

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



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Reading
Borough Council

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4.4 Housing

Provision of Housing

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.

The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to ensure that the shortfall of 230 dwellings that cannot be provided within Reading will be met over the plan period.

- 4.4.1 There is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area. The six Berkshire authorities (Reading Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough Council) together with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership co-operated on the production of a Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which reported in February 2016⁷². This study identified the Housing Market Areas within which the Berkshire authorities should work, and set out levels of housing need between 2013 and 2036.
- 4.4.2 The SHMA identifies Reading as being part of a Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, together with West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. Within this area, an 'objectively assessed need' is identified for a total of 2,855 new homes every year up to 2036. Reading's share of this need is 699 homes per year, or a total of 16,077 between 2013 and 2036. The expectation in the NPPF is that local planning authorities should meet their need unless they can demonstrate that doing so is not possible.
- 4.4.3 However, Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough. The Council therefore needs to set targets for housing provision that are capable of being met.
- 4.4.4 It is considered that of the 16,077 homes needed, 15,847 can be delivered in Reading Borough, which equates to 689 dwellings per annum. A Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment⁷³ (HELAA) has demonstrated that this is the level of housing development that Reading can realistically accommodate in the plan period. This uses a methodology that has been jointly agreed with four other Berkshire authorities, and examines each site with potential for ten dwellings or more, in terms of its development capacity, suitability, availability and achievability, as well as making an allowance for windfall development on sites of less than ten dwellings. The HELAA was carried out in November 2017, but the information on housing supply has been updated to 31st March 2019. The expected provision breaks down as follows:

⁷²[http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2959/Housing-Market-Assessment/pdf/Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Feb 2016.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2959/Housing-Market-Assessment/pdf/Berkshire_Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Feb_2016.pdf)

⁷³ Available at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

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|---|---------------------|
| Total need for Reading Borough 2013-36 | 16,077 homes |
| <i>Minus completed 2013-2019</i> | <i>4,202 homes</i> |
| <i>Minus permitted or resolution to grant (>10 dwellings) at 31st March 2019⁷⁴</i> | <i>4,696 homes</i> |
| <i>Minus allowance for small site (<10 dwellings) windfalls at 127 per year 2019-2036</i> | <i>2,159 homes</i> |
| Remainder not already identified | 5,020 homes |
| Identified in Local Plan | 4,790 homes |
| Shortfall to be accommodated elsewhere in HMA | 230 homes |

4.4.5 The Local Plan includes a Housing Trajectory at Appendix 1, which sets out how the housing requirement in policy H1 is expected to be met over the plan period, including forecast completions for each year. The Housing Trajectory will be kept up to date and a revised version published each December in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will also include an up-to-date assessment of the five-year housing land supply, a requirement of national policy. This will highlight any issues with the delivery of new homes, and whether there is any need to address issues through measures such as a plan review or through discussions with other authorities under the duty to co-operate.

4.4.6 Delivering the level of housing set out in policy H1 will mean that there is a shortfall of 230 dwellings when considered against Reading’s need. This will need to be accommodated elsewhere within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area. The other three authorities within the HMA recognise that there will be issues with Reading’s ability to accommodate its need within its own boundaries, and this issue is set out within the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework to which the four authorities have signed up⁷⁵. There will be continuing dialogue on this matter between the affected authorities which will inform local plans. Where agreement is reached, it will be for individual authorities’ Local Plans to specify where development will be located.

Density and Mix

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- *the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;*
- *its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *the need to achieve high quality design;*
- *the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and*
- *the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*

Indicative densities for different types of area are set out in figure 4.5, but the criteria above may indicate that a different density is appropriate. Residential development capacity figures within the site allocation policies are often based on these densities, but

⁷⁴ Including appropriate non-implementation rates

⁷⁵ <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/west-of-berkshire-spatial-planning-framework-final.pdf>