

# READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



[www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



**Reading**  
Borough Council

Working better with you

## 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 (NPPF). Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.*

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no policies relevant to the application or the policies which are most important to determining the application are out of date at the time of making the decision then permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:*

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.*

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 February 2019. 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 Strategy<sup>16</sup> (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 (including non-C3 forms of accommodation) 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 published in 2019 to

<sup>16</sup> 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>