

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

**TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM
STRATEGY**

Adoption Statement

June 2026

1. Date

- 1.1 The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy was adopted at the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23rd June 2026.

2. Relevant Legislation

- 2.1 The relevant legislation is as follows:
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
 - Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

3. Adoption Details

- 3.1 Reading Borough Council formally adopted the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy on 23rd June 2026. This document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It provides supplementary information to support policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019.
- 3.2 Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision. Such an application must be made promptly and in any event not later than 23rd September 2026. The SPD is available for inspection on the planning policy pages of Reading Borough Council's [website](#). A Statement of Consultation, summarising the consultation undertaken, comments received and responses to those comments, can also be viewed on the planning policy page. Hard copies are available for inspection at the Civic Offices.
- 3.3 Changes made to the Draft version (published June 2026) can be seen in the following pages of this document. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Planning Policy Team, Reading Borough Council by e-mail (planningpolicy@reading.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0118 937 3337. Further information on planning policy documents can be found on the [planning policy pages of Reading Borough Council's website](#).

4. Changes made

- 4.1 The table below lists the changes made to the document following the consultation period:

Page	Section / Paragraph	Draft (January 2025)	Final (April 2026)	Change Type
1	Cover Page	October 2024	April 2026	<i>Date updated</i>
2	Document Control	(no Document Control page in draft)	New Document Control page added with revision history: 1st Issue – Final	<i>New content added</i>

Page	Section / Paragraph	Draft (January 2025)	Final (April 2026)	Change Type
			Document – October 2024; 2nd Issue – Post Consultation Update – April 2026	
3	Contents (Table of Contents)	Chapter 6 titled 'Specific Projects'; sub-sections titled 'Introduction & Overview of Projects'	Chapter 6 re-titled 'Specific Examples'; sub-sections re-titled 'Introduction & Overview of Examples'	<i>Terminology change</i>
5	1.1 Executive Summary	...an emerging action plan which identifies physical public realm projects, enabling projects and studies to help prepare for the future.	New sentence added: 'The schemes included in the strategy are intended to be indicative, not prescriptive. They aim to outline best practice guidance and are intended to inform decisions as applications come forward. The areas identified are illustrative examples of different town centre conditions, demonstrating how public realm improvements can be applied, rather than prioritising locations for intervention.'	<i>New paragraph added</i>
5	1.1 Executive Summary	...because it addresses the growing demands of a rapidly developing town while preserving its historical and cultural identity.	...because it addresses the growing demands of a rapidly developing town while conserving and enhancing its historical and cultural identity.	<i>Wording change</i>
5	1.1 Executive Summary	...Reading remains a vibrant, attractive, and liveable town for both residents and visitors.	...Reading remains a vibrant, attractive, and liveable town for people who live, work and visit.	<i>Wording change</i>
5	1.1 Executive Summary	...aligned with Reading's broader ambition to be a	...aligned with Reading's broader	<i>Wording change</i>

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		carbon-neutral town by 2030.	ambition to be Net Zero by 2030.	
10	2.3 Policy & Strategies Context	List of policy documents did not include 'REDA BID Plans (2024-29)' or 'Reading 2050 Vision'	Added 'REDA BID Plans (2024-29)' and 'Reading 2050 Vision' to the list of relevant plans and strategies	<i>New content added</i>
13	2.5 Vision for Reading's Public Realm	...This vision looks to both build upon the heritage and look towards the future growth of the town...	...This vision looks to both conserve and better appreciate the heritage and look towards the future growth of the town...	<i>Wording change</i>
22	3.4 Heritage and Conservation	...many Grade I and II listed buildings...	...many Grade I, II and II* listed buildings...	<i>Wording change / correction</i>
23	3.5 Development Sites	'tranformations' (typo)	'transformations' (corrected)	<i>Typo corrected</i>
23	3.5 Developments sites	Figure of sites under construction or with planning permission within the town centre as of January 2025	Figure has been updated to account for completions and other updates on the ground as of June 2026	<i>Sites updated according to progress</i>
28	4.1 Existing Movement Hierarchy (Bus section)	...Reading's excellent... albeit...	...although... Buses make a positive contribution...	<i>Wording change; 'albeit' replaced with 'although'; bus contribution language revised</i>
32	4.4 Overall Recommended Improvements	First improvement listed: 'Cycle parking and micro-mobility – Improve access to secure cycle parking. Micro-mobility, scooter and e-bike hire should all be carefully considered.' Then 'Identified Transport and Movement Improvements by Mode'.	First improvement now: 'Accessibility and legibility – Address accessibility and legibility ensuring that streets and spaces are designed to accommodate all types of users.' Then: 'Futureproofing new links as part of redevelopment – New developments to improve sight lines, access and permeability throughout the town	<i>Content restructured; new accessibility bullet added first; new 'futureproofing' bullet added</i>

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			centre.' Cycle parking/micro-mobility content moved further down. 'Rebalancing Movement and Placemaking' added as new bullet.	
35	4.6 Enabling Town Centre Cycling	Text described introducing segregated cycle lanes with 'cycling first' routes (e.g. St Mary's Butts, Gun St)	Revised to clarify: 'creating segregated cycle lanes where space allows. Two way cycling routes are preferable as one way cycle routes negatively impact the connectivity of the cycle network.'	<i>Wording change; two-way cycling preference added</i>
36	4.7 Broad Street Layout	...or large areas of cycle parking... Cycle parking should be easily accessible to pedestrians.	Cycle parking guidance expanded: 'Cycle parking should be well located and highly visible to deter theft, without contributing to clutter.' Removed 'or large areas of cycle parking'.	<i>Wording change; cycle parking guidance expanded</i>
37	4.7 Broad Street Layout (Diagrams)	Diagram 3 labelled '(recommended)'	Label '(recommended)' removed from Diagram 3	<i>Label removed</i>
37	4.7 Broad Street Layout	(no text about demarcation for visually impaired)	New sentence added: 'It is important to ensure clear demarcation between pedestrian and any vehicular areas for the visually impaired.'	<i>New content added (accessibility)</i>
42	5.3 Paving General Principles	...consistent use of guidance.	...consistent use of DfT compliant guidance, with particular attention paid to segregated cycle-footways.	<i>Wording expanded; DfT compliance and cycle-footway attention added</i>
48	5.8 Parking & Integrated Green Infrastructure	'identified', 'condsidered', 'engagment' (typos)	'identified', 'considered',	<i>Typos corrected (3 instances)</i>

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			'engagement' (corrected)	
49	5.4 Vegetation General Principles	Ordering of principles placed 'Trees and planting in raised planting boxes should be avoided' at the top before the tree pit bullet.	Text reordered: detail about 'clear stem of 2.3-3m' and 'CCTV viewing lines' now precede the 'raised planting boxes' guidance. Note on CCTV and planting placement newly added.	<i>Content reordered; new CCTV planting guidance added</i>
51	5.4 Vegetation Planting Scenarios	Order of planting scenario descriptions and text about shrubs/perennials in certain sequence	Planting scenario descriptions reordered; 'Perennial planting' label position adjusted	<i>Content reordered</i>
58	5.9 (Street Furniture) or 5.8 context – Heritage assets	Reference to 'visual characteristics, resilience and adaptability'	Revised to include 'impacts on and connection with heritage assets above and below ground'	<i>Wording change; heritage asset reference added</i>
62	5.6 Rain Gardens	(no text about edges for visually impaired)	New sentence added: 'Edges should be clearly defined for visually impaired users.'	<i>New content added (accessibility)</i>
66	5.9 Street Furniture – Seating	Seating guidance was presented as general text integrated with bollards and bins text without a dedicated 'Seating' sub-header.	New dedicated 'Seating' sub-section with bullet points added: seating should be in places people want to sit, in clusters at squares; variety of spaces including sun/shade/groups; consideration of contrast and legibility for visual impairments. Text substantially restructured.	<i>Content restructured; accessibility considerations added</i>
66	5.9 Street Furniture – Seating	(no mention of contrast/legibility for	'Consideration should also be given to contrast and legibility	<i>New content added (accessibility)</i>

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		visual impairments in seating section)	to ensure elements are clearly visible to those with visual impairments.'	
67	5.9 Street Furniture – Bollards & Cycle Stands	Bollard section described height (1.1m), finish (RAL 7016), coordinated with furniture. Cycle stand section detailed Sheffield stands, 1200mm spacing, variety of types, CCTV surveillance guidance.	Content substantially reorganised. Bins section now specifies 'robust with inner metal liner, 100-120 litres, neutral design'. New bollard section states: 'use should be avoided wherever possible, and only used to direct traffic where there is no kerb upstand. Existing disparate bollards throughout the town [to be addressed].' Cycle stands: added reference to 'Latest versions of London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) by TfL'; number of stands to 'correlate with demand: over-supply should be avoided as well as under-provision'.	<i>Content substantially restructured; LCDS reference added; demand-led cycle parking guidance added; bollard avoidance principle strengthened</i>
68	5.10 Lighting Objectives	'heritge' (typo). No mention of partially sighted users in lighting section.	'heritage' (corrected). New text added: 'Consideration must also be given for the needs of partially sighted users with regard to lighting types, including reducing glare.'	<i>Typo corrected; accessibility lighting guidance added</i>
75	5.12 Wayfinding & Signage	'sucessful' and 'considered' (typos). No mention of historic signage, Conservation Area sign colour, audio/tactile wayfinding, or waterway routes.	'successful' and 'considered' (corrected). New content added: 'Historic signage should be retained where possible, and street name signs within Conservation	<i>Typos corrected; significant new content added on heritage signage, audio/tactile wayfinding, and waterway routes</i>

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			Areas should be green rather than black.' New sentence: 'Audio and tactile wayfinding elements should be integrated into the town's signage strategy to improve independent navigation.' New sentence: 'Wayfinding should also be considered to highlight the various feature waterway walking routes.' CCTV role in town centre referenced.	
77	5.14 Street Activation	Outdoor dining section led straight into guidance. No caveat about barriers to movement.	New sentence added before outdoor dining: 'Street activation should not introduce additional barriers to movement or access.'	<i>New content added (accessibility/movement)</i>
78	5.15 Meanwhile Uses	'Temporary play areas / play streets' listed without accessibility qualification.	Added: '(floor markings should avoid visual confusion for blind or cognitively impaired users)'. Also: 'raised stages should be accessible to wheelchair users'.	<i>Accessibility qualifications added</i>
80	5.16 Hoarding & Construction Site	Text about construction hoarding without reference to tactile warnings for visually impaired.	New text added: 'These require tactile warnings to alert visually impaired users.'	<i>New content added (accessibility)</i>
85–105	Chapter 6 – Specific Projects → Specific Examples	Chapter 6 and all sub-section headers referred to 'Specific Projects' and 'projects' throughout	All instances of 'Specific Projects' renamed to 'Specific Examples'; all instances of 'projects' in this context renamed to 'examples'	<i>Terminology change (throughout Chapter 6)</i>

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89	6.2 St Mary's Butts	Cycle parking described as 'on pads on the footpath'	Revised to 'in designated bays. Blue badge parking also needs to be considered.'	<i>Wording change; Blue Badge parking added</i>
92	6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square – Existing Issues	'Market Place and Towh Hall Square' (typo)	'Market Place and Town Hall Square' (corrected)	<i>Typo corrected</i>
92	6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square – Existing Issues	'Town Hall and heritage spaces'	'and Town Hall heritage spaces' (word order adjusted)	<i>Wording change</i>
93	6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square – Vision	'buidlings,' (typo). Bus layby described as '3m wide bus layby.'	'buildings,' (corrected). Bus layby revised to 'sufficient space for buses to pull in and stop.'	<i>Typo corrected; bus layby description revised</i>
93	6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square – Vision	Crossing described as 'crossing on raised tables'	Revised to 'crossing, comfortable and [pedestrian-friendly]'	<i>Wording change</i>
97	6.4 Queens Road & London Street Junction – Vision	No note about vehicle turning movements being retained. 'Super crossings' text present.	New text added: 'The vehicle movements at the junction (including turning left) are retained.' 'Super crossings' description retained.	<i>New clarification added on retained vehicle movements</i>
103	6.6 Green Space on River Kennet	'Strenghtened' (typo). No mention of mooring facilities.	'Strengthened' (corrected). New sentence: 'There may also be an opportunity to promote new mooring facilities.'	<i>Typo corrected; mooring facilities opportunity added</i>
109	7.2 Oxford Road – Vision & Schematic Proposal	Proposal bullets listed: crossing facilities, introduction of planting beds. Bridge referenced in general terms. Text referred to 'both sides of the road'.	New proposal bullets added with measurements: 'Formalised crossing facilities approximately every 100-150m'; 'Introduction of planting beds between the carriageway and the pedestrian	<i>Significant new content added; bus lane protection clause added; cross-reference measurements specified, photos added and bus lane added to image</i>

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			footpaths where road width allows, to break down long stretches of on-street parking and at junctions. These can be rain gardens when located at low points of the streetscape.' New note: 'The proposals do not interfere with the new bus lane that runs from Zinzan St to Prospect St, which should be retained.' 'both sides of the road' revised to 'where possible'. New photograph added and indication of bus lane added to image.	
116	8.1 Emerging Action Plan	(no specific note about collaborative delivery of actions)	New sentence added: 'These actions are to be progressed collaboratively between the Council and developers.'	<i>New content added</i>