

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.



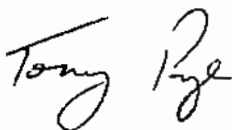
This plan has been carefully developed to address some of the key issues facing Reading. In particular, this Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and set out its commitment to work towards achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. We must therefore ensure that new development only takes place 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.



Tony Page

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

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, 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 unless there is clear and convincing justification in the form of overriding public benefits.

- 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.
- 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.

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>

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/>