

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



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Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

- 5.3.30 It is important that the overall retail character of the centre is maintained. Therefore, the policy seeks to ensure that a loss of A1 or A2 use¹⁰⁸ is not permitted where it would result in the overall proportion of the length of the frontage falling below 50%. For the purposes of applying this policy, existing frontages will be grouped together into the following streets: Broad Street (North and South); St Mary's Butts (East and West); Oxford Road (North and South); West Street (East and West); Friar Street (North and South); Chain Street (East and West); Union Street (East and West); Queen Victoria Street (East and West); Cross Street (East and West); Market Place, Butter Market and High Street; Duke Street (East and West), King Street and Kings Road (North and South); Station Road (East and West); Gun Street (South); and Oracle Riverside (North and South). The proportion will be calculated on the entire length of the frontage shown on the Proposals Map, even where that frontage does not include a use listed above.

Small Retail Units in Central Reading

CR8: SMALL SHOP UNITS IN CENTRAL READING

Small shop units make an important contribution to the diversity of the centre. Some areas of the centre are particularly characterised by small units, of less than 75 sq m. These include the arcades, Cross Street, Queen Victoria Street, Union Street, and any other areas designated in the future.

Within the areas characterised by small shop units, the amalgamation of individual shop fronts will not be permitted.

Major new retail development (more than 2,500 sq m) for multiple units in the Primary Shopping Area should include some provision for a range of small shop units.

- 5.3.31 In promoting town centres' vitality and viability, national policy in the NPPF focuses development in town centres and states that policies will allow centres to "grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters" (paragraph 85). It also states that local planning authorities should actively plan for growth and manage the role and function of existing centres. This includes the range of sizes of shops, which can cater for different and varied retail offers.
- 5.3.32 Reading is known as being a major shopping destination with a wide offer of national multiple retailers. However, there is also an existing grouping of smaller retailers which adds diversity to the range of the centre, and planning can help to maintain this sector and allow it to grow. Although controlling the occupiers of buildings is not within the remit of planning, it can have an effect on the size of units. Part of the retail mix and character of Reading centre is the presence of a number of small shop units including within the arcades and some of the smaller side streets. In order to ensure that the vitality, diversity and retail offer of the centre of Reading is maintained and enhanced, this policy seeks to retain these small retail units, and the provision of additional small units within new retail development.

¹⁰⁸ A1 and A2 uses are grouped together, as no planning permission is required to change between those uses in either direction