

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

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Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.

4.1.25 It is important that development is accessible by a choice of modes of transport. This means that the primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses. Locating development in areas accessible by walking and cycling can serve important public health goals, including:

- increased physical activity;
- decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;
- reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;
- fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;
- proximity to healthcare services;
- access to open space for recreation¹⁹.

4.1.26 The highest levels of accessibility in Reading are to be found in the town centre, which is also one of the most accessible locations in the South East. However, good levels of accessibility are also to be found within district and local centres and along well-served public transport corridors. For example, in the south of Reading, the delivery of a mass rapid transit (MRT) route will enable development that is at a higher density than in many other out of centre areas, in particular where there are transport interchanges.

4.1.27 As a rule of thumb, a good level of accessibility is considered to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.). In many parts of Reading, it will be important to ensure that access to a range of facilities is encouraged, and not affected by existing barriers, such as major roads, rivers and railways.

4.1.28 The Spatial Strategy, in figure 3.2, includes an indicative illustration of how the intensity of development relates to the level of accessibility. However, it is important to note that it is indicative only, and that changes to, or more detailed assessment of, accessibility levels over the plan period may enable a different approach to development density in some areas.

¹⁹ NHS Healthy Urban Development Checklist <http://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Healthy-Urban-Planning-Checklist-March-2014.pdf>