
Reading Borough Local Plan Public Examination

Response to Inspector's Matters and Issues
On behalf of University of Reading (UoR)

Issue 5
Built and Natural Environment

September 2018

**Reading Borough Local Plan
Public Examination**

Response to Inspector's Matters and Issues

Issue 5:

Are the policies for the Built Environment justified, deliverable and consistent with national policy?

Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of the University of Reading

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Prepared by:	Jonathan Locke	Jonathan Locke	Jonathan Locke
Checked by:	Nick Paterson-Neild	Nick Paterson-Neild	Nick Paterson-Neild

Barton Willmore
The Blade
Abbey Square
Reading
Berkshire. RG1 3BE

Tel: 0118 943 0000
Fax: 0118 943 0001
Email: planning@bartonwillmore.co.uk

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0.0 INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 Barton Willmore LLP is instructed by the University of Reading (UoR) to submit this written Hearing Statement ("HS") in response to the Inspector's Matters and Issues for Examination. These representations expand upon the representations submitted on behalf of the UoR in response to the relevant Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations on the emerging Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 0.2 This statement does not respond to all questions raised under Issue 5, but focuses on those of particular relevance to the interests of the UoR. Whilst efforts are made not to duplicate the content of previous representations, this HS draws on previous responses where necessary.

RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S QUESTIONS – Issue 5

Issue 5. Are the policies for the Built Environment justified, deliverable and consistent with national policy?

1.0 Q1. Are Policies EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and EN6 consistent with national policy? Will the LP be effective in dealing with designated assets at risk, listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, and non-designated heritage assets?

1.1 No comment.

2.0 Q1a. Are the requirements of individual site allocations policies and other policies within the LP (for example CR14c, CR14e and CA2) consistent with these policies?

2.1 Yes in so far as Policies CA1a (Reading University Boat Club), ER1c (land rear of 8-26 Redlands Road) and Policy ER1e (St Patrick's Hall) are concerned;

- a) The fourth bullet of Policy CA1a requires that any proposed development on the site "take account of potential archaeological significance, and be supported by a desk-based archaeological assessment which should inform the development";
- b) The first bullet of Policy ER1c states that development should "make a positive contribution to the conservation area and to the setting of adjacent listed buildings" and the second bullet requires that development on the site "take account of potential archaeological significance"; and
- c) The first bullet of Policy ER1e states that development should "retain the locally-listed building and additional development should enhance its setting" and the second bullet states that development on the site should "take account of potential archaeological significance".

2.2 The requirements of the abovementioned policies are considered to be in accordance with those stated within draft Policies EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and EN6 of the emerging Local Plan. The University has no further comment in relation to these policies.

3.0 Q2. What evidence is there for the protection of significant views in Policy EN5? Will the policy be effective?

3.1 No comment.

4.0 Q3. How up to date is the assessment of sites for Local Green Space and Public Open Space in Policy EN7, and is it robust? What is the justification for including Public Open Space within the Policy, and is this consistent with national policy?

4.1 No comment.

5.0 Q4. What is the justification for the standards in the provision of open space in Table 4.3 relating to Policy EN9?

5.1 No comment.

6.0 Q5. What is the evidence for the identification of Major Landscape Features in Policy EN13?

6.1 No comment.

7.0 Q5a. Do the requirements in Policy EN13 for a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment apply to all types of development, if so is this justified?

7.1 No comment.

8.0 Q6. Are the requirements of EN14 justified and will it be effective? Is it consistent with national policy?

8.1 No.

8.2 The University has previously stated within representations to the Council's Regulation 19 proposed submission version of the Local Plan that in its current form, Policy EN14 is not justified or consistent with national planning policy.

8.3 At present, the policy would require **all** new development to make provision for planting within the application site area regardless of site characteristics, including its size and location. It will not however be appropriate for all developments to include new planting. In order to resolve this matter, the University has previously recommended that the Council insert (in relation to the provision for tree retention and planting) the words "where appropriate and justified". This would enable the Council to require planting is retained and new planting is provided where appropriate and will not then be a catch-all policy for all development regardless of suitability.

8.4 The Council have responded that such a change would water down the policy approach and that in circumstances where on-site planting is not possible, off-site planting will be appropriate. The University does not consider that off-site planting will be possible in all circumstances and maintain that the aforementioned change (as stated within the University's representations) would resolve the soundness issues of this policy. For clarity, this is provided again below:

"New development shall make provision, where appropriate and justified, for tree planting within the application site ... "

9.0 Q7. Is the approach to air quality within the area as set out in EN15 justified, and will the policy be effective?

9.1 No comment.

10.0 Q8. Is EN16 justified and will it be effective including in relation to available capacity within the sewer network and Blakes Lock SPS, and contaminated sites? Will the policy be effective in relation to all potential sources of pollution?

10.1 No comment.

11.0 Q9. What is the justification for the noise rating level set out in Policy EN17?

11.1 The University considers there is insufficient justification for the inclusion, within Policy EN17 for noise generated by noise generating equipment to be limited to no more than 10dBA below existing background noise. It is considered that background noise level would provide an appropriate starting point above which it could be considered an impact on general amenities may begin to be experienced.

11.2 The NPPF (paragraph 123) states that planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving significant adverse impacts. NPPF footnote 27 directs attention to the Noise Policy Statement for England (2010), referred here to as the "NPSE". The NPSE states three key policy aims;

1. Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
2. Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and
3. Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.

11.3 In clarifying what would be considered "significant adverse" or "adverse" impacts from noise, the NPSE states three levels of impact;

1. NOEL – no observed effect level;
2. LOAEL – lowest observed adverse effect level; and
3. SOAEL – significant observed adverse effect level.

11.4 It is of particular interest that at paragraph 2.19 of the NPSE, it clarifies that NOEL is the "level below which no effect can be detected" and "there is no detectable effect on health and quality of life due to the noise." Noise would logically only become noticeable once it increases beyond background noise. At background noise and below there would be no noticeable impact and as such, there would be no justification for the Council including a policy requirement for noise emissions to be restricted to no more than 10dB below background noise.