

The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 is clear that the responsibility for dealing with rats falls to the land owner, so it is essential owners take responsibility and understand that any enforcement action will be taken against them if they fail to manage their land appropriately

## What Reading Borough Council can do:

- Provide information and advice on rats to residents.
- In some cases, take enforcement action where we have evidence of rats on private land that owners are failing to deal with.
- Continue with street cleaning to reduce environmental food sources on the highway.
- Advise residents on waste management and recycling and monitor the area to ensure compliance with waste legislation.
- Work with Thames Water to ensure that any issues relating to their network are resolved.
- Resolve issues on Council land.

## What Reading Borough Council can't do:

- Access all properties in the area and carry out proofing works or treatments.
- Carry out an open public area baiting programme due to issues of access and risks of secondary poisoning to non-target species.
- Survey private drains without the owner requesting this as a paid for service.
- Rectify land use issues outside the Council's control



## What can you do to prevent rats?

**Use your wheeled bin-** Dispose of waste food in your wheeled bin and make sure you can close the lid. Do not leave it lying around in bags or sacks.

**Compost bins-** Only put garden and uncooked vegetable waste on compost heaps. Either put them on a hard surface or use wire netting underneath to stop rats burrowing inside

**Get rid of clutter-** Remove rubbish, piles of wood and garden waste where rats could make a nest.

**Control Weeds, Shrubs and Bushes-** Keep your garden tidy and clear overgrown areas. Cut tree branches so they do not overhang your property. Wall climbing plants should be trimmed and not allowed to reach from ground to roof level.

**Close Old Burrows-** An inactive burrow will have leaves, cobwebs or other debris around the entrance. Close these holes so rats can't get back in. Fill holes in the garden with soil and pressing it down. Close holes in walls with cement

**Bird feeding/Pet food-** Rats will eat bird and pet food so make sure you keep food off the ground. If feeding wild birds use suspended wire feeders with attached waste trays and only put out enough food for the day. Clear away spilled bird or pet food immediately

**Building work-** If you are building an extension or conservatory ensure good workmanship as unfinished or poor workmanship can provide a perfect access for rats.

**Maintain your Property-** Keep your property in good repair. To ensure a rat infestation in your garden does not enter your home you should repair any external structural faults. Seal holes around pipes with wire wool and fill with cement or expanding foam. Damaged or old air vents with holes bigger than 2.5cm should be replaced, repaired or covered with fine mesh - make sure you don't block them though. Gaps under external doors should be blocked with draught excluding brushes or bristle strips or the threshold raised. Check your drainage is in good repair as rats can access the house via broken pipe work.

**Surrounding Areas-** Report any local refuse issues or fly tipping to the Council. Report local businesses who have overflowing bins or who don't clear the rubbish their business or customers create. You can use our 'Love Clean Reading' app or find more information about fly tipping here: [Fly-tipping - Reading Borough Council](#)

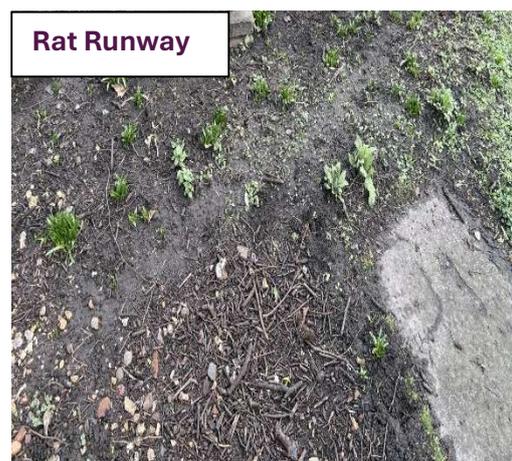
## Signs of Rats

**Droppings-** Rat droppings are around 2cm (3/4") long and cigar shaped. If they're moist and dark, it's a sign that rats are in the area.

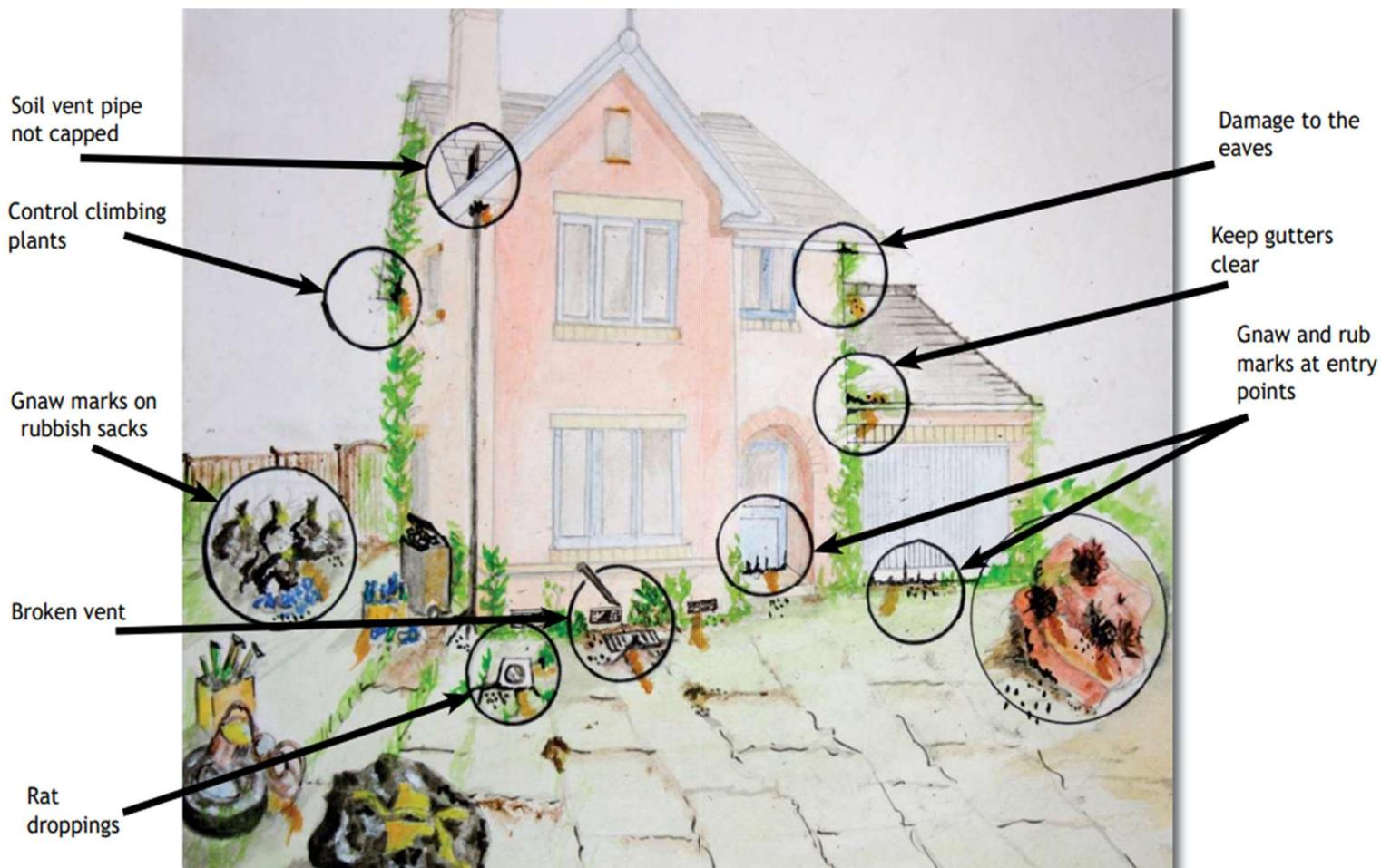
**Damage-** Rats gnaw constantly and cause damage to belongings, structures, pipes and electric cables as well as food packets. This damage can cause electrical fires, problems with drainage systems and even subsidence.

**Holes-** Rats live in burrows with entry and exit holes 5-7cm wide. If the hole is smooth and shiny it could be an active burrow. The holes could be under bushes or plants. They can also nest in roof spaces and upper floors of buildings

**Runways-** Rats run along the same path many times and leave black, greasy marks. Outside these paths are usually smoother and more compact than the surrounding soil often with shorter/ damaged vegetation.



## Signs of Rats at Home and Easy Entry Points



## Removing Rats

If you already have rats, you may need to consider hiring professional help.

### **Rat baiting**

We **do not** recommend you use over the counter bait as it is less effective than that used by pest controllers and may simply provide a food source for the rats.

We strongly advise you use a professional pest control service such as those accredited by BASIS PROMPT, British Pest Control Association (BPCA) or National Pest Technicians Association (NPTA).

A good company should:

- Give you a written inspection report and an action plan.
- Offer advice for structural repair, if required.
- Visit as regularly as required.
- Put bait in tamper-resistant containers.
- Educate you on how to prevent rats.

## Work together

- Walk around with the pest control professional during each visit and keep track of work.
- Agree on a service plan and cost.
- Follow-up on referrals and recommendations.

## Further advice and support

Reading Borough Council does not provide a pest control service. You can still contact us for advice and support.

Before contacting Reading Borough Council check that you have:

- Instructed an accredited pest controller
- Carried out pest proofing works
- Made sure household waste is secured in closed lidded bins
- Made sure bird food is removed at night
- Talked with neighbours to work to resolve the problem

### Reporting a problem

You can report fly-tipping and/or tell us about rats on council land using [Love Clean Streets](#) or by calling 0118 937 3787.

If rats are being attracted because of poor waste management at shops and business premises, please tell us using [Love Clean Streets](#)

The logo for 'Love Clean Streets' features the words 'love clean streets' in a rounded, teal-colored font. The letter 'o' in 'love' is replaced by a pink heart.The logo for 'Love Clean Reading' consists of the words 'LOVE CLEAN READING' in a bold, sans-serif font. 'LOVE' is in pink, while 'CLEAN READING' is in dark purple. The text is centered on a yellow background that has a subtle envelope-like shape.

**Reading**  
Borough Council  

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Working better with you