

To: Councillor Brock (Chair)
Councillors Page and Skeats

Direct: ☎ 0118 9372303

19 March 2020

Your contact is: **Simon Hill - Committee Services (simon.hill@reading.gov.uk)**

NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 24 MARCH 2020

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Tuesday, 24 March 2020 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR URGENT MEETINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

In response to the Covid-19 situation the Monitoring Officer has invoked the urgency provisions of the Constitution at Section 7.7 that provide for a three-member meeting of Policy Committee to take decisions on behalf of the authority.

These provisions allow for the three-member Policy Committee to take urgent decisions on all functions of the authority, including on behalf of other Committees, and full Council.

This meeting is being convened at short notice under the Section 100B (3) (a) of the Local Government Act primarily to consider items of business that had been due to be determined at meetings that have been cancelled as a result of the Council's response to the Covid-19 situation: Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (16 March 2020), Personnel Committee (18 March 2020) and Council (24 March 2020).

In line with the latest government advice the Council has closed the Civic Offices to the public and there will therefore be no public attendance or participation at this meeting. It will be webcast for live and repeat viewing.

- 1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES**
- 4. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS**

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Petitions and Questions submitted to the cancelled meetings of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee and full Council will be responded to in writing and the responses published with this agenda.

5. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 16 MARCH 2020 **BOROUGH WIDE** **5 - 770**

To consider the agenda items for the cancelled meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee which had been due to take place on 16 March 2020, and take any decisions as required.

6. COUNCIL - 24 MARCH 2020 **BOROUGH WIDE** **771 - 826**

To consider the agenda items for the cancelled meeting of full Council, which had been due to be held on 24 March 2020, and take any decisions as required.

7. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - 18 MARCH 2020 **BOROUGH WIDE** **827 - 850**

To consider the public agenda items for the cancelled meeting of the Personnel Committee which had been due to be held on 18 March 2020, and take any decisions as required.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN CLOSED SESSION

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion will be moved by the Chair:

“That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act”

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

10. EXEMPT ITEM - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 18 MARCH 2020 **BOROUGH WIDE** **851 - 854**

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To: Councillor Barnett-Ward (Chair)
Councillors Debs Absolom, Ayub, Carnell,
Challenger, Duveen, Eden, Emberson,
Maskell, McGonigle, Page, Robinson,
Stanford-Beale and R Williams

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6 March 2020

Your contact is: **Richard Woodford, Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE 16 MARCH 2020

A meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee will be held on Monday, 16 March 2020 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>Page No</u>
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING		7 - 18
3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		19 - 28
Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 January 2020		
4. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES		29 - 58
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint Waste Disposal Board - 17 October 2019• AWE Local Liaison Committee - 7 November 2019• Reading Climate Change Partnership - 28 January 2020		

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5. PETITIONS

Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.

7. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES

To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been the subject of Decision Book reports.

8. NORTH READING AND LOWER CAVERSHAM FLOOD ALLEVIATION PROPOSALS - UPDATE **CAVERSHAM**

A presentation by the Environment Agency providing the Committee with an update on the North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Proposals.

9. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/21 & 2019/20 MAINTENANCE UPDATE **BOROUGHWIDE** **59 - 106**

A report providing the Committee with an outline of the proposed Highway Maintenance 2020/2021 works programme and spend allocation and an update on the 2019/20 Highway Maintenance Programme.

10. ADOPTION OF THE CASTLE HILL/RUSSELL STREET/OXFORD ROAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL **ABBHEY; BATTLE; MINSTER** **107 - 116**

A report proposing the adoption of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal and approval of the amended Terms of Reference for the Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

11.	WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: DRAFT PLAN AND GRAZELEY UPDATE	BOROUGHWIDE	117 - 138
	A report asking the Committee to approve the draft response on behalf of Reading Borough Council to the Wokingham Local Plan Update: Draft Plan.		
12.	ADOPTION OF THE PALMER PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	PARK	139 - 250
	A report on the proposed adoption of the Palmer Park Development Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document, for use in determining planning applications within the area.		
13.	TREE STRATEGY	BOROUGHWIDE	251 - 322
	A report asking the Committee to agree the draft Tree Strategy 2020 for public consultation, incorporating any amendments agreed by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11 March 2020.		
14.	BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN	BOROUGHWIDE	323 - 402
	A report asking the Committee to agree for public consultation the Biodiversity Action Plan, incorporating any amendments agreed by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11 March 2020.		
15.	READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 - DRAFT FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION	BOROUGHWIDE	403 - 590
	A report providing the Committee with an update on development of the new Local Transport Plan (known as the 'Reading Transport Strategy 2036'), following the initial public consultation held last summer and seeking authority to undertake statutory consultation on the draft strategy and setting out the proposed consultation programme.		
16.	MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES - UPDATE	BOROUGHWIDE	591 - 600

A report providing the Committee with an update on key progress and milestones associated with the delivery of the current programme of major transport projects in Reading.

17. BUZZ 42 BUS SERVICE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT BOROUGHWIDE 601 - 606

A report setting out the proposed procurement of a new contract for operation of the Buzz 42 bus service, which operates between Kenavon Drive, Reading town centre and Rivermead Leisure Centre.

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- Present:** Councillor Barnett-Ward (Chair);
Councillors Debs Absolom, Ayub, Carnell, Challenger, Duveen, Eden (Vice-Chair), Emberson, Maskell, McGonigle, Page and Stanford-Beale
- Apologies:** Councillors Robinson and R Williams

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ayub declared an interest in Item 20 regarding the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Emissions and Age Policy.

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 8 of the previous meeting, the Chair tabled correspondence from the Environment Agency providing an update on the North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Proposals.

15. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2019 were received.

16. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board - 4 July 2019
- AWE Local Liaison Committee - 11 July 2019

17. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions on the following matters were asked in accordance with Standing Order 36.

Questioner	Subject
Helen Palmer	Zero Carbon Standards
Graham Smith	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme -
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Anti-Social Behaviour
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

	Scheme - Ground Surface Water
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Mobile Water Pumps
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - 5m Exclusion Zone
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Increased Flood Risk
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Removal of Trees
Michael Sage	Reading 2050 Refresh Workshop
Michael Sage	Reading's CO2 Emissions
Michael Sage	Food Waste Collections
John Booth	Clean Air
John Booth	Climate Emergency
Councillor McGonigle	Chain Stores

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

18. PETITION OBJECTING TO EXTENDING THE EXISTING VEHICLE CROSSING AT 8 ST JOHN'S ROAD, CAVERSHAM

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on a petition requesting that the Council did not extend the size of an existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road, Caversham. A copy of the Council's Vehicle Crossing Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Chair announced that it was recommended that consideration of the report on the petition be deferred, as the dropped curb proposed was to serve a development that was currently subject to two retrospective planning applications under consideration. The planning applications were to be determined at a forthcoming meeting of the Planning Applications Committee and it was therefore considered, to ensure Councillors did not pre determine matters to be considered when dealing with the planning applications, which included parking and access, that the matter of the drop curb should not be considered before decisions on the planning applications had been made.

Resolved -

That consideration of the report be deferred.

19. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on actions that had been taken to deliver the Air

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

Quality Action Plan 2016 and air quality related projects that the Council had recently completed.

The report gave details of the following projects:

- Bus Emission System Retrofit - this had been identified as the most effective single measure able to bring forward compliance with a Ministerial Direction regarding Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) limits on a number of specific roads. The scheme involved retrofitting 84 buses to Euro 6 standard;
- Vehicle Idling - officers would continue to use proactive measures to encourage compliance with no idling law, and enforcement officers had now begun to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to a minority of taxi drivers found to be idling unnecessarily on the rank;
- Go Electric Reading - a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs funded project to look at providing electric car charging for people living in homes without a drive; Phase 1 of the project had seen fifteen charge points installed into lamp columns, and in Phase 2 of the project it was planned to install fast or rapid Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) on Council-owned assets near to the residential areas that had indicated demand for EVCPs;
- 2019 Air Quality Grant Bid - an application was being prepared to fund a project aiming to accelerate the introduction of electric taxis to the fleet by purchasing four electric taxis and one rapid charge point.

The report also explained that it was proposed to update the Air Quality Action Plan, following the detailed studies which had been carried out following the Ministerial Direction that had been targeted at reducing Nitrogen Dioxide, as well as a brief overview of the Government proposed Environment Bill.

Resolved:

- (1) That the actions taken be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to review the Air Quality Action Plan be noted.

20. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE EMISSIONS AND AGE POLICY

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to note the Hackney Carriage Emissions and Age Policy, which set out the Council's requirements until 2030 and had been agreed by the Licensing Applications Committee on 23 October 2019 (Minute 5 refers). A copy of the report that had been agreed by the Licensing Applications Committee was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Policy was a staged approach with the aim of removing older and more polluting vehicles whose exhaust fumes were harmful to health and detrimental to the environment. The Policy had been developed in consultation with the Reading Taxi Association and the Reading Cab Drivers Association following the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency. In order to support the introduction of electric vehicles onto the fleet, the Council had recently put in a bid for Government funding which would enhance electric charging infrastructure as well as delivering a number of electric vehicles which would raise awareness and confidence in using the vehicles.

Resolved -

That the new Hackney Carriage Emissions Age Policy, which aimed to deliver an Ultra-Emission or Electric Vehicle fleet by 2029, be noted.

21. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with a summary of the progress against the carbon footprint targets for the Council's own operations and those of the Borough, and detailing the ongoing activity to meet the objectives set out in the climate emergency declaration. A copy of the Greenhouse Gas Report 2018/19 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that since its first Climate Change Strategy in 2008/09, the Council had invested in solar panels, LED street lighting and energy efficiency projects, which had reduced the carbon footprint of its own operations by 62.5%. The Borough's carbon footprint had reduced significantly since 2005 and the most recent national data had shown that by 2017 the per capita emissions for the Borough had reduced by 50%, to 3.3 tonnes per person. This had been the greatest reduction of any local authority area in the south east of England over the period. It had been estimated that the avoided costs to the Council from the reduced energy consumption since 2008 were £10.9m compared to if no action had been taken. For 2018/19 this had been estimated to be £1.5m. The 2015 to 2020 Carbon Plan target for 2020 had been met three years early and a new 2020 to 2025 carbon plan would continue to reduce the Council's carbon footprint towards zero, reducing exposure to rising energy costs.

The report explained that the Reading Climate Change Partnership was now preparing its third Climate Change Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025, which would include an Action Plan to reduce the Borough emissions to net zero by 2030 and to prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Council was also currently developing a suite of new strategies and programmes which would be incorporated into the third Climate Change Strategy and a Climate Action Board had been proposed. A new post of Head of Climate Strategy had been established alongside a new revenue budget and the Council had launched a number of additional initiatives and projects. Processes had also been put in place for all Committees to report on environmental implications and climate impacts.

Resolved -

- (1) That the significant progress made to date by the Council's proactive approach to addressing climate change issues and its impact on Reading and the scale of the ongoing challenge be noted;
- (2) That the establishment of a Climate Action Programme Board and the development of additional policies to further strengthen the Council's response to climate change be supported;
- (3) That the development of a new Carbon Plan for the period 2020 to 2025 through ongoing investment in low carbon technologies and initiatives to reduce energy costs and the carbon footprint of Council operations towards zero by 2030 be supported.

22. DRAFT RUSSELL STREET/CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that sought the Committee's approval of a draft review of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal for community involvement between December 2019 and February 2020. An Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the draft appraisal and associated documents, including maps showing proposed boundary extensions, was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area had been designated in 1974 and a full conservation area appraisal had been adopted in 2004. One of the primary concerns of the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) had been the length of time since many conservation area appraisals had been adopted, and it had subsequently been agreed that the CAAC would lead on review of conservation area appraisals. The review and updated appraisal of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area had been carried out by the CAAC in conjunction with the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA), with assistance from planning officers, officers of Historic England and interested local community representatives, and the review had made use of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit as recommended by Historic England.

The report summarised boundary extensions recommended by the review, and the issues and vulnerabilities that had been identified for the Conservation Area including poor maintenance and intensified use of private properties, streetscape environment and public realm, crime and anti-social behaviour and threats to views and vistas in and out of the Conservation Area. The review recommended that the name be changed to the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area, that funding be sought for improvements to the public realm, streetscapes and properties, that management plans involving the Council and community groups be established and that Article 4 Directions with Local Development Orders (LDOs) be expanded. The Committee were asked to approve the draft Appraisal for a formal public consultation, the outcomes of which would be reported back to a future meeting.

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

At the invitation of the Chair Evelyn Williams, Chair of Reading CAAC, and Abbey Ward Councillor Karen Rowland, addressed the Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Draft Russell St/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal, attached the report at Appendix 2, be approved for community involvement;**
- (2) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Draft Russell St/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to the start of community involvement on the draft document;**
- (3) That the proposed management plan actions set out in the report be agreed, noting the qualification in the management plan that actions would only be carried out as and when sufficient resources become available to undertake the work required;**
- (4) That the proposed extensions to the boundaries of the Conservation Area be considered in the light of responses to the public consultation.**

23. MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS - UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on key progress and milestones associated with the current programme of major transport projects in Reading.

The report explained that, to enhance facilities at Reading Station, the Council had secured funding of £36,000 from Great Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for the delivery of wayfinding and cycle parking security improvements at Reading Station interchange. Officers had developed the project alongside input from partners, including the British Transport Police and Thames Valley Police, and the report sought scheme and spend approval. The scheme would include installation of additional CCTV cameras within the cycle parking hub at the northern interchange and new pedestrian wayfinding units to the south of the station.

The report noted that detailed design work for Green Park station was being progressed in parallel with the construction of the interchange, including a new planning application for the station building elements of the scheme which had been granted consent in September 2019. The Council had worked with railway industry partners to address budget pressures for the latest station elements of the scheme, resulting in an additional £2.477m funding being secured from the New Stations Fund and £550k from the Local Growth Fund to ensure provision of the best possible facilities for passengers from station opening. The report sought scheme and spend approval for the additional funding, which

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

would result in the overall budget for the station being £20.077m. The indicative programme for delivery of the station had been updated to winter 2020.

The report also summarised the progress of schemes for South Reading Mass Rapid Transit, Thames Valley Park Park & Ride, Reading West Station Upgrade and National Cycle Network Route 422, and gave an update on unfunded schemes for Reading Station Interchange Enhancements, future phases of the South Reading Mass Rapid Transit and a Third Thames Crossing East of Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress on delivery of the programme of major transport schemes as set out within the report be noted;**
- (2) That the funding secured from Great Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for enhancements at Reading Station interchange be noted and scheme and spend approval for the scheme budget of £40,000 be approved and granted;**
- (3) That the additional funding secured for Green Park Station from the Local Growth Fund and New Stations Fund 2 be noted and scheme and spend approval for the revised budget of £20.077m for the scheme be approved and granted;**
- (4) That the progress with developing possible future schemes, including the submission of funding bids as set out within the report, be noted.**

24. TRANSPORT FOR THE SOUTH EAST - STATUTORY STATUS

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of the process being carried out by Transport for the South East (TfSE) to seek statutory status and the benefits this would bring to Reading.

The report explained that TfSE was a partnership of 16 local transport authorities, five local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and other stakeholders. The partnership was seeking to formalise its role with a proposal to become a statutory Sub-national Transport Body in the south east region, with powers and responsibilities to help deliver economic growth, improved quality of life and protection and enhancement of the environment. The specific functions that TfSE were seeking as part of its proposal to Government were set out in the report and these would operate concurrently and with the consent of the constituent authorities, rather than taking on responsibilities which currently sat with local authorities or the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The report noted that TfSE provided an opportunity to support and deliver growth plans across the region through the development of a long term strategic programme of transport measures. It would complement the work of the LEPs and support the delivery

of Local Plans and Local Transport Plans, and would address some of the barriers to growth of the economy that had been held back by transport infrastructure shortcomings, notably strategic infrastructure which was the responsibility of Network Rail and Highways England. Statutory status would enable the Council to influence more directly the priorities and programmes of these agencies through representation on TfSE's Board so helping to secure delivery of longstanding transport infrastructure ambitions. TfSE aimed to promote a more joined up approach to the delivery of cross boundary schemes within the region, which was a particularly important issue for a unitary authority such as Reading. TfSE's Shadow Partnership Board had approved the final proposal to be submitted to Government by the end of the year, and was seeking approval from all of its constituent members.

The report noted that TfSe had also been awarded Government funding to develop a transport strategy for the region, and a public consultation on the strategy had been launched on 7 October 2019. The draft strategy set out ambitious plans to grow the economy of the region by an additional 50% to £500bn and create almost three million additional jobs by 2050, in the context of achieving sustainable transport-led growth. A consultation event had been held in Reading and the consultation was open until 10 January 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress made by Transport for the South East in developing proposals for statutory status be noted and the inclusion of Reading Borough Council as a constituent member of the Sub-national Transport Body approved.**

25. LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Reading, which would be adopted under the emerging Local Transport Plan, and seeking approval to submit the first iteration to the Department for Transport (DfT). A copy of the LCWIP was attached to the report at Appendix A and a prioritised list of Cycling and Walking Improvements was attached to the report at Appendix B.

The report explained that the Council had successfully applied to the DfT to develop a LCWIP for the wider Reading area, in partnership with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils. The LCWIP, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1, had been developed with support from DfT's appointed consultant WSP and Sustrans. It set out plans to encourage more people to cycle and walk for local journeys or as part of longer multi-modal journeys, through the creation of strategic routes supported by a series of orbital, local and leisure routes. The Plan set out targets to increase cycle mode share into/from the town centre from 4% to 8% by 2030 and to 10% by 2036. Similarly, walking targets would aim to increase trips from 29% to 35% by 2030 and to 40% by 2036. In addition the Plan also set out the intention to reduce the number of cyclists and

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

pedestrians injured on the Borough's roads and to increase the number of children cycling and walking to school.

The report explained that the prioritised list of Cycling and Walking Improvements, which was attached at Appendix 2, had been prioritised against the five proposed LTP themes, deliverability considerations and an assessment of the potential to increase levels of walking and cycling. This meant that future improvements that would be delivered through the strategy, subject to funding, would be focused to achieve the greatest benefits. The LCWIP was a 'live' document that would be reviewed and updated periodically, and feedback would be sought in parallel with further consultation on the emerging LTP in spring 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the first iteration of the Local Cycling and Walking Plan and submission to the Department for Transport be approved;**
- (2) That it be noted that further consultation on the emerging Local Transport Plan would be integrated into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.**

26. WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE PLAN 2019/2020

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of a review of the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 and the changes incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 had provided a robust service for the duration of the winter period with minimal disruption to the primary and secondary road network during the 'normal' winter weather. There had been some unavoidable disruption to the road network during the snow events, but the Winter Maintenance Contractor had coped well considering the severity of the weather at the time. A review of the Plan had been carried out, to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and 'Well managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', and as a result of the review a number of changes had been incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 be noted;**
- (2) That the outcome of the review carried out on the Winter Service Plan to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' be noted;**

- (3) That the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 be noted and approved.

27. EXTENSION OF WINTER TERM CONTRACT 2016-2022

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to approve a further three year extension of the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016-2022 to provide a sustainable Winter Maintenance Service under the current contractual terms and conditions.

The report outlined a review of the current Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 that had been delivered by the Council's contractor J H Cresswell & Sons Ltd. The 2018/19 contract performance indicators had shown that the contractor had met all their required standards and had continued to deliver good value and a very good winter service to the Council. The contractor had agreed to continue to deliver the Winter Maintenance Term Contract for the final three years, until June 2022, under the current contract arrangement and terms and conditions. A three year extension would ensure that the contractor could allocate the three yearly refurbishment costs to their gritting vehicles so that they were compliant and safe to use. Other options for delivery of the contract had been considered but had proved to be financially less favourable when compared to remaining with the current contractor.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 be noted;
- (2) That the further three year extension of the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 be approved.

28. STREET LIGHTING AND ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT 2013-2018 (CURRENTLY EXTENDED UNTIL 30 JUNE 2021)

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to approve a further one year extension of the Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contract.

The report outlined the current Reading Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contract 2013-2018 with SSE Contracting Ltd, which was currently extended until 30 June 2021. Following the receipt of Challenge funding from the DfT, the street lighting stock had been upgraded to LED with a Central Management System; this had significantly reduced the maintenance input and would do so for the next 20 years with an estimated reduction in costs of up to 50%. Street lighting energy consumption had also fallen by 55% as a result of the change to LED lighting.

The report explained that the Council had successfully renegotiated the Contract with SSE Contracting Ltd based on the reduced maintenance requirements and had saved around £200k in maintenance costs per annum. SSE Contracting had agreed to continue

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

the contract for the final year, until 30 June 2021, under the current contract arrangement and terms and conditions. The Council would look at alternative options during the next financial year including retendering the contract and would consider bringing the contract in-house as part of a joint street lighting and traffic signals service.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Street Lighting & Electrical Maintenance Term Contract 2013-2018 (currently extended until 30 June 2021) be noted;**
- (2) That the further one year extension of the Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contract 2013-2018 (currently extended until 30 June 2021) be approved.**

(The meeting closed at 8.00 pm)

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Present: Councillor Ayub (Chair);

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Barnett-Ward, Carnell, Duveen, Ennis, Hacker, Page, Stanford-Beale, Terry and Whitham.

35. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted, and answered by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport on behalf of the Chair:

Questioner	Subject
Councillor Duveen	Road Maintenance Programme
Councillor Whitham	School Streets Update

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

37. PETITIONS

(a) Petitions in respect of De Beauvoir Road and Wrenfield Drive

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the receipt of two petitions asking the Council:

- To change the parking restrictions on De Beauvoir Road, Reading, to ‘13R permits only’;
- For a double yellow line to be installed between 18 and 45 Wrenfield Drive, Caversham.

Petition in respect of De Beauvoir Road

The report explained that the petition had been received by the Council on 30 December 2019 and contained 35 signatories. The lead petitioner had provided the following background information to the petition:

‘Currently the parking restrictions on De Beauvoir Road are ‘13R permits only or 2 hours free parking, with no return within 2 hours.’ Due to reasons listed below, the parking restrictions on De Beauvoir Road are no longer fit for purpose and is causing a negative impact on the local residents, which the system is designed to protect:

- *Parking is restricted to one side of the road only. However, there is a large number of residents along the street due to terraced housing on both sides of the street.*

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES - 9 JANUARY 2020

- *Parking spaces are used by people stopping to shop in the Cemetery Junction area. The big issue is Tesco Express (1-4 London Road) just around the corner from De Beauvoir Road, where parking spaces on De Beauvoir Road are used continuously for those stopping for a quick shop, which significantly reduces the amount of spaces available for local residents. When a space becomes available it is filled very quickly by the next person popping in to the shops. This means that residents are forced into parking a few streets away due to the lack of availability.*
- *De Beauvoir Road is a busy road which is used as a regular rat-run for traffic when the London Road is busy. Consequently, this means parking spaces are used more regularly than neighbouring streets because of the busy nature of the road.*
- *Introduction of additional parking restrictions in the Redlands area has pushed more temporary parking back onto the street.*
- *Families and young professional residents are turned away from living along the street due to the lack of parking. This is something that myself and neighbours have seen first-hand on a number of occasions’.*

At the invitation of the Chair the petition organiser, Kit Brash, addressed the Sub-Committee on behalf of the petitioners.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and agreed that Carnarvon Road and Junction Road should be included in the officers recommendations that would be submitted to the March 2020 meeting.

Petition in respect of Wrenfield Drive, Caversham

The report explained that the petition had been received by the Council on 6 January 2020 and contained 13 signatories. The lead petitioner had provided the following background information to the petition:

‘The section of road that we are requesting DYL is at the very end of the cul-de-sac in the turning circle. The turning circle has been used for many years by residents for parking on two sides (as in the aerial view taken from Google Maps below). Until recently, it was very seldom that cars would be parked at the end of the turning circle, where we are now requesting DYL and there was never really a problem.

However, over the past year or so, there has been regular parking on all three sides of the turning circle - thus making it very difficult for cars to use the turning circle and for residents to access driveways.’

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the contents of the petitions be considered and officer recommendations submitted to the March 2020 meeting;

- (3) That with regard to the petition in respect of De Beauvoir Road, Carnarvon Road and Junction Road be included in officer recommendations submitted to the March 2020 meeting;
- (4) That the lead petitioners be informed accordingly.

38. BI-ANNUAL WAITING RESTRICTIONS REVIEW - 2018B PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for statutory consultation on new or altered waiting restrictions. A table setting out the Bi-Annual Waiting Restriction Review Programme list of streets and officer recommendations, including any comments from Councillors, was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and drawings to accompany the officer recommendations in Appendix 1 were attached to the report at Appendix 2.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake a statutory consultation in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, for the proposals contained within in Appendix 1 and 2;
- (3) That the requests made for waiting restrictions as shown in Appendix 1 be amended as follows:
 - (i) Battle Ward: Elm Park - To remain in the programme;
 - (ii) Kentwood Ward: Thirlmere Avenue - To be removed from the programme;
 - (iii) Minster Ward: Wensley Road - To remain in the programme;
 - (iv) Norcot Ward: Taff Way - To be progressed and officers to arrange a meeting with schools and Ward Councillors to discuss wider parking issues;
 - (v) Redlands Ward: Allcroft Road - To remain in the programme and officers to arrange a meeting with Ward Councillors and affected residents to better understand the issue;
 - (vi) Thames Ward: Victoria Road (private road) - Officers to arrange a meeting with Ward Councillors to discuss the issues;
 - (vii) Tilehurst Ward: Combe Road - Officers to investigate appropriate restrictions for the traffic signal service layby;
 - (viii) Tilehurst Ward: Elvaston Way - Officers to carry out further work around the extent and location of the yellow line restrictions;

- (4) That subject to no objections received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order;
- (5) That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee;
- (6) That the Head of Transport, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor be authorised to make minor changes to the proposals;
- (7) That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

39. SUSTRANS ACTIVATION PROJECT

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Sub-Committee with an update on the progress of the Sustrans Activation Project which was being funded by the Department for Transport and led by Sustrans, a UK cycling and walking charity. A copy of the consultation responses was attached to the report at Appendix A and maps setting out the detailed designs were attached to the report at Appendix B.

The report explained that as a result of the Sustrans Paths for Everyone report that had been published in 2018, following a two year independent audit of the entire National Cycle Network, the DfT had since invested £21m which had been earmarked to improve significant on-carriageway stretches of the 16.575 mile National Cycle Network. This was part of a multi-million pound DfT investment to improve cycling and walking around England, cut down emissions and improve safety.

Sustrans had identified 50 Activation Projects that would be targeted initially, one of which was in Reading. The aim of the Reading Activation Project was to improve access to the traffic-free route between Katesgrove, Waterloo Meadows and Fobney Lock. Sustrans had formed a working group to develop the project, consisting of Council officers, Councillors, representatives of the Canal and River Trust and Thames Valley Police. The working group had focused specifically on barriers at the Katesgrove underpass, at both ends of Waterloo Meadows, and at Fobney Lock. Discussions were based around developing a set of modifications to open access to people with bikes, and people using wheelchairs, adapted cycles and mobility aids, who had previously been obstructed by the awkward barriers that had been installed originally to deter motorcyclists. Improvements to the surface of the path had also been included within the scope of the project.

Sustrans had carried out various consultation events at local community centres to make the local community aware of the proposed draft designs and to gain an understanding of the views of various user groups. A questionnaire had been produced as part of the consultation to record these views. Following on from consultation with the local community, detailed designs had been finalised, in collaboration with the working group. Sustrans had planned to use the Council's in-house Highways team to carry out these works, which were due to be completed by March 2020.

Resolved - That the progress and detailed designs for the Reading Activation Project be noted.

40. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Sub-Committee with an update on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which had been adopted as part of the Local Transport Plan in 2007, and the steps needed to review and update the Plan to reflect current and future use.

The report explained that local authorities were required to review the Rights of Way Improvement Plan after no more than ten years, and at regular intervals after, to ensure the Plan had remained relevant. As part of this process local authorities were expected to carry out a further assessment to ensure the Plan continued to achieve its purpose and to subsequently review the Plan and take a decision as to whether or not to amend it.

A number of public rights of way had been improved, or complemented, throughout the period of the existing Plan, including the opening of Christchurch Bridge, the installation of lighting in Kings Meadow, surface improvements, significant riverbank strengthening works along the River Kennet and private sector contributions towards improvements to the width and surface footpaths on the network. Evidence from the annual cordon count had shown that investment along routes connecting residential areas with the town centre and other employment sites had led to increases in the number of people using the network and how it was used.

In order to fulfil the Council's duties and ensure the Plan remained fit for purpose, the report proposed that an online survey should be carried out to enable the Council to assess whether or not the existing Plan reflected current and future use, as described in the Rights of Way Act. The proposed survey would collect information on how people currently used the network, including frequency, purpose, mode of travel and barriers to use. In parallel to the consultation assessments on the public rights of way network would continue to be carried out, including consideration of proposed development sites and potential improvements which could be funded or delivered through public developers. In addition, information would also be sought on any unclaimed rights of way that could be investigated and included as part of the network. Details of the consultation would be shared with local user groups, including the Mid-West Berkshire Local Access Forum, Access and Disabilities Working Group, Older People's Working Group, Cycle Forum and the Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum. The results of the consultation would be submitted to a future meeting and a recommendation would be made on whether or not to amend the existing Plan.

Resolved -

- (1) That consultation be undertaken informing the development of the next Rights of Way Improvement Plan, as set out in this report, be agreed;**
- (2) That submission of the feedback from the consultation to a future meeting be noted.**

41. ANNUAL PARKING SERVICES REPORT 2018-2019

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report presenting financial and statistical data on the Council's civil parking enforcement activities during 2018-2019. A copy of the Parking Services Annual Report 2018-2019 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that it was intended that the Annual Report for 2018-2019 would be published in January 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report, and the availability of annual reports for 2008-2018 on the Council's website, be noted;**
- (2) That the intention to publish the Annual Report for 2018-2019 in January 2020 be noted.**

42. CYCLE FORUM NOTES

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Sub-Committee of the discussions and actions from the Cycle Forum held on 4 December 2019.

Resolved - That the minutes from the Cycle Forum held on 4 December 2019 be noted.

43. OXFORD ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY - UPDATE

Further to Minute 42 of the meeting held on 10 January 2019, the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Sub-Committee with an update on progress with the Oxford Road Corridor Study.

The report explained that in order to take the proposals forward to delivery, a further statutory consultation would need to be carried out. This consultation had been programmed to take place in February/March 2020 with supporting public exhibitions to help raise awareness of the project with residents, businesses and local road users. The exhibitions would take place in Battle Library as it was regarded as the most central location. Subject to no objections being received during the consultation, officers had planned to commence works during the summer 2020 holidays. The programme of works was likely to take six to eight weeks to complete and if objections were received they would be considered at the June 2020 meeting.

Along with the measures that had been detailed in the report there would be further phases of the study which would focus specifically on the use of the Oxford Road corridor and surrounding roads. This would include the potential for an area-wide 20mph speed limit zone, measures to prevent through traffic, such as bus gates/lanes, environmental enhancements and a full review of the current Strategic HGV route to the Oxford Road from Junction 12 of the M4. All of these areas would be considered as part of the development of the next Transport Plan for Reading which was currently being prepared for consultation during Spring/Summer 2020.

Further to Minute 79 of the meeting held on 8 March 2018, the report explained that the Sub-Committee had agreed to the implementation of an on-street charging scheme in place of the limited waiting bays on Oxford Road, between Howard Street and Brock Barracks. Ward Councillors had since asked officers to review the agreed tariff and consider the impact of the free period. There had been some concern that drivers would seek free parking in the side roads, where there was some shared use provision, to avoid payment. Whilst this was a valid concern in reality currently drivers sought parking in side

streets as kerbside space along the Oxford Road could be hard to find. The current parking only allowed 20 minutes maximum stay but this was difficult to enforce and consequently cars were parked much longer than the regulations allowed. Part of the justification for on-street charging was to ensure drivers only parked for the time they needed. The charges had been designed to encourage a turnover of space, which in-turn would increase access to kerbside space and would promote local trade. In addition, by applying charges this was an opportunity to increase the length of stay; currently only a maximum of 20 minutes was permitted. The new charges allowed up to two hours, giving increased choice to park on the Oxford Road and not just the side streets.

The report stated that should a free period be desired there would be costs to be considered. As the tariff was offered in 20 minute segments the obvious consideration would be to make the first 20 minutes free of charge. From an analysis of existing on-street charges that were offered in 20 minute segments, just over 15% of drivers had used just the first 20 minutes. The current equipment did not allow for a free period and to ensure any such free period was managed this would require a change as the only way to manage a free period would be to link this to the vehicle parked by registering the vehicle registration number. This would require a key pad to be added to the on-street payment machine where the driver had to declare their registration number when they took a ticket. This was not a typical application within the Borough and would cost approximately £2,000 to carry out the change and, in addition, to ensure only one free period was taken once within the no return period would require an annual software licence of £2,040 for the 17 pay machines that had been installed under this scheme. There was no allocated funding for making this change to the tariff, introducing a free period and ensuring the free period was then not abused. In addition, on-street parking charges had formed part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure it remained sustainable.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and it was proposed that officers investigate the possibility of retaining the free period in the parking bays along the Oxford Road, prior to the introduction of pay and display arrangements. It was also suggested that the possibility of introducing a free period in all pay and display car parks/streets and roads around local shopping areas, outside of the town centre, should be investigated. In both cases it was requested that the findings be submitted to the next meeting.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report and the proposed delivery programme be noted;
- (2) That, prior to introducing the pay and display arrangements, the possibility of retaining the free period in the parking bays along the Oxford Road and of introducing a free period in all pay and display car parks/streets and roads around local shopping areas outside of the town centre be investigated by officers and the findings submitted to the next meeting.

44. PARKING CONDITIONS IN THE MALBOROUGH AVENUE AND ELMHURST ROAD AREA

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Sub-Committee of the details of the question that had been asked by Councillor Jones at the previous meeting and gave consideration of the solutions that had been offered for future action.

The report explained that changes within Malborough Avenue to extend the shared use period to the typical model used across the Borough, 8am to 8pm Monday to Sunday, would require statutory advertisement. Any changes to the double yellow line and extending resident permit parking bays would also require the Council to follow statutory process. To bring about any change for residents as quickly as possible it was proposed to advertise the 8am to 8pm Monday to Sunday restriction within the next waiting restriction review from March 2020. The waiting restriction review had been established to offer the very best value for money by using both staff and funding resources in the most efficient way. It was possible that the changes to the permit times met the expectation of residents and further changes were not necessary. To carry out statutory process outside of the established programme would require funding and possibly additional staff time; the cost of statutory advertisement had been estimated at £2,500 outside of the programme and the cost of changes applied to street (for signing) had been estimated at £1,800.

Changes to the tariff in Elmhurst Road were not recommended at this time but would be carried out as part of the annual tariff review in June 2020. However, as had been offered in Pepper Lane the Council would be able to offer discounted parking by phone. This would require the user to register an account and could be managed to ensure the integrity of the original scheme was maintained.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

45. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 46 below, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

46. APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY PARKING PERMITS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details of the background to her decisions to refuse applications for Discretionary Parking Permits from a total of 25 applicants, who had subsequently appealed against these decisions.

Resolved -

- (1) That with regard to application 20 a first discretionary resident permit be issued, personal to the applicant, subject to adequate proofs and a letter stating that the vehicle is owned by the charity for which the applicant works being provided;**
- (2) That, with regard to applications 13 and 17 a third discretionary resident permit be issued, personal to the applicant, subject to adequate proofs being provided**
- (3) That with regard to application 11 a temporary permit be issued (charged for), personal to the applicant, subject to adequate proofs being provided;**

- additional information about why the employer cannot provide a space and the application is referred back to next meeting;
- (4) That, with regard to applications 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 22 and 23 a first discretionary resident permit be issued, personal to the applicant, subject to adequate proofs being provided;
 - (5) That with regard to applications 9 and 16 a fourth discretionary resident permit be issued personal to the applicant and charged at the third permit rate, subject to adequate proofs being provided;
 - (6) That with regard to application 8 one free book of discretionary visitor permits be issued and officers to report back on use of carers permits by agencies where no family and friends are able to assist;
 - (7) That, with regard to application 6 a first discretionary resident permit be issued subject to adequate proofs and one book of discretionary visitor permits be issued, charged for and personal to the applicant;
 - (8) That with regard to application 4 a Teacher Permit be issued;
 - (9) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' decision to refuse application 25 be upheld and the £120 the applicant has already paid be refunded;
 - (10) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' decision to refuse applications 1, 2, 3, 14, 19, 21 and 24 be upheld.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.11 pm).

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Classification: OFFICIAL

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
17 OCTOBER 2019
(9.30 - 11.40 am)

Present: Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE
Councillor John Harrison

Reading Borough Council
Councillor Sophia James
Councillor Tony Page

Wokingham District Council
Councillor Parry Batth

Officers Pete Baveystock, Wokingham Borough Council
Grace Bradbrook, re3
Monika Bulmer, re3
Oliver Burt, re3
Andy Edwards, Reading Borough Council
Kevin Gibbs, Bracknell Forest Council
Sarah Innes, re3
Damian James, Bracknell Forest Council
Gareth Jones, Bracknell Forest Council
Clare Lawrence, Wokingham Borough Council
Claire Pike, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor John Halsall, Wokingham Borough Council

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on the 4 July 2019, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

14. Progress Report

The Board considered a report on progress in the delivery of the re3 Joint Waste PFI Contract. The report covered:

- re3 Waste Strategy 2018 to 2020
- Climate Change
- Trade Waste at the Household Waste Recycling Centres
- Reuse Shop
- Lakeside Energy from Waste facility
- User Satisfaction

- Confirmation of Changes to Waste Acceptance Protocol
- Receipt of Food Waste at Longshot Lane and Smallmead
- Joint Policy on Contamination of Kerbside Collected MDR
- Communications

The Board was presented with updated information on the rate of recycling. Food waste collection in Wokingham had increased recycling by 6.6% in the borough. Wood recycling had also added to the overall rate in all three boroughs. The good weather had also contributed to an increase in green waste collected. The partnership average recycling rate was therefore 47%. Kerbside recycling was up year-on-year in each borough and contamination had reduced too. It was noted that recycling at Longshot Lane and Smallmead would be monitored.

The Board was reminded that all three councils had made commitments to address climate change. The task for each was now to match their words with appropriate actions. There had been considerable reductions in use of landfill, but there was a need to identify the means to make decisions from a climate change perspective alongside the commonly used economic and performance perspectives. The re3 Project Team had explored partnering with the University of Reading. A proposal had been put forward to set a baseline and identify the most purposeful actions plus communications to bring about behavioural change using the University's expertise. Following receipt of the quotation, some clarifications were to be sought before further consideration. It was suggested that it would be worthwhile investigating what the Local Government Association was doing to support councils. Oliver Burt undertook to circulate the details of the existing proposal to members of the Board.

The Board was advised that a seven month trial of accepting trade waste from a limited number of re3-based small businesses, was to start on 4 November 2019. 19 businesses from a range of sectors, including a parish council, had signed up to participate in the trial. An update on progress would be presented to the next meeting on 23 January 2020. The current costs were noted and that these would be reviewed at the end of the trial.

Arising from trade waste trial, the Board was advised of a group which had not been accepted as a charity for the purposes of waste disposal. It was reminded that the eligibility criteria for the charity scheme was a matter for each council to determine.

The Board also discussed the establishment of a reuse shop. It was advised that the contractor, FCC, felt that the volume of available material could support one reuse shop at Smallmead or Longshot Lane. Three possible options were outlined, whilst a fourth involving provision at both recycling centres was also being considered. It was suggested that providing only one shop could result in longer journeys, contrary to the aim to reduce the carbon footprint. It was noted that to accommodate two shops, a full review of all existing reuse activity would be required to ensure the viability of both. The Board agreed that there was a need for more clarity, reviewing the suitability of any available locations and then potentially choosing the best site to open one shop to see how it went before deciding whether to add a second.

The Board was reminded that the Lakeside Energy from Waste site would be dismantled to accommodate the new runway at Heathrow if the runway got the go ahead. Planning permission was therefore being sought from Slough Borough Council for an alternative site. A letter in support of the proposal had been submitted in view of the implications of the loss of the site. The officers agreed to check the status of the planning application.

The Board was advised that user satisfaction remained high with overall satisfaction at Smallmead at 99% and Longshot Lane 98%. There remained some question as to whether everyone using the sites was entitled to do so, as 6% of those responding had declined to give their postcode. There had also been issues with fake permits and permits being offered for sale. In the circumstances, it was now proposed to conduct simple ID checks on all visitors. Existing forms of ID, as identified in 2016, would be used instead of the windscreen permits and would be supplemented with other forms such as the Bracknell Forest e+card and valid on-street parking permits. Permits. Windscreen permits would no longer be accepted from February 2020 after communicating the changes between now and January. It was suggested that large signs should be posted at the sites regarding the change.

The Board was advised that in view of the success of the food waste collections already underway, the facility for the councils to deposit collected food waste would be extended to include Longshot Lane as well. It was agreed that the officers would report back on any issues that may arise.

Reading was also to introduce food waste collections from next year. Details were being finalised. The Council had recognised that there were some significant challenges to be addressed as homes of multiple occupation and flats were often more challenging in respect of general waste recycling. As a result, the Council was intending to launch the scheme in a number of pilot areas, as the Council wanted to learn as much as possible from the pilots before extending the scheme to the whole borough. The Bracknell Forest and Wokingham officers expressed a willingness to help Reading as working together could help all three councils achieve their aims.

Contamination of collected recycling, by items which were not wanted for recycling by the material reprocessors, remained an issue which needed more attention. A phased approach for dealing with contaminated bins was being planned with a shared policy now being reviewed ahead of implementation. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) was willing to work with the partnership to trial it. Officers were asked to ensure that the benefits of WRAP's involvement were maximised, with a suggestion that, for example, the work could be targeted at the difficult areas where the aforementioned trials were to commence in Reading.

In response to a question about packaging, The Board was advised that there were a number of initiatives to encourage more recyclable materials. It was suggested that there was a need to do more to provide advice on the items which may or may not be recyclable to increase awareness. The Group was advised that the Plastic Recycling Wheel to offer guidance to residents was to be delivered to 16,000 homes during October. The Plastic Recycling Guide on the re3 web site had also been refreshed. Since February 2018, there had been a 59% increase in plastic recycling.

The Board was also advised that the trade waste pilot was being promoted. It was a year since the launch of the re3cycloipedia app. In that time, there had been over 50,000 searches. Public tours of the re3 Material Recycling Facility (MRF), during Recycle week had also been well received.

A further order for 8,000 bags of re3grow compost had been placed. The price would remain the same at £3.50 per 40 litre bag or 3 bags for £10.00.

Overall, the Board was pleased with how messages about recycling were being conveyed across the re3 partnership, but it acknowledged that there was a lot more to do.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 A report on the initial success of the trade waste trial be presented at the meeting on January 2020.
- 2 Further investigations be undertaken into the best location for an re3 reuse shop with an initial emphasis to be placed on identifying whether a first shop can be established, and its performance reviewed before a decision on whether to establish a second was taken.
- 3 Windscreen permits be no longer accepted as proof of address at the re3 Recycling Centres from February 2020.

15. Exclusion of Public and Press

That pursuant to Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 7 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

16. Annual Financial Statement

The Board considered a report summarising the current financial position of the joint waste PFI including:

- The 2018/19 accounts and detailed the emerging position in the current year.
- The first draft of the budget for 2020/21

It also briefed the Board on the reuse of water-based paints received at the Recycling Centres, preparations for the UK exit from the European Union and work with DEFRA regarding the Resources and Waste Strategy.

The Board was advised that:

- The contract saving for 2018/19 had been achieved in full.
- There had been a net underspend of £356k against the sum of the respective re3 council budgets.
- The three councils had benefitted from higher energy from waste capacity for their residual waste, increasing diversion from landfill, an increase in recyclate income and lower overall tonnages than expected.
- Recyclate income had risen to £377k in 2018/19, an increase of £149k from the previous year, arising from an increase in mixed dry recycling, including a full year of collecting pots, tubs and trays.
- The impact of Brexit was uncertain but re3 was in a good position to respond to whatever may happen.
- A second draft of the 2020/21 budget would be prepared in November.

- As part of the budget setting process for 2020/21, estimated savings of £25k from additional use of energy from waste in 2020/21 from recycling was to be directed to a recycling initiative in 2021/22, as agreed with Defra.

The Board discussed existing arrangements for the disposal of paint which was being undertaken by the Green Machine social enterprise. It had become clear that the existing arrangement, despite its original merits as a social enterprise, was neither cost-effective, nor being completed effectively. It was therefore agreed by the Board that the existing arrangement could no longer be supported.

RESOLVED that a reuse scheme for suitable water-based paint should be continued, if at all possible, via alternative means and on a non-profit basis.

17. **Date of the Next Board Meeting**

The Group was reminded that its next meeting would be held at 9.30am on 23 January 2020.

CHAIRMAN

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**Minutes of the 97th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting
Thursday 7th November 2019
AWE, Aldermaston**

Present:

Mark Hedges	Chair
Cllr Philip Bassil	Brimpton Parish Council
Cllr Mark Binns	Swallowfield Parish Council
Cllr Michael Bound	Basingstoke and Deane
Cllr John Chapman	Purley on Thames Parish Council
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Cllr Roger Gardiner	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Cllr Amy Gower	Emergency Planning Officer, West Berkshire
Cllr Graham Hetherington	Baughurst Parish Council
Cllr Max Joseph	Padworth Parish Council
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council
Cllr David Livingstone	Silchester Parish Council
Cllr Mollie Lock	Stratfield Mortimer Parish
Cllr Royce Longston	West Berkshire
Cllr Helen Manghani	Reading Borough Council
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cllr Ian Montgomery	Shinfield Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Barry Patman	Wokingham Borough Council
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Ayo Sokale	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Nicholas Thurlow	Mortimer West End
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council

Nick Bolton	AWE
Philippa Kent	AWE
Anna Markowska	AWE
Scott Davis-Hearn	AWE
Michele Maidment	AWE
Suzanne Chenery	AWE
Roy Awbery	AWE
David Niven	AWE
Alexander Jones	AWE

Regulators:

Gary Cook	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Rob Green	Environment Agency

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors

Cllrs Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Avril Burdett, Penee Chopping, Stuart Coker, Nicholas Corp, Sophie Crawford, Debbie Fisher, Malcolm Large, Clive Littlewood and Carolyn Richardson.

Actions from previous meetings

Action 1/96 Nick Bolton to look at AWE's approach to '12 lines of defence' and update at the next meeting.

Update provided in the Process Safety section. Action closed.

Action 2/96 Scott Davies-Hearn to establish whether there has been increased frequency of alarm testing.

There has not been an 'increase' in the alarms per se...AWE have had to undertake some validation tests following maintenance activities. Action closed.

Action 3/96 AWE to review whether the pre-fabs at the Mearings can be kept.

John Steele responded that we will retain the pre-fab but only for storage purposes. Action closed.

Action 4/96 Scott Davies-Hearn to discuss with Carolyn Richardson and report back to the following questions relating to new REPPiR legislation

- Cllr McGarvie asked how Hampshire fits in with the determination process.
- Cllr Bound raised a similar query over Basingstoke and Tadley Councils.

Amy Gower, from West Berkshire Council gave a verbal update explaining that the Council are currently confirming with their legal teams the process of consultation required under the new REPPiR 19 legislation and council policy to ensure that all stakeholders required are engaged with throughout the process. LLC members will be notified when required.

Approval of the 96th Meeting minutes

Chairman's update

Introduction

Mark Hedges welcomed members to the 97th meeting and went on to update them about some topics of interest.

Membership changes

A welcome was given to new members Councillor Mark Binns representing Swallowfield Parish Council who is replacing Jeff Moss, Councillor Nicholas Corp representing Wasing Parish Council who is replacing Tim Malpas, Councillor Max Joseph representing Padworth Parish Council who is replacing John Miller and Councillor Malcolm Large representing Woolhampton Parish Council who is replacing Gerald Hale.

Recognition for Director

Alison Atkinson, AWE's Director, Infrastructure Projects Delivery, has been recognised as the sixth most influential woman in engineering in the UK and Europe. The list published in October was produced by board appointments firm, Inclusive Boards, in partnership with the Financial Times.

Alison sits on the AWE Executive Board and has the responsibility for the delivery of the multi-billion-pound capital investment programme, involving the design, construction and commissioning of unique and complex facilities required to support the UK's nuclear deterrence enterprise. She is also the executive sponsor of AWE's ambitious commitment to transform diversity and inclusivity in the company.

Recruitment Campaign

AWE's 2020 apprenticeship recruitment opens next week (November 11) and runs until mid-January.

AWE is involved in a range of promotional activities including attending the national recruitment event Skills London at ExCel next week (November 15/16). There will also be an opportunity to meet the team locally at an AWE event at Tadley Library on December 10. Details of all AWE's opportunities can also be found on the website www.awe.co.uk.

The AWE graduate recruitment campaign for the 2020 intake has just closed and there has been a great response with over 1,200 applicants for the 131 available roles next year.

Engagement Survey

AWE has again signed up for the b-Heard Survey run by Best Companies to measure, improve and recognise levels of workplace engagement. It will enable AWE to identify what it's doing well, and how things can be improved. AWE is heartened by the response rate of 81%. Results from the survey will be collated and shared with colleagues at the end of this month.

Chief Nuclear Inspector's Report

AWE welcomed the Chief Nuclear Inspector's (CNI) Annual Report 2018/19 published last month (11 Oct) by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR).

The AWE sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield remain in enhanced regulatory attention for the 2018/19 period. This has been in part due to continued operations in ageing facilities while replacements with modern safety standards are being built.

During 2017, AWE began developing a Structured Improvement Programme (SIP) designed to bring about long-term and sustained business improvements in safety and regulatory compliance across Aldermaston and Burghfield.

AWE's SIP is a wide-ranging programme of work which consists of four inter-related projects focusing on safe operations, process, change and stakeholder interactions. The SIP is now at the implementation phase and the ONR notes that it continues to receive support and commitment at all levels throughout AWE.

While AWE acknowledges that short-term challenges remain, the progress that is being made in some areas demonstrates the strong commitment to improving safety and regulatory compliance. Achieving the highest standards in safety performance is a priority for everyone at AWE and AWE will continue to work closely with the regulators to achieve this.

An email newsletter with the details of the CNI report was sent out to all LLC members last month.

Schools Outreach Programme

AWE has had another busy term in the schools' outreach programme including delivering STEM workshops and running the annual engineering challenge, between them these two activities engaged over 500 secondary age students, helping inspire the future workforce.

Another highlight since the LLC committee last met was the re-launch of the Primary Science Centre at Queen Marys College in Basingstoke. Sian Butler, Director of Assurance attended the launch event which is the latest part of AWE's collaboration with the college.

AWE's sponsorship of the centre will support 4,000 primary children to enjoy free science sessions at the Science Centre as well as supporting free transport.

Community News

The community magazine Connect was published at the end of October and circulated to around 56,000 local homes and businesses. It can also be found on the AWE website.

Site Exercise

A major Level 1 site exercise (SITEX) was successfully completed at the Aldermaston site in October. The ONR commended the challenging scenario that AWE presented and there were some strong performances across the response. External agencies also participated including, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Berkshire Council and the South-Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) Hazardous Area Response Team (HART). The exercise was assessed as an adequate demonstration by the regulators.

Another site under cover exercise at the Aldermaston site will be held from 09.00-12 noon on Tuesday 19th November. This means that the site gates will be closed and access/egress to site will be restricted to staff responding to the exercise. The restrictions and road closures will remain in place until the exercise ends.

Questions arising from the Chairman's Update

Cllr Dave Shirt: (in relation to the CNI report and sites being in 'enhanced regulatory attention' for 2018/19)

'It is my understanding that it extends beyond that to 2020.'

Cllr Roger Gardiner added: 'It was always going out to 2020.'

Mark Hedges: 'We have a structured improvement programme and are starting to see some tangible improvements. A lot of work is being delivered under that programme is expected to be delivered in 2020/21. Issues of improving an ageing infrastructure are not a quick fix.'

Cllr Dave Shirt: There has been a lot of comment on social media in the past. We have been given the press release, but we need more information if we are to provide reassurance to local people.'

Mark Hedges: 'We will look at how we can improve this.'

Environment, Safety and Health Update

**Nick Bolton,
ESH Service Delivery Lead (SET)**

Nick gave an overview of performance in personal and process safety during the period advising members that the OSHA TRI (Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Total Recordable Incidents) Injury rate for the 12 months to the end of September 2019 was 0.361 and that this had risen slightly to 0.389 during the month of October which showed an increase in trend to previous months.

A total of 25 OSHA Recordable Events have occurred in the 12 months to the end of September 2019. 32% were slip/trips/falls occurring due to commonplace pedestrian hazards when walking around the AWE sites. This is a slight reduction from the total reported at the last LLC meeting.

A total of 6 RIDDOR Reportable Injury Events have occurred in the 12 months to the end of September 2019.

There are a number of activities in place to reduce the number of injuries on site which include continuous inspections/reviews across the roads and grounds areas, manual handling awareness training, a planned increase in operational alerts/briefings on subjects such as special awareness and ergonomics and reviews of health awareness and injury control.

A new health contract is due to start next April with the focus on providing services to improve physical health to prevent MSD's (Muscular Skeletal Disorders). These services will include an on-site physiotherapist and fitness for work checks for those working on high risk MSD tasks.

Questions Arising

Mark Binns asked for confirmation on what the respiratory and heat stress issues were.

Nick responded later in the meeting that the respiratory issue related to a firefighter was in a training scenario in a smoke-filled room and unfortunately suffered with asthma like symptoms. The two heat stress issues both occurred during the hot summer, one related to a member of the catering team who was working at the till at the time felt unwell after standing up and the other was an individual who felt unwell in an office.

Susan Mullen asked if AWE employees receive regular health screening?

Nick advised that AWE carry out pre-employment medicals and depending on the nature of the employees' role within the company they will receive regular checks eg. Hearing checks for those working in noisy environments.

AWE also has a drop-in medical service for any employee that may feel unwell or has an issue that they wish to discuss. There are also a number of trained mental health champions on site and also an external support team.

Regarding those who are returning to work after a period of sickness, AWE provide a gradual return to work process over an agreed period.

Mollie Lock stated that mental health usually affects the nonchalant. Does AWE have enough resources in place to help people?

Nick acknowledged that it was a big topic amongst the executive team at their last 'Stop for Safety' campaign. AWE is trying to raise awareness that it is ok for an employee to stop and ask for help should they need it. There are several mental health champions around the site

to provide support and a number of staff have trained to become Wellbeing Champions. These colleagues are available for anyone who has any health concerns or just need someone to talk to about any problems that they are experiencing. They are also trained to recognise signs and changes in behaviour amongst their colleagues which could be indicators to any mental health issues that they may be experiencing.

Action 1/97 Health and Wellbeing update including activities to support Mental Health to be added to the agenda at the next LLC meeting.

Process Safety

AWE's Process Safety performance is at an acceptable risk level and Process Safety training for supervisors is now compulsory and forms part of their competency assessment.

As per action 1/96 the AWE's approach to '12 lines of defence', we indirectly manage lines of defence (Risk Control Systems) through the Safety Management System, the 36 Nuclear Site Licence conditions and arrangements. Nick outlined the Swiss Cheese Model, lines of defence (Risk Control Systems; measures, systems, procedures and policies) against an incident occurring are conceptualised as slices of swiss cheese with vulnerabilities presented as holes in the cheese.

An error or event may allow a problem to pass through a hole in one slice of the system, however, if there are no holes in the next slice – or a hole is in a different place then the problem will be caught, and the risk of failure averted.

Site Update

Mark Hedges
Director of Site Operations

Community

There have been no formal complaints issued in this period.

Protestor Activity

Planned activity took place on Sunday 22nd September with a group of around 40 peace protestors arriving by coach around 11am. They stayed for approximately an hour and then left to attend their next event in Oxford as they said they would.

AWE work closely with the protestors to ensure their safety.

Questions arising

David Livingstone stated that there has been an increase in HGV's driving through Silchester with a number of complaints from residents. David wanted to make AWE aware of this issue in case some of the vehicles belonged to AWE.

Mark responded that AWE has prescribed routes for deliveries, but he would check with the Head of Logistics to make him aware. AWE is aware that there are currently traffic restrictions in Aldermaston which may lead to drivers seeking alternative routes.

Ask the Regulators

**Gary Cook Lead Site Inspector
Office for Nuclear Regulation**

The ONR has carried out a number of Licence Condition inspections during this period covering training, emergency arrangements, authorised and other suitably qualified and experienced persons, modifications or experiment on existing plant, operating rules, operating instructions, control and supervision of operations, safety mechanisms, devices and circuits, examination, inspection, maintenance and testing and leakage and escape of radioactive material and waste. Conventional health and safety inspections were also undertaken covering fire safety and AWE's Electrical Safety Improvement Programme.

ONR raised one regulatory issue relating to LC22 (modifications or experiment on existing plant) covering the need for AWE to revise a risk assessment sampled during an inspection. A further four regulatory issues were raised following amber rated inspections against LCs 10 (Training), 12 (Duly authorised and other suitably qualified and experienced persons), 27 (safety mechanisms, devices and circuits) and 28 (examination, inspection, maintenance and testing).

The ONR wrote to AWE on 22nd September 2019 regarding the Burghfield ATC Closeout Report that AWE had submitted in accordance with their Periodic Review of Safety (PRS) arrangements. The letter acknowledged progress in key modifications but also recognised the remaining shortfalls that continue to be addressed to ensure that risks are as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). ONR will undertake inspections to confirm the adequacy of the ongoing ALARP position.

In June, AWE reported a near miss electrical event where a contractor caused a flash over of electricity from a 415v electrical source. The event occurred in a non-nuclear building and no workers were injured. ONR is currently undertaking a formal investigation and will advise LLC members in due course.

You can find the full report available on the ONR website www.onr.org.uk

Questions arising from the ONR Report

George McGarvie asked if the ONR is currently working with the DNSR (Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator) on any matters?

Gary answered that yes, the ONR do work with DNSR, more so at the Burghfield site on such things as licensed instruments (LIs)

**Rob Green
Environment Agency**

The EA has completed several inspections since the last LLC meeting. It undertook a compliance inspection focussing on two legacy facilities at Aldermaston site that are undergoing decommissioning. There were no non-compliances but we provided regulatory advice in the form of recommendations and observations.

The EA also inspected several facilities that comprise the former radioactive effluent treatment facility at Aldermaston site which is also being decommissioned. Again, there were no non-compliances.

A number of AWE's arrangements were inspected to determine the provision of sufficient appropriately trained staff. Again, there were no non-compliances and the improvements that AWE is undertaking in this area were recognised.

The EA will be launching e:Mission which is their sustainability strategy, which sets out how they will actively seek to reduce any negative impact that we may have on the environment and help others to do the same.

Over the next 4 years the EA will continue to challenge themselves and those involved in their work to expand the scope of their targets to reduce the negative impact that we have on the environment and look for opportunities to improve it.

EA have also announced their goal to become a net zero organisation by 2030. The aim of this is to balance the carbon emissions we produce with those we take out of the atmosphere so that we are no longer contributing to climate change.

Nuclear Forensics

Dr Roy Awbery
Technical Sponsor – Nuclear Forensics (Provenance)

Dr Roy Awbery provided a very informative talk on Nuclear Forensics, giving an insight into what Nuclear Forensics is, it's purpose, why the UK is developing NF capability, how we are building that capability and the National Nuclear Forensics Library.

For anyone who is interested in learning more about Nuclear Forensics or maybe a career in the subject there will be a conference held in London on 14th-15th October 2020. For more details please visit <http://nufor2020.iopconfs.org/home>

Questions arising

Mark Binns suggested using TEDx which is a global community to circulate information regarding recruitment at AWE as there are many events that would attract many interested individuals. For more information visit www.ted.com

Community Programme

Philippa Kent
Community Engagement Manager

QMC Science Centre Re-launch

Queen Mary's College recently re-launched its Science Centre, which is sponsored by AWE. The partnership enables around 4,000 free science sessions to be delivered to local primary pupils. The centre was originally developed by a team of AWE graduates many of whom continued their careers at AWE and are now in senior science and engineering roles. The centre was officially opened by TV personality and mathematician Johnny Ball who joined in with the demonstrations and activities. Members were shown a video of the launch event.

Schools Engineering Challenge

Alexander Jones and David Niven, two of AWE's graduates on the team managing the Schools Engineering Project, provided a presentation with video footage of the challenge. The challenge, aimed at secondary pupils in year 9, is designed to promote engineering and help inspire the next generation of STEM professionals.

Prior to the challenge, lessons on electromagnetism were delivered to eight local schools, including a total of 200 year 9 students and covering the curriculum syllabus. Teams of four students from each school then took part in the challenge day from which there was a good mix of boys and girls. The task was to design, build and test a compact hydroelectric generator.

The winning team were from Maiden Erlegh and in 2nd place was Trinity School. An award for the best design was also presented to The Hurst School.

Expanding our STEM Ambassador Programme

AWE staff are now supported to train and take part in the national STEM Ambassador scheme. Training sessions have been run on site and staff have been given special leave to participate. Local schools and community groups can seek STEM support for their activities through the scheme.

Charitable Giving

Colleagues at AWE have raised around £3000 for **Macmillan Cancer Support** by participating in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning. Eleven teams took part and fund raising was supported by a £500 donation from the AWE Charity Fund.

The AWE charity fund also donated £500 to Tadley Library to support the library refurbishment by funding a selection of science books.

National Campaigns

In support of **Road Safety Week** which takes place 18-24th November, AWE will be providing local primary schools with safety awareness merchandise.

The company is also supporting the **Woodland Trust Campaign** to plant one million trees on 30th November. Members were invited to encourage their local communities to take part in this initiative. AWE will pay to provide a donation of hedging or tree saplings for local community projects on request.

ESH Community Event

Anna Markowska, Head of Environment, updated members on a project at Garland Junior School. On 22nd August her team from AWE joined others from the community to help turn a large area of grassland into a functioning garden area where students can learn about growing vegetables, growing plants, the wildlife that they will attract and will experience hands on gardening duties.

Any other Business

Action 2/97 Roger Gardner requested a presentation at the next meeting on Development Control by AWE and West Berkshire Council

Amy Gower/Mark Hedges

David Shirt stated that there have been a number of incidents of minor vandalism in Aldermaston Village involving the use of catapults and asked if Ministry of Defence police from AWE could patrol the area?

Mark said he would speak to colleagues in MDP as part of Project Servator and request increased vigilance to support the village

Mollie Lock asked if group from local historical societies could visit the AWE museum?

Mark explained that we are subject to strict security constraints which make routine visits to site difficult but said AWE would look at whether there was any support that could be offered to local history societies in neighbouring villages.

George McGarvie asked if it would be possible for the LLC members to have fixed security passes rather than temporary passes for each meeting in future?

Scott replied that this is unfortunately not possible.

Finally, Mark requested that any LLC member who has changed their contact details to please notify the AWE team so that they can be kept up to date with the latest news.

Close

Proposed 2020 Meeting Dates

18th March

22nd July

18th November

**Reading Climate Change Partnership
Board Meeting Agenda
Tues 28th January 2020
Councillor Room 1 at Civic Offices.
10.00-12.00 pm**

Attendees

Chris Beales (CHAIR), Tim Dixon, Tricia Marcouse, Tracey Rawling Church, Ben Burfoot, Willem Londeman, Poppy Harris, Katie Brett (Support Officer), Peter Moore (guest)

Apologies

Tony Page, Paul Harrison

<p>Welcome - introductions</p>	
<p>Sign-off of minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actions update document to be circulated after the meeting <p>Decision: October minutes were agreed.</p> <p>Decision: All agreed for the minutes from all the Board meetings - dating back to Jan 2018, will be posted on the website</p> <p><u>Actions:</u> KB to upload these minutes onto the website.</p> <p>BB to ask RBC that the minutes are also added to the council's Strategic Environment Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee meeting.</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>BB</p>
<p>Chair's intro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update since last meeting <p>CB provided an overview of current climate news: In 2019 the UK witnessed record temperatures, as well as incidents of widespread drought and flooding (with three flood alerts in the Reading area). The current Australian fires were also highlighted. The UK citizens assembly on climate change has started. Perhaps it is something for Reading in the future?</p>	

Brexit has continued to dominate news space, and the pre-general election (purdah) period in Nov/Dec impacted on CB (chair) activity.

CB noted it's been a busy time for the Partnership and the growing ReadingCAN. Thank you to everyone, including Peter Moore and Tracey Rawling Church for supporting the development and finalisation of the action plans and narrative in such a tight time frame.

CB announced that Environment Agency has declared to be net zero carbon by 2030.

Visits to the ReadingCAN Website have been steady, with an average of 200 hits a week. Note that we still have a very limited social media presence, promoting our activities: we currently only have our Twitter account, with CB and TRC tweeting occasionally. The ReadingCAN website group is not strong yet so there have only been limited posting from the wider network. CB will prioritise support for this over the coming months.

- Review progress of Vision (see '[Vision for ReadingCAN.pdf](#)')

CB stated he was pleased with the increase in the RCCP reputation and awareness since he became Chair. The grants scheme is on hold as funds are focussed on the new strategy development. We have built up ReadingCAN into a powerful active force with a lot of potential. The website needs more active postings. There is a lot of potential for the next phase of growth.

- Timeline / Forward look

The time scale for the finalisation and launch of the new strategy is tight. We are still aiming for a June launch, and the focus of this meeting is to confirm the board are happy to proceed on this basis.

- Plans for hand-over to next Chair

Decision: CBs two-year chairmanship finishes soon. It was agreed that the election of a new chair would happen in April's board meeting. CB will provide a full handover, with Chairmanship handover at the strategy Launch event in June.

Action:

All - who are interested in being considered for Chair, get in touch with CB before next meeting.

All

<p>Adaptation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See: https://ReadingCAN.org.uk/readings-first-adaptation-plan <p>CB received £1,700 from Environment Agency and £10k from RCCP to commission Mott Macdonald to develop the first adaptation plan for Reading in 2019. The work is now complete and CB is very pleased with it. The focus is on communication, and the document will be very useful to help engagement on this vital issue. It has a light touch approach and is the start of the conversation.</p> <p>BB noted the document was an important first step and perhaps is more of a ‘impact study’ than a ‘plan’. TD felt it is a summary of the main issues of Reading - but not specific on individual actions. TD asked how the new RCCP strategy, the Local Plan and Reading 2050 fit alongside this document. A diagram is needed to show the linkage, and he felt the title of Adaptation Plan should be changed. TRC felt that we need to communicate the purpose of the document clearly, to ensure it is not unfairly judged.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> CB agreed to add a strapline to the title in light of the discussion</p> <p>On 6 February CB has been invited to present the Adaptation Plan at the opening event for Mott MacDonald’s new office in Reading. Board members will all be invited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is complete - we need to digest and consider governance over the next couple of years <p>CB highlighted that we are yet to determine which agency will be responsible for Readings adaptation planning - Reading 2050, RBC or RCCP? This is something for future discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be referenced in our new strategy <p>Decision: This was discussed later in the meeting, with an agreement to signpost the Plan in the Strategy narrative.</p>	<p>CB</p>
<p>Evolution of the RCCP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘Evolution of RCCP.docx’ (see: https://alto.chrisbeales.net/index.php/s/LjbpNSITIAHhhA1) 	

<p>ReadingCAN is now created, how does the board fit alongside it? Should it be rebranded as the 'ReadingCAN board'? How are the board members elected? With the creation of the new role 'Head of Climate Strategy' at RBC - capacity and space is evolving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree actions <p>Decision: All agreed that the Board is to consider this document over the next couple of meetings, and actions to be confirmed when the strategy is completed.</p> <p>Action: KB to put onto April board agenda</p> <p>Decision: All agreed that the theme leads will be invited to all board meeting in future - but would not have voting rights.</p> <p>Action: KB to add theme leads to board mailing list</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>KB</p>
<p>Development of the ReadingCAN network / theme groups (capacity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to expand on the back of the public consultation • Are we ready for growth? (each theme / centrally?) <p>There was a round table update from all themes:</p> <p>Water theme (CB) - Confirmed they felt ready to take forward work in Reading. Thames Water and Environment Agency are fully engaged, with some more work needed to bring RBC on board</p> <p>Energy theme (BB) - They felt they still need commitment from SSE. The group meets regularly and the Energy Futures Policy is currently being developed.</p> <p>Resources theme (TRC) - Confirmed they felt ready to take forward work in Reading. They have a small but very engaged team, which are able to grow. They have volunteers running the projects - so envisage capacity challenges ahead.</p> <p>Nature theme (TM) - over 1000 days have been committed by volunteers to implement their Action Plan.</p>	

<p><u>Action:</u> TM and CB to discuss the development of more public email addresses - in order to help TM manage communications in her theme.</p> <p>Transport theme (PM) - the RBC transport team has engagement with the transport operators - and will use this for leverage of the climate strategy. The plan is evolving ok.</p> <p>Health (cover by TRC, as no health rep present) - Gill Ringland and her colleague Margaret from Ethical Reading were thanked for stepping up and temporarily leading this theme - to start the development of this new action plan from scratch. In December they stepped down and there is now no current lead for this theme. It was unclear who the theme members are remaining.</p> <p>There are a lot of essential connections still to be made in the plan. The NHS has now signed up to go net zero.</p> <p>It was discussed, given the circumstance, whether the health theme should be a crosscutting theme going forward or remain a theme in its own right. It was felt that this area is very important, and 'its new and therefore its thin' and is 'an area for development'.</p> <p>Decision: all agreed that after the consultation - if no lead is found - Health will become a crosscutting theme</p> <p>A discussion was had on the ability of generalists in Reading to engage with this process going forward. The actions for them need to be clear, gaining traction for community action, perhaps a series of commitments to sign up to. This issue will be addressed in the Communications and Engagement plan - which will be finalised before strategy launch in June/July.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing off an impressive events diary (e.g. active theme workshops) - Chris + Trish note on public events <p>CB felt there was a need for more events - 'If we look busy we will attract people..'</p> <p>Decision: All agreed that the website should act as a central hub for climate change activity.</p> <p>Decision / Action: All non-ReadingCAN events/posts need a standard disclaimer 'The RCCP does not necessarily endorse all that is said at this event'</p>	<p>TM/CB</p> <p>All</p>
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<p><i>Reading Green Market</i> - Sunday 15th March. An event where you can buy sustainable products. TRC agreed to book a stall at this event to highlight the consultation.</p> <p>Decision: After this discussion PH wanted to acknowledge that she will be running a stall there. Others felt this was not a conflict of interest.</p> <p><u>Action</u> - all to help to ensure more events are visible in ReadingCAN diary.</p> <p><i>Beanpole Day</i> - Saturday 18th April 10-3pm at Caversham Court. This is an open air event with limited options for roping down banners etc. All to think about how they will display materials, not just whether they are available to attend. There are three free concrete plinths that could be used for leaflets or exhibits but nowhere to pin up posters at eye level in the main event area, with possible option of doing it at the tea kiosk on a lower level if RBC gives permission for things to be stuck up on its elderly walls! TM will check that out. Major publicity starts end Feb so that is the time to make a decision. Nature theme is definitely going and XR is invited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website group <p>As discussed in Chair's intro.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to manage the ongoing communications and engagement challenge after the plan goes live • How to project manage the execution of the plan and ensure that we maintain urgency and momentum <p>These items were parked for discussion in the next Board meeting.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Is the new Strategy ready?</p> <p>CB walked the group through the following items to confirm that the board were happy that we are ready for the June launch target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table of themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Current capacity of theme group ◦ Is the action plan ready? ◦ Visions are good - is the theme narrative ready? <p>All theme representatives around the table were asked the above questions. All felt they had capacity in their theme and All themes</p>	

were happy with their action plans. It was confirmed that where RBC was noted as a lead partner - RBC officers had been consulted and so should not bring up issues when getting senior buy in. It was felt that gaining broader ownership by other organisations to some of the plans would be beneficial. It was noted that the theme visions varied in tone and style - and was there support for PM to adjust the visions to be a more consistent style. Most were happy with this.

Action: PM and CB to discuss adjustments to the Water Theme narrative.

PM/CB

Decision: All happy to proceed.

- Action Plans:

- Are there any bear-traps in the Action Plans that we need to prepare for (e.g. Thames flood alleviation scheme, 3rd bridge)?

Water theme: the flood alleviation scheme could be. CB confirmed that RCCP will not be pro or against the scheme, and our approach would be to encourage others make an informed decision for the town. He confirmed that he is happy that the 2 actions in the Water theme are measured and reflect this position.

Transport theme: the action plan was discussed. There is no reference to a 3rd bridge in this 5 year plan.

Nature - it was noted that some of the public parks are planned to act as flood water storage areas on occasions. It was felt by all that this would be agreeable with the public given the alternative.

Resources - no bear traps.

It was noted that we need to all be aware that we will not please everyone. The language and tone of the document needs to be positive. Stepping on toes is ok if its for the right reasons.

Energy theme - there are many bear traps. We are moving away from gas - which will be an issue for gas industry. The Energy Futures programme that BB is currently developing will help to mitigate this.

It was felt that noting the carbon reduction achieved going forward would strengthen the strategy narrative. However explanation would need to go alongside the figures - as the reduction would not be linear, taking into account the initial time allocated to lay the foundations for carbon reduction programmes, and also the later programmes that will be focussed on the much higher hanging fruit.

Decision: All happy to proceed.

- Agree concept of ownership (vs Lead) for each action

Decision: It was agreed that no individuals will be named on the action plan. Perhaps the lead partners should be read as 'initial delivery partners' - to encourage greater sign up during the consultation.

Decision: Ownership of actions is the RCCP board.

- Do we want index numbers for actions?

Decision: All agreed for simple indexing. PM and KB to insert for the consultation. All agreed that the theme sequence in the strategy should be in line with level of carbon reduction: Energy, transport, resources, water, nature, health.

- Plan for cross-cutting theme actions

Decision: It was felt that the agreed themes (education, community, business and adaptation) are now bedded into the 6 action plans. As required they will be addressed in the communications and engagement section.

- Are we happy with tables of unowned 'B list' / parked actions?

These actions do not have an identified Lead / owner, and therefore are not in the main Action Plan tables. Themes will still have a record of these and hopefully will be able to deliver the work within this strategy period.

Action: All theme coordinators to provide PM with their plan B information if there is anything to input into the narrative.

PM/KB

Theme
CO-
ordinators

- Are we happy with Peter’s narrative?
 - Links to Adaptation and sister Mitigation plans. Also, local plan, Reading 2050 and other relevant and parallel ‘visions’/activities (Tim)

TD noted that PM has done a terrific job under difficult circumstances. He has forwarded his comments - as points of detail. He felt there was a need for a more tight and focussed vision.

CB felt the document was very zero carbon focussed and needs a better balance against adaptation preparedness. This was debated and the range of views discussed: TD disagreed. TRC suggested the document be called ‘Climate Emergency Action Plan’ with a clear signpost to the Adaptation Plan. PH felt that more direct adaptation references were needed in this doc. WL wanted more on the climate emergency rather than zero carbon, TM had prepared many comments which PM will consider. BB confirmed that the document needed to be branded with RCCP, as ReadingCAN was not a formal entity. PM assured all that, given the time pressures of submitting the draft doc to admin briefing at RBC, he would be able to strengthen the balance and slim down the zero carbon sections, however could not manage a massive shift of goalposts. PM was mindful of the current discourse of bringing emissions down.

Decision: All agreed that PM would be able to shift the balance in the narrative quickly to address the concerns raised above.

Action: PM and CB to meet quickly after the meeting to discuss more substantive comments.

PM/CB

- What is the over-arching Vision?

CB suggested that, in addition to adaptation and mitigation, a third underlying vision element for the town is around ‘climate change learning’. This was rejected though.

Decision/ Action: The board agreed to a straightforward adaptation and mitigation vision, with a minor adjustment to the phrasing. PM will alter as agreed

PM

- What is the name for the Strategy (e.g. ‘Reading Climate Emergency Action Plan’?)

<p>Continuing the previous discussion - concerns about the initial 'zero carbon' vs the 'Climate Emergency' title were discussed. It was noted that the use of the word 'emergency' could have more of a campaign group tone (e.g. Extinction Rebellion). Perhaps RBC would not feel comfortable about this. Others confirmed that in their business arenas 'emergency words' were being used and would not put businesses off engaging. Others felt it was an attractive title.</p> <p>Decision: The title was agreed by a majority vote 'The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy: Towards a net zero carbon and a resilient Reading'.</p>	
<p>What is the plan for comms and engagement for the public consultation?</p> <p>All to provide feedback to PM concerning the narrative and consultation questions as track changes by tomorrow afternoon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from meeting with Gill (Ben) • Manage impact of Council Election period (26 Mar - 7 May) • Budget - see spreadsheet • Advertising • <i>Who are we sending the plan? we have the existing database of people. I have a list of other names that could be added if that is the way forward. (Trish)</i> <p>There was no time left to discuss the above. KB and BB have had initial meeting with RBC in regards public consultation, further meeting with communications next week</p> <p>Decision/ Action: It was agreed to organise a subgroup meeting, focused on comms and engagement through the consultation. Please confirm to Katie if you want to be in this.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
<p>Stop / Go decision for June launch of the strategy</p> <p>Decision: All agreed to a launch in June</p>	
<p>Where are we with current 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' Strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RBC review of the actions (did this happen 2019?) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure report? • Plan for website (move old page to post) (Chris) <p>There was no time left to discuss the above.</p> <p>Decision / Action: Agreed that BB will feedback to all on any RBC plans regarding closure. We can follow up with any required RCCP decisions.</p>	BB
<p>We should have a Big launch event (+ other events?)</p> <p>Strategy artwork and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Reading artistic community with competition (+ prize) • Photographs • Schools competition <p>There was no time left to discuss the above</p> <p>Decision/ Action: It was agreed to organise a subgroup meeting, focused on comms and engagement through the consultation. Please confirm to Katie if you want to be in this.</p>	All
<p>AOB</p> <p>Date for the next meeting - Tues 28 April 2020</p> <p>10-12 noon</p>	All

Outstanding actions from past meetings:

- PH to link with the Royal Berkshire Hospital to engage with and populate the action plan. PH to meet with health theme co-ordinator Gill Ringland and the person tasked with pulling Action plans together - to add key adaptation health needs, and then put into NHS plans.
- CB to add RCCP budget update to January board agenda → move to April

- TD to investigate the possibility of a student doing a scoping study of RCCP funding opportunities
- CB and BB to investigate further how to raise more funds, on a more permanent basis – to provide RCCP with more sustainable funding. To arrange a joint meeting with RCES on this challenge. To link with RCES to investigate how to spend the benefit fund, and discuss how to scale it up as a significant way to bring funds in
- All to keep an eye out for potential funds – to share at April 2020 board meeting.

- BB: to investigate the potential of advertising ReadingCAN (consultation and ongoing messages):
 - on bus shelters/buses
 - on big screen by Reading station (speak to Marcus).
- TP to ask his fellow Councillors to spread the message on ReadingCAN, and cascade the information in the new year.
- CB to link with Zsuzsi from Reading Fringe Festival in regards a presence next year.
- BB to make sure ‘travel planning’, ‘climate emergency’, ‘schools conference’ and ‘Eco schools’ is included in RBC leader’s letter to all schools.
- TD: to investigate the possibility of students filling some of the research needs in the action plans

- KB to investigate using the art boards in the shopping centre – to Launch the RCCP strategy

- CB and KB to follow up contacts at Parent Governors Association.
- KR to add to grant applications to RCCP board agenda in Jan for review → July
- TD to investigate if University would be interested in hosting green business network meetings
- KB to write letter to all school governors and all neighbourhood managers – to highlight strategy being written – and to get involved. What do you need from us? – you can help shape the agenda.
- Rebecca Lindsay to enquire with RBC’s cultural scheme to suggest that their recent event have climate change as their theme

- TM to put a shopping list together of materials that would be good for events and take forward with KB.
- All theme co-ordinators to send TM info for GIS mapping

- BB to feed into the consultation of the Thames Valley Industrial Strategy as there is very little mention on adaptation, carbon emissions and the impact of climate change (deadline June)..
- CB to investigate the possibility of Richard Stainthorp (head of Reading Parent Governors) becoming a ‘community’ board member.
- TM to investigate potential of Victoria Hunter from Acre being a suitable ‘community’ board member.
- KB and BB to investigate Reading Youth Council.
- All to propose community members for the Board.



- Green Business report (see Tracey's email) [CB to load onto RCCP docs]
- BB to ask policy colleagues for community organisation contacts
- TM to investigate faith forums such as Noah (Christian..)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/2021 & 2019/2020 MAINTENANCE UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR A PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT BOROUGHWIDE
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMERCIAL SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	SAM SHEAN	TEL:	0118 937 2138
JOB TITLE:	STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	resurfacing@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the extensive investment the Council is making in Reading, including the **£ 9M Highway Capital 3-year Investment programme 2020-2023** and to give spend approval for the Highway Improvement programme.
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of the £1.432 Million Highway Maintenance 2020/2021 Award from the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement (including Band 3 Incentive Funding) and to give spend approval.
- 1.3 To inform the Committee of the LED street lighting upgrade programme and the remaining available funding of £ 374,000.
- 1.4 The report outlines the proposed Highway Maintenance 2020/2021 works programme and spend allocation set out in Appendix 1 and paragraph 4.8.
- 1.5 To provide the Committee with an update on the 2019/2020 Highway Maintenance programme.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the **£9 Million Highway Capital 3- year Award for 2020/21 to 2022/23 Council funded investment** and gives spend approval for the proposed **Road & Pavement Maintenance Year 1 Programme 2020/2021**, as set out in Appendix 1 and paragraph 4.10.

- 2.2 That the Committee accepts the £1.432 Million Highway Maintenance Award for 2020/2021 from the DfT Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement and gives spend approval for the proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021, as set out in Appendix1 and paragraph 4.33.
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the LED upgrade programme and gives spend approval for the remaining £ 374,000 available grant funded capital budget for further LED upgrading in Reading.
- 2.4 That the Committee notes the Highways Maintenance 2019/2020 update
- 2.5 That the Committee notes the Highways Maintenance update 2019/2020 and gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Assistant Director of Finance to enter into the variety of contracts required to undertake the highways maintenance works as described in this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Council in June 2018 approved Shaping Reading's Future - Our Corporate Plan 2018-21. The Plan reflects the Council's priorities for Reading and provides direction for staff in delivering services to meet the needs of the communities within the Borough whilst working to a budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed at Council in February 2019. An annual refresh of the Plan was published at Council in June 2019.
- 3.2 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 3.3 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 3.4 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

4. THE PROPOSAL

BACKGROUND - £ 9M COUNCIL FUNDED HIGHWAY INVESTMENT

- 4.1 The Council has adopted a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and associated spending plans for the three years 2020/21 to 2022/23 covering all aspects of the Council's spend.

- 4.2 The proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy is informed by and supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities including its commitment to address the climate change emergency; and seeks to ensure that the Council is "fit for the future", with sound finances that allow the Council's future funding challenges and spending pressures to be met in as sustainable a way as possible.
- 4.3. The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council's finances are sustainable in both the short (one year) and medium term (three years). The Strategy is also informed by the Council's Vision: "to ensure that Reading realises its potential - and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success", as well as its Corporate Plan priorities:
- Securing the economic success of Reading;
 - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
 - Protecting and enhancing the life outcomes of vulnerable adults and children;
- 4.4 The Strategy builds on work over the previous 2-3yrs to stabilise the Council's financial position and build reserves back to a more robust level and seeks to facilitate vital investment in core infrastructure to drive efficiency improvements, facilitate service redesign and thereby manage pressures within demand led services. This invest to save approach provides for a robust financial position going forward and enables vital and valued services can continue to be delivered.
- 4.5 As part of MTFs an ambitious capital investment programme is to be delivered with the Council investing **£ 9M (over 3-years) Capital in Reading's local residential road and pavement network**. This welcomed investment is over and above the annual Local Transport Block Funding settlement from the (DfT) for highway maintenance work to improve the condition of local residential roads and pavements and reverse a deteriorating highway network.
- 4.6 The Council will also actively bid for appropriate external funding including Department for Transport (DfT) & DEFRA grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all highway assets. This includes a current expression of interest to the DfT for strengthening several bridges in Reading, (awaiting outcome).

PROPOSED PROGRAMME - Highway Maintenance Spend Proposal 2020/2021

- 4.7 The Council carried out a Residents' Survey with its Citizen Panel in September 2018 as part of the Council's on-going conversation with residents. The aim of the survey was to gather information to inform customer service delivery in a number of ways. More specifically, the survey asks about residents' views of their neighbourhoods and of Council services,

which has helped the Council to understand what residents really value in their local areas and services, in order to make decisions on budgets and services that reflect those values.

- 4.8 Over 65% of respondents said that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Respondents were asked what they thought needed improving and the number one consensus (58.05%) said that the condition of roads & pavements needed improving.
- 4.9 The Council has listened to the residents of Reading and is making a **£9M Capital Investment** over 3 years in Reading's local roads and pavements.

£ 9M COUNCIL 3-YEAR CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS

- 4.10 Year-1 £3M Capital Investment in local residential roads and pavements is set out in the table below:

	<i>2019/20 Spend (Works Only)</i>	<i>2020/21 Spend Proposal (Works Only)</i>
Minor Roads Surfacing	£ 135,000	£ 2,500,000
Pavement Resurfacing	£ 80,600	£ 500,000
TOTAL	£ 215,600	£ 3,000,000

- 4.11 **Minor Local Roads Surfacing (£2,500,00) - Financed by the £ 3M Year-1 Council Investment (year-1 of the £9M over 3-years)**
- 4.12 For category 3 roads (residential and other distributor roads) there is generally no skid or condition information available therefore priorities have to be established as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. The common types of deterioration are, for example, the number of potholes, rutting, the amount of patching and cracking.
- 4.13 A visual assessment of the road surface condition for minor roads is therefore carried out annually using the Council's agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the carriageway condition against various criteria. Those roads with the highest scores are then subjected to a further engineering assessment and those which, again, score highly through this process as well as being considered appropriate, are recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year's minor roads surfacing programme, subject to budget availability.
- 4.14 Based on the above a list of schemes has been prepared as detailed in Appendix 1. Estimated costs based on current information are shown against each scheme and would suggest that schemes 1 to 92 could be achieved this year. Tenders for this work will be invited shortly and the documents will include reserve schemes 93 to 96 should the tender prices returned are more favourable than current estimates enabling the Council to do more schemes within the available budget.

- 4.15 In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration outside of the scope of normal maintenance work, the programme of works would be reviewed and if necessary, a reallocation of funding within the budgets would be made to undertake higher priority carriageway schemes.
- 4.16 Due to the size of the 3-Year investment programme, the Council will engage Statutory Undertakers / Utility companies early to reduce the risk of newly resurfaced roads being dug up and also ensure that other planned major transport schemes are considered within the 3-year programme.
- 4.17 A number of cycle routes are included in year 1 of the programme where they are located on residential roads. Cycle routes will then be prioritised in years 2 and 3 of the programme and the detailed list of those roads will be reported to a meeting of the SEPT Committee (Strategic Environment Planning and Transport) in the summer.

It should be noted that a number of local branded cycle routes are on classified main roads. Funding for those roads will come from the Department for Transport's Capital funding award, rather than out of the Council's £9 million investment programme. The annual highway maintenance programme will consider improvements to routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which will be available for public consultation as part of our transport strategy consultation next month.

- 4.18 **Pavement Resurfacing (£500,000) - Financed by the £ 3M Year-1 Council Investment (year-1 of the £9M over 3-years)**
- 4.19 Potential pavement resurfacing schemes are identified as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. An assessment of the pavement surface is carried out annually using the Council's agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the pavement condition against various criteria; those pavements with the highest scores, as well as being considered appropriate, are then recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year's pavement maintenance programme, subject to budget availability.
- 4.20 As was the case with the 2019/2020 pavement maintenance programme, it is proposed to focus the Council's Capital Investment year-1 programme on resurfacing and/or reconstructing damaged pavements/stretches of pavement in 2020/2021 using the Council's in-house Highway Teams, as they are a competitive and cost effective team, who are experienced in delivering patching and minor road & pavement schemes.
- 4.21 The schemes listed in Appendix 2 are recommended for action in 2020/2021. Estimated costs based on current information would suggest that schemes 1 to 30 could be achieved this year.

- 4.22 9 number reserve pavement resurfacing/reconstruction schemes numbered 31 to 39 would be implemented if the costs for the main pavement programme prove to be less than the current estimates thus enabling more schemes within the available budget. Pavement resurfacing/reconstruction work is carried out in-house by the Council's Highways and Drainage Operations Team.
- 4.23 It is proposed to develop an alternate surfacing programme using slurry sealing or equivalent for years 2 & 3 of the Council's Capital investment programme, as this is a cost-effective process which provides a new 'veneer' overlain surface that seals and ultimately extends the life of pavements.
- 4.24 **Other Carriageway Maintenance Works - To be financed by the remaining £6M Council Investment in years 2 & 3 (years 2 & 3 of the £ 9M over 3-years investment)**
- 4.25 It is recognised that there are roads which repeatedly do not meet the appropriate criteria for inclusion within the major carriageway resurfacing or minor roads surfacing programmes but would benefit from other maintenance treatment(s) to extend the life of these assets. Examples of such maintenance works are explained in more detail below:
- Following a SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) survey, where a carriageway surface appears, overall, to be in a good condition but would benefit from a surface rejuvenation to improve/restore skid resistance, extending the life of the road. This process would prove to be a cost-effective treatment, when compared with full scale resurfacing, enabling more roads to be treated.
 - There are a number of concrete roads across the Borough which have previously been overlain with a thin flexible surfacing course. Over time this surfacing has locally worn away leaving a 'scabbed' surface. Typically, these areas do not meet the Council's current defect investigatory level to trigger repairs and as long as the underlying concrete slabs are in a stable condition, they are unlikely to increase in depth. Although such deterioration is aesthetically not pleasing, if the underlying concrete slabs are in reasonable condition, such roads do not score/rank as high as other roads for programmed maintenance work. Nevertheless, such roads would benefit from an appropriate treatment whereby the existing surfacing is either rejuvenated or replaced to not only improve the running surface but to also seal and protect the underlying concrete slabs, in turn, extending the life expectancy of these roads. Long Barn Lane and two sections of Southcote Lane were such roads that were successfully treated/resurfaced during the 2019/2020 Financial Year using a proprietary product/process.

- There are also examples of localised carriageway deterioration where the surfacing and/or sub-structure show signs of wear and tear in specific areas but not extensive enough to justify full-scale maintenance work to the complete carriageway area. In such situations, substantially sized patching, whether in the form of a surfacing only repair, a surfacing and base course repair or perhaps a greater depth full reconstruction repair, can rectify the issue locally and help to extend the overall life expectancy of the complete road.

4.26 The Council’s £9M investment over 3-years will enable the Highways Team to develop a programme for year’s 2 & 3 to address the above roads.

4.27 The Council will continue to actively bid for appropriate external funding including DfT & DEFRA grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all highway assets.

4.28 An updated report will be brought back to a future Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee meeting in the summer.

LOCAL TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING (INTEGRATED TRANSPORT & HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE) SETTLEMENT

4.29 The Council receives an annual Local Transport Block Funding settlement from the Department for Transport (DfT) for highway maintenance work. This settlement covers the general headings of bridges, highways and lighting. The Highway Authority then needs to demonstrate that it has made suitable use of their allocation in accordance with highway needs and within the general criteria for which LTP maintenance funding is allocated.

4.30 In December 2014, the Secretary of State for Transport announced how the DfT planned to allocate £6 Billion being made available between 2015/16 and 2020/21 for local highways maintenance capital funding. Ministers reached a decision on how to allocate the £976 Million of local highways maintenance capital block funding available each year based on a ‘needs based’ formula funding model.

4.31 Reading Borough Council’s settlement for this 6-year cycle is as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	AMOUNT OF SETTLEMENT
2015/16	£ 1,472,000
2016/17	£ 1,350,000
2017/18	£ 1,309,000
2018/19	£ 1,185,000
2019/20	£ 1,185,000
2020/21	£ 1,185,000

4.32 Every Local Highway Authority had the opportunity to secure additional funding on an “incentive basis”, dependent on its pursuit of efficiencies and

use of asset management; and/or from a competitive Challenge Fund for major maintenance projects.

Of the £6 Billion, £578 Million has been set aside for an incentive fund scheme, to help reward Local Highway Authorities who can demonstrate they are delivering value for money in carrying out cost effective improvements.

Each Local Highway Authority in England (excluding London) was invited to complete an annual self-assessment questionnaire, in order to establish the share of the incentive fund that they will be eligible for. Local Highway Authorities are not competing with each other for funding but are demonstrating that efficiency measures are being pursued in order to receive their full share of the funding.

Each Local Highway Authority scores themselves against 22 questions, which places them into one of 3 Bands on the basis of the available evidence.

Reading is currently (2019/2020) in Band 2, however, officers have been working hard to achieve Band 3 and can report that we have reached the requisite number (18) to declare Band 3 in 2020/2021.

The incentive funding awarded to each Local Highway Authority is based on their score in the questionnaire and is relative to the amount received through the needs-based funding formula. The current banding model is shown in the table below.

This table, therefore, shows an indicative allocation to each Band for how much Reading Borough Council could potentially receive in additional funding per Band per Financial Year to 2020/21.

For 2020/2021 Reading Borough Council achieved ‘Band 3’

YEAR	AWARD	BAND	INCENTIVE
2019/2020*	£1,185,000*	3 (100%)	£247,000
		2 (50%)*	£123,000*
		1 (10%)	£25,000
2020/2021**	£1,185,000**	3 (100%)	£247,000**
		2 (30%)	£74,000
		1 (0%)	0

*Note: For 2019/2020 Reading Borough Council remained at ‘Band 2’ so the total award with incentive was £1,185,000 + £123,000 = £1,308,000

**Note: for 2020/2021 Reading Borough Council achieved ‘Band 3’ resulting in an award total of £ 1,185,000 + £ 247,000 = £ 1,432,000

- 4.33 In previous years the LTP3/Local Transport Block Funding settlement has been split into a number of different areas to make best use of the funds available, and it is intended to continue with this approach.

Against each heading is the proposed works allocation based on the DfT settlement for Carriageways & Bridges, the Lead Local Flood Authority Flood Alleviation award & the remaining LED Streetlighting DfT award of:

TOTAL £ 1,820,250 for 2020/2021,

	2019/20 Spend (Works Only)	2020/21 Spend Proposal (Works Only)
Major Carriageway Resurfacing	£550,000	£800,000
Bridge/Structural Maintenance	£400,000	£600,000
Pothole Plan	£60,000	£ 32,000
Pothole & Flood Resilience Fund Award	0	£0 (Currently awaiting DfT award)
Pothole Action Fund Award	£135,975	£0 (Currently awaiting DfT award)
Additional Highway Maintenance Funding Award	£653,000	£0 (Currently awaiting DfT award)
Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding	£40,721	£ 14,250
Streetlighting	Joint LED Funded	£ 374,000
TOTAL	£ 1,839,696	£ 1,820,250

Major Carriageway Resurfacing (£800,000) - Financed by the DfT Award

- 4.34 With the funding available we have prioritised the schemes based on nationally accepted technical assessment processes as well as visual engineering assessments.
- 4.35 The provisional programme for category 1 and 2 roads (mainly class A and class B roads and roads with high volumes of commercial traffic) surface treatment has been prioritised after assessment of carriageways using information from:
- SCANNER surveys which checks the structural integrity and residual life of existing carriageways;
 - SCRIM (sideways-force coefficient routine investigation machine) surveys to check skidding resistance.
 - VISUAL/ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT by Highways Maintenance (Engineering) Team.

- 4.36 Based on the above assessments the roads/sections of roads listed in Appendix 3 are recommended for treatment over the next 3-years 2020/21 to 2022/23. These are shown in priority order and will be progressed until the available allocation is spent. To make the most effective use of the budget available only the sections of the roads with a poor and deteriorating residual life, as identified from the SCANNER surveys and visual engineering assessments, will be treated.
- 4.37 Tenders for this work will be invited shortly and the documents will include reserve schemes so that in the event that returned tender prices prove to be more favourable than current estimates suggest, we will be able to undertake further scheme(s) within the available budget. In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration on roads not currently on the 3 year list, the programme of works would be reviewed and if necessary, a reallocation of funding within the budgets would be made to undertake higher priority carriageway schemes.

Bridge/Structural Maintenance (£600,000) - Financed by the DfT Award

- 4.38 The Council has maintenance responsibility for around 80 bridges and 300 other structures. Each structure is inspected in line with the Code of Practice for Highway Structures. Based on these inspections the priority for works within the capital programme is determined and a rolling 5-year programme is developed and updated annually. Appendix 4 details the schemes proposed for 2020/2021 that are achievable within the available budget. Whilst these schemes are all high priority, they will not necessarily be completed in the order they are listed, as other factors have to be considered when developing a scheme and programme to ensure they are achievable within the timescale / financial year. The current bridge backlog is managed by risk assessment, monitoring and if necessary interim measures.

Street Lighting (£374,000) - Financed by the remaining LED streetlighting Capital Programme

- 4.39 The LED streetlighting upgrade was completed on the 31st March 2019 and has delivered over 55% annual energy consumption saving.
- 4.40 Streetlighting maintenance will revert to its normal cycle of works, predominantly dealing with emergencies such as RTA damage, column testing and inventory updates. Street lighting will be managed according to Highways asset management principles and inventory management and life cycle planning will be managed using the lighting module of the WDM system to coordinate with the pavement management and roads maintenance system. Once populated and operational the system will support web based self-serve reporting of street lighting faults via a dedicated portal improving

customer reporting and reducing the reliance on the current communication channels.

4.41 The completed LED upgrade joint contract programme achieved a saving of which Reading's share is £ 374,000. These funds will be directed towards completing any outstanding LED upgrade not included within the original project, (e.g. subway & bridge lighting). The Council estimates that there is over £ 500,000 of such schemes to complete.

4.42 Pothole Repair Plan 2020/21(£32,000) - Financed by the DfT Award

No announcement has yet been made by the Department for Transport on the Pothole Action Fund Award allocation for 2020/21. It is however, proposed to allocate £ 32,000 of available DfT funding towards a Pothole Repair Plan. Given the success of the previous Pothole Repair Plans, it is proposed to deliver a further Pothole Repair Plan. As before, this will enable potholes of a lesser depth than the Council's current investigatory criteria to be repaired, which can only help to extend the life of roads until such time that they require a more comprehensive maintenance treatment.

It is expected that this Pothole Repair Plan will be set up similarly to the previous Plans and, as usual, Members will be engaged at the appropriate time. Details will be presented in a Report for approval at a future Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee in advance of next winter.

4.43 Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding for 2017/18 and later years (Total Amount £14,250)

There are several costly flood risk/surface water management priority schemes identified for Reading under the 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy' and the 'Surface Water Management Plan'. However, given that these are very costly schemes and, unfortunately, are unsupported by appropriate funding at this moment in time, it is highly unlikely that they will form part of the 2020/21 works programme.

4.44 The grant will, however, be used towards the annual ditch cleaning programme and to investigate/progress further several smaller schemes identified through flood modelling. A detailed list of such works/schemes will be presented to this Committee for approval at a future meeting during the year to keep Councillors updated.

4.45 The combined 2020/2021 Council £3M year-1 Capital investment (£9M over 3-years), the DfT settlement for Carriageways & Bridges, the Lead Local Flood Authority Flood Alleviation award & the remaining LED Streetlighting.

DfT award **TOTAL £ 4,820,250 for 2020/2021**

UPDATE- HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE DELIVERY UPDATE 2019/2020

4.46 The Council has carried out an extensive works programme of major carriageway resurfacing, specialist carriageway surfacing of concrete roads, minor roads surfacing, pavement resurfacing, streetlighting (LED Replacement), as well as a bridges/structural maintenance programme. The Council also carried out repairs in response to an emergency solution feature collapse, which included the surface water sewer replacement.

4.47 Appendix 5 refers to the works programme delivered by the £1,308 Million Highway Maintenance 2019/2020 Award from the Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement. Appendix 5 refers to the works programme delivered by the Additional Funding Allocation (£653,000) DfT Award.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2019/2020 will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Defects reported by members of the public on the Council's public highway network are assessed / considered for appropriate action in accordance with the Council's investigatory criteria.

6.2 Schemes are identified through an assessment process however members of the public also request sites, and these are considered as part of the assessment process.

6.3 The Highway Maintenance Update 2019/2020 and Proposed Programme 2020/2021 will be available on the Council's website.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 consists of improvement work to the Council's existing public highway network. There

is no overall change to service delivery at this time. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer for each of the maintenance operations described in this report.
- 8.2 In each case, the tender process will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the principles of the Open process as defined by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations"). It is intended that each contract will be entered into based on the most economically advantageous tender received.
- 8.3 The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance and maintain highway structures.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 will be fully funded by the Councils £9M 3-year Capital Investment, the Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement for 2020/2021, the Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding 2020/2021 and the remaining LED Streetlighting Capital award.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed resurfacing contracts will include a carbon reduction and environmental element aimed at reducing the impact on the environment by the works. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the material by lower temperature products, use of recycled materials and reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment.
- 10.2 We will be ensuring through the procurement process that the successful contractor's operations support the Council's net zero carbon ambitions.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Reading Borough Council £ 9M Capital Investment over 3-years press release
- 11.2 'Highway Maintenance Update 2017/2018 and Proposed Programme 2018/2019' - Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee Report - 19th March 2019.
- 11.3 DfT Additional Pothole Action Fund Award 2017/2018 letter - 1st February 2018 & confirmation to carry spend into 2018/19 Financial year - 23rd February 2018.

- 11.4 DfT Letter 'Local Transport Capital Block Funding (Pothole Action Fund) Specific Grant Determination (2017/18): No.31/2951' - 1st February 2018.
- 11.5 Lead Local Flood Authority Grant for 2017-18 and Later Years - Department for Communities and Local Government letter - 13th June 2017
- 11.6 DfT Roads Funding: Information Pack - January 2017.
- 11.7 Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) Document - December 2014

Minor Roads 3 Year Surfacing Programme

2020/21 to 2022/23

APPENDIX 1

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Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

	Road	Ward	Cost Estimate £	Accumulative cost £	Year
1	Newport Road	Abbey	12464	12464	1
2	Sackville Street	Abbey	7854	20318	1
3	Princes Street	Abbey	12380	32697	1
4	St Johns Road	Abbey	6678	39375	1
5	Kings Meadow Road	Abbey	6846	46221	1
6	Ross Road	Abbey	7046	53267	1
7	Lynmouth Road	Abbey	11939	65205	1
8	Sun Street	Abbey/Park	3801	69006	1
9	Elm Lodge Avenue	Battle	7350	76356	1
10	Sherwood Street	Battle	29925	106281	1
11	Alma Street	Battle	9765	116046	1
12	Dorset Street	Battle	7875	123921	1
13	Belmont Road	Battle	17378	141299	1
14	Cambridge Street	Battle	8526	149825	1
15	Cannon Street	Battle	5250	155075	1
16	Gloucester Road	Battle	13125	168200	1
17	Gower Street	Battle	11361	179561	1
18	Hart Street	Battle	3780	183341	1
19	Lorne Street	Battle	15750	199091	1
20	Paddock Road	Caversham	7560	206651	1
21	Piggotts Road	Caversham	6836	213486	1
22	Wolsey Road	Caversham	22822	236308	1
23	Hemdean Rise	Caversham	7221	243529	1
24	The Slopes	Caversham	2930	246459	1
25	Falkland Road	Caversham	5662	252121	1
26	South View Avenue	Caversham	41003	293123	1
27	St Johns Road	Caversham	23121	316244	1
28	Hemdean Hill	Caversham	11398	327642	1
29	Cromwell Road	Caversham	16107	343749	1
30	The Warren	Caversham / Thames / Mapledurham	83801	427550	1
31	Barnsdale Road	Church	45518	473067	1
32	Modbury Gardens	Church	9429	482496	1
33	Hollydale Close	Church	17210	499706	1
34	Poplar Gardens	Church	4179	503885	1
35	Torrington Road	Church	20517	524402	1
36	Wentworth Avenue	Church	20066	544467	1
37	Arkwright Road	Katesgrove	12233	556700	1
38	Boulton Road	Katesgrove	37181	593880	1
39	Elgar Road South	Katesgrove	60690	654570	1
40	Canterbury Road	Katesgrove	24959	679529	1
41	Edgehill Street	Katesgrove	17010	696539	1

42	Clent Road	Katesgrove	6720	703259	1
43	East Street	Katesgrove	17409	720668	1
44	Vicarage Road	Katesgrove/Redlands	10454	731122	1
45	Cranbourne Gardens	Kentwood	4715	735836	1
46	Hartslock Way	Kentwood	4463	740299	1
47	Honiton Road	Kentwood	6983	747281	1
48	Upper Warren Avenue	Mapledurham	59241	806522	1
49	Woodcote Way	Mapledurham	46494	853016	1
50	Glenbeigh Terrace	Minster	3035	856051	1
51	West Fryerne (part)	Minster	5733	861784	1
52	Castle Crescent	Minster	18543	880327	1
53	Westcote Road	Minster	24318	904645	1
54	Boston Avenue	Minster	22113	926758	1
55	Wensley Road	Minster	92537	1019294	1
56	Brunswick Street	Minster	18102	1037396	1
57	Brownlow Road	Minster	12915	1050311	1
58	Taff Way	Norcot	12600	1062911	1
59	New Lane Hill	Norcot / Southcote / Tilehurst	90521	1153432	1
60	Waverley Road	Norcot/Battle	61352	1214784	1
61	Grange Avenue	Park	20318	1235101	1
62	Pitcroft Avenue	Park	17598	1252699	1
63	Tuns Hill Cottages	Park	6269	1258968	1
64	Manchester Road	Park	14879	1273846	1
65	Norris Road	Park	11529	1285375	1
66	St Edwards Road	Park	9272	1294647	1
67	Cumberland Road	Park	29400	1324047	1
68	Eric Avenue	Peppard	16886	1340933	1
69	Cavendish Road	Peppard	8397	1349330	1
70	Evesham Road	Peppard	42036	1391367	1
71	Crawshay Drive	Peppard	33065	1424431	1
72	Old Barn Close	Peppard	5534	1429965	1
73	Chiltern Road	Peppard/Thames	57383	1487348	1
74	Addington Road	Redlands	67326	1554674	1
75	Denmark Road	Redlands	16611	1571285	1
76	Southcote Lane	Southcote	5775	1577060	1
77	Haldane Road	Thames	10553	1587612	1
78	Newlands Avenue	Thames	13629	1601241	1
79	Peppard Road (Service Road in front of 13 to 45)	Thames	16519	1617761	1
80	Norman Road	Thames	3938	1621699	1
81	Scholars Close	Thames	4180	1625879	1
82	Moss Close	Thames	9727	1635605	1
83	Onslow Gardens	Thames	2482	1638087	1
84	Corwen Road	Tilehurst	66150	1704237	1

85	Crescent Road	Tilehurst	27563	1731799	1
86	Elmstone Drive	Tilehurst	21788	1753587	1
87	Whitley Wood Lane	Whitley	89523	1843110	1
88	Gillette Way	Whitley	49665	1892775	1
89	Vernon Crescent	Whitley	18375	1911150	1
90	Chagford Road	Whitley	19950	1931100	1
91	Sheldon Gardens	Whitley	1575	1932675	1
92	Swallowfield Drive	Whitley	45110	1977785	1
	RESERVE LIST				
93	Circuit Lane	Southcote	68817	1999917	1
94	Blandford Road	Whitley	77039	2009713	1
95	Foxhays Road	Church	64250	2073963	1
96	Usk Road	Norcot	41486	2115448	1
	YEAR 2 & 3 LIST				
97	Garrard Street	Abbey			2 or 3
98	Baker Street	Abbey			2 or 3
99	Addison Road	Abbey			2 or 3
100	Eaton Place	Abbey			2 or 3
101	Carey Street	Abbey			2 or 3
102	Great Knollys Street	Abbey			2 or 3
103	Orts Road	Abbey			2 or 3
104	Sidmouth Street (Queens Rd to Kennetside)	Abbey			2 or 3
105	Trafford Road	Abbey			2 or 3
106	George Street, Reading	Abbey/Battle			2 or 3
107	Beresford Road	Battle			2 or 3
108	Brunswick Hill	Battle			2 or 3
109	Catherine Street	Battle			2 or 3
110	Chester Street, Reading	Battle			2 or 3
111	Curzon Street	Battle			2 or 3
112	Kensington Road	Battle			2 or 3
113	Little Street	Battle			2 or 3
114	Deepdene Close	Battle			2 or 3
115	Fulmead Road	Battle			2 or 3
116	Little Johns Lane	Battle			2 or 3
117	Valentia Road	Battle			2 or 3
118	Argyle Road	Battle			2 or 3
119	Argyle Street	Battle			2 or 3
120	Connaught Close	Battle			2 or 3
121	Connaught Road	Battle			2 or 3
122	Norfolk Road	Battle			2 or 3
123	Ormsby Street	Battle			2 or 3
124	Rutland Road	Battle			2 or 3
125	Salisbury Road	Battle			2 or 3
126	Suffolk Road	Battle			2 or 3
127	Thornton Mews	Battle			2 or 3

128	Loverock Road	Battle			2 or 3
129	Battle Square	Battle			2 or 3
130	Lancing Close	Battle			2 or 3
131	Battle Place	Battle			2 or 3
132	Wantage Road	Battle/Norcot			2 or 3
133	Chester Street, Caversham	Caversham			2 or 3
134	Donegal Close	Caversham			2 or 3
135	Eccles Close	Caversham			2 or 3
136	Hampden Road	Caversham			2 or 3
137	Star Road	Caversham			2 or 3
138	Coldicutt Street	Caversham			2 or 3
139	Forge Close	Caversham			2 or 3
140	Keston Close	Caversham			2 or 3
141	Peel Close	Caversham			2 or 3
142	Harley Road	Caversham			2 or 3
143	Queens Road Caversham	Caversham			2 or 3
144	Richmond Road, Caversham	Caversham			2 or 3
145	Talbot Close	Caversham			2 or 3
146	Washington Road	Caversham			2 or 3
147	Westfield Road	Caversham			2 or 3
148	Champion Road	Caversham			2 or 3
149	Ian Mikardo Way	Caversham			2 or 3
150	Knighton Close	Caversham			2 or 3
151	Luscombe Close	Caversham			2 or 3
152	Mill Green	Caversham			2 or 3
153	Mill Road	Caversham			2 or 3
154	North Street, Caversham	Caversham			2 or 3
155	Oxford Street	Caversham			2 or 3
156	Anglefield Road	Caversham			2 or 3
157	Clifton Park Road	Caversham			2 or 3
158	Heron Island	Caversham			2 or 3
159	Queen Street	Caversham			2 or 3
160	Nelson Road	Caversham			2 or 3
161	St Annes Road	Caversham			2 or 3
162	Short Street	Caversham			2 or 3
163	Brackstone Close	Caversham			2 or 3
164	Buckside	Caversham			2 or 3
165	The Mount	Caversham/Thames			2 or 3
166	Hemdean Road (Church St to Oakley Rd)	Caversham/Thames			2 or 3
167	Hemdean Road (Oakley Rd to Sheridan Ave)	Caversham/Thames			2 or 3
168	Priest Hill	Caversham/Thames			2 or 3

169	Willow Gardens	Church			2 or 3
170	Windermere Road	Church			2 or 3
171	Ashburton Road	Church			2 or 3
172	Linden Road	Church			2 or 3
173	Seaton Gardens	Church			2 or 3
174	Blagdon Road	Church			2 or 3
175	Rushden Drive	Church			2 or 3
176	Staverton Road	Church			2 or 3
177	Hawkchurch Road	Church			2 or 3
178	Salcombe Road	Church			2 or 3
179	Tamarisk Avenue	Church			2 or 3
180	Totnes Road	Church			2 or 3
181	Whitley Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
182	Bourne Avenue	Katesgrove			2 or 3
183	Craddock Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
184	Elgar Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
185	Katesgrove Lane	Katesgrove			2 or 3
186	Mundesley Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
187	Short Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
188	West Hill	Katesgrove			2 or 3
189	Dale Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
190	Dorothy Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
191	Francis Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
192	Glebe Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
193	Hagley Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
194	Henry Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
195	Highgrove Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
196	Home Farm Close	Katesgrove			2 or 3
197	Jubilee Square	Katesgrove			2 or 3
198	Letcombe Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
199	Lincoln Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
200	Milman Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
201	Mount Pleasant Grove	Katesgrove			2 or 3
202	Mount Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
203	Newark Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
204	Rowley Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
205	Shenstone Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
206	Sherman Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
207	Spring Gardens	Katesgrove			2 or 3
208	Spring Grove	Katesgrove			2 or 3
209	Tippett Rise	Katesgrove			2 or 3
210	Upper Crown Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
211	South Street, Reading (London st to Sidmouth St)	Katesgrove			2 or 3
212	Alpine Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3

213	Waterloo Road	Katesgrove			2 or 3
214	Chesterman Street	Katesgrove			2 or 3
215	Christchurch Gardens	Katesgrove/Redlands			2 or 3
216	Larissa Close	Kentwood			2 or 3
217	Kinson Road	Kentwood			2 or 3
218	Brooksby Road	Kentwood			2 or 3
219	Chepstow Road	Kentwood			2 or 3
220	Pottery Road	Kentwood			2 or 3
221	Rissington Close	Kentwood			2 or 3
222	Rockbourne Gardens	Kentwood			2 or 3
223	Ullswater Drive	Kentwood			2 or 3
224	Bramshaw Road	Kentwood			2 or 3
225	Coalport Way	Kentwood			2 or 3
226	Forest Hill	Kentwood			2 or 3
227	Grasmere Avenue	Kentwood			2 or 3
228	Oakham Close	Kentwood			2 or 3
229	Rydal Avenue	Kentwood			2 or 3
230	Weald Rise	Kentwood			2 or 3
231	Scours Lane	Kentwood			2 or 3
232	Pierces Hill	Kentwood / Tilehurst			2 or 3
233	Shepherds Lane	Mapledurham			2 or 3
234	Balliol Road	Mapledurham			2 or 3
235	Blagrove Lane	Mapledurham			2 or 3
236	Hilltop Road	Mapledurham			2 or 3
237	Wincroft Road	Mapledurham			2 or 3
238	Fernbrook Road	Mapledurham			2 or 3
239	Queensborough Drive	Mapledurham			2 or 3
240	Tokers Green Lane	Mapledurham			2 or 3
241	Silverthorne Drive	Mapledurham			2 or 3
242	Highmoor Road	Mapledurham / Thames			2 or 3
243	Gravel Hill	Mapledurham/ Thames			2 or 3
244	Conisboro Avenue	Mapledurham/Thames			2 or 3
245	Benyon Court	Minster			2 or 3
246	Brownlow Road	Minster			2 or 3
247	Epsom Court	Minster			2 or 3
248	Garnet Street	Minster			2 or 3
249	Lower Brook Street	Minster			2 or 3
250	Marlborough Court	Minster			2 or 3
251	St Saviours Road	Minster			2 or 3
252	Swallows Croft	Minster			2 or 3
253	Berkeley Avenue (Service road from 89 - 119)	Minster			2 or 3
254	Carsdale Close	Minster			2 or 3

255	Downshire Square	Minster			2 or 3
256	Holybrook Road	Minster			2 or 3
257	Upavon Drive	Minster			2 or 3
258	Wolseley Street	Minster			2 or 3
259	Berkeley Avenue (Service road from 12 - 22A)	Minster			2 or 3
260	Berkeley Avenue (Service road to St Pauls Court)	Minster			2 or 3
261	Brook Street West	Minster			2 or 3
262	Coley Park Road	Minster			2 or 3
263	Froxfield Avenue	Minster			2 or 3
264	Harrow Court	Minster			2 or 3
265	Janson Court	Minster			2 or 3
266	Kimberley Close	Minster			2 or 3
267	Lima Court	Minster			2 or 3
268	Littlecote Drive	Minster			2 or 3
269	Lower Field Road	Minster			2 or 3
270	Maitland Road	Minster			2 or 3
271	Maldon Close	Minster			2 or 3
272	Mansfield Road	Minster			2 or 3
273	Rembrandt Way	Minster			2 or 3
274	Southcote Road	Minster			2 or 3
275	Tintern Crescent	Minster			2 or 3
276	Trelleck Road	Minster			2 or 3
277	Western Road	Minster			2 or 3
278	Garnet Hill	Minster			2 or 3
279	Portman Way	Minster			2 or 3
280	Coley Avenue	Minster			2 or 3
281	Parkside Road	Minster/Southcote			2 or 3
282	Links Drive	Norcot			2 or 3
283	Mowbray Drive	Norcot			2 or 3
284	Shaftesbury Road	Norcot			2 or 3
285	Upton Road	Norcot			2 or 3
286	St Georges Terrace	Norcot			2 or 3
287	Tern Close	Norcot			2 or 3
288	Fairstead Close	Norcot			2 or 3
289	Tofrek Terrace	Norcot			2 or 3
290	Marcus Close	Norcot			2 or 3
291	Windrush Way	Norcot			2 or 3
292	Combe Road	Norcot			2 or 3
293	Wykeham Road	Park			2 or 3
294	Culver Road	Park			2 or 3
295	Oaklands (part)	Park			2 or 3
296	Woodstock Street	Park			2 or 3
297	Amity Road	Park			2 or 3
298	Cholmeley Place	Park			2 or 3

299	College Road	Park			2 or 3
300	Coventry Road	Park			2 or 3
301	Norton Road	Park			2 or 3
302	Waybrook Crescent	Park			2 or 3
303	Amity Street	Park			2 or 3
304	Amherst Road	Park			2 or 3
305	Liverpool Road	Park			2 or 3
306	Palmer Park Avenue	Park			2 or 3
307	Cholmeley Road	Park			2 or 3
308	Radstock Road	Park			2 or 3
309	Buckingham Drive (service road in front of 51 - 87)	Peppard			2 or 3
310	Buckingham Drive (service road jun Marshland Sq to 49)	Peppard			2 or 3
311	Emmer Green Court	Peppard			2 or 3
312	Grove Cottages	Peppard			2 or 3
313	Woods Road	Peppard			2 or 3
314	Bramber Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
315	Chestnut Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
316	Corfe Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
317	Dacre Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
318	Dunster Close	Peppard			2 or 3
319	Earlsfield Close	Peppard			2 or 3
320	Fraser Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
321	Galsworthy Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
322	Goodrich Close	Peppard			2 or 3
323	Greenleas Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
324	Hertford Close	Peppard			2 or 3
325	Montpelier Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
326	Pendennis Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
327	Pinetree Court	Peppard			2 or 3
328	Rosehill Park	Peppard			2 or 3
329	Tenby Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
330	Yarnton Close	Peppard			2 or 3
331	Abingdon Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
332	Birchwood Close	Peppard			2 or 3
333	Devon Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
334	Elstow Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
335	Eynsford Close	Peppard			2 or 3
336	Farleigh Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
337	Farnham Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
338	Framlingham Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
339	Hadleigh Rise	Peppard			2 or 3
340	Holyrood Close	Peppard			2 or 3
341	Marshland Square	Peppard			2 or 3
342	Ulster Close	Peppard			2 or 3

343	Uppingham Gardens	Peppard			2 or 3
344	Aldeburgh Close	Peppard			2 or 3
345	Barnard Close	Peppard			2 or 3
346	Bellingham Walk	Peppard			2 or 3
347	Blackwater Close	Peppard			2 or 3
348	Burcombe Way	Peppard			2 or 3
349	Chalgrove Way	Peppard			2 or 3
350	Copse Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
351	Courtenay Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
352	Gifford Close	Peppard			2 or 3
353	Harlech Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
354	Ibstone Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
355	Illingworth Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
356	Knights Way	Peppard			2 or 3
357	Littlestead Close	Peppard			2 or 3
358	Lomond Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
359	Lowfield Green	Peppard			2 or 3
360	Lowfield Road	Peppard			2 or 3
361	Micklands Road	Peppard			2 or 3
362	Netley Close	Peppard			2 or 3
363	Queensway	Peppard			2 or 3
364	Ragley Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
365	Rowallan Close	Peppard			2 or 3
366	Spinney Close	Peppard			2 or 3
367	Thetford Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
368	Twin Oaks	Peppard			2 or 3
369	Venetia Close	Peppard			2 or 3
370	Whitby Green	Peppard			2 or 3
371	Aldenham Close	Peppard			2 or 3
372	All Hallows Road	Peppard			2 or 3
373	Carisbrooke Close	Peppard			2 or 3
374	Chatsworth Close	Peppard			2 or 3
375	Fallowfield Close	Peppard			2 or 3
376	Gayhurst Close	Peppard			2 or 3
377	Highbridge Close	Peppard			2 or 3
378	Ilchester Mews	Peppard			2 or 3
379	Jordan Close	Peppard			2 or 3
380	Kendal Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
381	Kirkham Close	Peppard			2 or 3
382	Launceston Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
383	Mallory Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
384	Melford Green	Peppard			2 or 3
385	Northbrook Road	Peppard			2 or 3
386	Odiham Avenue	Peppard			2 or 3
387	Osterley Drive	Peppard			2 or 3
388	Stirling Close	Peppard			2 or 3
389	The Ridings	Peppard			2 or 3

390	Dumbarton Way	Peppard			2 or 3
391	Burnham Rise	Peppard			2 or 3
392	Hawthorne Road	Peppard			2 or 3
393	Kidmore End Road	Peppard			2 or 3
394	St Barnabas Road	Peppard/Thames			2 or 3
395	Alexandra Road	Redlands			2 or 3
396	Granby Gardens	Redlands			2 or 3
397	De Beauvoir Road	Redlands			2 or 3
398	Eldon Square	Redlands			2 or 3
399	Hatherley Road	Redlands			2 or 3
400	Erleigh Road	Redlands			2 or 3
401	Hexham Road	Redlands			2 or 3
402	Junction Road	Redlands			2 or 3
403	Blenheim Gardens	Redlands			2 or 3
404	Cintra Avenue	Redlands			2 or 3
405	Foxhill Road	Redlands			2 or 3
406	Newcastle Road	Redlands			2 or 3
407	Corbridge Road	Redlands			2 or 3
408	Warwick Road	Redlands			2 or 3
409	Elmhurst Road	Redlands / Church			2 or 3
410	Stanhope Road	Redlands / Church			2 or 3
411	Greenwood Road	Southcote			2 or 3
412	Southcote Farm Lane	Southcote			2 or 3
413	Faircross Road	Southcote			2 or 3
414	Kearsley Road	Southcote			2 or 3
415	Barn Close	Southcote			2 or 3
416	Dwyer Road	Southcote			2 or 3
417	Gainsborough Road	Southcote			2 or 3
418	Liebenrood Road	Southcote			2 or 3
419	Pentland Close	Southcote			2 or 3
420	Virginia Way	Southcote			2 or 3
421	Cockney Hill	Southcote/Norcot			2 or 3
422	Raglan Gardens	Thames			2 or 3
423	Valentine Crescent	Thames			2 or 3
424	Eliot Close	Thames			2 or 3
425	Picton Way	Thames			2 or 3
426	St Andrews Road	Thames			2 or 3
427	Banbury Gardens	Thames			2 or 3
428	Cawsam Gardens	Thames			2 or 3
429	Briar Close	Thames			2 or 3
430	Buxton Avenue	Thames			2 or 3
431	Cedarwood Crescent	Thames			2 or 3
432	Ellesmere Close	Thames			2 or 3
433	Kildare Gardens	Thames			2 or 3
434	Lady Jane Court	Thames			2 or 3
435	Matlock Road	Thames			2 or 3
436	Oakley Road	Thames			2 or 3

437	Pembroke Place	Thames			2 or 3
438	Penn Close	Thames			2 or 3
439	The Ridgeway	Thames			2 or 3
440	Valley Close	Thames			2 or 3
441	Woodberry Close	Thames			2 or 3
442	Dovedale Close	Thames			2 or 3
443	Harrogate Road	Thames			2 or 3
444	Longhurst Close	Thames			2 or 3
445	Morecambe Avenue	Thames			2 or 3
446	Orwell Close	Thames			2 or 3
447	St Davids Close	Thames			2 or 3
448	Tyler Close	Thames			2 or 3
449	Uplands Road	Thames			2 or 3
450	Albert Road	Thames			2 or 3
451	Brill Close	Thames			2 or 3
452	Wilwyne Close	Thames			2 or 3
453	Grove Hill	Thames			2 or 3
454	Surley Row	Thames/ Peppard			2 or 3
455	Highdown Hill Road	Thames/ Peppard			2 or 3
456	St Peters Avenue	Thames/Mapledurham			2 or 3
457	Neath Gardens	Tilehurst			2 or 3
458	Recreation Road	Tilehurst			2 or 3
459	The Triangle	Tilehurst			2 or 3
460	Holland Road	Tilehurst			2 or 3
461	Delaney Close	Tilehurst			2 or 3
462	Lower Elmstone Drive	Tilehurst			2 or 3
463	Berkshire Drive	Tilehurst			2 or 3
464	Chieveley Close	Tilehurst			2 or 3
465	Felton Way	Tilehurst			2 or 3
466	Hazelwood Close	Tilehurst			2 or 3
467	Bourton Close	Tilehurst			2 or 3
468	Green Acre Mount	Tilehurst			2 or 3
469	Normanstead Road	Tilehurst			2 or 3
470	Portland Gardens	Tilehurst			2 or 3
471	Prince William Drive	Tilehurst			2 or 3
472	Elvaston Way	Tilehurst/Norcot			2 or 3
473	Acre Road	Whitley			2 or 3
474	Commercial Road	Whitley			2 or 3
475	Darwin Close	Whitley			2 or 3
476	Dawlish Road	Whitley			2 or 3
477	Moreleigh Close	Whitley			2 or 3
478	Shirley Avenue	Whitley			2 or 3
479	Yelverton Road	Whitley			2 or 3
480	Ashmore Road	Whitley			2 or 3
481	Merton Road North	Whitley			2 or 3
482	Merton Road South	Whitley			2 or 3
483	Newlyn Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3

484	Padstow Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
485	Salford Close	Whitley			2 or 3
486	Woodside Way	Whitley			2 or 3
487	Ashby Court	Whitley			2 or 3
488	Brixham Road	Whitley			2 or 3
489	Callington Road	Whitley			2 or 3
490	Chudleigh Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
491	Cooper Close	Whitley			2 or 3
492	Corinne Close	Whitley			2 or 3
493	Denbury Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
494	Durham Close	Whitley			2 or 3
495	Havergate Way	Whitley			2 or 3
496	Heatherdene Close	Whitley			2 or 3
497	Helston Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
498	Kingsbridge Road	Whitley			2 or 3
499	Kingston Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
500	Lamerton Road	Whitley			2 or 3
501	Landrake Crescent	Whitley			2 or 3
502	Longships Way (from Commercial Road to o/s 75)	Whitley			2 or 3
503	Lulworth Road	Whitley			2 or 3
504	Meavy Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
505	Merrivale Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
506	Mortimer Close	Whitley			2 or 3
507	Redruth Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
508	Rushley Way	Whitley			2 or 3
509	Spencer Road	Whitley			2 or 3
510	St Agnes Way	Whitley			2 or 3
511	Stockton Road	Whitley			2 or 3
512	Stratton Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
513	Templeton Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
514	Thurlestone Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
515	Village Close	Whitley			2 or 3
516	Whale Avenue	Whitley			2 or 3
517	Whitstone Gardens	Whitley			2 or 3
518	Woodman Close	Whitley			2 or 3
519	Wrenswood Close	Whitley			2 or 3
520	Bennet Road	Whitley			2 or 3
521	Rossington Place	Whitley			2 or 3
522	Gweal Avenue	Whitley			2 or 3
523	Kybes Lane	Whitley			2 or 3

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Pavements 3 Year Surfacing Programme

2020/21 to 2022/23

APPENDIX 2

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 **Reading**
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No.	Road	Ward	Road Assessment Score	Year
1	Addington Road	Redlands	18	1
2	New Lane Hill	Norcot / Southcote / Tilehurst	18	1
3	Forbury Road	Abbey	17	1
4	Lancaster Close	Redlands	17	1
5	St Peters Avenue	Thames / Mapledurham	17	1
6	Cressingham Road	Church	16	1
7	Hexham Road	Redlands	16	1
8	Spencer Road	Whitley	16	1
9	Stanhope Road	Redlands / Church	16	1
10	Tamarisk Avenue	Church	16	1
11	Torrington Road	Church	16	1
12	Willow Gardens	Church	16	1
13	Dovedale Close	Thames	15	1
14	Hollydale Close	Church	15	1
15	Orts Road	Abbey	15	1
16	Waverley Road	Battle	15	1
17	Windermere Road	Church	15	1
18	Erleigh Road	Redlands	14	1
19	School Terrace	Park	14	1
20	Sutton Walk	Redlands	14	1
21	Venetia Close	Peppard	14	1
22	Western Elms Avenue	Battle	14	1
23	Ambrook Road	Whitley	13	1
24	Bath Road (Castle Hill to Southcote Rd)	Minster	13	1
25	Bourne Avenue	Katesgrove	13	1
26	Brybur Close	Church	13	1
27	Deacon Way	Kentwood	13	1
28	Dulverton Gardens	Church	13	1
29	Foxhays Road (Part 1)	Church	13	1
30	Foxhays Road (Part 2)	Church	13	1
	RESERVE SCHEMES			
31	Heath Road	Park	13	Reserve Y1
32	Highmead Close	Church	13	Reserve Y1
33	Holberton Road	Church	13	Reserve Y1
34	London Road (Kings Road to A4 Bridge)	Abbey / Katesgrove / Park / Redlands	13	Reserve Y1
35	London Road (Kings Road to Eldon Road)	Abbey / Katesgrove / Park / Redlands	13	Reserve Y1
36	London Road (Queens Road to Eldon Road)	Abbey / Katesgrove / Park / Redlands	13	Reserve Y1

37	London Road (Sidmouth Street to London Street)	Abbey / Katesgrove / Park / Redlands	13	Reserve Y1
38	Newcastle Road	Redlands	13	Reserve Y1
39	Picton Way	Thames	13	Reserve Y1
	YEAR 2 & 3 SCHEMES			
40	Pitcroft Avenue	Park	13	2 or 3
41	Scours Lane	Kentwood	13	2 or 3
42	Sheridan Avenue	Thames	13	2 or 3
43	St Andrews Road	Thames	13	2 or 3
44	Wantage Road	Battle / Norcot	13	2 or 3
45	Watlington Street (Queens Rd to Kings Rd)	Abbey	13	2 or 3
46	Westcote Road	Minster	13	2 or 3
47	Woolacombe Drive	Church	13	2 or 3
48	Addington Road	Redlands	12	2 or 3
49	Aldeburgh Close	Peppard	12	2 or 3
50	Alma Street	Battle	12	2 or 3
51	Alpine Street	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
52	Blandford Road	Whitley	12	2 or 3
53	Bridgewater Close	Battle	12	2 or 3
54	Cheddington Close	Southcote	12	2 or 3
55	Cherry Close	Peppard	12	2 or 3
56	Cockney Hill	Southcote / Norcot	12	2 or 3
57	Corbridge Road	Redlands	12	2 or 3
58	Dorset Street	Battle	12	2 or 3
59	Elgar Road South	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
60	Exwick Square	Church	12	2 or 3
61	Fawley Road	Southcote	12	2 or 3
62	Gillette Way	Whitley	12	2 or 3
63	Home Farm Close	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
64	Kendrick Road	Redlands / Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
65	Morlands Avenue	Southcote	12	2 or 3
66	Morpeth Close	Redlands	12	2 or 3
67	Norcot Road	Kentwood / Norcot / Tilehurst	12	2 or 3
68	Norris Road	Park	12	2 or 3
69	Northumberland Avenue (Callington rd to Whitley wood Rd)	Katesgrove / Redlands / Church	12	2 or 3
70	Northumberland Avenue (Christchurch Gdns to Long Barn Lane)	Whitley	12	2 or 3
71	Northumberland Avenue (Longbarn Lane to Callington Rd)	Katesgrove / Redlands / Church	12	2 or 3
72	Norwood Road	Park	12	2 or 3
73	Overdown Road	Kentwood	12	2 or 3

74	Pell Street	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
75	Pepper Lane	Church	12	2 or 3
76	Sackville Street	Abbey	12	2 or 3
77	Shirley Avenue	Whitley	12	2 or 3
78	Southcote Road	Minster	12	2 or 3
79	Stanley Street	Abbey	12	2 or 3
80	Taff Way	Norcot	12	2 or 3
81	Taynton Walk	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
82	Upper Crown Street	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
83	Waterloo Road	Katesgrove	12	2 or 3
84	Wilwyne Close	Thames	12	2 or 3
85	Abingdon Drive	Peppard	11	2 or 3
86	Albert Road	Thames	11	2 or 3
87	Alexandra Road	Redlands	11	2 or 3
88	Barnsdale Road	Church	11	2 or 3
89	Bennet Road	Whitley	11	2 or 3
90	Clarendon Road	Park	11	2 or 3
91	Clayton Walk	Redlands	11	2 or 3
92	Commercial Road	Whitley	11	2 or 3
93	Cornwood Gardens	Church	11	2 or 3
94	Courtenay Drive	Peppard	11	2 or 3
95	Denmark Road	Redlands	11	2 or 3
96	Douglas Road	Caversham	11	2 or 3
97	Downshire Square	Minster	11	2 or 3
98	Elm Road	Church	11	2 or 3
99	Forge Close	Caversham	11	2 or 3
100	Geoffreyson Road	Mapledurham	11	2 or 3
101	Grange Avenue	Park	11	2 or 3
102	Hazelwood Close	Tilehurst	11	2 or 3
103	Hewett Avenue	Mapledurham	11	2 or 3
104	Hewett Close	Mapledurham	11	2 or 3
105	Kelmscott Close	Thames	11	2 or 3
106	Kildare Gardens	Thames	11	2 or 3
107	Kings Meadow Road	Abbey	11	2 or 3
108	Kirkham Close	Peppard	11	2 or 3
109	Knowle Close	Mapledurham	11	2 or 3
110	Longhurst Close	Thames	11	2 or 3
111	Luscombe Close	Caversham	11	2 or 3
112	Maitland Road	Minster	11	2 or 3
113	Matlock Road	Thames	11	2 or 3
114	Oak Tree Road	Kentwood	11	2 or 3
115	Peel Close	Caversham	11	2 or 3
116	Raglan Gardens	Thames	11	2 or 3
117	Rosehill Park	Peppard	11	2 or 3
118	Silverthorne Drive	Mapledurham	11	2 or 3

119	South Street, Reading (Sidmouth st to Watlington St)	Abbey	11	2 or 3
120	Spring Grove	Katesgrove	11	2 or 3
121	St Davids Close	Thames	11	2 or 3
122	The Mount, Reading	Redlands	11	2 or 3
123	Tyler Close	Thames	11	2 or 3
124	Waterman Place	Abbey	11	2 or 3
125	Waybrook Crescent	Park	11	2 or 3
126	Welland Close	Tilehurst	11	2 or 3
127	Wincanton Road	Whitley	11	2 or 3
128	Winton Road	Church	11	2 or 3
129	Acre Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
130	All Hallows Road	Peppard	10	2 or 3
131	Allcroft Road	Redlands	10	2 or 3
132	Arkwright Road	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
133	Ashburton Road	Church	10	2 or 3
134	Ashby Court	Whitley	10	2 or 3
135	Ashmore Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
136	Axbridge Road	Church	10	2 or 3
137	Balliol Road	Mapledurham	10	2 or 3
138	Belle Avenue	Park	10	2 or 3
139	Benyon Court	Minster	10	2 or 3
140	Beresford Road	Battle	10	2 or 3
141	Blenheim Road, Caversham	Thames	10	2 or 3
142	Blyth Walk	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
143	Boulton Road	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
144	Brayford Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
145	Brill Close	Thames	10	2 or 3
146	Brooklyn Drive	Peppard	10	2 or 3
147	Brownlow Road	Minster	10	2 or 3
148	Canterbury Road	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
149	Chagford Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
150	Chalgrove Way	Peppard	10	2 or 3
151	Champion Road	Caversham	10	2 or 3
152	Charles Evans Way	Caversham	10	2 or 3
153	Chelford Way	Thames	10	2 or 3
154	Chepstow Road	Kentwood	10	2 or 3
155	Chiltern Road	Peppard / Thames	10	2 or 3
156	Coley Avenue	Minster	10	2 or 3
157	Corinne Close	Whitley	10	2 or 3
158	Crescent Road	Park / Redlands	10	2 or 3
159	Darell Road	Thames	10	2 or 3
160	Darwin Close	Whitley	10	2 or 3
161	Denbury Gardens	Whitley	10	2 or 3
162	Elstree Close	Kentwood	10	2 or 3

163	Emmer Green Court	Peppard	10	2 or 3
164	Fernbrook Road	Mapledurham	10	2 or 3
165	Francis Street	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
166	Galsworthy Drive	Peppard	10	2 or 3
167	Garrard Street	Abbey	10	2 or 3
168	Green Road	Park	10	2 or 3
169	Hadrian Walk West	Redlands	10	2 or 3
170	Haldane Road	Thames	10	2 or 3
171	Hartland Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
172	Hawkchurch Road	Church	10	2 or 3
173	Hay Road	Minster	10	2 or 3
174	Hemdean Rise	Caversham	10	2 or 3
175	Hill Street	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
176	Hilltop Road	Mapledurham	10	2 or 3
177	Howard Street	Abbey	10	2 or 3
178	Kelvedon Way	Thames	10	2 or 3
179	Kennet Side (Part)	Abbey	10	2 or 3
180	Keston Close	Caversham	10	2 or 3
181	Lamerton Road	Whitley	10	2 or 3
182	Mellor Walk	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
183	Mill Road	Caversham	10	2 or 3
184	Mortimer Close	Whitley	10	2 or 3
185	Norman Road	Thames	10	2 or 3
186	Orwell Close	Thames	10	2 or 3
187	Oxford Road (Prospect st to Wantage rd)	Battle	10	2 or 3
188	Palmer Park Avenue	Park	10	2 or 3
189	Parkhouse Lane	Minster	10	2 or 3
190	Queens Road Reading	Abbey / Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
191	Redlands Road	Redlands	10	2 or 3
192	Richmond Road	Battle	10	2 or 3
193	Richmond Road, Caversham	Mapledurham / Thames	10	2 or 3
194	Romany Close	Kentwood	10	2 or 3
195	Rowley Road	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
196	Russet Glade	Peppard	10	2 or 3
197	Scholars Close	Thames	10	2 or 3
198	Shenstone Road	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
199	Southampton Street	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
200	St Bartholomews Road	Park	10	2 or 3
201	St Edwards Road	Park	10	2 or 3
202	St Saviours Road	Minster	10	2 or 3
203	The Ridgeway	Thames	10	2 or 3
204	Tilehurst Road (Russell to Parkside)	Minster / Battle	10	2 or 3
205	Trafford Road	Abbey	10	2 or 3
206	Upton Road	Norcot	10	2 or 3

207	Whiteknights Road	Park	10	2 or 3
208	Whitley Street	Katesgrove	10	2 or 3
209	Whitley Wood Lane	Whitley	10	2 or 3
210	Wrenfield Drive	Thames	10	2 or 3

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Major Roads 3 Year Surfacing Programme

2020/21 to 2022/23

APPENDIX 3

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	Road name	Section	Ward
1	IDR (A329)	Offslip to Oracle roundabout	Abbey
2	Forbury Road	Northbound from Kings Road to Kenavon Drive	Abbey
3	IDR (A329)	Castle Street offslip (southbound)	Abbey
4	Shinfield Road	Whitley Wood Road to Elm Road	Church
5	Wokingham Road	Holmes Road to Heath Road	Park
6	New Lane Hill	Iris Court to Cockney Hill	Tilehurst/Norcot
7	Oxford Road	Salisbury Road to Beresford Road	Abbey/Battle
8	Erleigh Road	Alexandra Road to Addington Road	Redlands
9	Shinfield Road	Pepper lane to 300m south	Church
10	Bath Road	Wren School to Parkside Road	Minster / Southcote
11	London Road	North side from Eldon Road to Redlands Road	Abbey / Katesgrove / Park / Redlands
12	Kidmore Road	Gravel Hill to Borough Boundary	Thames/Mapledurham
13	Berkeley Avenue	Elgar Road to Sherman Road	Minster
14	Briants Avenue	Full length	Caversham
15	Church End Lane	Neath Gardens to Stanham Road	Tilehurst
16	Lower Elmstone Drive	Lower Elmstone Drive - Pierces Hill to Chapel Hill	Tilehurst
17	The Meadway	Park Grove to Honey End Lane	Norcot
18	Oxford Road	Constitution Road to Elm Lodge Avenue	Norcot / Battle / Kentwood
19	Bedford Road	Northbound from Oxford Road to Chatham Street	Abbey
20	London Road	Cholmley Road to railway bridge	Park
21	Basingstoke Road	Buckland Road to 50m south of Callington Road	Whitley
22	Basingstoke Road	Rose Kiln Lane to Elgar Road South	Katesgrove / Whitley
23	Castle Hill	Coley Hill to Roundabout	Abbey/Minster
24	St Peters Hill	St Annes Road to The Warren	Caversham
25	Bath Road	Berkeley Avenue to Downshire Sq east	Minster
26	Bath Road	Burghfield Road to Hogarth Avenue	Southcote

27	Whitley Wood Lane	From junction with Basingstoke Road for 400m south	Whitley
28	Upper Woodcote Road	South of Crispin Lane to borough boundary	Mapledurham
29	Kidmore Road	Highmore Road to Dellwood Park	Thames
30	Kentwood Hill	Norcot Road to Kentwood Close	Kentwood
31	Caversham Park Road	Lowfield Road for 350m north	Peppard
32	Gosbrook Road	George Street to Mill Lane	Caversham
33	Caversham Park Road	100 m north of Kingsway for 300m south	Peppard
34	New Lane Hill	South of Kendrick Gate to Mandevill Close	Southcote
35	Christchurch Road	Basingstoke Road to Sutherlands Ave	Redlands / Katesgrove
36	Portman Road	Ashmere Terrace for 400m west	Battle
37	Evesham Road	Buckingham Drive to Knights Way east	Peppard
38	Overdown Road	Carlisle Road to Oxford Road roundabout	Kentwood
39	A33	100m north of Island Road for 200m south	Whitley
40	Christchurch Road	Elmhurst Road for 100m east	Church
41	Basingstoke Road	Christchurch Road to Shenstone Road	Katesgrove
42	Prospect Street	Gosbrook Road to Oxford Street	Caversham
43	Lowfield Road	Galsworthy Drive to Caversham Park Road	Peppard
44	Berkeley Avenue	Ashley Road to Portway Close	Minster
45	Berkeley Avenue	Upcross Road to slip road	Minster
46	Woodcote Road	Ilkley Road to Harrogate Road	Mapledurham / Thames
47	Oxford Road	50m east of Carlisle Road for 250m west	Kentwood
48	Woodcote Road	Darrell Road for 150m west	Thames
49	Whitley Wood Road	Hartland Road to Holberton Road	Whitley
50	Peppard Road	Evesham Road to Lowfield Road	Peppard
51	The Meadway	New Lane Hill to Routh Lane	Norcot

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Bridges 3 Year Maintenance Programme

2020/21 to 2022/23

APPENDIX 4

www.reading.gov.uk

 **Reading**
Borough Council
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No	Scheme / Project	Cost Estimate	Cumulative Total
1	Kennetside Retaining Wall Strengthening - Phase 4 (approximately 56m length of river wall west of Silly Bridge)	£ 200,000.00	£ 200,000.00
2	Kings Road Culvert Strengthening (including Abbey Square and Duke Street Culverts) Phase 2	£ 250,000.00	£ 450,000.00
3	Post Tension Special Inspection (PTSI) of Fobney Bridge	£ 25,000.00	£ 475,000.00
4	Bridge Assessment Programme (structural reviews of circa 30no. structures)	£ 15,000.00	£ 490,000.00
5	Kings Meadow Footbridge Repair/Replacement	£ 75,000.00	£ 565,000.00
6	General Management	£ 33,000.00	£ 598,000.00
	RESERVE SCHEMES		
1	Oxford Road Bridge bearing replacement	**	
2	Bearing replacement on 5 other IDR structures	**	
3	Repair/Replacement of Stone Parapet on High Bridge (Grade II listed structure)		
4	Refurbishment of Berkeley Avenue Canal and Railway Bridges	**	
5	Deck Repairs to Orbit Footbridge		
6	Kennetside Retaining Wall strengthening (remaining 0.8km length)		
7	Bridge Assessment Programme (Local Transport Corridor structures including inspection/investigation for structural details and load assessment)		
8	Strengthening works to Local Transport Corridor structures (estimate only - to be confirmed after investigations and load assessments)		
9	Desilting of Culverts (circa 20no.)		
10	Structural Concrete, Brickwork and Metal Repairs to various structures (circa 20no.)		
11	Bearing Replacements on various bridges (circa 5no.)		
12	Parapet Improvements at various locations		
13	Waterproofing & Joint Replacements on various bridges (circa 20no.)		

** Denotes schemes included in current DfT Expression of Interest - Awaiting DfT Announcement

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Highway Maintenance Delivery Update

2019/20

APPENDIX 5

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<u>Major Road Resurfacing:</u>		
No.	Road Name	Section
1	Kiln Road	41 Kiln Rd to 77 Kiln Rd
2	School Road	Chapel Hill to Norcot Road
3	Gun Street/Minster Street	Whole section
4	Dee Road	Tay Rd to Water Rd
5	Burghfield Road	Southcote Lane to Underwood Rd
6	Wokingham Road	Melrose Avenue to Crescent Rd
7	Upper Woodcote Road	Little Woodcote Close to Blagrove Lane
8	Basingstoke Road	Hartland Road to Imperial Way
9	Basingstoke Road	Hartland Road to 50m north of Bennet Rd
10	Caversham Park Road	From Queensway to 300m southbound
11	Henley Road	From Jnc Micklands Road to 282 Henley Road
12	Longbarn Lane **	Basingstoke Road to Northumberland Avenue
13	Southcote Road **	Southcote Farm Lane to Circuit Lane roundabout
14	Southcote Road **	Coronation Square to Virginia Way roundabout
** Denotes funded by DfT Capital Grant of £ 653k (Nov 2018 award)		
<u>Minor Road Surfacing:</u>		
No.	Road Name	Section
1	Deacon Way	Whole Section
2	Gratwicke Road	Whole Section
3	Blenheim Road	Whole Section
4	Collis Street	Whole Section
5	Axebridge Road	Whole Section
6	Inkpen Close	Whole Section
7	Garston Close	Whole Section
8	Whiteknights Road	Sections
<u>Pavement Resurfacing:</u>		
No.	Road Name	
1	Denmark Road Footway	Sections
2	Birdhill Ave Footway	Sections
3	Hillbrow Footway	Sections
4	Spencer Road Footway	Sections
5	Spring Terrance Footway	Sections
6	Templeton Gardens Footway	Sections

	<u>Bridges /Structures :</u>	
No.	Scheme / Project	Notes
1	Kings Road Culvert Strengthening (including Abbey Square and Duke Street Culverts) Phase 2	
2	Planned General Maintenance Various sites	
3	Bridge Assessment Programme (structural reviews of circa 30no. structures)	
4	Kennetside Retaining Wall Strengthening - Phase 3a (approximately 40m length of river wall near Blakes Lock) **	DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
5	Kennetside Retaining Wall Strengthening - Phase 3b (approximately 25.5m length of river wall near Blakes Lock) **	Part DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
6	Abbey Square Culvert Strengthening **	DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
7	Hills Meadow Culvert Desilting **	DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
8	Hill Meadow Culvert Strengthening **	DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
9	Armour Hill Solution Feature Stabilisation and Surface Water Sewer Replacement **	Part DfT Funded (£653k Nov 2018 Award)
10	Bridge Assessment Programme	
	** Denotes funded by DfT Capital Grant of £ 653k (Nov 2018 award)	

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	ADOPTION OF THE CASTLE HILL/RUSSELL STREET/OXFORD ROAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	ABBEY, BATTLE AND MINSTER
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) was set up, partly to bring the conservation area appraisals across Reading up to date, as it has been some time until most of these appraisals have been prepared. It was agreed that the CAAC would lead on reviews of conservation area appraisals in consultation with local communities.
- 1.2 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee in November 2019 approved a draft Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal for public consultation, which included proposed extensions to the conservation area. Consultation was held between November 2019 and February 2020, and a final version taking account of responses received is now proposed for adoption.
- 1.3 In addition, changes to the Terms of Reference for the CAAC, which are necessary for its operation, are also proposed for approval.
- 1.4 Appendices:
 - Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment Scoping
 - Appendix 2: Statement of Consultation
 - Appendix 3: Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal
 - Appendix 4: Amended Terms of Reference for the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (Tracked Changes Version)

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the results of the consultation on the Draft Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal, undertaken between December 2019 and February 2020, as set out in the Consultation Statement at Appendix 2, be noted.
- 2.2 That the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 3) be adopted.
- 2.3 That the amended Terms of Reference for the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (Appendix 4) be agreed.
- 2.4 That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to agree any further amendments necessary to the Terms of Reference for the Conservation Area Advisory Committee in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework impose a duty on local planning authorities to review their existing conservation areas and designate as conservation areas any 'special areas of architectural or historic interest'.
- 3.2 Although not required by law, Historic England recommends that Conservation Area Appraisals are reviewed and updated regularly, every five to ten years. Conservation Area Appraisals are material considerations in the determination of relevant planning applications, and can form a key piece of evidence for the preparation of planning policy.
- 3.3 The new Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, contains a much strengthened section on heritage. Policy EN3 of the Local Plan contains priorities for enhancement of conservation areas, which broadly align with many of the enhancement priorities that arise in Conservation Area Appraisals, and make clear that adopted appraisals will be a material consideration in dealing with planning applications.

4. THE PROPOSAL

(a) Current Position

- 4.1 The most recent conservation area appraisal for the Russell Street/Castle Hill area was prepared and adopted in 2004, and a review of the appraisal was required.

- 4.2 A review and updated appraisal was carried out through a community-led project by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) in conjunction with the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA), with assistance from RBC planning officers, officers of Historic England and interested local community representatives. The appraisal recommended extensions to the conservation area to take in areas around parts of Oxford Road, Prospect Street, Anstey Road, Body Road, Coley Place and Mansfield Road. A map showing the extensions is within the appraisal itself, in Appendix 3. Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee approved the Draft Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal for consultation on 20th November 2019.
- 4.3 Consultation was undertaken between 13th December 2019 and 7th February 2020, a total of eight weeks. The Draft Appraisal was placed on the Council's website, and all of the contacts on the Council's planning consultation list were written to advising them of the consultation. The document was made available in Central and Battle libraries and the Civic Offices. In addition, the Council wrote to all addresses within or adjoining the proposed extension to the conservation area.
- 4.4 A total of 11 written responses were received, although four of these were from general consultee bodies to state that there were no comments. The main points raised are summarised below.
- Some respondents, including Historic England and the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association, welcomed the appraisal, including the amount of work that had been undertaken in preparing it.
 - A suggestion for an amendment to include the northern end of Lorne Street was made, whilst another respondent noted opportunities for extensions without specifying them.
 - The Conservation Area Advisory Committee made a number of detailed comments on the wording.
 - Specific suggestions were made for enhancements, including relating to lampposts, litter bins, pavements and the layout of the highway.
 - One response objected to the extension to the conservation area, arguing that it would make it more difficult to respond to the climate emergency, and also that parts of the extended area did not merit conservation area status.
 - One response considered that the document was too lengthy and was in need of an executive summary.
- 4.5 A full Statement of Consultation, detailing the consultation measures and the responses received, is included as Appendix 2. Proposed Council responses to each representation are also included within the Statement of Consultation.

(b) Option Proposed

4.6 Committee is recommended to adopt the revised version of the Conservation Area Appraisal as attached at Appendix 3.

4.7 The main changes that have been made to the Appraisal compared to the version that was consulted upon are detailed wording changes. The Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2 highlights the changes that have been made in response to the comments.

4.8 Adoption of the Appraisal will result in the recommended extensions to the conservation area being confirmed. This will have implications for the operation of planning powers in the area, as it will alter the permitted development rights that will apply. The Appraisal will also be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area. The recommendation of the Appraisal is also that the name of the conservation area be changed to the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

4.9 On 5th April 2016, this Committee endorsed the establishment of a Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC), including a draft framework for its constitution (Minute 36 refers), which have until now served as the Committee's Terms of Reference.

4.10 The CAAC has now identified the need for changes to the Terms of Reference. The proposed Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix 4, in a tracked changes format from those agreed in April 2016.

4.11 The main changes can be summarised as follows:

- Inclusion of aims to stay abreast of national policy, advice and best practice, and around means of communication with the public and CAAC members;
- Addition of a specific planning and policy liaison officer, and definitions of the names roles within the Terms;
- Changes to enable temporary members to be co-opted, sub-groups to be formed, and those interested in Committee membership to apply;
- Introduction of a procedure to agree comments on planning applications outside Committee meetings;
- Introduction of the ability to request ward Councillors or the heritage champion to call a planning application into Planning Applications Committee;
- Inclusion of an introductory summary paragraph; and
- Various detailed wording changes for clarification.

4.12 As the Terms of Reference were originally set by this Committee, this report recommends that the proposed changes be agreed. However, it

was not originally anticipated that changes would need to be agreed by this Committee each and every time, and the report therefore recommends delegating agreement of changes to the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport.

(c) Other Options Considered

- 4.13 The main alternative option to the proposed option is to not adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 4.14 Not adopting the Appraisal will mean continued reliance on an Appraisal from 2004 which is now out-of-date. This will have implications for planning decisions within the area. It will also fail to implement the actions necessary to remove the conservation area from the at-risk register, and would potentially affect the award of High Street Heritage Action Zone funding that the Council has secured for part of this, and other, conservation areas.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Adoption of an updated appraisal and boundary extension will contribute to achieving the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan through the protection and management of heritage assets that will contribute to 'Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active' and 'Providing infrastructure to support the economy'. This updated appraisal with amended boundaries would ensure that the historical and architectural character is preserved and enhanced. It would also ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area and that development would not have a detrimental and therefore unsustainable impact.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Extending the conservation area, and providing an updated appraisal, will give further protection to the trees within the area, which play an important role in terms of air quality and adapting to climate change.
- 6.2 Extending the conservation area would increase the number of properties to which conservation area restrictions apply. Certain permitted development rights which apply elsewhere do not apply in conservation areas, and in some cases there may therefore be additional obstacles for property owners in adapting their properties, for instance in fitting solar panels or replacing windows. A balance will need to be struck in dealing with resulting applications in conservation areas to ensure that the climate priorities of the Council are met in a way that does not compromise the heritage priorities.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Council's consultation process for planning policy, as set out in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, adopted March 2014), is that the widest and most intensive community involvement should take place at the earliest possible stage, to allow the community a genuine chance to influence the document. Although the SCI deals mainly with development plan documents, the general principles are useful for documents such as a Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 7.2 Community involvement exercises have been undertaken by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee as part of undertaking the review. Details of community involvement and the consultations in 2016 and 2017 are set out in page 16 of the appraisal document. These included:
- A guided walk and visual audit of the CA in March 2016, during which attendees were able to ask questions and give feedback for the review;
 - An additional walk in March 2017 and Q&A;
 - An online survey during April and May 2017, during which residents and landowners in the area were asked for input; and
 - Local landlords being written to.
- 7.3 A formal consultation led by the Council began on 13th December 2019 and lasted for a period of eight weeks (to allow for the Christmas period) until 7th February 2020. The draft Conservation Area Appraisal was made available online and in Central and Battle libraries. The Council wrote to all of those on the planning consultation list advising them of the consultation. The Council also sent letters to every property within the proposed extensions, as well as to any adjoining property that was not already within the conservation area. This exceeded the minimum legal consultation requirements.
- 7.4 Responses received have been taken into account in considering changes to the appraisal. These are summarised in the Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2, along with a proposed Council response to each.

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 It is not expected that there will be any significant adverse impacts on specific groups due to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief. An equality scoping assessment is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed extensions to the conservation area, once agreed, will benefit from the controls set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The legislation would control the

demolition of buildings as well as ensure a closer control over new development in the area.

9.2 The following would apply:

- (a) In the exercise of planning powers the Secretary of State and planning authorities are under a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the area;
- (b) the demolition of buildings within the conservation area now requires planning permission;
- (c) “Permitted Development” rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas, and Article 4 Directions restricting “permitted development” rights in Conservation Areas do not (as is the case elsewhere) have to be referred to the Secretary of State for consent;
- (d) more controls exist in relation to works to any trees, not necessarily just TPO trees;
- (e) more exacting standards of advertisement control should be applied to advertisements in the Conservation Area, so long as the authorities are sensitive to the needs of businesses within the Conservation Area;
- (f) development proposals within conservation areas should either make a positive contribution to the preservation of the character or appearance of the area, or leave the character or appearance unharmed.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Existing budgets have been sufficient for the publication of the final documents and to notify occupiers affected.
- 10.2 There are no financial implications relating to changes to the Terms of Reference of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Value for Money (VFM)

- 10.3 The preparation of an updated appraisal will ensure that developments are appropriate to the area, that significant effects are mitigated and that there are no harmful effects to the historic environment within the Conservation Area. Production of an updated appraisal is in line with best practice, therefore represents good value for money.

Risk Assessment

- 10.4 There are no direct financial risks associated with the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal

Directorate: Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Team Leader

Date of assessment: 08/02/19

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To update the existing Russell St/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The Council will benefit from having an up to date appraisal for use as a material consideration in planning decisions. Stakeholders, including members of the public and the development industry, will benefit from more certainty.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

Adoption of an updated appraisal and boundary extension will contribute to the protection and management of heritage assets.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Developers/landowners, the public and community groups. All parties want an updated appraisal so as to best protect and enhance the historic environment in the area.

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than

others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because the updated appraisal is not expected to have equality impacts on particular groups. The document simply updates details regarding the historic environment in this particular

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 8 th February 2020
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 8 th February 2020

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: DRAFT PLAN AND GRAZELEY UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	MARK WORRINGHAM	TEL:	0118 9373337
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Wokingham Borough Council is consulting on the next stage of preparing its Local Plan. This stage is a full draft plan. Consultation will last until 20th March. The plan sets out planning policies and identifies land for development up to 2036, and there are a number of implications for Reading. This report recommends that a draft response on behalf of Reading Borough Council be approved.
- 1.2 By far the most significant new site in the draft Local Plan is at Grazeley, just to the south of Reading. This proposal is for a development of 15,000 new homes, of which 10,000 would be in Wokingham and 5,000 in West Berkshire. Reading Borough Council has been working closely with its neighbours on taking this proposal forward and ensuring that any development is accompanied by timely delivery of the very significant infrastructure required. This report provides an update on the progress of this joint working so far.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the consultation response to the Wokingham Local Plan Update: Draft Plan (Appendix 1) be approved.

2.2 That Committee note the current position on Grazeley Garden Town.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Wokingham Borough Council's existing development plan is set out in its Core Strategy (adopted 2010) and Managing Development Delivery document (adopted 2014), which both have an end date of 2026. In common with other authorities in the area, there is a need for a new local plan for Wokingham to take account of changing national policy and ensure that there is an up-to-date policy position.
- 3.2 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) consulted on an Issues and Options report for a new Local Plan in 2016, and then undertook a Homes for the Future consultation in 2018/19. Reading Borough Council responded to the latter consultation in February 2019.
- 3.3 The Grazeley Garden Town proposal is a site which, along with all other nominated sites, was subject to consultation in the Homes for the Future document. It forms an opportunity for a very significant new community that can help to meet housing needs over a long-term period. The area crosses administrative boundaries, falling primarily in Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire District, but there is also a very small area in Reading Borough, south west of Junction 11 of the M4.
- 3.4 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019, and this identifies the potential for a major development at Grazeley, and the need for this to be supported by significant investment in infrastructure, particularly transport links into Reading. It also identifies the small area of land within the Borough for uses associated with Grazeley.
- 3.5 Progress on the West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) Local Plan, which would need to cover the other portion of Grazeley, is somewhat behind Wokingham. A West Berkshire Local Plan Review Regulation 18 consultation took place in November and December 2018. The next consultation stage was timetabled for September 2019, but this has slipped, and a new programme has not yet been published.

4. THE PROPOSAL

(a) Current Position

Wokingham Local Plan

- 4.1 WBC published a Local Plan Update: Draft Plan for consultation, which began on 3rd February. The document is a full draft plan containing policies and site allocations. It is an initial draft, as the process requires a further draft, the Proposed Submission Draft that WBC intends to submit to the Secretary of State, at a later date.

- 4.2 The headlines of the Draft Plan with relevance to Reading are as follows:
- 769 homes each year to 2036;
 - Much more limited levels of employment and town centre development, to meet largely local needs;
 - Identification of Grazeley Garden Town for 10,000 homes in Wokingham Borough and 15,000 homes overall;
 - Continuation of the current Strategic Development Locations (south of the M4, Arborfield Garrison, South Wokingham and North Wokingham);
 - Other identified sites are much smaller scale and are generally more distant from Reading;
 - An improvement in sustainability standards, including carbon neutral standards for major housing development;
 - Safeguarding of important transport routes, including an additional crossing of the Thames and public transport provision on the A4/A329 corridor;
 - A policy for development on the University's Whiteknights Campus, which is similar, but not identical, to the Reading Local Plan policy;
 - Policies securing affordable housing at differing levels depending on scale and location from developments of five dwellings or more;
 - Policies on gypsy and traveller provision, including some identified sites around Finchampstead and Barkham, and with potential for inclusion within Grazeley;
 - A policy on development within the vicinity of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Burghfield.

- 4.3 Consultation on the Draft Local Plan Update will last until 20th March. The document is available on WBC's website¹, along with a variety of supporting evidence.

Grazeley Garden Town

- 4.4 The Grazeley Garden Town proposal, the WBC portion of which is contained as a proposed allocation within the Draft Plan, is a large potential new settlement to the south of Reading, south of the M4, west of the A33 and straddling the Reading-Basingstoke railway line. The site sits mainly in Wokingham and West Berkshire, although a very small part of the site (around 3.8 ha) is within Reading. Potential for 15,000 homes has been identified, around 10,000 of which would be in Wokingham and 5,000 in West Berkshire. There are four primary landowner interests: the Englefield Estate (working with Crest Nicholson); a joint venture between Hallam Land Management and Wilson Enterprises; WBDC; and WBC. In addition, there are a number of much smaller landowners.
- 4.5 The site has considerable potential for a sustainable development to meet many of the housing needs in the area. Its location immediately to the south of Reading enables strong transport links to be created into Reading, and there is potential for the development to be served by a new station.

¹ <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/local-plan-update/>

- 4.6 RBC has played an active and supportive role within the proposals for Grazeley so far. Whilst the housing needs that the development would meet would mainly be those of Wokingham and West Berkshire, the development nevertheless has potential to deliver a great deal of family housing, which Reading struggles to achieve on high-density town centre sites, although a wide range of homes would be provided to ensure a sustainable settlement, as well as a significant amount of affordable housing. RBC's support to date has, however, been entirely contingent on the timely delivery of the very significant infrastructure required by the development, in particular public transport links into Reading.
- 4.7 Although there have been development proposals in the area in the past, the current proposals first emerged in 2014, when a site was submitted to RBC's call for sites for the Local Plan (although it was subsequently withdrawn as it was outside the Borough). A joint Expression of Interest by WBC, WBDC and RBC was submitted in October 2016 to the Garden Village Prospectus. In March 2017, the authorities secured £224,000 of large sites capacity funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England), which was used for masterplanning work, which in turn was used for stakeholder engagement feeding into Wokingham's local plan process.
- 4.8 The four authorities in the west of Berkshire (WBDC, RBC, WBC and Bracknell Forest Borough Council), together with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, collaborated on a West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework, which was published in December 2016. This was a non-statutory document to investigate possible future options for growth in the area. The potential for around 15,000 homes in Grazeley was identified as an option for further exploration in that document.
- 4.9 In November 2018, WBC, WBDC and RBC submitted a joint bid to the government's Garden Communities Prospectus for Grazeley to be awarded Garden Town status and capacity funding to help to deliver 15,000 homes. The bid was supported by the main landowners. The bid was successful, and, in May 2019, the authorities were awarded £750,000 for 2019-20, with the funding for additional years yet to be determined.
- 4.10 The three authorities also co-operated on a much larger bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) for £252 million for forward funding of infrastructure to support a development of 15,000 homes. Stage 2 of this bid, the detailed business case, was submitted in March 2019. The particular infrastructure items covered by that bid were as follows:
- 8km of site contained strategic roads;
 - New M4 Bridge providing a direct link from Grazeley to Green Park and its railway station with provision for public transport, walking and cycling only;
 - Three new A33 accesses;
 - M4 Junction 11 Improvements;
 - Two new east-west railway crossings;

- A Fast Track Route, which is a public transport solution for moving within the site, to Reading Town Centre linking to the South Reading Fast Track Public Transport scheme, Mortimer and beyond;
 - Other transport measure including a 500 space town centre car park, park and ride infrastructure, a new bridge over the Kennet and Avon canal and bus service and bus stop infrastructure contributions;
 - A 2 form entry primary school;
 - Health Hub (first phase);
 - Enhancement and extension of electric and gas infrastructure;
 - Infrastructure for potable and foul water; and
 - Technical studies and planning application preparation.
- 4.11 The items that could be covered by the HIF bid were limited to those that could be delivered by April 2024. Therefore, not all essential infrastructure was part of that bid, in particular the provision of a new railway station, as it could not be delivered within that timescale. However, as the development builds out, considerable funding would be generated through the Community Infrastructure Levy, which would be sufficient to provide the remaining infrastructure including the station and a series of new primary and secondary schools.
- 4.12 At this stage, there has been no government announcement about the bid. Some successful HIF bids elsewhere have been announced, but the lack of an announcement about Grazeley so far does not mean that it has been unsuccessful.
- 4.13 In terms of governance, a Grazeley Joint Delivery Board (GJDB) has been established, and first met in September 2019. This comprises three Councillors from WBC, two from WBDC and one from RBC, and meets on a bi-monthly basis. At this stage, the GJDB operates mainly as a steering body, but work is underway to consider how this group evolves, including whether some statutory powers can be delegated by the three authorities. This may include plan-making and planning decision-making powers, compulsory purchase and spending. Any delegation of functions will need to be agreed by the relevant Council meetings in due course.
- 4.14 An Expression of Interest was also submitted in February 2020 on behalf of the three authorities under the New Development Corporation Competition. Under this competition, a total of £10 million is available to be divided between up to ten successful bidders for capacity funding to investigate the establishment of a Development Corporation or alternative delivery model. Should the authorities decide to establish a more formal delivery vehicle, this will take some time to be set up, and in the meantime the GJDB will continue to direct the process, potentially with some delegated powers.
- 4.15 The capacity funding referred to in paragraph 4.9 is mainly to be used for staffing and for commissioning work. A dedicated project team is in the process of being assembled and recruited. Although WBC has led this process so far, the team would report directly to the GJDB. This team will include a

transport officer with particular emphasis on ensuring that the development ties up with Reading's existing and developing transport system.

- 4.16 Ahead of an announcement on HIF funding, there are limitations on the work that can be undertaken. However, some work is underway in particular on two areas. Firstly, work is starting on masterplanning for the Grazeley proposal. Some masterplanning work had already been undertaken to support the various bids for funding and to feed into the local plan process. However, the work starting now is ultimately intended to lead to the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to inform and guide planning applications for the site. This would be a joint planning policy document, adopted by all three of the authorities. Secondly, work has been commissioned on developing a brand for Grazeley, including a website and engagement strategy.
- 4.17 Should there be a positive announcement on HIF, there would need to be swift delivery of infrastructure to meet the HIF deadlines. It is therefore expected that there would be considerable activity on these matters once an announcement is made.

(b) Option Proposed

Wokingham Local Plan

- 4.18 A draft RBC response to the Draft Local Plan Update consultation has been prepared and is included as Appendix 2, and would be submitted to WBC before the consultation deadline of 20th March.
- 4.19 The six areas of greatest importance for RBC to respond to are as follows:
- Overall housing provision;
 - Grazeley Garden Town;
 - Strategic transport infrastructure;
 - University of Reading Whiteknights Campus;
 - Housing mix and affordability;
 - Gypsy and traveller provision.
- 4.20 The first issue for any Local Plan to address is housing need. Policy H1 of the Draft Plan states that WBC is planning for 769 homes each year up to 2036. This is short of the number of homes that would be expected in accordance with the standard methodology for calculating housing need in national policy, which would currently total 804 homes each year. WBC sets out a case why it is considered that its housing need should be lower, specifically that the nationally-calculated affordability ratio that feeds into the methodology does not take account of certain key local factors. However, when calculating the homes actually provided for in the plan, it equates to 933 each year. WBC is in fact proposing to deliver considerably more than the plan's housing provision policy suggests. This results in unnecessary confusion, and RBC's proposed comments pick up on this.

- 4.21 The comments on Grazeley Garden Town are generally supportive, although they restate the position emphasised throughout joint work on this issue, which is that RBC's support is dependent on securing the necessary infrastructure in a timely manner.
- 4.22 In terms of strategic transport infrastructure, the measures are generally welcomed, although some clarification is requested in the response, as well as a clearer statement of policy support for the strategic schemes.
- 4.23 The policy on Whiteknights Campus is ostensibly very similar to the policy in our own Local Plan. However, there are some small changes to wording that actually have very significant implications. Firstly, the policy explicitly references the University's Accommodation Strategy and Campus Capacity Study, which were submitted to RBC's Local Plan Examination and generated significant concern due to the ambitious and unevidenced growth proposals. As drafted, WBC's policy would give these documents some level of policy weight. Secondly, the policy omits the safeguards around ensuring that proposals for new academic floorspace are accompanied by supporting student accommodation. RBC's response suggests amendments to address these matters.
- 4.24 In general, the proposals to provide high levels of affordable housing and to provide an overall mix of sizes of market housing are to be welcomed. However, it is worth making the point to WBC that RBC's housing provision will be necessarily focused on smaller, flatted accommodation due to the type of site available, and that there is therefore a strategic role for adjoining authorities such as WBC to include significant proportions of family housing to help to address this.
- 4.25 Finally, there is a proposed criteria-based policy on gypsy and traveller sites, three identified sites for permanent pitches as well as the possibility of some delivery as part of Grazeley Garden Town. However, there is no explicit attempt to meet RBC's unmet need for permanent gypsy and traveller provision, and the comments therefore re-emphasise the need to consider whether provision can be made for Reading's unmet need as well as RBC's willingness to work together to deliver a site that meets needs jointly.
- 4.26 A variety of other, more detailed points are covered in the proposed response.

Grazeley Garden Town

- 4.27 It is recommended that Committee notes the progress made on Grazeley Garden Town set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.17.

(c) Other Options Considered

- 4.28 The alternative option to making a response to the Draft Local Plan Update consultation would be to not make a response. However, this would mean that some key issues of importance for Reading are not addressed, and would lead to a number of potential impacts on the Borough, some of which would be significantly adverse.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Continued engagement in Wokingham's Local Plan Update and in the proposals at Grazeley Garden Town will contribute to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-21:
- Securing the economic success of Reading; and
 - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. Policies in the Draft Plan seek to address this issue. In terms of sustainable construction, standards are proposed to increase for all development, and the plan includes a requirement for major new residential development to be 'carbon neutral' (policy SS8). This will bring WBC's standards into line with those in the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.2 The Grazeley Garden Town proposal has the potential to be a highly sustainable community, based on significant investment in public transport (including a railway station), walking and cycling, and with sustainable design and construction measures built in from the outset. The alternative is likely to mean development taking place in locations where they can be less well supported by infrastructure, and where there is less critical mass to enable a sustainable community. However, whether this is achieved at Grazeley is dependent on the right infrastructure being delivered at the right time. RBC continues to be involved throughout the process to ensure that, if this development takes place, that the required infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Consultation on the Wokingham Local Plan Update began on 3rd February and will last until 20th March 2020. The responses to this consultation will feed into the next stage of the Local Plan, which is expected to be a Proposed Submission Draft for consultation. Consultation on development plans is required to be in accordance with the authority's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Wokingham's SCI was adopted in March 2019.
- 7.2 Consultation on the Grazeley Garden Town proposal will initially take place through the respective Local Plans. As well as this current Wokingham Local Plan Update consultation, this will also mean through consultations on West Berkshire's Local Plan, which has not yet been published in draft form. It is proposed that a Masterplan SPD also be produced, which would be adopted by all three authorities, including RBC. Consultation on that document is not yet timetabled but would need to be in accordance with Reading's adopted SCI (2014).

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Wokingham Borough Council has completed an Initial Equality Impact Assessment for the Draft Plan, which is available on WBC's website.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Local plans are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The process for producing local plans is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 states that a local planning authority should consult on what a local plan should contain. The Wokingham Local Plan Update: Draft Plan is prepared in accordance with this Regulation 18 requirement.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The response to the Wokingham Local Plan Update consultation has been managed from existing budgets.
- 10.2 The Grazeley Garden Town proposal has been the subject of two bids for government funding on behalf of the three authorities. The first bid was to the Garden Settlement Prospectus for capacity funding to enable work on developing the proposal. This bid was successful, and £750,000 was awarded in May 2019 for the 2019/20 year, which has been used for background work and studies as well as to start to assemble a dedicated team. Money awarded in following years will be subject to further announcements.
- 10.3 The three authorities also submitted a bid in March 2019 for £252 million under the Housing Infrastructure Fund. This would enable forward funding of key pieces of infrastructure to support the development, including transport and engineering schemes, education and healthcare facilities. No announcement has yet been made, but the authorities are liaising closely with Homes England on the proposal. Whilst not all of the infrastructure would be funded by this money (if successful), the bid would cover the essential items required at an early stage. Subsequent infrastructure funding would come from developer contributions primarily under the Community Infrastructure Levy as the development progresses.

Value for Money (VFM)

- 10.4 The proposal for much of the development in the area to take place in one development, at Grazeley Garden Town, offers particular value for money as it enables much of the infrastructure necessary to support growth to be delivered at the same time and in a co-ordinated manner, rather than being distributed around different parts of the area. In particular, it has allowed for the bid to be made for HIF funding where it can be demonstrated that it delivers significant housing growth.

Risk Assessment

10.5 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Wokingham Local Plan Update: Draft Plan:
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=508528>
- Wokingham Local Plan Update evidence base:
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/draft-local-plan-consultation/>

APPENDIX 1: Wokingham Draft Local Plan Update Draft response from Reading Borough Council

Reading Borough Council (RBC) is grateful for the opportunity to make representations on the Wokingham Draft Local Plan Update. RBC works closely with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on a range of strategic planning matters and looks forward to continuing this process throughout the Local Plan Update process. We welcome the progress that has been made on the Local Plan Update.

As WBC will be aware, the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) was adopted on 4th November 2019, and this provides important context to many of RBC's representations on the Local Plan Update.

RBC wishes to make the following comments on specific policies in the plan.

Policy SS1 - Spatial Strategy

Policy SS1 is an overall spatial strategy policy that draws together many of the strategic elements of the plan. RBC's comments on most of these issues are contained in our response to the relevant policy, e.g. SS3, H1 and H5.

However, there are some specific comments we would like to make.

Firstly, policy SS1 includes the following reference

“Large scale development will not be supported in the wider area around Grazeley garden town to avoid the over-concentration of development.”

We would seek some clarification around this reference. We understand that the identification of Grazeley should not be seen as a blank cheque for further development beyond that highlighted in policy SS3, but as currently worded it might prevent sustainable development taking place on the edge of Reading that is supported by adequate infrastructure provision. There may be circumstances where this is appropriate, and RBC therefore considers that this statement should be caveated accordingly.

Secondly, in the supporting text, paragraph 4.9 (in reference to Grazeley) says that:

“A successful outcome will enable the upfront delivery of a wide package of infrastructure including measures designed to mitigate traffic effects.”

We would suggest altering the emphasis to say that *“a successful outcome depends on the upfront delivery ...”*

Policy SS3 - Grazeley Garden Town

RBC supports the identification of Grazeley Garden Town in policy SS3. This is a highly sustainable location to help meet some of the area's substantial needs for additional homes. As WBC will be aware, RBC's support is dependent on adequate

and timely delivery of the necessary infrastructure to support the development and ensure that it does not impact on existing infrastructure. RBC is therefore pleased to see upfront recognition in the first paragraph of the policy of the importance of the necessity of this infrastructure provision, as well as the itemised list of vital upfront infrastructure in the table at the end of the policy, and the references to delivering infrastructure throughout the policy. RBC want to ensure that these references remain as part of the policy in the final version of the plan.

A small part (around 3.8 ha) of the Grazeley site falls within Reading Borough, and the RBLP identifies this land as SR4f (Land south west of Junction 11 of the M4) for:

“... uses associated with any major development around Grazeley if identified in plans of Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council. The form of any development, if identified, is yet to be determined and therefore no further details are set out in this policy.”

References to essential joint working between the three authorities are contained throughout policy SS3, and RBC can confirm its continued commitment to this joint working. This includes joint working around the issues that would arise as a result of any changes in the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone, as well as to masterplanning, leading to the production of a Masterplan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan SPD to be adopted by all three authorities.

RBC supports the specific development principles highlighted, in particular the reference in (i) to sustainable transport links into Reading. This will be essential to make sure that the development does not place an unacceptable burden on the existing transport network.

RBC welcomes the references in the policy to the potential for provision for gypsies and travellers. The establishment of an entirely new settlement represents a unique opportunity to consider the provision for travellers from the outset as part of the settlement, and to address the relationship with homes for the settled community as part of the design. As WBC will be aware, RBC has an unmet need for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches (see the comment on policy H11), and would like to explore what can be delivered at Grazeley to meet needs across the area. As stated in reference to that policy, RBC would be happy to discuss what resources would be required to help in meeting these needs.

Policy SS5: South of the M4 Strategic Development Location

RBC supports the continued emphasis on Strategic Development Locations, including the South of the M4 SDL, in line with the existing Core Strategy, and supported by adequate levels of infrastructure provision to ensure that impacts on Reading's infrastructure is adequately mitigated.

Policy SS8: Climate Change

RBC declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019, and the RBLP improves sustainability standards across the board to ensure that new development plays its

role in addressing this. In particular, policies require Zero Carbon Homes for new development. RBC welcomes policy SS8, which has similar expectations for Wokingham, and ensures a broadly level playing field for development across the two authorities.

RBC does, however, consider that the Local Plan could benefit from being clearer on how 'Carbon Neutral' development will be achieved for major residential. Ensuring that the Local Plan is as clear as possible will reduce opportunities to water down the approach at application stage. Having recently adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design and Construction to implement the Local Plan policies, RBC is happy to discuss this matter further with WBC, in particular whether there are opportunities to work together on carbon offsetting.

Point (g) seems to contain an error, in that it advocates measures to reduce the energy efficiency of new buildings. It is assumed that this should say increase.

Policy SS9: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy SS9 on adaptation to climate change contains wording which is very much in line with RBLP policy CC3. RBC therefore welcomes this policy.

Policy SS11: Safeguarded Routes

Policy SS11 safeguards land for key transport schemes, as shown on the Proposals Map. There are three routes identified in the policy which RBC particularly supports, as follows:

- (c) High quality express bus services or dedicated public transport route along the A4 and A329 corridors. This project is dependent on Reading Borough Council's 'Cross-town Link'
- (d) iv. Improvements to highway capacity along the A33
- (e) Third Thames Crossing from Thames Valley Park Drive/A3290 to South Oxfordshire.

RBC strongly supports reference to high quality express bus services or dedicated public transport route along the A4 and A329 corridors. As you will be aware, two recent planning applications by RBC for a link to meet these vital policy ambitions from both authorities, using the alignment shown in both RBC and WBC's existing plans, have recently been refused by WBC's Planning Committee, against officer recommendation. RBC therefore considers it essential that the Wokingham Local Plan is more specific about how and where it expects this link to be delivered, so that it is clearer how any future applications sit with WBC's planning policy. It should also be noted that 'Cross-town Link' is not an expression which is used or supported by RBC, with RBC's aspirations to work with Wokingham to provide high-quality sustainable transport options being referred to as East Reading Fast Track Public Transport corridor. It is important to recognise that this link is of importance to both authorities, and the policy should not therefore imply that it is solely a link that services Reading but rather a fundamental element to a wider

public transport corridor serving Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell as well as Rail-air services to Heathrow and Gatwick.

RBC also continues to fully support the Third Thames Crossing proposal, and will continue to work with WBC, as well as South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnerships through the Cross-Thames Travel Group to ensure that this vital piece of strategic infrastructure is delivered.

It is worth noting that, whilst the wording of the policy safeguards the land from other uses, there is not any explicit policy support for the proposals themselves within the policy wording, although it is implied. Policy SS12, which identifies other transport improvements, does include such a statement, and RBC considers that this should be reflected in SS11.

RBC therefore proposes the following amendments to policy SS11:

“1. Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure as listed below and shown on the Policies Map. The council will work with appropriate partners, stakeholders, and bodies to deliver these schemes. Proposals for development which would prejudice the delivery of these schemes or their effective operation will not be supported.

- a) *Provision of a Park and Ride near the Coppid Beech roundabout on the A329 in Wokingham*
- b) *Winnersh relief road*
- c) *High quality express bus services or dedicated public transport route along the A4 and A329 corridors. This project is dependent-on-to be jointly developed with Reading Borough Council’s ‘Cross-town-Link’ in line with the aspirations of the East Reading Fast Track Public Transport corridor.*
- d) *Improvements listed in Policies SS4, SS5, SS6 and SS7:*
 - i. *Improvements to highway capacity along A327 (including Eversley Bypass, subject to review by Hampshire County Council as lead authority)*
 - ii. *Arborfield Cross Relief Road*
 - iii. *Extension of Nine Mile Ride to the A327*
 - iv. *Improvements to highway capacity along the A33*
 - v. *South Wokingham Distributor Road (junctions at both Finchampstead Road and London Road) and associated improvements to the railway bridges on the A321 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham*
 - vi. *Northern Distributor Road*
- e) *Third Thames Crossing from Thames Valley Park Drive/A3290 to South Oxfordshire.”*

Policy SS12: Improvements to Transport Routes

Policy SS12 identifies other transport proposals which will be supported in addition to the strategic transport proposals. RBC supports delivery of these transport

schemes, particularly the transport infrastructure proposals for Grazeley (see our response to policy SS3).

Policy ER1: Meeting employment needs

RBC understands that WBC considers that there is no quantitative need for new office and industrial or warehouse floorspace within the area. RBC co-operated with WBC on the initial Central Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment that identified high levels of employment need in both authorities, and this formed the main evidence base for the Reading Borough Local Plan. However, it is understood that WBC has produced new evidence which reached different conclusions for Wokingham, and RBC does not have any concerns about the robustness of that evidence.

As a point of clarity, it might be helpful for policy ER1 to explicitly state that there is no identified quantitative need for significant employment floorspace, to ensure that position is as clear as possible and has full policy weight.

Policy ER6: The hierarchy of centres

RBC supports the focus on strengthening and supporting the network and hierarchy of centres in policy ER6. RBC particularly welcomes the identification of Shinfield Road as a district centre. This centre straddles the boundary between Wokingham and Reading, and its district centre status matches that in policy RL1 of the RBLP.

It is not entirely clear from reading the Local Plan what the quantitative level of town centre development planned for is. It is understood that the level of development will be in line with the role of the centres in the hierarchy, but it would assist clarity if any quantitative targets, that they are included in policy - or, if there are none, that this is explicitly stated.

Policy ER10: Whiteknights Campus

The Whiteknights Campus of the University of Reading (UoR) spans the boundary between Wokingham and Reading, and is therefore an important strategic matter that has been subject to cross boundary liaison. RBC notes that policy ER10 as drafted is in most senses identical to the corresponding policy ER2 of the RBLP, and therefore generally support most aspects of the policy.

However, there are significant differences from our policy ER2, which are as follows:

- The inclusion of a second paragraph which refers to supporting the business needs of the UoR; and
- The absence of the following clause which makes up part of ER2: “Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation.”

In terms of the second paragraph, the aim of supporting the role of the UoR is agreed, as it is a vital element of the economic success of the area. However, as worded, it seems to give unlimited scope for expansion, in particular because it explicitly refers to the Accommodation Strategy and Campus Capacity Study, and therefore gives them a form of policy weight. These documents were submitted to the RBLP examination and were considered as part of that process. The Accommodation Strategy is of particular concern as it contains highly ambitious and untested plans for growth, equating to an increase in around 10,000 students by 2028. Student accommodation already competes with general residential for town centre sites in Reading, and contributes to the RBLP being unable to meet the full identified housing needs. Significant growth in numbers of students will seriously exacerbate pressure on the housing market in both Reading and Wokingham, and there is little prospect of the area being able to absorb these levels of growth without significant problems. RBC has concerns about the robustness of the Accommodation Strategy in particular as a basis for future planning, which are documented in the Statement of Common Ground between RBC and the UoR. Although RBC has less of an issue with the Campus Capacity Study, there are still a number of aspects of it with which we disagree. Therefore, whilst we appreciate that these documents should be taken into account in drawing up the Local Plan, we are extremely concerned with any suggestion that they should be given policy weight by being referred to in the policy, or, indeed, by the role in planning decision making suggested in paragraph 6.57.

In addition, we consider that the lack of a reference to ensuring that new development can be supported by student accommodation is an important omission. Given the scale of the ambitions of the UoR, additional academic facilities require consideration as to whether they can be supported by student accommodation. As it stands, there is a discrepancy between the approach of the two authorities which means that a large-scale development on the part of the Whiteknights campus in Wokingham could take place without this consideration that would lead to a very extensive increase in need for student accommodation in both authorities and pressure on the housing market and housing sites.

The wording from ER2 referred to above was agreed between RBC and the UoR as part of the Statement of Common Ground that fed into the Examination, and we therefore strongly consider that it would be appropriate for inclusion in ER10.

We would therefore like to see the following changes to ER2:

***“Wokingham Borough Council will continue to work proactively with the University of Reading and Reading Borough Council to support the continued development of Whiteknights Campus as a focus for the University of Reading, to ~~meet the University’s longer-term business needs for educational and academic uses as set out in their Whiteknights Campus Development Plan, Accommodation Strategy and Campus Capacity Study~~ allow the University to continue to fulfil its important role in the economic success of the area.*”**

Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on

the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable subject to other policies in the Plan.”

In addition, the following changes are proposed to paragraph 6.57:

“The University has produced an Accommodation Strategy and Campus Capacity Study in September 2018. The Capacity Study draws on the information contained in the University’s Development Plan, and provides a high-level quantitative assessment of the potential capacity of the University’s existing sites to accommodate additional academic and residential development on both campuses and adjacent landholdings. The Campus Capacity Study and Accommodation Strategy ~~should be used to inform any future development proposals on the Whiteknights Campus~~ are useful context for the future plans of the University, but do not form part of the adopted planning policy for the area.”

H1: Housing provision

Local Housing Need

As outlined in section 7, the Draft Local Plan proposes to provide 769 homes per year. Use of the standard methodology, in line with the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, would lead to a need for 804 homes per year.

The Local Plan justifies this by referring to the following flaws in the standard methodology, which are explained more fully in the Topic Paper on housing need and exceptional circumstances:

- the upwards impact of substantial house building on the median house price (contrary to the premise of the standard method that higher house building will stabilise or lower house prices);
- the failure to recognise the functional economic relationship with Reading Borough; and
- the way the cap is applied does not take local plan-making circumstances into account.

RBC agrees that the exceptional amount of new build housing in Wokingham is likely to have had a distorting effect on the results of the methodology. The Topic Paper addresses this issue by feeding the median house price of non-new build housing into the standard methodology. However, this response exaggerates the exceptional nature of the area, because it excludes all new build housing. All authorities have an element of new build on the market, and it would be more appropriate to exclude a proportion of new build from the calculation, based on the extent to which the proportion of sales that are new build in Wokingham exceeds the national average, which is around 50% according to paragraph 5.11 of the Topic Paper.

In terms of the functional relationship with Reading, this is in reference to workplace-based income levels, which feed into the affordability ratio that makes up part of the standard methodology calculation. The argument is that the area is unusual in that a significant number of Wokingham residents work in Reading, and

that their incomes are actually on average higher than workers based in Wokingham. The Topic Paper argues that residence-based earnings should be used instead, and this further reduces the affordability ratio and therefore housing need.

RBC does not disagree that there is a clear functional relationship with Reading. However, simply using residence-based earnings does not address the likelihood that there are those who work in Wokingham whose housing need is rightly in Wokingham, but who are currently forced to live further afield or in unsuitable accommodation. Rather than substituting residence-based earnings for workplace-based, it would be preferable to calculate the extent of the distorting effect of the relationship with Reading. This could perhaps be achieved on the basis of the latest commuting statistics, and applying Reading's workplace based earnings to a proportion of Wokingham residents using these figures.

In terms of the cap on local housing need, the purpose of this within the standard methodology is to prevent an unreasonable increase in the burden being placed on a local authority as a result of the new need figure. As such, it is a simple calculation based on the most recently adopted plan, which in Wokingham's case is the Core Strategy, and the cap would exceed the local housing need generated by the standard methodology. Whilst it is agreed that there were particular circumstances in terms of the South East Plan examination that led to the Core Strategy figure, ultimately it was a reflection of the capacity that existed in Wokingham at the time. As demonstrated in Tables 2 and 3, the capacity to provide an uncapped level of housing need continues to exist.

In general, we would question the degree to which national policy allows these considerations to be taken into account. The NPPF is clear that need should be calculated in accordance with the standard methodology unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals (paragraph 60), and the methodology used does not appear to take into account all of these additional factors. The most recent full assessment of housing need taking the full range of local circumstances into account was the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Testing (GL Hearn, March 2018), which identified a need in Wokingham of 801 dwellings per year.

However, RBC notes that the actual proposed delivery shown in Tables 2 and 3 totals 16,802 over the plan period, which equates to 933 dwellings per year between 2018 and 2036. This is some way ahead of the need generated by the standard methodology. WBC's approach of focusing on Strategic Development Locations has an excellent recent track record of delivery, and RBC is confident that these figures can be achieved. RBC is not therefore concerned that WBC will under-deliver against its housing need as set out in the standard methodology, but does believe that the wording of H1 and the reduction generates unnecessary confusion that will inevitably lead to considerable debate at examination and appeals. It would be far simpler and less open to debate therefore if policy H1 was based on the need generated under the standard methodology.

Unmet Need from Reading

As has been highlighted in previous representations to the Local Plan Update process, the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, identifies an unmet need for housing totalling 230 dwellings over the whole plan period. A Memorandum of Understanding between WBC, RBC, West Berkshire District Council and Bracknell Forest Borough Council signed in October 2017 agrees that the shortfall arising from the RBLP will be met within the area of the four authorities.

However, the RBLP was submitted in March 2018, before the cut-off for considering housing need using the standard methodology. The housing need for Reading of 699 dwellings per year was based on objectively assessed need as identified in the Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016), and the RBLP plans for 689 per year based on the capacity of Reading. The Wokingham Local Plan is to be considered against the standard methodology, and it would not be logical to apply an unmet need that arises under an alternative methodological approach. Under the standard methodology, Reading's local housing need would have been 635 dwellings per year, so, when considered on this basis, the unmet need disappears.

In any case, as has already been noted, projected delivery in Tables 2 and 3 exceeds the housing figure in H1, and would in fact have been sufficient in any case to cover an unmet need of 230 dwellings.

H2: Sites allocated for residential/mixed use

RBC has no particular comments to make on the sites identified for residential and mixed use under policy H2, none of which are particularly close to our boundary or of a scale that is likely to have significant implications for Reading.

RBC does welcome the provision of sites to meet the permanent accommodation needs of travellers in Wokingham. RBC has its own unmet needs for permanent traveller provision, which are referred to in the response to policy H11, and there may be opportunities of sites closer to the RBC/WBC boundary that can meet needs jointly.

H3: Housing mix, density and standards

Policy H3 states that "The mix of housing provided should reflect and respond to the identified housing needs and demands of the borough's households as set out in the most up to date evidence contained within the Local Housing Needs Assessment, or successor documents" (point 2). Whilst RBC is delivering good levels of housing against its identified needs, there are issues with the mix that can realistically be achieved within Reading. Meeting housing needs within our boundaries relies upon medium and high density development. In particular, around half of housing development in the plan period will be in the centre of Reading, and inevitably largely in the form of smaller flats. Reading is not likely to deliver the mix profile that is needed. Therefore, it is considered that there should be some consideration of the wider levels of delivery across the functional area, with authorities such as Wokingham well-placed to deliver larger, family

accommodation which sits well with the existing character of the area. In our view, this should be reflected in policy H3.

We welcome the requirement for all new housing to be built in line with part M4(2) of the Building Regulations, and for 6% of housing on developments of 20 or more dwellings to be built in line with M4(3). This should ensure that there is flexibility built into the local housing stock to allow for changing circumstances to be accommodated without placing pressure on the housing market.

H5: Affordable Housing

RBC welcomes the policy on affordable housing, and the minimum levels of affordable housing provision between 20 and 40 % depending on the location and size of the site. We particularly support the proposal to seek affordable housing contributions from sites of less than 10 dwellings, and strongly agree that there is an exceptional case for divergence from national planning policy in this area. It is for WBC's evidence to determine the size threshold above which it is viable and appropriate to require contributions to affordable housing, but the evidence may well point to contributions from developments down to one house being justifiable, as was the case in the RBLP.

H11: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Provision

As set out in the RBLP, RBC has unmet needs for permanent accommodation for gypsies and travellers. RBC's Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Houseboat Dwellers Accommodation Assessment (September 2017) identified a need for 10-17 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers. After thorough assessment of potential land within Reading, RBC has concluded that this need cannot be met within Reading.

RBC will therefore be seeking to work with adjoining authorities to understand how these needs can best be met. On 21st February 2018, RBC made a request under the duty to co-operate to a number of authorities, including WBC, to understand whether there is potential to meet these permanent needs outside Reading's boundaries. WBC's response of 6th March 2018 noted that WBC was still assessing its likely capacity for pitches to meet its own needs, and was not able to meet needs from Reading. It is not clear what the outcome of assessment of capacity to meet unmet needs for travellers is. RBC wishes to ensure that the scope to meet its unmet gypsy and traveller needs is considered as part of the Local Plan process. RBC would be happy to discuss what resources would be required to help in meeting these needs.

The identification of potential for traveller provision within Grazeley may help to meet some of the needs emerging over the plan period, and this is a discussion that RBC wishes to continue. However, the delivery of the Grazeley site is long term, and this would not address those needs which already exist.

RBC is exploring the potential of a sites across the Borough to meet traveller needs. One of the potential sites is within Reading but adjoins the RBC/WBC

boundary, and would be accessed from within Wokingham. RBC wishes to continue a dialogue with WBC about the potential of this site, and any other sites that arise.

DH7: Energy

DH8: Environmental standards for non-residential development

DH9: Environmental standards for residential development

DH10: Low carbon and renewable energy generation

RBC supports these policies in line with our comments on policy SS8.

HC10: Development in the vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield

RBC supports this policy. Considering the cumulative impact of development within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) on the Off-Site Emergency Plan is a cross-boundary, strategic matter which needs to be kept under review by all affected authorities. Whilst RBC is currently outside the DEPZ, it is understood that boundaries are subject to change during the plan period, and RBC will continue to work jointly with WBC and West Berkshire District Council to address this.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	ADOPTION OF THE PALMER PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT PARK
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	PARK
LEAD OFFICER:	MARK WORRINGHAM	TEL:	0118 9373337
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report relates to the proposed adoption of the Palmer Park Development Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document, for use in determining planning applications within the area. The Development Framework sets out proposals for improvement of Palmer Park, in particular the development of a new swimming pool, and supplements policy in the recently adopted Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 1.2 A Draft Palmer Park Development Framework was approved for consultation by this Committee on 21st November 2018 (Minute 22 refers). Consultation took place between December 2018 and February 2019, and a total of 64 responses were received. A Statement of Consultation summarising the process and the responses is included. A revised version of the Framework has now been prepared, taking account of the responses received. Committee is recommended to formally adopt this.
- 1.3 Appendices
Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 - Statement of Consultation
Appendix 3 - Palmer Park Development Framework

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the results of the consultation on the Draft Palmer Park Development Framework, undertaken between December 2018 and February 2019, as set out in the Consultation Statement at Appendix 2, be noted.
- 2.2 That the Palmer Park Development Framework (Appendix 3) be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Palmer Park is an important green space serving East Reading as amenity and recreational space. The athletics stadium and velodrome have, as sporting venues, more regional and county wide importance. The park also serves as a location for local events such as fun fairs, circus and charity fundraising events. Whilst the park has a number of well used facilities, there are a number of underused elements, particularly in the central zone. These have the potential to become attractive, vibrant spaces and successful facilities.
- 3.2 The new Reading Borough Local Plan identifies site ER1j, covering the Palmer Park car park, stadium and access road, for leisure use including a swimming pool. The Local Plan was formally adopted at Council on 4th November 2019, and the Palmer Park site is now therefore allocated for this use. There is therefore an opportunity to provide more detail on how this allocation is to be delivered, as well as looking more generally on how the park as a whole can be improved. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would be required to achieve these objectives.
- 3.3 Policy Committee on 20th January made the decision to award the 25 year design, build, operate and maintain contract for Boroughwide leisure facilities to Bidder A, GLL. This included the provision of new leisure facilities including a swimming pool at Palmer Park. Committee decided that this should include the variant bid for provision of a 6-lane pool at Palmer Park. It is proposed that the new swimming pool at Palmer Park open in Spring 2022. A Development Framework, with SPD status, helps to provide certainty about the form of development that will be acceptable in this location and therefore reduce risk.

4. THE PROPOSAL

(a) Current Position

- 4.1 This committee approved the Draft Palmer Park Development Framework for consultation on 21st November 2018 (Minute 22 refers). The Framework considered the future of Palmer Park, in particular the inclusion of a new swimming pool. In particular, the draft Framework considered two options for location of the new pool. Option 1 was adjacent to the stadium building, whilst Option 2 was in front of the

stadium building. Both options resulted in loss of some of the open space to accommodate car parking.

4.2 Consultation was undertaken between 14th December and 22nd February, a total of ten weeks, and this included a consultation event held at Palmer Park stadium on 15th January.

4.3 A total of 64 written responses were received. The main points raised are summarised below.

- Support for Option 1 (raised by 22 respondents)—Respondents found Option 1 to be the most aesthetically pleasing and found it less intrusive than Option 2. Some noted that it best facilitated pedestrian flows, with the entrance visible and accessible for park users either on foot or by car.
- Preference for a 50 metre pool (raised by 18 respondents)—Respondents argued that a 50 metre pool would make Reading more attractive for competitive events and serve a wide range of swimmers (old and young, elite and beginner) with better value for money. A 50 metre pool could accommodate a wider variety of activities, both leisure and sport, and compete with nearby facilities in other authorities. Some also called for the inclusion of diving facilities.
- Support for improvements to the park's character and paths (raised by 13 respondents)—Respondents noted that the Park was in need of investment because its quality has deteriorated over the years. Respondents support improvements to paths, signage, landscaping, facilities for users with disabilities, seating, lighting and the setting of the George Palmer statue.
- Support for the new pool on this site, as opposed to elsewhere in the Borough (raised by 12 respondents)—Respondents expressed support for the construction of a new pool at Palmer Park and noted its excellent public transport links.
- Opposition to the loss of green open space (raised by 11 respondents)—Respondents were opposed to the loss of green open space due to an extended car park. Many stated that this important area is well-used for informal activities and that an extended car park will be an eyesore for nearby residents.
- Not enough car parking is proposed by either option (raised by 11 respondents)—Respondents stated that the current car park is often full and that adding a pool on-site will increase demand drastically. Some nearby residents expressed frustration that park users' cars 'spill' into the surrounding streets and take up limited on-street residents parking.

- Concern the East Reading Adventure Play Area (ERAPA) with accessible play equipment will be removed (raised by 8 respondents)—Respondents expressed concern at the suggestion that the ERAPA would be lost over time or consolidated with other play areas in the Park. Respondents noted that the ERAPA is well-used and that it is the best example of accessible play equipment on offer in the Borough.
- Concern that the new pool will be too close to the newly refurbished Bulmershe Leisure Centre Pool (raised by 7 respondents)—Respondents questioned whether or not a new 25 metre pool at Palmer Park will be viable when the new pool at Bulmershe is opened nearby.
- Concern that there is no local support for a new 25 metre pool on this site (raised by 7 respondents)—Respondents claimed that there is little support for a 25 metre pool at Palmer Park and stated that many residents would prefer either a 50 metre pool or a different site altogether.
- Footpaths are poorly lit throughout the Park (raised by 6 respondents)—Respondents feel that the park is unsafe at night and that this discourages users (particularly women) and encourages some users to drive instead.
- Consultation process has been insufficient (raised by 6 respondents)—Respondents feel that the consultation process was not publicised widely enough and/or that the drop-in event was held at the wrong time and in too small a space. Some felt that the consultation document did not provide enough detail, particularly with regard to leisure facilities. Some felt that more site options should have been appraised.
- There should be no increase in the amount of car parking provided (raised by 6 respondents)—Some strongly opposed the addition of any new car parking. Respondents stated that the Council should be encouraging users to walk, take the bus or cycle instead since surrounding roads are congested and may contribute to poor air quality.

4.4 The following points were also raised, albeit by fewer respondents:

- The framework should include cycle parking.
- Parking closer to the bowling green is needed for members of the Bowling Club.
- Use of the Park's facilities (including car parking, the sports centre and the circular path) should not be disrupted during construction.
- Anti-social behaviour and safety in the area must be addressed.
- A pool should accommodate a wide variety of activities.
- A wider appraisal is needed to consider all possible sites.

- Facilities and surfaces should be appropriate for users with disabilities (including parking, changing places, accessible toilets, play area surfaces, etc.)
- A pedestrian path should be included along the main vehicle entrance.
- The park cannot support two cafés.
- Informal sports fields (particularly to the south of the stadium) should not be disrupted by re-instating a historic path or new car parking.
- Public toilets are needed and should be accessible for all.
- Support for the “green” car park.
- Future maintenance must be addressed.
- The library should be better integrated with the rest of the park.

4.5 A full Statement of Consultation, detailing the consultation measures and the responses received, is included as Appendix 2.

(b) Option Proposed

4.6 Committee is recommended to adopt the revised version of the Palmer Park Development Framework. The version to be adopted is Appendix 3 to this paper. Once adopted, the Palmer Park Development Framework will be used to supplement the Local Plan for the determination of planning applications within the park.

4.7 Committee is also recommended to approve the recommended responses to representations made on the draft document. These are contained in Appendix 1 of the Statement of Consultation on the Draft Palmer Park Development Framework (at Appendix 2 to this report).

4.8 The main changes that have been made to the Development Framework compared to the version that was consulted upon are summarised below:

- Whereas the consultation draft set out two options for location of the pool, the adoption version centres around Option 1 as a preference, with the pool being located as an extension to the side of the stadium building.
- A specific section is included on car parking setting out information on how this will be considered. The amount of green space that would be lost to car parking has been reduced by reconfiguring the car park and the heart space, and proposals for coach parking and drop-off, and cycle parking are also now included. However, ultimately, the amount of car parking to be provided will be dependent on a Transport Assessment at application stage, which will have an effect on the amount of space available for the heart space and/or the amount of green space within the park to be used for car parking. This is reflected in the text of the Framework.

- The Framework no longer refers to any proposal for removal of the ERAPA accessible play equipment in the north of the park. It also makes reference for the need for the pool to be accessible to all.
- Some responses wanted greater clarity on why the proposed option was chosen over alternative locations. A summary setting out why this is the case is now included as an appendix.
- An enhanced policy context section has been included to make the relationship with the Local Plan policy clearer.
- There are further references to planting, trees and biodiversity throughout the document.

(c) Other Options Considered

- 4.9 There are two alternative options to the proposed option above. They are: (i) to base the Development Framework around an alternative location for the swimming pool; and (ii) not to proceed with a Development Framework for the area.
- 4.10 The Development Framework contains Appendix A, which details why alternative locations within the park, and other East Reading locations more generally, were not taken forward as locations for a new pool. In more general terms, the broad location of the pool was defined by the allocation within the Local Plan, and a SPD cannot make new policy to locate the pool outside the allocated site.
- 4.11 Not to proceed with a Development Framework would miss the opportunity to set out policies and proposals for the improvement of the park, and could mean that any improvements are more ad-hoc and less co-ordinated. It would also fail to give certainty in developing proposals for a new swimming pool that emerge from the leisure procurement exercise.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Adoption of the Development Framework will guide future development of the site in a way that will contribute to achieving the Council's priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan through:
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe;
 - Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Improving the environment of Palmer Park is a significant element of the Development Framework, and this includes proposals for new planting and creation of gardens within the park. The proposals within the Development Framework seek to minimise any loss of open space to

accommodate the new pool and associated parking, and the environmental implications of specific proposals will need to be considered at planning application stage.

- 6.2 A new building will be expected to meet the high levels of sustainability set out in Policy CC2 of the Local Plan. For a major development (i.e. over 1,000 sq m) this will mean meeting Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent standards, whilst for a minor development BREEAM Very Good will be required. Achieving this standard will be more challenging in relation to an extension to an existing building and if these cannot be met, the highest possible levels of sustainability will be required.
- 6.3 At Policy Committee in January 2020, the Council agreed to enter into a design, build, operate and maintain contract with GLL which would include the delivery of a new community pool at Palmer Park linked to existing facilities. GLL have committed to developing the new pool at Palmer Park to BREEAM Excellent standards and their tender submission sets out an initial pre-assessment document for obtaining BREEAM Excellent accreditation. GLL has also committed to use some renewables to achieve building control compliance, as well as to consider a full range of renewables and committed to focus on a number of measures which will help to reduce carbon emissions and improve environmental efficiency.
- 6.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location and is easily served by a choice of means of travel other than the car. It is located close to a bus stop on the high-frequency 17 bus route. A cycle route also passes along Wokingham Road, and the Framework includes a requirement for cycle parking. The location is also accessible on foot from much of east Reading.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Community involvement on the Draft Palmer Park Development Framework took place between 14th December 2018 and 22nd February 2019, a period of ten weeks. Paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5 of this report summarise the consultation process already undertaken, and this is set out in more detail in the Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2. The community involvement stages were undertaken in line with the Statement of Community Involvement (adopted March 2014).

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Scoping Assessment, included at Appendix 1 identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is relevant to this SPD. The EqIA (also at Appendix 1) identifies that, where there are identified impacts upon specific groups, these are expected to be positive. Compliance with the duties under S149 of the Equality Act 2010 can involve treating some persons more favourably than others, but it is not considered that there

will be a negative impact on other groups with relevant protected characteristics.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Regulation 12 and 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for undertaking consultation on SPDs. Regulation 14 sets out the requirements for adoption. The production of and consultation on the Framework are in compliance with the requirements under the Regulations.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The work undertaken on drafting the documents and the expenditure on community engagement has been funded from existing budgets.
- 10.2 The proposals set out in the Framework require significant funds to fully realise, including the significant investment required to deliver a new pool facility. The funding for provision of leisure facilities including a pool was considered as part of the decision on the design, build, operate and maintain contract for leisure facilities which was made at Policy Committee on 20th January. The Framework is a planning document to guide development; while funding could come from a number of sources including the Council, it is anticipated that a clear, adopted masterplan for the park would be helpful in seeking external funding should sources become available in the future.

Value for Money (VFM)

- 10.3 The preparation of a framework will ensure that future development proposals are appropriately guided and that significant effects are mitigated and that harmful effects are minimised. Production of a Supplementary Planning Document for Palmer Park is in line with best practice and therefore represents good value for money.

Risk Assessment

- 10.4 There are no direct financial risks associated with the adoption of the Palmer Park Development Framework.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- Draft Palmer Park Development Framework, December 2018
- Adopted Local Plan, November 2019

APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Palmer Park Development Framework

Directorate: DEGNS - Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Team Leader

Date of assessment: 02/10/2019

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To set out proposals for improvements to Palmer Park, including provision of a new swimming pool.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The East Reading communities served by the park will benefit through provision of improved leisure and recreation facilities.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

The adoption of the Development Framework as Supplementary Planning Document will allow improvements to the park to provide additional and enhanced leisure and recreation facilities, for East Reading residents, and, in the case of facilities with wider importance, for residents of a wider area.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Local residents - a park with a continued and enhanced recreation role, which provides important green space in this part of Reading, high quality and diverse recreational facilities and which reflects the historic role of the park.

Sporting clubs and groups - high quality, well maintained sports facilities that can be easily accessed.

Council's leisure service and leisure partner - a Framework which gives certainty for how required new facilities will be delivered.

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because: N/A

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**
- **Collection and Assessment of Data**
- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Consultation

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Park users, local residents, community and voluntary groups, local businesses, relevant developers and landowners, infrastructure providers, statutory consultees	Consultation involved notifying consultees of the documents, publication on the website, availability in Civic offices and Palmer Park library, and a specific consultation event held at Palmer Park Stadium. See Statement of Consultation (Appendix 2).	November 2018 - February 2019

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how could this proposal impact on Racial groups

The East Reading community is among the most ethnically diverse in Reading, and improvements to the park will therefore have a positive effect on those racial groups present.

Impacts are therefore expected to be positive.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how could this proposal impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

No specific impacts are identified.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how could this proposal impact on Disability

There has been concern arising through the consultation about how the proposals could impact on disability. This is in relation to two elements in particular: the accessible ERAPA play equipment in the north of the park, and the accessibility of the new pool to people with disabilities.

The Draft Framework referenced removal of the ERAPA equipment, and wider consolidation of play equipment more generally. There was substantial concern about this, and the Council received a petition on this matter (separately to the consultation). However, these references have been removed from the final version for adoption.

The version for adoption makes clear that all facilities are to be fully accessible and meet latest best practice, including changing places.

Impacts are therefore expected to be positive.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how could this proposal impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

No specific impacts are identified.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how could this proposal impact on Age

No specific impacts are identified.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how could this proposal impact on Religious belief?

There is a particular diversity of religious belief in the East Reading community, and improvements to the park will therefore have a positive effect on religious groups present.

There is a small, informal car park at the southern extent of the park, which is primarily used as a car park for the Park United Reformed Church, but the Development Framework does not propose to alter this car park.

Impacts are therefore expected to be generally positive.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Make a Decision

Tick which applies

1. **No negative impact identified** Go to sign off

2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

Reason

3. Negative impact identified or uncertain

What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

Any development proposals will be judged against the Development Framework at planning application stage, and this will include, for instance, whether the accessibility of the pool accords with the statements in the Framework.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 2 nd October 2019
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 2 nd October 2019

APPENDIX 2 - STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION ON PALMER PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

2.0 READING BOROUGH COUNCIL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER AND HERITAGE
CONSULTANT COMMENTS

APPENDIX 1 DETAILED SUMMARIES OF REPRESENTATIONS

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF DROP-IN SESSION

APPENDIX 3 REPRESENTATION FROM RBC HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANT

1.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

1.1 Consultation took place between 14th December 2018 and 22nd February 2019. A total of 64 written responses were received. Detailed summaries of each individual representation, as well as a response from the Council, are included in Appendix 1.

1.2 A drop-in event was held at Palmer Park Leisure Centre during the afternoon and evening of 15th January 2019. Approximately 50 individuals attended to discuss the framework with officers and a summary of points raised and the materials made available is included in Appendix 2.

1.3 The following issues were raised in written representations to the Palmer Park Development Framework (in order of the most frequently mentioned to the least frequently mentioned):

- **Support for Option 1** (raised by 22 respondents)—Respondents found Option 1 to be the most aesthetically pleasing and found it less intrusive than Option 2. Some noted that it best facilitated pedestrian flows, with the entrance visible and accessible for park users either on foot or by car.
- **Preference for a 50 metre pool** (raised by 18 respondents)—Respondents argued that a 50 metre pool would make Reading more attractive for competitive events and serve a wide range of swimmers (old and young, elite and beginner) with better value for money. A 50 metre pool could accommodate a wider variety of activities, both leisure and sport, and compete with nearby facilities in other authorities. Some also called for the inclusion of diving facilities.
- **Support for improvements to the park's character and paths** (raised by 13 respondents)—Respondents noted that the Park was in need of investment because its quality has deteriorated over the years. Respondents support improvements to paths, signage, landscaping, facilities for users with disabilities, seating, lighting and the setting of the George Palmer statue.
- **Support for the new pool on this site, as opposed to elsewhere in the Borough** (raised by 12 respondents)—Respondents expressed support for the construction of a new pool at Palmer Park and noted its excellent public transport links.
- **Opposition to the loss of green open space** (raised by 11 respondents)—Respondents were opposed to the loss of green open space due to an extended car park. Many stated that this important area is well-used for informal activities and that an extended car park will be an eyesore for nearby residents.
- **Not enough car parking is proposed by either option** (raised by 11 respondents)—Respondents stated that the current car park is often full and that adding a pool on-site will increase demand drastically. Some nearby residents expressed frustration that park users' cars 'spill' into the surrounding streets and take up limited on-street residents parking.
- **Concern the East Reading Adventure Play Area (ERAPA) with accessible play equipment will be removed** (raised by 8 respondents)—Respondents expressed concern at the suggestion that the ERAPA would be lost over time or

consolidated with other play areas in the Park. Respondents noted that the ERAPA is well-used and that it is the best example of accessible play equipment on offer in the Borough.

- **Concern that the new pool will be too close to the newly refurbished Bulmershe Leisure Centre Pool** (raised by 7 respondents)—Respondents questioned whether or not a new 25 metre pool at Palmer Park will be viable when the new pool at Bulmershe is opened nearby.
- **Concern that there is no local support for a new 25 metre pool on this site** (raised by 7 respondents)—Respondents claimed that there is little support for a 25 metre pool at Palmer Park and stated that many residents would prefer either a 50 metre pool or a different site altogether.
- **Footpaths are poorly lit throughout the Park** (raised by 6 respondents)—Respondents feel that the park is unsafe at night and that this discourages users (particularly women) and encourages some users to drive instead.
- **Consultation process has been insufficient** (raised by 6 respondents)—Respondents feel that the consultation process was not publicised widely enough and/or that the drop-in event was held at the wrong time and in too small a space. Some felt that the consultation document did not provide enough detail, particularly with regard to leisure facilities. Some felt that more site options should have been appraised.
- **There should be no increase in the amount of car parking provided** (raised by 6 respondents)—Some strongly opposed the addition of any new car parking. Respondents stated that the Council should be encouraging users to walk, take the bus or cycle instead since surrounding roads are congested and may contribute to poor air quality.

1.4 The following points were also raised, albeit by fewer respondents:

- The framework should include cycle parking.
- Parking closer to the bowling green is needed for members of the Bowling Club.
- Use of the Park's facilities (including car parking, the sports centre and the circular path) should not be disrupted during construction.
- Anti-social behaviour and safety in the area must be addressed.
- A pool should accommodate a wide variety of activities.
- A wider appraisal is needed to consider all possible sites.
- Facilities and surfaces should be appropriate for users with disabilities (including parking, changing places, accessible toilets, play area surfaces, etc.)
- A pedestrian path should be included along the main vehicle entrance.
- The park cannot support two cafés.
- Informal sports fields (particularly to the south of the stadium) should not be disrupted by re-instating a historic path or new car parking.
- Public toilets are needed and should be accessible for all.
- Support for the "green" car park.
- Future maintenance must be addressed.
- The library should be better integrated with the rest of the park.

2.0 READING BOUROUGH CCOUNCIL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER AND HERITAGE CONSULTANT COMMENTS

2.1 The following comments were submitted by the RBC Historic Buildings Consultant (detail representation in Appendix 3):

Comment	Changes made to the document
The proposals are not considered to have any adverse impacts on the setting of designated heritage assets.	Noted. No change required.
The aspiration to improve the setting of the George Palmer statue requires careful detail, but should serve to prove an overall heritage benefit.	Noted. No change required. Detailed proposals' effects will be assessed at application stage.
The proposal for the car park to the southern end of the park also requires careful detailing in order to respect the character of the adjacent piers and gates within the entrance.	Noted. No change required. Detailed proposals' effects will be assessed at application stage.
The designs for the swimming pool building are both modern designs which is considered appropriate within the context of the Stadium and surrounding infrastructure. Whilst there is no objection to either of the proposed designs, Option 1 would be marginally preferable as it has the simplest overall form.	Noted. The final framework features Option 1 as the preferred option.

2.2 The following comments were submitted by the RBC Natural Environment Officer:

Comment	Changes made to the document
The document contains good details with regard to trees.	Noted. No change required.
Trees should be recognised as a significant constraint.	This has been added to the list of constraints in Section 1.6.
Detail should be added to Section 2.5, 9 to refer to both succession planting and planting in connection with the new development.	Change made to refer to both succession planting and planting in connection with the new development.

2.3 The following comments were submitted by RBC's Ecology Consultant:

Comment	Changes made to the document
The objective of the document is to provide a vision and framework for the future development of a swimming pool and associated spaces within the park and as such very limited information has been provided about the ecology of the site. It would however be useful to have a section within the 'analysis/baseline' section on biodiversity, with a map showing the broad habitat types (a phase 1 habitat map), a section on the wildlife within the site, and a	It is considered that this is not necessary for this level of policy guidance, particularly since development itself is unlikely to significantly affect any habitats within the park. A baseline ecological survey would be required at planning application stage.

description of any wildlife-related constraints.	
There is very little reference to wildlife, except on page 11, where it refers to the small sensory and wildlife garden. The revamping of the park provides an opportunity to enhance its wildlife value and the document could be amended to include this.	Noted. The framework has been amended to further highlight opportunities for improving habitat for wildlife throughout the park.
The document suggests that the scrub that is adjacent to the stadium, which is subject to antisocial behaviour, may be removed. This may be of value to wildlife and consideration may wish to be given to other ways to reduce antisocial behaviour in this area.	Noted. In order to increase green space, the Framework has been amended to suggest pulling back the fencing along the track. This may allow for further tree planting.
<p>In relation to the planting palette:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 9 refers to ornamental trees, which are of limited ecological value. It should refer to a wildlife-friendly planting palette with native species. Instead the hedges shown are non-native and/or ornamental. • Pages 18 and 19 refer to tree or shrub planting. This should be native or naturalised. • It would be useful to have a section that sets out the broad principles for new planting, including an indicative planting palette. 	Noted. The Framework has been amended to emphasis the use of native species throughout.
Any planning application needs to be accompanied by a baseline ecological survey, including bat surveys of any buildings and trees affected by the proposals.	Noted. The Framework has been amended to require a baseline ecological survey, including bat and tree surveys, at planning application stage.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SUMMARIES OF INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIONS

RESPONDENT	SUMMARY OF POINTS RAISED	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Anonymous respondent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Framework does not contain enough detail. 2. The review of leisure facilities should include more definite proposals and include maintenance plans. 3. The swimming pool is not large enough to replace the loss of both Central and Arthur Hill. 4. There is no changing space for footballers now that the Pavilion has been re-let as a café. 5. There is no new provision of accessible toilets. The male toilets in the Stadium are not publically accessible and the entrance is only two feet wide. 6. There should be a survey of traffic counts and pedestrian counts. 7. The Council should not capitalise annual expenses such as grass cutting and painting as a deficit accounting tactic. 8. More locations for the pool should be considered. Pros and cons for each should be publicised. 9. Extension to the south of the existing building should be considered. This would take up green space, but would make the central heart larger. 10. A location between the Stadium and Palmer Park Avenue should also be examined. This may isolate the pool from the stadium, but that it not necessarily a bad idea. 11. Should access to the park's car park be available to Palmer Park Avenue residents? 12. Perhaps the hard grass standing should be extended to the perimeter path. 13. The library is isolated and should be integrated into the central scheme. 14. Inexpensive, robust features from the Newcastle Parks Project that require limited maintenance should be included, such as circuit training exercise points, features for orienteering, pitch and put sand pits, Boule, Croquet, tip and run cricket, rounders or baseball court, giant chess board, skittle 9 pin alley, 10 pin 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The planning framework is intended to provide a broad framework for the site and to establish planning policy against which a detailed application will be judged. It is not considered that a more detailed masterplan would provide sufficient flexibility for the future of the site. 2. The planning framework does not intend to review leisure facilities or propose maintenance plans. This is outside of the framework's scope. 3. The proposed pool is not intended to replace both Arthur Hill and Central Pool. A new pool at Rivermead is included within the Local Plan. 4. Noted. Although the planning framework does not go to this level of detail, this will be taken into account at planning application stage. 5. Noted. The framework has been amended to ensure that toilets within the new leisure facility are open to all users of the park and are accessible. 6. Noted. Although the planning framework does not go into this level of detail, a full transport assessment will be completed at application stage.

	<p>bowling, pitch and toss pin pit, skateboard ramp, football skill goal. The parks people have discounted these but it is successful at country pubs.</p> <p>15. Is the proposed pathway from Wykeham Railway Bridge to the main gates through the children's play area a good idea? Surely children's areas should be separated from areas used by cyclists to decrease hazards.</p> <p>16. Reducing the fenced play area south of the pavilion has some merit. The area is too large to enable adequate parental supervision. RBC might even consider some seating for supervising parents.</p> <p>17. A survey of the chalk mines is needed.</p> <p>18. All entrances should be enhanced, especially the entrance at St Bartholomew's Rd and Wokingham Rd.</p> <p>19. Won't two cafés be in competition with each other?</p>	<p>7. This is not a matter for the planning framework.</p> <p>8. Noted. An appendix has been added to the document to illustrate why other sites were not selected.</p> <p>9. It is not considered that further loss of green space would improve the park.</p> <p>10. Consideration of this site has been included in a new appendix.</p> <p>11. Detailed management of the car park will be considered at a later stage and is not within the scope of the planning framework.</p> <p>12. Again, further loss of green space is not acceptable.</p> <p>13. Noted. Elements of the planning framework, such as a new library garden, would draw activity toward this area and seek to better integrate it.</p> <p>14. Noted. Additional reference has been added to the framework to encourage inclusion of outdoor games.</p> <p>15. The framework proposes separating cyclists from the children's play area in order to reduce conflict.</p> <p>16. Noted.</p> <p>17. Noted. The area proposed for the new building and car park is considered safe to build on based on existing knowledge.</p> <p>18. Noted. Additional language has been added to the framework to</p>
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		<p>encourage the enhancement of entrances.</p> <p>19. Noted. The framework has been amended to state that a new café should complement the existing café and ensure that both facilities are successful.</p>
Arthur Hill Save Our Swimming CIC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refurbishing and reopening Arthur Hill Swimming Pool would be a more cost-effective and lower-impact option than building a new pool. 2. RBC should undertake a proper site options appraisal before selecting a location for a new swimming pool in East Reading. The assessment should also include options including refurbishment and reopening of Arthur Hill and the potential to partner with Wokingham BC to allow use of their facilities by Reading residents. 3. Proposals to expand car parking capacity in Palmer Park would run counter to policies on preserving public open space (EN7) and promoting sustainable transport (TR1) in the Reading Local Plan. 4. Any future leisure development in Palmer Park should not result in any loss of open parkland and should not give rise to a net increase in car parking spaces in the park 5. Construction of a new leisure facility should not open the door to further leisure development in the park 6. The adventure play area in the park should be refurbished and re-opened. 7. Reading needs a new 50m pool 8. The new pool at Palmer Park should not be a 'travel-to destination' for the wider area. Rivermead is more appropriate for this. 9. We broadly support the initiatives aimed at retaining the character of the northern part of the Park, strengthening the active core and those relating to paths and historic links. 10. We believe that the Council should consider an Equalities Impact Assessment, given the large proportion of minority ethnics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reasons for closure of Arthur Hill were detailed in the relevant reports at the time. The planning framework aims to reduce the impacts of building a new pool. 2. Noted. An appendix has been added to the document to illustrate why other sites were determined to be unsuitable. The reasons for closure of the Arthur Hill pool were reported to Committee at the time of the closure, and are set out in the accompanying report. In terms of use of Wokingham facilities, the Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents. 3. A new swimming pool at Palmer Park will increase the need for parking on-site. Users will be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport in the first

	<p>residents nearby who frequently use the park</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. ERAPA adventure play area should not be removed if it is not replaced. 12. Lighting should be improved. 13. The occasional surface water flooding of paths should be addressed. 14. The library should be better integrated with the rest of the facilities in the park. 15. We believe RBC is not consulting in good faith and that local councillors and senior officers have already made a decision that will not change should this consultation demonstrate that the public hold different views. In the past, RBC has breached trust in relation to a number of different local issues, such as the closure of Arthur Hill Pool and the East Reading MRT scheme. In order to generate confidence, we request the Council to publish point-by-point responses to all individual points raised during the consultation. 16. There is a clear conflict of interest between RBC's roles as a planning authority, landowner, leisure provider and developer. 	<p>instance, but additional parking spaces will help to prevent pool users' vehicles from spilling onto surrounding roads. The framework has been amended to reduce the extent to which green space is used for car parking. The framework has been amended to describe the relationship with the Local Plan allocation more clearly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The framework has been amended to further limit the loss of open space. A small net increase of parking spaces is needed for the reasons described above. 5. Noted. The framework does not suggest that further development in the park would be appropriate. 6. The Framework does not make any proposals to remove the ERAPA play equipment. 7. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough. 8. It is considered that Palmer Park is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. A full transport assessment will be completed at
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		<p>application stage.</p> <p>9. Noted.</p> <p>10. An equalities scoping assessment has been completed and is within the Policy Committee report. It is considered that a full equalities assessment would only be appropriate at application stage, once specific details of the proposal have been determined.</p> <p>11. The framework does not propose removal of the ERAPA equipment.</p> <p>12. Noted. Lighting improvements have been added to the framework.</p> <p>13. Noted. This has been added to the framework. Sustainable drainage systems will reduce surface water flooding.</p> <p>14. Noted. Elements of the planning framework, such as a new library garden, would draw activity toward this area and seek to better integrate it.</p> <p>15. Representations have illustrated widespread support for a pool on this site and park improvements in principle. Many changes have been made to the framework at the suggestion of respondents. This document addresses each point made point-by-point.</p> <p>16. Clearly, the Council has a number of different roles and statutory responsibilities. The Framework sets out how it would discharge its</p>
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Atkins, Ian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have never seen ASB in the vegetation near the stadium—in fact this area softens the landscape and screens aggressive lighting and noise from the stadium. 2. The diagonal historic path proposed on the grass in front of Palmer Park Avenue is not a good idea. This space is used as an informal sports field by many different groups and for picnics and gatherings 3. Remove the gates along the circular path, perhaps put a pedestrian bridge over the car entrance way 4. The car park will encroach too much on the playing fields—why extend the car park to create a new space near the centre? We should remove cars from the park and open up the main entrance for further parking (to the left of the main entrance near the library) 5. The only ASB I see is drivers doing ‘donuts’ in the car park. It is dangerous and noisy and made easier because the car park is hidden in the centre of the park. 6. Option 1 is preferable 7. I don’t see recycling facilities listed on this plan, I assume they are going to be retained and that this is an oversight. 	<p>duty as planning authority only.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework seeks to retain vegetation. 2. There needs to be a balance between the various ways in which the park is used, and diagonal path is not expected to noticeably reduce the space available for informal sports and recreation. 3. The framework has been edited to clarify that gates should be removed along the circular path, where possible. The cost of a pedestrian bridge is prohibitive, but the framework does seek to improve the crossing. 4. Change made to reduce the extent to which the car park encroaches on open green space. Due to the demand that will be generated by a new pool on the site, it is not feasible to eliminate cars from the park. This may increase street parking and prevent residents from parking near their homes. 5. It would be expensive and disruptive to completely relocate the car park. Management of the car park will be addressed at application stage. 6. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. 7. Noted. Reference has been added to the framework to refer to the
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Barnett, Christopher and Julie	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Palmer Park is not the right place for a replacement pool. Traffic is already chaotic around this site and makes attending events difficult. 2. The public transport to Palmer Park is poor when compared with buses to Bulmershe. 3. How can RBC justify this development when a brand new pool is planned to open at Bulmershe? 4. Option 1 is the least offensive. It seems Option 2 was only included to steer people to option 1. Option 2 is ugly and will encourage antisocial behaviour. 5. Single storey entrances will encourage trespass, as occurred at Central Pool. 6. The large glass area by the pool will encourage 'peeping toms' and may put people off swimming. 7. 200-300 car parking spaces will be insufficient when there is an event. 8. Is RBC planning to charge for parking? 9. The design will dictate the use. You cannot decouple design from the technical requirements and therefore need to consider a systems view. If the design fails to cater for a wide range of users then RBC will have once again failed residents. 10. The best option by far would be to provide a good 50m complex in a more accessible location. This would benefit young and old, elite and beginner as well as local shops, restaurants and hotels. 	<p>retention of recycling facilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that a new pool at Palmer Park is required as allocated in the Local Plan. A full transport assessment will be completed at application stage. The site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport and many users will walk, cycle or use the bus. 2. It is not considered that Palmer Park is poorly served by public transport. The park is served by frequent bus services. 3. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents. 4. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. 5. It is not clear what is meant by this comment. Safety of a detailed design will be addressed at application stage and Thames Valley Police will be consulted. 6. The framework does not seek to specify a particular design. The design presented in the framework is indicative of what might be pursued by an applicant. Again,
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		<p>safety will be addressed at application stage and the police consulted.</p> <p>7. A full assessment of the spaces needed, including surveys of existing use, will be needed at application stage.</p> <p>8. Management options for the car park will need to be considered at a later stage.</p> <p>9. Noted. Detailed uses within the building (other than the addition of a new swimming pool) are not within the scope of this planning framework. The framework does not seek to specify a particular design. The design presented in the framework is indicative at this stage, but the important parameters are included within the framework.</p> <p>10. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p>
<p>Berkshire Archaeology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are pleased to see the historic significance of the park and the archaeological potential being given full consideration. 2. We are very much in support of the policy ER1j which highlights the listed monument and the potential for below-ground 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change required. 2. Noted. No change required. 3. Noted. Berkshire Archaeology will be consulted again at such time an

	<p>archaeology, and note the design principles responding to the various constraints.</p> <p>3. We would be happy to advise on specific impacts of detailed proposals as they emerge, but are satisfied that the effects of the proposed - and welcomed - development of the park can be mitigated in line with national and local planning policy.</p>	<p>application is made.</p>
Berkshire Gardens Trust	<p>1. Although the park is not on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, it is an important part of Reading's history and environment, particularly in East Reading. It also provides the setting for the Grade II listed statue of George Palmer.</p> <p>2. Reference to historic features is limited to consideration under "circulation" rather than in the wider sense in accordance to the emerging Local Plan's policies on heritage. Therefore, we feel that the Framework should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement which covers fully: the George Palmer statue; the tree avenues; its park buildings; its key lines of sight and focal points; its openness; and its late Victoria/early 20th century setting of terraced houses.</p> <p>3. In principle, we support the location of a new pool at Palmer Park, as this would be in keeping with its historic purpose.</p> <p>4. George Palmer statue—the setting has been compromised with the introduction of tarmac, parking, poor fencing and the maintenance building nearby. The alignment with the historic approaches from north and south has been lost. We support the creation of the 'heart space' but we feel that the statue should form an integral part and focal point which ideally should be free of vehicles.</p> <p>5. Tree avenues—We are pleased to see tree avenues retained. The development provides an ideal opportunity to replace the line of trees that were originally planted behind the Victorian pavilion to recreate the historic continuous avenue. Planting along the principle access from Wokingham Rd to the pavilion could also replanted, as well as along Wokingham Rd. Trees should be of the same stature as the surviving tree avenue species.</p> <p>6. Historic circulation routes—We support the restoration of these</p>	<p>1. Noted. No change required.</p> <p>2. It is not considered that a full Heritage Statement is appropriate until application stage when detailed proposals are known.</p> <p>3. Noted. No change required.</p> <p>4. Noted. The framework seeks to significantly improve the setting of the George Palmer statue. A complete heritage statement will be completed at application stage.</p> <p>5. Noted. Reference has been added to the framework to encourage planting along the principal access and along Wokingham Rd.</p> <p>6. The framework does not propose additional vehicular entrances. The pedestrian route from the southern part of the park will continue through to the "heart space."</p> <p>7. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. The framework proposes major improvements to the play area as a whole, as well as the maintenance building and possible changes to the boundary around the track and velodrome.</p> <p>8. Although the planning framework</p>

	<p>routes. The original historic alignment of the main access has been lost over time with disabled parking added. We appreciate the need for parking, but the area is poorly maintained and has lost key views. We therefore support the provision of just one vehicular access as at present with the other routes enhanced for pedestrians and cyclists only. We also note that the paths at the southern part of the park would not lead into the heart space, but to the northern end of the proposed parking. This seems a poor design solution, given aspirations for the Park.</p> <p>7. Park buildings—We support the retention and enhancement of the Victorian pavilion and smaller building. The fencing around the play area detracts from these buildings and the landscape, so we hope that major improvements will be made to the play area as a whole. The existing stadium sits roughly on the location of the original Victorian building, therefore we prefer Option 1 which avoids intrusion into the ‘heart space’ and the setting of the statue. However, we are concerned that the maintenance building and its hard standing significantly detract and we suggest alternative locations be found to minimise or remove impacts such as vehicular access. Finally, the fencing around the Velodrome is very ugly with intermittent planting. This should be redesigned.</p> <p>8. Key lines of sight and focal points—We suggest that key lines of site to focal points be developed further to restore the original historic design and enhance the park. In addition to our comments on the statue and the pavilion above, the existing gate entrance piers, views to the tree avenues, new views to the proposed pool are all important and should be covered in the Core Design Principles.</p> <p>9. Late Victorian/early 20th century setting of the terraced houses—Although outside of the park, these are very visible from the park, especially during winter months. These views should be retained and enhanced.</p> <p>10. Openness—Openness to the north and south of the stadium is in keeping with its historic design. This allows long views to the tree</p>	<p>considers these elements, it is considered that a full consideration of heritage (including focal points) is best pursued at application stage once detailed proposals are known.</p> <p>9. Noted. The framework does not propose any changes to views of surround terraced housing, and the location of the pool away from these features is an advantage of the proposal</p> <p>10. Noted. The framework has been edited to reduce the amount of open green space that will be lost for parking and the heart space.</p>
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	<p>avenues and house around the park. We support aspects of the framework that achieve this, but we have major concerns about the extension of parking right across the southern parkland. We appreciate that the demand for parking will increase, but the location should be revisited to avoid harm to the park as a whole. For example, in Figure 11 the northern part of the proposed overflow parking (5) and part of area 7 could be redesigned for permanent parking whilst the overflow parking on reinforced grass could be accommodated north of Palmer Park Avenue. The proposed wildlife area at Figure 11, Area 7 would also sit well with an open parkland setting in the south of the park.</p>	
<p>Blanusa, Dr Tijana (Royal Horticultural Society)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good ideas in the document for enhancing the value of the park 2. I support the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures in the document. You should also consider green roofs, a rain garden, rain water harvesting, reed beds & green walls. These would provide several benefits at low cost. 3. Multiple benefits should be described, i.e. a hedge may provide a visual or noise screen, but can also trap pollution, mitigate storm water and support biodiversity. Hedges should be used in the car park. See the many benefits here: https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/climate-and-sustainability/hedges-for-environmental-benefits.pdf 4. Info boards should be placed around the park to explain interventions and ecosystem benefits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change required. 2. Noted. The framework does not preclude these specific interventions, but does not go into this level of depth. This will be assessed in detail at application stage in accordance with the policies in the new Local Plan. 3. Noted. Language has been added to the framework to emphasise the potential for hedges. 4. Noted. The framework does not preclude this, but does not go into this level of depth.
<p>Blofield, Karen</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bike paths to the pool for all entry points to the park 2. Secure cycle parking facilities 3. I prefer the design of Option 1 4. A 50m pool is needed 5. Pool should accommodate other sports (water polo, canoe polo, underwater hockey) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cyclists would be able to use the footpaths through the park to the new pool. 2. Noted. Reference to cycle parking facilities has been added to the framework. 3. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. 4. The overall provision of new

		<p>swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p> <p>5. This is not precluded by the planning framework, but will be for more detailed consideration as part of the consideration of leisure provision.</p>
<p>Bridgman, Ramona</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am a parent of a daughter with a physical disability and she has great difficulty using Rivermead and Central pools. The new building must be accessible, not just with regard to wheelchair access in and around the building, but also <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hoist pool-side to enable disabled people to get in and out of the pool, • A changing place, • A wheelchair accessible changing room, and • A pool that is easy to navigate once you are in (the Rivermead lagoon pool is hazardous due to changing levels and turns, there are not hand rails around the pool). 2. It is good to see mention of a sensory garden in the park. 3. There is no mention of wheelchair accessible play equipment, there is already very little in Reading and we need to keep what we have at least and upgrade it. 4. Surrounding ground should be wheelchair accessible, no sand or uneven surfaces. 5. Equipment needs to be better publicised to serve families 6. The Reading Families Forum would be happy to consult on detailed plans—it is usually cheaper to build accessibility into the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. This level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework, but an equality scoping assessment has completed to highlight these issues at an early stage. These comments will be taken into consideration at such time an application is made in order to ensure that facilities are accessible for all. Additionally, the framework has been amended to ensure that facilities are fully accessible and meet the latest best practice, including changing places. 2. Noted. No change required. 3. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment. 4. Noted. The framework has been edited to refer to include accessible surfaces.

	designs from the beginning, rather than having to adapt later.	5. Noted, but this is not within the scope of the planning framework. 6. Noted.
Bryant, Helen (RBC Access Officer)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If play spaces are consolidated, care must be taken to ensure accessible play equipment is provided for children with additional needs and disabilities. The informal play area near the nursery has two of only three wheelchair accessible structures in the whole of Reading. 2. We need more equipment and playgrounds in Reading for wheelchair users. We also need easily accessible information about surfaces in each play area, so that users can find out in advance if it is accessible to them. 3. At the very least, the design of new play areas should be discussed with families, particularly those with a variety of special needs. 4. Footpaths need a suitable surface for all users, including wheelchair and scooter users. Tarmac works well, but is not particularly attractive. Bonded gravel is a good option, but is more expensive. 5. Parking for disabled drivers and passengers cannot be lost and should be sited nearer to buildings and other places of interest. Extra space may be needed for ramps or lifts. It is best to consult disabled drivers. 6. "Greening" the carpark may make cause difficulties of users with special needs. 7. Shared surfaces are not popular with many disabled people, particularly visually-impaired people. Raised kerbs assist with wayfinding and help to avoid danger. 8. I support improving the setting of George Palmer's statue. Lawn or grass would be difficult for wheelchair users. Floor graphics may cause confusion for those with visual or cognitive impairments. 9. We should have a Changing Places facility on site, perhaps in the old WC building (www.changing-places.org). We only have two or three in the whole town. If not, then we need some good 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment. 2. Noted, but this particular document is only concerned with Palmer Park. 3. Noted. Another consultation will be held once detailed proposals are known. 4. Agreed. Language has been added to the framework to encourage suitable surfaces for all types of users. 5. Agreed. Language has been added to the framework to ensure that parking for disabled drivers and passengers is not lost, is located near points of interest and that there is adequate room for ramps or lifts. 6. Agreed. Language has been added to the framework to ensure that the needs of users with disabilities are considered within a possible green car park. 7. The Framework recognises that careful consideration of shared surfaces will necessary to ensure access for all. 8. Noted. A full equality assessment will be completed at application stage when detailed proposals are known.

	<p>accessible WCs as advised by BS8300:2018.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. A sensory garden would be welcomed by users with visual impairments, dementia or other conditions. 11. Seating steps look attractive, but would have to be handled carefully to avoid become a hazard to visually-impaired people or wheelchair users. Tactile paving or a change in colour to denote levels would be helpful. 12. Option 1 looks the neater of the two. 13. Manifestation may be needed on glass surfaces, in order to avoid accidents. 14. The "heart space" should be suitable for a wide range of people - higher, lower, seats with and without arms, etc. This should be carried throughout the site. 15. Bollards can be a hazard to blind people, particularly if they are demountable and leave holes. Tree pits can also cause trips and falls. 16. Lighting is very important and must not create "pools" of shadow that can be confusing. 17. Some of the gym equipment should be accessible for wheelchair users. 18. Building regulations, especially Part M, should be used as a guide. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Change made to include requirement for a changing places facility on-site. 10. Noted. No change required. 11. Noted. At application stage, proposals will need to be considered against Council policies that require access for all. 12. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. 13. Noted. The framework does not go to this level of detail, but will be considered at application stage. 14. Noted. The framework does not go to this level of detail, but will be considered at application stage. 15. Noted. The framework does not go to this level of detail, but will be considered at application stage. 16. Noted. The framework does not go to this level of detail, but will be considered at application stage. 17. Noted. The framework does not go into a level of detail as to specify gym equipment. This will be considered at such time detailed proposals are known. 18. Agreed. Again, this will be addressed at application stage.
<p>Bunce, Heather</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I support the pool, but not the increase in parking. There will be a loss of green space. 2. Carbon emissions will increase in an already congested and polluted area. 3. Every effort must be made to support public transport and the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that a pool on this site will increase the need for parking. Nonetheless, the framework has been edited to minimise the amount of green space

	<p>area is supported by an excellent bus service.</p>	<p>lost to new parking and the heart space.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. This site is accessible by sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. A full transport assessment will be completed at application stage. Steps will be taken to mitigate carbon emissions and traffic congestion, in line with the Council's planning policies. 3. The site is currently served by frequent public transport.
<p>Burbidge, Philip</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed design of the pool building is very poor, an eyesore. An architectural competition should be held for a better design. 2. The green area allocated for parking in the design is used for most of the year for sports and activities. 3. Building a swimming pool on the park is not popular with locals and every effort should be made to limit its impact. 4. Option 1 is preferable on two conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the new realm garden should not be created, but that this area should be used for parking in order to limit overspill of parking into green space. • The George Palmer statue and surrounding area should also be used for parking to further limit the overspill of parking into the current park green space, and that the statue with its flowerbeds should be moved to the redundant space behind the new Tutu café next to the bowling green. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The design of the building is meant to be indicative of possible proposals. It is not prescriptive. A detailed proposal will be considered on its own merits at application stage. 2. The framework has been edited to minimise the amount of green space lost. 3. It is acknowledged that some residents do not support the proposals, but the consultation responses indicate that there is also considerable support. 4. Partially agree. The framework has been edited to reduce the amount of public space directly in front of the leisure centre so that the car park encroaches on green space as little as possible. It is not possible to move the George Palmer statue, as its location and setting within this particular area of the park

		contribute to its significance.
Carter, Alice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think the pool will be great. 2. Please can you make sure that it has a changing places facility for disabled users who need more than the standard kind of disabled changing room at Rivermead, South Reading, etc.? The government is consulting on making these mandatory in new public buildings so it is sensible to plan its inclusion from the start. Reading should make facilities accessible to all. 3. I am very concerned that there is no mention of the ERAPA playground which is the only inclusive play area in Reading. How can RBC be so ignorant about this fantastic resource? You cannot take it out without violating the Equality Act. I understand that the Council has announced new funding for accessible playgrounds, but I don't see why ERAPA can't be kept. If ERAPA is going to go then you MUST replace it with good or better equipment in an equally accessible location with appropriate surroundings (i.e. not in the middle of a bark or sand pit). And with another wheelchair accessible roundabout and another climbing frame. I hope you will consult widely before removing this excellent resource. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change required. 2. Agreed. Change made to include reference to inclusion of a Changing Places facility. 3. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment.
Chambers, Donald	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why, when the town's population is growing, RBC is proposing to reduce the amount of green space available for residents? As a resident of Newtown who uses and appreciates the openness and expanse of Palmer Park, I am not able to support these proposals. 2. The Park definitely needs attention and proper management, but to destroy open space in this way is not the answer. I would have preferred demolished Arthur Hill and replacing it with a mixed use development including a pool. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that a new pool at this site will improve the town's leisure offer and serve residents. Nonetheless, the framework has been edited to reduce the extent to which a new car park will encroach upon surrounding green space. 2. The reasons for not using other sites, including Arthur Hill, are now included within an appendix to the framework.
Cook, Tim	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too many small centres, should have one large sports centre at Prospect Park. 2. Prefabricated buildings cost more and more to maintain over time. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that offering leisure facilities at different locations throughout the Borough increases accessibility for all residents.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Seems like ideas from an architect instead of looking at what has worked well, no imagination. 4. A pool in Palmer Park is a waste of resources, would rather see one 50m pool in Reading. If you must put a pool at Palmer Park then lease a temporary pool. 5. Reading should look to examples like Coventry and seek advice from Sport England (web links provided). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The framework is not prescriptive about construction methods. 3. The design of the building is meant to be indicative of possible proposals. It is not prescriptive. A detailed proposal will be considered on its own merits at application stage. 4. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. 5. Sport England have been consulted and their comments are included within this document.
Cunnington, Linda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I contest the proposed development framework for Palmer Park. The new pool will not be sustainable and will not generate adequate revenue because it is located too close to other pools (South Reading, Loddon Valley and Bulmershe). 2. I question that the 6-lane 25m leisure pool is a facility for all of East Reading. If opened for lane and family swims, when and where will teaching, fitness and club swimming take place? 3. The development framework has not taken public support for a 50m pool into account. Where is the documented public support for a 25m leisure pool? 4. Arthur Hill was closed by the Council because it was underused, it does not make sense to build facilities of similar restricted use, when there is opportunity for a bespoke aquatics facility that will serve many different activities for all ages. The development framework does not show improvements for all ages of the aquatic community or for the open green space of Palmer Park. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and others are even more distant, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents. 2. The Council is considering the provision of leisure facilities in the round through the Leisure Procurement process. A new pool at Palmer Park is only part of the proposals. 3. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a

		<p>matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p> <p>4. As above, the overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure procurement exercise.</p>
Darby, Marina	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I haven't seen the proposals advertised very much. 2. I think the proposal is attractive and thoughtful and I hope that costs do not mean plans will be compromised. 3. I like that having a green and welcome park has been prioritised. 4. The church carpark at the corner of Wokingham Road is an eyesore and needs to be improved. 5. The path round the park should not pass through the church car park. 6. I prefer Option 1 because it is streamlined and allows better pedestrian flows around The Heart. 7. The playground is well used and should not be made too small, however it can be hard to supervise children here and the fenced in area could be smaller, especially if new recreation areas are established. 8. I am delighted at the thought of having a pool at our door step and I think a sympathetic car park that uses some green space is a price worth paying. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full summary of the consultation process is provided in this document. The consultation was advertised at 16 community centres in East Reading, at libraries and the Palmer Park Leisure Centre, as well as online and in the local press. 2. Noted. It is important to consider that the framework is intended to be indicative of proposals that could be acceptable in planning terms. It is not prescriptive. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits at such time an application is made. 3. Noted. 4. There are no specific improvements laid out in the Framework for this car park. However, there will be various opportunities for environmental enhancements throughout the park. 5. Whilst there are no specific

		<p>proposals to reroute this path, the overall illustrative framework includes provision of a circular path without barriers to movement.</p> <p>6. Noted. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option.</p> <p>7. Noted. The framework seeks to consolidate the play area.</p> <p>8. Noted. No change required.</p>
Dunn, Colin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core principles are well thought out and presented well. 2. Option 1 is the best option because it is less intrusive and because it places the communal area at the front rather than around the side 3. Regeneration ideas are good, particularly the community and sensory gardens 4. The proposed car park option may cause problems for some, but it is absolutely necessary for the leisure providers. 5. The play area in the north is well-used and should be replaced, not removed. 6. A public toilet is needed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change required. 2. The final framework features option 1 as the preferred option. 3. Noted. No change required. 4. Noted. No change required. 5. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment. 6. Noted. Change made to ensure that toilets within the new leisure facility are accessible to all park users.
Faulkner, Keith	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I support the approach—the framework is well-considered and it is a good idea to make the park more attractive with a multi-functional centre 2. I prefer Option 1 because it is less intrusive of the view from nearby homes 3. I would be surprised if the number of visitors will support 2 cafes. 4. The plans show no bicycle racks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The framework has been edited to emphasise option 1 as the preferred option. 3. Noted. Change made to ensure that viability of the existing café is considered and that both cafes are able to be successful. 4. Noted. Framework has been amended to refer to cycle parking.
Food4Families and Reading Food Growing Network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community gardening is vibrant in Reading and we work closely with many other community groups. Our expertise should be used to establish food growing at Palmer Park. This should include 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The framework does not go to this level of detail on planting. 2. Noted. The framework does not

	<p>edible trees and shrubs throughout, not just in the community garden area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. We support the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures described. You should also consider green roofs, a rain garden, rain water harvesting, reed beds & green walls. The redevelopment should aim to have zero impact on the storm water system. 3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation need to be the core of the re-development. 4. The University of Reading's School of Agriculture, Policy and Development have expertise on planting for sustainable urban landscapes, including for sound and particulate absorption. 5. There are so many schools within walking distance of the park and its educational value should be enhanced, perhaps with an outdoor classroom or amphitheatre. 6. The library should be used for a base for story walks around the Park. 7. The Park is a green lung and we want its full potential to be realised. 8. The redevelopment can be a demonstration of innovative ways of maximising the value of community space and an example for other local authorities. 9. Interpretation panels should be placed around the site to illustrate eco-services provided. We are working with the Open University to explore how wireless technology can be used to help users interact with the surroundings. 	<p>preclude these specific interventions and detailed proposals will be considered at application stage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Noted. No change required. Any development will be subject to planning policies requiring climate change mitigation and adaptation. 4. Noted. 5. Noted. The framework does not preclude this and detail proposals will be considered at application stage. 6. Again, the framework does not go to this level of detail, but it does not preclude such elements. 7. Noted. The framework emphasises the importance of trees and biodiversity areas within the park. 8. Noted. No change required. 9. Again, the framework does not go to this level of detail, but it does not preclude such elements.
Gearing, Margaret	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The amount of parking at this time (especially on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays) is insufficient. With a new swimming pool, many more spaces will be needed. 2. As most bowlers are of mature age, Bowling Club parking would be very helpful. 3. The pool would be better positioned at the other end of the stadium, causing less disruption to the current facility users with parking and access for everyone when the building works start. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. An assessment of parking spaces needed will be completed at application stage in order to ensure that an appropriate amount of parking is provided. 2. Establishing separate parking for users of the bowling club would lead to loss of open space. The proposed car park is in close

		<p>proximity to the bowling club.</p> <p>3. Positioning the pool at the other end of the stadium would necessitate building on open space, and is not considered appropriate.</p>
Gerrard, Iain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I object to the proposal. There is no evidence of local support for the project. 2. It is too close to the pool being built at Bulmershe 3. This is against the preference of Reading Aquatic Club's and Sport England's recommendation for a new 50m, multi-use pool 4. How deep will the pool be? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. It is considered that there is public support for improvements to Palmer Park, including the construction of a new community pool. Many respondents to this consultation have expressed support for these proposals. 2. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents. 3. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough. 4. The framework is intended to explore proposals from a planning perspective and therefore does not go into detail regarding the specific

		characteristics of the pool itself.
Gunns, Valerie	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a member of the Palmer Park Bowling Club, I am concerned that the amount of proposed parking is insufficient. Parking is already difficult, especially when events are held and coaches take up multiple spaces. The future of this club, which has been thriving since 1910, is in doubt because of inadequate parking provision. 2. My other concern relates to vehicular access to the bowling club. The current drawings show restricted access as far as the lodge and the café. Emergency access to the gates of the club is crucial, as well as access for maintenance and deliveries. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full assessment of parking requirements will be completed at application stage to ensure that the appropriate amount of parking is provided. 2. Emergency access, as well as access for maintenance and deliveries, to the bowling club will be possible. Proposals will be assessed in more detail at application stage.
Hall, J	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a user of the park, the biggest problem for many years is the lack of parking spaces, approximately 200 in total. During evenings and at weekends, there is no parking available and vehicles are double parked on the access road because the facilities are so well-used. A new swimming pool will be a great addition, but will worsen parking issues. The number of parking spaces in both options is inadequate. 2. The swimming pool should be located adjacent to the stadium towards Palmer Park Avenue with extra parking provided in this area. 3. Leaving the existing parking spaces and adding more will cause less disruption during construction and will be more cost effective. 4. I second all of the points made by the Palmer Park Bowling Club. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full assessment of parking requirements will be completed at application stage to ensure that the appropriate amount of parking is provided. 2. Positioning the pool at the other end of the stadium would necessitate building on open space, and is not considered appropriate. 3. Sufficient parking provision will be provided during construction and disruption will be kept at a minimum. The framework has been amended to reflect this. 4. Noted.
Hicks, Sally	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am so pleased that the pool is just a regular swimming pool. 2. I prefer option 1. 3. We should include bike racks in the plans to encourage cycling and walking as much as we can. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. Option 1 has been selected as the preferred option. 3. Noted. Change made to include reference to cycle parking.
Historic England	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are pleased to see the document's engagement with the park as a historic resource for the people of Reading. The park has a relatively simple historic layout with the listed statue of George Palmer providing a focal feature. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. 3. Noted. Option 1 has been selected as the preferred option. The

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. We are pleased to see that the statue has been retained and the proposals for the enhancement of its setting. 3. The second option would have greater impact on the setting of the listed statue, but does provide the opportunity to place a building of landmark quality in a more central position in the park. HE have been interested to recognise the value of municipal building projects in developing outstanding architecture in the later 20th century. Chichester Festival Theatre is a good example of this. We recommend considering whether additional elements, such as the café to the north in option 2, would be better embraced within the structure to provide a more unified architectural scheme. 4. Option 1 would provide better integration with the existing sports facilities, framing the stadium space and would be less imposing in the parkland but could create a long frontage to the park that may be difficult to enliven along its entire length. 	<p>proposal aims to ensure that the new building reflects high-quality design principles and outstanding architecture. Specific design considerations will be addressed at application stage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Noted. Option 1 has been selected as the preferred option. The effects of the frontage will be addressed in detail at application.
Hooley, Sian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The drop-in room was too small and only having one event meant many people were unable to attend. Please can I request that future consultations allow for more people to participate? 2. The proposal to increase the number of parking spaces is against the own Council's policies on open space and sustainable transport. Local people should have less need to drive (accepting that some people need to because of disability). The park is well served by bus routes and if the Council is willing to improve cycle routes, there should be no need to provide more parking. I appreciate the will to make it as green as possible, but it is still a car park. What other sites can be used, rather than reducing the green area of Palmer Park. 3. The £800,000 that was spent to develop the MRT would have paid for Arthur Hill to be refurbished and subsidised for a year at less than the cost of a new pool. Should the Council be embarking on a costly project when it is struggling financially? 4. What is the impact of Bulmershe Leisure Centre? Will people have already found their own alternatives, albeit not as local? 5. The proposal includes a café, however Tutu Melaku is reopening 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The room used was selected because it was felt to give enough space for a display whilst also ensuring that visitors did not have to pass through the turnstiles at the stadium, but it is accepted that at times the room was very full. This will be taken on board in future consultations. 2. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. The framework aims to strike a balance between the increased need for parking generated by a new pool and encouraging transport by sustainable modes. The framework has been edited and the proposed

	<p>the café in early March and no one has discussed this with her. Given that the last café struggled, it seems unfair to introduce competition in this way without consultation and suggests a lack of regard for local business and the community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The report also refers to the library having its back to the park, but then doesn't address this in the proposed changes. Surely any proposals to change the park should include the library. 7. I understand that from the drop-in, if the pool doesn't go ahead the other changes to the park won't happen. This is disappointing as I feel there is an opportunity to revitalise the centre of the park at relatively low cost (the corridor running from the playground/café, past the bowling club and astro-turf up to George Palmer). 	<p>site of the car park shifted in order to ensure that as little green space is taken by parking as possible.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. This is not a matter for the Planning Framework. 4. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents. 5. The framework has been amended to ensure that the viability of the existing café will be considered. 6. It is considered that it is not cost-effective to move the existing library. Improved paths and gardens proposed aim to better integrate the library into the park and increase circulation. 7. Whilst the provision of the pool represents the main opportunity for improvement, the framework also identifies other opportunities that may be made across the lifetime of the framework.
<p>Hoult, Nigel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the park "feels run down" 2. Showers and changing rooms are poorly maintained, turnstile is broken, and letters have dropped off the sign and automatic doors sometimes not working. 3. In light of this, how is the Council going to spend the money to create and maintain the scheme proposed? Refurbishment should 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Although the framework is not intended to go into this level of detail, the proposed changes will include refurbishment of the existing leisure centre.

	<p>be a higher priority than the new pool.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Will charges increase because of the plans? I strongly oppose this. 5. Document should state the current number of parking spaces 6. Proposed parking is not enough to accommodate current users and new users brought by pool. Sustainable transport is a good idea, but in cold, dark winter people will drive. Some live too far to walk and bus services to Woodley take longer. 7. The footpaths are poorly lit 8. No proposed cycle parking 9. Visibility of pedestrian crossing near entrance is poor and dangerous. 10. We need measures to prevent travellers illegally occupying the site (barriers, CCTV). This may help to curb other anti-social behaviour. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Funding the maintenance of the facilities is not a matter for the framework, and is dealt with under the item on leisure procurement. 4. This is not within the scope of the planning framework. 5. The framework has been amended to clearly state the amount of existing parking and the amount of proposed parking. 6. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. The framework aims to strike a balance between the increased need for parking generated by a new pool and encouraging transport by sustainable modes. 7. Agreed. Change made to improve lighting throughout the park. 8. Change made to include cycle parking. 9. WAS A CHANGE MADE TO THIS EFFECT? 10. Specific measures to monitor and prevent ASB or occupation are not within the scope of the Framework. At such time a planning application is made, safety will be considered in detail and Thames Valley Police will be given an opportunity to comment.
Howell, K	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When a flyer arrived in early February, I really could not believe what I was seeing! After hearing of the closure of both Arthur Hill 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal does not seek to take up huge amounts of green space.

	<p>and Central pools, the Council is proposing to take up huge swathes of green, peaceful space that is a sanitary for working families, schools and colleges.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Council taxpayers' money has been wasted on plans to build a swimming pool in Palmer Park. 3. If George Palmer were alive today he would be spinning in his grave to see that the green space he provided was being built on. The Victorians built such green spaces because they knew the effects it had for workers. This is being overlooked now because of money. 4. The structure is out of character and does nothing to enhance the local environment. 5. In the past few years the Council has caused stress in what was a calm part of town with one-way streets, restricted parking and restricted access to name a few issues. 6. After the cycle stadium was renovated, areas that were free to the public at large became restricted, screened off and unsightly. I can see something similar happening again. 7. It is bad enough that they allow cars to drive up to the stadium. Parking has been extended over time and the bottle recycling moved to eat up even more green space. Cars in the park make it more unsafe for children. When I grew up using the park, I remember the joy of it feeling removed from the main road. I was able to learn to cycle without my parents having to worry about speeding cars. Future generations deserve this opportunity. 8. If the Council wants to build a pool the ideal location is in the town centre on the site of the old Civic Building. There are good transport links; it is easy to reach from all parts of town and plenty of parking nearby. This would not eat up green space and would boost businesses nearby. 	<p>The proposal has been edited to shift the car park in order to further reduce the amount of green space lost.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. It is considered that the provision of a pool in this location represents good value for money. 3. The framework seeks to retain the open and green nature of the park while provided improved leisure facilities for the town. 4. The design depicted is merely indicative. Detailed proposals will be considered on their own merits at such time an application is made. 5. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to mitigate any negative effects. 6. The proposal does not seek to limit public access to any existing areas of the park or leisure centre. 7. The framework aims to strike a balance between the increased need for parking generated by a new pool and encouraging transport by sustainable modes. The framework has been edited and the proposed site of the car park shifted in order to ensure that as little green space is taken by parking as possible. A full transport assessment will be performed to ensure that car routes are safely incorporated into the park. 8. The framework has been edited to
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		analyse and explain why this particular site has been chosen as opposed to other sites within the town.
Johnston, Stewart	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I want to thank everyone who is involved in making the park as it is. It is truly a wonderful local asset. I appreciate having the park so much. 2. The park desperately needs a public toilet. Please don't turn the old toilet block into a Rangers hut. I'm astounded that the proposals make no mention of a proper toilet—this is the single thing you could do to make the biggest difference. 3. I favour option 1 4. Closing the playground near London Road will worsen the park. The loss of amenity from removing this equipment would be greater than the proposed amenity increases proposed in the document i.e. a community garden, etc. At a minimum, please ensure the main play area on the Wokingham Road has a wheelchair accessible surface. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The framework has been edited to ensure that toilets in the new pool facility will be accessible to all users of the park. 3. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise Option 1 as the preferred option. 4. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment.
Kayes, Helen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full report with lots of interesting and positive suggestions to improve Palmer Park 2. I prefer Option 1 3. I agree with the resitting of the car park to the east of the stadium, but it is worrying that the area could be affected by subsidence. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasis Option 1 as the preferred option. 3. The areas proposed to be used for development and parking are not within the areas considered at risk of subsidence.
Kayes, Peter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I support Option 1, it is a cleaner design and less obtrusive, entrance is visible and accessible to park users 2. The move of the car park to the East is sensible 3. I support the greening of the car park to soften the impact 4. There should be no loss of parking as present parking is often full. A new pool will increase parking and traffic and so more parking will be needed. 5. The play area to the North of the Park is not fenced off and would be better served by being combined with the larger play area on 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise Option 1 as the preferred option. 2. The framework has been edited and the proposed site of the car park shifted in order to ensure that as little green space is taken by parking as possible. 3. Noted.

	the South side of the park	<p>4. Noted. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided.</p> <p>5. Noted, however the framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment.</p>
Keys, Karen	<p>1. It is essential that enough car parking is provided. The car park is regularly full to capacity during evenings. Adding a swimming pool will increase pressure. There is a lack of extra capacity on adjacent roads.</p> <p>2. The seating near the athletics track is needs repair and repainting. Paint is peeling, seats are broken and covered in bird droppings. It looks very run down and gives a poor image of Reading, as well as being unpleasant for parents.</p>	<p>1. Noted. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided.</p> <p>2. Noted. The framework has been amended to make clear that the works will include refurbishment of existing facilities.</p>
Lake, Tom	<p>1. All of this gives a big boost to a run-down and shabby facility.</p> <p>2. I prefer option 1 because it fits best into the overall park.</p> <p>3. Changing facilities must be fitted into the overall building in a way that makes it convenient to change for the pool. Is it possible that the smaller pool could somehow function as a warmer therapy pool? This would require arrangement for variable depth. Facilities should include changing cubicles alongside the pool for blind and other disabled swimmers (like at Arthur Hill). For safety and a feeling of security there should be good sightlines along access internally. Current arrangements at the leisure centre seem to encourage staff to congregate behind reception. This is not helpful and there should be a better arrangement.</p> <p>4. Having a children's play area without toilets nearby is reckless. Could the old toilet block be refurbished in a modern and sanitary way? Provision by the café has never really worked.</p> <p>5. Agree with the circular path being restored outside the play area, but we don't want to lose the kickabout area within the fence which is used by younger children.</p>	<p>1. Noted.</p> <p>2. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise that option 1 is the preferred option.</p> <p>3. Noted. Internal details of the new leisure building are not within the scope of the planning framework. The details of the leisure procurement process will be considered as a separate item.</p> <p>4. The framework has been edited to ensure that toilets in the new pool facility will be accessible to all users of the park.</p> <p>5. Detailed proposals for the play area are not within the scope of the planning framework but these comments have been noted.</p>
Marshall, James	<p>1. I like the idea of a pool.</p> <p>2. I prefer Option 1 because it takes up more dead space in the car</p>	<p>1. Noted.</p> <p>2. Noted. The framework has been</p>

	<p>park and less of the existing main car park directly in front of the sports centre. The current car park in the far north is not used by gym/sport centre users, but just people who park up and hang around.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The design should maximise natural lighting and use as much glass as possible to make it feel natural rather than closed with artificial lighting. The sports centre should include extra space for the gym and/or yoga/dance studio or a dedicated 'spin cycle' area which is currently crammed into the gym. 4. The sports centre should have solar panels, it is south-facing and ideal. 5. There should be more benches in the sunshine, rather than just in shaded areas 6. The extended car park will take up a huge chunk of grass parkland in one of the few spots in the park that isn't primarily a sports pitch. The area is frequently used by people for sports and recreation. 7. The extended car park should be on the outer edge of the park, which would act as a noise and traffic barrier from Wokingham Rd. No one really uses this area, it is noisy, too shady and is too close to the road to play any sports. There is already a car park at this corner so it wouldn't be out of place. The priority of the sport centre/pool car park could be given to users, while the outer car park could be for park users and others. By digging down a few feet and building a trench like car park with the excess soil becoming a small ridge, as illustrated below, it would act as a noise and traffic view barrier to the park, and most importantly saving the prime green park land, making the park more quiet and serene. The vista would not be spoiled either looking into or out of the park. An outer car park would make sense because many people parked there are not using the gym, but rather are using it as a park-and-ride via the 17 bus. 	<p>amended to emphasise that option 1 is the preferred option.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Noted. Internal details of the new leisure building are not within the scope of the planning framework, but the development will need to comply with the Council's policies on sustainable design. 4. Noted. The framework has been amended to encourage renewable energy technologies. The development will need to comply with the Council's policies on sustainable design. 5. Noted. Reference to inclusion of park benches in both sun and shade has been added to the framework. 6. The framework has been edited and the proposed site of the car park shifted in order to ensure that as little green space is taken by parking as possible. 7. It is considered that the car park is best located close to the leisure facility to allow access and to preserve as much green space as possible. This would lead to fragmentation of the usable green space within the park.
<p>McMahon, Sheena</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Option 1 is the best option because it is aesthetically pleasing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature option 1 as the

		preferred option.
McMahon, TJ	1. Option 1 is more visually interesting and aesthetically acceptable	1. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature option 1 as the preferred option.
McQuillan, Matt	1. A 50m pool will be more flexible, meet a range of needs and bring in income. The High Wycombe 50m pool is a great success.	1. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough..
Meade, Katy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, the proposal looks great. 2. I support Option 1. Safety is a major concern, especially given attacks in the park in recent years. Option 2 looks like it would be unsafe. 3. At present, the only way to access the sports centre on foot is a long route through the park and it feels unsafe. I would like to see the addition of a footpath alongside the road to the carpark. 4. The rationale behind the decision to consolidate the play areas is unclear. 5. Wherever the play area(s) is located, it must be accessible for all children, especially those that are very young or have physical disabilities. It seems incredible that during the redevelopment the facilities would be made less accessible than they are currently. 6. I am in favour of the higher number of parking spaces provided in Option 1. Parking is already busy and enforcement on the surrounding streets is weak, leaving residents unable to park close to their homes. It is vital that the new development does not put additional pressure on parking, both during construction and operation. 7. Roads in the immediate area are already in poor condition. Has 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature option 1 as the preferred option. 3. The framework has been amended to emphasise and encourage interventions that will address safety concerns within the park, including additional lighting. 4. Noted. The framework has been edited to clearly explain why the play areas are being consolidated. 5. Noted. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment. 6. Noted. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. 7. This is not within the scope of the planning framework. A full

	the additional impact of construction vehicles been considered and will the roads be repaired as necessary?	transport assessment will be performed at such time a planning application is made.
Morley, Brian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am a resident of Redlands Ward who has visit Palmer Park since childhood. I was also a regular swimmer at Arthur Hill baths, treasurer of the Dolphin Swimming Club which arranged swimming sessions for disabled people for over 50 years and a committee member of the Friends of Arthur Hill. I attended the consultation exhibition at the Sports Centre. 2. I welcome the use of grass and concrete in the car park, but there should be detailed arrangements for buses and coaches, as well as emphasis on access for vehicles bringing disabled users. 3. There should be more detail for secure bicycled parking near the pool, using Sheffield type racks. There should be roofing over the bike racks. At present there is no adequate cycle parking near the sports centre. 4. At present there is a lack of external lighting near the sports centre. This should be well thought out and environmentally efficient. 5. There is a lack of detail regarding the pool itself. There should be a further consultation on the plans for the pool itself. 6. There should be pool features for blind or partially sighted people, as well as people with various physical disabilities. This should include easy access from the entrance directly to the pool area, poolside showers, a lift or hoist into the pool and poolside changing cubicles where participants can leave clothing. Individuals with multiple sclerosis require a higher water temperature than most users. It should be investigated to see if the raised temperature can be achieved quickly enough to make provision viable. 7. I welcome the information about Huntley and Palmers and the enhancement of the George Palmer statue, but there should also be recognition of Arthur Hill. The new pool should be names for Arthur Hill and his story incorporated into displays. 8. The perimeter pathway requires repair. The blue disc cycling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. The framework has been amended to include provision for coaches, as well as to emphasise the need for parking for disabled users. 3. This level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework, but reference has been made to inclusion of cycle parking. Cycle parking will need to accord with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD. 4. The framework has been amended to emphasise and encourage interventions that will address safety concerns within the park, including additional lighting. The framework has also been amended to emphasis renewable energy and sustainable design and construction methods. 5. This level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework. At such time a planning application is made, residents will have further opportunity to comment on detailed proposals. 6. Again, this level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework, but a full equality assessment at application stage will

	<p>sights have deteriorated. The path should be widened so that users can pass one another easily. Fixed exercise equipment should be installed, much like Cintra Park.</p> <p>9. The play area near London Road should not be closed, but improved. It has a rich history and the play area near the Wokingham Road is too far from children in Newtown.</p> <p>10. The entry road from Wokingham Road to the sports centre needs a safe pathway for pedestrians and cyclists with adequate low energy lighting.</p>	<p>be performed to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>7. This level of detail is not within the scope of the framework but this suggestion has been noted.</p> <p>8. This level of detail is not within the scope of the framework, but this suggestion has been noted.</p> <p>9. The framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment close to London Road.</p> <p>10. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise safe and well-lit routes throughout the park.</p>
Mortimer, Chris	<p>1. A 50m pool needs to be delivered in Reading</p>	<p>1. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p>
O'Neill, Bob	<p>1. The framework should include detailed proposals for the pool, such as a planned layout of what the pool building will contain.</p> <p>2. A "destination" pool will require coach and bus parking. If hosting big events, the parking arrangement will need to be different. Traffic and heavy usage would destroy the open space.</p> <p>3. The scheme is brownfield creep and is against policy EN7.</p> <p>4. Reading has disposed of two pool sites. There has been no appraisal to consider locations that would best serve the public. The Arthur Hill donor's intentions have not been honoured.</p> <p>5. This consultation is worthless. The document lacks any real substance and presents a cosmetic solution to a structural issue.</p>	<p>1. This level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework. At such time a planning application is made, residents will have further opportunity to comment on detailed proposals.</p> <p>2. The framework has been amended to include reference to coach and bus parking. It is considered that increased usage can be accommodated by a small increase</p>

	<p>RBC should not be spending money on such empty projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. RBC needs to ask the public whether or not they agree that public open space should be used to make up for other public assets that have been disposed of. 7. Users of the swimming pools should have a say as to whether they would like to see facilities relocated or replaced. Arthur Hill could have been enhanced. Central pool could have accommodated a 50m pool with less parking. 8. It should be possible for a Community Interest Company to run sites. Private leisure providers should be expected to compete and establish facilities on existing brownfield. 9. Exceptional circumstances should not be used to allow leisure development on public open space. 10. RBC ignored a proposal for a pool at Chatham place. 11. Why was the old Civic Offices site not earmarked as a landmark leisure destination? It has adequate parking and would bring footfall to the town centre. 	<p>in car parking. Additionally, a full transport assessment will be required which will recommend measures to mitigate any issues that arise.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The framework has been amended to further minimise the amount of green space that will be developed, and explain the relationship with planning policies. It is considered that the new leisure facility will improve enjoyment of the park by the public, not jeopardise it. 4. The framework has been amended to include further analysis which explains why this site has been selected over other locations within the Borough. 5. The Council disagrees with this point. 6. A question along those lines would not accurately describe this situation. 7. This consultation has been open to users of pools within the Borough. 8. The management of the leisure facility is not within the scope of the framework. 9. The framework has been amended to further minimise the amount of green space that will be developed. The leisure facilities would be provided on previously developed land. A new pool at Palmer Park will improve the park's leisure
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		<p>offer.</p> <p>10. These specific circumstances around the Chatham Place Section 106 are not relevant here.</p> <p>11. This proposal is specifically for a pool for East Reading, which would not be served by the Civic Offices site.</p>
Palmer Park Bowling Club	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The access route from Wokingham Road needs to be extended to give access to the gate of the bowling green. This is essential for regular maintenance and events. Bowl Club matches can last between 5 and 12 hours and members also spend 4 to 5 hours a time on maintenance during the winter. The vast majority of lawn bowlers are over 60 years of age and many are in their 70s and 80s. The distance bowlers have to carry heavy bowls from parking to the green is an important factor. We suggest that during the playing season bowlers could use the area behind the building/café and between the bowls green (includes two disused flower beds). 2. Adequate parking facilities for Bowling Club members and guests. A new pool will increase the amount of parking required. At peak times, the spaces provided are already inadequate. 3. Both options would provide inadequate parking. A total of 300 spaces or more needs to be provided. 4. During recent re-surfacing of five-a side courts, a lot of parking was lost while the works were carried out. It is essential the ALL or MOST of the new parking facilities need to be in place before building commences. Members may have to carry bowls equipment even further. 5. We are disappointed that the consultation has not sufficiently engaged with clubs and organisations such as ourselves. We were not informed of the display at the stadium or that the framework had been published and was subject to a formal consultation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that full vehicle access to the bowling green is not necessary and would result in the loss of green space, but access for maintenance and emergency vehicles will be retained. 2. The framework has been amended to include an appropriate amount of parking which takes into account an increase in users. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. 3. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. 4. The framework has been amended to ensure that parking will not be reduced during the construction period. 5. A detailed description of the consultation process is described at the beginning of this document. Consultation measures need to be undertaken in line with the

		resources available. Whilst this may not have been perfect, it has yielded a range of responses, including from Bowling Club members.
Parkinson, Claire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am happy to see plans for two new pools in Reading. 2. However, I believe that having one long course and one short course pool would be better instead of two short course pools. There is a huge difference for swimmers and most successful swimmers are based in long course pools. 3. The depth of the pools is not mentioned. A pool 2 m deep throughout would not be practical. Could a pool like the one at High Wycombe or at Queen Elizabeth Park be considered where flexibility in size and depth can be achieved? This would be good for school holidays as the pool could be split into two sections. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough. 3. Details of the depth of the pool are not within the scope of the framework.
Pether, David	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Losing green space to car parking in the south-west area is completely unacceptable. I do not understand why option 1 requires a much larger car park than option 2, what is the justification for this? Given the placement of the building at option 1, it should be possible to retain a significant amount of car parking in its present location with improved landscaping and pedestrian-friendly access route. This would still provide more than adequate space for a café and terrace. 2. The café and terrace should be moved much closer to the George Palmer statue. 3. I prefer option 1. Option 2 is overbearing with a north-facing café and terrace. This would be a mistake. 4. The proposals should seek to restore the original pavilion building, which is neglected. This building is an important feature of the area at the corner of Wokingham Rd and St Bartholomew's Rd. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework has been amended to further reduce the amount of green space that will be lost to car parking, and made clear that loss of green space to parking will need to be justified at application stage. 2. There is some scope for flexibility of the layout, but the risk is that by moving the café closer to the George Palmer statue, the car park would have to be relocated and would further infringe on green space to the south. 3. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise Option 1 as

	<p>5. There are too many gimmicks, such as “sequence of events” and “arrival points” that only work if everyone arrives through the main gate and on foot. This is unlikely given the size of the proposed car park. I hope that money will be spent on landscaping and not signage and unnecessary furniture which look shabby after five years.</p>	<p>the preferred option.</p> <p>4. The framework considers possibilities for the future of the pavilion building.</p> <p>5. Public realm improvements will enhance the park for users. Nonetheless, these are suggestions and will be considered in detail at application stage. Ongoing maintenance will be considered, as well.</p>
Rayfield, Julie	<p>1. The framework should aim to improve safety on the perimeter path. One of the athletes that I coach was knocked unconscious one evening in the dark.</p> <p>2. The lighting along the path is inadequate for running</p> <p>3. The path is difficult for visually-impaired runners, particularly in autumn and winter when it is covered by leaves.</p> <p>4. The edges of the path should be clearly defined with smooth edges.</p> <p>5. The track should remain open during the redevelopment.</p>	<p>1. Noted. The framework has been edited to include measures that will improve safety and reduce antisocial behaviour within the park, such as increased lighting.</p> <p>2. Noted. Reference to better lighting has been added.</p> <p>3. Noted. It is difficult to address fallen leaves through the planning framework, but the framework does reference ongoing maintenance of the park and lighting.</p> <p>4. This level of detail is not within the scope of the planning framework, but will be considered in detail at a later stage.</p> <p>5. Noted. The framework has been amended to ensure that disruption is reduced during construction.</p>
Reading Aquatic Group	<p>1. The Reading Aquatic Group comprises Reading Swimming Club, Reading Royals Synchronized Swimming Club, Albatross Diving Club, Reading Cygnets, Reading Waterpolo Club and Reading Underwater Hockey Club. All these clubs support youth, adult and master swimmers in Reading.</p>	<p>Noted. This framework specifically deals with the proposal for a pool to serve the East Reading community. The Council has a longstanding commitment to provide a pool in</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Palmer Park Development Framework is ill-considered, as it does not recommend the most economic, environmentally or socially acceptable solution. 3. Before the closure of Central Pool, it was well-used by clubs and recreational swimmers. The temporary pop-up pool at Rivermead is unsuitable for diving, synchro, speed swimming, Waterpolo and underwater hockey. 4. Arthur Hill closed in October 2016. RBC has known since April 2014 that both Central Pool and Arthur Hill Pool were reaching the end of their economically viable lives. The April 2015 RBC Study by the Sports Consultancy to review "Indoor Sports Facilities Needs" concluded that the pools in the area were too old and needed to be replaced. 5. RBC has announced a 2-pool strategy providing a 25m leisure pool at Palmer Park and 25m competition pool at Rivermead. Neither will be open before 2021 at the earliest due to financial constraints. 6. Typically, 50m pools have the advantage of flexibility, moveable floors to support a variety of aquatic sports, division into 2 25m pools and provision of world class competitive training facilities. 7. Less than 1 mile from Palmer Park, Wokingham Borough Council is rebuilding Bulmershe Pool (25m, 6-lane) and will open by 2020 8. In Nov 2017, Swim England wrote to RBC and advised that Reading would be best served by a single 50m pool, given the Bulmershe pool 9. In Sept 2018, Swim England carried out a review in Reading and concluded that RBC should build a single 50m pool and diving pit. The report claimed that a 50m pool would be more economically beneficial (revenue of £955,000 pa compared to £383,000 pa for a 6-lane 25m pool). The report concluded that the 50m pool should be at Rivermead. 10. Local Authorities in other areas have successfully developed economic and social arguments to support the building of indoor sports facilities (including 50m pool) in other areas. E.g. Winchester and Derby have recently decided to build 50m pools 	<p>East Reading, to ensure that residents of the East Reading area have good access to swimming facilities. Bulmershe is still over a mile from the proposed pool, and is less accessible to most East Reading residents.</p> <p>The points made here generally relate to the overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading, which is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p>
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	<p>after High Wycombe's success.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. A 25m, 6-lane pool at Palmer Park 12. Does not adequately replace the loss of provision 13. Does not provide facilities that would support a world class aquatic sport expected in a university town 14. Does not provide for significant anticipated population growth (currently circa 350,000) 15. Does not heed the advice of Swim England 16. Does not take advantage of existing resources at Rivermead (parking, additional pool space, other sports facilities) 17. Would have a serious detrimental impact to valuable green space (due to the new pool buildings and new car parking space) 18. Does not adequately address the impact of having two similar leisure facilities within one mile of each other in terms of economic sustainability or increased accessibility for residents of Reading 19. Does not offer the best value for money for residents 20. Does not heed the overwhelming community support for a 50m pool 21. Over 4,500 signatures to the RG50 campaign 22. Reading Chronicle poll with 80% positive responses 	
Residents of Haywood Court	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Park is well-used year round and feels safe because of the presence in the area. 2. We firmly support a swimming pool here. Older residents' health has suffered as a result of the closure of Arthur Hill. 3. Bike lanes should be included within the park. 4. Need for more lights in the park. Women do not feel safe in areas that are not well lit. 5. Lights should be solar powered. 6. Sports centre needs major overhaul, more classes. 7. Wild grass areas will boost eco-diversity. 8. Children's nursery is lovely. Is it open? 9. Library is wonderful, but should be open more often. 10. There should be walking and running tracks. 11. Lloyd Park in Walthamstow is a great example. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. 3. Noted. The framework encourages improved cycling infrastructure, as well as cycle parking. However, inclusion of cycle lanes within the park will require widening of paths and will impact on open space. 4. Noted. The framework has been amended to encourage improvements to lighting. 5. Noted. The framework has been amended to encourage sustainable design and renewable energy

	<p>12. Traffic calming measures (including zebra crossings) on surrounding roads would improve safety and reduce pollution.</p> <p>13. Exits from the east side of the Cemetery would bolster the "green corridor".</p> <p>14. Reduce the size of the car park and invest in cycling points, recycling facilities and additional leisure infrastructure.</p> <p>15. Older and disabled peoples' needs should be considered in detail.</p> <p>16. The Bowling Club needs more lighting.</p> <p>17. There should be additional support for the Ethiopian café amid times of austerity/uncertainty.</p> <p>18. Utilise the hut near the playground. It has a spooky atmosphere.</p> <p>19. Consider allotments in the park.</p>	<p>throughout the park.</p> <p>6. Classes on offer are not within the scope of the planning framework, but the framework does reference a complete refurbishment of the facilities.</p> <p>7. Noted.</p> <p>8. Noted. Yes, the nursery is open.</p> <p>9. Noted. The opening hours of the library are not within the scope of this consultation.</p> <p>10. Noted. The framework seeks to retain and improve pedestrian routes throughout the park.</p> <p>11. Noted.</p> <p>12. Noted. This is not within the scope of the planning framework, but a detailed transport assessment will be carried out at such time an application is made and transport implications of development will need to be addressed.</p> <p>13. The existence of housing along the eastern side of the cemetery means that provision of an eastern exit is not possible.</p> <p>14. The framework seeks to strike a balance between car parking and encouraging sustainable transport. The framework makes reference to cycling parking and recycling facilities.</p> <p>15. Noted. A full equality assessment will be completed at such time an application is made.</p>
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		<p>16. Noted. Reference is made in the framework to improve lighting throughout the park.</p> <p>17. Noted. The framework has been amended to ensure that changes in the park do not harm the viability of the existing café.</p> <p>18. Noted. The framework considers possibilities for the future of the pavilion building.</p> <p>19. Noted. It is considered that allotments are available nearby and that the best use for the park is open green space for all users.</p>
Ridley, Robert	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The document seeks to open up the centre of the park, but both options fill much of the central space. The pool should be located nearer to Palmer Park Avenue, perhaps with the centre line of the pool aligned to the road. 2. It is important to retain the existing restricted access to the bowling green entrance for vehicles entering from the Wokingham Road. This is essential for the delivery of materials to the bowling club. The document should be amended accordingly, as below. Other diagrams need amendment to ensure that the café tables leave access to the bowling green clear. 3. I have been a member of the bowling club for 28 years and in this time, the overall usage has increased, as well as the number of cars. At peak times there are no spare parking spaces and cars have to dangerously double park or park along the access road. The bowling club has fixtures with many outside clubs throughout the season. One club, Farley Hill, has cancelled a long term annual fixture with Palmer Park because of the current inadequate parking provision. Therefore, it is key that the amount of parking for <i>existing</i> users be increased by about 20 or more spaces <u>and</u> a significant increase in parking should be added for users of the new swimming pool (a total of 300 spaces or 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An appendix has been added to illustrate the reasons why this specific location within the park has been selected. 2. Noted. The framework does not propose changes to the existing access arrangements on the route shown. 3. Noted. 3. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided. 4. The framework has been amended to ensure that the number of car parking spaces will not be reduced during the construction period. The parking will be required once facilities open, rather than at commencement of development.

- more).
4. All or most of the new parking facilities need to be in place before building commences.



Ryan, Emma

1. Parking proposed is inadequate, especially for additional facilities.
2. Traffic is already at gridlock in the area.
3. It is worth evaluating an entry route from the A4.
4. Option 1 reduces the building footprint whereas Option 2 detracts from the Park and is overbearing. Option 2 effectively compounds running costs when compared with Option 1.

1. A full transport assessment will be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate number of parking spaces is provided.
2. Noted. A full transport assessment will be required at application stage and any mitigation measures

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The proposals appear to replace old pools with new pools, rather than considering the needs of the swimming community. Pool use is changing and the Council must get on board with the needs of future users or new facilities will soon cease to meet needs. A community pool without significant spectator viewing area reduced the potential for additional revenue from competitions and Triathlon. Suggest involving triathlon clubs of reading (Rascals, TV Tristars) in the development of the concept. 6. Restriction of pool length to 25m will reduce revenue and functionality in an area where 50m pools are used for County Championships swimming. 50m pools have more flexible uses and can combine different offerings within a single time period including polo, kayak, diving, scuba, inflatable water soft play, water yoga, lessons, clubs and public swimming. Maidenhead Braywick Park is too similar and at 10 lanes will take revenue from Reading for short-course competition events. 7. A community pool also has to consider the needs of small folk especially as there is now no leisure pool in Reading. Rivermead is outdated and in a poor state of repair. 8. It is not possible to make comment on the suitability of the location of a building where there is not information to suggest what will be held within it. 9. Parking is a long way from velodrome access for those moving bicycles. Access to the velodrome needs to be close to the carpark. 10. The stadium is in disrepair and needs to be integrated into the new build, not bolted on and left to deteriorate further. The framework should go into more detail about future maintenance. 	<p>identified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A new access from the A4 would impact on the existing open space and on the operation of an already congested route into Reading. 4. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature Option 1 as the preferred option. 5. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough. 6. See response to point 5 above. 7. LEISURE 8. Noted 9. It is not considered that the parking is still conveniently located to access the velodrome and stadium. 10. The framework makes reference to refurbishment of the stadium. Reference has been added to the framework to ensure future maintenance.
Saunders, Liz	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plans look very exciting and I would welcome either option. A swimming pool will be a fantastic asset and I look forward to seeing how this progresses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted.
Short, Nick and Marja-Liisa Hovi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are long term residents of Palmer Park Avenue and have used the park and Arthur Hill Pool extensively for many years. We fully support the new swimming pool and it seems sensible that it 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The framework has been amended to provide more detail as to how

	<p>should be linked to the existing Palmer Park Stadium.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. It is not clear from the document how the proposal for the increased number of car parking spaces has been calculated. The existing car park is rarely at even half of its full capacity. Many of the cars parked there are actually people using the space as a park and ride or for overnight parking. We do appreciate that events may require more parking, but these are relatively rare and extra parking can be accommodated on green areas as overflow parking without taking these areas out of current recreational use other than for short-term parking. There are reliable and frequent bus services to the park, as well as excellent bike routes and footpaths. We need to be encouraging more exercise and less dependency on polluting cars? 3. Construction of the car park would have a significant detrimental impact on the park by reducing the amount of greenspace and creating an eye sore. The Council's policy (both in the existing Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan) specifies that proposals that would result in the loss of any areas of open space, erode their quality or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. Thus, the proposals are contrary to RBC's own planning policy. While the document proposes suggestions to address some of the issues, such as structured planting, this does not detract from the fact that open space will still be lost and there is still a clear visual impact. We note that in the emerging Local Plan, proposals for the new swimming pool state the development should "ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the use of the park." Clearly, this is not achieved with the construction of the new car park. 	<p>the proposed number of parking spaces, but these are only indicative proposals. A full transport assessment will be considered at planning application stage to ensure that the correct balance is struck between parking provision and encouraging sustainable transport.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The framework has been amended to further reduce the extent of the proposed car park, and made clear that loss of green space to parking will need to be justified at application stage.. Specific proposals will be assessed again against planning policies including EN7 at such time an application is made.
<p>Sport England</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both options have merit, but option 1 is best because it does not intrude as much into the park as option 2 2. Given the rich and diverse population of the city, it can be culturally and religiously important to ensure that the views into the pool are restricted from time to time as it is not permissible for women of certain backgrounds (including sections of the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities) to be seen in bathing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework has been amended. 2. Noted. This is not within the scope of the planning framework but will be taken into consideration at such time a planning application is made.

	<p>costumes by males who are not family members or husbands. This needs to be factored in if the pool is to be accessible to the widest range of people.</p> <p>3. The proposal for a 6-lane 25m community pool has not been justified. Sport England strongly recommended last year that RBC commission some Facilities Planning Modelling to ascertain the optimum size of pool in terms of capital and revenue costs. To date this work has not been commissioned. Therefore, once again, Sport England strongly advises that this is done to ensure the correct size of pool is being built: https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/facilities-planning-model/</p>	<p>3. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p>
Stenning, S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am a member of the Palmer Park Bowling Club. I am seriously concerned about the lack of parking proposed. At the moment during our season the parking is very restricted and quite a walk with equipment to the green. 2. The proposed parking is even further away and with the influx of pool users it will be even harder to park on an evening or weekend. 3. The bowling club was one of the first events to be undertaken after Mr Palmer kindly donated the park to the public and therefore should be given relevance. 4. A possible solution would be match day parking for the bowling club (w/ permits) towards the original lodge and snack shops. This could be used for maintenance, as well. It would keep our cars and traffic completely away from the pool and leisure centre, giving them more space. 5. An emergency vehicle needs to be able to access the bowling green in a hurry. This should be accounted for in the drawings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A full transport assessment will be considered at planning application stage to ensure that the correct balance is struck between parking provision and encouraging sustainable transport. 2. As above, the final number of spaces will need to be based on a full transport assessment. The location of the parking is still in close proximity to the bowling club. 3. Noted. 4. As above, the final number of spaces will need to be based on a full transport assessment, which will include the use of existing facilities. 5. The framework does not propose changes to existing access arrangements to the bowling green.
Stout, Andrew	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am an active member of Reading Swimming Club and I currently use the pop-up facility at Rivermead. I am pleased that the Council is striving to work with local aquatic clubs to find a 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a

	<p>resolution and my pros and cons are as follows: Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There is an urgent need to provide more swimming facilities given recent closures -It is not feasible or practical to re-open Arthur Hill because it is not fit for purpose -It is great that all the clubs are working together through the RG50 campaign <p>2. Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A 25m pool does not make economic sense nor provide provision for the needs of Reading and its clubs -A 50m pool is what Reading needs 	<p>matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.</p>
Tait, Dr AJ and Mrs E A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The new pool next to the stadium and “heart space” -Recommendations to improve the public spaces of the park, making it a place to stop, use facilities and learn -The park being a vital green space in East Reading -The proposals for the circular path with only two gates to be negotiated -The proposals for various gardens -The landscaping of the new car park to make it green 2. We support Option I and it seems more affordable 3. The fence to the stadium which is covered by undergrowth is an eyesore and needs to be addressed 4. Re-instating old paths could break up the use of informal fields, a path from the entrance in the middle of PPA should be considered 5. All efforts should be made to encourage flora and fauna 6. We don't know what is meant by “...parking can be replaced on or off-site or is no longer required.” All necessary parking should be on site because parking is an issue in the surrounding area. 7. Overall, we are in favour of the proposal. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature Option 1 as the preferred option. 3. Noted. The framework has been amended to emphasise refurbishment and maintenance of the stadium. A proposal to pull the fence inward has also been added. 4. It is considered that re-instating historic links will increase connectivity and honour the heritage significance of the park while retaining enough informal park space. A path from the middle of Palmer Park Avenue is included within the framework. 5. Noted. The framework encourages improvements to biodiversity throughout. 6. This language is included in the Local Plan policy ER1j - Palmer Park Stadium Area in order to ensure that a full parking and transport

		<p>assessment is considered at application stage. This statement does not mean increasing on-street parking in the area.</p> <p>7. Noted.</p>
Thames Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the information available to date we do not envisage infrastructure concerns regarding Water Supply capacity. 2. Due to the complexities of wastewater networks the level of information contained in this document does not allow Thames Water to make a detailed assessment at this time. We welcome the opportunity to meet with RBC to discuss wastewater needs further. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. Thames Water will be consulted in detail at application stage.
Veal, Sue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new development looks great 2. A 50m pool represents better value for money and can accommodate multiple activities at the same time (see High Wycombe). A 50m pool would give the town prestige in hosting long-course swimming competitions 3. A diving pool must be incorporated to make it a full aquatic centre. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough. 3. It is not proposed that the Palmer Park facility would incorporate diving facilities. These are proposed to be included within the Rivermead facility.
Ware, Bridget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I live in East Reading and I use to park almost daily to walk, run and meet friends. I am concerned that building a swimming pool will mean a large area of open space made into a car park. This space is used for cycling, American football, Frisbee, rounders, treasure hunts, tai chi, personal training and other activities. 2. The existing park centre outside the stadium would benefit from tidying up and having a more organised space for cars, but adding 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The framework has been amended to reduce the amount of green space that is used for parking, and made clear that loss of green space to parking will need to be justified at application stage. 2. It is considered that a swimming

	<p>a swimming pool is not right. The Council has wilfully allowed two pools in Reading to fall into disrepair so they are no longer viable. And then the land was sold to developers, ignoring proposals to keep Arthur Hill open as a pool.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Get real Reading and talk to locals. Stop spending vast sums of money on consultants to stage manage 'focal points,' 'hubs' and 'attractive vibrant spaces' when local residents are best served by open, green spaces, nature and freedom. 	<p>pool in this location will improve the leisure offer in the area. The reasoning for the closure of the Arthur Hill pool was set out in the Committee papers when the decision was made. The framework has been amended to include further analysis of possible sites within the Borough and explain why this site has been selected.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Many respondents to the consultation have expressed support for a pool in this area. Sufficient green space will be retained.
Weller, Paul	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Palmer Park is referred to as a sport facility in the document, but the proposed pool is a leisure pool and is not suitable for sport because it is too short and too narrow. The Council have sold two pools. The money from those facilities should be reinvested in swimming and sporting facilities. The proposed pool is not large enough for current needs. A large number of flats for young people are being built and a more appropriate pool is required, not a half measure. 2. The Council has requested city status and it's time city services were provided. Bracknell has better facilities. 3. The actual facility should be compromised because of expensive improvements to the park (signage, sensory areas, and other furniture) that will be vandalised. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detail proposals for the leisure centre itself and funding arrangements are not within the scope of the planning framework. 2. By establishing a pool on this site, the Council is working to improve its leisure offer. 3. It is considered that public realm improvements are an important part of the development and will make the park more attractive and better serve residents. On-going maintenance is referenced in the Framework.
White, Cllr Rob	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of well-lit route for evening use—there needs to be something in the development about evening and night-time use 2. From Newtown you have to walk "the long way round" to the main entrance. 3. No pedestrian path from the main entrance at Wokingham Road 4. Need improved picnicking facilities all around the park 5. Ward Councillors would have liked to be given an opportunity to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. The Framework has been include lighting along paths. 2. There are direct paths from the Newtown entrance to both the entrance on Wokingham Road and the leisure centre. 3. The Framework shows both a


	<p>engage earlier to allow earlier feedback.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. This framework appears dependent on the development of the park by an outsourced leisure operator. The outsourcing of services has no support from Green Party Councillors and I note that it no longer has the support of the Labour Party in Reading. 7. Recent press releases tell us that the process has already reached detailed design stage. This framework (with options at a draft stage) cannot give a development framework to developers who are already submitting detailed designs. It has wasted considerable officer time and money, as well as local resident time. 8. The document offers two possible pool locations but ignores others, leading residents to think that these are the only two possible within the park area. Results of the consultation will be led by this and won't be representative of local wishes. Many residents will be confused as to why a pool would be sited in an area of green space rather than at the existing Arthur Hill site. This should be made explicitly clear in the document. Many residents will welcome much delayed pool provision in East Reading, and will consider that if this is the only available site, then palmer park is acceptable. The decision to rule out other sites in East Reading should be detailed and clarified within the document. 9. Residents and Ward Councillors are dismayed to see that the plans include the removal of the ERAPA play area with no additional provision listed. The Wokingham road play area is not accessible to wheelchairs because it is on bark and sand. A further equality impact assessment must be done and a clear explanation offered for why the original EIA determined that there was no impact on disability, and despite significant local concern about accessible play-areas, judged that there was not already "public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impacts." 10. Residents will be very concerned to see a large car park planned. Existing parking provision caters for cars on most days of the 	<p>pedestrian path from the main pedestrian entrance on Wokingham Road and alongside the main vehicular entrance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Noted. The Framework has been amended to include reference to improved picnic spaces and seating throughout the park. 5. Noted. However, there has been an opportunity to influence the process through the consultation. 6. The decision to go through a Leisure Procurement exercise is not a matter for the Framework and is dealt with elsewhere. 7. This Framework will be used to consider planning applications for the detailed proposal and will therefore influence those detailed designs. At this stage, no planning application has been made. 8. The framework has been amended to include an analysis of why other possible sites were not proposed in order to clarify why Palmer Park was selected. 9. The Framework does not propose removal of the accessible play equipment. 10. Noted. The framework has been amended to reduce the extent to which car parking infringes on green space within the park, and made clear that loss of green space to parking will need to be justified at
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	<p>week, throughout most days of the year, with occasional events demanding 'over-flow' parking. Bus services are frequent and reliable and bus stops are directly connected to the sports centre. Car parking is unnecessary and against local policies on green open space, emerging policies and the NPPF. There seems no way that extensive additional car parking covering a large swathe of what is now grass could ever be justified or policy compliant.</p>	<p>application stage. A full transport assessment will be considered at planning application stage to ensure that the correct balance is struck between parking provision and encouraging sustainable transport.</p>
Wilks, Paul	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New pool is welcome. 2. Option 1 is preferable because it is less prominent from the surrounding houses. Option 2 is too visible from nearby houses. 3. New parking bays should be as concealed as possible from nearby houses, through positioning, screening and hedges. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. The framework has been amended to feature Option 1 as the preferred option. 3. Noted. The framework has been edited to reduce the extent to which a car park with extend into the southern area of the park. Reference is also made to "greening" the car park and reducing visual impacts.
Williams, Calvin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 25m, 6-lane pool at Palmer Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does not adequate replace the loss of provision -Does not provide facilities that would support a world class aquatic sport expected in a university town -Does not provide for significant anticipated population growth (currently circa 350,000) -Does not heed the advice of Swim England -Does not take advantage of existing resources at Rivermead (parking, additional pool space, other sports facilities) -Would have a serious detrimental impact to valuable green space (due to the new pool buildings and new car parking space) -Does not adequately address the impact of having two similar leisure facilities within one mile of each other in terms of economic sustainability or increased accessibility for residents of Reading -Does not offer the best value for money for residents -Does not heed the overwhelming community support for a 50m 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.

	<p>pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Over 4,500 signatures to the RG50 campaign -Reading Chronicle poll with 80% positive responses 	
Woods, Gary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am strongly opposed to the proposal to build a 25m pool at Palmer Park as it would not have equivalent facilities to those lost by the closure of Central Pool. 2. I have been a Masters swimming in Reading since 1989 and am appalled by the current lack of provision for competitive swimming in Reading. 3. I fully support the campaign for a 50m pool as per comments made by Reading Aquatic Group. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The overall provision of new swimming facilities in Reading is a matter for the leisure contract, which was awarded by Policy Committee in January 2020. This Framework deals specifically with the provision at Palmer Park, which would not be the right location for a facility to serve the whole Borough.

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DROP-IN SESSION

A drop-in session was held at Palmer Park Leisure Centre on 15th January 2019 during which Council officers were available to discuss the proposals informally. Notices for the event were posted throughout East Reading, including at sixteen community centres including the Palmer Park library, leisure centre and local religious organisations:






**HAVE YOUR SAY
ON THE FUTURE OF
PALMER PARK**

Reading Borough Council is consulting on a Draft Palmer Park Development Framework, which looks at the future of the park, including plans to provide a new swimming pool.


Consultation takes place between 14th December 2018 and 22nd February 2019.

For more information, please see the Council's website:
www.reading.gov.uk/palmerpark

Or come to a drop-in event at Palmer Park Stadium between 3pm and 8pm on Tuesday 15th January 2019.

www.reading.gov.uk

 **Reading**
Borough Council
Working better with you

An estimated 50 individuals attended the drop-in session. The following issues were raised:

Pool

- The framework should explain the proposal's connection to the closure of Arthur Hill.
- Most individuals prefer Option 1, particularly because the entrance to Option 2 is round the side of the building.
- There should be diving facilities.
- Who will operate the facility?
- There is a missed opportunity for dual aspect viewing (pool and stadium at the same time).
- Flat roof is not realistic when it rains so much.
- Many expressed frustration that Arthur Hill had been closed.
- The proposals are not detailed enough. There should be more information about the internal layout of the pool.
- Arthur Hill's poolside changing rooms were excellent for disabled swimmers.
- Could include more facilities, such as a Turkish bath.
- More detail is needed about where utilities will go i.e. electricity cables and water pipes, as this will affect the pool location.
- Concerns about the stability of the ground of the site of the proposed pool.

Parking

- There should be more clarity on why the two options proposed a different amount of car parking.
- Is this car park over-subscribed because it is free? This needs to be understood before a decision can be made about how much parking to provide.
- The site must be properly screened from Palmer Park Avenue.
- Parking is already at capacity. How will it cope with the increase caused by pool users?
- We shouldn't be encouraging driving by providing car parking.
- Parking area proposed may be unsafe. We need a full survey of the chalk mines.
- Many felt that there should be less parking to ensure that the south end of the park has an open feel.
- How will parking permit zones coming into effect increase pressures on this car park?
- No parking spaces should be lost.
- Structured grass never works.
- We are concerned that cars will spill out onto nearby streets looking for parking.
- It should be clear that smaller car parks are not available for general users of the park.
- We would prefer to see the small car park near the church extended.
- Provisions for coach parking should be clearer.
- There is too much staff parking proposed.

- Will there be charges for parking? This will make using the gym even more expensive.
- The site has good transport links and there will be less reliance on cars in the future.
- There is no justification for the loss of green space.
- The current management of the car park is unsatisfactory. Many park here to visit shops and get a bus into the town centre.
- Needs more detail on cycle racks.

Consultation

- Several people would like to be able to fill out a form at the drop-in.
- It is not clear which options have been appraised, both in terms of other locations in the Borough for a pool and other sites within the park.

Other

- Fields to the south of the building are used informally by small sports groups.
- Lights don't make the park feel safe. Having people in the park makes it feel safe.
- A new café is a great idea.
- The sensory garden is a great idea.
- "Containment of space" proposed on page 17 is a good idea.
- We don't need public realm in front of the building.
- Reinstating the path from the southeast corner will interrupt cyclists and runners.
- Trees are poorly looked after.
- Circular path needs to be smoothed and better-maintained.
- Adventure playground should not be lost.
- Will recycling facilities be retained. If not, where will they move to?
- Path proposed through car park should be completely linear and not break off at the car park.
- Floodlights are not helpful for drivers.
- Main access road has no footpath.
- Play elements must be available for all users of different ages and abilities. Dinton Pastures is a good example.
- The proposed "floor graphics" are too in your face.
- Circular path should be bonded gravel.
- Emergency access is important.
- Avoid level changes that are not clearly marked and steep gradients for disabled users.
- A terrace would be nice.
- There should be outdoor gym facilities.

- Where does the funding come from, and how can the Council afford this when the repairs to Arthur Hill were considered too costly?
- Concerns about the construction process, e.g. routing of HGVs or any temporary loss of parking.
- Does 'consolidation' of children's play mean that existing features will be relocated e.g. will the ERAPA facilities be lost, or moved?
- Concerns about a new café competing with the existing café
- Need to ensure that the broader park improvements are not separated from the pool, so that the pool building cannot be allowed to go ahead without improvements to the park.
- What is the main formal entrance to the park? If this has been lost, can it be reinstated?

The following posters were available for consideration:

Consultation on the Draft Palmer Park Development Framework

What is this consultation about?

The Council is reviewing its leisure provision across Reading. As part of this, it is proposed to provide a new swimming pool for East Reading to replace facilities which have been lost, and the Local Plan identifies Palmer Park as a site to provide this.

The Draft Palmer Park Development Framework is a consultation document that looks at how a new pool could be accommodated, and any other opportunities for improvement of Palmer Park, to make sure that it remains a well-used location for sports and recreation.

The document:

- considers the historical development of the park;
- Looks at constraints and opportunities;
- Identifies objectives and develops some key design principles; and
- Shows two options for accommodating a new swimming pool.

This is a consultation, and no decisions on these options and principles have been made at this stage. This is therefore your chance to have your say.

How can I get involved?

The consultation runs until **Friday 22nd February 2019**.

We welcome any comments that you have.

You can comment by writing to us at:

planningpolicy@reading.gov.uk

Planning Policy Team
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

You can find more information on our website, at www.reading.gov.uk/palmerpark



Overall Illustrative Framework for whole park (showing pool option 1)

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 New HEART SPACE... giving the heart of the park back to people with a revitalised contemporary landscape and public realm.
 - 2 Sports pitches with retained open park character.
 - 3 Southern parkland defined with new edge planting around the car park/stadium.
 - 4 Re-instated historic path links for better circulation and increased footfall through the park.
 - 5 Potential to add new layers of use and function into the active core of the park... for a renewed interest and general modernisation. (see suggestions on pages 8-11)
 - 6 Consolidated active play space close to pavilion, reduced fenced area. Informal play space outside the fence remains.
 - 7 Retention of existing sporting facilities such as the Bowling Club and 5-a-side pitches.
 - 8 New main car parking area designed as a green car park, and retained overflow parking capacity.
 - 9 Retention of lime tree avenue around the park perimeter. Implement a successional tree planting strategy. Provide a circular path without barriers to movement.
- (P) Other car parking opportunities including:
- disabled car parking at historic park entrance along Wokingham Road/access to pavilion unit;
 - parking at southern corner of Wokingham Road/ Palmer Park Avenue to service the church;
 - parking north of pool building, may include access restriction to limit car movements across the heart space



Option 1

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 Attach new pool building to existing stadium building. Entrance remains in same location.
- 2 Develop a new public realm in front of the building that attracts people to the centre of the park. Shared surface allows restricted access to car park and servicing areas.
- 3 Give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue.
- 4 Public car park (approx. 230 spaces) close to pool entrance. Green design with planting and grasscrete and softened around the edges with meadow grassland.
- 5 Overflow car park as per current location...access rationalised via new car park.
- 6 Informal park and garden. Define edges to the path with seating steps or metal edging.
- 7 Define space as sensory and wildlife garden. Retain existing sensory play and add other elements for sensory experiences...flowering and fragrant planting, musical play, barefoot path, bug hotel etc.
- 8 Play area consolidated for better surveillance and functional definition, reduced fence line.
- 9 Potential community garden linked to commercial unit/cafe within the pavilion.
- 10 Axis to monument revitalised with new seating and floor graphics linked to the overall theme.
- 11 Bowling green and 5-a-side pitches retained.
- 12 Access limited for maintenance, servicing and staff (approx. 36 additional spaces).
- 13 Re-instated historic path link for better circulation through the park.
- 14 Retain informal play space outside of fenced area.

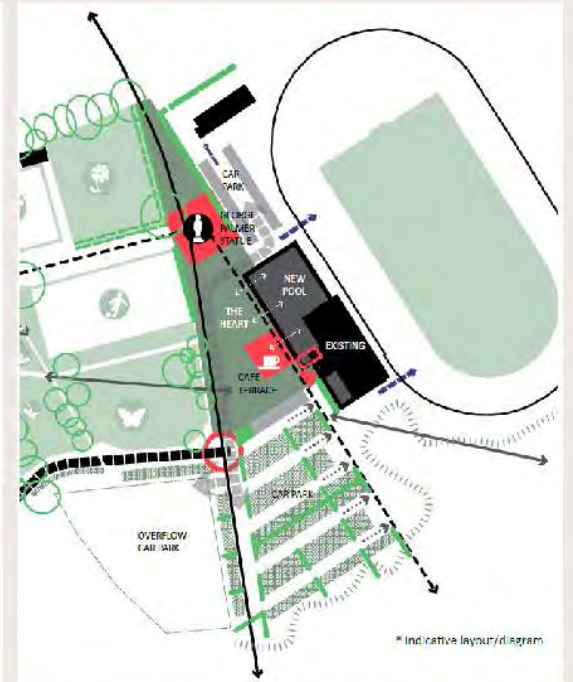
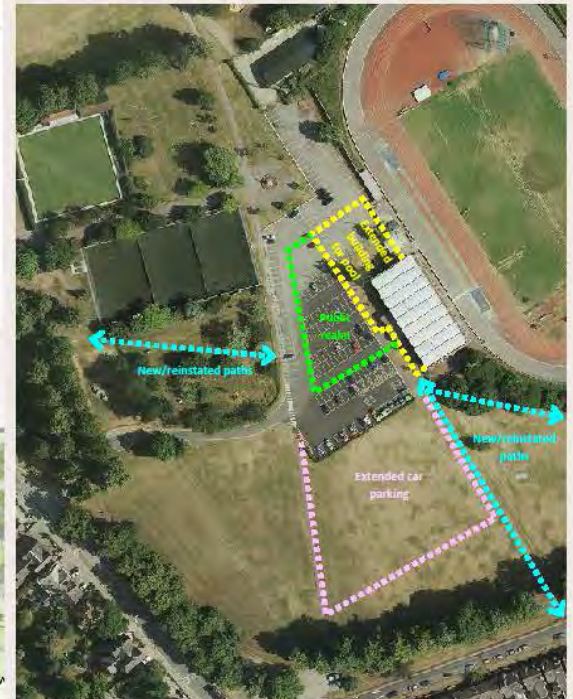


FIGURE 1: ILLUSTRATIVE MASSING PLAN - EXISTING (POOL BUILDING OPT 1)

Page 210



Option 2



CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 Attach new pool building to existing stadium building in more prominent position, new entrance situation.
- 2 Develop a new public realm around the building linking the new entrance space with the space at the monument. Shared surface allows restricted access to car park and servicing areas.
- 3 Give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue
- 4 Public car park (approx. 190 spaces) close to pool entrance. Green design with planting and grasscrete and softened around the edges with meadow grassland.
- 5 Overflow car park as per current location...access rationalised via new car park.
- 6 Informal park and garden. Define edges to the path with seating steps or metal edging.
- 7 Define space as sensory and wildlife garden. Retain existing sensory play and add other elements for sensory experiences...flowering and fragrant planting, musical play, barefoot path, bug hotel etc.
- 8 Play area consolidated for better surveillance and functional definition, reduced fence-line.
- 9 Potential community garden linked to commercial unit/cafe within the pavilion.
- 10 Axis to monument revitalised with new seating and floor graphics linked to the overall theme.
- 11 Bowling green and 5-a-side pitches retained.
- 12 Access limited for maintenance, servicing and staff (approx. 46 additional spaces).
- 13 Re-instated historic path link for better circulation through the park.
- 14 Retain informal play space outside of fenced area.

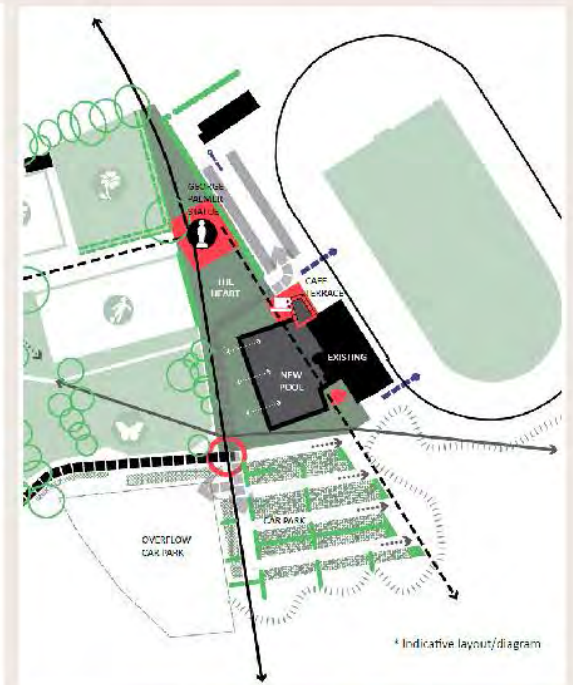
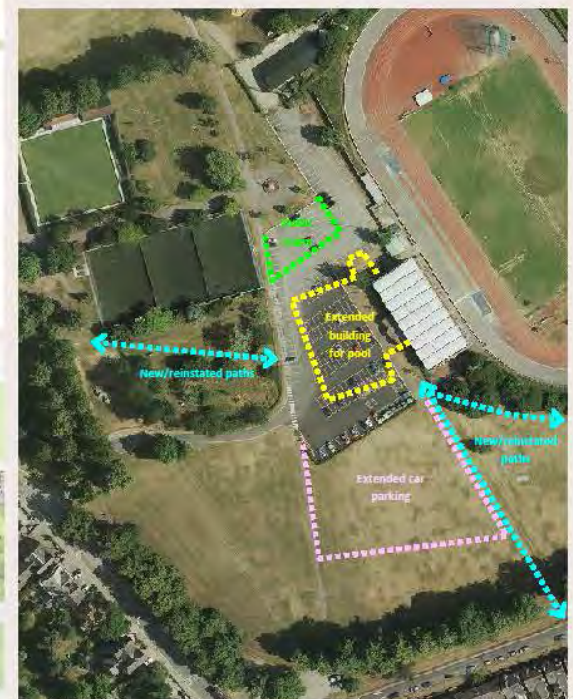


FIGURE 11 INDICATIVE MASTER PLAN EXTRACT (POOL BUILDING OPT 2)

Page 213



Historic maps



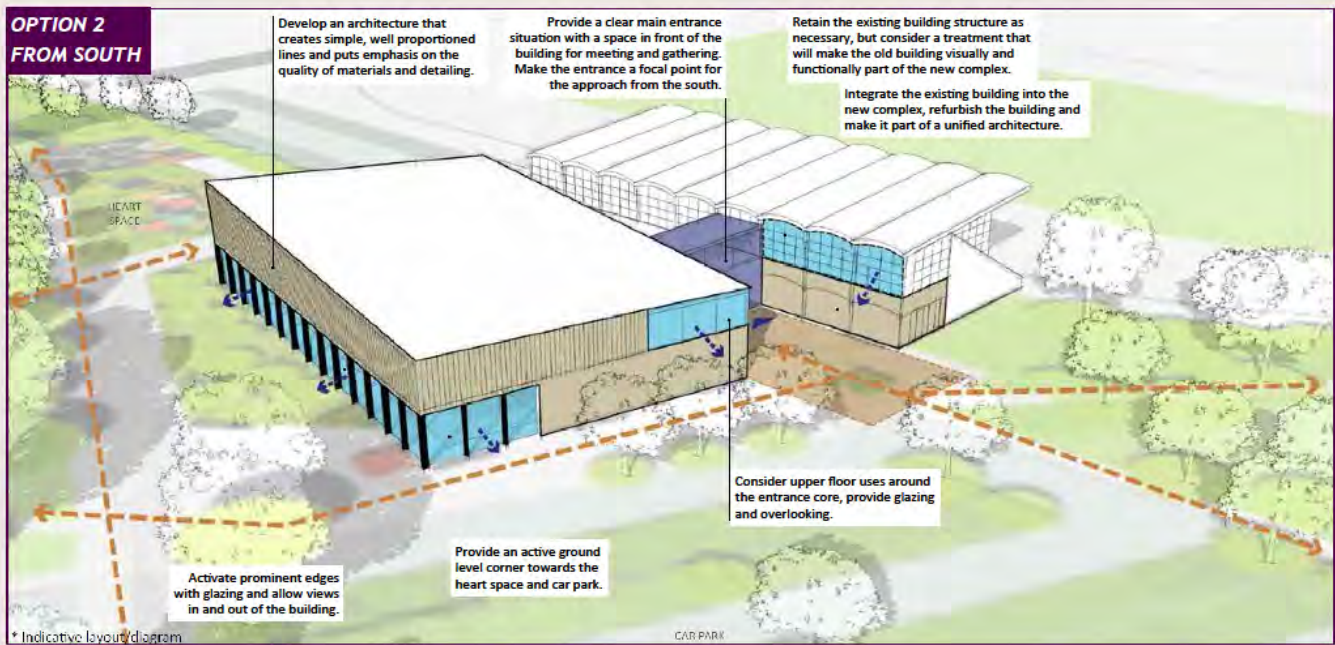
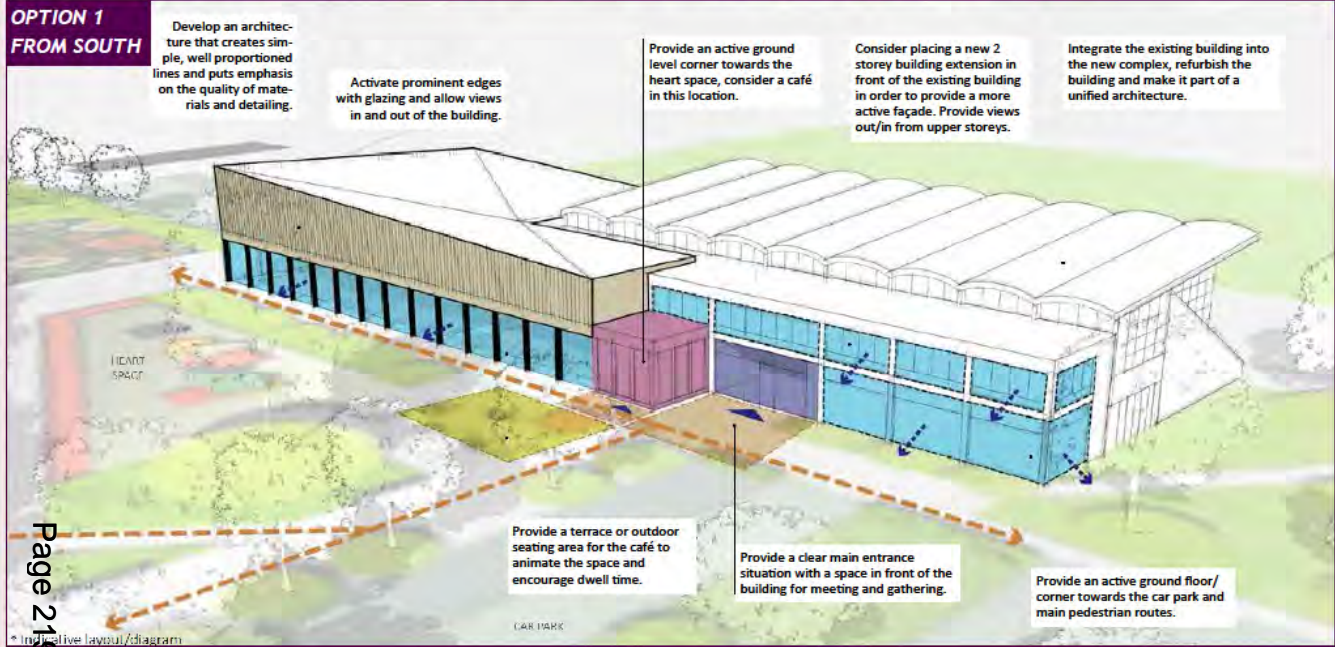
Page 218



Source of maps: www.oldmapsonline.org

Further detail (illustrative)

Drawings to illustrate possible architectural principles for pool building



Car park

Current situation: Approximately 196 public spaces.

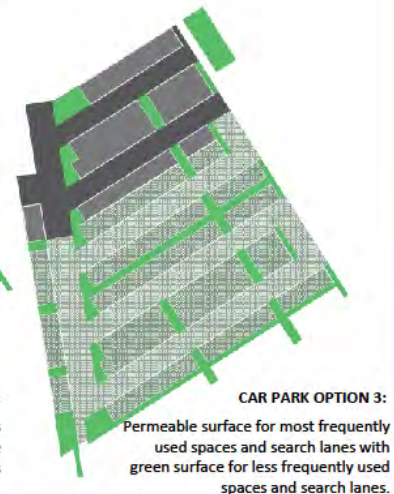
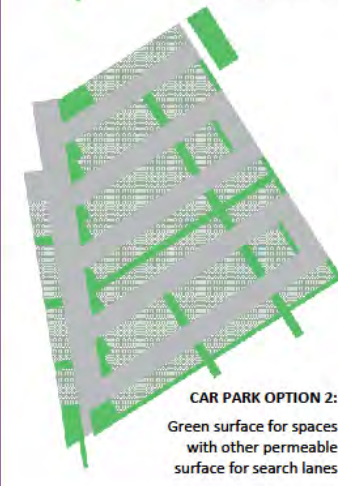
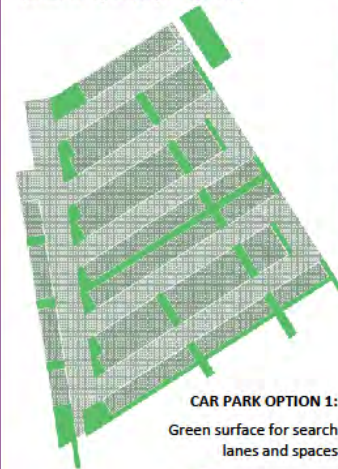
Under Option 1: Approximately 230 public spaces with 36 additional spaces for staff, maintenance and servicing.

Under Option 2: Approximately 190 public spaces with 46 additional spaces for staff, maintenance and servicing.

(figures above do not include car park at junction of Palmer Park Avenue and Wokingham Road)

Car park surface options

(based on layout for pool option 1)



Memorandum: Consultee Response			
TO:	Mark Worringham	Direct Line:	
FROM:	Jonathan Mullis	Ext No.	0118 946 7000
Consultee :	Historic Buildings Consultant	Dated:	3-4-19
Ref:			
Proposal:	Palmer Park Development Framework		
Location:	Palmer Park, Caversham		
Consultee Response:	DWG / Doc Ref:		
<p>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 With respect to these applications, the applicable statutory provisions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 16(2) which regards listed building consent for any works; and • Section 66(1) the determination of applications <p>These Sections state that when determining applications, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State, <i>'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'</i>.</p> <p>Legislative and Planning Policy Framework Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 66(1), in the determination of applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building, states that:</p> <p><i>'in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'</i></p> <p>Recent legal cases relating to issues of the setting of listed buildings have established that under section 70(3) the general power to grant planning permission under section 70(1) is expressly subject to sections 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</p> <p>This means that under Sections 16 and 66 of the Act authorities considering applications for planning permission for works which affect a listed building must have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the Listed Building.</p> <p>Curtilage Listing and Fixtures In addition, fixtures and curtilage buildings, that is any object or structure which is fixed to the building or is within the curtilage and forms part of the land and has done so since before July 1948, are also treated as part of the building for the purposes of listed building control.</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 In March 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaced the National Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The NPPF was subsequently updated in 2018. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a</p>			

key dimension of 'sustainability' is defined as '*...protecting and enhancing our...historic environment*' (DCLG et al, 2018).

The NPPF recognises the historic environment as comprising all aspects of the environment which have resulted from the interaction between people and places through time (DCLG et al, 2018, Annex 2: Glossary). The elements of the historic environment that are considered to hold significance are called heritage assets (DCLG et al, 2018, Annex 2: Glossary).

The associated Planning Practice Guide (PPG) identifies heritage assets as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

The glossary annexed to the PPG defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Planning Practice Guide (PPG)

The Planning Practice Guide (PPG) (2014) clarifies this additional requirement under 'What is the main legislative framework for planning and the historic environment?' where it states that:

In addition to the normal planning framework set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990....the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.

Any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

(See ID 18a-002-20140306)

Reading Borough Planning Policies

The Core Strategy 2008 (with further alterations January 2015), Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.*

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located and for the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

Historic Park and Garden

Grade II Registered. A mid-C19 cemetery, laid out 1842-3 in formal and informal style for a private cemetery company, with planting by nurserymen Sutton and Son of Reading.

Listed Building Description

Grade II Listed Church of St Bartholomew SU 7373 8/521 II GV 2. Church of England 1879. Chiefly interesting as Alfred Waterhouse's first and possibly only large-scale essay in Church building . Gothic. On corner of Palmer Park. 5 bay aisled nave. Red brick with grey brick decoration (eg cross in west gable) and bands. Ashlar plinth and recessed reveals. Tiled roof. West front has central entrance with stepped triplet in pointed recess above it and a double belfry. West porch to north of aisle a later addition (1920 by Sir Ninian Comper) with ashlar ogee entrance flanked by shield panels representing St Bartholomew's flaying knives and St Peter's keys) and topped by canopied niche with statue of St Bartholomew. Interior: wide bay arcades on low columns; whitewash now obscures polychromy of brickwork which was exposed inside as well as out. Tie beam roof. 3 bay aisled chancel 1902-05 (see rainwater heads) by G F Bodley with decorated windows - chancel added with Waterhouse's consent. Panelled wagon roof.

Grade II St Bartholomew's Church Hall SU 7373 8/522 II GV 2. Circa 1880, possibly by Alfred Waterhouse. Red brick with grey brick dressings, bands and decoration in gables. Tiled roofs. Ashlar cope and kneelers to left hand gable. 3 gables, centre recessed; 3 lancets each. Low fabled wings flanking left hand gable which has dormered chimney with tumbled brick.

Grade II Vicarage to St Bartholomew's Church. 1883. Alfred Waterhouse Architect. Gothic and asymmetric. 2 1/2 storeys. Red brick with plinth. Wide grey and red brick chequer band over ground floor and in gables with raised brick diapering and decorative verges tiled gabled roof with later chimneys. To north: 2 gables of 3 windows each, segmental headed sash windows and a centre bay. Left hand gable has slightly corbelled 1st floor, the right hand bay projects slightly with corner buttresses and 2 pointed doorways. Gable to west. Garden front 7 bays, 3 with slight gabled breaks left of centre.

Grade II Statue of George Palmer SU 7373 8/545 II 2. 1891. Sculptor George Blackall Simmonds. Bronze. The founder of Huntley and Palmer's biscuit empire carries his silk hat and his umbrella in his right hand and grasps his lapel with his left. Tall pink granite plinth with moulded base and cornice. Erected by public subscription. Stood in Broad Street. Unveiled 4.xi.1891. Moved to present position (Palmer also gave this Park to Reading) in 1930. A very unusual statue.

Heritage Assets

In addition to the above the non-designated heritage assets include the:

- Victorian pavilion building
- Toilet block
- South entrance gates and piers

There is also a mature lime tree-lined path around the park perimeter.

Proposals

The proposals:

- set out a vision and framework for the future development of a swimming pool and associated spaces within the park;
- recommend improvements to the public realm and spaces in the park;
- identify and resolve constraints and other barriers to development.

The development framework provides aspirations to:

- give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue.
- provide a new pool building
- would retain historic pavilion building, WCs and entrance gate piers.
- would reinstate historic path links for better circulation and increased footfall through the park.

Conclusions

The proposals are not considered to have any adverse impacts on the settings of designated heritage assets. The aspiration to improve the setting of the George Palmer statue requires careful detail, but should serve to prove an overall heritage benefit.

The proposals for the car park to the southern end of the park also requires careful detailing in order to respect the character of the adjacent piers and gates within the entrance.

The designs for the swimming pool building are both modern designs which is considered appropriate within the context of the Stadium and surrounding infrastructure. Whilst there is no objection to either of the proposed designs, Option 1 would be marginally preferable as it has the simplest overall form.

Summary

Please see above.

RECOMMENDATION <i>check relevant boxes</i>		CONDITIONS Discharge	PRE-APP submission
<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVE	<input type="checkbox"/> REFUSE	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLIES with Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORT PRE-APP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO OBJECTION		<input type="checkbox"/> NON-COMPLIANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT PRE-APP
<input type="checkbox"/> S106 Legal Agreement			

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Page 225

PALMER PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

MARCH 2020



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Purpose and Scope	2
1.3 Policy Context	3
1.4 Analysis & Baseline Condition	4
1.5 Historical Development	5
1.6 Circulation	5
1.7 Constraints & Opportunities	6

2. THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1 Concept and Design Drivers	7
2.2 Active Core Design Principles	8
2.3 Pool Option 1	12
2.4 Pool Option 2	14
2.5 Illustrative Framework Plan	16

3. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.1 The 'Heart' Space	17
3.2 Car & Cycle Parking	20
3.3 Pool Building	22

4. APPENDIX

4.1 Alternative Locations Assessment	24
4.2 Pool Building Options (as per Consultation Stage)	26

Page 228

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1. INTRODUCTION & ANALYSIS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Reading Borough Council is reviewing its provision and management of leisure facilities across the Borough to align the leisure offer with the Council's vision for sport and leisure. As well as looking to refurbish existing facilities, there is also focus on replacing facilities that have been lost at Central Pool and Arthur Hill.

The new Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) marks Palmer Park as a site for the development of a new swimming pool. This offers a major opportunity for Palmer Park as a whole and the Council recognises that any development needs to be well integrated and pose no negative impact on the park.

This development framework reviews the park's functionality as a key green space and sporting facility to ensure that it remains a well used place for the future.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The main purpose of this document is to set out a framework and design principles for the development of a new swimming pool within Palmer Park to ensure a co-ordinated, high quality, comprehensive development creating a well integrated new leisure facility in East Reading. This framework provides urban design, landscape and architectural guidelines by means of supplementary planning guidance, which will be used to inform future planning applications.

Secondly the document sets out further ideas and principles for other spaces within the park. These ideas and indicative interventions will need further investigation to test their feasibility and mechanisms of delivery, which could be part of separate projects not linked to the development of the swimming pool.

The document is intended to:

- set out a vision and framework for the future development of a swimming pool and principles for associated spaces within the park;
- recommend improvements to the public realm and spaces in the park;
- respond to planning policy in relation to the swimming pool development;
- identify and resolve constraints and other barriers to development.



Site photos - 1) Stadium building and car park; 2) Historic entrance gates at Wokingham Road; 3) Path leading to sports fields and London Road; 4) Avenue to George Palmer monument; 5) View of play space and mature lime tree avenue

1.3 POLICY CONTEXT

This Framework forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and supplements policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019.

The main policy that this Framework supplements is policy ER1j, a site-specific allocation of the Palmer Park stadium area.

The boundary of policy ER1j as defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map, and reproduced in Figure 1, covers the stadium complex and car park as well as the access road. The surrounding areas of open space are shown as Local Green Space under policy EN7.

However, this Framework considers the future of the park as a whole, including areas outside the ER1j allocation. In doing so, it helps to achieve a number of other policy aims of the Local Plan, such as ensuring that residents are provided with good access to leisure facilities, and that Reading's parks and open spaces can be enjoyed and accessed by all. Outside the allocation boundary, changes to the park will therefore need to be considered against the other parts of the plan alongside this Framework.

POLICY ER1j - PALMER PARK STADIUM AREA

Additional leisure development for a new swimming pool. Development should:

- *Demonstrate that car parking to be lost can be replaced on or off-site, or is no longer required;*
- *Ensure that there is no adverse impacts on the use of the park and its sport and leisure facilities;*
- *Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the listed monument and its setting;*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*
- *Retain public rights of way across the site.*



FIGURE 1 LOCAL PLAN DESIGNATION

1.4 ANALYSIS / BASELINE CONDITION

FUNCTION

Palmer Park is an important green space serving East Reading's neighbourhoods as amenity and recreational space, as well as acting as 'green lung' with potential to improve air quality in the locality. The athletics stadium and velodrome have as sporting venues more regional and county wide importance. The park also serves as a location for local events such as fun fairs, circus and charity fundraising events.

USES

Uses within the park include the following:

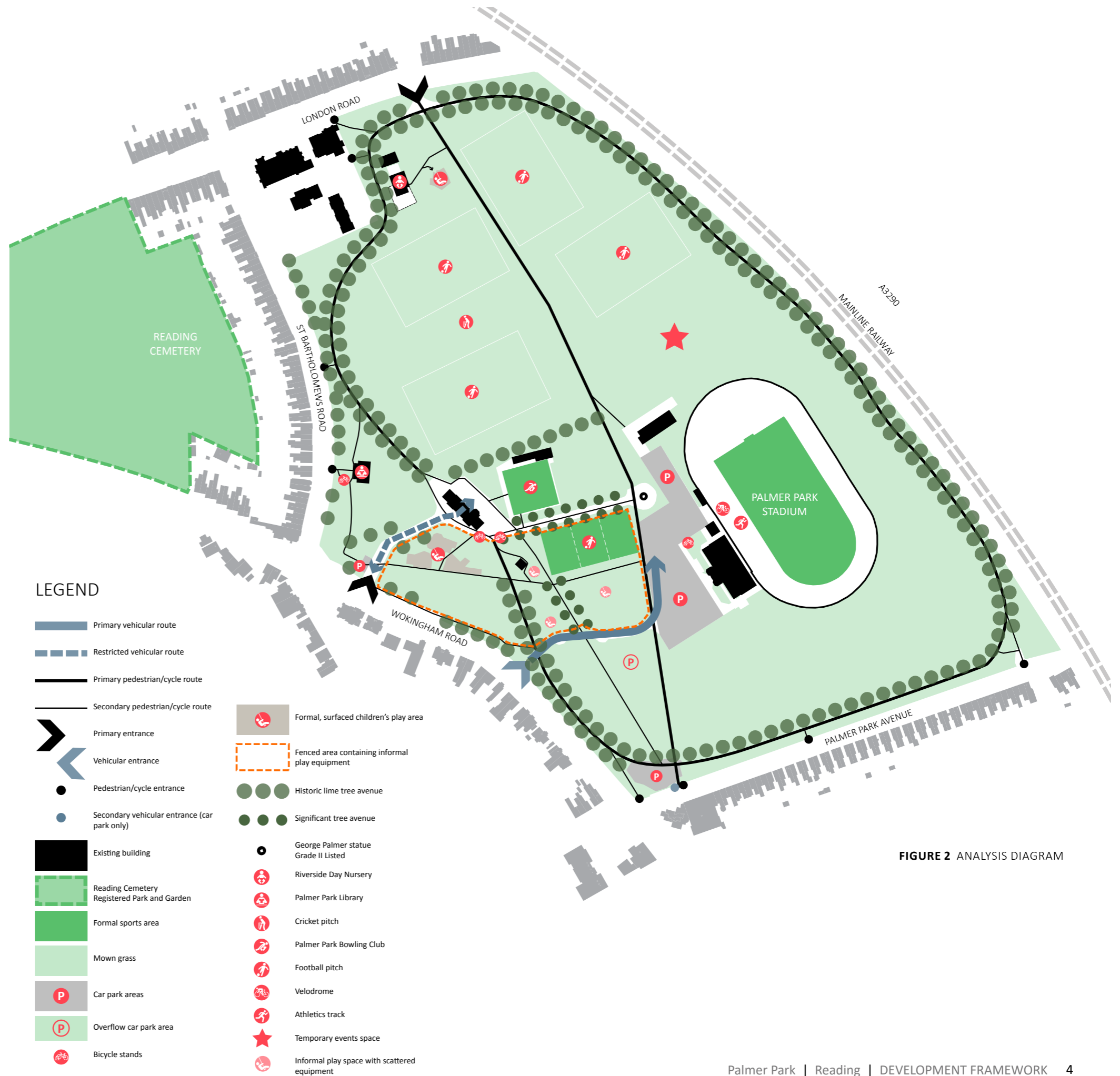
- Formal sports with athletics stadium, velodrome, artificial turf 5-a-side pitches, bowling club and football pitches
- Playground for young and older children (fenced), and play equipment in the north (unfenced)
- Informal green spaces for kickabout and general recreation
- Mature tree lined paths around the park perimeter
- Victorian pavilion building with a residential unit and a commercial space (currently not used)
- Public library
- Day nursery with garden space
- Temporary uses include fun fairs, circus etc on land to the north of the stadium

The park provides currently 209 car parking spaces (incl. 8 disabled spaces) as well as an overflow car park

OBSERVATIONS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

Dialogue with the Parks Department of Reading Borough Council (RBC) as well as general observations as a visitor of the park revealed the following baseline conditions:

- The park is a well used facility on certain days, but potentially underused at other times.
- The park is well used, but feels run-down in places.
- The football pitches and stadium are well used and booked.
- The play area is spread out within a large fenced space, which makes overlooking difficult. The area to the east is currently underused and its use as a play space could be reviewed.
- The North-South path seems to be a well-used route through the park, whereas the East-West routes from the monument and car park to the play area appears to carry fewer pedestrians.
- The library building turns its back to the park and currently has very little interaction with other park uses.
- The car park and space in front of the stadium lacks structure and clear routes for pedestrians/cyclists. Cars have priority over pedestrians in this space.
- Overall the park feels like a collection of uses and functions that lack a clear structure and 'heart'.
- The mature lime trees within the park are a fantastic asset and retain the character of the Victorian park design.
- Anti-social behaviour is being recorded within the park and is especially noticed within the scrub woodland around the stadium.



LEGEND

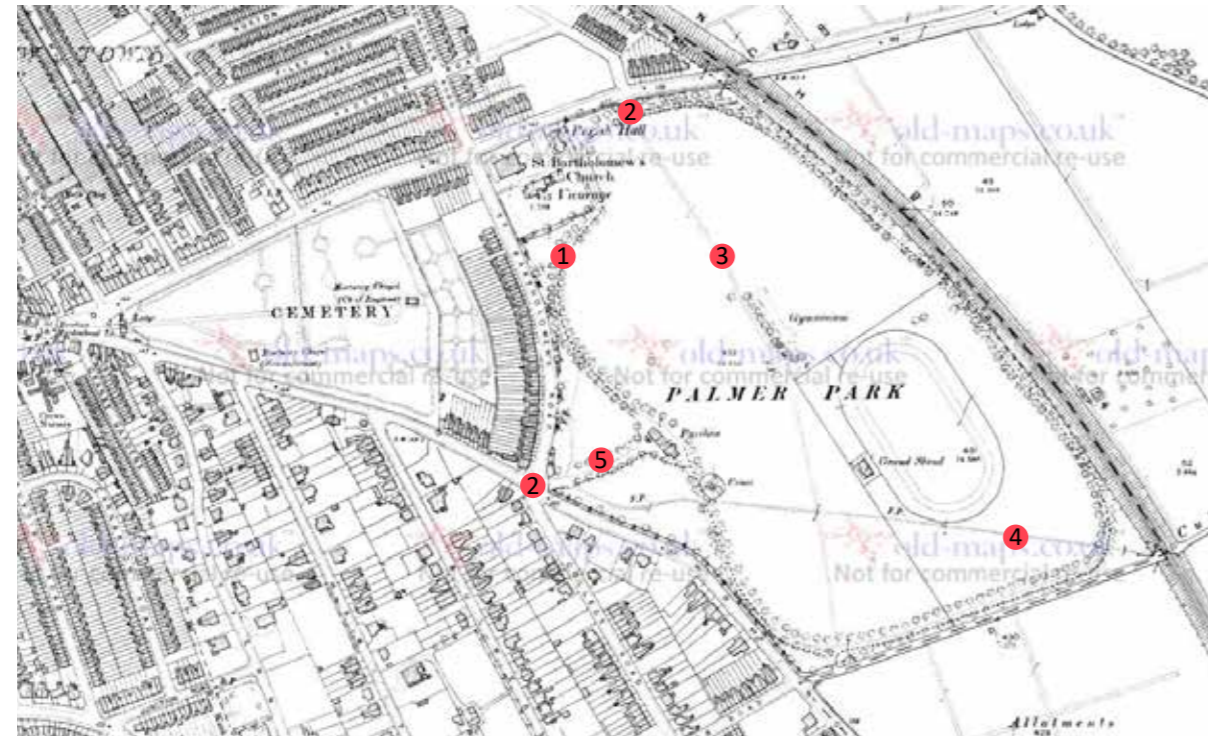
- Primary vehicular route
- Restricted vehicular route
- Primary pedestrian/cycle route
- Secondary pedestrian/cycle route
- Primary entrance
- Vehicular entrance
- Pedestrian/cycle entrance
- Secondary vehicular entrance (car park only)
- Existing building
- Reading Cemetery Registered Park and Garden
- Formal sports area
- Mown grass
- Car park areas
- Overflow car park area
- Bicycle stands
- Formal, surfaced children's play area
- Fenced area containing informal play equipment
- Historic lime tree avenue
- Significant tree avenue
- George Palmer statue Grade II Listed
- Riverside Day Nursery
- Palmer Park Library
- Cricket pitch
- Palmer Park Bowling Club
- Football pitch
- Velodrome
- Athletics track
- Temporary events space
- Informal play space with scattered equipment

FIGURE 2 ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

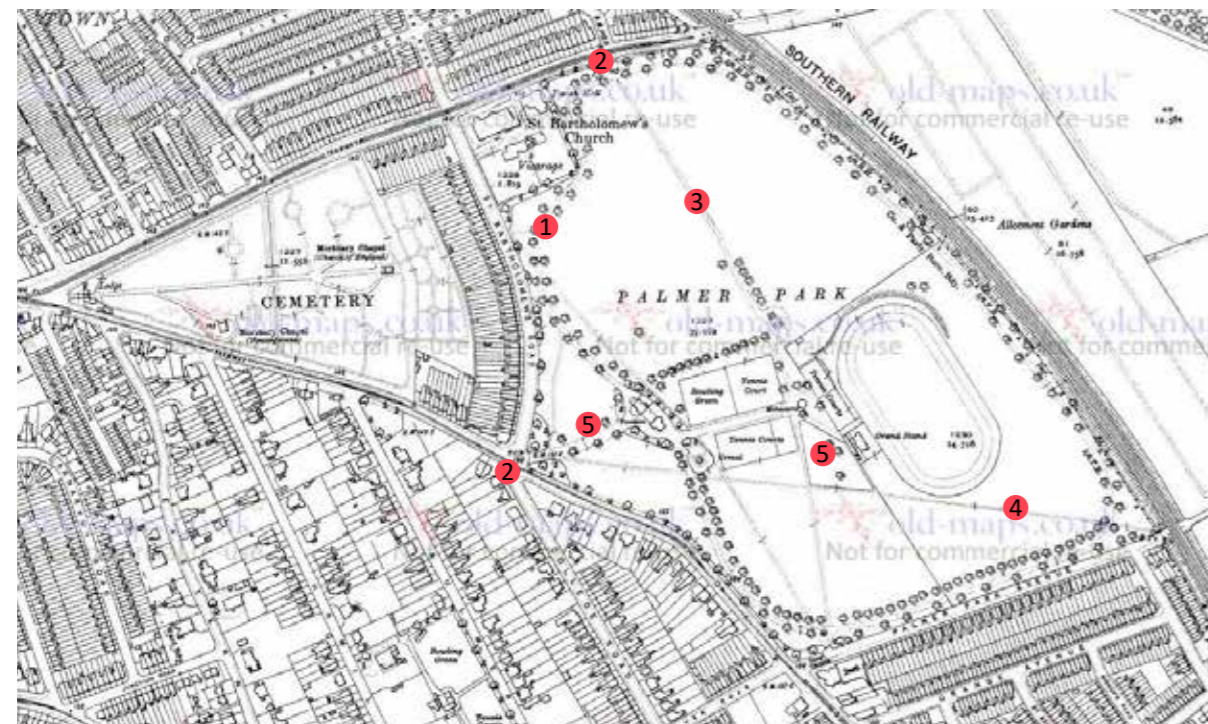
1.5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The park was initially 21 acres - land donated to the town by the renowned biscuit company Huntley and Palmers, in 1889. In 1891 it was extended to cover 49 acres, and fully opened in November of that year. It was designed by the architect William Ravenscroft.

Palmer Park has a number of varied uses, and contains one of the oldest velodromes in the country, having been constructed at the turn of the century. Primarily used by local residents, it hosts many religious festivals, sports competitions and events such as the fun fair.



1899 OS County Series Berkshire



1931 OS County Series Berkshire

1.6 CIRCULATION

The original design and structure of the park includes the key elements of:

1. The circular tree lined path around the perimeter;
2. Main entrance gates in the west and north, other entrances are secondary in nature;
3. A strong North-South link, which splits into two in the southern half of the park;
4. A diagonal East-West link;
5. A tree lined avenue leading to the pavilion building and terminating at the monument with a focal space in front of the stadium.

Most of these are still in existence and have altered little over the years. One of the main interventions has been the creation of a vehicular access and car park within the triangular space in front of the stadium in the 1980s. Other changes include the loss of parts of the East-West and North-South paths, particularly along the Palmer Park Avenue side.

There is potential with the development framework to re-discover some of these original design structures, which could lead to an improved circulation within the park.

The play area is currently a large fenced space spread out over a wide area. The gates pose a barrier to the usability of key movement routes such as the circular path. Activities such as running or cycling around the park are made inconvenient and result in fewer movements through this space.

The proposals should consider if a consolidated play space and reduced fenced area could open up routes and improve their usability.

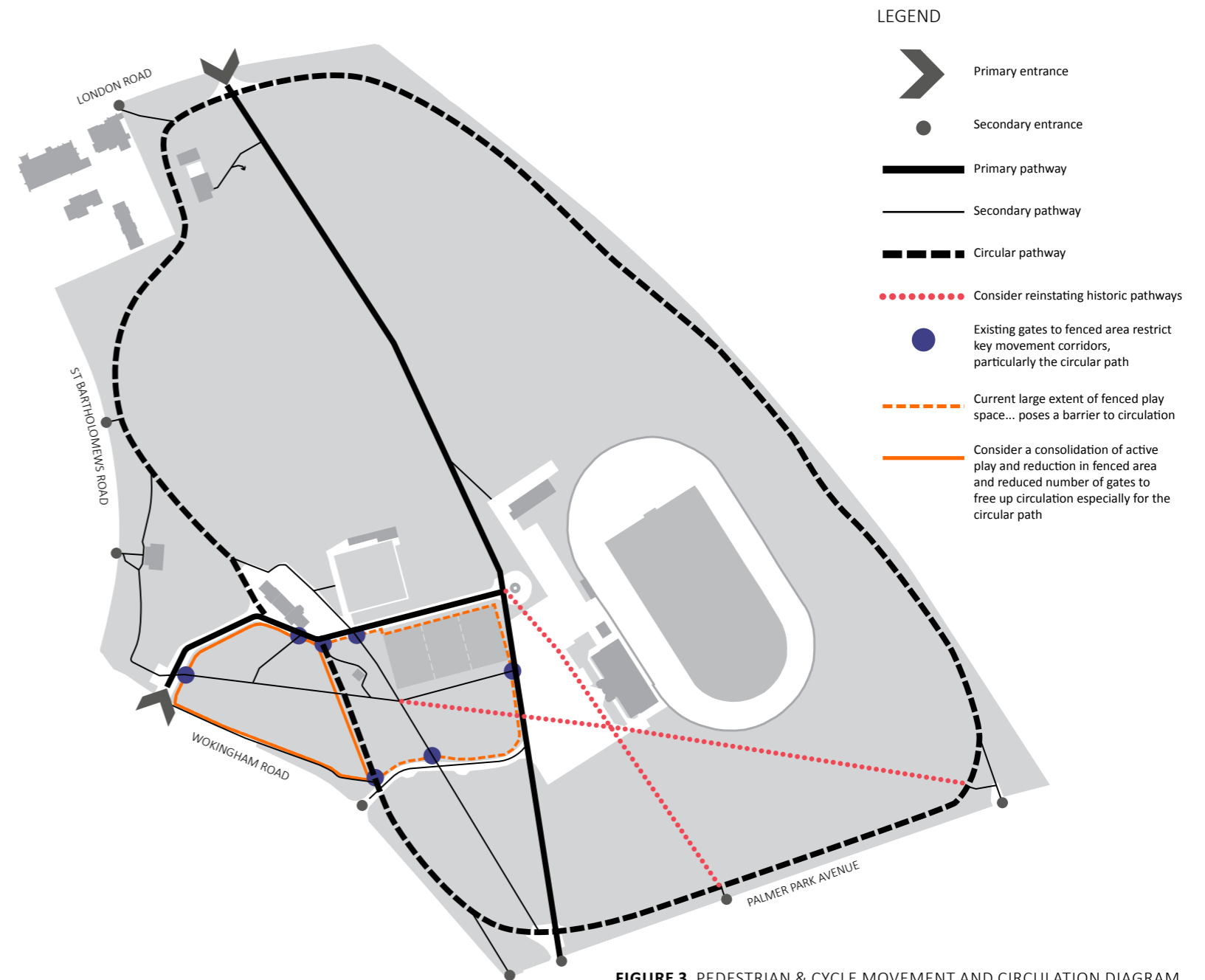


FIGURE 3 PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE MOVEMENT AND CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

1.7 CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES

Whilst the park has a number of well used facilities (the Stadium, Bowling Club and sports pitches) there are a number of under-used facilities and spaces, particularly in the central zone, which have the potential to become attractive, vibrant spaces and successful facilities. The strategy needs to be twofold and focus on general upgrades and improvements of existing spaces to maintain quality as well as look at opportunities to improve the general offer and appeal.

Simple interventions, such as announcing the park more prominently and invitingly at the entrances and re-instating some historic footpaths on the southern side, would increase footfall through the park and encourage more local residents to utilise their local asset.

Other opportunities include the restructuring of the triangular space in front of the stadium as a central focal space. The new swimming pool building is best placed in this location to enable the re-use of the existing building as well as the vehicular access route.

The refurbishment works of the park provide additional opportunities, which should be considered in any proposed works, such as:

- enhance the park's wildlife value to increase biodiversity and greenspace value
- interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as improved lighting

CONSTRAINTS

The main existing constraints include the following:

The servicing access to the maintenance building and temporary events space needs to be integrated into the master plan.

Large parts of the park have previously been identified at risk of subsidence due to chalk mines. Detailed surveys are not currently available to determine the extent of the risk or outline of potential measures to mitigate affected areas. Specific areas used within the framework for development, such as the proposed car park need further site investigation to assess suitability and feasibility.

- 3 Access to the stadium needs to be retained for servicing/maintenance and emergency. The raised sides of the velodrome need to be considered in this regard.
- 4 A full transport assessment is required at application stage to assess the vehicular access onto Wokingham Road given the likely increase in flows, which may require an upgrade to the junction.
- 5 The existing mature trees within the park pose a significant asset for the character and value of the park and need to be carefully integrated into any proposals.

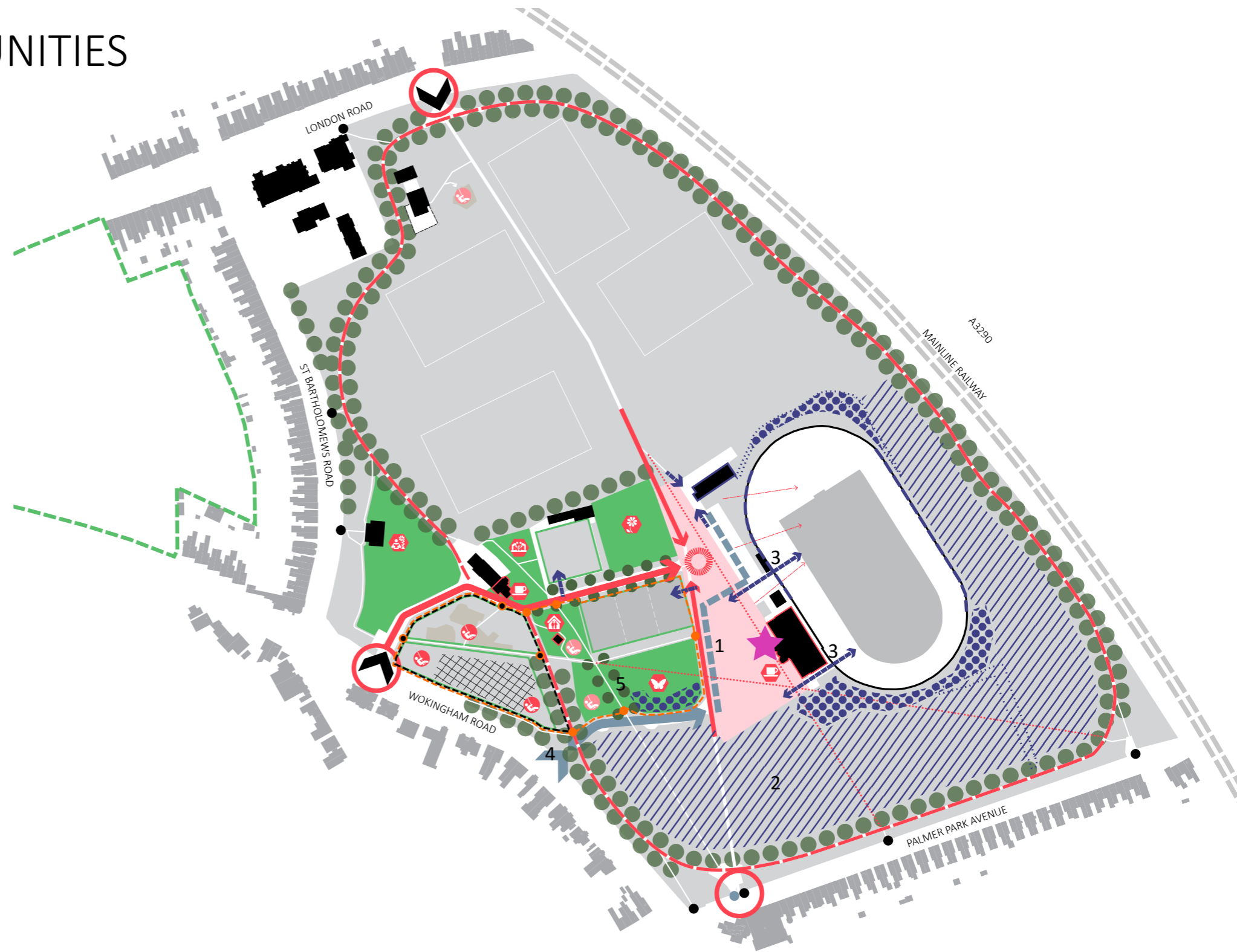


FIGURE 4 CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM

LEGEND

	Primary vehicular route		Reading Cemetery Registered Park and Garden
	Primary entrance		Green space with existing active use
	Vehicular entrance		Historic lime tree avenue support permanence with successional planting
	Pedestrian/cycle entrance		Significant tree avenue support permanence with successional planting
	Secondary vehicular entrance (car park only)		George Palmer statue Grade II Listed
	Existing building		Existing play area fence and gates

CONSTRAINTS

	Embankment		Existing building with negative aesthetic and long lease
	Timber close boarded fencing blocks views into stadium from park		Retain vehicular servicing access
	Potential for below ground chalk mines [Area TBC by site survey]		Below ground attenuation tanks in this area [precise location TBC by RBC]
	Vegetated areas supporting anti-social behaviour		Access required for servicing, emergency and maintenance

OPPORTUNITIES

	Route with opportunity for enhancement		Green space with potential		Wildlife and sensory garden
	Circular route with opportunity for enhancement		Restructuring of central space required to improve its visual and functional character		Palmer Park library garden
	Opportunity to reinstate historic pathway and improve circulation and access		Existing building with potential for change/improvement		Small scale food production / community garden (linked to cafe)
	Entrance with opportunity for enhancement		Consolidated fenced play space and reduced number of gates to improve circulation through the park with fewer barriers		Informal garden
	Opportunity to enhance significance of George Palmer statue		Location of new swimming pool close to existing building		Cafe
	Opportunity to open views into the stadium				Park guardian residential unit
					Play facilities within fenced area
					Other play facilities outside the fenced area

2. THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1 CONCEPT AND DESIGN DRIVERS

Reintroducing the heart of Palmer Park

Page 227

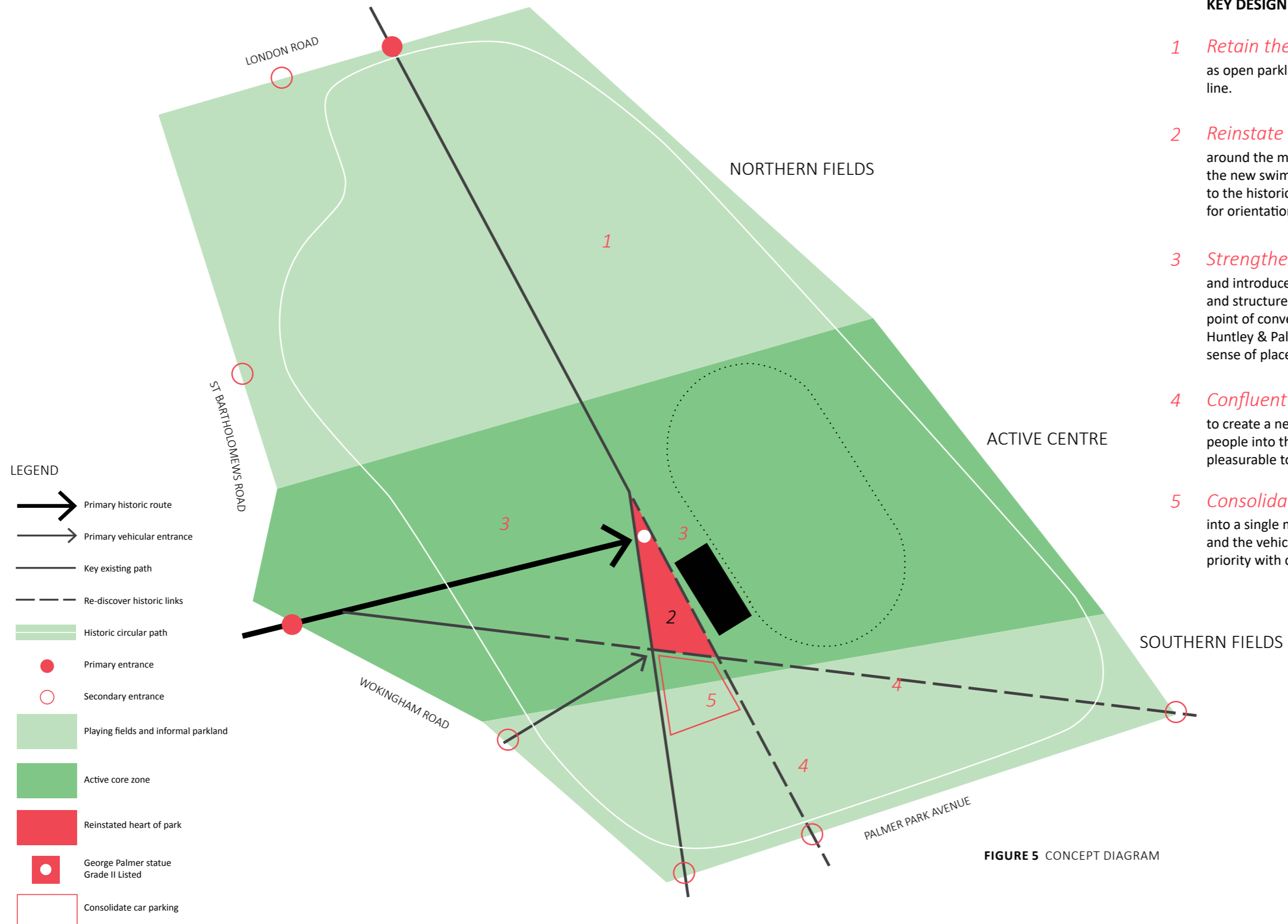


FIGURE 5 CONCEPT DIAGRAM

2.2 ACTIVE CORE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The main aim of the development framework is to establish design principles for the new swimming pool building and its associated functions and spaces to ensure there is no negative impact on the park. The framework is also a mechanism to examine the park as a whole and explore additional interventions to improve its function as a vital open green space.

As such the master plan recognises the importance of the active centre and proposes a sequence of events and spaces to connect the uses into a coherent structure.

The following pages illustrate the concept and give ideas of how the various spaces within the active core could be used or re-vitalised. The key components of the concept are as follows:

1. THE NEW 'HEART' SPACE

A new public space and key node in the centre of the park. This space will act as the entrance to the pool and stadium and link to other key spaces of the park.

2. THE NEW CAR PARK

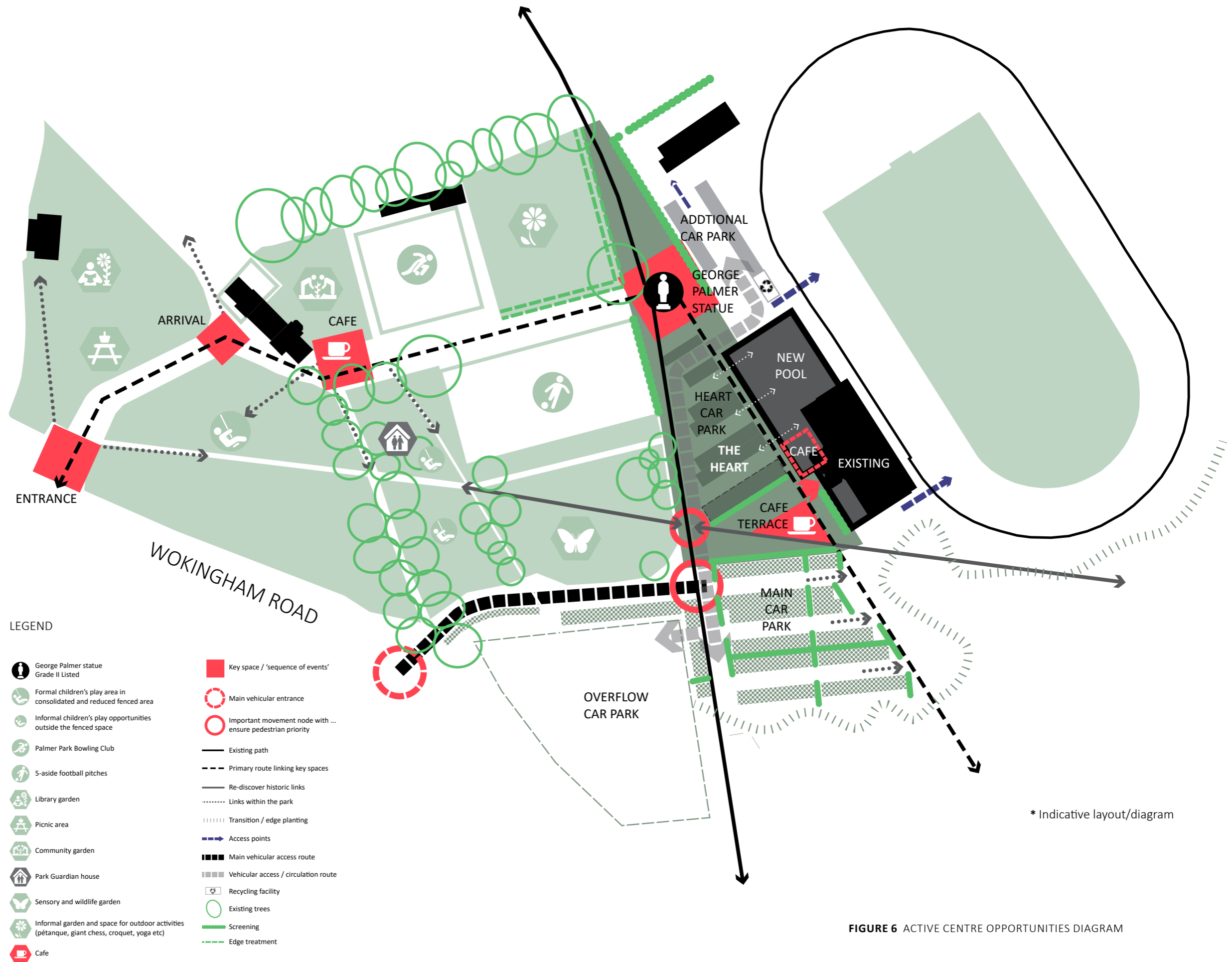
A consolidated car park area to the south of the HEART space and away from key pedestrian movements. This car park should be designed to be as green as possible and be well integrated into its landscape setting.

3. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Recommending key spaces that can play an active role of strengthening the main route through the active core. These spaces include entrances, movement nodes and places of activity.

4. FURTHER IDEAS FOR SPACES

Identifying additional opportunities and ideas to add 'layers' to the functionality of the park in order to create a vibrant, varied and multifaceted experience.

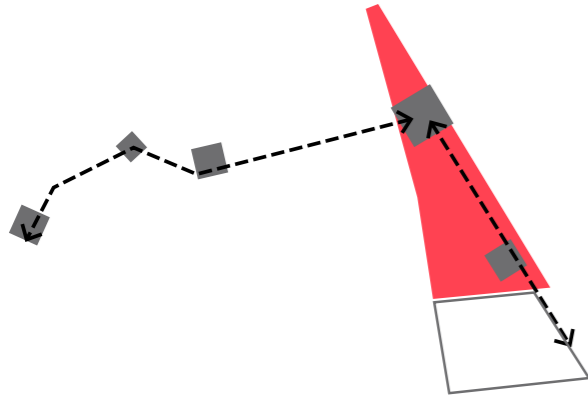


* Indicative layout/diagram

FIGURE 6 ACTIVE CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM

1. PRECEDENTS FOR THE NEW HEART . CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO PASS AND DWELL

- Create an element of 'stickiness' within the heart... make people want to stop, dwell, learn, play, explore.
- Maximise the existing George Palmer statue by creating a contemporary setting, an opportunity to introduce historical reference in art, sculpture, floor design, signage.



Page 239



HUNTLEY & PALMER BISCUIT TINS...INSPIRATION FOR COLOUR, PATTERN THEME?

DIFFERENT TREATMENTS AND DESIGN SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE FOR THE TRIANGULAR SPACE OF 'THE HEART'

HISTORICAL REFERENCE
setting for statue could be patterns from Huntley and Palmer's tins...



INTERACTIVE SCULPTURE/PLAY FEATURE
could be inspired by Huntley & Palmer's biscuit tins...

TREE BACKDROP
setting for statue could be a simple curtain of ornamental trees...



SQUARE WITH CAR PARKING
a central square which contains car parking

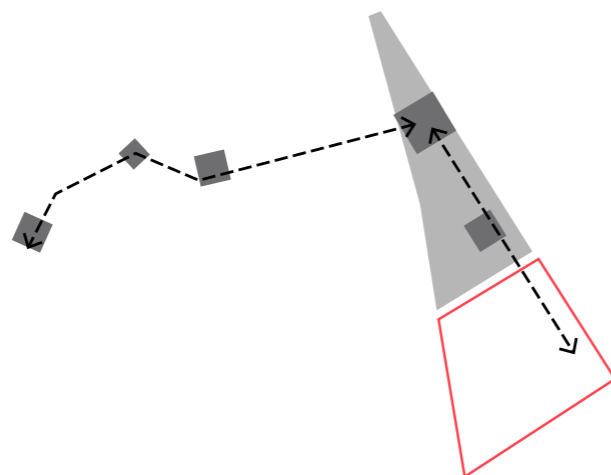
GREEN SETTING
setting for statue could be lush and green lawn...



LANDSCAPE WITH FUNCTION
a visible and aesthetically pleasant landscape as part of a water management system

2. PRECEDENTS FOR THE MAIN CAR PARK . CREATING AN UNOBTUSIVE, GREEN CAR PARK WHICH BLENDS WITH THE SOUTHERN PARK

- Explore ideas for greening the car park, including structured grass surfacing to minimise visual impact and sealed surface.
- Introduce a feeling of pedestrian priority with shared surface features, easy access to the wider pedestrian network and new pool entrance.
- Carefully blend the southern edge of the car park with the rest of the park with meadow grass and parkland tree planting.
- Use native and wildlife friendly species for the planting palette



STRUCTURED GRASS SURFACE & STRONG ROWS OF TREE PLANTING



HEDGE PLANTING AS SEPARATOR, GRASS BETWEEN TYRE TRACKS



STRONG TREE AND HEDGE PLANTING



TREES AND MEADOW GRASS TRANSITION TO MOWN GRASS

* Images are indicative

3. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS . STRENGTHENING THE KEY ROUTE THROUGH THE ACTIVE CORE

- Sequence of events/spaces/interest along the key pedestrian route to the newly discovered heart of park.
- The active core has much potential, but is currently underused...
- Use the theme around Huntley & Palmer as a golden thread to tell the story, inject colour and texture and create a unique sense of place... use in street furniture, signage and super graphics etc.

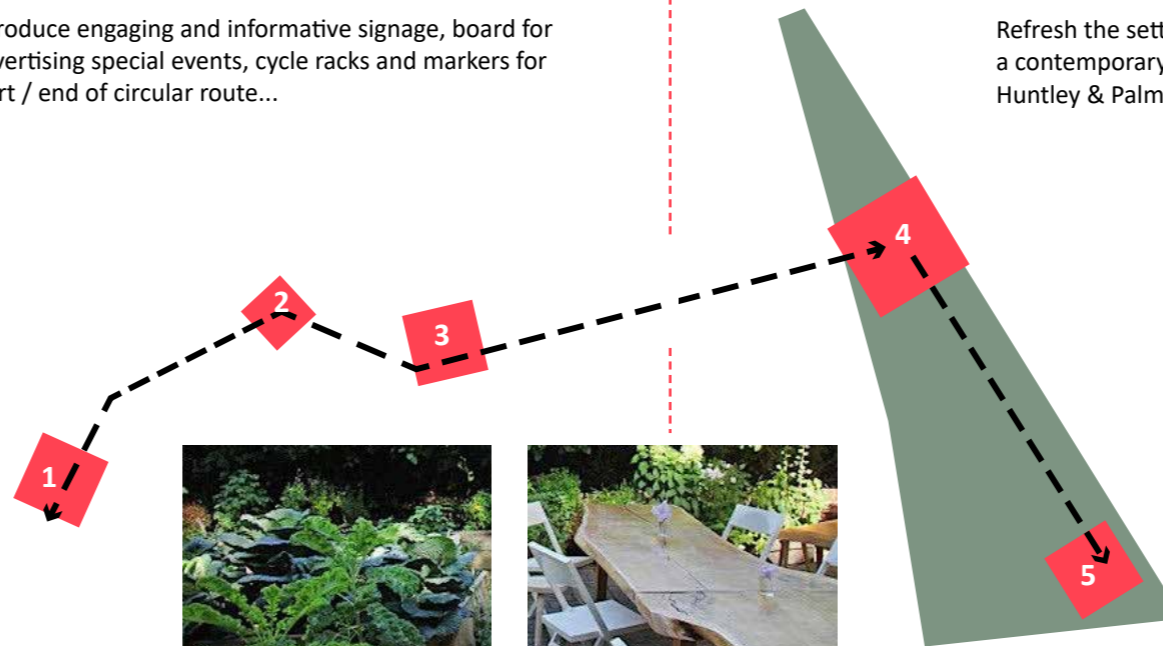


2 ARRIVAL *Orientation point*

Introduce engaging and informative signage, board for advertising special events, cycle racks and markers for start / end of circular route...

4 GEORGE PALMER STATUE *Heart of Palmer Park*

Refresh the setting of the George Palmer statue by creating a contemporary area using historical references, such as Huntley & Palmer's decorative biscuit tin designs...



1 ENTRANCES *Announce the park*

Enhance entrances to the park. Pull people into the park by use of simple, fun floor graphics that have an inviting and welcoming appeal...



3 CAFE / COMMUNITY GARDEN *Somewhere to pause*

Provide a calm, cool cafe area along the route for people to stop. Could be associated with a small scale produce/ community garden...



5 POOL CAFE TERRACE *Somewhere to relax*

Provide a space within the heart of the park, near the sports facilities to unwind pre or post sports, to meet friends and relax...

This cafe should complement the existing cafe within the pavilion to ensure both facilities will be successful.

4. FURTHER IDEAS FOR SPACES WITHIN THE ACTIVE CORE .
ADDING LAYERS FOR A MULTIFACETED PARK

The ideas and interventions listed here are indicative at this stage and will need further investigation to test their feasibility and mechanisms of delivery. They are likely to be separate projects that require further principles once specifics are known.

- Explore ideas and interventions that could be added at different stages without interrupting the base structure of the park.
- Explore how the community could play an active part in the creation and stewardship for some of these spaces...

PICNIC AREA

The park would benefit from improved picnic spaces and improved seating throughout the park. These should be located in sun and shade.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Area for small scale food production which could be associated with the existing cafe in the pavilion.

EXISTING BOWLING CLUB

RETAIN AND IMPROVE BOUNDARY



INFORMAL GARDEN

Space suitable for informal recreation, smaller events or community picnics.



BEING ACTIVE

Create a grassed space suitable for informal meetings, activities and local groups, such as yoga/thai chi, circuit training, play rangers, and similar... as well as outdoor games, such as giant chess, croquet, pétanque etc.

EXISTING 5-ASIDE COURTS

RETAIN



LIBRARY GARDEN

Could contain pleasant seating areas tucked into planting and outdoor classrooms for children's activities or book clubs.



EXISTING PLAY AREA

RETAIN, CONSOLIDATE AND UPGRADE



VICTORIAN BUILDING

A suitable use for the historic WC building has been sought for many years, but no realistic option has been found yet. Continue to explore ideas to retain this building within the park.

Could this lovely building support the community garden as a potting shed / garden store room? Or could it be transformed as a club/meeting room for local groups...? Keep exploring!

TOUCH

SENSORY AND WILDLIFE GARDEN

Open up the existing garden and create a relaxing space for the senses by moving and consolidating active play equipment to south of the play area, but retaining sensory equipment such as the sound



mirrors and play telephone. Introduce new sensory components such as careful planting, musical play, barefoot path and well placed seating.

Planted with native species beneficial to wildlife, this could be an educational resource and even contain bee hives.

2.3 POOL BUILDING. PREFERRED OPTION

The concept for the pool building is based on the principle of re-using the existing building and attaching the new pool uses to it to the north.

The existing entrance core will be re-used in its current location with the addition of a cafe to anchor an active use to this space.

The linear East-West and North-South routes are reinstated passing the entrance for easy access.

The main car park is consolidated into a dedicated area to the south. Structure

planting will break up the car park and grassland edge planting will merge it into the park landscape. This area would need further ground site investigation to understand the potential subsidence risk and options for mitigation. Additional car parking can also be integrated into the heart space in front of the pool to reduce the impact on the park.

The overflow car park is retained in its current location with a new access from the car park.

The access to the temporary events space and maintenance building is retained but limited to non public movements via raised bollards.

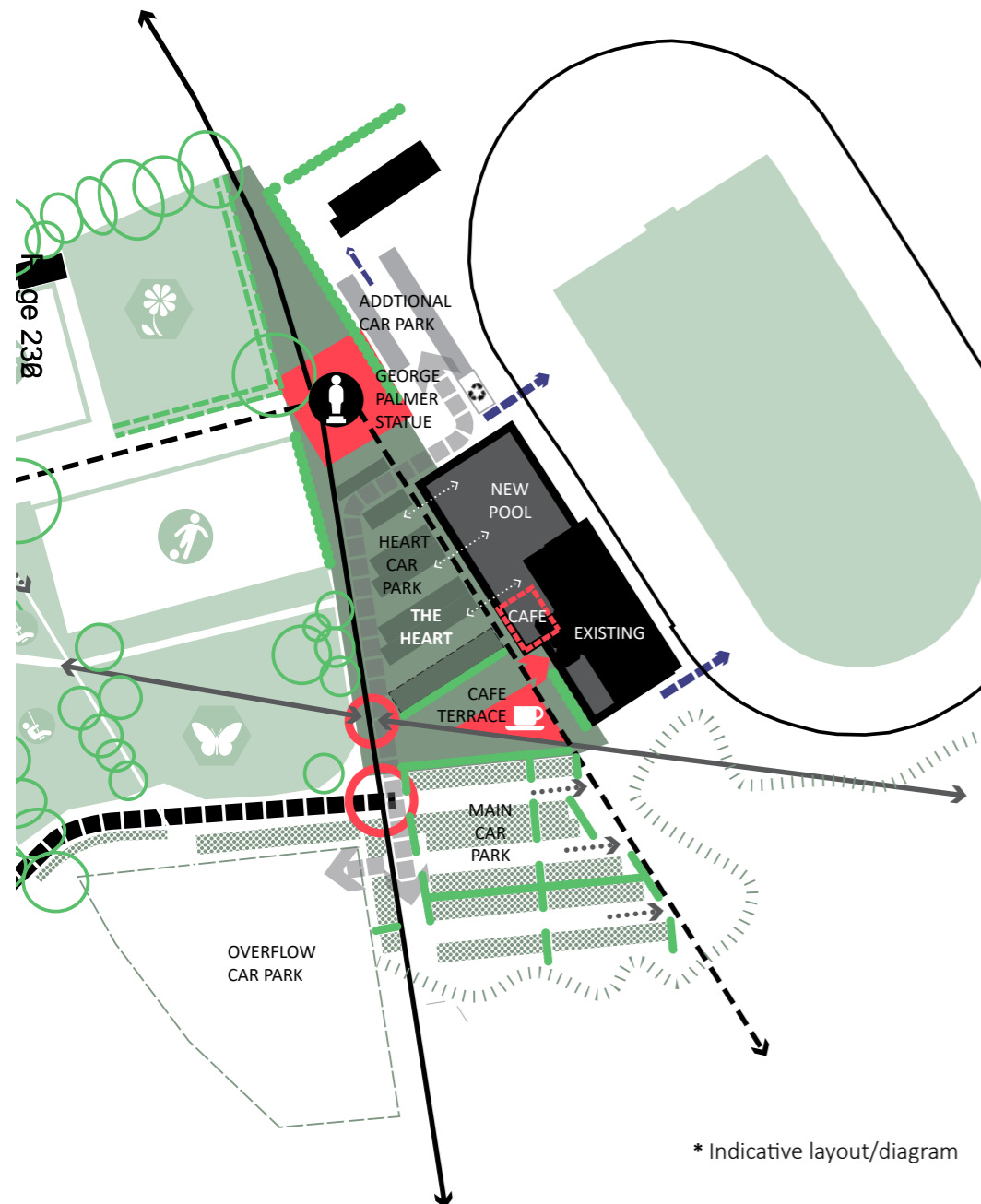


FIGURE 8 ACTIVE CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM



FIGURE 7 INDICATIVE 3D VIEWS

Note:

Whilst this is the preferred option, it could be possible that other arrangements may meet the requirements for a new pool whilst also delivering the key objectives of this Framework. Any alternative proposals will need to be judged against policies in the Local Plan, and this Framework, in particular sections 2.1 and 2.2.

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 Attach new pool building to existing stadium building. Entrance remains in same location.
- 2 Develop a new public realm in front of the building that attracts people to the centre of the park. Shared surface allows restricted access to car park and servicing areas.
- 3 Give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue.
- 4 MAIN CAR PARK: Public car park close to pool entrance. Green design with planting and grasscrete and softened around the edges with meadow grassland.
- 5 'HEART' SPACE CAR PARK: Public car parking provided within the heart space to reduce impact on the park. High quality permeable paving which could be used as a plaza for events.
- 6 Informal park and garden. Define edges to the path with seating steps or metal edging.
- 7 Define space as sensory and wildlife garden. Retain existing sensory play and add other elements for sensory experiences...flowering and fragrant planting, musical play, barefoot path, bug hotel etc.
- 8 Play area consolidated for better surveillance and functional definition, reduced fenceline. Include accessible play provision.
- 9 Potential community garden linked to commercial unit/cafe within the pavilion.
- 10 Axis to monument revitalised with new seating and floor graphics linked to the overall theme.
- 11 Bowling green and 5-a-side pitches retained.
- 12 ADDITIONAL CAR PARK: Public car park and access for maintenance, servicing and to recycling facilities.
- 13 Re-instated historic path link for better circulation through the park.
- 14 Retain informal play space outside of fenced area.
- 15 Overflow car park as per current location... access rationalised via new main car park.



FIGURE 9 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN EXTRACT

2.5 ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK PLAN

WHOLE PARK

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 New HEART SPACE... giving the heart of the park back to people with a revitalised contemporary landscape and public realm.
 - 2 Sports pitches with retained open park character.
 - 3 Southern parkland defined with new edge planting around the car park/stadium.
 - 4 Re-instated historic path links for better circulation and increased footfall through the park.
 - 5 Potential to add new layers of use and function into the active core of the park... for a renewed interest and general modernisation. (see suggestions on pages 8-11)
 - 6 Consolidated active play space close to pavilion, reduced fenced area. Informal play space outside the fence remains. Include accessible play provision.
- Retention of existing sporting facilities such as the Bowling Club and 5-a-side pitches.
- 7 New main car parking area designed as a green car park and retained overflow parking capacity.
 - 8 Additional car parking integrated within the 'heart' space.
 - 9 Retention of lime tree avenue around the park perimeter. Implement a successional tree planting strategy. Provide a circular path without barriers to movement. New planting in connection with the new development should seek to strengthen the character of the park.
- Ⓟ Other car parking opportunities including:
- disabled car parking at the historic park entrance along Wokingham Road/access to the pavilion;
 - parking north of pool building, may include access restriction to limit car movements across the heart space
 - parking at the southern entrance opposite the church



FIGURE 10 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

3. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

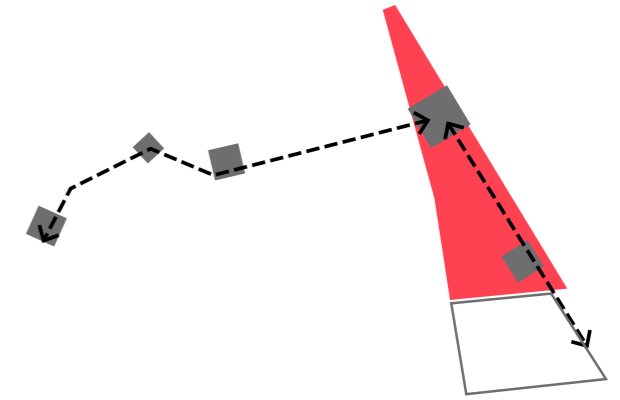
3.1 THE 'HEART' SPACE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 1 New heart is formed of two spaces, subtly separated by restricted vehicular access route.
- 2 Crucial to link into surrounding spaces and pedestrian circulation of the wider park.
- 3 Must provide an improved setting for the George Palmer monument (northern space).
- 4 Must provide a setting and entrance for the new pool building (southern space) which encourages people to dwell and enliven the 'heart'.
- 5 Pedestrian movement throughout the heart space is priority.
- 6 The space must be well defined on all sides in order to read as a single space and not to bleed into the adjacent garden spaces.

Page 239



KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE HEART SPACE



SHARED SURFACE QUALITIES

The Heart must accommodate vehicular movement, but pedestrians should be the priority users of the space and the design needs to reflect this principle. Shared surface features should be employed to reduce the dominance of vehicles through the space and allow pedestrians to move with ease and confidence.



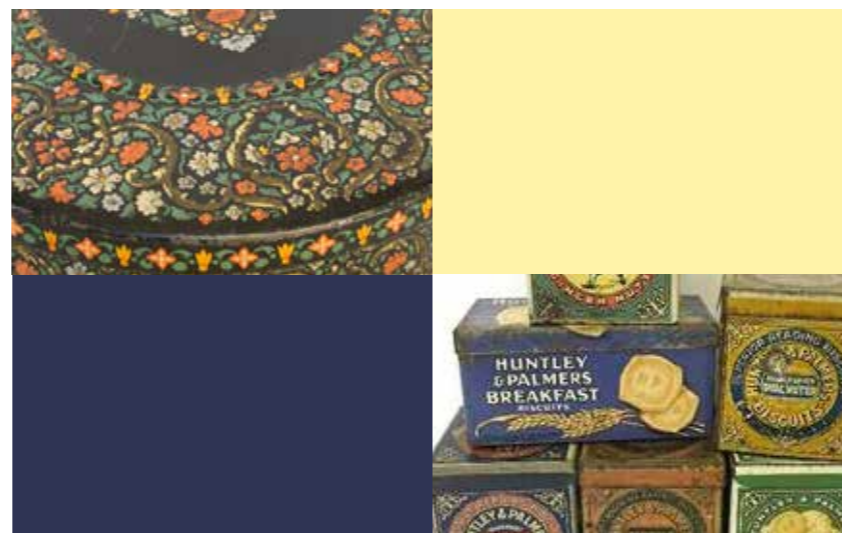
INCREASE DWELL TIME

The space must include reasons for people to stop, interact with and spend time in the space. This could include interactive sculpture, play, historical information, seating...



CONTAINMENT OF SPACE

The space must have well defined edges to separate it from adjacent spaces and functions. In some cases this may comprise vertical planted screening and others a series of benches or level change.



CREATE A UNIQUE IDENTITY

Potentially drawing inspiration from the Huntley & Palmers' legacy, the space should become a unique place offering an identity to Palmer Park and an appropriate setting for the new pool building and George Palmer monument.



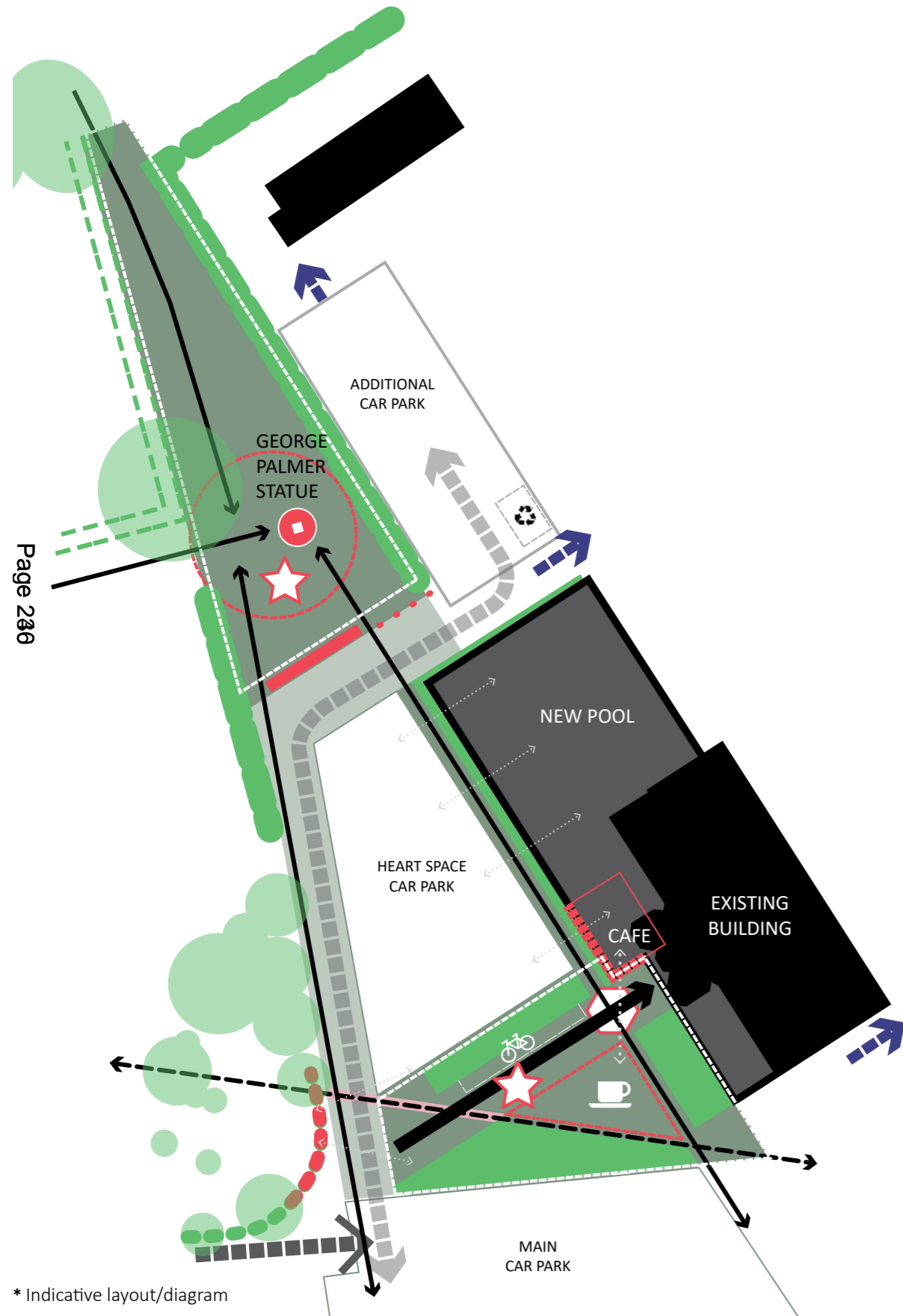
HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

The Heart space must be worthy of its central location and pivotal role within the park. Thought and care must go into the design thinking from concept to detail, ensuring that material junctions are neat and robust, trees are given adequate provision to mature and the space works for people.

THE 'HEART' SPACE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES .

PREFERRED POOL OPTION



Page 230

* Indicative layout/diagram

FIGURE 11 HEART SPACE DESIGN PRINCIPLES (WITH PREFERRED POOL BUILDING OPTION)

LEGEND: DETAILED DESIGN PRINCIPLES



VEHICULAR ENTRANCE
Main vehicular entrance retained. Further technical assessments to inform detailed design in terms of junction improvements, road width, flows etc.



RESTRICTED VEHICULAR ACCESS
Vehicular access is required through the Heart to reach the additional car park, access to the Diving Club building and for emergency / maintenance access. Access will also be required to the temporary events space on occasion. This vehicular route must be designed as part of the Heart space in such a way as to not restrict easy pedestrian movement, e.g. no raised kerbs, and of a material either matching the rest of the space or aesthetically sympathetic to the adjacent materials. Priority for pedestrians should be paramount in the design.



EMERGENCY STADIUM ACCESS
Two emergency access routes in/out of the stadium must be preserved in addition to the Diving Club building access.



POOL ENTRANCE ROUTE
The main pedestrian entrance route to the pool should be legible, easy to navigate and free from obstacles.



KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
The key pedestrian routes should be retained in place and integrated into the design of the spaces as they are critical to the successful pedestrian/cycle circulation of the wider park.



Priority for pedestrians should be paramount in the design. Utilise visual design solutions on the pavement to delineate the route .



VISUAL PERMEABILITY
Visual permeability should be created between the southern part of the Heart space and the swimming pool, and maintained between the Heart space and the adjacent garden spaces where activity and overlooking will help to combat anti-social behaviour.



VEHICULAR BARRIER
Vehicular barriers are required in choice locations to restrict and manage vehicular movement through the Heart space. Some will need to be demountable/moveable/rising to allow access.



GEORGE PALMER STATUE
The Grade II listed George Palmer statue must be retained, and the space around it used to create a more contemporary and engaging setting. As demonstrated on page 9, this space could be hard or soft, it could incorporate historical reference to Huntley and Palmer's but it must encourage people to dwell and appreciate the meaning of the statue within Palmer Park.



ACTIVE SPACES
As illustrated on page 9, the active parts of the Heart space could be occupied by a range of functions including play, interactive sculpture or storm water management. The space must be designed to encourage engagement, increased dwell time, activity and should include seating.



ENTRANCE SPACE
The space outside the main pool entrance should be marked in some way, potentially with informative signage, lighting or seating.



OUTDOOR CAFE SPACE
The Active Space must include opportunity for outdoor seating associated with the proposed cafe. This will serve as a hub for meeting, socialising and increasing the time people spend in the Heart space. It should be designed as an integrated part of the southern Heart space.



CONTAINING EDGE
Create an edge between the carriageway and the northern active space. This could consist of a low seating wall which would also serve as a bench for those waiting for coach pick up.



EXISTING TREES
Existing trees should be retained and managed wherever possible to maintain the historic park structure and help provide instant setting to the new pool building. Early succession planting will be required to maintain the established parkland quality for future generations.



SCREENING
Tree and shrub planting (British native or naturalised) should be used to help frame the space, screen the overflow car park and provide a lush backdrop to the George Palmer monument on approach from the West.



EXISTING HEDGEROW
Existing hedgerow along access road to be retained.



REMOVAL OF EXISTING HEDGEROW
Removal of a portion of the existing hedgerow to increase visual and physical permeability between the Heart and the adjacent green space. This also allows the reinstatement of the historic pathway and improves pedestrian connections and movement within the adjacent green space.



EDGE
Create a subtle edge between the northern heart space and the adjacent green space. Potentially a level change, series of benches or planting, this will help to define the individual spaces.



BICYCLE PARKING
The Heart Space must accommodate bicycle parking, close to the building entrance



RECYCLING FACILITIES
Provide a recycling facility within the additional car park.



PLANTING
Planting is required to green the space and help with surface water drainage

GENERAL DETAILED DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE HEART SPACE



STREET FURNITURE & MATERIALS

- Choose simple, robust and hardwearing materials suitable for public space.
- Consider selecting a 'family' of street furniture to keep styles and materials to a minimum. Ensure that the chosen 'family' is suitable for use across the wider park, should items require replacement.
- Carefully consider the placement of furniture, bollards and signage to aid legibility of the spaces but keep unnecessary clutter to a minimum.
- Careful detailing of materials is crucial to achieving high quality public realm: align street furniture with paving direction; carefully consider the junctions of different materials; coordinate the detailed design to ensure man-hole covers, tree pits, signage, lighting and drainage align with adjacent paving.
- Use root fixings to avoid unsightly above-ground fixings.



PLANTING

- Carefully consider planting and tree species - ensure they enhance the design for users by, for instance, providing shade for seating. Do not choose species which are: prone to berry drop or aphids, particularly over paving; poisonous/irritant, or; obstructive of building entrances and key sightlines.
- Choose species which are UK Native or naturalised and suited to the soil type.
- Consider species which are of benefit to wildlife.
- Ensure that tree and plants are planted with enough space and soil volume to reach maturity.
- When selecting species, consider the routine maintenance operations required and choose species where these are kept to a minimum.



SAFE & ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

- Ensure compliance with DDA regulations for external space.
- Avoid step/ramp level changes in main access and through-routes.
- Careful consideration of shared surface detailing is necessary to ensure safe and easy use for all.

3.2 CAR & CYCLE PARKING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

EXISTING CAR PARKING PROVISION

Palmer Park has three areas where cars can park and has an overall provision for 209 car parking spaces (incl. 8 disabled spaces). In addition an overflow car park is available on grassland near the main car park. The existing car parking areas and provided spaces are as follows:

- Main car parking area in front of the stadium (185 standard spaces, 5 disabled spaces)
- Disabled parking via the historic gate near the pavilion (3 spaces)
- Informal car parking near the church accessed via Palmer Park Avenue (ca. 16 spaces)

CAR PARKING REQUIREMENT

At application stage a survey should be undertaken to determine the existing situation in terms of car parking, e.g. peak times / off-peak times, user groups (incl. non park users). The results should then feed into a transport assessment to determine an optimum requirement for the proposals. This should include proposals to promote sustainable means of accessing the park, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The existing Parking Standards and Design SPD point to the need for a likely increase in numbers in order to avoid overspill into surrounding residential streets. According to the Parking Standard and Design SPD, a swimming pool of 422sqm pool area would require a maximum of 28 car parking spaces. However, there is an argument to be made that the uses within the park have different peak times and that car parking spaces will be shared over the course of the day by different uses. This emphasises the need for a survey to inform the right balance for the future car parking provision, which aims to find the optimum amount in order to reduce overall impact on the park.

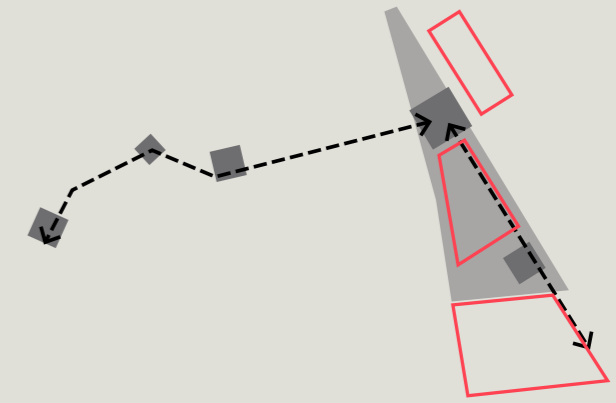
The use of the overflow car park plays an important role in this as well as how this can be successfully managed to offer additional capacity at peak times.

The number of parking spaces should not be reduced during the construction period.

CYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENT

Sufficient cycle parking in line with Parking Standards SPD needs to be provided with any proposal. Cycle parking should be placed in convenient and well overlooked locations to ensure safety and use.

The cycle parking requirements for the swimming pool are 1 space for 6 staff and 1 space per 40 sq m. Other uses may need additional cycle parking provision (to be determined at application stage).



PROPOSED CAR PARKING PROVISION

The indicative proposals for the preferred option within this document show an overall provision for 241 car parking spaces (incl. 13 disabled spaces). However, it should be stressed that these figures are indicative and the developer should engage with the Planning Authority to agree the final amount of required car parking. The proposed areas for car parking are as follows:

- Car parks at the stadium/pool (circa 222* spaces) include:
 - Main car park (circa 143* spaces)
 - 'Heart' space car park (circa 41 spaces and 10 disabled spaces)
 - Additional car park (circa 28 spaces)
- Retained disabled parking via the historic gate near the pavilion (3 spaces)
- Retained informal car parking at southern park entrance opposite church (ca. 16 spaces)

**indicative figures for reference*

The main car park as shown in the preferred option encroaches into the green space of the park by approx. 2300 sqm. This is due to an increased car parking need coupled with the loss of hard standing area now occupied by the new pool building.

This loss of green space can be offset by greenspace gained as part of the framework proposals, such as:

- Car free focal space at pool entrance (ca. 900 sqm)
- There is potential to pull the fencing around the stadium track inwards – at the moment there is an unused area of scrub between the fence and the velodrome/track, which serves little purpose. This could achieve around 1900 sqm additional public open space, and could allow tree planting closer to the track.





CAR PARK

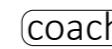






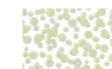
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

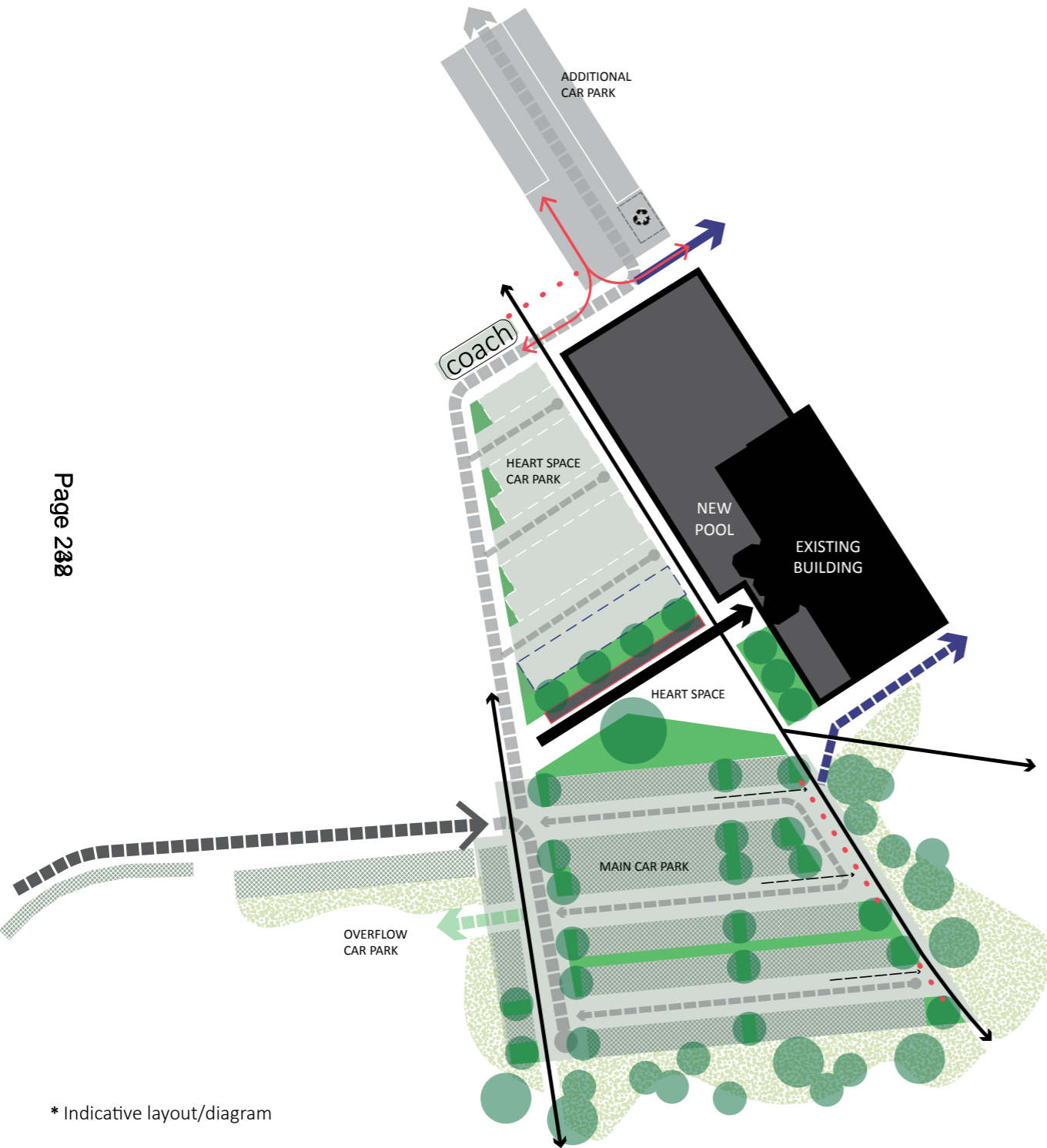
KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 1 The main car park is consolidated and sits to the south of the new Heart space, with vehicular access from the existing main drive.
- 2 Car parking can also be integrated into the heart space in front of the pool to reduce the impact on the park. A defined car free space needs to be provided at the pool entrance as shown.
- 3 Crucial to 'green' the car park to reduce the visual impact, blend with the southern parkland and reduce reliance on sealed surface area.
- 4 Must integrate pedestrian movement with wider pedestrian network of the park.
- 5 Must give pedestrians priority in the design of circulation routes and by introducing shared surface features to reduce dominance and speed of vehicles.
- 6 Must be legible and easy to navigate as a driver and a pedestrian.

LEGEND: DETAILED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

-  **VEHICULAR ENTRANCE**
Main vehicular entrance retained. Further technical assessments to inform detailed design in terms of junction improvements, road width, flows etc.
-  **VEHICULAR ACCESS & CIRCULATION**
Vehicular access and circulation within the car park must be designed in a shared surface fashion, in order to signal to drivers that the routes are shared with pedestrians and cyclists to reduce traffic speeds.
-  **MAIN STADIUM ACCESS**
A vehicular maintenance/emergency access route in/out of the stadium must be provided.
-  **EMERGENCY STADIUM ACCESS**
Emergency access routes in/out of the stadium must be preserved.
-  **ACCESS TO OVERFLOW CAR PARK**
Vehicular access to the overflow car park to be possible from the permanent car park.
-  **POOL ENTRANCE ROUTE**
The main pedestrian entrance route to the pool should be legible, easy to navigate and free from obstacles.
-  **KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES**
The key pedestrian routes should be retained in place and integrated into the design of the car park as they are critical to the successful pedestrian/cycle circulation of the wider park.
-  **PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO KEY ENTRANCE ROUTE**
From the car park, pedestrians should be able to gain easy access to join the key route to the new building's main entrance.
-  **VEHICULAR BARRIER**
Vehicular barriers are required in choice locations to restrict and manage vehicular movement at the peripheries of the car park. Some will need to be demountable/moveable/rising to allow access.
-  **'HEART' SPACE CAR PARK**
Extent of car park to be determined through detailed design stages. The car park appearance should be appropriate and integrated to the 'heart' space public realm design.

-  **COACH PARKING**
Incorporate a coach parking drop off/pick up space.
-  **TURNING HEAD**
Incorporate a coach / recycling vehicle turning facility.
-  **DISABLED CAR PARKING SPACES**
Disabled car parking should be situated as close to the building entrance as possible. Provide a suitable material for these spaces.
-  **MAIN CAR PARK**
Extent of car park to be determined through detailed design stages. The car park appearance should be as 'green' as possible and respond appropriately to its park setting. Develop an efficient car park layout to reduce impact on the park.
-  **BICYCLE PARKING**
Potential zones for additional cycle parking.
-  **PLANTING**
Some limited divisions with bands of evergreen planting may be appropriate to break up the car park and add a greening effect. This planting must not restrict sightlines or maneuvering of vehicles and should be planted and maintained a sufficient distance from car parking so as not to sustain routine damage from opening of car doors and trampling. The planting could be hedges, herbaceous plants or a mixture, but it must add structure and break the monotony of the car parking. Native planting species should be used.
-  **TREE PLANTING**
Tree planting will add height, interest, shading and structure to the car park, whilst helping the visual transition from car park to southern park. Careful consideration should be given to the choice of species and specification to ensure they are suitable for a car park setting. Native species should be used. Trees should be planted in locations to avoid trunk damage by maneuvering vehicles or car door opening and should be planted with sufficient space to reach maturity, which may require structured tree pits. Consider lighting. Additional tree planting to the edges of the car park may be chosen for their parkland qualities, and will help to soften the visual impact of the car park.
-  **TRANSITION/EDGE PLANTING**
The southern edge of the car park needs to help the area blend with the surrounding park. It may consist of long meadow grasses beneath the parkland trees, but other options are possible. This should mask the car parking visually but not restrict long views towards the centre of the park.



Page 288

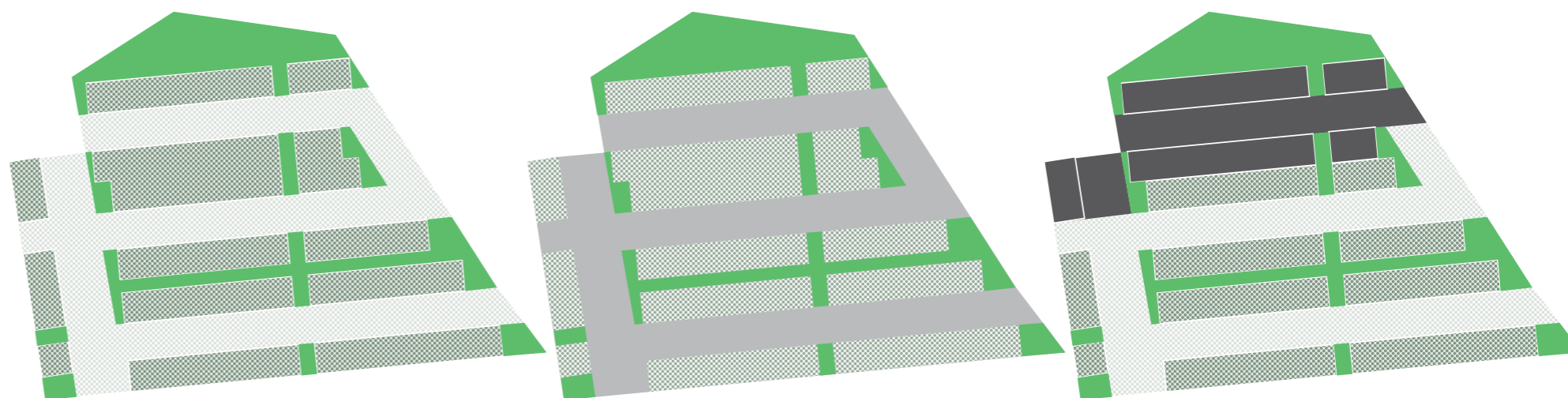
* Indicative layout/diagram

FIGURE 12 CAR PARK DESIGN PRINCIPLES

MATERIALITY OPTIONS

KEY MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- The greenness of car park is of paramount concern. This must not manifest as lines of trees between rows or planted screening to the edges, but a more genuine and whole greening of car park including surface materials. Exploration of ground plane material options is necessary to deliver a truly green car park which blends visually with the southern park.
- Structured planting must be used as vertical greening to break up the mass of the car park to the eye, creating 'rooms' of car parking spaces.
- Practical solutions are required to address concerns of longevity, maintenance and wear and tear of certain 'green' surface products. Detailed discussions with manufacturers of reinforced surfacing systems which can be planted with grass, and alternative options should be undertaken and ground investigations to ascertain the drainage condition.
- It is not necessary that material choices are consistent across the car park - it may be that the most used spaces, search lanes and disabled bays consist of materials which are considered harder wearing, with the less frequently used spaces as a different surface. The adjacent diagrams explore some options for distribution of materials, however, the best solution could be a combination of these ideas.



OPTION 1 . GREEN SURFACE FOR SEARCH LANES AND SPACES

OPTION 2 . GREEN SURFACE FOR SPACES WITH OTHER PERMEABLE SURFACE FOR SEARCH LANES

OPTION 3 . PERMEABLE SURFACE FOR MOST FREQUENTLY USED SPACES AND SEARCH LANES WITH GREEN SURFACE FOR LESS FREQUENTLY USED SPACES AND SEARCH LANES

FIGURE 13 POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION

POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR GREEN SURFACE



STRUCTURED GRASS SURFACE
recycled plastic reinforced surfacing system, backfilled with grass seed or turf



GRASS BLOCK PAVERS
interlocking concrete paving cells filled with grass seed or turf



BLOCK PAVING & GRASS
paving units with grass in between units

GENERAL DETAILED DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CAR PARK



MIX OF SURFACING SOLUTION

- Consider contrasting materials between the search lane and parking areas.
- Carefully consider the join between two materials.



MIX OF SURFACING SOLUTION

- Consider the use of mixed surfaces in the individual parking spaces, using more 'conventional' materials for the tyre tracks.
- Carefully consider the interface between planted strips and car parking spaces to minimise damage by vehicle overhang.



DELINEATION

- Consider integrated solutions for delineation of spaces.
- Parking spaces should be aligned with the opposite row for ease of parking within the given spaces.



PLANTING AND VEHICLES

- Careful thought and design detailing is required at the interface between vehicles and planting in order to minimise damage to plants and trees by trampling, bumpers and door swing. The solution(s) should be integrated with the design and not retrospective.

3.3 POOL BUILDING

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES. PREFERRED POOL OPTION

SPACE LAYOUT AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION

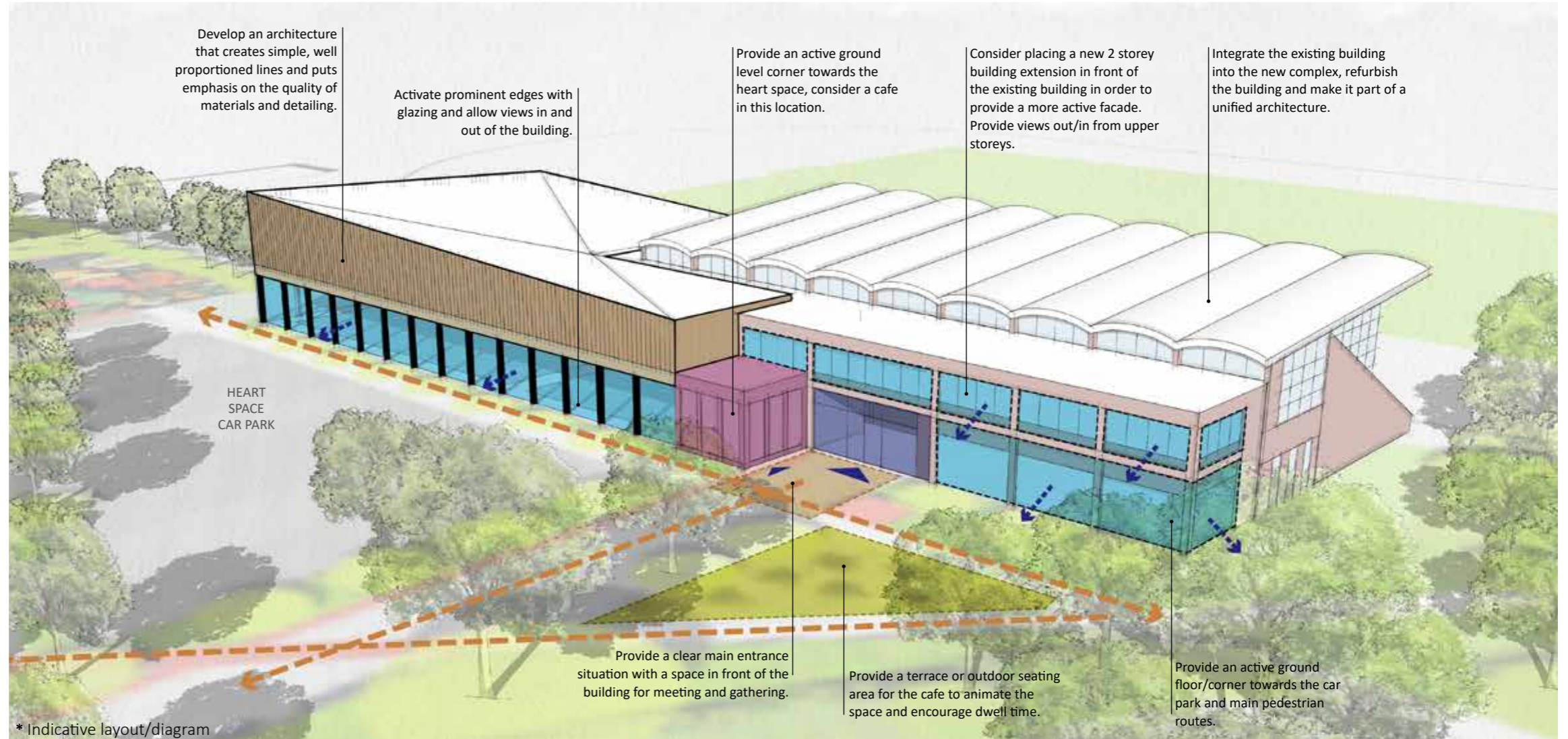
The proposal for a new swimming pool is linked to the refurbishment of the stadium building and the most economic solution is likely to be an extension to the existing built form. The new/extended building complex is expected to include:

- 6 Lane, 25m community pool
- Learner Pool
- 100+ station IFI compliant health and fitness suite
- 1-2 multi purpose exercise studios
- Ancillary facilities
- Access to 200-280 car parking spaces
- Facilities that are fully accessible and meet latest best practice, incl. changing places
- Public toilet facilities for all users of the park

Whilst responding to technical requirements to be informed by further design brief, it is important for the design and spatial layout of the building to maximise the inter-visibility between indoor and outdoor activities.

Inter-visibility will allow indoor activities to benefit from the park and landscape setting. Making leisure activities visible will contribute to promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

Building frontages towards public edges should be active as much as possible to provide surveillance as well as create an open and inviting building.



* Indicative layout/diagram

FIGURE 14 DESIGN PRINCIPLES - POOL SOUTH VIEW



VISION

The proposals should be designed to meet the latest standards with regards to design quality and leisure user experience.



BUILDING ENTRANCE

Utilise the existing entrance core location but create a new refreshed entrance situation that is inviting with glazing and transparency.



ANIMATED EDGES

Animate key edges, such as along the heart space and key pedestrian routes. Consider breaking the elevation with columns/mullions to add interest.





FIGURE 15 DESIGN PRINCIPLES - POOL NORTH VIEW

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

As part of the planning application for a new swimming pool, the Local Authority will expect to see information on the following;

- Transport Assessment
- Survey of existing park use, particularly with respect to car parking
- Ecological surveys including bat and tree surveys
- Management and maintenance strategy
- Green measures strategy to encourage renewable energy technologies and sufficient mitigation for climate change
- Equalities Assessment



FEATURE CORNER

Create a feature corner to the north with additional height to give interest to the built form and massing.



PARK INTEGRATION

The leisure centre should respect its location within the park setting. The architecture should form a calm backdrop in terms of both massing and materiality.



STADIUM ENTRANCE

Provide a considered and appealing stadium boundary and entrance. Consider large lettering announcing 'Palmer Park Stadium & Velodrome' on a concrete wall tying in with the architecture.

4. APPENDIX

4.1 APPENDIX A. REJECTED ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS FOR SWIMMING POOL

ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS WITHIN THE PARK

The Local Plan allocation ER1j for leisure including a new swimming pool consists of the existing stadium, car park and access road. Some comments received on the Draft Palmer Park Framework asked why other locations within the park had been rejected. The Framework supplements the Local Plan, so the broad location of the pool was a decision made as part of the Local Plan. This appendix shows the other parts of the park and why they would not have been considered appropriate for allocation for the pool in the Local Plan.

AREA 1: Centre of park

This area contains many of the more formal uses within the park, including the pavilion building and café, the main concentration of play equipment, the bowling green, five-a-side pitches and the library. Locating a pool within this area would be likely to mean the relocation or loss of one or more of these facilities, which is not considered to be acceptable. In addition, it would also reduce the amount of green space visible at the main entrance to the park.



AREA 2: South of park

This part of the park consists mainly of grassy areas used mainly for informal sports and recreation. The location of the sports stadium means that this area is quite narrow, so any proposal for a swimming pool would be close to the edge of the park. This would have the effect of fragmenting the green areas of the park. It would also be highly visible from roads surrounding the park, such as Wokingham Road and Palmer Park Avenue, and would therefore reduce the green character of the park.



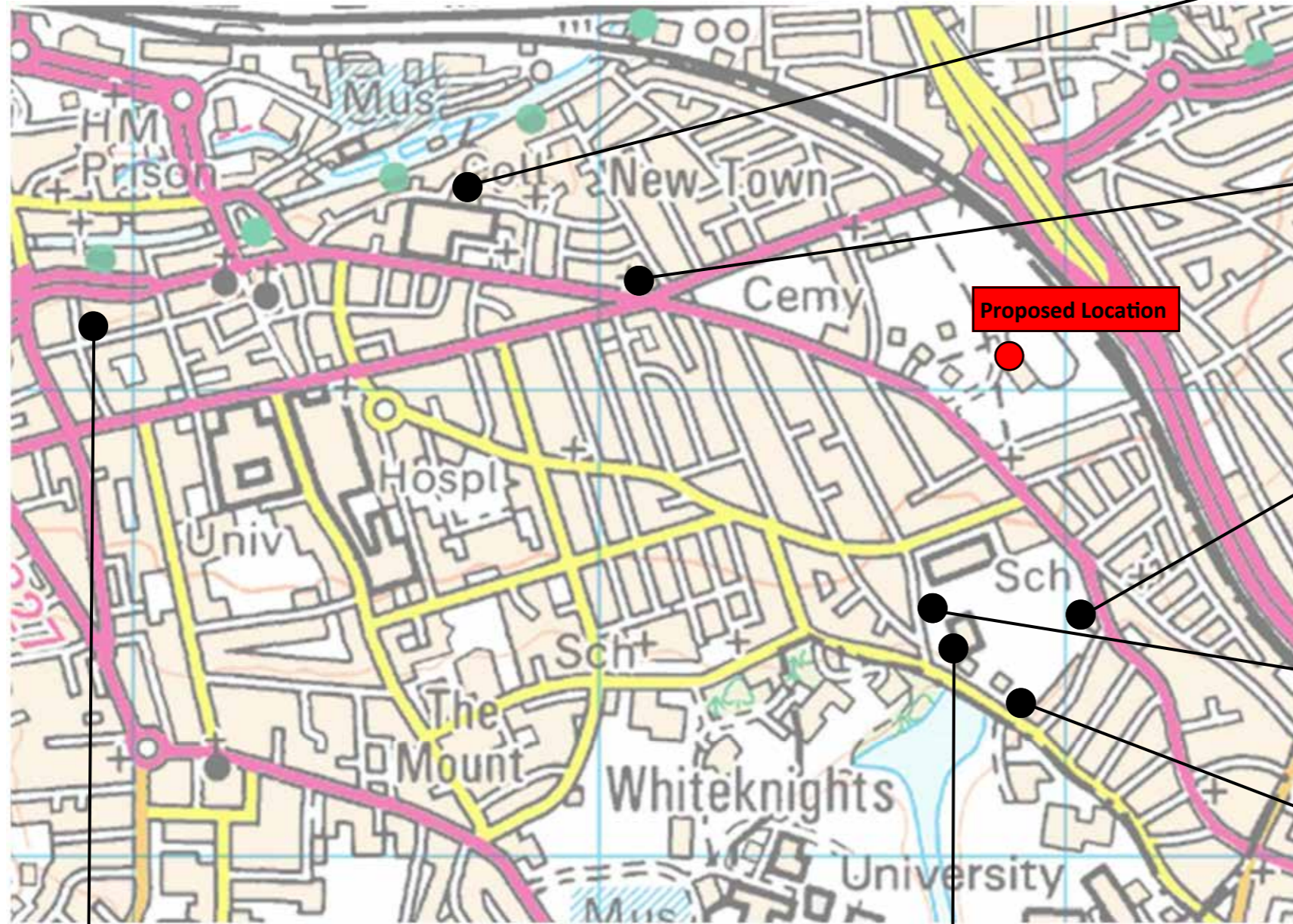
AREA 3: North of park

This part of the park contains the bulk of the open space, which is mainly made up of sports pitches. There would be no options for relocating such pitches within the park, so location of a pool in this area would have an unacceptable impact on sports provision for east Reading. This area also contains the nursery, which would need to be retained. It also forms a much needed green boundary to the London Road, one of Reading's most congested roads, with the vegetation in the park making a valuable contribution to mitigating the associated air quality effects.



ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THE PARK

The Local Plan, in policy ER1j, identifies that Palmer Park will be the location for the new swimming pool. Some comments received on the Draft Palmer Park Framework asked why other locations within Reading had not been considered suitable. This appendix shows other potential sites within East Reading and why they would not have been considered appropriate for allocation for the pool in the Local Plan. These sites were those considered for various uses as part of the Local Plan process, either within the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, or another piece of the evidence base. The Local Plan identifies Rivermead as the location for a replacement for Central Pool to serve Reading, so this considers Council-owned sites in East Reading only.



Land at Orts Road
This is a small area of amenity land. Any development would remove the only piece of green land in a high density housing area.

Arthur Hill
The site is extremely narrow, at 15m across. Although until recently used for a six-lane swimming pool, which closed in 2016, Sport England’s guidance (Swimming Pools: Updated Guidance for 2013) recommends that a six-lane community pool should be a minimum of 13m wide (and 17m for County standard), and this would not be possible to fit onto the site allowing for space either side of the pool and the depth of the walls etc. The building is locally-listed, which also constrains what can be done with the site.

Land at Green Road
This site has been identified as being needed for sports and recreation use as part of the overall play provision. The site formerly had planning permission for a mosque, but this has now expired.

Former Tennis Courts, Bulmershe Road
These former tennis courts are now in use for parking as part of the Maiden Erlegh School in Reading site, and is not available for development.

Mockbeggar allotments
These allotments are an important community resource that are required to remain in allotment use.

South Street Arts Centre
This site was identified as a development opportunity in the Reading Central Area Action Plan, but that was contingent of replacement of the arts centre within a facility to replace the Hexagon theatre. There are no current proposals for a replacement facility, so the site is not available for development.

Hamilton Centre
This site has been identified for residential use in the Local Plan. It is further away than Palmer Park from high-frequency bus routes, and is within an area that is more residential in character. The site is currently in use and is not immediately available for redevelopment.

4.2 APPENDIX B. POOL BUILDING OPTIONS AS PER CONSULTATION STAGE (NOV 2018)

POOL BUILDING. OPTION 1

The concept for the pool building is based on the principle of re-using the existing building and attaching the new pool uses to it to the north.

The existing entrance core will be re-used in its current location with the addition of a cafe to anchor an active use to this space.

The linear East-West and North-South routes are reinstated passing the entrance for easy access.

Car parking is consolidated into a dedicated area to the south. Structure planting will break up the car

park and grassland edge planting will merge it into the park landscape. This area would need further ground site investigation to understand the potential subsidence risk and options for mitigation.

The overflow car park is retained in its current location with a new access from the car park.

The access to the temporary events space and maintenance building is retained but limited to non public movements via raised bollards.

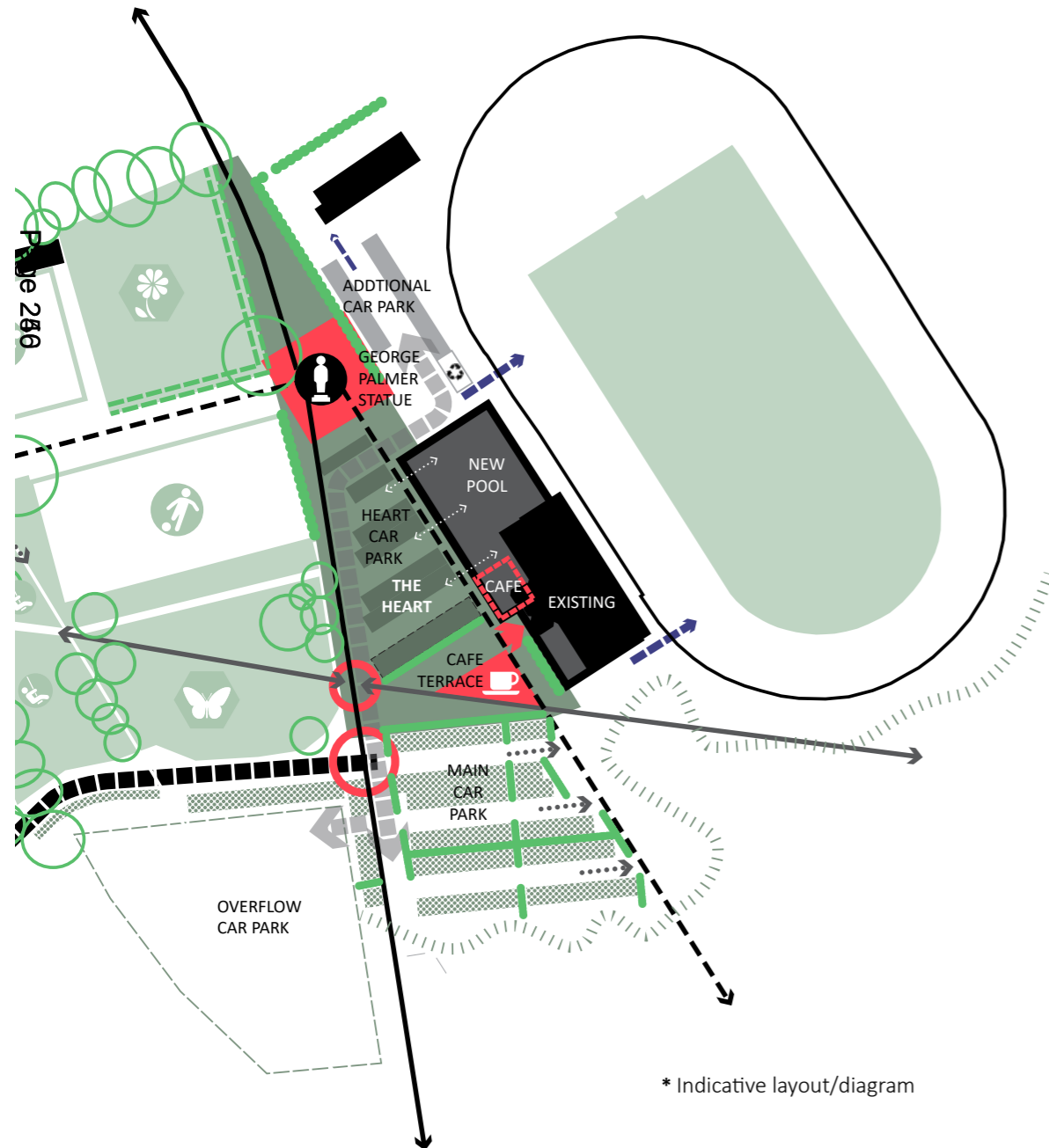


FIGURE 17 ACTIVE CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM (POOL BUILDING OPTION 1)



FIGURE 16 INDICATIVE 3D VIEWS - POOL BUILDING OPTION 1

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 Attach new pool building to existing stadium building. Entrance remains in same location.
- 2 Develop a new public realm in front of the building that attracts people to the centre of the park. Shared surface allows restricted access to car park and servicing areas.
- 3 Give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue.
- 4 Public car park (approx. 230 spaces) close to pool entrance. Green design with planting and grasscrete and softened around the edges with meadow grassland.
- 5 Overflow car park as per current location...access rationalised via new car park.
- 6 Informal park and garden. Define edges to the path with seating steps or metal edging.
- 7 Define space as sensory and wildlife garden. Retain existing sensory play and add other elements for sensory experiences...flowering and fragrant planting, musical play, barefoot path, bug hotel etc.

- 8 Play area consolidated for better surveillance and functional definition, reduced fenceline.
- 9 Potential community garden linked to commercial unit/cafe within the pavilion.
- 10 Axis to monument revitalised with new seating and floor graphics linked to the overall theme.
- 11 Bowling green and 5-a-side pitches retained.
- 12 Access limited for maintenance, servicing and staff (approx. 36 additional spaces).
- 13 Re-instated historic path link for better circulation through the park.
- 14 Retain informal play space outside of fenced area.



FIGURE 18 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN EXTRACT (POOL BUILDING OPT 1)

POOL BUILDING. OPTION 2

The concept for the pool building is based on the principle of re-using the existing building and attaching the new pool uses onto the front creating a more visually prominent position of the building within the park.

The new entrance core will be a new focal point when coming from the south. A new cafe would be attached to the north to activate the space to the monument. The linear East-West route is reinstated passing the entrance for easy access.

Car parking is consolidated into a dedicated area to the south. Structure planting will break up the car park and grassland edge planting will merge it into the park landscape. This area would need further ground site investigation to understand the potential subsidence risk and options for mitigation.

The overflow car park is retained in its current location with a new access from the car park.

The access to the temporary events space and maintenance building is retained but limited to non public movements via raised bollards.

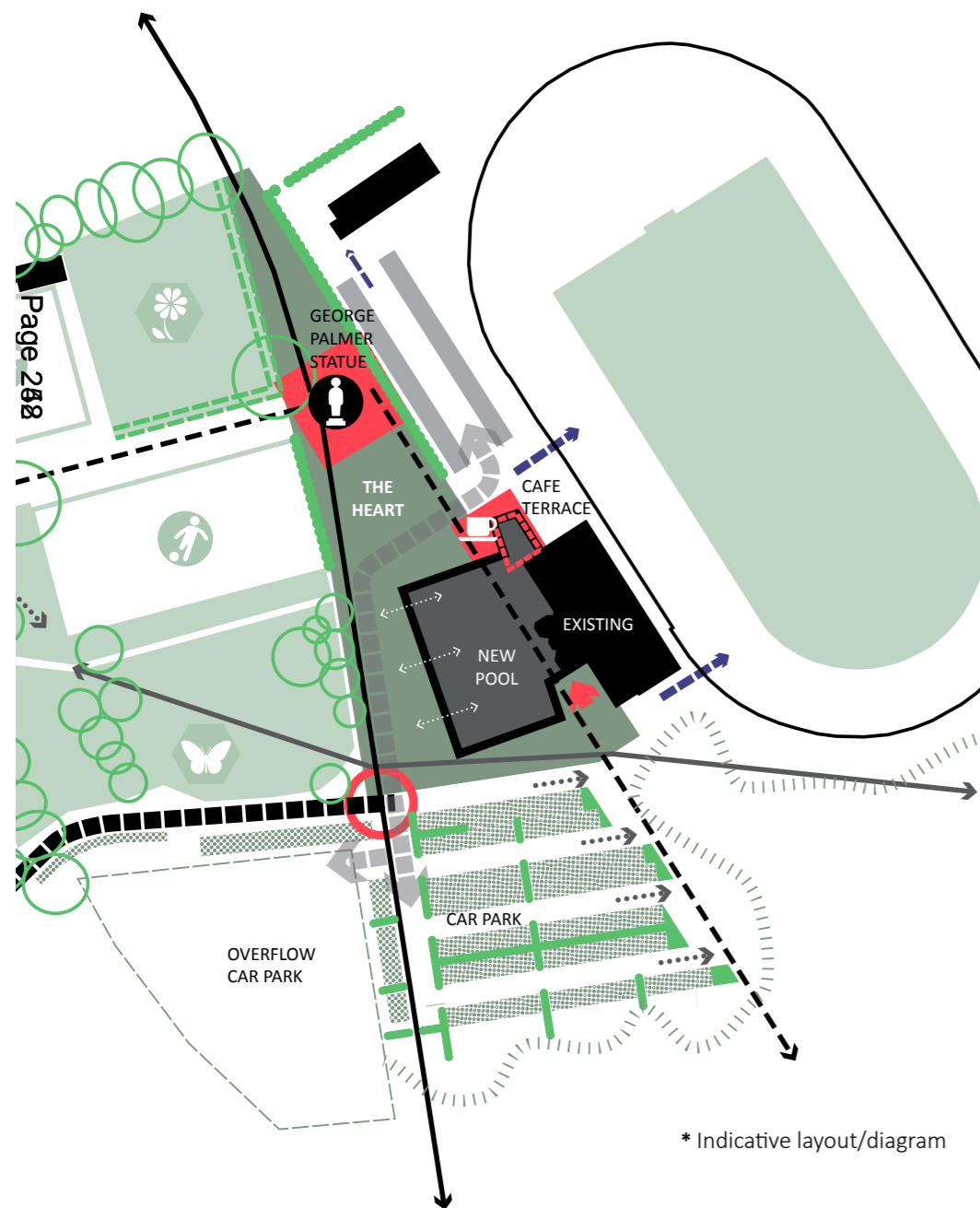


FIGURE 19 ACTIVE CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM (POOL BUILDING OPTION 2)



NORTH VIEW



SOUTH VIEW

FIGURE 20 INDICATIVE 3D VIEWS - POOL BUILDING OPTION 2

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

- 1 Attach new pool building to existing stadium building in more prominent position, new entrance situation.
- 2 Develop a new public realm around of the building linking the new entrance space with the space at the monument. Shared surface allows restricted access to car park and servicing areas.
- 3 Give an appropriate setting to George Palmer statue.
- 4 Public car park (approx. 190 spaces) close to pool entrance. Green design with planting and grasscrete and softened around the edges with meadow grassland.
- 5 Overflow car park as per current location...access rationalised via new car park.
- 6 Informal garden and garden. Define edges to the path with seating steps or metal edging.
- 7 Define space as sensory and wildlife garden. Retain existing sensory play and add other elements for sensory experiences...flowering and fragrant planting, musical play, barefoot path, bug hotel etc.

- 8 Play area consolidated for better surveillance and functional definition, reduced fenceline.
- 9 Potential community garden linked to commercial unit/cafe within the pavilion.
- 10 Axis to monument revitalised with new seating and floor graphics linked to the overall theme.
- 11 Bowling green and 5-a-side pitches retained.
- 12 Access limited for maintenance, servicing and staff (approx. 46 additional spaces).
- 13 Re-instated historic path link for better circulation through the park.
- 14 Retain informal play space outside of fenced area.



FIGURE 21 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN EXTRACT (POOL BUILDING OPT 2)

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	TREE STRATEGY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	MARK WORRINGHAM	TEL:	0118 9373337
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report concerns a draft Tree Strategy 2020, which is proposed for public consultation. The preparation of a new strategy, to replace the 2010 version, is an important part of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. The strategy includes ambitious aims and objectives for tree planting to 2030 and 2050, and includes details of how the existing tree stock will be protected and maintained. Views on the strategy from key environmental groups have already been sought and fed into the draft. Public consultation on the strategy is proposed to take place in March and April.

1.2 Appendices
 Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Scoping
 Appendix 2 - Draft Tree Strategy 2020

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Tree Strategy (Appendix 2), incorporating any amendments agreed by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11th March, be agreed for public consultation.

2.2 That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any changes necessary as a result of consultation

and approve the final Tree Strategy, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage and Recreation.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency at Council on 26th February 2019, and set out its commitment to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Trees can make an important contribution to both mitigating effects on climate change and on adapting to the climate change that is already inevitable. Ensuring that there is a robust strategy for trees is therefore a key part of the Council's response to the climate emergency.
- 3.2 At the same time, there are existing policy documents which make clear the importance of trees in Reading. The Reading 2050 Vision sees Reading as a 'City of Rivers and Parks' and includes potential measures of which trees are a key part, including connectivity of green spaces and introducing vegetation within the built environment. The Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2021 includes a priority of 'Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe'. The new Local Plan adopted in November 2019 includes policies to secure tree planting within development sites. In addition, the Council and community organisations are reviewing the range of conservation area appraisals across the Borough, and trees are usually a vital part of the historic significance of those areas.

4. THE PROPOSAL

(a) Current Position

- 4.1 The Council's existing Tree Strategy dates from 2010. Whilst there has been considerable success since that time, including planting of around 2,000 trees on Council land, it is now time that the Strategy is reviewed to meet the new challenges, particularly climate change.
- 4.2 The Council itself owns and manages approximately 12,500 specimen trees in addition to woodlands and groups of trees. Overall, the tree canopy cover of Reading is 18% of the Borough's area, although this differs substantially in different parts of the Borough, from 6.7% in Battle ward to 32.2% in Mapledurham.

(b) Option Proposed

- 4.3 This report recommends that a Draft Tree Strategy 2020 is approved for public consultation. The Draft Tree Strategy is included as Appendix 2. This strategy was considered by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11th March, and any amendments to the document made at that committee should be incorporated into the plan as recommended for consultation.

4.4 The Tree Strategy is built around a number of objectives, with actions against each objective. The Strategy looks at tree management and planting on the Council's own land, as well as measures dealing with trees on private land.

4.5 The objectives of the Strategy are set out below:

1. RBC Tree Stock - protect, retain, manage and plant trees to ensure an increased canopy cover of healthy trees resistant to pest & diseases and climate change and to reduce air pollution.
2. Climate adaptation - increase the diversity of the tree stock (family, genus and species) to provide resistance to climate change; plant large canopy species wherever feasible; maintain and keep trees healthy in order that they can achieve their full potential thus ensuring that Reading's Urban Forest is resilient to the impacts of climate change and provides the maximum role in mitigating its effects.
3. Tree planting - plant at least 3,000 'standard' trees¹ by 2030 on Council land.
4. Canopy cover - increase overall canopy cover to 25% by 2050; ensure that all wards have at least 12% canopy cover by 2050; and target priority areas for tree planting based on canopy cover, air pollution, treed corridors, green links, areas of high landscape value and ensure RBC and planting on development sites considers these.
5. Protection of private trees - the Local Planning Authority will continue to use its powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to make Tree Preservation Orders and to retain & protect trees on development sites in line with good arboricultural practice
6. RBC will engage with partners, public and landowners and work with key partner volunteer groups to raise awareness of the Tree Strategy aims and good arboricultural management practices
7. Improve biodiversity across the Borough by; selecting trees that are either native or of wildlife value, particularly in semi-natural areas; by ensuring that tree planting does not compromise or adversely affect other habitats; and by protecting ancient woodlands and ancient/veteran trees.
8. Identify all areas suitable for street tree and other planting on Council land - initial study to be completed by 2021, with continued updates.
9. Funding - continue to secure funding for tree planting and maintenance through government and other funding streams and partners.
10. Biosecurity - continually review RBC purchasing and working practices to ensure RBC are working to good arboricultural practice to minimise the chance of introducing and/or spreading pests, diseases or invasive species within the Borough

¹ A 'standard' tree will be of a minimum 8-10cm girth and 2.5m in height at the time of planting. N.B. the majority of the 3,000 trees are expected to be above this minimum

11. Trees & Development - tree retention, protection and planting within development sites in will be in accordance with the aims of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policies.
 12. Monitor progress - record and report net tree gain on an annual basis and reassess canopy cover in 2030.
- 4.6 In terms of quantitative targets, the strategy includes shorter-term targets for tree planting by 2030 and longer-term targets for canopy cover by 2050. The proposed tree planting on Council land would represent a 50% increase over current rates. However, as trees take some time to mature, it would be a number of years before increased tree planting in line with this strategy is reflected in increased canopy cover, and this is why no canopy cover target by 2030 is proposed. There are four wards which fall below the ward-specific canopy cover target (Abbey, Battle, Katesgrove and Whitley), and these, along with the treed corridors, would need to see much of the tree planting.
 - 4.7 There is an important relationship between the Tree Strategy and the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which is also to be considered at this meeting. Production of the BAP has been co-ordinated with the Tree Strategy. Council officers who have inputted into the BAP have also fed into the Tree Strategy, as have many of the other organisations. The potential for the two documents to be combined has been considered, but this was not considered appropriate. Trees have many important roles in addition to biodiversity, whilst biodiversity has many facets beyond trees. The Tree Strategy is also a more detailed document. However, there is considerable cross-referencing between the documents, and the documents have been reviewed to ensure that there is no inconsistency or unnecessary duplication.
 - 4.8 It is proposed that public consultation take place over a five-week period, between 20th March and 24th April 2020. The Tree Strategy and BAP will be consulted upon together. Once consultation is completed, responses will be considered in drawing up a final version.
 - 4.9 This report recommends that, for reasons of putting the Strategy in place swiftly, a final version taking account of consultation responses be approved by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage and Recreation. It is expected that this would take place in May 2020.
- (c) Other Options Considered
- 4.10 There are two alternative options to progressing with the Tree Strategy as drafted:
 - (a) continue to rely on the 2010 Tree Strategy; and
 - (b) preparing a strategy that aims for a higher level of canopy cover.
 - 4.11 Not progressing with a new strategy would mean reliance on a strategy which is now ten years old and which was not drafted to reflect the Climate

Emergency. This would not result in increased levels of tree planting, and miss out on all of the associated environmental benefits.

- 4.12 A strategy which aims for a higher level of canopy cover, for instance 30-40% would not be achievable, given the primarily urban nature of the Borough. Even without the constraint of being an urban area, most of the Borough is not in Council ownership, and the Council would not therefore be able to effectively influence whether this is achieved. There would also be possible issues in that some of the areas where trees might be possible to plant to achieve these targets are already important habitats in their own right (e.g. flood meadows) and this approach might therefore have a detrimental impact on biodiversity.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Approval of the Tree Strategy will contain proposals for continuing to expand the tree stock and canopy cover of Reading, and to protect and manage the existing stock. This will play a major part in achieving the Council's priorities of 'Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe' and 'Promoting health, education, culture and wellbeing' as set out in the Corporate Plan (2018-2021).

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A new Tree Strategy which increases the tree stock and canopy cover of the Borough would have significant positive environmental implications.
- 6.2 Trees can have a mitigating effect on climate change, by absorbing carbon dioxide and therefore offer a role in the decarbonisation of the Borough. Similarly, tree planting is a way of mitigating the adverse effects of poor air quality.
- 6.3 Trees can also make a particular contribution to adapting to the effects of the climate change that is already occurring. Trees can cool the town through transpiration and shading, prevent surface water run off by absorbing water through their leaves, branches and roots, and their fallen leaves feed the soil allowing for further carbon absorption.
- 6.4 The Tree Strategy considers how the approach to trees can best maximise these positive effects, through, for instance, inclusion of trees with a large canopy, ensuring the right balance between native and non-native species, and making sure that wildlife-friendly species are planted.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Tree Strategy has been subject to a stakeholder consultation with key groups over a period of three weeks between 3rd and 24th February 2020. The groups involved were as follows:
- Globe groups (Caversham, Tilehurst);

- Residents associations;
- Reading Tree Warden Network;
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT);
- The Conservation Volunteers;
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC);
- Environment Agency;
- Thames Water;
- Network Rail;
- Reading UK CIC;
- Local Nature Partnership;
- Reading Climate Action Network;
- Econet (Reading) (includes the Friends of groups and CROW);
- The Woodland Trust;
- Trees for Reading;
- Natural England; and
- University of Reading

7.2 A total of seven responses from these groups to this initial consultation were received. Many of these related to matters of detail, and these comments have been considered in preparing the draft of the Tree Strategy. Some of the groups considered that the Tree Strategy should be more ambitious in terms of new planting and/or canopy cover. However, these targets have been carefully considered to be achievable within the timescales, subject to resources being available.

7.3 Subject to approval, the Tree Strategy would be subject to a five week period of public consultation during March and April. This will include publication on the Council's website and sending to organisations and groups on the planning consultation lists. Consultation will take place in conjunction with the Biodiversity Action Plan. Responses received will be taken into account in preparing a final version of the document.

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

8.1 The Scoping Assessment, included at Appendix 1 identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not relevant to this decision. A full EqIA is not therefore required.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A Tree Strategy is not a statutory requirement in itself, but it does state how the Council will undertake some of its statutory functions.

9.2 Under Part VIII (Special Controls), Chapter I Trees, Section 197 of The Town and Country Act 1990 states (no change since 2010):

“Planning permission to include appropriate provision for preservation and planting of trees.

It shall be the duty of the local planning authority—

- (a) to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees; and*
- (b) to make such orders under section 198 as appear to the authority to be necessary in connection with the grant of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise.”*

9.3 Section 198 relates to the serving of Tree Preservation Orders, which the Council continues to do when appropriate.

9.4 The Environment Bill 2019/2020 had its first reading on 15th October and second reading on 28th October 2019. The Bill was reintroduced to parliament, following the general election, on 30th January and had its second reading on 26th February 2020. If brought into law, it will have implications for trees. Included within the Bill are measures to ‘improve the air we breathe’ and ‘restore and enhance nature and green spaces’, both of which tree planting can contribute to. Within this latter measure, The Environment Bill introduces a ‘Duty to Consult’ which will give the public the opportunity to understand why a street tree is being felled and express any concerns regarding this. If the Bill becomes law, the Council will implement required procedures.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Tree Strategy has been prepared within existing budgets.

10.2 Many of the actions set out in the Tree Strategy can be achieved using existing resources and within existing budgets.

10.3 The ambitions in terms of tree planting, which are to plant 3,000 trees on Council land by 2030, and will result in enhanced canopy cover, will require funding. Tree planting on current average levels of around 200 each year reflects the size of the tree planting budget, and the Tree Strategy makes clear that if an increase is to be achieved, this will have budgetary implications. This level of tree planting would require the purchase of an additional bowser (quotes currently being sought), additional vehicle costs to tow (around £12K p.a.) and an additional half post (£17K p.a.), as well as an approximate 50% increase in the tree planting budget from £50K to around £75K). There is also likely to need to be a 5% increase in the annual maintenance budget to cover items such as recording, inspection and formative pruning. Capital funding of £50k per annum for 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 has been agreed as part of the Council’s annual budget setting, the revenue implications of this will not be realised until 21/22. The service will seek to manage within existing resource, with a growth bid considered as part of next years budget setting if required.

Value for Money (VFM)

- 10.4 Trees are a cost-effective way of having a significant positive effect on the Borough's environment, in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change, enhancing the appearance and character of the area, improving air quality, providing for biodiversity and complementing the town's heritage.

Risk Assessment

- 10.5 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Tree Strategy 2010
- Report to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, 11th March 2020

APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Tree Strategy

Directorate: DEGNS - Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Team Leader

Date of assessment: 29/01/2020

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To set out the strategy, objectives and actions for protecting, managing and expanding the tree stock of Reading

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The whole community will benefit from the continued protection and maintenance of existing trees and the increase in number of trees and canopy cover.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

An increase in tree planting on Council land, and increased canopy cover, which will be beneficial to all residents in the Borough.

A particular focus on tree planting on treed corridors and in the wards where tree cover is lowest, which will benefit residents of Abbey, Battle, Katesgrove and Whitley in particular.

Continued protection of important trees, which will benefit all residents.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Local residents and environmental groups - protection of important trees, additional tree planting to contribute to climate change reduction/adaption, improved air quality, biodiversity, local character.

Council departments - clear targets and approaches to new tree planting and management of existing trees, supported by sufficient resources.

Landowners - a clear approach to protection of trees on their land.

Developers - a reasonable approach to new tree planting requirements which does not affect development viability and achievability.

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because: protecting, managing and expanding Reading's tree stock does not have a differential effect on racial groups, gender/transgender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 29 th January 2020
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 29 th January 2020

Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy 2020



March 2020



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Page 265



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

- i. **It is now 10 years since Reading's last Tree Strategy was produced and adopted. The need for review is made more urgent by the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in February 2019, and the production of a revised Climate Change Action Plan to respond to this.** This new Tree Strategy is intended to be an adaptable document that can be reviewed as and when required.
- ii. The benefits of trees are many. Environmental benefits include absorbing carbon dioxide, improving air quality, reducing flooding, shading and sheltering to reduce urban temperatures, providing a wildlife habitat and movement network and reducing noise. There are also aesthetic benefits that make our environment more enjoyable, as trees contribute to local character, make up a valued part of the historic environment, enhance privacy and add greenery and colour. These factors all help to contribute to better mental and physical health.
- iii. Trees have historically been an intrinsic part of Reading, with street tree planting and tree planting within open spaces a particular feature of the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of the town. Reading has a significant tree stock, in particular in its parks, school grounds, housing areas and along its highways. There is an extensive network of woodlands within the Borough, often on elevated ridgelines, and trees are also a key element of the perimeters of the flood meadows of the Thames and Kennet, as well as the railway corridors.
- iv. The Council itself owns and manages approximately 12,500 specimen trees in addition to woodlands and groups of trees, and therefore has a major role in implementing the strategy as a landowner. Since 2010, around 2,000 trees have been planted by the land-owning departments **of the Council. Overall, the tree canopy cover of Reading is 18% of the Borough's area.**
- v. There have been a number of changes since 2010 which the new Tree Strategy has to take into account. New national planning policy and environmental legislation affect matters around planning and management of trees. At a local level, the Reading 2050 vision sees Reading as a **'City of Rivers and Parks', whilst the new Local Plan strengthens planning policy around trees.**

Objectives

- vi. The 2020 Tree Strategy has the following objectives
 1. RBC Tree Stock - protect, retain, manage and plant trees to ensure an increased canopy cover of healthy trees resistant to pest & diseases and climate change and to reduce air pollution.
 2. Climate adaptation - increase the diversity of the tree stock (family, genus and species) to provide resistance to climate change; plant large canopy species wherever feasible; maintain and keep trees healthy in order that they can achieve their full potential thus **ensuring that Reading's Urban Forest is resilient to the impacts of climate change and provides the maximum role in mitigating its effects.**
 3. Tree planting - **plant at least 3,000 'standard' trees by 2030 on Council land.**
 4. Canopy cover - increase overall canopy cover to 25% by 2050; ensure that all wards have at least 12% canopy cover by 2050; and target priority areas for tree planting based on canopy cover, air pollution, treed corridors, green links, areas of high landscape value and ensure RBC and planting on development sites considers these.

5. Protection of private trees - the Local Planning Authority will continue to use its powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to make Tree Preservation Orders and to retain & protect trees on development sites in line with good arboricultural practice
6. RBC will engage with partners, public and landowners and work with key partner volunteer groups to raise awareness of the Tree Strategy aims and good arboricultural management practices
7. Improve biodiversity across the Borough by; selecting trees that are either native or of wildlife value, particularly in semi-natural areas; by ensuring that tree planting does not compromise or adversely affect other habitats; and by protecting ancient woodlands and ancient/veteran trees.
8. Identify all areas suitable for street tree and other planting on Council land - initial study to be completed by 2021, with continued updates.
9. Funding - continue to secure funding for tree planting through government and other funding streams and partners.
10. Biosecurity - continually review RBC purchasing and working practices to ensure RBC are working to good arboricultural practice to minimise the chance of introducing and/or spreading pests, diseases or invasive species within the Borough.
11. Trees & Development - tree retention, protection and planting within development sites will be in accordance with the aims of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policies.
12. Monitor progress - record and report net tree gain on an annual basis and reassess canopy cover in 2030.

Our aims and how we're going to achieve them

- vii. Section 3 sets out detailed measures for achieving the objectives, and leads to an Action Plan (Appendix 1) that states how the objective will be achieved, by whom, over what timescale, and how it will be resourced.
- viii. Information is included on how the Council will manage its own tree stock. This covers the various functions of the Council which have some responsibility for land on which trees stand.
- ix. The strategy aims to increase canopy cover. On its own land, the Council will plant at least three trees for every non-woodland tree felled. Guidance is included on new tree planting, and the emphasis will be on tree planting to achieve a more diverse tree stock. Priority areas for planting will be around the treed corridors shown on the map in Appendix 3. The Council tree planting aims depend on increases in funding.
- x. The strategy sets out how trees will contribute to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change in Reading. This includes an emphasis on diversity and larger canopies. The contribution trees can make to improving air quality is also a key part of the strategy.
- xii. Strong and effective protection of important trees, including ancient woodlands and ancient and **veteran trees, will continue through the Council's tree protection powers. The Council will** practice good biosecurity methods in its own activities to prevent the spread of pests and disease and will work to create a more resistant tree population. There will be a strong cross-relationship with the new Biodiversity Action Plan.
- xiii. Improved monitoring and reporting of gains and losses of trees, both in Council ownership and on development sites, will be required to ensure that the strategy is effective.



CONTENTS

PART ONE	5
- IMPORTANCE OF TREES TO READING	
- CHANGES SINCE 2010	
- LINKS TO OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES	
Introduction	5
Trees in Reading	6
Since the 2010 Strategy ...	8
<i>National policy</i>	8
<i>Reading Borough Council—Corporate</i>	10
<i>The Reading 2050 Vision</i>	10
<i>Planning</i>	11
RBC tree management	12
<i>Ownership, management and composition of the Council’s tree stock</i>	12
<i>Tree felling</i>	14
<i>Tree planting</i>	14
Transport	16
Canopy cover	17
Treed corridors	19
Climate change and disease proofing	19
Links to other Council strategies	20
PART TWO—OBJECTIVES 2020-2050	21
PART THREE— OUR AIMS AND HOW WE’RE GOING TO ACHIEVE THEM	23
Management of the Council’s tree stock	23
<i>Highways</i>	25
<i>Street works</i>	26
<i>Waterways</i>	27
<i>Education</i>	28
<i>Housing</i>	28
<i>Valuation</i>	28
Tree planting	29
<i>Make-up of tree stock</i>	29
<i>Native versus non-native</i>	29
<i>Where and how to plant</i>	30

<i>Maintenance</i>	31
<i>Funding</i>	31
<i>Hedge planting</i>	32
Climate change	33
Canopy cover	33
Biosecurity	35
Pest & disease resistance	36
Air pollution	37
Biodiversity	38
Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees	39
Tree protection	41
Development	41
Community engagement	42
Trees on a wider scale	42
Monitoring and reporting	43
GLOSSARY	44
APPENDICES	46
APPENDIX 1—ACTION PLAN	46
APPENDIX 2—MAP SHOWING CANOPY COVER BY WARD	50
APPENDIX 3—MAP SHOWING TREED CORRIDORS AND OTHER CONTEXT	51
APPENDIX 4—COUNCIL TREE NUMBERS BY FAMILY AND GENUS	52
APPENDIX 5—DECLARATION FOR STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS	54
APPENDIX 6—I-TREE READING CANOPY ANALYSIS	55
APPENDIX 7— INFORMATION ON NETWORK RAIL’S VEGETATION MANAGEMENT	59
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	60

Front cover photo:
Forbury Gardens
(*Anna Iwaschkin*)

PART ONE

- IMPORTANCE OF TREES TO READING
- CHANGES SINCE 2010
- LINKS TO OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES

Introduction

- 1.1 The benefits of trees are well documented. They contribute many social, environmental, economic and health benefits to an urban Borough such as Reading. Ensuring appropriate retention, maintenance and planting of trees within the Borough is vital to provide these **benefits, enable climate change proofing of the Borough, to meet the Council's environmental aims** and to make the town a desirable place to live and work.
- 1.2 In 2010, Reading Borough Council formally adopted its first Tree Strategy. It set out a shared vision and strategy for both private and public sector trees in Reading and set out a strategic approach towards their future management. It is appropriate 10 years on to review the previous aims, reflect on the achievements met and set out our aims for both the short and long term.
- 1.3 **Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face, the Council's climate emergency declaration in 2019 committed us to work towards a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.** Tree retention and planting will aid in meeting that challenge. Over the last 10 years, acceptance of the importance of tree retention and planting, for the multiple benefits they provide, has increased, particularly as a result of the extremes of weather that climate change brings and the continued loss of biodiversity that occurs. A revised Climate Change Strategy has been produced and this new Tree Strategy complements it, addressing some of its actions. **The benefits of trees are much wider, however, and include contribution to our town's character and heritage, improving air quality and providing a habitat for wildlife.**
- 1.4 This revised Tree Strategy will be an adaptable one; being updated as and when required to remain current, in line with changes to national and local policy, procedures, best practice and Government guidance.



Limes at Victoria Recreation Ground (Anna Iwaschkin)

Trees in Reading

- 1.5 Reading has Saxon origins and rose to particular prominence as a medieval religious centre with the foundation of the Abbey. There was a significant expansion in the 19th century supporting major employers, such as Huntley and Palmers, Sutton Seeds, various brick and tile works and Simonds Brewery. To support these industries, rapid residential development took place. This **phase of the town's evolution created its network of characteristic street tree planting.** London Road, Caversham Road, Kendrick Road, Coley Avenue and numerous side roads were planted with stately Plane trees in the form of avenues or were lined with Lime trees. Numerous parks, recreation grounds and open spaces were laid out at this time, all using trees as an important component of their design and legacy. Some other open spaces derived from former estates outside the urban area, such as Caversham Park and Whiteknights, where trees had long held an important role. Today we are fortunate to benefit from the significant tree planting that took place in the Victorian and Edwardian eras and, to a lesser extent, in later periods.
- 1.6 The Council owns (freehold) approximately 25% of the land within the Reading Borough area. Within that land, the Council is responsible for a significant number of trees and woodlands growing in a wide range of locations e.g. in parks and woodlands, schools, care homes, housing areas, along highways. Reading contains numerous parks and other open spaces. Parks such as Prospect, Palmer, and the Thameside Promenade provide the opportunity for people to experience trees of various forms, types and ages in a relatively dense urban environment. In addition there are prestigious open spaces of notable character in the centre of Reading such as **St Mary's Churchyard (Reading Minster), The Forbury Gardens and St Laurence's Churchyard,** or others such as at Caversham Court just outside the town centre.
- 1.7 There are extensive networks of woodlands and groups of trees across the Borough in both private and public ownership. These are remnants of what are likely to have been larger wooded areas, that historically provided food and fuel. They form significant and distinctive landscape features and help to define the landscape character of Reading. The concentration of woodland and other trees on higher ground defines the very visible wooded ridges that are an **acknowledged feature of the skyline and character of Reading, which are designated as 'Major Landscape Features' in our Local Plan.**



Beech trees at McIlroy Park (Anna Iwaschkin)

- 1.8 Other landmark trees coincide with the generally older housing stock, particularly within the 15 conservation areas in the Borough, where they contribute strongly to their character and appearance. The Conservation Area Appraisals for these 15 areas includes reference to important open spaces and trees where these form an integral element of the value of the area.
- 1.9 Street trees have an important role in helping to define the character of many areas; enhancing the street scene and softening the hard urban environment as well as providing a barrier to noise and pollution.
- 1.10 Trees also form significant parts of the landscape along the Thames, Kennet and Holybrook rivers, alongside the railways, and on the various arterial roads running into and out of the centre of Reading - **these are the 'treed corridors'**.
- 1.11 The benefits of trees are many. The environmental benefits include:
- They absorb carbon dioxide, the major climate change gas, reducing levels of this gas in the atmosphere;
 - Tree canopies intercept rain, delaying rainfall onto hard surfaces and into the mains drainage systems, thereby reducing surface water runoff and flooding caused by heavy rain (important to help mitigate the impacts of increases storms as a result of climate change);
 - They provide shelter and shading from wind, rain and sun and reduce urban temperatures as well as the temperatures of watercourses (especially important with regard to climate change adaptation);
 - They improve air quality by removing gaseous air pollutants, such as ozone and nitrous oxides, and particulate matter such as soot and smoke and they release oxygen;
 - They reduce noise, particularly noise from traffic;
 - **They provide habitat for wildlife and are a vital component of the town's green** infrastructure with street and urban trees providing wildlife corridors and stepping stones across the urban area.
- 1.12 In addition, there are significant aesthetic benefits, including
- They are a significant feature of the character of many streets, reinforcing their scale and proportion and enhancing their attractiveness;
 - Developments/housing with an established tree stock can result in higher property prices;
 - They screen undesirable features, enhance privacy and add greenery and colour;
 - **They are of historical importance, providing link to Reading's past and to mark wider** historical events; and
 - They can reduce certain types of anti-social behaviour such as graffiti, in some circumstances.
- 1.13 As a result of all of the factors above, trees and provision of green spaces have been shown to contribute to better mental and physical health.



Verdun Oak, Forbury Gardens (Geoff Sawers)

Since the 2010 Strategy ...

1.14 As was detailed in the 2010 Strategy, in October 2008, a Council motion was agreed as follows:

“This Council has always recognised the significant and positive contribution that trees can make to the quality of the urban environment. In particular, it notes that:

- 1. Trees can greatly enhance the visual amenity of our environment, are vital for people’s sense of well-being and contribute to everyone’s quality of life.*
- 2. Trees are essential in maintaining and enhancing the Borough’s biodiversity.*
- 3. Trees play a crucial role in reducing urban temperatures, mitigating the effects of climate change and facilitating better urban drainage.”*

1.15 In the ten years since the adoption of the Tree Strategy, a number of relevant Council plans, policies and procedures have changed requiring the Tree Strategy to be updated to reflect these.

National policy

NPPF

1.16 **Chapter 15 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) states that:**

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- ...
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- ...”*

- 1.17 It goes on to state that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply a number of stated principles, including:
- “development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and”***
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- 1.18 Under Part VIII (Special Controls), Chapter I Trees, Section 197 of The Town and Country Act 1990 states (no change since 2010):
- “Planning permission to include appropriate provision for preservation and planting of trees. It shall be the duty of the local planning authority—***
- (a) to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees; and*
- (b) to make such orders under section 198 as appear to the authority to be necessary in connection with the grant of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise.*
- 1.19 Section 198 relates to the serving of Tree Preservation Orders, which the Council has and continues to do when appropriate. Section 211 relates to trees within Conservation Areas and requires notice (a Section 211 Notice) to be submitted to the local planning authority 6 weeks prior to carrying out tree works (with a few exceptions). The Council will continue to serve Tree Preservation Orders where trees of sufficient merit within Conservation Areas are proposed for felling.
- Environment Bill 2019/2020
- 1.20 **This Bill is one of the Government’s key vehicles for delivering its vision set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan.** The Bill had its first reading on 15 October 2019 and second reading by MPs on 28 October 2019 unopposed but with MPs acknowledging that weaknesses in the Bill require improvements. It was re-introduced to parliament following a general election on 30 January 2020 and had its second reading on 26 February .
- 1.21 **Included within the Bill are measures to ‘improve the air we breathe’ and ‘restore and enhance nature and green spaces’, both of which tree planting can contribute to.**
- 1.22 **Within this latter measure, The Environment Bill introduces a ‘Duty to Consult’ which will give the public the opportunity to understand why a street tree is being felled and express any concerns regarding this.**
- 1.23 If the Bill becomes law, the Council will implement required procedures. The Council is in the Spring of 2020 establishing a Tree Forum that will consist of Third Sector volunteers and **organisations to heed the ‘Duty to Consult’ as above as a recognised element of joint working with the community.**

Reading Borough Council - Corporate

- 1.24 The Corporate Plan 2018-2021 (refreshed in spring 2019) sets out in Chapter 13 the Council's priority to:
- 'Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe' with a vision for the Borough to be 'clean, green and safe'.***
- 1.25 Tree retention and planting will contribute towards a number of the projects identified within the Plan such as improving air quality, working towards a carbon zero town and investments in our parks.
- 1.26 In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to work towards making Reading a carbon neutral town by 2030. The Council is also working alongside the Reading Climate Change Partnership in coordinating the development of the new Reading Climate Change Strategy, which will be launched in April 2020. Retention and planting of trees will be a vital part of dealing with climate change by, e.g. rainfall interception, cooling the local environment, providing shade and CO2 sequestration by trees to reduce of CO2 levels.
- The Reading 2050 Vision
- 1.27 Following on from Reading's 2020 Vision (developed in the mid 1990s), through the Reading 2050 Vision, project partners Barton Willmore, Reading UK and the University of Reading aim to excite and engage with people across Reading: local communities, businesses, education providers and public sector, to support Reading's economic growth and evolution as a smart and sustainable city.
- 1.28 The Vision celebrates the achievements of Reading as a place, including:
- 408HA of open space throughout the town, including woodlands, wetlands, parks, play areas, pitches and allotments which includes 5 Historic Parks and Gardens
 - 32% Carbon emissions reduction Reading-wide since 2005
- 1.29 **The Vision acknowledges Reading as a 'City of Rivers and Parks' and suggests ways of enhancing this, including:**
- Develop greater connectivity through our green spaces and waterways via a considered strategy which includes greening the IDR to act as a lung for the city, and embedding the **'internet of things' technology within it**
 - Engage with leading built environment industry specialists to encourage the considered provision of open spaces, bodies of water and vegetation in our urban spaces, inside and on buildings, in order to minimise heating and cooling requirements and pre-empt climate change impacts
 - Enhance and encourage understanding of the ecology and biodiversity of our open space for informal leisure activity and educational purposes
- 1.30 The objectives of the Tree Strategy can assist in enabling these visions.

Planning

- 1.31 **The Council’s new Local Plan was adopted in November 2019. The Local Plan provides planning policies detailing expectations for developments within the Borough relating to trees, landscaping and biodiversity.**
- 1.32 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) states that:
- “Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.***
- New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.”*
- 1.33 Through the use of both national and local policies the Council will continue to ensure the appropriate retention and protection of trees within development proposals and secure landscaping within new sites in order to contribute to our corporate aims and the aims of this Tree Strategy, although this needs to be supported by resources for monitoring and enforcement. It is an expectation that all development has due regard to tree related planning policies and to the aims of this Strategy.
- 1.34 There are 1500+ Tree Preservation Orders across the Borough and 15 designated Conservation Areas. Protection of significant trees within Conservation Areas will be expected in accordance with EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment. The Council has and will continue to retain, protect and seek replanting of trees through its powers under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.35 **In addition, Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) introduces a series of ‘green links’** which link together areas of biodiversity significance and potential significance, many of which consist of groups or corridors of trees, whilst EN13 identifies the important Major Landscape Features, three of which in particular (West Reading wooded ridgeline, East Reading wooded ridgeline and the North Reading dry valleys and Chilterns escarpment) are characterised by their tree cover.
- 1.36 **‘Protection’ of hedges falls under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, which is administered by the Planning Section.** If hedges meeting set criteria are proposed for removal, a Hedgerow Removal Notice must be served to the Council. The Council then has 42 days to determine whether the **hedge is an ‘important’ hedge, as defined by the Regulations and if so, whether they want to** serve a Hedgerow Retention Notice, taking into account the exemptions that apply. A Hedgerow Retention Notice is permanent but can be withdrawn by the Council at any point. The Council cannot refuse permission to allow the hedgerow to be removed other than by serving a Notice. If a hedge is removed in contravention of the regulations the owner can face a **fine of up to £1000 in a Magistrates’ Court, an unlimited fine in the Crown Court and a requirement to replace the hedge.** ‘Important hedges’ do not include any within or bordering a domestic garden, hence those fitting the criteria are limited within Reading Borough.

RBC tree management

Ownership, management and composition of the Council's tree stock

- 1.37 At present, the Council owns and manages approximately 12,500 specimen trees in addition to woodlands and groups of trees. There are 12,987 features on the database, of which 491 are groups of trees. The breakdown by land-owning department is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of trees (or groups of trees) in public ownership by land-owning department

Highways	Parks	Cemeteries	Housing communal areas	Education excl. schools	Other
5,209	4,768	398	1,927	204	481

- 1.38 Since the adoption of the first Tree Strategy in 2010, the Council has undertaken a review of its tree stock in line with good tree management practice and has introduced a new tree management system in order proactively to manage its trees in line with tree health and personal Health and Safety requirements. Both case law and increased incidents of extreme weather in the last decade have highlighted the importance of the adoption of a tree management system.
- 1.39 The new management software has enabled a Borough-wide tree survey allowing the Council to determine the condition, age, and make-up of its tree stock in order to assist in prioritising and devising tree planting plans on an annual basis.
- 1.40 Trees are surveyed on a three- to five-year rolling programme, with trees in higher target areas on a more frequent inspection schedule. Trees with defects are monitored more regularly.
- 1.41 The database also allows the Council to manage trees by their family group and genus or species. A full list of trees by family and genus/species is in Appendix 4. The ten most common families and associated genus/species are in Table 2 below, and largely reflect historic - mainly Victorian - planting preferences.

Table 2: Ten most common genera/species of tree in public ownership

Family	Genus/species	Common name	Numbers
Malvaceae	Tilia sp.	Lime	1997
Rosaceae	Prunus sp.	Cherry	1441
Fagaceae	Quercus sp.	Oak	882
Oleaceae	Fraxinus	Ash	789
Sapindaceae	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	665
Betulaceae	Betula	Birch	591
Platanaceae	Platanus	Plane	576
Sapindaceae	Acer platanoides	Norway maple	568
Rosaceae	Sorbus sp.	Whitebeam, rowan and service tree	493
Rosaceae	Malus	Apple	410

Table 3: Ten most common tree families in public ownership

Family	Common name	Number
Rosaceae	Rose	2898
Malvaceae	Mallow	1997
Sapindaceae	Soapberry	1770
Betulaceae	Birch	1273
Fagaceae	Oak or beech	968
Oleaceae	Olive	789
Salicaceae	Willow	687
Platanaceae	Plane	576
Cupressaceae	Cypress	196
Taxaceae	Yew	133

COMPARISON OF TREE FAMILY NUMBER WITHIN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP



- 1.42 In addition to the routine maintenance of individual trees, the Council has adopted, and implemented, woodland management plans for a number of its woodlands, with help from the Forestry Commission and from voluntary and community organisations such as The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Nature Nurture and 'Friends of' groups.
- 1.43 There are individual management plans for Bugs Bottom and Clayfield Copse, as well as for large sites with areas of woodland, such as Prospect Park. TCV has ongoing projects at Blundells Copse, Bugs Bottom and Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Woods, as well as at Lousehill Copse.



Tree felling

- 1.44 Trees are monitored and managed with a view to retaining them for as long as possible without compromising public safety. Management for retention includes canopy reduction and pollarding/re-pollarding. In some cases, valuable trees, e.g. ancient and veteran trees, are fenced in order to prevent public access where this may be dangerous, and/or ensure the continued health of the tree.
- 1.45 Sometimes the risk becomes too great to retain a tree, and the decision is taken to fell it. Felling is a last resort after exploring other ways of addressing the risk. Recording of felling was started in 2014. Table 4 below shows the numbers of trees felled in the past six years, a total of 257, or an average of 43 trees annually.

Table 4: Tree felling in Reading Borough, 2014-19

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
47	57	68	44	24	17

- 1.46 Where trees are felled, the locations are recorded for consideration of replacement tree planting in the following season.

Tree planting

- 1.47 The adoption of the 2010 Strategy resulted in the allocation of an annual tree planting budget to cover all planting costs (trees, labour and establishment maintenance). This has enabled the Borough to carry out comprehensive planting over the last 10 years.
- 1.48 The capital budget is supplemented by allocations from Housing Department budgets, **Section106 agreements, and schools' budgets. This has enabled the planting of an average of 200 trees annually for the past decade (excluding woodland planting).** On average, therefore,

the Council is planting five times as many trees as it removes. Where trees are felled on the public highway, tree pits are left open, to allow for replacement planting.

1.49 The numbers of trees planted over the past decade by land-owning department is in Table 5 below. The effects of a reduced capital budget for tree planting in 2018-2020 can be seen.

Table 5: Tree planting in Reading Borough by land-owning department

Year	Highways	Housing	Parks	Schools	Total
2010/11	56	86	152		294
2011/12	160	101	69		330
2012/13	Not known	124	24	25	173
2013/14	130	62	9	32	233
2014/15	64	72	54		190
2015/16	94	10	38	3	145
2016/17	95	14	32	20	161
2017/18	156	40	46		242
2018/19	55	33	20	19	127
2019/20	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	162 (to date)
					2,057

1.50 The allocation of capital for tree planting is determined by the priorities of the 2010 Tree Strategy, with priority given to areas with low canopy cover and to replacement of trees that need to be removed for Health & Safety reasons. In addition, requests from members of the public, communicated directly, via councillors or via the Reading Tree Wardens Network (RTWN) are given priority when there is funding available.

1.51 In addition to standard tree planting, substantial planting of whips has been undertaken across the Borough, which includes significant work with volunteer groups, and has taken place in areas such as Bugs Bottom and Palmer Park. There will be improved recording and mapping of the location of this planting to ensure their long-term success.

1.52 Alongside adoption of the 2010 Strategy, the Reading Tree Warden Network (RTWN) was set-up. The RTWN has, over the last 10 years, provided invaluable help in securing funds for tree planting and carrying out tree planting projects alongside the Council. These projects have included:

- Significant street tree planting across the Borough, including the inaugural planting of Plane trees in Richfield Avenue
- Avenue planting in various parks/open spaces, e.g. Prospect Park and Long Barn Lane
- **Tree planting within St Mary's Churchyard (alongside the Diocese)**
- Tree planting on the Reading Festival site
- Tree Planting on Hartland Road
- Tree planting on Brunel Road
- Tree planting within six Whitley schools.



RTWN planting Oaks in Hartland Road (Anna Iwaschkin)

- 1.53 The RTWN also carries out maintenance jobs on trees across the Borough e.g. watering in drought periods, rescuing trees from canine damage as well as reporting dangerous tree situations. They also look out for pests and other threats to trees.
- 1.54 In addition, the adoption and implementation of the woodland management plans (see paragraph 1.42), with help from the Forestry Commission and from voluntary and community organisations, has included tree planting with the Borough’s woodlands.
- 1.55 Finally, as part of its management strategy, suitable tree planting locations are noted whilst **trees are being surveyed in order to build up a ‘bank’ of tree planting locations for** consideration each planting season. These locations will be shared with RTWN and other groups that we have relationships with in planting trees throughout the town.

Transport

- 1.56 **Transport for London’s (TFL) ‘Healthy Streets’ initiative aims to introduce more trees and** greenery to make streets more attractive, more biodiverse, to tackle air pollution, to provide resilience to climate change (extreme weather) and to provide shade and shelter. RBC is proposing to integrate these principles as a core element of our new transport strategy for the period 2020-36 (subject to consultation), to help achieve a shift towards sustainable transport, walking and cycling by creating more attractive streets within Reading.
- 1.57 As part of the assessment of major infrastructure projects within the Borough, the inclusion of trees and other planting will be factored in alongside the considerable benefits of promoting a shift from private car use to sustainable transport, walking and cycling. Previous major projects such as Junction 11, Reading Station interchanges and the A33 MRT scheme have included tree planting which was vital to mitigate tree loss and soften an inevitable increase of hard landscape.



Plane trees in Kendrick Road (*Nicola Tipler*)

- 1.58 At full Council on 22 May 2019 a new interest group ‘Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum (Transport Users Forum)’ was formed in response to the Council’s declaration of a climate emergency. Several of the duties of this forum link to the aims of the Tree Strategy, namely:
- To propose measures to improve air quality across the Borough
 - **To identify and share best practice in relation to clean and green ‘healthy streets’** initiatives which promote sustainability, healthy living, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and carbon reduction.

1.59 The transport network includes the cycle and walking network alongside which tree planting will be incorporated where feasible. It also includes the railway network, which is managed by **Network Rail. Appendix 7 contains detail on Network Rail’s vegetation management.**

Canopy cover

1.60 The 2010 Tree Strategy included aims around increasing canopy cover. The overview map **identified areas of ‘10% or less canopy cover’ and these became priority areas for tree retention and planting.** The overall aim was a 10% increase in canopy cover by 2030.

1.61 **Unfortunately, the 2010 Strategy lacked a baseline figure for the Borough’s canopy cover, so it is impossible to categorically confirm whether the aims set out in 2010 are likely to have been**

achieved. Around 2,000 trees have been planted by the Council since 2010, and this is certainly **more than a 10% increase in the number of ‘arboricultural features’ that our tree management software records**, which is currently almost 13,000. However, this includes woodlands and copses as individual features. Therefore, Council planting of 2,000 trees, combined with administration of Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) and new planting on development sites, whilst certainly having extended the canopy cover by 2010, is unlikely to be on track for a 10% increase

1.62 As part of the preparation of the new strategy, i-Tree Canopy has been used to identify the current canopy cover of the Borough in total and by ward and therefore give us the baseline figure that the 2010 Strategy lacked. This has enabled us to have a clear idea of the current areas where canopy cover is low, i.e. where tree retention and planting should be focused, and provides information for future comparison, as well as to assess the cover within individual **wards. The results are set out in part 3 of this document, along with this Strategy’s aims for expanding cover.** Canopy cover will be assessed again in 2030, which is considered to be an appropriate minimum period for any comparison to be meaningful.

1.63 **The Council will assess the Borough’s canopy / trees further for the benefits they provide using i-Tree Eco** within the next 5 years and then remeasure whenever appropriate. This assessment is based upon the canopy cover, and should be tied to the date of the canopy cover objectives in section 2. i-Tree Eco is currently designed to provide estimates of:

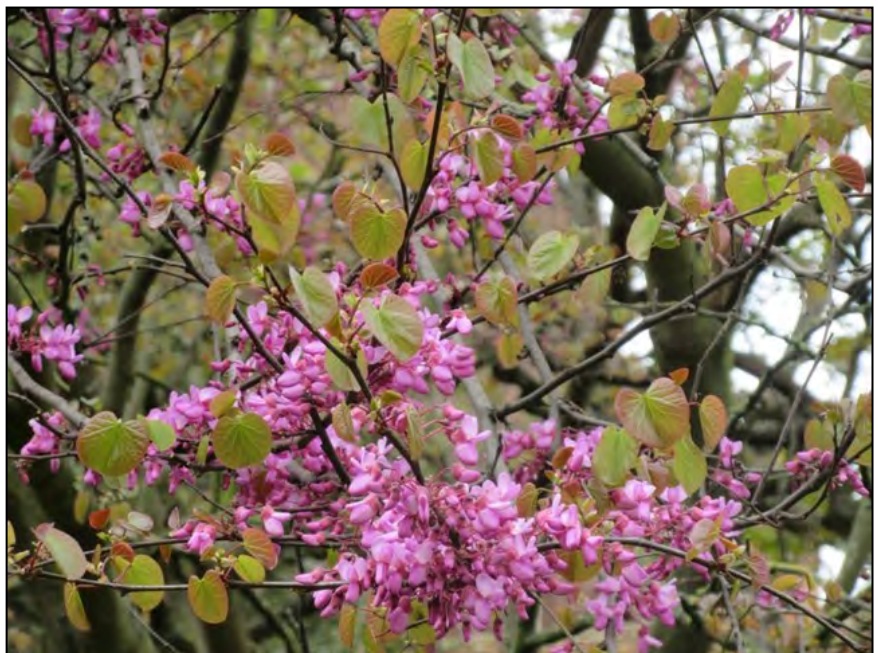
- Urban forest structure - Species composition, number of trees, tree density, tree health, etc.
- Pollution reduction - Hourly amount of pollution removed by the urban forest, and associated percent air quality improvement throughout a year. Pollution removal is calculated for ozone, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter 2.5 (<2.5 microns).
- Public health impacts - Health incidence reduction and economic benefit based on the effect of trees on air quality improvement for the United States only.
- Carbon - Total carbon stored and net carbon annually sequestered by the urban forest.
- Energy Effects - Effects of trees on building energy use and consequent effects on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.
- Avoided runoff - Yearly avoided runoff attributed to trees summarized by tree species or strata.
- Forecasting - Models tree and forest growth over time; considers factors like mortality rates, tree planting inputs, pest and disease impacts and storm effects. Some ecosystem services including carbon and pollution benefits are also forecasted.
- Bio-emissions - Hourly urban forest volatile organic compound emissions and the relative impact of tree species on net ozone and carbon monoxide formation throughout the year.
- Values - Compensatory value of the forest, as well as the estimated economic value of ecosystem services.
- Potential pest impacts - based on host susceptibility, pest/disease range and tree structural value.

Treed corridors

- 1.64 The Reading Tree Strategy - Overview Map incorporated within the 2010 Tree Strategy identified **‘treed corridors’ across the Borough, consisting of railways, roads and watercourses, which were** and are a priority for tree retention and planting to provide green corridors into, out of and through the town. These remain within this new Strategy and are cross referenced with priority routes for tree planting to address high air pollution areas within the Borough.
- 1.65 It would also be appropriate for Green Links, as identified in the Local Plan, to be identified as **‘treed corridors’ within this Strategy in order to help link and strengthen these.**
- 1.66 **The Council will also explore opportunities to ‘green’ the cycle and walking network through** tree planting to make these more pleasant for users by, for example, providing shade in the summer and the filtering of air pollution and particulates.

Climate change and disease proofing

- 1.67 It is becoming increasingly important for trees to form an integral part of any town for the multiple benefits they provide. In order to climate change proof our town, we need to assess the species make-up of our tree stock and work towards a greater diversity of tree species as the effects of climate change are not clear in terms of species survival.
- 1.68 In addition, pests and disease introductions as a result of global movement of goods have resulted in a significant detrimental impact on a number of species within the UK. An appropriate diversity of tree species will therefore also help to ensure that canopy cover is better protected should a pest or disease affect a particular genus or species.



Judas tree, St Lawrence’s churchyard (Anna Iwaschkin)

Links to other Council strategies

1.69 It is important that the Tree Strategy compliments other Strategies across the Council and vice versa:

- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Local Transport Plan
- Reading Climate Change Strategy (RCCS)
- Open Spaces Strategy
- Thames Parks Plan
- Reading Borough Local Plan
- Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan
- Highway Asset Management Plan
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Reading 2050 Vision
- Woodland management plans
- Conservation area appraisals.

PART TWO—OBJECTIVES 2020-2050

OBJECTIVE 1

RBC Tree Stock - protect, retain, manage and plant trees to ensure an increased canopy cover of healthy trees resistant to pest & diseases and climate change and to reduce air pollution.

OBJECTIVE 2

Climate adaptation - increase the diversity of the tree stock (family, genus and species) to provide resistance to climate change; plant large canopy species wherever feasible; maintain and keep trees healthy in order that they can achieve their full potential thus **ensuring that Reading's Urban Forest is resilient to the impacts of climate change and** provides the maximum role in mitigating its effects.

OBJECTIVE 3

Tree planting—**plant at least 3,000 'standard' trees* by 2030 on Council land.**

* See Glossary

OBJECTIVE 4

Canopy cover - increase overall canopy cover to 25% by 2050; ensure that all wards have at least 12% canopy cover by 2050; and target priority areas for tree planting based on canopy cover, air pollution, treed corridors, green links, areas of high landscape value and ensure RBC and planting on development sites considers these.

OBJECTIVE 5

Protection of private trees - the Local Planning Authority will continue to use its powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to make Tree Preservation Orders and to retain & protect trees on development sites in line with good arboricultural practice.

OBJECTIVE 6

RBC will engage with partners, public and landowners and work with key partner volunteer groups to raise awareness of the Tree Strategy aims and good arboricultural management practices.

OBJECTIVE 7

Improve biodiversity across the Borough by; selecting trees that are either native or of wildlife value, particularly in semi-natural areas; by ensuring that tree planting does not compromise or adversely affect other habitats; and by protecting ancient woodlands and ancient/veteran trees.

OBJECTIVE 8

Identify all areas suitable for street tree and other planting on Council land - initial study to be completed by 2021, with continued updates.

OBJECTIVE 9

Funding - continue to secure funding for tree planting and maintenance through government and other funding streams and partners.

OBJECTIVE 10

Biosecurity - continually review RBC purchasing and working practices to ensure RBC are working to good arboricultural practice to minimise the chance of introducing and/or spreading pests, diseases or invasive species within the Borough.

OBJECTIVE 11

Trees & Development - tree retention, protection and planting within development sites will be in accordance with the aims of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policies.

OBJECTIVE 12

Monitor progress - record and report net tree gain on an annual basis and reassess canopy cover in 2030.

PART THREE

OUR AIMS AND HOW WE'RE GOING TO ACHIEVE THEM

- 3.1 The overall aims are to increase tree planting and canopy cover across Reading, and to effectively protect, maintain and manage the important trees that we already have. This is essential if we are to work towards a carbon neutral Reading, and to make sure that Reading can cope with the climate change which is already occurring.
- 3.2 These aims fit in with the overall framework and actions of the Climate Change Strategy, which is to be published in March 2020. It has six main themes of:
- Energy and Low Carbon Development
 - Natural Environment and Green Spaces
 - Water Supply and Flooding
 - Transport and Mobility
 - Health
 - Resources
- It also has four overarching themes of:
- Education
 - Adaptation (Resilience)
 - Business
 - Community.

Management of the Council's tree stock

- 3.3 **Objective 1 of the 2010 Tree Strategy was related to the management of the Council's tree stock.** In order to meet with this objective, we introduced the use of ArborTrack Tree management software. All of the Council's trees, excluding schools and land within individual Housing properties, have been surveyed and added to this database to enable proactive management of the tree stock by:
- Map based system which can be updated using tablets in the field allowing easy identification of individual trees.
 - Each tree has an inspection regime allocated to it depending on age and condition.
 - The system produces inspection schedules.
 - Details of faults and disease can be recorded and monitored at each inspection.
 - Works schedules and bills of quantities can be easily produced and the works recorded in each tree's record.
- 3.4 Other data can be obtained from ArborTrack to help the Council decide on strategic tree management, such as identification of mature trees for which succession planting needs to be planned and identification of genus and species diversity to identify which are over-represented within the Borough. The former is vital in ensuring appropriate allocation of resources for planting to provide future replacements prior to felling. The latter is necessary to ensure that our tree stock is resilient to future pest and disease outbreaks and to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 3.5 Council trees are surveyed on a 3-5 year cycle, depending on their location, although some are noted for annual inspection. Data are stored in the specialist database, ArborTrack. Urgent and priority works noted during inspection are carried out as soon as practical.

3.6 The Council undertakes tree work principally to maintain the health and safety of the trees and on land that it owns. We prune trees for health and safety reasons, to remove actionable nuisances, in order to clear the public highway, or where trees are causing foreseeable damage to property. We do not cut back branches that block light or TV signals, drop leaves, flowers or fruit, or drip honeydew on cars.

3.7 Where there is no alternative to felling, trees are removed. It is not Council policy to grind out stumps, except where trees are to be replaced, where leaving a stump will create a hazard or where stump removal is prudent due to the presence of e.g. Honey fungus .

Table 6: Tree felling on public land, excluding works undertaken as part of woodland management, in Reading Borough (as recorded)

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
47	57	68	44	24	17	240

3.8 When trees are felled on the public highway, the tree pit is made safe but kept open, so that a new tree can be planted in the pit during the following planting season (or later, if the tree succumbed to a soil-borne pathogen).

3.9 Almost all tree maintenance is carried out by our in-house teams of arborists, who are fully trained in all aspects of tree work, as well as first aid and working safely on the public highway. Training is regularly refreshed when the relevant qualifications need to be refreshed under the law, or to keep arborists up to date with good practice.

3.10 **The Council carries out all tree work to the current British Standards Institute’s BS 3998: 2010 ‘Tree work - Recommendations’ and all tree planting and procurement to BS 8545: 2014 ‘Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations’.** The Council observes the law in respect of bird nesting and protected species. Procedures relating to work on trees in Conservation Areas and trees subject to Tree Protection Orders are also observed. This relates both to internal Council trees and to work carried out for private and public sector clients on a commercial basis. Whilst works to Council owned and managed trees are exempt from requiring a Section 211 Notice (Notice of works to trees in a conservation area) to be submitted, we notify the Natural Environment Team in Planning for their information.

3.11 The Council also expects third parties to observe the law in respect of interventions involving trees within the Borough. This includes application of National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) guidelines to utilities companies. Highways inspectors have been advised to inform the Tree Officer of infringements. Violations are inspected, and penalties imposed, although the Council prefers a cooperative approach, and will work with utilities contractors to find a solution to **works near trees (see later details under ‘Streetworks’)**.

3.12 Insurance claims against Council-owned trees are investigated, and trees are neither pruned nor felled where there is insufficient evidence to warrant this. Again, the Council will take a reasonable approach in situations when one of its trees is confirmed to be contributing to damage of property as part of its duty of care to neighbours.

- 3.13 **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** will be published on the Council’s website in order to assist with common queries. This will also include information to volunteers in regards to tree and whip planting within the Borough.
- 3.14 **In relation to the Council’s woodlands, these are managed separately. Woodland Management Plans** have been produced for 90 hectares of Reading’s woodlands (across 18 sites), which started in 2013. Implementation of the plans will benefit wildlife, amenity and the community - and the Forestry Commission part fund the works through the England Woodland Grant Scheme. Further information can be found at: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/groundsmaintenance>
- 3.15 Under Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (which came into effect in 2005), people whose light is affected by neighbouring evergreen trees / hedges are able to make a formal complaint to the Council if they are unable to resolve the matter themselves and if the trees/hedges meet set criteria. The Council will aim to maintain its evergreen hedges to ensure that they do not affect the reasonable enjoyment of neighbouring gardens and/or houses in relation to light.



Weeping Beech, Reading Old Cemetery (Cemetery junction) (Anna Iwaschkin)

Highways

- 3.16 RBC has adopted a Highways Asset Management Policy which sets out the means by which the Council will manage the creation/construction, acquisition, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation and disposal of all Council Highway Assets. This will be achieved by applying a systematic management approach to every aspect the highway including asset planning, community expectations, risk assessment and management, asset accounting, budget allocation, the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), the Highways Maintenance Manual and reporting and defining roles and responsibilities. All Highways assets, including trees will be covered by this approach with regular inspections and remedial/renewals being carried out as part of the highways condition surveys and safety inspections.
- 3.17 The Highways tree stock is an important asset with 5,209 street trees currently under management using the ArborTrack system, which complements the Asset Management approach to highways maintenance adopted by the Highways Department. The highway offers significant

tree planting opportunities both for replacements and new planting, subject to underground and aboveground services and visibility constraints.

- 3.18 Under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, where private trees are considered a threat to users of the public highway or public footpaths, the Council can require the owner to make the tree(s) safe. If trees and hedges are causing an obstruction to the highway the Council will issue a letter requesting works to be carried out to remove the obstruction within 28 days. If the works are not carried out in this time a formal notice will be issued giving a further 14 days to have the works carried out. If the works are still not carried out after this time legal proceedings may be instigated, which can result in the Council carrying out the work if it is not undertaken within the required period, and recovering costs.
- 3.19 Reading Borough Council has set the statutory heights of 5.5m for the carriageway (road) and 2.75m for the footways / footpath (pavements), i.e. tree branches must be maintained above these heights. If a tree is protected by a TPO or is situated in a Conservation Area, formal approval is not required for pruning to achieve these heights, however the Planning Section should be given prior notice of the intended works.
- 3.20 New tree planting locations within the highway will take into account the location of highway furniture, e.g. signs, lampposts, bus stops, and to avoid future obstructions. In addition, it will be ensured that planting on Council land and on development sites will not obstruct sight line safety. Where trees are planted on private land close to the public highway, advice will be given to landowners / developers to install suitable root barriers to prevent future root damage to pavement and road surfaces in order to avoid trip hazards occurring. Please see the section on Tree Planting.
- 3.21 Similarly when new highway furniture is installed it will be ensured that the locations minimise the likely need to significantly prune or fell existing highway trees during their expected lifespan.

Street works

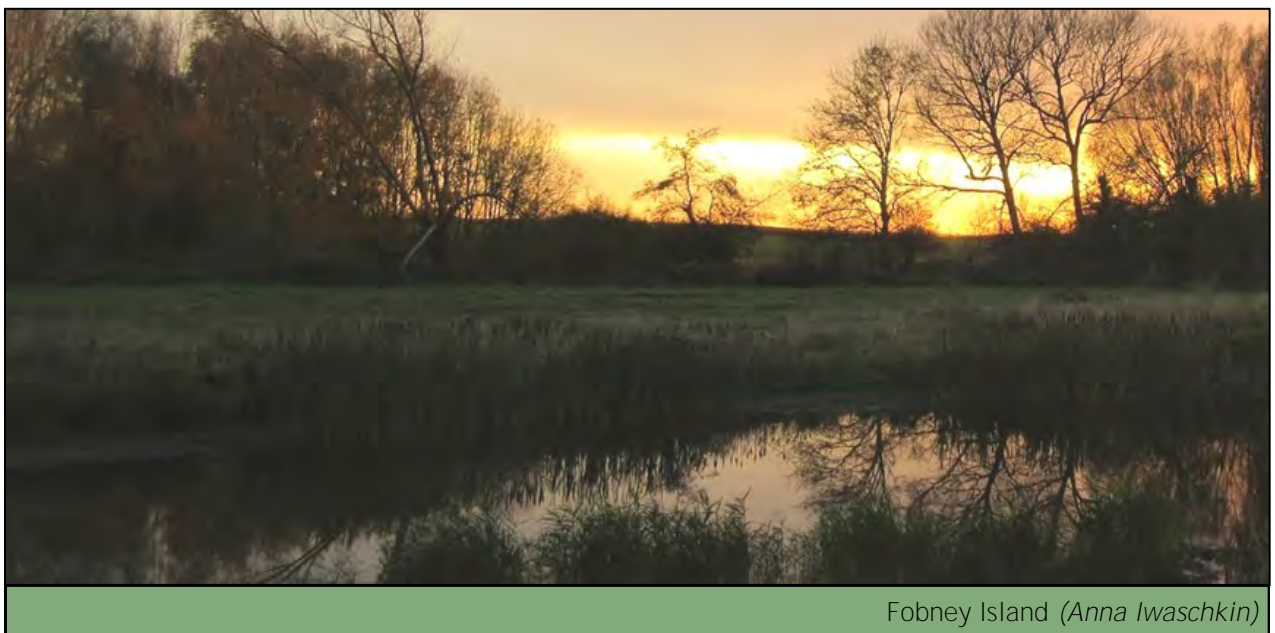
- 3.22 Works within the public highway by utility companies/Statutory Undertakers has the potential to cause significant harm to important street trees and adjacent private trees where works are within the pavement. Reading Borough Council expects all companies carrying out works within the Borough to have due care for Council and private trees adjacent to or within their working area. We expect all utility companies/Statutory Undertakers to follow **National Joint Utilities Group Volume 4: 'Street Works UK Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees' (NJUG 4) at a minimum and be able to fully justify any works that do not conform to this.** Statutory Undertakers are encouraged to liaise with appropriate officers at the Council where conflicts with trees arise and agree a method of working prior to commencement. If Statutory Undertakers are found to have caused unnecessary harm to Council trees, we will seek monetary compensation for any subsequent tree works that are necessary and for the full cost of planting a replacement tree if required. In addition, where the condition of a street tree has deteriorated since its last inspection, checks will be made to our street works register to establish if these are the likely cause of the deterioration and if necessary the relevant utility company will be approached for compensation.
- 3.23 The Council has sought a written agreement from the main five Statutory Undertakers (SSE,

Southern Gas Network, Virgin Media, Thames Water and BT) confirming their commitment to carry out their works with the expected consideration for adjacent trees. This has been in the form of a declaration which we have asked them to sign. This Declaration can be found in Appendix 5.

- 3.24 **The Council’s aim is to ensure that Highways Inspectors are fully aware of NJUG 4 with sufficient understanding of the document in order to challenge the working methods of contractors working on behalf of Statutory Undertakers close to trees. It is also an aim for Highways Inspectors to be trained to have basic arboricultural knowledge relating to the law and tree hazard identification.**

Waterways

- 3.25 Reading is fortunate to have a number of watercourses running through the town; namely the River Thames, River Kennet, Kennet & Avon Canal and the Holybrook. The watercourses benefit the town from an aesthetic point of view but also provide outdoor leisure opportunities, wildlife habitats and an alternative transport route. A mix of light and shade on river banks creates a diversity of habitats on the banks and in the channel and that the shade from trees helps keep rivers cool to resist the impacts of climate change. The Thames and the Kennet / Kennet & Avon are identified as treed corridors on the map in Appendix 3, hence are priority routes for tree retention and planting.
- 3.26 Although the embankments / towpaths are generally not public highway, Reading Borough Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, encourages land owners to carry out tree works, but step in to clear any dangerous / damaged / overhanging vegetation that is causing a blockage or could potentially increase flood risk. The Council would look to recharge where appropriate. The Environment Agency also has powers to remove trees or carry out tree works alongside main rivers where they cause a flood risk.
- 3.27 The Highways department works with the Parks department to arrange and pay for tree and vegetation clearing works, for example at Holybrook adjacent to Brook Street West and along the Holybrook flood plain below Southcote / Lesford Road.



Fobney Island (Anna Iwaschkin)

3.28 Highways annually inspect the local highway ditches and non-critical ordinary watercourses that are on our asset register and arrange for tree and vegetation works as appropriate and required.

Education

3.29 In relation to education land, individual schools are responsible for the management of trees on their land and must allocate resources within their budget for this. Regular inspection and maintenance of trees by schools is of utmost importance given both the high target zones and **that under an occupier's 'common duty of care', as defined by The Occupiers Liability Act 1957, 'an occupier must be prepared for children to be less careful than adults'.**

3.30 **Within the Council Health & Safety Department's 'Property Management and Compliance Guide', schools are required to have their trees inspected by a competent person on a monthly basis to industry best practice.** In addition, they are required to have a statutory inspection every 3-5 years (dependent on individual tree risk) by an approved contractor.

3.31 The Education Department within Reading Borough Council will encourage schools to carry out regular inspections to meet with their duty of care to the pupils and to comply with Health & Safety requirements.

3.32 Education officers will also encourage schools to carry out tree planting for e.g. shading and pollution filtration, providing advice on free or grant funding for tree planting, and to encourage pupils to be involved in the planting in order that future generations can appreciate the benefits tree provide.

Housing

3.33 Housing land across the Borough contains a significant number of trees, including 1,927 within communal land. Tenancy agreements make explicit what tenants can and cannot do in respect of trees on rented properties in order to avoid unauthorised loss. To ensure no unnecessary felling of trees and to encourage appropriate management and tree planting, the Housing Department will devise a tree policy as an addendum to the current tenancy agreements. Housing Officers will promote the objectives of the Tree Strategy to tenants.

Valuation

3.34 In order to avoid loss of good trees within the Borough, once Council land is identified for sale, the Valuation Section has and will continue to request that the trees be surveyed to identify any Health & Safety issues and assessed for a possible inclusion within a TPO. Where it is agreed that trees merit inclusion, a TPO may be served prior to the sale of the land in order that any potential purchasers are aware of tree constraints should they wish to redevelop the land where it is considered appropriate so to do.

3.35 The Valuation department will aim to avoid disposal of areas of woodland (or other high value wildlife habitat) which may result in pressure to fell or develop these areas, or where they are retained by the new owners, are less likely to be managed appropriately.

Tree planting

- 3.36 The overall aim is to significantly increase tree planting on Council land, to plant 3,000 trees by 2030, subject to achieving the necessary funding.

Make-up of tree stock

- 3.37 **We have identified that the Council's tree stock currently consists of a large variety of trees,** dominated by particular genera. The list of trees by family, genus and species is in the table in Appendix 4. The most common tree is Lime (*Tilia*), of which there are almost 2,000, followed by Cherry (*Prunus*) (1,441). There is also a surprisingly large variety of different conifers.

- 3.38 Annual tree planting over the next 30 years will focus on the families, genera and species which are underrepresented in order to create a more diverse tree stock. The reasons for this are not only aesthetic; diversity provides protection against pests and diseases spreading through particular varieties of tree, as well as supporting a greater range of fauna. The aim is to work towards a tree stock containing only 30% of any one Family, 20% of any one Genus and 10% of any one species. This will take time, as the historic, largely Victorian, planting has resulted in a predominance of certain trees. These are a relatively long-term investment, and there is no intention to fell trees to help achieve a greater mix. Replacement will therefore occur over time as trees senesce, as well as taking opportunities for mixed planting in new locations.

- 3.39 The need to increase certain tree species and avoid planting of others to achieve diversity will also be considered when landscaping schemes for development sites are assessed. There will be an expectation that developers and their landscapers will have due regard to our diversity aim and that landscaping will be designed accordingly.

- 3.40 It is known that some species can have a negative impact on human health. Therefore, species choice, particularly within well-used areas, will need to be mindful of these effects.

- 3.41 The Council will undertake to produce a preferred species list by 2022 that takes account of these considerations.

Native versus non-native

- 3.42 The 2010 Tree Strategy suggested that native species should be planted in preference to non-native species where appropriate. Native trees generally support a greater number and diversity of wildlife than non-native trees; their association with wildlife having built up over a longer period. The incorporation of native planting will continue to be of importance to **compliment the aims of the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and only native species will** be planted in semi-natural habitats and particularly along wildlife corridors. However, the inclusion of non-native species will also be appropriate to make the Borough more resistant to climate change and the impact of pests and diseases. When selecting non-native trees, the Council will focus on those that are beneficial to wildlife in its planting schemes and will expect developers to do the same. There will be instances where exotic, ornamental planting will be justified, for example in public parks and in Conservation Areas to maintain their original character.



Handkerchief tree, Forbury Gardens (Anna Iwaschkin)

Where and how to plant

- 3.43 As mentioned above, the Council is proactively identifying locations for tree planting in order to have a bank of locations ready for each tree planting season. As well as identifying the more obvious places for planting, i.e. within soft landscape areas, the Council will also look at potential creative ways of introducing space for tree planting where it does not currently exist, e.g. build-outs in narrow streets and planters of sufficient sizes, where this does not compromise highway use by all users.
- 3.44 When determining the right species to plant in any location, the Council will have due regard to **the ‘Right tree, Right Place’ principle and will add ‘the right tree pit’ to that.**
- 3.45 The potential negative aspects of trees are acknowledged, such as shading solar panels and **interrupting television signals, ‘nuisance’ from natural trees debris (e.g. leaves, branches, twigs, honeydew),** roots blocking drains, direct and indirect damage to buildings and structures (walls, hard surfacing) and even temporary traffic disruptions for tree works adjacent to the highway. Tree debris is a natural consequence of having trees and cannot be eliminated, only **managed appropriately to minimise hazards. New tree planting under the ‘right tree, right place, right pit pits’ principle aims to address the other issues to avoid future conflict thereby** ensuring trees can achieve their optimum size and lifespan without the need for detrimental pruning. Developers will be expected to approach planting with these same principles in mind and private landowners will be encouraged to consider these potential conflicts over the lifespan of any tree prior to planting.
- 3.46 The Council recognises the importance of good quality tree pits in order for trees to not only survive, but to thrive and achieve their optimum size and life span for maximum environmental

benefits. Tree pits will continue to be designed to meet the requirements of the location and species in order to provide a sufficient rooting environment and prevent damage to adjacent structures. As more creative locations for planting are identified, this will mean a greater cost per tree, hence, within the limitations of the annual budget, the number of trees in such locations will not be as great.

- 3.47 The Council will use the tree canopy data (including at ward level), air pollution data and **identified ‘green corridors’ to assist in defining where tree planting should be increased.** These priority locations can be seen on the maps in Appendices 2 and 3.

Maintenance

- 3.48 An appropriate portion of the annual tree planting budget will continue to be used for maintenance. The need for regular watering to ensure survival of new trees has been highlighted in recent years where drought and high temperatures have taken their toll on new planting. The Council does however have 99% survival rate for new planting by regular manual watering throughout the growing season (with the exception of the very dry summer of 2018, when losses exceeded 10%). Throughout the maintenance periods, where new trees have failed, they will be replaced unless it has been determined that soil conditions will prevent establishment. In view of the higher temperatures and reduced rainfall we are already experiencing and which is likely to continue, we will explore introducing alternative methods of watering and moisture retention, which may include greater community involvement. There will also be a need for more careful strimming around trees.

- 3.49 **With the climate emergency more groups have come forward wishing to undertake ‘mass whip plantings’ and this is expected to grow in the future. Whilst whip planting can produce canopy** for the future, the chance for survival unless properly tended to, can be minimal. Groups are encouraged to come to the Council to suggest places appropriate for whip planting. Once an area is planted, this will be added to a mapping system so that the areas can be noted in the future. Whips should be clearly marked out and a regular watering and clearing of the areas undertaken by the groups to ensure their success.

Funding

- 3.50 Meeting the objectives in section 2 of increasing tree planting on Council land, as well as canopy cover overall, can only be achieved if it is adequately resourced, and an increase in planting will need an increase in funding.
- 3.51 In relation to the funding of tree planting, the Council will continue to proactively seek grant funding and other funding streams, to secure money through Section 106 agreements where there is a need for off-site planting, and to facilitate memorial tree planting in order to increase the tree stock and provide adequate maintenance. The Council will also consider introducing match funding for local communities to encourage tree planting in their neighbourhoods.
- 3.52 Partners in tree planting initiatives include Trees for Cities, which annually gives a grant to the Reading Tree Warden Network for a joint planting scheme with the Council, and Ethical **Reading’s Trees for Reading, a new business-funded venture.**
- 3.53 The Council also encourages neighbourhood associations and neighbours to work together to

raise funding for tree planting in residential streets, and there have been several successful projects improving streets that are deficient in canopy cover.

- 3.54 Internally, the result of the i-Tree Eco assessment will provide a value for the Council's tree stock (a Council Asset) in terms of its 'ecosystem service'. This will enable due consideration for a review of the budget allocated for tree maintenance and planting.
- 3.55 The Council will continue to use its powers under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 to secure replanting in Conservation Areas and where protected trees are felled, wherever possible and appropriate. Where replanting within a Conservation Area cannot be enforced by law, owners will be encouraged to replant in order to meet the objective of the Tree Strategy and will be offered advice if required.



Boundary Lane (Sarah Hanson)

Hedge planting

- 3.56 Hedgerow retention and planting will play an important part in responding to the climate emergency and will contribute to the aims of the revised Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Hedgerows capture carbon, assist in reducing air pollution in urban areas, help soften the urban environment, function as noise barriers, aid wind mitigation (making areas more pleasant to walk and cycle) and are an important resource for wildlife providing both food and shelter. Appropriate management of existing and new hedgerows will be important, to maximise these benefits that they provide. New hedgerows will help strengthen identified green links, in addition to trees, and will be of particular importance where trees cannot be accommodated in order to provide the link between areas of habitat. There will be an expectation for new developments to incorporate hedge planting within landscape schemes, especially where sites fall within the vicinity of green links or are on identified 'treed corridors'.

Climate change

- 3.57 The Tree Strategy is important in how it can work in collaboration with the Climate Emergency Strategy and any resulting actions. Trees sequester (absorb) carbon dioxide and therefore can **offer a role in assisting in reducing Reading's carbon footprint.**
- 3.58 However, estimating the contribution that a tree will make to reducing carbon emissions is difficult, and can depend on its species, size and maturity. A rule of thumb often used is that a tree will absorb one tonne of carbon over an assumed lifespan of 100 years. This is only an approximate measure, but on this basis, the additional 3,000 trees would absorb 30 additional tonnes of carbon per year, although the expectation is that this will be supported by tree planting on private land. Clearly, tree planting can only be part of a much wider response to reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.59 The most significant value of trees as part of the climate emergency response is in how they protect people and environments from adverse climate impacts. For example, they cool the town through transpiration and shading, they prevent surface water run off by absorbing water through their leaves, branches and roots, and their fallen leaves feed the soil allowing for further carbon absorption. Overall, the Tree Strategy will be important in adapting current tree provision and mitigating/preventing future issues related to climate change.
- 3.60 In order to ensure the tree population of Reading is resistant to climate change, we will:
- Improve species diversity to make the tree population more resistant to species loss/failure as a result of a changing climate;
 - Plant large canopy trees wherever feasible on Council owned land;
 - Aim to secure space for large canopy species within development sites;
 - Aim to secure natural Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) within development sites, i.e. trees and landscape features as opposed to attenuation tanks, as the default position;
 - **Aim to secure green walls / green roof planting within development sites where 'on the ground' planting space is limited; and**
 - Plant trees in clusters where appropriate.
- 3.61 The risk is flooding is likely to increase with increasing frequency of storm events as a result of climate change. Tree planting is an important part of any flood alleviation strategy, contributing to natural flood management systems. Trees act to intercept rainwater, some of which evaporates directly back into the atmosphere; interception of the remaining (even when not in leaf) resulting in a slowing of the water flow into the drainage system, thereby relieving pressure on these during storms. The uptake of water by tree roots and the increase in soil infiltrations rates where trees exist also contributes to storm water management.

Canopy cover

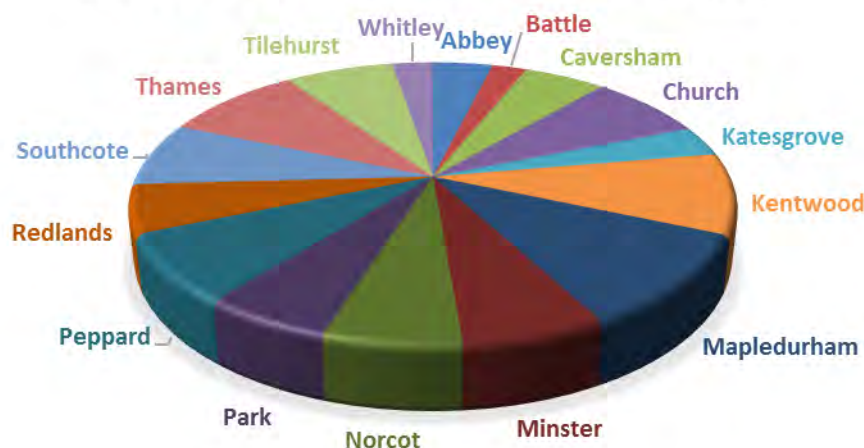
- 3.62 Canopy cover is a useful measure of the proportion of an area which is covered by the canopy of a tree. In terms of the climate change agenda, as well as for other matters such as air quality, it is a more meaningful measure than absolute numbers of trees. The Council has utilised i-Tree Canopy to estimate tree coverage within the Borough as a whole and within the individual wards. This has provided baseline data so that the increase in canopy cover can be followed over time. It has enabled us to identify the areas with low tree coverage where tree retention and planting can be prioritised.

3.63 The results are shown on the chart in Appendix 2 and the individual details for each ward are show in the table below.

Table 7: Percentage canopy cover in each ward

Ward	Canopy cover (%)
Abbey	11.6
Battle	6.72
Caversham	15.8
Church	22.8
Katesgrove	10.4
Kentwood	27.9
Mapledurham	32.2
Minster	19.7
Norcot	18.9
Park	17.7
Peppard	23.6
Redlands	16.7
Southcote	22.1
Thames	27.0
Tilehurst	21.1
Whitley	7.95
Total for the Borough	18

CANOPY COVER COMPARISON BY WARD



3.64 The current canopy cover is approximately 18%. This includes 12,496 number of individual Council trees, excluding those within non-communal Housing land, in schools and the 15 woodlands across the Borough. It also includes privately owned land, demonstrating the need to promote the value of trees to residents and land owners in the Borough.

- 3.65 It is important for this Strategy to aim to increase canopy cover. This aim must balance ambition with what can realistically be achieved, taking account of the geography of the area. Including ambitions that are undeliverable is not the purpose of this Strategy.
- 3.66 Reading is a highly urban borough, with the fourth highest population density in the South East **at the 2011 Census. Almost half of Reading's area is covered by the footprint of buildings, road carriageways and railway lines.** Some of the remainder includes other areas where opportunities for tree planting are very limited, such as sports pitches, surface car parks, service yards, open water, or priority habitats that are not characterised by tree cover. Within **that context, it is notable that Reading's tree cover is already higher than the average for towns and cities of 16%** (Forest Research, 2018). There is limited additional land available for planting, and even less land over which the Council is able to exercise control.
- 3.67 In addition, it takes time for newly-planted trees to mature to the point where they make a significant contribution to extending canopy cover, unless mature or semi-mature trees are planted, which in virtually all cases is financially prohibitive. The canopy cover objective of this Strategy should therefore be longer term than tree planting objectives.
- 3.68 For this reason, this Strategy aims to increase canopy coverage within the Borough to 25% by 2050. This is considered to reflect the amount of land that is likely to be suitable and potentially achievable for extended cover. It would represent a 39% increase in canopy cover over existing levels. It will be achieved by ensuring the number of trees planted significantly exceeds that felled on Council land, but will also rely on canopy cover being extended on private land, including development sites.
- 3.69 In addition, whilst recognising that each ward has a distinct geography, the aim is to ensure that all wards exceed 12% canopy cover by 2050, and this will require improvement in four wards in particular - Abbey, Battle, Katesgrove and Whitley. This will be achieved through Council planting (subject to funding), net increases in tree numbers on development sites and retention of trees through TPOs.
- 3.70 Ward boundaries in Reading are under review, and are expected to change shortly. There will therefore be a need for an early review of this Strategy to take account of the new wards and amend objectives accordingly. This review may also cover other matters.
- 3.71 In order to contribute to the aim of increasing canopy cover, the Council will aim to plant at least three trees for every non-woodland one felled on its own land. Over the last 10 years, the **Council's target of planting two trees for every one felled has been surpassed, and it is an opportunity to increase our ambitions to meet the climate change challenge.** However, achieving this will require an increase in funding for tree planting and maintenance.

Biosecurity

- 3.72 To deal with the threats from pests and diseases, the Council will continue to practice good biosecurity measures when carrying out tree work and disposing of waste wood.
- 3.73 **The Council's current tree surveying includes inspection for known and expected pests, in order that appropriate action can be taken in line with Government guidance. The arborists are also trained to look for defects in trees when they are working on them. In addition to the Council's**

inspection programme, the Forestry Commission monitors 12 sites for Oak Processionary Moth. The Tree Wardens are also vigilant, and notify the Council of suspected infections.

- 3.74 **In order to keep abreast of developments, the Council's Arboricultural Team subscribes to** Landscape Institute, Forestry Commission and Arboricultural Association alerts about biosecurity issues.
- 3.75 There are pockets of Chalara, Ash dieback, on Council sites. Where these are found, periodic clearance of affected trees, usually young trees, occurs. Any replanting which takes place will consider alternate species or dieback resistant Ash (if and when these become available).
- 3.76 The choice of varieties of tree to plant will be influenced by biosecurity concerns; varieties less subject to disease are being planted more frequently and mixed rather than monoculture planting is increasingly being done.
- 3.77 In addition, we will carefully consider suppliers of seeds, plants, trees and wood products to ensure they have appropriate biosecurity procedures in place in line with Government guidance. The Council currently uses tree nurseries which have good biosecurity policies in place. In addition, bedding plants are currently purchased from a UK supplier who grows their own from seed. Shrubs are purchased from a UK supplier who grows their own, buying in larger plants from reputable sources. Suppliers are asked to confirm that they have regular Ministry inspections and hold a Plant Passport, which denotes that they can issue plant passports for all plants that they handle. All suppliers are expected to keep up with any changes and ensure compliance with current Regulations (plant health regulations having changed in December 2019).
- 3.78 The Council are currently working on formulating a procedure to deal with disposal of arisings to take biosecurity issues into account.
- 3.79 Biosecurity will also be considered on development sites where there will be an expectation for developers to ensure that plants and trees are from suppliers with appropriate biosecurity measures. Developers will also be expected to deal with invasive species in line with government guidance.

Pest and disease resistance

- 3.80 The incidence of pest and disease introductions has had a significant effect on the UK tree population over the last 50 years, e.g. Dutch Elm disease, Horse chestnut leaf miner, Ash dieback and Oak Processionary Moth to name a few. To help create a tree population within the Borough more resistant to the impact of pests and diseases, we will:
- Improve tree diversity to reduce the impact on the tree population as a whole from the loss of any one species / genus;
 - Ensure good biosecurity working practices to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and diseases;
 - **Carefully consider all tree work to minimise the impact on the trees' future health, e.g.** timing of the work (phenology), keeping pruning to the minimum required and following good arboricultural practices;
 - Keep new trees healthy - right tree, right place, right tree pit and right maintenance of Council trees;
 - Securing sufficient landscape maintenance for new planting on development sites.

Air pollution

- 3.81 Clean air is essential for our health, quality of life and the environment. Air pollution is not only harmful to human health but also has harmful effects on plants and animals as well corroding materials and buildings. There are areas close to congested roads where levels of nitrogen dioxide exceed the air quality objectives and where levels of particulates are elevated. Particulates are classified by their mass (PM10 and PM2.5), with the smaller particulates, PM2.5 being more harmful due to their ability to travel further into the lung.
- 3.82 The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to review and assess air quality on a regular basis, against a set of Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) set out in the Air Quality Regulations. Local authorities are required to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in any area where the AQOs are exceeded and there is relevant human exposure, and must draw up an action plan to show what steps it intends to take to improve local air quality.
- 3.83 In September 2006, Reading Borough Council declared six AQMAs. In September 2009, monitoring then indicated there were additional areas where nitrogen dioxide levels were being exceeded. As a result the six AQMAs were revoked and replaced by a single management area which covers perceived and actual exceedances. An Air Quality Action Plan was subsequently drawn up and measures from it to improve air quality are being implemented.
- 3.84 The AQMA is shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map and highlights the main area of concern which includes much of the central area and main radial transport corridors. As such these **correspond with ‘treed corridors’ identified on the map in Appendix 3, hence priority planting** along these routes will provide green corridors which help improve air quality.
- 3.85 Policy EN15: AIR QUALITY of the new Local Plan requires that:
- “Development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality”.***
- 3.86 Trees directly absorb harmful polluting gasses such as oxides of Nitrogen, Sulphur dioxide and ground-level ozone as well as trapping particulate matter in their leaf surfaces.
- 3.87 The use of trees to help tackle air pollution can be maximised by careful species selection, i.e. choosing trees that will tolerate air pollution, and planting large canopy trees where possible. This can be considered both through Council planting and securing appropriate planting on **development sites. Guidance, such as The Trees and Design Action Group’s (TDAG’s) ‘Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure’ (<http://www.tdag.org.uk/>) and Barcham’s Tree Species Selection Guide (<https://www.barcham.co.uk>)** will be utilised for this purpose. The former, more extensive guidance, provides information of the tree characteristics useful for trapping pollution, e.g. dense crowns and textured leaves, along with advice on providing a mix of tree height and dimensions to allow air turbulence/mixing in order to disperse pollution. It **contains a long list of species suitable for ‘transport corridors’ which can be considered for use** in highway and major infrastructure planting.
- 3.88 As stated in the policy text for EN15, mitigation measures for development may include planting and green walls. This planting (trees, hedges, shrubs & green walls), along with green roofs, is

also important to improve air quality and will therefore be expected within development sites alongside tree planting or as an alternative where tree planting is demonstrated to be unfeasible.

- 3.89 In addition, it is important that we continue to secure and implement other methods of reducing air pollution for the benefit of the trees and vegetation that already exists.

Biodiversity

- 3.90 Trees and woodlands provide a vital resource for wildlife. They provide nesting and roosting sites, food in the form of foliage, wood, fruits and seeds and invertebrates. Numerous species depend on trees for their survival.
- 3.91 Whilst woodlands tend to be the most important, trees within the urban environment play a vital role by providing corridors and stepping stones for wildlife.
- 3.92 Reading has 193 hectares of woodland and scrub, much of which (approximately 50% - 95 hectares) is owned (freehold) by the Council. Other landowners include Network Rail, the University of Reading, schools and private land owners.
- 3.93 The majority of the RBC woodland is being managed in accordance with woodland management plans that were adopted in 2013 - these will need to be updated in 2023.
- 3.94 It will be important to avoid tree planting on certain valuable habitats where tree cover is not a feature of that habitat to avoid degrading the value they provide.
- 3.95 The Council is currently undertaking a review of its Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), prepared alongside this strategy, and the Tree Strategy aims to compliment this. To maximise biodiversity through planting we will:
- Carefully consider species selection, planting predominantly native or wildlife friendly species. The introduction of some non-native species will be acceptable to 1) retain the character of the older parts of the town where exotic species were historically planted and 2) to add to climate proofing the tree population
 - Prioritise planting along green corridors/links (as identified in the Local Plan), which incorporate wildlife corridors, both on Council land and on development sites.
 - Continue to protect existing trees through service of Tree Preservation Orders and retention of trees on development sites.
 - Aim to secure naturalistic SUDs provision on development sites as the default position.



Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees

- 3.96 Despite being a very urban borough, Reading is fortunate to have several pockets of ancient woodland; those being in Tilehurst (Kentwood Grove -McIlroys Park) and Emmer Green (Blackhouse Woods - Clayfield Copse). As an Action of our new Biodiversity Action Plan, we will **be carrying out an exercise to identify woodlands that are likely to be “ancient” which are below the 2ha. threshold used for identifying woodlands in Natural England’s Ancient Woodland Inventory.**
- 3.97 In addition to ancient woodland, there are scattered Ancient and Veteran trees across the borough, mainly within Parks but also within the grounds of old manor houses and occasionally within smaller private gardens.
- 3.98 These trees are an important heritage asset by providing a link to the history of Reading, from ancient parkland such as Prospect Park to stately homes and former estates such as Caversham Park and Whiteknights.
- 3.99 Ancient woodland, that being land which has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD, now covers only approximately 2.4% of the UK’s land area. These woodlands tend to be richer in plants and animals than other woodland areas and contain many rare and vulnerable species. Preventing their felling is important, but not enough alone to protect all their associated wildlife. Management of some of the woodland is also required, e.g. coppicing to provide open, sunny, sheltered glades for butterflies. Maintaining and managing these, along with other woodland, is vital to maintain an adequate amount of appropriate habitat to allow the species within them to thrive.

3.100 The NPPF provides the following definition:

“Ancient or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage”.

3.101 Ancient and veteran trees, which can be considered as an ecosystem in themselves, provide a habitat and a food source for a myriad of species, some of which are only found on such trees. Both standing (within the tree) or fallen deadwood on and around such trees (and within woodlands) is important as a resource (habitat, nesting and food source) for many species of bird and for nesting and roosting sites for bats. Also, many rare invertebrates associated with wood decay require ancient woodlands in which there has been a continuous succession of ancient trees and in turn these deadwood fauna are an integral part of the woodland wildlife community. Long standing dead wood is an important habitat for rare fungi such as the ecologically important and protected Oak polypore, *Piptoporous quercinus*.

3.102 As is acknowledged within the NPPF, such woodland and trees are irreplaceable habitats. The Council will continue to protect these through a combination of appropriate management, objecting to development proposals that would have a detrimental impact and the service of TPOs to prevent felling. There may also be opportunities for expansion through natural regeneration.



Veteran Oak within a private garden in Caversham Park Village (circumference just over 8m)
(Sarah Hanson)

Tree protection

- 3.103 The protection of both Council and private trees across the Borough will be vital alongside planting. To protect trees we will:
- Continue to use our powers under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 to serve new Tree Preservation Orders, prioritising those where there is a foreseeable threat to a tree(s), and to serve new Tree Preservation Orders where felling is proposed in a Conservation Area, i.e. where a Section 211 Notice is submitted, if the tree(s) is worthy of a TPO.
 - Continue to use our powers under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 to take legal action where contraventions take place to demonstrate the importance of trees in the Borough
 - Use national and local planning policies, along with relevant British Standards and good practice guidance to ensure the retention of trees (where appropriate) on development sites and to secure new tree planting to ensure a net gain in tree number, including on Council owned development sites.
 - Retain Council trees until such time as they pose an unacceptable risk to people or property, with the exception of trees which are deemed to have outgrown their location where felling due to a future foreseeable risk/nuisance is appropriate.
 - Take legal action or seek mitigation action / planting where Council trees are damaged / felled by third parties using Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) to determine a value for the tree where monetary compensation is required.
 - Aim to develop better working relationships with external bodies, e.g. utilities companies and large land owners, whose actions can have a significant affect.
 - Consider the potential harm to good quality trees and the amenity they provide when assessing High Hedge complaints.
 - Retain important hedgerows, where allowed by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- 3.104 **Reading Borough Council's internal planning applications** - RBC will respect the aims of tree policy and of this Strategy when considering its own internal planning applications. The Council should lead by example in tree retention, protection and planting on new / redeveloped sites.

Development

- 3.105 The Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, contains a strong new policy (EN14) on retention and planting of trees. In view of the climate emergency, the Council will apply the provisions of this policy rigorously. Where new planting is secured on development sites by condition, the Council will seek to secure resources to ensure that this is monitored and, where necessary, enforced.
- 3.106 Under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), land owners are able to carry out specified works without the need for planning consent. The works allowed, such as extensions, outbuildings and driveways, all have the potential to harm adjacent trees. Permitted Development (PD) rights do not override a Tree Preservation Order hence any PD works that might affect a protected tree must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The Council, through the planning service, will remind land owners of this. The same would apply to trees in Conservation Areas - in both situations, trees can only be removed without approval/notice being given if required in order to implement full planning approval.

Community engagement

- 3.107 The canopy cover objective of this Strategy, as well as many of the other objectives, cannot be achieved by the Council alone. As well as the major landowners referred to elsewhere in this Strategy, there will also be a need for appropriate planting and maintenance by private residents, and support from community organisations.
- 3.108 There is already substantial co-operation between community and volunteer groups and the Council. As set out in paragraph 1.52, the Reading Tree Warden Network (RTWN) was set up 10 years ago, and it will continue to be of considerable assistance in helping to achieve the objectives of this Strategy. As well as a history of successful community engagement on this issue, the Council has also recently looked to involve community groups on other matters such as heritage, and this demonstrates that such approaches can be of great assistance.
- 3.109 A Tree Forum for Reading is about to be established in spring 2020. This will include volunteers **and community organisations, and it will provide a platform for undertaking the ‘Duty to Consult’ introduced by the Environment Bill. There may be opportunities for additional joint working through that route.**
- 3.110 **The Council’s website will need to be one of the main points of contact for community engagement, and will require improvement to fulfil this purpose.** There should be a single location, where information on trees, including this Strategy, are set out in a clear, easy to access format. This will enable the Council to produce information for residents or landowners on important aspects of planting and maintenance. Subject to resources, the Council will also need to consider targeted distribution of information that can help us meet the objectives for trees.

Trees on a wider scale

- 3.111 Within the Reading 2050 Vision, Vision Statement 6 states:
- “Welcomes ethical and sustainable businesses that support Reading”***
- 3.112 **Reading Borough Council’s actions and decisions can also have an impact on a wider scale** through our waste strategies and procurement policies. The new Climate Change Action Plan **will detail the Council’s policies on these and the issue will also be addressed in the revised BAP.**
- 3.113 **In relation to the Council’s own green waste production, we recycle as much of our tree arisings** as possible. Chippings are distributed throughout the Borough, for example in woodlands for path surfacing, in parks for use as a mulch on flowerbeds and to allotment holders for use on their allotments.
- 3.114 A percentage is sold to contractors as and when they require them.
- 3.115 When working in woodlands logs and chippings are left as habitat stacks for biodiversity.

Monitoring and reporting

- 3.116 It is our aim to publish annual figures on our website to demonstrate our net gain in tree number in the Borough.
- 3.117 The Planning Section will keep a record of the number of trees felled on development sites against the number included in approved landscape schemes to demonstrate a net gain.
- 3.118 Parks (as the department carrying out tree work on most Council owned land) will keep a record of the number of trees felled against number planted to demonstrate a net gain.
- 3.119 Individual residents, private land owners and organisations are encouraged to let us know when they undertake planting so we can record this. Details of tree planting can be emailed to: Planning.naturalenvironment@reading.gov.uk

GLOSSARY

Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	An area where air quality objectives are not likely to be met. There is a requirement to draw up an action plan for each AQMA.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BEIS	BEIS - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017
Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT)	This provides a method for managing trees as public assets rather than liabilities. It is designed not only to be a strategic tool and aid to decision-making in relation to the tree stock as a whole, but also to be applicable to individual cases, where the value of a single tree needs to be expressed in monetary terms. https://ltoa.org.uk/resources/cavat
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
i-Tree Eco	A software application to quantify the structure and environmental effects of urban trees, and calculate their value to society. Data from an i-Tree Eco survey can be used for making effective resource management decisions, develop policy and set priorities for a town's trees and greenspaces. <i>(Definition from Forest Research)</i>
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	A document setting out national planning policy for England. This was finalised in 2019, and replaces a variety of previous national guidance within a single document.
NJUG	The National Joint Utilities Group Ltd (NJUG) is the UK's trade association. representing utilities and their contractors solely on street works matters.
RBC	Reading Borough Council
RCCS	Reading Climate Change Strategy
Reading 2050 Vision	https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050
RTWN	Reading Tree Warden Network
'Standard' trees	For the purposes of Objective 3, a 'standard' tree will be of a minimum 8-10cm girth and 2.5m in height at the time of planting. N.B. the majority of the 3,000 trees are expected to be above this minimum.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	For the purposes of this document, this term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.
TDAG	Tree Design Action Group
TfL	Transport for London



TPO	Tree Preservation Order
Trees for Cities	UK charity working at a national and international scale to improve lives by planting trees in cities. https://www.treesforcities.org/
Trees for Reading	Partnership providing funding from local businesses for tree planting in their locality (Ethical Reading).

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN

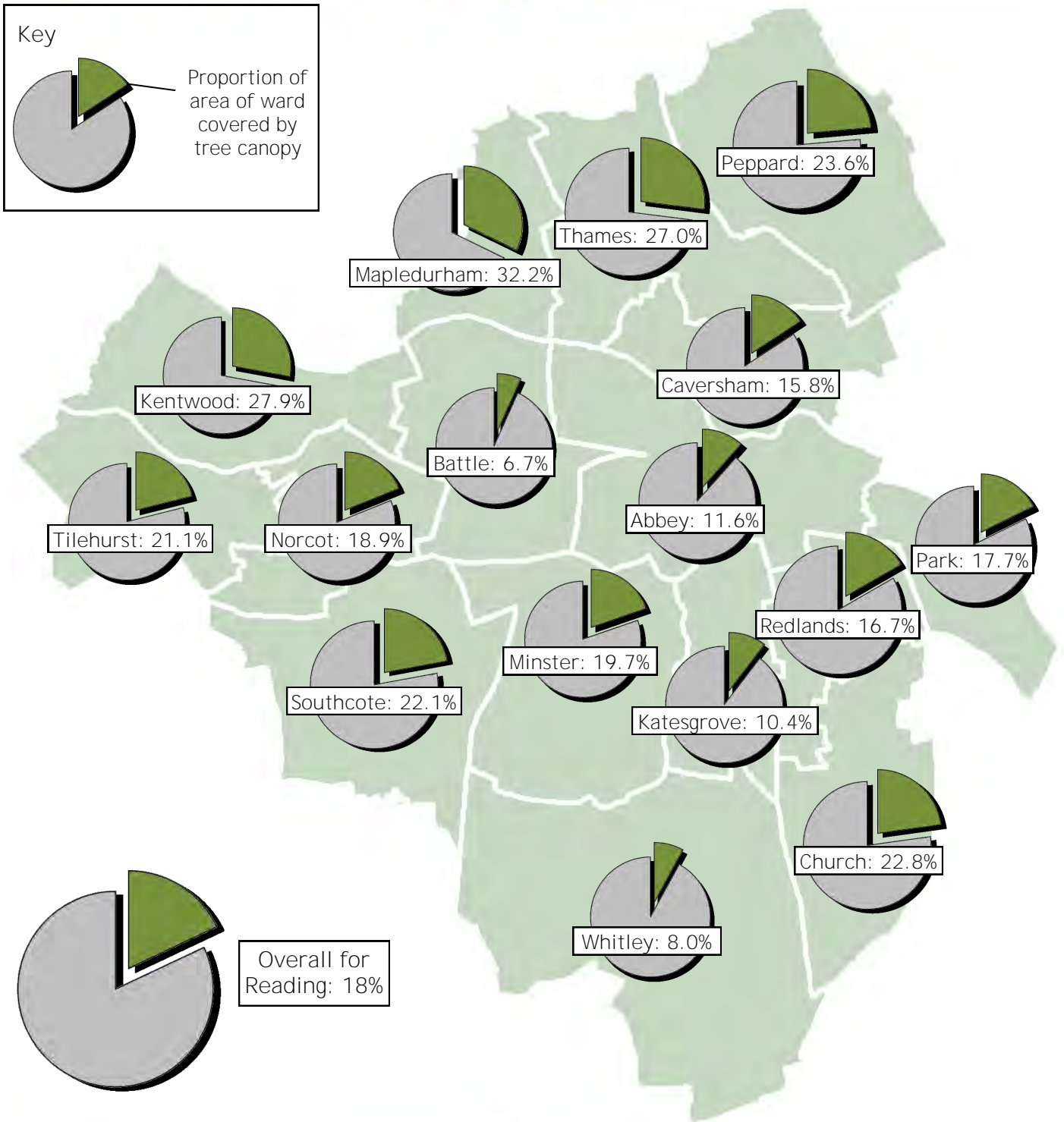
Objective	Action	Who	How	Resource scope / issues	Timescale
1. RBC Tree Stock - protect, retain, manage and plant trees to ensure an increased canopy cover of healthy trees resistance to pest & diseases and climate change and to reduce air pollution.	Protect Council trees from third party threats; only fell for health & safety reasons or when there's damage to property; manage trees in line with good arboricultural practice; plant with consideration of species and 'right tree, right place, right tree pit' principle; continue street tree planting	All Council land owning / managing departments	Careful consideration of development on RBC land; identify trees for TPOs on RBC land to be sold; RBC to seek compensation for damage to tree stock by external persons; manage trees in line with good arboricultural practice for optimum health; continue annual planting; increase species diversity & large canopy planting	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
2. Climate adaptation - increase the diversity of the tree stock (family, genus and species) to provide resistance to climate change, plant large canopy species wherever feasible and keep trees healthy in order that they can achieve their full potential to ensure that Reading's Urban Forest is resilient to the impacts of climate change so that it provides the maximum role in mitigating its effects	Careful consideration of species selection on RBC land and private land; plant large canopy trees where feasible; ensure appropriate maintenance of new trees to ensure establishment; maintain trees in line with good arboricultural practice; plant trees where appropriate on river banks to keep rivers cool (on average 50% of the water surface with dappled shade is desirable); devise a preferred species list for the Borough.	All Council land owning/managing departments, led by Parks; Planning Department; Developers; private householders; planning agents; Landscapers, Tree Consultants	Through appropriate planting and maintenance of Council trees and through the development control process to secure appropriate planting and maintenance on development sites. Tree works may also be required to reduce flood risk.	Existing staff resources	Ongoing. Preferred species list by 2022.

Objective	Action	Who	How	Resource scope / issues	Timescale
3. Tree planting - plant at least 3,000 trees by 2030 on Council land.	Continue planting on Council land and private land to ensure a net gain in tree number, especially within priority areas; focus on larger canopy trees where feasible.	All Council land owning / managing departments; Planning; private land owners; Developers; private householders; planning agents; Landscapers, Tree Consultants	Retention, protection and planting of trees on Council land; Planning Department through development control; encouragement of planting by private land owners	Additional staff and funding resources required.	Ongoing, with specific targets to 2030 and 2050.
4. Canopy cover - increase overall canopy cover to 25% by 2050; ensure that all wards have at least 12% canopy cover by 2050; and target priority areas for tree planting based on canopy cover, air pollution, treed corridors, green links and areas of high landscape value					
5. Protection of private trees - the Local Planning Authority will continue to use its powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to make Tree Preservation Orders and to retain & protect trees on development sites in line with good arboricultural practice	Make TPOs where necessary and expedient; ensure development proposals retain appropriate trees & protect them during the construction process in line with good arboricultural practice and in accordance with agreed methods	Planning Department (including Planning Enforcement); Legal Services	Service of TPOs and through planning conditions	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
6. RBC will engage with partners, public and landowners to raise awareness of the Tree Strategy aims and good arboricultural management practices	Improve advice on RBC website; encourage RTWN to include advice/links on their website, providing support to RTWN on the website where possible; provision of advice to owners of protected trees; guidance to volunteer groups on tree and whip planting; continue to liaise with Network Rail over management of lineside vegetation.	All Council departments; external bodies; public; Tree Contractors and Consultants; Landscape architects; businesses	Promotion of good tree management practices through the Council and RTWN website; promotion of good arboricultural practice to tree owners with TPOs and in Conservation Areas	Existing staff resources	Ongoing

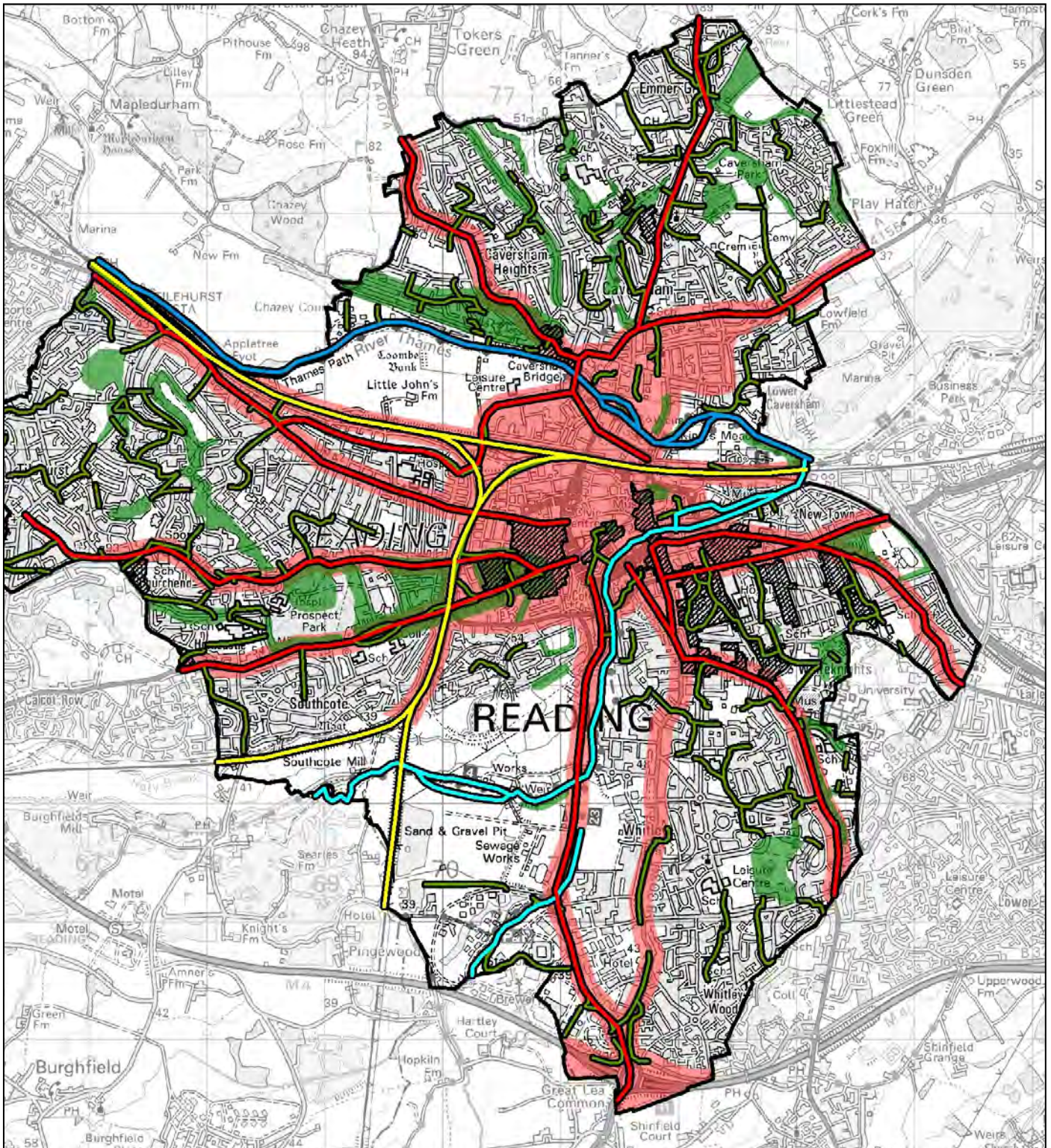
Objective	Action	Who	How	Resource scope / issues	Timescale
7. Improve biodiversity across the Borough by selecting trees that are either native or of wildlife value, particularly in semi-natural areas, and by ensuring that tree planting does not compromise or affect other habitats	<p>Ensure species selection on RBC land and development sites maximises biodiversity benefits; prioritise planting along identified green routes and links; promote green walls and roofs where tree planting not feasible; promote natural SUDs; promote aims of the BAP;</p> <p>Manage woodland so as to maximise their value to wildlife for example by retaining standing and fallen deadwood, opening up rides and glades and encouraging natural regeneration on the edge of woodlands;</p> <p>Avoid planting trees on areas of high biodiversity value such as wildflower meadows and wetland areas</p>	All Council Departments; Developers; private householders; planning agents; Landscapers, Tree Consultants	Through planting on Council land and through maximisation of greening on development sites in accordance with Tree Strategy, Local Planning Policies and BAP; Implementation of woodland and ecological management plans	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
8. Identify all areas suitable for street tree and other planting on Council land - initial study to be completed by 2021, with continued updates	Built up a bank of potential planting sites on RBC land in preparation for annual planting and external requests for new planting	All Council Departments, primarily Parks	By identifying potential tree planting sites when tree surveying and recording these	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
9. Ensure continuing funding for tree planting	Continue to identify sources and work with external bodies to secure funding for annual tree planting	All Council land owning/ managing departments, led by Parks.	Via Trees for Cities, Trees for Reading, RTWN, Memorial planting, S106, CIL, crowd funding, public funding (match funding), potential further budget following financial valuation of tree stock	Existing (and potentially increased) RBC tree budget; external funding; planning obligations	Ongoing

Objective	Action	Who	How	Resource scope / issues	Timescale
10. Biosecurity - continually review RBC purchasing and working practices to ensure RBC are working to good arboricultural and horticultural practice to minimise the chance of introducing and/or spreading pests and diseases within the Borough; ensure biosecurity is considered on development sites	Continually review RBC purchasing and working practices to ensure RBC are working to good arboricultural and horticultural practice to minimise the chance of pest/disease introduction to, and spread within, the Borough; ensure and encourage good practice to private land owners; ensure landscape schemes on development sites consider biodiversity when sourcing and maintaining trees; devise action plan on dealing with invasive species.	All Council land owning/managing departments, led by Parks; Planning Department; Developers; private householders; planning agents; Landscapers, Tree Consultants	Ensure working practices and management follow Government guidance; consider biosecurity when agreeing details of landscaping and maintenance on development sites.	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
11. Trees & Development - tree retention, protection and planting within development sites to be in accordance with the aims of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policy	Ensure tree retention and landscape schemes on development sites contribute to the aims of the Tree Strategy and comply with Local Plan Policy and that any opportunities for additional planting are secured.	Planning Department; Council landowning department when submitting a planning application on RBC land; Developers; private householders; planning agents; Landscapers, Tree Consultants; RBC Streetworks	Through the development control process, securing appropriate planning conditions and objecting to proposals which do not meet the objectives of the Tree Strategy and Local Plan policies; improve liaison with utility companies; additional resources for monitoring and enforcing compliance with landscaping conditions and contravention of planning law.	Existing staff resources	Ongoing
12. Monitor progress - Record and report net tree gain on an annual basis; reassess canopy cover in 2030	Continue recording of tree felling and planting on Council land; create a database for recording felling and planting secured on Development sites; provide a facility to allow private landowners to inform RBC of trees planted	Planning, Parks, private land owners, business owners	Annual reporting on the Council's website of net gain in tree number on development sites, Council land and new planting by private individuals and businesses	Existing staff resources	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2: MAP SHOWING CANOPY COVER BY WARD



APPENDIX 3: MAP SHOWING TREED CORRIDORS AND OTHER CONTEXT



Treed corridor (existing and potential) -

- railway
- road
- Green Link
- River Thames
- River Kennet and tributaries

- Area with high treescape value
- Air Quality Management Area
- Conservation Area

APPENDIX 4: COUNCIL TREE NUMBERS BY FAMILY AND GENUS

Family	Genus/Species	Numbers
Adoxaceae	Sambucus nigra	2
Altingiaceae	Liquidambar	85
Aquifoliaceae	Ilex	89
Araucariaceae	Araucaria auricana	3
Betulaceae	Betula	591
Betulaceae	Carpinus	197
Betulaceae	Alnus sp.	138
Betulaceae	Corylus	42
		968
Bignoniaceae	Catalpa bignonioides	18
Cupressaceae	Chamaecyp.	110
Cupressaceae	Cupressus	32
Cupressaceae	Sequoiadendron giganteum	24
Cupressaceae	Thuja plicata	15
Cupressaceae	Taxodium distichum	8
Cupressaceae	Metasequoia	7
		196
Fabaceae	Robinia	77
Fabaceae	Laburnum sp.	29
Fabaceae	Gleditsia triacanthos	21
Fagaceae	Quercus sp.	882
Fagaceae	Fagus	215
Fagaceae	Castanea sativa	49
		1273
Ginkgoaceae	Ginkgo biloba	2
Juglandaceae	Juglans regia	48
Magnoliaceae	Liriodendron tulipifera	37
Magnoliaceae	Magnolia	9
		46
Malvaceae	Tilia sp.	1997
Myrtaceae	Eucalyptus sp.	4
Nothofagaceae	Nothofagus sp.	6

Family	Genus/Species	Numbers
Oleaceae	Fraxinus	789
Pinaceae	Cedrus	126
Pinaceae	Pinus	95
Pinaceae	Larix decidua	21
Pinaceae	Picea sp.	18
Pinaceae	Abies sp.	15
Pinaceae	Pseudotsuga	9
		284
Platanaceae	Platanus	576
Rosaceae	Prunus sp.	1441
Rosaceae	Sorbus sp.	493
Rosaceae	Malus	410
Rosaceae	Crataegus sp.	371
Rosaceae	Pyrus sp.	171
Rosaceae	Amelanchier sp.	12
		2898
Salicaceae	Salix sp.	365
Salicaceae	Populus sp.	322
		687
Sapindaceae	Acer pseudoplatanus	665
Sapindaceae	Acer platanoides	568
Sapindaceae	Aesculus	368
Sapindaceae	Acer sp.	169
		1770
Simaroubaceae	Ailanthus altissima	9
Taxaceae	Taxus sp.	133
Ulmaceae	Ulmus sp.	75
	Other Conifer	30
	Unidentified	383

Groups: other broadleaf	367
Groups: mixed	124

APPENDIX 5: DECLARATION FOR STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS



Giorgio Framalicco
Deputy Director Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services

Agreement between Reading Borough Council and [company]

We the undersigned recognise the importance of trees within the Reading Borough Council area for the multiple benefits they provide. As such we commit to undertaking our required works with due care and consideration to both private and public trees. We recognise that Council trees are a public asset with environmental, social and economic benefits for both the residents of Reading and those that pass through and visit the town. As a public asset, we understand that their management is paid for by the public and therefore that any works or felling required as a result of our works should be paid for by us and that where possible replacement trees should be planted for any trees that must be felled during works.

When working within the Reading Borough boundary, we agree to the following:

- To fully assess the potential impact of our works on adjacent public and private trees, seeking our own arboricultural advice if necessary.
- To ensure our working practices comply with National Joint Utilities Group Volume 4: ‘Street Works UK Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees’ (NJUG 4), at a minimum, and will communicate this to all contractors and sub-contractors.
- If we cannot conform to NJUG 4, we will fully justify this and agree a method statement prior to commencement of any works.
- Should our work result in the immediate or future need for tree works, we will provide reasonable monetary compensation. We accept the Council’s use of Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) in assessing the monetary value of compensation should a tree need to be felled in order to implement, or as a result of, our works.

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Position:.....

Company:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX 6: I-TREE READING CANOPY ANALYSIS

Prepared by Georgia England, University of Reading

Results

The I-Tree Canopy assessment calculated the canopy cover of Reading to be 18%, which is 2% higher than the UK average (in towns and cities). It also means Reading is within reach of the UK target canopy cover of 20%. Individual I-Tree Canopy assessments were completed for each of the Reading wards, the results of which can be found in Figure 1. The ward canopy cover ranges from 6.7% to 32.2%. Canopy cover was greatest in the Mapledurham, Kentwood and Thames, which were determined to be 32.2%, 27.9% and 27% respectively. Whilst Whitley, Battle and Katesgrove wards had the lowest (8%, 6.7% and 10.4% respectively).

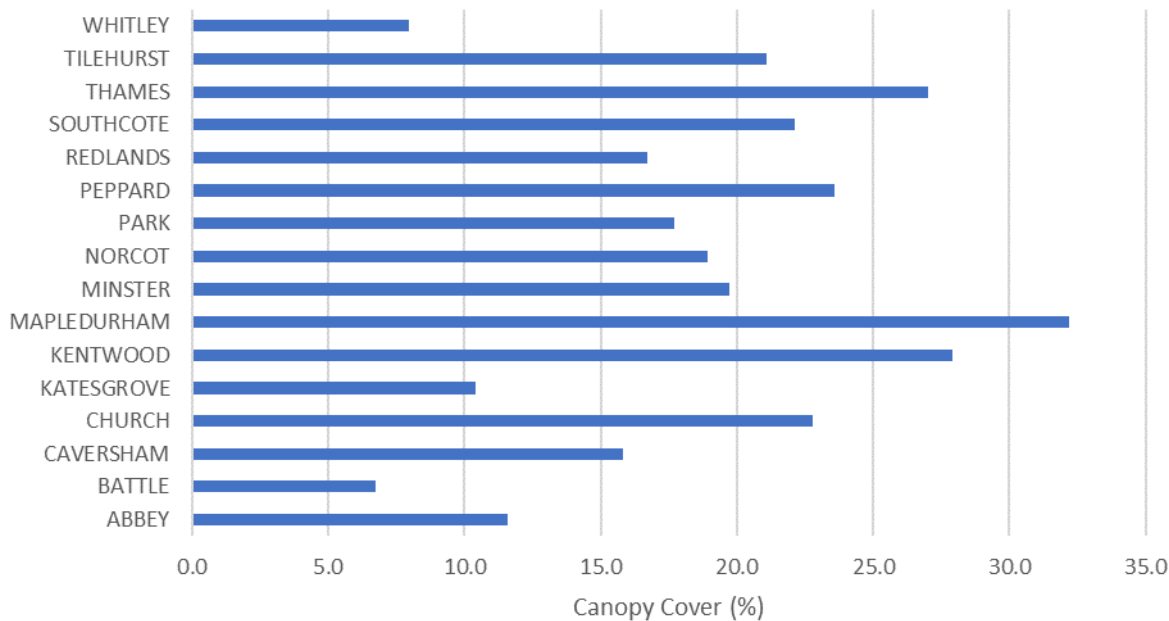


Figure 1 Canopy cover by Ward in Reading

In addition to canopy cover, I-Tree Canopy calculates 'benefits' provided by the tree assets. The benefits are pollutant removal services; such as carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide, Ozone, particle matter etc. Figure 2 shows the annual mass removed of three pollutant examples; carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). From this data it is clear that Thames, Southcote, Peppard and Kentwood provide the majority of chemical removal benefits out of all the Reading catchments. Battle and Katesgrove remove the least pollutants in terms of mass.

From the data we also see that Mapledurham and Whitley provide similar benefits, despite the major difference in canopy cover (32.2% and 8% respectively). This is because the benefits are also dependent on the area of the ward. Despite Mapledurham having high canopy cover, its area is one of lowest out of all the Reading wards (147ha). In comparison, Whitley has a low canopy cover but has the largest area of all the Reading wards (508ha).

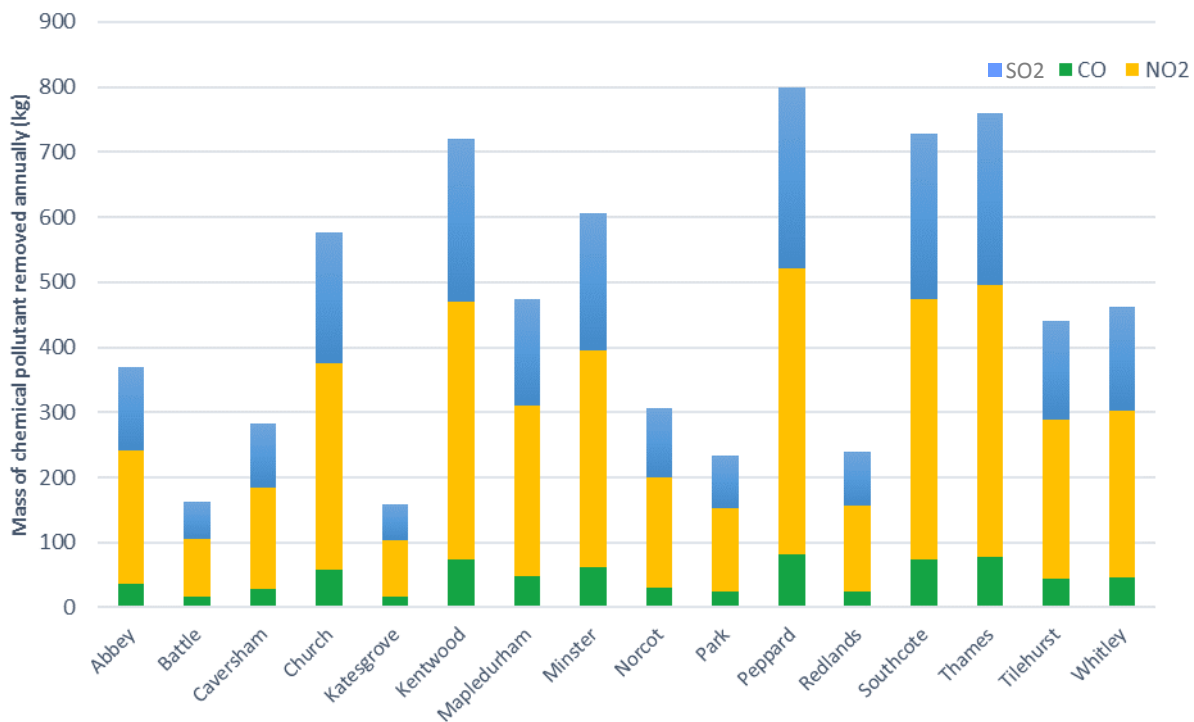


Figure 2 I-Tree results calculating the estimated mass of pollutant removed annually by trees within Reading wards

Another benefit determined by I-Tree Canopy is carbon storage; the overall carbon stored in Reading is determined to be 204,470t. Figure 3 presents the carbon stored within each ward as a percentage of this value. As expected from analysing the other benefits, Peppard, Kentwood, Southcote and Thames hold the highest percentage of overall carbon storage. Whereas Katesgrove, Park and Redlands contribute the least, reflected in their low percentages.

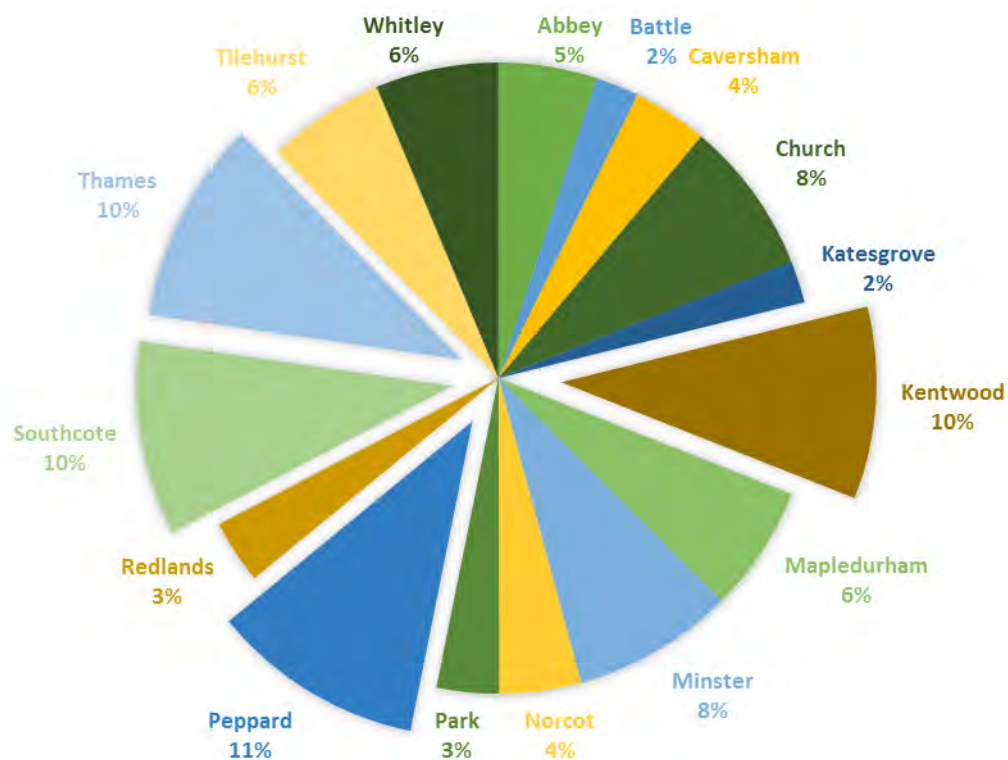


Figure 3 Total carbon stored per ward as a percentage of the overall carbon stored within Reading

I-Tree Canopy also calculates an economic valuation of the benefits provided. Figure 4 presents the total annual benefit value in £s for each Reading ward. The difference between the highest and lowest valuation is £30,000, which emphasises the difference in benefits being received between wards. Consistent with the other results, Peppard (£37,325), Southcote (£33,971), Thames (£35,489) and Kentwood (£33,279) have the greatest calculated values. In contrast, Battle and Katesgrove are valued at £7533 and £7291 respectively.

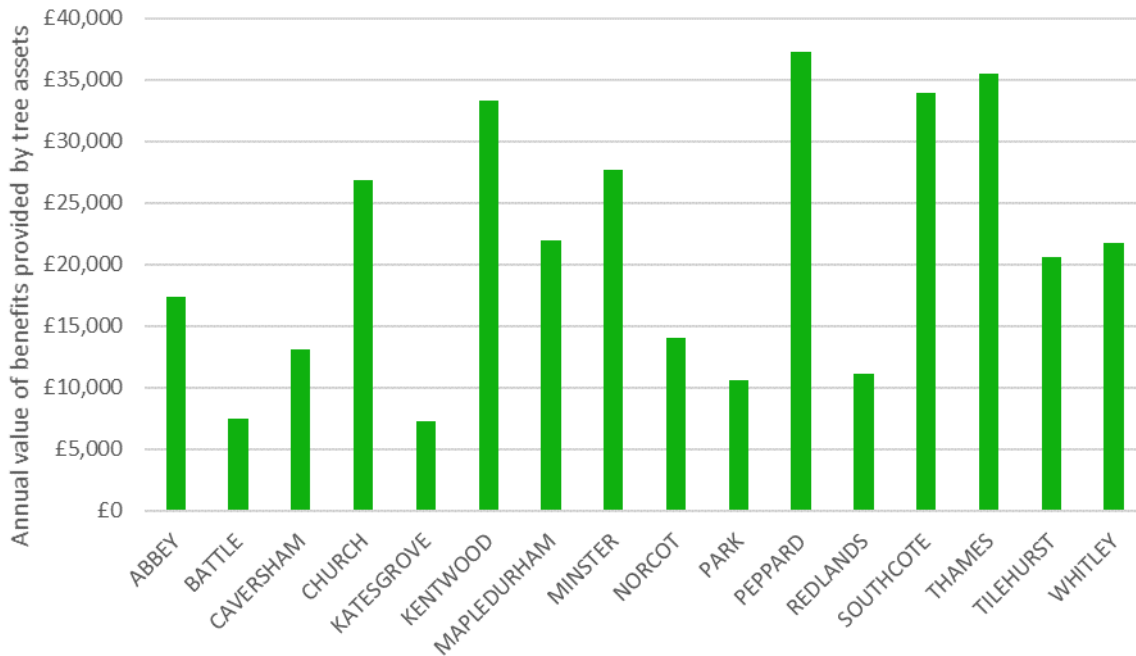


Figure 4 Total value of benefits provided by tree assets annually by Reading ward

Discussion

On reflection of the data obtained from the I-Tree Canopy assessment it is clear that canopy cover can vary significantly on a local scale. In Reading alone, the canopy cover results of individual wards varies by 25.5%. The impact of this difference can be seen from the variation in benefits provided by the tree assets within the wards.

The benefits are dependent of canopy cover and ward area, therefore wards with high canopy cover and larger area have the greatest calculated benefits. However, Whitley is the ward with the largest area (508ha) yet currently has an average benefit provision. In fact, the benefit values are matched by Mapledurham, a ward that is less than a third of the area of Whitley. This enforces how influential canopy cover percentage is on benefit provision.

Removal of these pollutants is beneficial for human health, as the chemicals can cause illness and respiratory problems. By increasing canopy cover of an area, the annual removal of these pollutants also increases. Furthermore, increased canopy cover has been linked to other benefits; including improving mental health, urban flooding and shading, as well as environmental benefits (e.g. biodiversity and connectivity).

Limitations

There are limitations to using the I-Tree Canopy assessment method. The accuracy of the canopy cover results is dependent on the number of points identified (tree or non-tree), the more points completed the higher the accuracy. In this assessment the points were identified until the standard error was equal to $\pm 1.50\%$. There is potential for human error in identifying whether the point fell on a tree or not, although the likelihood of this significantly influencing the results is low.

However, the benefit results present higher potential inaccuracies, which is due to uncontrolled variables. For example, trees vary in their ability to remove pollutants; depending on age, species and location. These limitations mean the standard errors for the benefits are high.

Future recommendations

The UK target canopy cover is 20% for urban areas; 6 of the 16 wards already exceed this target. However, to optimise the canopy cover in Reading and reach the proposed target, the primary focuses should be on the wards Whitley, Battle and Katesgrove. As these wards would require extensive tree planting to reach achieve the canopy cover goal.

However, if benefit provision is prioritised it would be more important to focus on planting in Battle, Katesgrove, Park and Redlands. The current ward tree assets provide significantly low benefits, it would be advantageous to increase canopy cover in these areas.

APPENDIX 7: INFORMATION ON NETWORK RAIL'S VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Network Rail's (NR's) estate is approximately 51-52,000 hectares in size and 16,000 km long (double if you count both sides) with an average width of 12m from the track to the fence. It contains approximately 6 million trees (taken to be those 3m tall and above) with Ash being the most prevalent species (16%); other species including Sycamore, Oak and Birch. Certain works in recent years resulted in a public outcry the result of which (following political involvement) was that NR had to undertake a formal review of their procedures. As part of this, there have been improvements to their website to help explain their vegetation management policies and a national helpline from which you can be linked to the local team in order to answer specific enquiries.

NR's management guidance provides the required safety zones to both allow safe working zones for NR staff and to manage the potential risk of harm to the rail network or trains from falling trees, the effect of which can be major disruption or injury. A railway cross-section is divided into 4 zones:

- 1 The area immediately around the trains and railway infrastructure must be kept clear for the safety of passengers and staff;
- 2 **Near the railway wild flower grasslands are encouraged which are perfect for insects and butterflies;**
- 3 Bushes and brambles provide habitats for small animals such as hedgehogs and amphibians. Smaller birds such as sparrows and robins are attracted to berries which grow along the railway;
- 4 At a safe distance further back from the railway, taller trees provide habitats for animals such as squirrels and larger birds.

NR believe that these different lineside habitats help create a more biodiverse ecosystem than a uniform line of trees.

Given the differing levels of the railway across the network, some of which runs through deep cuttings, each location is assessed by local engineers and is treated in a site-specific manner, taking into account such factors as slope angle, vegetation type and soil type in order to determine likely root stability. Where alternatives to felling are appropriate, these are implemented.

Prior to recent lineside vegetation works through Reading and Wokingham, NR engaged with RBC, Wokingham BC, RTWN and Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association. NR is a significant landowner **within the Borough and the railway is a designated 'treed corridor' in this Strategy**. As such, NR will be an important contributor in helping the Borough meet the objectives for canopy cover, therefore RBC will continue to liaise with NR in order to minimise tree removal and discuss replacement planting.

Weblink to NR environment pages:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/environment>

Weblink to vegetation management and community involvement:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/environment/vegetation-management/keeping-lineside-neighbours-involved-in-vegetation-management>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tree Wardens - thanks to the members of RTWN who provided some lovely photographs of trees and woodlands in Reading.

Georgia England, University of Reading - big thanks to Georgia for sharing her canopy cover assessment & data for the Reading Borough area.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	MARK WORRINGHAM	TEL:	0118 9373337
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report recommends that a draft Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) be published for public consultation. This provided a framework for actions that the Council will take to conserve biodiversity across the range of its functions. Reading's existing BAP covered the period from 2005-2015 and has now expired. A new version is needed to set out the actions needed as part of the response to the climate emergency.

1.2 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Scoping

Appendix 2 - Draft Biodiversity Action Plan

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix 2), incorporating any amendments agreed by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11 March 2020, be agreed for public consultation.

2.2 That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any changes necessary as a result of consultation and approve the final Biodiversity Action Plan, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency at Council on 26th February 2019, and set out its commitment to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Biodiversity is a vital consideration within the context of climate change, as changes in the climate can have significant implications on habitats and wildlife. Biodiversity is also part of the response to climate change to ensure that Reading adapts to climate change as it occurs.
- 3.2 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019, and this includes, as part of objective 6, maintaining and enhancing the natural environment of the Borough. Policy EN12 of the Local Plan identifies the need to protect those areas of greatest importance for biodiversity, but also to connect habitats together to form a green network which allows for movement between habitats. It also seeks a net gain of biodiversity on development sites.
- 3.3 At a national level, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a programme for conserving the UK's biodiversity and led to the production of action plans for many of the UK's most threatened species and habitats. The UK BAP was superseded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' in July 2012 to reflect the devolution in the UK, and, within this, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife' was published in 2011. It describes what is needed to halt overall biodiversity loss by 2020 and sets ambitious goals across a number of areas.
- 3.4 In 2018 the government published its 25 year Environment Plan. It has 19 policies, with the most relevant being:
1. Embedding an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure
 4. Focusing on woodland to maximise its many benefits
 6. Protecting and recovering nature:
 - i. Publishing a strategy for nature
 - ii. Developing a Nature Recovery Network
 - iii. Providing opportunities for the reintroduction of native species
 - iv. Exploring how to give individuals the chance to deliver lasting conservation
 - v. Improving biosecurity to protect and conserve nature
 9. Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces
 10. Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school
 11. Greening our towns and cities
 19. Leaving a lighter footprint on the global environment

4. THE PROPOSAL

(a) Current Position

- 4.1 Reading's most recent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was published in March 2006. It covered the period from 2005 to 2015 and has now expired. The

Strategy fed into planning policy documents produced within plan period, such as the Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document, but these documents have themselves now been replaced by the Local Plan.

4.2 The BAP 2005-2015 was based around a series of specific action plans for different species and habitats. As it contains a significant amount of species and habitat-specific detail, it is a lengthy document, and is not always in the most user-friendly format.

(b) Option Proposed

4.3 This report recommends that a Draft BAP is approved for public consultation. The Draft BAP is included as Appendix 2. This plan was considered by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11th March, and any amendments to the document made at that committee should be incorporated into the plan as recommended for consultation.

4.4 The proposed Draft BAP is a more succinct and user-friendly document than was the case with the 2005-2015 version. The document is intended to be easier to use, but also easier to keep under review over the coming years.

4.5 The BAP is organised around the following themes, each of which will contain a set of actions. In some cases, these actions will require more detailed work to be undertaken, such as a more detailed action plan.

- Legislation - to ensure the Council's plans and actions comply with most up-to-date legislation.
- Designated sites - actions around management, monitoring and selection of important wildlife sites.
- Planning and building control - ensuring that there is no net loss and where achievable a net gain of biodiversity on development sites, which is likely to mean identifying priorities for a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document.
- Woodlands, trees and hedgerows - management actions for woodlands, consideration of actions for identification of new woodlands and reviewing whether all ancient woodlands have been identified.
- Grasslands and road verges - actions around management of these features, including opportunities for wildflowers and pollinating species.
- The two rivers, their floodplains and other watercourses - ensuring that the wildlife significance of the watercourses and surrounds is maintained and enhanced, including opportunities for habitat creation.

- Management of Council projects and the sale of land - actions could ensure that biodiversity is considered as a fundamental part of Council projects and taken into account when disposing of land.
 - Education, access to nature, public engagement and volunteering - a variety of actions around education at all ages, working with schools and the University, as well as volunteering and Council communications to the public about biodiversity.
 - Ecological records - actions to continue and improve the maintenance of ecological records.
 - Connectivity - actions to improve the connection of habitats in Reading to allow for movement of biodiversity.
 - Coordinated approach across council departments and within policy documents - noting the need to co-ordinate efforts with a range of Council and partner strategies.
 - Global biodiversity - actions the Council and partners can make to avoid contributing to global biodiversity loss, for instance in terms of procurement.
 - Ongoing review - an action for an annual review.
- 4.6 Actions are accompanied by proposals for how and when they will be achieved, and it will be important to keep these actions under review on a regular basis over the life of the BAP. To achieve this, in some places the BAP avoids significant levels of detail and focuses on the strategic objectives, which means it is easier to review and update in a streamlined manner.
- 4.7 The BAP has been drawn up through co-operation with a number of interested stakeholder groups. A steering group comprising the following organisations, alongside the Council, has met a number of times to discuss the emerging document:
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust;
 - Berkshire Ornithological Club;
 - Caversham GLOBE;
 - The Conservation Volunteers;
 - Econet
 - Reading Climate Action Network (nature and green spaces group);
 - Reading Friends of the Earth;
 - Reading Urban Wildlife Group;
 - Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre;
 - Tilehurst GLOBE
 - University of Reading

- 4.8 The following organisations were also invited but, due to other commitments, have not attended the meetings to date. They have however agreed to review the document.
- Environment Agency
 - Friends of Fobney Island
- 4.9 There is an important relationship between the BAP and the Tree Strategy, which is also to be considered at this meeting. Production of the BAP has been co-ordinated with the Tree Strategy. Council officers who have inputted into the BAP have also fed into the Tree Strategy, as have many of the other organisations. The potential for the two documents to be combined has been considered, but this was not considered appropriate. Trees have many important roles in addition to biodiversity, whilst biodiversity has many facets beyond trees. The Tree Strategy is also a more detailed document. However, there is considerable cross-referencing between the documents, and the documents have been reviewed to ensure that there is no inconsistency or unnecessary duplication.
- 4.10 It is proposed that public consultation take place over a five-week period, between 20th March and 24th April 2020. The BAP and Tree Strategy will be consulted upon together. Once consultation is completed, responses will be considered in drawing up a final version.
- 4.11 This report recommends that, for reasons of putting the BAP in place swiftly, a final version taking account of consultation responses be approved by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillors for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, Culture Heritage and Recreation and Neighbourhoods and Communities. It is expected that this would take place in May 2020.

(c) Other Options Considered

- 4.12 The alternative option is to not proceed with a revised BAP at this point. The previous BAP is out of date and has passed its end date, and this option would mean that there would be limited co-ordination of the Council and partner's efforts to deal with biodiversity loss, and would fail to adequately respond to the climate emergency.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Approval of the Biodiversity Action Plan will contribute to the Council's priority of 'Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe' as set out in the Corporate Plan (2018-2021) by maintaining and enhancing habitats in Reading.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Preparing a new BAP is an essential part of the response to the climate emergency. Wildlife and habitats in Reading, as well as globally, will be

affected heavily by climate change, and it is essential that the BAP seeks to address and mitigate this wherever possible.

- 6.2 The Reading Climate Emergency Plan (RCEP) contains a nature theme, the actions for which have significant crossover with the BAP. The BAP will help to deliver many of the actions around matters such as connectivity of habitats, planting and habitat creation. The production of the BAP has been undertaken alongside the RCEP, to ensure that there is no contradiction and that the documents can work in tandem.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The BAP has been drawn up in conjunction with a number of stakeholder groups with interest in biodiversity in Reading, which are referred to in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8. These groups have contributed to drafts of the document as it has evolved.

- 7.2 Subject to approval, the BAP would be subject to a five-week period of public consultation in March and April. This will include publication on the Council's website, and sending to organisations and groups on the planning consultation lists. Consultation will take place in conjunction with the Tree Strategy. Responses received will be taken into account in preparing a final version of the document.

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Scoping Assessment, included at Appendix 1 identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not relevant to this decision. A full EqIA is not therefore required.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40), each public authority, including local authorities, has a duty regarding biodiversity, as follows:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

- 9.2 Whilst having a BAP in place is not an explicit statutory requirement, it nevertheless helps to fulfil the duty by providing a framework for actions that a local authority will take to conserve biodiversity across the range of its functions.

- 9.3 There are a number of other existing pieces of legislation with reference to aspects of biodiversity. These includes the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations 2017 (which implemented the European Habitats Directive into UK law).

9.4 The Environment Bill 2019-2020 had its first reading on 15th October and second reading on 28th October 2019, and was re-introduced to parliament following the general election on 30th January 2020. It includes a number of provisions relating to biodiversity and the natural environment. It would amend the Section 40 duty referred to above to include enhancing as well as conserving biodiversity. It also includes a provision for 10% biodiversity net gain as a result of development, introduction of a standard national metric for measuring biodiversity impact of development and a requirement for five-yearly biodiversity reports reporting on the actions carried out in relation to these functions. The Bill would also introduce a requirement to produce local nature recovery strategies which would cover many of the actions dealt with in the BAP, including a statement of priorities and a habitat map. If the Bill becomes law, the Council will implement required procedures.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The BAP has been prepared within existing budgets.

10.2 Many of the actions set out in the BAP can be achieved using existing resources and within existing budgets. However, others could have financial implications depending on how the specific action is carried out in practice. For instance, the BAP highlights the need for biodiversity to be taken into account in procurement. These are high-level actions, and the implementation of specific measures will need to be thought through in more detail.

Value for Money (VFM)

10.3 A clear plan for addressing the loss of biodiversity represents good value for money, as it ensures that the Council's wide-ranging functions are all contributing towards the same overall aims. Producing the BAP alongside the timing of the Tree Strategy and the Climate Emergency Strategy ensures that the best use of resources is made in drawing the purposes of those documents together.

Risk Assessment

10.4 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Biodiversity Action Plan 2005-2015
- Environment Bill 2019-2020
- Report to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, 11th March 2020

APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Biodiversity Action Plan

Directorate: DEGNS - Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Team Leader

Date of assessment: 04/02/2020

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To set out objectives and actions for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within Reading.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The whole community will benefit from the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, which is essential to ensure a high quality natural environment, which contributes towards health and well-being.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

Halting the net loss of biodiversity and working towards an overall improvement will assist the retention and improvement of Reading's natural environment, which benefits the whole community.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Local residents and environmental groups - protection and enhancement of biodiversity thus increasing the appreciation and understanding of the wildlife within Reading.

Council departments - clear targets and approaches to protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including management of areas of existing and potential wildlife significance.

Developers - a clear approach to the application of biodiversity net gain requirements

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because: protecting and enhancing Reading's biodiversity does not have a differential effect on racial groups, gender/transgender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

Signed (completing officer) Mark Worringham Date: 4th February 2020

Signed (Lead Officer) Mark Worringham Date: 4th February 2020

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Reading Biodiversity Action Plan

Draft for consultation

27 February 2020

1. Executive summary	4
2. Biodiversity.....	5
What is biodiversity?.....	5
Why is biodiversity important?.....	5
What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?.....	5
Why does Reading need a Biodiversity Action Plan?	5
The 2006 Reading BAP.....	5
What is the vision for Reading’s biodiversity?	6
How is the BAP structured, what are its aims, and who will it be used by?.....	6
3. Policy and legislation	7
4. The state of biodiversity	8
International context.....	8
National context	8
Local context	8
5. Habitats.....	10
Habitat classifications.....	10
An overview of habitats in Reading	10
Woodland, trees and hedgerows.....	11
Grasslands.....	14
Watercourses	16

Page 337

6. Designations.....18

- National Character Areas18
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.....18
- Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation18
- Local Wildlife Sites19
- Green Links19
- Green Infrastructure.....19
- Species20

7. Stakeholders21

- Who owns and manages land in Reading?21
- Other stakeholders21
- Berkshire’s Local Nature Partnership22
- Neighbouring authorities.....22
- Themes for action.....23

 - A) Legislation23
 - B) Designated Sites23
 - C) Planning and building control.....24
 - D) Woodlands, trees & hedgerows.....25
 - E) Grasslands and road verges27
 - F) The two rivers, their floodplains and other watercourses.....28
 - G) Management of council projects and the sale of land33
 - H) Education, access to nature, public engagement & volunteering34
 - I) Ecological records36
 - J) Species and habitat specific actions36
 - K) Connectivity37
 - L) Coordinated approach across council departments and within policy documents37

M) Global biodiversity - what can the council do?37

N) Ongoing review38

Appendix 1 - Figures39

 Figure 1 - Phase 1 habitat types in Reading.....40

 Figure 2 - Designated sites, priority habitats and ancient woodland.....41

 Figure 3 - Rivers.....42

 Figure 4 - woodland ownership in Reading.....43

 Figure 5 - Geology and National Character Areas44

Appendix 2 - Rare and notable species records held by TVERC.....45

Appendix 3 - Policy and legislation62

 The Rio Convention (Convention on Biological Diversity).....62

 The 2001 European Union Summit.....62

 United Kingdom63

 England64

Appendix 4 - List of species and habitat specific actions.....68

 Ecological enhancements within and adjacent to development sites.....68

 Surveys68

 Other68

Appendix 5 - Acknowledgements.....69

Appendix 6 - References.....70

1. Executive summary

[To be completed]

DRAFT

2. Biodiversity

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity (a contraction of 'biological diversity') refers to the variety of life and its processes; including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences amongst them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur.

An ecosystem can be as large as a river system or as small as a rotting log. It is a community of plants, animals and microorganisms, along with their environment, that function together as a unit.

Why is biodiversity important?

Biodiversity is important both in its own right and as an indicator of the wider health of the environment.

We all rely on biodiversity for our physical needs; it provides natural services (sometimes referred to as ecosystem services) such as food, clean air and water.

Biodiversity improves people's quality of life, in terms of providing leisure and educational resources for society and opportunities to experience the natural world and access to nature has been shown to have numerous benefits for people's mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Biodiversity will help us adapt to climate change. As the climate changes healthy ecosystems and the services they provide will be increasingly valuable, but at the same time biodiversity will be threatened by an increasingly unpredictable climate.

What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a framework for conserving and enhancing biodiversity. It sets out the actions that will be taken to achieve this.

Why does Reading need a Biodiversity Action Plan?

Across the globe biodiversity is declining, with rates of extinction now far in excess of background rates. Many scientists believe that we are entering

the sixth mass extinction. If this loss continues it will have serious consequences for humankind as the natural systems that we all rely on break down particularly as the council tries to tackle the Climate Emergency that was declared by Reading Borough Council and the national government and in 2019.

Reading is rich in biodiversity along its rivers, in its parks, gardens and open spaces. However, without action to prevent activities that harm biodiversity and to encourage those that help it, biodiversity will continue to decline, and we will be much poorer for it.

Actions to conserve biodiversity happen at a local level and Reading's BAP provides a framework to ensure that actions are coordinated and targeted.

The 2006 Reading BAP

Reading's previous BAP was written in 2006 and ran until 2015. It has not been updated. It was organised as a series of 19 'Action Plans', divided into Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans. These were:

Habitats

1. Urban I
2. Urban II
3. Semi-Natural Grasslands
4. Parkland and Veteran Trees
5. Ancient and Species Rich Hedgerows
6. Broad Leaved Woodland
7. Ponds (Standing Open Water) and Reedbeds
8. Rivers

Species

1. Black Poplar
2. Loddon Lilly
3. Glow Worm
4. Stag Beetle
5. Bat Species
6. Water Vole
7. Black Redstart

8. House Sparrow
9. Sand Martin
10. Great Crested Newt
11. Slow Worm

The updated BAP will be organised differently, around themes rather than habitats and species.

What is the vision for Reading's biodiversity?

In late 2019 and early 2020, a group of people from the council, nature conservation organisations and voluntary groups came together to write Reading's new BAP. They agreed on the following vision statement for biodiversity in Reading:

By 2030 Reading will be a borough rich in wildlife, accessible to and valued by its residents, better connected to the wider landscape including through its urban areas. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity will be integral to the actions of the council and others and the decline in biodiversity will have been reversed. Important wildlife sites and habitats will be protected, maintained, restored and enhanced and new wildlife habitats will be created - both for nature itself and for the benefits it provides to the people of Reading - capable of withstanding the climate emergency, and helping to mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

How is the BAP structured, what are its aims, and who will it be used by?

Section 8 of this document sets out the new BAP's Themes for Action. Collectively these will ensure that:

- 1) Reading's biodiversity is protected
- 2) The decline in Reading's biodiversity is reversed
- 3) Important wildlife sites and habitats are restored, extend and enhanced
- 4) New wildlife rich habitats are created
- 5) Reading's biodiversity is valued by its residents

6) Reading's biodiversity is resilient to climate change and will help mitigate its effects.

It will be used by the council, particularly the following departments:

- Planning and development control
- Sustainability
- Highways
- Parks
- Education
- Housing
- Property

and other stakeholders including:

- Developers
- Private landowners
- Wildlife groups
- Governmental organisations such as the EA and the Canals and Rivers Trust
- Volunteer groups.

It will guide their actions, ensure those actions are coordinated and targeted and provide a baseline against which actions can be measured.

The BAP will be overseen by Reading Borough Council's Planning Policy Team. It will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

A report detailing the actions that have been taken will be published annually. A review of the BAP's actions will be undertaken when necessary with a report taken to the council committee whenever any major changes are proposed.

3. Policy and legislation

Reading Borough Council, along with all public bodies, has a legal duty to conserve biodiversity. This is set out under section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (The NERC Act) as follows:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

There is also a raft of other policy and legislation, including:

1. The Convention on Biological Diversity - signed by 168 countries including the UK in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
2. European Union Directives, in particular the Habitats Directive, The Birds Directive and The Water Framework Directive. These have been transposed into UK law and will continue to apply unless or until the acts which have transposed them have been revoked.
3. Domestic legislation such as The Wildlife & Countryside Act, which amongst other things provides protection for nesting birds and prohibits the release of invasive species, and The Badgers Act.
4. Planning Policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Reading Borough's Local Plan.
5. Other Council and local policies such as The Tree Strategy and The Climate Change Action Plan (both of which have been updated at the same time as the BAP and provide a comprehensive approach to the conservation of Reading's environment).
6. The Environment Bill (likely to soon become The Environment Act) which sets out the government's targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment and provisions about nature and biodiversity (if passed it will give the government's 25 Year Environment Plan on a statutory footing)

Further details are provided in Appendix 3

4. The state of biodiversity

We are living through an ecological and climate crisis. Biodiversity is diminishing across the globe and the quantity and diversity of wildlife even at a local level is declining. Many scientists now think that we are living through the sixth mass extinction event with a recent and sobering scientific studyⁱ concluding that:

“The evidence is incontrovertible that recent extinction rates are unprecedented in human history and highly unusual in Earth’s history. Our analysis emphasizes that our global society has started to destroy species of other organisms at an accelerating rate, initiating a mass extinction episode unparalleled for 65 million years. If the currently elevated extinction pace is allowed to continue, humans will soon (in as little as three human lifetimes) be deprived of many biodiversity benefits. On human time scales, this loss would be effectively permanent because in the aftermath of past mass extinctions, the living world took hundreds of thousands to millions of years to rediversify. Avoiding a true sixth mass extinction will require rapid, greatly intensified efforts to conserve already threatened species and to alleviate pressures on their populations—notably habitat loss, overexploitation for economic gain, and climate change. [...] However, the window of opportunity is rapidly closing.”

International context

A recent UN reportⁱⁱ found that:

“The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900. More than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened. The picture is less clear for insect species, but available evidence supports a tentative estimate of 10% being threatened. At least 680 vertebrate species had been driven to extinction since the 16th century and more than 9% of all domesticated breeds of mammals

used for food and agriculture had become extinct by 2016, with at least 1,000 more breeds still threatened.”

National context

About every 3 years, The State of Nature partnership (comprising over 70 partners drawn from conservation NGOs, research institutes, and the UK and national governments) publishes an audit of Nature in the UK. The 2019 reportⁱⁱⁱ found:

1. Our indicator of average species’ abundance of 696 terrestrial and freshwater species has fallen by 13% since 1970; the rate of decline was steeper in the last 10 years, although not statistically significantly so
2. Our indicator of average species’ distribution, covering 6,654 terrestrial and freshwater species over a broad range of taxonomic groups, has fallen by 5% since 1970, and is 2% lower than in 2005.
3. More species have shown strong or moderate decreases in abundance (41%) than increases (26%) since 1970, and likewise more species have decreased in distribution (27%) than increased (21%) since 1970
4. Our wildlife is undergoing rapid change; the proportion of species defined as showing strong changes in abundance, either increasing or decreasing, rose from 33% over the long term to 53% over the short term.
5. Of 8,431 species that have been assessed using regional Red List criteria, 15% have been classified as threatened with extinction from Great Britain, and 2% are already extinct.
6. An assessment based on the best available data indicates that, although progress has been made, the UK will not meet most of the CBD’s 2020 Aichi target [In 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Province, Japan, the signatories to the CBD published a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the years 2011-2020. This included five strategic goals and 20 targets referred to as the 'Aichi Targets'.]

Local context

Despite being an urban borough Reading is rich in wildlife:

1. It lies next to two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: the Chilterns to the north, and, the North Wessex Downs to the west.
2. It has two large rivers running through it, the Thames and the Kennet (and their floodplains) with a total of 62km of watercourses including streams.
3. Outside of private gardens, there are 200 hectares of woodland and 800 hectares of grassland, equating to around one quarter of the total area of the borough (4000 ha.).
4. There are five local nature reserves - Clayfield Copse, Blundells Copse, Round Copse, McIlroy Park, and, Lousehill Copse
5. There are 21 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs).
6. There are two woodlands listed on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory
7. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) hold records of 274 priority, protected and or notable species that have been recorded within the borough since 1970. This includes 8 reptile & amphibian species, 109 bird species, 18 terrestrial mammals, 7 fish, 59 plant and 70 invertebrates. Not all of these species are resident, some may have been seen on just a few occasions, and some such as the palmate newt may no longer be found in the borough.

(See Appendices 1 and 2 for maps and species lists.)

Monitoring in Reading

TVERC collect and collate data about biodiversity in the Thames Valley. Reading Borough Council have a service level agreement with them.

TVERC has mapped habitats in Berkshire and Oxfordshire using a mixture of field survey data and aerial photograph interpretation. The habitat map is constantly improving as new data becomes available.

TVERC also collects and collates ecological records for the borough and members of the public are encouraged to submit their records to them. The council receives regular data updates.

TVERC also run the Local Wildlife Site project in Berkshire. They survey LWSs about once every 10 years. Further information on this is provided below.

Other than TVERC surveys and surveys to inform development proposals, there are very few direct studies of biodiversity in Reading. However, we do know that:

1. 85% of the borough's Local Wildlife Sites have management plans in place, meaning that they are being managed, at least in part, for wildlife, and are classified by DEFRA as being in "positive conservation management"
2. There is anecdotal evidence that some bird populations, including swifts and house sparrows, are declining.
3. Numbers of some species, such as the Red Kite, have increased.
4. Populations of some species, such as glow worms and water vole, are likely to have disappeared.

Recent actions

A number of projects in Reading over the last 10 years have helped conserve biodiversity. These include:

- The implementation of a Higher Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England which resulted in the meadows at Bugs Bottom, Clayfield Copse, McIlroys Park, Prospect Park, Hills Meadow and Arthur Newbury Park being managed as hay meadows.
- The production, with help from The Forestry Commission, of Woodland Management Plans for the majority of the council's woodlands.
- The creation of the Fobney Island Nature Reserve which by 2018 had become rich enough in wildlife to be designated as a LWS
- Detailed design input into new development proposals by the Planning Department's Natural Environment Team to ensure that nature is conserved and new habitat for wildlife is provided.

5. Habitats

TVERC has mapped habitats in Berkshire and Oxfordshire using a mixture of field survey data and aerial photograph interpretation. It includes most open spaces but does not include private residential gardens.

The habitat map is constantly improving as new data becomes available but there tend to be major updates whenever new aerial photography becomes available. In Reading, due to Heathrow airport, new aerial photography is collected less frequently than elsewhere. The most recent aerial photography data for Reading is from 2016.

Habitat classifications

There are a number of ways that habitats are classified in the UK and these are discussed below:

Phase 1

The Phase 1 habitat classification system was first published by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) in 1990. It is a standardised system for classifying and mapping wildlife habitats in all parts of Great Britain, including urban areas, and is widely used as the standard technique for habitat surveys. Habitats are classified to a broad habitat such as woodland, grassland, open water etc., and then sub-divided further to provide the Phase 1 habitat type, such as broad leaved semi-natural woodland, calcareous grassland etc.

It was developed before the time when computer based geographical information systems were available and, due to the ways that habitats are mapped (as a mixture of point, line and polygon data), is not best suited to computer based analysis.

National Vegetation Classification

This is a detailed botanical survey. Habitats are classified according to published descriptions given in the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) (e.g. “w6 Alnus glutinosa - Urtica dioica woodland” or “CG1 Festuca ovina-Carlina vulgaris grassland”) developed and published in the 1980s by the

Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC). There is very little NVC survey data for Reading.

Integrated Habitats Classification (IHS)

The Integrated Habitat System (IHS) was developed by the Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC). It was designed to be used in the UK, and is an integration of existing classification systems including Priority Habitats (as defined under the NERC Act), Phase 1 and NVC.

It was developed for use with modern IT systems and is increasingly used for mapping habitats.

Priority Habitats

Priority Habitats are habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The secretary of state is required to periodically publish (via the JNCC) a list of these habitats under Section 41 (S41) of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. The list evolved from the UK BAP that was first published in 1994. They are routinely referred to as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI), Section 41 (S41) Habitats, UK BAP Habitats and Priority Habitats.

We refer to them as Priority Habitats in this document as this is this is the terminology used in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

An overview of habitats in Reading

The table below lists the Phase 1 habitat types found in Reading and their extent as per the TVERC habitat dataset.

Phase 1 Habitats	Area (Ha.)
Grassland habitats	
Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland	287
Improved grassland	184.6
Neutral grassland - semi-improved	304.6
Parkland and scattered trees	4.3
	Total 780.5
Woodland habitats	

Broadleaved woodland - plantation	11.8
Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural	151.5
Coniferous woodland - plantation	0.6
Mixed woodland - semi-natural	3.2
Scrub - dense/continuous	35.2
Scrub - scattered	1.3
Total	203.6
Wetland habitats	
Fen	5
Running water (Excl. River Thames)	23.9
Standing water	15.1
Swamp	22.6
Total	66.6
Other habitats	
Bare ground	2.4
Allotments	31.2
Ephemeral/short perennial	0.2
Tall ruderal herb	4.7
Quarry	8.8
Total	47.3

The table below lists the Priority Habitats found in Reading and their extent as per the TVERC habitat dataset.

Priority habitat	Area (Ha.)
Grassland habitats	
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	128.4
Lowland meadows	4.8
Total	133.2
Woodland habitats	
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	134.5

Lowland wood pasture and parkland	33.9
Wet woodland	8.7
Total	177.1
Wetland habitats	
Reedbeds	1.1
Ponds	0.1
Lowland fens	26
Eutrophic standing waters	10.2
Total	37.4
Other habitats	
Traditional orchards	1.2
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	34.8
Total	36

Woodland, trees and hedgerows

Woodland

Excluding scrub, there are approximately 167 ha of woodland in Reading. Of this, RBC owns approximately 92 ha., with the remainder 75ha. in other ownership. There is a mixture of woodland types ranging from the ancient broadleaved woodland at Clayfield Copse to newly planted woodlands such as that at Balmore Walk.

It is important to manage our woodlands because many of our rarer and endangered species rely on the associated habitats, in particular the open and regenerating habitats, that woodland management produces. Lack of management has reduced habitat and structural diversity in Britain's woodlands and is the biggest threat to the UK's small woodlands.

Woodland management

Of the woodland managed by Reading Borough Council, most have a management plan in place. These were produced in conjunction with the Forestry Commission and adopted by the council in 2012. They are 10 year

plans and will need to be reviewed in 2022. The woodlands for which management plans were produced are:

1. Arthur Newbury and McIlroys Park
2. Blundells Copse
3. Bugs Bottom and Furzeplat
4. Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Woods
5. Beech (or Highdown) Wood, Rotherfield Way Copse and Balmore Walk
6. Lousehill copse
7. Prospect Park, Devils Dip and Southcote Linear Park
8. Thames woodlands (Hills Meadow, Kings Meadow and View Island)
9. The Cowsey
10. Warren Woodland Escarpment

When the plans are reviewed it will be important to ensure that the following management considerations are addressed:

- New pests and diseases such as ash dieback and oak processionary moth
- Species selection to take account of climate change and resilience to new pests and diseases
- The retention of standing deadwood
- Where the council does not own or manage a woodland, it has only limited options to control changes, mainly through the planning system. For example, where a woodland has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the council can request that a management plan is drawn up when a TPO application is submitted, and planning policy protects woodlands (most of which is Priority Habitats) from removal.
- The council does however own small plots of woodland outside of public parks. It will be important that wherever possible these are kept in public ownership, as this means they are more likely to be managed beneficially for biodiversity.

Regenerating Ash at Clayfield Copse, much of which now suffers from Ash dieback. Management of our woodlands will need to account for this disease.



New woodland

Due to the size and urban nature of Reading there are likely only limited opportunities for new woodland planting. Where these opportunities do exist, they are likely to be associated with new development although there may be some areas in Reading's parks and open spaces that can be planted.

Ancient woodland

Ancient woodland is defined as land that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600. This is around the date of the earliest maps, and it is considered that if an area was woodland at this time then it is likely to have always been wooded.

In the 1990s English Nature, now Natural England, reviewed old maps; in particular, Ordnance Survey's First Series 1:25,000 maps, and created an inventory of woodlands more than 2ha in size. This was the basis for the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI).

In Reading there are two woodlands listed on the AWI - Kentwood Grove (McIlroys Park) and Blackhouse Woods (Clayfield Copse) (see appendix 1)

Natural England have advised local authorities that they should carry out their own assessments to identify smaller woodlands which were likely to be "ancient" and some authorities in Berkshire have commissioned TVERC to carry out such a review.

The council will work with voluntary groups such as Caversham Globe and Reading's Tree Wardens to carry out a review of ancient woodland in Reading.

Ancient and veteran trees

The NPPF defines an 'ancient' or 'veteran' tree as:

A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage."

Such trees can be found as individuals or in groups and can be found in historic parkland, hedgerows, gardens and ancient woodlands. They support a variety of wildlife, such as the stag beetle, that are associated with dead or decaying wood.

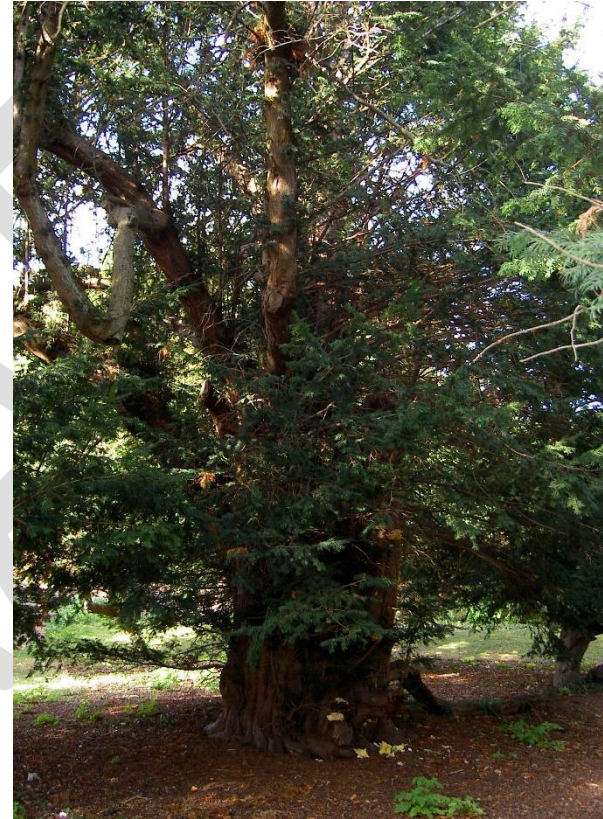
The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory has a map showing ancient and veteran trees and many of Reading's ancient and veteran trees are shown on this map (see <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>)

[Text box: Ancient woodlands and veteran trees and development control.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees are specially protected through the planning process and the NPPF reads:

"development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists"]

Veteran Yew Tree in Caversham Court (photo courtesy of Dave Kenny)



Wood pasture

Parts of Prospect Park fit the priority habitat description of 'Lowland Wood Pasture & Parkland': it is an old parkland landscape containing veteran trees over what was once grazed grassland, relatively unimproved and species rich in places, and managed as a hay meadow on the slopes below the Mansion House.

Street trees

The borough has numerous street trees, many of which were planted in the 19th Century, with particularly fine examples along London and Kendrick Road. These are managed by the council who have a rolling programme of street tree planting and management. The Council have produced a Tree Strategy, which details the measures that the council will take to manage these trees and as such they are outside of the remit of the BAP.

Hedgerows

The Priority Habitat description for hedgerows is as follows:

“any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less than 20m wide. Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are covered by this priority habitat, where each UK country can define the list of woody species native to their respective country. Climbers such as honeysuckle and bramble are recognised as integral to many hedgerows, however they require other woody plants to be present to form a distinct woody boundary feature, as such they are not included in the definition of woody species. The definition is limited to boundary lines of trees or shrubs, and excludes banks or walls without woody shrubs on top of them.”

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 are intended to protect important countryside hedges from destruction or damage. They are part of the planning regulations and administered by the local planning authority. It is an offence to remove an important hedgerow (as defined under the regulations) without have received written notice from the local planning authority that works can commence. They do not apply to hedgerows within the curtilage of, or marking a boundary of the curtilage of, a dwelling-house, and there are a number of other exemptions. An ‘important’

hedgerow is one that fulfils a number of criteria including the number of woody and ground flora species it contains, and its location.

There is no definitive list of hedgerows in Reading. However, it is likely that there are a number of hedgerows that fit the Priority Habitat description, but only a few, such as the hedgerow at the northern end of Bugs Bottom are likely to be considered as ‘important’ under the Hedgerow Regulations.

It will be necessary to ensure that existing hedgerows are retained and managed appropriately (for example by cutting them after the winter, but before the nesting season, so that they provide food for overwintering birds).

A mixed native hedgerow in an urban garden. This provides a greater diversity and abundance of food than ornamental hedgerows



Grasslands

Unimproved grasslands are grasslands that appear never to have been “improved” that is that they have not been reseeded, drained or fertilised. In England there are around 4.5 million hectares of grassland, of which just 100,000ha is “unimproved”.

Unimproved grasslands contain a much greater diversity of grasses, sedges, rushes and wildflowers and are much richer in wildlife. They are often referred to as wildflower meadows. Conversely, “improved” grasslands have far fewer species, often only a few grass species with the occasional weed, and offer very little value for wildlife.

However, there is a continuum between improved and unimproved grasslands and generally speaking the longer a grassland has been left without “improvements” the closer to an unimproved grassland it becomes. These grasslands are referred to as “semi-improved” grasslands.

Grasslands can also be classified according to the soil type, either neutral, acid or calcareous, and or their level of waterlogging.

In Reading, other than the marshy grassland along the river valley to the west of the A33, there are no unimproved grasslands (it is possible that the grassland on the steep slopes of Balmore Walk has never been “improved” but due to the heavy mowing regime the species richness is likely to have declined). The majority of the grass is either short cut amenity grassland (287ha.) or other improved grasslands (185 ha.).

Reading’s hay meadows

Some of the semi-improved grasslands were bought into management as hay meadows in 2011 through a grant from Natural England through their Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, and approximately 35 hectares of grassland are managed as wildflower meadow with a hay cut taken once per annum. Of these, parts of Clayfield Copse, McIlroys Park, Prospect Park and McIlroys Park were sown with a mix of wildflower seeds and the species diversity increased.

The reseeded meadow at Arthur Newbury Park 5 years after it was reseeded



It costs more to manage an area as a hay meadow than as amenity grassland. Therefore, when the HLS agreement comes to an end the council will need to commit to funding this management.

Road verges and roundabouts.

The council’s Highways Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 392km of road and 800km of pavements, much of which has

a grassed verge and roundabouts. Some areas are likely to contain rare species such as the Lizard Orchid that was found on the Basingstoke Road in 2019. These areas are, as a rule, managed as regularly cut amenity grassland, with only a few areas managed as less frequently cut grass.

Road verges are very important for allowing wildlife, particularly pollinators (such as bees) and other invertebrates, to move through the landscape. However, it can be more difficult to manage road verges for wildlife. This is because the arisings need to be removed and disposed of, and litter in long grass can be an issue; people's perception of tidiness can conflict with what is good for wildlife.

Parks

As with road verges, there may be parts of Reading's parkland and urban greenspaces that can be managed as less frequently cut grass. The council will need to carry out steps to identify suitable areas.

Watercourses

According to the EA's Detailed River Network dataset, there are 62Km (39 miles) of watercourses in Reading:

- Berry Brook - 0.9 km
- Christchurch Ditch - 1.1 km
- Foudry Brook - 2.2 km
- Green Park Flood Relief Channel - 2 km
- Kennet - 26.4 km
- Kingsley Close Ditch - 0.8 km
- Smallmead Ditch - 0.5 km
- Thames (Upper) - 6.8 km
- Unnamed watercourses - 20.3km

These are shown on in Figure 3(Appendix 1).

Both the Kennet and The Thames are regularly used by otters a species that nearly became extinct in the 1960's and 70's and sand martins nest in old drainage pipes in the brick walls and bridges in and over the Kennet.

Classification of rivers

Watercourses are designated by the Environment Agency (EA) as either Main Rivers or Ordinary Watercourses, primarily for flood risk purposes. Main rivers are usually larger rivers and streams and are shown on the Main River Map:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/main-river-map-for-england-proposed-changes-and-decisions>

The Environment Agency has the powers to carry out maintenance, improvement or construction work on Main Rivers to manage flood risk. The lead local flood authorities (including Reading Borough Council) carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses.

The Main Rivers in Reading Borough are as follows:

1) The River Thames and its tributaries

- a) Christchurch Ditch
- b) Berry Brook

2) River Kennet (this is split into a number of channels in the Fobney area upstream of Reading town centre) and its tributaries:

- a) Holy Brook.
- b) Foudry Brook.
- c) Green Park Flood Relief Channel.
- d) Smallmead Ditch.
- e) Kingsley Close Ditch.

3) The Kennet and Avon Canal.

There are also a number of small ordinary watercourses, most of which are unnamed apart from the Gunters Brook close to the Queen's Road car park.

Water framework directive

Under the EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) [transposed into UK law via The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017] the EA has legal duties to ensure that waterbodies, including rivers, achieve "good ecological status" or "good ecological potential":

- Good Ecological Potential (GEP) refers to the classification of WFD water bodies that are designated as Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB).
- Good Ecological Status (GES) refers to the classification of WFD water bodies that are not designated as HMWB.

There are five categories of GES or GEP: high, good, moderate, poor and bad, established on the basis of specific criteria and boundaries defined against biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological elements.

The 2019 WFD water body classifications have not yet been published so the most recent data is currently from 2016.

There are four WFD Cycle 2 river water bodies within Reading Borough, two of which are HMWBs and two are not:

Thames Wallingford to Caversham (EA reference: GB106039030331)

This is designated a Heavily Modified Water Body for navigation, recreation and flood protection reasons.

It was classified as at Moderate Ecological Potential in 2016, failing for invertebrates and phosphate.

Kennet and Holy Brook (EA reference: GB106039023140)

This is designated a Heavily Modified Water Body for recreation reasons.

It was classified as at Moderate Ecological Potential in 2016, failing for fish and dissolved oxygen.

Holy Brook (EA reference: GB106039023141)

This water body is not designated as a Heavily Modified Water Body.

It was classified as at Moderate Ecological Status in 2016, failing for plants and dissolved oxygen.

Foudry Brook (West End Brook to M4) (EA reference: GB106039017380)

This water body is not designated as a Heavily Modified Water Body.

It was classified as at Poor Ecological Status in 2016, failing for fish, plants and phosphate.

6. Designations

There are a series of nature conservation designations, many of which overlap. This section gives an overview of these (a map showing designated sites and priority habitats is given in Appendix 1, Figure 2)

National Character Areas

A National Character Area (NCA) is a natural subdivision of England based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity. There are 159 National Character Areas and they follow natural, rather than administrative, boundaries. They are defined by Natural England, the UK government's advisors on the natural environment.

Reading is located within two NCAs: the Chilterns to the north of the River Thames and the Thames Valley to the south.

A map showing the NCAs and their underlying geology is provided in Figure (Appendix 1) and a description of each is given below.

The Chilterns NCA

Caversham to the north of the River Thames and the north facing slopes of Tilehurst lie within the Chilterns NCA, which stretches north-east to Luton and north to Wallingford and Princes Risborough. It is an area of chalk overlain with a glacial outwash of clays, gravels and sands. This acid and calcareous mix gives rise to a patchy distribution of chalk grassland and woodland habitats.

On the northern edges of the borough, grassland, agricultural and woodland features of the Chilterns are evident, such as in Bugs Bottom and Clayfield Copse, and there are some remnants in Tilehurst at McIlroys and Arthur Newbury Park.

The river valley of the Thames to the west also retains significant areas of semi-natural habitat, including The Warren Escarpment, a wooded steep chalk bank, and Little John's Farm.

The Thames Valley NCA

The Thames Valley is a low-lying area stretching from Reading to the southwest fringe of London. The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings.

Most of Reading lies within the Thames Valley NCA, including the flood meadows to the south, with areas of mixed broadleaved woodland now only remaining on the steeper ridges.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

In Berkshire there are 29 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). These are areas identified by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum (which has now become the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (BLNP)) where action to conserve biodiversity would be most beneficial. There are two such areas in Reading:

Kennet Valley East

This encompasses the floodplains at the eastern end of The Kennet between Reading and Newbury.

West Reading Woodlands

This encompasses the woodlands in Tilehurst, Lousehill Copse, Blundells Copse and McIlroys Park.

The BLNP outlook is currently uncertain and attendance at BLNP meetings has dwindled. As a result, little work has been undertaken on the BOA initiative. It is however likely that BOAs in Berkshire will form the basis for Nature Recovery Areas that are referred to in the government's 25 year Environment Plan.

Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

In Reading there are five Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

1. Blundells Copse
2. Round Copse (which is now part of McIlroys Park)

3. McIlroys Park
4. Lousehill Copse
5. Clayfield Copse

LNRs are designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act and are sites owned by the council and of local importance for nature conservation. The four Reading LNRs were designated in 1991 and 1992.

There are no other Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Reading.

Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are sites which include important and rare habitats and species. They are protected from the direct and indirect effects of development through planning policy as set out in Reading's Local Plan. To qualify as an LWS, a site is assessed by the LWS Selection Panel against the LWS Selection Criteria, a detailed document produced by TVERC.

The LWS Selection Panel meets annually and assesses sites that have been surveyed in the preceding year. Panel decisions result in sites being designated as LWS (if they meet the criteria), de-selected (if they don't meet the criteria) or deferred (if further survey information is required). Sometimes sites are extended to include adjacent valuable habitats; sometimes parts of sites are removed.

Survey work is carried out by TVERC staff and experienced volunteers, with the aim of surveying sites every 10 years.

There are 20 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) in Reading, all but 3 of which (Cow Lane Depot, Meadway Fringe & Whitley Park Farm/St Patricks Hall Pond) are managed or part managed by The Council.

Local Authorities are required to report to DEFRA the proportion of LWS that are in "positive conservation management" each year. This is known as Single Data List (SDL) 160.

DEFRA consider those sites in "positive conservation management" to be those that:

1. have a Site Management Plan;
2. are under an Environmental Management Schemes (such as Higher Level Stewardship);
3. where there is a written record that conservation work has taken place, or
4. where a record was made where a landowner of a LWS had received management guidance or advice in the last 5 years and whether it was known if this was acted on.

TVERC assesses the LWS on behalf of Reading Borough Council and in 2019 in Reading 85% of LWS were assessed by TVERC as being in positive conservation management.

Green Links

On the Local Plan Proposals Map^{iv} there are a series of "Green Links". These were identified during a study of the borough by TVERC and either denote an existing link or illustrate an indicative location for where potential Green Links could be located to provide desired connectivity for wildlife between ecologically important areas. It should not necessarily be interpreted as a precise line, rather it may indicate an indicative potential connection between areas. In practice, most Green Links shown on the map are a mixture of existing and potential links, i.e. whilst there are existing aspects that contribute to the Network there is also significant potential for development to make a further contribution to improve the Network.

Green Infrastructure

A commonly used term is "green infrastructure". Natural England define this as:

"A network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities".

In Reading, the parks, rivers, woodlands, grasslands, gardens, street trees and road verges, all make form part of this green infrastructure.

Species

TVERC hold records of 274 protected, priority, and or notable species that have been recorded within the borough¹. This includes 8 reptile & amphibian species, 109 bird species, 18 terrestrial mammals, 7 fish, 59 plant and 70 invertebrates (see Appendix 2).

Priority species - as with habitats, the secretary of state, under section 41 of the NERC ACT, is required to periodically publish (via the JNCC) a list of species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list evolved from the UK BAP that was first published in 1994. They are routinely referred to as Species of Principal Importance (SPI), Section 41 (S41) Species, UK BAP Species and Priority Species. In the NPPF they are referred to as “priority species” which is how they are referred to here.

Protected species- Reading also hosts a number of protected species such as badgers, bats and otters. Some of these are protected under EU Legislation (transposed into UK Law via the Habitat Regulations) and other under UK legislation such as the water vole. Most are also priority species.

Notable and red list species - Notable lists have been published by conservation organisations such as the of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC). Species are classified according to set criteria set out in the lists. Those on the "red list" are the most under threat, whilst those on the amber and green are less so.

Not all those species recorded are resident, some may have been seen on just a few occasions, and some, such as the water vole, may no longer be found in the borough.

¹ Since:

- 1980 for more frequently recorded taxonomic groups e.g. plants, mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians [this date will be changing to 1995 in March 2020]

The Hazel Dormouse, a European Protected Species, that is found in the Chiterns and could be present in the Reading's woodlands particularly those at the north of the borough (photo courtesy of Eric Palmer)



- 1960 for less frequently recorded groups such as more obscure invertebrate groups and lower plant groups.

7. Stakeholders

Who owns and manages land in Reading?

To effect change in the way that land is managed we first need to understand who owns and manages it.

Private landowners

Being an urban borough, most of Reading's outdoor space is in private gardens. There are a great variety of shapes and sizes. Some gardens, particularly when taken with the adjacent areas, can be large areas of wildlife rich space with a mosaic of habitats and a diversity of species. It is estimated that approximately 1,300 hectares of the borough, or 33%, is within the curtilage of residential gardens.

There are also numerous privately owned industrial and retail areas such as the Oracle in central Reading.

Reading Borough Council

The council owns approximately 1,000ha of land (including buildings). Of this approximately 420 hectares, excluding highways land, is fully accessible to the public and managed by the parks department. This includes 24 allotments, 9 cemeteries and churchyards and 70 parks and gardens.

Of particular value to wildlife are the council's woodlands and grasslands.

The highways department manages much of the remainder along with the property, housing and education departments.

The University and private schools

Reading University owns the campus, a large area of land in the east of the borough that crosses into Wokingham, with approximately 1/3rd of the campus (35 hectares) being within Reading Borough.

There are also several other education institutions that own land in Reading such as Queen Anne's School, Leighton Park School and The Abbey School.

Farmers

Much of the land to the west, along the Kennet valley floodplain, is owned by a local farming family. It is managed as low intensity grazing and provides some of Berkshire's best wetland habitats.

Little John's Farm, adjacent to the Thames and used by Reading Festival, is the other area of Farmland in Reading.

Network Rail

Network rail own and manage the land adjacent to the railway tracks. These act as important corridors for wildlife.

The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency carry out maintenance work primarily for flood risk purposes, on main rivers including the River Thames and River Kennet. They also control invasive, non-native species including floating pennywort and Japanese knotweed.

Canals and Rivers Trust

The Canals and River Trust is responsible for managing the Kennet and Avon Canal and the vegetation along its banks.

Other stakeholders

There are also numerous volunteer, local wildlife groups and amateur naturalist societies in Reading, including:

- The Conservation Volunteers
- Caversham Globe
- Tilehurst Globe
- ECONET (an umbrella group that encompasses several "Friends Of" groups and Reading Urban Wildlife Group)
- Reading Friends of the Earth.
- Berkshire Ornithological Club
- Reading and District Natural History Society
- Berkshire Mammal Group,
- Berkshire & South Bucks Bat Group

- Reading Tree Wardens

Berkshire's Local Nature Partnership

According to the www.gov.uk website, "Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people who aim to help bring about improvements in their local natural environment."

Local Nature Partnerships originated in a vision set out in the UK government's 2011 'Natural Environment White Paper', which identified the need to take greater account of the value of the environment when strategic decisions are made that affect people and the local economy. 48 LNPs in England received approval from DEFRA, including the BLNP.

The BLNP outlook is currently uncertain, attendance at LNP meetings has dwindled and the chair has recently resigned. There is no funding for the LNP and to date it has no permanent staff member.

Neighbouring authorities

Nature crosses boundaries (particularly along rivers, rail and road verges) and it will be important to ensure that there is coordinated action with neighbouring authorities including Wokingham, South Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Council.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the Nature Recovery Network and the LWS system are all examples of cross boundary working.

Page 22 of 70

8. Themes for action

This section details the objectives of the BAP and the actions that will be taken to achieve them. It is intended to be iterative, whereby actions lead to further actions, with actions and progress towards them regularly updated.

Descriptive text in this section is limited to text that has not been covered in the sections above.

A) Legislation

As we exit the EU, the environmental protections that the EU’s Directives provide may no longer apply. Conversely it may be that new laws and or strengthened protections are brought in by the UK government. It will be important therefore to ensure that the council’s policies are updated to take account of any new laws, and wherever possible existing environmental protections are upheld.

Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
The council will ensure that its policies and plans are up to date with wildlife and biodiversity legislation.	Review and update policy as new legislation comes into force.	RBC - all	Ongoing
	Uphold existing environmental protections	RBC - all	Ongoing

B) Designated Sites

In Berkshire there is a comprehensive system for designating LWSs and other than the four LNRs (which are all also LWSs) there are no statutory sites within the borough. There are no plans to comprehensively change this system.

It would be useful to have a system for determining whether a site had reached “favourable condition” rather than simply measuring whether it is being managed (as is currently the case). The council will work with TVERC and the LWS Selection Panel to see if such a system can be developed, possibly when each site is surveyed.

[When assessing Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Natural England refer to sites being in “Favourable Condition” but it may be that a different terminology is used.]

OBJECTIVES	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To ensure that all LWS have reached “Favourable Condition” by 2030	To review and update management plans for all RBC managed sites	RBC Parks	Rolling programme
	To implement the management plans	RBC Parks	Ongoing
	To engage with the owners of LWS not managed by the council to encourage them to manage the LWS for wildlife	RBC Parks & Planning	Ongoing
	To work with TVERC and the LWSSP to draw up a system for defining and measuring the “Condition” of LWSs	RBC Planning	2022
To regularly survey, designate and de-designate LWSs in	To continue to fund TVERC to	RBC Planning	Ongoing

OBJECTIVES	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
accordance with the LWS Selection Criteria	carry out these works		

C) Planning and building control

The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is a material consideration in, and an integral part of, the planning system. The council, as the local planning authority, needs to be satisfied that a development proposal complies with planning policy before it grants planning permission. Planning permission is set out at the national level through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and at a local level through Reading Borough’s Local Plan. Planning Policy evolves as government policy and priorities change and through case law.

Appendix 3 includes key paragraphs from the NPPF and The Local Plan also includes policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Applicants need to demonstrate, through the provision of ecology surveys and reports, how their proposals comply with planning policy. The council can refuse planning applications that adversely affect biodiversity and can also set planning conditions and planning obligations to ensure that any effects are minimised, and biodiversity is enhanced.

Biodiversity net gain

One of the key drivers for biodiversity improvements over the coming years is likely to be the policy, as set out in the Government’s 25 Year Environment White Paper, to:

“Embedding an ‘environmental net gain’ principle for development, including housing and infrastructure”.

This is in accordance with paragraph 174b of the NPPF and Reading’s Local Plan which states (Policy EN12) that:

“In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.”

This is sometimes referred to as biodiversity offsetting or biodiversity net gain.

The idea behind this is that when a new development comes forward the developer will need to demonstrate that there will be a net gain for biodiversity. This is expressed in terms of biodiversity habitat units before and after the development. The units are a factor of habitat type, condition, area, time, anticipated time to target condition etc. If the calculation shows that there will not be a gain (the Environment White paper suggests that this should be 10%) then the developer needs to offset any losses by creating or enhancing habitats elsewhere.

Government Guidance on this matter is evolving but DEFRA have produced a calculator to calculate these impacts. However, a key decision that the council will need to make is where it is acceptable to offset biodiversity losses as there may only be limited opportunities within the borough. It may be, for example, that the council would accept an offsetting scheme within a set distance of the borough, or perhaps within a BOA.

Where Priority Habitats are to be affected the policy does not normally apply as these are protected from development through the planning process.

Ecological enhancements within development sites

In addition to Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations there are other opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments. For example, planning conditions can be imposed to secure

the provision of swift bricks, bird and bat boxes and native and wildlife friendly landscaping schemes (including green roofs and walls), and requirements for ‘hedgehog holes’ in new fences.

The council at present seeks ecological enhancements on most non householder developments. However, there is no system in place to record when, or whether, ecological enhancements are secured, and very little enforcement action when they are not. We also do not know whether and to what extent the enhancement measures are successful.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To continue to assess all planning applications for their ecological impacts	To assess planning applications for their impact on protected, priority and notable species, and priority habitats, ancient woodland and protected sites	RBC planning	Ongoing
	To require developers to provide on-site ecological enhancements	RBC planning	Ongoing
To ensure that new development results in measurable net gain in biodiversity units.	To produce a supplementary planning document, possibly in conjunction with neighbouring authorities, that sets out the council’s approach to Biodiversity Net Gain.	RBC planning	2021
To monitor landscaping and the provision of ecological enhancements	To investigate new ways to monitor schemes	RBC planning	2021

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
	To design and implement an internal RBC system for recording ecological enhancements that have been provided in development sites.	RBC planning	2021
	To work with TVERC to develop ways of capturing habitat creation data	RBC planning, TVERC	Ongoing

D) Woodlands, trees & hedgerows

The BAP should result in existing woodland being better managed and new woodlands, trees and hedgerows being planted.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
To manage Reading’s woodlands for wildlife	To review RBC woodland management plans	RBC parks	By 2023
	To implement woodland management plans	RBC parks	Ongoing
	To identify funding opportunities for woodland management such as through the Forestry Commission	RBC parks	By 2023
	To engage with private woodland owners and to encourage them to manage their woodland for wildlife	RBC planning & RBC Parks	Ongoing

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
To retain woodlands in public ownership	Not to sell council owned woodlands other than where suitable compensatory environmental measures are implemented	RBC property	Ongoing
	Where new woodland habitat is created as part of planning applications to adopt this as publicly owned land securing its management through planning obligations as appropriate	RBC planning, property & parks	Ongoing
To identify suitable areas for new woodland creation	To assess parks and highways land and, other council owned and private land to identify and map those areas where new woodland could be created	RBC highways, parks, planning & property	By 2023
	To agree targets for new woodland creation in accordance with the tree strategy and CCAP	RBC highways, parks, planning & sustainability	By 2023
	Create new woodland areas within development sites (or as part of offsetting schemes - see separate theme)	RBC planning	Ongoing
To review Reading's Ancient	To review the ancient woodland inventory, including smaller woodlands (less than	RBC and volunteer groups such as Caversham	By 2022

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Woodland Inventory	2ha.), in line with DEFRA guidance	Globe and Reading's Tree Wardens	

E) Grasslands and road verges

Reading's grasslands and road verges have significant potential as a wildlife resource, particularly for pollinators, and if they are managed as less frequently cut grass they will host a greater diversity and abundance of wildflowers. Recent research has shown that the part of the verge closest to the road contains fewer pollinators which is often the part that needs to be cut to maintain a tidy appearance. It also suggests that the later in the year that the grass is cut the better it is for pollinators^v.

The council will be trialling systems for cutting road verges less frequently and will be producing a highways grassland management policy shortly. It will also be looking to identify areas within parks that could be managed as less frequently cut grassland.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To manage Reading's wildflower meadows for wildlife and look for opportunities to increase the extent of this habitat	To cut the grass annually as a hay cut	RBC parks	Ongoing
	To identify the resources to manage these areas after the current HLS funding runs out	RBC parks	By end of 2021
To identify and then manage road verges for wildflowers and pollinators	To identify road verges which could be sustainably managed as	RBC parks & highways	2020

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
	longer grass and or pollinator strips		
	To test different road verge management regimes and draw up a road verge management policy	RBC parks & highways	To commence in 2020 then ongoing & iterative
To identify and then manage areas of amenity grassland for wildflowers and pollinators	To identify areas of RBC managed land that could be managed as less frequently cut long grass or wildflower meadow	RBC parks	2020
	To manage those areas as long grass	RBC parks	2021

F) The two rivers, their floodplains and other watercourses

Reading's watercourses are a major part of the Borough's Green Infrastructure. The council does not directly own the rivers but does manage the paths next to them in some locations. It also manages some of their floodplains such as Christchurch, Hills and Kings Meadows adjacent to the Thames, and Fobney Island, Waterloo Meadow and some of the farmland adjacent to the Kennet.

Development and urbanisation

The council is also responsible for determining planning applications and those that could affect Reading's watercourses must comply with policy EN11 in the Local Plan.

Development proposals next to a watercourse can enhance its environment. They can result in new wildlife friendly planting, the re-naturalisation of the watercourse banks, and new habitats features such as otter holts and sand and martin nesting sites. Conversely, they can adversely affect it by overshadowing it and introducing light pollution and hard surfaces.

Urbanisation around watercourses, especially in and around the town centre, has resulted in artificial, hard river banks such as steel sheet piling, concrete or brick. Wherever possible these will be reinstated to natural banks and with a more natural profile, to restore river and riparian habitats.

Even if it's not possible to remove hard banks, there are still opportunities to establish marginal vegetation as has been done in Christchurch Meadow.

Some of the smaller watercourses do have natural banks but have been altered in other ways such as straightening, e.g. the Christchurch Ditch. Opportunities will be sought to re-naturalise these channels by re-meandering or introducing gravels and woody debris to enhance the in-channel habitats.

Lighting

Rivers are some of the most sensitive habitats for lighting as they are used by invertebrates, bats, birds and mammals, all of which are sensitive to artificial light.

Riverflies, for example, are a vital part of a River's ecosystem and are an important food source for birds, fish and other animals. It is likely that the increasing intensity and distribution of lights across Britain is affecting riverfly breeding and survival as many species depend on specific environmental cues for certain stages in their life cycle. The larvae are generally repelled by light but the adults are attracted to artificial night lights and could become disoriented around them. There are recorded incidents of high mortality of riverflies around light sources close to riverbanks. Such incidents have the potential to lure sufficient numbers of adult riverflies away from the water to cause population declines.^{vi}

Lighting alongside rivers should be kept to the minimum that is required and the council will explore options to reduce light levels as it replaces its streetlamps in these locations. Measures will include the use of baffles and shields, the use of lights of an appropriate frequency (research indicates that while lower UV components attract fewer invertebrates, warmer colour temperatures with peak wavelengths greater than 550nm cause less impacts on bats^{vii}).

In addition, where development proposals are adjacent to the river it should, as a minimum, not increase existing light levels and ideally should reduce them, this includes light from new windows.

Polarised light is also attractive to invertebrates, including beetles, dragonflies and adult riverflies. Polarised light pollution is the process whereby light reflects off smooth surfaces and is then scattered in the atmosphere or under water. Artificial lights are not necessarily part of this form of light pollution, but artificial lighting can make the situation worse. Adult mayflies are attracted to sources of polarised light as in nature they indicate a water surface on which the insects can breed and lay eggs. Artificial sources of polarised light such as dark building and smooth road surfaces can attract mayflies in the same way; however, any eggs laid on such surfaces will not develop. There are a total of 278 species of mayfly, stonefly and caddisfly in Britain, eight of which are Priority Species. All but the most polluted rivers in Britain support mayfly populations, therefore

artificial lighting and sources of polarised light pollution around all rivers should be minimised.

Management of parks

A number of Reading's parks have watercourses running through them. The watercourse and its banks do or could provide valuable habitat for wildlife. It will be important that these areas be managed sympathetically for wildlife, for example by allowing emergent vegetation and scrubby banks to develop and avoiding clearance where it is not needed.

Fish passages

There are salmonid fish passes on Caversham weir on the Thames and Blakes weir on the Kennet, but improvements for multi-fish species passage including eels are still required. Some of the smaller weirs, for instance at County Lock, are impassable to fish at low flows.

The EA and the council will seek ways to improve fish movement along Reading's watercourses

Light pollution over the Fobney Island Nature Reserve from the Thames Water treatment plant



Invasive, non-native species

Invasive, non-native species are a major cause of biodiversity decline as they outcompete local species. Due to their dynamic nature, rivers often support invasive species which can easily be transported long distances along them. Examples of invasive species found along Reading's rivers include:

- Floating pennywort
- Japanese knotweed
- Himalayan balsam
- Mink

Litter

Litter, in particular plastic, is a significant driver of biodiversity loss. It ends up in the river where it can harm fish and water birds, and gets washed downstream to the seas. Despite limited efforts at a national level, it is estimated that there will be a 20% increase in plastic waste by 2030^{viii} and much of this will end up in the oceans.

Reading has a number of riverside parks which are well used by the public. Many of the bins in these parks have open tops which means that litter can blow out and end up in the rivers; there are also too few bins in some parks for the litter generated.

The council will replace the open top bins and provide more bins where these are required.

Overflowing litter bin adjacent to the Kennet & Avon Canal



Other pollution

As well as light, litter and plastic pollution, other sources of pollution that can affect the rivers include sewage and foul water, runoff from farms, roads and factories, and microplastic pollution such as that from artificial sports pitches. This is exacerbated during large rainfall events when

pollution is rapidly washed into the drainage system and does not have time to settle out.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which aim to replicate natural drainage as closely as possible, can reduce this pollution by slowing runoff rates and holding water on land so that polluting materials can settle out. They can also provide valuable wildlife habitats and reduce flood risk.

All new major developments must incorporate SuDS in their schemes in accordance with Policy EN18 in Reading’s Local Plan and national planning policy.

The Highways Department is responsible for much of the borough’s drainage systems including approximately 18,000 road drains. There are opportunities to incorporate SuDS elements on highways land and parks such as the flood attenuation basin at The Cowsey and by replacing hard surfaces with swales and tree planting.

The council will explore ways that this can be done.

The Kennet floodplain & its management

Fobney Meadow, at the eastern end of the Kennet Meadows and west of the A33 (a LWS and part of the East Kennet BOA), is a valuable wetland with breeding birds including Water Rail, Gadwall, Lapwing, Redshank (attempted), Little Ringed Plover (attempted), Barn and Little Owl (possibly), Grasshopper Warbler and Stonechat. It carries good numbers of Gadwall, Teal, Wigeon, Snipe in winter and is used by several wader species on migration.

However, it sometimes dries out with devastating effects on the breeding wetland species. The council, in partnership with the EA is assessing ways to stabilise this habitat by reducing water flows out of the meadow.

The Proposed Caversham & Reading Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Environment Agency is proposing a Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) that aims to address flood risk in the Reading suburb of Caversham on the north bank of the Thames and in Abbey ward on the south bank linked to the increased risk of flooding caused by climate change. The scheme would

reduce the risk of flooding to approximately 740 residential properties, as well as several roads and transport links, linked to the increased risk of flooding caused by climate change.

There are plans for a new Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) at Christchurch Meadow. This is to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Caversham linked to the increased risk of flooding caused by climate change.

The council, as the local planning authority, will assess the scheme if and when a planning application is submitted and it will be important to ensure that, if the scheme goes ahead, it is designed to maximise its value for wildlife in line with adopted policies.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
To ensure that Reading’s rivers reach good ecological and chemical status by 2025.	To work with the EA and others to identify potential pollution hotspots	RBC - all departments, EA	Ongoing
	All actions below		
To reduce light pollution on and adjacent to the rivers, minimising the effects it has on wildlife	To assess the council’s riverside lighting schemes, to define excessive light pollution, and to identify areas where such pollution occurs and where improvements can be made	RBC highways	2021

Page 31 of 70

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
	(this could be Reading University student project)		
	To implement the improvements identified above	RBC highways	2024
To manage bankside vegetation sympathetically for wildlife	Allow emergent vegetation and scrubby banks to develop by avoiding clearance where it is not needed.	RBC - Parks	Ongoing
To halt the spread of invasive species along the rivers	To work with partners to manage invasive species such as floating pennywort, Japanese knotweed, mink	RBC- all departments	Ongoing
To halt plastic pollution into rivers, particularly from parks and open spaces	To replace all open topped bins in parks with closed top bins to	RBC Parks & Highways	2021

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
	stop wind-blown litter		
	To install new bins adjacent to Rivers and to empty them regularly	RBC Parks & Highways	2021
To maximise the wildlife value of the Kennet Valley East BOA	To raise the water levels in Fobney Meadow	RBC, EA, Friends of Fobney Island, Berkshire Ornithological Club and Local Residents	2023
	To reduce light pollution from the Thames water treatment works	RBC, EA, Thames Water	Ongoing
To ensure that the proposed Caversham & Reading FAS at Christchurch Meadow (if it is built) is designed to maximise its value for wildlife	To assess any scheme submitted by the EA.	RBC - Planning	Ongoing
To ensure that new development maximises the opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Rivers	Ensure that, as a minimum, new development does not increase light spillage over rivers	RBC - Planning	Ongoing

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
	To seek opportunities to de-culvert watercourses	RBC -- Planning & Highways	Ongoing
	To ensure that any new landscaping adjacent to watercourses is predominantly native and wildlife friendly.	RBC - Planning	Ongoing
	To require the re-naturalisation of the river bank when new development is adjacent to it	RBC - Planning	Ongoing
To improve fish movement along Reading's watercourses	To improve existing and create new fish passes	EA and RBC	Ongoing

Page 369

The council also has a diverse property portfolio and landholding, some of which will be sold in the future. Other than in certain parks, no audit of this landholding's biodiversity has been carried out. Where land is sold it will be important to ensure that its future biodiversity value is realised by for example setting clear parameters for new development such as setting aside areas that are to be retained and enhanced for wildlife. At present there is no formal policy to safeguard the biodiversity of land that is disposed of.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
To understand the ecological value of council owned land	To carry out a biodiversity audit of council owned land	RBC - Property	2022
To retain land of high ecological value in council ownership	Not to sell land that hosts priority habitats or species without appropriate measures of relocation or protection.	RBC - Property	Ongoing
To ensure that there is a net gain for biodiversity when RBC land is sold	To formally set out development parameters, as required under prevailing planning policy, to include ecological constraints and opportunities, when any land is sold and to ensure that legal agreements reflect this	RBC - Property	Ongoing

G) Management of council projects and the sale of land

The council is partly or fully responsible for numerous projects such as the south Reading MRT, the Fobney Island Nature Reserve, the new swimming pool at Palmer Park and The Green park Station. If Reading is to halt biodiversity loss and wildlife is to be restored it will be essential that all council projects are designed from the outset with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as an integral component.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
To ensure that SUDS systems are designed to maximise their wildlife value	To produce a guidance document (supplementary planning document or equivalent) on SuDS standards for new development to include a requirement for native aquatic and marginal species	RBC - Policy	2022

H) Education, access to nature, public engagement & volunteering

There are 64 schools in Reading and the University of Reading and Reading College have campuses in the borough. Many of these have grounds that include semi-natural habitats which could be managed better for wildlife.

In addition, there are opportunities to involve students and staff in education, research and volunteering activities.

RBC have been running one such scheme, Reading Outdoor Classrooms for the past 10 years with 25 primary school classes per year being offered a free outdoor education session.

Nature Nurture, a Reading based, award winning Community Interest Company, runs events across the borough.

The University runs a variety of courses, including in ecology and wildlife conservation, and there are opportunities for students and staff to work with the council on specific projects such as the Tree Strategy and a lighting assessment of Reading's rivers.

The hedge at Fobney Island laid by volunteers



There are also a number of volunteer groups, in particular the Conservation Volunteers based on London Street, who run volunteering events across the borough. Such events don't only provide wildlife benefits but also help to maintain physical and mental health.

Reading is fortunate to have numerous other environmental groups such as Caversham and Tilehurst Globe, Econet² and Reading Friends of the Earth.

There are also numerous specialist wildlife groups based in and around Reading such as Berkshire Ornithological Club, Reading and District Natural History Society, Berkshire Mammal Group, Reading and Berkshire & South Bucks Bat Group. Many BBOWT members live in Reading.

Other groups such as the scouts, youth clubs and U3A³ may want to use the council's green spaces to access and learn about nature.

The council can help by providing this biodiversity action plan (a coordinated framework for action) and access to its open spaces for classes and work parties. It can also facilitate events where resources are available and engage with the public about the management of its estate, such as the management of road verges and street trees.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
Encourage Reading University and schools to manage their estate for wildlife	Ensure that planning proposals are designed to maximise wildlife value	RBC planning	Ongoing
To work with the university to undertake that could benefit wildlife in Reading	To produce a list of student projects and to share these with the university	RBC - All	Ongoing
Encourage schools to teach children about wildlife	Provide access to volunteer and educational	RBC parks	Ongoing

Page 35 of 70

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
	groups to RBC land		
	Facilitate programmes such as Reading's Outdoor Classrooms where resources allow	RBC - all	Ongoing
Facilitate volunteer groups	Provide access to volunteer and educational groups to RBC land	RBC parks	Ongoing
RBC engagement with the public about biodiversity and the management of its estate.	Production of online and published materials including a dedicated webpage for the BAP	RBC parks & planning	Ongoing

² Econet includes Friends of Clayfield Copse (FoCC), Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields (FoMP), Friends of McIlroys Park (FoMP), Friends of Cemetery Junction (FoCJ), Conserve Reading on Wednesdays (CROW) and Reading Urban Wildlife Group

³ The University of the Third Age (U3A) is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community—those in their third 'age' of life. It is commonly referred to as U3A

I) Ecological records

It is vital that accurate ecological records are held and available to the council and others. Without this information it is not possible to determine whether actions to conserve biodiversity are succeeding or failing.

TVERC maintain databases of protected species, habitats and sites. RBC is a partner and will continue to fund TVERC, sitting on its steering group as appropriate. The council will also provide records to TVERC, encourage others to contact TVERC when they need ecological data and to submit their records to TVERC.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To continue to support TVERC and their work	Continue with the TVERC SLA	RBC planning	Ongoing
	Submit records from planning applications to TVERC	RBC planning	Ongoing
	Encourage individuals and local wildlife groups to submit records to TVERC and access their data when needed	RBC all	Ongoing

J) Species and habitat specific actions

TVERC hold records of 274, priority, protected and or notable species that have been recorded within the borough since 1970. This includes 8 reptile and amphibian, 109 bird, 18 terrestrial mammal, 7 fish, 59 plant and 70 invertebrate species.

Not all of these species are resident, and some may have been seen on just a few occasions, however populations of many species will be declining. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of swifts in the borough, as with populations elsewhere, is declining.

Appendix 2 lists the priority, protected and or notable species that have been recorded in Reading and their likely status (as assessed by local experts).

The BAP does not include specific actions for species and the council will not have the resources to monitor such species, but many species will benefit from the actions set out in this BAP. There are however a number of species-specific actions that can be taken and, where resources are available, the council will undertake these works or encourage others to do so. Examples include the provision of swift bricks in new developments, the provision of peregrine platforms on new buildings, surveys for glow worms, and surveys for water voles.

There are also other Priority Habitats, such as ponds and brown field sites, within the borough. Again, the BAP does not have specific actions for these habitats but wherever possible the council will encourage the conservation and enhancement of these habitats.

It is anticipated that the list will evolve over time as the need for actions becomes apparent. The current list is provided in Appendix 4.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To undertake works to benefit priority species	To maintain an up to date list of species and habitat specific actions that will benefit individual species and priority habitats	RBC planning	Ongoing

K) Connectivity

In his review of nature conservation, Making Space for Nature, in 2010, Sir John Lawton wrote:

“The essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of England’s ecological network can be summarised in four words: more, bigger, better and joined.^{ix}”

Reading’s BAP should achieve all these aims, with the creation of more wildlife habitat, better management of existing sites, and improved connectivity through the urban environment as additional trees and wildlife friendly landscaping are provided reducing the barrier that an urban area can create for wildlife.

L) Coordinated approach across council departments and within policy documents

The council has numerous policy documents, across its various departments, all of which can affect biodiversity. It will be vital to ensure that biodiversity, and the actions within the BAP, are integral to these documents as they are conceived, developed, revised and published. Some of the relevant policy documents are listed below

- - Reading’s Tree Strategy
- - Local Transport Plan
- - Reading Climate Change Strategy (RCCS)
- - Open Spaces Strategy
- - Thames Parks Plan
- - Local Plan (Planning)
- - Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan
- - Highway Asset Management Plan
- - Air Quality Action Plan
- - Reading 2050 Vision

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To ensure that all other policy documents consider biodiversity	Coordinate approach across council departments and other national agencies	RBC - all, EA, Thames Water, Network Rail	Ongoing

M) Global biodiversity - what can the council do?

What we buy and where we buy it can have significant impacts on biodiversity. For example, timber from virgin forests results in those forests being lost and fish from unsustainable fisheries can kill our oceans. Investments in fossil fuel companies drive global warming which exacerbates biodiversity loss.

Green Public Procurement is a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life-cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To ensure that RBC’s actions (and inactions) do not contribute to global biodiversity decline and increase biodiversity where possible.	To ensure that global biodiversity is considered as part of the Council’s procurement	RBC policy	Ongoing

N) Ongoing review

It will be important to regularly review the BAP to ensure that its actions are being implemented and, if they are not, to identify the reasons why.

As the BAP is intended as an iterative process, the annual review will include space on its agenda for new ideas, and a mechanism whereby those ideas can be gathered and monitored during the course of the year will also be devised. This process might initially be open to council staff only, but could potentially be widened out in order to enable partner organisations, other stakeholders, and the general public to put forward ideas. As such, the BAP would adopt a fairly flexible and expansive character, open to public engagement.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
To Regularly review the BAP and its actions	To hold a meeting annually to assess the actions that have been undertaken and update the BAP as appropriate	RBC policy	Once per year in March

Appendix 1 - Figures

DRAFT

Figure 1 - Phase 1 habitat types in Reading

Page 370

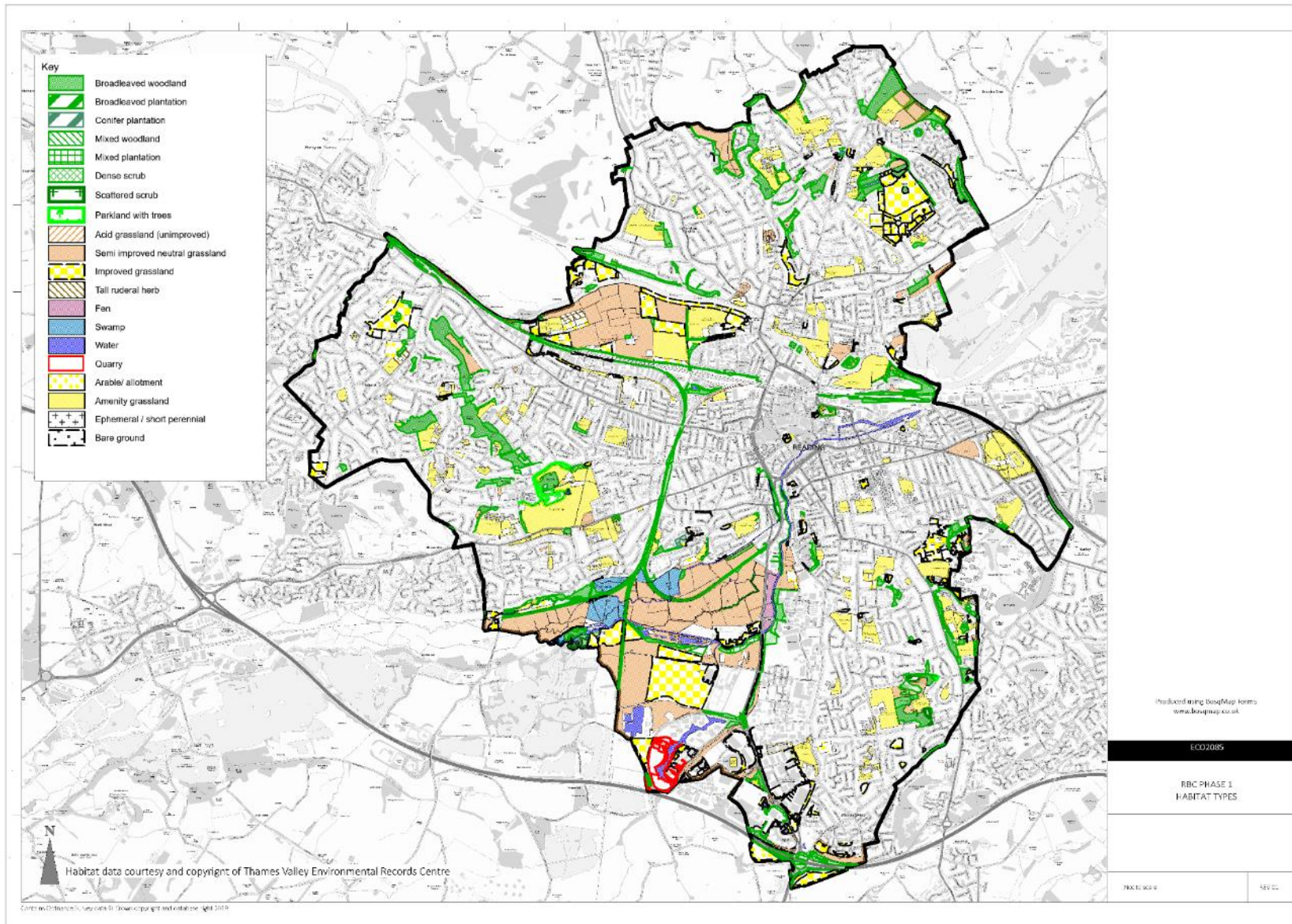


Figure 2 - Designated sites, priority habitats and ancient woodland

Page 373

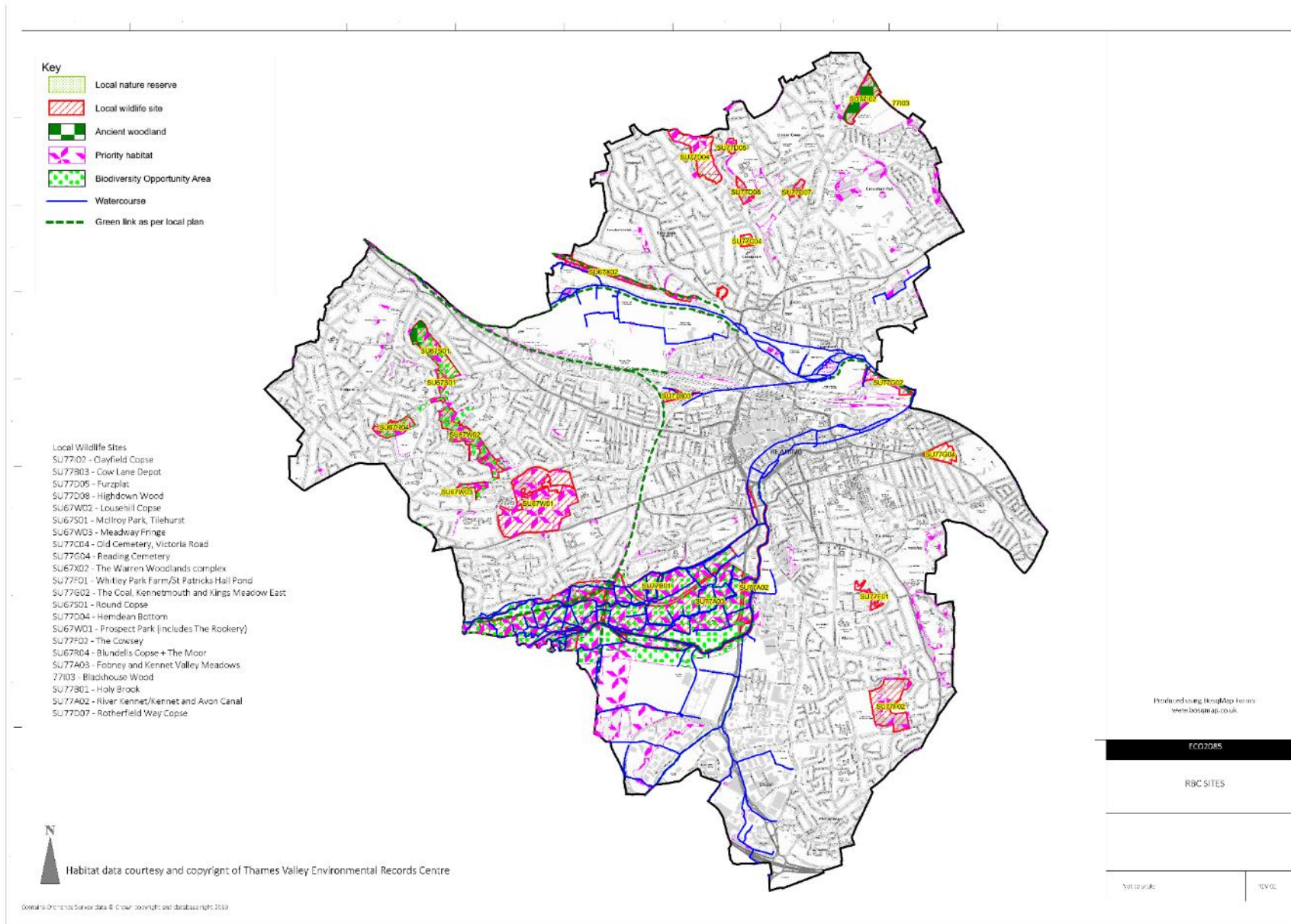
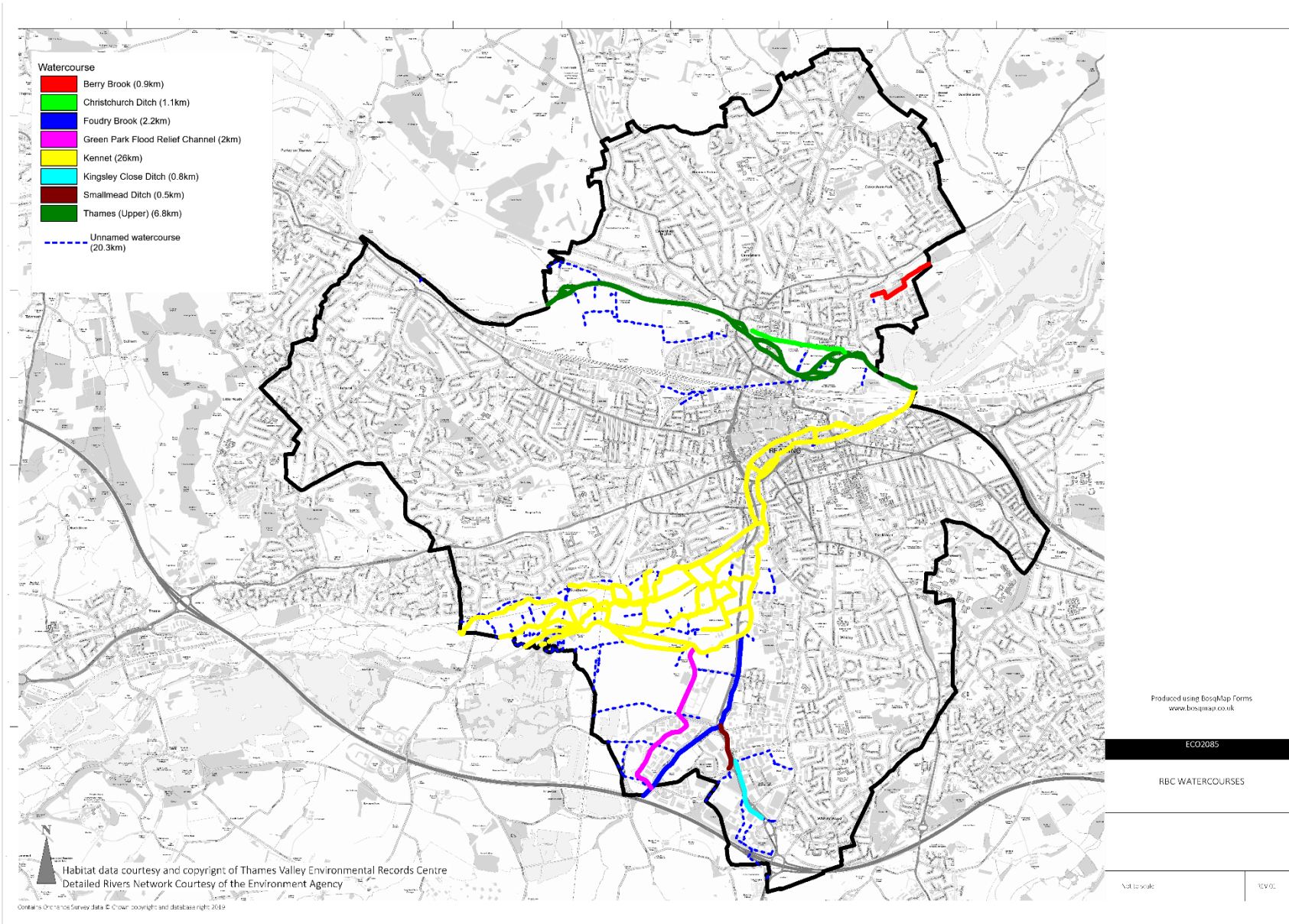


Figure 3 - Rivers

Page 378



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Figure 4 - woodland ownership in Reading

Page 379

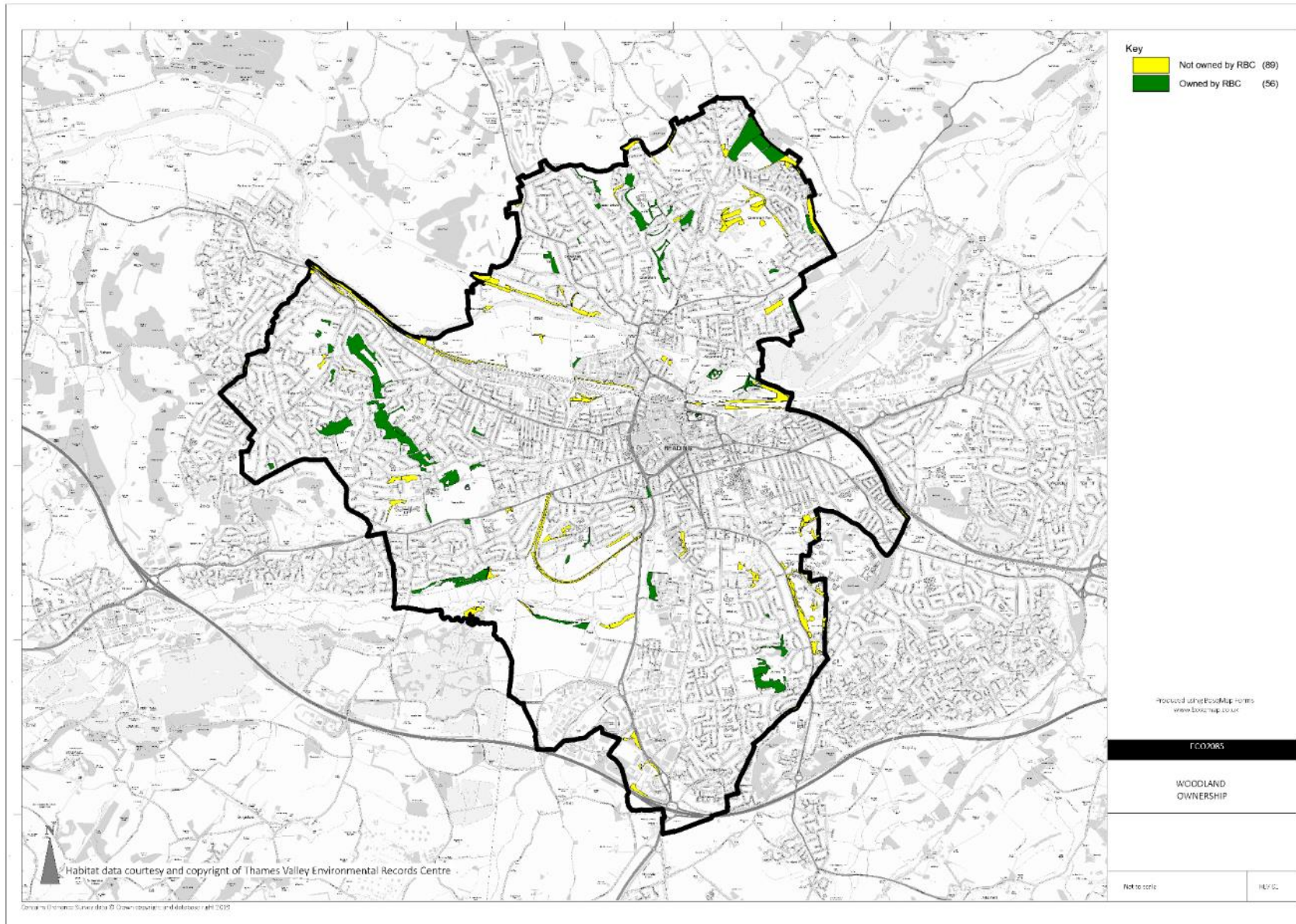
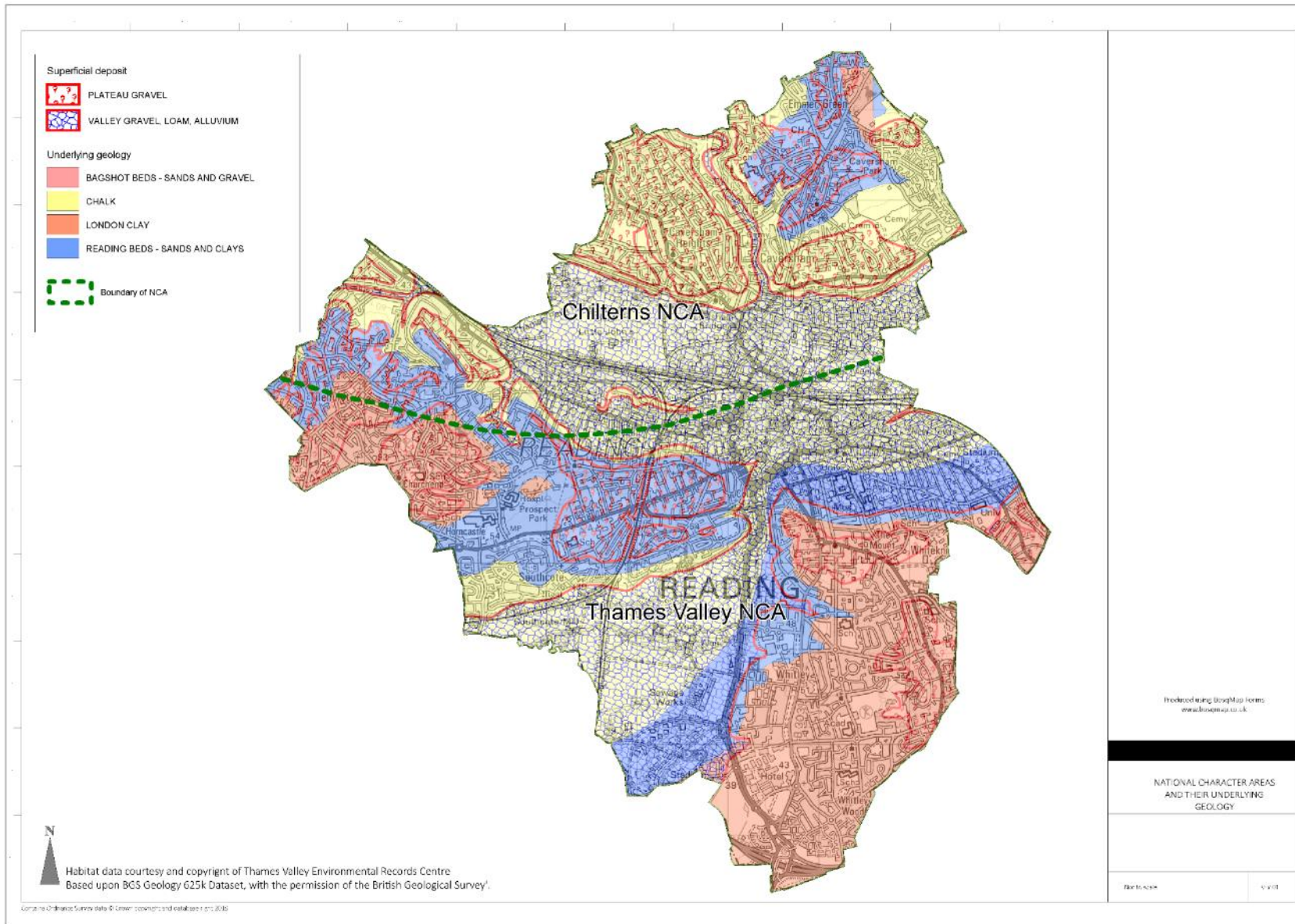


Figure 5 - Geology and National Character Areas



Appendix 2 - Rare and notable species records held by TVERC

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Amphibians	Common Frog	Rana temporaria	74	2016		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a				
Amphibians	Common Toad	Bufo bufo	31	2014		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a	NERC-S41			
Amphibians	Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	2	2017	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a	NERC-S41			
Amphibians	Smooth Newt	Lissotriton vulgaris	16	2016		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a				
Birds	Avocet	Recurvirostra avosetta	2	2012	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Bar-tailed Godwit	Limosa lapponica	2	2012	BirdsDir-A1			Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Barn Owl	Tyto alba	5	2010		WACA-Sch1-p1			RESIDENT	
Birds	Bewick's Swan	Cygnus columbianus	2	2010	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1	NERC-S41	Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	31	2015		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	21	2015				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa	1	2003		WACA-Sch1-p1	NERC-S41	Bird-Red, RL-Global-post2001-NT	MIGRANT	
Birds	Black-throated Diver	Gavia arctica	1	2010	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Brambling	Fringilla montifringilla	18	2006		WACA-Sch1-p1			WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	41	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Caspian Tern	Hydroprogne caspia	1	2010	BirdsDir-A1				VAGRANT	
Birds	Cetti's Warbler	Cettia cetti	12	2011		WACA-Sch1-p1			RESIDENT	
Birds	Common (Mealy) Redpoll	Acanthis flammea	4	1997				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Common Crossbill	Loxia curvirostra	1	2005		WACA-Sch1-p1			VAGRANT	

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Birds	Common Gull	Larus canus	4	2012				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	6	2012				Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	1	1994		WACA-Sch1-p1	NERC-S41	Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Common Tern	Sterna hirundo	24	2013	BirdsDir-A1			Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Crane	Grus grus	1	2012	BirdsDir-A1			Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	11	2011			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	SUMMER VISITOR (BREEDS ON THE KENNET MEADOWS)	
Birds	Curlew	Numenius arquata	1	1994			NERC-S41	Bird-Red, RL-Global-post2001-NT	VAGRANT	
Birds	Dunlin	Calidris alpina	1	2005				Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	51	2018			NERC-S41	Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	15	2012		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Firecrest	Regulus ignicapilla	1	1994		WACA-Sch1-p1			RESIDENT	
Birds	Gadwall	Anas strepera	8	2012				Bird-Amber	PREDOMINANTLY WINTER VISITOR BUT DOES BREED IN LOW NUMBERS	
Birds	Glaucous Gull	Larus hyperboreus	1	2005				Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Golden Plover	Pluvialis apricaria	3	2005	BirdsDir-A1				VAGRANT	
Birds	Goldeneye	Bucephala clangula	1	1994		WACA-Sch1-p2		Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Goshawk	Accipiter gentilis	2	2005		WACA-Sch1-p1			MIGRANT	
Birds	Grasshopper Warbler	Locustella naevia	3	1994			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	6	2007				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus	18	2012		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Greenshank	Tringa nebularia	3	2007		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Grey Partridge	Perdix perdix	2	2005			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	VAGRANT	

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Birds	Grey Plover	Pluvialis squatarola	1	2012				Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	41	2015				Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Greylag Goose	Anser anser	10	2013				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Hawfinch	Coccothraustes coccothraustes	2	2005			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	6	2007			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Hobby	Falco subbuteo	21	2012		WACA-Sch1-p1			SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Honey-buzzard	Pernis apivorus	3	2000	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Hoopoe	Upupa epops	8	2005		WACA-Sch1-p1			VAGRANT	
Birds	House Martin	Delichon urbicum	26	2013				Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR BREEDS IN SEVERAL PLACES SUCH AS CRESCENT ROAD	
Birds	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	45	2017			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Iceland Gull	Larus glaucoides	3	2004				Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	30	2012				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	37	2019	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Knot	Calidris canutus	1	2004				Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	11	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	4	2012				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Lesser Redpoll	Acanthis cabaret	7	2004			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos minor	11	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Linnet	Linaria cannabina	8	2007			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	35	2012	BirdsDir-A1				RESIDENT	
Birds	Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius	16	2012		WACA-Sch1-p1			SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Little owl	Athene noctua							BREEDS IN OR AROUND WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS AND FOBNEY ISLAND.	

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
									RECORD FROM BOC. NOT YET REPORTED TO TVERC.	
Birds	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	57	2015				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus	1	2011	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red, Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Marsh Tit	Poecile palustris	11	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis	5	2012				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Mediterranean Gull	Larus melanocephalus	6	2004	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	RESIDENT (RARE)	
Birds	Merlin	Falco columbarius	4	2005	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Mistle Thrush	Turdus viscivorus	36	2016				Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Montagu's Harrier	Circus pygargus	1	2004	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	29	2017				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Nightingale	Luscinia megarhynchos	6	2005				Bird-Red	SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Osprey	Pandion haliaetus	5	2011	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	2	2010				Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR (LIKELY TO BE BREEDING)	
Birds	Peregrine	Falco peregrinus	34	2019	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1			RESIDENT	
Birds	Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula hypoleuca	5	2004				Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Pintail	Anas acuta	31	2005		WACA-Sch1-p2		Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Pochard	Aythya ferina	2	2007				Bird-Red	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Red Kite	Milvus milvus	132	2017	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		RL-Global-post2001-NT	RESIDENT	
Birds	Redshank	Tringa totanus	3	2012				Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR (HAS BRED IN THE PAST MAY BREED AGAIN WHEN FOBNEY MEADOW IS RE-WETTED)	
Birds	Redstart	Phoenicurus phoenicurus	17	2012				Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Redwing	Turdus iliacus	32	2012		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	WINTER VISITOR	

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Birds	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	15	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1	2004				Bird-Red, Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR (HAS BRED WHEN SUITABLE HABITAT IS AVAILABLE. THERE IS NO SUITABLE HABITAT AT PRESENT)	
Birds	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	3	2010	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	MIGRANT	
Birds	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	1	2012				Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	1	2003	BirdsDir-A1			Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	11	2010		WACA-Sch1-p1	NERC-S41	Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	2	2003				Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	2	2011				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	2	2010	BirdsDir-A1			Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	5	2003				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	12	2012			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	12	2014				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	123	2016			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	8	2005			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	SUMMER VISITOR	
Birds	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	1	1994				Bird-Amber	VAGRANT	
Birds	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	50	2015			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	RESIDENT	
Birds	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	13	2012				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	249	2018				Bird-Amber	SUMMER VISITOR. BREEDS AT MANY SITES BUT NUMBERS APPEAR TO BE DECLINING	
Birds	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	9	2009				Bird-Amber	RESIDENT	
Birds	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	9	2012				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	1	1994			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	EXTINCT	
Birds	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	2	2011			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	EXTINCT	

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Birds	Whimbrel	Numenius phaeopus	3	2010		WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Red	MIGRANT	
Birds	Whinchat	Saxicola rubetra	4	2011				Bird-Red	MIGRANT	
Birds	White-fronted Goose	Anser albifrons	2	2011				Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Birds	Wigeon	Anas penelope	3	2010				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	35	2009				Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola	2	2010	BirdsDir-A1	WACA-Sch1-p1		Bird-Amber	MIGRANT	
Birds	Wood Warbler	Phylloscopus sibilatrix	2	2009			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	MIGRANT	
Birds	Woodcock	Scolopax rusticola	3	2012				Bird-Red	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava	5	2005			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	MIGRANT	
Birds	Yellow-legged Gull	Larus michahellis	5	2010				Bird-Amber	WINTER VISITOR	
Birds	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	6	2005			NERC-S41	Bird-Red	VAGRANT	
Fish - Bony	Atlantic Salmon	Salmo salar	5	2004	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A5	HabReg-Sch4	NERC-S41			
Fish - Bony	Barbel	Barbus barbus	35	2016	HabDir-A5	HabReg-Sch4				
Fish - Bony	Brown Trout	Salmo trutta subsp. fario	5	2014			NERC-S41			
Fish - Bony	Brown/Sea Trout	Salmo trutta	3	2016			NERC-S41			
Fish - Bony	Bullhead	Cottus gobio	7	2011	HabDir-A2np					
Fish - Bony	European Eel	Anguilla anguilla	59	2016			NERC-S41	RL-Global-post2001-CR		
Fish - Jawless	Brook Lamprey	Lampetra planeri	1	1994	HabDir-A2np					
Higher Plants - Ferns	Maidenhair Fern	Adiantum capillus-veneris	1	1970				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Alexanders	Smyrniolum olusatrum	1	2015				Oxon-Scarce		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Annual Beard-grass	Polypogon monspeliensis	1	2007				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Bitter-vetch	Lathyrus linifolius	1	1982				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Bluebell	Hyacinthoides non-scripta	86	2018		WACA-Sch8				

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Bur Medick	<i>Medicago minima</i>	1	1994				Status-NS, RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Butcher's-broom	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	10	2010	HabDir-A5					
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Carlina Thistle	<i>Carlina vulgaris</i>	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Cat-mint	<i>Nepeta cataria</i>	1	1997				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Chamomile	<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	1	1982			NERC-S41	RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	8	2017				RL-Eng-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	3	1986				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Common Cudweed	<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Common Rock-rose	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Common Valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	11	2013				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Corn Marigold	<i>Glebionis segetum</i>	1	2008				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Corn Mint	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	5	2015				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Crosswort	<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	2	2009				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Dittander	<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	1	1994				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Dwarf Spurge	<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	1	2004				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	English Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus anglica</i>	2	2018				Status-NR, RL-Eng-post2001-		

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
								VU, RL-GB-post2001-NT, RL-Global-post94-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Field Mouse-ear	Cerastium arvense	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Field Scabious	Knautia arvensis	9	2011				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Fritillary	Fritillaria meleagris	1	2016				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Frogbit	Hydrocharis morsus-ranae	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Galingale	Cyperus longus	1	2009				Status-NS, RL-Eng-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Goldenrod	Solidago virgaurea	5	2012				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Good-King-Henry	Chenopodium bonus-henricus	3	1998				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Grape-hyacinth	Muscari neglectum	3	2014			NERC-S41	Status-NR, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Heath Cudweed	Gnaphalium sylvaticum	1	1984				RL-Eng-post2001-EN, RL-GB-post2001-EN		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Heath Speedwell	Veronica officinalis	4	1998				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Heather	Calluna vulgaris	1	1998				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Hoary Plantain	Plantago media	8	2004				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Hound's-tongue	Cynoglossum officinale	1	2015				RL-Eng-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Lesser Spearwort	Ranunculus flammula	6	2006				RL-Eng-post2001-VU		

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Marsh Arrowgrass	Triglochin palustre	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Marsh Cinquefoil	Potentilla palustris	1	1982				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Marsh Ragwort	Senecio aquaticus	6	2005				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Marsh Speedwell	Veronica scutellata	1	2005				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Marsh Valerian	Valeriana dioica	5	2006				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Mountain Currant	Ribes alpinum	1	2004				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress	Cardamine impatiens	1	1986				Status-NS, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Quaking-grass	Briza media	3	2010				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Ragged-Robin	Silene flos-cuculi	13	2017				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Sainfoin	Onobrychis viciifolia	1	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Sanicle	Sanicula europaea	21	2018				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Slender Parsley-piert	Aphanes australis	1	2015				Oxon-Scarce		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Stinking Chamomile	Anthemis cotula	1	2007				RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Stinking Hellebore	Helleborus foetidus	3	2008				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Summer Snowflake	Leucojum aestivum subsp. aestivum	7	2019				Status-NS		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Tormentil	Potentilla erecta	3	2008				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Treacle-mustard	Erysimum cheiranthoides	1	1994				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Velvet Bent	Agrostis canina	2	1986				Oxon-Scarce		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Water-violet	Hottonia palustris	2	1986				RL-Eng-post2001-VU		

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	White Helleborine	Cephalanthera damasonium	1	2004			NERC-S41	RL-Eng-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Whorled Water-milfoil	Myriophyllum verticillatum	1	1985				RL-Eng-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Wild Pansy	Viola tricolor	1	1985				RL-Eng-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Wild Strawberry	Fragaria vesca	21	2018				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Higher Plants - Flowering Plants	Wood-sorrel	Oxalis acetosella	8	2018				RL-Eng-post2001-NT		
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	An Ant, Bee, Sawfly or Wasp	Dolichovespula (Dolichovespula) media	1	1993				Notable-A		
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Brown Tree Ant	Lasius brunneus	4	1993				Notable-A		Unconfirmed record. Nearest confirmed record on iRecord is Winnersh
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Meadow Ant	Formica pratensis	1	1998			NERC-S41	RL-GB-pre94-EX, RL-Global-post94-NT		Unconfirmed record. Nearest confirmed record on iRecord is Winnersh
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Red-girdled Mining Bee	Andrena (Poecilandrena) labiata	1	1997				Notable-A		Possible misidentification as this species is probably now extinct on the UK mainland.

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Red-shanked Carder-bee	Bombus (Thoracobombus) ruderarius	4	1997			NERC-S41			More recent records on iRecord - 2016 & 2019
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Red-tailed (Hill) Cuckoo Bee	Bombus (Psithyrus) rupestris	1	2013				Notable-B		Unconfirmed - possible but very similar to red-tailed bumble bee
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Sharp-collared Furrow Bee	Lasioglossum (Evylaeus) malachurum	1	2013				Notable-B		ID confirmed
Invertebrates - Beetles	A Beetle	Tachyporus formosus	23	2015				Notable-A		Record from experienced recorder and accepted, so this is a valid record.
Invertebrates - Beetles	Adonis' Ladybird	Hippodamia (Adonia) variegata	1	2013				Notable-B		Unconfirmed record. Nearest confirmed record on iRecord is Winnersh
Invertebrates - Beetles	Large Fruit Bark Beetle	Scolytus mali	1	2003				Notable-B		Record from experienced recorder and accepted, so this is a valid record.
Invertebrates - Beetles	Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	742	2017	HabDir-A2np	WACA-Sch5-s9.5a	NERC-S41	Notable-B		Very difficult to split out except by dissection. The only Berks record on NBN is from Wokingham
Invertebrates - Butterflies	Chalk Hill Blue	Polyommatus coridon	1	1992		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a		RL-GB-post2001-NT		
Invertebrates - Butterflies	Purple Emperor	Apatura iris	1	1991		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a		RL-GB-post2001-NT		Unconfirmed record. There

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
										are a few records from the Oxfordshire side of the Thames between Mapledurham and Pangbourne
Invertebrates - Butterflies	Small Blue	Cupido minimus	1	1995		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-NT		Several records on NBN just outside Reading BC in Earley.
Invertebrates - Butterflies	Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus	7	2014			NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-NT		UKBMS records adjacent to RBC area
Invertebrates - Butterflies	Wall	Lasiommata megera	4	1992			NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-NT		NBN rec for 2014. UKBMS record
Invertebrates - Butterflies	White-letter Hairstreak	Satyrrium w-album	2	1993		WACA-Sch5-s9.5a	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-EN		No records from RBC area. 1 from Hurst
Invertebrates - Caddis Flies	A Caddis Fly	Leptocerus lusitanicus	3	2014				RL-GB-pre94-VU		1 record from university campus. Possibly include planting of disease-resistant elms to encourage this species.
Invertebrates - Dragonflies & Damselflies	Common Club-tail	Gomphus vulgatissimus	24	2017				RL-GB-post2001-NT		NBN 1984. Records from Pangbourne are nearest on iRecord

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Invertebrates - Dragonflies & Damselflies	Variable Damselfly	Coenagrion pulchellum	1	2017				RL-GB-post2001-NT		Declining on the River Thames and elsewhere. Needs banks and riverside walls to climb up and emerge. Need to bear this in mind with Thames FAS.
Invertebrates - Mayflies	Southern Iron Blue	Baetis niger	1	1994			NERC-S41			All records close to the population in Burghfield, so probably wanderers from there.
Invertebrates - Molluscs	Depressed (or Compressed) River Mussel	Pseudanodonta complanata	1	2013			NERC-S41	RL-Global-post2001-VU		Unconfirmed record.
Invertebrates - Molluscs	Fine-lined Pea Mussel	Pisidium tenuilineatum	1	2006			NERC-S41			NBN 2013
Invertebrates - Molluscs	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Margaritifera (Margaritifera) margaritifera	1	1985	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A5	WACA-Sch5-s9.1k/s9.1t/s9.2/s9.4a/s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-CR, RL-Global-post94-EN		NBN 2006.
Invertebrates - Molluscs	Thames Ramshorn	Gyraulus (Gyraulus) acronicus	2	1994			NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-VU		
Invertebrates - Moths	A Moth	Mecyna flavalis subsp. flaviculalis	3	1993				RL-GB-pre94-VU		NBN 1995
Invertebrates - Moths	Beaded Chestnut	Agrochola lychnidis	8	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Blood-vein	Timandra comae	14	2018			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Brindled Beauty	Lycia hirtaria	32	2007			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Brown-spot Pinion	Agrochola litura	1	1996			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Buff Ermine	Spilosoma lutea	45	2018			NERC-S41			

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Invertebrates - Moths	Bulrush Veneer	Calamotropha paludella	1	1996				Notable-B		
Invertebrates - Moths	Centre-barred Sallow	Atethmia centrago	6	2008			NERC-S41			Unconfirmed. No Reading records - nearest records Mere oak Park and Winnersh.
Invertebrates - Moths	Cinnabar	Tyria jacobaeae	43	2018			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	Xanthorhoe ferrugata	6	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Deep-brown Dart	Aporophyla lutulenta	1	2005			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Dot Moth	Melanchra persicariae	34	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Dusky Brocade	Apamea remissa	8	2005			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Dusky Thorn	Ennomos fuscantaria	6	2008			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Garden Tiger	Arctia caja	3	2008			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Ghost Moth	Hepialus humuli	1	1981			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Green-brindled Crescent	Allophyes oxyacanthae	1	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Grey Dagger	Acronicta psi	33	1996			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Knot Grass	Acronicta rumicis	8	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Lackey	Malacosoma neustria	4	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Large Nutmeg	Apamea anceps	10	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Minor Shoulder-knot	Brachylochia viminalis	1	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Mottled Rustic	Caradrina morpheus	47	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Mouse Moth	Amphipyra tragopoginis	2	2004			NERC-S41			

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Invertebrates - Moths	Mullein Wave	Scopula marginepunctata	1	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Oak Hook-tip	Watsonalla binaria	5	2005			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Olive Crescent	Trisateles emortualis	1	1987			NERC-S41	RL-GB-pre94-R		
Invertebrates - Moths	Powdered Quaker	Orthosia gracilis	11	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Rosy Minor	Litoligia literosa	3	1981			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Rosy Rustic	Hydraecia micacea	2	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Rustic	Hoplodrina blanda	32	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Sallow	Cirrhia icteritia	1	1997			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	September Thorn	Ennomos erosaria	2	2008			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Shaded Broad-bar	Scotopteryx chenopodiata	3	1997			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Shoulder-striped Wainscot	Leucania comma	6	2009			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Small Emerald	Hemistola chrysoprasaria	3	2004			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Small Phoenix	Ecliptopera silaceata	1	1981			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Small Square-spot	Diarsia rubi	31	2008			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Spinach	Eulithis mellinata	6	1996			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	Sprawler	Asteroscopus sphinx	1	2011			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	V-Moth	Macaria wauaria	6	1981			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - Moths	White Ermine	Spilosoma lubricipeda	18	2018			NERC-S41			
Invertebrates - True Bugs	A True Bug	Aquarius paludum	4	2007				Notable-B		
Invertebrates - True Flies	A True Fly	Helina parcepilosa	3	2013				RL-GB-pre94-VU		Unconfirmed
Invertebrates - True Flies	Hornet Robberfly	Asilus crabroniformis	2	1999			NERC-S41	Notable		Valid record.

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Brown Long-eared Bat	Plecotus auritus	61	2017	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41			Unconfirmed. Possible - nearest confirmed iRecord records are in Sonning.
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	391	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Daubenton's Bat	Myotis daubentonii	43	2016	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Lesser Noctule	Nyctalus leisleri	7	2017	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Long-eared Bat species	Plecotus	29	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Nathusius's Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus nathusii	7	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Natterer's Bat	Myotis nattereri	4	2017	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Noctule Bat	Nyctalus noctula	166	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Nyctalus Bat species	Nyctalus	2	2013	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Serotine	Eptesicus serotinus	13	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				

Taxon group	Common name	Scientific name	Count of records	Most recent year recorded	European protected status	UK protected status	NERC Act Status	Conservation list status	Note on local status by Berks Ornithological Club (Coloured text = species where targeted conservation action may help the species)	Notes from local entomologist and herpetofauna expert (Mike Turton)
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	292	2018	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Whiskered Bat	Myotis mystacinus	1	2011	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b				
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	3	1999			NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	Eurasian Badger	Meles meles	87	2018		Badgers-1992				
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	European Otter	Lutra lutra	8	2018	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a	NERC-S41	RL-Global-post2001-NT		
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	European Water Vole	Arvicola amphibius	21	2009		WACA-Sch5-s9.4a/s9.4b/s9.4c	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	Polecat	Mustela putorius	2	2005	HabDir-A5	HabReg-Sch4	NERC-S41			
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	West European Hedgehog	Erinaceus europaeus	76	2019			NERC-S41			
Reptiles	Adder	Vipera berus	1	2008		WACA-Sch5-s9.1k/s9.5a	NERC-S41			
Reptiles	Common Lizard	Zootoca vivipara	1	2010		WACA-Sch5-s9.1k/s9.5a	NERC-S41			This is a possible misidentification as the species is now very rare in Berkshire and Oxfordshire
Reptiles	Grass Snake	Natrix helvetica	33	2016		WACA-Sch5-s9.1k/s9.5a	NERC-S41			
Reptiles	Slow-worm	Anguis fragilis	80	2016		WACA-Sch5-s9.1k/s9.5a	NERC-S41			

Appendix 3 - Policy and legislation

A summary of key policy and legislation is provided below.

The Rio Convention (Convention on Biological Diversity).

In 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the UK, along with 168 other countries made a formal commitment to work together to protect the environment. Amongst other treaties the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed. This had three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

For the first time in international law the treaty recognised that the conservation of biological diversity is ‘a common concern of humankind’. The CBD is one of the key drivers of biodiversity conservation worldwide.

In 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Province, Japan, the signatories to the CBD published a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the years 2011-2020. This included five strategic goals and 20 targets referred to as the ‘Aichi Targets’.

The next conference will be held in 2020 in Italy.

The 2001 European Union Summit

At the 2001 European Union Summit in Gothenburg, European leaders made a commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2010.

The 2010 target was not met. In March 2010 the EU made a new commitment to

“Halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restore them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.”

The last review, in 2015, concluded that:

“Overall, biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU have continued since the EU 2010 biodiversity baseline, as confirmed by the 2015 European environment - state and outlook report. This is consistent with global trends and has serious implications for the capacity of biodiversity to meet human needs in the future. While many local successes demonstrate that action on the ground delivers positive outcomes, these examples need to be scaled up to have a measurable impact on the overall negative trends.”

The strategy will be reviewed again in 2020.

Key directives

There are three EU Directives that are key to the conservation of biodiversity in Europe. As with all EU directives, have been transposed into national law. After the UK leaves the EU it is likely that in the UK the directives will continue to apply unless or until the acts which have transposed them have been revoked.

The Birds Directive

First adopted in 1979 The Birds Directive aims to protect all of the 500 wild bird species naturally occurring in the European Union. Member states have a duty to maintain populations of all wild birds species, designate Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the rarest and most vulnerable species, restrict the sale and keeping of wild birds, and restrict the hunting and killing of wild birds.

The Habitats Directive

The Habitats Directive promotes the maintenance of biodiversity. Member states are required to:

- Maintain or restore European protected habitats and species listed in the directive at a favourable conservation status
- Contribute to a coherent European ecological network of protected sites by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II of the directive.
- Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of an SAC. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.
- Undertake surveillance of habitats and species
- Ensure strict protection of species listed on Annex IV
- Report on the implementation of the Directive every six years, including assessing the conservation status of species and habitats listed on the Annexes to the Directive.

The NATURA 2000 Network

This is a coherent European ecological network of protected sites and is made up of SACs and SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network.

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC is an EU directive which commits European Union member states to achieve good ecological and chemical status of all water bodies (including marine waters up to one nautical mile from shore) by 2015. Most waterbodies did not meet the target and the deadline for achieving it has been extended.

The EIA Directive

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2014/52/EU), ensure that all projects, above a certain threshold, are assessed for their potential impacts on the environment, through a process known as Environmental Impact Assessment. It is transposed into UK law through regulations such as The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the '2017 Regulations').

United Kingdom

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan, first published in 1994, was the UK Government's response to signing the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The plan set out a programme for conserving the UK's biodiversity and led to the production of 436 action plans for many of the UK's most threatened species and habitats. The UK BAP was superseded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' in July 2012 to reflect the devolution in the UK.

The UK BAP priority list was last reviewed in 2007 and includes 1,150 species and 65 habitats that are a priority for conservation actions. It has not been reviewed again since but the habitats are the “priority habitats” referred to in planning policy.

25 Year Environment Plan

In 2018 the government published its 25 year Environment Plan. It has 19 policies as follows (those most relevant to the Reading BAP are highlighted in bold):

1. **Embedding an ‘environmental net gain’ principle for development, including housing and infrastructure**
2. Improving how we manage and incentivise land management
3. Improving soil health and restoring and protecting our peatlands
4. **Focusing on woodland to maximise its many benefits**
5. Reducing risks from flooding and coastal erosion
6. **Protecting and recovering nature:**
 - i. **Publishing a strategy for nature**
 - ii. **Developing a Nature Recovery Network**
 - iii. **Providing opportunities for the reintroduction of native species**
 - iv. **Exploring how to give individuals the chance to deliver lasting conservation**
 - v. **Improving biosecurity to protect and conserve nature**
7. Conserving and enhancing natural beauty
8. Respecting nature in how we use water
9. **Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces**
10. **Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school**
11. **Greening our towns and cities**
12. Making 2019 a Year of Action for the environment
13. Maximising resource efficiency and minimising environmental impacts at end of life.
14. Reducing pollution
15. Introducing a sustainable fisheries policy as we leave the Common Fisheries Policy
16. Achieving good environmental status in our seas while allowing marine industries to thrive
17. Providing international leadership and leading by example
18. Helping developing nations protect and improve the environment
19. **Leaving a lighter footprint on the global environment**

England

The most up to date strategy for England is “Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife”. It was published in 2011. It describes what is needed to halt overall biodiversity loss by 2020 and sets ambitious goals for:

- better wildlife habitats - quality goals for priority habitat and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife - an increase in priority habitats by at least 200,000ha
- the restoration of 15% of degraded ecosystems - as a contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation
- establishing a Marine Protected Area network
- managing and harvesting fish sustainably
- marine plans in place by 2022
- an overall improvement in status of our wildlife and prevention of further human induced extinctions of known threatened species
- significantly more people engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action

In line with the 25 year Environment Plan it will soon be replaced by a new strategy for nature.

Key legislation

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

This act provides mechanisms to designate National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves (of which there are two in Reading).

The 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act(as amended).

This act:

- Protects wild birds and their nests, including special penalties for rare or vulnerable species (such as the black redstart) as listed on Schedule 1 of the act
- Protects animal listed on Schedule 5 (such as water voles, reptiles and amphibians) and plants listed on Schedule 8 from (depending on the species) disturbance, killing, injury, taking, uprooting or sale.
- Contains measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed on Schedule 9.
- Provides for the notification (designation) of Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are the best examples of different habitat types.

The Habitats Regulations 2017

These regulations transpose the Habitats Directive into UK law and gives strict protection to our rarest species (known as European protected species) such as bats, great crested newts, otters and dormouse. It also

The NERC Act

This created a biodiversity duty for all public bodies, including local authorities. Section 40 reads:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

It also created a duty for the government to:

“publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State’s opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. “

These are the “priority habitats” and the “priority species” referred to in the NPPF

The Environment Bill

The Environment Bill (likely to soon become The Environment Act) if adopted will put the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan on a statutory footing and set out:

- a. Provisions for the Office for Environmental Protection;
- b. Provision about waste and resource efficiency;
- c. Provisions about air quality;
- d. Provision for the recall of products that fail to meet environmental standards;
- e. Provisions about water;
- f. Provisions about nature and biodiversity;
- g. Provision for conservation covenants;
- h. Provisions about the regulation of chemicals; and for connected purposes.

Key paragraphs from the NPPF

The NPPF states that there are three overarching objectives of sustainable development: an economic objective; a social objective and an environmental objective (including helping to improve biodiversity). At paragraph 170 the NPPF reads:

“170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

And at paragraph 174 and 175 it reads:

“174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Appendix 4 - List of species and habitat specific actions

This section is to be discussed and expanded on in the next meeting.

Ecological enhancements within and adjacent to development sites

Hedgehog gaps under new fencing

Swift bricks

Sand martin nesting tubes

Bat boxes

Stag beetle loggeries

Peregrine platforms

Black redstart nesting sites and habitats

House sparrow terraces and planting to provide invertebrates and seeds

Surveys

Amphibian surveys for palmate newt, great crested newts and toads

Glow worm surveys

Water vole surveys

Loddon lilly

Barn owl

Pollinators

Other

Otter holts in parks

Planting rarer native trees such as black poplar, wild service and wild pear.

Appendix 5 - Acknowledgements

[List of individuals and organisations who contributed to the BAP]

DRAFT

Appendix 6 - References

i

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	15
TITLE:	READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 - DRAFT FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT BOROUGHWIDE
SERVICE:	PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS MADDOCKS	TEL:	0118 937 4950
JOB TITLE:	ACTING STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROGRAMME MANAGER	E-MAIL:	chris.maddocks@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on development of the new Local Transport Plan (known as the 'Reading Transport Strategy 2036'), following the initial public consultation held last summer. The report seeks authority to undertake statutory consultation on the draft strategy and sets out the proposed consultation programme.

Appendix A - Reading Transport Strategy 2036 - Draft for Public Consultation

Appendix B - Reading Transport Strategy 2036 - Summary of Visioning Consultation Responses

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note progress on the development of the draft Reading Transport Strategy 2036, including the public consultation undertaken last summer.
- 2.2 To approve the draft Reading Transport Strategy 2036 (Annex A) for public consultation, commencing on Monday 23rd March 2020.
- 2.3 To grant the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, authority to make further amendments to the draft strategy prior to consultation in response to

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 All Local Transport Authorities are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP) under the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. Our current LTP for the period 2011-26 was adopted by Full Council in March 2011, however the majority of schemes within the current strategy have been delivered or are in the process of being delivered, therefore a new strategy will put the Council in the best possible position to secure external investment in Reading.
- 3.2 The new transport strategy will be a key element of delivering the Reading 2050 Vision and responding to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. The transport strategy has been aligned with other Council strategies including the new Local Plan and draft Climate Emergency Strategy which is currently the subject of its own consultation. Transport is a vital element of achieving wider Council policy objectives relating to air quality, climate change, equality for all, health and wellbeing, productivity and congestion, and enabling sustainable economic growth and housing delivery. The new transport strategy is heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to both provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, alongside measures to manage demand for travelling during peak times.
- 3.3 A number of sub-strategies will be developed to provide more detailed implementation plans for key areas of the overarching strategy. These will cover areas such as cycling and walking, road safety, sustainable travel to school and a Boroughwide Car Parking and Air Quality Management Strategy, as agreed within the Council's current Medium-Term Financial Strategy. All sub-strategies will be developed to align with and help deliver the overarching transport strategy for Reading.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Initial Consultation

- 4.1 An initial visioning consultation on the principles to underpin development of the new transport strategy was undertaken from 29th July to Friday 20th September 2019. The consultation was heavily promoted, including a range of events for residents and key stakeholders, and resulted in 2,881 online survey responses and 18 detailed responses from members of the public and organisations. In addition, feedback was received from over 750 people who were directly engaged through events undertaken during the consultation.
- 4.2 The overriding theme from the feedback received from the consultation was significant support for investment in sustainable transport in Reading, to provide realistic alternatives to the private car. This included support for radical policies including re-allocating road space for the use of sustainable modes and for implementation of a charging scheme to restrict the use of vehicles in sensitive areas.

4.3 A selection of the headline feedback received from the consultation is set out below:

- 90% of respondents agreed with the five main themes for the new strategy as set out below:
 - Connecting people and places
 - Supporting healthy lifestyles
 - Creating a clean and green Reading
 - Enabling inclusive growth
 - Embracing smart solutions
- 93% thought making public transport journeys faster and more reliable would be effective;
- 83% said a comprehensive park and ride network would be effective to reduce the number of cars on the road;
- 92% thought better connected walking and cycling routes would be effective and 75% supported the reallocation of road space for sustainable modes of transport;
- 90% said dedicated car free spaces would be effective to increase active travel;
- 78% felt limiting cars from sensitive areas (around schools and the town centre) would improve safety, alongside air quality and health benefits for residents;
- 76% said initiatives where roads are free of cars for a limited time would improve safety, air quality and public health;
- 86% thought better facilities would increase the uptake of zero emission vehicles (e.g. electric vehicle charging points); and
- Around 60% said a charging scheme would be effective in reducing the number of private vehicles on the road.

4.4 Further feedback from the consultation has been published on the Council's website and is set out in Appendix B to this report.

Statutory Consultation

4.5 The draft Reading Transport Strategy 2036 (provided at Appendix A) has been prepared to reflect the key themes of feedback received from the consultation. The draft strategy sets out an ambitious vision for transport in Reading, demonstrating how transport options in Reading will be developed to 2036 and beyond to help achieve our wider Council objectives for the town including the Reading 2050 Vision and responding to the Climate Emergency. The strategy includes the key themes which were overwhelmingly supported in the initial consultation, alongside a range of radical policies to set the guiding principles for developing the town's transport network.

4.6 An ambitious programme of schemes and initiatives is set out to implement each element of the overall strategy, including options to improve air quality and manage congestion through demand management schemes such as a Clean Air Zone. The schemes section includes a commitment to work with key

stakeholders to delivery each element of the overall strategy, including working with Wokingham Borough Council to address the issues of air quality, congestion and carbon emissions in East Reading by reviewing the range of options which were considered at the time of the East Reading MRT planning application in 2018.

- 4.7 It is a statutory requirement to undertake a 12-week consultation on the draft transport strategy. This consultation is proposed to commence on Monday 23rd March with a dedicated webpage, including public survey, and a press launch. The consultation will include the draft Reading Transport Strategy 2036 and associated Integrated Impact Assessment reports, alongside consultations relating to two sub-strategies to the main strategy itself, the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and an initial information gathering exercise for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Authority to undertake consultations on these sub-strategies has previously been granted through Committee approval. The consultation will run for 12 weeks and close on Sunday 14th June 2020.
- 4.8 The Integrated Impact Assessment report assesses the overall strategy (including the vision, objectives, policies and schemes) in relation to its environmental, equality and health impacts. The two documents have been developed in parallel through an iterative process to ensure feedback from the initial IIA assessments has been used to develop the main strategy. The overall focus of the transport strategy is on promoting sustainable modes of travel and the key objectives relate directly to improving the environment, promoting healthy lifestyles and inclusivity. This overall focus combined with the IIA approach has ensured that these key areas are fully integrated within the strategy and the positive benefits resulting from delivery of the strategy will be maximised.
- 4.9 Key promotional activities to be undertaken as part of the consultation will include:
- Press launch and press release.
 - Consultation webpage, including survey.
 - Social media campaign.
 - Advertising on digital screens, such as those in Council buildings, on buses and outside the railway station.
 - Three public drop-in events.
 - Presentations to local user and interest groups.
 - Meetings with key stakeholders including local authorities.
 - Article in the school travel newsletter issued to all schools in the Borough.
- 4.10 There are a number of statutory consultees we will engage through the consultation, including:
- Transport operators;
 - Neighbouring local authorities;
 - Natural England;
 - Environment Agency; and
 - English Heritage.

- 4.11 In addition, we will ensure information regarding the consultation is disseminated to key partners and stakeholders including community groups, the Local Enterprise Partnership and local businesses, and local education establishments and healthcare providers.
- 4.12 Following completion of the consultation, the feedback received will be reviewed and the draft strategy will be updated accordingly. It is proposed the final strategy will be submitted for adoption by the Council in November 2020.
- 4.13 It should be noted the transport strategy consultation will run in parallel to the consultation on the new Climate Emergency Strategy which commenced on 13th March. The transport strategy has been developed in parallel with the Climate Change strategy, particularly the transport theme, to ensure consistency between the two strategies and to ensure the delivery of each strategy supports the overarching objectives of both strategies.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Delivery of a new transport strategy would help to deliver all of the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
- Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities.
 - Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs.
 - To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children.
 - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.
 - Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.
 - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Initial consultation on the key principles helping to shape the new strategy was undertaken in summer 2019. The consultation resulted in over 3,000 responses, including over 2,800 online and 750 face-to-face discussions at a range of public drop-in sessions, meetings, workshops, etc.
- 6.2 The statutory consultation will build on significant consultation events and activities undertaken as part of the visioning consultation that helped inform the draft strategy. It is proposed that the consultation is launched with a press release which will form the basis of promotional messages circulated to existing contacts, networks, user groups and social media platforms as well as promotional messages displayed on-screens located in Council buildings and on-board buses. Consultation activities, as set out in section 4 of this report, will include three public drop-in events and meetings with key stakeholders and local user groups.
- 6.3 People who wish to provide feedback on the draft strategy will be encouraged to do so via an online survey hosted on the Council website.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Local Transport Plan is a statutory requirement as set out in the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. The Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment, considered in the overarching Integrated Impact Assessment, is also a statutory requirement.
- 7.2 By producing a new transport strategy in line with Government guidance the Council will be fulfilling its statutory duty to keep the strategy under review.
- 7.3 It should be noted that the statutory consultation will coincide with the pre-election period. Legal advice considers the consultation to be normal Council business due to the work undertaken to date and the envisaged timescales, however restrictions around promotional activities will be in place during the period up to Local Elections.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to: -
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which incorporates an Equality Impact Assessment, has been undertaken as part of the development of the new strategy and will be published as part of the statutory consultation.
- 8.3 In addition to equality, the IIA also considers the health and environmental implications of the proposed policies and outlined schemes and considers that appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the strategy in order to minimise the impact of the proposals. The overall vision and key objectives of the strategy relate directly to improving the environment, promoting healthy lifestyles and inclusivity; therefore the benefits resulting from delivery of the strategy in these key areas is reflected in the IIA assessment.
- 8.4 Sub-strategies and schemes outlined in the draft strategy will be subject to further Equality Impact Assessments as they are developed.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total carbon emissions. As set out in the draft Climate Emergency Strategy this figure is lower in Reading with transport accounting for around 20% of carbon emissions, however significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

- 9.2 The draft transport strategy, which has been developed in parallel to the emerging Climate Emergency Strategy, responds to this challenge and is focused on five themes. These themes all encourage a step-change in transport infrastructure and services and a shift towards sustainable and clean modes of transport as attractive alternatives to private vehicles. This builds on the considerable success of increasing the number of walking, cycling and public transport trips into Reading town centre to 80% as part of the delivery of previous Local Transport Plans.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The development of the draft transport strategy has been funded by existing transport budgets.
- 10.2 The development and delivery of schemes set out in the draft strategy will be subject to future funding being identified and/or secured, such as grants issued by Central Government, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and private sector contributions secured through the planning process.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Local Transport Plan 3: Strategy 2011-2026, Council, 29 March 2011
- 11.2 New Local Transport Plan & Borough-Wide Car Parking and Air Quality Strategy, Policy Committee, 16 July 2018
- 11.3 Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan - Draft for Consultation, Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee, 20 November 2019
- 11.4 Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Update Report, Traffic Management Sub-Committee, 9 January 2020

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Local Transport Plan

Reading Transport Strategy 2036

Consultation Draft - March 2020

Foreword, by Councillor Tony Page

Page 418

This is the most important Transport Strategy that Reading will ever produce. The Climate Emergency is happening now and it is not something any of us should ignore. The new strategy is our most radical yet and reflects the fact that the status quo is not an option.

Over the following pages you can read about how our plans will help to combat the poor air quality polluting some parts of our town and how our policies will help create a net zero-carbon Reading by 2030. It includes schemes some people may find controversial. I make no apology for that. The only way we can hope to tackle the congestion and pollution which blights some areas of Reading is by doing things differently.

Reading has one of the UK's fastest growing economies. It is a major centre for employment, leisure and education in the Thames Valley region and home to many national and international companies. Demand for new homes has never been higher. But with that success come serious challenges in terms of pressure on our transport infrastructure, commuter congestion and poor air quality.

The challenge will only intensify in the coming years with many thousands of new homes being built, particularly just outside of Reading. Many of those people will commute into Reading for work and must be offered attractive and reliable alternatives to the private car.

Already one in three vehicles on the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) does not even stop in central Reading at peak times, and could take a more direct and appropriate route, avoiding the town centre, if better orbital links were available. It is not acceptable for the many thousands of vehicles and lorries who have no origin, destination or purpose in Reading to continue to use the town as a short cut, causing additional congestion, polluting our air and damaging our health. This document will help tackle that injustice. It is a situation no responsible local authority can ignore.

Our challenge is to successfully absorb the growth in housing, jobs and commuting, whilst protecting the health of residents. Our Transport Strategy to 2036 is a plan to do that. It has been designed following recent phases of public consultation which produced a record number of responses and showed very strong support for a more sustainable future. Thank you to the over three thousand people who helped shape it.

This strategy provides high quality and realistic alternatives to the private car through new and upgraded railway stations, new park and rides and quick, reliable public and affordable transport routes. It includes major new schemes to promote and strengthen public transport links, like a Third Thames Crossing and a new orbital route in the north of the borough. It includes new pedestrian and cycle routes, and the infrastructure to support it. It also includes demand management schemes, to remove the most polluting vehicles from our streets, particularly those with absolutely

no business in Reading. This strategy also outlines how we will work with partners to fund and to help deliver the vision.

We are building on strong foundations. In recent years we have overseen the complete transformation of Reading Station, built Christchurch Bridge, the new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Thames, and created new park & ride sites at Mere oak and Winnersh. Our investment has resulted in significant increases in sustainable travel in Reading. Bus use is the third highest in the whole country and sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, now accounts for over 75% of trips to and from the town centre.

As you will see, we want to transform travel options in this period by delivering high-quality and realistic alternatives to the private car. This will bring significant benefits for the environment and climate crisis, the health and wellbeing of residents, enable sustainable economic growth, unlock local job opportunities and deliver new homes to the highest environmental standards.

Future travel in and around Reading must be affordable and accessible to reduce the considerable inequalities in our communities. It must improve residents' health and wellbeing, whilst supporting a growing and inclusive economy.

We recognise that difficult choices will need to be made to address the climate crisis and improve air quality in our town. Embracing rapidly changing technology and being responsive to innovation will be fundamental to achieve our vision for the town.

This strategy is currently in draft form and is based on feedback from the extensive consultation we undertook last summer. This is a further opportunity for you to help shape the final strategy, to inform the decisions we take and improvements we deliver. This will ensure that together we can achieve a sustainable and prosperous future for everybody in Reading.

We have achieved a great deal, but we have much more to do. This is how we will do it.



Councillor Tony Page

Deputy Leader and Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport

Reading Borough Council

Contents

Executive Summary	6
1. Introduction	12
2. Vision & Objectives	16
3. About Reading	24
4. Challenges & Opportunities	48
5. Our Policies	66
6. Our Schemes & Initiatives	86
7. Funding & Implementation	150
8. Partnerships & Stakeholders	158
9. Monitoring & Review	162
Glossary	166
References	168

Page 419

Appendices

Appendix A - Summary of Visioning Consultation Responses

Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Reading Transport Strategy 2036 is a statutory document that sets the plan for developing our town's transport network to 2036 and beyond. It includes the guiding policies and principles, alongside schemes and initiatives to be delivered, to enable us to achieve our overall vision for a step-change in sustainable travel choices in Reading.

The strategy is focused primarily on improvements within Reading Borough for local residents. However, due to the compact geography of the Local Authority area, it also includes cross-boundary schemes and initiatives within neighbouring local authorities which form part of the wider Reading urban area.

This strategy has been developed in partnership with local residents, businesses and stakeholders through an extensive consultation which was undertaken during summer 2019. It has been informed by an integrated impact assessment, which has considered the impacts of the plan on the environment, health, and equalities issues. In addition to satisfying statutory requirements, this has helped to shape the content of the Reading Transport Strategy in order to maximise beneficial effects for local communities and the environment.

This is a draft strategy for consultation to ensure that you have the opportunity to help shape the final strategy before it is adopted in late 2020.

Our Vision and Objectives

By 2050, we want Reading to be a great place to live, work, study and play. We have formed a vision for our town, by coming together with local businesses, community groups and Reading University to plan for Reading's future. The result is the Reading 2050 Vision, an ambitious description of what Reading can be; a green tech city, a city of culture and diversity, and a city of rivers and parks.

The Reading 2050 Vision identifies key elements for its delivery, including a number in which transport plays a major part. Transport will be critical to enhancing the connectivity needed to facilitate economic growth and enable everyone enjoy the multitude of assets the town has to offer. The way in which we deliver this will be key to low carbon living, and creating the green and healthy spaces to allow our communities to thrive. Technology will support our transport network, facilitating smart and efficient solutions, and maximising the impact that transport can make.

The Reading Local Plan vision, which sets out in more detail a vision for Reading in 2036, but considers the context of the longer-term direction of travel to 2050, is informed by the Reading 2050 Vision.

The Reading 2050 Vision and our Local Plan have informed our approach to delivering the transport elements of the overall vision for Reading,

considering key factors including changing travel patterns and future technology, the climate change emergency, opportunities to enable healthy lifestyles, promote sustainable economic growth and reduce inequalities by ensuring everyone can benefit from the success of our town.

To help us deliver our overall vision for Reading, we have developed a supporting transport vision for this strategy.

Page 427

“Our vision is to deliver a sustainable transport system in Reading that creates an attractive, green and vibrant town with neighbourhoods that promote healthy choices and wellbeing. Future mobility options will enable everyone in Reading to thrive, enjoy an exceptional quality of life and adapt to meet future challenges and opportunities.”

Five objectives underpin our vision, taking into account the future challenges we will face and the opportunities we will embrace:

Creating a Clean and Green Reading

Provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town

Supporting Healthy Lifestyles

Create healthy streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve accessibility to key destinations and increase personal safety

Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Enable sustainable growth and connect communities so that everyone can benefit from Reading's success

Connecting People and Places

Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car, helping to provide a transport network that is fast, affordable, connected and resilient

Embracing Smart Solutions

Use technology to manage the network efficiently and allow informed travel choices, whilst enabling Reading to become a smart, connected town of the future

We are building on success through our significant investment in the transport network in recent years. We have provided new and upgraded transport infrastructure to encourage people living, visiting and working in Reading to use sustainable transport including the major redevelopment of Reading Station and associated Cow Lane Bridges scheme, new Park and Ride facilities at Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle, initial phases of the South Reading Fast Track Public Transport corridor, Christchurch Bridge and the new National Cycle Network route 422.

About Reading

Reading is an important and strategic location in the South East. The Borough was home to around 163,000 people in 2018, with a further 60,000 in the wider urban area. The population of the area is expected to grow over this plan period. Reading is also a major centre of employment, with around 120,000 people working in the Borough. There are more jobs in Reading than workers, so people travel in from other areas to work. The centre of Reading is also a major retail and leisure destination, with The Oracle ranked in the top 50 shopping centres in the UK.

The town's location on both the Great Western Main Line and the M4 motorway makes it a major hub for transport movement. Reading Railway Station is one of the busiest railway stations outside London and marks the western terminus of the Elizabeth Line. Reading also has excellent connections to the international transport hubs at Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. In addition, Reading's location on the Kennet & Avon Canal and River Thames and at the meeting point of several national cycle routes, gives it significance for a variety of other modes of travel. Such connectivity is represented by Reading's status as a regional transport hub, international gateway and a major transport interchange.

Due to our success in investing in sustainable travel options, trips to/from central Reading by public transport have increased by 53%, walking and cycling by 56% and car and taxi trips have decreased by 13% over the last ten years .

Challenges and Opportunities

We have identified seven key transport challenges facing us:

Adapting to the Future

We know that we are in the midst of a climate crisis. This, alongside fast changing technological innovation, means the future is uncertain and Reading will need to adapt, through both decarbonisation and accepting the need to travel more sustainably. This will affect the way we travel and transport goods, whilst at the same time provide new and innovative opportunities for society.

Improving Air Quality

As a result of the high levels of car congestion and accompanying air pollution in parts of Reading, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared covering the town centre and key corridors into and out of the town. The negative effects of poor air quality are serious: up to 36,000 people in the UK die as a result of air pollution every year. Technologies are developing that are reducing the level of pollution vehicles emit from exhausts, and the UK is shifting towards electric vehicles. However, around 85% of fine particulate pollution from vehicles does not come from traditional fuel types and exhausts, and so a reduction in vehicle usage is the only measure that will improve air quality further.

Reducing Congestion

Whilst Reading has high levels of bus usage and the main railway station is one of the busiest outside London, a significant proportion of people travelling into or out of the Borough for work travel by car. This makes Reading one of the most congested places in the UK - central Government statistics indicate that Reading has the third highest levels of delays on A roads of any local authority outside London. Due to a lack of alternative strategic north-south connections there are high levels of through-traffic in Reading, which have no origin or destination within the Borough. This adds to congestion in the town centre, on the bridges over the River Thames and along key corridors.

Providing Affordable and Accessible Travel for All

Despite economic growth, Reading has seen an increase in the number of areas which fall into the UK's most deprived 10%, from zero in 2010, to five in 2019. The availability, accessibility and affordability of public transport and the provision of walking and cycling facilities are critical to ensuring equality of opportunity and connectivity across the Reading area.

Removing Barriers to Healthy Lifestyles

Many of our public spaces and streets require improvements to make them more attractive and welcoming, with better provision to encourage more people to choose to walk and cycle, as well as providing greater independence for those who are mobility impaired. Our local pedestrian and cycle networks are extensive, but there are

still gaps that cause disconnect, and parts where the route quality needs improvement and priority given to sustainable travel over private car use to support healthy lifestyles.

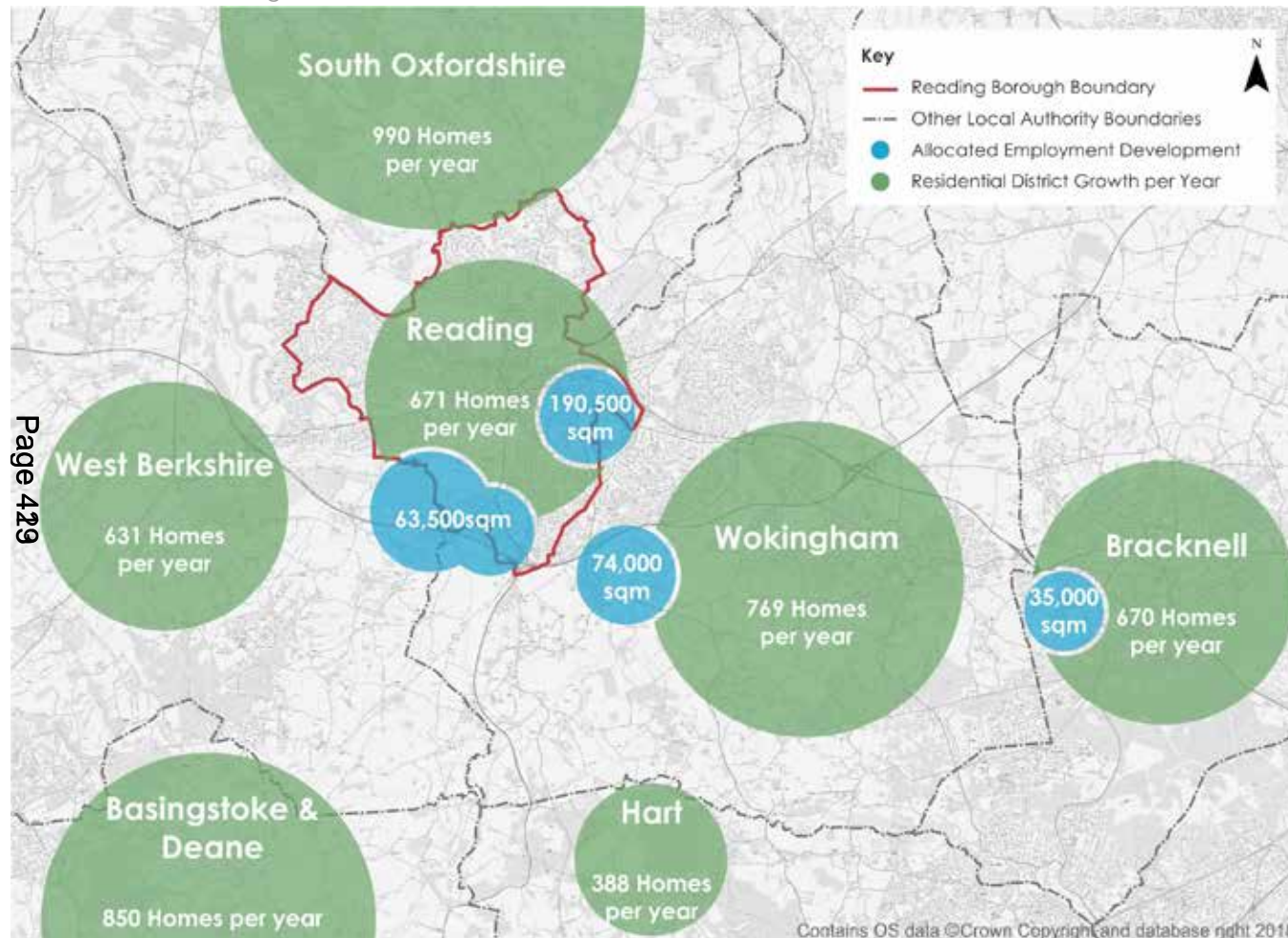
Achieving Good Accessibility to Local Facilities and Employment

Within Reading, access to local facilities and employment varies significantly, depending both on the type and the location. It is important that existing local facilities including the Royal Berkshire Hospital and schools are served by high-quality, frequent bus services, in order to reduce car travel, and to enhance access to amenities for people who do not own a car. Similarly, the availability of sustainable travel options to employment is important to increase access to employment for all users, including vulnerable groups, and to reduce congestion across the network. New developments have the opportunity to deliver facilities that serve both new residents or employees, and existing communities in the local area, contributing towards a shift to sustainable travel and also increasing social cohesion.

Accommodating Development

Economic success and growth in Reading is forecast to continue and substantial house building is planned in both Reading and neighbouring authority areas. Between 2013 and 2036 an additional 2,600 homes are planned to be built each year in the local area and population growth will mean more trips on our network each day. The RTS will help us to deliver our Local Plan as well as those of neighbouring authorities.

Planned Annual Housing Increase



Our Policies

Our policies set the guiding principles for our strategy to ensure we will achieve our overall vision and objectives. These policies cover a range of topics including:

- **Multi-modal policies** including development control, equality and inclusivity, the environment and climate change.
- **Public transport policies** including rail, buses, taxis and private hire vehicles, waterways, mobility as a service, shared autonomous vehicles and travel information.
- **Active travel policies** including healthy streets, public space, walking and cycling, school travel, public rights of way.
- **Demand management policies** to manage travel demand and improve quality of life for residents.
- **Network management policies** including road safety, parking and enforcement, motorcycles, freight, smart solutions and highway asset management.
- **Communication and engagement policies** including training and education, incentivisation and public engagement.

Our Schemes and Initiatives

We will implement our policies through the delivery of schemes and initiatives to improve transport in the area and meet our aims and objectives. In accordance with legislation, this Local Transport Plan has been developed so that our transport strategy considers the wider environment and is inclusive of all types of transport users.

Our strategy includes a wide range of schemes and initiatives from localised small-scale enhancements to strategic cross-boundary major schemes, including:

- **Demand management schemes**, will be an essential element of this overall strategy. We are currently investigating options including, Workplace Parking Levy, Road User Charging, Clean Air Zone and Emissions-Based Charging
- **Major multi modal schemes**, including a Third Thames Crossing, a North Reading Orbital Route and key transport corridor enhancements
- **Public transport schemes**, including new and upgraded railway stations, Fast Track Public Transport routes, Park and Rides, quality bus corridors, community transport, concessionary travel, Mobility as a Service and demand responsive transport
- **Active travel schemes**, including strategic and local pedestrian and cycle routes, cycle parking hubs and facilities at interchanges and residential areas and a cycle hire scheme

- **Network management schemes**, including demand management, road safety schemes, efficiency improvements, intelligent transport systems, electric vehicle charging and smart city initiatives
- **Communication and engagement schemes**, including marketing, travel information, training, play streets and travel accreditation programme

Christchurch Bridge



Green Park Station



Funding and Implementation

Our implementation plan sets out our indicative delivery programme for future transport schemes and initiatives to 2036. The schemes and initiatives set out in this strategy are not fully funded, therefore we will continue to seek external funding to enable us to deliver the overall strategy.

Funding sources will include grants and private sector contributions and will be supplemented by both capital and revenue Council funding and services delivered on a commercial basis. The implementation of demand management measures will provide an additional revenue stream to invest in and enhance sustainable transport options.

Delivery of the strategy will be split between major schemes, packages of smaller measures delivered through our neighbourhood area action plans, and on-going revenue initiatives.

Our implementation plan will be updated annually to provide a three year rolling delivery programme, which will allow us to adapt to changing technologies, budgets and development proposals.

Partnerships and Stakeholders

Our Strategy is ambitious, therefore it will be critical to work in partnership with key stakeholders to achieve its successful delivery. This will include, but not be limited to, neighbouring authorities, local communities, education providers, public services and businesses to take account of their diverse needs and aspirations when delivering this strategy.

We participate in a number of key formal and informal partnerships to support a joined up, overarching approach to delivery of our key services and future plans. This enables us to lobby for wider transport improvements and funding (for instance the major redevelopment of Reading Station), therefore we will continue to develop these partnerships throughout the strategy period to achieve the best possible results for Reading and its local communities. Our key delivery partners are:

National / Regional

- Central Government including Department for Transport
- Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
- Transport for the South East
- Network Rail
- Highways England

Neighbouring Local Authorities

- Wokingham Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Local Parish and Town Councils

Transport Operators

- Train operators including Great Western Railway and South Western Railway
- Bus operators including Reading Buses
- Community transport operators including Readibus
- Reading taxi associations

Local Community

- Community groups and local residents
- Private sector including local businesses
- Education providers including the University of Reading, colleges and schools
- Public services including the Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Media

Monitoring and Review

Performance monitoring is key to manage and improve the delivery of our strategy programme. We have identified a number of key performance indicators and targets which set our ambitions to transform travel options in Reading and enable us to measure progress against achieving our overall vision and objectives.

These targets relate to significantly increasing usage of sustainable transport, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions, improving road safety and improving public satisfaction with travel in Reading.

Given the longer-term time-scales of this Strategy, it will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains current and that it is best placed to respond to future needs and opportunities as they arise.

School Streets Trial (2014) - Geoffrey Field Infant and Junior School & Christ the King Catholic Primary School



1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 The Reading Transport Strategy 2036 is a statutory document (known as a Local Transport Plan) that outlines the high-level policy and strategy for transport to meet existing and future transport demand in the town to 2036.
- 1.2 This strategy sets out how transport can play its part in delivering Reading's 2050 vision and Reading's Local Plan to 2036, to make Reading a great place to live, work, study and play. It outlines our approach for all types of transport in Reading and seeks to embrace opportunities to adapt to changing travel demands and new technologies. The climate change emergency, enabling healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, sustainable economic growth, increasing productivity and forecast population and housing growth are key factors considered in developing the plan. This document replaces the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) and looks ahead to 2036.
- 1.3 In preparing this plan, we have identified what challenges we need to tackle, and have established a high-level vision and focused objectives, under our five themes: creating a clean and green Reading; supporting healthy lifestyles; enabling sustainable and inclusive growth; connecting people and places; and embracing smart solutions. This has been informed through the

consultation carried out from July to October 2019 which sought the views of residents, schools and businesses. This analysis and consultation has enabled the identification of new schemes, initiatives and policies to transform transport options in the area.

- 1.4 Reading's transport strategies have always been a valuable local platform for jointly developing and communicating our plans and programmes for improving transport with the local community. They have enabled engagement and partnership working with other organisations and key stakeholders including our neighbouring authorities and local and national transport operators. Our strategy is also an important tool to ensure we deliver improvements efficiently and that these achieve best value for money.
- 1.5 Excellent progress has been made in delivering significant transport improvements in Reading since our first LTP was published in 2001. This is evidenced through our annual delivery reports and summarised in the About Reading chapter. This plan builds on our approach and past success, taking our longer-term strategy forward to 2036, in line with our Local Plan which sets the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Our Approach

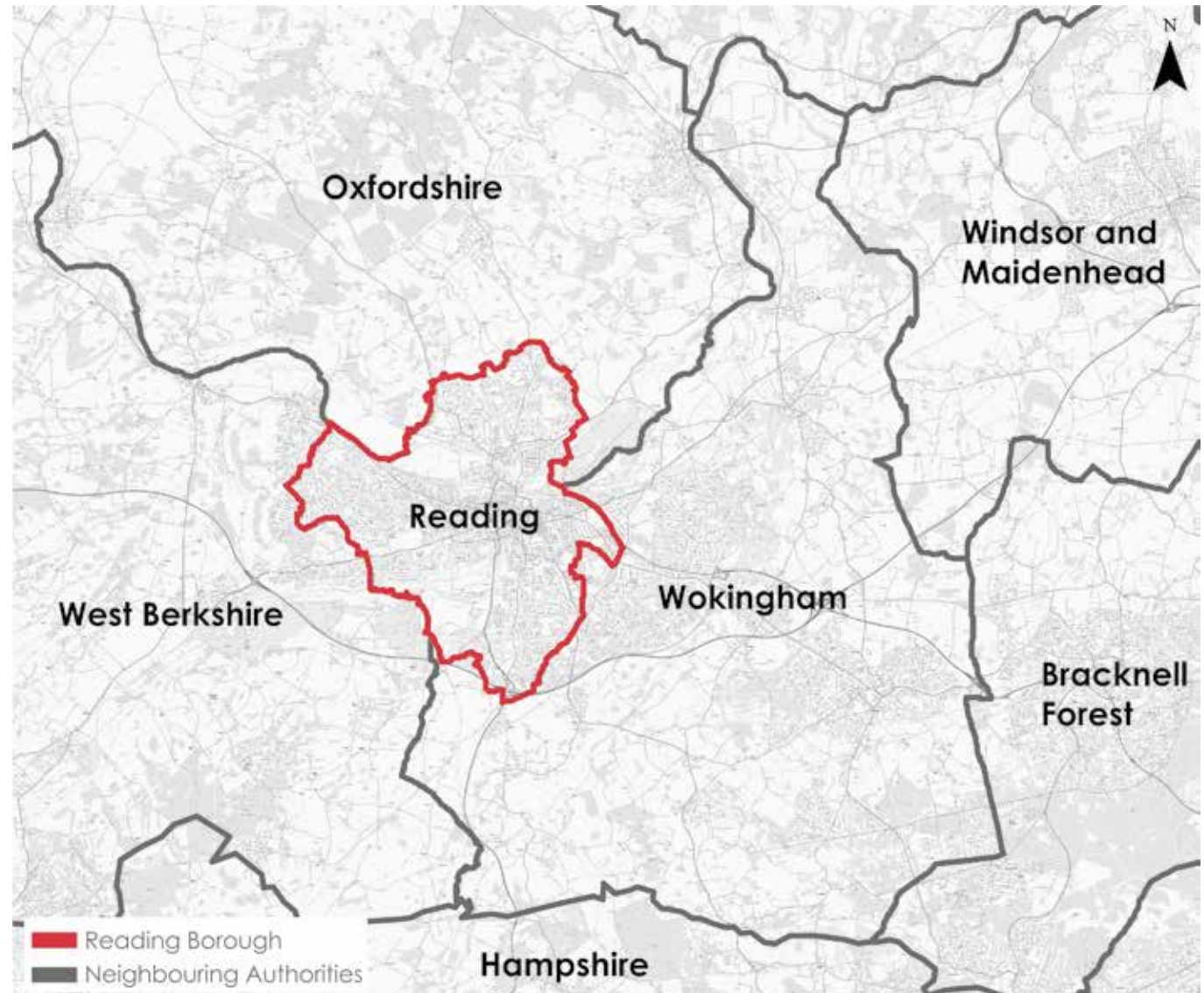
1.6 This plan is prepared in two parts, a Strategy Plan (this policy document) and an Implementation Plan which sets out a three-year delivery programme and is updated annually. The Strategy Plan is supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes our Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure the impacts of the plan provide positive benefits and meet relevant legislation in these key areas.

Page 423

Our strategy is focused primarily on Reading Borough. However, due to the compact nature of the Local Authority area, it also includes schemes within the wider Reading urban area.

1.8 Given the longer-term time-scales for this strategy, it will be regularly reviewed and evolved to keep it current and to ensure it is best placed to respond to future needs and opportunities as they arise. The evolving strategy will be adaptable to future challenges and new technologies. A key focus of this strategy is to ensure the needs of Reading's growing population and economy are developed in a sustainable way, therefore the strategy aims to provide a vital influence in decisions about where future housing should be located both within and outside the Borough. Growth should be

Figure 1: Reading's Location



directed to places where sustainable travel options can be made more attractive and therefore provide a viable alternative to the private car.

1.9 Reading's Transport Strategy 2036 - Implementation Plan (published separately) sets out an annual budget and delivery programme for a three-year period. It will also provide an update on progress with delivering the overall strategy in terms of monitoring against objectives.

1.10 Our strategy details our long-term vision for transport in Reading and the transport objectives which support this. Chapter 5 sets out the challenges and opportunities the plan will address. It reviews the current and expected future people movement patterns in and around Reading, and the capacity and quality of the infrastructure and services which support these demands. Schemes to help resolve or embrace these challenges and opportunities are further identified in this chapter at strategic and neighbourhood area levels.

1.11 Our transport vision and objectives have influenced the preparation of a set of policies relating to transport modes and themes. Supporting sub strategies provide more detail on the objectives and actions proposed for certain thematic topics, such as walking and cycling, school travel and public rights of way.

1.12 We have set out the likely mechanisms which will enable us to fund our proposals, alongside our approach for ensuring value for money in transport investment, and monitoring arrangements to track our progress.

Consultation and Engagement

1.13 Our plan has been developed to ensure that the strategies, decisions and implementation of transport schemes reflect the needs of local residents. A wide range of consultation and engagement has been undertaken with residents and key local stakeholders to allow them to influence and shape the development of the plan.

1.14 We consulted with local residents, businesses and key stakeholders through a comprehensive consultation to understand local views to help set the main themes and objectives that underpin the strategy. This included an online survey and information website, public drop-in sessions and workshops with key stakeholders and interest groups. This took place between 29th July 2019 and 13th October 2019. Nearly 80,000 households and 3,800 businesses received a letter drop, direct engagement was held with around 750 people at various events held within the Borough and 2,881 responses were gathered through an online survey.

1.15 There was an overwhelming level of public support for the five themes that underpin our Transport Strategy, with 90% of responses expressing agreement.

1.16 Sustainable travel is fundamental to each of the five core principles. Increasing public transport patronage is essential to this, and 94% of responses indicated support for extending the public transport network with more frequent services to schools, workplaces and isolated areas, as a means to increase public transport use.

1.17 To further promote sustainable travel, significant support was shown towards the implementation of car-free spaces (90%), reallocating road space for sustainable transport (75%), as well as improving the connectivity of the walking and cycling network in Reading (92%).

1.18 There was also a significant level of support for delivering demand management measures with 60% of respondents thought a charging scheme would be effective in reducing the number of private vehicles on the road.

Evidence Base

- 1.19 A significant base of evidence has been used to underpin the development of this strategy, using national, regional and local sources of information. We have analysed this data to develop our policies, schemes and initiatives.
- 1.20 There are seven local areas in and around Reading, representing the town centre and the six main transport corridors radiating from central Reading. Information for each area has been considered, including the demographics, movement characteristics, planned and committed development and infrastructure proposals.
- 1.21 We will develop action plans for each area that enable us to identify and prioritise local transport measures for each neighbourhood area that will deliver the best value for money and positive outcomes in respect of our overall strategy vision and objectives. Our approach will also ensure that existing assets are used as effectively as possible and the benefits of upgraded or new infrastructure will therefore be maximised.
- 1.22 Our plans will be progressed in partnership with appropriate neighbouring authorities where these extend beyond our administrative boundaries. These will be shaped by consultation with our partners, stakeholders and local communities.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 1.23 The RTS is supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which has been undertaken in tandem with developing the plan. An IIA Report has been published for consultation in tandem with the Draft RTS.
- 1.24 The purpose of the IIA is to identify, assess and address likely significant effects on the environment and likely effects on health and equalities from the emerging RTS. In doing so, the IIA has helped to shape the content of the RTS in order to maximise its sustainability and socio-economic performance.
- 1.25 The IIA incorporates a suite of statutory and non-statutory impact assessments:
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
 - Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
 - Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- 1.26 These impact assessments have been undertaken in a co-ordinated manner to support development of the RTS. The SEA element of the IIA identifies the likely significant effects on the environment, whilst the EqIA and HIA elements identify likely different impacts on demographics groups and persons with protected characteristics (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) and on health outcomes respectively. The

HIA element of the IIA was undertaken on a non-statutory basis to support demonstrating compliance with SEA and EqIA requirements relating to the assessment of likely health effects in an integrated manner.

- 1.27 In accordance with statutory SEA requirements, we consulted on our IIA Scoping Report both within the Council and with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England in Autumn 2018. The Scoping Report:
- Defined an evidence-based suite of key issues which should be addressed in the LTP4; and,
 - Defined an integrated assessment framework to underpin the testing, assessment and refinement of all components within the emerging RTS (objectives, schemes, policies, etc).
- 1.28 Taking account of consultee feedback, the IIA is being undertaken on an iterative basis in tandem with developing the RTS itself. As detailed within the accompanying IIA Report this allowed any uncertainties, issues or mitigation requirements identified during the IIA to be addressed in the Draft RTS. In addition to meeting statutory requirements this iterative process has maximised the sustainability and socio-economic performance of the LTP4.

2. Vision & Objectives

Our Vision for Reading 2050

- 2.1 We have formed a vision for our town, by coming together with local businesses, community groups and the University of Reading to plan for Reading's future.
- 2.2 The result is the Reading 2050 Vision, an ambitious description of what Reading can be, with three themes central to Reading's long term success as a smart and sustainable city. These three themes are
 - A green tech city
 - A city of culture and diversity
 - A city of rivers and parks



Source: Reading UK - <https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050>

Our vision for Reading 2050 is “an internationally recognised and economically successful city region, where low carbon living is the norm and the built environment, technology and innovation have combined to create a dynamic, smart and sustainable city with a high quality of life and equal opportunities for all”

2.3 Six vision statements were identified to bring the themes together and describe what success looks like. These identified the aim for Reading to be a place that:

- Shares success to support and enable thriving communities
- Delivers a real sense of place and identity
- Thrives on cultural and cross-generational diversity
- Recognises our heritage and natural assets
- Embeds technology to deliver innovation and low carbon living for all
- Welcomes ethical and sustainable businesses who support Reading

2.4 The Reading 2050 Vision identifies key elements for its delivery, including a number in which transport plays a major part. Transport will be critical to enhancing the connectivity needed to facilitate economic growth and enable everyone enjoy the multitude of assets the town has to offer. The way in which we deliver this will be key to low carbon living, and creating the green and healthy spaces to allow our communities to thrive. Technology will support this, facilitating smart and efficient solutions, and maximising the impact that transport can make.

2.5 The Reading Local Plan vision, which sets out in more detail a vision for Reading in 2036, but considers the context of the longer-term direction of travel to 2050, is informed by the Reading 2050 Vision.



Source: Reading UK - <https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050>

Our Vision For Transport In Reading

Our Vision for Transport in Reading

2.6 This Reading Transport Strategy will help to deliver both the Reading 2050 and Reading Local Plan visions, through an ambitious programme of measures to enable and encourage sustainable travel choices in the town by 2036, with the intent that future transport strategies will continue to support the Reading 2050 vision in the longer term.

2.7 In order to achieve our ambitions, we will need to embrace emerging opportunities and our strategy will need to be adaptive to innovation. Travel demand in the future will be affected by changes in technology and wider society. The extent and pace of change is not certain, however it is clear that innovations such as driverless and connected vehicles and new approaches to the provision of transport will bring the potential for historic transport trends to change significantly, and our ambition is for residents of Reading to be at the forefront of benefitting from these opportunities.

2.8 Our overarching vision for transport in Reading has been aligned to our wider vision for the town in 2050, our Local Plan, and relevant national, regional and local policies.

“Our vision is to deliver a sustainable transport system in Reading that creates an attractive, green and vibrant town with neighbourhoods that promote healthy choices and wellbeing. Future mobility options will enable everyone in Reading to thrive, enjoy an exceptional quality of life and adapt to meet future challenges and opportunities.”



Our Objectives

2.9 Our strategic objectives have been developed as the guiding principles running through this strategy to ensure and set out how we will measure our success in delivering our vision for transport in Reading.



Creating a Clean and Green Reading

Provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town



Supporting Healthy Lifestyles

Create healthy streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve accessibility to key destinations and increase personal safety



Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Enable sustainable growth and connect communities so that everyone can benefit from Reading's success



Connecting People and Places

Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car, helping to provide a transport network that is fast, affordable, connected and resilient

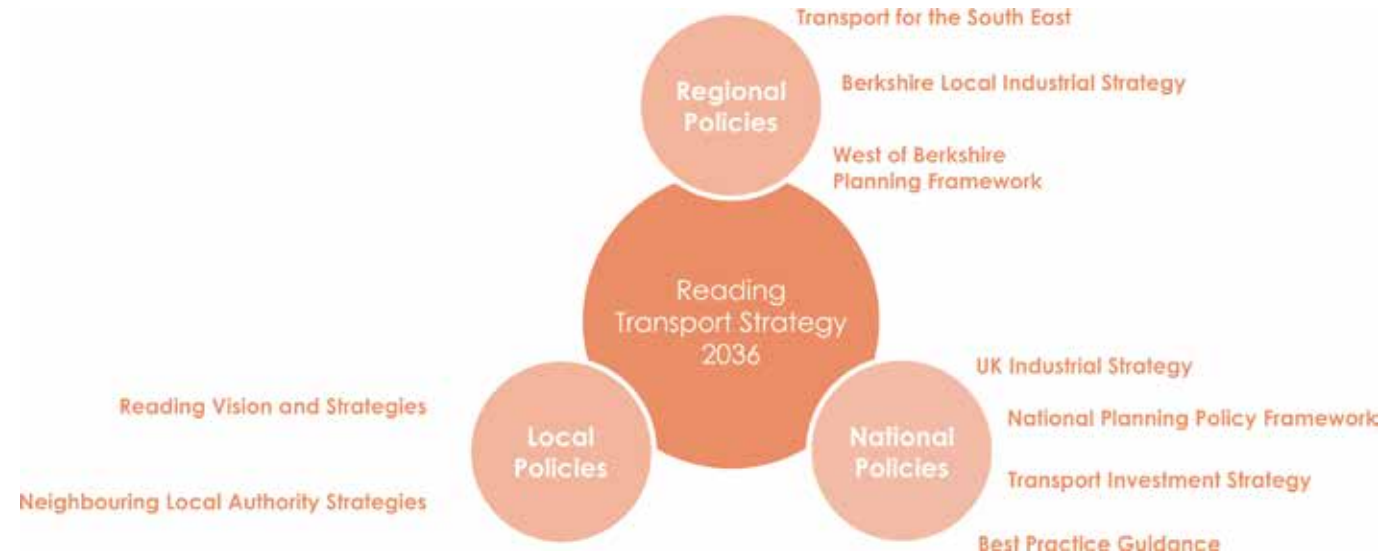


Embracing Smart Solutions

Use technology to manage the network efficiently and allow informed travel choices, whilst enabling Reading to become a smart, connected town of the future

Our transport vision is supported and informed by wider policies and guidance that: set out how Reading can foster economic growth; become an activity hub in the Thames Valley; improve sustainability in the town; and work in partnership with other authorities to achieve this.

Figure 2: Policy Context



National Policy and Guidance

Industrial Strategy

The Industrial Strategy was published by the Government with a vision for making the UK the world's most innovative economy, creating good jobs and greater earning power for all. It identifies that major upgrades to the UK's infrastructure will be needed to make it the best place to start and grow a business, and to ensure communities across the UK are prosperous. To support this, significant investment is being made in terms of transport, and innovation in transport is being encouraged.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.11 The vision for this strategy has also been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

2.12 The NPPF aims to achieve sustainable development, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It has three interdependent objectives, summarised below:

- Economic: help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- Social: support strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- Environmental: contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

Transport Investment Strategy and National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline

- 2.13 National transport priorities are identified in the Transport Investment Strategy, which focuses on creating a transport network that meets the needs of all users, growing the economy and supporting additional housing, through value-for-money investment.
- 2.14 The National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline sets out the Government's investment strategy in relation to infrastructure projects. The Pipeline builds upon the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 and identifies transport as the sector with the highest number of projects in the pipeline. Investment in transport infrastructure will total 30% of the total pipeline, and just over £10bn has been allocated for Local Authority Transport¹. It also highlights that just under £70bn of investment is to be made in transport related projects and infrastructure from 2020/21 to 2027/28.

Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places

- 2.15 The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places guidance (August 2019) sets out a new approach to transport planning and development, recognising that nationwide, car parking and traffic still dominate development despite decades

of Government encouraging a more sustainable approach to transport within spatial planning.

- 2.16 The guidance disposes of 'predict and provide' where development and transport infrastructure is planned based on outdated historic patterns and trends. Instead, it introduces an approach where a vision is set, and then development and transport determined to deliver that vision.
- 2.17 The advice aims to support the creation of places that meet the requirements of the 21st century and address the environmental, economic and social challenges that we are facing.

Regional Policy and Guidance

Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy

- 2.18 The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership's mission is to enable growth in the sub-region, through implementation of the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS), sustaining the area's status as the most productive sub-region in the UK and supporting the national Industrial Strategy. The BLIS sets out five key priorities to achieve its vision of being 'the best of both global and local', and for Berkshire to 'grow with intent':

- Enhancing productivity within Berkshire's enterprises
- Ecosystems which are maturing and evolving and extend beyond Berkshire
- International trade, connections, collaborations and investment
- Vibrant places and a supportive infrastructure
- Making Berkshire an inclusive area where aspirations can be realised

West of Berkshire Planning Framework

- 2.19 The West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework provides a collective and ambitious vision for growth in the region, recognising the need to address the infrastructure deficit to enable the area to fulfil its potential as part of the wider economy of SE England.

Transport for the South East

- 2.20 Transport for the South East (TfSE) brings together 16 transport authorities and five Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to plan strategic transport across the south east of England. It intends to become a statutory body by 2020 and is already working closely with Government. TfSE has developed the Transport Strategy for the South East (Consultation Draft, October 2019) which sets to achieve this key vision:

2.21 *'By 2050, the South East of England will be a leading global region for net -zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy network have delivered a step change in connectivity and environmental quality.'*

2.22 Through this strategy, TfSE will work with partners and authorities to create a better connected, more sustainable, integrated transport system for the South East which will benefit everyone who lives in, works in and visits the area.

Local Policy and Guidance

Our Local Plan

2.23 Our Local Plan guides development in Reading up to 2036 and will therefore play a decisive role in how our town evolves. The Local Plan seeks to deliver new homes and employment space in Reading, alongside critical infrastructure to accommodate forecast housing demands and job creation, and to ensure the town remains an attractive place to work, live and study. It also looks to reduce inequality in Reading, improve the environment (both urban and natural), make better use of its heritage assets and expand its role as a centre for arts and culture.

2.24 The RTS will help to deliver our Local Plan and will also, where appropriate, support the delivery of other Local Plans currently in development across the city region.

Our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

2.25 The implications of climate change for future generations are predicted to be very significant. Reading has a long-standing commitment to action on climate change and is at the forefront of providing solutions to this global challenge and to take the opportunities that arise in doing so.

2.26 We have pledged to aim for a carbon-neutral Reading by 2030. We have declared a climate change emergency and we call on the Government to accept moral and ethical responsibilities and to give Reading the additional powers and funding needed to help us achieve our goal.

2.27 Transport-related risks of the impacts of climate change include:

- Damage to transport infrastructure from extreme weather events (for example winds or temperatures)
- Discomfort to travellers (for example urban heat islands, where temperatures are extremely hot in warm weather)
- Flooding of parts of the transport network (from either surface water or rivers)

- Prolonged dry periods leading to increased air pollution and lower levels of dispersion

2.28 Our Climate Change Adaptation Plan sets out how we will both reduce our environmental impacts that contribute towards climate change, and how we will adapt to address the impacts climate change will have on our town and lives. The plan covers six themes which are:

- Transport and mobility
- Water supply and flooding
- Health
- Natural environment and green spaces
- Energy and low carbon development
- Purchasing, supply and consumption

2.29 These themes are each considered from four different perspectives:

- Education
- Adaptation (resilience)
- Business
- Community

Our Air Quality Action Plan

2.30 The Environment Act 1995 introduced a statutory duty for Local Authorities to review and assess the air quality in their districts, and where problems exist, to formulate an action plan to improve the situation. Air quality is assessed against UK Air Quality Objectives (AQO), which are target levels of each pollutant based on their effect on human health. Our air quality monitoring and modelling identified a number of areas close to busy roads that did not meet national air pollution targets, and because of this we have declared a large area of the Borough as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

2.31 We have also prepared an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) identifying measures which will improve air quality across the Borough, with a particular focus within the AQMA.

2.32 The AQAP recognises that transport is the main contributor to air quality exceedance in Reading and includes details of objectives, policies and actions to achieve these objectives. We are committed to taking action to improve air quality, through identifying areas where levels of local air pollutants exceed air quality objectives and working with partners and the community to reduce pollutants and their impacts on health.

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2.33 Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out the areas we will focus on to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of people who live in Reading and those who visit. The strategy and associated action plan cover a wide range of topics, including the need to increase physical activity levels through active travel and increase social interaction through improving access to transport.

Our Corporate Plan

2.34 Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will enable Reading to realise its full potential and ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

2.35 The plan is updated every year and outlines our strategy to deliver our vision, whilst recognising the importance of the social and environmental challenges. Recently, this has been against the backdrop of a difficult financial environment, including reductions in Central Government funding and growing demands on key Council services. It covers six key priorities:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Promoting health, education, culture & wellbeing
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

Forbury Gardens



3. About Reading

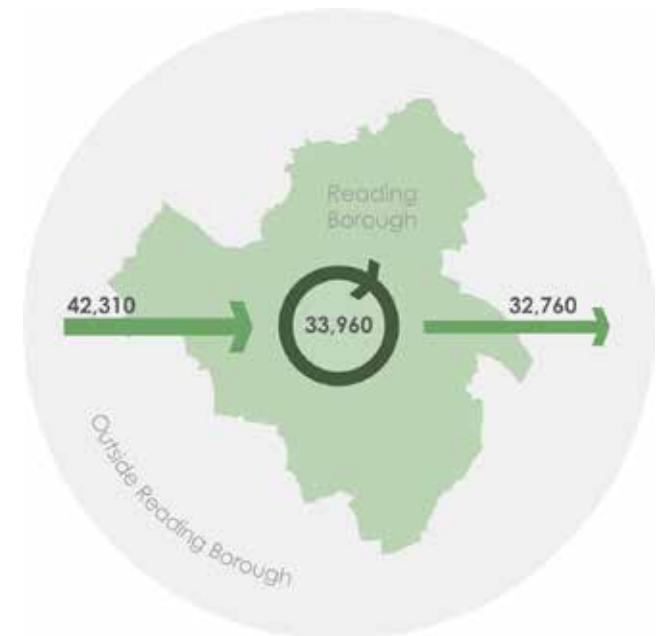
Reading Borough

- 3.1 Reading Borough cannot be viewed in isolation from its wider context. The Borough itself forms the core, but not the whole, of the urban area that is generally considered to constitute Reading. Figure 1 (page 13) shows how the urban area centred on Reading extends beyond the Borough boundaries and into West Berkshire and Wokingham. For instance areas, such as Calcot, Purley-on-Thames and parts of Tilehurst are located in West Berkshire, and Woodley and Earley are in Wokingham.
- 3.2 In a wider sense, the Reading urban area in many ways functions as a single 'city region' with the nearby towns of Wokingham and Bracknell. The relationship to South Oxfordshire is different, in that the Borough boundary currently forms the edge of the urban area, however there is still a significant level of demand for travelling between the two areas. Whilst Reading is bordered by Wokingham in the south, there are also significant movements between Reading and Hampshire, particularly Basingstoke and Winchester.
- 3.3 Reading Borough itself was estimated to be home to 163,203 people in 2018² and around 233,000 in the greater Reading area. The population is set to rise by a further 8.7% by 2036³. Whilst, in common with most areas, there is an ageing population, Reading

nonetheless has a younger population profile than many of its neighbours. Given the urban nature of Reading, it is unsurprising that it **ranks fourth in the South East for population density**, with 4,040 people per square kilometre⁴.

- 3.4 Reading is a major centre of employment, with approximately 120,000 people working in the Borough⁵. There are **more jobs in Reading than workers**⁶, which means there is a significant demand for traveling into Reading from other local authority areas,

Figure 3: Movement of Workers to, from and within Reading



as shown in Figure 3, placing strain on the transport network and impacting the wellbeing of residents within the Borough. This reflects the economic success of the town, which functions as the centre of the Thames Valley, one of the most economically dynamic regions in the country.

The Oracle



amongst 63 sample UK cities for working age population with high level qualifications¹⁰. The University of Reading is renowned for world-class research, particularly in the areas of health, environment and food security. It also has one of Europe's leading business schools and a recently established science park.

3.7 Reading ranks highly from an economic perspective; it has the **11th highest employment rate, the 3rd highest average weekly earnings and a labour force where 24% of all jobs are within knowledge intensive business services, the highest percentage in the UK**¹¹. Reading significantly benefits from a relationship between the availability of highly skilled workers and a network of highly skilled businesses. The

Thames Valley region also has the highest levels of productivity in the UK outside of London¹².

3.8 Reading is a place with huge potential, second only to London for wages; it has above average economic productivity and rates of employment. Despite this economic success, Reading has some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of the Thames Valley, which are often masked by statistics at Borough and even ward levels. High costs of living and housing have contributed to Reading being **identified as the 4th least equal city in the UK**¹³, indicating that many residents are not benefitting from the town's success. We are committed to reversing this trend and ensuring all residents have the ability to benefit from the town's success.

3.9 Reading has seen an increase in the number of LSOAs (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) that are within the UK's most deprived 10%, from none in 2010¹⁴, to 2 in 2015¹⁵ and to 5 in 2019¹⁶. Deprivation statistics consider income, employment, education, barriers to housing and services, health, living environment and crime, many of which are factors that transport either contributes towards or is affected by. The availability, accessibility and affordability of public transport and the provision of walking and cycling facilities are critical to ensuring equality of opportunity and connectivity across the Reading area.

3.5 Reading is a hub for a variety of businesses, including ICT, professional services and pharmaceuticals. The attraction of Reading is enhanced by a workforce that ranks within the UK top 10 for qualification levels and productivity⁷. At the same time, the town also hosts a number of industrial activities, and has an increasing role within the logistics sector. One in nine jobs in Berkshire are digital technology specialist jobs⁸. Many of these businesses rely on the high level of skills in the area, and there are strong relationships with the University of Reading and other higher education providers in the area. However, despite the overall economic buoyancy, there are pockets of deprivation within the urban area where there are high levels of unemployment which is a key challenge this strategy seeks to address.

3.6 The centre of **Reading is a major retail and leisure destination, with The Oracle ranked in the top 50 shopping centres in the UK**⁹. Reading is also home to the University of Reading and Reading College. A large percentage of the local working population are highly skilled, ranking as 8th highest

The Wider Urban Area and Strategic Transport Connections

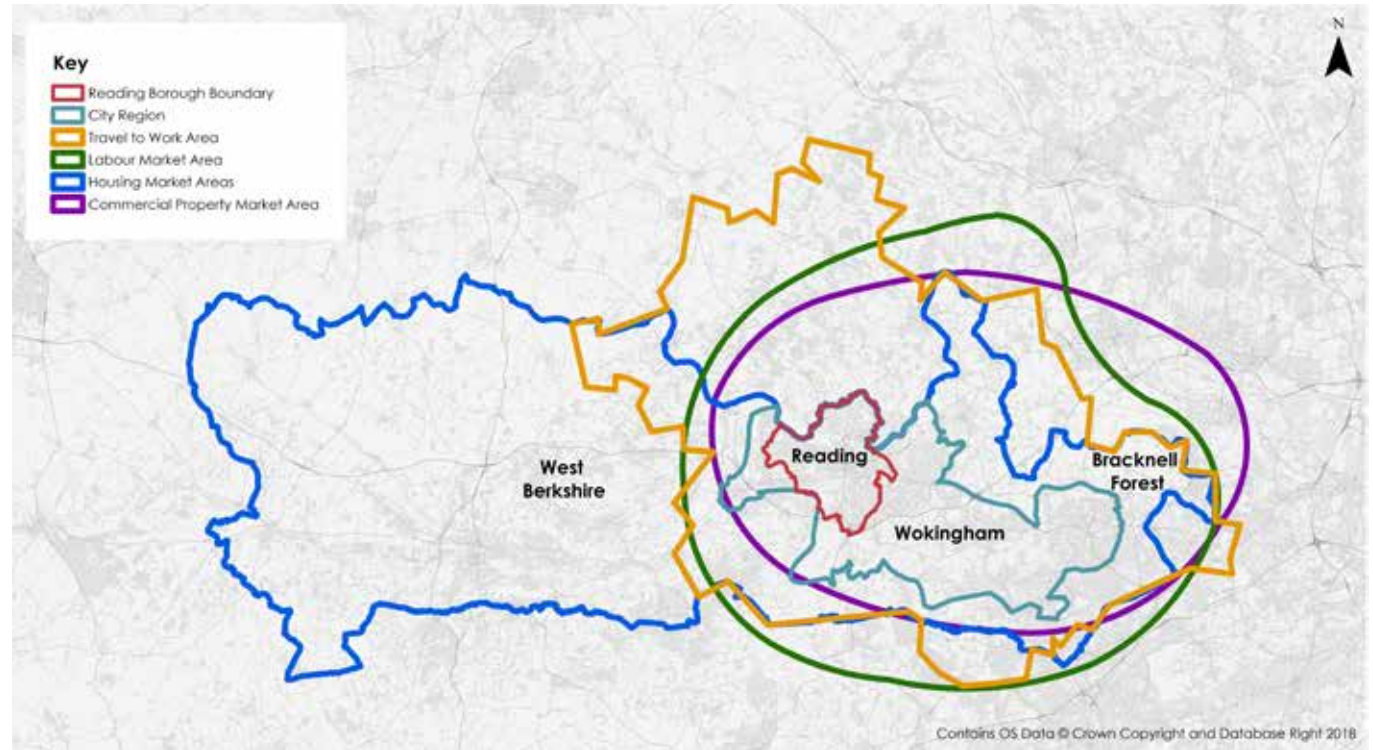
3.10 Reading is situated within a wider area that includes Wokingham and Bracknell which functions as a city region: a densely populated urban area with a regional centre, sub regional hubs, major business/science parks and large suburban areas. This region currently encompasses the existing urban areas and planned development areas, and is expected to expand as additional development is identified at the edge of the existing region.

Page 436

1 The area forms a natural economic cluster which is **forecast to be the UK's fastest growing economy during 2018-2021**, with Berkshire contributing £37.8bn GVA per annum¹⁷. The region straddles four administrative boundaries over 200 sq. km, sitting at the centre of the Reading travel to work area; and the housing, labour and commercial market areas, shown in Figure 4.

3.12 Reading is the main town within the region and is a major population and employment centre within the South East, with a workday population of 165,005. When considering the wider city region, the workday population is 401,824, comprising Reading Borough itself, and a further 126,524 people in part of Wokingham Borough, 83,753 in part of Bracknell Forest and 26,542 in part of West Berkshire¹⁸.

Figure 4: City Region, Travel to Work Area, Housing, Labour and Commercial Market Areas



3.13 Reading's location on the Great Western Main Line and the M4 motorway makes it a major hub for regional and national transport movement. Reading Railway Station is one of the busiest railway stations in the UK outside of London and marks the western extent of the Elizabeth Line. In addition, Reading's location on the Kennet & Avon Canal and River Thames and at the meeting point of several national cycle routes, connecting

to London, Wales and the Isle of Wight via Southampton, gives it significance for a variety of modes of travel.

3.14 Reading benefits from close proximity to London and Heathrow Airport, alongside excellent links to national rail and road networks. There is ongoing significant investment in the national transport network in the area, with schemes coming forward

including the Elizabeth Line, the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and railway line electrification, as well as the M4 Smart Motorway scheme and planned expansion of Heathrow Airport.

3.15 The local road network within the area includes the A33, A4 and A329(M) which form part of the national Major Road Network. These roads are important in Reading, as they provide links to the wider strategic network. In particular, the A33 provides a link between the M3 motorway to routes north of Reading that connect to the M40 and is therefore used heavily by vehicles travelling through Reading.

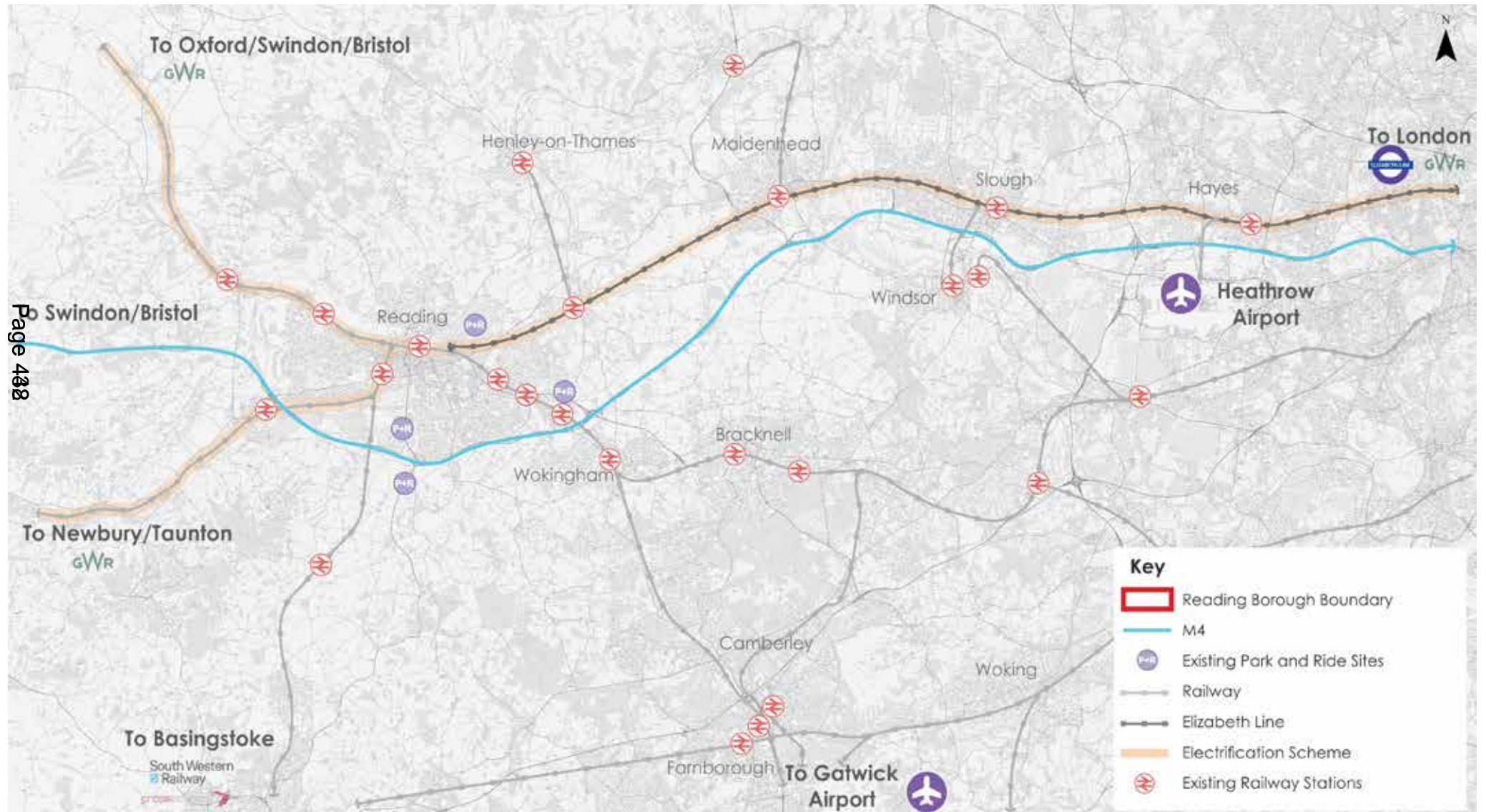
3.16 Such connectivity is represented by Reading's status as a regional transport hub, international gateway and a major transport interchange as shown in Figure 5.

3.17 Whilst this excellent access to wider strategic networks provides many advantages to Reading and local residents, it also creates significant demand for travel in to and through the Borough. Despite having the third highest bus use in the country Reading remains one of the most congested towns in the UK, with car congestion in the area causing the third highest levels of delays in any local authority outside London¹⁹.



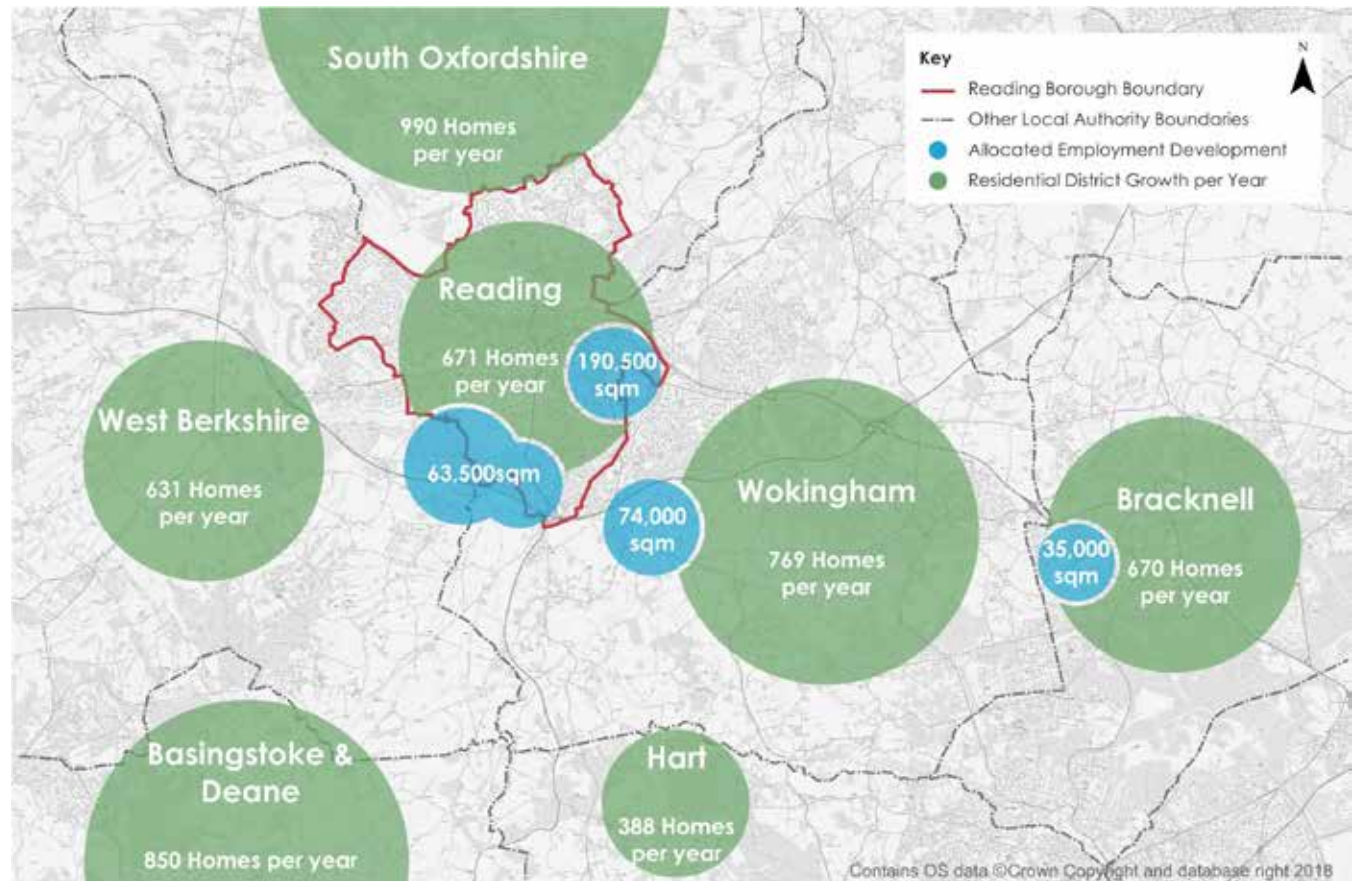
3.18 Reading is the seventh highest ranked city in the UK for inward investment²⁰, and the sixth most productive²¹. Reading was also ranked second out of the UK's top cities for good growth, considering a number of factors including economic performance and transport connectivity²².

Figure 5: Existing Strategic Transport Connections



Page 438

Figure 6: Planned Annual Housing Increase



3.19 Economic success and growth in Reading are expected to continue and substantial house building is planned in both Reading and neighbouring authority areas. Major new development is proposed in central Reading, south Reading and at the edges of the Reading urban area within neighbouring Wokingham, West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire authorities, as well as in Bracknell Forest further east.

3.20 Between 2013 and 2036, Reading's Local Plan commits to the delivery of 15,847 homes – an average of 689 per year. Accounting for emerging Local Plans for neighbouring Local Authorities, this increases to a total requirement of approximately **2,600 homes per year** across the city region. Figure 6 shows the planned annual increase in housing numbers in Reading and surrounding Local Authorities.

3.21 The need to manage the increased demand this growth will have on the local transport network and mitigate the potential negative impacts for local residents is a significant challenge that this strategy seeks to address. We will do this by providing a high-quality, efficient and connected transport network that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport trips to manage the additional forecast trips. It will be important to encourage sustainable travel to manage growth by providing high-quality alternatives to the private car.

Environmental Considerations

3.22 Across Reading, there are environmental constraints that will influence where we deliver our schemes, and how they are designed. Figures 7 to 10 show the flood risk,

heritage, ecology and landscape constraints within and surrounding the Borough. These constraints will be taken into account in the development and delivery of all physical infrastructure schemes, which will also be supported by relevant technical information and assessments.

Figure 7: Environmental Constraints - Flood Risk

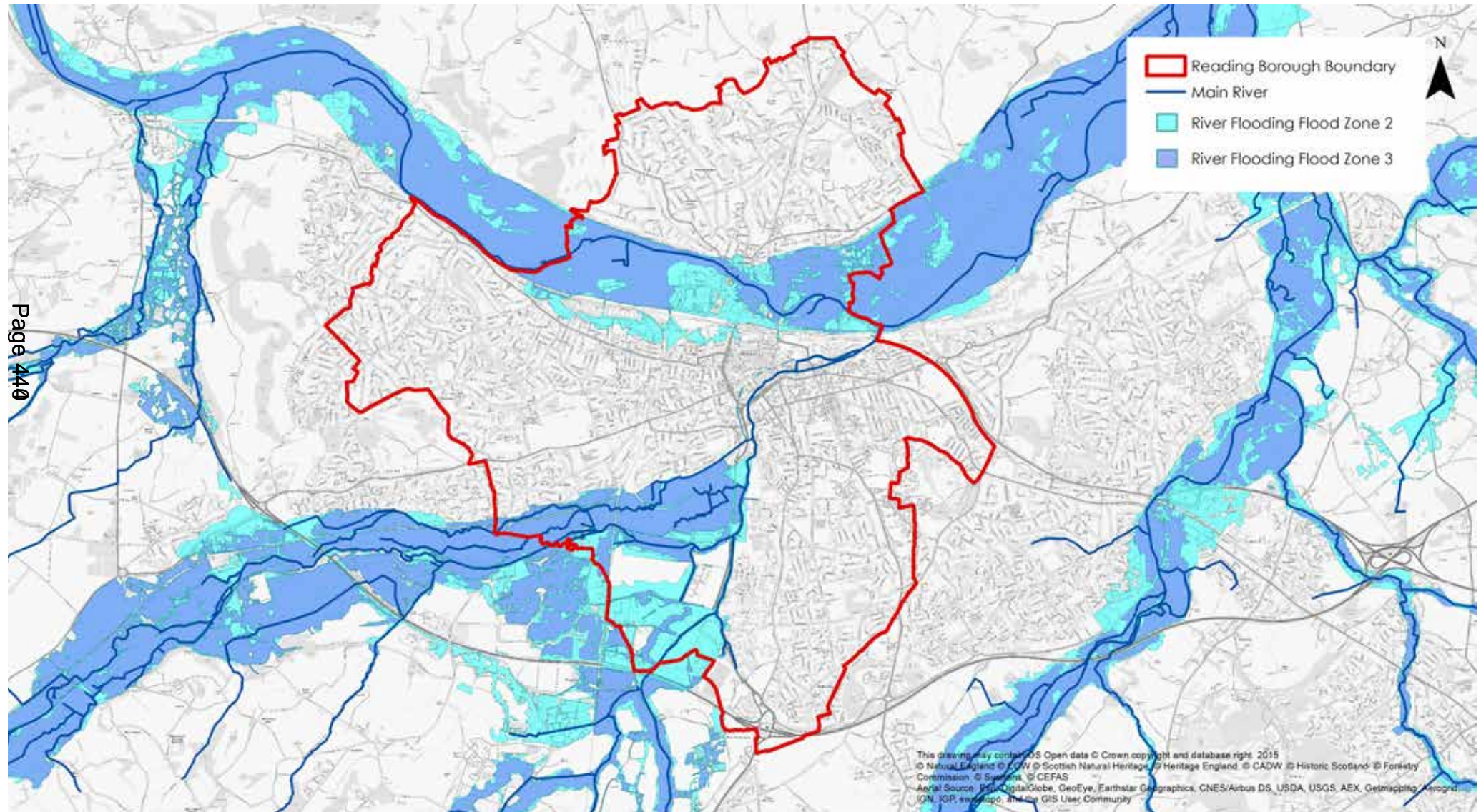


Figure 8: Environmental Constraints - Heritage

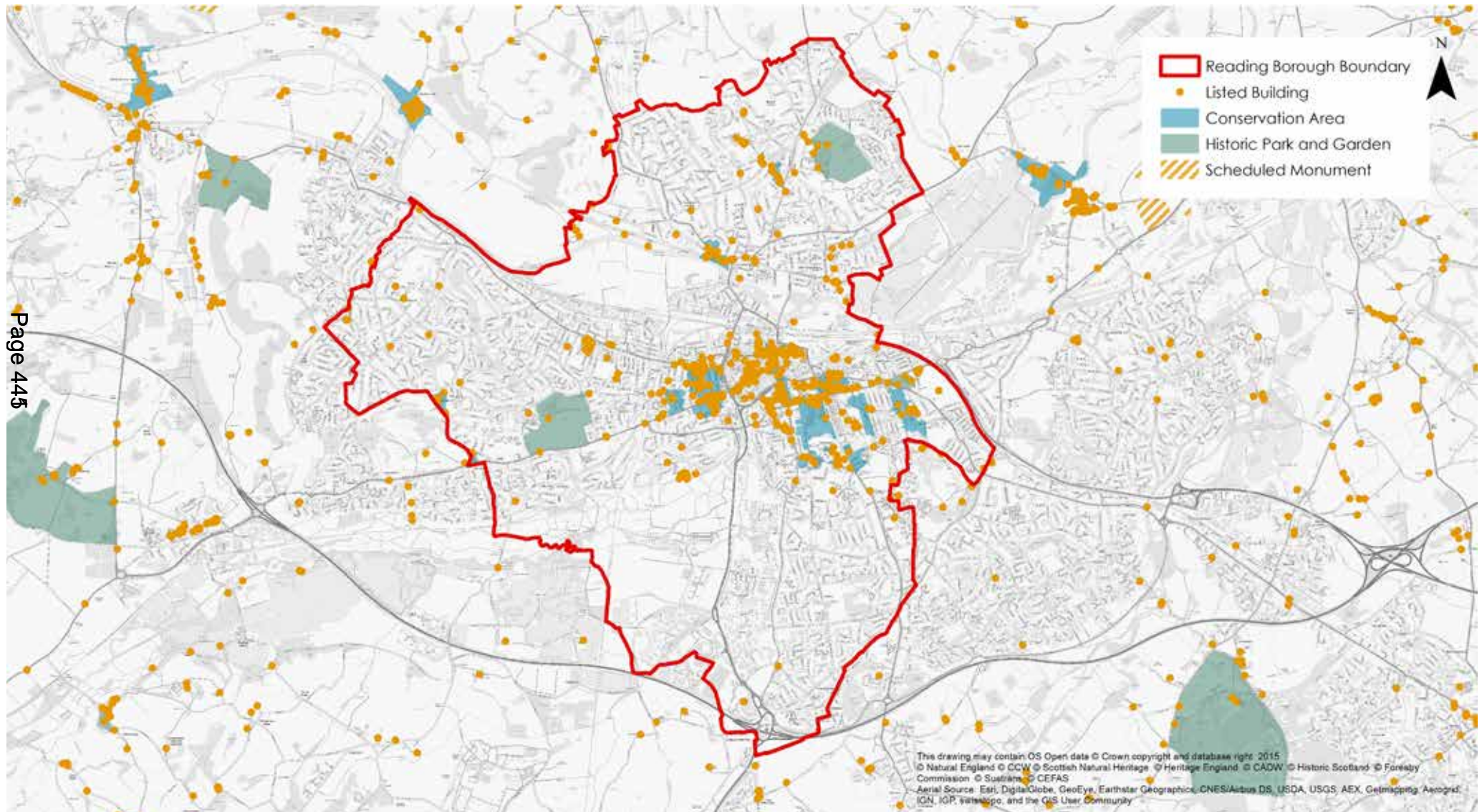


Figure 9: Environmental Constraints - Ecology

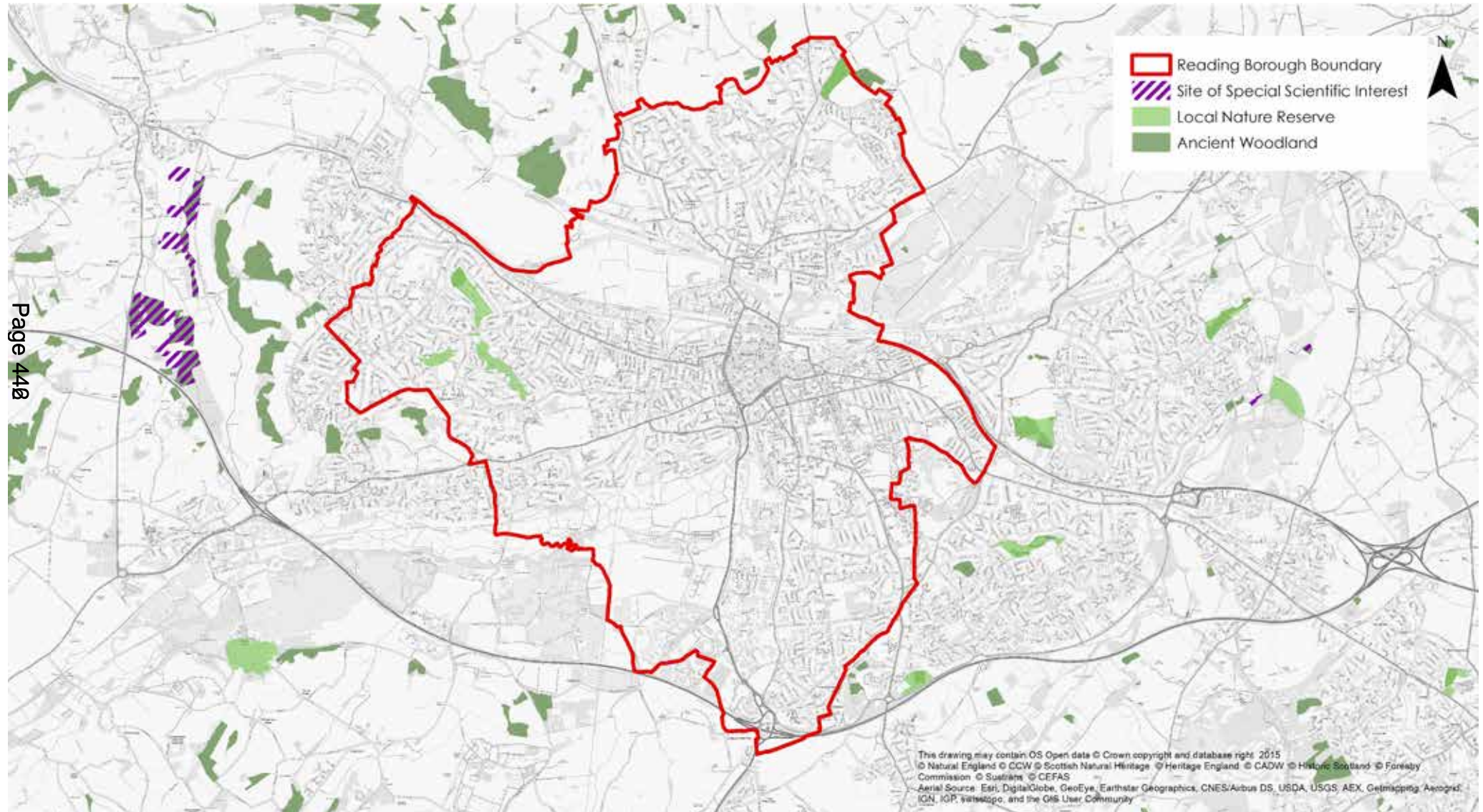
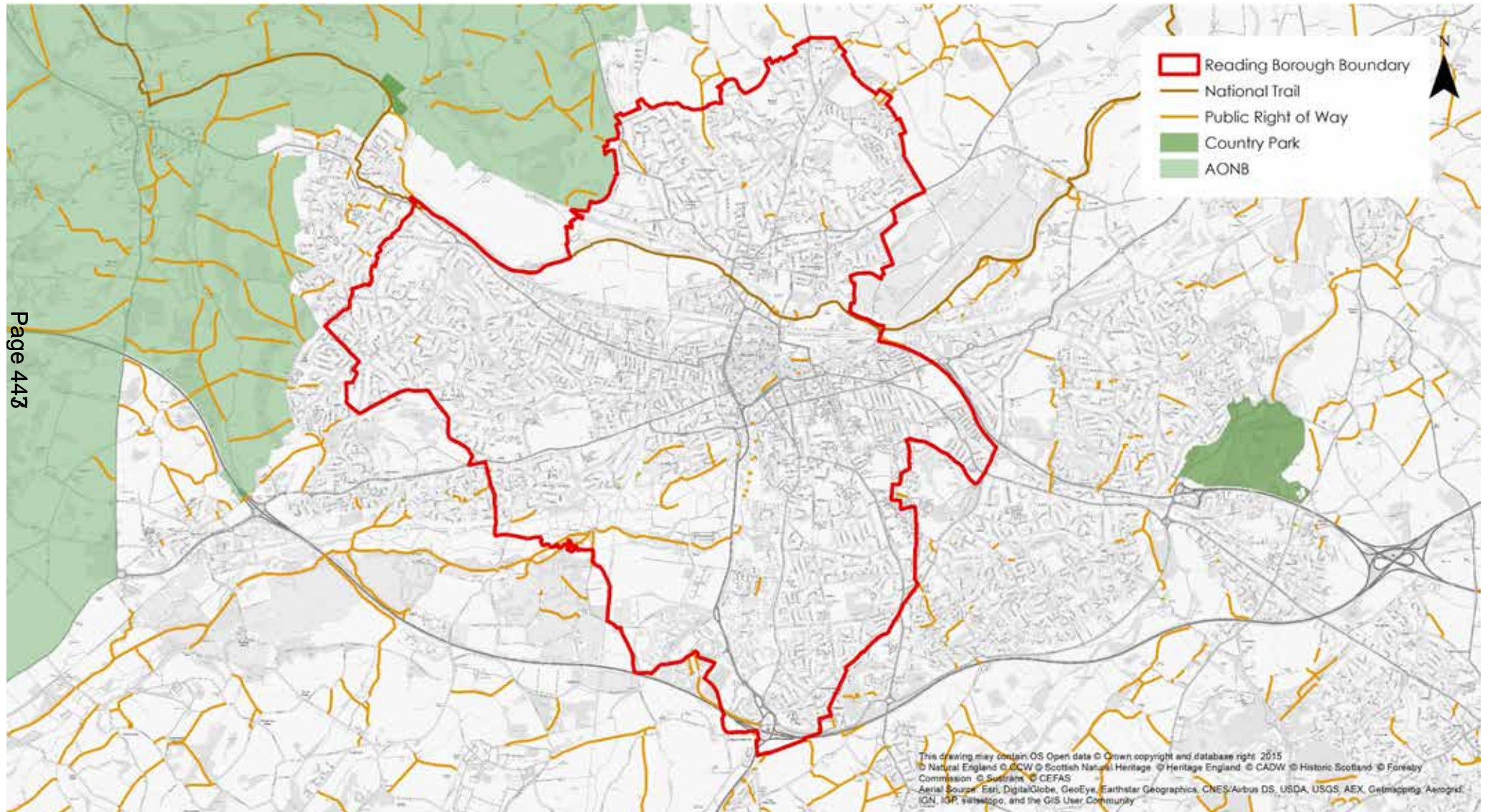


Figure 10: Environmental Constraints - Landscape



Current Travel in Reading and the Wider Urban Area

Walking and Cycling

- 3.23 Walking is not only a travel choice but also forms part of most journeys taken by other means of travel, as people must, for example, get to and from a car park, bus stop or railway station.
- 3.24 Walking and cycling also offer health benefits, both in terms of the physical benefits of active travel and through increasing opportunities for social engagement. There is clear evidence that the environment in which people live has a significant impact on health and wellbeing. It has both direct health benefits, and an impact on people's attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of their environment. For instance, reducing air pollution can improve perceptions of safety and promote outdoor physical activity and social interaction²⁴.
- 3.25 It has also been demonstrated that good neighbourhood design (in terms of walkability and mixed land use) has positive impacts on health and wellbeing, through increasing opportunities for social interaction and active travel, and helping to promote healthy behaviours²⁵. Neighbourhood and street layouts should be designed to allow for pedestrian and cycle connections within

Page 448

and between neighbourhoods, encouraging healthy lifestyles²⁶. Physical activity, such as walking and cycling, has been shown to improve mental health, particularly in terms of self-esteem, mood and depression, as well as dementia²⁷.

- 3.26 Mental health issues are common in the UK, with approximately 33% of people experiencing a mental health problem each year²⁸.
- 3.27 Creating an attractive environment where people feel safe to walk and cycle has the potential to lead to many positive health outcomes. Benefits include increased mobility, physical activity levels, greater social interaction, reduced BMI and reduced risk of injury. We can achieve this through delivering improved infrastructure prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, such as segregated facilities, traffic calming measures, and public space improvements.
- 3.28 Furthermore, the provision of open and green space, high quality public transport and improved air quality have been demonstrated to lead to increased physical activity, improved cardiovascular outcomes, and increased social interaction, among other health benefits²⁹.

Thames Path, Caversham



Cycle Signage



3.29 A large proportion of people in Reading walk to and from work, as shown in Figure 11, however, there is scope to increase the number of walking and cycling trips. Our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan sets out how we will increase the number of walking and cycling trips into the town centre within a 2km and 10km radius respectively. There is also scope to increase trips within local or adjoining areas such as those made to local facilities and services including local centres, schools, healthcare, leisure centres and libraries.

Figure 11: Walking Mode Share

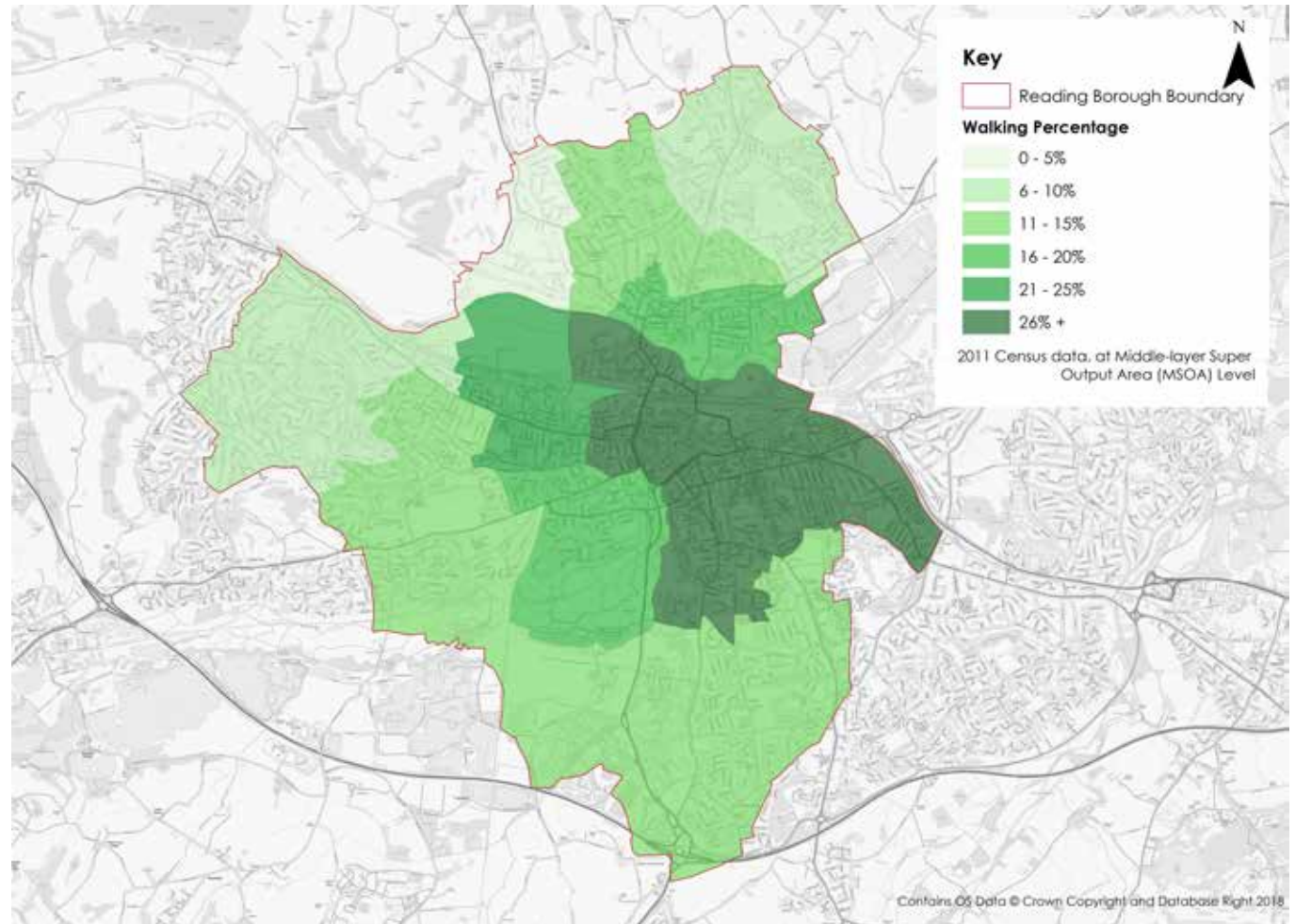
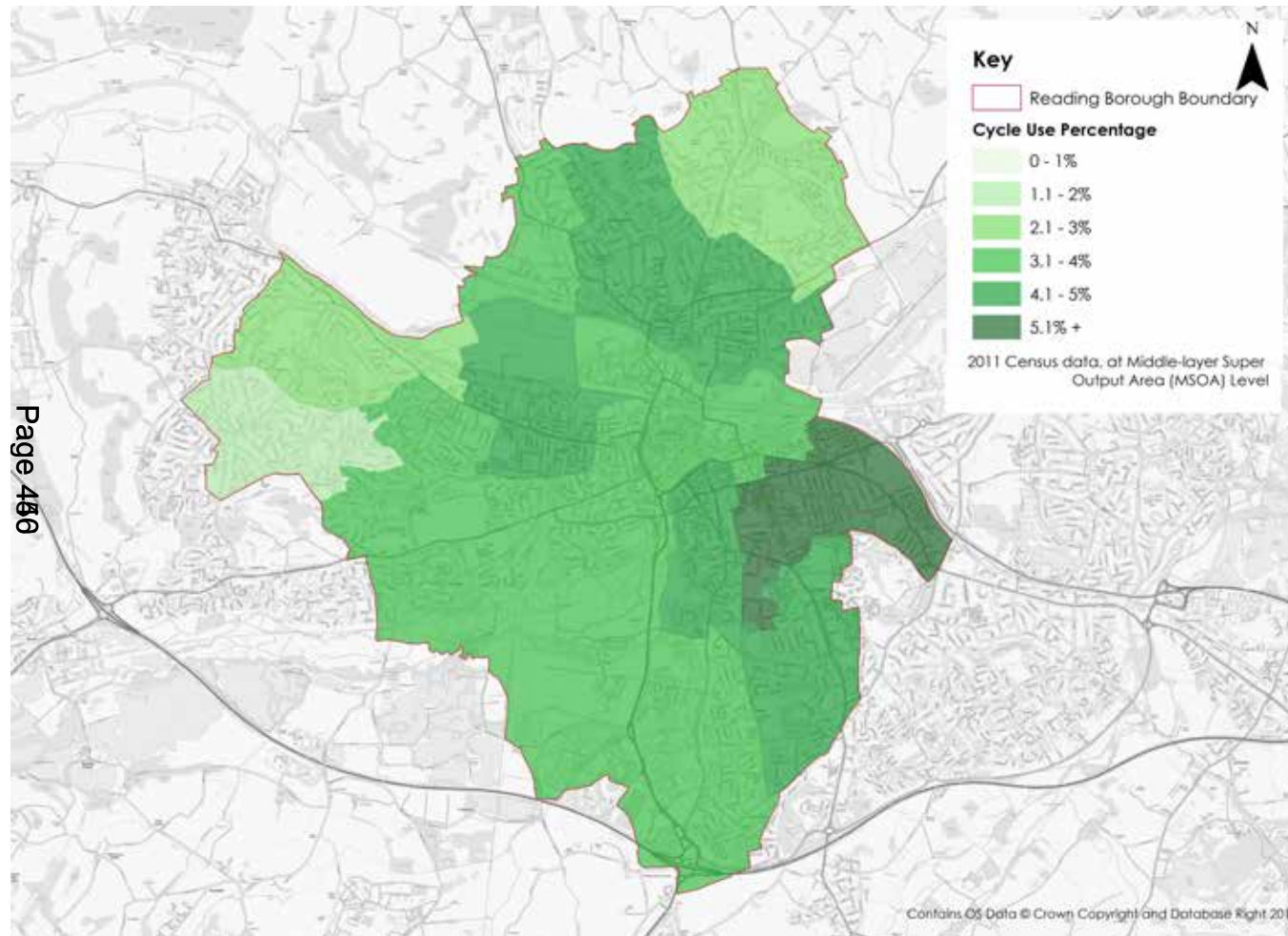


Figure 12: Cycling Mode Share



Page 486

3.30 Cycling levels in Reading are slightly above the national average. However, other urban areas, such as those who have been provided significant Central Government funding through the Cycling Ambition Cities programme, have demonstrated the significant potential of increasing cycling mode share when supported by significant investment. In addition, there is significant opportunity to increase commuter cycling trips from the wider urban area due to the compact and relatively flat nature of much of the town.

3.31 Whilst there is a good network of radial cycle routes within Reading, there are limited orbital connections and some areas are not accessible via any dedicated cycle routes. In the wider city region, the new National Cycle Network route (NCN 422) will link Newbury to Ascot via Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell; however further cycle improvements are needed to better connect the wider city-region and suburban areas, including proposed development sites. Cars dominate key corridors into and out of Reading making both walking and cycling less attractive due to poor air quality and limiting the space available to provide for sustainable travel. Investment has been made in walking and cycling schemes to improve local connectivity within the town, as well as strategic connections across the city region.

Public Transport - Rail

3.32 Existing rail lines runs east-west and north-south through Reading, with frequent services from Reading Station providing fast links to London, the West, Wales, South West, South Coast, Gatwick Airport, the Midlands and North of England. Interchange at Hayes Station currently provides rail access to Heathrow Airport from Reading.

3.33 Reading Station is **one of the UK's busiest railway stations and currently caters for around 17 million passengers** (and a further 4 million interchanging passengers) every year, with passenger numbers increasing annually³⁰. The upgrade of Reading Station, completed in 2015, has relieved previous capacity constraints and allowed us to secure ongoing sustainable economic growth in Reading, providing further redevelopment opportunities.

3.34 Reading is planned to benefit from significant investment in the following strategic rail schemes:

- The Elizabeth Line, stopping services are now operating between London Paddington and Reading and the scheme will be completed in 2021 to provide direct services into Central London and across to the east side of London

- The Western Rail Link to Heathrow will provide direct access to Heathrow Airport from Reading and is planned to be completed in 2027
- The high speed rail line (HS2) will reduce journey times from London to the Midlands and the North via an interchange on the Reading to Paddington line at Old Oak Common, enhancing connections from Reading to the rest of the UK. The first section is planned to open in 2026

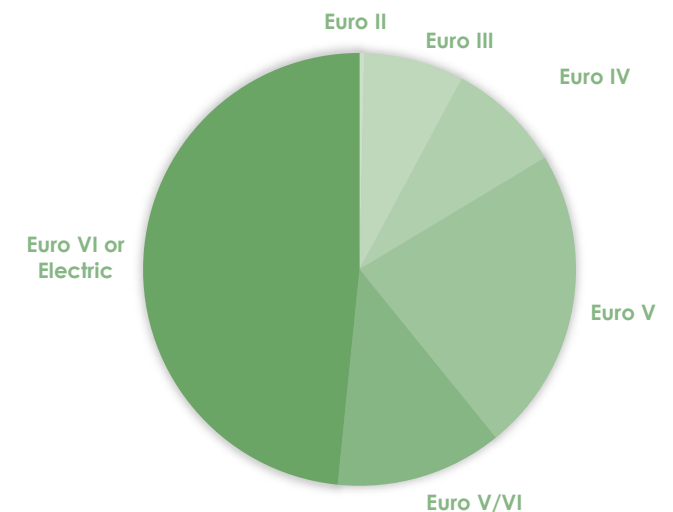
Public Transport - Bus

3.35 We have supported investment in buses for a number of years, including through delivery of bus priority and dedicated infrastructure, for example at the M4 junction 11, along the A33 and at Park and Ride facilities, at Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle. This investment has been further reinforced with significant investment from Reading Borough Council, owned Reading Buses in prioritised customer service, new technologies and environmentally friendly vehicles.

3.36 Reading Buses offer free Wi-Fi, on-board charging for mobile devices, smart ticketing, real-time rail information on buses that link with Reading Station, audio and visual displays and GPS tracking for real-time information. **Reading Buses has reported a 48% increase in bus use since 2009**, since it began sharing open data³¹.

3.37 **Reading Buses' fleet is one of the most environmentally friendly in the country**, with 72% of the fleet are hybrid, gas powered, or meet Euro VI emissions standards^{32,33}.

Figure 13: Proportion of Reading Buses' Fleet Meeting Euro Emissions Standards



3.38 Bus use per head of population in Reading has increased since 2010 by 24% and Reading now has **the third highest level of bus use in the country**³⁴. This has been against a backdrop of national decline (-11.4% across England), and a decline of 0.5% in the South East overall, as shown in Figure 15. Few places have similarly bucked the long-term trend of decline in bus use.

3.39 Whilst Reading benefits from frequent, high quality bus services delivered by one of the most successful bus companies in the UK, and supported by Reading Borough Council, neighbouring areas of the south-east are not so fortunate. Services in out-of-town areas are prone to delays on the road network from car congestion due to high car usage and resulting in lower levels of bus passenger journeys per head of population for commuter trips travelling to Reading from outside of the Borough.

3.40 Some neighbouring areas have amongst the lowest bus use figures nationally and therefore a large proportion of people travel from these areas into Reading by car.

Figure 14: Bus Mode Share

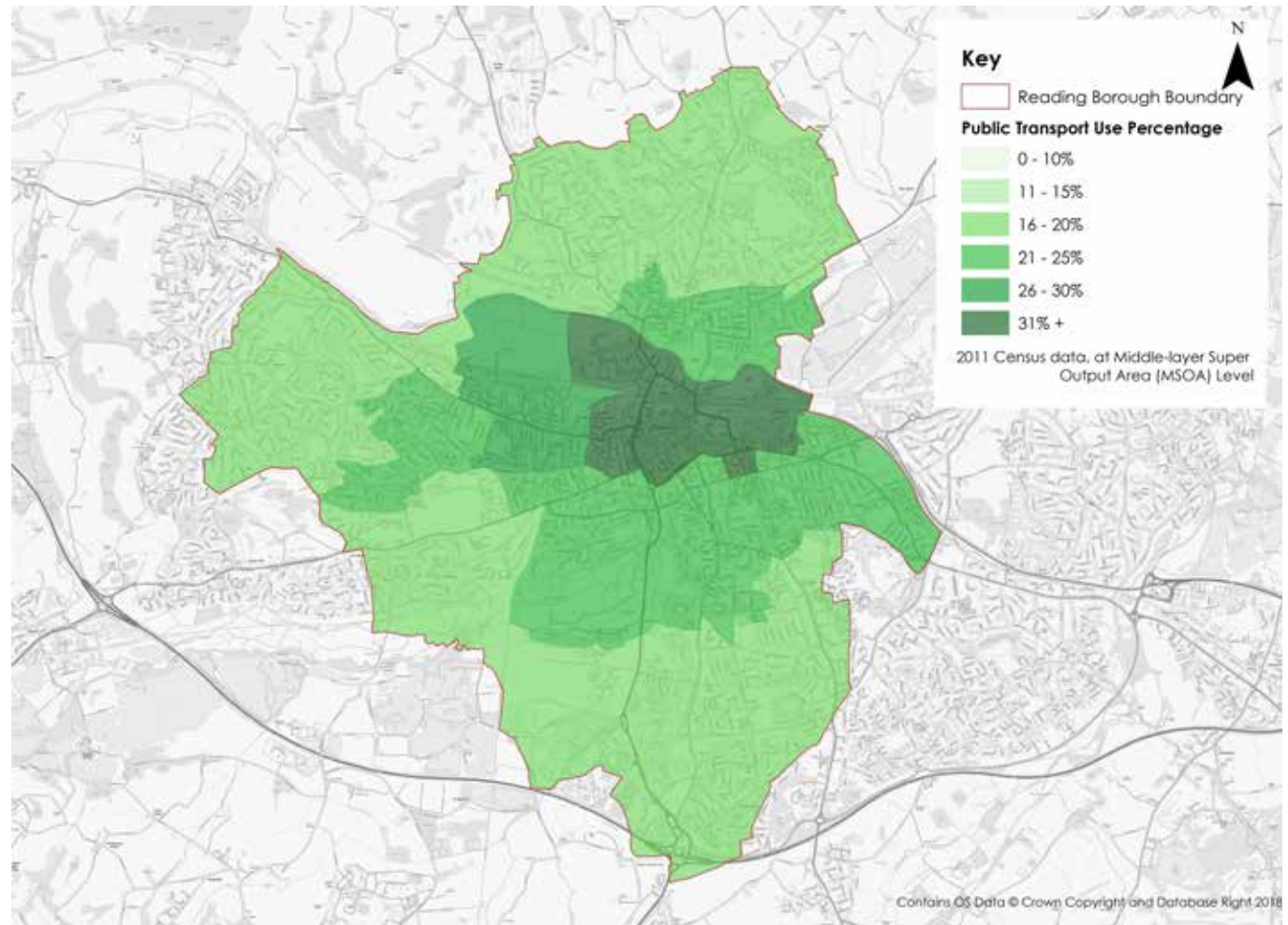
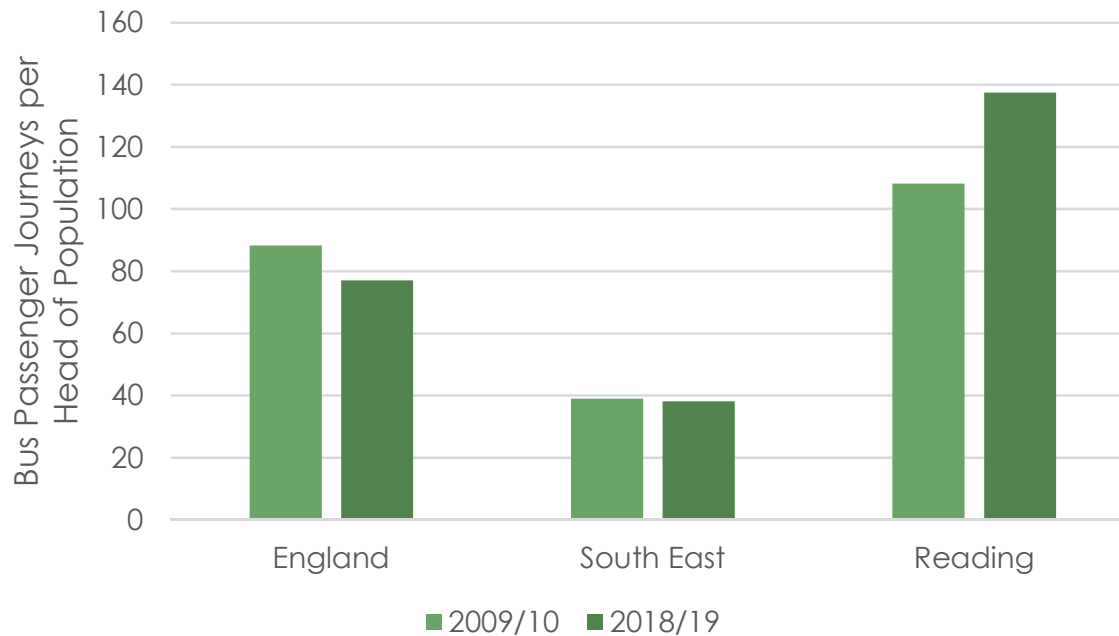


Figure 15: Bus Use in Reading



Page 489

Road

3.41 The M4 motorway runs east to west just south of Reading, with three junctions offering access to the city region. The M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway scheme will increase capacity on this road.

3.42 There has been a huge shift in the town's economy, from its origins in 'beer, biscuits and bulbs', to a compact service economy which specialises in business and insurance

services, home to the largest concentration of information and communication technology corporations in the UK. The Thames Valley generates some £37.8 billion per annum in output³⁵ and is the highest outside of London in regard to GVA per hour worked³⁶.

3.43 A high proportion of people in the wider city region continue to drive to and from work and schools, with the **average annual delay to drivers in Reading more than twice England's average**³⁷.

3.44 **The average car commuter in Reading spends 26 hours a year in congestion during peak hours**, with a total estimated cost of £75 million³⁸.

3.45 **Reading car commute times have increased by 46% between 2007 and 2016**³⁹ and a survey recently undertaken by RBC showed that 93% of local businesses that responded believe congestion affects productivity⁴⁰.

3.46 The additional network capacity provided as part of the Smart Motorway scheme is needed as Reading's road network can become crippled when incidents or closures occur on the M4, or other major roads into/out of the town centre. It is vital that we continue to build resilience into the network to enable the transport system to continue to operate efficiently during such periods of disruption as the town continues to thrive and grow.

3.47 The ability to continue to attract inward investment while reducing environmental impacts in Reading depends on managing the transport network and providing sustainable transport facilities as demand for travel grows. This will require sustained investment across the transport network so that Reading and the Thames Valley area can continue to thrive.

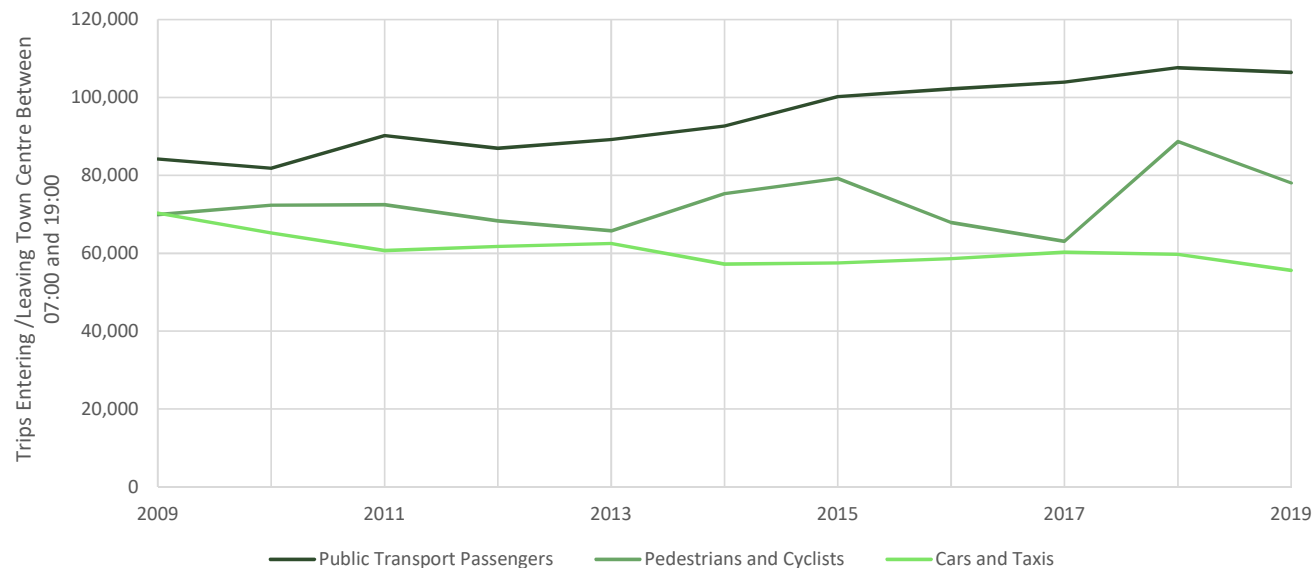
Building on Our Success

3.48 We have made significant investment in the transport network in recent years. During this time, significant levels of investment have been secured to provide new and upgraded transport infrastructure and encourage people living, visiting and working in Reading to use sustainable transport options.

3.49 We have an excellent track record of successfully securing external funding to deliver improvements to the transport network in Reading. This includes over £25 million from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which enabled us to deliver a programme of sustainable schemes including Christchurch Bridge and Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle Park and Rides sites; over £40 million from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership to help deliver a new railway station at Green Park, and initial phases of the South Reading Fast Track Public Transport corridor scheme, Thames Valley Park & Ride (in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council), upgrades to Reading West Station and Theale Station (in partnership with West Berkshire Council), and a new cross-Berkshire National Cycle Network route.

3.50 Reading has been at the forefront of delivering innovative technology schemes including the recent Smart City Clusters and ADEPT Live Lab projects.

Figure 16: Town Centre Cordon Count Results



Mode	2008/9/10 Average Total Trips	2017/18/19 Average Total Trips	% Change
Walk	66,759	67,686	+1.4%
Cycle	5,773	8,913	+54.4%
Bus	45,942	60,865	+32.5%
Train	37,523	45,147	+20.3%
Car & Taxi	67,051	58,506	-12.7%

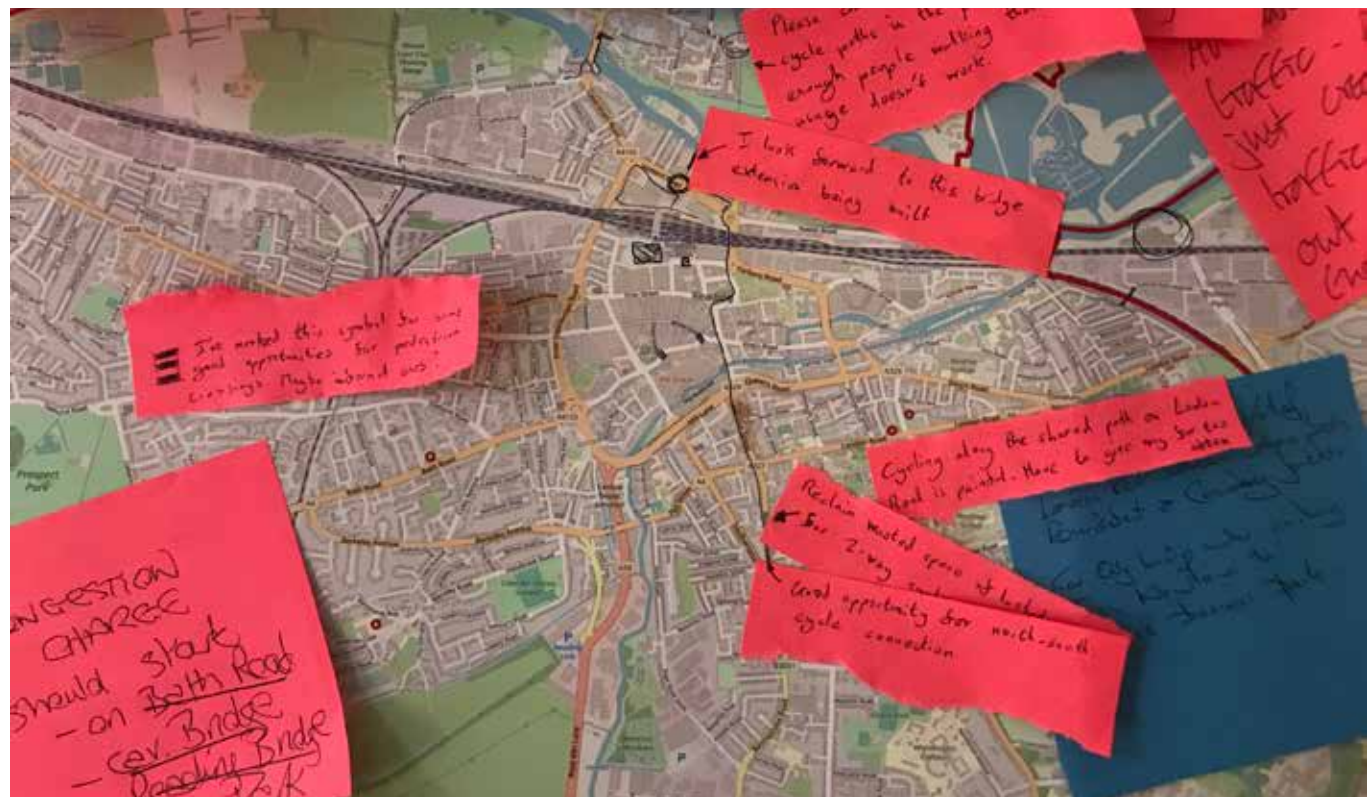
- 3.51 Reading has also been involved in EU-funded projects researching the application of sustainable transport initiatives and sharing best practice.
- 3.52 Progress in delivering our transport strategy objectives has been monitored annually since 2008 conducting a 12-hour survey on the number of trips made into and out of the town centre by each mode of travel. Whilst the results are to an extent subject to weather conditions on the survey day, the historical data, as shown in Figure 16, is a useful indicator that there has been an overall increase in the number of trips being made into and from the town centre. Significantly there is a continuing upward trend in sustainable transport trips against a decline in car trips.
- 3.53 This shift towards sustainable travel has contributed towards generally decreasing levels of NO₂ air pollution in Reading although air quality still remains a significant concern in the town with areas that breach legal limits.

Engagement and Initiatives

- 3.54 In addition to numerous major projects that we have delivered in recent years (such as those shown in case studies on the following pages), we have also delivered a wide range of initiatives and engagement activities.

- 3.55 These include air quality measures, such as the installation of 'No Idling' signage at schools, expansion of the Co-Wheels car club in Reading, a significant programme of residential and business personalised travel planning, road safety education and bikeability cycle training in schools and the national school sustainable travel accreditation scheme Modeshift STARS.

Transport Strategy Visioning Consultation, Public Exhibition



Active Travel

Recently delivered schemes include:

- Christchurch Bridge
- Reading Station Cycle Hub
- National Cycle Network 422
- London Road Active Travel Improvement Scheme
- Forbury Retail Park to Napier Road Active Travel Link
- Church Street Public Space Enhancements

Page 458

3.56 We have delivered many significant active travel schemes including Christchurch Bridge and National Cycle Network route 422, alongside a comprehensive programme of local improvements such as numerous new pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities, additional cycle parking at Reading Station, town centre and local centres throughout the urban area, cycle training, road safety education and school and personalised travel planning initiatives.

3.57 Much-needed repairs to walking and cycling links in the town have also been carried out, such as the St Laurence's Church wall at the Forbury, where the structural buttresses supporting the wall had blocked the footway since the 1970s. We also refurbished and reopened an underpass under the Great Western Main Line connecting Newtown to the River Thames, reducing severance for residents in the area.



Project Name: Christchurch Bridge
Cost: £5.9 Million
Status: Completed 2015

Christchurch Bridge was opened in 2015, providing a step-change in pedestrian and cycle provision between Caversham and Reading railway station and town centre, reducing the severance caused by the River Thames and helping to encourage active travel. The bridge also enhances access to green space at Christchurch Meadows for residents in the town centre. It was the first new crossing of the Thames in Reading for almost 90 years.

Determining key geometric requirements of the bridge required careful development with attention to architectural concept, buildability and environmental elements. The design incorporates extensive new landscaping, including an area of wetland habitat to achieve flood mitigation and enhance biodiversity, while managing constraints including proximity to adjacent properties. Christchurch Bridge provides a legacy for future generations. The bridge is the first across the River Thames built outside London for 20 years.



Project Name: NCN 422
Cost: £4.2 Million (across Berkshire)
Status: Completed 2020

The new National Cycle Network Route 422 will connect Newbury and Ascot, via Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell. The scheme provides better connections for long distance cycle journeys, as well as enhanced facilities for more local journeys within Reading. The section within Reading links to those in neighbouring authorities serving major business parks, local centres, Royal Berkshire Hospital, the University of Reading and schools.

Enhancements include both on and off-carriageway cycle facilities, new crossing points including raised tables and tiger crossings to improve connectivity along the Bath Road, through the town centre and along Wokingham Road.



Public Transport

Recently delivered schemes include:

- Reading Station Upgrade
- Reading Station Interchanges
- Reading Station Town Centre Enabling
- Cemetery Junction Bus Priority
- Winnersh Park and Ride
- Mereok Park and Ride
- South Reading FTPT Initial Phases

Page 458

3.58 Public transport has been a key focus for Reading over recent years, and we have delivered several major schemes, including major upgrades to Reading Station and delivery of parts of our South Fast Track Public Transport corridor. In addition, we have carried out a replacement programme for old bus shelters and implemented a Park and Ride services from Mereok Park and Ride the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Green Park and Reading football matches.

3.59 The delivery of bus priority measures in Central Reading and along routes leading out of the centre have helped keep bus

services out of congestion, contributing to the significant rises in bus use mentioned earlier.

3.60 We have successfully campaigned for the Elizabeth Line to be extended from Maidenhead to Reading, to provide a direct route from Reading across London. TfL Rail Elizabeth Line services between Reading and Paddington began from December 2019 with four trains an hour (six per hour at peak times) running between Reading and Paddington. Following the completion of the entire route, which is scheduled for 2021, passengers will be able to travel through Central London all the way to Canary Wharf and Abbey Wood without changing. The Elizabeth line services also radically improve the local train services within the Thames Valley by providing more regular trains linking Slough, Maidenhead and Twyford to Reading.

3.61 In 2015, we opened Mereok Park and Ride near the M4 Junction 11, which was shortly followed by the opening of Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride two months later. Combined with Madejski Park and Ride, the facilities have provided a cost-effective alternative to private car travel into the centre of Reading. All three sites are served by regular bus services, with Mereok and Madejski also benefitting from the South FTPT corridor.



Project Name: Reading Station Area
Cost: £879 Million
Status: Completed 2015
Partners: Network Rail

Reading Railway Station underwent a major upgrade, which was completed in 2015.

The works included provision of a new North interchange and remodelling of the southern interchanges to improve public space and enhancing the connectivity and legibility of the area. New platforms were built, along with track layout reconfiguration to remove bottlenecks on the Great Western Main Line and a new rail

signalling centre for the Thames Valley. Major work was also carried out on the Great Western Main Line to prepare for electrification.

The works have led to a 125% improvement to through line platform capacity, and a 38% improvement in service performance⁴¹. The new station has been designed to accommodate the Elizabeth Line and Western rail access to Heathrow Airport

The revitalisation of Reading Station has been a catalyst for major redevelopment in Reading as a whole, including Station Hill and Thames Tower.



Project Name: South Reading Fast Track Public Transport
Cost: £18.3 Million (to date)
Status: In progress
Partners: Reading Buses, Wokingham Borough Council, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Green Park, Reading International Business Park

Reading's South Fast Track Public Transport (FTPT) corridor scheme has delivered a series of bus priorities measures on the A33 between Reading Town Centre and the Mereok Park and Ride facility to the south of the M4 junction 11. The scheme is designed to reduce forecast congestion

and improve public transport journey times and reliability on this key corridor into Reading, helping to accommodate the increasing travel demands associated with growth by attracting more travel to be made by public transport instead of private car. We have a phased approach to implementation of South FTPT, delivering sections of the scheme as external funding is secured.

Journey times for South FTPT services have reduced by up to 24% from 2015 when Mereok was opened and these services are now the most reliable in the Reading area. As a result of this improvement, average passenger numbers on these services have increased by 62% from 2015 to 2019.



Highway, Network Management & Parking

Recently delivered schemes include:

- Cow Lane Bridges
- Red Route
- A33 Pinch Point Scheme
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Eastern Area 20mph
- Traffic Signal Upgrades
- Reading Bridge Strengthening

Page 466

3.62 The use of technology in transport in Reading has grown significantly over the last few years, with advances made both in the provision of information (through Variable Message Signs and mobile applications, for example) and through data collection such as the Bluetooth journey-time monitoring system.

3.63 Detection infrastructure has been installed at disabled parking bays in Reading, facilitating development of a mobile application that can be used to remotely determine whether disabled parking is available.

3.64 Traffic signal upgrades have also been carried out across the majority of traffic signal junctions across the Borough, replacing life expired equipment, installing new low energy equipment and improving the network's ability to respond dynamically to changing traffic flow and pedestrian and cycle movements at crossings.

3.65 Reading's transport systems produce a significant amount of data, therefore making best use of this data to optimise the network for all users has been a key priority. This included the securing of DfT funding to apply machine learning to the datasets to not only understand the current operation of the network, but to also predict the near-term future to enhance how Reading deals with congestion, incidents and events.

3.66 Several highway and parking schemes have been delivered within the Borough, including safety schemes, schemes to improve public space, and increases to highway capacity. 20mph speed limits have been implemented around primary schools, as well as waiting restrictions and yellow zigzags, and verge and footway parking bans have been implemented in Tilehurst and Southcote. Mobile payment facilities for on-street pay and display parking have also been installed, alongside residents' parking schemes in many areas.



Project Name: Cow Lane Bridges
Cost: Included in Reading Station Area works
Status: Completed 2019
Partners: Network Rail

The scheme can also accommodate larger vehicles such as buses and lorries. This provides the opportunity to route lorry traffic in the West of Reading away from the Oxford Road, creating a potentially safer and more welcoming environment for residents and businesses in the local area.

An enhanced walk and cycle route has been provided as part the scheme along Cow Lane.

Improvement works to the Cow Lane Bridges were completed in 2019, improving travel around Oxford Road and Portman Road. This major upgrade to the bridges has been delivered to enable two-way traffic through both bridges, thus removing a major traffic bottleneck within Reading.



Project Name: Red Route
Cost: £250,000
Status: Completed 2019

A Red Route has been implemented in Reading on the 17 bus route along the Oxford Road, through the town centre and along Wokingham Road. This is a no stopping restriction which will keep key public transport services moving, prevent delays for bus passengers and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are over 4.5 million trips on the 17 bus route each year⁴², and so the Red Route has provided wide-scale benefit to local residents by improving traffic flow and making public transport more reliable.

This initial trial is intended to be rolled out to other locations across the town where enhanced enforcement will provide similar benefits.



4. Challenges & Opportunities

Introduction

- 4.1 To achieve our overall vision for transport in Reading we have identified the issues currently faced in terms of transport, and future challenges and opportunities that this strategy will need to address, to inform our objectives, schemes and policies.
- 4.2 We have considered:
- Current travel patterns
 - Existing transport infrastructure
 - Socio-economics and demographics
 - Health, wellbeing and environmental issues
 - Future development and growth
- 4.3 This chapter provides details of the key challenges and opportunities for transport in Reading and considers the whole of Reading Borough, as well as the wider urban area, including parts of Tilehurst and Purley, Calcot, Woodley, Earley and Winnersh, to allow consideration of cross-boundary issues. Our analysis has considered Reading Borough at a strategic level, as well as local issues.

Key Challenges

- 4.4 Seven key challenges for our strategy to address have been identified through detailed analysis of the evidence base. These are:

- Adapting to the future
- Improving air quality
- Reducing car congestion and the negative effects it causes
- Providing affordable and accessible travel for all
- Removing barriers to healthy lifestyles
- Achieving good accessibility to local facilities and employment
- Accommodating development and delivering the Local Plan

Adapting to the Future

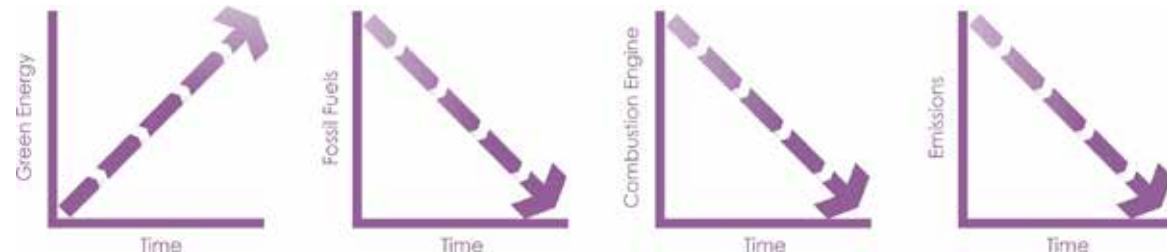
We know that we are in the midst of a climate crisis. This, alongside fast changing technological innovation, means the future is uncertain and Reading will need to adapt, through both decarbonisation and accepting the need to travel more sustainably. This will affect the way we travel and transport goods, whilst at the same time provide new and innovative opportunities for society.

Climate Change Emergency

- 4.5 We are in a state of crisis with our actions to date having increased atmospheric CO₂ levels to a level where average global temperatures will rise to around 1.5 to 2.0 degrees above pre-industrial base by around 2050. Transport is now the biggest sector in terms of CO₂ emissions in the UK representing over a quarter of emissions. The very modest technological improvements in petrol and diesel engine technology over the last 20 years to reduce CO₂ have been more than offset by consumer behaviour changes such as SUV sales increasing from 4% in 1998 to over 25% in 2018. Globally, the growth in SUV sales was the second highest cause of continuing increases in atmospheric CO₂ last year after electricity generation.
- 4.6 The Government's targets for net zero by 2050 and a need to more than halve CO₂ emissions globally by 2030 as set out by the Commission for Climate Change require radical action. This cannot be achieved through only technological intervention;

people will need to make changes to the way they live their lives and how they travel.

- 4.7 By 2035, the sale of new petrol and diesel car and vans will be banned in the UK. Car manufacturers are expected to reduce outputs of combustion engine cars in advance of this, and by 2030, 70% of new cars are likely to be electric⁶². As older cars are gradually replaced and removed from the network, fewer and fewer combustion engine vehicles are expected to remain on our roads.
- 4.8 Even with electric vehicles, we will need to reduce how much we travel by private car; the manufacturing processes for electric vehicles and (at least currently) the sources used for electricity generation to power them both result in air pollution that contributes towards climate change. Additionally, electric vehicles produce particulate pollution as they are used, and both electric and combustion engine vehicles add to congestion and reduced levels of physical activity.



UK Industrial Strategy 2019

- 4.9 The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterised by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human [Klaus Schwab, The Fourth Industrial Revolution].
- 4.10 Being able to capture the benefits of rapidly changing technology is key to meeting future challenges including climate change and there is huge opportunity from new technologies. However, with such rapid change comes real risks of communities being left behind and risks of a technology led future that is not inclusive, which does not benefit society as a whole.

Page 460

- 4.11 The UK Industrial Strategy 2019 has set out a number of the key technologies that the UK should be investing in, linking them to four Grand Challenges for UK investment: mobility, ageing population, artificial intelligence and data, and clean growth, where there are a lot of interactions between these areas. This highlights that we cannot meet our transport challenges of the future through just working within our transport silo but need an integrated smart city approach to delivering services.
- 4.12 The Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy details plans for enabling growth in the region, supporting the UK Industrial Strategy.

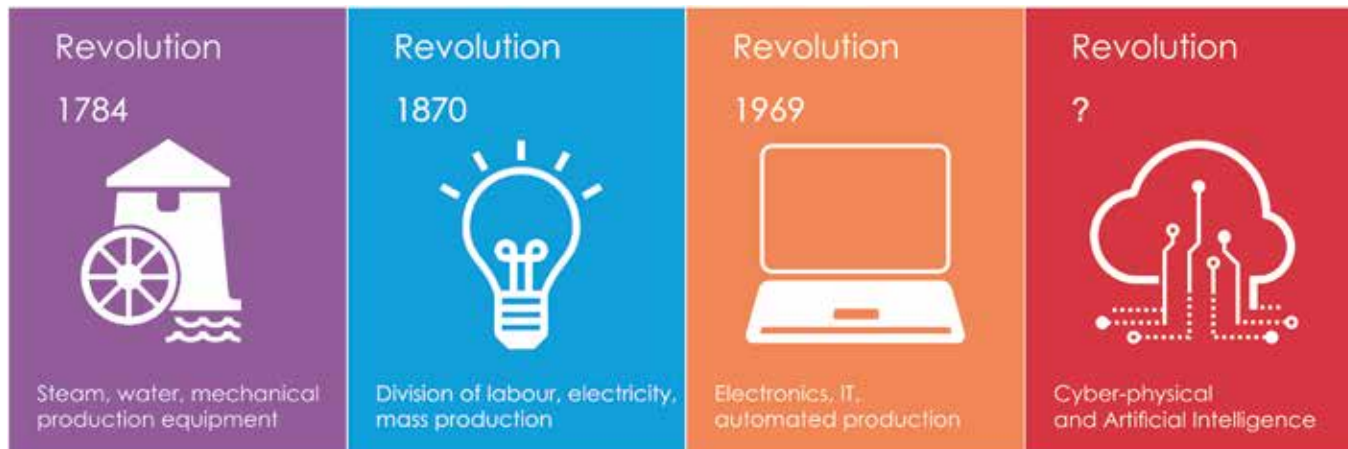
Main Technological Changes

- 4.13 Some of the main technological changes that are foreseen in the transport sector include:

New Fuels

- 4.14 Public transport, both rail and road has already invested heavily in moving away from use of diesel as a main fuel with electric trains and bio gas buses already providing much of Reading's public transport. Significant investment is now also being made by the car industry in Electric Vehicles technology (EVs). Hydrogen fuel cell technology is also being developed and we may see this coming forward in this period, probably for freight and potentially public transport in the first instance. These technologies will help further de-carbonisation of the transport sector, although their impact may not be significant before 2036.

- 4.15 There is a challenge of providing the right balance of public electric car charging infrastructure to support EV take up, whilst not necessitating expensive electricity grid reinforcement and battery storage that may not be required in the long run.



Autonomous Vehicles

- 4.16 There is significant investment and publicity around autonomous vehicles and we see two distinct applications.
- 4.17 The first is a private autonomous car that can give hands free travel to anywhere in the UK. There is not forecast to be a significant take up in the plan period, however in the longer term, autonomous vehicles have the potential to smooth traffic flow, almost eliminate accidents and could free up car parks for development and the continuing development of driver assist systems will contribute to these outcomes in the interim.
- 4.18 The second is shared autonomous vehicles such as 12 to 15 person autonomous electric pods, although these could be any size of vehicle. These vehicles are already operating at certain locations across the world where they operate in private controlled environments such as business parks, and a number of cities globally have trialled these vehicles. It is anticipated that Government legislation will enable autonomous vehicles to operate without a driver on the public highway in the next few years and hence they could form part of a transport strategy for Reading within the plan period. Shared Autonomous Vehicles have the potential to support public transport services, providing affordable door-to-door public transport when connected to

interchanges with other public transport services. The ability to connect door-to-door could also provide an inclusive service reducing the need for households to own a car.

Autonomous Public Transport



Drone Delivery

- 4.19 By 2030, between 150,000 and 400,000 commercial drones are expected to be in operation in the UK⁶³. There could be drones supporting our emergency services, delivering parcels, as well as supporting other industries. Whilst drones are predicted to uplift the UK GDP by £42 billion by 2030⁶⁴, there are concerns regarding privacy, noise pollution and visual impacts which have yet to be addressed. However, the evidence suggests that drones are likely to be part of our future transport system.

Mobility Services on Demand

- 4.20 Mobility services are widely forecast to provide a step-change in the way we will travel in the future. Instead of individuals spending a lot of money investing in a car which is only in actual use around 4% or 5% of the time they would pay a monthly subscription for a service that can be tailored to their needs which we can access via an app and a single payment platform. Mobility services can bring together public transport, with cycle hire, shared taxi hire as well as private car hire and, by reducing car ownership, can significantly reduce private car dependence which is critical to enabling economic growth in a net zero carbon future. Currently, mobility services are generally not much more than an app which brings together journey planning and payment services on a single platform. However, there is potential that these services will harness the power of big data and artificial intelligence to accurately predict demand for travel and hence provide very efficient shared transport services which will remove the need and desire to own a car.

Micro-Mobility

- 4.21 Micro-mobility encompasses a range of transport choices from scooters and electric scooters to electric bikes and small electric one and two seat cars for urban transport.

Some of these, such as e-scooters will require legislation to be legal on the public roads, and others, such as e-bikes need careful consideration in designing routes as they can move at a steady 15mph with very little effort, opening up larger areas to be within easy cycle distance where safe routes are provided.

Next Generation of Network Management Systems

4.22 The current traffic management systems, whilst there have been some key developments, are essentially still based on technology from the 1970s and optimise the highway network for vehicles based on monitoring traffic flow. It is anticipated that new generation of network management systems will be delivered, which use multiple sensors (Internet of Things – IoT) including connected vehicles and the travellers themselves to create predictive network models using machine learning and artificial intelligence. This expected to link to mobility services creating a multi-modal and integrated system.

Wider Changes in Society - Sharing and Circular Economy

4.23 The sharing economy is another potential step-change in transport and there we are already seeing individuals hiring out their private cars in certain cities or renting out their driveways during the day for commuter

parking. New companies are making sharing very easy and safe via apps, and this is expected to grow. Another aspect of the sharing economy is car sharing and there is significant potential for this to grow.

4.24 The circular economy will help to reduce our impact on the environment, through keeping products in use for as long as possible, and then recovering and reusing materials at the end of the product life. The circular economy can apply to everything from plastic bags through to our transport infrastructure. For example, trials of 'plastic roads' have been undertaken, where recycled plastic has been mixed with asphalt to resurface roads, rather than using bitumen.

4.25 Research and trials regarding reuse of materials is on-going, and we anticipate that the way we design and build our transport infrastructure could change significantly over the plan period.

4.26 We also expect growth in services and businesses supporting the circular economy and reducing waste, such as libraries of 'everyday items', community fridges, household goods/food refill shops and repair cafés.

4.27 With all of the above predicted technological changes there will be considerable opportunities, alongside

challenges to avoid isolation of individuals as technology 'passes them by'. A key aim of this strategy is to ensure inclusivity and access to travel as needed for everyone in Reading.

Figure 17: The Circular Economy



Improving Air Quality

- 4.28 Vehicles cause air pollution through emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM). In the UK, road transport contributes 12% of all fine PM and 34% of NO_x pollution⁴⁷. Vehicle emissions from private cars, taxis and goods vehicles are a significant concern, particularly the effects on human health.
- 4.29 As a result of high-levels of congestion in parts of Reading, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared covering the town centre and many of the key corridors into and out of the town including adjacent to the Royal Berkshire Hospital; as shown in Figure 19. Additionally, Wokingham Borough Council has declared an AQMA along the M4 south of Reading.
- 4.30 In Reading, our monitoring shows that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is the only pollutant that currently exceeds a UK national objective. Levels of NO₂ have started to fall, but we must do more to reduce NO_x pollution further. Although the levels of particulate matter are below current UK objectives, it is widely accepted that there is no known safe limit for exposure to particulate matter. It is important that we reduce particulate emissions to limit the impact on our communities.

- 4.31 The negative effects of poor air quality are serious: up to 36,000 people in the UK die as a result of air pollution every year⁴⁸, and research indicates that reducing PM by 10µg/m³ would extend average lifespans in the UK by five times more than eliminating casualties on the roads, or three times more than eliminating passive smoking⁴⁹. In Reading, **6% of deaths are attributable to PM_{2.5}**⁵⁰.
- 4.32 The **mortality rate from respiratory disease has been increasing for under-75s in Reading for in recent years**, as shown in Figure 20⁵¹. Current rates are more than 40% above the average for the South East.

- 4.33 Whilst technologies are developing that are reducing the level of NO_x and particulate matter vehicles emit from exhausts, and the UK is shifting towards electric vehicles, around 85% of fine particulate pollution from vehicles does not come from exhausts⁵².
- 4.34 All road vehicles, including electric vehicles, cause air pollution from wear and tear on tyres, brakes and road surfaces, and particles are lifted back into the air through vehicle movement. It is expected that, in the relatively near future, non-exhaust emissions will be dominant in road transport, and reducing single/low occupancy road travel will be required to achieve improvements in air quality.

Figure 18: Vehicle Emissions

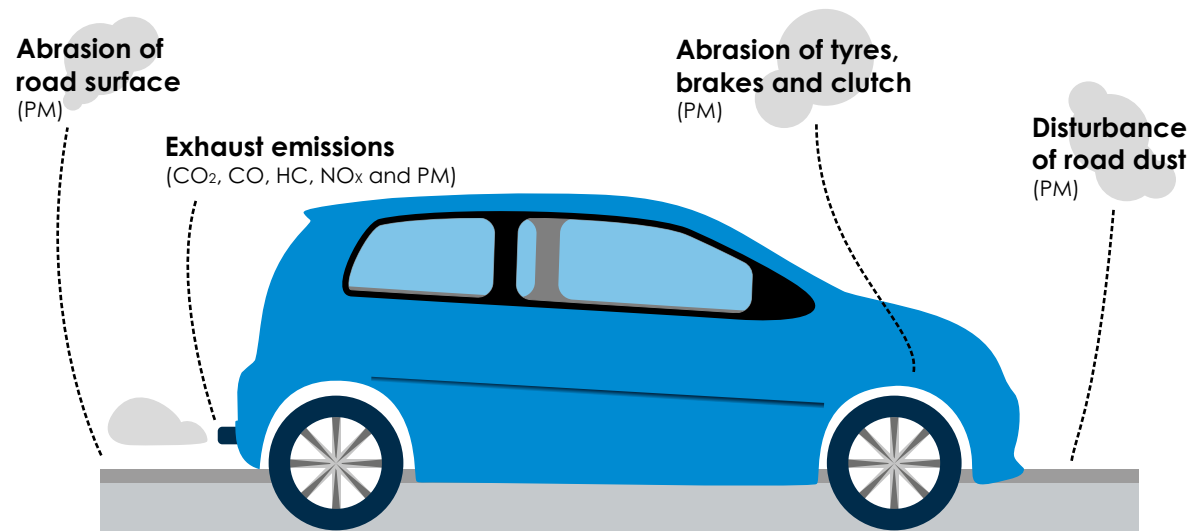
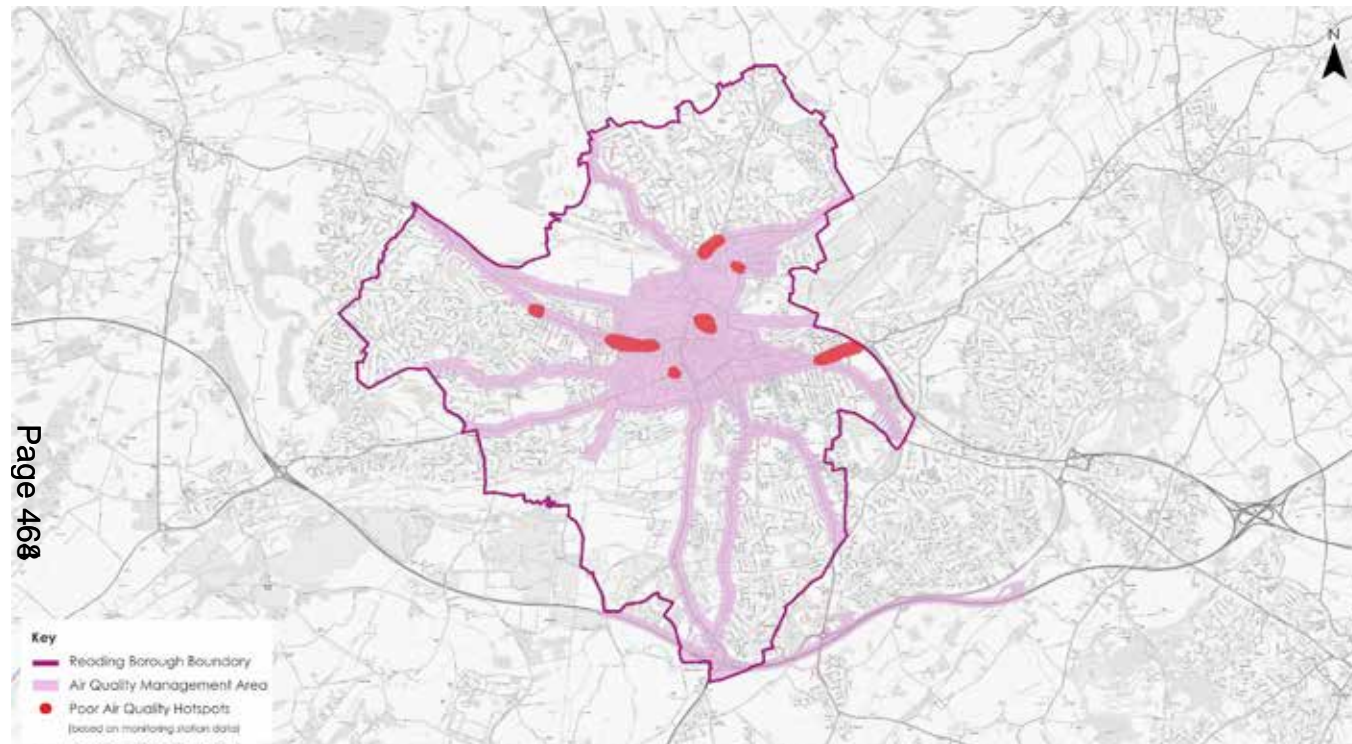


Figure 19: Monitored Air Quality Hotspots



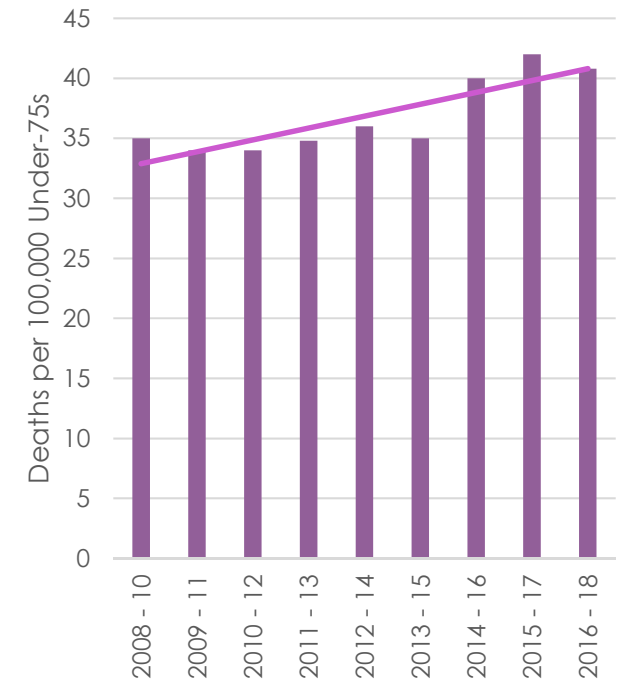
Page 468

4.35 Reading has one of the cleanest bus fleets in the UK, and we have secured over £1.5 million of funding from Central Government to upgrade the remaining buses to the latest green emissions standards. Reading Buses has also trialled an electric bus in Reading to understand how they could have potential to help improve Reading's air quality.

4.36 The electrification of the Great Western Mainline and introduction of electric trains along the route will also reduce public transport emissions by reducing pollution from trains starting and stopping in Reading.

4.37 There is opportunity in Reading to improve air quality and correspondingly improve health outcomes for the area. Increasing sustainable travel mode share and

Figure 20: Under-75 Mortality Rate for Respiratory Disease

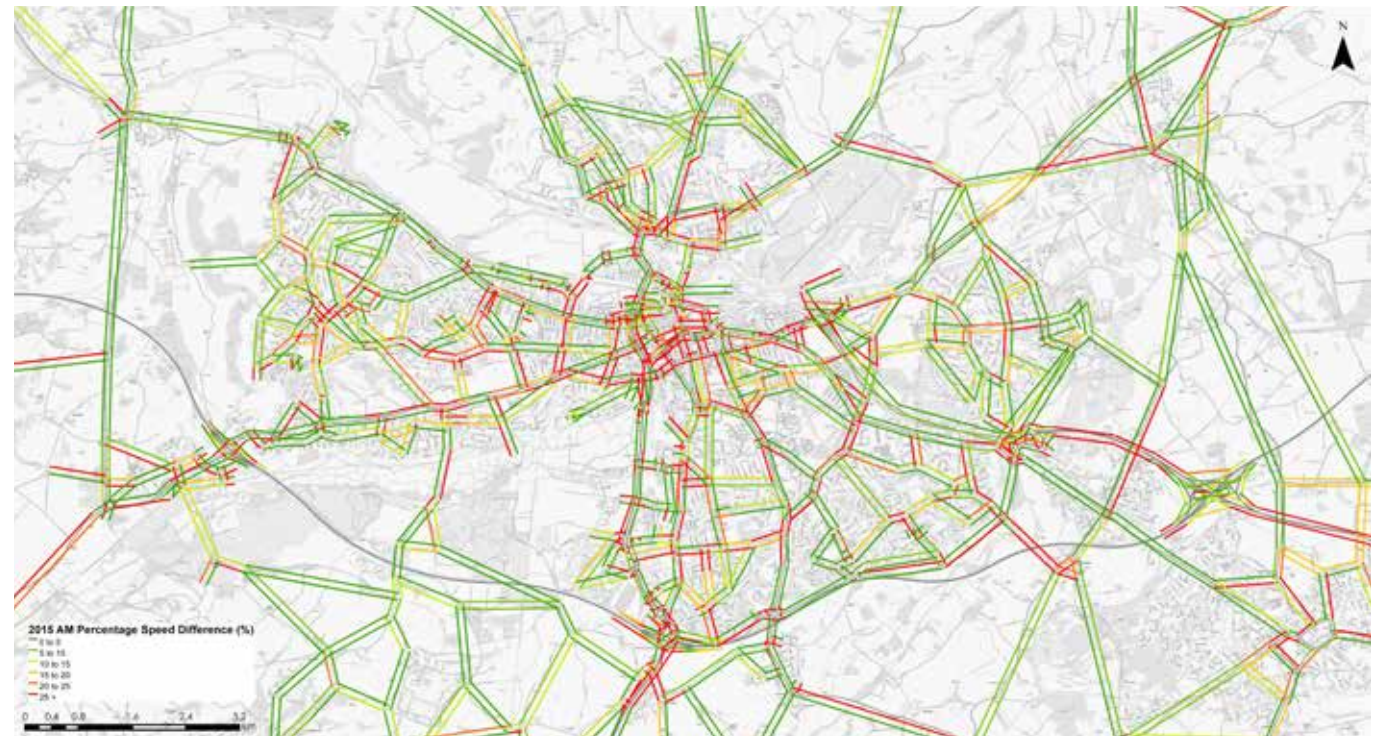


reducing private vehicle (particularly single-occupancy) use is key to reducing transport emissions. Improvements to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, as well as increased promotion of sustainable travel options will support this mode shift, and can also contribute towards reducing exposure to pollution by increasing the separation distance between people and vehicles, and increase green infrastructure.

Reducing Congestion

- 4.38 Due to Reading's location and a lack of alternative strategic north-south road connections in the surrounding area, there are high levels of through-traffic, with no origin or destination within the Borough. This adds to the high levels of congestion in the town centre, on the bridges over the River Thames and along key corridors.
- 4.39 Additionally, 56% of car driving commuters living and working within the Reading area do not have an origin or destination within the Central Neighbourhood Area, and instead travel around the edge of Reading. Due to a relative lack of orbital routes, a large proportion of these drivers travel via the Inner Distribution Road (IDR), further adding to town centre congestion. In peak hours, **up to a third of trips using the IDR in peak periods could take a more direct or appropriate route**, if orbital route improvements or other transport alternatives were in place.
- 4.40 For employment trips within the Neighbourhood Areas, the proportion of people travelling by car is relatively low, at 51%. However, for trips starting or ending outside the Reading area, this rises to around 86%. This leads to increased levels of traffic and commuter car congestion within the Neighbourhood Areas as traffic travels into and out of the town⁴⁵.

Figure 21: AM Peak Hour Vehicle Speed Reduction Compared to Speed Limit (2015)



4.41 Delays are generally worse at signalised junctions, particularly those that are not operating the latest technology, and in local centres where traffic mixes with people, as shown in Figure 21.

4.42 Despite significant investment in public transport and active travel improvements, traffic and congestion around Reading continues to grow, and more substantial investment and infrastructure is needed to encourage people to make sustainable travel choices, and to provide alternative, more suitable, routing options for through-traffic.

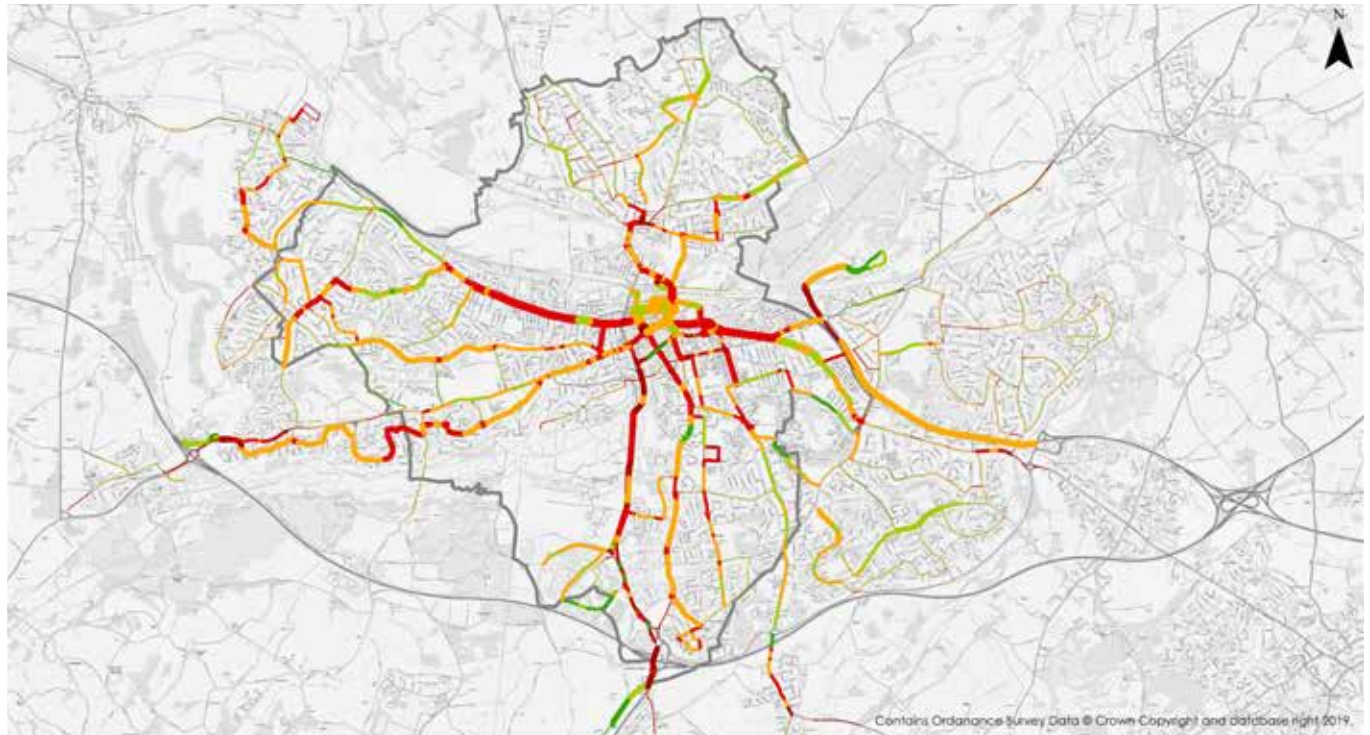
4.43 Car congestion has significant negative impacts on our public transport network and services. Public transport is critical to travel and movement around Reading: 21.6 million journeys were made by bus in 2018, and this number is increasing annually⁴⁶.

4.44 We have invested heavily in public transport priority across the town and many of the primary routes into and out of the town centre have bus priority, but there are some roads with a high bus service frequency that do not. These routes would benefit from the introduction of bus lanes and other measures to improve bus journey times and reliability.

4.45 Furthermore, there are a number of locations away from the key corridors where car congestion builds up, particularly in the peak hours and at school times, and causes delays to bus services, as illustrated in Figure 22. Whilst there is existing bus priority at some congestion hotspots, there are locations where bus priority is not present and, if introduced, would improve service frequency and reliability, making bus services more attractive in Reading.

4.46 Delays are also caused where there are obstructions in the carriageway, such as on-street parking and delivery and servicing. The introduction of a Red Route no-stopping restriction along Oxford Road and Wokingham Road aims to keep public transport moving and reduce delays for

Figure 22: PM Peak Bus Frequency and Highway Congestion



passengers, whilst also improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme includes parking and loading bays, to provide appropriate places for vehicles to park, whilst not obstructing vehicle movements.

4.47 There is an opportunity to introduce similar measures along other corridors in Reading, especially in local centres, where movements conflict and buses experience delays.

Providing Affordable and Accessible Travel For All

We want Reading to be a town where everyone, regardless of background, disability, income, age or gender, can easily and safely travel around. Our transport system needs to be accessible to all, providing access to employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities, to allow our growing town to thrive.

Page 467

4.48 The RTS is supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment, prepared in accordance with statutory requirements including the Equality Act 2010. Likely different impacts of different demographic groups and people with protected characteristics have therefore been considered throughout the preparation of the RTS.

4.49 Specific demographics groups have been identified as most likely to be vulnerable to transport impacts. These are:

- People on low incomes
- People with health issues or disabilities
- Older people
- We have also considered Reading's diversity, and how many other groups may be affected by transport.

Income Deprivation

4.50 Incomes in the Reading urban area are generally high, but there are areas of deprivation, particularly in the Whitley, Tilehurst and Lower Caversham, as shown in Figure 23.

4.51 These areas generally correspond to areas of lower car ownership (Figure 24), and so these communities are more reliant on public transport, as well as active travel. It is therefore important that bus services in these areas are frequent, affordable and of high quality, and that walking and cycling networks are comprehensive, facilitating liveable neighbourhoods. This will enable convenient and direct access to employment opportunities and other facilities.

4.52 Outer parts of the Reading urban area, particularly outside the Borough boundary, generally have high incomes and correspondingly high car ownership. These areas also typically have less frequent and slower bus services, as there is very limited bus priority outside Reading Borough. Consequently, a high proportion of trips from these areas to/from Reading are made by car, increasing car congestion on local Reading roads. Priority for public transport services is needed, including Park and Ride services, to increase their attractiveness.

Figure 23: Income Deprivation

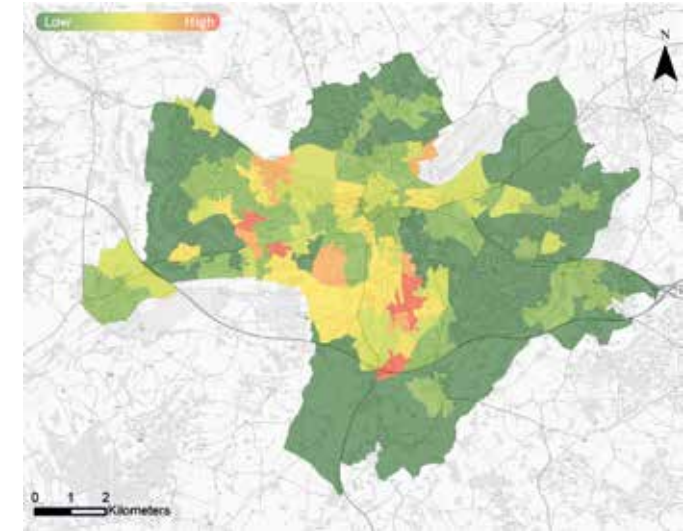
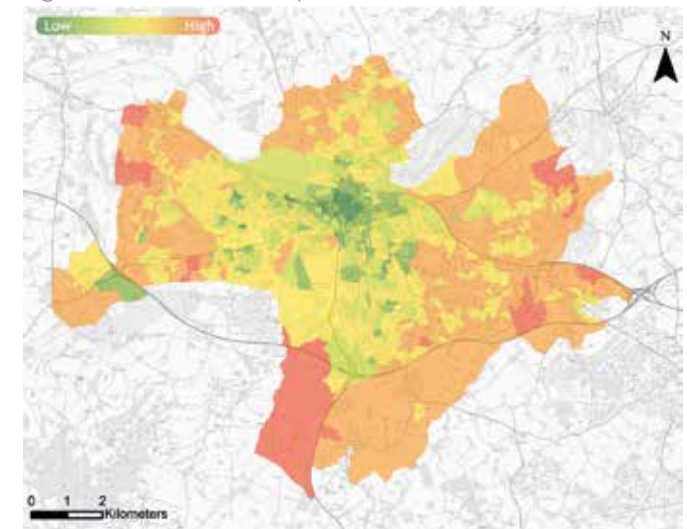


Figure 24: Car Ownership Levels



Health and Disability

4.53 Parts of the Reading urban area, particularly in the town centre, Whitley Coley and West Reading, have relatively high levels of health and disability deprivation. There are high levels of car congestion on roads around the town centre and along key road corridors in Reading. This leads to low environmental quality and high levels of air pollution, negatively affecting people's mental and physical health. This is reflected in Figure 25.

4.54 Overall, 12.9% of people in Reading report having a limiting long-term illness or disability⁵⁵.

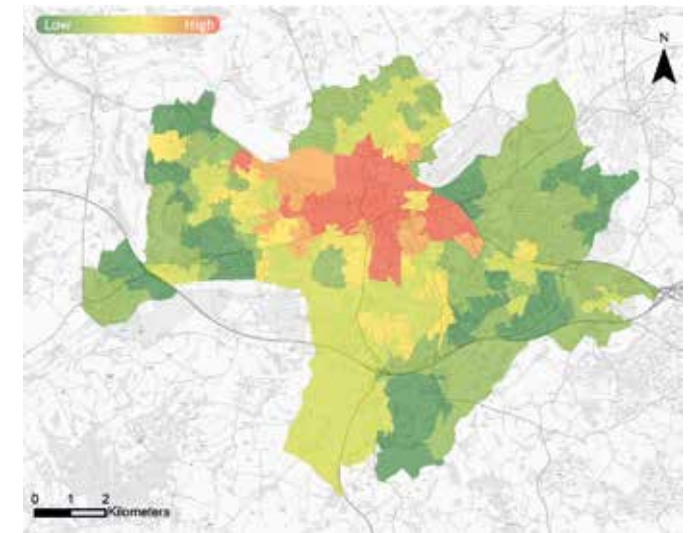
4.55 Sustainable transport provides a significant opportunity to improve quality of life for those with health issues or disabilities through providing access to local services and reducing social isolation. A high-quality, accessible transport network is important to provide disabled people with equal opportunities. In Reading, much has been done to improve the transport experience and accessibility for disabled travellers. Readibus provides door-to-door assisted bus services which are free to use for disabled people with support from Reading Borough Council.

4.56 All buses operated by Reading Buses are wheelchair accessible and most now have audio and visual on board stop announcements. However, there are still many barriers facing disabled people to use public transport.

4.57 Common barriers include:

- Narrow, uneven or poorly maintained pavements
- Dropped kerbs that are not flush with the road surface
- Very high or very low kerb heights
- Poor colour contrast
- Pavement obstruction by parked vehicles, street furniture and overgrown vegetation
- Use of disabled parking spaces by non-disabled drivers
- Difficulties navigating shared spaces
- Limited availability of travel information in accessible formats
- Cost of travel for those on lower incomes
- Lack of alternative provision where there are steps
- Availability of assistance and support

Figure 25: Health and Disability Deprivation



Older People

- 4.58 There are high proportions of older people clustered in parts of the Reading urban area, particularly in the outer parts of the Borough and neighbouring authorities, as shown in Figure 26.
- 4.59 33% of people aged 65 and over living in Reading live alone^{56,57} and are therefore more likely to be socially isolated and experience loneliness. Older people are also less likely to own and drive a car^{58,59} and may be less mobile. They are often reliant on public transport to meet their transport needs and to facilitate social interaction within their local communities, improving their mental and physical health.
- 4.60 Some of the areas of Reading with high populations of older people may be less financially viable environments in which to operate traditional commercial bus services. This is due to a high proportion of residents and bus users that may have concessionary travel passes which are used for a free off peak bus travel.
- 4.61 Some older people will still be travelling in the morning peak period when free travel is not available, whether for work or other reasons. Average retirement ages in the UK have been increasing since the year 1990, as shown in Figure 27, with an increase of 1.7 years for men, and 3.2 years for women

between 1990 and 2019⁶⁰. This is likely to lead to an increased demand for travel for older people in Reading, as a larger proportion of the population continues to travel for work for longer. By 2035, the number of people living in Reading aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 38%⁶¹.

- 4.62 However, a high proportion of older people will likely be travelling outside peak travel times for leisure, shopping and health or personal appointments rather than for work or education. Nevertheless, bus services provide important connections for residents to local facilities, and so it is important that a good bus service can be provided.
- 4.63 Older people may also be less familiar with technology than younger generations, and so it is important that travel information and tickets are available in accessible formats, such as print or telephone.

Figure 26: Proportion of Population Aged Over 65

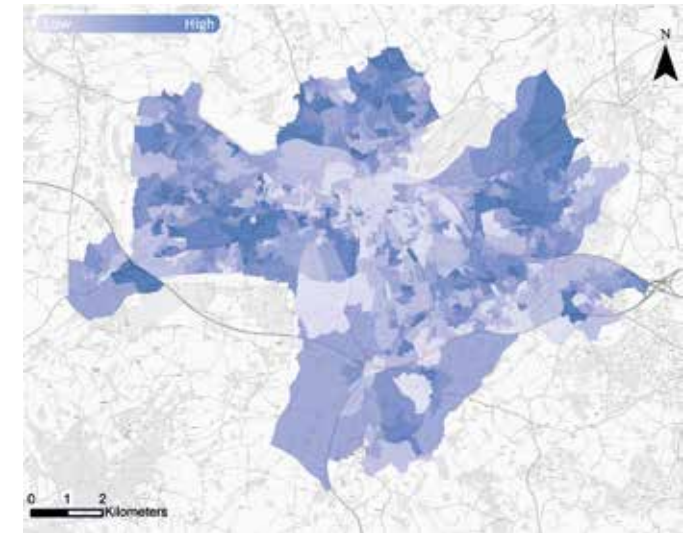
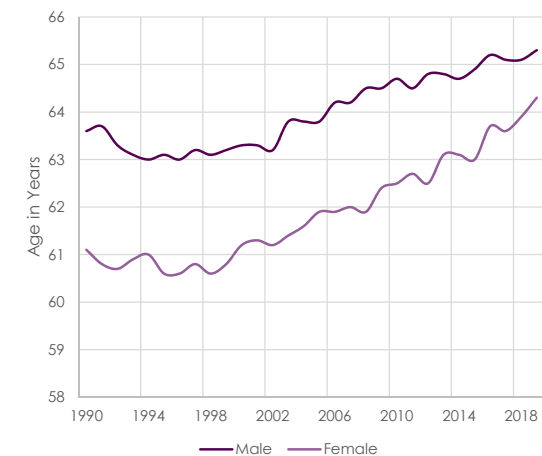


Figure 27: Average UK Retirement Age

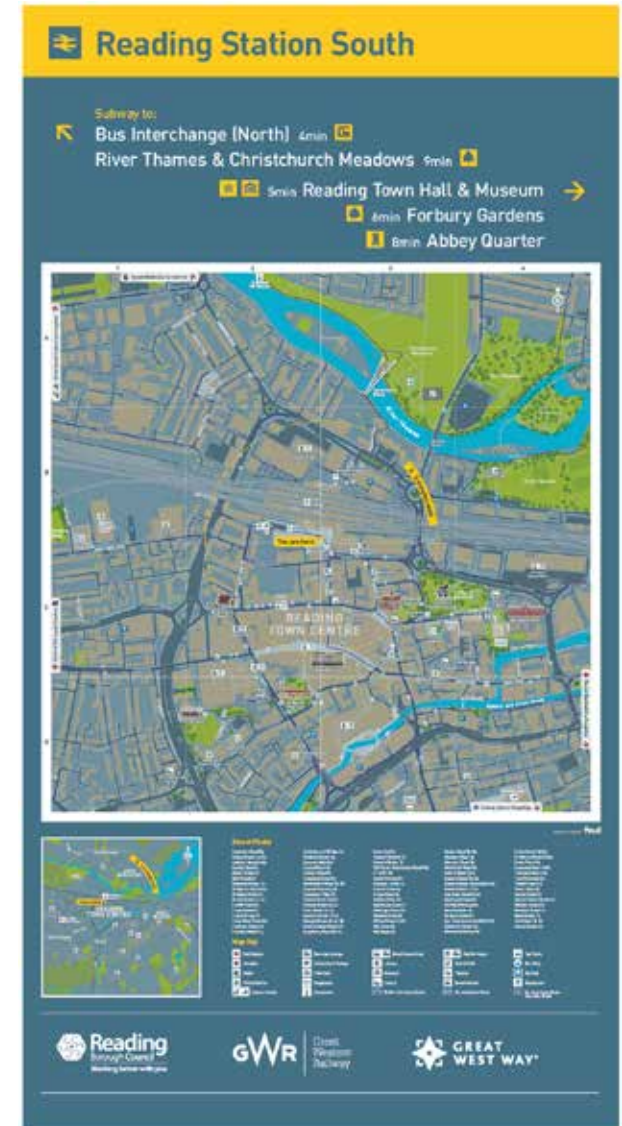


Diverse Communities

- 4.64 We need to ensure our transport network is designed to enable all of our residents, regardless of background, race, culture, religion and beliefs, sexuality, age or gender, are able to travel safely and easily.
- 4.65 Reading is highly multi-cultural, and has the seventh highest proportion of residents born outside the UK of any non-London local authority in England⁷³. Some of our residents have lower levels of English proficiency. Travel around Reading can be inherently more challenging for these people, as the majority of travel and route information is in English. This could discourage the use of public transport by people with lower levels of English proficiency, which could lead to reduced opportunities and increased social isolation.

- 4.66 The median age of Reading residents is 34 – the 16th youngest of any UK local authority outside London⁷⁴. Younger travellers, in particular children, may have more difficulty than the average user understanding complex information and responding to changes on the network (for example delays or cancelled services). Provision of appropriate information is therefore key to enabling younger people to use the network. In addition, children are more vulnerable whilst travelling, and so our transport network needs to be safe and secure, so that children feel comfortable whilst travelling and are able to travel independently.
- 4.67 There are a large number of visitors to Reading every year. Some of these are visitors on business, and others are for leisure reasons, such as Reading Festival. Visitors are less likely to be familiar with Reading and the transport network, and therefore clear and visible information is needed to allow them to plan and carry out their journeys.
- 4.68 Safety and security on our transport network and the provision of accessible information for all are key challenges we have identified in supporting our diverse communities in Reading.

Wayfinding Scheme - Travel Information



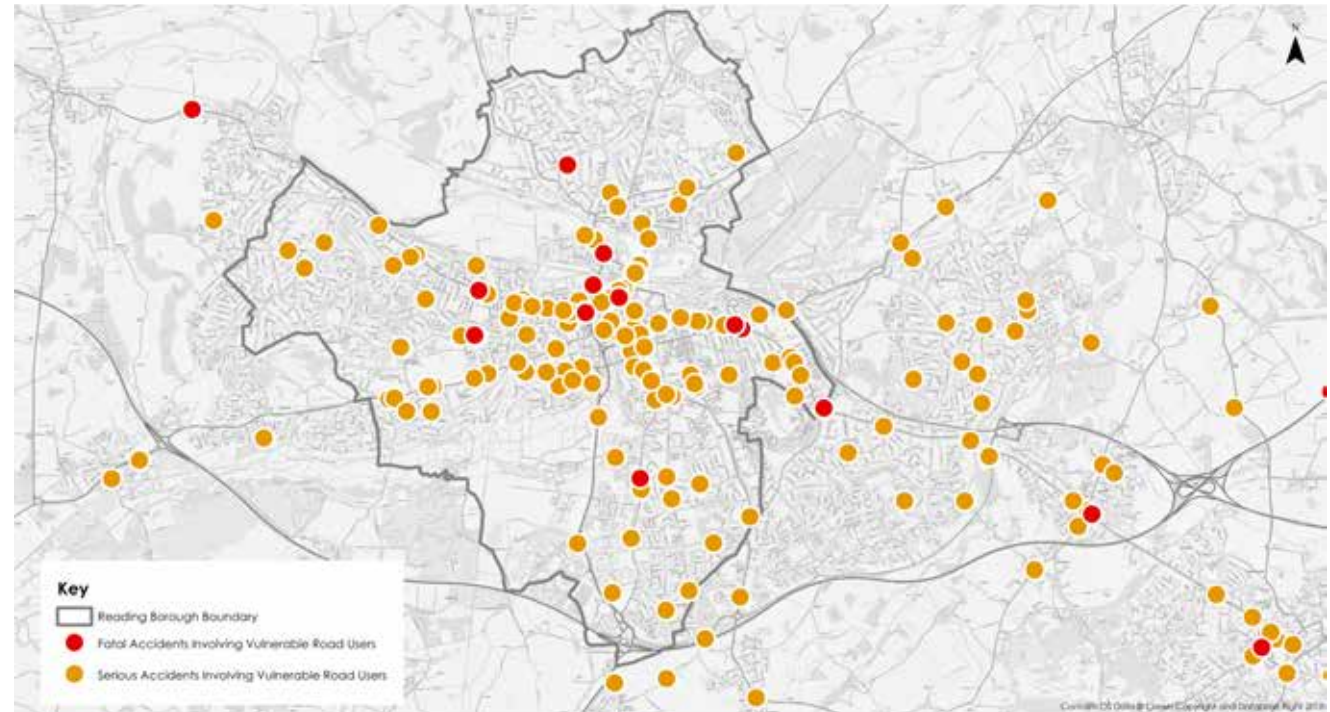
Removing Barriers to Healthy Lifestyles

4.69 Reading's pedestrian network and public space has had significant investment over the years, but there are areas of the town which require enhancement, such as the street paving, landscaping and furniture. Improvements are also needed to better accommodate pedestrian movement and desire lines, which change as the pedestrian demand to, from and within the town centre alter with changes to uses and with new development. The quality of the environment in parts of the town centre is good, especially areas where enhancements have been delivered in recent years, but there are areas, and also many local centres outside the town centre, where improvements to the public spaces and streets will create a more welcoming and attractive space, with better provision for all people walking, cycling and those who are mobility impaired.

Page 475

4.70 Safety is an important consideration for this Strategy, We have reviewed vulnerable road user collisions in the last five years, shown in Figure 28, to understand existing road safety issues and inform the development of the RTS. Areas where pedestrian movements conflict with vehicle movements (general traffic, taxis, buses and servicing movements) can be perceived as feeling less safe than areas which have been designed with greater pedestrian-only space, such as Market Square and Broad Street.

Figure 28: Serious and Fatal Vulnerable Road User Collisions (2014 to 2018)



4.71 Pedestrians crossing the road can sometimes be subject to undue delay, where the street design currently prioritises cars. Whilst 29 traffic signal junctions were upgraded in the town as part of the LSTF programme, many still operate outdated technology. Upgrades to modern traffic signal systems and improved crossing facilities would better enable priority to be given to pedestrians, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment and further encouraging walking.

4.72 Wayfinding in Reading has been improved through localised schemes which have delivered new and upgraded signage, however, consistent signage across the town centre and wider Borough is not yet in place. This makes sustainable travel less attractive, particularly for people unfamiliar with Reading. Therefore, there are opportunities to improve signage to encourage walking, cycling and bus use as a preferred mode over private car, both for a complete trip, and as part of a multi-stage trip.

4.73 Over the years, Reading has developed and signed a series of branded and coloured coded local cycle routes, shown in Figure 29, which provide connections between suburban areas and the town centre linking to key facilities and services, including schools, employment, leisure facilities and local centres. Our local cycle network is complemented by four National Cycle Network routes (4, 5, 23 and 422), linking Reading to major towns and cities, such as Basingstoke, Oxford, Newbury, Birmingham, Southampton, Bristol, and Swansea.

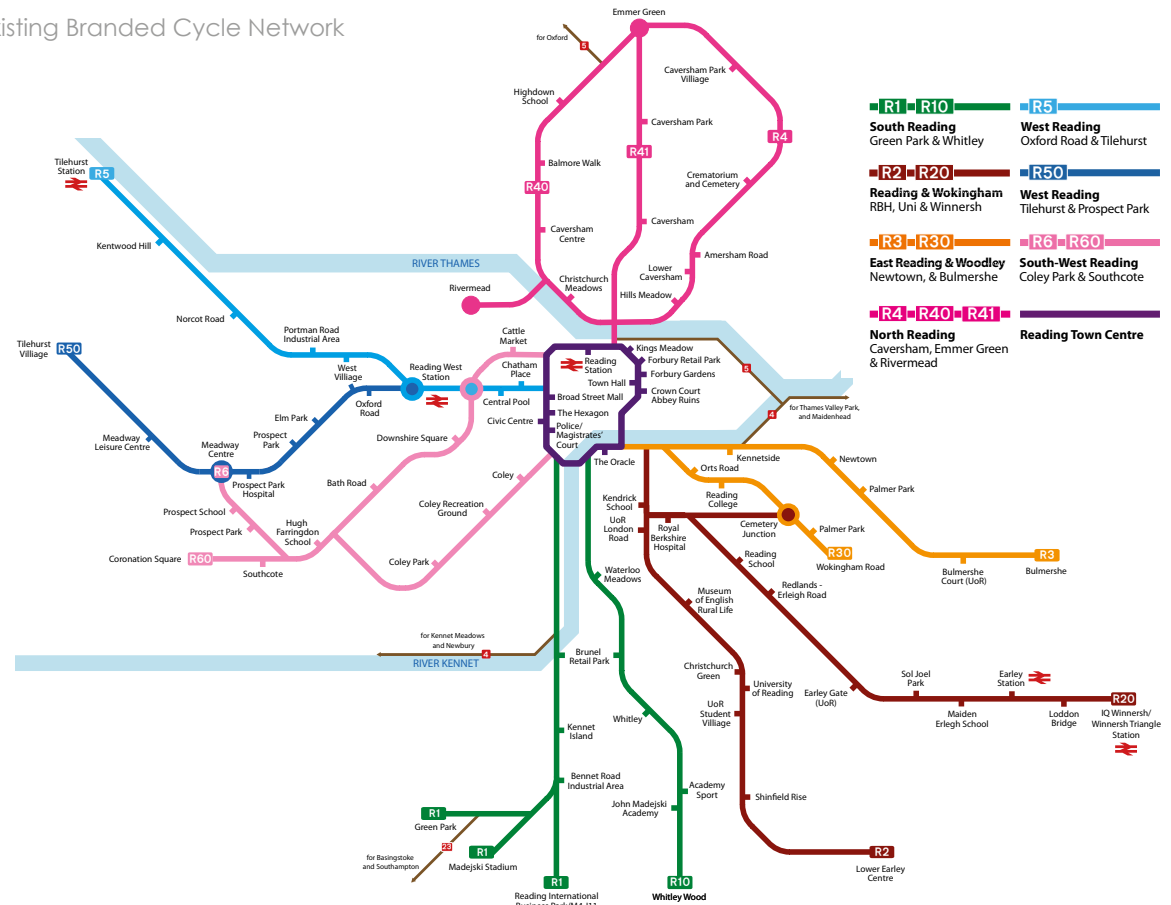
4.74 The local branded routes were developed to connect people to places, such as employment, education and local facilities and services, via the core network and wider 'linking' routes. The network is made up of a combination of on and off-carriageway facilities, and designated quiet streets, and covers the wider Reading area.

4.75 The local cycle network is supported by a number of unbranded routes along quiet streets, providing feeder routes to the main network. In some areas, additional local routes are required, to better connect communities to local facilities, employment areas and the town centre. This will increase the attractiveness of cycling in Reading.

4.76 Reading also suffers from bicycle theft, particularly in the town centre and areas to the south including Whitley. Whilst additional secure bicycle parking has been delivered in recent years, such as at the northern interchange of Reading Station, there is

further opportunity for more secure and smarter bicycle parking across the town. Additionally, there are improvements that could be made to existing bicycle parking to provide increased levels of security, protection against weather and better storage for larger bicycles.

Figure 29: Existing Branded Cycle Network

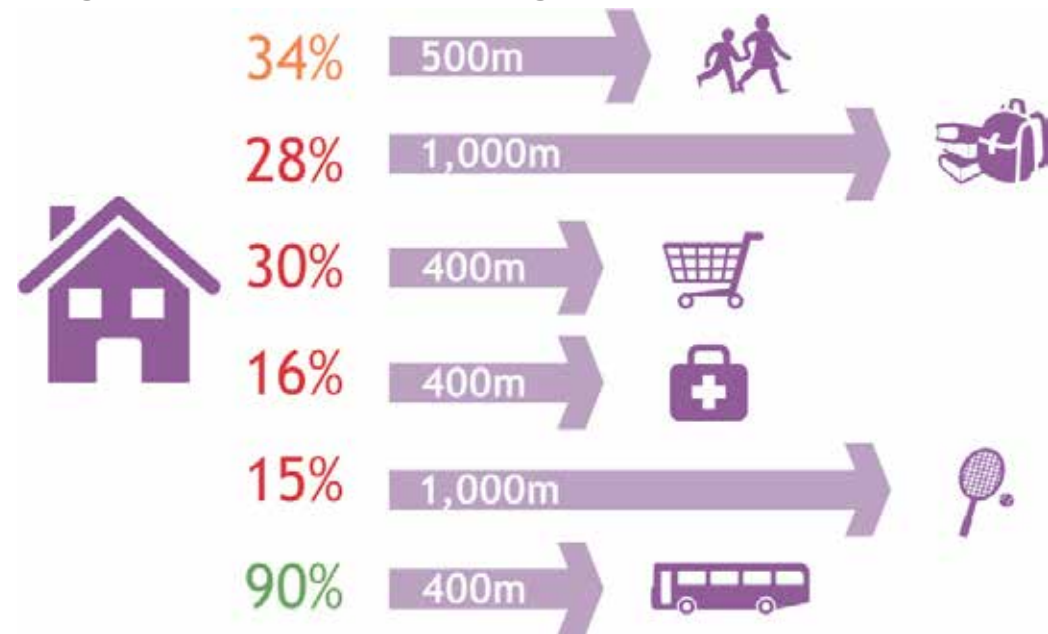


Achieving Good Accessibility to Local Facilities and Employment

Local Facilities

4.77 Good access to local facilities is key to enabling growth and supporting sustainable travel patterns. Within the wider Reading area, access to local facilities varies significantly, depending both on the type of facility and the location. Overall, access to public transport stops is good, with 90% of Reading residents living within 400 metres of a bus stop. However, accessibility to other amenities is significantly lower, with the majority of people living outside typical reasonable walking distances, as shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Percentage of Homes Within Reasonable Walking Distances of Local Facilities



Page 473

4.78 Accessibility to schools is reasonable in many areas, however, residents within the Central Neighbourhood Area, and parts of the Northern and Western Neighbourhood Areas are located a significant distance from both primary and secondary schools. The Western and Northern Neighbourhood Areas also have areas a significant distance from a local retail centre, along with the South Western Area.

4.79 GPs are often located close together, meaning they serve a wider catchment area, and can be a significant distance from some patients.

4.80 Many sports facilities are located where there is green space, for example at major parks, and so the opportunity to relocate or expand provision can be limited.

4.81 Many local facilities in Reading are clustered in groups. This can lead to benefits, as people are able to access multiple facilities in one trip, and these hubs often serve as the heart of local communities. However, these clusters of facilities can also lead to a greater proportion of residents living further away from them or can encourage increased car usage.

4.82 Access to the Royal Berkshire Hospital is particularly challenging leading to car congestion and a perceived difficulty in finding somewhere to park. Greenwave bus services between Mere oak Park and Ride and the hospital provide a useful and easy to use alternative for many hospital visitors. Numerous buses link the hospital with Central Reading but relatively few offer direct links from residential areas of Reading.

4.83 Nationally, more than 50% of trips by all modes of transport in the morning peak hour are associated with education⁵³.

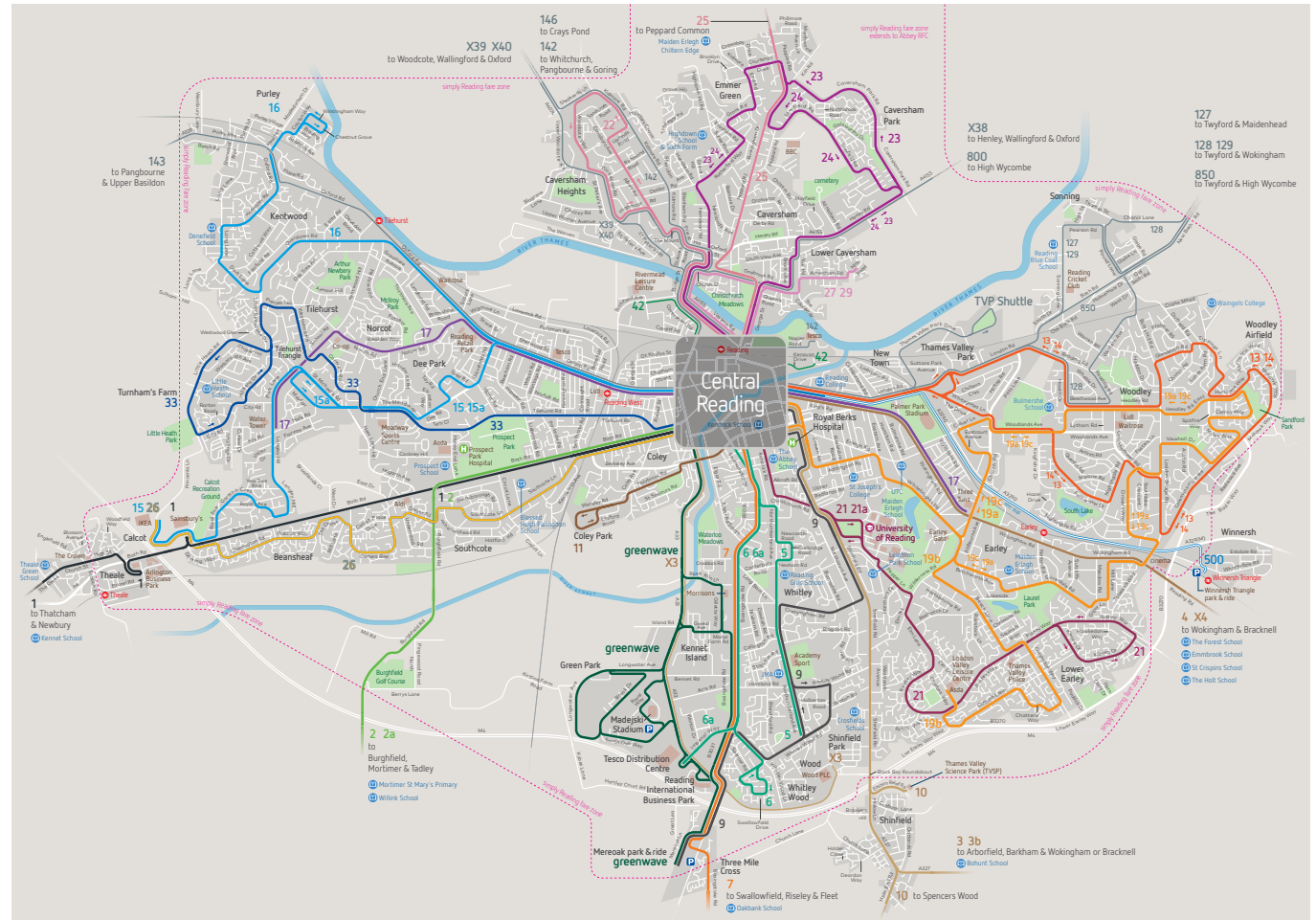
4.84 There is a high level of car use for trips to and from school in Reading, contributing to congestion in the peak hours, and an extended afternoon peak period. The level of physical activity for children is reduced and in Reading 34% of children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school⁵⁴. There is an opportunity for local facilities to be served by high-quality, frequent bus services, in order to reduce car travel where possible, and to enhance access to amenities for people who do not own a car.

85 Additionally, accessibility to local facilities should influence future land-use planning, to enable delivery of key amenities where they are required most, reducing the need to travel for communities. There is an opportunity with new developments to deliver facilities that serve both new residents or employees, and existing communities in the local area, contributing towards a shift to sustainable travel and also increasing social cohesion.

Employment

4.86 Up to 45% of car trips on the network in peak hours are related to employment⁶⁸. Whilst many areas of employment in and around Reading, such as the town centre, have good accessibility by sustainable modes, others are more accessible by private car, particularly for those not travelling from origins along the same radial corridor.

Figure 31: Existing Bus Network



4.87 This leads to high levels of congestion on our network in peak hours, reduced levels of active travel and increased journey times, which leads to losses in productivity.

93% of local businesses that responded to a recent survey believe congestion affects productivity⁴⁰.

Accommodating Development

4.88 Significant development planned in Reading and the surrounding area is shown in Figure 13. In Reading alone, at least 15,847 homes are planned to be delivered between 2013 and 2036⁴³.

4.89 Within Reading and the nearby local authority areas of South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire, Wokingham, Bracknell and Deane, and Hart, over 5,000 homes are planned to be delivered each year. Many of the people living in these homes will travel to Reading, whether for work or leisure, and the transport network will require improvement to accommodate these additional travel needs and enable development to be delivered without affecting the health and wellbeing of residents within the Borough.

4.90 Reading is also an employment hub, and significant growth in employment floorspace and jobs is anticipated within the town and greater Reading area. The region's economy was the second fastest growing area of the UK between 2014-17 and is forecast to have the UK's 4th highest employment rate growth for 2018-21⁴⁴.

4.91 The spatial strategy for development in Reading and the surrounding area is set out in the Local Plans for each Local Authority.

Figure 32: Planned Future Housing Growth



4.92 Without interventions, car traffic is predicted to increase as a result of development, leading to additional demand on roads across Reading, particularly key corridors. Levels of rat-running traffic through residential areas are forecast to increase, as car drivers seek to avoid congestion. The RTS is therefore key to implementation of Reading's Local Plan, and will also support neighbouring Local Plans.

4.93 Development and transport need to be planned together, to enable people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices, to make best use of existing resources, and to encourage integration of communities. Transport improvements will be required to support development of proposed sites and overall increases in travel in and around Reading.

5. Our Policies

Introduction

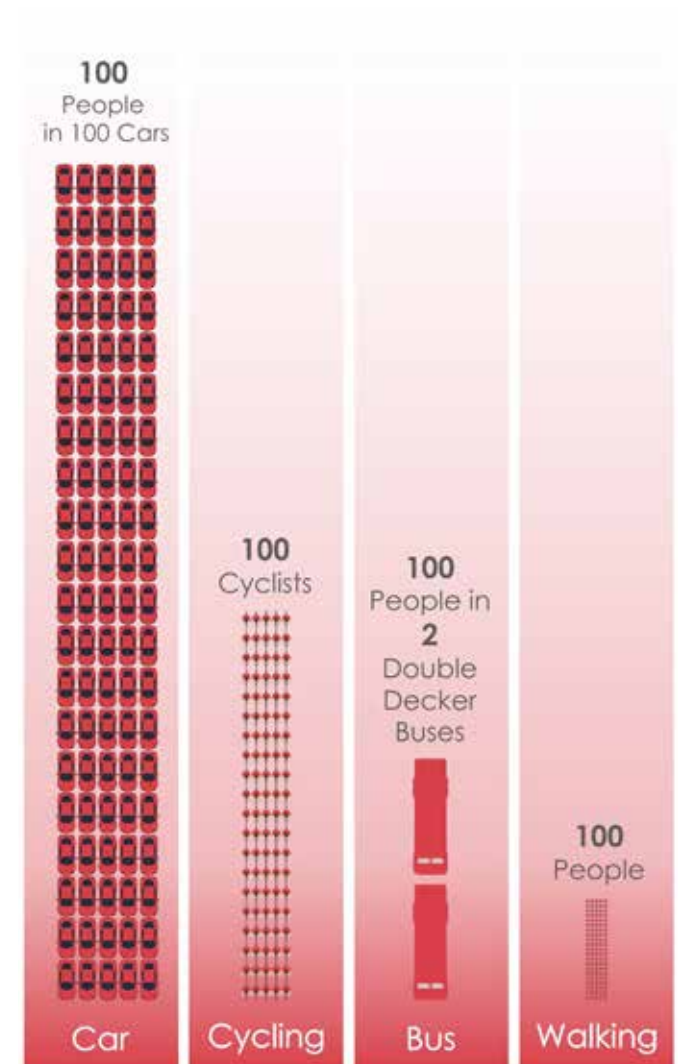
5.1 This chapter sets out our policies to support delivery of the overarching transport vision and objectives for Reading. These supporting policies are broken down by individual theme and provide the guiding principles for implementation of the strategy. This chapter also highlights the key statutory duties the Council must fulfil in its role as a Local Highway Authority.

Multi-Modal Policies

Sustainable Transport

- 5.2 We want to achieve a step change in the provision of walking, cycling and public transport choices for people travelling to, from and within Reading.
- 5.3 This will help us to achieve our overall vision for transport in Reading including enabling healthy lifestyles and creating a clean and green environment. It will also support our aim of providing an accessible transport system for all, and enable sustainable developments to come forward and to provide opportunities for local residents.

Figure 32: Roadspace Efficiency



Policy RTS1 | Sustainable Transport

1.1: We will prioritise sustainable travel modes to offer an attractive and realistic alternative to the private car.

1.2: We will increase the capacity of the sustainable transport network by reallocating road space to sustainable modes.

1.3: We will complement any increase in general traffic capacity with sustainable transport improvements.

1.4: We will develop sustainable transport schemes in partnership with neighbouring Boroughs to support an increase in sustainable cross-boundary journeys.

The Environment and Climate Change

5.4 The environment plays a key role in supporting the quality of life, health and wellbeing of our residents. Our Transport Strategy will support the environment, including the aspirations of our Climate Change Strategy which sets out our ambition to become a carbon neutral town by 2030.

5.5 Opportunities to enhance the local environment through the creation of healthy streets, greening and providing better accessibility to encourage the use of our rivers and parks will be delivered through our Strategy.

Policy RTS2 | The Environment and Climate Change

2.1: We will design our schemes to improve the built and natural environment, enhancing the quality of life of our residents.

2.2: We will ensure transport schemes deliver improved air quality, reduced emissions and biodiversity net gains.

2.3: We will adapt our transport network to prepare for climate change.

2.4: We will protect and promote the heritage of our town.

Equality and Inclusivity

5.6 The Equality Act sets out our statutory duty to ensure that our policies and services do not discriminate against anyone and that we promote equality of opportunity, including the provision of transport that is accessible to all. All proposals that are considered at Council committee meetings are currently reviewed in line with Equalities Impact Assessment requirements.

5.7 The Inclusive Transport Strategy (ITS), published by Central Government in July 2018, builds on the Equality Act and sets out ambitions for inclusive transport whereby disabled people have the same access to transport as everyone else and for them to travel confidently, easily and without extra cost.

5.8 Considerable investment has already been made in ensuring the Reading Buses fleet is accessible to all through the provision of low-floor buses, complemented by audio messaging, on-board bus screens and accessible kerbs.

5.9 Improving inclusion means giving people safer, healthier and more affordable transport options. In turn this helps ensure people can remain independent and active lifestyles for longer and access key local facilities and services, such as leisure and health.

5.10 Affordability of transport is key to providing equality of opportunity and connectivity across Reading, particularly to those on lower incomes. We will continue to deliver schemes and programmes that reduce the cost of travel, provide alternative and more cost-effective modes of travel or help give people the information or skills they may need to travel more cheaply. Our concessionary fares and cycle training programme, Bikeability, are two examples of ongoing initiatives offering people on low incomes cost-effective travel choices.

Development Control

5.11 Our Transport Development Control team is a statutory consultee of the planning process and provides technical advice on the transport and highway implications of each development proposal submitted to the Planning Authority. They work collaboratively with developers to influence the transport approach and details of development, so that highway safety, convenience and amenity are improved through development, to avoid environmental degradation and to support economic activity, whilst enabling the delivery of our Local Plan.

5.12 We have developed a transport model for Reading, which we will require major proposals to use to test the impact of development on the town. Our access charge allows us to update and upgrade the model, so that it provides a suitable baseline for testing the implications of development growth in Reading and the wider area.

Policy RTS3 | Equality and Inclusivity

3.1: We will work with transport operators to deliver an accessible network for all, taking action to address barriers caused by physical infrastructure.

3.2: We will continue to undertake Equalities Impact Assessments as part of the development of new schemes and policies, as a minimum in line with our statutory requirements, to enable us to deliver transport improvements that cater for all residents.

3.3: We will continue to work with partners to deliver public transport, such as bus, community transport and taxi operators, that is affordable and accessible to all and reduce inequalities in our communities.

Policy RTS4 | Development Control

4.1: We will work with developers to design development that supports delivery of our transport strategy.

4.2: We will work with developers to secure land for transport infrastructure where required.

4.3: New developments be will required to demonstrate how they will deliver healthy streets and make a positive contribution to the walking, cycling and public transport network and support sustainable travel, such as initially subsidising bus services, through the development and implementation of travel plans.

4.4: Private sector contributions, including Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy, will be used where appropriate to improve the transport network and mitigate the impact of development, including through enhancement of walking, cycling and public transport facilities.

Sustainable Modes of Travel to School

- 5.13** It is vital that public transport and active travel options are available for all children to access education to improve children's physical activity levels through increased walking and cycling. Our overarching aim for school travel is therefore to increase the number of children walking, cycling or taking public transport and in reducing the number of car journeys to schools.
- 5.14** The Council has a statutory duty to develop and keep under review a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) to school, which is a statutory document under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 5.15** Our SMoTS includes policies to assist all schools with developing, implementing and monitoring ambitious school travel plans and increasing the use of sustainable transport options for travel to school. It also identifies the responsibility for providing road safety education and national standard cycle training and defines the process for developing measures to create safe routes to schools.

Policy RTS5 | Sustainable Modes of Travel to School

5.1: We will update our SMoTS to reflect our priorities in delivering the national sustainable schools accreditation programme, Modeshift STARS, and new initiatives, such as school streets, seeking to create safer and more attractive environments around schools.

5.2: All schools will be incentivised to renew their school travel plan annually as part of the national accreditation scheme – Modeshift STARS and set ambitious targets to increase the percentage of the school community walking, cycling and using public transport.

5.3: We will encourage and support the promotion of sustainable travel to schools through implementation of education, training and initiatives, such as Bikeability and school streets.

5.4: We will work with the school community to identify barriers currently preventing sustainable travel and provide solutions to create safer and more attractive routes to schools.

Smart Solutions and Innovation

- 5.16** It is anticipated that technology will transform the way we work and travel within our plan period.
- 5.17** We will strive to remain at the forefront of technological advancements where they provide real benefits to those who live and work in Reading.
- 5.18** Reading is home to many high tech companies and start ups providing opportunity to collaborate and deliver innovation with the private sector.

Policy RTS6 | Smart Solutions and Innovation

6.1: We will embrace the latest technologies to improve the efficiency and resilience of the transport network for the benefit of our residents.

6.2: We will work with businesses to encourage the use of technology to reduce the need to travel, and as a Council we will lead by example.

6.3: We will continue to promote Reading as a town that actively encourages and supports the testing of innovative solutions to defined transport challenges.

Public Transport Policies

Public Transport

- 5.19 For sustainable and successful growth, public transport will need to play a major role in delivering the vision of the Strategy across the plan period to 2036. A well-integrated, attractive and efficient public transport network is essential for meeting people movement demands of the future. Public transport can provide an alternative means of travel to the private car. If public transport provides attractive journey times, reliability and/or reduced cost compared to the private car, it can result in reduced congestion and emissions.

Page 480

Policy RTS7 | Public Transport

7.1: We will continue to build on the well-established bus and rail connections and work with partners across Reading and the wider region to establish an accessible, affordable reliable and sustainable, integrated public transport network.

7.2: We will support the evolution of public transport as technologies advance and new types of services become viable.

Bus and Community Transport

- 5.20 Bus services provide the everyday access for millions of journeys each year within, to and from Reading. Buses represent the most efficient use of road space for the transport of people going to the same corridor or location yet buses are often seen stuck in queues of low occupancy cars going to the same place.
- 5.21 We will continue to invest in bus priority to improve the operation of buses to provide more capacity, more frequency, high quality and faster journeys, working with bus operators to re-invest the efficiency savings in improved services.
- 5.22 We recognise the contribution of Reading Buses as main public transport operator and major employer in Reading for over 100 years. The company is wholly owned by Reading Borough Council and a major asset in the provision of sustainable transport and the future development of inclusive and sustainable travel in Reading.
- 5.23 Cross town access from residential areas to schools, workplaces and the hospital is sometimes difficult and bus services will need to be developed to meet these travel needs.
- 5.24 We will continue to support the development of high-quality fast track and quality bus corridor services serving new development areas including business parks and housing in and outside of Reading. This will involve continuing to work with neighbouring authorities to secure investment in the transport network through new development. This will include investment in Fast Track Public Transport routes connecting strategic Park and Ride sites and offering easy interchange with fast journeys into Central Reading and key locations, for example the Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- 5.25 We will continue to work with education providers to ensure that school bus services are developed to support other sustainable ways of access to school and reduce the negative effects of cars on 'the school run'.
- 5.26 Community transport, including dial a ride services plays a key role in enabling those who are unable to use public transport to live independent lives.
- 5.27 The main dial a ride provider in Reading is Readibus who offer a comprehensive service, with support from local authorities, to support people who live in our local communities. We currently provide subsidy towards this service.

Policy RTS8 | Bus and Community Transport

8.1: We will work with bus operators, businesses, health and education providers towards delivering high quality fast, frequent and reliable bus services that are not forced to take second place to excessive or inappropriate car use.

8.2: We will maximise the use of bus services by ensuring space on the highway is dedicated to buses or shared with buses, taxis, cycles and emergency vehicles where feasible, to ensure equality of urban mobility and to free up space for regeneration of streets with planting and improvements to the public space.

8.3: We will work with neighbouring authorities and other parties to enable the provision of community transport services in Reading for the benefit of our residents and reduce social isolation.

Rail

5.28 Reading's central location at the meeting point of seven rail lines and the historic development of frequent train services has given Reading a unique train network and we recognise the importance of Reading as a national rail hub and the contribution of train services to mobility to and from Reading. This has been enhanced by the redevelopment of Reading Station, the current construction of Green Park station and the upgrading of many of the trains used on Great Western Railway services.

5.29 Recognising that train is by far the quickest way into or out of Reading in virtually any direction, the local and longer links need to be developed by train companies and supported by Reading Borough Council as alternatives to increasing car use in the Thames Valley. We are a statutory consultee on train operating company franchises and Network Rail plans and will continue to work closely with these companies to ensure Reading is served by the maximum level of train services and at a consistent quality that passengers would expect. We will continue to challenge fares anomalies and poor services and at the same time support the development of improved train services where there are needs.

5.30 Western Rail Access to Heathrow remains a Network Rail project for delivery by 2027

which will open-up direct access by train from Reading. The Council will continue to push for this service to be realised to help reduce the numbers of cars heading to Heathrow from the Reading area.

5.31 We will support improvements on the North Downs rail line between Reading and Gatwick through schemes such as bi-mode trains and electrification of the line to give faster more frequent journeys to the airport.

5.32 We will continue to support and encourage the development of 'Park and Rail' and initiatives to improve station access in the wider area.

Policy RTS9 | Rail

9.1: We will continue to lobby for improvement and work with the rail industry including train operating companies to provide improved services for train travellers to and from Reading.

9.2: We will continue to support the development of the other Reading Stations (Reading West, Tilehurst and Green Park) to ensure each is accessible and provides a high-quality entry to the rail network with high quality frequent and reliable train services.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

5.33 Taxi and private hire vehicles are a key part of the public transport network providing a service when other modes of public transport may be unavailable, or in areas that the current public transport network may not serve, allowing journeys that may not otherwise be possible to be made by public transport. This reduces the need for people to own private cars.

5.34 Our role seeks to ensure that providers of taxi and private hire services adhere to the quality obligations set out in the relevant licences, and are compliant with all relevant guidance on the conditions that arise from the application of the appropriate sections of legislation.

5.35 Alongside the police, we can revoke taxi and private hire licences if the licence holder does not meet their obligations. A penalty points system is in place for breaches of regulations, as set out in the licence holder handbook. Through these mechanisms, we will continue to work with taxi and private hire providers to deliver high-quality and reliable taxi services in Reading.

5.36 Technology can play a huge part in making taxis more accessible to people with the introduction of apps, cashless pay systems and enabling ride sharing.

5.37 We are also responsible for providing and maintaining suitable taxi ranks and pick-up points, and we will continue to liaise with operators to maintain adequate and appropriately located facilities across Reading. We will continue to support a shift towards electric taxis and will work with taxi and private hire service operators to identify ways in which we can support fleet changes.

5.38 A new policy has been adopted to encourage taxi drivers to switch to cleaner vehicles to improve air quality and contribute towards the aim to be a carbon neutral town by 2030. We are initially offering incentives in the form of reducing licence fees for the cleanest vehicles. The following incentives are planned:

- A 25% reduction in the vehicle fee for all Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) (emitting a maximum of 50g/km of CO2) from April 2020 and a 50% reduction for electric vehicles
- A free vehicle licence fee for October 2021 to October 2022 for ULEVs or 100% electric vehicles which have never been part of Reading's taxi fleet before.

5.39 Additionally, by 2028, all hackney carriages in Reading will be required to be either electric or ULEVs.

5.40 This will contribute towards reducing, and eventually removing altogether, the most polluting taxis on Reading's roads, having a positive step towards combating the impacts of climate change.

Policy RTS10 | Taxis and Private Hire

10.1: We will work with operators to deliver smart, accessible and efficient taxi services across the Borough.

10.2: We will work with taxi and private hire services, offering support and incentives to encourage a shift towards the use of cleaner vehicles.

10.3: We will require all taxis operating in Reading to be electric or hybrid vehicles by 2028.

Waterways

- 5.41 A number of leisure riverboat services currently operate along Reading's waterways. River transport services do not have the same capacity for people movement as other public transport services, however we support the continued and increased use of our waterways by private operators to provide services for leisure and commuter services that could contribute to reducing congestion, where this would not cause unacceptable local problems.

Page 487

Policy RTS11 | Waterways

11.1: We will work with private operators to seek opportunities for external funding for waterway schemes and improvements to the connecting networks.

Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVS)

- 5.42 The Government is committed to the UK being world leaders in the development and delivery of connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) and legislation that will enable CAVs to operate on the public highway without a 'driver' overseeing it. This is expected as soon as 2021.
- 5.43 Whilst there is significant uncertainty over when a private autonomous car that can go anywhere may come to the market, and whether we will see any within this plan period, there is a significant likelihood that Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs) will come forward within the next 5 to 10 years.
- 5.44 These Shared Autonomous Vehicles, such as 15-seater pods operating with traffic in a demand-responsive way on pre-defined routes, have significant potential to provide last-mile connectivity for main public transport services such as at stations and Park and Rides, and provide door-to-door public transport to deliver a transport system for all.

Policy RTS12 | Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

12.1: We will monitor the development of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), in particular Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs), and seek to implement feeder services to the FTPT and use SAVs on the FTPT as technology, legislation and costs align.

12.2: We will future proof the transport network for emerging and unknown technologies such as CAVs, by reallocating road space to public transport, and other forms of sustainable transport.

Active Travel Policies

Healthy Streets

5.45 To support our local plan in its vision for Reading to be a clean, green, healthy, safe and desirable place, we will integrate the principles of the London's Healthy Streets⁶⁵, and other best practice examples, into the development and delivery of walking and cycling schemes as detailed in our LCWIP and outlined below:

- Inclusive streets suitable for people from all backgrounds
- Easy to safely navigate and connect people to places
- Provide shade, shelter and places to stop and rest
- Walkable and provide options for cycling
- Low levels of noise and air pollution
- Enhancing streets to improve quality of life, support social interaction and enable active lifestyles
- Create a sense of security

5.46 As part of the integration of the Healthy Streets principles, we will encourage the creation of green corridors. The greening of streets and increased biodiversity will improve air quality across the Borough, and in turn provide a more attractive environment for walking and cycling.

5.47 Around 75% of respondents supported the reallocation of road space to sustainable modes, including walking, cycling and public transport, as part of consultation on this strategy.



Source: Lucy Saunders

Policy RTS13 | Healthy Streets

13.1: We will encourage the creation of healthy streets in Reading, to improve air quality, reduce congestion and help make our communities healthier, greener and more attractive places to live, work, learn and play.

13.2: We will reallocate road space away from the private car, to provide healthier streets and encourage more sustainable, active modes of travel.

Walking and Cycling

- 5.48 Enabling and encouraging walking and cycling across the Borough to support healthy lifestyle choices and inclusive growth, where everyone benefits from Reading's success will continue to play a core role in our transport strategy.
- 5.49 Further to the completion of key infrastructure projects delivered through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, we have set out ambitious plans to transform our streets and create an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes set out in our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plan sets out our long-term aims for encouraging more people living in, working in and visiting Reading to consider walking and cycling for local journeys, or as part of a longer multi-modal journeys.
- 5.50 We will aim to achieve this by prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements and providing safe and attractive routes that connect people to local services and support multi-modal journeys, such as those containing an element of bus or rail travel.

Policy RTS14 | Walking and Cycling

14.1: We will transform our walking and cycling network to be safe, clean and green and better connect people to local facilities and services, including education, retail, leisure and employment, as set out in the LCWIP.

14.2: We will create a hierarchy of walking and cycling routes, building on our existing network and seek to secure new routes, including through proposed developments, and, where feasible, segregate routes.

14.3: We will design our walking and cycling network to accommodate all users where feasible. This will include wheelchair users, adapted cycles, those who are visually impaired and cycles with trailers, for example.

14.4: We will integrate the LCWIP into cross-departmental strategies to maximise the benefits of walking and cycling, including improved health and wellbeing, air quality, reduced emissions and to create a more attractive local environment.

14.5: We will monitor the development and uptake of new technologies such as e-bikes and e-scooters, to inform our walking and cycling strategy.

High-Quality Public Space

- 5.51 As set out in our Local Plan, we want to deliver attractive, high-quality public space throughout Reading, including at the town centre, local centres and the main walking and cycling routes in the Borough, to encourage healthy behaviours and improve community cohesion.
- 5.52 Building on the Reading Transport Strategy and our Local Plan, we will develop a Public Space Strategy for the town centre, which will set out our vision for the town centre and help shape future growth of the area, linking planning, development and transport. The creation of an attractive, connected streetscape will attract new business, create jobs and increase visitor numbers.

Policy RTS15 | High-Quality Public Space

15.1: We will deliver high-quality public space, encompassing streets and accessible interchanges across the Borough, including in our town and local centres, to bring social, health, economic and environmental benefits to all.

15.2: We will develop a comprehensive wayfinding system for the town to improve the travel experience of residents, employees and visitors in Reading, and people travelling through the town.

Rights of Way

5.53 We have a duty to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This plan provides a strategy for local communities and visitors to access the countryside via more sustainable means.

5.54 This plan includes an assessment of the suitability and availability of public rights of way for all users (now and in the future), opportunities to improve the network and any changes to the management.

5.55 Strategic Rights of Way connecting residents to local facilities and services have been integrated in our LCWIP. We will continue to identify new opportunities to expand and improve the network through development proposals to ensure the routes are better integrated into the highway network and that routes are accessible to all.

Policy RTS16 | Rights of Way

16.1: We will work with developers to seek opportunities to deliver new and improved routes through development proposals to provide an integrated and accessible rights of way network for all potential users.

16.2: We will maintain and improve the existing Rights of Way network across the Borough.

Footpath 1 - Kings Meadow



Network Management Policies

Network Management

5.56 The Council has a network management duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004, and our appointed Network Manager has responsibility for the movement of traffic in liaison with neighbouring local authorities and other agencies. The need to maximise the use of our existing highway network is critical to managing congestion within a tightly constrained urban area.

5.57 Part 2, Section 16(1) of the 2004 Act defines the following objectives in the context of local highway authorities managing their road networks:

- To secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and
- To facilitate the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

5.58 Local authorities also have a duty under the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 to prepare reports from time to time setting out the levels of road traffic in their area and to publish forecasts and targets for reducing growth.

5.59 To fulfil the network management duty, a local authority may take any action that will contribute to securing more efficient use of the road network, or the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion and other disruptions to the movement of traffic. Reading's approach is to be proactive in taking such actions, using innovative Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) systems. Elements of the UTMC are automated to balance traffic flows. Using the information gathered on network performance, messages are generated and disseminated through various means to encourage smarter travel choices.

5.60 Our network management policies support the overall delivery of our LTP vision and objectives by:

- Improving the operation, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of the local transport network
- Improving data collection and management to support other policy areas and strategies and the LTP3 targets and monitoring requirements
- Co-ordinating a rapid response to network incidents, roadworks and planned events with effective multi-platform strategies, working with other parties where required (such as emergency services, utility providers and

event promoters) to minimise disruption and delay

- Continuing to review and assess new opportunities (legislative, technical and operational) and innovative technologies that may improve the network management function to ensure efficient use of assets
- Maintaining records of Traffic Regulation Orders and consolidate signing, ensuring that all proposed changes to the network have appropriate authorisation
- Developing, maintaining and implementing seasonal and other planned multi-platform strategies to ensure that the network is able to operate at optimum efficiency

Policy RTS17 | Network Management

17.1: We will maximise the performance of our network and manage our network to aid the movement of people, prioritising sustainable transport.

17.2: We will report on the current and forecast levels of traffic in Reading, and publish targets to reduce traffic growth.

17.3: We will increase monitoring of our transport network to inform transport schemes and policies.

Road Safety

5.61 We have a duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to provide road safety information and advice relating to the use of roads. We are also required to take measures to prevent treatable accidents from occurring by analysing patterns in the circumstances of accidents, including location and causation factors, and to prepare and design programmes to improve road safety by addressing these factors.

5.62 Road safety issues are addressed through a combination of measures based on engineering, enforcement and education. Our past approach has focused on local accident clusters with the aim to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads in line with Government targets. This has been combined with enforcement work in partnership with Thames Valley Police, road safety education work based on community partnerships and an understanding of local issues, particularly where there is evidence that people living in poorer communities are more likely to become casualties in road traffic accidents.

5.63 Between 2000/02 and 2016/18, the number of fatalities and serious injuries on our network has reduced by 31%, with slight injuries reducing by 45% over the same time period⁶⁶. Partnership working, enforcement and education will still be an important

element of road safety, but new guidance and analysis of current trends indicate a revised approach to reducing accidents. Therefore, our Road Safety Strategy focuses more on actions to improve safety for vulnerable road users (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) and address accident causation factors (e.g. speed, road user behaviour) rather than accident cluster sites, which are becoming rare.

Policy RT18 | Road Safety

Page 488

18.1: We will take action to improve road safety for all and to further reduce fatalities and injuries on our network.

18.2: We will improve the safety of vulnerable road users through a combination of measures, including infrastructure enhancements set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

18.3: We will support and promote education programmes and road safety campaigns, particularly those that better protect vulnerable road users.

18.4: We will monitor accident data and transport safety developments to identify where we can deliver improvements to road safety.

Streetworks

5.64 We have a statutory duty under the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 to co-ordinate statutory undertakers works on the highway to minimise disruption to the transport network and limit the impact to residents.

5.65 Streetworks are necessary to maintain and provide utility services such as water, gas and electric which are mainly located within the public highway.

Policy RTS19 | Streetworks

19.1: We will continue to actively engage with statutory undertakers to co-ordinate streetworks within Reading.

19.2: We will investigate methods to improve the management of streetworks, such as permit and charging schemes, to provide access to the transport network.

19.3: We will seek to improve the accuracy of information for all users of the road and footways including suitable diversion routes when required.

Parking

5.66 Our Parking Policy details our approach to the ongoing development and delivery of parking management in Reading. Parking management is an important transport planning tool, enabling us to influence how people may choose to travel, with the aim of encouraging them to use more sustainable forms of transport, including Park and Ride facilities. We also recognise the importance of providing blue badge parking to enable those who are less mobile to access key facilities and services where they are less accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

5.67 If left unmanaged, parking would soon become disruptive to the transport networks and services, as people would park for convenience, rather than considering other people's needs. This could lead to increased pressures on neighbourhoods, and movement could be affected to the detriment of road safety. There could also be an impact on emergency service response times.

5.68 Ambitious new parking standards are set out in the Local Plan, including the provision of electric vehicle charging points. Further details of our parking standards for new development and our approach to the provision and management of public car parks and on-street parking will be set out in our updated Parking Policy.

5.69 Parking management covers time restrictions, parking charges, controlled parking zones, residents parking permits and blue badges. Parking charges provide us with the opportunity to set appropriate parking prices that allow us to fund maintenance of public car parks, manage parking demand, provide new infrastructure such as electric charging points, and incentivise the use of Park and Ride facilities.

Policy RTS20 | Parking

Page 489

20.1: We will manage the parking provision across the Borough, in public car parks, on-street parking and across new developments, to influence sustainable travel choices, encourage sustainable patterns for travel and provide for those who are less mobile.

20.2: We will investigate new technologies and systems to improve the efficiency of kerbside usage, and implement these if effective.

Enforcement

5.70 Reading has an enforcement policy to try and balance the needs of all road users, at a time when demands continue to increase. The key objective is to maintain an appropriate balance between the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and access for disabled people, thereby contributing to the economic growth and success of the town.

5.71 Reading Borough Council introduced Civil Parking Enforcement under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 from 31st March 2000, and in October 2005, powers were introduced under the Transport Act 2000 that made it possible for Reading Borough Council to enforce the regulations governing the use of bus lanes in the Borough.

Policy RTS21 | Enforcement

21.1: We will continue to enforce traffic and parking restrictions in Reading, to improve the effectiveness of our infrastructure and prioritise sustainable modes

Demand Management

5.72 Demand management measures such as road user charging, clean air zone, workplace parking levys and emission based charging can be used to reduce peak demand for the roads in Reading and encourage travel by sustainable modes.

5.73 These measures can help to improve the lives of our residents by improving air quality, reducing congestion and accidents, and enabling the reallocation of road space to sustainable modes.

Policy RTS22 | Demand Management

22.1: We will develop demand management measures to reduce congestion and improve the quality of life of our residents and prepare a supporting business case to implement potential schemes.

22.2: We will reinvest revenue generated by demand management measures in sustainable transport solutions as set out in the 'Our Schemes and Initiatives' chapter.

Motorcycles and Powered Two-Wheelers

- 5.74 Powered two wheelers (PTW) have the potential to deliver reductions in congestion when used as a substitute to the car, occupying less road space, and being permitted to use some bus lanes where it is deemed safe to do so. The use of PTWs also contributes to improved accessibility and social inclusion where, for some, they provide a cheaper alternative to the car. PTWs can give independence to young people, being available from age 16, and have the potential to increase access to employment or further education opportunities.
- 5.75 During transport scheme development, appropriate Safety Audits are undertaken which consider the needs of motorcyclists and vulnerable road users.
- 5.76 Motorcycle parking spaces will continue to be provided in appropriate locations within the Reading area, including at transport interchanges.

Policy RTS23 | Motorcycles and Powered Two-Wheelers

23.1: We will continue to work in partnership with the police, motorcyclists' representatives and motorcycle outlets to promote best practice in road safety and education for users of PTWs.

Freight and Sustainable Distribution

- 5.77 For a successful economy, freight movements (transporting raw materials to producers, or finished goods from producers to consumers) should be as efficient as possible. It is important to consider the environmental impact of freight operations and potential conflicts with other transport users and land uses in the vicinity. Freight vehicle drivers face different network constraints due to factors such as height and weight or because of the time-sensitive nature of their business. It is recognised that they require different route choice and travel information to other road users.
- 5.78 Our objective is to support sustainable distribution methods that bring economic benefits to Reading while reducing environmental impacts and social nuisance. Our policy for freight to support the overall delivery of our LTP aim and objectives covers:
- To work with freight operators to help them operate a service that reduces impacts on the town in terms of noise and air pollution and also minimises carbon emissions
 - To develop the content and delivery of local travel and route choice information for freight operators

- To manage the loading and unloading of goods to improve the efficiency and operation of the surrounding network
- To promote measures that minimise the impact of freight transport on road maintenance and road safety
- To continue to evaluate and, where appropriate, enable consolidation and interchange options between freight modes to reduce the number of freight trips within Reading

Page 495

This could be carried out through a Freight Partnership arrangement which would consider, evaluate and promote or implement technical and operational solutions to address identified local issues.



Policy RTS24 | Freight and Sustainable Distribution

24.1: We will work with operators to support the efficient movement of freight, improving reliability and journey times of deliveries and minimise impact of freight transport on the local road network.

24.2: We will work with operators to support the delivery of freight consolidation centres, to improve efficiency and reduce the number of last-mile delivery trips within Reading.

24.3: We will work with operators to explore and support more sustainable delivery methods, such as cargo bikes and electric micro-vehicles, for the last mile delivery.

Highways Asset Management

- 5.80 We adopt an asset management planning approach for the management of our infrastructure assets. Our Highways Asset Management Policy applies to the creation and construction, acquisition, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation and disposal of all our highway assets.
- 5.81 Our policy demonstrates our commitment to continue to deliver a service to the community via our assets at an agreed level of service, our legislative requirements are satisfied and exposure to risk is limited to acceptable levels.
- 5.82 Our Highways Asset Management Policy is prepared and implemented in line with the UK Roads Liaison Group's Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice.
- 5.83 We record how we manage and maintain our assets in our Highway Maintenance Manual. This details the procedures we use (and levels of service expected) to maintain each highway asset including street lighting, structures, drainage, road markings, winter maintenance, traffic signals and street cleaning. The document also includes standard details and materials approved for use on the highway.

Policy RTS25 | Highways Asset Management

25.1: We will maintain our transport infrastructure to a high standard, and deliver essential improvements to meet the demands of residents, local businesses and visitors.

Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) & Surface Water Management

- 5.84 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the Council is responsible for identifying and communicating flood risk, through the preparation of preliminary flood risk assessments, flood risk and hazard maps and the introduction of flood risk management plans.
- 5.85 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are features designed to replicate the natural drainage of an undeveloped area. We deliver SuDS as part of our transport infrastructure, in line with policy EN18 of our Local Plan, to capture surface water run-off from infrastructure and discharge this at a natural rate back into watercourses, reducing the risk of flooding due to development.

Policy RTS26 | Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) & Surface Water Management

26.1: We will incorporate SUDS and surface water management into our requirements for transport schemes.

Smart City Approach

- 5.86 We fully embrace the concept of 'smart cities' in the delivery of our services. Our view of smart cities is in line with the UK Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) which 'considers smart cities a process rather than a static outcome, in which increased citizen engagement, hard infrastructure, social capital and digital technologies make cities more liveable, resilient and better able to respond to challenges'.
- 5.87 We have taken a lead in smart city development in the Thames Valley, securing cross authority smart city investment from the LEP, and we see our expertise in technology implementation, which is at the core of our network management and open data systems, as a key skill to bring to the developing smart city capability across the Council.
- 5.88 We already work across Berkshire authorities in procurements such as traffic signal maintenance to improve efficiency and reduce costs. These procurements are cross-sector, for example working with public health to deliver the beat the street sustainable transport programme, and working with TVB Police to share costs of monitoring CCTV. There are significant further opportunities to develop smart working, particularly given the central role of transport

in the delivery of a wide range of Council services. Transport has overlaps with many services across the Council from health to adult social care and there are opportunities to change the way we join up these services.

5.89 We will work collaboratively across the Council and other partners to secure funding and develop business cases to deliver transport services in a more integrated way. Our strategy will include:

- Seeking to secure collaborative working and funding opportunities, both within and external to the authority, which will further our smart city approach, help the Council to deliver its services as a whole and provide cross-sector benefits and savings to maximise the value of public investment.
- Keeping updated in relation to innovation and technology and embracing technology where there is a clear benefit to the delivery of our services.
- Engaging with academia and business to better understand the opportunities and explore new business models for delivering services, and exchange knowledge with other smart cities to reduce investment risks.
- Working collaboratively with schools, colleges and universities for the mutual benefit of delivering our services and

furthering the development of 'smart' skills in Reading.

- Make public data available for use to facilitate private investment and development of smart city solutions.
- Working to successfully deliver the Thames Valley Berkshire Smart Cities Cluster project.

Policy RTS27 | Smart City Approach

27.1: We will work collaboratively with partners both within and outside the Council to develop a Smart City Strategy for Reading.

27.2: We will work collaboratively with partners, create the platform for, and seek to invest in the Smart Cities approach to support future growth and to maximise the efficiency and attractiveness of our transport networks and services.

Mobility Services & Sharing Economy

5.90 The car ownership model could be replaced by a mobility service contract, where an autonomous vehicle could be called up on demand. This concept also opens up a new world of travel options for those who do not have access to a car or hold a driving licence.

5.91 Congestion has a significant negative economic and productivity impact. However, if a car could pick you up and drop you off and attend to someone else's journey afterwards without the need for a driver, the efficiency of the model is vastly improved, particularly if you are willing to share your journey with someone else. We already share journeys on public transport yet are very reluctant to have strangers in our cars. This would not necessarily be a concern if we are buying a mobility package rather than a vehicle. Without the need to control the vehicle, we can also expect a marked increase in both productive and leisure time during travel.

5.92 The impact of congestion on air quality could also be vastly improved, since all vehicle technologies are moving towards 'zero emission at source' models. Cleaner air lends itself to more high-quality outdoor spaces. This brave new world also means that streets and accesses could be designed in different ways. Ugly signage, lighting,

barriers, traffic signals and markings could be removed.

- 5.93 The end goal is an integrated, clean transport network, travelling autonomously, attending to transport needs through sophisticated communication and data processing: anyone can get anywhere in reasonable time and at reasonable cost.
- 5.94 As outlined throughout the Challenges and Opportunities chapter, current expectations are that we will start to move away from individual car ownership towards mobility services over the period of the plan. Trials are developing Mobility as a Service (MaaS), where, instead of owning a car, an individual sign up to a monthly mobility service contract to provide them with all their travel needs. Users plan and pay for their journeys using an easy-to-use app, and the mobility service provider provides them with the most suitable transport for their travel needs, which can be public transport, cycle hire, a taxi or car hire. Reducing car ownership has the potential to significantly reduce car dependency without restricting an individual's opportunities for travel. This is just one example of potential business and sharing-economy-led models coming forward. Currently, commercial business cases have not been fully demonstrated.

- 5.95 In order that we are best placed to realise the benefits of such changes, we will actively monitor and review developments in this area and look to secure funding, where appropriate. These new services may also provide new opportunities for the delivery of Council-operated services.
- 5.96 Whilst we are hopeful that commercially viability Mobility as a Service models will come forward in the near future, we recognise that we need to tackle climate change and that improved, integrated, app-based journey planning and payment services that take us towards full MaaS would be very beneficial and would need to be led by us.

Policy RTS28 | Mobility Services & Sharing Economy

28.1: We will work with commercial providers to deliver Mobility as a Service models.

28.2: We will work with our neighbouring authorities to develop interim app-based journey planning and payment services that take us towards full Mobility as a Service.

28.3: We will integrate our systems and data to enable the development of an improved mobility service offering across our travel to work area, to improve ease of travel by non-private car modes.

Communication and Engagement Policies

Travel Information

- 5.97 Travel information includes workplace travel planning, personalised travel planning, and static and dynamic travel information provision through signs, leaflets and technology. Travel information also assists in the management and monitoring of the transport networks, offering low cost interventions to reduce congestion and the impact of transport on the environment.
- 5.98 Our aim is to give people the information and assistance they need to enable them to understand what travel options are available, choose how and where to travel, and guide their travel behaviour so they are making sustainable travel choices when travelling within or through Reading, no matter the journey purpose or demographic.
- 5.99 We will deliver travel information by:
 - Securing and promoting real-time information for public transport through a range of channels to transport users and freight operators, including: arrivals and departures and traffic conditions and incidents;
 - Promoting the use and implementation of web, mobile, on-bus, bus stop and

key destination displays, and emerging technologies for disseminating travel information and advice to transport users;

- Supporting the delivery of customisable and personalised travel planning services that will encourage individual sustainable travel choices
- Facilitating open data access, encouraging and supporting the wider use of data captured by UTMC to provide additional information to the public through software development partnerships and make public data available for innovative applications that benefit transport users and network performance

5.100 Working with Government, operators, neighbouring authorities and other partners to secure and promote interoperable technology where appropriate

5.101 Travel information is also available in a number of other locations:

- The provision of a bus information strategy is a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000, and details of corresponding policies to improve the provision, quality and accessibility of information available to public transport users are contained within our Public Transport Strategy

- Working with stakeholders to enable them to promote sustainable transport options to their workforce and visitors
- We use Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to distribute information across modes. A series of complementary technologies (such as sensors, computers, electronics and communication devices) integrated through management databases and strategies are used to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of transport networks. They deliver high quality traveller information often in real-time, leading to increased use of sustainable modes and fulfilling elements of the network management duty as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Policy RTS29 | Travel Information

29.1: We will support and promote the use of a wide range of data and technology to influence travel behaviour and manage the transport network.

29.2: We will work with partners to deliver high quality, accessible, real-time data to assist users to make sustainable travel choices, recognising the differing needs of travellers.

29.3: We will work with businesses, and other key destinations, to support them in delivering their travel plans and providing sustainable travel advice to their workforce.

Public Consultation and Engagement

5.102 Communication and engagement with local residents is vital to ensure their needs are considered and integrated at key points in scheme and strategy development and to maximise the benefits within local communities and the town as a whole.

Policy RTS30 | Public Consultation and Engagement

30.1: We will engage with residents, employees and other stakeholders to develop the details of our schemes and strategies from the early stages, so that the views of the local community are reflected in our approach.

30.2: We will develop evidence bases and technical assessments to support our schemes and strategies, and will make these publicly available where appropriate.

30.3: We will improve the way we engage with the public to make our consultations more accessible and make it easier for all to participate in the consultation process.

30.4: We will open-up our transport data for public use where possible.

6. Our Schemes & Initiatives

Introduction

- 6.1 We have identified a number of transport schemes and initiatives to help address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities set out in the Challenges and Opportunities chapter to deliver the transport vision and objectives. These are intended to be flexible and to be responsive to innovation, technological advances, funding availability and to reflect delivery of the 15-year strategy.
- 6.2 The schemes themes are summarised in the following sections and more details are provided on the individual scheme pages.
- 6.3 The detailed design and alignment of infrastructure schemes are yet to be determined. Design of all physical infrastructure will take into account the environmental constraints identified in the About Reading chapter. When infrastructure schemes come forward, they will be supported by relevant technical information and assessments.

Demand Management Schemes

- 6.4 Due to key challenges including the declared climate emergency, car emissions causing poor air quality and the forecast levels of growth increasing future demand for travel, continuing with the status quo is

not an option. Therefore, alongside providing sustainable alternatives we must manage demand on our network to help to achieve our overall vision for Reading. This will involve making difficult choices and delivering some or all of the following schemes:

- Clean Air Zone
- Emissions-Based Charging
- Road User Charging
- Workplace Parking Levy

Multi Modal Schemes

- 6.5 We have identified a number of schemes that will provide benefits to all road users providing benefits including smoothing traffic flow, more reliable journey times, improved air quality and productivity, these include:
- Transport Corridor Multi Modal Enhancements
 - Inner Distribution Road (IDR) Multi-Modal Enhancements
 - North Reading Orbital Route
 - Third Thames Crossing East of Reading

Public Transport Schemes

- 6.6 We have identified a number of public transport schemes that will provide a step change in public transport provision in Reading including:

- Quality Bus Corridors
- Concessionary and Discounted Travel
- Community Transport
- Demand Responsive Transport
- Fast Track Public Transport Corridors
- Park and Ride Network
- New Railway Stations and Upgrades
- Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

6.9 Measures and improvements for each QBC will be determined based on the specific challenges in the area, but could include:

- Implementation of Red Route no-stopping restrictions
- Bus priority at junctions and/or other sections of the route, where buses experience delay
- Improved bus access through implementation of bus gates
- Carriageway widening or restricted on-street parking to facilitate two-way bus movement
- Removal of vertical traffic calming measures
- Replacement upgraded bus shelters where this has not already been done
- Improvements to accessibility of bus stops
- Real-time information at main bus stops supported by information delivered to personal electronic devices.
- Continued high-quality branding of services using the QBC
- Continued Wi-Fi and USB charging facilities on buses using the QBC

6.10 Many of these features have been delivered in programmes across previous LTPs and need further development to serve the continued growth in use of public transport

and to mitigate the negative effects of car congestion.

Fast Track Public Transport Corridors

6.11 Our strategy includes a Fast Track Public Transport (FTPT) network across Reading to connect the wider city region and Thames Valley. The FTPT network will be designed to meet a set of standards above and beyond our Quality Bus Corridors, and may be designed for future public transport modes other than bus.

6.12 The Park and Ride proposals support the FTPT and interchange options, to increase travel capacity, reduce private car use and improve journey times, reliability and air quality on some of Reading's busiest roads. FTPT will deliver dedicated public transport lanes and routes, allowing for segregation of public transport and general traffic. Reallocation of road space for the FTPT will be considered, where land is constrained, and in order to realise traffic reductions and air quality improvements. Some orbital routes may not require segregation, but priority for FTPT public transport services will be important at congestion hot spots.

6.13 The long-term vision for FTPT incorporates a network that expands the public transport on offer rather than replacing existing networks. The FTPT network extends beyond Reading to offer public transport and interchange options to the wider city region.

Quality Bus Corridors

Page 897

Reading has one of the highest levels of bus use in the country and a highly developed core bus network. Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs) in this network have been identified to complement our FTPT network, where full route segregation may not be required. Although, further measures should be implemented to help the bus services run on time and gain priority over private vehicles where general traffic is delayed. Passenger numbers along these corridors are already high, and the user experience is important to maintain and increase the level of bus usage.

6.8 Improvements to the QBCs may require the reallocation of road space away from general traffic to encourage bus use and reduce car dependence. This will help to achieve traffic reductions and air quality improvements.

6.14 The developing FTPT network links key employment areas, residential areas, transport hubs and Reading town centre and railway station, providing the additional transport capacity necessary to support the planned growth in and around Reading. Stops along FTPT corridors will be strategically located but limited in number, in order to provide a balance between improved access to key destinations along the route and faster journey times.

6.15 Cyclists, motorcyclists and taxis will not generally be permitted to use FTPT infrastructure outside the town centre, to avoid conflict and delay to fast public transport services operating on the network, which will stop only infrequently.

6.16 In summary, the FTPT corridors should:

- Enable the use of vehicles propelled by bio gas, hybrid electric, fuel cell or other eco-friendly fuel/energy so that the system is clean and causes limited air pollution
- Enable the use of high capacity vehicles with low floors to allow passengers to board and exit quickly. Vehicles with wide multiple doorways and capability to quickly accommodate wheelchairs and wider accessibility for the whole community

- Allow vehicles to be scheduled at very close intervals that accelerate up to top speed between stops and able to maintain headways. The stops and interchanges will be more limited than standard bus services but will be located to maximise the catchment area
- Deliver a segregated highway (wherever possible) with the possibility of some form of guidance and advance signals where traffic intersects the route to allow the system to 'jump start' on traffic
- Deliver routes that provide links to the town centre, major planned development sites, existing communities and terminate at or link to Park & Ride schemes. It will also provide orbital links allowing travellers to avoid central Reading and provide the potential for strategic links to surrounding areas and transport hubs
- Deliver boarding platforms which match the vehicle floor height with plenty of room to handle crowds quickly with a form of rapid payment procedure. Interchange with other modes (i.e. walk, cycle, car, taxi, bus, coach and rail) should be maximised
- Deliver interchanges and the pedestrian links designed to maximise safety and provide passengers with a sense of security

- Deliver interchanges at key locations, which will allow the integration of the transport systems with local communities and facilities

6.17 Whilst initially designed to carry buses, the FTPT network will be designed to be suitable to adapt in the future to carry other forms of public transport, such as guided buses, trams, trackless trams, light rail or autonomous shuttles/buses.

6.18 The FTPT network would offer a potential testing area for trials and early adoption of emerging technologies and legislation to enable services, for example: Mobility as a Service (MaaS); connected autonomous public transport services and demand responsive services.

Park and Rides

6.19 Reading's transport network currently includes Park and Ride sites at Mere oak, Winnersh Triangle and Madejski Stadium. A further Park & Ride located at Thames Valley Park is under construction. Our strategy involves expansion of our Park and Ride network, to intercept traffic travelling to Reading from the outskirts of the town and city region, and provide an alternative travel option to the private car. The facility seeks to attract those that do not have the option to travel by bus for their whole journey.

- 6.20 83% of people surveyed supported a comprehensive Park and Ride network to help reduce the number of cars on the road.
- 6.21 We have identified key road corridors used by people driving into Reading that are not currently served by a Park and Ride facility. Further assessment work will be required to understand environmental and land constraints to inform the precise location for each scheme, and the scale of each facility.
- 6.22 Our Park and Rides will be complemented by our FTPT and Quality Bus Corridors, so drivers using the Park and Rides will have access to high-quality bus services direct to Reading town centre, railway station, and key employment areas. These services will also provide benefits to local residents and employees living and working along the routes, as they will have the opportunity to access more frequent bus services.
- 6.23 At present, Park and Rides offer the opportunity to encourage interchange to public transport outside the edges of Reading, to reduce the number of vehicles travelling into our town and the congestion on the network.
- 6.24 Secure cycle parking hubs will be provided at our Park and Rides to enable access to the bus services for a wider range of users and to encourage active travel.

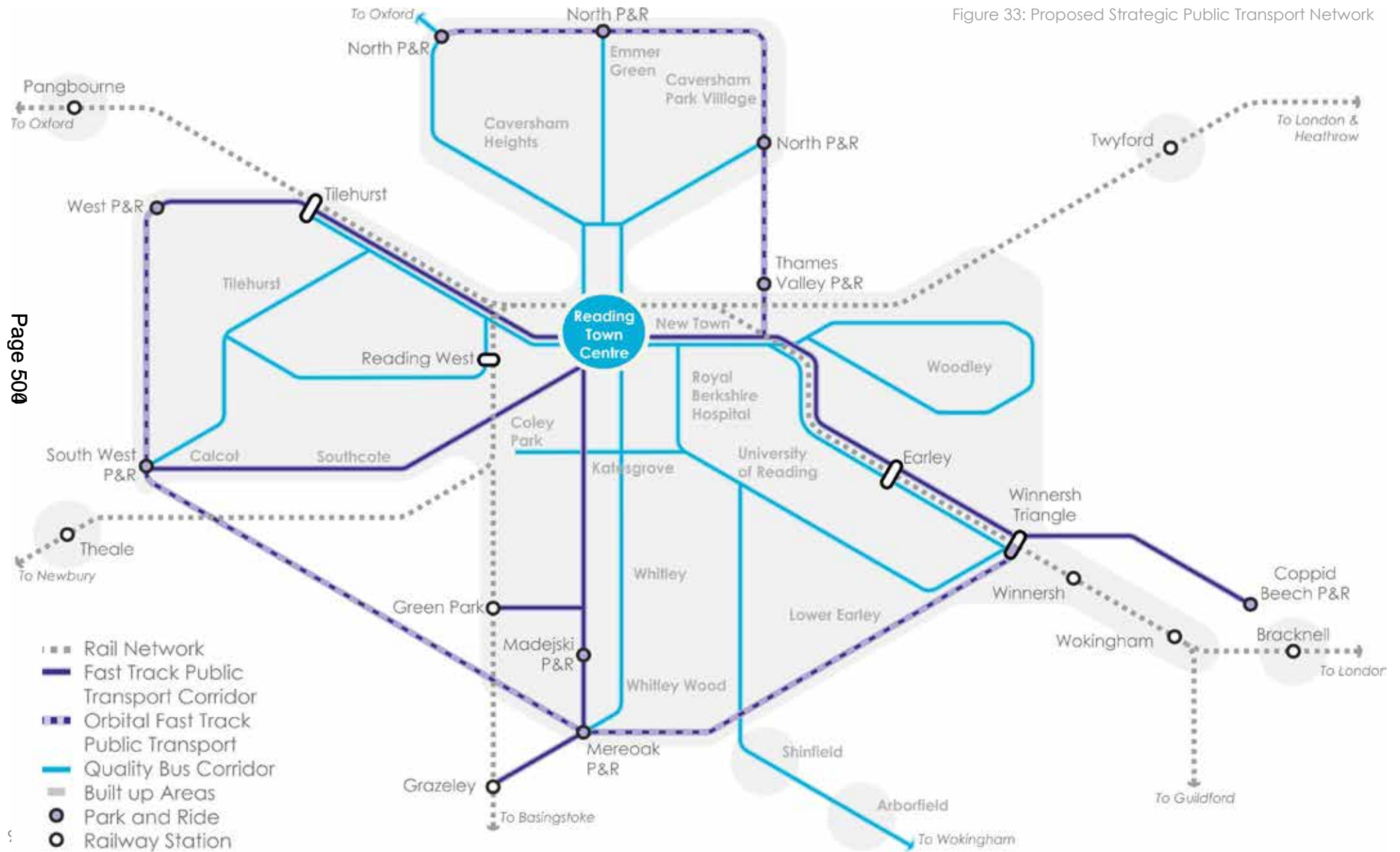
- 6.25 We expect in the medium term that our Park and Rides will evolve to provide higher levels of electric charging points for vehicles, as the adoption of electric vehicles increases. Given the strategic location of our Park and Ride sites, there is opportunity for these to become electric charging stations for both vehicles using the Park and Ride facility, and vehicles otherwise passing by.
- 6.26 This will mean a proportion of drivers using the charging facilities will be waiting for a period of time at the Park and Ride sites, while their vehicles charge, creating demand for facilities and amenities such as retail. In light of the climate emergency and emerging circular economy, we will seek to create green hubs at our Park and Rides to cater for this demand, which could include:
- Travel information station
 - Parcel collection
 - Recycling and waste point
 - Household goods refill station
 - Food share-house / community fridge
 - Repair café
 - Library of things
 - Reuse shop
- 6.27 In the longer term, as there is a shift towards connected autonomous vehicles and a

change in the ownership model, existing parking facilities at our Park and Rides will evolve to become charging, servicing and repair hubs, where autonomous vehicles will be kept when not active on the roads. Park and Rides will become green interchange hubs, where people will be able to transfer from low occupancy CAVS (and other modes such as cycling) to higher occupancy shared autonomous vehicles to travel into Reading town centre, and also access a range of other facilities.

Railway Stations

- 6.28 The regular rail services run to and through Reading on the Great Western Main Line, Reading–Basingstoke branch line and Reading–Taunton line, which can/will be accessed at Reading Railway Station, Reading West and a future committed railway station at Reading Green Park (planned to open in winter 2020). Significant investment is planned and progressing on the railways including: electrification, Elizabeth Line and Western Rail Link to Heathrow.
- 6.29 Improved access to the railway via improved and new railway stations (discussed below), and via footways, cycleways, bus services and Fast Track Public Transport services are important to increase rail use and realise the benefits of the wider rail investment and accessibility enhancements.

Figure 33: Proposed Strategic Public Transport Network



Active Travel Schemes

6.30 We have identified a number of active travel schemes which will incorporate the principals of the healthy streets concept and best practice. The schemes will transform the transport network to make walking and cycling more attractive, enable improved air quality, improve health and wellbeing and reduce private car use and emissions. These include:

- Town and Local Centre Public Space Enhancements
- Strategic Pedestrian Routes
- Local Pedestrian Routes
- Strategic and Town Centre Cycle Routes
- Local Cycle Routes
- Sustainable and Safer Travel to School
- Play and School Street Programme
- Transport Interchange Cycle Parking Hubs
- Residential Cycle Parking
- Cycle Hire Scheme

6.31 Walking and cycling are low-cost, efficient, environmentally friendly modes of transport. They can contribute to reducing congestion levels, delivering physical and mental health benefits and improving accessibility. We

have identified a number of improvements that can be made to the current infrastructure to encourage increased levels of walking and cycling in Reading through the work carried out as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

6.32 Strategic cycle routes are proposed to link key transport hubs and major employment in Reading. They will provide protected space for cyclists on some of our busiest roads, whilst maintaining separation from pedestrians to avoid conflicts. Only pedal cycles and legal e-bikes will be permitted to use cycle superhighways.

6.33 Our strategic and town centre cycle network will be supported by a wide network of local and leisure cycle routes, providing connections to local facilities including education, retail, health and leisure. Opportunities to provide a new cycle hire scheme around Reading are being explored. Cycle hire facilities improve access to cycling, and therefore we plan to provide and expand our cycle hire network.

6.34 Public space plays a large part in the movement experience within Reading. It is recognised that there are areas of the town, particularly within the town centre and local centres, where improvements to the quality of public space would improve user comfort and make walking and cycling in

Reading more attractive. Improvements will be delivered to enhance the public space throughout the town centre. Alongside this, public space improvements offer the opportunity to enhance both road safety and perceptions of safety, through good design.

Network Management Schemes

6.35 We have identified a number of schemes to manage travel demand on our networks to improve the efficiency and safety of the transport network. This will include embracing and trialling new technologies alongside our traditional forms of network management including:

- Traffic and Junction Management
- Parking Schemes and Management
- Road Safety Schemes
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- Smart City Initiatives
- Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

Communication and Engagement Schemes

6.36 To maximise the benefits of the schemes we deliver and achieve our overall objectives, it is vital to engage with local residents and key stakeholders to promote the benefits and enhancements that our schemes will bring to them, these include:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Travel Information and Advice
- Training, Education and Initiatives
- School Travel Accreditation Programme
- Progress Reporting and Engagement

Our Schemes and Initiatives

6.37 The following pages provide more detailed information on the individual schemes that in combination form our overall transport strategy.

6.38 The delivery of these schemes are subject to further scheme development, feasibility, consultation and funding. More information on funding, implementation and engagement with residents and delivery partners is outlined in subsequent chapters.

Demand Management

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Department for Transport

Summary:

Due to key challenges including the declared climate emergency, car emissions causing poor air quality and the forecast levels of growth increasing future demand for travel, continuing with the status quo is not an option. Therefore, alongside providing sustainable alternatives we must manage demand on our network to help to achieve our overall vision for Reading. This will involve making difficult choices and delivering some or all of the schemes set out in this section.

The introduction of demand management measures will provide revenue to enable investment in sustainable transport options to provide attractive alternatives to the private car and increase options for travel around the town. This is therefore a fundamental element of our overall transport strategy.

We are progressing investigative work on demand management options for Reading, but are also aware of the potential for demand management to be delivered on a wider scale, such as nationwide road user charging or mobility charging. We will monitor developments in this area, and will adapt our proposals in line with regional or national policy if required.

Each demand management measure is highly flexible and able to be deployed either in isolation, or in combination with other measures. We will undertake further work to determine the best package of demand management measures to implement in Reading.

Whilst we will deliver demand management within Reading Borough, it should be noted that the administrative boundaries of Reading mean key employment sites, such as the University of Reading and Green Park, will be split across boundaries. In the case of Thames Valley Business Park and Arlington Business Park, these will be entirely outside of the Borough. Given the large number of trips that are generated by these sites, we will commence discussions on the proposed options with Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire Councils at an early stage.

Demand management has an inherent risk of disadvantaging those on low incomes, and those who face barriers accessing public transport. To mitigate this risk as far as possible, we will design any demand management scheme with full consideration of equalities, and will carry out an

Equalities Impact Assessment. Revenue generated by demand management will also be able to be reinvested back into the sustainable transport network to reduce or remove barriers to travel for all, in line with policy RTS3 Equality and Inclusivity.

Issue

Reading is a densely populated town, with high economic and social activity, leading to high levels of travel demand. In order to facilitate continued economic growth and development, transport capacity needs to be increased to accommodate the corresponding increases in demand to travel. There is no longer the available land to continue to provide more capacity for private vehicle travel and the environmental and health consequences are not acceptable or desirable when seeking to realise the Reading 2050 Vision and meet the aim of the RTS.

Evidence already indicates that Reading is unlikely to be able to meet the identified transport growth and air quality challenges without additional methods of managing traffic growth in parallel with investing in improving access for more sustainable means of travel. Therefore, doing nothing is not an option. The RTS is reliant upon external funding being secured to develop and construct new transport infrastructure to improve air quality and reduce car congestion.

Outcome

- Reduced traffic leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased capacity for growth
- Reliable, ring-fenced income stream to allow us to deliver other elements of the RTS, including investing in alternative travel services, initiatives and infrastructure

Clean Air Zone

Page 50
Clean Air Zone (CAZ) would allow us to either restrict access or introduce charges for the most polluting vehicles, allowing us to improve air quality in the town.

Although a CAZ would not target all vehicles, and as a result would have a more limited impact on congestion compared to other demand management measures, it targets the most polluting vehicles, including businesses operating old vehicle fleets. This could have a significant impact on air quality in Reading, leading to associated health benefits. A CAZ could also be designed to target trips based on origin and destination, such as through-trips.

Emissions-Based Charging

Emissions-based charging charges drivers for various actions at a rate that is dependent on their vehicle's emissions. For example, drivers of more polluting vehicles parking in Reading could be

charged a higher rate than low emission vehicles such as electric and hybrid. The charges could vary across the Borough and change depending on time and day.

Road User Charging

Road User Charging (RUC) could be implemented to seek to reduce traffic, without road closures. Charges for specific routes or zones could be levied, leading to reductions in traffic in key areas, or the scheme could apply across the Borough. Complementary measures to minimise the risk of traffic re-routing along unsuitable alternative roads would also be required.

RUC could apply to all vehicles using roads within the charging area, regardless of journey purpose, origin or destination. Alternatively, it could be implemented flexibly, for example to discourage the high volumes of through-traffic that Reading is currently subject to, or to discourage travel at peak times.

Workplace Parking Levy

A Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) would seek to encourage employees to shift towards sustainable travel. Employers could pass on levy costs to staff, and/or they may look to reduce their parking to reduce costs.

A similar approach to that already in operation in Nottingham would be proposed, and the levy would apply to all employers with employee

parking over a certain threshold, with minimal exceptions. Varying rates could be applied in different areas of Reading, potentially dependent on their accessibility by other modes of travel.

A WPL would likely require expansion of existing controlled parking zones, to reduce the likelihood of overspill parking into residential areas. These would be applied in consultation with local residents.

Adapting to the Future

Demand management is inherently flexible, with the ability to change pricing or restrictions to adapt to a changing transport network over the long term, as well as dynamic pricing throughout the day and week.

We acknowledge that a demand management scheme cannot be delivered without reasonable alternative travel provision, such as public transport, in place. Therefore, we will implement demand management through a phased approach, that can adapt to changing travel patterns (for example a shift towards electric vehicles) and also allow the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure in tandem.

In the long term, we expect that demand management will be seamlessly integrated with our MaaS scheme, and mobility demands via peak modes in peak locations at peak times would be subject to additional charges in comparison to off-peak travel.

Transport Corridor Multi Modal Enhancements

Delivery Partners:

West Berkshire Council
Wokingham Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Hampshire County Council
Local Parish and Town Councils

Summary:

Multi-modal enhancements to major transport corridors, which could include:

- Reallocation of road space to walking, cycling and public transport
- Improved pedestrian and cycle provision, including wider, more accessible routes and upgraded /new crossings
- Improved public transport provision, including bus priority infrastructure, travel information and stop facilities
- Increase in capacity at pinch points
- Traffic signal upgrades
- Safety enhancements
- Removal of excessive street furniture
- Increased landscaping and vegetation
- Introduction of pedestrian and cyclist rest areas

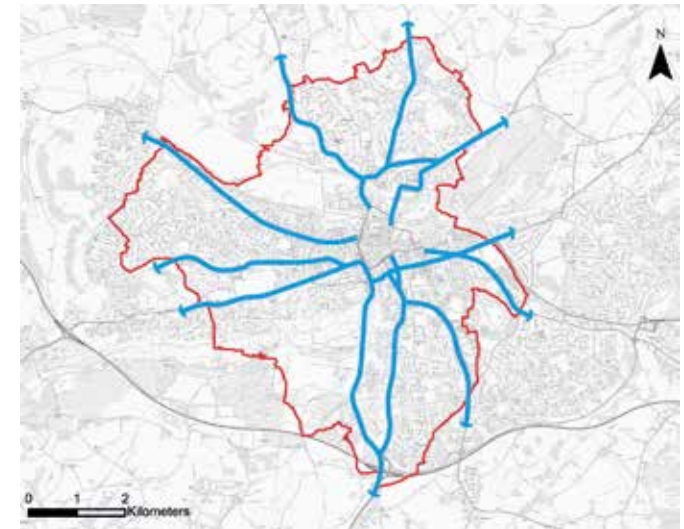
Issue

These highway corridors are key routes that connect the wider urban area and strategic highway network to the centre of Reading. The routes also serve a number of high-density residential areas. Therefore, traffic volumes are high, particularly during peak morning and evening hours as the roads carry both strategic and local traffic.

The high traffic volumes give rise to congestion, which, in many locations, is further exacerbated by local traffic pinch points. The congestion and relative lack of high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure leads to public transport and active travel being seen as unattractive.

Outcome

- Reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased walking and cycling levels through enhanced user experience, including improved safety, reduced delay and better accessibility
- Shift to public transport through improved public transport journey times and reliability, upgraded waiting environment, and potential for further bus services to increase capacity
- Economic benefits through improved journey time reliability and increased travel capacity
- Improved biodiversity and urban environment



Inner Distribution Road (IDR) Multi-Modal Enhancements

Summary:

Multi-modal improvements to the IDR to reduce severance and reconnect communities, which could include:

- Reallocation of road space to walking, cycling and public transport
- Improved pedestrian and cycle provision, including wider, more accessible routes and upgraded /new crossings
- Improved public transport provision, including bus priority infrastructure, travel information and stop facilities
- Increase in capacity at vehicle pinch points
- Traffic signal upgrades
- Safety enhancements
- Removal of excessive street furniture, such as guard railing
- Increased landscaping and vegetation

The IDR forms a key part of the highway network in Reading, and as such, congestion and air pollution are major issues.

Issue

The IDR carries significant levels of traffic providing access to the town centre or carrying traffic around the town centre to and from the radial routes it connects. Facilities for other modes, such as public transport, walk and cycles are limited. Enhancement is therefore needed to improve the experience and safety for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly crossing the IDR.

Traffic congestion on the IDR has proved to be a continuous issue within Reading. The route itself is dominated by motor vehicles and the road environment acts as a major barrier to sustainable travel modes such as walking and cycling, due to a combination of traffic volumes and speeds.

The IDR is one of the busiest roads in Reading, with parts of the route carrying almost 50,000 vehicles a day⁶⁷. It encircles the town centre, causing high levels of severance, and is a significant barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements. The road suffers from high levels of congestion and poor air quality, with localised pinch points and very limited public transport priority.

Walking and cycling to and through the town centre is made less attractive by the significant barrier created by the IDR which disconnects communities, and public transport services experience delay, discouraging their use.

Outcome

- A package of multi-modal improvements will help to encourage more sustainable travel, reconnect communities, whilst removing traffic pinch points and enabling improved traffic flow, leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality. This would offer health benefits to residents, employees and visitors to the town
- Improved journey time reliability would lead to economic benefit, and encourage the use of public transport, leading to a mode shift away from the private car
- An improved walking and cycling experience alongside better connectivity and reduced journey times for these modes and bus services would lead to a mode shift towards active travel and improved healthy lifestyles



North Reading Orbital Route

Delivery Partners:

South Oxfordshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Local Parish and Town Councils

Summary:

A new orbital route around the northern edge of Reading linking the A4074 to the A4155. The new route would enable the delivery of an effective Park and Ride network in the north of Reading. It will include an FTPT route along its length, walking and cycling facilities and limited highway capacity for general traffic to help alleviate congestion in Caversham and over the River Thames.

The scheme will facilitate the reallocation of road space in Caversham and over the existing river crossings, to deliver public transport priority, walking, cycling and public space improvements. The route is linked to the delivery of the proposed Third Thames Crossing east of Reading, to provide an enhanced connection to the town centre and wider strategic network from the north of Reading.

We will work closely with Oxfordshire authorities to deliver the scheme, as it is reliant on land availability to the north of Reading.

Issue

Traffic currently uses Caversham as a through-route, causing significant congestion and air quality issues for local residents in Caversham. A large proportion of this through-traffic travels to and from the north of Reading, passing through Caversham local centre and along local (often residential) roads, which leads to traffic delays and poor air quality in Caversham.

Bus journey times are unreliable as a result of the congestion, making public transport an unattractive option. There is currently limited opportunity to deliver public transport priority due to the constrained nature of the roads.

These issues will be exacerbated if development within Caversham and north of Reading in South Oxfordshire is delivered. This will increase traffic levels further as the new occupants are likely to make trips to Reading as it is a major employment, retail and leisure hub in the area.

Outcome

- Traffic to and from north of Reading would be routed around Caversham local centre facilitating reallocation of road space for improved public transport and cycle facilities serving the local community and town centre. This would reduce dependency on the private car and encourage a shift to sustainable transport, increasing capacity for travel into and out of Reading and improving air quality.

- When combined with the Third Thames Crossing, cars and lorries will be routed away from Caversham and Reading town centre, improving forecast congestion.
- The scheme would be linked to the delivery of Park and Ride facilities along Reading's northern boundary, the Third Thames Crossing and East FTPT. This would provide a high-quality FTPT route from Park and Rides north of Reading to the town centre, via Thames Valley Park and Ride, further encouraging mode shift.

Adapting to the Future

Whilst initially designed to carry buses, the dedicated FTPT lanes will be designed to be suitable in the future to carry other forms of public transport, such as shared autonomous shuttles/buses, guided buses, trams or light rail.

The FTPT lanes, combined with the wider FTPT network, would offer a potential testing site for trials and early adoption of emerging technologies and legislation to enable services, for example Mobility as a Service (MaaS), connected autonomous public transport services and demand responsive services.

Third Thames Crossing East of Reading

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
 South Oxfordshire District Council
 Local Parish and Town Councils
 Oxfordshire County Council
 Highways England
 Department for Transport

Summary:

Provision of a new multi-modal river crossing, including bus priority and segregated walking and cycling facilities, linking the eastern side of Caversham and the northern end of the A3290 and associated mitigation measures to protect and bring benefits to local communities.

The crossing will include sustainable transport provision, as well as capacity for private vehicles. The crossing would link to other proposed schemes including the East FTPT route, North Reading Park & Ride facilities and the North Reading Orbital Route.

The crossing enables the reallocation of road space to provide bus priority for services between Caversham and Reading town centre via the existing crossings of the River Thames. This will help to achieve traffic reduction and air quality improvements.

The Cross-Thames Travel Group has been formed to develop the scheme and associated mitigation measures, including representation from all key stakeholders and Local Authorities. Feasibility work carried out by the group to date has concluded that the preferred location for the crossing is to the east of Reading. The scheme has been ranked as the second highest priority major transport scheme in the region by Transport for the South East and scheme development work is being undertaken by the Cross-Thames Travel Group.

Issue

Reading and Sonning suffer from through-traffic travelling between Oxfordshire and the M4 and southern England, as well as high levels of trips from Oxfordshire to and from Reading. This causes significant congestion in Reading town centre and Caversham, where traffic is required to cross the River Thames using either Reading or Caversham Bridges, which do not provide sufficient capacity to cross the river.

The network is significantly and adversely affected when there are incidents on or close to the bridges across the River Thames, such as traffic accidents and flooding. The approach to Sonning Bridge is vulnerable to flooding and this crossing becomes impassable during flood events. The diversion route from this bridge to Henley Bridge is also susceptible to flooding and this further reduces crossing capacity during flood events. This results in significant increases in traffic using Reading and Caversham bridges, and adds to the congestion in northern and central Reading.

The current transport network has limited capacity to accommodate travel demand to Reading town centre and the strategic road and rail networks. The lack of bus priority crossing the river leads to slow, unreliable buses serving Caversham, making public transport in the area both less attractive and less commercially viable to deliver higher frequency services. Existing cycle links, including those to Thames Valley Park, are indirect.

Outcome

- Significant benefits including reduced journey times, more reliable journeys, congestion relief, air quality improvements and network resilience
- The crossing and the associated North Reading Orbital Route would provide an alternative route for traffic away from the existing river bridges reducing congestion in Caversham and enabling the reallocation of road space to provide bus priority
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential to increase bus frequency due to improved journey times and reliability on the existing bridges in Reading and Sonning
- Increased attractiveness of cycling between, South Oxfordshire Caversham, Reading and Wokingham
- Associated mitigation measure protecting and bringing benefits to local communities

Quality Bus Corridors

Delivery Partners:

Public transport operators
West Berkshire Council
Wokingham Borough Council
South Oxfordshire District Council

Summary:

High quality branded bus routes and infrastructure (bus shelters, real-time information, accessible buses, Wi-Fi and USB charging on buses etc.). Bus priority (potentially involving the reallocation of road space) should be further delivered to enable the bus services to avoid the impacts of congestion. Additionally, the expansion of the red route scheme along high frequency routes to improve traffic flow. Cyclists, motorcyclists and taxis will generally be permitted to use bus priority infrastructure provided to support our QBCs.

Issue

Car congestion is the single biggest factor limiting the delivery of quality reliable bus services as the bus services are hindered by congestion. This leads to increased journey times, reduced reliability and results in increased operating costs and limits the attractiveness of using bus services.

Outcome

- Improved bus journey times and reliability along the main corridors in and out of the town centre. Modernised, high quality bus infrastructure will further improve the perception of bus travel and be more attractive for main mode of travel
- The improved attractiveness of bus travel, therefore reducing private car trips, easing congestion, and enabling higher level of trips to be accommodated on the transport networks to enable economic growth



Concessionary and Discounted Travel

Delivery Partners:

Public transport operators
Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Summary:

We provide statutory concessions in accordance with national legislation, which allow older and disabled people to travel on buses for free during off-peak times. Additionally, we also provide concessionary travel for disabled people and their carers during peak times, and travel at all times on dial-a-ride services for eligible pass holders.

We will investigate the potential to provide further concessions for other sustainable trips within Reading. Potential options for this could include discounted or free travel for:

- Different population sectors (for example people aged under 18 or people living in low income households)
- Different trip types (for example travel to school or trips in certain parts of Reading)
- Different trip times (for example off-peak travel for more users or peak travel for older people.)

To support an expanded concessionary fares scheme, we will need to identify a revenue stream, for example that which could be generated by a demand management scheme.

Issue

Disabled and elderly people are more likely to be reliant on public transport than other members of the population and are also more likely than others to be financially less well off. At present, the concessionary fares scheme only provides for free travel during off-peak times. However, many journeys made by those with concessionary passes need to be made at peak times (for example trips to work or healthcare appointments). This can lead to increased social isolation, increased deprivation and poverty for those who struggle to pay for peak hour fares.

Reading suffers from congestion due to high levels of private car travel, leading to poor environmental quality and reduced productivity.

Over one in four cars trips on the network at peak times are related to school travel⁶⁸.

Some areas of Reading are relatively deprived, with people at risk of social isolation without affordable travel options.

Outcome

Expansion of the concessionary fares scheme would provide a financial incentive encouraging bus travel in Reading and leading to a mode shift away from the private car. Depending on the details of the scheme, the following benefits could be realised:

- People developing life-long sustainable travel habits, resulting in a permanent mode shift away from the private car
- Increased accessibility to services and employment, resulting in economic benefit
- Reduced peak hour traffic, leading to reduced journey times, improved journey time reliability, reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased off-peak bus travel, leading to improved viability of bus services
- Mental health benefits (from social interaction and increased independence) and physical health benefits (from increased mobility)

Community Transport

Delivery Partners:

ReadiBus
Other community transport operators

Summary:

Reading is served by ReadiBus – a specialist transport service for people with restricted mobility. This operates as a 'dial-a-ride' service. Our strategy includes additional demand responsive travel services, which would serve all sectors of the population.

We will continue to support ReadiBus services, and investment in the scheme to enable more flexibility in booking.

Issue

People with restricted mobility are less likely to be able to travel by standard bus, or drive. Lack of suitable transport services can lead to isolation, alongside health and wellbeing impacts.

Currently, people using the ReadiBus service must book a set time in advance, using either the website or by phone. Furthermore, last-minute bookings cannot be made. This limits flexibility for travel.

Outcome

- People with mobility impairments will be more able to travel freely, affording them greater independence and flexibility
- The scheme will reduce the likelihood of isolation and associated health impacts



Demand Responsive Transport

Delivery Partners:

Public transport operators

Summary:

Introduction of demand responsive transport services, primarily in areas not otherwise serviced by public transport. Supporting technology would be implemented, which could include a mobile app, website and/or phone system, to facilitate the operation of the scheme.

This allows provision of flexible bus access at times when it is difficult or expensive to provide frequent fixed route bus services.

Issue

Some areas of Reading are relatively isolated and have poor access to the town centre and local facilities. This is due to bus services not covering all areas of Reading. In particular, people with disabilities, young and older people and deprived communities are most at risk as they are less likely to be able to travel by alternative means.

Outcome

- Access to amenities would be improved in areas not currently served by public transport, providing affordable travel options for those on low incomes and encouraging reduced travel by car or taxi
- The scheme would also act as a feeder service to regular public transport services, providing door-to-door connectivity and increasing the attractiveness of public transport
- This would encourage a mode shift away from the private car and contribute towards reduced forecast congestion and improved air quality, as well as encouraging social interaction and allowing people to be independent for longer
- Investment in the system could provide a catalyst for the expansion of non-fixed route public transport services, with the emerging initiatives and technologies such as MaaS, autonomous and connected vehicles

Adapting to the Future

Technological advances mean that Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs) are likely to become a cost-effective solution for 'last mile' travel for people and deliveries within the plan period. Currently, there are SAVs running in locations such as business parks across the world, although they currently require a driver except where they are operating on a fully private road. We expect UK legislation to remove this requirement for a driver from 2021, and for the cost of vehicles to fall. Current SAVs are relatively small, carrying around 12 to 15 people, however the technology is scalable to any size of vehicle and we expect there will be a much wider choice available over the coming years, enabling them to provide new opportunities for an integrated public transport service.

It is likely that the evolution of SAV will follow on from the development of Demand Responsive Travel across the Borough and in the future, they will work together to provide high frequency door-to-door services to complement and enhance the fixed-route public transport network.

Reading will review all schemes and new development in the context of operation on opening but also suitability for the future deployment of SAVs, so that they are 'future ready'.

South Reading Fast Track Public Transport Corridor

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
Public transport operators
Royal Berkshire Hospital
The University of Reading
Private sector

Summary:

Staged delivery of an FTPT route along the A33 (including future development sites), linking MereOak Park & Ride, south Reading business parks, Kennet Island, Madejski Stadium and Reading town centre is already underway.

There still remains significant sections along the A33, particularly northbound towards the town centre, where the FTPT should be delivered to provide priority.

Issue

Car commuter congestion and lack of bus priority through junctions leads to delays to Greenwave bus services that use the FTPT route. This makes provision of effective public transport services along the A33 challenging.

Planned development in and around the Southern Neighbourhood Area is expected to further increase demand for travel along the A33 corridor, increasing congestion. Alternative travel options and capacity upgrades are required to support already increasing travel demand and unlock development sites.

Outcome

- Significant cost savings to businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential to increase bus frequency due to reduced operating costs and/or increased patronage
- Increased capacity for travel into and out of Reading, and reduced congestion leading to improved air quality
- Development in the Southern Neighbourhood Area will be unlocked



East Reading Fast Track Public Transport Corridor

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
Public transport operators

Summary:

There are high levels of congestion, poor air quality, lack of public transport provision leading to unreliable journey times and a lack of continuous walking and cycling facilities in the east of Reading. These issues have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents, therefore the status quo is not an option and we must deliver a solution that addresses these issues.

An FTPT corridor in the eastern area of Reading would provide a sustainable travel option, reducing congestion and improving air quality to deliver benefits to local residents. It will link Thames Valley Park & Ride and Reading town centre (as well as Winnersh Triangle and Coppid Beech Park and Rides, and potentially North Park and Rides via Third Thames Crossing) to maximise benefits.

We are committed to working with Wokingham Borough Council to provide enhanced sustainable travel options and deliver the East FTPT to address issues facing local residents.

We will work with Wokingham Borough Council to review the work that informed and supported the previous planning application for an East Reading public transport and active travel route, and identify the type of infrastructure that would best support the objectives of the East FTPT corridor. Solutions could include:

- A tidal-flow public transport scheme on existing highway (removing capacity for general traffic)
- Options to improve travel via the railway and rivers
- A new dedicated public transport route connecting the east of Reading and Thames Valley Park and Ride to the town centre

Any options will be investigated in conjunction with the implementation of complementary demand management measures.

Issue

Daily profiles, alongside congestion and observed queues, indicate that the corridor is operating at, or over capacity during the majority of the day. Traffic queues can reach 300–550 vehicles exiting Reading in the peak periods and between 60 and 200 vehicles entering Reading in the peak periods.

Traffic congestion and lack of bus priority on London Road leads to slow, unreliable public transport, increased operating costs and decreased service frequency. This makes bus

travel less attractive, and limits opportunity to operate a greater range of bus services along the corridor.

Car demand to access the strategic rail and motorway networks is expected to grow with delivery of the Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

Planned development in and around the Eastern Neighbourhood Area, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest is expected to increase travel demand and delay along the corridor, restricting growth in the area. Alternative travel options and capacity upgrades are required to unlock development

Outcome

- Reduced congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased public transport services to the planned Thames Valley Park & Ride, to improve its attractiveness and extend the operating hours
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential to increase frequency due to reduced operating costs and increased support
- Significant benefits to residents and businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Increased capacity for travel to and from Reading to help mitigate the impact of future development in Reading and Wokingham

West Reading Fast Track Public Transport Corridor

Delivery Partners:

West Berkshire Council
Public transport operators

Summary:

Delivery of an FTPT corridor in the west of Reading.

The FTPT corridor will link the West Park and Ride to Portman Road Industrial Estate area, supporting regeneration of the area, as well as to the town centre. It will also provide benefits to public transport services for local residents along the corridor, including improved connections to the Oxford Road local centre, Tilehurst and Reading West stations and local schools.

There are also opportunities for the FTPT route to serve Rivermead Leisure Centre, the proposed new secondary school on Richfield Avenue and Cardiff Road Industrial Estate via the improved Cow Lane Bridges.

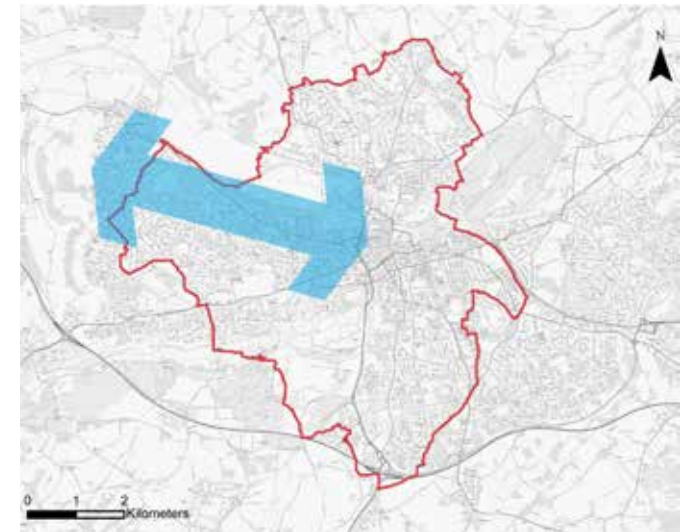
Issue

Traffic congestion and a lack of bus priority on A329 Oxford Road leads to slow and unreliable public transport, increased operating costs and decreased service frequency. This makes bus travel between western parts of Reading and the town centre less attractive and challenging to maintain headways and deliver higher frequency and passenger capacity.

Car commuter demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

Outcome

- Reduced congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Provision of high quality public transport services to the West Park & Ride, to encourage mode shift away from the private car and increased the combined benefits of the schemes
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential to increase bus frequency due to reduced operating costs and/or increased support
- Significant benefits to residents and businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Increased capacity for travel to and from Reading to help mitigate the impact of future development



South West Reading Fast Track Public Transport Corridor

Delivery Partners:

West Berkshire Council
Public transport operators

Summary:

Delivery of an FTPT corridor in the south west of Reading, linking a future Park & Ride and Reading town centre.

Page 526 This FTPT corridor will provide a fast public transport route from the South West Park and Ride to the town centre, encouraging mode shift from private car for the final stages of long-distance trips via the M4 motorway and removing cars from Reading's road network.

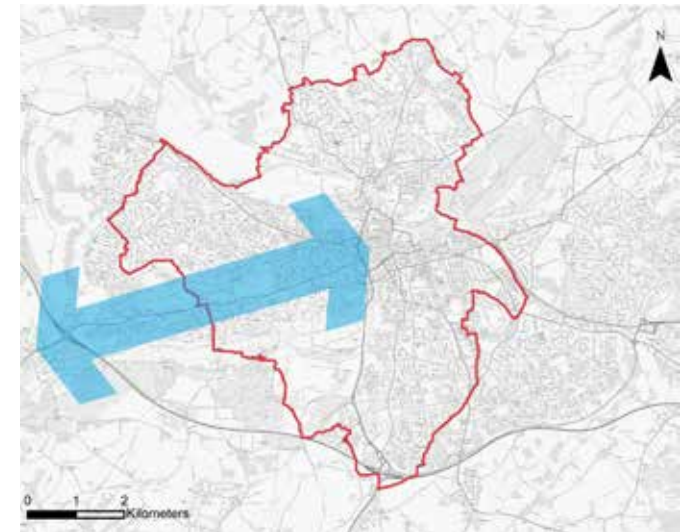
Issue

Traffic congestion and a lack of bus priority on the A4 Bath Road leads to slow and unreliable public transport, and also increased operating costs and decreased service frequency. This makes bus travel between western parts of Reading and the town centre less attractive and challenging to maintain headways and deliver higher frequency and passenger capacity.

Car commuter demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

Outcome

- Reduced congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential to increase bus frequency due to reduced operating costs and/or increased support
- Significant benefits to residents and businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Improved and sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport networks to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes
- Increased capacity for travel into and out of Reading



Orbital Fast Track Public Transport

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Public transport operators

Summary:

Delivery of orbital FPT corridors, linking key transport hubs, residential areas and employment areas.

Page 527 These services would reduce the need for people to travel into the town centre when they do not have an origin or destination within the centre, reducing the number of vehicles making through trips on the IDR. They will also enable cross town travel by public transport without needing to change services in the town centre.

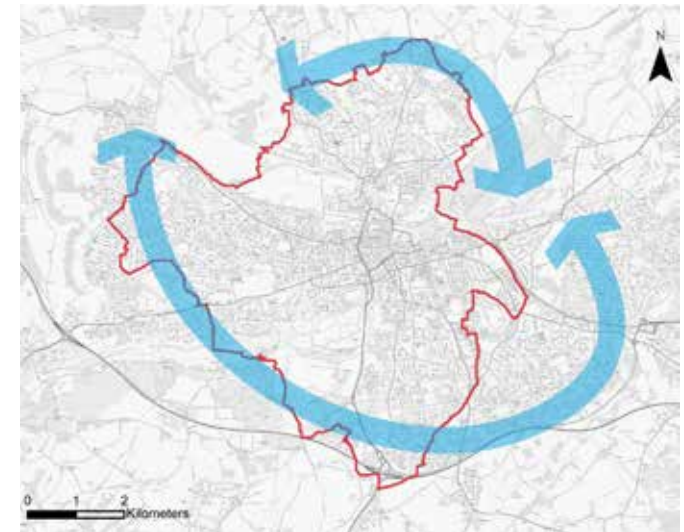
These services could either be provided on existing routes or new routes such as the proposed North Reading Orbital Route.

Issue

41% of commuters travelling to work from home within the wider Reading area do not have an origin or destination within the Central Area. Therefore, there is a significant demand for orbital movements between residential, employment areas and railway stations/Park & Rides. Currently the majority of bus routes are radial, making public transport a less attractive choice for these journeys as it is indirect.

This leads to increased car travel and congestion within the town and city region.

Car commuter demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.



Outcome

- Cost savings to businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Increased attractiveness of public transport and potential for significant increase in overall bus patronage
- Increased capacity for travel around Reading, and reduced car commuter congestion leading to improved air quality
- Improved and sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport network to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes

MereOak Park and Ride Expansion

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council

Summary:

MereOak Park and Ride opened in 2015 with 570 spaces and is extensively used by people travelling from south of Reading, and the M4. It is served by Greenwave buses to Reading town centre, Madejski Stadium, Green Park and the Royal Berkshire Hospital. MereOak is also the coach stop for Reading for National Express coach services. There is potential for the Park and Ride to become a major transport interchange hub, encouraging further use of the Park and Ride, with the provision of additional facilities and car parking at the site.

We will deliver increased parking provision, new electric vehicle charging points, and a facilities hub (which could include toilets, a waiting room and café, for example).

Issue

Planned development in and around the Southern Neighbourhood Area is expected to increase demand for travel along the A33 corridor, adding further delays or restricting growth within the heavily congested Neighbourhood area. Alternative travel options are required to unlock development sites in the wider area, and to increase capacity for travel into Reading.

MereOak Park and Ride does not benefit from enclosed passenger waiting facilities or toilets. Demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.



Outcome

- Improved amenity offering will increase attractiveness of Park and Ride facility
- Attract more motorway coach services to stop at this facility
- Additional car parking will provide increased capacity to travel by Park & Ride. This would increase usage of the Park and Ride and reduce congestion into the town, which, in turn, could enable increased bus service frequencies to the Park and Ride
- Increased capacity for trips along the A33 corridor, facilitating economic growth
- Improved sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport networks to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes.

Thames Valley Park and Ride

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council

Summary:

Delivery of a new Park and Ride facility at Thames Valley Park, servicing the town centre.

A new Park and Ride facility - Thames Valley Park and Ride – is being delivered by Wokingham Borough Council. The scheme includes 260 parking spaces west of Thames Valley Park and is proposed to be served by the existing Thames Valley shuttle bus services between the Park and Ride and central Reading.

East FTPT will provide a direct traffic-free route for this service, if delivered, as well as Winnersh Park and Ride and other eastern bus services. Further services passing the Park and Ride would increase the frequency services and increase the Park and Ride operating hours.

Issue

The A4 London Road operates at capacity with high levels of congestion occurring during peak periods. Planned development is anticipated to increase travel demand on this corridor and there is no capacity to accommodate this.

Demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

Outcome

- Car trips from the east into Reading will be able to use the Park and Ride and associated bus services to access Reading. This will increase the transport capacity into Reading town centre and facilitate economic growth
- Improved sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport networks to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes



Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride Enhancements

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council

Summary:

Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride provides a key link for those travelling from the south and east of Reading. Further enhancements are proposed to increase parking capacity and improve for the Park and Ride services.

The improvements delivered will need to cater for the growth of future technologies including the provision of more electric charger points.

We will seek to extend parking provision by decking the car park that will allow an increase in the parking spaces. This will cater for the demand with an increase in provision of electric charging points for both cars and buses to adapt to changing technologies. Waiting facilities and associated amenities will also be upgraded to enhance user experience.

East FTPT would improve the journey times and reliability of the supporting bus services.

Issue

Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride opened in 2015 with nearly 600 spaces for those travelling from the east of Reading. The Park and Ride has been well used and providing this key link to the town centre with buses departing every 15 minutes. However, there are currently no waiting facilities for passengers and there is limited provision for electric vehicles.

Outcome

- Improved amenity offerings will increase the attractiveness of the Park and Ride facility
- Additional car parking will provide increased capacity to travel by Park & Ride
- Combined, this would increase usage of the Park and Ride and reduce congestion



7.1

North Reading Park and Rides

Delivery Partners:

South Oxfordshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Local Parish and Town Councils

Summary:

The provision of a comprehensive Park and Ride network to the north of Reading serving the town centre.

Page 525
The provision of Park and Ride facilities alone will provide benefits with the existing infrastructure. However, there is limited scope to provide a truly attractive alternative to the private car due the lack of ability to provide bus priority on routes through Caversham due to limited available space.

The benefits of this scheme would be maximised through the delivery of the North Reading Orbital and Third Thames Crossing.

Issue

North Reading suffers from high levels of congestion and is heavily constrained – in particular, the Reading and Caversham bridges over the River Thames. This has negative impacts on public space and air quality within Caversham.

Demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

Outcome

- Car trips from the main road network north of Reading will be able to use the Park and Ride and associated bus services to access Reading town centre, increasing transport capacity into the town centre and facilitating economic growth
- The North Reading Orbital Route will help link any North Park and Rides and the Third Thames Crossing would enable bus priority to be delivered on or on the approach to the existing town centre bridges across the River Thames and/or provide a prioritised alternative route into Central Reading south of the river, via East FTPT



West Reading Park and Ride

Delivery Partners:

West Berkshire Council
Local Parish and Town Councils

Summary:

Delivery of a new Park and Ride facility at the western edge of Reading, serving the town centre.

This facility will be linked to the West FPT corridor, providing local residents along the corridor improved connections to the Oxford Road local centre, Tilehurst and Reading West stations and local schools.

Page 528

Issue

The A329 Oxford Road suffers from high levels of congestion and is heavily constrained in some areas. Planned development is anticipated to increase travel demand on this corridor.

Demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes such as: Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and smart motorways.

West FPT would improve the journey times and reliability of the supporting bus services.

Outcome

- Car trips from the west into Reading, including those from neighbouring areas, will be able to use the Park and Ride and associated bus services to access Reading. This will increase transport capacity into Reading town centre and facilitate economic growth. Residents of areas en-route will be able to access extra fast services into the town centre
- Improved sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport networks to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes



South West Reading Park and Ride

Delivery Partners:

West Berkshire Council
Local Parish and Town Councils

Summary:

Delivery of a new Park and Ride facility at the M4 Junction 12, to encourage mode shift from private car for the final stages of long-distance trips via the M4 motorway and removing cars from Reading's road network.

This facility will be linked to the South West FTPT corridor, which will provide a high quality public transport connection directly to Reading town centre.

Page 527

Issue

The A4 Bath Road suffers from high levels of congestion and is heavily constrained in some areas. Planned development is anticipated to increase travel demand on this corridor.

Demand to access the strategic networks (rail and motorways) is expected to increase with the planned investment schemes including the Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and M4 smart motorway.

South West FTPT would improve the journey times and reliability of the supporting bus services to the Park and Ride.

Outcome

- Car trips from the west into Reading (particularly those travelling along the A4 and M4) will be able to use the Park and Ride and associated bus services to access Reading increasing transport capacity into Reading town centre and facilitating economic growth
- Residents of areas en-route will be able to access fast services into the town centre or out to Calcot/Theale, encouraging a switch to public transport and reducing forecast congestion. This could lead to improvements in forecast air quality
- Improved sustainable accessibility to the strategic transport networks to increase the catchment and travel benefits of the planned schemes



Reading Station Interchange Enhancements

Delivery Partners:

Network Rail
Great Western Railway

Summary:

Further enhancements to the Reading Station interchange to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, including:

- Upgraded public transport stops with real-time passenger information and improved infrastructure to enhance user experience and encourage sustainable travel
- Improve the north/south active travel spine through planned development in the station area. This will include delivering an improved connection between Reading Station and Christchurch Bridge
- Improved access to/from Reading Station for cyclists, including through the subway, and connectivity to key local and national cycle routes
- Improvements in cycle parking through the provision of secure cycle hubs
- Signage and digital wayfinding to help visitors find their way to and from the railway station



Issue

Reading station is a major transport hub and, with increased passenger usage anticipated over the coming years, improved transport infrastructure will be required to keep up with the demand and to accommodate growth in the Reading area. In addition, cycle theft in Reading is high, and discourages people from cycling to the railway station.

Outcome

- Improved attractiveness for rail travel, therefore reducing forecast private car trips and forecast congestion, leading to improvements in forecast air quality
- Reduction in cycle theft
- Increased attractiveness of active travel through reduction in severance between the station and town centre
- Improved interchange experience between modes, increasing the attractiveness of public transport and active travel

Reading West Station Upgrade

Delivery Partners:

Network Rail
Great Western Railway

Summary:

Delivery of a quality railway station upgrade, including:

- A ticket office and barriers
- Shelter
- Cycle parking
- Improved ramp entrance
- Lifts to both platforms
- Platform widening
- Canopies on the platforms and improved signage

Reallocation of road space to improve access on foot, cycle and bus.

Issue

The access to Reading West Railway Station is concealed and signage is poor, so its visibility from the roadside is limited. Natural surveillance and visibility on the ramps and on the platforms are poor. The ramp from Oxford Road is steep and has a number of steps and is therefore difficult or impossible to access for mobility impaired people or those with children, buggies or heavy goods. A temporary stepped access is provided to the other platform. There is a ramp to the other platform from Tilehurst Road but is isolated and natural surveillance is poor. The railway station is not secure. The platforms are narrow, and protection from the weather is very limited for both passenger and the part time railway station staff. Oxford Road suffers with significant congestion, which affects the journey times and reliability of the bus services accessing the railway station.

Outcome

- Improved attractiveness for rail travel, therefore reducing forecast private car trips and forecast congestion, leading to improvements in forecast air quality
- Oxford Road corridor would be enhanced to improve personal safety and discourage anti-social behaviour
- Railway station investment can act as a catalyst for wider development and regeneration



Tilehurst Station Upgrade

Delivery Partners:

Network Rail
Great Western Railway

Summary:

Improve customer experience and make the station fully accessible providing lifts to allow customers to access all platforms. In addition, improve the access to the station by all modes to improve safety and user experience. This could include improved footways, crossings, drop-off/pickup layout, and additional cycle and car parking.

Issue

The access to Tilehurst Station is currently poor and inaccessible for users. There are no lifts to access some of the platforms making it unusable for some disabled users and therefore discouraging rail use.

Outcome

- Improved attractiveness for rail travel, therefore reducing forecast private car trips and forecast congestion, leading to improvements in forecast air quality
- New facilities will make the station accessible to a greater range of potential users



Green Park Station

Delivery Partners:

Network Rail
Great Western Railway
West Berkshire Council

Summary:

A new railway station and interchange, serving Green Park and wider southern Reading is being delivered by Reading Borough Council.

The scheme includes a two-platform railway station and a multi-modal interchange to the east of the railway station, including a bus interchange, a park & ride facility, cycle parking, short stay car park (drop off/pick up), taxi drop-off, accessible parking facility and access road.

Issue

There are high levels of commuter car congestion on the A33, especially around Green Park. Significant development is planned to come forward in the area which will increase congestion without upgrades to the transport networks. Currently the only access into Green Park is by road via private car, bus or cycle. The high frequency bus services are susceptible to congestion where FTPT routes have yet to be delivered, with the potential to reduce the attractiveness of bus travel and increase journey time unreliability.

Outcome

- Significant cost savings to businesses through improvements to travel capacity, journey time and reliability
- Reduced forecast congestion and delay leading to increased attractiveness of bus services and improved forecast air quality
- Significant development in the area would be unlocked, facilitating economic growth



Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

Delivery Partners:

Private sector
Public transport operators

Summary:

Establish a sustainable MaaS scheme allowing residents, commuters and visitors to simply plan, pay for and undertake multi-modal journeys through an easy to use app linked to a single payment platform. MaaS can be set up as a pay as you go or as a monthly subscription for services.

Page 528

The principle behind MaaS is to reduce car ownership by providing a multi-modal service that gives users the confidence that all their travel needs can be conveniently met without owning a car. In the first instance this may be giving up / not buying a second car. Research shows that without a car on the drive, people travel substantially more sustainably which is necessary to meet Reading's climate targets and improve air quality and health. Increased sustainable travel will make high quality public transport services more viable which will enable more investment in services and greater take up of MaaS. MaaS is not about preventing all access to a car and car clubs and car hire can be part of a scheme.

To be effective MaaS needs a good geographical coverage so that the majority of journeys made by the traveller are within the MaaS area. For example, if a family has a second car primarily used for commuting, MaaS should be able to provide an effective alternative.

We will look to work with neighbouring authorities, public transport operators and commercial providers to build a more integrated service. There are also commercial companies working to establish MaaS services on a fully commercial model although without success to date in the UK. Reading will monitor progress of these should it be beneficial to encourage a company to lead on MaaS services.

We will deliver a MaaS 'light' service in and around Reading working with neighbouring authorities and operators to quickly take practical steps towards a full MaaS service building on existing smart cards, apps and web services in the region in the first instance to actively encourage modal shift. Marketing and branding will be a key part of this. Should viable commercial services come forward then we will work with operators to facilitate the commercial MaaS service in place of a Council-led scheme.

We would expect MaaS to be accessible to users via a mobile app. For many people (including some older and disabled people) a service that brings together all travel options into one location and facilitates journey planning, booking and integrated payment is likely to be viewed as a easy to use, and could lead to increased independence for some users.

However, we also recognise that some users, particularly some older or disabled people, may have difficulty using an app to plan, book and pay for their travel. To mitigate this risk as far as possible, we will design any MaaS scheme with full consideration of equalities, and provide alternative access and booking options, such as a website and a telephone service. We will also provide high-quality customer support and education programmes to enable these users to better access MaaS. We will carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment for any MaaS scheme, in line with policy RTS3 Equality and Inclusivity.

Issue

Currently there are no multi-modal travel planning services in Reading which streamline journeys and allow for users to make a single payment option for complete journeys. This can make public transport both complex and expensive for users, discouraging its use.

Outcome

- The availability of a sustainable MaaS scheme will offer improved mobility and access to services whilst reducing the use and consumption of transport resources. A more streamlined transport system will create more reliable, convenient and cost-effective journeys which encourage the uptake of more sustainable travel. This will result in a reduction in private car use, carbon impact and will free up road capacity for further improvements for sustainable travel



Town and Local Centre Public Space Enhancements

Summary:

We will enhance the experience of visiting central Reading and local centres including access between buses and other modes of transport by removing or reducing conflicts between motorised transport and walking and cycling.

Improvements could include providing adequate facilities for deliveries, manage available kerb space and removal of obstructions to free bus movement on approaches to central areas. Improvements could also be made to provide better access for walking and cycling in and around Reading town centre, including to Reading Station and better access for bus passengers to key interchanges in the town centre, as well as creating car or vehicle-free areas, and providing rest and amenity areas.

Effective management of deliveries, blue badge parking and on and off-street parking will all contribute towards a more accessible town centre.

Issue

The perception of safety for vulnerable road users along some of the key road corridors, at local centres and the town centre is poor. These roads experience high levels of congestion and suffer from poor air quality. Major road links, such as the IDR, cause significant severance, and make walking and cycling unattractive. Wayfinding has been introduced over time and is sometimes disjointed, and the wider public space environment has become cluttered and inconsistent.

Outcome

- Active travel would be enabled, and access would be improved to the local facilities and the town centre, leading to reduced car trips and forecast congestion
- Alongside increased green space, air quality would be improved and exposure to pollution could be reduced through greater separation of people and vehicles
- Road safety and perceived safety could be improved
- Improvements to public space could attract people and businesses to the area, leading to economic growth



Strategic Pedestrian Routes

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council

Summary:

We will provide improvements to encourage walking and improve options for multi-modal interchange on key walking routes which connect major employment areas, transport hubs, the town centre and district hubs across the Reading area. Improvements should reduce conflict with traffic and other road users and improve safety and perception of safety. Further work will be undertaken to identify strategic pedestrian routes for improvements, which could include:

- Roadspace reallocation
- Enhanced public space
- Resurfacing
- Lighting and CCTV
- New/improved crossings
- Improved signage
- Street clutter removal and consolidation
- Introduction of pedestrian and cyclist rest areas
- Increased landscaping and vegetation

Issue

Strategic pedestrian routes are of variable quality in Reading, and areas of poor provision reduce the attractiveness of the routes and discourage people from walking, both as a main mode, or as part of a multi-mode trip. In many locations, private car travel is prioritised over pedestrian movements and pedestrian routes can be narrow and poorly maintained. This can make routes particularly difficult to use for disabled people and other vulnerable users such as parents with pushchairs.

Outcome

- Improved accessibility for all users
- Increased walking levels and shift away from private car travel, leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased levels of physical activity leading to improvements in mental and physical health
- Improved active travel journey times leading to economic benefit
- Improved access to public transport, leading to increased public transport use, potential for service frequency enhancements, additional capacity into Reading and reduced journey times



Local Pedestrian Routes

Summary:

Create a network of local pedestrian routes that connect people to local facilities and provide feeder links to the strategic pedestrian network.

Issue

Local pedestrian routes connecting people to local facilities, such as schools, shops and healthcare are often indirect and poorly maintained, leading to high levels of car use for short trips. This contributes towards health issues and causes congestion.

The quality of routes can make active travel particularly difficult for disabled people and other vulnerable users such as parents with pushchairs.

Many of our local centres are located on or adjacent to key transport routes, and local congestion caused by people using their cars for short trips has consequential effects on the wider network, such as delays to public transport.

Outcome

- Improved accessibility for all users
- Increased accessibility of local facilities
- Walking will be encouraged, increasing levels of physical activity
- Reduced walk journey times leading to economic benefit
- Mode shift away from private car leading to reduced congestion, improved air quality and improved public transport reliability
- Potential safety benefits for pedestrians, such as reduced obstructions on footways, including parked vehicles



Strategic and Town Centre Cycle Routes

Delivery Partners:

Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Bracknell Forest Borough Council

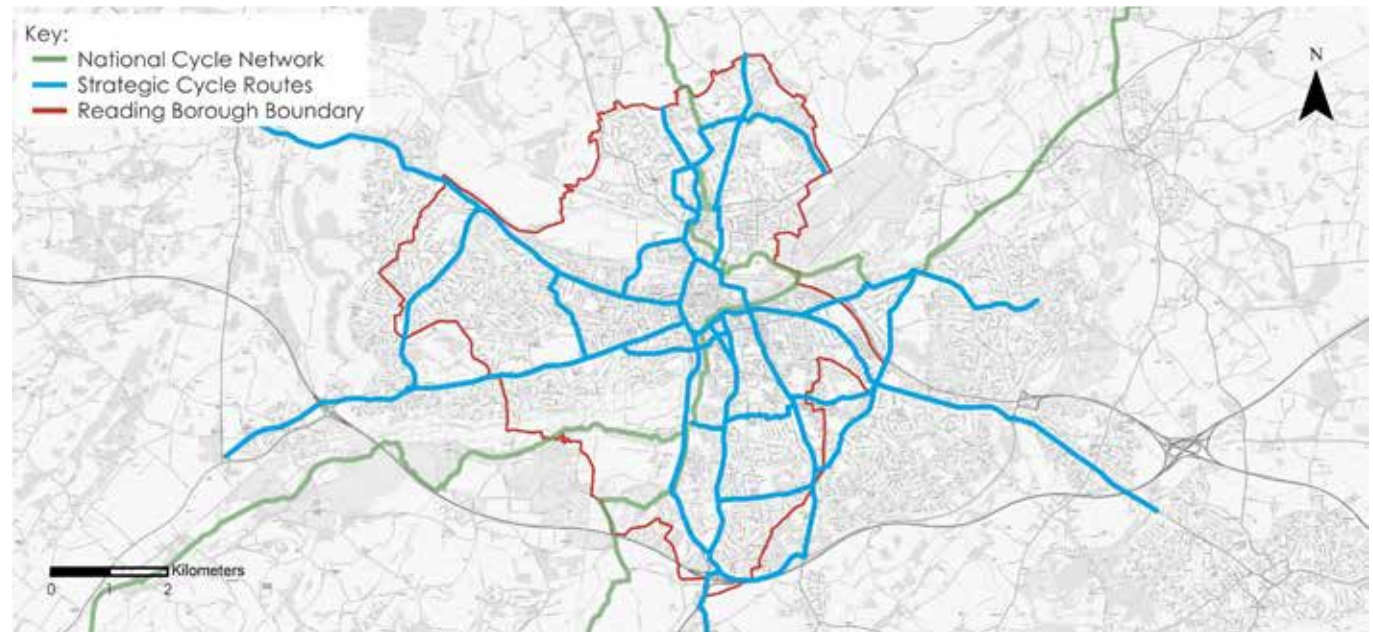
Summary:

Given the compact nature of Reading Borough, there is significant opportunity for improvements to increase cycling levels and create a shift away from private car travel.

We will create a strategic cycle network based on the principles of London Cycle Superhighways to connect major destinations (including employment centres and transport hubs) along key transport corridors and in the town centre. These routes include both radial and orbital routes as well as enhanced routes within the town centre.

Improvements will include reallocating road space, segregation between pedestrians and cyclists and traffic, surface improvements, crossing enhancements, two-way cycle facilities, parking restrictions, signage, reducing street furniture and increasing accessibility for all.

Associated public space improvements would enhance key corridors including those in deprived areas.



Issue

There are limited dedicated cycle connections along key corridors and, where these do exist, they often connect people to places by indirect and unattractive routes where the quality of provision is variable. Low route quality in some locations can make routes particularly difficult to use for those with adapted cycles, such as tricycles, recumbent cycle, wheelchair cycles or cycles with trailers.

Outcome

- Improved accessibility for all users

- Increased cycling levels and shift away from private car travel, leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Reduced conflict between cyclists and pedestrians
- Increased levels of physical activity leading to improvements in mental and physical health
- Improved active travel journey times leading to economic benefit
- Improved access to public transport, leading to increased public transport use, potential for service frequency enhancements, additional capacity into Reading and reduced journey times

Local Cycle Routes

Summary:

The creation of a new or improved local cycle network along lightly trafficked routes, linking communities to local facilities such as shops, leisure facilities, healthcare and education.

Cycle facilities will include a mixture of shared or segregated foot/cycleways, on-carriageway cycle lanes, cyclist awareness signage and crossing facilities. Shared use facilities will have an interim role to play as we transition towards the provision of segregated cycle infrastructure.

Improvements to borough-wide local routes are proposed as part of the LCWIP. These routes will take into account different types of bicycle for those with particular mobility needs.

Issue

The local cycle network is incomplete and often follows less direct and quieter routes, with disjointed and/or missing connections. This leads to high levels of car use for short trips. This contributes towards health issues and causes congestion.

Low route quality in some locations can make routes particularly difficult to use for those with adapted cycles, such as tricycles, recumbent cycle, wheelchair cycles or cycles with trailers.

Many of our local centres are located on or adjacent to key transport routes, and local congestion caused by people using their cars for short trips has consequential effects on the wider network, such as delays to public transport.

Outcome

- Improved accessibility for all users
- Increased accessibility of local facilities
- Cycling will be encouraged, increasing levels of physical activity
- Reduced cycle journey times leading to economic benefit
- Mode shift away from private car leading to reduced forecast congestion, improved forecast air quality and improved public transport reliability
- Potential safety benefits for cyclists



Sustainable and Safer Travel to School

Delivery Partners:

Schools
Local communities

Summary:

Introduction of a package of measures to encourage sustainable and safer travel to school, which could include:

- Local road closures at school start and finish times
- New and improved pedestrian and cycle crossings
- Reduced vehicle speed limits
- Traffic calming measures
- Increased cycle and scooter parking provision
- Support to set up Park and Strides, walking buses or bike buses

In addition, encourage schools to enrol in the Modeshift STARS to influence the modal shift of school travel for children and staff.

Issue

Parents using cars when dropping off and collecting children from school contributes significantly to congestion in Reading. This leads to poor air quality on some of the main corridors and town centre, as well as around schools themselves. The issue at schools is made worse by vehicles waiting with engines on, particularly where there is limited parking space availability.

Congestion around schools also leads to road safety issues.

Usage of the private car to travel to and from school reduces activity in children and has impacts on their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Outcome

- Health benefits of improved air quality and increased active travel levels
- Influencing long term travel behaviours by enabling and encouraging children to walk, cycle or bus to school rather than depend upon the car
- Improved road safety, potentially leading to a reduction in accidents
- Shift to sustainable travel for journeys to school, leading to improved journey time reliability



Play and School Street Programme

Delivery Partners:

Local communities
Schools

Summary:

We will offer support to local communities and schools who would like to organise temporary street closures for up to three hours, to create Play and School Streets.

We will also advertise the benefits that community and play events can bring to children and neighbourhoods.

Play and School Streets give children the chance to play safely in their street without any danger from traffic. This initiative was trialled in 2013 - 2014 across the Borough and a number of streets successfully took part in Play and School Street activities.

Issue

Traffic levels in Reading lead to a perceived lack of safety for children playing outside. Many minor roads have high numbers of vehicles travelling along them, leading to reduced opportunities for children to play outside. Additionally, many homes in Reading are some distance from significant outside play space.

Current evidence shows that the amount of time children play outside is reducing, and their independent mobility is declining.

Outcome

- Temporary street closures improve perceived safety and encourage children to play in the street. They have been shown to increase levels of physical activity, contributing to children's health, and also increase social interaction between both children and adults
- The temporary closures build confidence to use street spaces more fully when the closures are no longer in place and helps to re-establish the street as a shared space, rather than one dominated by vehicles
- Street closures have also been shown to encourage informal activities that help to develop cycle confidence, better providing children with the skills to enable to choose cycling as a mode of travel⁶⁹



Cycle Parking Hubs and Facilities

Delivery Partners:

Network Rail,
Great Western Railway, South Western
Railway
Local residents and community groups

Summary:

Provision of secure, covered cycle hubs at transport interchanges, with the potential for manned security to provide additional reassurance at major hubs. Hubs can provide a large number of secure spaces with double height racks and include facilities including CCTV, lighting, electric charging points, bicycle repair stands, pumps, and 24-hour access with key cards. Cycle hubs have been installed at Dorking, Brighton, Lewes and Horsham Stations and demonstrate the success of these cycle hubs.

Establishment of residential cycle parking facilities, particularly in areas of terraced housing. Provide communal cycle hangars in residential areas which provide safe storage for residents who currently do not have the provision and as a result do not own a bike. Cycle hangars are designed to provide a secure on street solution, which are accessed by a resident using a key.

Issue

The lack of secure, covered and convenient cycle parking facilities, such as CCTV, electric charging points and maintenance stands, at origins and destinations is a key barrier to cycling and can reduce the attractiveness of cycling for both local and longer multi-modal journeys. In addition to the challenges faced when parking bicycles at key destinations, such as the town centre and transport interchanges, many residents also lack the necessary storage space to keep a bicycle at home and are therefore discouraged from owning a bike and cycling to work or for leisure trips. The lack of cycle parking hubs and facilities can encourage car travel, increasing congestion around the town centre and transport hubs, and also reduces levels of active travel.

Outcome

- New and improved cycle parking hubs and facilities would encourage an increase in cycling as people would feel safe storing their bikes at key destinations, including transport interchanges and residential areas.
- By providing more residential cycle parking across the Borough, it will encourage more residents to own a bike and use it to travel to work and for leisure purposes. This will help to encourage a modal shift from car use to cycling, which in turn will reduce congestion and improve air quality around the town centre.



Cycle Hire Scheme

Delivery Partners:

Private sector
Wokingham Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council

Summary:

The provision of a new cycle hire scheme to serve Reading and the wider area. Investigate opportunities to upgrade the existing cycle hire infrastructure and include possible fleets of e-bikes and/or e-scooters.

Issue

Reading is not currently served by an active cycle hire scheme. Opportunities to provide a new cycle hire scheme around Reading are being explored. Cycle hire stations will be located at key destinations across Reading, including transport hubs, employment centres and near other local facilities and services. Existing infrastructure from the previous scheme will be upgraded, and new hire stations provided to serve the wider Reading area to encourage more cycle trips into the town centre.

Outcome

- Cycle hire hubs would increase access to cycling and complement other transport options.
- It provides opportunity for those who do not currently own a bicycle to try cycling, potentially leading to significant increases in cycling and physical activity.
- Increasing access to cycling could lead to corresponding reductions in car commuting and forecast congestion and could lead to improved air quality



Traffic and Junction Management

Summary:

We will deliver infrastructure schemes to improve our network efficiency, including:

- Junction type changes
- Removal of highway pinch points
- Traffic signal upgrades
- Reallocation of roadspace
- Lane allocation changes
- Changes to junction layouts
- Delivery of public transport priority
- Delivery of pedestrian and cycle priority

Issue

Many parts of our highway network are not designed to accommodate the current level of multi-modal movements. There are local pinch points that cause congestion and areas that lack sufficient provision and priority for active travel and public transport. Parts of our network are also under-utilised and there is wasted space.

Outcome

- Reduced traffic journey times, reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Reduced active travel and public transport journey times, leading to mode shift away from the private car
- Improved bus journey time reliability
- Increased network capacity



Parking Schemes and Management

Summary:

Technological advances now enable our kerbs and parking spaces to be managed dynamically, improving efficiency of usage.

Kerb-space could be booked for a variety of uses, such as general parking, disabled parking, short-stay parking, loading, servicing or as a bus stop. Usage could be managed through dynamic pricing, with higher charges applied for certain booking types at particular times of day. Improved efficiency of kerb-space will allow us to remove on-street parking that obstructs pedestrian, cycle or public transport routes.

We will also be able to manage charges for on-street and off-street parking, to discourage travel during peak periods and to encourage modal shift away from car to sustainable transport such as buses or Park and Ride.

Multiple booking methodologies could be used, including mobile applications.

We would expect any parking management system to be accessible to users via a mobile app. However, we recognise that some users, particularly some older or disabled people, may have difficulty using an app to plan, book and pay for their parking. To mitigate this risk as far as possible, we will ensure our parking management schemes have full consideration of equalities, and provide alternative access and booking options, such as a website and a telephone service.

We will also provide high-quality customer support and education programmes to enable these users to better access our parking management schemes. We will carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment for any parking management scheme, in line with policy RTS3 Equality and Inclusivity.

Issue

Kerb-space and parking in local centres and Reading town centre is limited. Unmanaged on-street servicing and deliveries combined with car parking can cause congestion and blocking of pedestrian and cycle movements as well as the ability for buses to access kerbs.

In some areas across the Borough, parking is unmanaged and on-street parking is obstructing the use of footways and cycleways. Poor management of parking leads to more vehicles circling streets to find parking spaces and queuing to wait and leave car parks when they are already full.

Outcome

- Improved access to local facilities through increased parking provision at certain times of day, in particular for disabled people where disabled parking is currently limited.
- Reduced obstruction of people and vehicle flows leading to reduced congestion, improved journey time reliability and associated economic benefit.
- Improved public transport reliability leading to a mode shift away from private car and associated reduction in congestion and improvements in air quality.
- Reduced emissions and economic benefits, as drivers would be directed automatically to either their pre-booked space or the closest available parking, so drivers (including of commercial vehicles) would not need to wait for spaces to become available.
- Improved emergency service response times.
- The management system will allow us to better address inappropriate parking practices such as the blocking of footways or parking on double yellow lines.
- Improved transport data to inform future schemes and policies.

Road Safety Schemes

Summary:

We will provide safe roads and pavements, including crossings, that prioritise and encourage walking, cycling and public transport.

Schemes could include:

- Improved crossings
- Street clutter removal and consolidation
- Introduction of rest areas for pedestrians and cyclists
- Cutting back vegetation
- Traffic calming
- Reduced speed limits
- Improved parking and loading design
- Resurfacing
- Signage and lining
- Lighting and CCTV

Issue

Whilst a number of road safety schemes have been implemented in recent years in Reading, further improvements need to be delivered to improve the safety of vulnerable road users and to remove pinch points which can cause dangerous driver behaviour.

Outcome

- Reduced active travel and public transport journey times and improved public space, leading to mode shift away from the private car, reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Increased journey time reliability leading to economic benefits
- Improved road user safety, leading to fewer collisions and lower network disruption



Electric Vehicle Charging

Key Delivery Partners:

Utility providers
Car manufacturers

Summary:

Charging infrastructure needs to be provided around Reading to support the shift towards electric vehicles and the Government commitment of no new petrol or diesel vehicles to be sold after 2035, or earlier.

We will support installation of electric vehicle charging points on-street within the Borough and will also support the introduction of electric car club vehicles and associated charging bays. Various placement methods for on-street electric charging points will be considered, such as within existing street furniture, with priority given to avoiding and minimising street clutter.

Within public car parks, we will convert existing spaces to electric vehicle parking spaces, including at our Park and Ride sites. We will also monitor EV demand and review land use policies for the installation of EV garages as battery technology improves across the growing EV fleet.

Issue

Reading has declared a climate crisis and needs to support the switch to low carbon vehicles, including electric vehicles.

Reading suffers from poor air quality, caused generally by the high volumes of traffic experienced in the town. The majority of vehicles using the roads in Reading are not low or no emission vehicles and contribute towards poor air quality conditions.

There are a limited number of electric vehicles charging points in Reading. Central Government is considering a ban on the sale of petrol, diesel and hybrid cars nationwide from 2035 or earlier, and we anticipate that there will be a significant shift towards electric vehicles before this. A high-quality network of charging infrastructure will be required to support this.

Outcome

- Improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions, through encouraging a mode shift towards electric vehicles
- Economic benefits in terms of reduced vehicle operating costs

Adapting to the Future

We are seeking to reduce the volume of traffic travelling into and through Reading town centre. The RTS will deliver the public transport and active travel infrastructure needed to support this.

Access to public transport provision in Reading is excellent within the town centre area. There is opportunity to encourage the shift away from combustion vehicle use in this part of the town through conversion of existing on-street residents' parking bays to electric vehicle car club bays. This will enable residents to use an electric car when required, but also helps reduce the need for car ownership, removing polluting vehicles from our network at an accelerated pace.

Developing battery technology, the take up of EVs and the challenges of providing sufficient peak power at homes to charge cars is likely to both enable and necessitate a different, garage approach, to the current, predominately home based EV charging model. Therefore, charging points outside people's homes, in public car parks, at places of work or on-street will no longer be practicable to deliver or required. Instead, our Park and Ride sites will be adapted to create charging hubs and interchange points for public transport including electric shared autonomous vehicles. We will also look to identify other potential sites for EV charging and it is anticipated that the Adept Live Lab project will help this.

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

Summary:

Big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the way we understand how our networks are operating and our ability to predict future operation and the management decisions that can be made.

We are currently building a predictive system based on machine learning which fuses a number of network datasets (for example Bluetooth journey time monitoring, Automatic Number Plate Recognition, traffic loops, bus position). In addition, we are deploying an Internet of Things (IoT) communications platform that will help us collect real-time network condition data.

The system being built will provide network operators with enhanced information to manage the network and provide traveller information. Further work is needed to fully integrate this system into the existing strategy management tools to fully realise its value to network management and there is an expectation that the ADEPT project will provide the work that will enable this.

We will use these improved insights to better manage the network and promote sustainable travel including:

- Direct peak traffic demand to more appropriate options, such as towards P&R instead of town centre parking
- Use media and traffic control measures to redirect traffic in emergency situations and enable effective emergency responses, through integrated ITS, such as green light corridors
- Give people real-time information about air quality and the climate impacts of their travel choices, as part of encouraging more sustainable travel
- Provide network information to support the promotion of Mobility as a Service
- Develop smart alternatives to M4 closure diversions and subsequent gridlock in Reading through smart traffic management. Traffic lights dynamically respond to incidents and help redirect traffic around the town
- Use smart solutions to keep public transport out of congestion both at known hotspots and during periods of disruption

Issue

Reading suffers from high levels of congestion, and we currently do not have sufficient infrastructure to allow us to effectively manage our whole network in real-time, minimising delays and allowing us to

respond effectively to changing demand or any incidents on the network.

Outcome

- Improved traffic management leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Improved transport data to allow development of better applications and to inform future transport schemes and policies
- Smooth traffic flow
- Improved public transport journey times, leading to increased attractiveness of public transport and a shift away from private car
- Ability to manage traffic to prevent disruption to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport
- Reduced emergency service response times through the ability to hold conflicting traffic back and automatically turn lights green for blue-lighted vehicles

Adapting to the Future

ITS development will be an integral part of the Smart Cities and Mobility as a Service action plans. The digital twin model for Reading will include fully integrated real-time data relating to the transport network, enabling more effective management of the network. Machine learning will enable greater autonomy of the transport system, with less requirement for human intervention.

Smart City Initiatives

Key Delivery Partners:

Private sector
Other public bodies

Summary:

Transport impacts on a wide range of services delivered by the Council, being a driver for everything from economic growth and business rate retention, to social isolation, mental and physical health and education and to, most critically, meeting our climate targets.

Transport is a derived demand, meaning it is there to get people or goods from A to B, with the need to travel being defined by the activities that the individual is undertaking or the destination of the goods. Very few trips are made purely for the journey.

With transport having such a cross authority role, there is significant potential for our transport team to work more closely across the authority to tackle the challenges around the sustainable delivery of transport. This will build on previous initiatives such as the Beat the Street programme which was jointly delivered by health and transport teams to encourage active travel.

Reading is the lead authority on the Thames Valley Berkshire Smart City Cluster project. This project is focused around the Internet of Things (IoT) and has been working to increase collaboration between departments within Reading and also improve cross working between Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council. The project is delivering pilots around a number of challenges set by the local authorities.

The Smart City approach will look to make best value of data from both the perspective of what it can tell us about our transport network and also from the perspective of its potential value to the local authority. We will use it to improve our understanding of people's travel needs and will work cross-sector and cross-authority to address the transport challenges, using data and technology to address these needs where they provide the optimum solution. The £4.75m ADEPT Thames Valley Berkshire Live Lab project which covers the six Berkshire authorities will draw insights from transport, energy and health data. This will provide a good cross-sector example of a smart approach to transport service delivery. Reading will look to build on this project in the future.

Issue

Technology is rapidly developing, whilst, at the same time, the need to respond to the transport and environmental challenges that face us from a cross-sector approach is increasing. Electric vehicles are a good example of this, where transport policy to encourage the take up of electric vehicles represents a huge energy supply challenge, and this requires an integrated approach. Setting policies that can respond flexibly and quickly to the adoption of changing technologies and enable good decision making to be made is a real challenge. There is significant pressure to quickly act to address the climate change, and technology coupled with a smarter cross-sector approach should be a significant part of this solution.

Outcome

- A smart city strategy for Reading, with transport fully integrated into this strategy, and cross-sector procurement and projects that tackle climate, sustainable travel and congestion. Considerations could include new procedures for procurement that can make decision-making quicker
- Growing further funding opportunities around the Thames Valley Berkshire Smart City Cluster project, working with neighbouring authorities and cross-sector to develop smart solutions to challenges where transport forms a part

- Successful deployment of the ADEPT project and the capitalisation of the outcomes of this, to maximise the value of data and improve the management of the transport network. This will allow movement of more people, supporting economic growth, whilst reducing their carbon footprint and not exacerbating air quality and congestion issues
- Traffic congestion, mobility and air quality are major transport challenges facing Reading today. These impact the daily lives of the residents, workers and visitors to the town. To meet these challenges, smart city initiatives will be utilised to optimise sustainable transport opportunities and reduce congestion. Smart initiatives will help to create a more effective transport network that help to improve safety, increase productivity and improve mobility. Overall this will contribute towards improving air quality, encouraging healthier lifestyles and attracting new business investment for the town

not work as expected. Large studies to identify the best solution can be overtaken by technological change and may lead to 'too little – too late'.

We will work to develop a digital model of Reading (known as a digital twin), that will integrate real-time and historic transport data with other data such as that relating to health, air quality, noise, energy, waste and crime. This will allow us to quickly test schemes and policies prior to implementation, allowing us to refine our ideas and designs to best serve Reading, and expose unforeseen problems before they become a reality.



Adapting to the Future

We will change our internal processes, and lobby Government, to be able to undertake an approach of radical incrementalism to changing technology and tackling climate change. We need to be able to act quickly and implement technology and schemes to address the climate impacts of transport based on reasonable likelihood that it will take us in the right direction and be prepared to change direction if it does



Marketing and Promotion

Delivery Partners:

Public transport operators
Media
Public services (for example schools and GPs)

Summary:

We will develop a comprehensive package of travel marketing, promotion and raising awareness for all transport users to inform them of travel choices and improve their understanding of new schemes and initiatives, which could include:

- Signage
- Development of mobile travel apps
- Advertising on local and social media
- Real-time information and marketing on the transport network
- Promotional events, e.g. 'Clean Air Day'
- Promotional material at local facilities and services, such as healthcare facilities, schools and community hubs
- Promotional material for development travel plans
- Press releases to explain new schemes and initiatives

Issue

High volumes of private car trips in to, from and within Reading causes significant congestion in the town, with associated climate, health and wellbeing and economic impacts.

Currently, marketing and promotion of sustainable travel in Reading is limited and is not generally able to respond to rapidly-changing travel conditions.

Outcome

- Travel marketing and awareness campaigns using a wide range of media can be highly successful at increasing understanding across various population sectors of issues resulting from certain transport choices, and awareness of what can be done to resolve these issues
- Promotion of sustainable travel options and new schemes and initiatives will encourage mode shift away from the private car, greater uptake/use and support for change. In turn, car mileage would decrease, leading to reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality. Economic growth would be supported through increased capacity for trips into Reading
- Real-time information allows dynamic decision-making and allows the users of the transport network to better respond to changes in demand or incidents

No Idling Campaign



Travel Information and Advice

Delivery Partners:

Neighbouring Local Authorities
Transport operators
Media
Private sector

Summary:

Travel information enables people to make informed choices about how they travel. We will provide or facilitate high quality, real-time travel information through a number of means, which could include:

- Mobile apps
- Real-time information boards
- Variable message signage
- Print (including accessible forms such as Braille and foreign language formats)
- Our website
- Personalised travel advice
- Information boards and signage

We will develop a wayfinding strategy to share our information and we will open up our data for public use, allowing the private sector to develop travel information apps

We will support businesses and organisations to develop travel plans, and to join the national travel accreditation programme Modeshift STARS Business

We recognise the diverse needs of our residents and we will ensure travel information and advice is provided in accessible formats.

Issue

Reading suffers from high levels of congestion and a mode shift away from the private car is needed to reduce the negative impact traffic has on the town. Currently there is limited travel information available which enables people to make informed decisions about how they travel. In particular, the network struggles to respond well to disruption, as there are very limited means of publicising this disruption, potential travel impacts and alternatives to people.

Outcome

- Improved wayfinding and greater public knowledge of sustainable travel options, leading to mode shift away from private car, reduced forecast congestion and improved forecast air quality
- Improved ability to respond dynamically to network disruption, leading to reduced congestion
- Greater awareness of specific barriers to sustainable travel, enabling implementation of

measures to overcome these where possible

- Digital wayfinding will provide an integrated product and digital platform that is inclusive and socially engaging for users. We will encourage or co-ordinate transport operators to share data to develop co-ordinated travel information and real-time data. This will help to encourage the use of public transport and other sustainable mode choices, such as walking, cycling or car clubs
- Improved accessibility of information for all users of the transport network



Training, Education and Initiatives

Delivery Partners:

Local schools
Community groups

Summary:

Training courses could include:

- Adult cycling programmes
- Bikeability
- Road safety road shows
- Pedestrian and scooter road safety training
- Young driver safety awareness training

We will work with schools to deliver age-appropriate training to all children, as well as offer training to adults in the community.

Issue

All road users need the necessary skills to be able to use our streets safely.

Children travelling to and from school (and travelling at other times) risk conflict with other road users. Road safety training is critical to assist in development of awareness of risks and reduce the number of pedestrian and cyclist casualties on our roads.

Young drivers are over-represented in accidents; drivers aged 17 to 19 make up only 1.5% of drivers on the roads but are involved in 9% of fatal and serious collisions. One in four 18 to 24-year olds crash within two years of passing their test⁷¹. Young drivers are much more likely to be over-confident, take excessive risks and be less able to identify and assess hazards.

Outcome

- Decreased pedestrian and cyclist casualties
- Increased levels of walking and cycling to and from school, leading to reduced congestion and improved air quality around schools
- Decreased road traffic collisions
- Reduced network disruption due to collisions, leading to improved journey time reliability and productivity
- Development of cycling skills leading to potential for life-long behaviour change



School Travel Accreditation Programme

Delivery Partners:

Local schools

Summary:

Modeshift STARS is an accreditation scheme that operates nationally, and supports schools, pupils and parents to make sustainable and healthy travel choices, through an easy-to-use online platform. The scheme recognises excellence through accreditation and a national awards programme.

Two schools in Reading have already gained their first Bronze award. Building on the success of these schools, we will encourage more schools to take part in the scheme and support them to work towards both accreditation and national and regional awards.

Issue

Car travel to and from school contributes heavily to traffic on the road network, leading to increased congestion and air pollution. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution, with studies showing that this can lead to decreased lung capacity and increased likelihood of developing asthma.

A high proportion of children in Reading are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school, and across the UK, only 17.5% of children meet daily guidelines for physical activity⁷⁰.

Outcome

- The travel planning programme will encourage children, parents and staff to make more sustainable travel choices, leading to a mode shift away from the private car.
- This will help to reduce forecast congestion and improve forecast air quality, as well as improve the health and wellbeing of children



Progress Reporting and Public Engagement

Delivery Partners:
Media

Summary:

We will provide regular updates on progress in delivering the transport strategy. This will include updates through press releases, residents' newsletters and via social media platforms to reach a wide range of the population of all ages, language, economically active, retired, students, unemployed, families, single people, couples, etc.

Engagement with residents within and outside the Borough will be undertaken to spread awareness and help achieve the goals set out in this strategy.

Issue

Public engagement in the detailed development stages of schemes is generally low, and so there is higher risk of public opposition and objection.

Outcome

- Public engagement in the transport strategy and development of schemes will result in improved scheme designs that better respond to public opinion and needs
- This will reduce the risk of non-approval and increase the speed at which we will be able to deliver our vision



Transport Strategy Visioning Consultation, School Workshop

Page 550

Prioritising Our Schemes

6.39 The schemes and initiatives have been identified to best meet the RTS objectives listed below. We have compared the likely outcomes of each scheme and initiative against the RTS objectives in order to prioritise these.

6.40 The delivery of the schemes and initiatives will be subject to funding availability, status of any supporting development, land availability (if third party land requirements), and engagement of delivery partners. We have ranked each scheme or initiative towards each objective. The scores are summarised in the following tables, the darker colours represent higher scores. Each objective has been weighted equally when assigning an overall score to each scheme or initiative.



Creating a Clean and Green Reading

Provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town



Supporting Healthy Lifestyles

Create healthy streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve accessibility to key destinations and increase personal safety



Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Enable sustainable growth and connect communities so that everyone can benefit from Reading's success



Connecting People and Places

Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car, helping to provide a transport network that is fast, affordable, connected and resilient



Embracing Smart Solutions

Use technology to manage the network efficiently and allow informed travel choices, whilst enabling Reading to become a smart, connected town of the future

Demand Management Schemes	Create Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Demand Management Scheme Options	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Multi-Modal Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Transport Corridor Multi Modal Enhancements	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
IDR Enhancements	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
North Reading Orbital Route	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Third Thames Crossing East of Reading	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Page 55a

Public Transport Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Quality Bus Corridors	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Concessionary and Discounted Travel	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Community Travel	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Demand Responsive Travel	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
South Fast Track Public Transport Corridor	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
East Fast Track Public Transport Corridor	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
West Fast Track Public Transport Corridor	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
South West Fast Track Public Transport Corridor	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Orbital Fast Track Public Transport	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Mere oak Park and Ride Expansion	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Thames Valley Park and Ride	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓

Public Transport Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride Enhancements	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
North Reading Park and Rides	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
West Reading Park and Ride	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
South West Reading Park and Ride	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Reading Station Interchange Enhancements	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Reading West Station Upgrade	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Tilehurst Station Upgrade	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Reading Green Park Station	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Mobility as a Service	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Page 558

Active Travel Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Town and Local Centre Public Space Enhancements	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Strategic Pedestrian Routes	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Local Pedestrian Routes	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Strategic Cycle Routes	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Local Cycle Routes	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Sustainable and Safer Travel to School	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Play and School Streets Programme	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Cycle Parking Hubs and Facilities	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Cycle Hire Scheme	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓

Network Management Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Traffic and Junction Management	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Parking Schemes and Management	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Road Safety Schemes	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Electric Vehicle Charging	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Intelligent Transport Systems	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Smart City Initiatives	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓

Page 566

Communication and Engagement Schemes	Creating a Green and Clean Reading	Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	Connecting People and Places	Embracing Smart Solutions
Marketing and Promotion	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Travel Information and Advice	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Training, Education and Initiatives	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓
School Travel Accreditation Programme	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Progress Reporting and Engagement	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓

Complementary National and Regional Schemes

National Schemes

- 6.41 We will lobby external stakeholders to secure investment in the national transport networks to enhance the connectivity of Reading.
- 6.42 This will include schemes such as the M4 smart motorway, enhancements to the major road network, the Elizabeth Line, electrification and other measures to de-carbonise the railway network and the proposed Western and Southern Rail Links to Heathrow.
- 6.43 This may also include national demand management measures such as a national road user charging scheme. Any local demand management schemes will need to be complimentary to this.

Regional Schemes

- 6.44 We will work with neighbouring authorities to build on the schemes within our strategy to improve connectivity to the wider region.
- 6.45 The FTPT network could be enhanced through the south east public transport corridor within Wokingham's current strategy which includes proposals for high-quality express bus services along the A329 corridor.

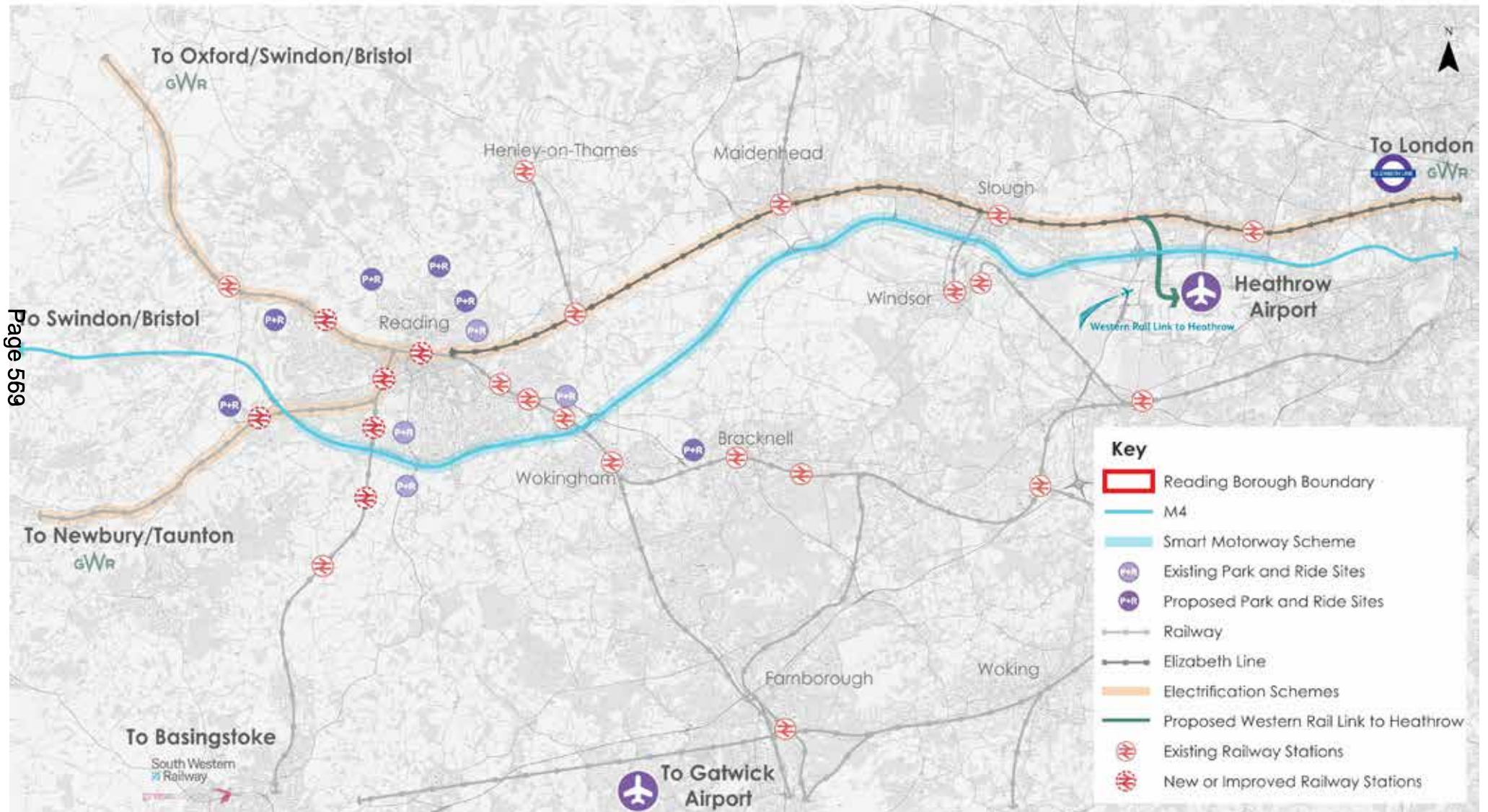
- 6.46 The comprehensive Park and Ride network set out in our strategy would be complemented by other Park and Rides in the region including Coppid Beach Park and Ride.
- 6.47 A Park and Ride at Coppid Beach will provide a facility to serve people travelling to Reading from the eastern parts of Wokingham, and from Bracknell. This will link to the overall network through the East and South FTPT corridors and will provide an attractive alternative to the private car for those travelling to Reading from the east.
- 6.48 We will support further improvements to the rail network at stations outside the Borough such as Theale Station upgrade which is included in West Berkshire Councils strategy.

Grazeley Garden Settlement

- 6.49 We will work with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils on the potential development of around 15,000 homes at Grazeley Garden Village.
- 6.50 This will result in significant increases in traffic demand, potentially leading to increased congestion in south Reading. If the development comes forward, there is insufficient capacity in the existing transport network to accommodate this travel demand.

- 6.51 To accommodate the development, a comprehensive package of sustainable transport and infrastructure measures will be required to be delivered in advance of significant new housing coming forward.
- 6.52 The package of transport measures includes enhanced Park and Ride facilities and FTPT provision into Reading, walking and cycling infrastructure linking to the wider network and capacity improvements to the M4 Junction 11.
- 6.53 Infrastructure improvements will also enhance connectivity to existing local railway stations and/or provision of a new railway station as part of the development.

Figure 34: Proposed Future Regional Transport Network



Page 569

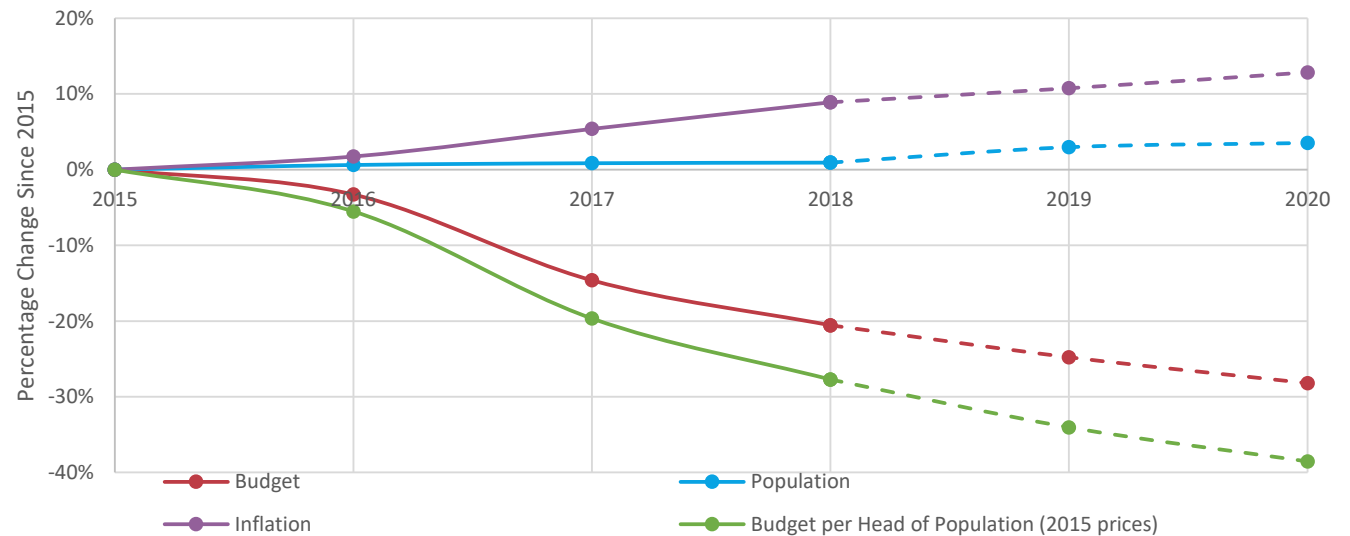
7. Funding & Implementation

Potential Funding Sources

7.1 We are under increasing financial pressure, with cuts to our budget and inconsistent streams of funding available. Figure 35 shows how our revenue budget has decreased by nearly 30% in real terms per resident of Reading since 2015⁷², and is expected to be almost 40% lower in 2020.

7.2 Therefore, we must work hard to secure funding from other sources, to enable us to deliver the infrastructure Reading needs to support its residents, employees, visitors and economy.

Figure 35: Historic and Forecast Revenue Budget Changes



Funding Bids

- 7.3 We have an excellent track record for successfully bidding for funding from Central Government and obtaining funding from a range of other sources, including the Department of Transport, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the European Union.
- 7.4 Funding from successful bids has been used previously to deliver schemes such as Christchurch Bridge, South FTPT, Mere oak Park & Ride, Winnersh Park & Ride, NCN Route 422, Reading West Railway station, and major upgrades to Reading Railway Station and the M4 Junction 11.

Parking and Enforcement

- 7.5 Our enforcement of traffic restrictions is proposed to continue, including bus lanes and parking, as set out in Chapter 6. We have seen an increase in compliance over recent years which is the objective of our enforcement, rather than for revenue generation.
- 7.6 We also charge for on-street pay and display parking, Council-owned car parks and resident parking permits in Reading. Revenue from parking and from penalty charge notices is ring-fenced for transport-related schemes, in accordance with the

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and so cannot be spent on other Council services. In previous years, we have used revenue from parking and enforcement to fund schemes such as supported bus services and discretionary concessionary fares, road safety schemes, and highway drainage improvement works.

Developer Contributions

- 7.7 We also use developer contributions (through Section 106 obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy) to deliver many of our schemes. Developer contributions are also used to complement other funding streams, particularly for large schemes. For example, a fifth of the funding for Christchurch Bridge came from developer contributions (£1.2 million), with the remaining £4.7 million from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 7.8 Developers can be required to deliver infrastructure needed to support proposed development. We also collect developer contributions to fund new bus services for developments in their early years.
- 7.9 We will continue to work with developers to negotiate funding and delivery of transport infrastructure identified in this strategy that supports new developments. However, some of the schemes identified in this Local Transport Plan will require a significant level

of capital funding, alongside revenue funding to help operate and maintain the new infrastructure.

Demand Management

- 7.10 As set out in Chapter 6, we are planning to introduce demand management measures in Reading. Further work is being carried out to determine which measures would be most effective.
- 7.11 Demand management offers the opportunity to better manage traffic growth, whilst also providing a reliable, continuous funding stream for Reading. Revenue raised from demand management will allow us to accelerate delivery of elements of the RTS, as the funds will be reserved for transport projects.
- 7.12 A continuous funding stream also allows us to more easily deliver transport schemes which require revenue (rather than capital) funding, such as an expanded concessionary or discounted travel scheme.

Our Implementation Plans

- 7.13 Many of the potential funding mechanisms to support delivery of our transport strategy are still evolving, and so our implementation plan will be refreshed every three years, to allow our funding plans to be updated.

Implementation Plan

7.14 Our implementation plan sets out our indicative delivery programme and mechanisms for our transport schemes. We will publish a detailed delivery programme on an annual basis, which will allow us to adapt to changing technologies, budgets and development proposals. We will also develop strategies to provide further detail and implementation strategies to support our policies.

Delivery Partners

7.15 We have identified a number of key delivery partners in our implementation plan. Further information on our stakeholders and partners is detailed in the next chapter.

7.16 Other key delivery partners include local schools, public services, the media, businesses and community groups.

Delivery Mechanisms

7.17 We will deliver our schemes through a number of mechanisms:

- **Major Capital Schemes (MCS):** Our major capital-funded schemes will be delivered as individual projects, and are dependent on the availability of capital funding, among other factors.
- **Revenue Schemes (RS):** Our revenue schemes will be delivered as on-going projects, and are dependent on the availability of revenue funding, among other factors.
- **Neighbourhood Area Action Plans (NAAP):** Our Neighbourhood Area Action Plans, covering the areas shown in Figure 36, will be used to deliver local interventions, working closely with local communities to develop scheme details.

Figure 36: Neighbourhood Area Action Plans



	Timescale			Delivery Mechanism
	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2036+	
Demand Management Schemes				
Demand Management Options				Revenue Schemes
Multi Modal Schemes				
Transport Corridor Enhancements				Major Capital Schemes
IDR Enhancements				Major Capital Schemes
North Reading Orbital Route				Major Capital Schemes
Third Thames Crossing East of Reading				Major Capital Schemes
Public Transport Schemes				
Quality Bus Corridors				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Concessionary & Discounted Travel				Revenue Schemes
Community Travel				Revenue Schemes
Demand Responsive Travel				Revenue Schemes
South Fast Track Public Transport Corridor				Major Capital Schemes
East Fast Track Public Transport Corridor				Major Capital Schemes

	Timescale			Delivery Mechanism
	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2036+	
West Fast Track Public Transport Corridor			➔	Major Capital Schemes
Orbital Fast Track Public Transport			➔	Major Capital Schemes
Mere oak Park and Ride Expansion	➔			Major Capital Schemes
Thames Valley Park and Ride	➔			Major Capital Schemes
Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride Enhancements		➔		Major Capital Schemes
North Reading Park and Ride			➔	Major Capital Schemes
West Reading Park and Ride			➔	Major Capital Schemes
South West Reading Park and Ride			➔	Major Capital Schemes
Reading Station Interchange Enhancements		➔		Major Capital Schemes
Reading West Station Upgrade		➔		Major Capital Schemes
Tilehurst Station Upgrade		➔		Major Capital Schemes
Green Park Station	➔			Major Capital Schemes
Mobility as a Service (MaaS)			➔	Revenue Schemes

	Timescale			Delivery Mechanism
	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2036+	
Active Travel Schemes				
Town Centre & Local Centre Public Space Enhancements				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Strategic Pedestrian Routes				Major Capital Schemes
Local Pedestrian Routes				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Strategic Cycle Routes				Major Capital Schemes
Local Cycle Routes				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Sustainable and Safer Travel to School				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Play and School Streets Programme				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Cycle Parking Hubs & Facilities				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Cycle Hire Scheme				Major Capital Schemes

	Timescale			Delivery Mechanism
	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2036+	
Network Management Schemes				
Traffic and Junction Management				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Parking Schemes and Management				Revenue Schemes
Road Safety Schemes				Neighbourhood Area Action Plans
Electric Vehicle Charging				Major Capital Schemes
Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)				Revenue Schemes
Smart City Initiatives				Revenue Schemes

	Timescale			Delivery Mechanism
	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2036+	
Communication and Engagement Schemes				
Marketing and Promotion			▶	Revenue Schemes
Travel Information and Advice			▶	Revenue Schemes
Training, Education and Initiatives			▶	Revenue Schemes
School Travel Accreditation Programme			▶	Revenue Schemes
Progress Reporting and Engagement			▶	Revenue Schemes

8. Partnerships & Stakeholders

Introduction

- 8.1 Our Strategy is ambitious, therefore working in partnership with key stakeholders is vital to its successful delivery. Transport issues are material considerations for many activities, services, agencies and organisations. One of our major assets is the interest and involvement of our local communities, businesses and other stakeholders and our commitment to consultation and consideration of their different viewpoints in all aspects of scheme design and implementation.
- 8.2 We participate in numerous formal and informal, internal and external partnerships to support a joined up, overarching approach to delivery of our key services and future plans. We will continue to engage with local residents and members of the business community when forming transport policies and strategies, and proposals are framed to take account of the diverse needs and aspirations of local stakeholders. We also receive and review communication from partners and the public on transport matters on an ongoing basis.
- 8.3 Partner involvement and public engagement allows us to access both expert and local knowledge, and this helps to justify our approach. We can outline specific interventions or local initiatives at an early stage of option development or

scheme design to seek public contribution to help shape them. We seek feedback during implementation and on scheme completion. It also encourages partner and local community involvement in schemes and the decision process, to build greater confidence in, and ownership of improvements in the local community.

- 8.4 A range of consultation techniques and methods are used, appropriate to the audience and subject matter. These include partnerships and various channels of communication. Innovative ways of keeping up with social change, social media and building better engagement are part of our long-term strategy.

Partnerships

- 8.5 Reading is at the heart of a wide sphere of economic influence within the Thames Valley. It is part of a variety of partnership groups in this area, reflecting the need to work across Local Authority boundaries for different levels of service delivery, lobbying for investment and prioritising transport projects to support Reading's role as a major hub in the Thames Valley and wider south-east region.
- 8.6 As part of our Smart Cities initiative, and to make the most efficient use of our limited available resources, it is important that we

work positively with our strategic partners, which include neighbouring Local Authorities and Local Highway Authorities, the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and strategic transport bodies including Transport for the South East, the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum and the Berkshire Local Transport Body.

- Oxfordshire County Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Local Parish and Town Councils

Transport Operators

- Train operators including Great Western Railway and South Western Railway
- Bus operators including Reading Buses
- Community transport operators including Readibus
- Reading taxi associations

Local Community

- Community groups and local residents
- Private sector including local businesses
- Education providers including the University of Reading, colleges and schools
- Public services including the Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Media

8.9 We will seek to work collaboratively with our partners to:

- Develop shared ideas and solutions to deliver our transport Strategy
- Widen the beneficial impacts of our

schemes and policies to surrounding areas and communities

- Deliver sustainable economic growth
- Seek greater levels of funding to allow us, and our partners, to accelerate our delivery plans.

Transport for the South East

8.10 Reading Borough Council is a partner in Transport for the South East (TfSE) – a new body which brings together representatives of 16 transport authorities and five local enterprise partnerships to improve the transport network and grow the economy of the whole South East area. Its key aim is to support and grow the economy by delivering a quality, integrated transport system that makes the region more productive and competitive and improves the quality of life for all whilst protecting the environment. TfSE is already working closely with Central Government and is intended to become a statutory body by 2020. We will continue to work closely with TfSE in the future.

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

8.11 The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) is a business-led partnership, responsible for determining the key investment priorities to which public

8.7 We also partner with other bodies, such as Reading UK Community Interest Company and the Community Safety Partnership.

8.8 Our key delivery partners are:

National / Regional

- Central Government including Department for Transport
- Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
- Transport for the South East
- Network Rail
- Highways England

Neighbouring Local Authorities

- Wokingham Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council

funds are directed to implement its emerging Industrial Strategy (and current Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)). We have worked closely with TVBLEP to deliver many elements of our previous LTPs, and our relationship will continue to be important in the delivery of our vision for the RTS.

Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum

8.12 The Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum (BSTF) similarly brings together TVBLEP, the six unitary authorities (including Reading Borough Council), DfT, Highways England, Network Rail, Heathrow Airport Limited, and various train and bus operating companies to discuss and consult on cross-boundary strategic transport issues. The BSTF forms the transport policy arm of the LEP covering a range of issues, and thus making a substantial contribution to the SEP.

Berkshire Local Transport Body

8.13 The Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) was established in March 2013 in response to the Department for Transport's wish to devolve Local Transport Major Schemes Capital Funding to local control. The Body consists of six elected members and six private sector representatives recruited and appointed by the LEP. This is a competent publicly accountable Joint Committee which can prioritise and implement transport capital schemes on behalf of the LEP Forum.

Neighbouring Authorities

8.14 Delivering our vision for transport will require effective working with neighbouring local transport authorities and local transport operators to deliver effective cross-boundary transport networks that respond to the needs of all users. Working in partnership with other organisations will help to provide better outcomes for door-to-door journeys and deliver value for money results.

8.15 We recognise the importance of ensuring maintenance, infrastructure and transport services are not affected by authority boundaries, particularly with substantial growth in neighbouring areas which will likely increase movement to, from, and through the Borough. Our partnerships with neighbouring authorities are particularly important to us and the implementation of cross-boundary schemes, and we will continue to work closely with them to develop and deliver these schemes that support growth in the area, including:

- Demand management
- Key transport corridor multi-modal improvements
- North Reading Orbital Route
- Third Thames Crossing East of Reading
- New and upgraded railway stations

- Radial and Orbital FTPT
- New and expanded Park and Rides
- Quality bus corridors
- Concessionary travel schemes
- Strategic pedestrian routes
- Strategic cycle routes
- Cycle parking hubs and facilities
- Cycle hire scheme
- Smart city initiatives
- Intelligent transport systems

Reading UK CIC

8.16 Supporting the objectives of the LEP, Reading UK is a Community Interest Company (CIC) created in 2007, which operates as a private sector-led partnership with the public sector, to create opportunities and remove barriers to growth in Reading. The CIC's Economic Plan for Reading 2016–2020 supports opportunities to strengthen the local economy and improve the reputation of the Reading region. In 2017/18, Reading UK delivered against these objectives with a series of high-profile programs and projects, including the launch of the Reading 2050 Vision which raised Reading's profile as a place of growing opportunity. We will continue to work closely with Reading UK to deliver our vision for transport in line with the Reading 2050 vision.

Community Safety Partnership

- 8.17 No one agency can tackle crime, or fear of crime, by working alone, particularly in the current economic climate. In Reading, we believe that crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime can only be tackled through partnership working.
- 8.18 The Community Safety Partnership comprises of statutory agencies, including Reading Borough Council, Thames Valley Police, the National Probation Service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Public Health. These agencies have joined forces to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime, and are committed to supporting and working alongside our communities in reducing the impact of crime and disorder that concern them locally, including transport issues.

Forums

- 8.19 Various information and consultation forums have been set up for members of the public and transport-user groups, to facilitate engagement and discussion around a number of topics. Forums particularly relevant to the delivery of the RTS include those opposite.

- 8.20 We will continue to engage and consult with these forums to deliver our transport strategy and vision for Reading.

- **The Cleaner Air & Safer Transport Forum**, made up of local interest groups and key partners, influences and facilitates the development of the Council's sustainability agenda, including climate change, transport and air quality.
- **The Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum**, which comprises membership from Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire unitary authorities, local landowners and user groups, and has been instrumental in the preparation and delivery of our Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- **The Access and Disabilities Working Group**, which facilitates discussion on improving accessibility in Reading, ensuring that the needs of disabled transport users are considered through our transport strategy and delivery; and
- **The Older People's Working Group**, which identifies and promotes awareness of issues facing older residents and provides a channel for older people to influence the development of local services, including transport.

Governance

Policy Committee

The cross-party committee oversees the overall direction of the Council's strategy, policy and budget, including economic development and regeneration.

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

The cross-party committee is responsible for statutory and non-statutory functions relating to Environment, Planning, Highways and Transport.

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

The sub-committee acts as a greater Reading consultative body to promoting public transport, walking and cycling within Reading.

Reading Area Transport Strategy Delivery Group

Led by RBC and attended by Officers from Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP.

9. Monitoring & Review

Introduction

9.1 Performance monitoring is key to ensuring the successful delivery of this strategy and monitoring progress against our objectives. We will undertake monitoring, surveying and data capture to support this, to inform our detailed scheme development and keep our evolving transport programme under review.

Data Collection

9.2 We will continue to collect additional data to support us in developing our schemes and initiatives to best deliver our vision, including the annual town centre monitoring surveys.

Figure 37: Annual Town Centre Monitoring Survey Locations



Performance Indicators

9.3 We have identified a number of key performance indicators and targets against which we will monitor our progress which are set out in the following tables.

9.4 Progress towards our targets and delivering our vision for transport in Reading will vary year on year, depending on when individual schemes are delivered. We have therefore set overall targets for the RTS to achieve by 2036.

	Performance Indicator	Data Source	Baseline	Target By 2036	Monitoring Frequency	
Multi-Modal Indicators						
Page 573	1	Car trips to, from and through the town centre	Annual cordon count (Reading Borough Council)	22,100 per day (2017-2019 average)	Reduce by 20% to 17,600 by 2036	Annual
	2	Road transport carbon emissions	Carbon Dioxide Emissions Statistics (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)	134.6 kt CO ₂ (2008)	Reduce by 50% to 67 kt CO ₂ by 2036	Annual
Public Transport Indicators						
	3	Bus usage in the Borough	Bus Statistics (Department for Transport)	22.5m trips (2018/19)	Increase by 25% to 28.1m by 2036	Annual
	4	Park and Ride usage	Bus ticketing data (Reading Buses)	560,536 per year (2019)	Increase by 100% by 2036	Annual
	5	Rail usage – entries and exits for all stations	Office of Rail & Road	18,120,959 per year (2018/19)	Increase by 25% to 23.5m by 2036	Annual
	6	Public transport trips to the town centre	Annual cordon count (Reading Borough Council)	50,700 per day (2017-19 average)	Increase by 45% to 73,500 by 2036	Annual

	Performance Indicator	Data Source	Baseline	Target By 2036	Monitoring Frequency
Active Travel Indicators					
7	Proportion of adults walking at least 3 times per week for main journey purpose	Walking and Cycling Statistics (Department for Transport)	30.8% (2017/18)	Increase to 50% by 2036	Annual
8	Proportion of adults cycling at least 3 times per week for main journey purpose	Walking and Cycling Statistics (Department for Transport)	5.1% (2017/18)	Increase to 10% by 2036	Annual
9	Active travel trips to, from and through the town centre	Annual cordon count (Reading Borough Council)	41,100 per day, 2017-2019 average	Increase by 10% to 45,300 by 2036	Annual
Network Management Indicators					
10	All people killed or seriously injured on the highway network in the Borough	Road Safety Statistics (Department for Transport)	50 per year (2016-18 average)	Reduce by 50% by 2036	Annual
11	Public satisfaction with highway maintenance (including roads, footways and street lighting)	Highway & Transport survey (Ipsos MORI)	52% satisfied (2018)	Increase by 25% to 65% by 2036	Annual
Communication and Engagement Indicators					
12	School travel planning Modeshift STARS accreditation	Modeshift STARS data (Reading Borough Council)	2 schools achieved accreditation (2019)	All schools achieved accreditation by 2036	Annual

Page 57

9.5 Reviewing Our Strategy

- 9.6 Given the longer-term time scales for this strategy, it will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains current and that it is best placed to respond to future needs and opportunities as they arise.
- 9.7 Our Strategy has been developed in partnership with local residents, businesses and stakeholders through an extensive consultation which was undertaken during summer 2019. It is underpinned by statutory assessments relating to the environment, health and equality to ensure the impacts of the plan provide positive benefits and meet relevant legislation in these key areas.
- 9.8 Challenges and opportunities have been identified based on robust data and adopted policy, with priorities and policy approaches identified to deal these challenges and embrace opportunities as they arise.
- 9.9 Further engagement and analysis will be undertaken as individual schemes and initiatives are developed. We will work with a range of partners and technical and academic research groups in order to support the robust technical work of developing, testing and validating options, particularly on innovative projects.



- 9.10 When elements of the strategy are delivered we will monitor, benchmark and measure the results to monitor progress, and influence the methodology by which future actions are prioritised and approved. This integrated cycle allows the RTS to be continuously reviewed and updated to ensure the overall vision and objectives of the strategy are delivered.

Glossary

Artificial intelligence

The capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behaviour, like visual perception, speech recognition and decision making

Autonomous vehicles

Vehicles that can operate without a driver

Big data

Extremely large datasets that can be analysed to reveal patterns and trends

Biodiversity

The variety of all living things, including plants, animals and habitats, and their interactions together within a particular area

Carbon emissions

The release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere

Carbon neutral

Achieving an overall balance between CO₂ produced and CO₂ taken out of the atmosphere

Connected autonomous vehicles

Vehicles that are both connected and autonomous

Connected vehicles

Vehicles that can talk to both each other and the infrastructure around them (for example traffic lights)

Decarbonisation

The reduction or removal of CO₂ emissions from a product or process

Digital twin

A digital model of a town, which includes networks such as transport and power, and historical and real-time data.

Fast Track Public Transport (FTPT)

Public transport that uses dedicated lanes and routes, and so is separated from general traffic, and has limited numbers of stops so it is a faster service serving key destinations

GVA

A measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of the economy

IDR (Inner Distribution Road)

The ring road that surrounds Reading town centre, which comprises Vastern Road, Forbury Road, part of the A329 and Caversham Road

Interchange

The action of switching between transport modes or services, or a place where this happens (such as a railway station)

Internet of Things

A network of all devices that are connected to the internet, for example computers, phones, as well as things like some traffic lights, cars, washing machines and fridges

Local Transport Plan

A statutory document setting out the objectives, policies and schemes intended to improve transport in an area. The Reading Transport Strategy is Reading's Local Transport Plan to 2036.

Machine learning

Where a computer programme can access data and use it to learn for themselves, rather than being explicitly programmed by a person

Mode

The method of travel, such as walking or by bus

Mode shift

A change in the mode of transport

Natural surveillance

Where something is naturally visible by other people, for example from passing traffic or nearby homes

Orbital movements and routes

A movement or route that is around Reading, rather than to, from or across the town centre

Particulate pollution

A mixture of tiny solid and liquid droplets that float in the air

Pinch point

A part of the public highway where congestion is particularly likely to occur (whether vehicle congestion or congestion of pedestrians, cyclists or public transport)

Public Right of Way

A path that anyone has the legal right to use on foot, and sometimes using other modes of transport

Quality of life

The conditions in which we live, including social factors such as environment and physical and mental health, as well as material and economic factors

Real-time data

Data that is delivered immediately after collection

Shared autonomous vehicle

An autonomous vehicle that can carry many people and operates as a public transport service

Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs

Traffic Regulation Orders

A legal tool which allows local authorities (like us) to restrict, regulate or prevent the use of any public road, or right of way

Wayfinding

The process of working out where you are, how to get to where you want to be and following the route accordingly

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Local Transport Plan

Reading Transport Strategy 2036

ANNEX A - Summary of Visioning Consultation Responses

ANNEX A - Summary of Visioning Consultation Responses

1. Summary

We Asked

- 1.1. We asked for your feedback into the early stages of designing a new transport strategy for Reading to last the next 15 years.

You Said

- 1.2. You gave a wide range of feedback about how we can make transport in Reading faster, simpler, safer, less congested, more connected, more accessible and better for the environment.

We Did

- 1.3. This consultation was the first step in designing a new transport strategy for Reading.
- 1.4. We have used your feedback to inform development of the draft strategy document, which is subject to statutory consultation.

2. About the consultation

- 2.1. Over the summer of 2019 we ran a consultation on the future of transport in Reading. We launched this at the start of developing our next transport strategy for Reading and was designed to get early input into the priorities and direction of the new strategy.
- 2.2. Our objectives were:
 - To get early feedback to inform the development of the new strategy.
 - To hear from as many people as possible and to hear from a cross section of people – including those who live in the Borough, people travelling in from outside, a range of ages and a geographical spread.
- 2.3. The consultation ran from Monday 29th July 2019 to 13th October 2019.
- 2.4. We publicised the consultation with:
 - A media launch.
 - Promotion on the Council's website, social media channels, through our hubs and libraries and on the big screen at Reading station.

- A leaflet delivered to 70,000 households and 3,800 businesses in the Borough.
- Consultation events including meetings with partners, public drop sessions, pop up stalls at Reading Station and Green Park, and visits to local schools.

- 65% drive to work,
- 16% take children to school,
- 70% drive to the shops,
- 68% drive for leisure, recreation or to socialise
- 21% drive for other purposes.

2.5. We had more than 3,000 responses: almost 2,900 online and a further 750 from events.

3. Who responded?

Page 58

- There was an equal split between males (51%) and females (49%).
- The age group with the highest level of respondents was 36-45, however there was a good spread of responses across all age ranges.
- 3.3. 78% of the respondents live in Reading Borough, 12% live in the wider urban area and 10% live outside of the urban area.
- 3.4. 54% of respondents reported that their current main mode of travel is by sustainable modes, 43% drive and 3% travel by other means.
- 3.5. Of the 43% of respondents who said they drive as their main mode of travel in and around Reading:

3.6. Of the 43% of respondents who said their main mode of transport is to drive, 37% have or are considering changing their main mode of travel.

4. Results summary

- 4.1. We proposed five themes to underpin the new transport strategy, and 90% of respondents supported these proposed themes:

Creating a Clean and Green Reading



Provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town

Supporting Healthy Lifestyles



Create healthy streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve accessibility to key destinations and increase personal safety

Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth



Enable sustainable growth and connect communities so that everyone can benefit from Reading's success

Connecting People and Places



Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car, helping to provide a transport network that is fast, affordable, connected and resilient

Embracing Smart Solutions



Use technology to manage the network efficiently and allow informed travel choices, whilst enabling Reading to become a smart, connected town of the future

4.2. A number of key themes emerged including:

4.3. Theme 1 - Support for sustainable transport such as measures to improve public transport, walking and cycling:

- Accessible - Cheaper bus fares, more capacity on vehicles, integrated timetabling between buses and trains, smart ticketing, wider catchment of bus routes, air conditioning on buses.
- Convenient – More frequent, faster and more reliable, round town routes complementing town centre routes.
- Park and Ride – All sides of the town and accessible to users
- Safety – safer routes, away from traffic, lit, crossings.
- Quality – surface of the route, smooth for cycling and walking.
- Connected – Joined up network of cycle routes, better connected to destinations and transport hubs.
- Facilitated – Changing facilities, secure cycle parking, e-bike/scooter charging.

4.4. Theme 2 - Support for measures to manage congestion and the growing demand

for transport including using technology, dedicating space for sustainable transport and 'management' measures such as limiting when and where cars can go, and vehicle charging schemes.

5. Detailed results

5.1. Question 1 - We asked people to rank how effective the possible strategies to improve transport in Reading would be. The highest ranking option was increasing journeys on foot, bike and public transport. The next highest were reducing cars on the network and tackling congestion on major roads, bridges and junctions.

5.2. Question 2 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to reduce the number of cars on the road according to how effective they thought they would be. All of the options received support from more than half of all respondents, with an improved Park and Ride network ranking the highest.

- 83% thought a better Park and Ride network would be effective.
- 75% thought reallocating road space for sustainable modes of transport would be effective.
- 66% thought a smart parking system would be effective.

- 65% thought initiatives such as car clubs and lift sharing would be effective.

- 60% thought a charging scheme for private vehicles would be effective.

5.3. Question 3 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to increase journeys on foot and bike according to how effective they thought they would be. All of the options received support from more than half of all respondents, with three options ranking above 90%.

- 92% thought improving the quality and safety of routes would be effective.
- 92% thought improving the connectedness of the walking and cycling network would be effective.
- 90% thought dedicated spaces for walking and cycling free of cars would be effective.
- 89% thought having secure cycle parking and changing facilities at destinations would be effective.
- 59% thought a charging scheme for private vehicles would be effective.

5.4. Question 4 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to increase journeys on

public transport according to how effective they thought they would be. All of the options received support from 89% or more of all respondents.

- 94% thought extending the network with more frequent services to workplaces, schools and isolated areas would be effective.
- 93% thought making public transport easier to use with transferable tickets and joined up timetables would be effective.
- 93% thought making journeys faster and more reliable would be effective.
- 89% thought making public transport more accessible to everyone would be effective.

5.5. Question 5 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to tackle congestion on our roads according to how effective they thought they would be. All the options received support from more than half the respondents, with more capacity (bus and cycle lanes, river crossing) and dedicated space for space for public transport ranking the highest:

- 88% thought increasing capacity with schemes such as a new river crossing, more bus and cycle lanes or new forms

of transport like river taxis would be effective.

- 82% thought dedicated space and priority for sustainable transport would be effective.
- 59% thought a charging scheme for private cars would be effective.

5.6. Question 6 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies that make use of the current and emerging smart technology to improve transport in Reading according to how effective they thought they would be. All the options received support from more than 70% of respondents, with using real time information to manage junctions and signals ranking highest:

- 91% thought using real time traffic information to better manage junctions and traffic signals would be effective.
- 84% thought using real time data about traffic conditions to help people make decisions about how to travel would be effective.
- 73% thought using technology to replacing need to travel, eg work at home, online shopping would be effective.

- 71% thought using apps to integrating services like car clubs and cycle hire would be effective.

5.7. Question 7 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to improve air quality in the town according to how effective they thought they would be. All the options received support from more than 70% of respondents, with zero emission vehicles and road space for sustainable transport the most popular.

- 86% thought facilities to encourage uptake of zero emission vehicles such as electric vehicle charging points would be effective
- 83% thought prioritising road space for sustainable transport would be effective
- 73% though limiting cars outside schools and in the Town Centre would be effective
- 72% thought a clean air charging scheme for high emission vehicles would be effective

5.8. Question 8 - We asked people to rank the possible strategies to improve safety on the road network according to how effective they thought they would be. All the options received support from more than half of

respondents, with safety measures like crossings and speed restrictions the most popular:

- 88% thought better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists would be effective
- 82% thought managing traffic with reduced speed limits or joined up traffic signals would be effective
- 78% thought limiting cars in sensitive areas, e.g. schools and town centre would be effective
- 76% thought initiatives where roads are free of traffic for a period of time would be effective
- 53% thought a charging scheme for private cars would be effective

5.9. Question 9 - Drivers were asked what they thought could be done to encourage people to make more journeys on foot, by bike or on public transport. The majority of drivers who answered said better public transport would encourage them to change how they travel. Many also said they wanted better cycling facilities.

6. Other feedback

- 6.1. The consultation also asked for any other feedback. The main points raised include:
- Support for extension of public transport services throughout Reading (particularly Caversham and direct services to Royal Berkshire Hospital).
 - A number of responses supported new park and ride facilities as well as the extension of services into and around Reading.
 - Support for subsidised bus fares for vulnerable people, including the elderly, people on low incomes and families.
 - A range of comments about public transport – some in agreement and some proposing alternative points of view – such as the need for additional and more reliable services (inc. school bus services), and bus lanes being used by other modes of transport (e.g. motorcycles, electric vehicles, multiple occupancy vehicles).
 - Some comments suggesting the re-introduction of tram services between the town centre and outer suburbs.
 - A number of responses specifically referenced the introduction of a third

bridge over the River Thames to help manage traffic levels in Reading.

- A number of responses referenced the need to provide an outer ring road around Reading to help alleviate congestion in Reading and reduce through traffic.
 - Comments supporting road infrastructure improvements along the IDR and key corridors.
 - Comments highlighting the need to provide segregated and connected cycle facilities that are safe and secure.
- 6.2. A number of comments related to upgrading footways to ensure they are accessible for use by people with particular mobility requirements, for instance through improved surfacing, dropped kerbs etc.
- 6.3. A range of comments about vehicle charging schemes – some in agreement and some proposing alternative points of view – including support for the introduction of charging schemes, and concerns about the impact of charging schemes on residents on low incomes and those with mobility issues.
- 6.4. Comments supporting smart solutions, including cleaner transport options, such as electric vehicles, and initiatives for smoothing

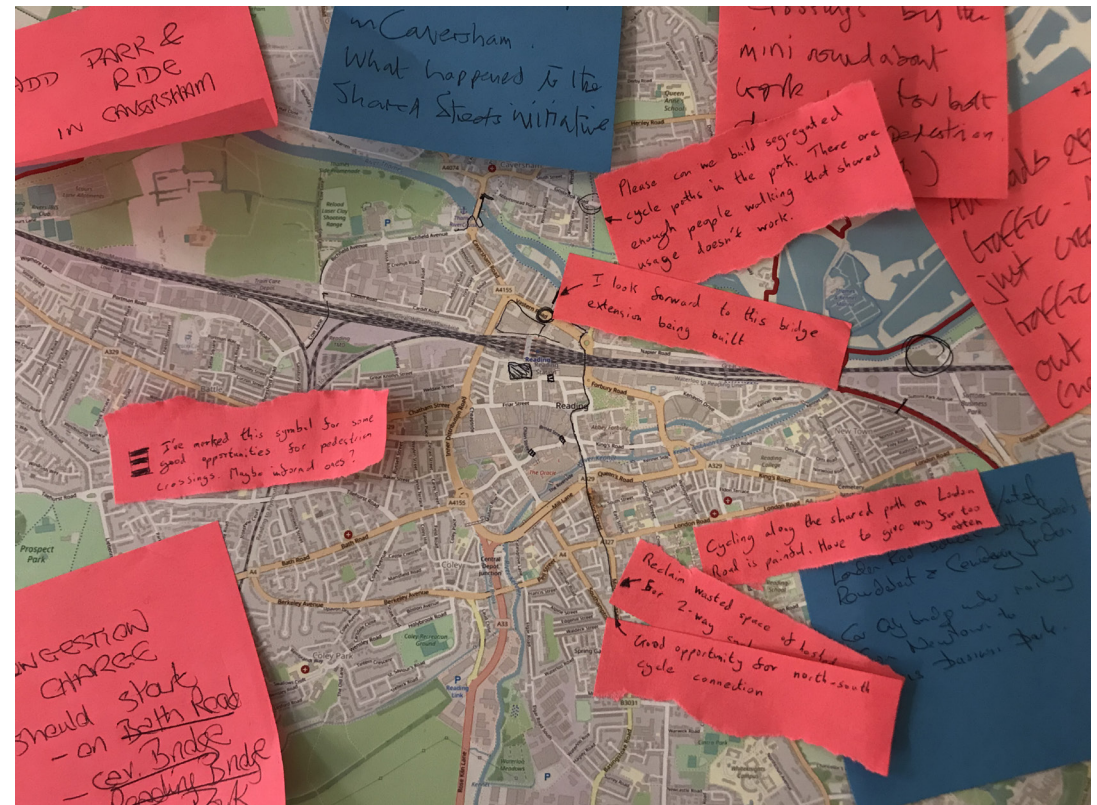
traffic flow.

7. Overview

- 7.1. We're planning for the future of transport in Reading and this consultation has informed us of your views.
- 7.2. Transport matters to all of us. It connects us with our workplaces, schools, friends and families. It affects our health, the air we breathe, and the streets where we live. It helps our economy to grow and our town to thrive, and it can make the environment around us clean and friendly or dirty and dangerous.
- 7.3. Future travel in Reading is about more than moving people from A to B. It must be affordable and accessible, improve people's health and wellbeing, support a growing and inclusive economy, enable a carbon neutral future for Reading and harness the latest technology.
- 7.4. The draft strategy we have developed is intended to shape our town's transport network to 2036 and beyond, informing the decisions we take, the funding we secure and the changes we make.
- 7.5. In developing the strategy, we have brought together all the responses we have received from the online survey with those from our

public events and the focus groups held with residents, neighbouring local authorities, transport companies, local business and schools.

- 7.6. The statutory consultation on this strategy will further inform the development of the final strategy, which is intended to be adopted in late 2020.



Transport Strategy Visioning Consultation, Public Exhibition

Strategic Transport
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Bridge Street
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RG1 2LU

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Website: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/transport2036>

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	16
TITLE:	MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS MADDOCKS	TEL:	0118 937 4950
JOB TITLE:	ACTING STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMME MANAGER	E-MAIL:	chris.maddocks@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on key progress and milestones associated with the delivery of the current programme of major transport projects in Reading, including:

- Reading Station Area Redevelopment
- South Reading Mass Rapid Transit
- Thames Valley Park Park & Ride
- Reading Green Park Station
- Reading West Station Upgrade
- National Cycle Network Route 422

1.2 The report also provides an update on funding opportunities for future schemes which are currently unfunded.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Committee notes progress with delivery of the programme of major transport schemes as set out within the report.

2.2 That the Committee notes progress with developing possible future schemes, including the submission of funding bids as set out in paras 4.24 to 4.32 of this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the delivery of new transport infrastructure in order to manage levels of congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst accommodating the significant levels of planned growth. The Council's approved Capital Programme provides capital funding of over £40m for the projects listed in this report. Funding is provided from grants received from the Local Enterprise Partnership and Central Government, developer contributions, investment from Network Rail and Great Western Railway (GWR), and Council borrowing.
- 3.2 The Council's current Local Transport Plan for the period 2011-26 was adopted by Full Council in March 2011, setting the policy for promoting safe and sustainable travel within, to and from the Borough. However, the majority of schemes within the current strategy have either been delivered or are in the process of being delivered, therefore a new draft strategy has been developed to put the Council in the best possible position to secure external investment in Reading.
- 3.3 An initial consultation on the principles to underpin the new transport strategy was undertaken last summer and this Committee is being asked to approve the new draft strategy for statutory consultation under a separate agenda item to this meeting. The strategy reflects that fact that transport is a vital element of achieving wider Council policy objectives relating to air quality, climate change, health and wellbeing, equality for all and enabling sustainable and inclusive economic growth and housing delivery.
- 3.4 The new strategy has been developed to help achieve wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, Climate Emergency which was declared in February 2019 and improved air quality. It is heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to both provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, alongside measures to manage demand to improve air quality and congestion. The new strategy has been aligned with other Council strategies including the new Local Plan and draft Climate Emergency Strategy.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Major Transport Scheme Programme

Reading Station Area Redevelopment

- 4.1 Reading Station has been transformed in recent years through the Network Rail led £850m area redevelopment scheme. The final element of this scheme was delivered in April 2019 with the opening of the Cow Lane scheme, unlocking this historic bottle neck by providing two lanes for traffic alongside a continuous shared path for pedestrians and cyclists. To complement the new highway arrangements at Cow Lane the Council has recently implemented a reduced speed limit of 30mph on Cow Lane and Portman Road, and is developing a series of public transport, walking and cycling enhancements for the Oxford Road corridor.
- 4.2 The multi-modal interchanges at Reading Station have also undergone significant redevelopment and the Council has secured funding of £36,000 from GWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for the delivery of further wayfinding and cycle parking security improvements. This includes the installation of additional CCTV cameras within the cycle parking hub at the northern interchange, and new high-quality pedestrian wayfinding units to the north and south of the station. These units have been designed to complement the soon to be upgraded signage within the station and the significant amount of pedestrian signage which has been installed throughout the town as part of the Abbey Quarter project.
- 4.3 The CCTV cameras are due to be installed by early summer and will be connected to the central CCTV facility overseen by the Council and Thames Valley Police. The design of the wayfinding units is currently being finalised and they will be manufactured in March, with installation scheduled by our in-house Highways team also in early summer.

South Reading Mass Rapid Transit (Phases 1-4)

- 4.4 The overall vision for the South Reading Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme is a dedicated fast-track public transport priority route on the A33 growth corridor, between MereOak Park & Ride and Reading town centre. The current scheme is a series of bus priority measures being delivered in phases as funding is secured, which in the future has the potential to become a guided-bus, tram or autonomous shared vehicle system.
- 4.5 Phases 1 and 2 of the scheme were granted full funding approval from the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) in November 2015; and scheme and spend approval by Policy Committee in April 2016. The scheme is now complete with the following sections of bus priority delivered:
- Outbound bus lane between the A33 junction with Imperial Way and the existing bus priority provided through M4 Junction 11.
 - Outbound bus lanes between the A33 junctions with Lindisfarne Way (Kennet Island) and Imperial Way.
 - Inbound bus lane on the A33 between Imperial Way and South Oak Way.

- 4.6 Phases 3 and 4 of the scheme were granted full financial approval by the BLTB in November 2017, and scheme and spend approval by Policy Committee in January 2018. Construction commenced in March 2018 and the latest position on each section of the scheme is set out below:
- Extension of the inbound bus lane on Bridge Street - complete.
 - Outbound bus lane on London Street - complete.
 - Outbound bus lane on the A33 approach to Rose Kiln Lane - complete.
 - Outbound bus lane on the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Lindisfarne Way (Kennet Island) - construction works to commence spring 2020.
 - Upgrade of the traffic signals to a MOVA method of control at a number of junctions on the MRT route including the A33 Bennet Road gyratory - construction works scheduled for summer 2020.
 - Inbound bus lane parallel to Reading International Business Park - construction works scheduled for summer 2020.
 - Two new bus stops near Kennet Island (northbound) and at Little Lea (southbound) - construction works scheduled for summer 2020.

Thames Valley Park Park & Ride

- 4.7 Thames Valley Park Park & Ride is a new park & ride facility off the A3290 to the east of Reading, in close proximity to Thames Valley Park business park, which forms part of our planned comprehensive network of park & ride facilities for the urban area. The scheme is being led by Wokingham Borough Council and was granted full financial approval by the BLTB in July 2017.
- 4.8 A public consultation on the scheme proposals was undertaken during November 2015 and planning permission was granted by Wokingham Borough Council in November 2016. This planning consent was subsequently varied through a Section 73 application in October 2018 to reflect the updated design for the scheme, which includes planting in a 'living wall'.
- 4.9 Wokingham has appointed a contractor to deliver the scheme and construction work commenced on-site in February 2018. The latest programme from Wokingham is for the facility to be operational from April 2020.

Reading Green Park Station

- 4.10 Reading Green Park Station is a proposed new railway station on the Reading to Basingstoke line. The station and multi-modal interchange will significantly improve accessibility and connectivity to this area of south Reading which has large-scale development proposed including the expansion of Green Park business park, Green Park Village residential development and the Royal Elm Park mixed use development.

- 4.11 The scheme was granted financial approval by the BLTB in November 2014; and scheme and spend approval by Policy Committee in September 2017. Concept designs for the station were produced by Network Rail and planning permission granted in 2015, with funding for the scheme secured from the Local Growth Fund (£9.15m), Section 106 developer contributions (£5.6m) and the New Station's Fund 2 (£2.3m)
- 4.12 Balfour Beatty has been appointed to undertake the detailed design and construction of the station. Design work for the multi-modal interchange and surface level car park is complete and a significant proportion of the interchange works are also now complete. Detailed design work for the station is being progressed in parallel with the construction of the interchange..
- 4.13 The scheme is being progressed in partnership with Network Rail and Great Western Railway (GWR), who will ultimately own and operate the station respectively. The Council has worked with these partners to address budget pressures resulting from design changes to the station and a review of the delivery programme. An additional £2.477m funding has been secured from the New Stations Fund and £550k from the Local Growth Fund to ensure we can provide the best possible facilities for passengers from station opening. This will result in the overall budget for the station increasing to £20.077m but as a result of the support from the rail industry and the Local Enterprise Partnership, there is no further Council funding required above the £5.6m already committed by the Council and secured from developer contributions.
- 4.14 The next step for this project is to finalise the detailed designs for the station and commence construction of the station itself which is scheduled to commence in March 2020. As a result of the rail industry led design changes detailed in 4.13 above, the indicative programme for completion of the station construction works has been updated to winter 2020. Once complete the station will go through a period of testing before its official opening and public use. The Council will work with Network Rail and GWR to ensure that the station is open as soon as possible after its completion.

Reading West Station Upgrade

- 4.15 The Council, in partnership with GWR and Network Rail, has produced plans for improved passenger facilities at Reading West Station which have been designed to transform the station and interchange environment. These plans include a new station entrance on the Oxford Road which include highway alterations and interchange improvements, increased cycle parking, improvements within the station itself such as enhanced lighting and CCTV coverage, and enhancements to the entrance at Tilehurst Road.
- 4.16 The scheme was granted funding approval by the BLTB in November 2019 with £3.1m funding from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and £200,000 Section

106 developer funding secured by the Council through the planning process. In addition, the overall scheme includes works implemented by Network Rail to the value of £940,000 to provide a new stepped access from the town centre side of the Oxford Road to the outbound platform (for services towards Basingstoke) following removal of the internal footbridge connecting the two platforms. The works were successfully delivered in 2019 as part of Network Rail's wider programme of electrification works for the railway line between Southcote Junction and Newbury and therefore this element of the project has been delivered.

- 4.17 Detailed designs for the station, interchange and highway enhancements are currently being prepared in partnership with GWR, and pre-application advice from the Council's Planning department is being undertaken with a planning application due to be submitted this spring. A Funding Agreement is being developed with GWR to apportion the LGF funding between the station works which are being managed by GWR and the interchange and highway elements of the scheme which are being managed by the Council.
- 4.18 The scheme will include passive provision for accessibility enhancements within the designs for the station enhancements, however Network Rail's requirement for a full rebuild of the platforms prior to any accessibility enhancements being implemented means delivery of these elements is not currently affordable within the funding envelope for the current scheme. Therefore, the Council will continue to seek opportunities to secure funding for these elements of the overall Masterplan vision for the station.

NCN (National Cycle Network) Route 422

- 4.19 National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 422 is a new cross-Berkshire cycle route between Newbury and Ascot. The route will provide an enhanced east-west cycle facility through Reading, linking to existing cycle routes to the north and south of the borough. The scheme was granted full funding approval by the BLTB in November 2015 and the elements within Reading are being delivered in phases as set out below.
- 4.20 Phase 1 of the scheme was granted scheme and spend approval by Policy Committee in January 2017. It includes the provision of a shared path on the northern side of the Bath Road between the Borough boundary and Berkeley Avenue, with the majority of construction completed in July 2017. The remaining element of this phase involves widening the footway and associated improvements between the junctions with New Lane Hill and Greenwood Road. These works have been complicated by the presence of a poorly maintained, privately-owned retaining wall at the edge of the footway on the Bath Road near Greenwood Road for which an engineering solution is currently being finalised.
- 4.21 Phase 2 of the scheme was granted scheme and spend approval at Policy Committee in September 2017. It includes the provision of a route from Bath

Road/Berkeley Avenue through the town centre to east Reading, including the installation of two tiger crossings (which combines a pedestrian zebra with a crossing for people on bikes) on Duke Street and Yield Hall Place, imprinting at key crossing points and on-carriageway cycle facilities along Berkeley Avenue, improved signage along the route including through the Oracle shopping centre, and a contraflow cycle facility on Kennet Side. The majority of works for this phase are now complete, with remaining lining and signage to be completed.

- 4.22 Phase 3 of the scheme was granted scheme and spend approval by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee in November 2018. It builds on previous works delivered as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme by enhancing cycle facilities along Wokingham Road from Cemetery Junction to Three Tuns. Works commenced in April 2019 including improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at side road junctions and between Cemetery Junction and Palmer Park Avenue, and implementation of a tiger crossing facility outside the entrance to Palmer Park. Recommendations from the road safety audit undertaken for the tiger crossing in summer 2019 have been implemented, including the application of coloured anti-skid on the approaches to the crossing. On-carriageway cycle facilities were delivered in tandem with the Council's annual resurfacing programme, with remaining signage works and raised tables to be implemented.
- 4.23 The next step for this scheme is to complete the remaining works as set out above for the full route within Reading to be opened, which will link with the elements outside the borough currently being delivered by Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils.

Future Funding Opportunities & Unfunded Schemes

Reading Station Interchange Enhancements

- 4.24 GWR launched a further round of the Customer and Communities Improvement Fund in summer 2019, for which the Council submitted bids to fund cycle parking improvements at the south-east interchange and access improvements at the southern interchange, which was supported by the Access and Disabilities Working Group and Reading Association for the Blind. The accessibility bid seeks to provide directional tactile paving so people who are blind or visually impaired can navigate the public square more easily, and the installation of contrasting strips on street furniture to reduce hazards. It is not currently known when an announcement will be made by GWR regarding the successful bids.

South Reading Mass Rapid Transit (Future Phases)

- 4.25 As set out in the report above, the South Reading MRT scheme is being delivered in phases as funding is secured, with phases 3 and 4 currently

being delivered. The Council has submitted a bid to the DfT Pinch Point Fund for phases 5 and 6 of the scheme, to the value of £12m in line with the Council's approved Capital Programme. The chances of this bid being successful are limited due to the fact that the scheme is located on the proposed Major Road Network (MRN) and the DfT guidance was clear that schemes on the MRN were not the focus of this funding opportunity, therefore we will continue to seek other opportunities to secure funding for this scheme as they arise.

Third Thames Crossing East of Reading

- 4.26 A third vehicular crossing over the River Thames is a longstanding element of Reading's transport strategy to improve travel options in the wider area, and to help relieve traffic congestion in Reading, Sonning and Henley. The Cross Thames Travel Group has been established to progress the scheme, which is currently led by Wokingham Borough Council in partnership with Reading Borough Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and Oxfordshire LEP.
- 4.27 Preparation of the Outline Strategic Business Case for the scheme was completed in September 2017. The business case shows there is a strong case for a two-lane traffic bridge in this location, with the full documentation available on Wokingham Borough Council's website here - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/parking-road-works-and-transport/transport-and-roads-guidance-and-plans/>.
- 4.28 A high-level feasibility study has been undertaken to investigate the buildability, outline costs and programme for constructing a bridge in line with the recommendations set out in the Outline Strategic Business Case. This work was completed in October 2019 which confirms construction of a river crossing in the proposed location would be feasible and includes high-level cost and programme information which will be used to feed into future work for the scheme.
- 4.29 The scheme has been nominated for prioritisation by TfSE for possible funding through the DfT's Large Local Major Schemes programme. TfSE ranked the scheme as the second highest priority scheme of this magnitude in the South East region and has subsequently submitted the proposal to the DfT for consideration for funding.
- 4.30 The next MP summit meeting to review progress on the scheme has been called by the MPs for Reading East and Henley Constituencies at the end of March 2020. We will continue to work with officers from each authority through the Cross Thames Travel Group to progress the scheme and further updates will be provided at the appropriate time.

Reading Transport Strategy 2036 - Scheme Programme

- 4.31 The draft version of the Reading Transport Strategy 2036 for statutory consultation includes a comprehensive programme of schemes and initiatives aligned to the overall strategy vision. This programme includes the schemes set out in this report alongside a programme of new schemes, ranging from major capital schemes such as the North Reading Orbital Route, radical improvements to the public transport, walking and cycle networks and a programme of communication, engagement and training initiatives.
- 4.32 All of the new schemes and initiatives included within the draft strategy are currently unfunded. It will therefore be vital that these schemes are developed to a point at which the Council is in the best possible position to secure external funding to deliver these schemes and initiatives to ensure the overall vision and objectives of the strategy are ultimately achieved, including responding to the Climate Emergency.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The delivery of the projects outlined in this report help to deliver the following service priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 'Shaping Reading's Future: 2018 -2021':
- Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities.
 - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.
 - Promoting health, education, culture & wellbeing.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The projects have and will be communicated to the local community through public exhibitions and Council meetings.
- 6.2 Statutory consultation will be conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Notices will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The creation of - and changes to existing - Traffic Regulation Orders will require advertisement and consultation, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. These procedures have been and will continue to be completed at the relevant time.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 The Council, and where appropriate partner delivery organisations, have carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise on all of the projects included within the current capital programme.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Our transport strategy is focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. This includes managing congestion and improving air quality by providing a more efficient network and suitable alternatives for vehicular traffic, which will enable existing highway capacity to be reallocated for the use of sustainable modes. The delivery of the schemes as set out within this report form part of this overall strategy, which has achieved considerable success in recent years including bus usage in Reading being the third highest in the country outside of London, having increased by 23% since 2010, and around 35% of trips into Reading town centre being made by pedestrians and cyclists.
- 9.2 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total emissions. Significant investment in sustainable transport solutions, including the schemes set out within this report, are therefore vital in order to respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 All schemes included in the current programme being delivered by the Council are included in the Council's Capital Programme. This sets out the funding sources and funding profile for each scheme.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Major Transport Scheme Update Reports to Strategic, Environment, Planning and Transport Committee from 2015 onwards.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	17
TITLE:	BUZZ 42 BUS SERVICE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	STEPHEN WISE	TEL:	0118 937 3735
JOB TITLE:	SENIOR TRANSPORT PLANNER	E-MAIL:	stephen.wise@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed procurement of a new contract for operation of the Buzz 42 bus service, which operates between Kenavon Drive, Reading town centre and Rivermead Leisure Centre. The service is fully funded by Section 106 private sector planning contributions from developments on Kenavon Drive, alongside ticketing revenue collected from passengers. The existing contract ends in November 2020.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That delegated authority is given to the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Services and the Assistant Director of Finance, to award the new Buzz 42 Contract to the successful service provider upon completion of the procurement process.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's current Local Transport Plan for the period 2011-26 was adopted by Full Council in March 2011, setting the policy for promoting safe and

sustainable travel within, to and from the Borough. However, the majority of schemes within the current strategy have either been delivered or are in the process of being delivered, therefore a new draft strategy has been developed to put the Council in the best possible position to secure external investment in Reading.

- 3.2 The provision of public transport services is set out in the emerging Reading Transport Strategy 2036, for which a high-level consultation was undertaken in summer 2019. Feedback from the consultation illustrates support for public transport, including enhanced infrastructure and more comprehensive services, to enable people to access key facilities and services more easily and reduce congestion on the transport network.
- 3.3 The provision of high-quality public transport services, such as Buzz 42, is a fundamental element of achieving wider Council policy objectives, including those relating to improving air quality, tackling the climate emergency, equality for all, health and wellbeing, productivity and congestion, and enabling sustainable and inclusive economic growth and housing delivery. The service provides a tool by which short journeys by public transport in central Reading can be encouraged and support the delivery of further housing development in the Kenavon Drive area and the potential repurposing of Reading Gaol. The service also supports wider public transport journeys through connecting services and enabling people to access education, employment and leisure facilities more easily as an alternative to private car use.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Current Position

- 4.1 The development of redundant industrial areas for housing at 42 Kenavon Drive, and subsequently at further Kenavon Drive locations, led to the establishment in October 2017 of a local bus service branded as Buzz 42 through the receipt of Section 106 contributions from developers. This service was incorporated in the Greenwave bus contract operated by Reading Buses.
- 4.2 The current Greenwave contract ends in November 2020. The Buzz 42 service is not currently commercially viable without S106 contributions, therefore it is proposed that a procurement exercise is undertaken for the ongoing delivery of Buzz 42 services from the existing contract expiring in November 2020.
- 4.3 The current service runs from around 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday with a 20-minute frequency peak shuttle from Kenavon Drive to Reading town centre, and an off-peak and Saturday 40 min frequency service which continues to Rivermead Leisure Centre to support the relocation of The Maples Wellbeing Centre and access to leisure facilities. Current passenger journeys are approximately 46,000 per year producing £35,000 of revenue. The balance of the approximately £131,250 per year is sufficiently covered by S106 contributions which are specifically fettered for this purpose until November 2025.

Procurement of a New Contract

- 4.4 It is proposed that a separate contract is procured for operation of the Buzz 42 service from November 2020 for a 3 year period, with option to extend the contract by a further 2 years to 5 years in total.
- 4.5 Current and future expected S106 contributions have been calculated to cover the net cost of operations until at least November 2025 allowing the potential of the above 3 + 2 year contract.
- 4.6 The development of Rivermead Leisure Centre facilities over the next two years will need to be supported by a reliable public transport service for it to be a sustainable facility. Buzz 42 can be developed in that role as it is currently unlikely that a commercial bus service will be available to serve Rivermead. As part of the proposed contract, options have been included for prices for various extended operations to cover evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays so that a suitable service can be provided when needed.
- 4.7 Buzz 42 provides a convenient connection for town centre residents who have children attending EP Collier School and would be available to support the planned secondary school adjacent to Rivermead, in a limited capacity way, using the existing 20-seater capacity bus. A further option in the proposed contract would enable an additional potentially larger vehicle to operate the service if demand warranted it.
- 4.8 It is anticipated that planned and proposed developments in the Kenavon Drive and Richfield Avenue/Tessa Road area will provide the opportunity to improve bus services to Richfield Avenue and Rivermead including extensions via Cow Lane to and from west Reading. The proposed contract can be used as a catalyst to add public transport options to this underserved area. The additional funding forthcoming would enable a second bus to be added to the contract enabling a full peak service to be offered. This would provide an alternative to the need for commuters to drive to and from this area, helping to reduce congestion on this cross town route.
- 4.9 The anticipated timeframe for procuring a new contract is set out below:
- Prepare procurement documentation, including specification and contract - March 2020
 - Issue Invitation to Tender (ITT) - April 2020
 - Tender response deadline - June 2020
 - Tender evaluation - June 2020
 - Award contract - July 2020
 - Standstill period - July 2020
 - Traffic Commissioner notified of service changes - early August 2020
 - New contract commences - 5th November 2020

4.10 The Committee is therefore asked to agree the proposed procurement approach and programme for securing a new contract to deliver the Buzz 42 service.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The delivery of the Buzz 42 service would help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Securing the economic success of Reading.
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Timetable and real-time information regarding the service will be provided in paper format, in bus shelters, online and on mobile devices.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The existing contract for Greenwave services (including Buzz 42), awarded to Reading Buses, is due to expire on 4th November 2020.

7.2 The Buzz 42 contract target value is £132,000 per year, adjusted to include inflation, and has a lifetime value of £660,000 based on a 5-year estimated lifecycle.

7.3 The contract will be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

7.4 Contract procurement to be completed by 14th August 2020 to give required time for new operator to register the bus service.

7.5 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the successful service provider.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to: -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 There are no proposed changes to the operation of the Buzz 42 service and an Equality Impact Assessment has therefore not been undertaken.

8.3 Older and disabled person pass holders will be able to continue using their concessionary fares pass on Buzz 42 services, in accordance with the national scheme, enabling them to access key facilities and services, such as those in the town centre and The Maples Wellbeing Centre.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Our emerging transport strategy, which is being developed in parallel to the emerging Climate Change Strategy, is focused on five themes all of which encourage the use of sustainable and clean modes of transport as attractive alternatives to petrol or diesel-powered vehicles. This builds on the considerable success of increasing the number of walking, cycling and public transport trips into Reading town centre to 80% as part of the delivery of successor Local Transport Plans.

9.2 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total emissions. Significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is therefore vital in order to respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

9.3 The redevelopment of the current leisure centre and the opening of a new secondary school at Richfield Avenue will occur within the contract period. It is essential that a reliable and efficient bus service is provided from the outset to encourage sustainable travel. Further on going discussions with bus operators will be required in advance of the opening of the new facilities to see what additional services could be provided.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Section 106 contributions have been received and future contributions identified to cover the expected operating loss on the Buzz 42 service for the duration of a 3 + 2-year contract from November 2020, along with ticketing revenue collected by the operator. The S106 contributions are specifically intended to support this bus service and are not transferable to other transport activities. The operation of Buzz 42 will not incur any cost to Reading Borough Council during the proposed contract period.

10.2 Section 106 contributions for bus service support has been secured from the following developments:

- 42 Kenavon Drive: £306,400
- Former Homebase/Toys r Us site: £191,400

10.3 It is not proposed to alter the Buzz 42 timetable, scope or service specification at this time. It is therefore proposed the procurement of the contract will be evaluated against a target price based on the known cost for operation of the existing Buzz 42 service.

10.4 Future variations and possible development of the service will be provided for by requesting prices for known possible service additions, as part of the contract procurement process.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Greenwave & Buzz 42 Contract Extension and Fares Revision, Decision Book, 8th February 2019

To: Councillor Barnett-Ward (Chair)
Councillors Debs Absolom, Ayub, Carnell,
Challenger, Duveen, Eden, Emberson,
Maskell, McGonigle, Page, Robinson,
Stanford-Beale and R Williams

Direct: 0118 937 2332 ☎
richard.woodford@reading.gov.uk

09 March 2020 2020

Your contact is: **Richard Woodford, Committee Services**

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE 16 MARCH 2020

Further to the agenda for the meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on Monday, 16 March 2020 please see attached ...

	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>Page No</u>
10. ADOPTION OF THE CASTLE HILL/RUSSELL STREET/OXFORD ROAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - APPENDICES 2 TO 4	ABBEY; BATTLE; MINSTER	3 - 160

A report proposing the adoption of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal and approval of the amended Terms of Reference for the Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

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APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION ON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL FOR THE RUSSELL STREET/CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA

December 2019

1. Summary of Consultation Measures

- 1.1 Consultation took place from Friday 13th December 2019 to Friday 7th February 2020.
- 1.2 This appraisal has been produced for Reading Borough Council by the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee, set up to advise Reading Borough Council in regards to conservation areas, and in conjunction with the local Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) Conservation Streets Committee.
- 1.3 Consultation involved contacting all those on the Council's planning policy consultation list, which includes a mix of statutory consultees, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and interested individuals. The document was also available to view in Central and Battle Libraries and in the Civic Offices. A letter was also sent to every address within the proposed extension (and those addresses outside the conservation area which adjoin the proposed extension) highlighting the proposal to extend the area and providing details of the conservation area.

Page 613

Summary of Responses

A total of 11 responses were received.

2.2 The following points were raised by respondents:

- For some respondents, this was a much needed update to the existing Conservation Area Appraisal. Acknowledgement was given to the undertaking of this task.
- One respondent questioned the length of document. Implying that the document is too long and needs a summary of changes from the previous appraisal.
- One respondent requested the removal of the tidal lane at the foot of Castle Street.
- One respondent questioned the appraisal document in relation to Reading Borough Council's sustainability objectives. The respondent feels that the restrictions that the appraisal represents would limit the addition of sustainable infrastructure such as EV chargepoints, solar panels, and double glazed windows.
- There were positive and negative reactions to the proposed expansion of the conservation area. The argument for the expansion highlights the importance of linking the Russell Street and Castle Street Conservation Area back to the town centre. While the argument against the expansion favours the creation of pocket conservation areas, rather than a blanket expansion.
- Many respondents did not have any comments to make on the appraisal.

2.3 Detailed summaries of each individual representation, as well as a response from the Council are included below:

Name	Representation	Council Response
Geoff Sawers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you thought of including in the proposed extended area the lower half of Lorne Street? The large townhouses (Nos. 5-11) on the east side were laid out as Waterloo Terrace in 1861, before Lorne Street existed. On the west side there is a very attractive terrace (Nos. 10-16), also mid-Victorian. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lorne Street was assessed as a whole, using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, and the total collective value of the street was not considered to be of sufficient overall character for inclusion. However, this can be reviewed with the next re-appraisal of the area.
Palgrave 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is this 100 pages where is the summary of the changes in say 10 pages? 2. Not happy with the political blurb at the beginning, not needed. 3. I don't really want to read a dry 100 page document. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The document is as long as it is because it needs to be a thorough appraisal of the significance of the area. The Statement of Special Interest at the beginning is a concise 4-page summary of the significance of the area. As the Appraisal is an entire re-appraisal, it is not possible to summarise all of the changes. 2. Noted. No change proposed. 3. Noted. As set out above, there is a Statement of Special Interest which summarises the appraisal.
John Wilkins	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pleased to see that some protection is given to trees in Coley Ave (in and out of the conservation area). 2. Support extension of conservation area, and there may be a case for further extension. 3. Supportive of many of the actions in Table 2, particularly restrictions on tall buildings, enforcement actions in general, over painting of quality brickwork, concern about satellite dishes etc., rubbish management, street signage clutter and improvements to green canopy. 4. Replacement of modern lamp posts should only be considered when the current ones are life expired. 5. Street litter bins should be retained and emptied at appropriate intervals to avoid overfilling, but recognise that when life expired better bins could be provided. Interestingly I notice that a new bin was recently installed in Castle Hill (south side) about 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change needed. 2. Noted. No change needed. 3. Noted. No change needed. 4-5. An additional action is proposed to be included within the action plan to identify the need for a review of street furniture generally within the conservation area. 6. The need for improvements to pavements is identified within the action plan.

Name	Representation	Council Response
	<p>20 yards from an existing bin which has been retained. Seems excessive although it is close to the residence of a Councillor!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Pavements are a major issue in the conservation area and adjacent areas such as Coley Avenue; many are in very poor condition. Also in some places encroachment of vegetation form adjacent properties is also a concern where more action could be taken. 7. I note the concerns about bins on pavements, but some properties do not seem to have very good alternatives. This issue may get worse with the introduction of food waste collections. Perhaps there are ways in which RBC could suggest options to residents. 8. I found the document informative, has good photographs of the areas and gives the impression of a thorough piece of work. (How much did it cost?) The key issue now is ongoing implementation of the actions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Noted, although this is not within the scope of the CAA to resolve. 8. Noted, and agreed that the focus must now be on implementation. The document was mainly produced by volunteers, and the cost was therefore minimal.
Richard Carr, Transport for London	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can confirm that we have no comments to make on the updated Conservation Area Appraisal. 	Noted. No change needed.
Highways England	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have reviewed this consultation and no comments on the proposal. 2. However, please do continue to consult Highways England as this appraisal progresses. 	Noted. No change needed
Matt Perlander, National Grid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have reviewed the above document and can confirm that National Grid has no comments to make in response to this consultation. 	Noted. No change needed
James Simmons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I wondered if it would be possible to consider removing the tidal lane from Castle Street/Castle Hill? Many motorists seem not to understand how it operates despite the large intrusive signage for it, going by how often horns are sounded during peak times. Not only would this allow the signs to be removed, but also perhaps if funding were available at some later stage, having only two lanes in that section might allow room for the pavement to be widened and planters or raised beds to be installed in sections of the road planted with short hedges between the footway and the carriageway to add visual appeal, segregate pedestrians a little more from the traffic and improve air quality. 	No change proposed. There are no current plans to remove the tidal lane on Castle Hill, which plays a current role in managing traffic flow. Any review would be outside the Conservation Area Appraisal process.
Natural England	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural England does not have any specific comments on this updated Conservation Area Appraisal. 	Noted. No change needed.
G. Burden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having reviewed the comprehensive document prepared by the council for consultation on the extension of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area I find some of the arguments flawed and out of line with wider council objectives. 2. The taking the wider council objectives first, reading the minutes of the strategic environment planning and transport committee from 9th July 2019 the committee stated that they would be looking to achieve a Carbon Neutral status for Reading by 2030, this includes carbon footprint of council facilities, use of renewable energy and a travel and transport plan that that looks to address electric vehicle charging facilities. It appears that the council in considering to extend the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area is inconsistent with this policy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2-5. It is understood that, in some circumstances, the objective of improving the sustainability of buildings and conserving heritage can come into conflict. There will be a need for a balance to be struck. However, extending the CA does not prevent

Name	Representation	Council Response
Paige Bell	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. By extending the conservation area to maintain existing fixtures and fittings the council is making it far more expensive to allow landlords and private residents to improve the heating efficiency of properties by replacing old and rotting single glazed sash windows, ill fitting doors, with modern energy efficient double or triple glazed windows. 4. The appraisal document also comments on the number of private dwellings where the boundary walls have been removed, and in many cases where council approved drop curbs have been installed. If the council is serious about sufficient provision of electric vehicle charging facilities, it needs to embrace private individuals supplementing the provision made by the council. 5. Further to this extending the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area will make the installation of solar panels again counter to the council's desire to achieve a carbon neutral status in 10 years. 6. The desire to improve the view from within the existing conservation area appears to be a flawed argument, and will give the council the opportunity to perpetually increase the conservation area, and as such isn't about preserving the integrity of the existing conservation area, and in only extending the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area to half of the Prospect Street the council instantly gives those living on Prospect Street an unsatisfactory view. 7. The extension of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area includes a former petrol station/car dealership which is now a Tesco Metro and a petrol station which has a car wash facility, hardly the type of structure that falls under the English Heritage at Risk list. 8. Based on the above I believe that the council should reconsider the extension of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, if the council has a desire to protect elements of the Oxford Road then pockets of individual conservation areas should be established rather than a blanket extension. 	<p>improvements being made to buildings, it simply brings more of those improvements within planning control. There are still improvements that can be made even within the CA under permitted development rights, and where planning control is exercised, Local Plan policies which are supportive of sustainability measures apply.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Consideration of views into and from within the CA is a usual part of undertaking a CAA, and does not mean that the CA will continue to perpetually expand. The CAA extension does not alter the view for anyone living on Prospect Street. 7. It is agreed that certain features within the CAA do not make a positive contribution, but the overall areas in which they fall were considered worthy of inclusion. The inclusion of these features places an emphasis on the importance of their improvement. 8. See above.
Evelyn Williams, Chair Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading CAAC feels that in addition, the re-inclusion of areas bordering the IDR around Body Road, Anstey Road and green space at the corner of Castle Hill is important to re-connect the conservation area (CA) with the town centre and the St Mary Butts/Castle Street CA. 2. The area has undergone significant change in the last 15 years and much, as described in the appraisal, has been to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA. In 2018 the area was placed on the Historic England (HE) at risk register. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change needed. 2. Noted. No change needed. 3. Noted. No change needed. 4. Changes proposed to remove capitalisation where the document is referring to conservation areas in general.

Name	Representation	Council Response
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 617</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. In 2019 there was good news with the award of HSHAZ (High Streets Heritage Action Zone) funding from HE. Subject to plans currently being developed between Reading Borough Council and HE, the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road CA can benefit from this grant. The management plan included within the CA appraisal makes reference to the improvements that should be undertaken. 4. Capitalise only when referring to Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area or the CA. Otherwise lower case. 5. Listed building ref nos. should be added. 6. Captions to illustrations should include orientation e.g. 'looking north' or 'the north side looking west' 7. Photographers are credited generally rather than specifically. 8. Refer to article 4 directions, 3-49 Field Road and Jesse Terrace (Pages 7 & 8). New bullet: <i>To conserve heritage features, article 4 directions have been placed on 3-49 Field Road (for patterned brickwork and architectural features) and the whole of Jesse Terrace (for architectural features) which remove permitted development rights.</i> 9. All properties in Jesse Terrace are covered by an article 4 direction that removes normal rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use). Append to end of second paragraph: <i>To counter this problem all properties in Jesse Terrace are now covered by an article 4 direction that removes normal rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use).</i> 10. There should be a credit for this blended image: Image 4.2.5 11. Insert reference to buildings by age fig 4.1.2 in text (Page 22). 12. Insert bullet: <i>Figure 4.1.2 Buildings by Age on the following page illustrates and summarises the successive periods and waves of development in the area from the late 18C, through the 19C to the First World War, and the subsequent areas of infill or redevelopment that followed in the 20C.</i> 13. Page 37, 5.5.2.: Remove first sentence and change second sentence to: <i>The proliferation of wires from telegraph poles particularly in streets with a high proliferation of HMOs blights...</i> 14. Page 45: Insert: <i>Mention GII railings hidden within holly bushes,</i> 15. Page 60: Sentences starting Additionally two detached.... Change second sentence to: <i>Both buildings house businesses and 104 Oxford is particularly well maintained.</i> 16. Page 62: Holy Trinity's 'lost spiralet': Change lost to: <i>removed</i> 17. Page 63: Bridge Hall roof tiles were replaced in 2019. Insert after and: <i>...despite replacement of roof tiles in 2019 is...</i> 18. Page 65: Lifespring Church - name cinemas. Insert name of cinema: <i>Opened as the Pavilion, later known as the Gaumont that closed in 1979. It was then a bingo hall (1979-89) and Riley's Snooker Centre (to 2011).</i> 19. Page 66: Fly tipping not worth mentioning now. Remove: reference to fly tipping. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Change proposed, although only where the listed buildings in each character area are referenced rather than on each occasion that they are mentioned. 6. Change proposed, although in cases where a wider view is included rather than an image of a specific building. 7. Changes proposed to credit photographers. 8. Change proposed as suggested. 9. Change proposed as suggested. 10. Change proposed to add credit. 11. Change proposed as suggested. 12. Change proposed as suggested. 13. Change proposed as suggested. 14. Change proposed as suggested. 15. Change proposed as suggested. 16. Change proposed as suggested. 17. Change proposed as suggested. 18. Change proposed as suggested. 19. Change proposed as suggested. 20. Change proposed as suggested.

Name	Representation	Council Response
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 8</p>	<p>20. Page 67: second para Reword second half of para re: modern infill. Reword as: <i>The modern infill at nos. 8-16 replaced A F Jones stone store. As it was built sympathetically... unduly with neighbouring heritage properties.</i></p> <p>21. Page 67: Oxford Road School Add additional information. Add: <i>Listed Grade II. Architect Morris and Stallwood 1880-83, extended by Stallwood 1884. Retains original wooden windows and railings.</i></p> <p>22. Page 67: 2 Argyle Street Ghost sign. Insert: <i>H Jackson Tailor.</i></p> <p>23. Page 68: Date for opening of Carey Baptist Chapel 15 June 1871. Insert: <i>Carey Baptist Chapel opened 15 June 1871.</i></p> <p>24. Page 69: Railway bridge 'modernisation'? Describe the modernisation' to back up statement or remove.</p> <p>25. Page 69: Negative features Holy Trinity Church spire. Replace lost by: <i>removed. Be consistent whether it is a spire or spiralet.</i></p> <p>26. Page 73: Baptist Church on Waylen Street had an entrance on Oxford Road. Reword: to explain link with Oxford Road entrance.</p> <p>27. Page 75: fig 6.3.3. Replace with a clearer (less artistic) image: possibilities attached.</p> <p>28. Page 77: fig 6.3.5 Image does not show the curved stucco dividing wall described. Replace image.</p> <p>29. Page 78: fig 6.3.7 Expand description. Mention and/or include: <i>Fox-Talbot image. See attached from views document within New Local Plan evidence.</i></p> <p>30. Page 83: More info on the Oasis. Insert in second sentence: <i>It was originally the Eagle public house....it closed in 2009.</i></p> <p>31. Page 84: first para Reword for clarity and accuracy from 'Overhead wires...' onwards. Reword and insert additional sentence: <i>Many houses in the area simply do not have the front gardens to accommodate the large and multiple bins (even for non-HMO properties) provided by RBC and so they end up on the street.</i></p> <p>32. Page 85: fig 6.3.17 A better image needed to illustrate the caption. 6.3.18 is better.</p> <p>33. Page 87: last sentence. Explain more about the hall. Reword to say: <i>The 1960s Walford Hall provides a valuable community facility that houses...but it is....</i></p> <p>34. Page 88: fig 6.3.21 Add date of red roof Insert: <i>...installed in 2017</i></p> <p>35. Page 89: 10 Body Road add date of red roof Insert: <i>2017</i></p> <p>36. Page 94: 6.4.3 View 20 Insert: <i>tree has a TPO (as in caption to 6.4.2).</i></p> <p>37. Page 94: York Lodge Mention garage. Insert additional sentence: <i>The property has a garage built in 1925 with the initials of the owner - ALH (Arthur Lee Humphreys) in the keystone.</i></p> <p>38. Page 95: Bellevue Hotel Rear garden also parking Delete: <i>'front' before garden.</i></p> <p>39. Page 98: Is the date known for Herman Gollancz Hall? Insert date: <i>if known or approximation e.g. 1950s</i></p>	<p>21. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>22. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>23. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>24. Change proposed to refer to the opportunities afforded by Reading West station improvements.</p> <p>25. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>26. No change proposed. The church (actually Methodist) may have had a secondary entrance on Oxford Road, but Waylen Street was the main entrance.</p> <p>27. Change proposed to replace image.</p> <p>28. Change proposed to replace image.</p> <p>29. Change proposed to add the Fox Talbot image.</p> <p>30. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>31. Change proposed to improve clarity, although references to bins are already considered to be sufficiently clear.</p> <p>32. Change proposed to replace image.</p> <p>33. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>34. Change proposed as suggested.</p> <p>35. Change proposed as suggested.</p>

Name	Representation	Council Response
	<p>40. Page 101: 6.5.2 Add article 4 at end of last sentence. Reword to: <i>The polychrome...condition and are protected by an Article 4 Direction.</i></p>	<p>36. Change proposed as suggested. 37. Change proposed as suggested. 38. Change proposed as suggested. 39. Change proposed as suggested. 40. Change proposed as suggested.</p>
<p>Richard Rowlands</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) very much welcomes and supports the draft Appraisal, in particular the aims and measures set out in the Action Plan. 2. The draft Appraisal rightly recognises that community engagement, in partnership with the Council, is key to the successful management, protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas, particularly those, like this one, on the At Risk register. 3. BSANA's aims as established when our organisation was created in November of 2012 are as follows: "The objects of the Association shall be to improve the quality of life for present and future residents of the Area by promoting a sense of community and by action to conserve, protect and improve the character of the Area." We believe that the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and its highlighting of the strengths of the area along with its issues, perfectly marries up with the ethos of our Association. Which geographically represents the residents of a large part of the Conservation Area. 4. The draft Appraisal has evidently been arrived at only after very intensive historical research and character analysis. Many of our members contributed to this endeavour in terms of research and analysis and it quite naturally receives our strongest endorsement. BSANA has representatives on Reading's CAAC and as such, we further endorse the line item analysis that the CAAC has contributed in the finalisation of this document. BSANA looks forward to working in partnership with the Council, and as best it can, on the delivery of the Action Plan that, hopefully, will lead to the removal of the Area from the At Risk register. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change needed. 2. Noted. No change needed. 3. Noted. No change needed. 4. Noted. No change needed.
<p>Rachel Fletcher, Historic England</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We wish to commend the huge amount of work and care taken to achieve this document. 2. The first few pages that succinctly summarise the significance of the conservation area and set out the character of each area is most useful for easy access and understanding about why the conservation area is significant. 3. The careful assessment of each area is impressive and will no doubt be useful for development management purposes. The mapping that show lots of detail about building dates, important features and so on is all well done. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. No change needed. 2. Noted. No change needed. 3. Noted. No change needed. 4. Noted. No change needed.

Name	Representation	Council Response
	<p>4. Importantly, the document also sets out areas where improvements can be made, identifying buildings where opportunities exist. The public realm and opportunities for improvements are also touched upon. We think more emphasis on how and where the public realm could be improved would be beneficial to the document, as this will allow clear identification of where Council funds can be focussed in order to achieve shared and visible benefits to both residents and those who live and work in the area, and strengthen its character and appearance.</p>	

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2020



“The local situation of Reading is such as to claim the notice of the first Metropolis in the known world, London, and being so pleasantly situated on the high road from the second Metropolis in this kingdom, Bristol, and the most elegant and fashionable City of Europe, Bath, it cannot fail to attract and become a retreat to the independent part of society.”

*Thomas Jesse
Castle-Hill House, Reading
10 October 1817*

*passage from a letter to the Berkshire Mercury
by local property developer Thomas Jesse*



Foreword by Councillor Tony Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Heritage Champion for Reading Borough Council.

Reading is a town of many contrasts as the capital and economic centre of the Thames Valley and as a town with a rich, historic heritage going back over 900 years. The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area has played a key role in Reading's residential expansion since the 17th century.

The conservation area forms a substantial microcosm of residential building styles ranging from the humble artisan cottage to grand villas from each of the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. It is this range that provides the area's unique value and context to Reading.

To be able to respect and preserve our historic past while providing for an exciting future for the town is a particular challenge for Reading Borough Council. During the process of this reappraisal, the Council took the decision to place the Conservation Area on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register. This move acknowledges the area's challenges over recent decades but is a proactive first step in the preservation and enhancement of the area by working in partnership with the community. Addressing the area's problems will be an incremental process and has begun with the securing of Heritage Action Zone funding from Historic England to make improvements along the Oxford Road. These funds will facilitate practical steps to future-proof the Oxford Road corridor by accentuating and enhancing its proud and diverse history. It is anticipated that this work will have a beneficial effect throughout the neighbourhood as other funds and management plans will be sought to reverse the negative issues existing within the conservation area and protect its heritage.

Reading has 15 Conservation Areas within the Borough, supported by written Conservation Appraisals. Many of those appraisals are now relatively old and in need of review. Reading Borough Council is very grateful that various local communities, who have the intimate knowledge and understanding of their areas and local history, have initiated the process of reviewing our Conservation Area appraisals.

The Review of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Area is the second appraisal to be formally reviewed under this community-led arrangement. As a local resident in the area I have seen first-hand how this review has been underpinned by the knowledge, research, hard work and enthusiasm of volunteer members of the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) and Reading's Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). As work progressed, they have undertaken informal consultations, and held meetings and tours of the area involving the local community. They have considered and incorporated the feedback that they have received over these several years of work. The review has also taken account of advice and assistance from officers of Historic England and Reading Borough Council.

Special thanks are due to those who have contributed to and written the first draft of the conservation area appraisal:

- *Cllr Karen Rowland - Lead Member for Culture Heritage and Recreation who lives in the area; Tom Christie and Richard Rowlands of BSANA; and Mary Neale, Kim Pearce, John Nicholls of the CAAC.*
- *Photo credits to David Neale, Joe Doak, and members of the CAAC and BSANA.*

Additional thanks go to:

- *Evelyn Williams (CAAC Chair) and Richard Bennett (Civic Society Chair).*
- *BSANA and CAAC members who have assisted in the long process to bring this to fruition.*
- *Reading Central Library, Reading Museum, the Berkshire Record Office for their assistance in local history research and for permission to use images cited in the text.*

Cllr Tony Page

Heritage Champion, Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, and Deputy Leader, Reading Borough Council

Initial Statement



This appraisal has been produced for Reading Borough Council by the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee, set up to advise Reading Borough Council in regards to conservation areas, and in conjunction with the local Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) Conservation Streets Committee.

In accordance with recommendations by Historic England, the field work has been carried out using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit and engaging with local community groups and representatives.

The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area was last appraised in 2004 by the Council's external consultants *The Conservation Studio* of Cirencester. Their report dated April 2004 was formally adopted by the Council at that time. Much of the observation in that report remains relevant today, and is restated in the greater detail of this appraisal and its recommendations. Positively, with this analysis, there has been an increase in public awareness of what is significant in our architectural heritage and worthy of conservation. Positively, there are active volunteer-led community organisations in place which the 2004 appraisal noted was a key element to drive improvements forward.

In publishing this appraisal for public consultation, the Council also acknowledges the advice and assistance of Historic England, particularly by their providing, in February and April of 2016, training workshops in conservation area appraisal for Council officers and local community representatives who would be taking part in the appraisal process.

This appraisal also acknowledges that the Conservation Area was placed on Historic England's listing of "Heritage at Risk" at the end of 2018. As well as providing detail on the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area, it highlights those issues that have resulted in this designation and which accordingly need to be managed. The appraisal concludes with detailed recommendations for boundary changes and a management plan aimed at removing the Conservation Area from its "at Risk" status and better protecting and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area in the years ahead.



Contents

Statement of Special Interest.....	7
SS1 Introduction	7
SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features	7
SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities	8
SS4 Recommended measures.....	10
SS5 The 2019 Boundary adjustment.....	10
Conservation Area Appraisal	14
1. Introduction.....	14
1.1 Policy Context.....	14
1.2 Sustainable development in conservation areas.....	14
1.3 Policy changes and the new Local Plan	15
1.4 Public Consultation.....	16
2. Landscape Setting	17
2.1 Setting within surrounding area	17
3. History of the Area.....	19
3.1 Archaeological heritage	19
3.2 Development History of the Area	19
4. Spatial Analysis.....	20
4.1 Key characteristics and Plan form	20
4.2 Views into, out of and within the Conservation Area	23
4.3 Trees and green landscape	30
5. Buildings and public realm	35
5.1 Key positive characteristics	35
5.2 Building types and forms	35
5.3 Materials, styles and features.....	35
5.4 Buildings of local historic interest and Buildings of Townscape Merit	35
5.5 Public realm- Floorscape, street lighting, street furniture and local detail.....	36
5.5.1 Street lighting.....	37
5.5.2 Communications wires and electricity.....	37
5.5.3 Tarmac:.....	38
5.5.4 Granite kerbs and gutters:	38
5.5.5 Sections of sett stones remain in three noticeable locations:	39
5.5.6 Cast Iron Bollards and benches.....	39
5.5.7 Coal hole covers.....	39
5.5.8 Railings.....	39
6. Character Areas.....	40
6.1 Castle Street / Castle Hill	42
6.1.1 Significance	42

6.1.2	Materials	42
6.1.3	Views: (see section 4.2 page 23).....	43
6.1.4	Area analysis:	45
6.1.5	Key positive characteristics:	52
6.1.6	Negative features:.....	53
6.1.7	Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	53
6.1.8	Buildings of Townscape Merit	53
6.1.9	Listed Buildings	53
6.2	Oxford Road	56
6.2.1	Significance	56
6.2.2	Materials	57
6.2.3	Views	58
6.2.4	Area Analysis:	59
6.2.5	Key Positive Characteristics	69
6.2.6	Negative Features	69
6.2.7	Buildings/Sites presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	70
6.2.8	Buildings of Townscape Merit:.....	70
6.2.9	Listed Buildings:	71
6.3	Russell Street and streets east	73
6.3.1	Significance	73
6.3.2	Materials	73
6.3.3	Views	73
6.3.4	Area Analysis	76
6.3.5	Key Positive Characteristics	89
6.3.6	Negative Features	89
6.3.7	Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	90
6.3.8	Buildings of Townscape Merit:.....	90
6.3.9	Listed Buildings	90
6.4	Streets west of Russell Street	92
6.4.1	Significance	92
6.4.2	Materials	92
6.4.3	Views	94
6.4.4	Area Analysis	94
6.4.5	Key Positive Characteristics	99
6.4.6	Negative Features	99
6.4.7	Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	100
6.4.8	Buildings of Townscape Merit:.....	100
6.4.9	Listed Buildings	100
6.5	Castle Crescent and streets south of Castle Hill	101
6.5.1	Significance	101
6.5.2	Materials	101
6.5.3	Views	103
6.5.4	Area Analysis	104
6.5.5	Key Positive Characteristics	109
6.5.6	Negative features.....	109
6.5.7	Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	110
6.5.8	Buildings of Townscape Merit	110
6.5.9	Listed Buildings:	110
7.	Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement.....	111
7.1	Inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk List	111
7.2	Poor maintenance and intensified use of private properties.....	111
7.3	Streetscape environment and public realm	111

7.4	Crime and Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)	112
7.5	Threats to Views and Vistas in and out of the Conservation Area	112
7.6	Detailed Issues throughout the Conservation Area	112
7.7	Sites presenting Opportunities for Enhancement	113
8.	Action Plan	114
8.1	Community engagement with the Council	114
8.2	Big Picture Actions involving the “at Risk” Conservation Area	114
	Appendices	124
	Appendix 1: Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area	124
	Before the 12 th century	124
	Medieval and early modern settlement	124
	Georgian Period 1714-1837	125
	Victorian Development	130
	Twentieth and Twenty-first century development	132
	Appendix 2: Geology and topography	134
	Appendix 3. Justification for boundary extensions	136
	OXFORD ROAD CHARACTER AREA	136
	RUSSELL STREET AND STREETS EAST CHARACTER AREA	138
	CASTLE HILL / CASTLE STREET CHARACTER AREA	139
	CASTLE CRESCENT, STREETS SOUTH OF CASTLE HILL AND THE MANSFIELD ROAD EXTENSION ..	140
	Appendix 4: List of figures	141

Statement of Special Interest

SS1 Introduction

The Conservation Area is notable for its diverse and representative collection of urban, domestic English architectural styles dating from the Georgian period through the Victorian and Edwardian periods with modest amounts of later 20th century infill. With its range of wealthy to more modest examples of each of these periods, the Conservation Area forms a microcosm of Reading's residential building during these periods.

The Conservation Area illustrates the emergence of a street pattern as the agricultural lands bordering Castle Hill and the Oxford Road to the west of the mediaeval town centre of Reading were progressively developed: first, as an elegant suburb for members of the town's elite and later with infill streets of terraced housing for employees of Reading's new manufacturing industries whose rapid growth was enhanced by the arrival of the railway.

Reading's proud heritage of brick, tile and terracotta manufacturing is exemplified in each of five separately distinctive character areas:

- Castle Street/Castle Hill - dominated by large Georgian housing and trees. (Section 6.1)
- Oxford Road- a half- mile long "regular mix" of Georgian terraced housing and Victorian retail frontages. (Section 6.2)
- Russell Street and streets east-well-noted for its large single-family Victorian and Georgian terraces. (Section 6.3)
- Streets west of Russell Street- noted for its striking views to the Caversham escarpment and a mix of low-rise fine Georgian properties to later polychrome patterned-brick artisan terraces. (Section 6.4)
- Castle Crescent and streets south of Castle Hill- dominated by late Victorian villas mixed with early Georgian housing. (Section 6.5)

Due to the size of the Conservation Area, this appraisal has set out each of these character areas out by reviewing each separately in detail (see Section 6). In breaking down what is a large conservation area in this manner, this appraisal becomes more useful to developers and planners should future development come forward in understanding the character of an immediate area.

SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features

- The area developed largely in the 18th century as an area of intense residential housing to the west of the town centre centred along the road to Bath, along Castle Street and Castle Hill, and the Oxford Road leading towards Pangbourne and Oxford. These two early mediaeval routes out of Reading defined the structure of the development of the area.
- This progressive development and infill of Reading's early market gardens given over to this housing is evident from the layout of the first north-south connector roads of Russell Street and Prospect Street.
- The Conservation Area is a microcosm of Reading's residential building styles in a concentrated area. Within its boundaries, housing spans both wealthy and more modest examples from the 18th century to the 20th century. It encompasses a range of Georgian villas, terraces and artisan housing. The long Victorian era is evident in the development of substantial Victorian single-family terraces and the later polychrome patterned two-up, two- down terraces. Arts and Crafts influences appear in the area's large Victorian and Edwardian villas.
- The area boasts 151 addresses that are Listed properties either singly or as part of a terrace. Listed properties are mainly concentrated along Castle Hill/Castle Street, Russell Street and the Oxford Road but also dotted throughout the area.

- Buildings of Townscape Merit *, (as defined on page 36, section 5.4) which vary from unlisted terraces to cottages, lend important highlights to each of the Conservation Area's character areas.
- The remaining large Georgian villas and terraces are concentrated along Castle Street/Castle Hill, Coley Hill, the Oxford Road, Russell Street and Baker Street, signifying the early move by the more affluent to the west of the town to take advantage of the 'salubrious air' away from local industry.
- The extensive use of Reading's famous local brick industry is exemplified in polychrome brick, tiles and terracotta throughout the area.
- The open views north from several vantage points to the leafy hills of the Caversham escarpment highlight the geographical location of the area set atop a large clay and chalk escarpment.
- The view south along Coley Avenue and its allée of trees in place along the road for over 200 years is protected as a significant heritage view for Reading.
- A number of mature trees, largely along Coley Avenue, Castle Street/Castle Hill and Bath Road, create a positive green canopy and many are protected by TPOs (Tree Protection Orders).
- The strong religious legacy of the area is manifest in the c.1826 parish church of the Holy Trinity, the only purpose-built synagogue in Berkshire on Goldsmid Road and in a number of surviving historic Nonconformist chapels and places of worship.
- 55 Baker Street was the site of "The Reading Establishment" studio of William Fox Talbot, an early photography pioneer. It was there that "The Pencil of Nature," the first mass-produced book with photographs was manufactured.
- The Grade II* 154-160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, is a Reading landmark property. Throughout its life it served as an inn, a refuge for French priests during the French Revolution and was home to the local Jesse family of developers throughout the 19th century. It was also for part of its life a school, run by Jesse's wife.
- The striking streetscape of Jesse Terrace, built by the local Jesse family, is distinguished by well-proportioned terraces on both sides with decorative cast iron verandas.
- Along with 154-160 Castle Hill, Yeomanry House with its intact gatehouse, front garden and drive and 1 and 2 Bath Road remain as examples of the large "gentlemen's residences" for Reading's elite 19th century society that once populated the apex of Castle Hill.
- Oxford Road Community School is an attractive, Grade II Victorian school and well-used by the local community.
- To conserve heritage features, article 4 directions have been placed on 3-49 Field Road (for patterned brickwork and architectural features) and the whole of Jesse Terrace (for architectural features) which remove permitted development rights.

SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities

While there are many sections of the conservation area which are well maintained and easily appreciated, there are several more challenged sections that have led to the area's inclusion on Historic England's "Heritage at Risk" list. Nonetheless, the area's historical interest as a microcosm of Reading's 19th century building styles still provides clear evidence of its past.

Recently, many parts of the conservation area have suffered from insensitive renovations and poor management, largely as a result of the intensified use of buildings as Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). These HMOs are frequently investment properties owned by remote landlords that are not always well-maintained and these properties have also changed the community balance of the area with properties originally designed to house single families. There has also been insensitive management of the public realm with poor pavement surfaces, out-of-keeping modern street lighting, excessive signage and overhead

wires. The impacts of these issues are most apparent along the Oxford Road and in the streets east of Russell Street. To counter this problem all properties in Jesse Terrace are now covered by an article 4 direction that removes normal rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use).

However, the **heritage** “bones” of the buildings, on even the most challenged streets, are very much in evidence and many architectural details of interest remain. It is hoped that the “at Risk” listing will galvanise Council and local community cooperation in reversing the **area's** blight, enabling the special character of the area to be better revealed, protected and enhanced.

Negative Issues and vulnerabilities:

- The on-going degradation of property façades with the loss of historic features and detailing such as traditional doors and windows, roofing materials, and frontage treatments. This is most noticeable along the Oxford Road, Prospect Street, Russell Street and in streets to the east with Waylen Street, Zinzan Street, Howard Street, Anstey Street, Body Road, Carey Street and Baker Street.
- The intense use and ongoing replacement of original windows and doors with modern uPVC substitutes on both unlisted and listed properties badly alters façades.
- Architecturally unsympathetic extensions and alterations including poor quality dormers, loss of chimney stacks and chimney pots and the loss of front walls onto streets.
- Persistent rubbish management issues have resulted in the loss of front boundary walls for bin hard-standings in front gardens. High numbers of bins in front gardens and on pavements negatively affect streetscape views.
- The physical blighting effects of continuing population intensification into what was originally single- family housing with excessive overhead telecom wires, satellite dishes, unkempt wires and exterior pipes along property façades.
- HMO and flat conversions over many decades has threatened and altered the traditional societal and community structure of the area. On many streets, HMOs far outnumber single-family homes, which was the intent of the original development in the area.
- Modern retail signage in poor condition, loud and unsympathetic colours and lighting create an uneven grain and jarring appearance along the Oxford Road.
- Poor condition of much of the Oxford Road, including inappropriate modern shopfront conversions, metal roller security screens, wires.
- **Buildings identified as “opportunities for enhancement,” frequently out-of-keeping late 20th century development, detract from heritage streetscape views. This is especially evident along portions of the Oxford Road and along the west sides of both Field Road and Coley Hill.**
- Poor condition of the public realm with excessive, redundant street signage, unsympathetic street furniture and modern street lighting jar with heritage streetscapes.
- Non-policy compliant prolific estate agent signage degrades the area.
- Poor quality tarmac pavements and roads detracting from the historic setting.
- Persistent higher-than-average crime and ASB in parts of the Conservation Area creates a lack-of-desirability for positive investment and reduces the appeal of the area for some residents and families.
- High levels of traffic along the major historic thoroughfares of Oxford Road and Castle Street/Castle Hill create a distracting environment and poor air quality hotspots.

- Lack of green in the area leaves some streets with barren and bleak views.

SS4 Recommended measures

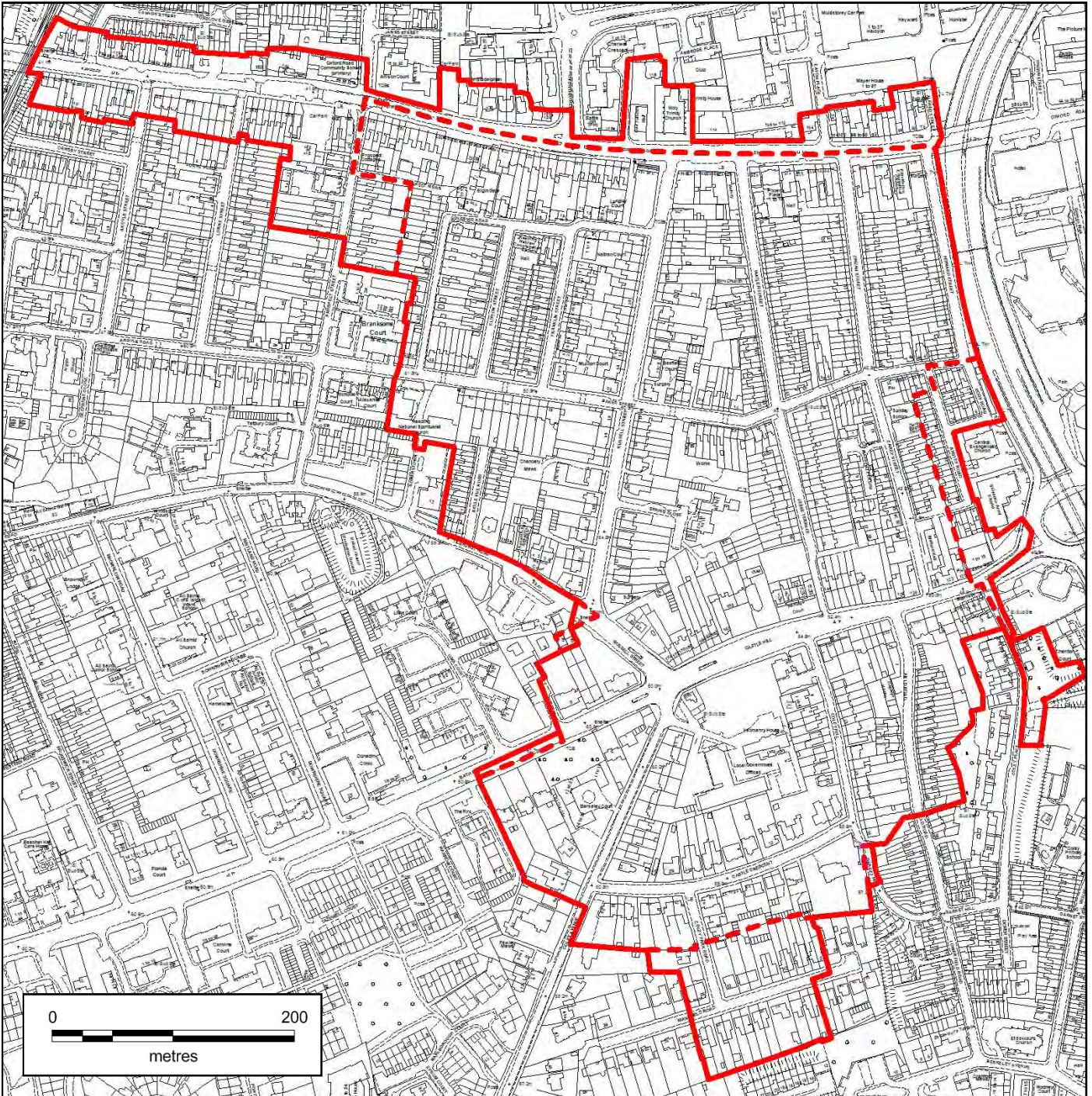
Historic England advises that the successful care, protection and enhancement of conservation areas cannot be provided by the local Council alone; it also needs the active goodwill and co-operation of landowners and the local community in order to be successful.

As the Conservation Area is now on the Heritage at Risk list, action to right negative situations within the area is clearly warranted. Section 8 details recommended measures aimed at the reduction of further harm to the Conservation Area and to encourage its enhancement and regeneration. The over-arching measures detailed in Section 8 are recapped in brief here:

- A change of name to the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area This would acknowledge the historical importance and actual development structure of the area.
- Seeking funding for improvements to the public realm, streetscapes and properties The area has issues that are beyond the scope of present resourcing and voluntary contributions. Funding is necessary to grapple with the larger issues present.
- Establishing management plans with the Council and community groups The 2004 appraisal and Historic England acknowledge the necessity of essential cooperation between the LPA and community groups in the care management and improvement of at Risk conservation areas.
- An expansion of Article 4 Directions with Local Development Orders (LDOs) Such linked policies are the leading tool for the rescue of conservation areas where there has been a noticeable and continuing loss of character.

SS5 The 2019 Boundary adjustment

After careful review of the existing boundary of the Conservation Area, taking into account feedback from the public consultation process and a detailed study of each of the character areas within the Conservation Area, the following extensions to the Conservation Area boundary are proposed as shown on Figure SS5.1.



Proposed Conservation Area boundary 2019



2004 Conservation Area boundary

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure SS5.1: Proposed Conservation Area boundary

November 2019



OXFORD ROAD CHARACTER AREA

The inclusion of 78 to 104A, 104, Holy Trinity Church, 120-190 Oxford Road (evens) on the north side from Alfred Street to the railway bridge and the inclusion of 205 to 283 Oxford Road (odds) on the south side of the Oxford Road from Prospect Street to the railway bridge. The inclusion of 1 to 23 Prospect Street (odds) and 2 to 14 (evens) Prospect Street.

The largest extension proposed within the appraisal is along the Oxford Road, expanding the 2004 boundary that runs down the centre of the road between the IDR and Prospect Street. The extension includes all properties fronting Oxford Road along the south between the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) and the Reading West railway bridge and a majority of sites along the north side of that road although the most of the modern sites are excluded. The area also includes a section along Prospect Street to the south along both sides of that road.

The historical importance justifies the extension as the Oxford Road is one of the two major routes to the west out of the town centre, from which the infill residential streets of the area were developed. The special and varied early to mid-19th century character of the Oxford Road extends clear to the railway bridge. This area has an evidential mix of Georgian and Victorian built environment, noting that the Oxford Road to the west of the bridge is entirely devoid of Georgian built structure.

Along this half mile stretch of the Oxford Road, a substantial proportion of the properties were built prior to 1833, and the route contains 40 listed properties. * These factors reinforce the high value of this road both to Reading's history and the history of the area.

This proposed boundary change denotes a significant change from the 2004 appraisal in terms of understanding the Conservation Area itself and how the Oxford Road is an integral element of the area.

Additionally, within this character area, one of the first two connector roads from Oxford Road to the south was Prospect Street which was integral to the development of the grid system of residential streets laid out over the 19th century. The buildings on this street reflect strongly the same time periods of development that took place along the Oxford Road.

1-9 Prospect Street is a rare Georgian terrace of workers' cottages c.1820s, and part of the pattern of speculative housing development that extended up from the Oxford Road. Along with Prospect Mews, their contrast with the large houses of Sidney Terrace immediately to their north aids in the understanding of early housing for labourers and artisans in the area. The larger houses from 11-23 Prospect Street are also part of that earlier development phase and built prior to 1833.

On the west side of the street, the larger Edwardian semi-detached houses have attractive polychrome brick and terracotta embellishments and give a sense of historical balance to both sides of the street essential in proper conservation area designation.

(listed individually or as part of a group.)*

RUSSELL STREET AND STREETS EAST CHARACTER AREA

Re-inclusion of Body Road, Anstey Road and 3 to 11 Baker Street.

These properties were removed from the Conservation Area at the last appraisal in 2004 based upon a loss of original windows, doors and front boundaries along with the detrimental presence of satellite dishes and the presence of the modern buildings of the Salvation Army and the Carey Centre. However, the housing stock within the area is to be re-included as the housing terrace's period character is very much in keeping with the character of the nearby houses within the Conservation Area especially in terms of massing, materials and age. The area contributes well to the complete picture of the residential development in the Conservation Area as a good example of well-laid-out late Victorian artisan housing and aids in substantiating the Conservation Area as a complete microcosm of Reading's residential housing history.

The removal of this area from the Conservation Area in 2004 confused and weakened the understanding of a natural boundary line to the Conservation Area within the residential street structure. The exclusion of the two large modern buildings in the centre acknowledges their lack of contribution to the historical nature of the area, but their direct responsibility to the Conservation Area surrounding them will remain should future development on those sites come forward. Notable is the Carey Centre site, which provides a very positive feeling of space and green to the immediately surrounding housing and both maintain height and massing that are appropriate to the western side of the IDR and the Conservation Area itself.

The 2004 appraisal noted that a good working relationship with residents was needed in the area. Since the last appraisal the Council has supported the creation and development of the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) and the area lies within their remit. As a result, improved private property maintenance and public realm care in this area has been achieved, along with fostering a greater appreciation for the area.

CASTLE HILL / CASTLE STREET CHARACTER AREA

The re-inclusion of 1 to 15 Castle Street (Castle Gate flats) and the green space at the northwest corner of the Castle Street/IDR roundabout; plus the inclusion of 3 to 7 Coley Place (odds); plus the inclusion of the open park area to the south of those houses along Coley Place.

The Castle Gate flats were removed in the 2004 appraisal along with Anstey Road and Body Road. The necessity to re-include the Castle Gate flats and the green space on the southwestern side of the Castle Street roundabout reduces confusion about the Conservation Area's "natural" and "understood" boundary line lying just to the west of the IDR and greatly aids in establishing and confirming a proper "gateway" to the Conservation Area from the town centre. This entrance into the Conservation Area figures significantly in the views in and out of the Conservation Area (see section 4.2, views 6A and 6B).

Furthermore, such a boundary revision accords the heritage area proper value in terms of any future development in the area around the IDR roundabout which might affect the Conservation Area in terms of views and massing. It also improves the physical connection of the Conservation Area with the neighbouring St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area and the historic route west from the centre of Reading.

The small terrace of houses at 3-7 Coley Place perched along the edge of the steep chalk escarpment, are a key element of an important and noted view from Castle Street (see section 4.2, view 17). The houses, once part of a longer terrace of ten houses, are the only surviving examples of early mansard roofs in the Conservation Area. Additionally, their simple artisan style contrasts well with the grander houses of Castle Street and Castle Hill and completes an understanding of the variety of development in the streets that developed to the south off that road.

The inclusion of the green space to the south of 3-7 Coley Place that hugs the edge of the escarpment shows clearly the topographical restrictions around which the area developed. Whilst difficult to build on, the space has a place as an asset to the Conservation Area, leading to the pedestrian link bridge which replaced the historic road link to Willow Street.

CASTLE CRESCENT CHARACTER AREA

2 to 28 Mansfield Road (evens) 1 to 29 Mansfield Road (odds); 1,2,3 Coley Park Road

This extension acknowledges that the houses of Mansfield Road are part of the same late 19th century development phase as Castle Crescent and thus have many similarities in styling and original purpose. Only the houses along Mansfield Road from this development period are included. The high brick walls of Coley Park Road between the two streets form a pleasant connector road and its brick walls, are worthy of preservation.

Conservation Area Appraisal

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Context

The purpose of an appraisal document is to ensure that the special interest justifying designation of the conservation area is clearly defined and analysed in a written statement of its character and appearance. This provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for development plan policies and development control decisions, and also forms the basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

This Appraisal describes and defines the particular historical and architectural character and interest of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, highlighting those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced and identifying negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

The Historic England Good Practice Advice Note on the Historic Environment in Local Plans clarifies advice as given by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the management of conservation areas as designated heritage assets. It notes that the NPPF states that planning should "... be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations." It further states that local planning authorities within their Local Plan framework should "...maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to: assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment". This Appraisal is charged with providing the up-to-date evidence as needed for the establishment of the Local Plan in regard to the management of the fifteen conservation areas within Reading.

1.2 Sustainable development in conservation areas

The government has outlined a presumption in favour of sustainable development and clarifies the purpose of the planning system in achieving these goals. Sustainable development must, amongst other things, perform a role in protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. In relation to conservation areas the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: "Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably". This means that proposals that fail to fulfil these requirements should not be accepted and the NPPF explains that where a proposal involves harm to a designated heritage asset, it should only be allowed if the public benefit of the proposal outweighs the harm.

In order to make these judgements clear with accuracy, evidence must be laid out detailing the importance of the historical, heritage and cultural significance of the conservation area and its assets. This Appraisal provides that evidence, in as reasonably detailed manner as possible.

This Appraisal cannot hope to mention every building or feature within the Conservation Area that might be of value. Any omission should not be taken to imply that it is not of any interest or value to the character of the area.

This appraisal serves to advise the implementation of policy guidelines as established by the Historic England Good Practice Guides for the Historic Environment and the Setting of Heritage Assets which have been put in place to support the NPPF. It provides the needed background advice for the maintenance and delivery of a sustainable historic spatial vision for the area and to justify the protection and enhancement of the area. It defines the qualities and local distinctiveness that provide baseline evidence for the development of local policy with Local Plan documents, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Article 4 (2) Directions and Local Development Orders as needed.

Its description of the area further lays out the background evidence needed for enforcement and also serves to advise investment and development within the area. It is meant to aid in informing proposals for new development and provide the solid evidence necessary on which to base the determination of planning applications, either for new development or alterations to the existing historical fabric.

1.3 Policy changes and the new Local Plan

2017 was the 50th anniversary of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 which created conservation areas in the UK. Budgets for planning departments now face their greatest financial challenge since the implementation of that Act and thus greater challenges in being able to meet the lofty ideals for the development of conservation areas set out in 1967. **The Council's** statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to identify those parts of their area that are considered to contribute positively to '... special historic or architectural interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to **preserve or enhance**' and to **designate** these as conservation areas. The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area was formally designated in 1974 as one of Reading's first conservation areas. **The 1990 Act further requires the Council to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area' when exercising its function as a local planning authority.**

Unlike listed buildings, conservation areas are not assessed against national criteria standards. In accordance with the NPPF and guidance standards set forth by Historic England, the Local Planning Authority sets its own standards within its Local Plan guidelines for how their conservation areas are to be maintained, protected and enhanced. Historic England recommends a re-evaluation of a conservation area once every five years. This conservation area has not been reappraised since 2004, and is overdue for reappraisal. Much has changed since then in terms of policy on a national and local level. National planning policy changed in 2013 with the introduction of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act. This replaced Conservation Area Consent with a requirement for planning permission for the demolition of a building in a conservation area. It also relaxed other rules that have affected the **Conservation Area's appearance in the intervening years such as low wall demolition.**

Locally, the Reading Core Strategy was adopted as policy in 2008, the Reading Central Area Action Plan followed in 2009, and finally the Sites and Detailed Policies Document was adopted in 2012. At the time of writing, the maintenance of the Conservation Area is set out in the Core Strategy adopted in 2008 which was last altered in **January 2015. Certain SPD's** (Supplementary Planning Documents) such as the Residential Conversions SPD and the Sites and Detailed Policies SPD aid in the implementation of the Core Strategy.

Reading Borough Council adopted a new version of its Local Plan in November 2019 which in terms of conservation areas and the historic environment, is the overarching document that **informs the Council on the management of Reading's fifteen** conservation areas. This document enhances and makes more specific policy provisions in the fulfilment of the Council's statutory duties in regard to the protection and enhancement of conservation areas.

In Spring 2016, the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee of Reading Borough Council, following national policy guidance, endorsed the creation of the Reading

Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC), a non- statutory body formed to carry out community-led re-appraisals and provide advice on the overall protection, and enhancement, of Reading's 15 conservation areas and other heritage assets.

1.4 Public Consultation

This appraisal has been prepared by the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) in association with the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) and has engaged in numerous public consultations since 2016, engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the area. Extensive discussions have also been had with Reading Borough Council and Historic England in identifying and defining what continues to be of special significance and worthy of protection and/or enhancement.

In March 2016, following a two-day appraisal training workshop, sponsored and led by Historic England, an initial informal public consultation event was held in the Russell Street Castle Hill Conservation Area. Following an illustrated presentation on how to use the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, a team of local residents and other stakeholders carried out a visual audit of every street in the Conservation Area along with others in the immediate and wider area that were to be considered for possible inclusion. This was a useful exercise in terms of gathering the opinions of the local community about the area. This original evaluation information was compiled into a detailed spread sheet that formed the basis of the analysis and the findings in this appraisal.

Throughout the subsequent three years, informal consultation has continued to take place with local residents. A refreshed survey of residents in the current Conservation Area boundary and in all proposed extension areas which has sought further comments has run from April to September of this year. Members of the CAAC and BSANA writing committee have continued to evaluate and take on board residents' and heritage experts' opinions. Several Heritage Open Days saw tours of the area given in 2017-2019 and opinions were also gathered at those events.

The appraisal was subject to full public consultation between December 2019 and February 2020. This included publication to the website, making the document available in local libraries and writing to all addresses within or adjacent to the proposed extension, as well as others on the Council's planning consultation lists. Eleven responses were received, and these were considered in drawing up the final version for adoption in March 2020.

2. Landscape Setting

The Conservation Area lies alongside and between two historic routes leading westwards out from the mediaeval core of Reading, namely the old roads to Bath and to Oxford. For centuries the area formed the primary western entrance into the town centre.

The underlying geology consists of clay, silt and sand over chalk at the top that erodes away and is detailed further in Appendix 2.

The top of Castle Hill, at the intersection with Russell Street and Coley Avenue, is the highest point in the Conservation Area. To the north, the long, wide slope of Russell Street leads down the low hill to the parish church of Holy Trinity and the Oxford Road with its mix of shops and residential buildings. To the south west, Coley Avenue, lined with trees, leads down to Berkeley Avenue in the south. To the south Castle Crescent, Mansfield Road and Coley Hill sit on the high flat portion of the high mound of clay which slopes rapidly away towards the beds of the Holy Brook and the River Kennet below forming the western side of Coley Gorge.

2.1 Setting within surrounding area

The Conservation Area comprises the first residential neighbourhood area to the west of the town centre after crossing the IDR. Prior to the development of the IDR it was more connected to the town but is now separated from it, and forms its own distinct neighbourhood area sharply contrasting with the new tall towers of Chatham Place to the north.

There is still a perceptible link between Castle Street in the town centre (within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street CA) and Castle Street on this conservation area side of the IDR. This becomes Castle Hill towards the top of the hill near the intersection with the Bath Road and Coley Avenue. The end of the street closest to the IDR still retains its Castle Street name. The east side of Howard Street was demolished to make way for the IDR in the late 1960s. The row of trees shielding the street from the IDR stands where the houses were once on the east side of the street.

The area is currently primarily within Abbey Ward but also reaches into Minster Ward south of Castle Hill/ Castle Street and into Battle Ward past Prospect Street. It is defined geographically and historically by its major east-west routes: along the north by the Oxford Road and the south by Castle Hill/Castle Street. Residential housing lies in between the two and to the south of Castle Hill.

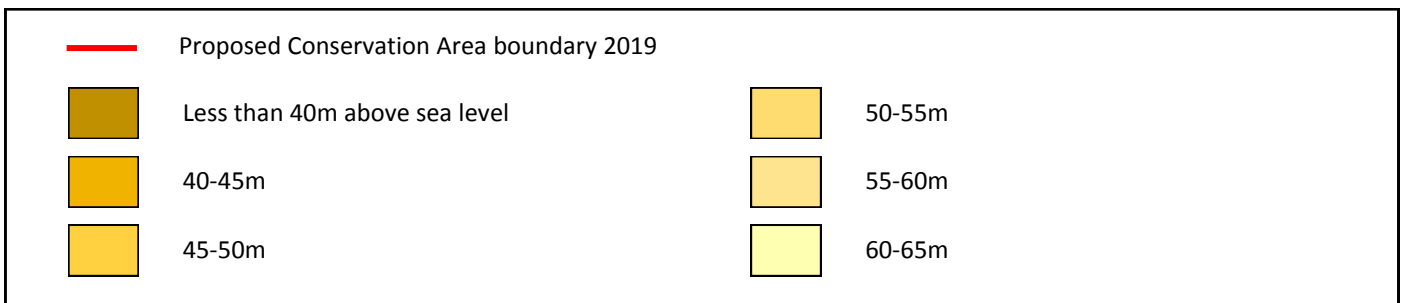
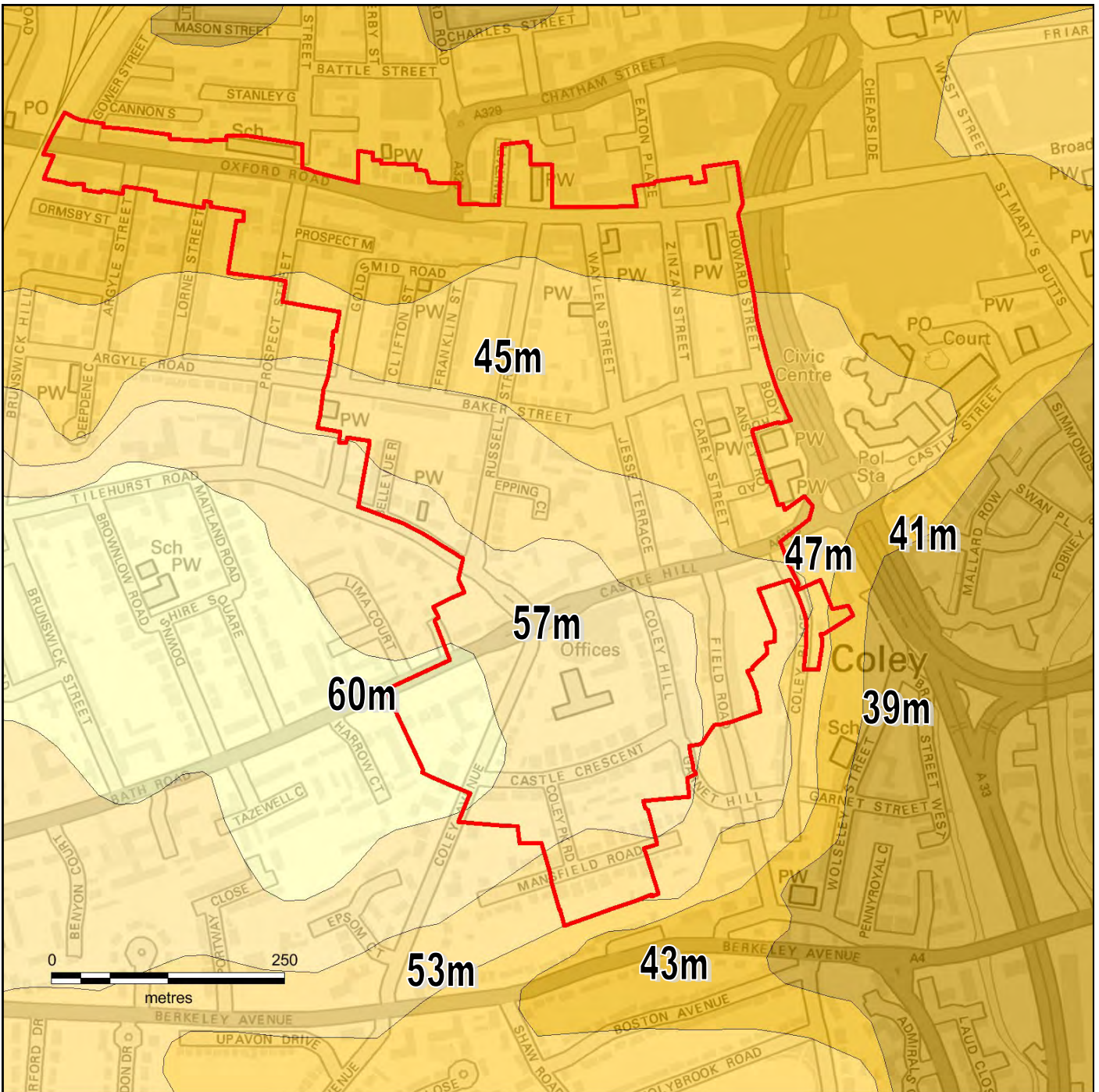
The styling of the late 19th century, Victorian, polychrome brick, two-up two-down, terraced housing in Clifton Street and Franklin Street continues westward along the residential streets off Oxford Road out to the Norcot roundabout.

To the west of the Conservation Area, between Tilehurst Road and the Bath Road is the late Victorian planned street development that comprises the Downshire Square Conservation Area. The two conservation areas come close to touching along the Tilehurst Road. That area is one of attractive grand polychrome brick villas in the late Victorian, and early Edwardian style, built in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

Directly to the west and just north of Downshire Square, the streets of Brunswick Hill, Argyle Street and Lorne Street have a variety of houses from the early to late 19th century that are attractively set and worthy of future protection. The area was considered for inclusion in this Conservation Area, however this would have made it very difficult to manage.

The area to the southeast of Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road is an interesting area of small terraced cottages mixed in with impressive polychrome brick villas. It is another area that could be analysed for its value as a potential conservation area, possibly being incorporated in the Castle Crescent/ Mansfield Road area.

Coley Avenue progresses out to the south and west from its intersection with Castle Hill and is notable for its allée of tree species of which lined the avenue, once the drive to the former Coley Park Estate.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 2.0.1: Topographical map of the Conservation Area, showing how the land falls away from the high point at the Castle Hill, Coley Avenue and Bath Road intersection.

November 2019



3. History of the Area

3.1 Archaeological heritage

Although legend places a Norman castle on the south side of Castle Hill, there has been limited evidence of archaeological significance in the area. Actual finds are recorded in the Historic Environment Record, held by the Borough Council.

However, any below-ground work carries the possibility of further discoveries, so all applications for such work should be referred to the Council's advisory archaeologist to consider the need for archaeological investigation before work proceeds.

3.2 Development History of the Area

Castle Hill and Oxford Road are historic radial routes from the town centre, and a scattering of buildings developed along them from the 18th century, some of which survive as important elements in the Conservation Area.

The area between them was largely open until the early 19th century, when Russell St and Prospect St were developed as suburbs of mostly large terraced properties, to be followed by the development of remaining areas as terraced housing. These areas, with sections of plain and polychrome brickwork give the Conservation Area its essential character and mark it out as an area worthy of protection.

The 20th and 21st centuries have been less kind to the area. The area has become one where single-family houses have been progressively adapted to multiple occupation residences. This has resulted in or exacerbated: unsympathetic alterations; pressures on traffic and parking; unsightly bin storage; satellite dishes and social problems. These factors have somewhat affected the appetite for sympathetic investment in the area. These issues are covered more fully in Section 7, on Negative Features.

A full account of the area's rich history is at Appendix 1, which also includes more detailed history of each Character Area, of which there are five within the Conservation Area as a whole.

The Character Area analyses in Section 6 highlight those aspects of each individual character area's history which are visible in its current state, and which should therefore be taken into account in decisions about change.

4. Spatial Analysis

4.1 Key characteristics and Plan form

Key characteristics of the conservation area include:

- It is the first residential development west of the town centre commenced in the late 18th century and continuing into the 19th century.
- Individual large Georgian and early Victorian villas (Yeomanry House and No. 2 Bath Road) are set back from the wide road in grounds with some surviving mature trees **still show evidence of large "prestige villas" that were situated at the top of Castle Hill at its junction with Bath Road.**
- The streets south of Castle Hill have early 19th century Georgian terraces of two and three storey houses in Coley Hill and detached and semi-detached houses in their own gardens in Castle Crescent. There is a large detached villa in its own grounds at No. 3 Castle Crescent, a former vicarage recently restored with further development of the site.
- There are substantial Georgian terraces of three storey houses along Castle Hill with front gardens of varying size.
- Buildings or sites of former coaching inns on the route to Bath survive: The former Kings Arms Inn with late 17th century and 18th century origins at 154-160 Castle Hill, now private housing, the Horse and Jockey now The Castle Tap at 120 Castle Street (first recorded 1699, rebuilt 1823).
- Russell Street (c.1815-1825) laid out on the eastern boundary of former market gardens is a wide main thoroughfare linking Castle Hill to the Oxford Road. There are substantial three storey Georgian terraced villas on the west side facing later three storey Victorian villas and terraces on the east side.
- Baker Street, one of the earliest streets in the conservation area, has smaller Georgian terraced houses in the section east of Russell Street and a well-preserved red brick early Georgian terrace of substantial two storey houses with basements (formerly known as Bedford Row) to the west of that junction.
- Oxford Road has a combination of diverse but frequently poorly maintained shop fronts in both early Georgian and Victorian buildings. The Oxford Road Community School, listed Grade II, was built between 1880-3 by local architects Morris and Smallwood. It is largely original with some modern additions.
- The streets to the east of Russell Street between the Oxford Road and Castle Hill (Waylen Street, Zinzan Street, Howard Street, Carey Street and Jesse Terrace) are fairly wide with sizeable brick two to three storey houses (mid- to late 19th century). Jesse Terrace is the best preserved, most attractive single street within the Conservation Area.

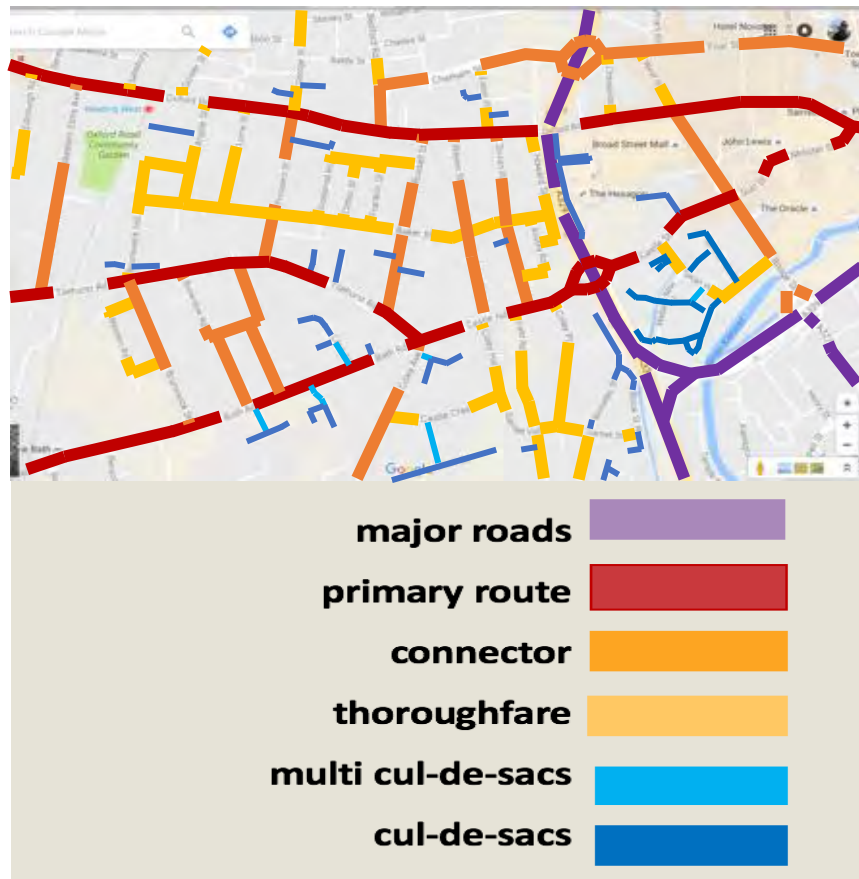
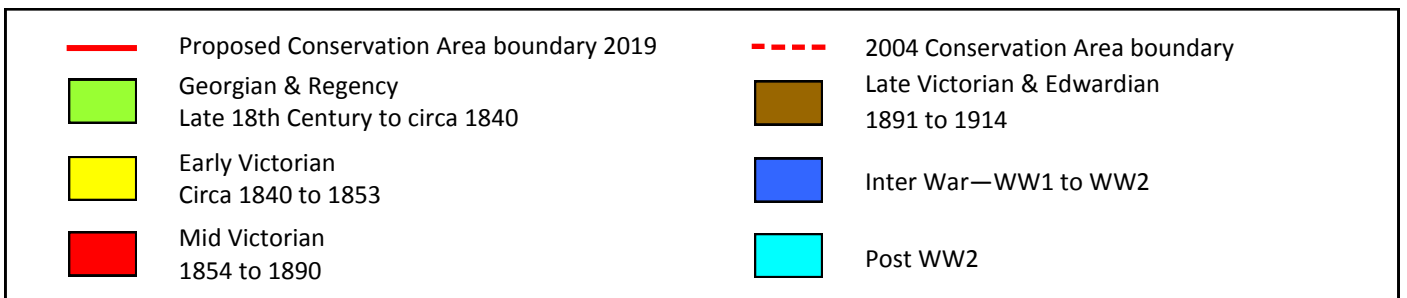
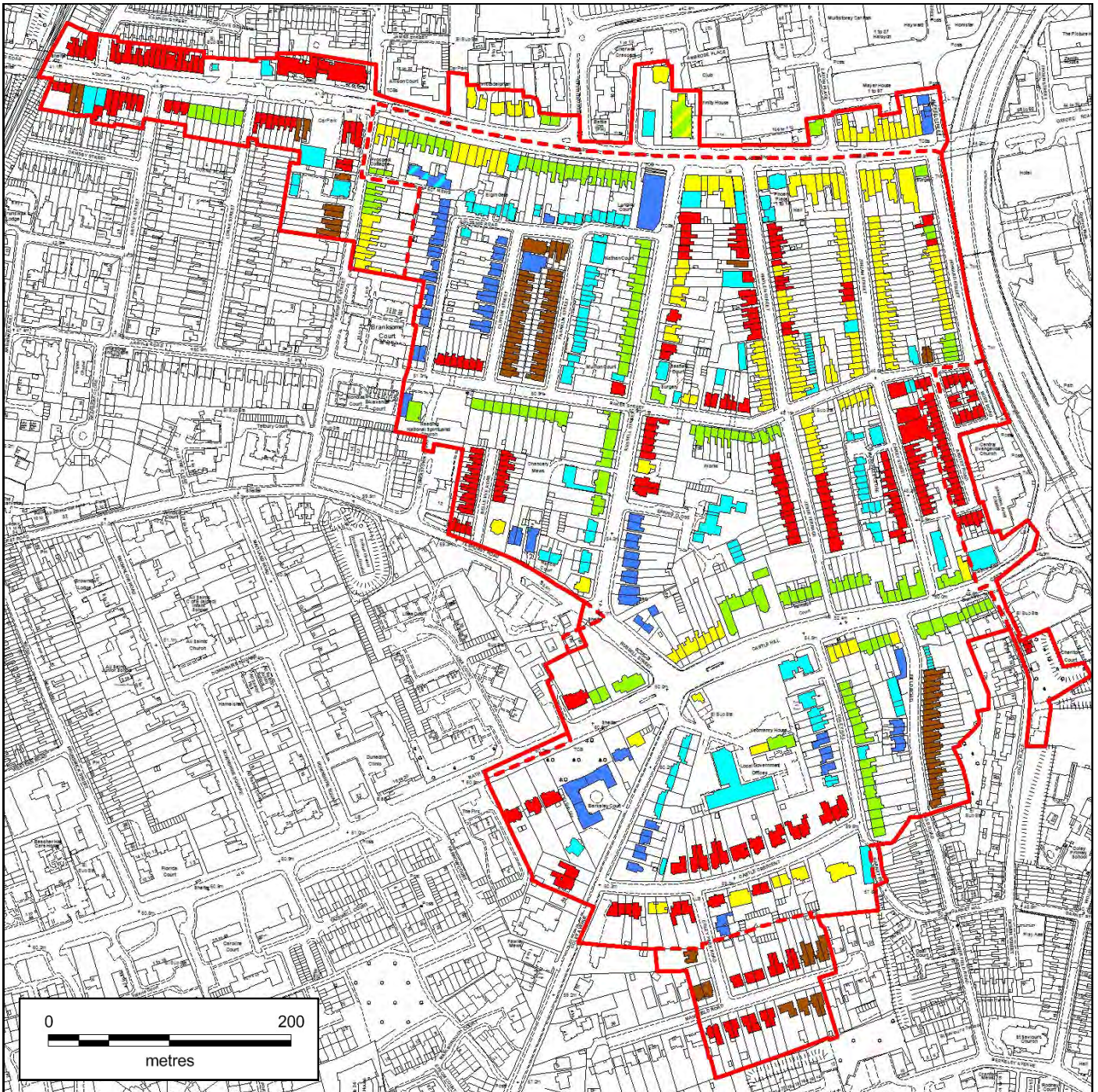


Figure 4.1.1 Road type layout within the Conservation Area

The layout of the Conservation Area results from the 18th and 19th century development of a residential area first along the two major mediaeval westbound routes from the town centre and followed later by infill streets in a grid pattern on the site of former market gardens between the two routes: the current Oxford Road extending to Tilehurst Road towards Pangbourne and Oxford and the route west along Castle Hill/Castle Street to the Bath Road.

- Prospect Street and Howard Lane (now Howard Street) are the very earliest north-south connector roads between the two primary routes. Prospect Street was laid out by William Pratt Swallow and ran from the Oxford Road south uphill towards Pigs Green Lane (now Tilehurst Road). Howard Lane ran from the Oxford Road to Back Lane (parts of which became Baker Street) which in turn led into the town centre along Hosier Street.
- Russell Street (also developed by Mr. Swallow) and Baker Street were laid out c. 1815-1825 as housing began to be built on the two roads. The bend along Baker Street between Waylen Street and Russell Street shows how Baker Street joined up with the earlier layout of the former Back Lane which continued towards the town into Hosier Street.
- Waylen Street and Zinzan Street took shape c. 1830-40, as infill roads within the emerging residential area.
- The Oxford Road was formerly referred to as Oxford Street as it emerged from the town centre up to the intersection of Russell Street, and was named as such on the 1853 Sanitation Map of Reading. The Oxford Road remains a primary route out of the centre to the west and is still heavily utilised by both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. It has a distinctively different character from the remainder of the Conservation Area. It is defined by both its busy use and its diversity of cultures, which is reflected in the shops lining the main road.

- Castle Hill forms the western section of Castle Street as the main road west out of the town centre extending from the minster church of St. Mary the Virgin in The Butts. The entire road was called Castle Street until the section west of Jesse Terrace was renamed Castle Hill at some time between 1870 and 1890. Castle Street/Castle Hill remains as it has been historically; a primary route for traffic in and out of the town centre. The heavy traffic today is further exacerbated by the IDR's exit onto the road at the roundabout between the Conservation Area and the town centre. To a lesser degree, the road is also a pedestrian route to residential areas west of the centre. Its wide layout with large Georgian villas set back in grounds often with mature trees, still maintains a residential feel despite the traffic.
- Jesse Terrace to the north of Castle Hill and the streets leading off Castle Hill to the south have a similar character. The streets south of Castle Hill are quieter and do not have the same issues as the area between Castle Hill and the Oxford Road. The southern portion of the Conservation Area is centred on its relationship to Castle Hill/Castle Street as a route for residents in and out of that area into the town centre.
- Figure 4.1.2 Buildings by Age on the following page illustrates and summarises the successive periods and waves of development in the area from the late 18C, through the 19C to the First World War, and the subsequent areas of infill or redevelopment that followed in the 20C.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

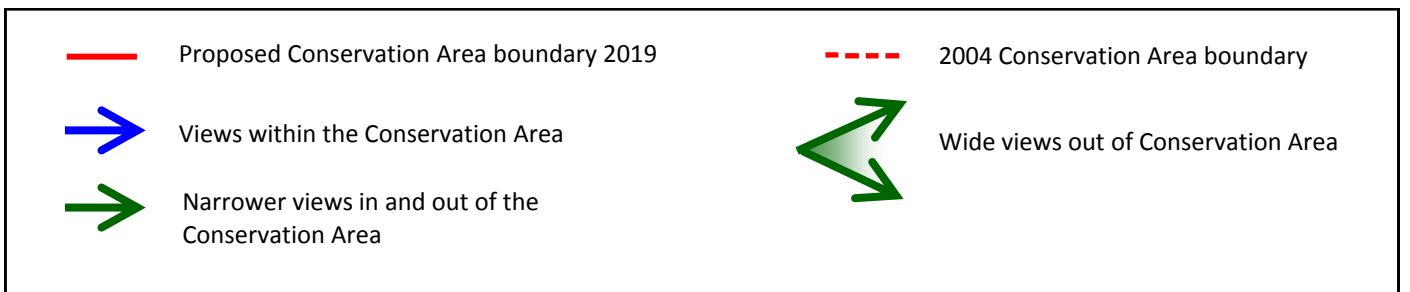
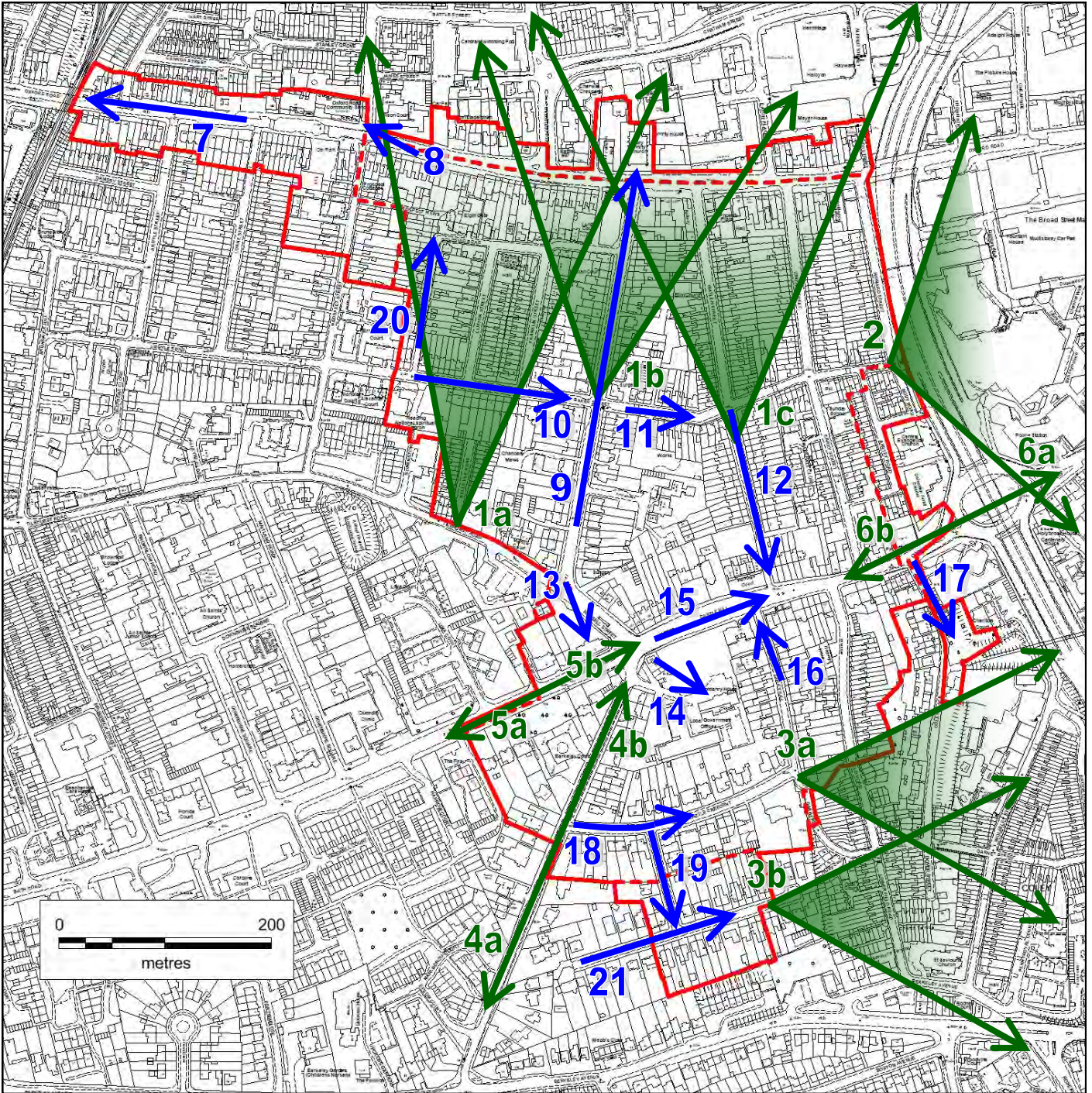
Figure 4.1.2: Buildings by age

November 2019



4.2 Views into, out of and within the Conservation Area

Views form a critical consideration in retaining those qualities about the conservation area that define its character and its specialness. Within Section 6, views relating to each individual character area are defined within that section.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 4.2.1: Views into, out of and within the Conservation Area

November 2019

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Figure 4.2.2 View 6b: The view looking west up Castle Street to Castle Hill (Courtesy of Joe Doak)



Figure 4.2.3 View 13: The **chimney view at the back of Mr Swallow's residence (2 Bath Road) and 4 Bath Road** (Google Maps)



Figure 4.2.4 View 15: Early 19th century view of Castle Hill looking east towards the town (from postcard)



Figure 4.2.5 View 15: *Blended view of Castle Hill and Castle Street looking east from early 20th century with tram line overhead to today's view with the Blade in the far distance (Chris Lee)*



Figure 4.2.6 View 9 northwards towards the Holy Trinity Church along the Oxford Road from Russell Street (David Neale)



Figure 4.2.7 View 20, large TPO oak in winter with view of Caversham escarpment in the distance (Mark Worringham)



Figure 4.2.8 Views 4a and 4b: **Fox Talbot's** early photograph of the allée of trees looking north east along Coley Avenue (Henry Fox Talbot)



Figure 4.2.9 View 5a: West view along the Bath Road from the junction with Castle Hill, Coley Avenue to the left, and Russell Street to the right (David Neale)

4.3 Trees and green landscape

While trees and planting are prominent in parts, the area is primarily urban. Most of the Conservation Area has ten percent or less canopy cover, so protecting and enhancing the area's green assets is a priority, as defined in the Council's 2010 Tree Strategy document and in line with the Council's 2019 Climate Emergency Motion.

The local Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) and the Council have been working proactively to find sites where greening can be increased. This strategy has had recent success, notably along Baker Street and Oxford Road. Further greening is desirable throughout the Conservation Area, but is complicated by underground cables and narrow pavements.

TPO trees in the area

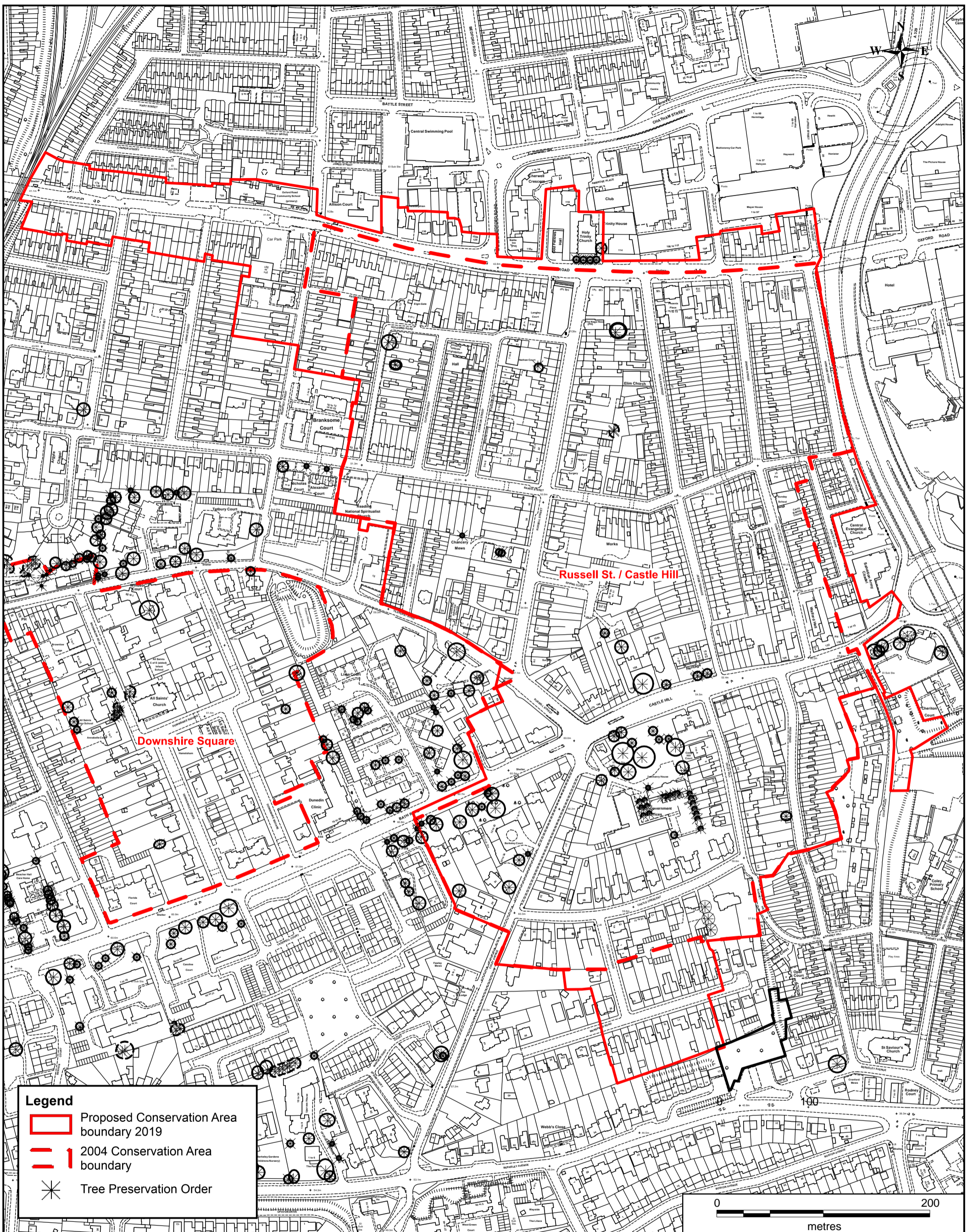
Figure 4.3.1 shows trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). Not having a TPO does not mean a tree in the conservation area does not merit protection.

BSANA has also worked with the Council to prevent the removal of trees which make a positive contribution to the area. Due to Council resource limitations, placing a TPO on a tree is often in reaction to a threat rather than a proactive measure, but designation as a conservation area protects all substantial trees by requiring an application to fell them.

Trees in the public domain or owned and managed by the Council, such as those along Coley Avenue, are not TPO'd as it they are assumed to be monitored and under good care.

The most significance trees for residents in the area are:

- the large Cedar of Lebanon at 154-160 Castle Hill - possibly 200 years old
- the oak tree at the corner of Goldsmid Road framing the bend in the road – c.100 years old
- the small group of regularly pollarded trees at the front of the Holy Trinity Parish Church
- several of the large mature cypress trees along the Bath Road
- several of the mature specimens in the front garden at Yeomanry House, which provide a barrier between the house and the traffic on Castle Hill.



Title: **Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area**
Figure 4.3.1: Tree Protection Orders within the Conservation Area

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Date: 29/10/2019 Scale at A3: 1:3250

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref: 7223 - G:\Mapinfo\Data\Client datasets\Environment\Planning & Transport\Conservation\Russell_Castle_Hill_Proposal





Figure 4.3.2 The large Cedar of Lebanon at 154- 160 Castle Hill and other TPO trees along the road (Karen Rowland)

Trees on private properties

Many of the trees which benefit the area are on private land. The most notable green canopies in the Conservation Area are those fronting properties along the Bath Road and along Castle Hill.

There are several trees currently being considered for TPOs fronting the Yeomanry House site, referred to below.

Many back gardens on the terraced streets have smaller trees which contribute to the overall green canopy in the area and are protected from immediate felling by their conservation area status.



Figure 4.3.3 Large TPO trees along the Bath Road (Karen Rowland)

Trees in the public domain

A number of trees within the public realm add greatly to the area. The historic allée of trees along Coley Avenue contributes much to the overall green canopy of the southern part of the Conservation Area, while the substantial mature tree canopy at the beginning of the Bath Road enhances the view west from the top of Castle Hill.

The avenue of trees along Howard Street forms an essential barrier to the traffic noise from the IDR for Howard Street and Body Road.

The trees in raised planters along Body Road are poorly maintained and improvements are needed. Trees at the south east corner of the Conservation Area, at the IDR intersection with Castle Street, are also suffering from neglect.

As they mature, the newer trees planted by the Council along the Oxford Road and along Baker Street will bring a much greener feel to those roads.



Figure 4.3.4 *Allée of trees along Coley Avenue looking north into the Conservation Area (Karen Rowland)*

Green parks and open green spaces

Green space is at a premium within the Conservation Area. While small green areas are proposed for inclusion at the corner of Castle Street and the IDR, along the escarpment at Coley Place and a small grouping of trees at Body Road, there are no public parks or gardens within the Conservation Area.



Figure 4.3.5 The historical, open front garden space in front of Yeomanry House (Karen Rowland)

Creative redevelopment of the area separating Body Road from the IDR could make a small green space more beneficial to the neighbourhood instead of being an area subject to antisocial behaviour.

Private green spaces are equally rare, and two of those are owned by local churches. The area of grass and shrubs at the Carey Centre near Body Road, though private to the Carey Baptist Church, provides an oasis of green for the immediate area.

The grounds surrounding the National Spiritualist Church at 81 Baker Street were the garden of York Lodge, the early 19th century house which the church now occupies. It is a welcome green open space in Baker Street, but it too, is private to the Church.

The front garden of Yeomanry House is part of the site recently sold and being changed into a nursery. It was noted in the 2004 appraisal as a much-needed green space for the area which at the time was publically accessible, although never an official "public open space." The garden is important to retain in terms of its historical relationship to Yeomanry House's original layout.

The large front gardens of the terrace of houses at 134-144 Castle Hill, together with the front gardens of Jesse Terrace, contribute significantly to the green space in the area.

5. Buildings and public realm

5.1 Key positive characteristics

The Conservation Area's strength lies in its varied built environment, which provides a remarkable microcosm of residential styling in Reading from the late 18th century to the first part of the 20th century.

The area grew in response to the rapidly changing needs of Reading's population in the 19th Century as the industrial revolution brought new industries to the town. The development of particular streets and areas encapsulate many of the house types common to Reading during the 19th century, ranging from high-end housing for Reading's wealthy businessmen to houses for professional people, artisans and labourers and spanning the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. For example, the Georgian period is exemplified at the high end along Castle Street and Castle Hill and at the more modest level in the early artisan cottages along Prospect Street; the higher end of Victorian houses along Jesse Terrace with more modest scales along Howard Street and Belle Vue Road; and fine, up-market late Victorian and early Edwardian villas on Castle Crescent, Mansfield Road and Russell Street with artisan houses along Anstey Road.

As well as exemplifying this variety of house styles, inclusion of a larger section of Oxford Road illustrates the development of services for local residents. Places of worship display the diversity of religions within Reading during this period, while today's shops occupy buildings that have supplied the area's needs for roughly 200 years.

5.2 Building types and forms

The area is predominantly residential, particularly along the infill streets of the Conservation Area, with a high proportion of typical Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian terraces with a few detached and semi-detached properties. Their 2 to 3 and a half stories height is a very notable feature of the area. Property footprints vary largely in accordance with the social status of their intended occupants.

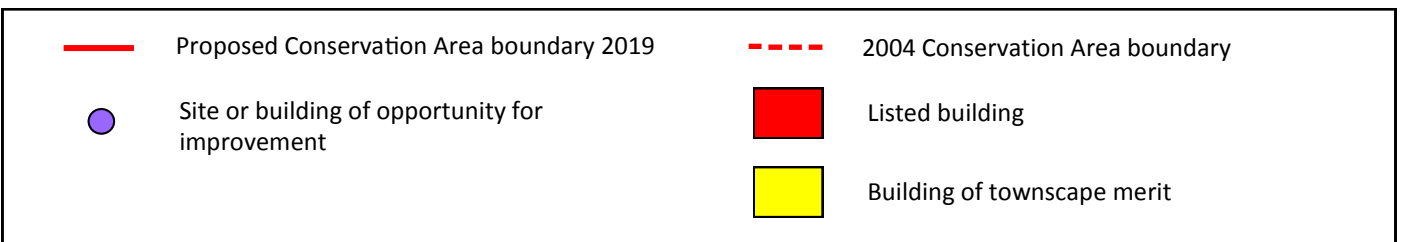
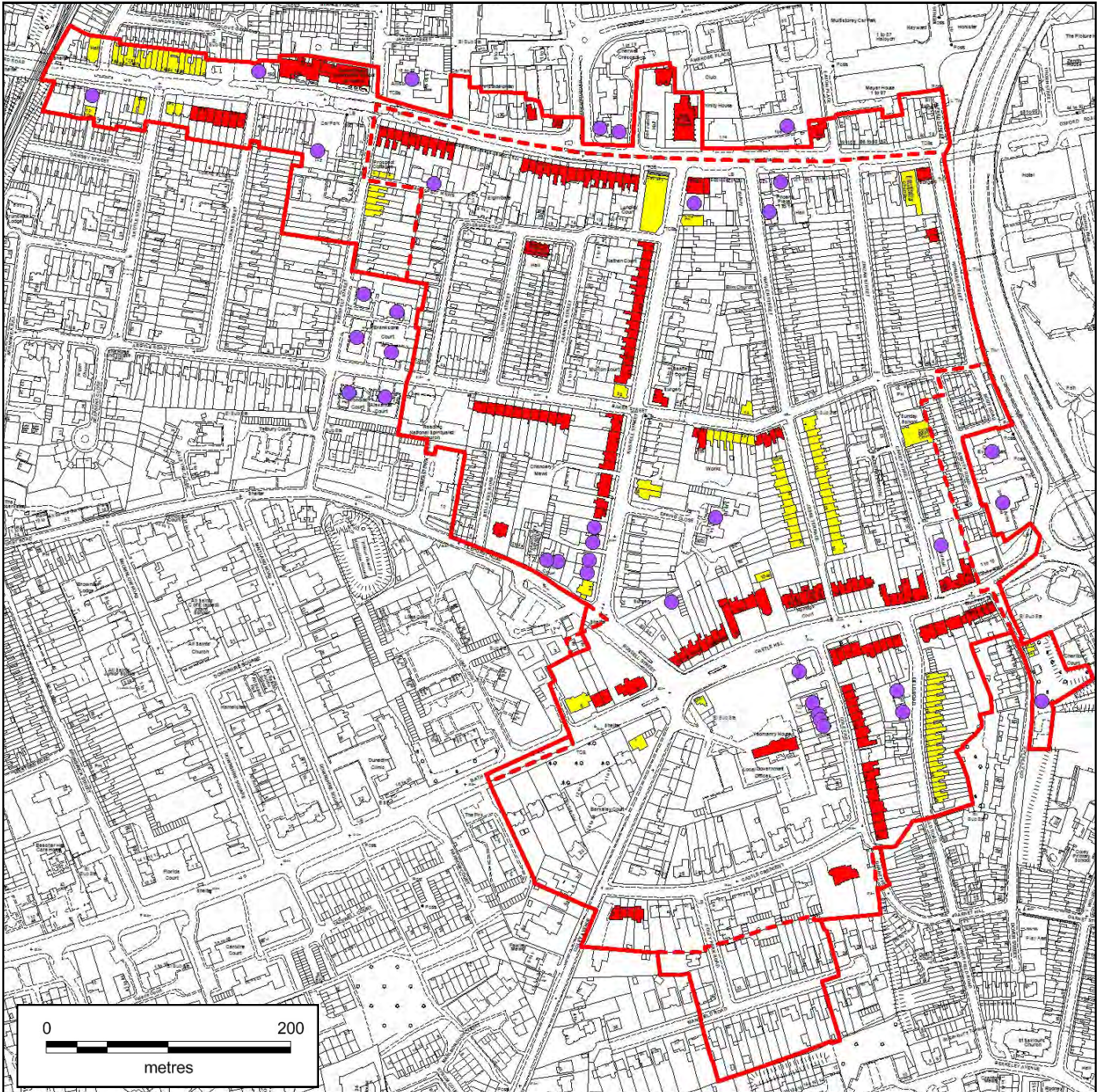
There are numerous places of worship, predominantly along the Oxford Road and in the streets north of Castle Hill, while Oxford Road exhibits a large variety of retail services for nearby residential streets.

5.3 Materials, styles and features

The Conservation Area shows a variety of local vernacular materials, but the common thread is Reading's famous brick and tiles; predominantly red, but displaying a full range of brick colours and finishes, used throughout all the style periods within the area. Stucco, Welsh slate, red tile, stone dressings and a smattering of Bath stone all lend character to the area. Materials for each of the individual character areas are highlighted in the Materials section of each character area in Section 6.

5.4 Buildings of local historic interest and Buildings of Townscape Merit

The new Local Plan for Reading defines the term of Buildings of Townscape Merit as used within the Borough. This designation denotes those those buildings within conservation areas that contribute significantly to the character of the area and are important to retain and enhance but are not Listed Buildings. To clarify, there are also no Locally Listed buildings within conservation areas and buildings are either Listed Buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit or undesignated within a conservation area within the Borough.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 5.1.1: Buildings and site classification

November 2019



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5.5 Public realm- Floorscape, street lighting, street furniture and local detail

5.5.1 Street lighting

Most of the area's lighting is provided by slim silver modern steel columns with simple glass lanterns. Though not particularly dominant, they are not in keeping with their conservation area setting and are detrimental as a whole to the area. Their bright lights, at first-floor level for many of the terraced houses, cause a harsh shine into bedrooms and living areas.

The Council's recent replacement lighting scheme has replaced lights in lampposts throughout the town with halogen. This has meant the loss of many old cast iron gas lampposts throughout the town and regrettably, the Conservation Area lost all but one on Franklin Street as a result.

The main thoroughfares have the tallest lamps with shorter ones in residential streets. Light pollution due to the proximity to the town centre and the IDR has a detrimental effect, especially in Howard Street, Body Road, Anstey Road, Carey Street and Zinzan Street.

Improving street lighting has wide potential for improvement to the local streetscape.



Figure 5.5.1 *Lights from the IDR (above left) and halogen street lights glaring into terraced housing at night along Zinzan Street (Karen Rowland)*

5.5.2 Communications wires and electricity

The proliferation of wires from telegraph poles particularly in streets with a high proliferation of HMOs blights the streetscape and sky views. A programme of work with service suppliers to reduce redundant wires would be welcome.



Figure 5.5.2 Overhead wires on a street with numerous HMOs (Karen Rowland)

5.5.3 Tarmac

As noted in the 2004 appraisal, the Conservation Area is mostly paved in modern tarmac, which is generally not in keeping with a conservation area setting and looks old and dirty very quickly.

The current patchwork appearance of much of the Oxford Road between the IDR and Prospect Street (primarily along the south side of the street) is a result of earlier concrete block paving being unevenly replaced with tarmac in sections of the street. Multiple materials and patches give the entire pavement of Oxford Road a run-down appearance, as in many parts of the Conservation Area in certain areas.

5.5.4 Granite kerbs and gutters

On the positive side, however, many of the streets retain their 19th century granite kerbs and stone gutters, with the occasional road mouth in granite setts. Examples noted within the 2004 appraisal, which was not a comprehensive list, include:

- Castle Crescent: 100mm granite kerbs with 300mm stone gutters
- Coley Hill: 150mm granite kerbs with three lines of granite setts creating the gutter
- Castle Hill: 300mm wide granite kerbs and 300mm granite gutter, with three lines of granite setts on the corner junctions
- Russell Street: 100-300mm granite kerbs and setted gutters
- Jesse Terrace: short lengths of 100mm wide stone kerbs with 300mm wide stone gutters
- Zinzan Street: 100mm granite kerbs with some stone or setted gutters in front of nos. 8-10 curved kerb showing an original entrance way to the back of the properties for carriages
- Oxford Road: 300mm wide granite kerbs with modern cast iron bollards, recently repainted black.

5.5.5 Sections of sett stones remain in three noticeable locations

Baker Street: about 1.5 sq. m of setted stones outside the basement entrance to the Oasis Community Centre.

Belle Vue Road: at the end of the road near the fencing to the back of the properties, remains a large area of setts (appx 12 sq. m) uncovered by tarmac and with the fan pattern visible, which once may have covered much of the area.

Prospect Street at Prospect Mews: a large area (appx 4 sq. m) of large stone setts or cobbles at the entrance area to the Mews.



Figure 5.5.3 *Sett stone pavement at the end of Belle Vue Road, still displaying the fan pattern of road that was common in the area (Karen Rowland)*

5.5.6 Cast Iron Bollards and benches

The Oxford Road and the east side of Howard Street have rows of fairly modern cast iron bollards, which lend an attractive appearance to the area. Recently repainted they are generally a benefit to the area.

5.5.7 Coal hole covers

Cast iron coal hole covers made originally in Reading's foundries are particularly in evidence on Castle Hill and Prospect Street.



Figure 5.5.4 *Coal hole cover, Castle Hill (Evelyn Williams)*

5.5.8 Railings

Although many original railings have been lost there are good examples remaining, for instance at Oxford Road Community School and some properties along Castle Hill.

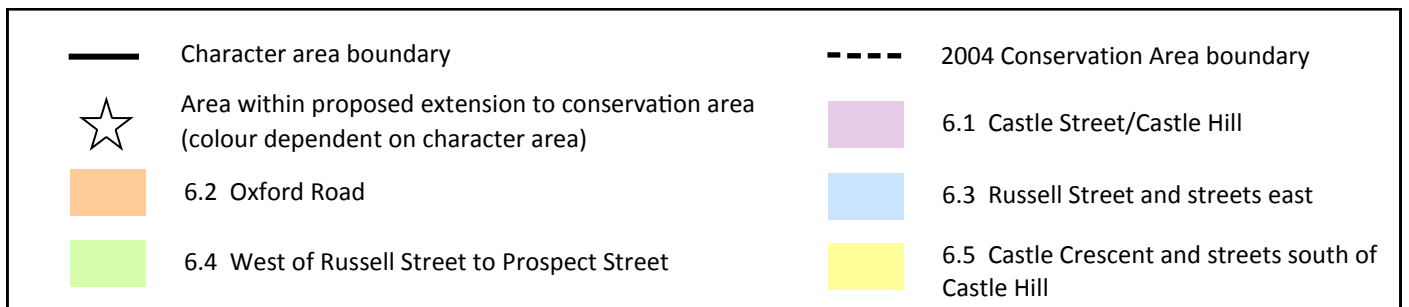
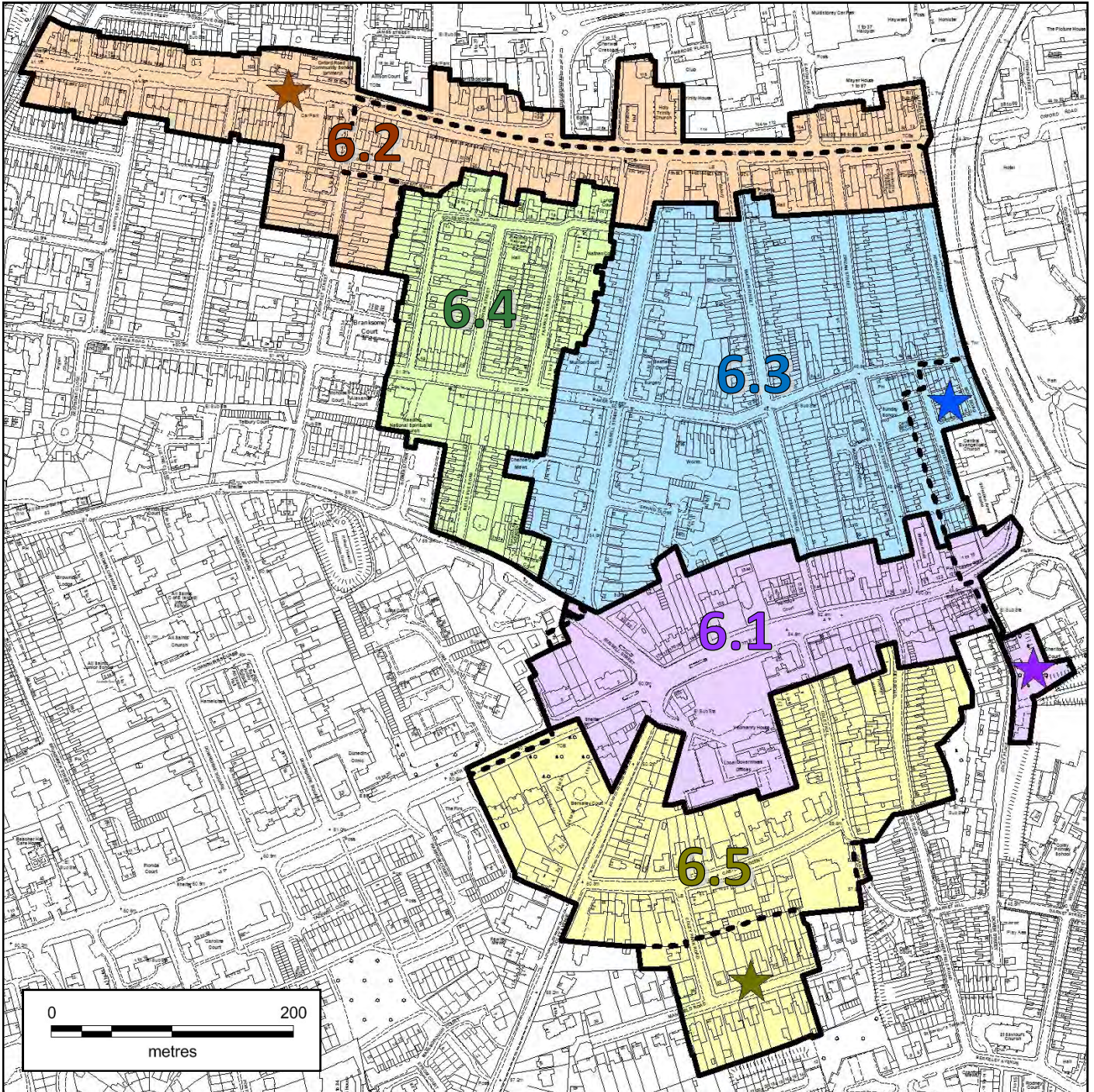
6. Character Areas

This section breaks down this large Conservation Area into geographical areas of particular and consistent character, identifying for each the factors which create that character, and which demand careful consideration whenever change is contemplated.

Because of the size of the conservation area, each character area is in many ways a micro-conservation area of its own. These 5 sections are designed to provide quick access for planners and developers to home in directly on what is important within the immediate surrounds of a site.

Within each character area appraisal a breakdown of its attributes exist as follows:

- An *overview of significance* of the character that defines the area;
- typical *materials* found within the area;
- critical and important *views* within the area are highlighted;
- an *area analysis* gives a high-level overview to critical elements of the area;
- the *area's key positive characteristics* and features;
- the *area's negative features* are defined;
- a listing of specific *Opportunities for Enhancement* highlights buildings that provide opportunities to redevelop more in keeping with the *area's* special character; (see map below)
- a listing of *Buildings of Townscape Merit* highlights those buildings that contribute significantly to the character of the area and are important to retain and enhance; (see Figure 5.4.1)
- the *Listed Buildings* within the area are pointed out. (Figure 5.4.1)



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.0.1: Character areas

November 2019



6.1 Castle Street / Castle Hill

6.1.1 Significance

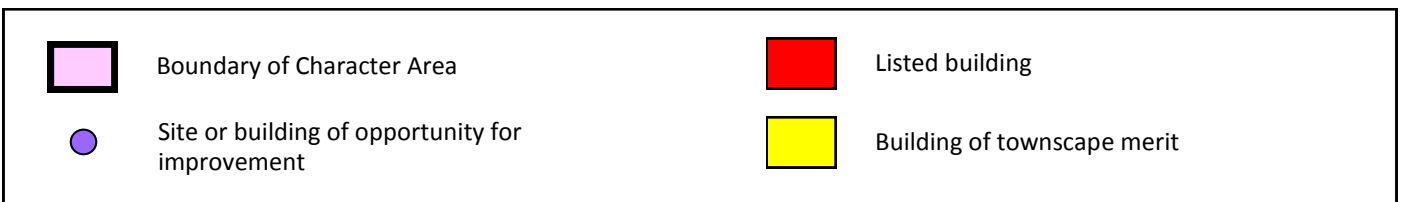
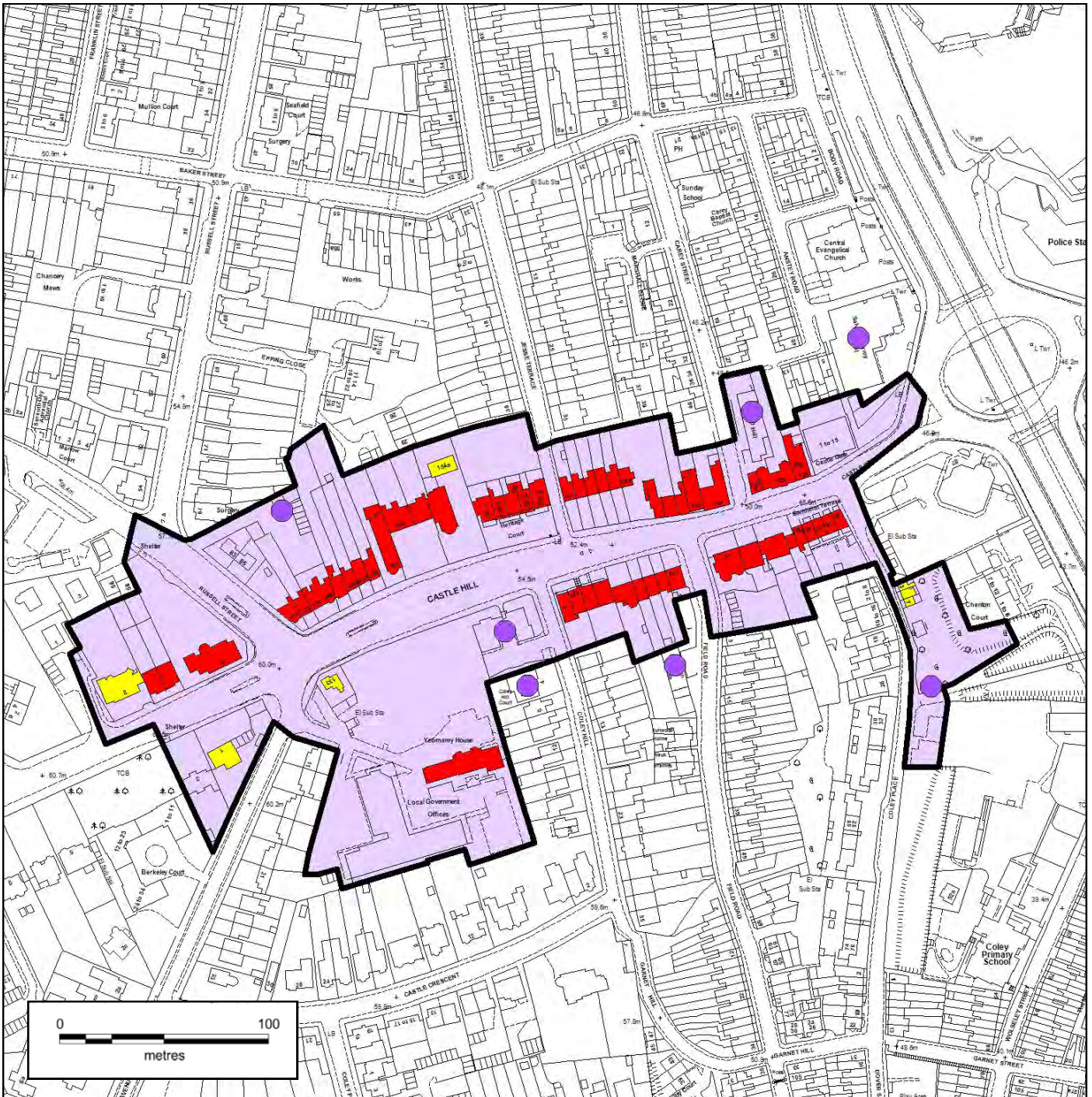
Castle Hill and Castle Street comprise one of the finest, oldest and most attractive streets within the Conservation Area. It is a wide, curving, open street that winds uphill from the town centre to the top of the chalk and clay escarpment at the junction of Castle Hill with Russell Street and Coley Avenue. This leafy street is part of the original London to Bath Road. It is notable for its large trees and imposing Georgian houses which make up part of the fine views within, into and out of the Conservation Area. The houses are mostly two and a half to three storeys tall. Largely of Georgian period construction, there are several later additions along the road, but they do not detract significantly from the grandeur of the street. The Georgian properties have large gardens set back from the pavement and leafy vistas, high quality detailing and original features. These principal characteristics contribute to its significance and justification as a separate and unique character area.

Unfortunately, the building of the IDR in 1969 divided this section of the street from the town centre with the insertion of the large roundabout, thus losing the significance of that route through the town. Reconnecting Castle Hill to the heart of the town centre, whether real or visually, would create greater understanding of the historic course of this road through Reading and its significance in influencing the development of the remainder of the Conservation Area.

6.1.2 Materials

Stucco rendering is the most common treatment of the façades of the Georgian houses along the street, many of which have rusticated ground floor frontages. Most of the houses are painted in neutral shades of white and off- white, though at no. 107 the yellow façade and dark green doors are believed to be the original colours of the house. Roofs are largely of Welsh slate. There are small amounts of red tile, the most notable example being the street- facing mansard roof of 160 Castle Hill.

Underlying red brick is notable only occasionally, largely seen on upper floors and to the side and rear of the properties. Regrettably, at nos. 134-144, the original Bath stone façade was removed in the latter part of the 20th century and replaced by Bath stone-coloured stucco although it is still a very attractive terrace with Regency detailing.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.1.1: Character Area 6.1—Castle Street/Castle Hill

November 2019

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6.1.3 Views: (see section 4.2 page 23)

The most important views within the area and into and out of it are in each direction along the Castle St/Castle Hill. These views are shown as 15 (see Figure 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 and 6.1.3 below) and 6a & b (see Figure 4.2.2) on page 26. They unfold as the viewer travels along the escarpment ridge and follow the curve of the historic route to and from Reading, revealing the area's relationship with the town centre. View 6b progressively reveals the large Georgian townhouses along the route which are the focal point of the Character Area.

The views off the main route are also important. View 17 (below), looks southeast up the slight incline of Coley Place, revealing a striking row of tall terraced houses at 3-7 Coley Place, set against the trees to the rear. These contrast notably with the grander Georgian houses on Castle Hill. The small terrace is what remains of a longer terrace which once stood on this edge of the escarpment above the Holy Brook. The views off the street are also important.



Figure 6.1.2 View 17: Looking south up Coley Place from Castle Hill (David Neale)



Figure 6.1.3 View 15: Looking east towards town from Castle Hill (David Neale)

Views 13 and 14 display some of the grand houses that once dominated the Castle Hill, Russell St and Coley Avenue junction. View 13 (figure 4.2.3) looking south towards the back of nos. 2 and 4 Bath Road is of their impressive tall chimney stacks. View 14 looks southeast from

Coley Avenue into the grounds of Yeomanry House. The original house can be seen from the junction with the modern Berkshire Records Office to its side and the property's original gatehouse (no.133) on the corner.

View 5a (see Figure 4.2.9) looks west along the Bath Road towards the Downshire Square Conservation Area from the junction of Castle Hill, Russell Street, Coley Avenue and Bath Road. The view of Downshire Square Conservation Area is screened by the largest collection of fine, mature trees within the Conservation Area. Most of these mature trees are protected by TPO status.

6.1.4 Area analysis:

The Grade II* 154-160 Castle Hill, originally the Kings Arms Inn, with its striking Cedar of Lebanon tree in its forecourt, is the street's most notable and impressive building (see figure 6.1.4). Dating from the late 17th century, its long history is detailed in Appendix I. The 18C railings to the street are hidden within holly bushes,



Figure 6.1.4 154- 160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, and Jesse family home (Karen Rowland)

The Grade II former Horse and Jockey (now called the Castle Tap) was rebuilt in 1823 on the site of a 17th coaching inn and is today an active Public House listed as an Asset of Community Value.



Figure 6.1.5 *The former Horse and Jockey (The Castle Tap) rebuilt early 19th century, 120 Castle Street (Karen Rowland)*

Yeomanry House, Grade II, and its associated gatehouse, at 131 and 133 Castle Hill, comprise the most significant remaining example of the grand houses built at the junction of Castle Hill, Russell St and Coley Avenue for the wealthy and prominent businessmen of Reading. It exemplifies the layout of these properties with its c.1840 gatehouse and large front garden facing directly onto Castle Hill. The footprint of its original drive is still in situ. The gatehouse is notable for its early and extensive use of salmon-coloured brick.

The modern, purpose-built Berkshire Record Office was built on the site of the Berkshire Yeomanry's Riding School (built 1911). The Record Office's minimalist design, appropriate massing and footprint allows it to fit well within the setting.



Figure 6.1.6 Yeomanry House at 131 Castle Hill - house, front drive and garden, (Karen Rowland)



Figure 6.1.7 Former c.1840s gate house 133 Castle Hill for Yeomanry House, with the back section recently sympathetically built. (Karen Rowland)



Figure 6.1.8 Berkshire Record Office, on the Yeomanry House site (Karen Rowland)

The Grade II 2 Bath Road, the former home of local market gardener, William Pratt Swallow, has a fine Georgian frontage and an attractive chimneyscape (also see figure 4.2.3). The busy intersection that it sits directly upon, with frequently backed-up cars and street furniture compromises its originally important setting.



Figure 6.1.9 **William Pratt Swallow's house, 2 Bath Road** with busy junction in front of it (David Neale)

Further early 19th century grand villas near this junction include the greatly altered 1 Bath Road, largely hidden behind a modernised high brick wall. The large fine trees (many safeguarded by TPOs) along the Bath Road heading west near the entrances to Janson Court and Lima Court are the only visible reminders of the long-demolished mansions that once stood behind them.

The houses at nos.107-111 and nos.122-132 (all Grade II), define the early building at the east end of the street. These houses are large, often rusticated and stuccoed; many with original arched windows and fanlights. The house at no.107 still retains its stable building and the footprint of its large, original garden to the rear.



Figure 6.1.10 Large rusticated Georgian houses on the south side of Castle Street at 107-111 (David Neale)



Figure 6.1.11 Large Georgian properties on the north side of Castle Street at 122-132 (David Neale)

The Grade II early 19th century Bath stone Blenheim Terrace, at nos. 97-105 Castle Street, is impressive in scale and its classic detailing. It is one of only two extant Bath stone properties remaining within the conservation area. No.105 is regrettably in a poor state of repair.



Figure 6.1.12 *Blenheim Terrace, Bath stone terrace, 97-105 Castle Street (David Neale)*

The attractive Grade II Regency detailed terrace at 134-144 Castle Hill is set back from the road in well-tended deep gardens. Its Bath stone coloured stucco façade is a replacement of its original Bath stone façade which was removed in the 1960s.



Figure 6.1.13 *Bath stone coloured stuccoed Regency style terrace, 134-144 Castle Hill (Karen Rowland)*

The fine grouping of houses at nos. 113-121 (all Grade II) create a pleasing collection on the south side of the street. The terrace is attractive because of the houses' Georgian architectural variety, despite dropped kerbs for parking along most of the fronts. No. 113 forms a particularly striking end with its rusticated paired pilasters, topped with wreaths.



Figure 6.1.14 Attractive diverse terrace of Georgian properties at 113-121 Castle Street (David Neale)

Heritage Court (nos. 144A – 152) and the terrace at nos.162A- 166 (all Grade II) are the legacy of the local Jesse family of developers. The attractive verandas with concave metal roofs and Regency style metal work distinguish the families' developments along Castle Hill.



Figure 6.1.15 Heritage Court, 144A- 152 Castle Hill, a Jesse family development (David Neale)



Figure 6.1.16 Nos. 162A-168, with Regency iron detailing, an early Jesse family development (David Neale)

The trees along the street are notable and contribute well to the overall fine appearance of the road.

Nos. 168-174 Castle Hill, c. early 1840s (Grade II), displays the waning influence of late Georgian styling in the area. It is an impressively-scaled rusticated stucco and red brick terrace. Wooden sash windows remain and the surviving fanlights have an unusual styling, with a linked elongated oval pattern and a centre section for a lamp within the fanlight. One of these fanlights has been entirely retained at no. 168. The western end of the terrace is in multiple occupancy, poorly maintained and has seen the erosion and loss of original features as a result of poor maintenance by the owner. Constant estate agent signage and poor maintenance of the frontages and façades contributes negatively to the appearance of this corner terrace.

Another detraction on the street is at no. 129 Castle Hill, Ridgeborough Court. Here, the late 20th century residential building's overall design and fenestration are out-of-keeping with the rest of the street. By comparison, the modern Castlegate flats at no.114 Castle Street have better interpreted the prevalent Georgian styling along the street and as such form less of a visual detraction along the road.

6.1.5 Key positive characteristics:

- the Grade II* 154-160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, and its impressive forecourt Cedar of Lebanon tree
- attractive, well-maintained listed Georgian houses and terraces along the run of the street
- well maintained gardens east of Jesse Terrace
- Yeomanry House with its original footprint of front garden, drive and gatehouse
- Many TPO'd trees within the route and along the Conservation Area boundary
- 107 Castle Hill with its original features and original footprint of stables and back garden
- Fine unfolding streetscape views within, into and out of the Conservation Area of Georgian houses, trees and open sky

6.1.6 Negative features:

- busy and heavy traffic, especially during rush hours
- identified hot spot for air pollution along Castle Hill
- poor quality tarmac pavements and surfaces
- excessive clutter of modern street furniture
- modern building at 129 Castle Hill
- a small number of poorly maintained front gardens and boundaries
- dropped kerb parking at 107-109 and at 115-121 Castle Hill
- poor pedestrian links across busy street and at mid-point along Castle Hill
- poor condition of some properties, notably at 105 Castle Street, 125-127 Castle Hill, 172-174 Castle Hill (terrace), 2 Bath Road and 1 Bath Road
- obtrusive private parking signage
- gardens given over to parking

6.1.7 Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

- Ridgeborough Court, 129 Castle Hill, late 20th c, Improvement of façade or front garden to be more in keeping with the local character of the area.
- 1 Bath Road, circa 1830. Removal of unsympathetic modern additions to building and to restore former height of front boundary wall.

6.1.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit

- Former Yeomanry House Gatehouse, 133 Castle Hill, circa 1840. Small gatehouse of Yeomanry House with early use of salmon-coloured brick.
- 1 Bath Road, circa 1830. One of the remaining original "grand houses" originally situated at this junction.
- 8 Bath Road, circa 1880-1890. Striking terracotta front doorway on late Victorian building.
- 3-7 Coley Place, circa 1850-1870. Lone examples of mansard roof terraced housing within the Conservation Area; originally part of 10 houses along terrace that disappeared prior to approximately 1910.

6.1.9 Listed Buildings

- 97 to 105 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. Early 19th century terrace of five houses, 3 storeys and basement. Bath stone, arched openings to ground floor, string courses and parapet. Steps to principal storey. Original cast iron railings to areas. Houses to end of terrace set slightly forward. 1321959.
- 107 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. Circa 1800 Georgian stucco house, 3 storeys and semi basement, steps to entrance. Principal floor, arched windows and rusticated stucco, four Ionic pilasters and moulded entablature to upper floors, slate roof. Poor forecourt as parking. 1113421.
- 109 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. Circa 1800 Georgian stucco house, 2 storeys plus semi basement and attic. Steps to entrance. Rusticated stucco to basement and entrance storey. Tripartite windows. Bracketed eaves and slate roof. Poor forecourt as parking. 1113422.

- 111 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. Late 18th-early 19th century house, altered, 3 storeys and semi basement. Stucco, rusticated to ground floor and basement, cornice and parapet. Steps to entrance. Porch with slender fluted Doric columns. 1321960.
- 120 Castle Street, Grade II. Public house, The Castle Tap. Mid 19th century, 2 storeys, red brick, modelled to first floor. Stone or stucco cornice and string course, slate roof. Two tall half glazed doorways. 1113248.
- 122 Castle Street, Grade II. Circa 1840, 3 storey stucco house, rusticated ground floor and corner pilasters, raised surrounds to upper windows, cornice, parapet and slate roof. Central entrance door and fanlight, panelled pilasters. 2 storey extension to west. 1154757.
- 124 Castle Street, Grade II. Early 19th century, 3 storeys. Symmetrical façade with central door and fanlight, five bays wide. Stucco with, string course cornice and parapet, slate roof. 1113429.
- 126 Castle Street, Grade II. Early 19th century, 3 tall storeys and basement, set back, stucco, channelled ground floor with arches, mouldings to first floor windows, cornice and parapet. Railings. 1321965.
- 128 to 132 Castle Street, Grade II. Terrace of 3 houses, early 19th century, 3 storeys, stucco. Central part projecting and pedimented with delicate wrought iron balconies to first floor. Hipped slate roofs. 132 has entrance on return western elevation with 2 storey bay. 1154760.
- 134 to 144 Castle Street, Grade II. Symmetrical terrace of six houses. Early 19th century, 3 storeys and basement. 2 projecting gabled bays. Arched openings to ground floor. Second floor bullseye windows to four houses. Rendered Bath stone front, hipped slate roofs. A good design. 1113430.
- 113 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. 1850s on older site. 3 storeys plus basement. Rendered with heavy moulded parapet, string course, channelled pilasters, bracketed hood to door. 1113617.
- 115 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. After 1823. 3 storeys and basement. Rendered, 2 string courses, steps to entrance, radiating fanlight, slate roof. 1113423.
- 117 and 119 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. After 1823. 3 storeys and basement. Rendered, similar to 115. Wrought iron railings of the period to first floor on later support. Slate roof. 1321961.
- 121 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. After 1823. 3 storeys and basement. Rendered, cornice and parapet, arched openings to ground floor. Right hand set back. Fanlight and pilastered doorcase. 1321961.
- 123 Castle Street, (S. side), Grade II. Mid 19th century. 3 storeys and semi basement, red brick, rendered and channelled lower floors and window surrounds. Steps to entrance. Slate roof. Chimneys. 1113424.
- 125 and 127 Castle Street (S. side), Grade II. Mid 19th century. 4 storeys and basement, red brick with contrasting dressings, paired windows rendered surrounds. Steps to columned twin porch. Slate roof. 1113425.
- 144A to 152 Castle Street, Grade II. Early 19th century. Symmetrical terrace of six houses now flats. Early 19th century, 4 storeys and basement. End houses set forward. Rendered

Bath stone, cornice and parapet, mouldings to windows, arched first floor. Ground floor veranda with railings. Slate roof. 1154770.

- 154 to 160 Castle Street. Former Kings Arms Inn, Grade II*. A U-shaped group of buildings, now four houses with 18th century fronts but older origins. 2 storey centre block, end blocks taller with 2 storey circular bays. Painted stucco with cornice and parapets. Mansard roofs. Two with porches. One of the finest building groups in the Conservation Area. 1113431.
- 162, 162A, to 166 Castle Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century. Symmetrical terrace of four houses, end houses gabled and set forward. 3 storeys and basement. Rendered Bath stone, channelled ground floor, veranda and railings to centre houses. Slate roof. 1113432.
- 168 to 174 Castle Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century. Terrace of originally four houses, 4 storeys and basement. Red brick. Stucco ground floor, 2 storey end bays, cornice and parapet. Slate roof. One fanlight, at 168, retains lantern. 1154775.
- 2 Bath Road, Swallow House, Grade II. Circa 1780. 2 storey and basement. Red brick, delicate wooden cornice, slate roof with end chimneys. Wings to either side of centre block. Central door surround with open pediment and Doric pillars. A fine Georgian house in some disrepair. 1113396.
- 4 and 6 Bath Road, Grade II. Early 19th century. Symmetrical pair, 3 storeys and basement. Red brick now painted. Stucco ground floor, window surrounds and parapet. Slate roof. Railings. 1154509.
- Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Grade II. Early 19th century. Original building 2 storeys, stucco with moulded cornice and stone balustrade. 2 storey circular bay windows. Central recessed entry with wide fanlight. Slate roof. Unfortunate later 19th century extension wing to right. 1321962.

6.2 Oxford Road

6.2.1 Significance

The Oxford Road is one of the earliest roads leading out of Reading, south of the River Thames, serving as the primary route to Pangbourne and on to Oxford. The Oxford Road character area consists of the Oxford Road corridor between the IDR to the east and the Reading West Railway Bridge at its western end and encompasses a small area of both Prospect Street and Argyle Street directly to the south because of the related housing styles. Today, this is a vibrant area with an active pedestrian and vehicular traffic route, well known for its array of independent shops which **reflect the area's** diverse communities.

The 2-and 3-storey streetscape is a mix of impressive Georgian terraces and stand-alone houses interspersed with Victorian shops and houses along the route.

Along this half-mile route of 19th century heritage buildings on the Oxford Road, forty of the addresses are listed, either singly or collectively as a terrace. Although a general neglect of retail frontages and poorly-maintained, terraced houses is very prevalent along the road, the **area's early** history is still strongly evident in its 19th century built environment. Solid Arts and Crafts influences are apparent in the many attractive polychrome brick and terracotta façades in the area. The Oxford Road Community School, and houses along the west side of Prospect Street display good terra-cotta embellishment. The first-floor levels above the shops and the residences opposite the retail terrace at the junction with Argyle Road are notable for their colourful polychrome brickwork.

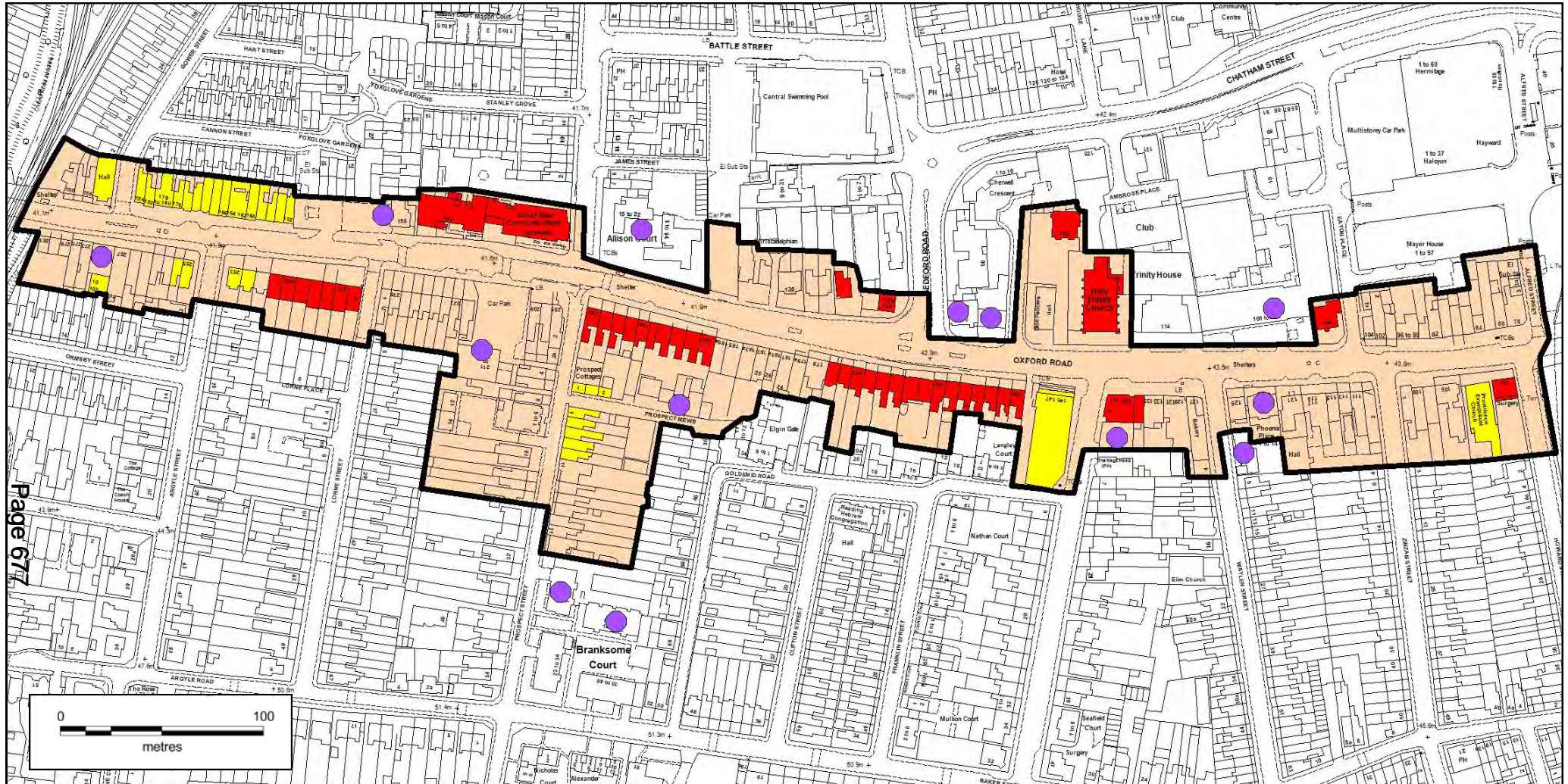
Early 19th century mapping evidence suggests that shops with residential accommodation above them extended westward from the town centre; notably between Alfred Street and Eaton Place and also between Russell Street and Waylen Street. However, the nature of the shops and services has altered over time, reflective of incoming immigrant populations. The current speciality hair salons, grocers and bakers, along with the estate agents, key cutters, pharmacies and dentists, all serve the needs of the diverse local community and Reading's wider population. **Today's** businesses are a continuation of the Oxford Road's history of diverse retail services established over many generations.

The parish church of the Holy Trinity, along with Bridge Hall, Providence Chapel and the modern Lifespring Church, evidence the conservation **area's** historical association with a variety of religious institutions; traditional, non- conformist and those of other faiths.

Regrettably, a combination of modern ad-hoc alterations with the poorly maintained public realm along the road strikes a distracting discordance. Many modern alterations are out of keeping with the historic environment. Some modern builds have failed to respect the Conservation Area's character. **Much of the residential accommodation, including above the shops, tends to be poorly maintained.** Along with the exciting and vibrant nature of the Oxford Road, the clash of modern and historic materials and poor maintenance makes it **difficult to fully appreciate the street's historic character.**

The public realm areas are poor in many sections. Traffic management signs should be rationalised. Trees have been planted along the route to improve the public realm and this should be extended.

To the rear of the south side of Oxford Road there have historically been many yards and **businesses most of which have now been redeveloped, e.g. the stonemason's yard on Prospect Street.**



Page 677


- Boundary of Character Area
- Listed building
- Building of townscape merit
- Site or building of opportunity for improvement

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.2.1: Character Area 6.2—Oxford Road

November 2019

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6.2.2 Materials

Reading's most dominant building material, red brick, is seen frequently especially along the Georgian terraced façades. Polychrome brick and terracotta embellishment is notable and impressive further along to the west of the route nearer the railway bridge with later development along the road. Stucco is also common and notable at 197-203 Sidney Terrace and on many of the retail/residential buildings. Roofs are almost entirely slate with the notable exception of the red tiled roof of the Oxford Road Community School.

6.2.3 Views

In view 7, looking west along Oxford Road towards the railway bridge from the eastern end, the parade of polychrome brick residential and retail buildings display their colours well, with the with the bustle of Oxford Road's pedestrians and vehicles in front. The bridge, with its faded mural of doves, designed by schoolchildren, has been a landmark for over 170 years.

View 8, looking northwest, shows the striking Oxford Road Community School, which, like the retail terrace in view 7, is brilliant in the late afternoon sun.



Figure 6.2.2 Reading West railway bridge, facing west along the Oxford Road, the iron bridge replaced an original brick design (David Neale)



Figure 6.2.3 Oxford Road between Russell Street and Prospect Street - poor condition Georgian terraces, acceptable modern pastiche of pre-existing elements, varied shop façades and poor public realm (Google Maps)

6.2.4 Area Analysis:

The oldest buildings date to the early 19th century, in several long, listed terraces notably at: 149-177, 187-193, 195-197 and 197-203 Oxford Road and Prospect Terrace at 237-247 Oxford Road/ no. 2 Lorne Street.



Figure 6.2.4 Large stuccoed Georgian Sidney Terrace, 197-203 Oxford Road (David Neale)

Maps regression also shows that the shops with residential on the first floor, at the corner of Alfred Street towards Eaton Place along the north side, and shops on the south side east of Russell Street, existed prior to 1833.

Additionally, two detached Georgian houses at 101 and 104 Oxford Road remain from the earlier villas that dotted the route. Both buildings house businesses and 104 Oxford is particularly well maintained.



Figure 6.2.5 101 Oxford Road-a detached Georgian family home with original high back garden walls (David Neale)



Figure 6.2.6 National Meteorological Society at 104 Oxford Road, a detached Georgian house with porticoed front porch surrounded by unsympathetic modern build (David Neale)

Most of the early residential terraces are in poor to moderate condition, with several converted to shops at ground floor level. The Georgian terraces are largely of red brick, except for the impressive stuccoed villas at nos. 197-203. Fortunately, a majority of the listed terraces still retain original windows, doors and detailing although there are some exceptions where enforcement has failed to catch uPVC replacement window in the listed terraces. Some of the original brick walls in front of these properties, notably at nos. 149-153, need repair and re-pointing.



Figure 6.2.7 Listed Georgian terraces along Oxford Road, in poor repair, lost behind cluttered street furniture and busy road traffic (David Neale)

Prospect Terrace is a fine, Grade II Georgian terrace set back from the Oxford Road largely in poor condition and negatively impacted by the petrol station opposite and the busy road.



Figure 6.2.8 237 and 239 Oxford Road, part of Prospect Terrace, 237-247 Oxford Road/2 Lorne Street (Reading Borough Council)

The proudly diverse shops along the north and south side of Oxford Road between Howard Street and Russell Street are in some of the worst conditions along the route. Many of them originate in structures existing prior to 1833. Ad-hoc, ill-advised renovations, illuminated signage and the neglect of the building façades by individual owners have largely caused these issues. Irregular frontages and shops spill wares and storage out onto the pavement creating a disjointed, lively appearance along the roadway. Accentuation of positive historic features could improve footfall and attract trade without detracting from the character of the area.



Figure 6.2.9 Proudly diverse grocers and shops do business amid clutter and poor signage which mask the original early 19th century structures on Oxford Road between Russell Street and Waylen Street (David Neale)

The austere Grade II Holy Trinity Parish church, built c.1826 but the stone façade to west front 1845, at the junction of Russell Street on the Oxford Road still maintains a heritage presence. The last renovation of the church was unable to fund the reinstatement of its centre spiralet which was removed in the last half of the 20th century. Current development directly to the church's east will affect the church's prominence on the road and the reinstatement of its spire could help to strengthen its presence significantly. The Grade II 118 Oxford Road, a circa 1845 villa to the rear of Bridge Hall, was once the manse.



Figure 6.2.10 The Grade II Holy Trinity parish church at the intersection of Russell Street (David Neale)



Figure 6.2.11 Holy Trinity spirelet before removal (cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Michael FORD - geograph.org.uk/p/1535020)

The rise and on-going strength of Nonconformist Churches in the area from the mid-19th century is part of the story of the Oxford Road and the Conservation Area south of Castle Hill. The Providence Chapel, dating from c.1859, is evidence of this societal activity. Sadly, its modern tarmac frontage and access ramp detract from its appearance.

Bridge Hall, dating from c. 1899, was built for Reading's Open Brethren group, and despite replacement of roof tiles in 2019 is in very poor repair and in need of external improvements.

The Pavilion, originally an important cinema for Reading, opened in 1929. It was later known as the Gaumont, that closed in 1979. It was then a bingo hall (1979-1989) and Riley's Snooker Centre (to 2011). It is now home to the non-conformist Lifespring Church. The church has carefully restored much of the original cinema's interior detailing. In recognition of the Nonconformist tradition of the area, each of these buildings have been listed as Buildings of Townscape Merit.



Figure 6.2.12 Providence Chapel, c. 1859, 103 Oxford Road (Google Maps)



Figure 6.2.13 Bridge Hall, originally built for the Reading Open Brethren Group, in poor repair (David Neale)



Figure 6.2.14 *The Pavilion, a former popular Reading cinema, corner of Russell Street, now well restored and home to the Lifespring Church (David Neale)*

The connector road of Prospect Street created early in the 19th century by William Pratt Swallow is a natural extension to the Oxford Road character area in defining how residential streets came to be structured off that road. The early Georgian houses and the styling of the late Victorian infill along the western side of the Street, closely mirror the styling along the Oxford Road.

Prospect Mews (built prior to 1853) and the small late Georgian artisan terrace, nos. 1-9, (built prior to 1833) provide important historical societal context with their contrast to the grand Sidney Terrace to the north along Oxford Road.

The terrace at nos.1-9 is collectively in poor to fair condition, with the over- bearing dormer window at no.1 being a large detraction to the harmony of this rather rare, early, artisan terrace. Two of the houses, 5 and 9 Prospect Street, are stuccoed like Prospect Mews. The house at 9 Prospect Street has the original fanlight and windows, along with many original interior features and is still in use as a single-family residence.

The street also contains examples of coal hole covers and other historic ironwork.



Figure 6.2.15 1-9 Prospect Street, a rare modest Georgian artisan terrace with the over-bearing modern dormer window at no. 1 (Karen Rowland)

A rare, representative expanse of stone paving has been retained at the entrance into Prospect Mews. The modest terrace of Prospect Mews, directly behind Sidney Terrace is in fair condition, although the Mews itself is access for a car repair service at the back.



Figure 6.2.16 Prospect Mews, mews houses with an expanse of stone pavement at the entrance to the alleyway (David Neale)

The much larger houses at nos. 11-23 Prospect Street were all built prior to 1853. No. 23 Prospect Street has attractive later polychrome detailed modifications which were noted

positively during the initial consultation in 2016. This detailing shows the desire of residents later in the 19th century to enhance their properties in line with changing styles with the later infill along Oxford Road and on Prospect Street opposite.

The houses opposite at nos. 4-26 on the west side of the street, are late Victorian/ Edwardian additions notable for their use of polychrome brick and attractive terracotta embellishments. The modern infill at nos. 8-16 replaced AF Jones stone store. As it was built sympathetically, noting the street's materials, scale and footprints, it does not contrast unduly with neighbouring heritage properties.

The striking Grade II listed Oxford Road Community School (architect: Morris and Stallwood, c. 1880-1883 and extended by Stallwood in 1884) anchors the route in a positive reminder of its proud past. It is well-maintained and provides a positive and active focal point for the surrounding neighbourhood. It retains original wooden windows and railings.



Figure 6.2.17 The well-maintained Oxford Road Community School (David Neale)

Further along the northern side of Oxford Road at the western end, the long terrace of c.1890 shops with residences above at nos. 152 to 180 has a vibrant, polychrome façade which largely retains its integrity and is unpainted. This terrace exhibits a high level of detail and is in better condition than other retail terraces further to the west beyond the railway bridge. Original bargeboards above centre dormers and polychromed chimneys largely remain. The colourful retail signs above modern altered retail frontages are a moderate detraction, but they also display the many diverse and long-standing local businesses that the Oxford Road is well-known for. Although many of the windows on the first floor have been converted to uPVC, and retail frontages blur an original storefront layout, the terrace is a credit to the street and deserves to be protected and enhanced where possible.

To the south opposite the retail terrace are two polychromed residential terraces at nos. 249-253 and nos. 255-261, c.1890, flanking the entrance to Argyle Street. They are in reasonable condition, although the eastern one has lost chimneys. Their rare mirrored form is worthy of further protection. The properties directly behind those on Argyle Street reflect this continued style of building onto the Oxford Road streetscape and the ghost signage of an old tailoring business (H Jackson Tailor) at 2 Argyle Street adds clear historical context to the area and should be protected.



Figure 6.2.18 Long retail terrace, 152-180 Oxford Road, stunning polychrome and largely intact, although incompatible signage and store fronts detract from its appearance (David Neale)

The terrace at nos. 225-235 is a simple two-and half storey red brick terrace with ample, deep-set gardens. The houses are in fairly good condition with front boundaries largely intact but each differently treated which reduces the harmony of the terrace. The two more exuberant Arts and Crafts influenced poly-chrome houses at the eastern end of the terrace at nos. 221-223 have front gardens converted to hard standing and the loss of a red brick front wall that detracts from the rest of the terrace.

Modern infill development from the latter half of the 20th century blights the historic streetscape, most intensely on the north side of Oxford Road. Therefore, several of these sites have been excluded from the proposed revised boundary of the Conservation Area. These exclusions are: Eaton Court at 104-112, the lot at 114 undergoing redevelopment to a large block of flats, Richer Sounds at 118A, the Royal PH on the corner of Bedford Road and Allison Court at no. 136. It should be noted however, that any future redevelopment of those sites will be controlled by policy to be respectful to the surrounding heritage of the Conservation Area. Notably, Allison Court, provides a pleasant green space and trees in its garden along the road and its recently added fencing makes a clearer boundary line. Similar thought for improved frontages amongst the excluded properties would be welcomed in order to better screen the sites from the road and contribute more positively to the surrounding Conservation Area.

The petrol station at no. 150 and Tesco Express at nos. 211-221 also disrupt the historic built line of the road. They are, however, included in the boundary due to their geographical positioning along the road and the key important heritage element of the School. Their adverse impact includes their materials, massing and set-back footprints, tarmac parking spaces and their out-of-keeping modern design. They both provide opportunities for enhancement such as improved entrances and green landscaping.

The MTC Motorcycles dealership at nos. 267-271 conceals an historic villa, Oxford Lodge, directly behind it and the lodge's roof can still be seen from Gower Street opposite, behind

the retail façade. The shop's façade, scale, appearance and set back are discordant with the remainder of the area but the dealership lends itself to the historic flavour of unique and varied businesses along the route.

The railway bridge is a prominent reminder of Reading's progress and industry in the mid-19th century. It is currently showing signs of wear, and there are opportunities for improvement as part of Reading West station, which could substantially improve the area by reducing ASB and creating a more positive conduit to the west from the Conservation Area. The appearance of the bridge, either repainted or re-built to reflect its original brickwork and architectural quality would create a desirable visual impact for the Conservation Area.

6.2.5 Key Positive Characteristics

- The listed Georgian terraces of 149-177, 187-193, 195-197, 197-203 and Prospect Terrace at 2 Lorne Street/237-247 Oxford Road, though many of these properties are in poor condition.
- The early Georgian single-family residences at 101 and 104 Oxford Road
- Oxford Road Community School, which is well-maintained
- Holy Trinity Church with its sealed catacombs beneath and its Pugin chancel screen
- Bridge Hall, which is currently housing a church although in a state of poor repair
- Providence Chapel with its polychrome brick façade
- The Pavilion, a well-restored former cinema, now home to the Lifespring Church
- The impressive Gothic Revival villa at 118, set back from the road
- The unpainted polychrome terrace of shops at 152 to 180, east of Gower Street
- The twinned polychrome terraces at 249-253 and 255-261 either side of Argyle Street opposite the shops
- The rare artisan terrace at 1-9 Prospect Street
- Prospect Mews, its small stand of terraces and retained stone entrance way
- Recently repainted cast iron bollards and new tree plantings along the route
- Greyed brick end first floor at 109B Oxford Road facing the intersection with Zinzan Street

6.2.6 Negative Features

- The modern intrusions along the north side of the Oxford Road, included or not within the proposed Conservation Area boundary
- Modern shop fronts have destroyed the original 19th century retail frontages in many locations
- Metal roller security doors along the route
- Garish, illuminated and irregularly sized retail signage that destroy a sense of harmony along the retail corridor notably on the north between Alfred Street and Eaton Place and on the south side of the street between Zinzan Street and Russell Street
- Poorly kept front retail spaces extending to the pavements detracting from the traditional street line and causing issues with pedestrian flow along the route (notably between Waylen Street and Russell Street)
- The poor state of repair of many of the properties along the road including redundant wires, satellite dishes and uPVC windows
- Poorly managed commercial and residential waste
- Excessive and erratic public realm street signage and estate agent signage
- Poor pavement repairs with tarmac among stone slabs especially on the south side of the street between Russell Street and Prospect Street
- Several air-quality hot-spots along the route due to traffic
- The removal of the spiralet at the Holy Trinity Church

- The poor decorative condition of the railway bridge over the Oxford Road

6.2.7 Buildings/Sites presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

- BP Service Station, 150 Oxford Road. Circa 2010s.
- Tesco Express, 211- 212 Oxford Road. Circa 2010s.
- Building of flats, 123 Oxford Road. Circa 1980-1990s
- Garages, east end of Prospect Mews, Circa mid /late 20th c
- MTC Motorcycle Dealership, 261-271 Oxford Road, Circa mid /late 20th c

Sites just outside the Conservation Area with key impact:

- The Royal PH, 2 Bedford Road (at the corner of Oxford Road). Circa 1930s.
- Richer Sounds, 118A Oxford Road. Circa 1970s
- The Odd Fellows Hall, 118 Oxford Road. Circa 1970s
- Eaton Court, 104-112 Oxford Road. Circa 1970- 1980s
- Allison Court, 136 Oxford Road. Circa 1960s.

6.2.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit:

- Bridge Hall, 184 Oxford Road, 1899, one of several places of worship along the Oxford Road area that is extant and showing the area's spread of Nonconformist worship. Its use of greyed brick and Dutch-styled front pediment delineate along the street.
- Lifespring Church, The Pavilion, 143-145 Oxford Road. Circa 1926. Originally one of Reading's dominant and leading cinemas, now well-restored noting its interior audience space and its room at the front windows upstairs.
- Retail terrace, 152-180 Oxford Road. Circa 1880-1890s. Its fine and not overpainted polychrome detailing and chimneyscape is impressive and attractive.
- Mirror image terraces, 249-253 and 255-261 Oxford Road, circa 1880-1890s. The mirror-image terraces also reflect similar design to the retail terrace opposite and balance this area of the street in a nice polychrome presentation.
- Prospect Mews terrace and alley way, Prospect Mews. Circa c. 1840-1850. The modest terrace buildings are reasonably well-kept and the entrance to the alleyway maintains its stone slab floor.
- Artisan terrace at 1-9 Prospect Street, c.1820-1830. This small modest early terrace is rare because of its age. The over- sized modern dormer at no. 1 detracts but it is otherwise remarkable for the context it gives in understanding the housing styles for persons at that time that could not afford a prestigious home such as at near-by Sidney Terrace.

6.2.9 Listed Buildings:

- 101 Oxford Road, Grade II. 2 storey plus basement detached Georgian, early 19th century. Red brick, stone dressings, central doorway, timber cornice and slate roof. Original garden walls. Forms a good group with adjoining Chapel and 105 Oxford Road. 1113545.
- 104 Oxford Road (N. side), Royal Meteorological Society, Grade II. Early 19th century, 2 storey Georgian detached. Red brick, central stone/stucco Doric portico and cornice, slate roof. 1113549.
- 139 and 141 Oxford Road, Grade II. 3 storeys, mid 19th century, painted brick. Windows replaced with uPVC, original arched doorway and fanlight to left, recorded in listing notes, lost since 2004 Appraisal. Red brick extension to side on Russell Street with poor window/wall ratio. Included as extreme example of the deterioration of listed buildings in this part of the Conservation Area. 1321910.
- Holy Trinity Church (N. side), Grade II. 1826 and 1845, stone gabled façade with lancet windows and octagonal bell turret. Interior has reclaimed chancel screen by Pugin. 1113550.
- 118 Oxford Road (N. side), Grade II. Circa 1845, set back, gabled 3 storey ashlar stone villa relates to Holy Trinity Church, chimneys, 2 storey bays, slate roof. 1113551.
- 149 to 161 Oxford Road, Grade II. Terrace of seven houses, 2 storeys plus semi basement, early-mid 19th century. Red brick, stucco cornice, slate roofs, steps to principal storey, two as shops. 1113546.
- 163 and 165 Oxford Road, Grade II. Pair of houses, early-mid 19th century, 3 storeys plus semi basement, with flanking 2 storey set back entrance bays, steps to principal storey, red brick, hipped slate roofs. On axis with Bedford Road. Inappropriate advertising fascia as with others in road. 1113546.
- 167 and 169 Oxford Road, Grade II. Terrace of two houses continues in the style of 149-161 Oxford Road, early-mid 19th century red brick, stucco cornice, slate roofs and tall chimneys. One basement now a shop. 1113546.
- 171 to 177 Oxford Road, Grade II. Terrace of 4 houses, 3 storeys plus semi basement, early 19th century, steps to principal storey, red brick, slate roofs, ridge chimneys, original railings to two. 1156337.
- 120 and 122 Oxford Road (N. side)m Grade II. Pair of houses, 2 storeys plus semi basement, circa 1830–40, plain red brick with central pediment, arched windows to central bays, hipped slate roof. 1302871.
- 124 Oxford Road (N. side), Grade II. Circa 1850 detached, rendered, 2.5 storeys, tripartite windows. 1321913.
- 187 to 193 Oxford Road, Grade II. Terrace of four houses, 3 storeys plus semi basement, early-mid 19th century, steps to principal storey, red brick, stone string course, hipped slate roof, ridge chimneys. 1113547.
- 195 and 197 Oxford Road, Grade II. Pair of houses, 3 storey plus semi basement, early 19th century Georgian red brick, slate roof. Elegant door cases and Greek fret lintels. No loss of windows at 195. 1321911.

- 199 to 203 Oxford Road, Grade II. Terrace of three houses, early- mid 19th century, 3 storeys plus semi basement. Rendered with parapet, mouldings to windows and steps to principal storey. 1302906.
- Oxford Road Primary School. 1880-83 and 1894, Grade II. A complete and homogenous group of buildings, 1.5 to 3 storeys plus tower, set behind wall and railings of the period. Red brick, moulded decorative drip moulds and string courses, part tile hung. Steeply pitched tiled roofs with decorative ridge tiles. 1392867.
- 237 to 247 Oxford Road, Prospect Terrace, and includes 2 Lorne Street which is the end of the terrace, Grade II. Terrace of seven houses, early-mid 19th century, 3 storeys plus semi basement, red brick, hipped slate roofs. Most retain elegant arched doorcases and Greek fret lintels. 1113548.

6.3 Russell Street and streets east

6.3.1 Significance

Russell Street and the collection of streets to the east of it towards the IDR, exhibit the Conservation Area's wide range of Georgian and Victorian residential architecture in a mix of modest and grand properties. Reading's prosperous growth in the 19th century saw these streets fill in with a range of building types.

The eastern portion of Baker Street contains a number of early Georgian terraces, inclusive of the house at 55 Baker Street which was briefly the studio of Henry Fox Talbot. Along the west side of Russell Street, Georgian 2 to 4 storey terraced and semi-detached housing were built for the more affluent businessmen of Reading. Prior to 1853, the long terraces of 2 and 3 storey properties were built along Waylen Street and Zinzan Street. Jesse Terrace was begun only slightly later to a more prestigious design specification. The 2 to 3 storey terraces along Body Road and Anstey Road were built c. 1880s to provide more modest housing for local artisans. Varying levels of original detailing remain throughout the area.

Unfortunately, many of the houses in the area are currently in poor repair and collectively create an overall air of neglect, despite some well-maintained exceptions. Over many years, a high proportion of the housing designed for single-family use has been adapted for multiple occupancy. Many of these unsympathetic adaptations have damaged the period character and uniformity of the terraces; blighting the streetscapes as a result.

Nevertheless, the area's architectural planform remains intact. There is the fine expanse of Russell Street and the uniform character of Jesse Terrace that remain amongst the Conservation Area's finest streetscapes. As an evidential microcosm of Reading's 19th century housing styles, these intensely developed and fine-grained streets form a unified residential neighbourhood of special character and significance.

The entire Conservation Area has always had a number of places of worship that point to the strength religion has played in the area over time. Notably within this character area is the non-conformist Carey Street Baptist Church and the Central Jamme Mosque on Waylen Street which grounds the strong Islamic community in the area which is on the site of another former Baptist Church. A large Wesleyan Methodist church had also sat on Waylen Street until it was cleared for housing in the late 20th century.

6.3.2 Materials

Red brick is common in the Georgian and early Victorian houses, though sadly over-painting is common on many of the residential streets. Red brick boundary walls are important along the streets. A pleasant variety to the red brick is introduced by polychrome colours in red, tan off- white and grey amongst some of the late-Victorian/ Edwardian infill. Stucco is evident from on some of the Georgian properties. Welsh slate roofing prevails. Bath stone is minimally present on Russell Street. In some sections, cast iron railings and details remain retaining a gracious touch that was original along the streets.

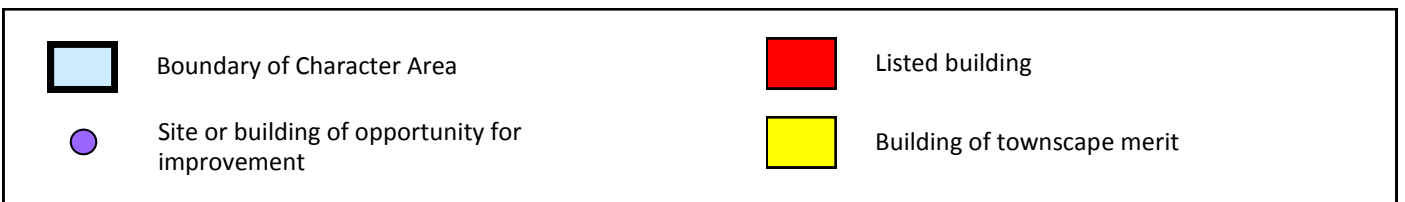
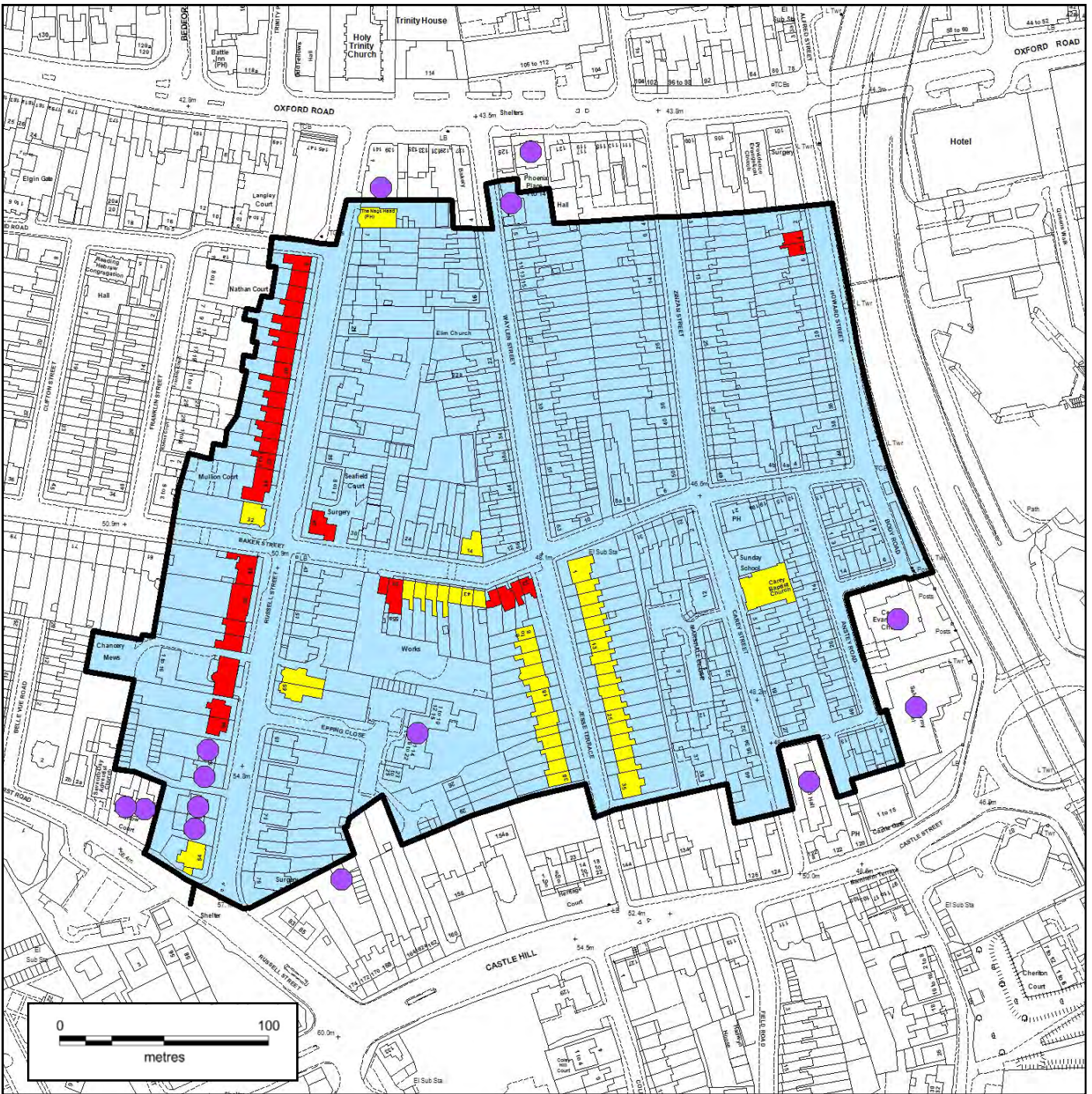
Multi-pane single glazed windows are exceedingly being lost to uPVC windows and original multi-paneled doors have been lost to uPVC doors to an overall degrading result.

6.3.3 Views

Views 9, 11 and 12 are located within this character area and illustrate the variety of architectural forms found within the area.

View 9, looking north towards Oxford Road from down Russell Street illustrates the prime and fortuitous positioning of the Holy Trinity parish church at the bottom of the slope. It takes in, the juxtaposition of the Georgian terraces to the west and the large late Victorian villas to the east and give a sense of how the neighbourhood developed. This view was first photographed by Fox Talbot c.1845.

View 11, looking east along Baker Street, illustrates the bend in the road that has been characteristic of this view since the development of Baker Street east of Russell Street.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.3.1: Character Area 6.3—Russell Street and streets east

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The view takes in the long imposing three storey Georgian stuccoed terrace on the south side of the street (c.1830s). The former studio of Henry Fox Talbot is at No. 55 in this terrace at the west end. The cottage-like detached two storey house at No. 14 Baker Street and the two imposing, listed semidetached houses at Nos. 33- 39 form an attractive viewpoint. Number 1 Jesse Terrace and its high brick wall beyond begin to unfold as the viewer winds round the bend.



Figure 6.3.2 View 11, of the winding Baker Street looking east (David Neale)



Figure 6.3.3 View 12, looking south up Jesse Terrace towards Castle Hill (Richard Bennett)

The variety of houses in View 11 contrasts with the neat symmetry of matching terraced houses along Jesse Terrace, as seen in View 12. The cast iron verandas and large front gardens add interest to View 12, looking south towards Castle Hill.

6.3.4 Area Analysis

The creation of the IDR in the 1960s saw the original properties on the western side of Howard Street retained whilst the houses along the eastern half were demolished. 4-4A Howard Street is a listed Georgian semi-detached house and the original rustication on the ground floor of 4A has been retained. 2 Howard Street dates from c.1850-70s, and is an attractive single-family home of substantial size with a well-tended front garden that lends itself positively to the street scene.

There are a number of original front garden cast iron railings at nos. 16-22 and two original curved stucco dividing walls at 4 and 22 Howard Street (figure 6.3.5). The modern faux-stone rendered façade at no. 8 and the irregular colours and over-painting of many of the houses are incompatible with the otherwise red brick simplicity of the rest of the houses, adding to a sense of disharmony along the street. The line of trees on the eastern side minimises the sight and noise of the IDR and provide reasonable tree coverage in the summer but affords less coverage in winter. Recently re-painted black cast-iron bollards line the street in front of the trees.



Figure 6.3.4 2, 4 and 4A (listed Georgian semi-detached terrace) Howard Street showing the rustication on 4A (David Neale)



Figure 6.3.5 Original iron railings at 16-22 Howard Street and the curved stucco dividing wall at no. 22 (Mark Worringham)

The large Georgian terraces located along the west side of Russell Street contribute significantly to the street's grand appearance. Most of these are in good condition and some are still retained as single-family homes on the south end near its intersection with Tilehurst Road.



Figure 6.3.6 Terraces along the west side of Russell Street (nos. 38-42) with Regency window balconies (David Neale)



Figure 6.3.7a Georgian terraces at nos. 6-14 Russell Street. The Holy Trinity parish church forms an impressive view at the north end of the street from the Oxford Road (Evelyn Williams)



Figure 6.3.7b Russell Street with Holy Trinity Church at the foot 1844-47 Fox Talbot “**talbotype**” (credited to Nicolaas Henneman © Science and Society Picture Library)

The listed 2-storey Georgian terraced properties between nos. 6-34 have been adversely affected by buy-to-let investment which has resulted in the poor maintenance of many of the properties. The removal of original windows at nos. 14 and 16 are a regrettable blight on the terrace and enforcement has been unable, to date, to get the developer to repair this damage.

Faded 'ghost signage', painted high on the side brick wall of 4 Russell Street at the junction with Goldsmid Road directs the visitor to “Junction Road” (the former name of Goldsmid Road), as “leading to Westfield Grove.” This signage needs to be ensured to remain.

The detached family house at no. 54, now in multiple occupation, is notable for its light brick frontage and was built prior to 1853.

The semi-detached houses at nos. 48-50 Russell Street are striking and unique in the area with their use of Bath stone. They are the work of Nathaniel and Henry Briant whose work can also

be seen in Reading's Eldon Square Conservation Area where there are numerous houses that are of almost identical structure, planform and style. The Kennet and Avon canal made Bath stone a prestigious choice for houses in the 1830-40s.



Figure 6.3.8 48-50 Russell Street, Bath stone semi- detached houses, very similar in style to those in Eldon Square in east Reading (David Neale)



Figure 6.3.9 54 Russell Street (c.1850s-1870s) cream coloured brick detached house (David Neale)

Other notable smaller red brick family homes include those located diagonally across from each other at the Russell Street and Baker Street intersection at nos. 36 and 41 Russell Street. No. 36 is in multiple occupancy and retains a very large original rear garden and attractive front entryway porch. No. 41 has been used as a local surgery for many years. With no significant extensions, the context of their size and massing sits in contrast to other houses along the street. The front garden walls have been retained in both cases.

The Parsonage at 32 Baker Street, is a fine late-Victorian house, which sides on to Russell Street. It was created as the Vicarage for the Holy Trinity parish church and dates from c.1890. It has striking polychrome brick detailing and terracotta features and its front door, looking onto Baker Street, is set within an ornate late Victorian timber and tiled porch. Horizontal bars on the first-floor windows remain from the use of the upstairs room as a nursery. Improved landscaping could enhance the site.



Figure 6.3.10 *The Parsonage (c.1890) at the northeast corner of Baker Street and Russell Street with attractive polychrome and wood detailing (David Neale)*

The much larger later Victorian villas on the east side of Russell Street are in varying states of repair, from poor to very good. All are in multiple occupancy use as flats, HMOs and bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Although a few have been over-painted, much attractive polychrome detailing and original features survive.

The popular Nag's Head public house is a well-restored, faux-Tudor building and listed as an Asset of Community Value. It attracts many customers from outside the area by virtue of its multiple CAMRA awards as one of Berkshire's leading ale and cider pubs.



Figure 6.3.11 The well-maintained **Nag's Head faux**-Tudor pub, Russell Street (c.1850-1870s) multiple CAMRA Best Pub in Berkshire awards and an Asset of Community Value (David Neale)

The stuccoed, late-Georgian terrace at 37- 55 Baker Street built prior to 1833, are the oldest houses on the eastern part of that street originally named Russell Terrace in this section. Their poor condition belies their historical importance. A significant pioneer of early photography, Henry Fox Talbot had his "Reading Establishment" studio at 55 Baker Street. The site is worthy of enhanced designation.

A mirrored pair of two-storey, semi-detached houses, with side doors are at nos. 33-35 are also listed and their unusual planform singles them out amongst others.



Figure 6.3.12 Fox Talbot's 'Reading Establishment' studio at 55 Baker Street. (David Neale)

Alexandra Terrace at nos. 23-31 is a straightforward, red brick terrace with many original windows and details intact and dates from prior to c.1853. Some original iron fencing and gates remain, notably at no. 29. The property at no. 23 is in poor condition and no. 31 has seen a recent loss of its original windows.



Figure 6.3.13 23- 31 Baker Street, Alexandra Terrace, c.1850, red brick terrace, overall well-preserved with majority of original windows and doors intact (David Neale)

Other buildings of note along Baker Street include the semi-detached Rednirt Villas, which have attractive stonework and a centre plaque with its name and the date of 1904.



Figure 6.3.14 Rednirt Villas 1904, developed by Mr. Trinder, bay windows, polychrome and stone work detailing. Rednirt is Trinder spelt backwards. (David Neale)

The Oasis Community Centre dates from c.1860s. It was originally the Eagle public house, inn, spirits retailer and warehouse in the late 1800s. It closed in 2009. Now well-restored and maintained by the Carey Baptist Church, it serves a current benefit to the area as a community meeting place. A small section of surviving sett stones are located on the pavement in front of the cast iron door opening to the cellar. Its old Morland advertising sign along with this cellar entrance affirm its past use. Inside, the ghost image of an advertising sign from the last decades of the 1800's proclaiming "Ferguson's Pale Ale, Stouts & Porter, Wine & Spirits" is located on the first floor, along an east-facing brick wall that originally formed the exterior wall of the original building. The sign is currently covered by plasterboard. The building's well-maintained polychrome detailing and wooden original windows further reinforce its heritage context and positive value to the streetscape.



Figure 6.3.15 The Oasis Community Centre, c.1860s Inn and Public House (Karen Rowland)



Figure 6.3.16 Detached house at no.14 Baker Street with cottage-like Victorian frontage (David Neale)

Zinzan Street and Waylen Street were developed on market gardens once owned by Mrs. Zinzan. The majority of the houses date from prior to 1853 with infill and completion of the terraces shortly thereafter. Many of the houses here have been adversely affected by intense HMO use and frequently insensitive owner alterations and management. The two streets exhibit some of the worst degradation in the area. Overhead wires lead to multiple-occupation properties, the facades of which are cluttered by excessive satellite dishes, wires and random utility pipes, to facilitate increasing households within the properties. Front garden walls have been removed to create rubbish bin standings, which contributes to an uneven frontage lines along the pavement and disrupts terrace harmony. A good number of red brick façades have been painted over. The absence of green front gardens contributes to a bare streetscape view.

The regularity of the sizeable houses along Zinzan Street creates a long expanse of somewhat austere terraces along both sides of the street. The street is in almost complete multiple occupation use as either flats or HMOs. Variations of poorly constructed dormer windows on the two- storey properties are detractions to an otherwise continuous, fine-grain building line. There are still a small number of houses at nos. 19, 23, 39, 43, and at nos. 40-48 which have retained their Victorian iron railings. Nos. 39 and 45 still have original curved entrance walls that separated front gardens from next door. A dropped granite kerb outside 8-10 Zinzan Street evidences the entrance to a former coach storage in use until c.1910. A very rare crinkle – crinkle wall separates nos. 3 -5 Zinzan Street in the back garden and is worthy of heightened protection.



Figure 6.3.17 *The conditions of terraced housing looking north along Zinzan Street with poor quality modern dormers, overhead wires, excessive bins and satellite dishes. (Mark Worringham)*

Waylen Street displays more variety in its housing stock, with houses varying from 2-3 storeys in height. The terraced street displays a far greater level in the variety of their built form than along Zinzan Street. The large late Victorian detached villa at no.16 is an attractive element in the street.

Nos. 5-15 form an impressive faux-Tudor terrace with many original doors and features, although they are in overall poor condition. The remainder of the street has been adversely affected by the very poor condition of the majority of the properties; largely the result of poor maintenance by landlords with the conversion to multiple-occupation and HMOs. Like Zinzan Street, Waylen Street also has a poor reputation for higher than usual levels of crime and ASB.

The multiple occupation properties at nos. 43-61 have identically painted stuccoed façades with uPVC windows and doors that detracting from some more unusual detailing such as rusticated doorways and curved window mouldings on this terrace.



Figure 6.3.18 Looking north along Waylen Street with its overall poor conditions. The **street's earliest** houses, nos. 43-61, are on the right c.1840 (Karen Rowland)

The small two-up/two-down houses from nos. 21- 27 are well-tended properties but the refacing of no. 21 in modern yellow stone detracts from the surrounding historic façades.

The modern Marlon housing development on the east side of the street at the Oxford Road replaced the once mighty Nonconformist Wesleyan Methodist Church. This modern development detracts from the historical understanding of the road. Its location on the plot is sited forward of the pavement lines of the historic properties and its large massing is incompatible with the scale of the rest of the **street's built environment**.

The well- cared for Jesse Terrace across Baker Street from Waylen Street, sits in strong contrast to Waylen Street and is **arguably the Jesse family's most impressive development**. The street forms one of the finest streetscapes in the Conservation Area. The terraces date from c.1853 to the mid-1870s and largely remain in single family occupation to this day. Only a few have been converted for multiple occupation as flats and HMOs, and an Article 4 Direction was put in place in 2016 which has protected the single-family balance of the street. The houses have striking, uniform metal verandas on both sides of the street and are set back from the street, most with well-tended gardens. An Article 4 direction, put in place in 2004, now protects the house façades from uncontrolled alterations and, with few exceptions, original windows, doors and chimneys remain to create a pleasing harmony along the street.



Figure 6.3.19 Close-up of terraces and gardens in Jesse Terrace (Karen Rowland)

Like Zinzan Street, piecemeal replacement of original features with modern materials has adversely affected houses on Carey Street. Original windows have been retained in houses at no. 13, and the upper floors of no. 15. Original cast iron railings remain at nos. 13 and 25. Chimneys and pots largely remain on the east side of the street, but the west side of the street has far fewer and is an almost continuous run of over-painted brick façades. Poor frontages, rubbish bin landings and unkempt front gardens and a lack of green along the street, contribute to the rather austere appearance of the street.

The Carey Baptist Church (opened 15th June 1871) along the street has an impressive polychrome frontage, is well maintained and provides a visual highlight along the street. Some interior details remain inside its main worship hall. The view to the backs of the large Georgian houses that front Castle Hill and the tall brick dividing wall along Carey Street is one of the more striking views from the street.

The 1960s Walford Hall provides a valuable community facility that houses the Reading Association for the Blind but it is incompatible with the historic built environment of the area.



Figure 6.3.20 Carey Baptist Church chapel with its polychrome frontage, 1869 (David Neale)

Anstey Road and Body Road were created prior to the turn of the 20th century, developed on open land belonging to the Carey Particular Baptist Chapel, as it was known at the time. The properties vary from poor to moderate condition but provide strong context as an intact example of Reading's housing response at the time; to provide attractive but economical accommodation for the average working family. As such, the two streets provide an interesting contrast to the other houses in the Conservation Area. Polychrome detailing in multi-coloured red, tan and grey brick has in many cases, unfortunately been over-painted.



Figure 6.3.21 6-12 Body Road, the new red tile roof was installed in 2017 during the time protection of a conservation area did not apply (David Neale)

The polychrome two-up two-down terraced houses along Anstey Road's main corridor have bay fronted windows on the ground level and are on extremely small ground footprints with a virtually non-existent front garden and only tiny gardens in the rear.

Houses along both sides of Body Road and along the southern end of Anstey Road all have identical layouts and dormers, accentuated with late Victorian era detailed bargeboards. The recent red tile roof at no. 10 Body Road is incongruous among the slate roofs and would have been caught if the area had not been removed from the Conservation Area in 2004.

Although less ornate than the rest of the Conservation Area's 19th century predecessors, original front garden railings remain at nos. 4, 8, 10, 14, 24, 32, 38 and 40.

Positively, the houses all face onto rare green space owned by the Carey Centre, which lends a welcome sense of green openness, rare to the Conservation Area. The trees that form a border along Body Road provide a pleasant, leafy backdrop to the edge of the conservation area and screens the area from the noise and pollution of the IDR.

6.3.5 Key Positive Characteristics

- A wide diversity of 19th century housing styles with impressive contributions of every style period
- Jesse Terrace is an attractive and well-maintained street with strong local historical connections to the Jesse family of developers
- Henry Fox Talbot's 'Reading Establishment' studio at 55 Baker Street where *The Pencil of Nature* (the first book with mass-produced photographs) was produced
- Red brick Georgian terraces at 6-34 Russell Street, west side
- Georgian Bath stone semi-detached villas at 48-50 Russell Street
- The pre-1833 Georgian terrace at 37-55 Baker Street
- Alexandra Terrace at 23-31 Baker Street
- Carey Baptist Church
- Oasis Community Centre at the corner of Baker Street and Carey Street, a former pub
- Nag's Head, Russell Street, an Asset of Community Value and a CAMRA award winning ale and cider pub
- Rednirt Villas, 8 and 8A Baker Street
- Parsonage at 32 Baker Street
- Original wrought iron railings at 16-22 Howard Street
- Open green space at Anstey Road and Body Road surrounding the Carey Centre
- Valuable green and shielding from the IDR as provided by trees along Howard Street and Body Road
- The rare crinkle – crinkle wall (of which there are only a handful in Reading) that separates 3-5 Zinzan Street in the back garden.

6.3.6 Negative Features

- The overall poor condition of much of the housing stock; notably on Zinzan Street, Waylen Street, Howard Street, the north end of Russell Street, Carey Street, Anstey Road and Body Road
- Poor condition of the public realm; excessive over-head wires; worn street signage; tarmac pavements and streets all exacerbate a bleak street appearance.
- ASB, including drug dealing and street drinking and pervasive crime in the area
- Poor definition of frontages to the pavement, including the removal of front railings and brick walls in several streets
- The creation of hard standings for bins in front gardens
- Excessive quantities of bins causing visual blight along streetscapes
- Frequent fly-tipping

- Proliferation of satellite dishes, and excessive and redundant wires and pipes on façades
- uPVC windows and non-traditional modern uPVC doors
- Over-painted brick, frequently hiding polychrome brick detailing
- Unsympathetic rendered façades at 21 Waylen Street and 8 Howard Street
- Brownfield site behind 55 Baker Street and open area accessed next to 26 Baker Street
- Walford Hall is an out-of-keeping modern building
- Poor condition of 5-15 Waylen Street, which is a large Victorian, mock-Tudor terrace
- Incompatible architecture to the rear of 139-141 Oxford Road, facing Russell Street
- Recent red tile roof at 10 Body Road
- Non-policy compliant estate agent signage is a constant in the area

6.3.7 Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

- Building of flats, back of 139-141 Oxford Road, facing Russell Street. Circa 2016.
- Building of flats, Waylen Street near the Oxford Road, Circa 1990-2000.
- Reading Association for the Blind, Walford Hall, Carey Street. Circa 1960-1970.
- Epping Close flats, Epping Close. Circa 1980-1990.
- Reading Tyres Ltd, 81 Russell Street. Circa late 20th century.
- Buildings of flats, 52-54 Russell Street. Circa 1960-1970.
- 11 Baker Street, Circa 1880- (negative rendering and redevelopment).
- 50 Zinzan Street, Circa 1840- (negative rendering and redevelopment.)

outside Character Area but with direct adverse impact:

- Carey Centre, Anstey Road, Circa 1960-1970.
- Salvation Army, Anstey Road, Circa 1960-1990.

6.3.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit:

- 2 Howard Street, Circa 1850-1870. A fine, well-cared for single family home with intact detailing and interiors.
- 14 Baker Street. Circa 1850-1870s. A charming cottage style single- family house, only recently turned over to multiple occupation.
- Terrace at 41-55 Baker Street. Circa 1820-1830s.
- Alexandra Terrace, 23-31 Baker Street. Circa 1833-1853.
- The Oasis Community Centre, 21 Baker Street. Circa 1850-1860s.
- 1 Jesse Terrace. Circa 1850-1860. An intact, attractive single- family home reflective of an earlier Georgian centre hall planform. Stuccoed and with a large back garden and wall that contributes nicely to the view along Baker Street.
- Jesse Terrace, east side Terrace 3-33. Circa 1850-1860s.
- 35 Jesse Terrace, circa 1850-1860.
- Jesse Terrace, west side Terrace 8-30. Circa 1850-1860s.
- 54 Russell Street, Circa 1840-1850.
- 59 Russell Street, Circa 1880-1900

6.3.9 Listed Buildings

- 6 to 22 Russell Street, Grade II. Early 19th century Georgian, terrace of nine houses which step down Russell Street in pairs, except for 6, 8 and 10 which form a group of three. 2 storeys, plus attic and basement, red brick with stucco string course, arched ground floor

windows, arched doorcases with patterned fan lights, slate roofs. 14 and 16 have recently had original windows removed. 1321882.

- 24 to 34 Russell Street, Grade II. Early- mid 19th century, Georgian terrace of six houses which step down Russell Street in pairs, 34 has an extra bay. 3 storeys and basement, red brick with stucco string course, arched door openings with patterned fan lights of the period, slate roofs with ridge line chimney stacks. 24 and 28 have lost original second floor windows. 1113568.
- 41 Russell Street, Surgery (E. side), Grade II. Early- mid 19th century, detached red brick symmetrical façade, hipped slate roof. Arched and recessed doorcase, wide traceried fanlight. 1113567.
- 33-39 Baker Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century. 2 pairs of semi-detached houses linked by porch annexe. 2 storeys and basement. Each pair is a stucco pavilion with hipped slate roof and 2 ranges of glazing bar sashes. 1321984.
- 55 Baker Street, Grade II. Circa 1840 and altered. 3 storeys, stucco with parapet and shallow pediment, semi-circular bay at first floor, widows with raised surrounds. Arched front door and adjoining arched window in panel. House was pioneer photographer Fox Talbot's 'Reading Establishment'. 1154492.
- 36 Russell Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century, 2 storey detached house, brick with slate roof, stucco string course. 3 bays wide. Fanlight to door and delicate wire porch of curved gable design. 1302644.
- 38 and 38A Russell Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century, 3 storeys and basement, red brick with stucco string course, flat eaves to hipped slate roof. 38 is 3 bays wide, arched openings to ground floor, wide fanlight and fluted columns to central doorcase. No 38A is one bay wide, slightly set back, with parapet. 1113569.
- 40 and 42 Russell Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century pair of houses, 3 storeys and basement, red brick with stucco cornice and shallow pediment. No 40 has been recently and poorly rendered. Arched doorways with rusticated stucco recess. Elegant first floor cast iron railings. 1321883.
- 44 and 46 Russell Street, Grade II. Early-mid 19th century pair of houses, 3 storeys and basement, red brick, stucco string course, hipped slate roofs. Elegant wide arched door cases with fanlights and fluted Doric columns. 46 has a one bay extension in good period style. 1156906.
- 48 and 50 Russell Street, Grade II. Circa 1840, pair of houses, 2 storeys with attic and basement. Bath stone, channelled ground floor, arched first floor windows, bracketed eaves and hipped slate roof. Cast iron railings of the period to ground floor. Entrance doors in set-back square bays to side. 1113570.
- 4 and 4A Howard Street, Grade II. 3 storey pair of houses, early 19th century. Red brick, rendered parapet and ground floor, one with original rusticated stucco. Arched entrance doors and ground floor windows. 1113495.

6.4 Streets west of Russell Street

6.4.1 Significance

The area west of Russell Street consists largely of 2-storey, terraced early Georgian housing, later polychrome-patterned Victorian and Edwardian infill and, along Goldsmid Road and the west side of Clifton Street, further 20th century infill. In Goldsmid Road is the only purpose-built synagogue within Berkshire. It is a Grade II listed and is built in the Moorish style. The area has a quiet residential character and fine highly-valued distant views of the green Caversham escarpment from along the higher ridge of Baker Street. These elements distinguish this area from other character areas.

The infill of Franklin Street and Clifton Street was developed in the area known during the 19th century as Westfield Grove which surrounded Westfield House along Baker Street. These streets, sloping down northwards from Baker Street, are characterised by the terraces of Edwardian artisan housing with attractive polychrome brick patterning running the length of the terrace. The narrow rear access alley for these houses remains to this day.

Similarly, in the open garden area of Bellevue House, the polychromed artisan terraces of Belle Vue Road, c. 1880, were developed.

The impressive terrace of c.1820s Grade II Georgian houses on the south side of Baker Street retain their original details and plan forms and are well maintained. The last remaining Georgian villa of an original series of three sits to the east of this terrace and is occupied by the National Spiritualist Church which maintains its original large open garden easily viewed from Baker Street. The elevated narrow stand of tall trees adjoining its southern boundary provides an important green backdrop to the streetscape views along Baker Street.

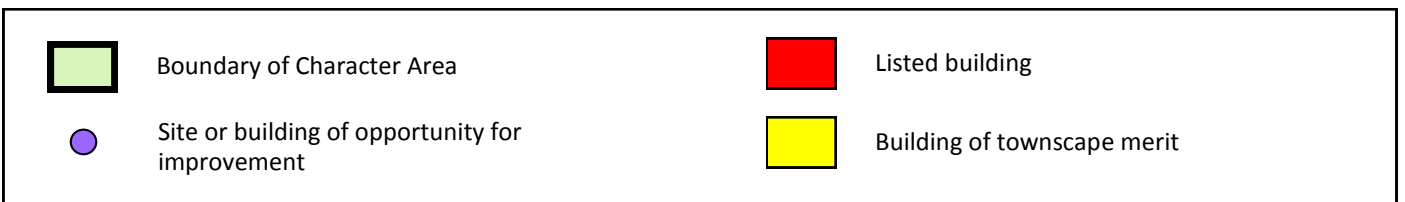
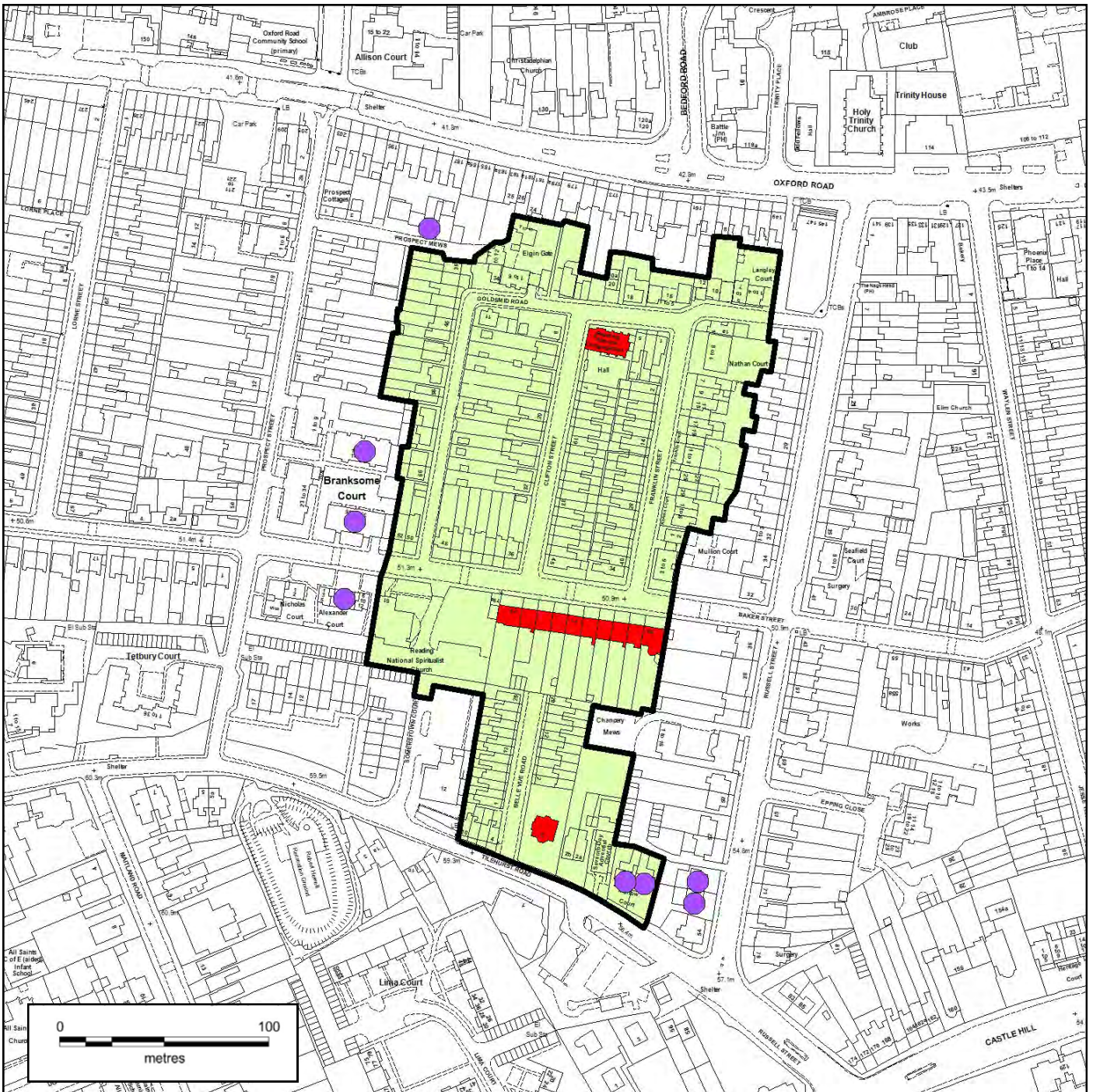
The attractive large oak at the bend in Goldsmid Road defines that corner and now has a Tree Preservation Order placed on it.

The late Victorian 3-storey terrace on the north side of Baker Street is dominant along the street front. It still retains its impressive chimneyscape along with their original back garden layout and tall brick boundary walls.

It is these notable features and details that contribute to the **area's** special character, which are reflective of the Conservation Area's chief attribute as a residential microcosm of **Reading's building styles**.

6.4.2 Materials

The earliest homes in the area resonate with the red brick structure that is so common of **Reading's** Georgian buildings. Fan-light detailed doorways and traditional multi-glazed sash windows dominate those Georgian homes. However, the polychrome pattern detailing along the Victorian and Edwardian terraces of Franklin Street and Clifton Street also gives the area its strong character.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.4.1: Character Area 6.4—West of Russell Street to Prospect Street

November 2019

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6.4.3 Views

Views 10 and 20 are located within the Russell Street Character Area and evidence the residential expansion and growth of the conservation area over the centuries. The view east along Baker Street towards Russell Street (no. 10) is enhanced not only by the fine early Georgian terrace along the south side of the street but also by the view of the back of 36 Russell Street on the right - a house originally built as a two storey detached Georgian house, not dissimilar to the two storey detached Georgian house opposite it at 41 Russell Street, built c.1840.

View 20 looks north towards the large oak tree at the bend of the road. In Goldsmid Road the view of the remarkable oak tree, protected by TPO, sets off positively what is an otherwise quiet but more modern corner (mid-20th century) of the character area.



Figure 6.4.2 View 20, Large TPO oak at the corner of Goldsmid Road looking north. (Google Maps)

6.4.4 Area Analysis

The Georgian terrace of houses at 61-79 Baker Street were the first buildings constructed in the late 1820s/ early 1830s. The features of the terrace are notable, with its classic and clean Georgian styling and its retention of original windows, doors and fanlights. The iron railings at no. 69 were recast from the original arrowhead railings that once existed along the terrace.

The National Spiritualist Church at 81 Baker Street, formerly York Lodge, is the only one remaining of three similarly scaled early 19th century villas. The surviving garden is a rare green space in the Conservation Area and provides a visual reminder of the unusual layout of these three villas wherein the entrance faced on to the garden and not towards the road, with a drive leading from Baker Street. The property has a garage built in 1925 with the initials of the owner – ALH (Arthur Lee Humphreys) – in the keystone.



Figure 6.4.3 The listed Georgian terraced houses from 61-79 Baker Street, complete with original doors, fanlights and windows (Mark Worringham)



Figure 6.4.4 The listed National Spiritualist Church, 81 Baker Street, originally York Lodge, one of an early 19th century group of three villas (David Neale)

The Grade II Bellevue Villa is the only other remaining early estate house of this type in the character area and is located on Tilehurst Road. It functions currently as a bed and breakfast. Its exterior is reasonably well maintained, although the garden is given over to parking and could be more sensitively landscaped. It still retains original windows and has two Regency styled Coade stone decorative urns set on the roofline at each side.

The short, quiet cul-de-sac of Belle Vue Road, was created prior to the 1890's from the side garden of Bellevue Villa. Belle Vue Road is associated with two-up, two-down, terraced polychrome houses creating a harmonious effect along both sides of the road. Regrettably, some of the façades have been painted, disrupting the once continuous polychrome detailing along the street. However, original windows have been retained on several properties and the doorways have attractive stone-arched in-set porches. There is still a fine high wall down the east side of Belle Vue Road separating the Villa from the development. At the far end of Belle Vue Road, the modern tarmac road surface has eroded to reveal several square metres of the original cobbles or sett stones, which were laid in a traditional fan pattern. This small bit of original paving is worthy of continued maintenance.



Figure 6.4.5 *Bellevue House, 2 Tilehurst Road, built prior to 1839, listed, with decorative urns possibly of Coade stone. (David Neale)*



Figure 6.4.6 *Belle Vue Road, (c.1880-90) diminutive polychrome terraces with a high brick wall to the right separating the development from the original Bellevue Villa. The view is north to the backs of the listed 61-79 Baker Street and the Caversham escarpment beyond (David Neale)*

Both Franklin Street and Clifton Street were developed near the turn of the 20th century, created from the site of the former Westfield Villa and its surrounding gardens of Westfield Grove.

The terraces on the west side of Franklin Street and the east side of Clifton Street are separated by a small access alleyway that is still in situ today. These terraces exemplify the style of polychrome brick terraced housing that formed part of the rapid growth along the residential streets to the west of the railway line in order to house the increasing populations employed in local industries. Regrettably, some of the brickwork on the houses has been painted, breaking the harmony of the polychrome detailing along the terrace's façade. The remaining polychrome needs to be placed under the protection of an Article 4 Direction and Local Development Order in order to protect it.

The circa 1980s housing along the east side of Franklin Street was built in the back gardens of the properties along Russell Street and on a former stables, but the massing is overall in keeping with the scale of the area along with reasonable use of similar materials found in the rest of the character area. Multi-coloured brick embellishment on most of these modern buildings pays homage to the polychrome detailing on the west side of the street. However, front gardens turned over to parking have created a poorly defined irregular pavement line and a heavily tarmacked appearance to east side of the street that could be improved with landscaping.

The west side of Clifton Street is largely mid-20th century terraced and semi-detached housing, with many that are attractive and well-cared for. Here, intact front walls and regular pavement lines preserve the finer street grain better than the irregularly fronted east side of Franklin Street does.



Figure 6.4.7 Terraced polychrome houses along Clifton Street, the ones to the south with double bay fronts (David Neale)



Figure 6.4.8 Matching terrace on Franklin Street facing east behind the one on Clifton, The small gate mid-way is the access to the extant back passageway (David Neale)

The 3-storey terrace at 36-48 Baker Street, between Clifton Street and Goldsmid Road, was built c.1880-90. The terrace has subtle grey end brick linear detailing to the front and sides. The high brick walls of the back gardens and the tall chimney stacks are attractive and remarkably intact, thus worthy of retention and protection. Regrettably, uPVC windows, satellite dishes, antennas and painted trim proliferate and detract from the front facing street view of the large terrace block.

Reading Synagogue in Goldsmid Road is Grade II listed in recognition of its significance and high quality. It dates from 1900 and is a fine expression of Moorish design in polychrome brickwork and stone, topped with a wood and lead cupola. Whilst the original synagogue is one of the Conservation Area's finest buildings, the 1950s Sir Herman Gollancz Hall attached to the original building, facing Clifton Street is out-of-keeping stylistically, and if redevelopment were to take place on the site, a building more respectful of the impressive structure that it is attached to would be advised.



Figure 6.4.9 Listed Moorish style synagogue with fine brick and stone detailing and bell tower, Goldsmid Road at the corner of Clifton Street (Karen Rowland)

The largest and finest tree in the character area is located at the right-angle bend in Goldsmid Road. It is a large oak, safeguarded by a TPO, which provides attractive green and shade at the corner and anchors the corner bend of Goldsmid Road with its restrained, well-maintained 20th century housing.

The lone remaining original gas lamp post that once lined the area's streets remains on Franklin Street, now converted to LED lighting. Regrettably, the other two of the three original cast iron gas lamp posts in the area were removed in 2018 along Goldsmid Road.

6.4.5 Key Positive Characteristics

- Listed Moorish style Synagogue in Goldsmid Road
- Listed Georgian terrace at 61-79 Baker Street, in fine condition
- Views to the Caversham escarpment from Baker Street
- Georgian period artisan houses at 1-9 Prospect Street and at Prospect Mews
- York Lodge, National Spiritualist Church, and its large front garden at 81 Baker Street
- BelleVue Lodge on Tilehurst Road with its Regency urns at the top of the building
- Polychrome patterned terraces on Clifton Street and Franklin Street
- Belle Vue Road with its polychromed houses, intimate feel and patch of exposed sett stones
- Large oak tree at the bend of Goldsmid Road, safeguarded by a TPO
- High intact brick garden walls of the back gardens behind 36-48 Baker Street
- Original alleyway behind the Clifton Street/ Franklin Street polychrome terraces
- Converted original gas lamp post on Franklin Street; the only one remaining

6.4.6 Negative Features

- Modern meeting hall attached to the Synagogue
- Overpainting of polychrome houses destroying the brick patterning on Franklin Street, Clifton Street and Belle Vue Road
- Overall poor condition of 1-9 Prospect Street and the larger dormer at no. 1

- Poor condition of 48 Baker Street and overpainting and dropped kerb front parking at 46 Baker Street
- Overhead wires blight the view towards Caversham
- Crime and ASB along Prospect Street in the immediate area of Oxford Road
- Rubbish bins, which block pavements on Franklin Street and Clifton Street
- Poor tarmac pavements and poor condition of the streets

6.4.7 Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

- Four semi-detached houses. 1 Tilehurst Road, Circa 1970, whilst recessed back from the road, the houses are entirely out-of- keeping with the local heritage
- Seventh-Day Adventist Church, modern frontage hiding an older church behind it, this front could be done more sympathetically to the area

outside Character Area but with direct adverse impact:

- Nicholas Court, Baker Street, Circa 1970s.*
- Alexander Court, Baker Street, Circa 1970s.*
- Branksome Court buildings, Baker Street/Prospect Street, Circa 1970- 1980.*
- BP petrol station, Tilehurst Road

6.4.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit:

- Terrace, 1- 9 Prospect Street. Circa 1820-1830.
- Mews houses, Prospect Mews. C. pre- 1853.

6.4.9 Listed Buildings

- Reading Synagogue, Goldsmid Road, Grade II. 1900, red brick with decorative brick, stone dressings and window columns, slate roof, gabled ends. In a Byzantine style, some elements such as coloured glass and cupola have arts and crafts influence. 1277762.
- 61 to 79 Baker Street, Grade II. Early 19th century Georgian terrace of nine houses, 2 stories and basement, set back from road with front gardens. Red brick with slate roofs, arched doorcases with radiating fanlights. A complete and homogenous group. 1113394.
- 81 Baker Street, York Lodge, part of the Reading National Spiritualist Church, Grade II. Early 19th century detached house set back from road, 2 storeys, red brick with hipped slate roof. Semi-circular porch with Ionic columns. 1154497.
- Belle Vue House, 2 Tilehurst Rd, Grade II. Circa 1839 stucco villa 2.5 storeys plus basement. Bay to south elevation and a grander north elevation, both with pedimented gabled roof. Two decorative Regency period urns on south elevation, possibly of Coade stone. Grounds entirely gravelled over with UPVC canopy and other modern additions. 1113596.

6.5 Castle Crescent and streets south of Castle Hill

6.5.1 Significance

The leafy suburban environment of the character area consists of a wide variety of housing styles. Castle Crescent, Mansfield Road and Bath Road are defined by late Victorian and Edwardian villas in large gardens. However, the Georgian terraces of Coley Hill and the Edwardian polychrome terrace along Field Road contribute to the varied mix of the area. The houses throughout the character area are attractive and generally well- cared for. Additionally, the red brick walls throughout the area contribute significantly to the character of the area.

The area benefits from its elevated location atop the chalk escarpment above the Holy Brook to the south east which gives it an open, airy feeling. The area is confined geographically by limited access points into and out of the area. This provides a sense of seclusion from the more intensively developed and busier parts of the Conservation Area. Consequently, the area has an overall tranquil, pleasant and unified appeal. These characteristics contribute to its significance as a distinctive and separate character area.

The avenue of trees along Coley Avenue originates from the late 18th century and provides a notable historic green boundary to the area. The Avenue has been noted as a protected heritage view within the new Local Plan (adopted in 2019 by Reading Borough Council).

The large polychrome villas for which the area is noted are primarily along Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road and together make up a striking and discrete locality.

Along Castle Crescent, these villas sit within a number of large Georgian houses. One of these, is 3 Castle Crescent which has recently been restored. The restoration has maintained the original garden footprint, albeit with the addition of some slightly over- sized, but rather sympathetically designed, mews- style additions in that garden.

Along Coley Hill, there are several attractive Georgian terraces along the east side of the street, some of which enjoy fine views from their rear windows and gardens from the height of the escarpment to the town to the east. The east side of Field Road has an impressively long late- Victorian terrace exhibiting several differently coloured polychrome designs along its length. Along the west sides of both of these streets, there is late 20th century business and residential infill that is somewhat jarring to the heritage settings of these streets.

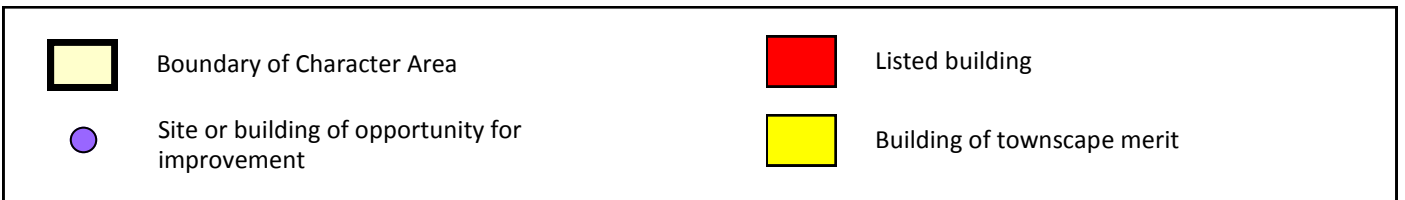
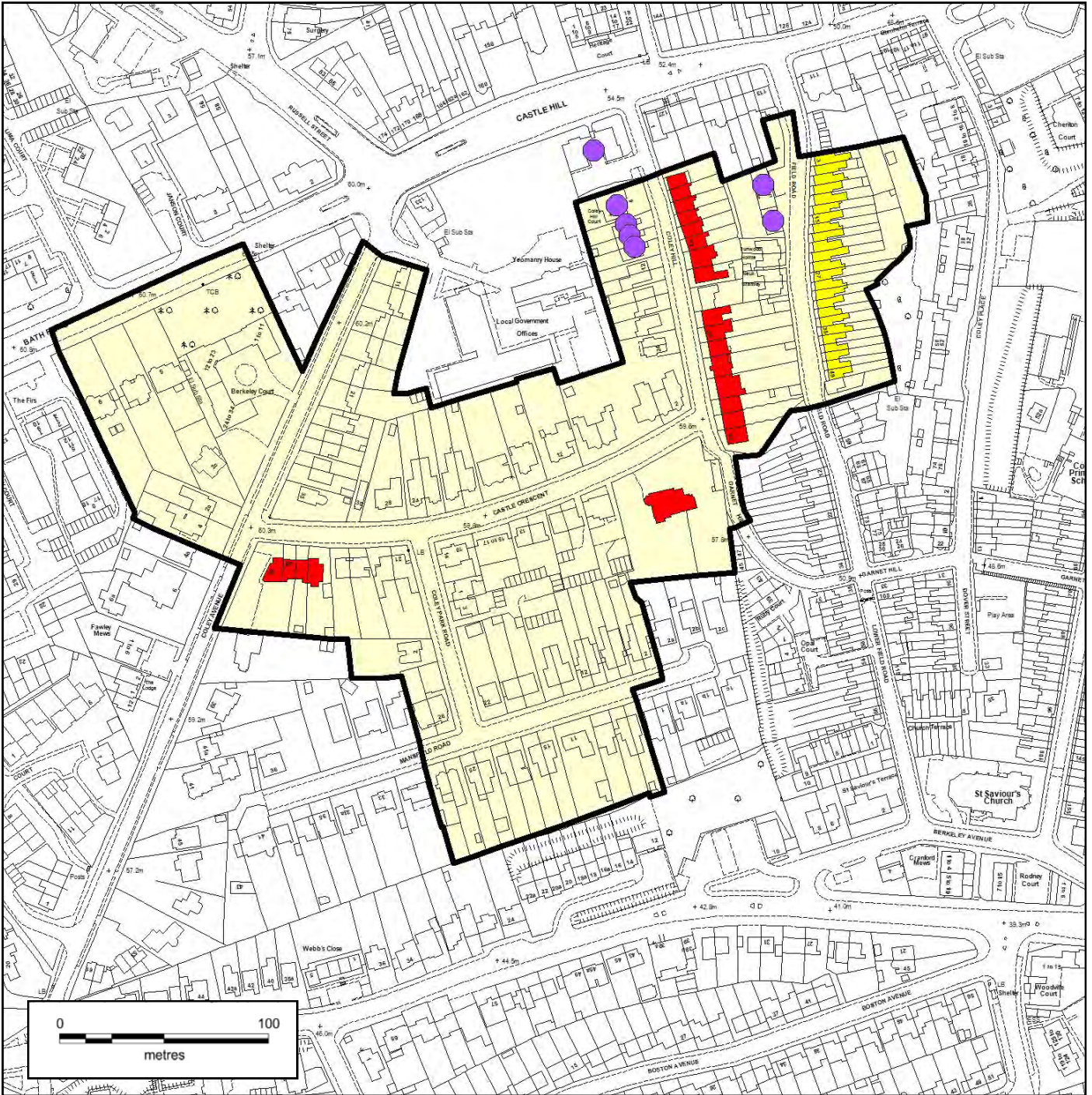
Nonetheless, the area still has a distinctive air about it with some fine views afforded it by its geographical positioning at the top of the escarpment, that that help to identify this as a distinct and separate character area.

6.5.2 Materials

Traditional red brick is dominant along the tall walls lining Coley Avenue and in the Georgian terraces of Coley Hill. Polychrome brickwork in grey, blue, tan and red is used throughout the area in the late Victorian and Edwardian residences. This polychrome brickwork is particularly notable along the villas of Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road. The polychrome terraces along the east side of Field Road are notable for their condition and are protected by an article 4 direction.

Stucco is the more dominant facing material on houses along the southern side of Castle Crescent and on some of the Georgian period terraces on Coley Hill. Stone detailing for doors and window sills are common throughout the character area no matter the time period of the property. Modern infill properties are often faced with stucco and exposed red brick combinations, which are at least materially in-keeping with the area's traditional material usage.

Roofing materials are predominantly and traditionally slate, as notable especially on the area's Georgian properties although the later Victorian villas exhibit the occasional red tile roof.



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

Figure 6.5.1: Character Area 6.5—Castle Crescent and streets south of Castle Hill

November 2019

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6.5.3 Views

View 4A and B, to both the north and south along Coley Avenue, into and out of the Conservation Area, is now a protected heritage view in the new Local Plan. The avenue once formed the private drive to Coley House and the Coley Park Estate and exhibits the same line of trees along the route as shown on the Coates' map of 1802 and as photographed by Henry Fox Talbot (see Figure 4.2.8 page 29). The current trees along the route were planted in 1905 and replaced the same historical allée of trees.

Views 16, 18, 19 are located within Castle Crescent and Streets South of Castle Hill Character Area, which evidence some of the most architecturally interesting buildings in the Conservation Area. The area is noteworthy for its Georgian terraces and Victorian villas.

View 16, looking north down to Castle Hill from Coley Hill, includes the Georgian terraces on the east of the side street to the larger Georgian Heritage Court property on Castle Hill. This view helps to understand the early relationship of Coley Hill to Castle Hill.

View 18 is a kinetic view travelling east along Castle Crescent from Coley Avenue. As the view unfolds along the curve in the road it takes in the attractive large Victorian villas lining the north side of the street which contrast with the large Georgian villas on the south side of the street.

View 19 from Castle Crescent down Coley Park Road and towards the villas of Mansfield Road continues to display these large villas and provides an attractive view into this turn-of-the-century suburban development.

Wide vistas at Coley Hill and Castle Crescent should be maintained for the future.

Views 3a and 3b are wide, sweeping easterly views from the higher point along the escarpment area over Coley Gorge to the Katesgrove area and its two historic church spires. Tall, private boundary fencing currently limits these views and ultimately it would be desirable if these views to the east could be made more easily accessible to the public. These views, both illustrate a strong sense of openness, together with leafy green and expansive open sky, punctuated with the Victorian spires of the mediaeval St. Giles Church and Christ Church. This was a sight line for defensive positions during the siege of Reading in 1643 from Fort Royal to the fleche at the end of what is now Edgehill Street and back.

Also, from the high escarpment area, view 21 is a kinetic view from along the entirety of Mansfield Road looking east, from which the spire of St. Giles can be seen. This aids in understanding the correlation of the high escarpment ground to the town below in the east. Similarly to views 3A and 3B, the view to the east of St Giles Church from along Mansfield Road should be protected.



Figure 6.5.2 View 4a and 4b, The 220 plus year old allée of trees along Coley Avenue with old high brick walls, (View north from Castle Crescent) (Karen Rowland)

6.5.4 Area Analysis

Coley Avenue was originally the private route to the impressive Coley House, the remains of which are located to the south of today's Berkeley Avenue. Coley Avenue's impressive allée of trees lining the road dates back to at least the late 18th century. After having been replanted in the early 20th century, the striking tree lines survive today. The avenue of trees, the attractive high brick walls, and detached houses within large front gardens define Coley Avenue within the character area.

Coley Hill dates to circa 1820, with a grouping of fine, varied Georgian terraces along the east side of the street. These terraces are predominantly red brick, though some have stuccoed façades. Many of the houses have original railings, doors and arched windows that add to the heritage significance of these buildings. The survival of some of these details is at greater risk as several of these large buildings, subdivided into flats for multiple-occupation use, are showing signs of poor maintenance.

The presence of a lone modern, two-storey detached house at no. 19, between two Georgian terraces, jars otherwise with the architectural harmony along this side of the street. The modern infill along the west side of the street leaves the street rather unbalanced and is quite incongruous with the Georgian side. Should properties on this side of the street come up for re-development, sensitivity to the Georgian character of the street could significantly improve the street's overall streetscape.



Figure 6.5.3 31-35 Coley Hill, stuccoed lower ground floor and later Victorian trimmed windows, 1820-30s (David Neale)



Figure 6.5.4 Arched windows and fanlights on two storey Georgian houses, Coley Hill (David Neale)

Number 3 Castle Crescent which dates from c. 1835-1840, is notable for the size of its intact original garden area. Several TPO trees screen the southwestern perimeter at the rear of the site. Despite recent renovation, additions to the main house and large mews-style building additions to the plot layout, it remains one of only a few substantial detached villas within the Conservation Area whose grounds reflect their large original garden layout.



Figure 6.5.5 3 Castle Crescent after recent renovations (David Neale)



Figure 6.5.6 Stucco 3-storey houses- south side of Castle Crescent near Coley Avenue, c. 1840 (David Neale)

The later Victorian properties, c. 1880-1900, on Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road date from a single wave of development and are noted as an impressive collection of villas. Each is individually detailed with polychrome, stone, and tile embellishments and many maintain their brick boundary walls. Many are in multiple occupancy and numerous front gardens have been hard- surfaced to provide off-street parking which is detrimental to the original

layout of the sites. However, the properties are otherwise well-managed and maintained, which contributes to the streets' still grand appearances.

Coley Park Road links Mansfield Road to Castle Crescent and the attractive high red brick walls along the road link the two streets together in a unified appearance. The modern infill along this short road is of a sensitive design in terms of massing, materials and detailing and the brick walls help to harmonise with historic built environment. In the same way as the red brick walls located along Coley Avenue, Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road unify the appearance of the entire area, the red brick walls of Coley Park Avenue are worthy of further protection.



Figure 6.5.7 Polychrome houses along the north side of Castle Crescent (David Neale)



Figure 6.5.8 Attractive stone and tile house at the corner of Mansfield Road and Coley Park Road (David Neale)

The small, artisan terraces along the east side of Field Road date to circa 1900 and their façades are decorated with three distinct polychrome colour patterns. The terrace is un-

painted, attractive and well maintained, despite an almost total loss of original windows. The polychrome brick patterning is worthy of further protection. These features of 3-49 Field Road are subject to an Article 4 direction, dating from January 1986. The modern housing and business premises detract from this view along the west side of the street. There are fine views from Field Road below, up to the gardens and backs of the large Georgian terraces along Coley Hill along the edge of the chalk and clay ridge.



Figure 6.5.9 Field Road polychrome terrace (Google Maps)

5, 7 and 9 Bath Road, date from c.1880-90 and were incorporated into the Conservation Area in the 2004 Appraisal. Each has a similar appearance to the villas of the same time period on Castle Crescent. The houses are set back from Bath Road, following a similar alignment to the grand housing present on the road earlier in the 19th century. These polychrome brick properties have attractive, deep front gardens with striking trees that are safeguarded by TPO's.



Figure 6.5.10 Large polychrome villa set back amongst striking TPO trees, Bath Road (David Neale)

The listed building at the south east corner of the junction of Castle Crescent and Coley Avenue functions as a bed and breakfast but is poorly maintained. The mid-20th century Berkeley Court opposite, is set well back in an attractively kept garden. Its rear portion is the former entrance of an earlier manor house on the site. Newer windows detract from its otherwise attractive mid-20th century design, which is unique to the area.



Figure 6.5.11 The mid 20th century Berkeley Court, Coley Avenue (David Neale)

6.5.5 Key Positive Characteristics

- The historic allée of trees and the brick walls along Coley Avenue
- The villas of Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road, which date from c.1880-1900
- The Georgian terraced housing along the east side of Coley Hill
- The unpainted, well-maintained polychrome brick terrace on Field Road, east side
- Notable historic brick walls around the area, both tall boundary walls and lower frontage walls notably on Coley Avenue, Coley Park Road, Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road
- The large trees, TPO safeguarded, in front of the late Victorian villas at 3-7 Bath Road
- The view out over Katesgrove from the corner of Coley Hill and Castle Crescent
- The view out to the spire of St. Giles Church from Mansfield Road
- mid-20th century Berkeley Court

6.5.6 Negative features

- Incompatible modern development along the west sides of Field Road and Coley Hill
- Tarmac pavements throughout the area
- Poor public realm: street lighting and erratically placed street furniture
- Poor quality front garden boundaries and bins at 3, 5, 21 and 23 Coley Hill
- Bins in front gardens on the east side of Field Road
- Loss of front gardens for parking along Castle Crescent and Mansfield Road
- Excessive and redundant overhead wires detracting from open sky views
- Loss of original slate roofs and chimneys, replacement of original doors and windows by uPVC windows and doors in some properties

6.5.7 Buildings presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

- Coley Hill Court, Coley Hill, Circa 1980-1990.

6.5.8 Buildings of Townscape Merit

- Terraces, 3-49 Field Road, Circa 1880-1890.

6.5.9 Listed Buildings:

- 3 to 13 Coley Hill, Grade II. Circa 1840. Stepped terrace of six houses. 3 storeys and basement. Red brick. Stucco cornice, string course and window surrounds. Slate roof. Some railings. 3 and 5 have lost details and been rendered since the listing notes were prepared. 1155087.
- 15, 15A, 17, 17A Coley Hill, Grade II. Circa 1840. An irregular, elegant pair of 2 storey buildings. Red brick with stucco string, slate roof, arched openings to ground floor. 1113458.
- 21 to 25 Coley Hill. Circa 1840, Grade II. Terrace of three houses, 3 storeys and basement. Red brick terrace, 21 and 23 painted. Slate roof. Arched ground floor windows with ogee pattern glazing. 1155093.
- 27 Coley Hill, Grade II. Early 19th century. Symmetrical 3 storey house. Red brick, stucco strings, slate roof. Arched ground floor openings. Later porch. 1113459.
- 29 Coley Hill, Grade II. Early 19th century. 2 storeys. Red brick, slate roof. Arched openings to ground floor. 1321937.
- 31 to 35 Coley Hill, Grade II. Mid 19th century. Terrace of three houses, 3 storeys and basement. Red brick. Ground floor stucco also first floor window surrounds. Hipped slate roof. Blind boxes. 1155095.
- 3 Castle Crescent, Grade II. Mid 19th century. 2 storey villa. Stucco with quoins, mouldings to windows. Doric portico. 2 storey wing to left, bay to right. Hipped slate roof. Grounds developed. 1154629.
- 29 to 35 Castle Crescent, Grade II. Circa 1840. Terrace of four houses. 35 now a hotel with loss of original windows. 3 storeys, end houses gabled and set forward. Stucco with slate roof. Parapet to Coley Avenue side of 35. Forms a group with 21 to 27. 1113408.

7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement

7.1 Inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk List

In November of 2018, the Conservation Area was listed on Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk. The primary reasons for its inclusion were the ongoing loss of character through the degradation of the housing stock and the poor condition of the public realm. These issues are in common across the country with inner city/town conservation areas. Whilst all character areas within the Conservation Area have issues which have contributed to this listing, the Oxford Road Character Area 2 and the Russell Street and Streets East Character Area 3 have the most serious issues.

There will need to be an action plan established to address the issues that promoted its inclusion on the list. However, the Council's resources are currently limited as to how to immediately address the steps that need to be taken to remove the area from the list. Community buy-in of interested groups such as the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC), the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) and the Civic Society will play a critical role in working with the Council to put action in place remove the area from the list. On-going conversations are being had by the Council with Historic England to look for funding and resourcing to assist in this. The following items (7.2- 7.5) detail the primary issues that need to be addressed.

7.2 Poor maintenance and intensified use of private properties

A large number of the period properties in the area are privately rented and over the years this has seen an increasing imbalance of a community that was once a predominantly single-family area. In common with other parts of the Borough, the Council has established policies to maintain the community balance as detailed in the new Local Plan. A great many, but not all, of the properties show signs of neglect, overcrowding or unsympathetic management. This manifests itself in:

- loss of architectural detail and original features (front walls, railings, chimneys, doors and windows, etc.)
- inappropriately rendered and over-painted brick façades
- satellite dishes, often multiple dishes, erected on street-facing façades
- untidy or excessive cabling, wiring and pipework on façades to maximise the number of "households" within a site
- high numbers of household waste bins exceeding the capacity of front gardens, frequently overflowing, unsightly and being kept on public pavements.
- fly-tipping of bulky items from the transient rental population and from outside the area

7.3 Streetscape environment and public realm

As noted in the last appraisal in 2004, many streets in the Conservation Area retain their 19th century granite kerbs and stone gutters. It was also noted that the majority of the paving was of modern tarmac and this continues to be the case today. The replacement of concrete stone slabs along the Oxford Road from a past improvements programme have led to a particularly unattractive patchwork effect along the road with tarmac replacing stone slabs as they've been pulled out for repairs. As with any heritage area, tarmac has an overall blighting effect on a conservation area as it is not a heritage material.

Street furniture includes many recently re-painted cast iron bollards, notably in Howard Street and along Oxford Road. However, the design and quality of modern public lamp posts and

litter bins in the Conservation Area is unsympathetic and tends to clutter and detract from the local character rather than harmonise with it. Additionally, in the past year, the area lost two of the last three remaining cast-iron lamp posts in the area, with the lone cast iron lamp – post now in Franklin Street.

Excessive and unsightly telecommunications wires overhead blight streetscape views. The wires appear in many cases to be redundant. This is especially notable in streets where there is heavy HMO occupation.

7.4 Crime and Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)

Parts of the Conservation Area, most prevalent in Character Areas 6.2 and 6.3, continue to have higher than average levels of crime and ASB. Notably, this long-standing pressure is evidenced with the following issues:

- Repeated offensive graffiti and tagging on telecom cabinets, private walls and buildings is a consistent visual manifestation of this issue.
- Open and frequent drug-dealing and drug-taking on the streets adds an additional visual blighting effect to the area's street scenes.
- Vandalism to front gardens, front brick boundary walls, piers and railings in the area is a consistent issue.
- Good quality contractors frequently refuse to work in the area due to the levels of crime and white van theft. This has led to the common hiring of cash-only, cheaply-priced contractors with little understanding or concern in the use of heritage-appropriate techniques for repairs and conversions.
- The overall levels of crime and ASB have given the area a seemingly unshakeable reputation as an undesirable area to move into. This, together with the run-down presentation of the housing stock (as detailed in section 7.2) continues to be off-putting to a wide range of potential residents.

As is common with other inner- city/town conservation areas throughout the country, the area's crime and ASB has had a sustained detrimental effect on the Conservation Area itself.

7.5 Threats to Views and Vistas in and out of the Conservation Area

The hilly topography of parts of the Conservation Area, and the grid pattern of the streets, provide some notable views to the north and east into the town centre. Future development along the Caversham Road and IDR corridor could alter and affect important heritage views out of the Conservation Area. Mitigation of this needs to be considered wherever feasible in terms of potential negative impact to views out of the Conservation Area.

7.6 Detailed Issues throughout the Conservation Area

Throughout the entire Conservation Area opportunities should be taken to address, prevent and reduce the following blights which are superficial in many cases and have the ability to be improved upon and reversed.

- excessive cabling/satellite dishes/pipework on house façades (e.g. to accommodate multiple households within the building)
- insensitive painting/rendering/cladding of house fronts
- replacement of original doors and windows by uPVC substitutes

- loss of front boundary railings, walls and fences to increase rubbish bin storage and accessibility
- loss of chimney stacks on residential and commercial properties (e.g. due to the removal of interior fireplaces)
- unkempt waste management on domestic and commercial properties
- bins on public pavements and high numbers of domestic and commercial waste bins kept in front gardens, blighting streetscape views
- frequent fly-tipping of large items due to high turn-over of residents and landlords lack of assistance in removals
- unduly prolonged and excessive display of estate agents' signage
- excessive/redundant overhead wiring by telecom utilities
- use of tarmacadam for surfacing street pavements
- uneven, patchworked appearance of pavements and streets
- redundant, excessive and worn street signage
- unsympathetic street lighting fixtures
- poorly maintained and graffitied appearance of brick and stucco walls and telecom cabinets

These blights, common throughout the Conservation Area, are addressed in the Action Plan set out in Section 8.

7.7 Sites presenting Opportunities for Enhancement

Sites throughout the Conservation Area that negatively affect the character of the area are individually listed at the end of each character area section in Chapter 6. These sites are identified as currently having a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area, and each presents an **"opportunity for enhancement"** to contribute positively to the character of the area. When opportunities present themselves, mitigation measures such as improved landscaping, sympathetic signage and in-keeping redevelopment should be taken. In the case of these sites coming forward for redevelopment, policy guidelines for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas should be strongly adhered to.

8. Action Plan

8.1 Community engagement with the Council

The 2004 appraisal concluded with this call for community engagement:

'Whilst the Council can initiate improvements and control new development, the co-operation and enthusiasm of local residents and business owners provides a vital constituent to the future successful management of the conservation area. This means that local residents, tenants and other property owners need to work with the Council and agree common aims and objectives. Hopefully, this [2004] appraisal will provide a framework for a positive partnership for mutual future benefit.'

During the intervening years since 2004, the Council has been seeking to develop that positive partnership with local property owners and neighbourhood community groups. In 2012, Abbey Ward councillors encouraged the formation of the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association [BSANA] which promotes and coordinates community engagement in the Conservation Area's most blighted streets, lying to the north of Castle Hill in Character Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In 2016 the Council endorsed the setting up of the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee [CAAC] whose aims include making proposals for the enhancement and the protection of Reading's conservation areas.

Although community engagement measures have proceeded since 2012, this alone has not been the universal cure to reversing the issues which have led to the Conservation Area's decline. It has become clear that special measures are necessary to protect the historic environment from further decline.

By listing the site with Historic England on its 'Heritage at Risk' register, the Council has taken the first significant step towards righting the situation. This has opened opportunities for funding and increased community and business engagement with a view to rectifying many of the existing issues in the area.

The action plan in the 2004 appraisal consisted of recommendations relating to removal of permitted development rights by Article 4 Direction, improvements to the public realm, and the application of existing policies to secure gradual improvement to shop fronts along the Oxford Road. Those recommendations have been reviewed and carried forward more extensively in the Action Plan set out in Tables 1 and 2.

8.2 Big Picture Actions involving the "at Risk" Conservation Area

A change of name to the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area

With the proposal of new boundary changes for the area and the inclusion of a large portion of the Oxford Road up to the railway bridge, this appraisal has acknowledged that the history of the area. **The area's history** was defined by the layout of both the Castle Street/Castle Hill route and the Oxford Road as they formed the structure for the later residential infill in the 19th century.

It is the understanding of this development pattern and the relationship of the residential streets to these two major routes that is the reason for the renaming of the conservation area. With the proposed name, **the area's history** would be more immediately apparent to residents, businessmen and visitors in understanding the development of this first residential suburb to the west of Reading's town centre. It would be hoped that the requisite sign changes could be enabled by outside funding streams designated to improve the Conservation Area.

Proposed expansion of Article 4 Directions and Local Development Orders (LDO)

Since the last appraisal, the implementation of the 2013 Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act has relaxed planning restrictions in conservation areas. This relaxation has contributed to intensified and noticeable harm to the Conservation Area (e.g. the loss of front garden boundary walls for the creation of hard standings for bins). It is highly likely that without additional measures, the Conservation Area will be at greater risk from the continuing loss of detail and an erosion of the harmonious terraced character that makes it special.

The use of Article 4 Directions is recommended where there are acknowledged, sustained and on-going issues with loss of character, detailing or community balance. This appraisal reaffirms and builds upon the recommendation of the use of Article 4 Directions as in the 2004 appraisal. The two subsequent Article 4 Directions placed in Jesse Terrace (protecting the façades in July 2004 and controlling small HMOs in January 2016) have had a positive effect on protecting the character and balance of the street. As such, this has had the effect of creating a notable dichotomy between that street and Waylen Street lying just opposite it on Baker Street which had no Article 4 Direction put in place.

In 2018, the Government also announced the allowance of fee collections to be paid to the LPA for planning applications within Article 4 Direction areas. This has relaxed to some degree, the financial and resourcing pressures for LPAs in implementing Article 4 Directions.

In other towns and cities the use of Article 4 Directions, linked to Local Development Orders (LDOs), have been effective in the restoration of character within blighted conservation areas. Reading's new Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) has recommended the possible use of such linked-up documents. LDOs exempt the need for planning applications within the Article 4 Direction area, if the renovation meets certain criteria of character standards within an area. As LDOs are general, it is sensible that there would need to be several LDOs for the area; likely stipulating standards for buildings of a different housing period or style.

The use of LDOs can greatly lessen the amount of planning applications that would come forward in an Article 4 area. (e.g. the replacement of a 4 -panelled wooden front door would not need permission in streets where they are considered to be in-keeping with the character of the area.) The results would not be immediately apparent, and their effectiveness would take many years to become apparent, depending upon when people chose to renovate. However, the restoration of original character would gradually become noticeable.

Due to the loss of character and the imbalance of a single-family community that was once dominant in the area, it is evident that there are many streets that could benefit by the application of Article 4 Directions/LDOs.

It is the purpose of this appraisal to recommend solutions for the management of the Conservation Area that would enhance and regenerate it, ultimately removing it from the "at Risk" register. Article 4 Directions remain the primary tool that planning law provides to retain and restore character in conservation areas. As such, this appraisal recommends the application of Article 4 Directions and LDOs at this time for the following streets:

Howard Street, Body Road, Anstey Road, Carey Street, Zinzan Street, Waylen Street, sections of Baker Street, Russell Street, Clifton Street, Franklin Street, Tilehurst Road, Belle Vue Terrace, Prospect Street, Oxford Road and Field Road.

Seeking funding for Improvements to the Public Realm, Streetscapes and Properties

In listing the Conservation Area on the Heritage at Risk listing, funding streams not otherwise available become possibilities. Funds from Historic England's Heritage High Streets programme, Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA) and Capacity Building Grants are all funding possibilities.

Action Plan: Big Picture Actions involving the “at Risk” Conservation Area

In November 2018, the Council allocated £50,000 of neighbourhood CIL funding to the **improvement of “conservation areas within the town centre,”** much of which could potentially be used as match funding for this Conservation Area.

Along Oxford Road, improvements to the public realm and retail shop frontages and signage could have a positive impact on the road. Furthermore, such improvements are likely to have a positive knock-on effect for the streets directly off of the Oxford Road. Other initiatives which would benefit the area would include satellite dish/antennae amnesty programmes and rubbish bin management schemes.

Establishing Management Plans with Council and Community Groups

The Conservation Area is one that should be able to continue to enhance the understanding **and appreciation of Reading's 19th century residential growth and development** into the future. However, in acknowledging the Conservation Area as the asset that it is, this appraisal also acknowledges its current problems and vulnerabilities. Without the mutual corporation of the LPA and engaged community groups **improvements to its current “at Risk” state** will not be possible.

Nottingham, in recent years, has placed the majority of its conservation areas on the **“at Risk” register as a proactive step** in their improved care and management. They have found that the formation of a structured working plan with engaged community groups and Council officers has been beneficial in actioning steps needed for conservation area improvement.

The following action plan has been set out as a starting point for future work. By necessity, it will evolve and need regular review and adjustments as funding and programmes are put in place.

Action Tables

Policies and actions need to be applied to all of Reading's conservation areas if the remaining historic character of the town's 15 conservation areas is to be appropriately protected and enhanced.

The actions in Table 1 were spelled out in the St Peters Conservation Area and were agreed to be necessary actions for all conservation areas within the town, particularly with regard to the prudent protection of architectural detail and character in building alterations or redevelopment.

TABLE 1 – All conservation areas (a Borough wide response for all conservation areas)

ISSUE	ACTION
Loss of original architectural features and details (see 7.1). Insensitive change and development not requiring planning permission, permitted development	<p>Guidance: Provide guidance document on 'approved' methods for common small-scale alterations.</p> <p>Awareness: Provide householder information on the added value of 'period detail' and detail on economic alternatives for energy efficiency savings</p>
Loss or change to original boundary features (walls and railings see 7.2)	Awareness: Provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of boundary walls and railings
Insensitive development undertaken without permission (see 7.1 e.g. window replacement in listed buildings)	<p>Guidance: Provision of property owner guidance on legal requirements for alterations/development/treeworks in conservation areas.</p> <p>Enforcement: Legal enforcement by RBC to secure reversal of changes</p>
Redevelopment within or adjoining the conservation area should respect the general height, massing and alignment of existing buildings and use a palette of materials which reflect its existing character (see 7.6)	Guidance, Policy: Supplementary Design guidance planning document for development in historic areas. Support: Use CAAC to gain informed comment on planning applications affecting conservation areas

ISSUE	ACTION
Poor street furniture, clutter and surfacing (see 7.3 and 7.5)	Training/Awareness: Council officers responsible for street signage, furniture and repair should have appropriate guidance on their impact on the conservation area and take this into account in planned maintenance

Noting however the far greater pressures and current situations within this Conservation Area and the resourcing needed to affect a turn-around of the situation, responsible agents and timetables are only suggested in the tables below and not agreed upon at this time. It is hoped that through grant funding and future funding schemes that time-tables and agents can be identified to right the most egregious issues within the Conservation Area.

Table 2 – The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area specifically:

ISSUE	ACTION
Overarching Recommendations:	
The Conservation Area should be extended in accordance with the recommendations in this reappraisal.	Adoption: Approve extension of Conservation Area
Risk of neighbouring tall building development adversely impacting views and character of the Conservation Area	Consultation: Public consultation, Environmental Surveys, Historic England input (Historic Places Panel), Design Review Panel Mitigation: Where possible and in-line with the Local Plan steps should be taken to mitigate damage to the views within and out of the area.
Need for improved enforcement for listed building and conservation area infractions	Enforcement: Increased detection and enforcement, funding for Council resourcing

ISSUE	ACTION
Maintenance issues with private premises- domestic and retail	
Loss of architectural detail and features (windows, doors, chimneys, etc.)	Development Control: Article 4 Direction with Local Development Orders (LDOs) need to be put in place in multiple areas of the Conservation Area
The over-painting and covering up of original brickwork, especially noting polychrome patterned brickwork	Development Control: Article 4 Directions plus LDOs
The building or alteration of a front porch or weather-shield	Development Control: Article 4 Directions and enforcement
The creation of hard standing surfaces for rubbish bins in front gardens and/or the removal of front garden boundary walls	Development Control: Article 4 Directions plus LDOs and improved detection and enforcement
Removal or loss of front and side boundary walls and railings	Development Control: Article 4 Directions plus LDOs
Installation of uPVC windows and uPVC primary entrance doors	Development Control: Article 4 Direction plus LDOs and improved detection and enforcement
Multiple façade satellite dishes, redundant cabling and pipes on street-facing façades	Community Involvement: Improved detection Enforcement: improved enforcement of the existing regulations Development Control: Article 4 to remove PD rights for façade blighting elements visible from a public highway, including footpaths
Creating unconsented access onto a road or public highway	Community Involvement: Improved detection Enforcement: improved enforcement of the existing regulations
The erection or alteration of gates, fences or walls	Development Control: Article 4 Directions plus LDOs and improved detection and enforcement

ISSUE	ACTION
Prolonged and persistent poor maintenance of properties detrimental to local character	Community Involvement: Communication with landlord and tenants Enforcement: Enforcement; including in the most severe cases, where detrimental to the surrounding quality of life the issuance of Community Protection Notice (CPNs)
Prolonged and persistent poorly maintained façades: painting, rendering using out-of-keeping materials, redundant wires, excessive pipes detrimental to local character	Community Involvement: Communication with owners; Enforcement: Enforcement; including in the most severe cases, where detrimental to the surrounding quality of life the issuance of Community Protection Notice (CPNs)
Prolonged and persistent poorly maintained boundaries, hedges, fences, and gates detrimental to local character	Communication with landlord and tenants Enforcement: Enforcement; including in the most severe cases, where detrimental to the surrounding quality of life the issuance of Community Protection Notice (CPNs)
Prolonged and persistent poor management of rubbish detrimental to local character	Enforcement: Enforcement; including in the most severe cases, where detrimental to the surrounding quality of life the issuance of Community Protection Notice (CPNs)
Reduction of green canopy in gardens	Community involvement: improved detection Awareness: Create and provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of green canopy in gardens Enforcement: of existing regulations
Non-compliant estate agent signage; unduly prolonged time period for signage presentation and use; projection beyond boundary onto public highway	Enforcement and detection: Improved detection and enforcement. Adherence to and enforcement of RBC's policy on estate agent signage,

ISSUE	ACTION
Shop fronts	
Lack of knowledge by shop-owners about the policy and suggested design parameters within the conservation area	Education: of shop-owners Policy: to review and reinforce the policy on shop-fronts and retail signage Funding: improvement schemes for shop fronts
Unsympathetic retail signage, hiding of string courses, windows, window sills; use of garish colours, plastic lettering, over dominant lighting, internally illuminated signage	Policy update: Update Council SPD policy for signage, issues. Enforcement of current policies Funding: seek and implement funding to work with retailers to improve frontages
Loss of historic shopfronts and replacement of key heritage details	Policy creation: Article 4 Direction plus LDOs Detection and enforcement: of current policies Secure funding: seek and use funding to improve issues
Metal roller security shutters	Policy creation: Article 4 Direction plus LDOs Enforcement: and improved detection; Secure funding: seek and implement funding to work with retailers to improve issues
Parking on retail frontages and forecourts	Policy creation: Article 4 Direction plus LDOs Enforcement: where appropriate
Excessive freestanding sale boards and advertising flags	Detection and enforcement: to improve
Prolonged and habitual storage of goods beyond curtilage and on public pathways	Detection and enforcement: to improve
Permanent storage of rubbish on forecourts	Detection and enforcement: to improve

ISSUE	ACTION
Public Realm	
Tarmacadam pavements and patched pavements	Secure funding: Seek and implement funding for improved pavements within Conservation Area
Retention of granite kerbs and setted gutters	Repair: and improved detection and reporting
Unconsented drop kerbs in the Conservation Area	Community detection: improve Enforcement of current policies
Out of keeping modern lamp posts	Seek funding: and implement to install more character- appropriate lamp posts
Redundant and excessive street signage	Survey of streets: community-led and Council adoption Reduction and improvement: where possible
Street furniture	Review: street furniture throughout the area in line with future replacements to be evaluated and considered replacing with street furniture more in keeping with the Conservation Area budget dependant.
Unsympathetic street litter bins- free- standing and on poles	Seek funding: and implement to install more character- appropriate bins
Redundant, excessive and unsightly overhead wires	Survey of area: community-led Removal and reduction: where possible in conjunction with Council and utility companies
Household bins on public pavements	Enforcement: and improved detection

ISSUE	ACTION
Fly tipping of bulky items	Communication with landlords and tenants Enforcement: and improved detection
Lack of green canopy cover in area	Funding: sought through private benefactors and RBC Location: of appropriate sites and programmes for increased canopy cover
Crime and ASB	
Graffiti on public and private realm walls and units	Detection and removal: to be improved. Enable communities to be able to remove graffiti
Open drug dealing and use of drugs	Enforcement: and improved detection. This also links to much wider strategies to combat these issues, not within the remit of this Action Plan.
Antisocial behaviour	Enforcement: and improved detection

Appendices

Appendix 1: Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area

Before the 12th century

There is limited evidence within today's Conservation Area of pre-12th century activity in the form of a small number of Prehistoric and Roman finds and a single feature. These discoveries are recorded on the local Historic Environment Record.

(http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/advanced_search.aspx)

Chance finds are simply referenced to Castle Hill as the exact location is unknown. Hunting and gathering tools consist of a flint arrowhead and a bronze arrowhead, spearheads and an axehead and may represent casual loss rather than occupation. A Bronze Age pit containing worked flint was discovered at 1-3 Castle Crescent during an archaeological evaluation. Finds indicating other forms of subsistence are evidenced by coins and sherds of hand-made pottery.

Mediaeval and early modern settlement

The Conservation Area is defined by the ancient route from London to the west (now Bath Road) and by a route from points south to Oxford, which was called Pangbourn Road (now Oxford Road). The roads intersected near the site of St Mary's Minster.

There is conjecture about whether Castle Hill was the site of a castle possibly built by King Stephen during the civil wars of 1135-53 with Empress Matilda. Although no archaeological evidence has proved that a castle did exist, it may have been a motte and bailey castle constructed of wood and earth.

The eastern part of the Conservation Area between what is now Oxford Road and the southern end of Coley Hill was on the edge of Reading and was occupied in the 1540s, but most of the land was open country.

The area was too far west to be included on John Speed's 1611 map of Reading and the first map to show the land of the Conservation Area is a plan of the defences of Reading from the English Civil War.

Reading changed hands several times during the Civil War but at the end of 1642 was garrisoned by Royalist troops. The governor, Sir Arthur Aston, constructed defences around the town consisting of bastions linked by earth banks. The siege of Reading took place in April 1643 with Parliamentary forces under the Earl of Essex first setting up a position facing the Forlorn'd Hope (at the top of Castle Hill) and Fort Royal (between Castle Hill and Castle Crescent), the major Royalist defensive positions on the west of Reading. Coates map of 1802 marks the area 'Old Fortifications' which indicates that at that time they were still visible.



Figure A1.1 Part of Burt's etching of a plan of Civil War defences looking South



Figure A1.2 Part of Coates Map 1802 showing 'Old Fortifications'

Georgian Period 1714-1837

The Bath Road between Reading and Puntfield (just west of Theale) was turnpiked by an Act of Parliament in 1715. A toll gate was erected at the top of Castle Hill on the western outskirts of the town, immediately to the east of the drive to the estate of Coley House. A further Act in 1729 extended the jurisdiction of the turnpike trustees westward beyond Puntfield as far as Speenhamland at Newbury. The toll gate was moved westward c.1830 about half a mile, to where the town's outskirts had then expanded.

From the mid-18th century onwards, Reading's location meant it became an increasingly important coaching and wagon stop between Bath and London. Inns, such as the Kings Arms Inn (now 154-160 Castle Hill) and public houses such as the Horse and Jockey (now The Castle Tap at 120 Castle Street) rebuilt in 1823 on the site of the 17th century inn, flourished on the road heading west out of town. Baker's and Gilder's London to Newbury coaches advertised a stop here from 1825.

John Rocque's map of 1761 shows plots on the north side of what is now Castle Hill were occupied with southern views across Coley Gorge. Most of those buildings were subsequently demolished or redeveloped.



Figure A1.3 Extract from Rocque's Map of Reading 1761

The Grade II* 154-160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, is one significant building which remains from that period. 158-160 Castle Street/Castle Hill was constructed in 1734 and an additional wing was added before 1796 to achieve today's footprint. 2 Bath Road, the home of the locally prominent Swallow family, dates from c.1780.

The handsome house at 107 retains the structure which many of these houses may have had with its stable buildings and original back garden footprint still intact.

At the beginning of the 19th century a succession of large properties for the wealthier families of Reading were built along the two main roads from the centre. During the century the land between the roads, which had been market gardens and nurseries, was also developed with a range of properties to house wealthy businessmen, artisans and labourers. However, by the end of the 19th century Reading's elite had moved away from the area and plots began to be subdivided or large houses demolished to make way for new developments of smaller properties.

On the streets south of the Castlehill House on the eastern side of Coley Hill are further evidence of that early development. Castle Crescent also saw the building of several large homes in the 1830s and 1840s. Yeomanry House, early 19th century, is the finest remaining example of the grand houses surrounded by large gardens built for the wealthy and prominent businessmen of Reading.

York Lodge at 81 Baker Street, now part of The National Spiritualist Church, was built at this time as one of three villas with entrances that faced to the east and away from Baker Street, with drives up to the fronts of the houses and their gardens surrounding them. The other two houses were called Lancaster Lodge and Tudor Lodge, but were later demolished and the site is now occupied by flats dating from the late 1960s/ early 1970s, Alexander and Nicholas Courts. Bookseller Arthur Lee Humphreys, friend and publisher of Oscar Wilde, lived at York Lodge from c.1899-1946 and his initials and the date 'ALH 1925' can be seen over the

gateway to the street. (<https://whitleypump.wordpress.com/2018/07/22/a-reading-bookseller-publisher-and-author-extended-article>)



Figure A1.4 Part of Thomas Coates' map, 1802

A thriving market gardening business developed in the area to the south of the present-day Castle Hill and Tilehurst Road area. Swallows' Nurseries was run by James Swallow with his son William Pratt Swallow. They are known to have supplied plants and shrubs to various local estates, most notably, in the mid 1790's, to Purley Park which at that time was being landscaped by Humphry Repton.

Archaeological investigation around Yeomanry House, known during part of the 19th century as Castlehill House, identified several ditches and discrete post-medieval features. These ditches could have been related to the documented nursery and market gardening on the site prior to the building as shown on Coates' map of 1802 or they may be military defensive ditches.

Mrs. Zinzan's fields are also noted on Coates' map located in the area between today's Waylen Street and Howard Street. They were part of the sizeable local nursery industry in the area supplying vegetables and fruit to the town. The fields were sold off in the 1830s and Waylen Street and Zinzan Street were laid out after that sale. There was another plant nursery named Victoria Nursery just north of the Oxford Road located between the railway and Mason Street and shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1877).



Figure A1.5 The deed that created and laid out Waylen Street and Zinzan Street off the Oxford Road, c.1830s (Berkshire Record Office)

William Pratt Swallow was also a land surveyor and in the 1820s, possibly sensing the need for housing would be a more profitable venture, he sold large parts of his nurseries for private housing. This marked the beginning of rapid change. Mr Swallow 'founded' Prospect Street and Russell Street, the first two early connector routes from the Oxford Road in the north to the Bath Road and Pigs Green Lane (later Tilehurst Road) routes to the south. Russell Street was laid out along the eastern boundary of former nursery garden plots. These two streets were integral in setting out the grid system for the development of the rest of the streets in the area throughout the 19th century.

Baker Street was continued west of Russell Street during this time directly to the west of Back Lane (later an extension of Baker Street) along other east-west boundaries of Swallow's former fields. The bend in the road created by this development can still be seen in Baker Street today just to the west of its junction with Waylen Street. Some of the earliest development was the listed Georgian terraced housing on the south side of Baker Street (61-79) c.1820s.

Along Oxford Road there was a similar pattern of development, spreading from the town centre to Argyle Street in the west. Georgian houses and terraces line the route and several long terraces dating to the early 19th century are listed. Many of the 2-storey properties, with ground floor shops and residential accommodation above, along the Oxford Road between Alfred Street in the east and Russell Street were also built by 1833. However, with the exception of Prospect Terrace between the present-day Lorne Street and Argyle Street, building along the Oxford Road ended near Prospect Street for the early part of the century. When the railway was built in 1847, building continued for the rest of the century to the west towards and then beyond the railway bridge. By the early 1850s 2-storey shops mixed with earlier residential terraces had largely filled the Oxford Road frontage between Howard Street and Prospect Street.

Speculative development began in Prospect Street in the 1820s with housing built along the east side. The terrace of artisan houses at 1-9 Prospect Street are rare exemplars of housing for the working man at the time.

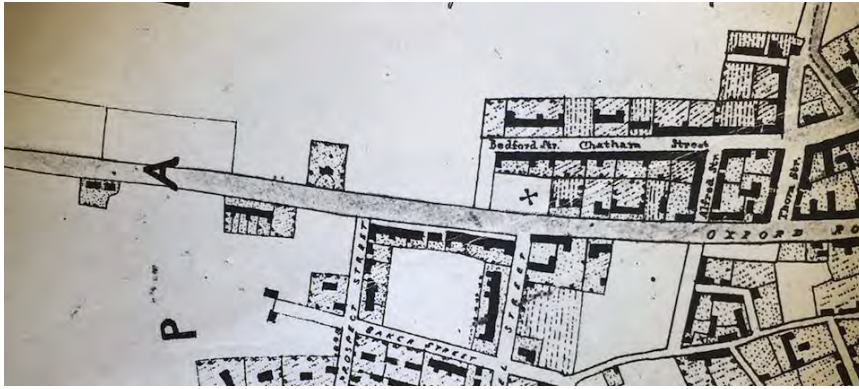


Figure A1.6 Oxford Road, Dormer Map 1833 showing residential terraces and street front shops already in existence to Prospect Street and Prospect Terrace beyond to the west



Figure A1.7 Oxford Road, Sanitation Map 1853 showing development west to Prospect Street with Prospect Terrace still separate to the west

Among the historic churches and places of worship in the area Holy Trinity parish church stands on Oxford Road at the intersection with Russell Street. In 1826 the Reverend George Hulme purchased the site to build a proprietary chapel over the gravel pits in that location in order to construct catacombs. He counted on the high fees which Reading's wealthiest citizens would pay to use the church's burial vaults. Proprietary chapels were not compelled to follow the rules of the traditional orientation of altars facing east. Thus, there is a striking view down Russell Street to its front entrance. The catacombs were sealed off in 1858, due largely to the fact that they kept filling with water but were later used during the Second World War as an air raid shelter.



Figure A1.8 Holy Trinity Parish Church, Oxford Road, late 19th century. **Hulme's Villas** sit to its east on the right (from Council's collection of local illustrations)

Victorian Development

The railway reached Reading in 1840 and the line through Reading West station was opened in 1847 but the station itself did not open until 1906. The railway and the bridge were placed at a distance from the edge of town which was near Prospect Street. The railway bridge divides the eastern end of the Oxford Road where the properties are a mix of Georgian and Victorian building from the more commercial, largely late Victorian and Edwardian shops further to the west. The bridge, while not the original brick bridge, is a reminder of the industry that arrived to Reading in the mid 19th century and the success that it brought along with it.

Answering the housing needs that Reading had at the latter part of the 19th century larger estates began to be sold off, for the establishment of housing for Reading's rapidly increasing population. There was a movement westward from the town for the development of much needed housing for the many people now working in local industries.

As the population increased, further places of worship were built for the community and those in the Conservation Area mainly date from this period. A number of Nonconformist churches were built among them the Providence Chapel on Oxford Road built c.1859. Carey Baptist Chapel was built in 1869 and named after George Carey, the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society. Towards the end of the century, Bridge Hall was built near the railway bridge for Reading's Open Brethren group. The Grade II Reading Synagogue (1900), in Goldsmid Road is of Moorish design and is the only purpose-built synagogue in Berkshire.

The Victorian pioneer of early photography, Henry Fox Talbot had a studio, 'The Reading Establishment', at 55 Baker Street (then 8, Russell Terrace) from 1844-47. It was from this studio that the mass production of his invention, the calotype, or 'talbotype' print, was used to produce 'The Pencil of Nature', the very first mass-produced book which contained photographs. It is due to the presence of the studio in the town that Reading has some of the earliest photographs of the built environment in existence.

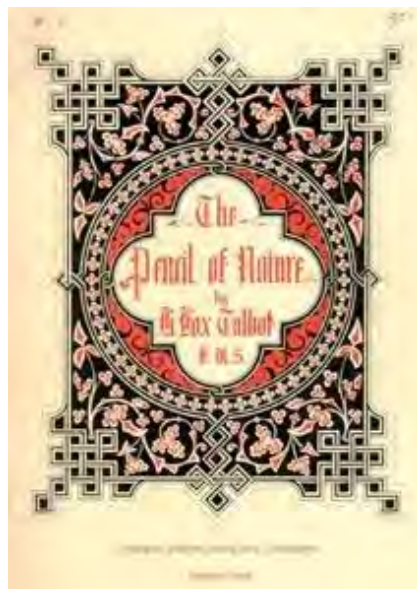


Figure A1.9 *The Pencil of Nature*, the first mass-produced book containing photographs, published **during Fox Talbot's time in Reading** (photo from Berkshire Record Office)



Figure A1.10 Fox Talbot and his workers at the rear of his studio at 55 Baker Street. To the far right are the houses of 33- 35 Baker Street. (Met public domain, downloaded)

The Jesse family's contribution to the development of Victorian housing in Reading was considerable. Three generations of the Jesse family lived at 154-160 Castle Hill and while they developed sites throughout Reading, they figured most notably in the development of the Conservation Area. All three generations included developers, each generation passing the business down from an uncle to a nephew.

The family built Jesse Terrace in groups of approximately four at a time, with only the earliest group (1-13) being in place prior to 1853. The Terrace was largely completed by the mid 1870s and there are subtle differences in each of the groups that are notable to this day. The large single family homes have a trademark concave metal-roofed veranda, a look repeated on Heritage Court and at 162-164 Castle Hill, properties along Castle Hill which the Jesse family also developed.

In 1880 they purchased what was then known as Castlehill House (now Yeomanry House) and its surroundings, an approximately six acre site, with hopes of turning the entire area into a succession of streets with housing and a grand square of prestigious properties. This was never built as fashions were changing with the coming of the railways and the decline of the Bath Road. (A drawing of this scheme is in the collection of Jesse family papers at the BRO.) The house was then used as a school between 1888 and 1905/6.

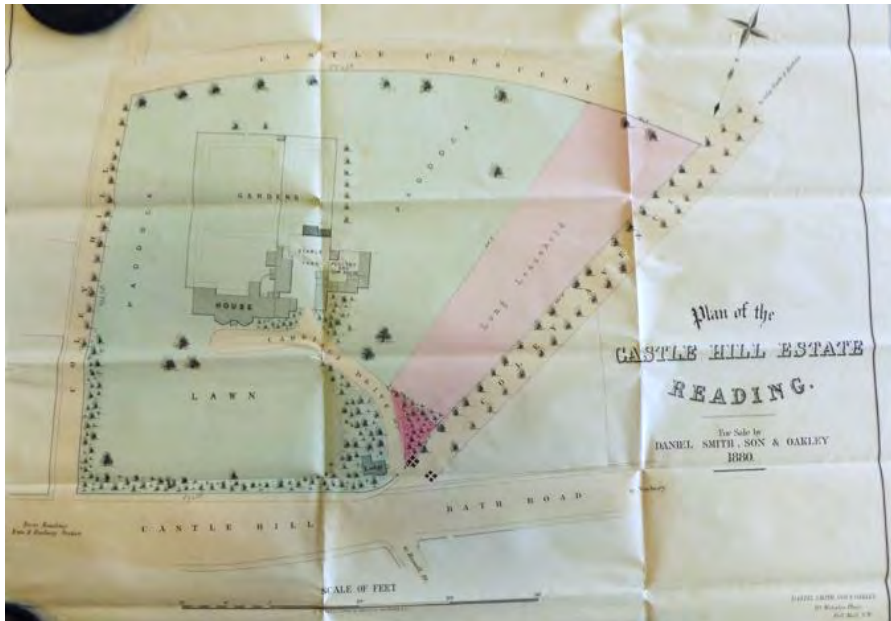


Figure A1.11 The Yeomanry House site map for its sale in 1880 (Berkshire Record Office)

Twentieth and Twenty-first century development

By the beginning of the 20th century most of the development of housing in the Conservation Area had been completed. However, some housing continued to be built, and Rednirt Villas, in Baker Street, dated 1904 on a central plaque, is an example of the turn of the century small villa, continuing the established style of polychrome brick with terracotta detailing. (The name is amusingly the owners' name Trinder spelt backwards.)

Castle Hill House became the home of the Berkshire Yeomanry (1907-1968). It was purchased from Jesse, a riding school added (1911) and the house renamed accordingly. Purchased by RBC in 1968. The Berkshire Record Office was built on the site of the Riding School. The Pavilion, once a well-attended cinema which opened in 1929 is now home to the Lifespring Church since 2013 who have restored much of the original cinema's interior detailing. The Carey Centre and the Salvation Army citadel are on the site of an older terrace of houses facing east into an area called Pine Court, poor quality housing for local factory workers at the nearby Coach Manufactory.

Some of the terraced houses near Jesse Terrace did not have bathrooms, as they did not form part of the original design. Many of the houses were served by communal baths. The nearby slipper baths were located to the rear of Jesse Terrace, behind Castle Street and were constructed in the 1940s or 1950s and demolished c.2003.

The latter half of the 20th century has seen some buildings constructed which are not in keeping with the rest of the Conservation Area while others fit well with their surroundings and are modern assets to the area.

Notably, Castle Gate at 114 Castle Street fits well within its setting in terms of material design and massing. The modern Berkshire Record Office (2000) was built on the site of the riding school using modern materials and a design that strikes the right balance on the site. The new build at 179 Oxford Road combined elements of the two older buildings on the site and in turn, subtly enhanced the immediate street scene. Regrettably, though, there are a few buildings along the north side of Oxford Road and the occasional modern build on streets south of Castle Hill and scattered throughout the area that have impacted negatively on their settings. Structures that are out of keeping with the Conservation Area are listed in each individual character area section as Opportunities for Enhancement.

Later 20th century and current developments have responded to Reading's housing demand with the conversion of many of the larger family homes that had been built in the area to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The IDR which was constructed through the eastern end of the Conservation Area in the late 1960s had a significant impact on the character of the area, severing the neighbourhood's direct access from the town centre. The east side of Howard Street was demolished and it also divided Castle Street and Castle Hill in two at the roundabout, thus losing the context of the long road to Bath and the west that went through the town centre at St. Mary's Butts. Significant buildings on Castle Street were lost as well as some substantially older properties to the east of Howard Street and Body Road.

In 1974 the Conservation Area was created, in recognition that the residential neighbourhood to the west of the IDR held a varied and special collection of Reading's range of housing from the 18th to the 20th century.



Figure A1.12 *Finches Buildings- demolished for the IDR. The side of 3 Baker Street at the far right (source unknown, provided by Alan Stevens)*

Appendix 2: Geology and topography

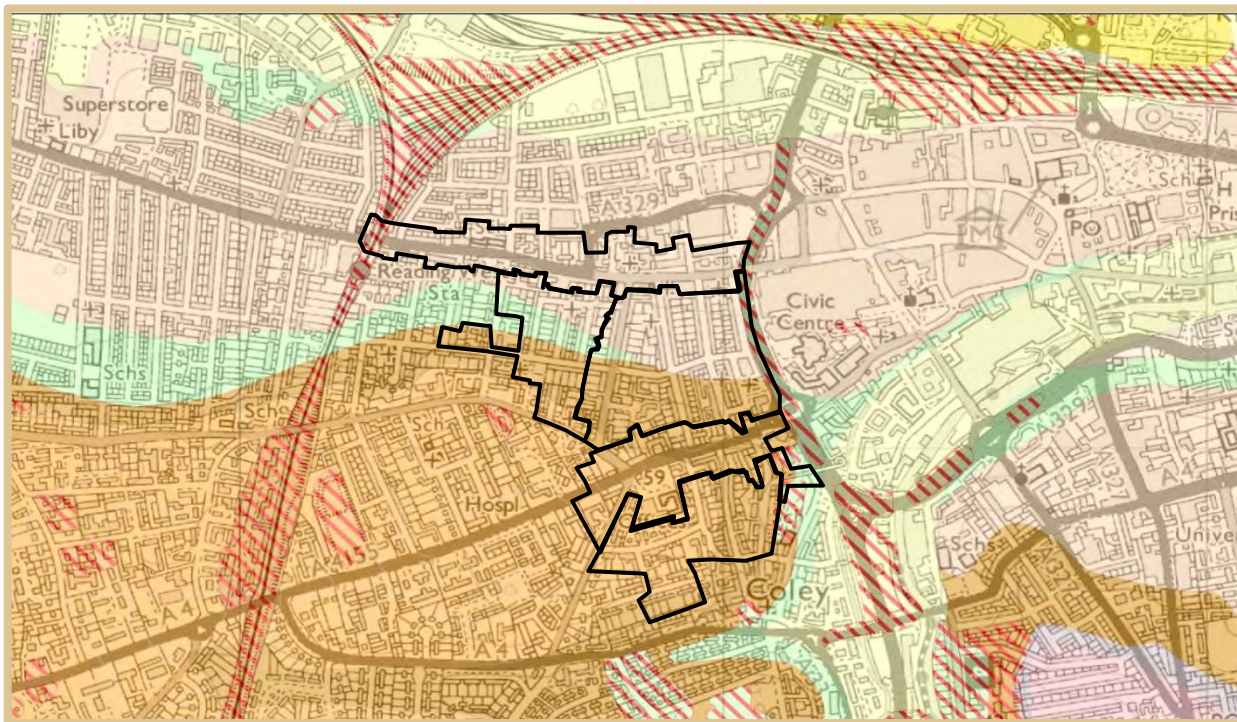


Figure A2.1 Geology of the area (Conservation Area outline approximate)

The area sits atop a high mound of clay, silt and sand covering most of the southern portion of the conservation area. Castle Hill sits along the high ridge of that clay. As the land falls away from this ridge towards the north and to the south east, the clay ridge gives way to underlying chalk. The northern most part of the conservation area is made up of sand and

gravel deposits which continue northwards to the alluvial deposits of the River Thames beyond. As the higher ground slopes down towards the River Kennet and the Holybrook in the southeastern portion of the conservation area south of Castle Street, the alluvial silt deposits of the river bed are present.

It was the alluvium silt, sand and clay that was the basis for the famous brick manufacturing in Reading, exemplified widely throughout Reading in the famous red brick and polychrome brickwork on buildings of the 18th to early 20th centuries.

The gravel and alluvium make-up of the area led to the development of a local gravel pit site that figures interestingly in the area to this day. The Holy Trinity parish church (circa 1830, completed and with the western front added in 1845) at the bottom of Russell Street on the Oxford Road was built on top of a gravel pit that had been used for the making of the Oxford Road. The site was chosen so that catacombs were easy to create underneath the church.

Appendix 3. Justification for boundary extensions

The proposal for the extension of the Conservation Area is the result of joint working between the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA), Reading's Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Reading Civic Society and Historic England. The evaluation took on board the use of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit in an extensive community consultation exercise and comments received via other consultations.

This appendix sets out the conclusions of that work in the way suggested by Historic England Advice Note 3- 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'. **The following sections therefore justify each proposed extension in terms of its historic and its architectural interest.** They identify spatial relationships, collective interest, local distinctiveness and identity, rarity and community value.

OXFORD ROAD CHARACTER AREA

The inclusion of 78 to 104A, 104, Holy Trinity Church, 120-190 Oxford Road (evens) on the north side from Alfred Street to the railway bridge and the inclusion of 205 to 283 Oxford Road (odds) on the south side of the Oxford Road from Prospect Street to the railway bridge. The inclusion of 1 to 23 Prospect Street (odds) and 2 to 14 (evens) Prospect Street.

A) WESTERN END

Historic interest of the Character Area

Oxford Road, originally called Pang Lane, was one of the two major historic routes westward from Reading. When the railway bridge was built, it marked the western limit of Reading's growth. The part of Oxford Road between it and Prospect Street to the east comprised open areas, on which some development had started during the Georgian period. It became a suburban idyll, with villas in large gardens, which was infilled progressively by large Victorian terraces. Terminating the boundary of the Conservation Area at the bridge reflects the distinctiveness and identity created by these mixed historic origins, whereas beyond the bridge is entirely Victorian.

The 19th century extension of commercial activity from the town centre westward along Oxford Road is the ancestor of its current vibrant, multicultural environment. This part of Oxford Road continues to experience intense speculation, rapid change and frequent ad hoc renovations, reinforcing the threat to its character and the need for protection. This is best provided by including both sides of the road, as far as the bridge, within the Conservation Area, which also tells the story of Georgian and Victorian development most clearly.

Architectural interest of the Character Area

With 40 buildings listed individually or as part of a group, this extension recognises the entire half mile of Oxford Road as **an architectural time capsule of this phase of Reading's growth**, with its gentle mix of Georgian and Victorian shops and homes. The Character Area's western boundary reflects how the railway bridge closes the view along the street and from Reading town centre. The presence of important buildings, both listed and those of Townscape Merit, enhances this spatial relationship. For example, the use of mirror image terraces, at 249- 253 and at the junction with Argyle Street, is a rare example of the use of symmetry and space to create impact.

The mix of Georgian and Victorian Buildings of Townscape Merit create group interest, linking the western extension with the eastern end of Oxford Road. In particular, they are linked by the similarities (and some contrasts) in scale, massing and architectural detailing between the south side of Oxford Road (249-253) and the north side (170-180). There is similar group

interest in the Buildings of Townscape Merit on the both sides of Oxford Road. On the north side, working west to east, is the architectural exuberance in the small scale buildings of 186-190 and Bridge Hall, 184 Oxford Road; and the differences and similarities in scale, massing and architectural detailing at 152-180 Oxford Road. The south side includes a little series of terraces between Prospect and Lorne Streets. The greater exuberance in the detailing of the Victorian terraces 205-209 and 221-223 contrasts with the simple aesthetic of the Georgian styles at 225-235, juxtaposed with the listed terrace of 237-247 Oxford Road and the remarkable mirror image terraces at 249-253.

One of the most striking community buildings along this half mile is the Oxford Road Primary School. With its strong Victorian aesthetic, it provides a landmark building of communal value, in terms both of to its aesthetic and its spatial relationship with George Street. This location and the surrounding green lends a rare openness to the enclosed nature of the Street, which the public consultation showed to be much valued by the local community.

B) NORTHERN SIDE

Historic interest of the Character Area

The area between Alfred Street and Eaton Place evidences the early 19th century link between the town centre and Oxford Road, and with the south side of Oxford Road between Howard Street and Russell Street. The local distinctiveness of this commercial corridor includes significant buildings, such as the Providence Chapel and the Pavilion, a former Cinema (now Lifespring Church) on the south side, and Holy Trinity Church on the north side of Oxford Road. These churches provide historic and community links and are larger buildings in wider plots than the surrounding terraces. They broaden the finer grain of the retail terraces and their high architectural quality, community connections and historical value add to the area's **distinctiveness**. Dotted further to the south, within the residential streets, are other non- conformist places of worship including the Carey Baptist Church on Carey Street and the Synagogue on Goldsmid Road, evidencing the importance of religion in the area during the second half of the 19th century.

Another important spatial relationship is that between Holy Trinity Church and Russell Street. The church provides an end view in a panorama looking north along Russell

Architectural interest of the Character Area

The buildings in this Character Area are a mix of residential and retail terraces: listed, Buildings of Townscape Merit or unlisted. They create the **area's** collective interest of and illustrate its past use and development. Within the extension, the mix of Georgian and Victorian listed buildings have collective interest, especially in the architectural links between the north side of the Street (120-122) and the south sides (163-165). In addition, there is a group interest in the subtle chalet-styling of the 21/2 storey stucco buildings on the north side of Oxford Road. Number 124 is listed and the other, 134, is a Building of Townscape Merit. The little group of detached and semi-detached buildings between Bedford Road and the entrance to the Central Swimming Pool car park are rare survivors of the more suburban scatter of villas in large gardens that characterised the early development of Oxford Road.

Some large scale modern developments which are out of character with the **area's** historic scale and quality have coarsened the finer historic grain of the terraces. While the set-back within such larger plots echoes large community buildings like the historic cinema, their architecture and non-community functions, such as flats or commercial units, are incongruous with the rest of the street. These sites provide opportunities for enhancement.

Extending the boundary to include the north side is consistent with Historic England's advice that boundaries should not run down the centre of a road, as both sides contribute to its character and need care in any change.

C) PROSPECT STREET

Historic interest of the Character Area

Oxford Road was a mediaeval route from Reading town centre, and that spatial relationship was reinforced by the gradual expansion from the centre of houses and shops. Prospect Street and Russell Street form connecting roads between Oxford Road and Castle Hill and reflect the foresight of Mr Swallow, who created them in the 1820s

Architectural interest of the Character Area

Prospect Street contributes to the architectural interest of the Oxford Road Character Area by adding to the earlier Georgian terraces and later Victorian infill. It illustrates different architectural responses to the expansion of housing by mixing larger and smaller homes, unlike elsewhere in the Conservation Area. This mix of architectural styles creates local distinctiveness and identity, separate from but connected with Oxford Road. For example: 1-9 Prospect Street are rare examples of Georgian artisan cottages and are of Townscape Merit; 11-23 Prospect Street are larger, Georgian terraces; and 4-26 Prospect Street are late Victorian/Edwardian properties, with distinctive architectural detailing. Architectural detailing became more important over time, evidenced by the addition of later architectural features at Number 23, directly influenced by the Victorian/Edwardian infill opposite.

RUSSELL STREET AND STREETS EAST CHARACTER AREA

Re-inclusion of Body Road, Anstey Road and 3 to 11 Baker Street.

Historic interest of the Character Area

The relationship between the Conservation Area and Reading town centre began as historic routes along Oxford Road and Castle Street/Castle Hill and developed into a suburban, and then urban, extension with shared architectural features. This Character Area reflects the cumulative historic and architectural interest of the wider Conservation Area, as a microcosm of Reading's housing history from the 18th to 20th centuries.

3-11 Baker Street provides an historic streetscape of tightly arranged, high quality terraces on small plots, built in multi-coloured bricks with bay windows to create compact, attractive and affordable housing.

The housing on Anstey and Body Roads, built in the 1890s, echo the earlier design of Baker Street terraces but are larger. Body Road (both sides), 1-3 Anstey Road and the southern (east- west length) of Anstey Road (5- 13) share a similar built form with a centre dormer, all of which still exist. This design difference is readily appreciated from the open area at the Body Road / Anstey Road junction.

The 2004 appraisal removed these properties from the Conservation Area, commenting: *"These are late 19th century houses, mostly in multiple occupation (flats) which have been adversely affected by the loss of their original windows and front doors. Other detrimental features include the addition of satellite dishes, the loss of front boundaries and the modern buildings facing the Inner Relief Road."*

These concerns remain, but the current appraisal strongly supported reinclusion, noting that these concerns apply equally elsewhere in the Conservation Area and contribute to its being listed as At Risk; that there is architectural merit in the houses, which are integral to the Conservation Area's housing history from the 18th to the 20th centuries; that public consultation supported its re-inclusion and valued the avenue of trees on Body Road, screening the IDR below; and that BSANA is actively supporting improvement. It also provides

a more logical and readable Conservation Area boundary and unifies the eastern side of the Conservation Area.

Architectural interest of Character Area

The proposed extension reflects the distinctive 19th and 20th century responses to Reading's population growth, with small, high quality houses in small plots.

Early residential development of this Conservation Area took place in three waves: large houses along Oxford Road and Castle Hill; large Georgian terraces along Russell Street; and later infill of smaller terraces as Reading continued to grow. Anstey and Body Roads are tertiary roads, connected with the secondary roads between Oxford Road and Castle Hill. Characteristic of these small terraces are their high quality construction; they were built to fit within the remaining space available along tertiary roads at the turn of the 20th century, in small plots with small gardens.

The local distinctiveness and identity of the terraces along Anstey and Body Roads echo the small terraces on Belle Vue Road and Franklin and Clifton Streets. They share the same two-up, two-down scale and architectural features such as bay windows, open porches and polychrome brick detailing seen on the west side of Anstey Road. Identical architectural features occur on the small terraces along the north side of Body Road and the south side of Anstey Road. The enclosed and compact nature of these small terraces with tiny gardens creates local distinctiveness and shared identity. This is reinforced by detailing on the façades of the larger terraces, 1-3 and 5-13 Anstey Road and Body Road.

CASTLE HILL / CASTLE STREET CHARACTER AREA

The re-inclusion of 1 to 15 Castle Street (Castle Gate flats) and the green space at the northwest corner of the Castle Street/IDR roundabout; plus the inclusion of 3 to 7 Coley Place (odds); plus the inclusion of the open park area to the south of those houses along Coley Place.

Historic interest of the Character Area

The spatial relationship between Castle Hill and the historic town centre developed through the slow expansion of residences along Castle Hill, particularly the fashionable villas centred initially on the Castle Hill, Coley Avenue and Bath Road junction. This connection slowly expanded with the development of further road networks and the infill of large and small terraces, until the centre and this former suburb became conjoined. This historic connection was severed by the construction of the IDR.

The revised boundary provides a clear entrance into this Character Area and reflects the road before it was severed from the town by the IDR. The harsh boundary of the IDR is softened a little by the green space at the roundabout, which contributes to the protected views into and out of the Conservation Area (Views 6A and 6B). Behind the green space, 1-15 Castle Street replaced a listed building. Whilst not historic, its materials and massing do not detract from the Conservation Area and it forms part of the balance between the large historic houses and the wide, sweeping curve of Castle Hill.

Including 3-7 Coley Place in the Conservation Area emphasises the escarpment as an edge of the Conservation Area. 3-7 Coley Place are the last surviving houses of what was originally a ten-house terrace at the edge of the escarpment, typifying the development of smaller terraces off Castle Hill and growth along secondary residential streets. 3-7 Coley Place also contributes to a protected view at an entry-point into the Conservation Area (View 17) and the open space to its south, which softens the hard edges of the IDR, is an opportunity for enhancement. The boundary change also helps re-ignite the linkage between this area and Castle Hill, across the

Architectural interest of the Character Area

3-7 Coley Place formed part of the westward expansion of town, until severed by the construction of the IDR. They show the contrast between the large town houses along Castle Hill, and smaller, later infill development. Their unique mansard roof terrace with dormers and their design on the edge of the escarpment create local distinctiveness: their basements are open to the back gardens, which slope steeply from the road down the hillside. They evidence the pressure to build houses in the latter half of the 19th century, even on the edge of a steep hillside.

CASTLE CRESCENT, STREETS SOUTH OF CASTLE HILL AND THE MANSFIELD ROAD EXTENSION

2 to 28 Mansfield Road (evens) 1 to 29 Mansfield Road (odds); 1,2,3 Coley Park Road

Historic interest of the Character Area

Mansfield Road is contemporary with Castle Crescent (c1890-1910) and shares its scale and "grain". The houses retain many original features, with Victorian tiles and polychrome detailing, and are generally well-cared for, despite many being converted to HMOs. Its buildings group into a suburban idyll and reflect the early development of this fashionable part of town. Coley Park Road was the only connecting road with it, creating a quiet and exclusive cul-de-sac, which is rare in developments of this period in Reading. A gap was retained in the plots to the south of Castle Crescent to accommodate the connecting road. Such relationships between the roads create their historic and architectural interest. In particular, 23-25 was situated to provide an end view along Coley Park Road from the junction with Castle Crescent.

Architectural interest of the Character Area

Most buildings on Mansfield Road are of Townscape Merit. Collectively they share formal design principles with villas in the Castle Crescent Character Area: pairs of semi-detached villas in large gardens. Their variety of architectural form is distinctive to this Character Area, though their polychrome, stone, and tile details are seen elsewhere in the Character Area. There are fine distant views toward St Giles Church.

Appendix 4. List of figures

Figure SS5.1	Proposed Conservation Area boundary	11
Figure 2.0.1	Topographical map of the Conservation Area, showing how the land falls away from the high point at the Castle Hill, Coley Avenue and Bath Road intersection	18
Figure 4.1.1	Road type layout within the conservation area	21
Figure 4.1.2	Buildings by age	23
Figure 4.2.1	Views into, out of and within the Conservation Area	25
Figure 4.2.2	View 6b: The view looking west up Castle Street to Castle Hill (Courtesy of Joe Doak).....	26
Figure 4.2.3	View 13: The chimney view at the back of Mr Swallow's residence (2 Bath Road) and 4 Bath Road	26
Figure 4.2.4	View 15: Early 19 th century view of Castle Hill looking east towards the town	27
Figure 4.2.5	View 15: Blended view of Castle Hill and Castle Street looking east from early 20 th century with tram line overhead to today's view with the Blade in the far distance	27
Figure 4.2.6	View 9 northwards towards the Holy Trinity Church along the Oxford Road from Russell Street	28
Figure 4.2.7	View 20 down Goldsmid Road from the south.....	28
Figure 4.2.8	Views 4a and 4b: Fox Talbot's early photograph of the allée of trees looking north east along Coley Avenue.....	29
Figure 4.2.9	View 5a: West view along the Bath Road from the junction with Castle Hill, Coley Avenue to the left, and Russell Street to the right.....	29
Figure 4.3.1	Tree Protection Orders within the Conservation Area	31
Figure 4.3.2	The large Cedar of Lebanon at 154- 160 Castle Hill and other TPO trees along the road.....	32
Figure 4.3.3	Large TPO trees along the Bath Road.....	32
Figure 4.3.4	Allée of trees along Coley Avenue looking north into the Conservation Area	33
Figure 4.3.5	The historical, open front garden space in front of Yeomanry House	34
Figure 5.1.1	Buildings and site classification.....	36
Figure 5.5.1	Lights from the IDR ((above left) and halogen street lights glaring into terraced housing at night along Zinzan Street	37
Figure 5.5.2	Overhead wires on a street with numerous HMOs.	38
Figure 5.5.3	Sett stone pavement at the end of Belle Vue Road, still displaying the fan pattern of road that was common in the area.	39
Figure 5.5.4	Coal hole cover, Castle Hill.....	39
Figure 6.0.1	Character Areas.....	41
Figure 6.1.1	Character Area 6.1—Castle Street/Castle Hill.....	43
Figure 6.1.2	View 17: Looking south up Coley Place from Castle Hill.....	44
Figure 6.1.3	View 15: Looking east towards town from Castle Hill.....	44
Figure 6.1.4	154- 160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, and Jesse family home.....	45
Figure 6.1.5	The former Horse and Jockey (The Castle Tap) rebuilt early 19 th century, 120 Castle Street.....	46
Figure 6.1.6	Yeomanry House at 131 Castle Hill - house, front drive and garden,	47
Figure 6.1.7	Former c.1840s gate house 133 Castle Hill for Yeomanry House, with the back section recently sympathetically built.	47
Figure 6.1.8	Berkshire Record Office, on the Yeomanry House site.....	47
Figure 6.1.9	William Pratt Swallow's house, 2 Bath Road with busy junction in front of it.....	48
Figure 6.1.10	Large rusticated Georgian houses on the south side of Castle Street at 107-111.....	49
Figure 6.1.11	Large Georgian properties on the north side of Castle Street at 122-132	49
Figure 6.1.12	Blenheim Terrace, Bath stone terrace, 97-105 Castle Street	50
Figure 6.1.13	Bath stone coloured stuccoed Regency style terrace, 134-144 Castle Hill	50

Figure 6.1.14	Attractive diverse terrace of Georgian properties at 113-121 Castle Street.....	51
Figure 6.1.15	Heritage Court, 144A- 152 Castle Hill, a Jesse family development	51
Figure 6.1.16	Nos. 162A-168, with Regency iron detailing, an early Jesse family development	52
Figure 6.2.1	Character Area 6.2—Oxford Road.....	57
Figure 6.2.2	Reading West railway bridge, facing west along the Oxford Road, the iron bridge replaced an original brick design	58
Figure 6.2.3	Poor condition listed Georgian housing, an acceptable modern pastiche front built onto a historic framework, varied shop façades and poor public realm all mix along the streetscape between Russell Street and Prospect Street	59
Figure 6.2.4	Large stuccoed Georgian Sidney Terrace,197-203 Oxford Road	59
Figure 6.2.5	101 Oxford Road-a detached Georgian family home with original high back garden walls	60
Figure 6.2.6	National Meteorological Society at 104 Oxford Road, a detached Georgian house with porticoed front porch surrounded by unsympathetic modern build	60
Figure 6.2.7	Listed Georgian terraces along Oxford Road, in poor repair, lost behind cluttered street furniture and busy road traffic	61
Figure 6.2.8	237 and 239 Oxford Road, part of Prospect Terrace, 237-247 Oxford Road/2 Lorne Street.....	61
Figure 6.2.9	Proudly diverse grocers and shops do business amid clutter and poor signage which mask the original early 19 th century structures on Oxford Road between Russell Street and Waylen Street.....	62
Figure 6.2.10	The Grade II Holy Trinity parish church at the intersection of Russell Street	63
Figure 6.2.11	Holy Trinity spiralet before removal	63
Figure 6.2.12	Providence Chapel, c. 1859, 103 Oxford Road (Google Maps)	64
Figure 6.2.13	Bridge Hall, originally built for the Reading Open Brethren Group, in poor repair.....	64
Figure 6.2.14	The Pavilion, a former popular Reading cinema, corner of Russell Street, now well restored and home to the Lifespring Church	65
Figure 6.2.15	1-9 Prospect Street, a rare modest Georgian artisan terrace with the over- bearing modern dormer window at no. 1	66
Figure 6.2.16	Prospect Mews, mews houses with an expanse of stone pavement at the entrance to the alleyway	66
Figure 6.2.17	The well-maintained Oxford Road Community School.....	67
Figure 6.2.18	Long retail terrace, 152-180 Oxford Road, stunning polychrome and largely intact, although incompatible signage and store fronts detract from its appearance.....	68
Figure 6.3.1	Character Area 6.3—Russell Street and streets east	74
Figure 6.3.2	View 11, of the winding Baker Street looking east.....	75
Figure 6.3.3	View 12, looking north up Jesse Terrace towards Castle Hill	75
Figure 6.3.4	2, 4 and 4A (listed Georgian semi- detached) Howard Street showing the rustication on 4A.....	76
Figure 6.3.5	Original iron railings at 16-22 Howard Street and the curved stucco dividing wall at no. 22.....	77
Figure 6.3.6	Terraces along the west side of Russell Street (nos. 38-42) with Regency window balconies.....	77
Figure 6.3.7a	Georgian terraces at nos. 6-14 Russell Street. The Holy Trinity parish church forms an impressive view at the north end of the street from the Oxford Road.....	78
Figure 6.3.7b	Russell Street with Holy Trinity Church at the foot 1844-47 Fox Talbot “talbotype” 78	
Figure 6.3.8	48-50 Russell Street, Bath stone semi- detached houses, very similar in style to those in Eldon Square in east Reading.....	79

Figure 6.3.9	54 Russell Street (c.1850s-1870s) cream coloured brick detached house	79
Figure 6.3.10	The Parsonage (c.1890) at the northeast corner of Baker Street and Russell Street with attractive polychrome and wood detailing	80
Figure 6.3.11	The well-maintained Nag's Head faux-Tudor pub, Russell Street ,(c.1850-1870s) multiple CAMRA Best Pub in Berkshire awards and an Asset of Community Value	81
Figure 6.3.12	Fox Talbot's 'Reading Establishment' studio at 55 Baker Street.....	82
Figure 6.3.13	23- 31 Baker Street, Alexandra Terrace, c.1850, red brick terrace, overall well-preserved with majority of original windows and doors intact.....	82
Figure 6.3.14	Rednirt Villas 1904, developed by Mr. Trinder, bay windows, polychrome and stone work detailing. Rednirt is Trinder spelt backwards.....	83
Figure 6.3.15	The Oasis Community Centre, c.1860s Inn and Public House	83
Figure 6.3.16	Detached house at no.14 Baker Street with cottage-like Victorian frontage	84
Figure 6.3.17	The conditions of terraced housing looking north along Zinzan Street with poor quality modern dormers, overhead wires, excessive bins and satellite dishes.	85
Figure 6.3.18	Looking north along Waylen Street with its overall poor conditions. The street's earliest houses, nos. 43-61 , are on the right c.1840.....	86
Figure 6.3.19	Close-up of terraces and gardens in Jesse Terrace	87
Figure 6.3.20	Carey Baptist Church chapel with its polychrome frontage, 1869	88
Figure 6.3.21	6-12 Body Road, the new red tile roof was installed in 2017 during the time protection of a conservation area did not apply	88
Figure 6.4.1	Character Area 6.4—West of Russell Street to Prospect Street	93
Figure 6.4.2	View 20, Large TPO oak at the corner of Goldsmid Road looking north.	94
Figure 6.4.3	The listed Georgian terraced houses from 61-79 Baker Street,complete with original doors, fanlights and windows	95
Figure 6.4.4	The listed National Spiritualist Church, 81 Baker Street,originally York Lodge, one of an early 19 th century group of three villas.....	95
Figure 6.4.5	Bellevue House, 2 Tilehurst Road, built prior to 1839, listed, with decorative urns possibly of Coade stone.....	96
Figure 6.4.6	Belle Vue Road, (c.1880-90) diminutive polychrome terraces with a high brick wall to the right separating the development from the original Bellevue Villa. The view is north to the backs of the listed 61-79 Baker Street and the Caversham escarpment beyond	96
Figure 6.4.7	Terraced polychrome houses along Clifton Street, the ones to the south with double bay fronts	97
Figure 6.4.8	Matching terrace on Franklin Street facing east behind the one on Clifton, The small gate mid-way is the access to the extant back passageway.....	98
Figure 6.4.9	Listed Moorish style synagogue with fine brick and stone detailing and bell tower, Goldsmid Road at the corner of Clifton Street	99
Figure 6.5.1	Character Area 6.5— Castle Crescent and streets south of Castle Hill	102
Figure 6.5.2	View 4a and 4b, The 220 plus year old allée of trees along Coley Avenue with old high brick walls, (View north from Castle Crescent)	104
Figure 6.5.3	31-35 Coley Hill, stuccoed lower ground floor and later Victorian trimmed windows, 1820-30s.....	105
Figure 6.5.4	Arched windows and fanlights on two storey Georgian houses, Coley Hill	105
Figure 6.5.5	3 Castle Crescent after recent renovations.....	106
Figure 6.5.6	Stucco 3-storey houses- south side of Castle Crescent near Coley Avenue, c. 1840.....	106
Figure 6.5.7	Polychrome houses along the north side of Castle Crescent	107
Figure 6.5.8	Attractive stone and tile house at the corner of Mansfield Road and Coley Park Road.....	107
Figure 6.5.9	Field Road polychrome terrace	108
Figure 6.5.10	Large polychrome villa set back amongst striking TPO trees, Bath Road.....	108

Figure 6.5.11	The mid 20 th century Berkeley Court, Coley Avenue	109
Figure A1.1	Part of Burt's etching of a plan of Civil War defences looking South	125
Figure A1.2	Part of Coates Map 1802 showing 'Old Fortifications'	125
Figure A1.3	Extract from Rocque's Map of Reading 1761	126
Figure A1.4	Part of Thomas Coates' map, 1802	127
Figure A1.5	The deed that created and laid out. Waylen Street and Zinzan Street off the Oxford Road, c.1830s (BRO)	128
Figure A1.6	Oxford Road, Dormer Map 1833 showing residential terraces and street front shops already in existence to Prospect Street and Prospect Terrace beyond to the west.....	129
Figure A1.7	Oxford Road, Sanitation Map 1853 showing development west to Prospect Street with Prospect Terrace still separate to the west	129
Figure A1.8	Holy Trinity Parish Church, Oxford Road, late 19 th century. Hulme's Villas sit to its east on the right.....	129
Figure A1.9	The Pencil of Nature, the first mass- produced book containing photographs, published during Fox Talbot's time in Reading	130
Figure A1.10	Fox Talbot and his workers at the rear of his studio at 55 Baker Street. To the far right are the houses of 33- 35 Baker Street. (Met public domain, downloaded)	131
Figure A1.11	The Yeomanry House site map for its sale in 1880.....	132
Figure A1.12	Finches Buildings- demolished for the IDR. The side of 3 Baker Street at the far right	133
Figure A2.1	Geology of the area (Conservation Area outline approximate)	134

APPENDIX 4: REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE READING CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRACKED CHANGES VERSION)

1. Summary

1.1 The Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is a voluntary group independent of but endorsed by Reading Borough Council (RBC). The aims of the committee are to promote the preservation and enhancement of Reading's heritage particularly but not limited to the protection and good management of Conservation Areas. It works with RBC and other heritage groups to achieve its objectives.

2. Detailed Aims

1. 2.1 To advise ~~the Council~~RBC when preparing Conservation Area Character Appraisals or policies for the preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area, ~~h~~Heritage ~~s~~Sites or other areas deemed to be of ~~h~~Historical ~~i~~Importance. As appropriate, to take the lead in revising ~~C~~onservation ~~A~~area appraisals and formulating policies for particular ~~C~~onservation ~~A~~areas (including making positive proposals for their enhancement and measures for their general care and maintenance ~~of the area~~). To initiate the consideration of and to make recommendations concerning the boundaries of potential Conservation Areas. To make recommendations for and modifications to the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas.
2. 2.2 To assist in furthering the education, involvement and support of the local bodies and the general public in conservation issues.
3. 2.3 To ~~comment and~~ advise ~~the Council~~RBC on ~~certain~~ planning applications, ~~inclusive of P and pre-a~~Applications, including objection or support, and to advise RBC on any other matters which may be referred to the Committee ~~which affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, Heritage Site or other area deemed to be of Historical Importance~~. Representations from the CAAC on planning applications should be submitted to the ~~p~~Planning ~~and Development~~ ~~t~~Team. Recognising the voluntary nature of this ~~C~~ommittee, not every application will be considered and therefore a lack of comment will not imply endorsement.
- 2.4 The CAAC may make representations on matters which affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, heritage site or other area deemed to be of historical import.
4. 2.5 To advise ~~the Council~~RBC on schemes for the enhancement of Conservation Areas or other heritage assets ~~which may be~~ referred to the Committee or initiated by it for works or operations, other than maintenance works, to the public highway, public realm, public open

space or any other ~~C~~council--managed space which will impact such assets.

2.6 The CAAC will meet as required to address priorities and have arrangements in place to submit timely planning application comments between meetings. Meetings will be set as deemed necessary, at least four times per annum.

2.7 To keep abreast of national policy, advice and best practice and share with RBC officers.

~~5.~~ 2.8 The Committee may agree to the setting up of appropriate e-mail accounts, web sites and social media accounts etc. in order to communicate with and inform members of the CAAC and the public about matters within these terms of reference.

3. **Membership**

~~1.~~ 3.1 ~~The Committee~~CAAC membership will aim to reflect a cross-section of interests, local people and appropriate skills. ~~Nominations to serve on the Committee will be sought from relevant local groups, professional bodies and companies, and more widely if it deemed appropriate.~~

~~2.~~ 3.2 Councillors, ~~who are not other than~~ members of the Planning Applications Committee, may be appointed to serve on the Committee. However, Councillors from the Planning Applications Committee may be invited to attend meetings, ~~but~~ in an ex-officio observational observer capacity only.

~~3.~~ 3.3 The CAAC shall elect a chair, a vice chair, a planning policy and liaison officer and a secretary/ minute taker to serve for a minimum period of a the forthcoming year until the first committee meeting after the following 1 April.

~~4.~~ 3.4 The name of the Chair ~~along with a general and~~ contact email for each CAAC shall be included on the CAAC webpage on the Council's website. The ~~c~~C Constitution of the ~~c~~C Committee shall be posted on the Council's website.

3.5 The committee will have no less than six and no more than 20 members in order to ensure that it can work effectively. ~~The names and addresses of all CAAC members shall be held by the Council for reference.~~ The Committee will have the power to co-opt temporary members with a specific subject or CA of interest who may not wish to be longer term members of the Committee.

~~5.~~ 3.6 Sub-groups may be formed by the committee with a defined remit to report back to the committee.

6. 3.7 The CAAC will ~~advertise for~~seek new members when places become available and new members will be chosen by the Committee on the basis of their potential contribution to the work of the CAAC. Individuals who are interested in joining the Committee may apply. Observers and / or speakers can be invited to Committee meetings to assist with the work of the CAAC and networking with other groups.
7. 3.8 Appointments ~~to approved by the C~~ommittees shall be for a period of four years, but may be renewed after that period. At the first meeting of the Committee after 1 April membership for the forthcoming year will be re-confirmed.
8. 3.9 ~~It is important that a proportion of the Panel members have knowledge of planning and are familiar with looking at drawings. In When~~ recruiting new members, ~~every reasonable effort will be made~~the aim will be to ensure that the Committee is made up of individuals that will be able to give constructive, professional opinions ~~in relation to the goals of~~on improving the historic environment of Reading. This should include knowledge of planning, conservation and urban design, as well as representation from residents and communities living in conservation areas or heritage areas. To ensure the quality of the Committee's output, 'A' advisory memberships' may be taken from professional persons engagedinclude practitioners in historical conservation or planning ~~from outside of the town of~~ Reading.

4. Procedures

1. 4.1 ~~Details of~~A link to the CAAC meetings calendar and other information shall be included on the CAAC webpage on the Council's website ~~and a summarised annual report also placed on the web site.~~
2. ~~A quorum of at least one third of the CAAC members shall be required for the committee to vote on decisions.~~
- 4.2 Matters shall be decided by consensus or if necessary by a simple majority vote of members present. The Chair shall have the casting vote where agreement cannot be reached.
3. 4.3 A quorum of at least one third of the CAAC members shall be required for the committee to vote on decisions.
- 4.3 The CAAC does not fall within the definition of a committee or subcommittee as contained in Section 102 of the Local Government Act of 1972.
- 4.4 Meetings of the Committee will not be open to the public or the press.

- 4.5 Comments on planning applications may be discussed at Committee meetings but are likely to have deadlines which fall between meetings. The agreement of three members of the Committee, of whom one is an officer, is required on the comments to be made. Ideally one of the three will have local knowledge of the proposal.
4. 4.6 ~~However, c~~Comments of by the CAAC on planning applications will be published by the relevant case-worker with the related pPlanning aApplication documents on the planning applications website. The CAAC's comments shall be taken into consideration in the planning officer's assessment of the planning application and recorded in the officer's report, referred to at Planning Application Committee meetings and a link to the documents published on the Council's CAAC web-site page.
- ~~5.~~ 4.7 The CAAC may invite to its meetings applicants and other parties involved in proposed developments or ~~in regards to items having to do with~~other matters concerning the historic environment ~~to the meetings in order to~~ explain or clarify issues. ~~It is important to note that t~~The CAAC is a consultee in its own right and it is there to form its own views on the applications they received to comment on.
- ~~6.~~ 4.8 Representations from the CAAC on planning applications will be set out in adequate detail. ~~If the CAAC objects to~~comments on an application ~~they~~ will clearly identify ~~the reasons why the proposal is harmful to its impact on~~ the character and appearance of the relevant Conservation Area and ~~why it is not in accordance with its relevance to~~ the Council's development plan or planning guidance.
- ~~7.~~ 4.9 ~~The CAAC's comments shall be taken into consideration in the planning officer's assessment of the planning application and recorded in the officer's report.~~Where the CAAC has objected to an application and this objection cannot be overcome and the recommendation is for approval, the CAAC will be able to request the application be considered at the Council's Planning Applications Committee either by asking the ward Councillor to bring it forward or the Town's Heritage Champion (a Councillor held - position).
- ~~8.~~ 4.10 Members of the CAAC shall not be remunerated for their participation in the activities of the CAAC.
- ~~9.~~ 4.11 If any member of the CAAC has any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any planning application or other matter before the CAAC, that member shall declare their interest, withdraw from the meeting while the matter is under consideration, and this should be noted in the minutes.

5. Officers

- 5.1 CHAIR and VICE CHAIR. The chair and vice-chair of the committee are the first points of contact for the CAAC.
- 5.2 PLANNING AND POLICY LIAISON OFFICER. In consultation with other members of the committee, the planning and policy liaison officer will monitor new planning applications for those of interest to the CAAC and expedite responses and comments. The officer will also be aware of changes in local and national planning policy which may affect the heritage environment and bring it to the attention of the wider committee.
- 5.3 MINUTE TAKER/SECRETARY. The minute taker will take minutes of committee meetings and distribute to attendees and circulate the agenda of future meetings.

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Summons and Agenda 24 March 2020

**Chief Executive
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU**

Peter Sloman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 937 3787

To: All Members of the Council

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2303
e-mail:
michael.popham@reading.gov.uk

16 March 2020

Your contact is: Michael Popham - Democratic Services Manager

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Reading Borough Council to be held at **Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading**, on **Tuesday, 24 March 2020 at 6.30 pm**, when it is proposed to transact the business specified in the Agenda enclosed herewith.

Yours faithfully



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive Mayor's Announcements.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

9 - 18

The Mayor to sign the Minutes of the proceedings of the previous Council Meeting.

4. **PETITIONS**

To receive petitions in accordance with Standing Order 8.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Questions in accordance with Standing Order 9.

6. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions in accordance with Standing Order 10.

7. **COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020/21 - 2022/23**

19 - 26

Report by Executive Director of Resources

8. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21**

27 - 56

Report by Executive Director of Resources

9. **LOCAL ELECTRICITY BILL**

Councillor Emberson to move:

Reading Borough Council acknowledges the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy.

The Council also recognises that:

- Councils can play a central role in creating sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated renewable electricity
- The very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so

- Making financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations.
- Revenues received by councils that became local renewable electricity providers could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities.

Accordingly, Reading Borough Council resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply.

The Council further resolves to inform the local media of this decision, write to the Members of Parliament for Reading East and Reading West to ask them to support the Bill, and to write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, expressing its support.

10. END THE DECLINE IN WILDFLOWERS TO SAVE THE BEES

Councillor Sokale to move:

The British landscape has witnessed a 97% decline in wildflower meadows since 1945. Wildflowers also have a part to play in meeting the challenge of climate change as they have been shown to improve air quality in urban areas. This is because they have an optimum green structure with their different leaves capturing a range of pollutants as well as removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Today, wildflower meadows make up less than 1% of the UK landscape. Wildflowers are especially important for pollinating insects such as: bumble bees, moths, butterflies, wasps, beetles, and hoverflies as well as honeybees which have been negatively impacted over the last century with habitat loss, pesticides and the depletion of nectar sources.

The decline of wildflowers and the resulting decline in pollinating insects is a problem for us all as it is estimated that one third of food we eat is pollinator dependant. Without them, we endanger future food production.

The Council welcomes:

- The Reading Climate Change Partnership Strategy which will reflect the council's commitment to climate change and the environment.
- Financial initiatives to increase wildflower planting and maintenance within the Borough on Council-managed property.
- The commitment of our Parks Team to identify routes and areas where the possibility exists for wildflower planting with the

Council's Geographical Information System (GIS).

- The draft Local Transport Plan, currently out for public consultation, and its intent to increase biodiversity along Reading's highways.

This Council resolves to:

- Seek to increase wildflower planting within the Borough, noting that much land suitable for planting is in private ownership.
- Continue to identify and manage Reading's wildflower meadows for wildlife and pollinators and seek viable opportunities to increase the extent of these habitats.
- Explore and, where suitable, trial alternative maintenance approaches on grass verges.
- Actively engage local groups and interested residents on areas suitable for wildflower planting and to further work with and advise those volunteers as to the planting and maintenance of these areas.
- Deliver on the wider Biodiversity Strategy, now out for public consultation, as a component of the Reading Climate Change Strategy and to regularly review and improve its management plans for parks and open spaces to increase biodiversity.

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

Present: Councillor Woodward (Mayor);

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Carnell, Challenger, Davies, Duveen, Eden, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Grashoff, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Leng, Lovelock, Manghnani, Maskell, McEwan, McGonigle, McKenna, O'Connell, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, Rynn, D Singh, R Singh, Skeats, Sokale, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, Terry, White, Whitham, J Williams and R Williams;

Apologies: Councillor Hacker.

39. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

40. PETITION

Carol Goddard presented a petition in the following terms:

It is with great regret that I understand you are not replacing the Bowls Hall when the new Leisure Centre is to be built.

I am currently a bowler at Rivermead Bowling Club and would like the facility to either be provided at the new Leisure Centre or at a new building close to the current one.

I will be unable to play at Whiteknights and I do not want to drive to a Club up to 30 minutes drive away from my home.

Please reconsider your current plans and provide a new facility for Rivermead Bowling Club.

RESPONSE by Councillor Hoskin (Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport):

Thank you very much for taking the time to bring your petition to the Council tonight.

We do understand your disappointment that a dedicated bowls hall could not, in the end, be provided within the final plans for the new leisure centre at Rivermead. Whilst we would love to have been able to provide a new bowls hall the process to select a partner was driven by a need to secure affordability for the council tax payer. These budget constraints meant we were unable to include these facilities in the specification for the leisure contract as a minimum requirement.

As part of the process to develop the specification, the Council used Sport England modelling to review the demand and supply for indoor sports facilities, including bowls. Particular attention was paid to likely future demand including changes in population and changing trends in participation in physical activity.

This was used to produce the minimum requirements for facilities and services. The modelling indicated greater capacity than demand for indoor bowls, reflecting the membership numbers observed.

Reading is unusually fortunate to be served by two indoor bowls halls, three miles apart. Whiteknights bowls club with seven rinks has 850 to 900 members, and Rivermead with 250 to 300 members, uses the six rinks provided.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

Whilst the consideration of what facilities exist within Greater Reading was part of the considerations in terms of prioritisation, the club's aspirations and business plan was provided to the bidders to help them draw up their proposals.

Whilst the new facility at Rivermead will not include an indoor bowls centre, the aim is to create an inclusive swimming and fitness environment, including a 25m 8-lane competition pool and a 6-court sports hall.

In addition, the GLL have been tasked with increasing the number of people from priority groups participating in physical exercise. To achieve this GLL have opted to make significant improvement to facilities and provide a number of targeted activities within their programme.

For older people, this includes expanding the 60+ clubs across all leisure centres in Reading, providing more walking sports, and developing new activities with Age UK and the University of the 3rd Age.

There are plans to link to health programmes such as social prescribing, exercise referral, falls prevention, cardiac and cancer rehabilitation activities. There will also be community outreach programmes targeting priority groups delivering monthly sessions in community settings such as parks and community centres.

That said, I understand that your specific concern, and passion, is about indoor bowls. I have committed myself to working closely with Rivermead Bowls Club to explore fully all options and proposals to support both it and members over the next couple of years. A senior council officer and I have already enjoyed a productive meeting with the club and the next is in the diary. Furthermore we will increasingly include GLL in these discussions. It is also important to remember that the present bowls hall, along with the rest of Rivermead, will remain open until, at least, late summer 2022, and therefore provide a home for the winter 20/21 and 21/22 seasons.

41. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Helen Palmer	RBH Environmental Policy	Cllr Page
2.	Alice Mpofu-Coles	School Exclusions	Cllr Pearce
3.	Richard Stainthorp	Recycling Rates	Cllr James
4.	Richard Stainthorp	Food Waste Recycling	Cllr James
5.	Richard Stainthorp	School Capacity	Cllr Pearce
6.	Stuart Kinton	Climate Emergency	Cllr Brock
7.	Michael Sage	Climate Emergency - Lobbying & Cooperation	Cllr Brock
8.	Andrew Hornsby-Smith	Carbon Neutral by 2030	Cllr Page
9.	Andrew Hornsby-	Chestnut Walk	Cllr Rowland

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

	Smith		
10.	Amjad Tarar	Improving Recycling Rates	Cllr James
11.	Amjad Tarar	Major Developments in Reading	Cllr Page
12.		WITHDRAWN	
13.	Stuart Kinton	Carbon Neutral by 2030	Cllr Page
14.	Roger Lightfoot	Leisure Facilities Contract	Cllr Hoskin
15.	Peter Burt	Free Swimming	Cllr Hoskin
16.	Peter Burt	Sports and Leisure Forum	Cllr Hoskin
17.	Roger Lightfoot	New Swimming Pools	Cllr Hoskin
18.	John Booth	Climate Emergency - Local Investment	Cllr Page

As there was insufficient time, pursuant to Standing Order 9(6), a written reply to Questions 8-11 and 13-18 above would be provided in accordance with Standing Order 11(3).

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

42. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 10

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Cllr Duveen	Accounts for 2017/18 & 2018/19	Cllr Brock
2.	Cllr Duveen	Equal Pay Settlements	Cllr Brock
3.	Cllr O'Connell	Traveller Incursions	Cllr Page
4.	Cllr Manghnani	Travellers	Cllr Page
5.	Cllr Manghnani	Indoor Bowling at Rivermead	Cllr Hoskin
6.	Cllr White	Is Rough Sleeping on the Increase?	Cllr Ennis
7.	Cllr J Williams	Ensuring Value for Public Money	Cllr Brock
8.	Cllr McGonigle	Single use Plastics Update	Cllr Brock
9.	Cllr White	Green Road Tennis Courts	Cllr Hoskin

As there was insufficient time, pursuant to Standing Order 10(4), a written reply to Questions 8-9 above would be provided in accordance with Standing Order 11(3).

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

43. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE COUNCIL'S 2020/21 BUDGET

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report fulfilling the requirement on her under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 as the Council's Chief Finance Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves. The Council had a duty to have regard to the advice set out in the report when considering setting its 2020/21 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for the subsequent two financial years. The Statement of Reserves and Balances, which provided a summary of estimated reserve movements from 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2023, were attached to the report for information.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

Resolved -

That the Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Council's 2019/20 budget and indicative budgets for the subsequent two financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 be noted and the opinion contained therein be taken into account in making the decisions set out in Minutes 44-47 below.

44. 2020/21 BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2023

Further to Minutes 59 and 72 of the Policy Committee meetings held on 16 December 2019 and 17 February 2020 respectively, the Executive Director of Resources submitted a report on the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the three years 2020/21 - 2022/23. The report provided an update on the results of the budget consultation exercise as well as changes arising from the publication of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement [LGFS] and other changes that had arisen since the report to Policy Committee in December.

The proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy was informed by and supported the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities including its commitment to address the climate change emergency; and sought to ensure that the Council was "fit for the future", with sound finances that would allow the Council's future funding challenges and spending pressures to be met in as sustainable a way as possible. The underpinning rationale of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensured the Council's finances were sustainable over the medium term and that in the longer term the Council's finances were not reliant on the unsustainable use of one-off reserves or funding and that general and earmarked reserves were maintained and bolstered to meet future funding challenges and risk. The Strategy was informed by the Council's Vision: "to ensure that Reading realises its potential - and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success", as well as its Corporate Plan priorities. The Budget assumptions were set out in the report as follows:

- a) Council Tax increases of 3.99% (including a one off 2.0% social care precept) in 2020/21 and 1.99% in both 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- b) £32.9m of efficiencies and increased income across the period;
- c) A contingency provision over the three years (£3.5m 2020/21; £4.9m 2021/22; and £5.2m 2022/23) to mitigate possible slippage or non-achievement of higher risk savings and/or income targets over the period;

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

- d) General Fund capital investment of £365m over the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 of which £200m would be for invest to save purposes;
- e) £4.5m of transformation funding (over the period 2020/21 to 2021/22) to support delivery of efficiency savings assumed within the MTFS.

The report had the following documents appended: Summary of General Fund Budget 2020-21 to 2022-23; General Fund Revenue Budget by Service 2020-21 to 2022-23; Detailed General Fund Budgets 2020-21 to 2022-23; Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020-21 to 2022-23; General Fund and HRA Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2022-23; Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy; Fees and Charges; Equality Impact Assessment; Dedicated Schools Grant; and details of the Budget Consultation exercise.

A motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED as set out in the resolution below.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Whitham and LOST:

'In the recommendation relating to 2020/21 Budget & Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023 (Agenda item 8), insert "subject to an additional recommendation (i) below" after the words "...endorse the Draft 2020/21 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Draft Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9, and..."

Add a new Recommendation (i) as follows:

"(i) This Council notes:

- Reading Council has declared a climate emergency.
- 39% of Reading's carbon emissions comes from housing.
- 4,000 houses per year need to be insulated.
- 7,290 of our Reading households live in fuel poverty (where they don't have enough money to heat their home) and in some parts of the town it is as high as 30% of residents (UK average is 10.9%).
- Most Council homes have had basic energy efficiency measures installed but many private rented and owner-occupied properties haven't.
- There is no government scheme of the appropriate size to insulate the number of homes needed.
- However, some government funding is available. Local Authority Flex (LA Flex), is a part of the UK Government's third phase of ECO (Energy Company Obligation) money to tackle fuel poverty.
- Neighbouring Bracknell Forest Council has a Local Authority Flex scheme. They work with local insulation companies and have insulated 1,126 private rented and owner-occupied properties under this scheme since November 2018. Bracknell also offer top up grants to pay for further insulation and energy efficiency measures.

This Council resolves to:

- Set up a Local Authority Flex scheme to use central government money to insulate qualifying Reading homes in the private rented and owner-occupied sectors as soon as possible.
- Earmark £1 million of the 19/20 General Fund revenue underspend to set up a grants fund to pay for top up housing energy efficiency measures to houses

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

which qualify under the Local Authority Flex scheme. This money will also pay for an 18 month fixed term post to finalise and administer the scheme.

- The grants fund will be used for home energy efficiency measures that will help homes reach an Energy Performance Certificate level C. Priority for the grants fund will be given to helping those in fuel poverty."

Make all consequential amendments to the revenue and capital budgets arising from the above amendment.'

A recorded vote having been demanded, the voting was as follows:

For the motion: 6 Councillors Duveen, McGonigle, O'Connell, White, Whitham and J Williams.

Against the motion: 39

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Carnell, Challenger, Davies, Eden, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Grashoff, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Leng, Lovelock, Maskell, Manghnani, McKenna, McEwan, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, Rynn, D Singh, R Singh, Skeats, Sokale, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, Terry, R Williams and Woodward.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Duveen and seconded by Councillor O'Connell and LOST:

'In the recommendation relating to 2020/21 Budget & Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023 (Agenda item 8), insert "subject to an additional recommendation (i) below" after the words "...endorse the Draft 2020/21 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Draft Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9, and..."

Add a new Recommendation (i) as follows:

"(i) This Council notes from the Chief Financial Officer's Report that the current year 2019/20 will end with a projected underspend of £3.2m.

In view of this we propose that the Council add the following projects to the Recommended Actions, using money from the underspend in 2019-20.

In relation to paragraph 13.3 of the report, amend the following bullet points:

- £500,000 for electric vehicle charging points (across 2 years from 2020-21);
- £200,000 for tree planting including a new bowser and towing vehicle in 2020-21 and further annual funds of £100,000 for 2021/22 and 2022/23; and

add the following additional bullet point:

- £50,000 for a second camera van"

Make any consequential amendments to the revenue and capital budgets arising from the above amendment.'

A recorded vote having been demanded, the voting was as follows:

For the motion: 6 Councillors Duveen, McGonigle, O'Connell, White, Whitham and J Williams.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

Against the motion: 39

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Carnell, Challenger, Davies, Eden, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Grashoff, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Leng, Lovelock, Maskell, Manghnani, McKenna, McEwan, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, Rynn, D Singh, R Singh, Skeats, Sokale, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, Terry, R Williams and Woodward.

Resolved -

That, taking due regard of the results of the budget consultation exercise (as outlined in Section 3 and set out in more detail in Appendix 10 of the report), endorse the Draft 2020/21 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Draft Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9, and agree the following:

- (a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £150.1m for 2020/21 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax for the Council of 3.99% (1.99% general increase and 2.00% additional adult social care precept) or £64.93 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £1,692.16 per annum as set out in paragraph 8.2 of the report;
- (b) the proposed efficiency savings of £6.3m together with additional income of £5.3m in 2020/21 required to achieve a balanced budget for that year as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (c) the overall savings proposed within the MTFs of £32.9m (of which changes to income, fees and charges is £13.5m) and three-year growth changes to service budgets of £26.6m as set out in Appendix 3;
- (d) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2020/21 of £40.9m as set out in Appendix 4 and an average increase of 3.3% in social dwelling rents from April 2020 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £102.57;
- (e) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes as set out in Appendices 5a and 5b;
- (f) the Strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver future transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix 6;
- (g) the changes to Fees and Charges set out in Appendix 7 of the report;
- (h) the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as set out in Appendix 9.

A recorded vote having been demanded, the voting was as follows:

For the motion: 29

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ayub, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Challenger, Davies, Eden, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Leng, Lovelock, Maskell, McKenna, McEwan, Page, Pearce, Rowland, D Singh, Sokale, Terry, R Williams and Woodward.

Against the motion: 16

Councillors Ballsdon, Carnell, Duveen, Grashoff, Manghnani, McGonigle, O'Connell, Robinson, Rynn, R Singh, Skeats, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, White, Whitham and J Williams.

45. DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY

Further to Minute 73 of the Policy Committee held on 17 February 2020, the Executive Director of Resources submitted a report on the Capital Strategy, which was attached as an Appendix, and provided an overview of where and how the Council intended to deploy its capital resources to support the delivery of the strategic aims set out in the Corporate Plan. The Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with other strategic documents such as the Council's Asset Management Plan, Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and the Commercial Investment Strategy. The Council had an ambitious Capital Programme, a key aspect of which was the commitment to invest in the acquisition of commercial property in Reading and neighbouring Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas to support its strategic objectives. The extent of the Council's investment in commercial properties and the criteria for investment were set out in section 5 of the Strategy. The Council had limited capital resources and had therefore developed a prioritisation matrix to determine how resources would be used and capital bids were assessed using this tool to highlight risks and opportunities.

The Capital Strategy had regard to prevailing Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Guidance and the Prudential Code. Compliance with government guidance was considered on a case by case basis and where permissible may be ignored if not in line with the Council's Corporate Plan. The Council had decided not to have full regard to CIPFA guidance or the Prudential Code as it related to commercial property investment and lending to housing associations. The proposed Action Plan at Appendix D of the Strategy identified four areas where work was required for the Council to become fully compliant with the CIPFA code requirements. These were:

- Developing our knowledge of the existing asset base;
- Identifying what assets we need in the future;
- Developing and implementing new systems and processes, which enable the transition to become fully compliant with the code requirements;
- Reviewing current capacity within the organisation.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

Resolved -

- (1) That the Capital Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) That the updated Action Plan that formed Appendix D of the Capital Strategy be noted, together with the associated financial implications.

46. COUNCIL TAX SETTING

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking approval of the calculations for determining the Council Tax requirement for the year 2020/21, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The report also sought approval to set the Council Tax amounts for each property valuation band in the Borough including precepts from the Thames Valley Police and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

Resolved -

- (1) That the following amounts that have been calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be agreed:
 - (i) £425,131,532 being the estimated aggregate expenditure of the Council in accordance with section 31A (2) of the Act;
 - (ii) £329,116,681 being the estimated aggregate income of the Council for the items set out in section 31A (3) of the Act;
 - (iii) £96,014,851 being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as the Council's Council Tax Requirement for the year (Item R);
 - (iv) £1,692.16 being the amount at (iii) above (Item R) divided by the Council's tax base 56,741 (Item T) calculated in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, representing an increase of 3.99% in the Council's own tax;
- (2) That the net tax base of 56,741 Band D equivalent properties (being the gross tax base adjusted for an assumed collection rate) used for setting the budget requirement for 2020/21 that was agreed by Council on 28 January 2020 be noted; and
 - (i) that the Band D charge for Reading Borough Council be £1,692.16 as shown in section 4.4 of the report; and
 - (ii) that, including the Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and Thames Valley Police precepts, Council Tax by property valuation band be as set out in section 4.8 of the report.

47. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (2020/21); MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY (2020/21); ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2020/21)

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report seeking approval for a Treasury Management Strategy, which had to be in place before the start of each financial year, in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 and the CIPFA Prudential Code. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), was attached to the report at Appendix A, setting out the parameters for the Council's planned Treasury activity during 2020/21, which the Council's Treasury Team would manage on a day-to-day basis. The TMSS reflected the Council's Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 with non-treasury investments being registered in the Council's Capital Strategy, which was presented separately to the TMSS (see Minute 45 above). The report also had appended the Treasury Management Policy 2020/21; Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) 2020/21; and the Annual Investment Strategy.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

Resolved -

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (2) That the Treasury Management Policy for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (3) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (4) That the Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (5) That the Prudential and Treasury Management indicators as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

48. RBC ACTION SINCE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY - AND FUTURE PLANS

Further to Minute 74 of the Policy Committee held on 17 February 2020, the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on action taken on climate change since the declaration of a climate emergency at Council on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers), and to summarise future plans in this area, with a particular focus on financial commitments in the context of the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023. The report illustrated that over the two first full financial years since the declaration of a climate emergency, 2019/20 and 2020/21, the Council had committed around £34 million to capital projects which would contribute directly to reducing emissions, in both its own operations and the wider community. The report also showed how the Council had made additional revenue commitments to develop and accelerate its response to the declaration. Additionally, the Council would ensure that all policy and spending decisions across the full range of its activities took account of their impact on emissions wherever possible, and that all staff were engaged in the process of working towards the goal of a net zero carbon Reading by 2030. A new Climate Action Programme Board had been established in January 2020 to help achieve this and to ensure good governance in this area in line with best practice advice. The report had appended a summary of the Council's action since declaring a Climate Emergency and the plans to continue this work.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Brock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

Resolved -

That the progress to date and the future plans as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report to take forward the Council's commitment to achieving a net zero carbon Reading by 2030 be endorsed.

(The meeting closed at 9.25pm).

Agenda Item 7

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	24 MARCH 2020		
TITLE:	COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020/21 - 2022/23		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR BROCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADERSHIP
SERVICE:	COUNCILLOR SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MIKE GRAHAM	TEL:	0118 937
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Michael.graham@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to Minutes 54, 9 and 18 of the Council's meetings held on 26 March, 22 May and 25 June 2019 respectively, this report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the scheme of Councillors' Allowances for the financial year 2020/21.
- 1.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel considers a scheme of allowances and makes recommendations to Council each year. In 2019/20, the Panel undertook a full review of the scheme. As part of that review, the Panel recommended the basic allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) should be increased at the beginning of each new financial year in accordance with the Local Government Pay Settlement (LGPS). The Council accepted this recommendation.
- 1.3 On the basis of the Panel's full review in 2019/20, the Council adopted a revised scheme, which came into effect on 1 October 2020. The Panel has decided to recommend that the Councillors' Allowances scheme for 2020/21 should remain unchanged, with the expectation that the basic allowance and SRAs would be increased in line with the LGPS. This recommendation had been an important feature of the Panel's report to provide a safeguard to prevent councillors' allowances in Reading falling behind other comparable authorities again in the future.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The Leader will move a motion.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council on 25 June 2019 (Minute 18 refers) agreed a scheme for Councillors' Allowances for 2019/20, with the following features:

- (i) The total amount to be spent on Councillors' Allowances be £550,000;
- (ii) The level of basic allowance to be paid to each councillor be £8,220 per annum.
- (iii) That the remaining £171,875 be spent on special responsibility allowances (SRA) to be paid at the following levels to the office holders as specified below:

Office Holder	Level of SRA pa
Leader of the Council	£18,500
Deputy Leader of the Council	£11,300
Tier 1 to be paid to the Lead Councillors	£9,500
Tier 2 to be paid to the Leader of the main opposition group and the Chairs of Licensing Applications Committee and Planning Applications Committee	£6,076
Tier 3 to be paid to the Chairs of Committees (except the Chair of the Appeals Committee), and Group Leaders of the other political groups	£3,039
Tier 4 to be paid to councillors carrying out such other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require the commitment of equivalent time and effort as for other categories of activity which would qualify for Special Responsibility Allowance under Paragraph 5(1)(i) of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003	£1,074

(iv) Councillors may claim for the cost of a carer to look after children or disabled or elderly dependant relatives whilst undertaking approved duties on behalf of the Council as follows:

- Up to £9 per hour for childcare, up to 15 hours per week;
- Up to £9 per hour for the carer of a disabled or elderly dependant relative (including a disabled child), up to 15 hours per week;

and provided that the above claims were supported by a signed receipt from the carer confirming the hours and amount claimed and that the carer was not a close relative. These allowances are taxable.

(v) An approved duty is defined as follows:

- a meeting of the executive
- a meeting of a committee of the executive
- a meeting of the authority
- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the authority
- a meeting of some other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations

- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations
- a meeting which has both been authorised by the authority, a committee, or sub-committee of the authority or a joint committee of the authority and one or more authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the authority is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more councillors have been invited (if the authority is not divided into political groups)
- a meeting of a local authority association of which the authority is a member
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996
- any other duty approved by the authority in connection with discharging the duties of the authority or its committees or sub-committees.

3.3 The Council, on 13 November 2001, set up an independent Remuneration Panel to review annually the Council's scheme for Councillors' Allowances and to make recommendations for a scheme of allowances to include:

- i) the amount of basic allowance to be paid to all Councillors;
- ii) the duties in respect of which Councillors should receive a special responsibility allowance, and the amount of such an allowance;
- iii) allowances for the care of children or dependants.

3.4 The Remuneration Panel was set up to include at least three and no more than five independent members appointed to represent stakeholders of the Council. Its current membership is:

- Francis Connolly - member with experience of the local voluntary sector and local business
- Linda Fort - member with experience of the local media
- Mick Pollek - member with experience of the local trade union movement
- Lady Audrey Durant - member with experience of the local voluntary sector

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The Panel conducted a full review of the Councillors' Allowances Scheme, which was reported to the Council on 25 June 2019. The new scheme, which is attached to the report, came into effect on 1 October 2019. In view of the recent review of the scheme, the Panel has decided not to recommend any modifications to the scheme for 2020/21. As part of the scheme the basic allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances set out above are set to be increased at the beginning of each new financial year in accordance with the Local Government Pension Settlement for the period of the scheme (ie

the subsequent three years to 1 April 2022). It is also recommended that the carers' allowance, which is available to councillors to cover the cost of looking after dependants, whilst they are undertaking approved duties on behalf of the Council, should be increased in line with the 'Real Living Wage' to £9.30.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The provision for the payment of allowances to Councillors gives local authorities the scope to set allowances schemes to suit local needs and to help ensure that Councillors are not financially disadvantaged in serving as elected Members.
- 5.2 Ensuring Councillors are recompensed fairly for their services will help to attract candidates of high calibre and help to retain them, thereby enhancing the stability and experience of Reading's elected Councillors.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 South East Employers conducts an annual survey of members' allowances that provides benchmarking data and this has been used to compare the level of allowances in Reading with the Berkshire unitary and other comparable authorities.
- 6.2 During the recent Independent Remuneration Panel in 2019/20, the Panel found that Special Responsibility Allowances in Reading had fallen far behind those paid to councillors in the other Berkshire unitary authorities and its comparable group, 'statistical neighbours'. The Panel was of the view that Reading's councillors should be valued as much as their counterparts throughout Berkshire and recommended significant increases in the SRA for Reading's Councillors. The Council considered the Panel's recommendations and agreed to increase SRAs substantially, whilst generally keeping Reading's SRAs at the lowest level in Berkshire.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Not relevant to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to set up and maintain an independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to the authority concerning the allowances to be paid to elected members.
- 9.2 The relevant regulations governing the payment of allowances to elected members are:

- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 1991 No. 351
- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 1995 No. 553
- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2001
- Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001
- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014.

9.3 The Local Government Act 2000 (Commencement No 6), made on 15 February 2001, brought into force from 19 February 2001 all the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 which relate to allowances except the abolition of attendance allowance which was abolished from 28 July 2001.

9.4 The relevant regulations came into force on 4 May 2001 and from that date local authorities have been under a duty to set up an independent Remuneration Panel. Any decision to amend, revoke or replace an allowances scheme will have to be taken having regard to the recommendations of the Panel. This will apply to the Council's current scheme, which will expire on 31 March 2020.

9.5 Under Regulation 2(5) of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, the adoption of the Councillors' Allowances scheme may not be the responsibility of the executive of the authority. Regulation 2(7) goes further and states that the Council may not delegate this function to a Committee or to an officer. The Council has to take all decisions relating to the adoption of its Scheme of Councillors' Allowances.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The 2020/21 budget for Members' Allowances is £550,000, subject to final confirmation of the Local Government Pay Settlement for 2020/21.

10.2 The MTFS includes a provision for the base budget to be increased in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement.

10.3 These costs will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget setting process.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCHEME FOR COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES - 2020-2021

FINDINGS OF REMUNERATION PANEL

Reading Borough Council has received recommendations from an independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the scheme of allowances to be paid by the authority to Councillors for the financial year 2020-2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REMUNERATION PANEL

That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Councillors' Allowances scheme adopted from 1 April 2020, be amended, in accordance with the provision set out in Regulation 10(3), as follows:

- (1) That, for 2020-21, the total sum for the payment of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to councillors be set at £550,000 (subject to confirmation of the Local Government Pay Settlement for 2020/21);
- (2) That, within this total sum, the provision for the payment of Basic Allowance to all councillors be set at £378,125 (subject to being increased in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement for 2020/21); and the Basic Allowance paid to individual councillors be set at £8,220 (subject to being increased in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement for 2020/21) a year;
- (3) That the Special Responsibility Allowances payments be set at the amounts set out, as follows:
 - (a) the amount paid to the Leader to be £18,500;
 - (b) the amount paid to the Deputy Leader to be £11,300;
 - (c) the amount paid to SRA Tier 1 to be £9,500;
 - (d) the amount paid to SRA Tier 2 to be £6,076;
 - (e) the amount paid to SRA Tier 3 to be £3,039;
 - (f) the amount paid to SRA Tier 4 to be £1,074.No councillor shall receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;
- (4) That the existing categorisation of tiers be as follows:
 - Tier 1 to be paid to the Lead Councillors;
 - Tier 2 to be paid to the Leader of the main opposition group and the Chairs of Licensing Applications Committee and Planning Applications Committee;
 - Tier 3 to be paid to the Chairs of Committees (except the Chair of the Appeals Committee), ~~Page 24~~ Leaders of the other political groups;

- Tier 4 to be paid to councillors carrying out such other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require the commitment of equivalent time and effort as for other categories of activity which would qualify for Special Responsibility Allowance under Paragraph 5(1)(i) of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;
- (5) That the following persons shall be regarded as, or equivalent to, "other Councillors carrying out other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require the commitment of equivalent time and effort as for other categories of activity which would qualify for Special Responsibility Allowance" at Tier 4 (and subject to no Councillor receiving more than one Special Responsibility Allowance):
- Vice-Chairs of Committees;
 - Independent Person appointed in accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 to carry out the functions specified in that Act in relation to the Members' Code of Conduct and Local Standards Committee
- (6) That the 2020-21 arrangements for the payment of Dependant Carers' Allowance be raised by a cost of living increase of 2.8%, paid in line with the real living wage, as follows:
- (a) Up to £9.30 per hour for childcare for up to 15 hours a week
 - (b) Up to £9.30 per hour towards the cost of a care attendant for an elderly or disabled relative (including a disabled child) for up to 15 hours a week

The person providing the care may not be a close relative defined as spouse, partner (opposite or same sex cohabitantes), parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren. The paid care attendant must sign a receipt to show that they have cared for the dependant during the hours claimed for;

- (7) That, subject to (9) below, the level of subsistence allowances, with the exception of overnight subsistence, remain the same as officers receive. The allowances are currently:
- Subsistence
 - o Breakfast allowance £8.26
 - o Lunch allowance £11.41
 - o Tea allowance £4.52
 - o Evening meal allowance £14.13
 - o Overnight subsistence £82.21 a day outside London
£93.77 a day in London or at LGA Annual Conferences
- (8) That the level of travel allowances be set as the same as officers receive, as follows:
- Travel by councillor's own motor vehicle - 45 pence per mile
 - Travel by councillor's own bicycle - 37 pence per mile
 - Travel by councillor's own motorcycle - 40.9 pence per mile
 - Bus travel - cost of the ordinary fare, cheap fare or portion of any weekly ticket;

- (9) That the subsistence limits referred to in (7) above be exceeded in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer, e.g. to enable a Councillor and an officer attending a conference to stay at the same accommodation, subject to there being sufficient budget provision;
- (10) That provision for Co-optees' Allowances are payable solely to non-councillor members of the Standards Committee attending meetings of the Committee or any Sub-Committee set up by the Committee as part of its process of assessing, investigating and hearing complaints about Councillors; the allowances to be paid at the daily rate equivalent of the Councillors' Basic Allowance; the Monitoring Officer to be authorised to settle the rate to be paid on each occasion;
- (11) That the salary sacrifice schemes available to Council staff also be made available to Councillors;
- (12) That the basic allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances set out above be increased at the beginning of each new financial year in accordance with the Local Government Pay Settlement for the period of the scheme (ie the subsequent two years to 1 April 2022).

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	24 MARCH 2020		
TITLE:	PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO:	CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
LEAD OFFICER:	SHELLA SMITH	TEL:	0118 937 4697
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	E-MAIL:	Shella.smith@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Council with a Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 for approval, following its endorsement by Personnel Committee on 18 March 2020.

1.2 Appendices

Appendix 1: Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 be approved, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

2.2 That the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development be authorised to update the Pay Policy with new pay scales when the discussions between national employers and joint trade unions had been concluded, in addition to updating the current employers pension contribution figure.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Local Authorities are required under section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The statement must articulate the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and its lowest paid employees.

- 3.2 The Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 is attached as Appendix 1. It has been updated as follows:
- To show the updated pay multiples (paragraph 8) and pay profiles (Annex D)
- 3.3 Further updates will be required to the Pay Policy Statement as detailed below. Delegated authority is sought through this report for the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development to make these updates.
- Paragraph 14.1 with the new employer contribution rate for 2020/21 for the Local Government Pension Scheme when agreed (currently 16.7%)
 - Annex F (new pay scales) when the discussions between national employers and joint trade unions have concluded
- 3.4 Each local authority is an individual employer in its own right and has the autonomy to make decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances and which deliver value for money for local taxpayers. The provisions of the Localism Act do not seek to change this or to determine what decisions on pay should be taken but they require individual employing authorities to be more open about their own policies in relation to pay and how decisions are made in this regard.
- 3.5 Section 40 of the Act requires authorities in developing their Pay Policy Statement to have regard to any guidance published by the Secretary of State. This includes Communities and Local Government guidance on Openness and Accountability in Local Pay and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (as amended).
- 3.6 The government has taken steps to increase transparency on the pay and reward of public sector employees and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency which amongst other things asks councils to consider the way they release data on senior salaries.
- 3.7 In March 2011 the Hutton Review of Fair Pay was published which made several recommendations for promoting pay fairness in the public sector by tackling disparities between the lowest and highest paid in the public sector.
- 3.8 The provisions contained in the Act bring together the need for increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of pay which culminated in the formalisation of the Council's Pay Policy Statement, which outlines the pay and reward of the most senior employees set within the context of the pay of the wider workforce.
- 3.9 The Act sets out in detail the specific elements which the Pay Policy Statement must include as a minimum. The Act requires that in addition to

the determination of senior salaries, authorities must make clear what approach is taken to awarding other elements of pay including:

- severance payments,
- any additional fees (e.g. election duties),
- pay increases,
- honorarium payments etc.

- 3.10 The Act requires that authorities include in their Pay Policy Statements their approach to the publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers. Reference to the council's Statement of Accounts where this information is published is included within the proposed policy.
- 3.11 The Act requires that Pay Policy Statements are produced annually and are considered by full Council. Any subsequent amendments required to the policy should also be considered by full Council. This should be carried out in accordance with part 5A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Secretary of State does not consider that any of the grounds for exclusion of the public would be met for discussions around Pay Policy Statements.
- 3.12 The Act requires that the Council's approach to pay, as set out in the Pay Policy Statement, is accessible for council tax payers for them to take an informed view of whether local decisions on all aspects of remuneration are fair. Therefore, the approved Pay Policy Statement is published on the Council's website.
- 3.13 The Hutton report highlighted that there is value in ensuring decisions about senior pay are taken in the context of similar decisions on lower paid staff and the Act requires Authorities to set their policy on remuneration for the highest paid employees alongside policies on the lowest paid.
- 3.14 The Hutton report and The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency also suggest that the organisation's pay multiple is published. The 'pay multiple' (in this context) is described as the ratio between the highest paid employee and the 'median average' earnings across the organisation which acts as a means of illustrating the relationship between the highest and lowest paid.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no significant legal issues arising from this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the Pay Policy Statement is based upon existing policies and procedures.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no significant equalities issues arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

7.1 As the Pay Policy Statement is largely a matter of fact in terms of how the Council currently determines the pay and conditions of its staff, consultation with staff is not required. However, the statement in Appendix 1 has been presented to the Council's Local Joint Forum on 18 March 2020 for information.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant environmental and climate issues arising from this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Reading Borough Council's pay policy aims to ensure value for money whilst enabling the Council to deliver high quality services to the residents of Reading. The Council seeks to set pay rates that are adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public but will determine overall pay and benefits at an appropriate level in accordance with equality, affordability and other relevant factors.
- 1.2. Pay levels will not be unnecessarily generous or otherwise excessive.
- 1.3. Reading Borough Council agrees that local authorities should be able to determine their own pay structures in order to address local priorities and to compete in the local labour market.
- 1.4. Reading Borough Council is committed to equality, transparency and fairness across all of its activities and particularly in relation to the pay and conditions of its staff.
- 1.5. This document has the following Annexes:
 - Annex A: Requirements and Recommendations to Publish Personal data concerning Staff
 - Annex B: Governance Arrangements for Pay and Conditions of Service
 - Annex C: Summary of Conditions of Service
 - Annex D: Council Employees in Salary Bands as at 1 April 2019
 - Annex E: Pension Discretions Statement
 - Annex F: Pay scales for staff employed on NJC (Green Book) conditions and Senior Managers (JNC)
- 1.6. The following related documents related to pay and remuneration can be accessed through the Council's website:
 - o Details and responsibilities of all job roles paid above £50,000
 - o Market Supplement Policy
 - o Council Senior level organisational chart

2. LEGISLATION

- 2.1. The authority appoints its staff, and determines the terms and conditions of service on which they hold office, under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1978. This includes procedures for dismissal. Full Council has delegated this power to the Personnel Committee, with the exception of the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer for whom separate statutory procedures apply.
- 2.2. Sections 38 - 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require that the authority produce a policy statement that covers a number of matters concerning the pay of the authority's staff, principally Chief Officers. This policy statement meets the requirements of the Localism Act in this regard and also meets the requirements of guidance issued in February 2012 and February 2013 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to which the authority is required to have regard under Section 40 of the Act.
- 2.3. This policy also has some connection with the data on pay and rewards for staff which the authority publishes under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and the data which is published under The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations (2011). A revised draft Code was published in December 2013. It should be noted that the requirements to publish data under the Secretary of State's

guidance, the Code of Practice and the Regulations do differ, the data requirements of the Code of Practice and the Accounts and Audit Regulations are summarised at **Annex A** to this policy statement.

- 2.4. Any decision under powers delegated in the Council's Constitution / Scheme of Delegation with regard to remuneration to be taken during 2020/21 will be bound by and must comply with this Statement. No decision at variance with this Statement may be taken without the specific agreement of full Council.
- 2.5. The Head of Paid Service and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services must be consulted prior to any decision impacting on remuneration where there is any question regarding compliance with the Statement.

3. SCOPE OF THIS STATEMENT AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 3.1. This pay policy statement meets the statutory duty to provide the Council with a description of the policy on staff remuneration for annual approval. It provides information on remuneration arrangements for staff directly employed by the Council, excluding staff in schools.
- 3.2. This statement sets out the Council's policy with regard to:
 - the remuneration of 'chief officers' (the senior pay group - see below)
 - the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
 - the relationship between chief officers' remuneration and that of other officers
- 3.3. In this policy the 'senior pay group' (senior managers) covers posts in the top three tiers of the organisation. These include the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors. Posts in this group in Reading are as follows:
 - (a) the Head of the Authority's Paid Service [Chief Executive]
 - (b) the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services;
 - (c) the Executive Director of Social Care & Health;
 - (c) the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
 - (d) the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
 - (e) the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services)
 - (f) persons who, as respects all or most of their duties, report directly to or are directly accountable to the Head of the Council's Paid Service
 - (g) persons who, as respects all or most of their duties, report directly to or are accountable to the posts listed in (b), (c), (d) and (e) above (other than staff whose duties are of a clerical or support nature)
- 3.4. The senior management structure of the organisation can be found in Part 7 of the Council Constitution on the Council's website.
- 3.5. The Council defines its lowest paid employees as those staff paid on the first spinal column point of the Council's pay grades for National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services staff [RG Grades]. This definition is adopted as it refers to the lowest level of pay for staff on non-casual or apprentice contracts of employment.
- 3.6. The relationship between the remuneration of the lowest paid employees and that of the Council's senior officers is as described in this statement and by reference to the published data referred to.
- 3.7. "Remuneration" for the purposes of this statement includes these elements:
 - basic salary
 - pension
 - all other allowances arising from employment

4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND DECISION MAKING

- 4.1. Full Council has delegated to the Personnel Committee the power to appoint and determine the terms and conditions of employment for all staff, including the application of any discretions under the pension schemes. The terms of reference of the Personnel Committee are set out in Article 8 of Part 2 of the Council's constitution.
- 4.2. Full Council, and the Personnel Committee, have extensive and long-standing arrangements to delegate the exercise of this power to Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors, in respect of the staff employed in their service areas.
- 4.3. The delegation is subject to the Council's Officer Employment Rules, which are set out in Part 4 of the Council's constitution.
- 4.4. A summary of the arrangements for determining terms and conditions of service for staff, including the Officer Employment Rules, can be found in **Annex B**.
- 4.5. The Council, and the Personnel Committee, have adopted a range of policies which apply to the recruitment and employment of the staff of the authority. Policies which are specifically relevant to this Statement include:
 - o Low Pay Policy
 - o Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - o Employment Stability Agreement and Pay Protection Policy
 - o Appraisal Scheme and Performance-Related Progression Scheme
 - o Policies relating to Market Supplements; Starting Salary on Appointment; Honorarium and Acting-Up Payments
- 4.6. The Scheme of Delegation provides for Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors to manage, review and apply the Council's Human Resources policies, and to determine the appropriate pay and conditions for the appointment of staff within these policies.

5. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 5.1. Reading Borough Council applies terms and conditions of employment that have been negotiated and agreed through appropriate collective bargaining mechanisms (national or local) or as a consequence of authority decisions, these are then incorporated into contracts of employment.
- 5.2. The Council is a member of the local government employers association for national collective bargaining in respect of chief executives, chief officers and other employees. There are separate negotiations and agreements in respect of each of these groups. Changes from national negotiations generally take effect from 1 April each year and are retrospective to 1 April where agreements are made later than 1 April. It is the authority's long-standing policy to implement national agreements. The head of paid service and chief officers are under the JNC conditions of service, with locally determined pay. All other employees are under the relevant national agreement on pay and conditions of service applying to the particular service area, with local variations to pay. *Pay for staff on NJC conditions was last increased nationally ('cost of living' increase) in April 2019. The last time that pay for staff on JNC conditions was varied as the result of a national pay award was in April 2019. The Council will apply any settlement reached nationally in respect of staff covered by national bargaining machinery where this is the locally agreed mechanism for determining cost of living increases.
- 5.3. A summary of the arrangements for determining terms and conditions of service for staff is set out in **Annex C**:

* The April 2020 figure has not yet been agreed nationally.

6. POLICY ON REMUNERATING SENIOR MANAGERS

- 6.1. **Head of Paid Service:** The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) is paid on a locally determined salary which is reviewed and approved by Personnel Committee when the post becomes vacant. Independent external consultancy advice on appropriate remuneration levels (taking account of role and responsibilities, recruitment and retention factors and local and regional salary benchmarks) is presented to Personnel Committee to inform their decision-making in this matter.
- 6.2. The locally determined salary will be within the parameters of the Pay Policy Statement and will be set out in the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting which approves the salary, which will be published on the Council's website. The salary range will also be published in the job advertisement to fill the vacant post.
- 6.3. At the conclusion of the recruitment process, the decision to appoint a person to fill the post of Head of Paid Service will be taken by full Council, which will be advised of the local salary, and the point at which the appointment was recommended to be made.
- 6.4. No other payments or benefits are payable to the Head of Paid Service (e.g. bonus, performance related pay, health insurance, car lease) other than those referred to elsewhere in this policy statement as being applicable to all employees.
- 6.5. Unless otherwise determined on appointment, the salary for the Head of Paid Service is subject to annual review by the Personnel Committee (on the anniversary of the date of appointment), in accordance with the following principles:
 - That any salary progression is subject to a satisfactory annual appraisal;
 - That the salary / scale is uplifted by the pay award nationally agreed for the JNC for Chief Executives;
 - That these principles take effect on the anniversary of the date of appointment without need for Personnel Committee decision, unless an exception report is initiated by the Leader of the Council.
- 6.6. **Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors:** Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors are paid on locally determined incremental Reading Senior Management / Corporate Director (RSM / CD) salary scales. These scales were established and approved by Personnel Committee following an independent review of senior salaries carried out by the Hay Group in 2001/2, using relevant regional public sector salary benchmarks. These scales are uplifted by the pay award nationally agreed (if any) for the JNC for Chief Officers. Exceptionally, the JNC pay award is not implemented for the senior pay group in times of severe budget challenge.
- 6.7. There are no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexi-time, bank holiday working, stand-by payments, etc., paid to these senior staff, as they are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns without additional payment.
- 6.8. No other payments or benefits are payable to Corporate Directors and Heads of Service (e.g. bonus, performance related pay, health insurance, car lease) other than those referred to elsewhere in this policy statement as being applicable to all employees.

7. POLICY ON REMUNERATING THE LOWEST PAID IN THE WORKFORCE

- 7.1. This policy statement reconfirms the Council's long-standing Low Pay Policy. The new (1/4/19) grading structure allows for all staff, except apprentices, to be paid an hourly rate no lower than the Living Wage (£9.00 per hour).
- 7.2. The Council previously paid a Living Wage supplement to increase the hourly rate of employees to the Living Wage, where necessary. The salary scales effective from 1st

April 2019 remove the requirement for such a supplement and the Living Wage is therefore reflected in all staff's substantive rate.

- 7.3. Apprentices are paid the nationally recommended allowance rate of £153.53 for the first 12 months of employment and thereafter are paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW) as applicable to the employee's age. These rates are updated as the national allowances are revised.
- 7.4. Reading Borough Council is also committed to the development and publication of a local policy to promote and require, to the extent permitted by law, the application of the Council's low pay policy to staff working for the Council's contractors in addition to the application of TUPE. The Council became an accredited Living Wage Employer in 2015.

8. PAY MULTIPLES

- 8.1. The highest paid salary in this authority is up to £162,302 which is the top of the annual salary range paid to the Head of Paid Service. The current ratio between the lowest paid employee (scp 3 (new national pay spine), £18,065 per annum as at 1/4/19) and the highest paid employee is 1:8.98. The Council will work to maintain a ratio of no more than 1:10 between the lowest paid and the highest paid. This ratio is with effect from 1st April 2019.
- 8.2. This authority does not have a policy on maintaining or reaching a specific highest / median 'pay multiple', however the authority is conscious of the need to ensure that the salary of the highest paid employee is not excessive and is consistent with the needs of the authority as expressed in this policy statement. The authority's approach to the payment of other staff is to pay that which the authority needs to pay to recruit and retain staff with the skills, knowledge, experience, abilities and qualities needed for the post in question at the relevant time, and to ensure that the authority meets any contractual requirements for staff including the application of any local or national collective agreements, or authority decisions regarding pay. The median salary paid by the Council is £26,999. Pay multiple therefore between the highest and median salary is 1: 6.01.
- 8.3. Pay multiples will be monitored each year within the Pay Policy Statement, and will be benchmarked against comparable authorities as others' pay policy statements are published.
- 8.4. In terms of overall remuneration packages the Council's policy is to differentiate by setting different levels of basic pay to reflect differences in responsibilities (job evaluation) but not to differentiate on other allowances, benefits and payments it makes.

9. PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE

- 9.1. The Council uses established formal job evaluation procedures to identify the relative worth of jobs within the council (including the senior pay group), and to allocate jobs to the appropriate pay grade.
- 9.2. For the senior pay group (RSM / CD Grades) RBC uses the Hay job evaluation scheme, for other jobs we use the national NJC for Local Government Employees JE scheme.
- 9.3. The NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, which is recognised by employers and trades unions nationally, allows for robust measurement against set criteria resulting in fair and objective evaluations and satisfies equal pay requirements
- 9.4. Pay grades are shown at Annex F.

10. PAY PROFILE

- 10.1. Annex D shows employees at 1 April 2019 by salary band and then by gender, ethnic origin and disability. Salary bands are based on the RG pay scales introduced in May 2011.
- 10.2. The numbers of black and minority ethnic employees and disabled employees are shown as a proportion of employees who have made a positive declaration.
- 10.3. Female employees continue to form the greater percentage across all salary bands. Each band, apart from Apprentices as shown in RG1 and officers in RG9, has over 50% women, with the proportion reaching 64.52% in RG10. This is the grade with the highest proportion of women.
- 10.4. The overall number of employees who have declared a disability across salary bands ranges between 0.00% in RG10 and 6.25% in RG1 (apprentices).

11. PAY PROGRESSION

- 11.1. Under the Council's Performance Related Progression Scheme the award of an annual increment is dependent upon an employee's achievement of performance targets and competency objectives. The scheme also links incremental progression with whether performance is improving or declining. No increment can be awarded if an employee is subject to formal disciplinary or capability (poor performance) procedures.
- 11.2. The following principles apply to pay progression for all RBC staff with effect from 1st April 2012:
 - 'Gateways' will be established 2 or 3 increments from the top of each grade depending on its length. Progression within a grade beyond the gateway will be for wider responsibility which meets agreed competency levels, based on job evaluation (JE) factor levels;
 - Progression up to the gateway within the grade will be subject to a satisfactory assessment of performance and contribution based on management evidence throughout the year;
 - Progression between grades within career grades will be dependent on meeting competencies at the next grade level;
 - On progression matters, there will be one appeal level above the approving manager (i.e. designated officer or Head of Service);
 - Regular supervision and appraisal are fundamental to employee progression.
- 11.3. Accelerated incremental progression within the evaluated grade is only possible where there is objective evidence of outstanding performance or there is evidence that demonstrates inequality of pay level with comparable peers. Any such increase must be approved by the Executive Director and reasons provided to HR.
- 11.4. In addition to 11.3, accelerated increments would be paid for the progression within an existing career grade structure where skills and competencies (including academic attainment) have been achieved which meet predetermined career grade progression criteria.
- 11.5. The acceleration of an employee through the gateway of their existing grade, needs to be evidenced and certified by the Service Manager as meeting pre-existing and defined career progression criteria and approved by the Executive Director. Copies of the evidence to support such a decision need to be placed on the employee's personal file held by HR.
- 11.6. Any career grade progression is conditional upon budget provision being available.

- 11.7. Employees successfully moving posts within the Council will be subject to the principle of annual incremental progression assessment. They will no longer receive an automatic increment 6 months after being in their new post.

12. LOCAL PAY ARRANGEMENTS

- 12.1. **Child Care Solicitors** – This section, based in RBC’s Legal Service, provides a service to other Berkshire Unitary Councils. Staff who were employed by the former Berkshire County Council retain local pay and progression arrangements which were inherited by RBC as a result of Statutory Transfer Order / TUPE provisions.

13. REMUNERATION ON APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION

- 13.1. The Council’s policy is to not pay any form of “signing on” fee or incentive payment when recruiting, except where there are significant recruitment difficulties that jeopardise service delivery, as identified and approved by CMT.
- 13.2. The starting pay point for all new employees (including internally appointed or promoted employees) should normally be the first point of the appropriate grade. There may be circumstances (e.g. offers from other employers, market forces) where it is necessary to make an offer that is at a higher point within the grade. The authority to make an offer higher than the starting point lies with the Deputy/Assistant Director, who must also consider the equality of such an exception and must inform the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development of the reason for the exception. This policy applies to all staff.
- 13.3. At the point of any assimilation to a new grade, employees moving to a higher grade will be placed at the bottom of that new grade.

14. OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE REMUNERATION PACKAGE

- 14.1. **Pension:** Pension provision is an important part of the remuneration package. All employees may join the local government pension scheme (or the Teachers Pension Scheme for relevant staff) and are enrolled automatically unless they wish to opt out. The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from employees and from employers. The current employer contribution rate for Reading Borough Council is 16.7%¹. This rate is reviewed and set every three years by the actuary. Reading Borough Council is part of the Berkshire scheme, administered by the Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor. Neither the scheme nor the Council adopt different policies with regard to benefits for any category of employee: the same terms apply to the Chief Executive, chief officers and other staff.
- 14.2. **Election / Returning Officer Fees:** The Returning Officer is an officer of the Borough Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the Borough Council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from his/her duties as an employee of the Borough Council. As Returning Officer, he/she is paid a separate allowance for each election for which he/she is responsible.
- 14.3. Separate fees will be paid to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services for undertaking Returning Officer duties which are not part of the post’s substantive role. These fees will be paid in line with the amount recommended by the Government or Electoral Commission for Parliamentary and European elections and referendums, or as set out in the Council’s budget estimates for local elections.
- 14.4. The Returning Officer may appoint one or more Deputy Returning Officers, and pay a fee to them for undertaking the duties that the Returning Officer allocates to them.
- 14.5. **Market Supplements:** The Council may pay a market supplement, in addition to base salary, in order to recruit or retain staff with special skills experience or knowledge.

¹ The pension figure will be updated when this has been agreed

Market supplements are applied, reviewed and withdrawn in accordance with the Council's market supplement policy, which is published on the Council's website. The Head of Paid Service has delegated authority to determine posts for which salary supplements will be paid, and the amount and duration of the supplement, in consultation with the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development and the relevant Executive Director.

14.6. Honorarium and other temporary additional payments:

Under the Council's scheme of delegation to officers, Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors are authorised to approve additional payments in the circumstances described below:

(a) 'Acting-up' - The employee will either receive the 'rate for the job' that they are covering if they are undertaking the full range of duties and responsibilities. As a minimum, this means that they will be paid at the first spinal column point of the grade of the post that they are acting up into. If the employee is not undertaking the full range of duties of a higher graded post, then an acting up allowance will be paid. The allowance will be a percentage of the difference between the first point on the grade of the post being covered and the employee's current salary equivalent to the percentage proportion of higher responsibility being undertaken.

(b) **Honorarium payments** - Where an employee is undertaking work on a project or discrete piece of work which would fall outside of the normal range of duties expected for his / her particular post, then the employee shall be eligible for an honorarium payment for the duration of the project.

The level of payment made should be determined with regard to the level of responsibilities being undertaken and this should be determined with regard to the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. All such payments must be approved by the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development to ensure proper application of the Council's policy.

The employee will be paid an amount appropriate to the proportion of their time being spent working at this higher level on a monthly basis for the duration of the project / programme.

15. NON-PAY ELEMENTS AND BENEFITS

15.1. Annual Leave: The following annual leave entitlements apply

- The minimum annual leave allowance (on appointment) will be 24 days per year
- There will be an additional 5 days at 5 years continuous local government service (granted from anniversary of start date).
- There will be an additional 3 days at 10 years Reading Borough Council service (granted from following 1 April).
- The minimum annual leave allowance (on appointment) will be 30 days per year for the senior pay group
- The maximum annual leave allowance for all staff will be 32 days.

15.2. **Salary Sacrifice Schemes / Employee discount schemes:** All employees can access salary sacrifice schemes for childcare vouchers, Kennet Day Nursery, Added Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), bicycle purchase, and lease cars (from 2019). There are also non-subsidised employee discount schemes.

15.3. **Flexible Working:** All employees can access flexible working arrangements subject always to the needs of the service.

15.4. **Car Allowances / Expenses:** The Council will meet or reimburse authorised travel, subsistence and (exceptionally) accommodation costs for attendance at necessary and approved meetings and training events. The Council does not regard such costs as remuneration but as non-pay operational costs. This policy is applied consistently to the

Head of Paid Service, chief officers and other employees. The locally determined car allowance reimbursement rate for necessary and approved work-related travel is 45p per mile for **all authorised car users**. No other car allowance (e.g. monthly lump sum) is payable to any employee.

16. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

- 16.1. Under the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the decision to effect dismissal or retirement on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency of the service is a decision of Personnel Committee for posts at Deputy/Assistant Director and above. The decision is delegated to the relevant Executive Director for all posts below this level.
- 16.2. However, the final decision as to the compensation to be paid as a result of such dismissal decisions, **for all posts**, is a decision of Personnel Committee. Personnel Committee also need to approve any employee requests for early retirement which require employer consent and entail a cost to the Council.
- 16.3. Each of the proposals presented to the Committee must first be considered and agreed by an officer panel comprising the Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer), Monitoring Officer and the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development. This panel is established to monitor applications on the basis of consistency, legality and financial prudence. In terms of financial prudence, each case must demonstrate a 'payback period' within one year, or, exceptionally, two years in 'efficiency of the service' cases if sufficient service and efficiency benefits to the Council can be demonstrated. This Panel also assesses associated questions e.g. exercise of exceptional discretion; reasonableness of alternative employment in redundancy cases etc.
- 16.4. In the event that the compensation to be paid exceeds £100,000 in total, then full Council will be offered an opportunity to vote on the matter prior to approval.
- 16.5. **Discretionary Enhancement of Redundancy Payments:** The policy for the award of any discretionary payments is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. Redundancy payments under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England & Wales) Regulations 2006 provide discretion to pay up to an overall lump sum of 2 times the statutory redundancy payment formula based on actual weeks' pay, capped at 52 weeks' pay (may be adjusted following consultation). This is payable to employees made redundant with 2 or more years continuous service regardless of their age. Discretionary compensation can be reduced in cases where an offer of suitable alternative employment is deemed to have been unreasonably refused.
- 16.6. **Settlement Agreements:** In exceptional circumstances, and specifically so as to settle a claim or potential dispute the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services can agree payment of a termination settlement sum (subject to a decision of Personnel Committee if outside the normal framework for termination payments as set out in this section).
- 16.7. **Policy on Re-Employment:** The policy for re-employment following redundancy / efficiency termination is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. Employees in receipt of compensation payment for loss of employment which has had discretionary enhancements applied to it are not permitted to take up employment with Reading Borough Council within 12 months of the ending of their current employment.
- 16.8. **Flexible Retirement:** In accordance with Superannuation Regulations, rather than continuing in their current job to age 65 employees can, on or after age 55 and with Council consent, reduce their hours of work or the grade in which they are employed and draw (some or all of) their accrued pension benefits whilst continuing in employment and building up further benefits in the Scheme - enabling them to ease into retirement. Employees must be 55 or over and have 3 or more months' membership in the LGPS (including transferred rights) in order to be eligible to make a flexible retirement request following a reduction in hours or grade. Pension benefits will normally be

reduced if paid before age 65. This policy is open to all employees, subject to financial requirements being met (net savings to the Council and a pay back period of no more than 2 years).

17. PENSION DISCRETIONS

17.1. The Council's current policy statement on the use of discretions under the relevant Superannuation Regulations is attached as **Annex E**.

18. PAY PROTECTION

18.1. The Council's pay protection policy is approved by the Personnel Committee as part of the Employment Stability Agreement. The policy provides a mechanism for assisting employees to adjust to a reduction in pay as a result of organisational change.

19. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ON THE REMUNERATION OF STAFF

19.1. This Pay Policy Statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, details of all posts paid above £50,000 will be published.

20. AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

20.1. As the policy covers the period April 2020 to the end of March 2021, amendments may need to be made to the policy throughout the relevant period. As the Localism Act 2011 requires that any amendments are approved by the Council by resolution, proposed amendments will be reported to Personnel Committee for recommendation to the Council.

21. POLICY FOR FUTURE YEARS

21.1. This policy statement will be reviewed each year and will be presented to full Council each year for consideration in order to ensure that a policy is in place for the authority prior to the start of each financial year.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX A

The Secretary of State for CLG Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency indicates that local authorities should publish the following data concerning staff:

- Salaries, job descriptions, responsibilities, budgets (including overall salary cost of staff reporting), and numbers of staff for all staff in receipt of a salary of more than £50,000
- An organisational chart of the staff structure of the authority including salary bands and details of currently vacant posts
- The 'pay multiple' - the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole authority workforce

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations (2011) require that the following data is included in the authority's accounts:

- Numbers of employees with a salary above £50k per annum (pro-rata for part-time staff) in multiples of £5k
- Job title, remuneration and employer pension contributions for senior officers. Senior officers are defined as Head of Paid Service, Statutory Chief Officers and Non-Statutory Chief Officers by reference to Section 2 of the 1989 Local Government & Housing Act.
- Names of employees paid over £150k per annum

For the above remuneration is to include:

- Salary, fees or allowances for the current and previous year
- Bonuses paid or receivable for the current and previous year
- Expenses paid in the previous year
- Compensation for loss of employment paid to or receivable, or payments made in connection with loss of employment
- Total estimated value of non-cash benefits that are emoluments of the person

For the above pension contributions to include:

- The amount driven by the authority's set employer contribution rate
- Employer costs incurred relating to any increased membership or award of additional pension

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX B

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

[Note: these provisions are subject to amendment as the source documents are amended]

1.1. Constitution of Reading Borough Council

Part 3.3 Responsibility for Council Functions (Schedule 1, Part 2):

37. Power to appoint staff, and to determine the terms and conditions on which they hold office (including procedures for dismissal)	Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972.	Personnel Committee General Delegation to Executive Directors and Deputy/Assistant Directors
40. Power to appoint officers for particular purposes (appointment of “proper officers”)	Section 270(3) of the Local Government Act 1972	Personnel Committee
43. Duty to designate officer as head of the authority’s paid service, and to provide staff, etc	Section 4(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (c. 42)	Council

1.2. Constitution of Reading Borough Council – 27 May 2015: Article 4, 4.2 Functions of the full Council:

Only the Council will exercise the following functions:

[...] (g) confirming the appointment of the Head of Paid Service;

1.3. Constitution of Reading Borough Council : Article 12 – Officers:

12.1 Management structure

[...]

(b) Chief Officers

The full Council will confirm the appointment of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and the Personnel (Appointments) Committee will make appointments to the following posts (or such other similar posts as it may decide from time to time), who will be designated chief officers:

- Executive Director of Social Care and Health
- Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services
- Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhoods
- Executive Director of Resources

(c) Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer and Deputies

The Council has designated the following posts as shown:

- Chief Executive- Head of Paid Service
- Executive Director of Resources - Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer
- Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services - Monitoring Officer

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 prescribe that the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer must be confirmed by the full Council.

The Council has designated the following Deputy post as shown:

Assistant Director of Finance - Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Such posts will have the functions described in Article 12.2-12.4 below.

12.2 Functions of the Head of Paid Service

(a) Discharge of functions by the Council

The Head of Paid Service will report to full Council or the Policy Committee on the manner in which the discharge of the Council's functions is co-ordinated, the number and grade of officers required for the discharge of functions and the organisation of officers.

(b) Restrictions on functions

The Head of Paid Service may not be the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer.

[...]

12.7 Employment

The recruitment, selection and dismissal of officers will comply with the Officer Employment Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

1.4. The powers and duties of the **Personnel Committee** include the following:

"6. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- (1) Subject to Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out in the constitution:
 - a) to arrange for the appointment of the Council's Head of Paid Service, and make recommendations to Council in this respect
 - b) to appoint Executive Directors, the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and posts falling within the definition of Deputy Chief Officer in Section 2(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989
 - c) to dismiss Executive Directors, the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and posts falling within the definition of Deputy Chief Officer in Section 2(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989
 - d) to settle all matters relating to the above appointments or dismissals
- (2) To take any decisions affecting the remuneration, terms and conditions of service of the Head of Paid Service;
- (3) To undertake performance appraisals of the Head of Paid Service and Executive Directors; and to set annual targets against which performance can be measured.

[...]

- (6) To determine the level of compensation to be paid in individual cases of voluntary redundancy and early retirement and other personnel matters where appropriate.

[...]

1.5. The **Officer Employment Procedure Rules** are in Part 4 of the Constitution.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX C

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Chief Executive

The terms and conditions for the Head of Paid Service are as set out by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

Executive Directors

The terms and conditions for the Executive Directors are in accordance with the Scheme of Conditions of Service agreed by the National Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

Deputy/Assistant Directors (third tier - i.e. reporting directly to the Head of Paid Service or an Executive Director)

The terms and conditions for Deputy/Assistant Directors are as set out by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Officers, and as amended locally. Pay is determined locally.

NJC Staff

The Terms and conditions for NJC staff are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, and as amended locally.

Craft Employees

The Terms and conditions for NJC staff are determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Craft and Associated Employees, and as amended locally.

Teachers

The terms and conditions for Teachers are as set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.

Soulbury Staff

The Soulbury Committee determines the national salary framework for Soulbury staff and terms and conditions, as amended locally.

Youth Workers

The terms and conditions for Youth Workers are as determined by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Youth and Community Workers, and as amended locally.

Coroners

The terms and conditions for Coroners are set by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Coroners, and as amended locally.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT - ANNEX D

Council Employees in Salary Bands as at 01.04.19

Grade Bandings		Total Staff	Women		BME			Disability		
			No	%	No	ND	%	No	ND	%
RG1	Up to 18,065	20	9	45.00%	6	0	30.00%	1	4	6.25%
RG2	18,795	108	67	62.04%	37	12	38.54%	1	20	1.14%
RG3	21,166	264	168	63.64%	43	18	17.48%	12	29	5.11%
RG4	26,317	420	253	60.24%	74	16	18.32%	18	31	4.63%
RG5	31,371	307	188	61.24%	58	6	19.27%	11	13	3.74%
RG6	35,934	201	108	53.73%	36	6	18.46%	5	13	2.66%
RG7	41,675	153	94	61.44%	22	6	14.97%	6	11	4.23%
RG8	47,540	92	48	52.17%	16	4	18.18%	1	5	1.15%
RG9	53,409	41	20	48.78%	4	0	9.76%	2	2	5.13%
RG10	57,395	31	20	64.52%	4	2	13.79%	0	4	0.00%
Above 57,395		40	21	52.50%	3	3	8.11%	1	7	3.03%

Page 855

- 1 - Based on 2019 pay bands and earnings
- 2 - As a proportion of employees who have made a positive declaration
- 3 - Excludes schools

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME REGULATIONS 2013
STATEMENT OF POLICY ABOUT EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONARY FUNCTIONS
SCHEME EMPLOYER DECLARATION**

The Scheme employer known as **Reading Borough Council** ('the Council') has prepared this written statement of policy in relation to its exercise of certain discretionary functions available under the Local Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The Scheme employer declares that it will keep this statement under review and publish the statement (and any amendments made thereto) in a place that is easily accessible to all of its eligible Scheme employees and that it will provide to the administering authority the most up to date version of the statement at all times.

**PART A - Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 60 of the
Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013**

Regulation 16 – Additional Pension Contributions

The Scheme employer may resolve to fund in whole or in part any arrangement entered into by an active scheme member to pay additional pension contributions by way of regular contributions in accordance with *Regulation 16(2)(e)*, or by way of a lump sum in accordance with *Regulation 16(4)(d)*.

The Scheme employer may enter into an APC contract with a Scheme member who is contributing to the MAIN section of the Scheme in order to purchase additional pension of not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

The amount of additional contribution to be paid is determined by reference to actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Consideration needs to be given to the circumstances under which the Scheme employer may wish to use their discretion to fund in whole or in part an employee's Additional Pension Contributions.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the whole or part funding of an active member's additional pension contributions

The Council has resolved not to adopt this discretion at this time.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

An active member who has attained the age of 55 or over and who with the agreement of their employer reduces their working hours or grade of employment may, with the further consent of their employer, elect to receive immediate payment of all or part of the retirement pension to which they would be entitled in respect of that employment as if that member were no longer an employee in local government service on the date of the

reduction in hours or grade (*adjusted by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State - separate policy required under Regulation 30(8)*).

As part of the policy making decision the Scheme employer must consider whether, in addition to the benefits the member may have accrued prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014 and all, part of none of the pension benefits they built up after 1 April 2014.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of allowing an employee to draw all or part of their pension benefits earlier than their normal retirement age.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning flexible retirement

The Council has resolved that it will give such an opportunity to its employees. Flexible Retirement under this discretion will be subject to an agreed policy framework. The Council has resolved that waiving actuarial reduction in full or in part will only be considered where there will be a sufficient financial or other benefit to the authority. An exception to this requirement is the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances

Regulation 30(8) – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction

Where a Scheme employer's policy under regulation 30(6) (flexible retirement) is to consent to the immediate release of benefits in respect of an active member who is aged 55 or over, those benefits must be adjusted by an amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (commonly referred to as actuarial reduction or early payment reduction).

A Scheme employer (or former employer as the case may be) may agree to waive in whole or in part and at their own cost, any actuarial reduction that may be required by the Scheme Regulations.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of agreeing to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the waiving of actuarial reduction

That the Council does not consent to waive any actuarial reduction for staff electing to retire at age 55 or over, unless there is a sufficient financial or other benefit to the Council. An exception to this requirement is the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

A Scheme employer may resolve to award

- (a) an active member, or

(b) a member who was an active member but dismissed by reason of redundancy, or business efficiency, or whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency,

additional annual pension of, in total (including any additional pension purchased by the Scheme employer under Regulation 16), not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

Any additional pension awarded is payable from the same date as any pension payable under other provisions of the Scheme Regulations from the account to which the additional pension is attached.

In the case of a member falling within sub-paragraph (b) above, the resolution to award additional pension must be made within 6 months of the date that the member's employment ended.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the award of additional pension

The Council has resolved not to adopt this discretion at this time

Schedule 2 - paragraphs 2 and 3

Where a scheme member retires or leaves employment and elects to draw their benefits at or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 those benefits will be actuarially reduced unless their Scheme employer agrees to meet the full or part cost of those reductions as a result of the member otherwise being protected under the 85 year rule as set out in previous Regulations.

So as to avoid the member suffering the full reduction to their benefits the Scheme employer can 'switch on' the 85 year rule protections thereby allowing the member to receive fully or partly unreduced benefits but subject to the Scheme employer paying a strain (capital) cost to the Pension Fund

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the 'switching on of the 85 year rule

That the Council does not consent to switch on the 85 year rule for staff electing to retire at age 55, unless there is a sufficient financial or other benefit to the Council. An exception to this requirement may be the employee's exceptionally difficult personal or domestic circumstances.

PART B - Formulation of RECOMMENDED policy in accordance with the

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 9(1) & (3) - Contributions

Where an active member changes employment or there is a material change which affects the member's pensionable pay during the course of a financial year, the Scheme employer may determine that a contribution rate from a different band (as set out in Regulation 9(2)) should be applied.

Where the Scheme employer makes such a determination it shall inform the member of the revised contribution rate and the date from which it is to be applied.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the re-determination of active members' contribution bandings at any date other than 1st April

The Council shall re-determine contribution rates on 1st April each year only. Staff joining the scheme shall be placed in a contribution band consistent with their contracted, actual pay in the first instance except for casual staff who shall initially be placed on the lowest contribution band. The banding placement for individual staff shall be re-determined wef from the 1st April only in subsequent years following initial placement and adjusted as necessary in the light of the pensionable pay actually earned in the previous year (using a '12 month equivalent' calculation for staff who have not worked a full year).

Regulation 17(1) - Additional Voluntary Contributions

An active member may enter into arrangements to pay additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) or to contribute to a shared cost additional voluntary contribution arrangement (SCAVCs) in respect of an employment. The arrangement must be a scheme established between the appropriate administering authority and a body approved for the purposes of the Finance Act 2004, registered in accordance with that Act and administered in accordance with the Pensions Act 2004.

The Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not it will make contributions to such an arrangement on behalf of its active members

Scheme Employer's policy concerning payment of Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions

The Council will pay SCAVC contributions where an employee has elected to pay AVCs by salary sacrifice. The amount of these employer SCAVC contributions will not exceed the amount of salary sacrificed by the employee. This is a Council discretion which is subject to the employee meeting the Council's conditions for acceptance into the salary sacrifice shared cost AVC scheme and may be withdrawn or changed at any time.

Regulation 22 - Merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

A deferred member's pension account is automatically aggregated with their active member's pension account unless the member elects within the first 12 months of the new active member's pension account being opened to retain their deferred member's pension account.

A Scheme employer can, at their discretion, extend the 12 month election period.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

The Council has resolved not to extend the time limit for election beyond 12 months.

Regulation 100(6) - Inward Transfers of Pension Rights

A request from an active member to transfer former pension rights from a previous arrangement into the Local Government Pension Scheme as a result of their employment with a Scheme employer must be made in writing to the administering authority and the Scheme employer before the expiry of the period of 12 months beginning with the date on which the employee first became an active member in an employment (or such longer period as the Scheme employer and administering authority may allow).

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the extension of the 12 month transfer application period

The Council has resolved not to extend the time limit for election beyond 12 months.

Regulation 21(5) - Assumed Pensionable Pay

A Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not to include in the calculation of assumed pensionable pay, any 'regular lump sum payment' received by a Scheme member in the 12 months preceding the date that gave rise to the need for an assumed pensionable pay figure to be calculated.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning inclusion of 'regular lump sum payments' in assumed pensionable pay calculations

That the Council does include in such calculations an element for 'regular lump sum payment' where it is fair, equitable and justifiable to do so.

Regulation 74 - Applications for Adjudication of Disagreements

Each Scheme employer must appoint a person ("the adjudicator") to consider applications from any person whose rights or liabilities under the Scheme are affected by:

- (a) a decision under regulation 72 (first instance decisions); or
- (b) any other act or omission by a Scheme employer or administering authority,

and to make a decision on such applications.

Responsibility for determinations under this first stage of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) rests with "the adjudicator" as named below by the Scheme employer:

Name: Michael Graham
Job Title: Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Address: Civic Centre, Reading, Tel No:0118 9373470
Email: michael.graham@reading.gov.uk

Adjudicator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

SCHEME EMPLOYER CONFIRMATION

It is understood that the discretions contained within this statement of policy are applicable to all eligible members of the Scheme. The Scheme rules allow for a revised statement to be issued at least one month in advance of the date that any new policy takes effect. The revised statement must be sent to the administering authority and the employer must publish its statement as revised in a place that is accessible to all of its eligible scheme members.

The policies made above:

Have regard to the extent to which the exercise of the discretions could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service;

Will not be used for any ulterior motive;

Will be exercised reasonably;

Will only be used when there is a real and substantial future benefit to the employer for incurring the extra costs that may arise;

Will be duly recorded when applied.

Signed on behalf of the Scheme Employer: _____

Name in Block Capitals: JACQUELINE YATES

Position: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Scheme Employer's Name: READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Date:

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – ANNEX F

KEY PAY SCALES FOR COUNCIL STAFF (1ST APRIL 2019)

(NB: THIS ANNEX WILL BE UPDATED ONCE THE PAY SCALES FROM 1 APRIL 2020 HAVE BEEN AGREED)

New NJC Pay Structure - April 2019

GENERAL PAY SCALE

SCP	Per Annum		Per Hour		Current Grades		SCP
53	£	57,395	£	29.75		RG10	53
52	£	56,012	£	29.03			52
51	£	54,629	£	28.32			51
50	£	53,409	£	27.68			50
49	£	52,189	£	27.05		RG9	49
48	£	50,969	£	26.42			48
47	£	49,748	£	25.79			47
46	£	48,530	£	25.15			46
45	£	47,540	£	24.64		RG8	45
44	£	46,572	£	24.14			44
43	£	45,591	£	23.63			43
42	£	44,632	£	23.13			42
41	£	43,662	£	22.63		RG7	41
40	£	42,683	£	22.12			40
39	£	41,675	£	21.60			39
38	£	40,760	£	21.13			38
37	£	39,782	£	20.62		RG6	37
36	£	38,813	£	20.12			36
35	£	37,849	£	19.62			35
34	£	36,876	£	19.11			34
33	£	35,934	£	18.63		RG5	33
32	£	34,788	£	18.03			32
31	£	33,799	£	17.52			31
30	£	32,878	£	17.04			30
29	£	32,029	£	16.60		RG4	29
28	£	31,371	£	16.26			28
27	£	30,507	£	15.81			27
26	£	29,636	£	15.36			26
25	£	28,785	£	14.92		RG3	25
24	£	27,905	£	14.46			24
23	£	26,999	£	13.99			23
22	£	26,317	£	13.64			22
21						RG2	21
20	£	25,295	£	13.11			20
19	£	24,799	£	12.85			19
18							18
17	£	23,836	£	12.35		RG1	17
16							16
15	£	22,911	£	11.88			15
14	£	22,462	£	11.64			14
13							13
12	£	21,589	£	11.19			12
11	£	21,166	£	10.97			11
10							10
9	£	20,344	£	10.54			9
8	£	19,945	£	10.34			8
7	£	19,554	£	10.14			7
6	£	19,171	£	9.94			6
5	£	18,795	£	9.74			5
4	£	18,426	£	9.55			4
3	£	18,065	£	9.36			3
2	£	17,711	£	9.18			2
1	£	17,364	£	9.00			1

PAYAWARD	2.0%	
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ANNUAL 01/04/2018	GRADE			SCP	ANNUAL 01/04/2019	MONTHLY 01/04/2019	WEEKLY 01/04/2019	HOURLY 01/04/2019	
52246	RSMD			1	53291	4440.91	1022.01	27.6220	
53570	RSMD			2	54641	4553.45	1047.91	28.3220	
54893	RSMD			3	55991	4665.91	1073.79	29.0215	
56217	RSMD			4	57341	4778.45	1099.69	29.7215	
57544	RSMD			5	58695	4891.24	1125.65	30.4230	
58867	RSMD	RSMC		6	60044	5003.70	1151.53	31.1225	
60190	RSMD	RSMC		7	61394	5116.15	1177.41	31.8219	
61514	RSMD	RSMC		8	62744	5228.69	1203.31	32.5219	
62839	RSMD	RSMC		9	64096	5341.32	1229.23	33.2225	
64163		RSMC		10	65446	5453.86	1255.13	33.9224	
65487		RSMC		11	66797	5566.40	1281.03	34.6224	
66813		RSMC		12	68149	5679.11	1306.97	35.3235	
68137		RSMC		13	69500	5791.65	1332.87	36.0235	
69461		RSMC	RSMB	14	70850	5904.19	1358.77	36.7234	
70784		RSMC	RSMB	15	72200	6016.64	1384.65	37.4229	
72109		RSMC	RSMB	16	73551	6129.27	1410.57	38.1234	
73436		RSMC	RSMB	17	74905	6242.06	1436.52	38.8250	
74756			RSMB	18	76251	6354.26	1462.35	39.5229	
76086			RSMB	19	77608	6467.31	1488.36	40.2260	
77413			RSMB	20	78961	6580.11	1514.32	40.9276	
78734			RSMB	RSMA	21	80309	6692.39	1540.16	41.6260
80057			RSMB	RSMA	22	81658	6804.85	1566.04	42.3255
81385			RSMB	RSMA	23	83013	6917.73	1592.02	43.0276
82706				RSMA	24	84360	7030.01	1617.86	43.7260
84028				RSMA	25	85709	7142.38	1643.72	44.4249
85359				RSMA	26	87066	7255.52	1669.76	45.1286
86678				RSMA	27	88412	7367.63	1695.56	45.8259
88003				RSMA	28	89763	7480.26	1721.48	46.5264
89330				RSMA	29	91117	7593.05	1747.44	47.2280
90650				RSMA	30	92463	7705.25	1773.26	47.9259
91973				RSMA	31	93812	7817.71	1799.14	48.6254
96209				CDIR	32	98133	8177.77	1882.00	50.8649
99172				CDIR	33	101155	8429.62	1939.96	52.4314
102346				CDIR	34	104393	8699.41	2002.05	54.1095
105618				CDIR	35	107730	8977.53	2066.06	55.8394
106663				CDIR	36	108796	9066.36	2086.50	56.3918
109859				CDIR	37	112056	9338.02	2149.02	58.0815
113054				CDIR	38	115315	9609.59	2211.52	59.7707
119636				CDIR	39	122029	10169.06	2340.27	63.2506

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Agenda Item 7



Peter Sloman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 937 3787

To: Councillor Emberson (Chair)
Councillors Brock, Lovelock, Page and
Skeats

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2332
e-mail:
richard.woodford@reading.gov.uk

30 October 2019

Your contact is: **Richard Woodford**

NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 7 NOVEMBER 2019

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on Thursday, 7 November 2019 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>Page No</u>
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 11 JULY 2019	BOROUGH WIDE	3 - 4
3. PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 16 OCTOBER 2019	BOROUGH WIDE	5 - 8
4. TEAM READING - PRESENTATION	BOROUGH WIDE	9 - 22
5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC		
At this point, the following motion will be moved by the Chair: "That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act"		
6. REDUNDANCIES	BOROUGH WIDE	23 - 26

CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

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Present: Councillor Emberson (Chair);
Councillors Brock, Page and Skeats.

Also Present: Miriam Palfrey (for items 1 and 2) and Shella Smith.

Apologies: Councillor Lovelock.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. BRIEFING ON THE TEAM READING PROGRAMME

Shella Smith, Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, gave a presentation on the work and achievements of Team Reading over the past year, and set out the programme going forward over the next twelve months.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

4. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development and the Executive Director of Resources submitted a joint report, which set out a request for flexible retirement of A and the payment of pension benefits through the Local Government Pension Scheme. The proposal, together with the financial implications, was set out in a schedule appended to the report.

Resolved -

- (1) That the flexible retirement of employee A on the terms set out in the schedule appended to the report and the payment of pension benefits through the Local Government Pension Scheme be approved;
- (2) That the proposal be approved on the basis of the financial implications as set out in paragraphs 7.1 of the report, and that authority to conclude the individual package be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development (acting jointly).

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.23pm).

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Present:

Councillors Emberson (Vice Chair in the Chair), Brock, Page and Stanford-Beale

K Magee	Unite
A McNamara	National Education Union (NEU)
A Solera	UNISON
S Smith	Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development
Richard Woodford	Committee Services

Apologies:

I Newnham	Unite
M Palfrey	Unison

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Miriam Palfrey was elected to serve as Chair of the Forum for the remainder Municipal Year 2019/2020.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Emberson had been appointed to serve as Vice Chair at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 22 May 2019 (Minute 11 refers).

3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2019

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 14 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report providing the Forum with information about the European Union (EU) settlement scheme and its implications for employees of the Council. Unison had requested that the Council considered giving paid time off to employees who needed to apply for settled status under the EU settlement scheme as a result of Brexit.

The report explained that the scheme had been designed to be simple to use and applications could be made via an app on a mobile phone. Furthermore, employees had until 30 June 2021 to make an application if there was a deal or until 31 December 2020 if there was no deal. It was therefore recommended that paid time off for employees to make an application under the settlement scheme was not required.

The UK was due to leave the EU on 31 October 2019, with or without deal, and it had been made clear that free movement would no longer be possible for UK nationals and European Economic Area (EEA) nationals in the UK after Brexit. If there was a deal, then under the withdrawal agreement all EU nationals (except Irish nationals) who were already resident in the UK would be required to apply under the EU settlement scheme for settled or pre-settled status. This included

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 16 OCTOBER 2019

those who already held a registration certificate or permanent residence card. The withdrawal agreement provided for a transition period lasting until 31 December 2020 if there was no deal and the deadline for applications for settled or pre-settled status was 30 June 2021 if there was a deal.

The report explained that in the event of a no deal scenario, the settlement scheme would be available only for EU nationals who were already resident in the UK on or before exit day. They would have until 31 December 2020 to apply for either pre-settled or settled status. The application process had been designed to be straightforward and individuals would apply online and would qualify by meeting three core criteria - Identity, Eligibility and Suitability. A straightforward online application, where the applicant was not required to provide further information, currently took between one and four calendar days to process. The scheme had been fully open for applications since 30 March 2019, there was no fee and there was a free government helpline available seven days a week to support people who needed to make an application.

The Forum discussed the report and a number of points were raised including the following:

- The number of applications was increasing as was the complexity of the cases which meant there were issues with the software and many applicants were having to work with consultants in order to process their applications;
- The Document Check app currently only worked fully on Android smartphones and tablets and not with Apple devices;
- The number of staff who needed to apply for settled or pre-settled status was not known as only eligibility to work in the UK was asked for when staff joined the Council;
- It was noted that the Chief Executive's weekly blog included a reminder to EU members of staff about the need to apply to the EU settlement scheme;
- S Smith agreed to produce further specific communications with staff and to put a reminder in the printed copy of Inside Reading, the monthly newsletter for staff, so that staff who did not have access to email would be made aware of the situation;
- The trade unions asked that the position be kept under review and an update be given at the next meeting in February 2020.

AGREED -

- (1) That paid time off was not required for staff wishing to apply for settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme be agreed;
- (2) That further communications with staff, including information in Inside Reading, be carried out by S Smith;

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 16 OCTOBER 2019

- (3) That the position be kept under review and an update report be submitted to the next meeting.**

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.15 pm).

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Team Reading Attract



Agenda Item 4

7 November 2019

Progress so far

- Improved advertising & procurement
- Online DBS Checks
- Social media presence
- Branded advertising templates
- Streamlined process and paperwork
- Increased personal contact with candidates
- Recruitment metrics
- Local advertising
- New jobs pages & portal released
- CV applications enabled
- Itrent Recruitment & Onboarding implemented









Social Media & Advertising

Reading Borough Council Admin view

Page Content Suggestions Career Pages **Analytics** Activity 45

Companies to track ⓘ Time range: Sep 24, 2019 - Oct 23, 2019 ▼

Company	Total followers	New followers
 Reading Borough Council Your company	3,719	99
 Wokingham Borough Council	2,465	60
 West Berkshire Council	2,529	35
 Bracknell Forest Council	2,683	84
 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	1,716	42
 Slough Borough Council	3,457	37
 Brighter Futures for Children	242	30

Page 837



Social Media & Advertising

Page 838

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top left is the Google logo. The search bar contains the text "Kitchen fitter jobs in reading". Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "All", "News", "Images", "Shopping", "Maps", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The search results indicate "About 541,000 results (0.34 seconds)". A blue header for the "Jobs" section is visible, with "Near Reading" below it. Filter buttons include "Kitchen", "Past 3 days", "Full-time", "Account manager", "Joiner", and "MORE FILTERS". Three job listings are shown, all from "Reading Borough Council" in "Reading (+1 other)".

Job Title	Employer	Location	Source	Posted	Type
Multi-Skilled Kitchen Fitter	Reading Borough Council	Reading (+1 other)	via LinkedIn	3 days ago	Full-time
MultiSkilled Kitchen Fitter - Jobs in Reading - 1207159	Reading Borough Council	Reading (+1 other)	via Wisdom Jobs UK	22 days ago	Full-time
Multi-Skilled Kitchen Fitter	Reading Borough Council	Reading (+1 other)	via LinkedIn	14 days ago	Full-time



Social Media & Advertising

The screenshot shows a job search interface with a blue header bar containing 'JOBS', 'SAVED', and 'ALERTS'. Below the header is a navigation bar with filters for 'Title', 'Location', 'Date posted', 'Type', 'Company type', and 'Employer'. A secondary filter bar includes 'All', 'Surgeon', 'Senior manager', and 'Surveyor'. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a right main panel. The sidebar lists several job listings, each with a company logo, title, location, and posting date. The main panel displays a detailed view for an 'Arborist' role at Reading Borough Council, including application buttons for various job portals, job details like '1 day ago' and 'Full-time', and a description of the role and team.

JOBS **SAVED** **ALERTS**

Title Location Date posted Type Company type Employer [Send feedback](#) [Learn more](#)

All Surgeon Senior manager Surveyor

Arborist
Reading Borough Council
Reading (+1 other)
via Neuvoo
1 day ago Full-time

Utility Arb Surveyor
Ground Control
Reading
via Totaljobs
21 days ago £28,000–£29,999 a year

Climbing Arborist - Reading
Arbjobs
Reading (+1 other)
via Arborist And Tree Surgery Jobs
22 days ago Full-time

Apprentice Tree Surgeon
Government jobs, apprenticeship
Reading
via LinkedIn
2 days ago Full-time

Arboriculturist
Jacobs UK Ltd
Reading
via Totaljobs
30 days ago Full-time

Arborist [SAVE](#) [Share](#)

Reading Borough Council
Reading (+1 other)

Apply on Neuvoo Apply on reed.co.uk Apply on Jobsgopublic Apply on Jobs In UK Apply on Jobrapido.com Ap

1 day ago Full-time

About us

Join us here at Reading Borough Council, and you can look forward to a rewarding new role as part of a friendly and supportive team. We work together, helping each other to make lives better for people in our communities. If you'd like to be part of our growing future, we can offer excellent training and development, not to mention a range of great benefits. So be part of an organisation that will genuinely value you and your contribution to our success. Get in touch now.

The Parks Team is currently looking for skilled and experienced arborists to join our growing team responsible for the maintenance of trees on public land in Reading.

About the role

The successful candidate will have extensive experience in climbing and working from a rope and harness in all weather conditions. Senior arborists must have experience in managing teams undertaking a range of different tree work tasks, and in working with clients and contractors. The role also requires a wide range of...

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reading.gov.uk



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Jobs

If you live here, work here or just visit, you will already know that Reading is a great place to be.

The Council is dedicated to ensuring Reading can achieve its potential and everyone can benefit from its success. We firmly believe our staff are our greatest asset and we are seeking talented and dynamic individuals with the experience and drive to help us achieve our ambitious plans.

Join us today and help to shape Reading's future.



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New portal live



Job Search
Login
Reset Password
Applications
My Profile

Search results

Results - 20 matches found

 Save this search as a job alert

Pastoral/Family Worker - Geoffrey Field Junior School




29 hours per week - Term Time Only - 4 days per week - Permanent

We are looking for a dedicated professional to join our school as pastoral and family worker. This post would suit an already experienced pastoral/family worker or someone with other relevant experience looking to [...\[more details\]](#)

Location: Geoffrey Field Junior School	Contract Type: Term Time Only / Permanent / Part-Time	Salary: £13,712 to £17,050	Job reference: SCH1021
--	--	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------

Application closing date:
19/09/2019

[Job profile](#) [Send to a friend](#)

Casual General Assistant




About us
We are looking for staff to come and join our casual team to help deliver events throughout the year. Some of our events include Conferences & Venue Hire, Weddings, Banqueting, Dinners, Cafés, Concerts, Comedy & Events, Museums.

About the role
The purpose of this role is to [...\[more details\]](#)

Location: Town Hall/Museum - Blagrove Street	Contract Type: Casual / Sessional	Salary: £9.36	Job reference: DEN0142
--	---	-------------------------	----------------------------------

Application closing date:
24/09/2019

[Job profile](#) [Send to a friend](#) [Apply online](#)



New portal live



- Job Search
- Login
- Reset Password
- Applications
- My Profile
- Log off

Welcome back Mr Ben Test

Supporting Information

Page 2 of 4

Remember you can check how you are progressing with your application form by referring to the icons on the summary page.

CV

To attach a CV in support of your application click on the Browser button to upload a file attachment.

Attachment

My Cv.docx

Supporting Information

Please use this space to provide further information in support of your application.

Supporting statement

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, quo malis ullum praesent ex, nec ex decore ancillae, est et modo quas decore. Perpetua salutatus deterruisset ut quo, elit erroribus consequuntur ei duo, ex mei veritus volutpat. Sea verear maiestatis et. Cu vis iuaret invenire. Quando ceteros te per.

Mea ut causae albusci adversarium, te vel feugiat assueverit suscipiantur. Everti democritum ne est. Vix quod errem omnium cu, eirmod virtute dissentiet eu his, congue mediocritatem per ex. Has ea etiam aequae iuaret. Labore philosophia at vim. Et mei noster denique, eum dicta solet meliore at.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, quo malis ullum praesent ex, nec ex decore ancillae, est et modo quas decore. Perpetua salutatus deterruisset ut quo, elit erroribus consequuntur ei duo, ex mei veritus volutpat. Sea verear maiestatis et. Cu vis iuaret invenire. Quando ceteros te per.


Mea ut causae albusci adversarium, te vel feugiat assueverit suscipiantur. Everti democritum ne est. Vix quod errem omnium cu, eirmod virtute dissentiet eu his, congue mediocritatem per ex. Has ea etiam aequae iuaret. Labore philosophia at vim. Et mei noster denique, eum dicta solet meliore at.

Page 848



Itrent R&O

< Recruitment

 Payroll Officer (GJ) (REC9980)

Requisition details

2 Applicants in total

0 New applicants in the last 5 days

No Closing date

0 Pending applications

Job title
Payroll Officer (GJ)

Location

Requisition end date

Application end date

Published?
Yes

Recruitment manager

Recruitment administrator

Manage applicants

Page 873

1. MANUAL APPLICANT (0)

1 APPLICATION SUBMITTED ONLINE (2)

2. SHORTLISTING (0)

3. REJECT AFTER APPLICATION (0)

3. INVI >

Applicant details ▾

Attachments


Current Salary ▾


Location ▾

Notice Period ▾

Move applicants


Stage notes


 Graham Johnson (A18981)
External
 Applied on 11/07/2019

 ALL DOCS

MOVE TO

No notes


 Harvey Johnson (A18970)
External
 Applied on 11/07/2019


 ALL DOCS


MOVE TO

No notes


LINKS


 **Recruitment**

 Recruitment correspondence

 Recruitment campaigns

 Interview schedules

 Pre-employment checks and right to work information

 Post new starter transfer



Itrent R&O

Personal Absence Employment Career & Development

Hello Joshua
You last logged in 6 hours ago

- Updated Employment Privacy Policy >
- Book a holiday >
- Book onto a learning activity >
- e-Recruitment - Apply for a Job >
- View my learning account >
- Change my address details >
- Web recruitment >
- More links from self service... >

P899848

< Congratulatio

Welcome to Reading Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Code of Conduct Employee Handbook >



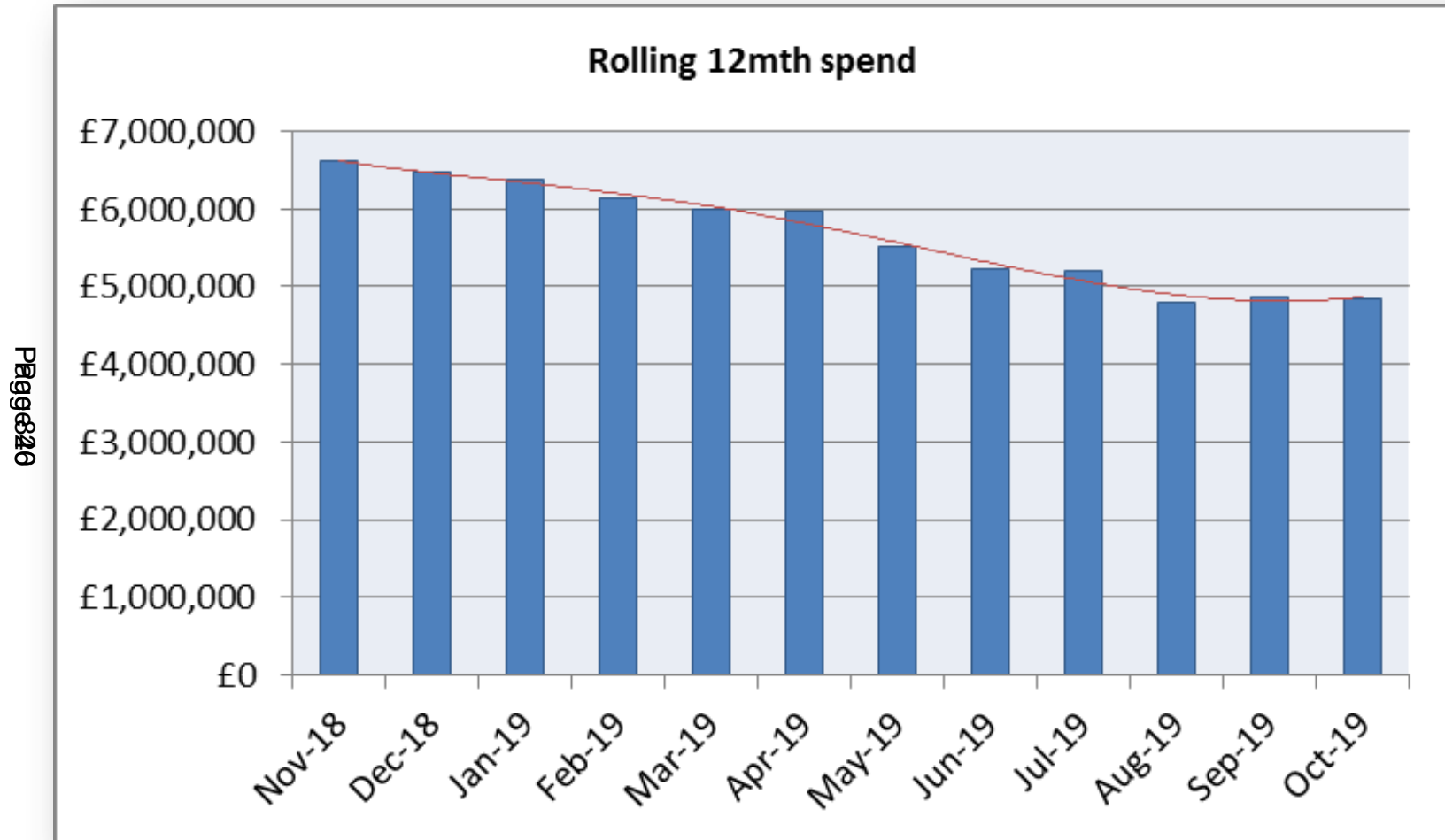
Recruitment metrics

(To end September)

Calendar Year	Hires	Time to hire (calendar days)	Number Applicants	Av Applications	Cost per Application (£)	Cost per hire (£)	Fill Rate %
2018	257	90	2,163	7.6	30	256	55
2019	337	74	3,954	12.1	10	116	73



Agency Spend



Delivery for next quarter

- Itrent R&O
- Hard to reach activity
- Recruitment KPIs



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Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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