

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

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Reading
Borough Council

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5.3 General Policies for Central Reading

Definition of Central Reading

CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING

The Central Area boundary as shown on the Proposals Map will mark the edge of the town centre other than where specified. However, for the purposes of application of the sequential test for main town centre uses, the following definitions as defined on the Proposals Map are used:

- *Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area;*
- *Major office development of over 1,000 sq m will take place in the Office Core; and*
- *Other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core.*

- 5.3.1 The policy identifies the boundaries of the town centre for the purposes of applying the sequential test, as set out in paragraph 86 of the NPPF. These boundaries are distinct from the boundary of 'Central Reading' as the area covered by section 5. Need has been identified for additional main town centre uses (see section 4.6) and the overall strategy is that the centre of Reading should be the main location for such main town centre uses. The spatial strategy for Central Reading (section 5.2) and the guidelines on Major Opportunity Areas (policies CR11-13) give guidance on the main locations for this floorspace. However, there is a need to define a Primary Shopping Area to set out the boundaries of what should be Reading's shopping core, and this will be set out on the Proposals Map.
- 5.3.2 The primary shopping area should be the focus for new retail investment. It will be the first location to be examined in applying the sequential approach to identifying sites for retail proposals, in line with the NPPF.
- 5.3.3 The sequential approach will also be applied to 'main town centre uses' other than retail, including leisure, cultural, visitor and arts facilities as well as offices. The general approach to these uses is set out in RL2, and involves concentration mainly on the centre. An office core and a central core will need to be defined to act as the focus for these uses in the centre and in order for the sequential approach to be applied. The office core will be slightly different from the central core for reasons set out in the spatial strategy.
- 5.3.4 It should be emphasised that the designation of, for example, a primary shopping area, does not mean that other types of development will not also be acceptable within this area. Mixing uses within the centre is at the heart of the strategy. The policy is purely in place to allow the application of the sequential test.

Design in Central Reading

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:

- a. *Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;*