceptable, although the extent of internal works to the listed building will have a strong influence over the form of the conversion. These possibilities include conversion to residential, a cultural or heritage use that capitalises on the

¹¹⁶ http://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles/caversham_park.html

¹¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-36712152>

¹¹⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000524>

¹¹⁹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

heritage of the park, such as a visitor centre, or a community use that could include education. It may be possible to achieve a mix of uses within the building.

- 8.3.11** For clarity, this allocation is not for additional development. At this stage, it has not been demonstrated that significant additional development within the area will not harm the historical significance of the site or is otherwise appropriate. Any proposal that includes additional development would need to be accompanied by compelling evidence that such development will not have a detrimental impact on the many features of importance within the site, including areas of important habitat, significant trees, the House and other listed structures, views in and out of the site, and the overall significance of the park itself, as well as on considerations such as access.

9. EAST READING

9.1 Area Context

- 9.1.1 This section covers the areas of Reading Borough east and south east of the centre, up to the Wokingham Borough boundary. It is a relatively small geographical area, but contains some 28,700 residents according to the 2011 Census, making it the highest residential density in the Borough outside the town centre.
- 9.1.2 The area within Reading Borough forms only a small part of the east of the urban area, as beyond the Borough in Wokingham Borough lie the areas of Woodley, Earley, Lower Earley and Winnersh, all of which function as part of the immediate Reading urban area and which account for a further 62,000 residents, as well as major business parks such as Thames Valley Park, Suttons Business Park and Winnersh Triangle.
- 9.1.3 East Reading within the Borough boundary is dominated by Victorian housing. The area grew up with the industrial expansion of the town in the 19th century, and the housing supported the key industries such as Huntley and Palmers biscuits and Suttons Seeds. This heritage is evident in the names around the area, including Palmer Park and Alfred Sutton primary school. Much of the area is formed of terraced housing to house the workers, but there are also larger homes, many of which were intended for managers at the new industries.
- 9.1.4 This heritage means there is a significant concentration of important heritage features in the area. Six conservation areas (Alexandra Road, Christchurch Road, Kendrick Road, Redlands, South Park and The Mount) take in some of the best preserved of these Victorian areas, whilst a seventh, Eldon Square, picks out some of the town's Georgian heritage at the fringe of the town centre. However, these are merely the best examples, whilst much of the surroundings of these conservation areas continues the Victorian theme. Reading cemetery is a registered historic garden, and Palmer Park is one of the town's main green spaces.
- 9.1.5 This part of town is known for two key institutions: the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the University of Reading. The University of Reading is a major focus of higher education with an international reputation, and its main Whiteknights Campus spans the boundary of Reading and Wokingham Boroughs, with another campus on London Road. This means that East Reading's population is boosted by thousands of students, some living in purpose-built halls, but others in private rented accommodation in the areas around the campus. This boosts the vibrancy of the area, but can also lead to tensions with permanent residents. The Royal Berkshire Hospital on London Road is the main hospital for residents of west and central Berkshire, and was established in 1839. It now employs more than 4,000 staff. Both the university and the hospital occupy some of the surrounding Victorian buildings for additional functions.

9.2 Strategy for East Reading

- 9.2.1 The following represent some key principles for the area:
- a. The University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus will continue to develop to support the economy and function of the town, subject to the constraints of the site;
 - b. The areas of tension between the University and surrounding areas will be carefully managed, and purpose-built student accommodation on established university sites will be supported;

- c. The Royal Berkshire Hospital will continue to be a very significant facility for the wider sub-region, although development on site will avoid adverse effects on the surrounding residential areas;
- d. Areas of heritage and landscape importance will be conserved;
- e. New development will provide or contribute to infrastructure to adequately support the development;
- f. The provision of transport improvements including Mass Rapid Transit to link into park and ride at Thames Valley Park, and National Cycle Network route 422 will be supported.

9.2.2 The strategy for the area is illustrated on Figure 9.1.

9.2.3 The substantial historic significance of much of East Reading, together with the existing residential density, means that there is little scope for additional major development. Much of the recent development has been associated with the University, and that is likely to continue to be the case in the plan period.

9.2.4 It is considered that East Reading can accommodate around 1,100 homes between 2013 and 2036, around 7% of the total planned for (this includes 132 homes already completed between 2013 and 2017). The area is unlikely to be able to make any significant contribution to meeting development needs for employment or retail uses. It is important to note that this is an indication of potential capacity, not a policy target.

9.2.5 Given the limited amount of development expected, no overall strategy for development distribution is necessary. However, there are two major themes that need to be highlighted in the area strategy, namely heritage and the need to manage the relationship between the residential areas and the two major institutions, the university and hospital.

9.2.6 The concentration of heritage assets in East Reading is very significant, with 17% of the area falling within a conservation area or historic park. These assets should of course be conserved. However, given the distribution of conservation areas in particular, there may be opportunities for development on sites in between areas to better link those areas together with high quality design.

9.2.7 The University of Reading is a vital part of Reading's economy and life, and there will continue to be a need for development to support that role at its main Whiteknights campus, as well as its secondary campus at London Road. This development will be supported, where it does not result in significant adverse effects. However, there is clearly an issue around accommodating students in the area, with many of existing homes in the area now occupied by students, and therefore concerns about various possible effects such as noise, parking and the sustainability of local services with less accommodation available for families. For this reason, an increase of purpose-built student accommodation is needed, but this should preferably be on the existing university sites, both to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and so that key sites elsewhere deliver much-needed general housing rather than student accommodation. The Whiteknights campus crosses the boundary with Wokingham, and it is important that policy across the site is consistent.

9.2.8 The hospital is clearly a vital facility for the town and surrounding area, and there is a

likelihood that on-site development will continue over the plan period. However, there is a serious local issue with car parking, at least in part due to parking related to the hospital spilling into surrounding streets. New development at the hospital will therefore need to show what measures will be taken to prevent further worsening of this issue.

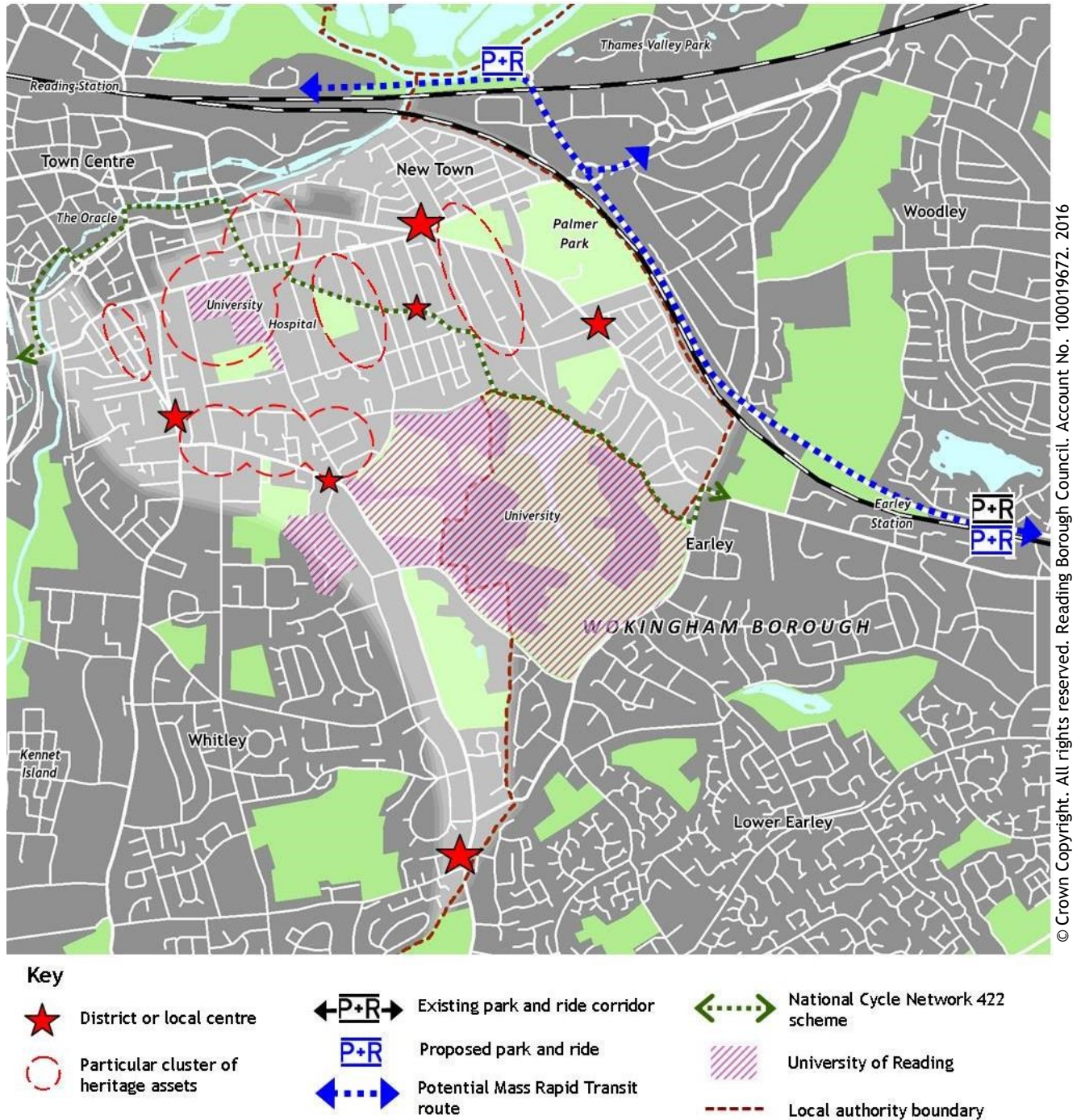


Figure 9.1: Area Strategy for East Reading

9.3 East Reading Site-Specific Policies

Sites for Development in East Reading

ER1: SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN EAST READING

The following sites will be developed according with the principles set out in this policy:

ER1a THE WOODLEY ARMS PH, WALDECK STREET

Development for residential, with potential for student accommodation.

Development should:

- *Take account of the prevailing two-storey height of surrounding buildings;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address any contamination on site.*

Site size: 0.09 ha 26-38 student studio bedspaces, or equivalent amount of residential

ER1b DINGLEY HOUSE, 3-5 CRAVEN ROAD

Retention and change of use of locally listed building for residential with limited additional development.

Development should:

- *Retain the locally-listed building, which is subject to an Article 4 direction, and any additional development should enhance its setting; and*
- *Reflect the setback of buildings from the road in the immediate local area.*

Site size: 0.33 ha 15-22 dwellings

ER1c LAND REAR OF 8-26 REDLANDS ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Make a positive contribution to the conservation area and to the setting of adjacent listed buildings;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Retain the wall fronting Morgan Road; and*
- *Retain mature trees on the site and provide for a north-south green link, which will reduce the amount of the site that can be developed and will particularly limit development behind 14-24 Redlands Road.*

Site size: 0.74 ha 12-18 dwellings

ER1d LAND ADJACENT TO 40 REDLANDS ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including that protected by TPO;*
- *Make a positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and*
- *Take account of the potential for biodiversity interest, including bats.*

Site size: 0.43 ha 23-35 dwellings

ER1e ST PATRICK'S HALL, NORTHCOURT AVENUE

Development to intensify the provision of student accommodation on site, with retention of locally-listed Pearson's Court.

Development should:

- *Retain the locally-listed building and additional development should enhance its setting;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of the potential for biodiversity interest, including bats;*
- *Enhance the green link across the northern boundary of the site; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 3.39 ha Net gain of approximately 450-500 bedspaces

ER1f HAMILTON CENTRE, BULMERSHE ROAD

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Address all parking requirements in off-street locations to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets;*
- *Justify the loss of existing community provision.*

Site size: 0.35 ha 13-19 dwellings

ER1g ALEXANDER HOUSE, KINGS ROAD

Redevelopment of offices for residential.

Development should:

- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*
- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.*

Site size: 0.16 ha 26-38 dwellings

ER1h ARTHUR HILL SWIMMING POOL, 221-225 KINGS ROAD

Development for residential whilst retaining the frontage of the building where possible.

Development should:

- *Avoid an adverse impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings;*
- *Consider the merits of the option of retaining the existing frontage;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.11 ha 6-10 dwellings

ER1i 261-275 LONDON ROAD

Development for residential with district centre uses on the ground floor.

Development should:

- *Be accessed from Cholmeley Road;*
- *Assess and mitigate any impact on the Cholmeley Road/London Road junction;*
- *Make a positive contribution to the setting of the registered historic park at Reading Cemetery;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- *Take account of the potential for contamination;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.16 ha 10-16 dwellings and 360-440 sq m of town centre uses

ER1j PALMER PARK STADIUM AREA

Additional leisure development for a new swimming pool.

Development should:

- *Demonstrate that car parking to be lost can be replaced on or off-site, or is no longer required;*
- *Ensure that there is no adverse impacts on the use of the park and its sport and leisure facilities;*
- *Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the listed monument and its setting;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Retain public rights of way across the site.*

Site size: 3.08 ha Approximately 1,000 sq m pool

ER1k 131 WOKINGHAM ROAD

Development for residential with ground floor local centre uses.

Development should:

- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Address any contamination on site;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.15 ha 8-12 dwellings and 400-500 sq m of retail or related use.

9.3.1 This policy identifies those sites within East Reading where development will be appropriate. As well as contributing to meeting the identified needs of the Borough, allocation can help provide physical regeneration of sites which are in some cases vacant or underused. In addition, it allows the Council to highlight the issues which need to be addressed in developing sites, set out site-specific requirements and, if necessary, plan for the provision of infrastructure.

9.3.2 Where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in ER1 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan, including, for residential developments, the need to provide affordable housing.

9.3.3 Where there are significant issues that will need to be addressed in any planning applications on

the specific sites listed above, these are usually highlighted in the policy. However, it is not a guarantee that there are no other potential issues, and it does not remove the need to address the usual matters that should be dealt with on all sites.

- 9.3.4** On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for specific groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in regional and/or local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory.
- 9.3.5** Sites ER1a, ER1b and ER1h potentially contain public sewers. If building over or close to a public sewer is agreed to by Thames Water it will need to be regulated by a 'Build over or near to' Agreement in order to protect the public sewer and/or apparatus in question. It may be possible for public sewers to be moved at a developer's request so as to accommodate development in accordance with Section 185 of the Water Act 1989.

Sites with existing planning permission

- 9.3.6** At the time of publication of the Draft Local Plan, a number of sites in East Reading had planning permission for ten or more dwellings or more than 1,000 sq m of employment development. There is not considered to be a need to identify most of these sites within a policy, as the permission establishes the principle of the development. Any future applications on these sites will be acceptable where they are substantially the same as the existing permission. Applications for developments will need to be considered against policies in the plan, in particular whether it would adversely impact the likelihood of meeting Reading's identified development needs.

| Site | App ref | Summary of development |
|---|----------------|--|
| Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road | Various | Additional hospital floorspace outstanding under existing outline permissions |
| University of Reading, The Chancellors Way & Shinfield Road | 100726 | Development of 151-bed hotel and conference centre |
| 84 Watlington Street | 111073 | Extension and conversion of pub for 10 dwellings (under construction) |
| Wells Hall, Upper Redlands Road | 121820, 140428 | Redevelopment of halls of residence for 34 dwellings (under construction) |
| 252 Kings Road | 141986 | Change of use and extension of offices to student accommodation (under construction) |
| Princes House, 73a London Road | 150685 | Change of use of offices to 26 dwellings |
| University of Reading, London Road | 150730 | Conversion of existing buildings to 53 dwellings (under construction) |
| 40 Silver Street | 150885 | Development for 14 dwellings |
| 1a Upper Redlands Road | 150890 | Development of 10 dwellings (under construction) |
| 35 Christchurch Road | 151034 | Conversion of house in multiple occupation into 10 dwellings |

Development progress is correct to 31st March 2017

Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading

ER2: WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF READING

The University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Proposals Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. Access to and within the site will be improved where necessary.

Where development would result in the need for additional students to be housed in Reading, it should be supported by a corresponding increase in student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable subject to other policies in the Plan.

Development will accord with the following criteria:

- *Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;*
- *The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;*
- *There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and*
- *The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.*

9.3.7 Reading is home to the University of Reading. This occupies a number of sites within and around the Reading urban area, many of which are outside the Borough boundaries, but its main location is the Whiteknights campus, shown on the Proposals Map, split between Reading and Wokingham Boroughs. This campus will be the main focus of future development associated with the University of Reading, although there will continue to be development activity at the University's secondary, but original, campus on London Road.

9.3.8 The Whiteknights Campus has a number of issues which distinguish it from other parts of the Borough, and therefore necessitate a distinct approach. The University currently has around 17,000 students¹²⁰ from over 150 countries plus over 4,000 staff, and Whiteknights is the hub of university activity. Students, staff and visitors need to be supported by services, facilities and infrastructure. This policy is therefore required for the part of the Whiteknights campus that lies within the Borough.

9.3.9 The site is on the site of the 19th century Whiteknights Park, and includes a significant amount of parkland, woodland and lakes. Its attractive surroundings are part of the pull of the university, but also offer a number of constraints to development. Parts of the site have significant wildlife importance, and the area is a prominent part of the local landscape, adjoining part of the East Reading wooded ridgeline Major Landscape Feature, with large tracts of open green space. A number of listed buildings are on site, and the campus is surrounded by

¹²⁰ www.reading.ac.uk

residential areas. In addition, approximately two thirds of the Campus is within Wokingham Borough, meaning that a consistent approach is required.

- 9.3.10** In 2008, the University drew up a Whiteknights Campus Development Plan, which set out the University's principles for future development of the site, including providing 1,297 additional bedspaces, waste and catering facilities and changes to the accesses and internal circulation. The Development Plan does not form part of the Council's strategy, but it outlines the changes that are proposed to occur on the site in the coming years, and has informed this policy. Much of the development proposed in that plan has now been built out, but there remains the likelihood of further development over the plan period.
- 9.3.11** Proposals within the Whiteknights Development Plan include rationalising the substantial number of vehicle access points around the campus. Given that growth is likely to occur on the campus, it is vital that access points are appropriately located. The Council is therefore supportive of this principle in the Whiteknights Development Plan.
- 9.3.12** Many of the main planning issues on the site are dealt with elsewhere within the local plan. Although it is not appropriate to repeat policy here, developments will need to consider matters such as parking (TR5 and Parking and Design Standards SPD), biodiversity (EN12), the historic environment (EN1-EN6), residential amenity (CC8) and landscape (EN13).

Royal Berkshire Hospital

ER3: ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is a highly significant facility which serves the needs of Reading as well as much of its hinterland. Unless it is proposed to move to a new site, the Hospital site on Craven Road will continue to be a focus for healthcare development to meet requirements, and the site will need to be flexible to adapt to changing technologies or modes of service delivery. Such development will be supported where it complies with the following criteria:

- *Where development would result in an increase in staff or visitors, it should be accompanied by measures which ensure that development does not have an adverse effect on the functioning of the highway, either as a result of increased use or by resulting in additional on-street parking in surrounding streets;*
- *Development will conserve the listed main block on London Road and 17 Craven Road, ensuring that their use is consistent with its conservation;*
- *Development would not result in adverse effects on the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas; and*
- *There will be no significant detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties.*

Any long-term proposal for moving the hospital to a new site in the Reading area would be supported where it would ensure that such a move would enhance its accessibility to residents of Reading and the rest of its catchment, would not lead to a reduction in standards of care, and where it would comply with other policies in the Plan.

- 9.3.13** The Royal Berkshire Hospital, located between London Road, Craven Road, Redlands Road and Addington Road, is the main hospital facility for the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust, which provides hospital services to west and central Berkshire. As such, it is a vital facility not only for Reading, but for a much wider surrounding area. The hospital employs more than 4,000 staff, making it a key part of the Reading economy.
- 9.3.14** There are a number of factors that are likely to lead to a need to continue to develop the hospital site. As well as population growth in Reading and surrounding areas, there are technological changes that can mean a need to change the way that buildings on the site work to ensure that the best available care can be given. Over a 20-year plan period, there are also likely to be other changes in the way services are delivered which have implications for how physical space is used. It is important that, wherever possible, physical changes on site to respond to these issues are supported by planning policy. The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is currently working on an estates strategy for the site.
- 9.3.15** However, there are also constraints which affect the site. The 19th Century hospital building fronting London Road is listed, and increasingly has limited suitability for modern clinical requirements, which is likely to mean more of a focus on administrative functions. 17 Craven Road is also listed. There are also two conservation areas (Kendrick and Eldon Square) adjoining the hospital, as well as several other listed buildings, and the setting of these assets particularly affect the Redlands Road and London Road frontages.
- 9.3.16** One of the main issues affecting the site is transport, and, in particular, parking. London Road is subject to particular congestion issues at peak times. On-site car parking is a limited resource, and this has resulted in a significant issue of on-street car parking in surrounding residential streets, although this is also related to the nearby University and the occupation of many houses in the area by students. A Residents' Parking Scheme has been introduced in many of these nearby streets, which will further emphasise the need for development at the hospital, where it results in additional visitors, to introduce measures that manage travel issues. This could involve use of park and ride, public transport, or may involve on-site car parking where it could be managed to avoid additional strain on roads.
- 9.3.17** There are not currently any proposals for the hospital to relocate. However, a plan with a 20-year timescale must be alive to any future changes in circumstances, and the policy therefore needs to include a degree of flexibility for this scenario, however remote. In such an instance, the Council would work closely with the Trust and other stakeholders on any proposals.
- 9.3.18** The policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies in the plan, for example on residential amenity (CC8), protection and enhancement of the historic environment (EN1-6) and on traffic and highway issues (TR3).

10. IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 Implementation Measures

- 10.1.1** Some information on specific measures for implementing policies is set out in the supporting text for the relevant policy, but this section provides a useful summary on some of the key methods:
- 10.1.2 Development management decisions:** The key delivery method for all policies in the Local Plan is through the development management process. Decisions on applications will be made in line with the Local Plan once adopted, alongside other material considerations including national policy. This will include the information contained on the Proposals Map. Conditions and section 106 agreements will be used where relevant, and certain information will be required to accompany applications. The Council produces a Validation Checklist, updated periodically, which summarises the information that should be submitted alongside different types of application.
- 10.1.3 Early and effective pre-application discussions:** Since the development management process is intended to be a proactive approach to managing the whole development process, there is an emphasis on pre-application discussions. The Council already has measures in place for securing pre-application discussions, including a form for those seeking pre-application advice, and a charging regime. The adopted Statement of Community Involvement strongly advises that pre-application consultation is carried out on major schemes.
- 10.1.4 Topic-related Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Some of the policy topics in the Local Plan will need to be covered by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). For instance, an Affordable Housing SPD provides more guidance on how affordable housing will be secured through development, and a Parking Standards and Design SPD sets out detailed expectations for parking provision with development. The Local Plan generally states where an SPD will be produced, or where an existing SPD will continue to be applied.
- 10.1.5 Site-related Supplementary Planning Documents:** The Council will continue to produce planning briefs for key sites. In addition, many of the existing planning briefs that relate to development allocations in this document will remain in place, for instance the Station Area Framework and Battle Hospital and Meadway Centre planning briefs.
- 10.1.6 Local Development Orders (LDO):** A Local Development Order (LDO) is an order made by a local planning authority which has the effect of granting permission on a site for a certain development. It removes the need for a developer to apply for planning permission, and therefore streamlines the planning process. LDOs have not been used in Reading in recent years, but there is a Government proposal that local planning authorities should make extensive use of LDOs for suitable housing sites. The use of LDOs for some allocated sites therefore remains a possibility. Another Government proposal, currently being piloted in a number of other local authorities, is a 'brownfield register', which keeps a public record of suitable previously-developed land for housing to encourage its development. It is suggested by the Government that land on the Register should generally be subject to LDOs. These proposals are not yet fully in place, but if and when they come into force, they will have a major role in implementation of the plan.
- 10.1.7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** In terms of securing many of the infrastructure needs

identified in this plan, one of the main tools that the Council has is the Community Infrastructure Levy. This is a levy on development taking place in the Borough to contribute towards infrastructure. A CIL Charging Schedule sets out the range of charges, and a CIL Regulation 123 list details the schemes which CIL will contribute towards. The current Charging Schedule was adopted in January 2015, and CIL was introduced in Reading in April 2015.

10.1.8 Section 106 agreements: Prior to the introduction of CIL, Section 106 agreements were the main mechanisms for securing contributions towards infrastructure provision. Their use is now much more limited, but they will continue to be used to ensure that affordable housing is provided in line with the policies in this plan, as well as to secure employment, skills and training measures, and for any site-specific infrastructure not covered by the CIL Regulation 123 list.

10.1.9 Other Council and partner strategies: The Local Plan will need to be implemented alongside a number of other plans and strategies, produced by both the Council and its partners. Some of the policies in the Local Plan need to be applied in conjunction with other strategies, for instance:

- Local Transport Plan (TR2: Major Transport Projects);
- Cycling Strategy (TR4: Cycle Routes);
- Air Quality Action Plan (EN15: Air Quality);
- Open Spaces Strategy (EN9: Provision of Open Space);
- Tree Strategy (EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands);
- Accommodation with Care Commissioning Strategy (H5: Accommodation for Vulnerable People)
- Healthy Weight Strategy (various policies relating to matters such as open space and walking and cycling).

10.1.10 Council-owned land: Some of the land referenced in this document is currently in Council ownership. The Council is always open to approaches from developers and adjoining land owners to explore comprehensive regeneration and development proposals which incorporates its land, and is actively bringing forward proposals for a major site in central Reading. The Council will also continue to bring forward its own development proposals, for instance for new affordable or extra-care housing or for education, where there is the opportunity and funding to do so.

10.1.11 Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO): The Council will consider the use of its CPO powers to facilitate redevelopment and regeneration within the Borough, where this is consistent with Council policy, irrespective of whether Council-owned land is involved. However, it is clearly preferable in most cases that landowners and developers be given the opportunity to bring forward key sites, and for this reason the use of CPOs has not been programmed.

10.1.12 Duty to Co-operate: Much of this local plan has sought to place Reading Borough within its wider context, in particular in reference to the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council has a duty to co-operate with a range of partner organisations, including nearby planning authorities, government bodies and infrastructure providers. The Council has produced a Duty to Co-operate Scoping Statement, setting out the partners and topics which will be subject to the duty, and this is available on the Council's website¹²¹. In particular, Reading Borough Council is working with its neighbours in examining

¹²¹ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4412/Duty-to-cooperate-scoping-strategy/pdf/RBC_Duty_to_Cooperate_Scoping_Strategy_1215.pdf

how growth can take place within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, in particular in view of the expectation that Reading's unmet housing need will be accommodated within the rest of the HMA. The publication of the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework is an important starting point and context for this plan, but this joint work will continue into the future.

10.2 Delivery Timescales

- 10.2.1** Figure 10.1 sets out indicative timescales for the developments and site proposals that are anticipated to be delivered. These represent our best estimate at the time, and the delivery timescale of individual sites are liable to change over the plan period. It is not considered that any deliberate phasing of development proposals is required, although, on some sites, developments will need to be coordinated to create a comprehensive development. The table is split into five-year periods, with short-term meaning within five years (2016-2021), medium-term five to ten years (2021-2026) and long-term is after ten years (2026-2036). A category for unknown or longer-term is also included, which includes sites where there is less confidence of delivery over the plan period, but which are nevertheless considered to be worth allocating.
- 10.2.2** For housing sites, it is a requirement of a Local Plan that covers housing to include a Housing Trajectory, setting out how the provision of housing across the plan period will meet the targets in the plan. A Housing Trajectory, which builds on the timescales in figure 10.1 and shows how the level of housing planned for will be achieved, is included in Appendix 1.

Figure 10.1: Overall Timescales for Site Proposals

| Policy Ref | Site/Proposal | In progress | Short (2016-21) | Medium (2021-26) | Long (2026-31) | Long (2031-36) | Longer term/ unknown |
|------------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| CR11a | Friar Street and Station Road | | | | | | |
| CR11b | Greyfriars Road Corner | | | | | | |
| CR11c | Station Hill and Friars Walk | | | | | | |
| CR11d | Brunel Arcade and Apex Plaza | | | | | | |
| CR11e | North of Station | | | | | | |
| CR11f | West of Caversham Road | | | | | | |
| CR11g | Riverside | | | | | | |
| CR11h | Napier Road Corner | | | | | | |
| CR11i | Napier Court | | | | | | |
| CR12a | Cattle Market | | | | | | |
| CR12b | Great Knollys Street and Weldale Street | | | | | | |
| CR12c | Chatham Street, Eaton Place and Oxford Road | | | | | | |
| CR12d | Broad Street Mall | | | | | | |
| CR12e | Hosier Street | | | | | | |
| CR13a | Reading Prison | | | | | | |
| CR13b | Forbury Retail Park | | | | | | |
| CR13c | Forbury Business Park and Kenavon Drive | | | | | | |
| CR13d | Gas Holder | | | | | | |
| CR14a | Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street | | | | | | |
| CR14b | Former Reading Family Centre, North Street | | | | | | |
| CR14c | 17-23 Queen Victoria Street | | | | | | |
| CR14d | 173-175 Friar Street and 27-32 Market Place | | | | | | |
| CR14e | 3-10 Market Place, Abbey Hall and Abbey Square | | | | | | |
| CR14f | 1-5 King Street | | | | | | |
| CR14g | The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street | | | | | | |
| CR14h | Central Club, London Street | | | | | | |
| CR14i | Enterprise House, 89-97 London Street | | | | | | |
| CR14j | Corner of Crown Street and Southampton Street | | | | | | |
| CR14k | Corner of Crown Street and Silver Street | | | | | | |

| Policy Ref | Site/Proposal | In progress | Short (2016-21) | Medium (2021-26) | Long (2026-31) | Long (2031-36) | Longer term/ unknown |
|------------|--|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| CR14l | 187-189 Kings Road | | | | | | |
| CR14m | Caversham Lock Island, Thames Side | | | | | | |
| CR15 | The Reading Abbey Quarter | | | | | | |
| SR2a | Former Landfill, Island Road | | | | | | |
| SR2b | North of Island Road | | | | | | |
| SR2c | Island Road A33 Frontage | | | | | | |
| SR3 | Land North of Manor Farm Road | | | | | | |
| SR4 | South of Elgar Road | | | | | | |
| SR5a | Pulleyn Park, Rose Kiln Lane | | | | | | |
| SR5b | Rear of 3-29 Newcastle Road | | | | | | |
| SR5c | 169-173 Basingstoke Road | | | | | | |
| SR5d | 16-18 Bennet Road | | | | | | |
| SR5e | Park of Former Berkshire Brewery Site | | | | | | |
| SR5f | Land South West of Junction 11 of the M4 | | | | | | |
| WR1 | Dee Park | | | | | | |
| WR2 | Park Lane Primary School, The Laurels and Downing Road | | | | | | |
| WR3a | Former Cox and Wyman Site, Cardiff Road | | | | | | |
| WR3b | 2 Ross Road and Part of Meadow Road | | | | | | |
| WR3c | 28-30 Richfield Avenue | | | | | | |
| WR3d | Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Avenue | | | | | | |
| WR3e | Yeomanry House, Castle Hill | | | | | | |
| WR3f | 4 Berkeley Avenue | | | | | | |
| WR3g | 211-221 Oxford Road, 10 and Rear of 8 Prospect Street | | | | | | |
| WR3h | Rear of 303-315 Oxford Road | | | | | | |
| WR3i | Part of Former Battle Hospital, Portman Road | | | | | | |
| WR3j | Land at Moultsford Mews | | | | | | |
| WR3k | 784-794 Oxford Road | | | | | | |
| WR3l | 816 Oxford Road | | | | | | |
| WR3m | 103 Dee Road | | | | | | |
| WR3n | Amethyst Lane | | | | | | |

| Policy Ref | Site/Proposal | In progress | Short (2016-21) | Medium (2021-26) | Long (2026-31) | Long (2031-36) | Longer term/ unknown |
|------------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| WR3o | The Meadow Centre, Honey End Lane | | | | | | |
| WR3p | Alice Burrows Home, Dwyer Road | | | | | | |
| WR3q | Norcot Community Centre, Lyndhurst Road | | | | | | |
| WR3r | Charters Car Sales, Oxford Road | | | | | | |
| WR3s | Land at Kentwood Hill | | | | | | |
| WR3t | Land at Armour Hill | | | | | | |
| CA1a | Reading University Boat Club, Thames Promenade | | | | | | |
| CA1b | Part of Reading Golf Course, Kidmore End Road | | | | | | |
| CA1c | Land at Lowfield Road | | | | | | |
| CA1d | Rear 200-214 Henley Rd, 12-24 All Hallows Rd & 4, 7 & 8 Copse Ave | | | | | | |
| CA1e | Rear of 13-14a Hawthorne Rd & 282-292 Henley Rd | | | | | | |
| CA1f | Rear of 1-3 Woodcote Road and 21 St Peter's Hill | | | | | | |
| CA1g | Land West of Henley Road Cemetery | | | | | | |
| CA2 | Caversham Park | | | | | | |
| ER1a | The Woodley Arms PH, Waldeck Street | | | | | | |
| ER1b | Dingley House, 3-5 Craven Road | | | | | | |
| ER1c | Land Rear of 8-26 Redlands Road | | | | | | |
| ER1d | Land Adjacent to 40 Redlands Road | | | | | | |
| ER1e | St Patrick's Hall, Northcourt Avenue | | | | | | |
| ER1f | Hamilton Centre, Bulmershe Road | | | | | | |
| ER1g | Alexander House, Kings Road | | | | | | |
| ER1h | Arthur Hill Swimming Pool, 221-225 Kings Road | | | | | | |
| ER1i | 261-275 London Road | | | | | | |
| ER1j | Palmer Park Car Park | | | | | | |
| ER1k | 131 Wokingham Road | | | | | | |

10.3 Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 10.3.1** Infrastructure is required to support new development within the Borough through the Plan period to ensure that communities are sustainable. The requirement for local authorities to assess quality and capacity of infrastructure, as part of the Local Plan process, is identified in the National Planning Policy Framework. The suggested broad categories are physical, green and social infrastructure.
- 10.3.2** In preparing this Local Plan, the Council has been in liaison with a range of infrastructure providers to determine long term strategic infrastructure needs which would result from the level and distribution of planned growth within the Borough. This has resulted in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which sets out in full how infrastructure to support the levels of development set out in this plan will be provided, and the IDP is on the Council's website. An Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (Figure 10.2) derived from the IDP is included here, and summarises the key infrastructure projects which will be required to support the level of proposed growth. These have been identified through this process of consultation and liaison with internal departments and external organisations. This schedule sets out the project, the need for it, requirements, costs, funding, timescales and who has responsibility for delivery.
- 10.3.3** The majority of housing development will occur on brownfield sites and represent 100 dwellings or less. Therefore, in most cases there will not be the requirement for significant infrastructure on a site by site basis. The infrastructure schemes will be strategic in nature, serving the impacts of growth from groupings of sites. Where there is need for site specific infrastructure, this will be addressed and negotiated at the detailed planning stage. The Infrastructure Delivery Schedule identifies key infrastructure requirements for major sites that are known at this time.
- 10.3.4** A range of different infrastructure requirements have been reviewed in the IDP report, but only infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth has been identified within the delivery schedule in Figure 10.2. These include core transport projects, health provision, additional capacity for primary and secondary education places, community and youth provision and additional neighbourhood police infrastructure. The IDP will be a 'living' document; a snapshot in time, based on the best available information at this time. This will need to be updated as and when further information becomes available.

Figure 10.2: Summary Infrastructure Delivery Schedule

| LOCATION | SCHEME | NEED FOR SCHEME | SCHEME REQUIREMENTS | CAPITAL COST AND FUNDING | TIMESCALES (where known) | LEAD DELIVERY AGENCY |
|-----------------|---|---|--|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| PHYSICAL | | | | | | |
| Borough-Wide | Cycle Hire | Encouraging active travel and promoting an alternative to car use | Operation, maintenance and expansion of publicly available bike hire scheme | Unknown—LTP block grant, S106 | Ongoing | Reading Borough Council (RBC) |
| | Cycling Strategy | Encouraging active travel and promoting an alternative to car use | Local measures to encourage cycling routes, lighting, cycle parking, etc.; new areas of development to be connected to existing network | Unknown—LTP block grant, S106 | Ongoing | RBC |
| | Major Repair and Improvement Projects | Improving and maintaining existing infrastructure | Continuous maintenance and improvement of existing facilities and infrastructure including retaining walls, culverts, subways, footbridges and flood defence schemes | Unknown—LTP block grant | Ongoing | RBC |
| | Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Schemes | Providing alternatives to car use and encourage sustainable transport use; reduce congestion; improve accessibility and air quality | Dedicated express, limited stop bus-based rapid transit connected to Park and Ride locations; focused in key areas of growth and key routes in urban areas | Approx. £100,000,000—LTP block grant, LGF | 2018-2036 | RBC |
| | National Cycle Network Route 422 | Increase connectivity and the National Cycle Network, encourage uptake of cycling | East-west national cycle route with shared use facilities & cycle routes; improvements of existing infrastructure & links; new facilities | Approx. £1,100,000—LTP Growth Deal, S106 | 2016-2018 | RBC |
| | Network Management, Junction Improvements and Road Safety | Increase attractiveness of public transport, reduce congestion, promote sustainable travel and improve road safety | Improvements to existing infrastructure and enhanced provision | Unknown—LTP block grant, S106 | Ongoing | RBC |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Borough-Wide | Park & Ride Sites | Reduce the mode share of trips by car to central Reading, thereby reducing congestion and improving accessibility and air quality | A series of new Park and Ride sites and local transport interchanges will be provided on key routes to Reading | Approx. £19,000,000 - S106, LTP, LGF | 2018-2036 | RBC, adjoining authorities |
| | Public Transport and Enhancements | Increase attractiveness of public transport, reduce congestion, promote sustainable travel, improve accessibility and air quality | Improvements to existing public transport infrastructure and provision enhancement including bus stops, bus lanes, bus priority at junctions | Unknown-LTP block grant, S106 | Ongoing | RBC |
| | Third Thames Crossing | Reduce congestion | Provide alternative north-south route across the River Thames via a new road bridge | Approx. £100,000,000-LGF | 2020-2036 | Wokingham, RBC, Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire |
| | Walking Strategy | Encouraging active travel and promoting an alternative to car use | Local measures to encourage walking; new areas of development to be connected to existing pedestrian networks; improve walking route, pedestrian crossings, lighting and accessibility | Unknown-LTP block grant, S106 | Ongoing | RBC |
| | Decentralised Renewable Energy Site | To reduce the carbon footprint of the Borough, and reduce and stabilise energy costs, through the development of low carbon, localised energy infrastructure, to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels and assist in meeting local and national targets for reducing CO ₂ emissions, in line with global action to avert severe climate change. | Details not known at this time; interventions will likely focus on the town centre | CIL, Section 106 | Ongoing | RBC |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Water and Wastewater | To ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate future growth | There are a number of areas within the Borough including some parts of west and south Reading where Thames Water has identified potential capacity issues with water and wastewater, in particular with the overall scale of development in the catchment draining to Blakes Lock SPS. For these areas, detailed investigation and modelling will be required to determine if a local infrastructure upgrade is required. | Costs to be determined by Thames Water with developer | To be confirmed as and when a development comes forward and where issues have been highlighted by Thames Water. Thames Water has indicated that upgrades to assets can take up to 3 years lead in time. | Thames Water and relevant developer |
| Berkshire Superfast Broadband | To ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate future growth; support economic growth by increasing digital connectivity | Implementation of broadband infrastructure to 24mb wherever possible; ensure a minimum superfast infrastructure for 98% of properties by 2019; private sector is developing fibre based gigabit solutions | £192,000 RBC capital funding; private funding from a variety of providers | Ongoing | RBC, private sector providers |
| Electricity | To ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate future growth | In order to accommodate development as proposed in the central area major reinforcement works to the 13200 and 33000 volt infrastructure would need to be carried out. Large amount of cables and plant which, may require diverting and relocating as a result of development designs and layouts. | Costs to be determined by SSE chargeable to developments on an apportionment basis and major extension to the 11000 volt and low voltage networks, which is fully rechargeable to the developments | Ongoing | SSE |

Borough-Wide

| | Air Quality Monitoring | To assess the levels of pollutants at hotspot locations where further development is likely to worsen air quality | NOx analyser, enclosure and associated infrastructure | £70,000 - Section 106, DEFRA Air Quality Grant | Ongoing | RBC |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| South | Green Park Station Multi-Modal interchange | Reducing congestion and improving sustainable travel options to major employment sites and future housing development | A new train station and multi-modal interchange at Green Park on the Reading-Basingstoke Line with enhanced facilities | Approx. £16,000,000 | 2018-2019 | RBC, Network Rail, Great Western Railway |
| | South Reading MRT | Providing alternative modes to car use and encourage sustainable transport use; reduce congestion; improve accessibility and air quality | Dedicated express, limited stop bus-based rapid transit connected to Mere oak Park and Ride, areas of growth and key routes in the urban area | Approx. £55,000,000 – LGF, S106 | 2016-2020 (phases 1-4); further phases subject to funding | RBC |
| Central/ East | Cow Lane Improvements | Allow freight, public transport and sustainable modes to use this strategic route to central Reading and remove a major bottleneck | Remove major bottleneck caused by restricted height and width at Cow Lane | Unknown | 2018-2020 | Network Rail, RBC |
| | Low Emission Zone | Improve air quality | Unknown | Unknown – LTP block grant, S106 | Unknown | RBC |
| | Reading West Station Upgrade | Facilitate current and future passenger numbers, improve accessibility and step-free access | Improve standard of passenger waiting facilities and platforms; increase bike parking; provide step-free access with two lifts on either side of the footbridge; improved ticket vending machines and low ticket counter window | Approx. £3,500,000 – LGF, S106 | Unknown | RBC |
| | Town Centre Access and Public Realm Enhancements | Reducing the impact of congestion; delivering a higher quality public realm; encouraging healthier lifestyles; improving access to central Reading | Junction improvements; accident remediation scheme; improved way finding | Unknown – LTP block grant, S106, BID | Ongoing | RBC |

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|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|-------------------|--|
| Central/ East | East Reading MRT | Providing alternative modes to car use and encourage sustainable transport use; reduce congestion; improve accessibility and air quality | Dedicated express, limited stop bus-based rapid transit connecting Reading town centre/Reading Station and TVP Park and Ride along key commuting corridor | Approx. £24,000,000 – LGF, CIL | 2018-2021 | RBC, Wokingham |
| | TVP Park and Ride | Reduce congestion and improve accessibility and air quality | New Park and Ride site in the vicinity of Thames Valley Park Business Park | Approx. £3,600,000 – LGF, S106 | 2017-2018 | Wokingham, RBC, Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire |
| GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE | | | | | | |
| Borough- Wide | Thames Parks Plan | To increase the capacity of these regionally important parks to accommodate the outdoor/leisure recreation needs of the expanding population and to protect and enhance ecological value. | Physically link the eight Thames Parks creating a chain of quality green space with high amenity, ecological and landscape value. | £5,000,000 (est.) - S106, other funding sources being sought | From 2017 onwards | RBC |
| | Open Spaces Strategy | Improve the quality of existing public open space and facilities particularly in larger parks to benefit the wider population. | Improvement to strategically important open-spaces. | £2,000,000 Dependent on receipt of grant funding and/ or S106 contributions | Ongoing | RBC |
| | Green Infrastructure/ Access to Open Space Play Requirements | To develop green infrastructure network and links, including along watercourses. Most of the current stock of play equipment is more than a decade old. At current levels of use, this is declining; an increasing population accelerates the rate of decline, so that equipment needs continually to be refreshed. | Linking existing green links, and formalising off-road routes between parks, with signage and surfacing. When deemed a Health & Safety liability with over-use, it needs to be replaced or removed. Continuous investment is needed simply to sustain the existing provision. Because many of the Council's 55 play areas are used to capacity, increases in the local population require increases in equipment; needs to be upgraded with technological advances to sustain the interest of children of all ages. | Unknown | Ongoing | RBC |
| | | | | £3.2 million dependent on receipt of grant funding or CIL/ S106 contributions | 2017-2027 | RBC |

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|--------------|--|--|--|--|---------------------|-----|
| Borough-Wide | Biodiversity Plan | To protect, enhance and increase biodiversity in parks, open spaces, allotments, cemeteries, woodland, waterways, riparian corridors and wetland areas | Reading's Biodiversity Plan identifies a number of actions including: Enhancing and increasing habitats for plants and wildlife; creating links between existing habitats; increasing plant diversity across grassland open spaces; improvement and additional planting of hedgerows; improving diversity of tree species in woodlands; improving and enhancing the Borough's watercourses and riparian corridors. | £375,000 | 2017 - 2027 | RBC |
| | Allotment Creation & Enhancement | Ongoing development pressure on existing private allotments. Very long waiting lists for allotments, which will be exacerbated by additional growth | To improve allotment provision within the Borough (especially in the North and West) | Dependent on funds becoming available or on a development opportunity making land available | Ongoing requirement | RBC |
| South | John Rabson Recreation Ground and the Cowsey | Public open space improvements within a deprived area; This is the only park in South Reading which has been identified as being a sufficient size to develop as a Neighbourhood Park with varied facilities and providing a range of experiences. Grass pitches suffer from waterlogging reducing availability and effectiveness. | Extend range of sports facilities and support more intensified use; landscaping and additional facilities as resources become available | £500,000 Further phases dependent on receipt of additional grant funding or S.106 contributions | 2017 onwards | RBC |
| | Kenavon Drive and surrounding open space provision | To create and improve links with adjacent open space and the town centre. | Enhance recreational / open space that serves this area; Increased levels of residential accommodation require broader range of facilities capable of sustaining increased levels of use. | £1,000,000 | 2017 onwards | RBC |
| Central/East | Christchurch Meadows | Increase capacity and quality of facilities to cater for increased growth in population and demand. | Enhance sports facilities including team sports, tennis and update leisure facilities | £500,000 | 2017 onwards | RBC |

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| Borough-Wide | Updating and improving Reading's indoor sports provision | Create high quality leisure venues to encourage and support greater levels of physical activity by Reading residents. | Reprovide Arthur Hill Swimming Pool at Palmer Park Stadium, Central Swimming Pool within town centre catchment and refurbish/extend Meadoway and refurbish other indoor sports centres to provide activities reflecting modern needs and demands. Ensure facilities support increased activity and health initiatives. | Unknown-- Potential-Sport England, New Opportunities Fund, RBC, Capital funds from sale of land | 2017 - 2022 | RBC |
| | Police Facilities | To make communities safer, increase public confidence, reduce costs by improving efficiency, improve service delivery and improve outcomes for victims of crime, as well as to aid in the prevention and investigation of crime with ANPR cameras. | Premises - New police station in South Reading, touchdown space in central Reading and potentially other areas. Digital Policing Program including smartphones, tablets, body-worn video, vehicle wifi and other new capabilities, including enhanced and new ANPR cameras at strategic locations within the Borough | Unknown, ANPR is £11,000/camera | Ongoing | Thames Valley Police |
| | Townsafes and CCTV | To update aging CCTV infrastructure in the town centre and continue expansion of the Townsafe radio program | Updates to CCTV infrastructure in the future; initial investment to provide Townsafe radios to new businesses throughout the borough | Section 106, CIL | Medium to long term | RBC |
| | Extra Care Housing | Dated existing provision and providing more options for an ageing population to reduce the demands on other care services | Delivery of extra care housing provision, mental health accommodation, learning disability accommodation and dementia friendly provision | Not known at this time | Ongoing | RBC, HA partners |
| | Primary Education | To provide sufficient primary school places to accommodate Reading's growing population. | Moorlands Primary School expansion from 1FE to 2FE by Sept. 2019; additional primary places needed in the north and centre in shorter term, and in the south in longer term. | Education Funding Authority, CIL, Section 106 | Ongoing | RBC |

| Borough-Wide | | Secondary Education | Healthcare | Postal Services | To provide sufficient secondary school places to accommodate Reading's growing population. | Need for additional 9 forms of entry to 2026, comprising: | Education Funding Authority, CIL, Section 106 | Required by 2021 | RBC |
|--------------|--|---------------------|---|--|--|--|---|------------------|---|
| | | | Additional capacity at existing surgeries and new surgeries associated with major development (particularly in the north, centre and south); Additional A&E and Maternity capacity is expected to be needed at the Royal Berkshire Hospital | Additional capacity for universal postal services. | <p>One new 6FE secondary school, preferably close to town centre - site identification process underway;</p> <p>Expansion of existing schools to provide 3 forms of entry.</p> | <p>Identifying and securing sites for new surgeries on major residential developments; expanding existing surgeries in line with CCG estate and staffing strategies; expansion of A&E and Maternity facilities</p> | CIL, Section 106 | Ongoing | Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS |
| | | | | | | For every 400 new dwellings, one additional postal worker is required, and for developments approaching 1,000 new dwellings in one area, an increased footprint or new delivery office may be required. | Royal Mail | Ongoing | Royal Mail, RBC to keep RM updated of scale and timing of development |

11. MONITORING

- 11.1.1** The Council's main monitoring tool is the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), produced in December every year. This has two purposes. Firstly, it reviews progress in producing all local development documents against the milestones in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the programme for all of these documents. If documents are falling behind, it will review whether there is a need to update the LDS. Secondly, the AMR monitors the effectiveness of local development documents. For example, the report will show whether the policies are impacting on development management decisions, and whether they are helping to achieve the Council's targets.
- 11.1.2** The schedule in Figure 11.1 sets out how the policies in the Local Plan will be monitored. There are a significant number of policies in the plan, and the resources are unlikely to be available to monitor each individually, so policies are grouped into their overall sections, with indicators for each section. The schedule sets out the source of the data that will be collected to monitor the plan, the regularity with which it will be collected and the location in which it will be presented. Generally, data will be presented in the AMR.
- 11.1.3** Monitoring of these indicators will reveal whether the policies and proposals in the Local Plan are being successfully implemented and therefore whether the overall strategy is being achieved. The AMR will therefore demonstrate whether, on balance, the Local Plan needs to be reviewed. In the event that one or two targets are being marginally missed is unlikely to form a reason to review the plan. A review is more likely to be needed if there is consistent failure to meet targets by a significant margin, in one area or across the board. It should be noted that some development targets, particularly those for the individual areas of Reading, are approximate, and, as set out in the individual area sections, do not represent a policy target. The ultimate distribution of development across the Borough may vary to a degree.
- 11.1.4** This Local Plan proposes to provide the vast majority, but not all, of Reading's housing need. A shortfall of 644 dwellings has been identified, to be provided elsewhere in the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area. The Council will play an active role in promoting the provision of these homes in other authorities, and will monitor progress in their provision. This will include the progress of other local authorities within the Housing Market Area in undertaking Local Plan reviews that help to meet the shortfall, and the progress in delivering homes against housing targets set out in Local Plans, including maintaining a five-year housing land supply.
- 11.1.5** Where monitoring demonstrates that there will not be sufficient progress on meeting this shortfall, the Council will consider the reasons for this, and will consider whether the extent of the lack of progress is sufficient to trigger a full or partial review of the Local Plan.

Figure 11.1: Monitoring Framework

| Indicator | Relevant policies | Target | | Data | | |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | Target | Target Date | Source | Date | Where presented |
| Cross-Cutting Policies | | | | | | |
| Carbon footprint of Reading Borough | General, CR2 | Reduce by 34% compared to 2005 levels | 2020 | Reading Climate Change Partnership | 2020 | RCCP website ¹²² |
| Sustainability requirements attached to major planning applications approved | CR2, H5 | Requirements for all majors | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Contributions towards infrastructure secured through Section 106 agreements | CC9 | No specific target - maximise contribution | | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Community Infrastructure Levy receipts and expenditure | CC9 | No specific target - maximise contribution | | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Built and Natural Environment | | | | | | |
| Amount of public recreational open space | EN7 - EN9 | No net loss | By 2036 | RBC | Biannual | AMR |
| Loss of open space to development | EN7, EN8 | None | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| New public open space brought into use through development | EN9 | Net gain | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Number of Local Wildlife Sites in positive conservation management | EN12 | 80% | Annual | TVERC | Annual | AMR |
| Area of Biodiversity Action Plan habitat | EN12 | No net loss | Annual | TVERC | Annual | AMR |
| Development in Major Landscape Features | EN13 | None | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Air quality targets in the UK Air Quality Strategy | EN15 | Various | 2020 | RBC | 2020 | TBC |
| Development on sites wholly or partly in Flood Zones 2 and 3 ¹²³ | EN18 | Maximum 4,000 dwellings and 250,000 sq m non-residential | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Economic Development | | | | | | |
| Office floorspace completed (net change) | EM1 | 53,000 - 112,000 sq m | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Industrial and warehouse floorspace completed (net change) | EM1 | 148,000 sq m | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |

¹²² <http://www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/>

¹²³ This relates to the amount of development permitted or allocated on sites wholly or partly in Flood Zones 2/3 in this Local Plan

| Indicator | Relevant policies | Target | | Data | | |
|---|-------------------|--|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| | | Target | Target Date | Source | Date | Where presented |
| Proportion of office floorspace completed which is in the centre or A33 corridor | EM2 | 90% | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Proportion of industrial/warehouse floorspace completed which is in the A33 corridor or Core Employment Areas | EM2 | 80% | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Net change of employment land within Core Employment Areas | EM3 | No net loss | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Net change in small business units (less than 150 sq m) | EM4 | No net loss | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Net change in storage & distribution floorspace in south of Basingstoke Road | EM4 | No net loss | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Housing | | | | | | |
| Five year housing land supply measured against targets in H1 | H1 | More than 5 year supply plus buffer ¹²⁴ | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Amount of new housing delivered (net change) | H1 | 671 | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Amount of new affordable housing delivered on new development sites. | H3 | 30% on sites of 10+ dwellings | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| | | 20% on sites of 5-9 dwellings | | | | |
| | | 10% contribution on sites of 1-4 dwellings | | | | |
| New-build dwellings delivered by size and type | H2 | At least 50% 3-bed or more outside centre | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Percentage of new dwellings on previously-developed land | General | 90% | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Proportion of student accommodation delivered on non-FHE sites | H12 | None | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches | H13 | TBC | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Dwellings delivered and offices lost through office to residential prior approvals | General | No target ¹²⁵ | | RBC | Annual | AMR |

¹²⁴ The buffer is generally 5%, unless over the plan period a track record of under-delivery is established, in which case the buffer rises to 20%

¹²⁵ Council has little control over this matter

| Indicator | Relevant policies | Target | | Data | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------|----------|---------------------------|
| | | Target | Target Date | Source | Date | Where presented |
| Transport | | | | | | |
| Delivery of identified transport projects in policy TR2 | TR2 | Various - see Local Transport Plan | | RBC | Annual | Reports to SEPT Committee |
| Retail, Leisure and Culture | | | | | | |
| Retail, leisure and culture floorspace delivered | RL2 | Up to 34,900 sq m | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Proportion of retail, leisure and culture floorspace delivered that is in a designated centre | RL1 | 80% | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Retail vacancy within designated centres | RL1 | Less than 10% | Biannual | RBC | Biannual | AMR |
| Proportion of key frontages within district and local centres in A1 or A2 use | RL3 | Targets in policy RL3 | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Other Uses | | | | | | |
| Floorspace for community facilities (use class D1) delivered | OU1 | Net increase | Annual | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Development for residential and non-residential uses within the Consultation Zones for AWE Burghfield | OU2 | No target | | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Central Reading | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed in Central Reading (net change) | CR11, CR12, CR13, CR14 | 7,600 (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Office floorspace completed in Central Reading (net change) | CR11, CR12, CR13, CR14 | 71,000 sq m (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Retail and leisure floorspace completed in Central Reading (net change) | CR11, CR12, CR13, CR14 | Up to 27,000 sq m (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| South Reading | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed in South Reading (net change) | SR2, SR3, SR4 | 3,700 (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Industrial/warehouse floorspace completed in South Reading (net change) | SR1, SR4 | 155,000 sq m (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |

| Indicator | Relevant policies | Target | | Data | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| | | Target | Target Date | Source | Date | Where presented |
| West Reading and Tilehurst | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed in West Reading and Tilehurst (net change) | WR1, WR2, WR3 | 2,400 (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| Caversham and Emmer Green | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed in Caversham and Emmer Green (net change) | CA1, CA2 | 700 (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |
| East Reading | | | | | | |
| Dwellings completed in East Reading (net change) | ER1 | 1,100 (approx.) | By 2036 | RBC | Annual | AMR |

12. GLOSSARY

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| Accessibility | The ability to access places and services, to be able to get about or get to specific facilities. |
| Active frontage | A front of a building which provides activity to the street or space onto which it faces. Please note that this also has a specific policy definition - see policy CR7. |
| Adoption | Adoption is the point at which a planning document becomes official policy. |
| Affordable housing | Housing provided at below market price to meet the identified needs of an area. |
| Air Quality Action Plan | An action plan for addressing air quality issues in an Air Quality Management Area. |
| Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) | An area where air quality objectives are not likely to be met. There is a requirement to draw up an action plan for each AQMA. |
| Air Quality Objective Levels | Local authorities are required under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality against a series of Air Quality Objectives set at national level. |
| Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) | A yearly report showing how the Council are keeping to their timetable and what the effects of their plans are. |
| Apart-hotel | A use falling between hotels and housing, providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living but also the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 hotels for planning purposes. |
| Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) | A landscape protected at national level due to its character and natural beauty. |
| Article 4 Direction | A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights. |
| Base station | A base station is a macrocell, microcell or picocell site and consists of radio transmitters and receivers in a cabin or cabinet connected to antennae by feeder |
| Biodiversity | The diversity of plant and animal species |
| BREEAM | A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. BREEAM assessment methods generally apply to commercial developments (industrial, retail etc). |
| Brownfield | Land which has been previously developed. |
| Brown roof | A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks. |
| Building line | The general line of buildings along a street, beyond which few or no buildings project. |
| Building of townscape | A building identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal identified as making a particular contribution to the character of the conservation area, usually not covered by a formal heritage designation. |

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| Bulky goods | Goods which are large and often require shopping trips to be made by car: e.g. furniture, DIY products etc. |
| Classified Highway Network | The network of identified main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads. |
| Combined Heat and Power | Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units generate electricity through an engine and capture the by-product, combustion heat, for use in heating and hot water systems. |
| Community facilities | Facilities and services which are of benefit to the wider community. See policy OU1 for a definition of community facilities as it applies to the Local Plan. |
| Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) | A charge which local authorities can charge on most types of new development in their area, to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area. CIL was introduced in Reading in April 2015. |
| Community involvement | Involvement of various individuals, groups and organisations and the general public in preparing planning documents. |
| Comparison retail | Retail of goods, such as clothes, records, books which are often purchased after a comparison of prices and available alternatives. |
| Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) | This is a means for local authorities to acquire land needed to help deliver economic and social change, under the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. |
| Conservation area | Defined areas of special architectural or historic interest which are worth preserving. |
| Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) | The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom of the Seveso II Directive devised in Brussels following the Seveso disaster . They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors. |
| Crossrail | A transport project to provide east-west rail links across London, which will terminate at Reading station. Services will be known as the Elizabeth Line. |
| Design and Access Statement | These accompany a major planning application, or a minor planning application in a designated area, to explain the design of the proposal. |
| Development briefs | Documents setting out planning principles for a specific site. Also known as planning briefs. |
| Dormer window | Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally. |
| Downlighters | A type of lighting where the light is projected downwards - in the case of advertisements often illuminating a sign below. |
| Dwelling | A single housing unit - a house, flat, maisonette etc. |

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| Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) | An assessment to calculate the needs for economic development uses, which mainly constitute offices, industry and warehouses. The Central Berkshire EDNA was produced in 2016. |
| Elizabeth Line | Rail services connecting Reading with London arising as part of the Crossrail scheme. |
| Energy Service Company (ESCO) | Companies concerned with maximising efficient and cost-effective supply and end-use of energy for their customers. This can encompass a mixture of the following as appropriate; competitive purchasing of various fuels; CHP; end-use efficiency measures; consumption monitoring and management and others. Found on http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Energy%20services%20company%20(ESCO) |
| Evening Economy | A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening. This includes pubs, clubs, restaurants and some arts/cultural uses. |
| Examination | Local plans are considered at an examination, during which the Planning Inspector assesses the soundness and legal compliance of the document. |
| Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) | A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed. |
| Flood Zones | The Environment Agency designate flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain. See the NPPF. |
| Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) | An area in which there are particular economic interrelationships, and which therefore functions as an economic whole, regardless of authority boundaries. |
| Geodiversity | The diversity of the geology in a location. |
| Granny annexe | A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house, that does not have all the facilities to be a self-contained unit of accommodation and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative. |
| Green roof | A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane. |
| Hazardous Substances Consent | Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity. Determining body is the Local Planning Authority. |
| Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) | A truck or lorry, defined by the EU as being over 3,500 kg. |
| Historic Environment Record | A source of information on all aspects of the historic environment in a given area. |

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| Historic Parks and Gardens | Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by Historic England. |
| House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) | A house occupied by unrelated individuals. Please note that the specific definition of an HMO changes depending on the legislation covering a specific area, e.g. planning or licensing. |
| Housing Association | An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost ‘affordable housing’ to meet specific housing needs. |
| Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) | An assessment that examines the capacity of an area for housing and economic development uses. National Planning Practice Guidance provides more information on such assessments. |
| Housing Market Area (HMA) | ‘A geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work’ (<i>source of definition: Planning Practice Guidance</i>). |
| Housing trajectory | A tool to compare how much housing the authority will provide against its requirement, and manage the supply. |
| ICNIRP declaration | A declaration from telecommunications code systems operators which confirms that any specific telecommunications proposal will adhere to ICNIRP guidelines on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields. |
| Illumination | The act of lighting something - in the case of this document, usually an advertisement or sign. |
| Information and Communications Technology (ICT) | Equipment, applications and services that involve communication. |
| Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) | A plan for providing the infrastructure necessary to support growth. |
| International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Electromagnetic Field | International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Electromagnetic Field: The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection is a body of independent scientific experts consisting of a main Commission of 14 members, 4 Scientific Standing Committees covering Epidemiology, Biology, Dosimetry and Optical Radiation and a number of consulting experts. This expertise is brought to bear on addressing the important issues of possible adverse effects on human health of exposure to non-ionising radiation. |
| Inner Distribution Road (IDR) | Inner Distribution Road - the road circling Reading’s core, made up of Queens Road, part of Caversham Road, Vastern Road, Forbury Road and part of Watlington Street. |
| Issues and Options | The first consultation stage in producing the local plan. |
| Implementation | The means by which aims and strategies are carried out. |

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| Infrastructure | The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community. |
| Lattice grilles | A type of protection for shopfronts and windows that is in a lattice-pattern and allows views through the window. |
| Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) | An authority responsible for strategies for managing flood risk in their areas. These are usually county or unitary authorities. |
| Legibility | ‘The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed’ (<i>source of definition: By Design, 2000</i>). |
| Listed building | Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Permission is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II*, with I being of exceptional interest. |
| Local Development Order (LDO) | A Local Development Order is a tool that a local authority can use to grant permission for certain types of development within a specified area, and can therefore be used to simplify the planning process. |
| Local Development Scheme (LDS) | The programme for producing planning documents. |
| Local Green Space | A type of green space protected for its particular local significance according to criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework. |
| Local Plan | The main document setting out planning policies for a District or Borough. |
| Local Transport Plan (LTP) | A five year plan setting out the strategy and priority for transport. |
| Locally listed building | Identified locally-significant buildings, which do not benefit from the same statutory protection as buildings on the national list. |
| Macrocell | A macrocell provides the largest area of coverage within a mobile network. The antennae for macrocells can be mounted on ground-based masts, rooftops or other existing structures. They must be positioned at a height that is not obstructed by terrain or buildings. Macrocells provide radio coverage over varying distances depending on the frequency used, the number of calls made and the physical terrain. Macrocell base stations have a typical power output in tens of watts. |
| Main town centre uses | Uses defined in the NPPF - retail; leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation; offices; and arts, culture and tourism. |
| Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) | A proposal in Reading for a completely new or hybrid public transport system to complement the existing provision. |
| Massing | ‘The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings’ (<i>source of definition: By Design, 2000</i>). |
| Microcell | Microcells provide additional coverage and capacity where there are high numbers of users within urban and suburban macrocells. The antennae for microcells are mounted at street level, typically on the external walls of existing structures, lamp-posts and other street furniture. Microcell antennas are usually smaller than macrocell antennas and when mounted on existing structures can often be blended into building features. Microcells provide radio coverage over distances, typically between 100m and 1000m and operate at power levels substantially below those of macrocells. |

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| Microclimate | The climate of a small area. |
| Mixed-use | Where a site contains more than one use. |
| Morphology | The historic pattern and grain of development. |
| Multi-modal interchange | A transport interchange which is served by a number of modes of transport. |
| Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) | A fenced, non-turf surfaced area, marked out, and an adequate size for, at least two of the following sports: tennis, netball, basketball and five-a-side football. (<i>Source of definition: Sport England</i>) |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | A document setting out national planning policy for England. This was finalised in 2012, and replaces a variety of previous national guidance within a single document. |
| Park and Ride | A transport system where drivers leave their cars in a car park and continue their journey on public transport. |
| Permeability | ‘The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it’ (<i>source of definition: By Design, 2000</i>). |
| Permitted development | A type of development that is specifically excluded from the need to apply for planning permission. |
| Picocell | A picocell provides more localised coverage than a microcell. These are normally found inside buildings where coverage is poor or there are a high number of users such as airport terminals, train stations or shopping centres. |
| Planning briefs | Documents setting out planning principles for a specific site. Also known as development briefs. |
| Planning condition | A condition that is attached to a planning permission. |
| Planning Inspector | A Planning Inspector is appointed by the Secretary of State to examine planning proposals and documents, and issue a binding report. |
| Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) | An online resource offering more detailed guidance on the operation of national planning policy, particularly that in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| PM_{2.5} | “The mass per cubic metre of air of particles with a size (diameter) generally less than 2.5 micrometres (µm)” (source: DEFRA) |
| PM₁₀ | “Particulate Matter of less than 10 millionths of a metre in diameter. These particles have the greatest potential of reaching the furthest parts of the lungs.” (source: Health Protection Agency) |
| Previously developed land | Land which has been previously developed. Also known as brownfield. |
| Projecting box type signs | A box-shaped sign projecting from a building or structure, often illuminated internally. |
| Proposals map | A map on an Ordnance Survey base which shows the sites and locations to which policies apply. |

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| Public realm | 'The parts of a village, town and city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks' (<i>source of definition: By Design, 2000</i>). |
| Reading UK CIC | The economic and marketing company for Reading, formed as a Community Interest Company. |
| Retail and Leisure Study | A study identifying the needs for retail and leisure space in an area. |
| Retail warehouse | A large, often single-level store, often specialising in the sale of bulky goods such as furniture or DIY, catering for mainly car-borne customers. |
| Section 106 agreement | A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. |
| Sequential approach | A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses. |
| Serviced land | The roads and necessary infrastructure including drainage are provided by the developer. Plots are then available to build a house and connect it to relevant services. |
| Soundness | When holding an examination into planning documents, the role of the Inspector is to decide whether the documents are 'sound'. |
| Spatial options | Options for the future development which covers specific areas or sites. |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | A European directive means that an SEA must be completed for all local development documents. This has been made part of the sustainability appraisal process. |
| Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) | An assessment that looks at which areas can be defined as housing market areas, and identifies needs for different sizes and types of housing within those areas. The Berkshire (with South Bucks) SHMA dates from February 2016. |
| Student accommodation | Living accommodation provided specifically for those in education. |
| Submission | The stage at which a draft Local Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. |
| Sui Generis | A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004), which has its own category. |
| Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) | Planning documents which provide more detailed information than development plans, but do not have the same weight. |

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| Surface Water Management Plan | ‘Surface water flooding describes flooding from sewers, drains, small water courses and ditches occurring during heavy rainfall in urban areas. A SWMP is a framework through which key local partners with responsibility for surface water and drainage in their area work together to understand the causes of surface water flooding and agree the most cost effective way of managing surface water flood risk. The purpose is to make sustainable urban surface water management decisions that are evidence based, risk based, future proofed and inclusive of stakeholder views and preferences’. ¹²⁶ |
| Sustainability Appraisal | A sustainability appraisal should be completed for all local development documents at all stages. It highlights the main environmental, economic and social effects of the document. |
| Sustainability objectives | The twenty objectives against which policies and documents are appraised in the sustainability appraisal. |
| Sustainable development | Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations. |
| Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) | For the purposes of this document, this term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management. |
| Tree Preservation Order (TPO) | An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA’s consent. |
| Undercroft parking | Car parking located beneath a development. |
| Uplighters | A type of lighting where the light is projected upwards - in the case of advertisements often illuminating a sign above. |
| Urban design | ‘Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, ... and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development’ (<i>source of definition: By Design, 2000</i>). |
| Urban renaissance | Making towns and cities places where people want to spend time and live. |
| Use class | There is a list of 13 use classes introduced through the Use Classes Order legislation. Planning permission is not needed for a change of use within a single use class. |
| Waterspace | The areas alongside and close to main river and canal corridors. |
| West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework (WoBSPF) | A non-statutory document published in December 2016 looking at opportunities for growth in the West of Berkshire, along with the cross-boundary implications and the essential infrastructure needed. |
| Western Berkshire Housing Market Area (WBHMA) | The area defined as forming a single housing market area by the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, comprising the local authority areas of Reading, West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. |
| 2FE | 2-Form Entry. A school which admits two forms of new pupils per year. |

¹²⁶ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/documents/manage/surfacewater/swmp-guide.pdf>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: HOUSING TRAJECTORY 2013/14 TO 2035/36 AS AT 31/03/2017

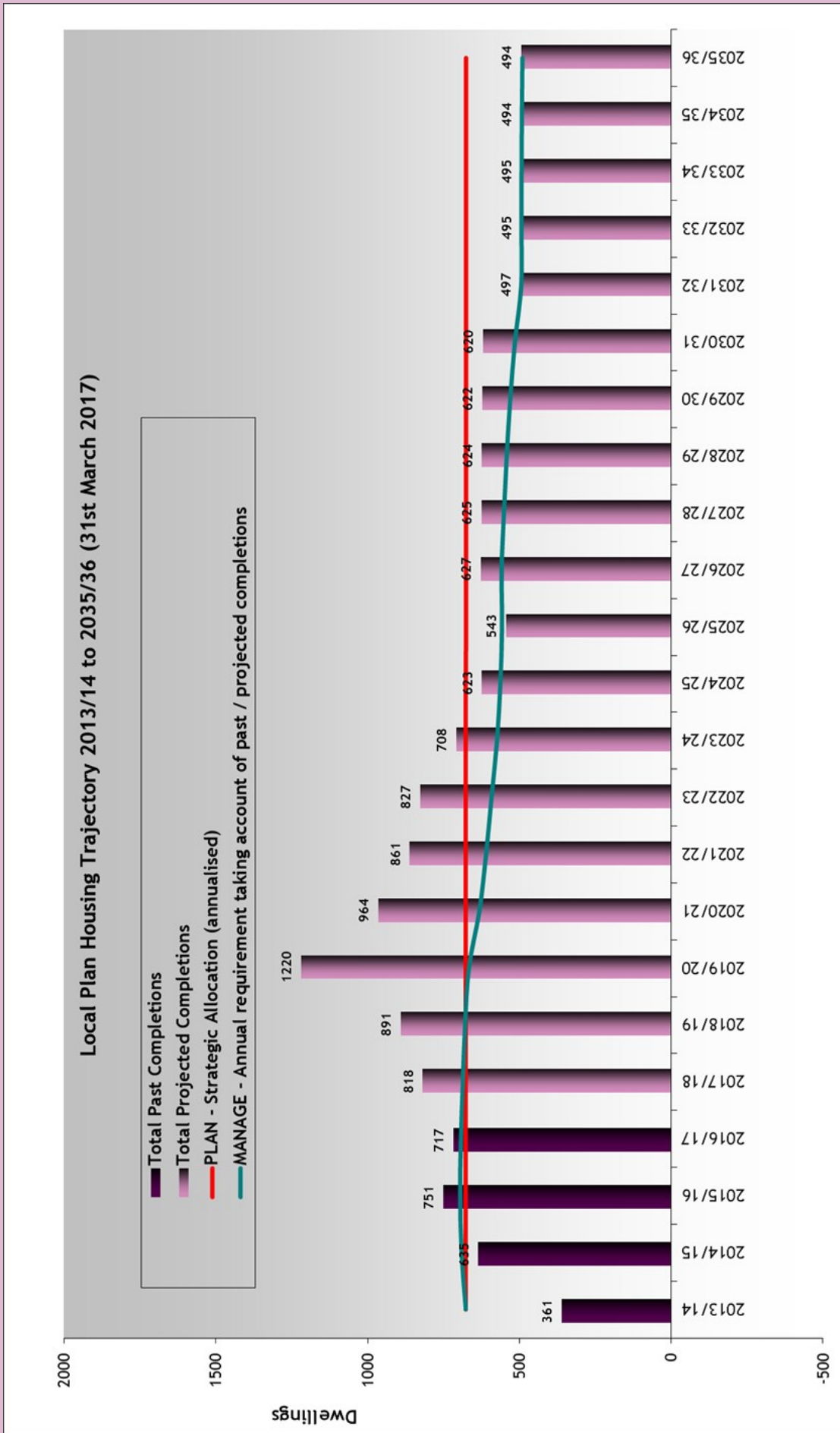
| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 | 2031/32 | 2032/33 | 2033/34 | 2034/35 | 2035/36 | TOTAL | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-------|
| Small Scale unidentified sites (<10 units) | 123 | 129 | 80 | 103 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 127 | 2848 | |
| Permitted & under constr (10+), no lapse rate | | | | | 691 | 458 | 284 | 199 | 113 | 100 | 59 | 90 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1904 |
| Permitted & not started (10+), incl. lapse rate | | | | | 295 | 473 | 233 | 95 | 71 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1167 |
| Permitted subject to S106 (10+), incl. lapse rate | | | | | 0 | 0 | 37 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 65 |
| Permitted since 16/17 ¹²⁷ (10+), 10% lapse rate | | | | | 0 | 12 | 280 | 349 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1017 |
| Sites in Local Plan, 10% or 20% lapse rate | | | | | 0 | 0 | 79 | 86 | 434 | 436 | 430 | 405 | 400 | 500 | 498 | 497 | 495 | 493 | 370 | 368 | 368 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 6593 |
| Other allowances | | | | | 0 | 0 | -60 | -58 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -109 |
| Past completions (C3 housing) | 361 | 635 | 751 | 717 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2464 |
| Past completions (non-C3 residential) | 0 | -41 | -5 | 96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 50 |
| Total past completions (all) | 361 | 594 | 746 | 813 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2514 |
| Total projected completions | | | | | 818 | 891 | 1220 | 964 | 861 | 827 | 708 | 623 | 543 | 627 | 625 | 624 | 622 | 620 | 497 | 495 | 495 | 494 | 494 | 494 | 13050 |
| Cumulative completions | 361 | 955 | 1701 | 2514 | 3332 | 4223 | 5443 | 6407 | 7268 | 8095 | 8803 | 9426 | 9970 | 10597 | 11222 | 11846 | 12468 | 13088 | 13585 | 14080 | 14575 | 15069 | 15564 | | |

MONITORING AGAINST LOCAL PLAN TARGETS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| PLAN - Housing (per annum) ¹²⁸ | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 671 | 15433 |
| PLAN - Non-C3 resi (resi equiv p.a.) | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 127 |
| PLAN - Total strategic allocation (annualised) | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 677 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 676 | 15560 |
| MONITOR - No dwellings above or below cumulative allocation | -316 | -399 | -330 | -194 | -53 | 161 | 704 | 991 | 1175 | 1325 | 1356 | 1302 | 1170 | 1121 | 1070 | 1018 | 964 | 908 | 729 | 548 | 367 | 185 | 4 | | |
| MANAGE - Annual requirement taking account of past / projected completions | 677 | 691 | 695 | 693 | 687 | 679 | 667 | 632 | 610 | 592 | 574 | 563 | 558 | 559 | 551 | 542 | 531 | 515 | 494 | 494 | 493 | 492 | 491 | 491 | |

¹²⁷ Or with resolution to grant subject to Section 106

¹²⁸ Expressed as a dwelling equivalent – see paragraph A1.3



- A1.1** The Housing Trajectory shows how much housing is expected to be delivered and when, and how this relates to the housing provision in the Local Plan. It shows the components of expected supply. An updated version of the Housing Trajectory will be included in each Annual Monitoring Report.
- A1.2** In general, the trajectory deals with dwellings within the C3 use class. Where residential accommodation falls within the C3 or C4 use class, it is considered to be a single dwelling. However, in line with National Planning Practice Guidance, other types of residential accommodation can be counted towards meeting housing needs on the basis that it frees up existing residential accommodation, as long as the need for those forms of accommodation are also part of the calculation.
- A1.3** The way that the different types of accommodation are converted into dwelling equivalents in the Housing Trajectory is set out below:
- **Student accommodation:** There is potential for new student accommodation to free up existing housing. Where there is a cluster of bedrooms with shared kitchen and living room facilities, this is considered to be equivalent to a single dwelling, as are studios which are entirely self-contained. More frequently, accommodation is in the form of study bedrooms with some shared facilities, and in these cases we assume that four bedrooms equates to one dwelling.
 - **Houses in multiple occupation:** The approach to HMOs is largely similar to that for student accommodation. Small C4 HMOs are already counted as ‘dwellings’ in the Council’s monitoring in any case. For larger ‘sui generis’ HMOs, it is considered that, where it is a cluster of bedrooms in a dwelling style with shared kitchen and living facilities, it is equivalent to a single dwelling. Where it comprises bedsits with shared toilet facilities, it is assumed that four bedsits equates to one dwelling.
 - **Residential care and other accommodation for older people:** Some accommodation for older people, such as extra care housing, tends to count as a C3 dwelling anyway, where it is a wholly self-contained residential unit. In care accommodation with shared facilities, the assumption is that two new residential care spaces free up one new home.
 - **Serviced apartments (where authorised)** are considered to fall within the C1 hotel use class and will not be counted against housing supply.

APPENDIX 2: CRITERIA FOR LOCALLY LISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CRITERIA FOR LOCALLY LISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Exclusions

Buildings and structures will not be considered for the Local List when they are already part of a Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument, or subject to an Article 4 direction relating to historical or architectural interest.

Principles of Selection for the Local List

This guidance sets out the general principles that Reading Borough Council applies when deciding whether a building, group of buildings or structure should be added to Reading's List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures:

- a. pre-1840: Any building, structure or group of buildings where its/ their original character and form are clearly identifiable.
- b. 1840 - 1913: Any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are of clearly-defined significance in the local context and where elements that contribute to its/ their heritage significance remain substantially complete.
- c. 1914 - 1939: Any building, structure or group of buildings where the elements that contribute to a high level of significance in the local context remain substantially complete.
- d. post-1939: Any building, structure or group of buildings where the elements that contribute to its/ their exceptional heritage significance in the local context are wholly complete and unaffected by inappropriate changes.

In identifying significance in the local context it must be shown that the building, structure or group of buildings contribute(s) to the heritage of the Borough in accordance with at least one of the significance criteria detailed below:

Historic interest

- a. Historical Association
 - i. The building or structure has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event.
 - ii. The building or structure has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest.
- b. Social Importance
The building or structure has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities. Such buildings/structures may include places of worship, schools, community buildings, places of employment, public houses and memorials which formed a focal point or played a key social role.
- c. Industrial Importance
The building or structure clearly relates to traditional or historic industrial processes or important businesses or the products of such industrial processes or businesses in the history of Reading or are intact industrial structures, for example bridges.

Architectural interest

- a. Sense of place
 - i. The building or structure is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading.
- b. Innovation and Virtuosity
 - i. The building or structure has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials.
 - ii. The building or structure is the work of a notable local/national architect/engineer/builder.
 - iii. The building or structure shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering.
- c. Group Value
 - i. The buildings/structures form a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.
 - ii. The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947.

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