

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



www.reading.gov.uk

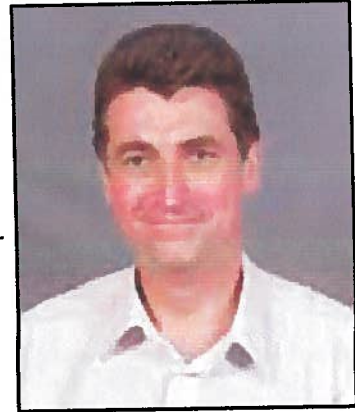


Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

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

a case-by-case basis to protect visual amenity. The most recent report (2015) sets the following levels (applicable to measurements at night):

Illuminated Area (m ²)	Zone E1 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E2 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E3 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E4 (candelas/m ²)
Up to 10.00	100	400	600	600
Over 10.00	N/A	200	300	300

(Source: Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements, Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2015).

4.7.30 The zones are described as:

- Zone E1: Intrinsically dark areas.
- Zone E2: Low district brightness areas (e.g. rural-urban fringe).
- Zone E3: Medium district brightness areas (e.g. district and local centres and urban areas).
- Zone E4: High district brightness areas (e.g. the core of the centre).

In some circumstances, particularly where listed buildings and conservation areas are concerned, illumination levels may need to be reduced, although this will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please see the comments in paragraph 4.7.26 about illumination.

4.7.31 There is an overlap between this policy and OU5 on shopfronts, and, in some cases, both policies will apply.

Shopfronts and Cash Machines

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

Shopfronts, individual features of shopfronts and cash machines will respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. Features that positively contribute to the character of the building and street will be retained and, where possible, restored. Safety and security will be maintained and enhanced.

For shopfronts, the following criteria will be fulfilled:

- New shopfronts on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;*
- Where a shop occupies multiple units, shopfronts will not run in a continuous horizontal line across the different unit façades. The fascia and the shop windows should be broken up to ensure the features of each unit are not lost;*
- Fascia boards should be lower than any first floor windows, and reflect the predominant height of historic fascia boards on surrounding buildings;*
- Canopies and blinds over windows and entrances should be for the shading of the shop and should be retractable; and*
- Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. Where security is essential, security features will be internal, such as internal open mesh grilles. Opaque coverings on shop windows, such as paint and films, will be minimised and will not obscure the window.*

4.7.32 Reading has many good examples of shopfronts, both traditional and modern. To ensure that the heritage character and amenity of the Borough is maintained, the design of shopfronts is

vital. The character of a shopping street is often defined by its shopfronts. Given the success of Reading as a shopping destination, many visitors experience Reading mainly as shoppers, and it is therefore important that shopfronts do not detract from this experience.

- 4.7.33 The overall composition of multiple shopfronts is often of greatest importance, and features such as stallrisers, pilasters and fascia boards can contribute to the character of the building as well as to the streetscape, and should be retained where they already exist. Such features should be included in new shopfronts where they are part of the character of the street. *Fixed canopies can obscure such features and are usually inappropriate. Merging of shopfronts can negatively affect the pattern of the street, and, where shop units are combined, the pattern can be maintained by having a gap in the fascia boards and a strong separation between the exterior of the two units by a pilaster or a column.*
- 4.7.34 Security is an important consideration and the Council does not seek to hinder the ability of businesses to protect their property. However, in recent years, many shopfronts have been secured by external, solid roller doors. These are often a cheap and easy solution for security, but have detrimental effects on the shopfront and streetscape, presenting a blank wall to pedestrians and reducing natural surveillance. Other methods of security, such as lattice grilles and internal shutters are more appropriate as they still provide the necessary security but also create a more open frontage and allow light spillage after dark. In recent years, there have also been a number of cases where shop windows have been obscured by opaque material, which can have a negative effect on the vitality of the whole street and is not appropriate. Shopfronts should remain active during both the day and night.
- 4.7.35 Safety and security will be a prime consideration in the location of cash machines, which should be located in well-lit, busy areas, away from dark corners or recesses.