



Reading Borough Council Local Plan Partial Review Examination

Stage 2 Hearing Statement

Matter 10 – Site Specific Policies

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Prepared for:
The University of Reading

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1 Matter 10: Site-specific policies

1.1 Issue 5 – Question 10.53

Is Policy ER2 justified and effective?

- 1.1.1 The University supports strategic policy ER2 relating to its Whiteknights Campus. The University strongly supports and welcomes the continued inclusion of a policy for Whiteknights campus which will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading.
- 1.1.2 The University welcomes the proposed updates to policy ER2 and supporting text to reflect the University's current plans and strategy. The University's needs and objectives are constantly evolving, and it is important that the planning policy for Whiteknights Campus reflects this.
- 1.1.3 The amendment to the policy to include reference to development to reduce the University's carbon emissions is supported. It is important for this to be referred to in the policy to ensure that the University can actively pursue developments which are required to decarbonise its estate. The University has published its Net Zero Carbon Plan 2021-2030, and in accordance with this will be pursuing related projects some of which may require planning permission.
- 1.1.4 The policy states that the provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, including the reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation is acceptable. It is recognised that the Whiteknights Campus is an appropriate location for student accommodation. The retention of this wording from the adopted Local Plan is welcomed, so that the University is able to increase the levels of student accommodation on the campus if required to improve the provision of student accommodation and to allow for potential future increases in student numbers.
- 1.1.5 Paragraph 9.3.8 has been amended to reflect current student numbers and this update is supported. This paragraph also recognises that 'students, staff and visitors need to be supported by services, facilities and infrastructure', which is reflected in the types of development that are listed within the policy as suitable within the Campus.
- 1.1.6 Paragraphs 9.3.10 and 9.3.11 of the adopted Local Plan are proposed to be removed, as the text referring to the Whiteknights Campus Development Plan is now out of date. This is supported, as the Whiteknights Campus Development Plan is out of date. Updated text has been proposed which largely reflects the University's representations it submitted to the Local Plan Partial Update Scope and Content consultation which took place from November 2023 to January 2024.
- 1.1.7 Paragraph 9.3.10 now refers to the draft Estates Strategy 2022-2032 as well as the Net Zero Carbon Plan 2021-2030 which was published in June 2021. The text refers to the 'University within a park' concept set out in the draft Estates Strategy and the likely emphasis on repurposing and refurbishing existing buildings as well as creating a campus heart and improving accessibility. This updated text is supported and is in accordance with previous representations submitted by the University as outlined above. There is a minor error in the text wording – 'heat' should be amended to 'heart'.



- 1.1.8 Whilst the University considers the policy to be sound, it seeks a minor amendment to Paragraph 9.3.10 to acknowledge that there are likely to be changing circumstances and priorities for the University which may lead to the need for additional new built development in the medium to longer term, and the Local Plan time horizon is longer than its 10 year Estate Strategy, which it likely to be reviewed prior to the end of the Local Plan period. The supporting text should be amended to read:
- 1.1.9 “At this stage, there is no indication that the strategy will involve a significant increase in the amount of floorspace on the campus **in the short term. The University will continue to keep this under review in order to support and deliver any new buildings or student accommodation (either through new buildings, redevelopment/replacement, refurbishment, extension or repurposing/conversion of existing buildings for student accommodation) should this be required to meet the needs of the University. The University will continue to regularly engage with both the Council and Wokingham Borough Council as it implements the Estate Strategy and any successor strategy which may be prepared in the Local Plan period.**”
- 1.1.10 The supporting text to policy ER2 should reflect that the University’s priorities and plans will change in the medium and long term as set out above. However, the University is satisfied that the proposed wording of policy ER2 provides sufficient flexibility with regards to University related development on the Whiteknights Campus, including specific reference to student accommodation being acceptable on the campus.

Policy ER2 is considered to be sound, however minor amendments are sought to the supporting text as set out above.

