



Planning Inspectorate

Reading Borough Council

Examination of the Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update

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Dear Mr Worringham

Examination of the Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update - Inspector's Second Letter following Stage 2 Hearings

1. Stage 2 hearing sessions were held on 3 – 6, 10 – 12 and 23 February 2026 to examine the Local Plan Partial Update's (LPPU) soundness. On 31 March 2026, the Council provided me with a draft schedule of main modifications, draft consequential changes to the Proposals Map, an updated draft housing trajectory, and a range of documents relating to land at Kentwood Hill and Armour Hill (EX103 – EX106). Although I am grateful for the documents provided, this second post-hearings letter sets out areas where further work is expected and confirms whether further main modifications are necessary.
2. The interim views expressed in this letter do not represent my full or final conclusions on these matters as there remain several outstanding issues which I refer to. My report will take account of any additional work and representations made during consultation on main modifications. My report will also cover other issues that are not dealt with in this letter.

Timescales

3. The Council has confirmed that it proposes to seek approval of main modifications for public consultation at Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23 June 2026. Subsequently, the Council intends to seek adoption of the LPPU at Full Council on 13 October 2026. While I consider these dates to be achievable, the potential to meet these dates remains highly dependent on my receipt of outstanding work on water quality and climate change.

Water Quality

4. I have asked the Council to work with its consultants and the Environment Agency to seek to resolve concerns about water quality, as outlined in my first

post-hearings letter dated 18 March 2026. I require an update on progress and an agreed timetable for resolution of the water quality issue. The update and timetable should be provided by no later than 23 April 2026.

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction and Policy H5: Standards for New Housing

5. During the hearing sessions for Matters 3 and 4, the Council acknowledged the Inspector's and representors' concerns about the application of Policies CC2 and H5 for different forms of development. I understand that the Council and its consultants are working through modifications to the two policies. I require an update on the likely date of provision of the amended policies. The update should be provided by no later than 23 April 2026.

Deletion of Site Allocations WR3s and WR3t

6. At my request, the Council has provided further information on the recent Local Wildlife Site designation of two residential site allocations WR3s Land at Kentwood Hill and WR3t Land at Armour Hill. I consider it is necessary for soundness for the two site allocations WR3s and WR3t to be deleted and for the recent Local Wildlife Site designation to be shown on the Proposals Map. These changes may also have consequential effects on the housing trajectory and other parts of the LPPU. The draft schedule of main modifications and consequential changes to the Proposals Map should be updated accordingly.
7. I note the Council's view on designation of sites WR3s and WR3t as Local Green Space under Policy EN7. No further main modifications are required to Policy EN7 for soundness.

Next Steps

8. I look forward to receiving an update and timetable on water quality and an update on climate change policies by no later than 23 April 2026. I would also like to receive an updated draft schedule of main modifications and updated consequential changes to the Proposals Map by the same date.
9. This letter should be uploaded to the examination website, but I am not seeking any comments from participants at this stage. In the meantime, should the Council have any queries about the content of this letter, then please do not hesitate to contact me through the Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Gilbert

Inspector