

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



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Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

FOREWORD

By Councillor Tony Page

The Local Plan is 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. It will be the main point of reference for anyone wishing to undertake new buildings, changes or developments within Reading over that period.



This plan has been carefully developed to address some of the key issues facing Reading. In particular, this Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and set out its commitment to work towards achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. We must therefore ensure that new development only takes place where it can help us in achieving that aim. The Local Plan contains sustainability policies that put it at the cutting edge of authorities across the country. We are proud in Reading to be in the top 5% of local authorities in Britain for cutting carbon emissions and the Local Plan will play a major part in building upon that success.

Over recent years, Reading has had great economic success, and this has resulted in considerable investment in the town. However, this success brings its own issues. In particular, Reading faces an acute housing crisis. There are not enough homes in general, and there is a particular need for genuinely affordable housing which represents more than half of our overall assessed housing need. The Local Plan is a major part of our response to this issue, and 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 continues to be an attractive place in which to work, to live and to study. 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 social exclusion.

The Plan also takes a positive approach to conserving and enhancing Reading's considerable but, in the past, often overlooked historic legacy. Reading has some truly significant historic sites, some of which are identified for future use and enhancement as part of this Plan. Improving Reading's environment is a major part of the Plan, both in terms of revitalising tired and run-down sites and areas, and in preserving those elements that are essential to our residents' quality of life.

This Plan will ensure that our town remains a great place in which to live, work and play for people living here now - and in the future. It provides an excellent basis for delivering on our Climate Emergency Declaration earlier this year, and achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for Reading.

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*

- 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.