

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

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.

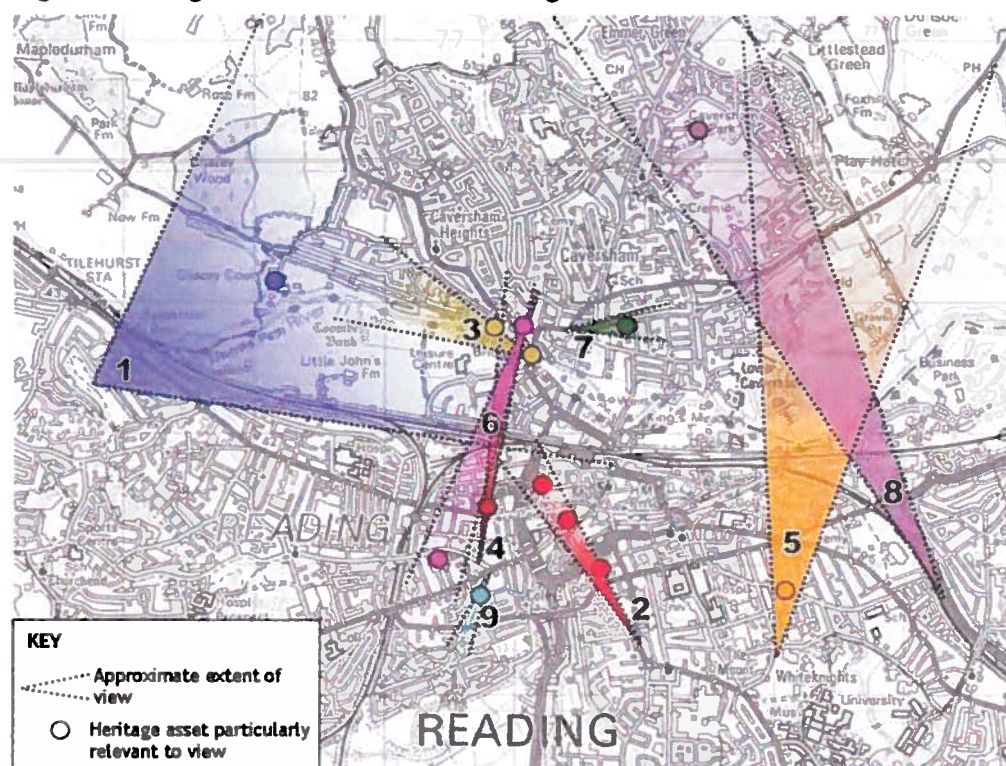
The following views merit special protection:

- 1. View from Mclroy 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***
- 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

Figure 4.2: Significant Views with Heritage Interest



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.

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 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

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