

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Safeguarding Amenity

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.*

The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.

As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Proposals which would generate regular movements of HGVs on residential roads will not be acceptable.

Where an otherwise acceptable development could change its character to a use that would have a greater impact on amenity without needing planning permission, conditions will be applied to restrict such changes.

- 4.1.36 One of the key concerns of planning is to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it would affect residential properties. At the same time, ensuring that new development creates a quality living environment for future residents is also critical. The policy aims to ensure that existing and additional residential properties provide an acceptable living environment, which is a key element of a high quality of life. It is applicable to any type of development.
- 4.1.37 Substantial levels of development are planned for Reading in coming years, and the vast majority of it will take place in the existing urban area of Reading. Although the mix of uses sought will be generally beneficial to Reading, this increasing concentration of different types of development may give rise to some tensions between uses.
- 4.1.38 Most tensions can be avoided by careful design, siting and orientation of buildings and spaces, paying particular attention to those aspects which are most likely to cause issues (e.g. car parks, bin stores and noisy equipment), and which are most sensitive to effects (e.g. children's play areas, outdoor spaces or habitable rooms). Planning conditions can also be used to deal

with matters such as the installation of extraction systems, hours of operation, or preventing a development from changing its character.

- 4.1.39 There is not any current policy prescribing the location of employment uses below 2,500 sq m. Such a policy is not required, as long as impacts on residential amenity are carefully controlled. This policy will therefore be regularly applied to new or expanding employment uses. Where HGV movements (vehicles having a gross laden weight greater than 7.5 tonnes) are to be generated, apart from during construction, it is not appropriate that residential roads are used. This policy also seeks to ensure that new development for uses such as residential in close proximity to commercial use is not located or designed in a way that leads to future tensions that would constrain the operation of existing businesses.
- 4.1.40 Amenity levels for new residential development may also be considered. For instance, layouts should avoid locating living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens next to, above, or below proposed and neighbouring bedrooms unless effects can be adequately mitigated through design. Another example is that 'dual aspect' units will help to increase access to light.
- 4.1.41 Other policies in this document deal specifically with uses which often have particular amenity impacts, for instance residential conversions (H8) and house extensions (H9). Policy CC8 must be read in conjunction with these policies where they apply.
- 4.1.42 There is good practice guidance available on some of these issues²². The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on House Extensions provides some useful guidance on how extensions can be designed to accord with the principles of this policy, and that SPG continues to be current. For instance, the SPG sets out a basic way to protect light to main rooms in adjoining dwellings, through avoiding extensions that would infringe on an area measured at an angle of 45° from the midpoint of the closest window to a habitable room in a neighbouring property.
- 4.1.43 This policy mainly deals with the end result of developments, but in the meantime, conditions may be applied to regulate the amenity effects of construction.

Securing Infrastructure

CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.

Employment development should provide mitigation measures in line with its impacts on labour and skills and on the transport network.

²² For instance, reference to the 'BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice' document may be of use in ensuring that new development adjacent to residential properties is not of adverse bulk and does not block out sunlight and daylight to habitable rooms and outdoor living spaces.