

To: Councillor Cross (Chair)
Councillors Hornsby-Smith, Ballsdon,
Davies, Ennis, Goss, Juthani, Keeping,
Lanzoni, Leng, Magon, McCann, McElroy,
McGoldrick, McGrother, Moore and
Rowland.

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2744
e-mail: andrew.wood@reading.gov.uk

3 March 2026

Your contact is: **Andrew Wood - Committee Services**

**NOTICE OF MEETING - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
COMMITTEE 11 MARCH 2026**

A meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee will be held on Wednesday, 11 March 2026 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. DELEGATED DECISIONS		5 - 6
3. MINUTES		7 - 14
To confirm the Minutes of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee held on 19 November 2025.		
4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		15 - 28
To receive the Minutes for the meeting of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 26 November 2025.		

5. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

29 - 64

To receive the Minutes for meetings of the:

- Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Local Liaison Committee on 6 November 2025;
- Cleaner Air Safer Transport Forum on 12 June 2025 and 2 December 2025;
- Reading Climate Change Partnership Board on 16 October 2025.

6. PETITIONS

Public petitions may be submitted on any matter within the Committee's responsibilities. Submissions should be emailed to committee.services@reading.gov.uk and must be received **no later than 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting.**

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Public questions may be submitted on any matter within the Committee's responsibilities. Submissions should be emailed to committee.services@reading.gov.uk and must be received **no later than 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting.**

8. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor questions may be submitted on any matter within the Committee's responsibilities. Submissions should be emailed to committee.services@reading.gov.uk and must be received **no later than 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting.**

9. ADOPTION OF THE ELDON SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

**REDLANDS;
THAMES** 65 - 206

A report recommending that the Committee adopt the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal following the completion of a public consultation. A short presentation will also be given by representatives from the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC).

10. CLEAN AIR LIVING MATTERS: EXPLORING READING

**BOROUGH
WIDE** 207 - 222

A report summarising the achievements and final outcomes of the Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading (CALM:ER) Air Quality Awareness Programme.

11. ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE REPORT **BOROUGH WIDE** **223 - 256**

A report responding to the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group and providing an overview of recent and planned active travel schemes, outcomes achieved, and partnership working.

12. LOCAL TRANSPORT DELIVERY PLAN **BOROUGH WIDE** **257 - 264**

A report outlining the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Transport Grant funding for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 and seeking approval to submit the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan to Government.

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.**

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee - Delegated Decisions

Committee	Directorate	Date of meeting	Minute number	Item title	Decision	Officer delegated to	Lead Councillor portfolio	Expected timescale for decision
SEPT Committee	DEGNS	26/06/25	6(2)	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging in Reading Tender Award	(2) That the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be authorised to enter into a 15-year contract with the successful bidder (with a possible 1-year extension) to deliver EV charging in Reading.	AD of Environmental & Commercial Services	Climate Strategy and Transport	It is anticipated to award the contract in April 2026 with the delivery of the scheme expected to commence from July.

This page is intentionally left blank

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor Cross (Chair);
Councillors Hornsby-Smith (Vice-Chair), Ennis, Goss, Juthani, Keeping, Lanzoni, Leng, McCann, McGoldrick, McGrother, Moore and Rowland.

Also in attendance via Microsoft Teams: Councillor Magon.

Apologies: Councillors Ballsdon, Davies and McElroy.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Minutes of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2025 were received and noted.

10. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings of other bodies were received and noted:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board on 18 September 2025.
- Reading Climate Change Partnership Board on 24 April 2025 and 17 July 2025.

11. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The Committee received and noted the list of delegated decisions from previous meetings.

12. ELDON SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Committee considered a report that sought approval to conduct a public consultation on the draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal during November and December 2025. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2 - Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2025)

The report explained that the Eldon Square Conservation Area had first been designated in 1972 under the Town & Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended) and had been the first conservation area established in Reading. In 1982 the area had been extended to include Watlington Street, Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street. The most recent full appraisal of the Eldon Square area had been completed in 2007.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

The report stated that, under Section 69 of the List Buildings and Conservation Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework, planning authorities had a responsibility to review their existing conservation areas and to designate any areas of special architectural or historic significance. Historic England also recommended updating conservation area appraisals every 5 to 10 years. The report explained that conservation area appraisals were a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications, were specifically referenced in policy EN3 of the Local Plan and provided key evidence for the preparation of planning policy.

Following a review of the Council's approach to the town's historic environment, the Council had supported the formation of the Reading Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (CAAC). One of the CAAC's key concerns was the amount of time elapsed since many of the town's conservation area appraisals had been prepared and adopted. Best practice recommended that appraisals be updated every five to ten years and several in the town had been identified as being due for renewal. It had been agreed that the CAAC would lead on reviewing conservation area appraisals, working in consultation with local communities.

The Eldon Square review was the fourth to be carried out by the CAAC, following St Peters in 2018, Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road in 2020 and Christchurch in 2024. The review had been a community-led project conducted primarily by the CAAC, with assistance from RBC planning officers and other interested local community representatives. As recommended by Historic England, the appraisal review had utilised a locally adapted version of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit which set out a methodology to assess the character of the landscape and build environment of the area. The appraisal document (Appendix 2) had been updated as a result of the assessment.

The report summarised the various findings and recommendations within the updated appraisal, these included recommendations to expand the boundary of the conservation area to include properties at 84 Queens Road, 77 London Road, 32 Eldon Terrace and, 46 and 48 Eldon Terrace. The report also listed various issues and vulnerabilities that had been identified during the review process and detailed the recommended measures set out within the appraisal's Action Plan. The recommendations included:

- The expansion of the Eldon Square Conservation Area at the four locations listed above;
- To reduce the number of buildings of townscape merit;
- An Article 4 direction to prevent loss of original features;
- Addressing the issue of domestic bins in front gardens and obtrusive pipework on the front of buildings;
- Improve the blight caused by main roads and residential car parks;
- Address the poor maintenance of the George V Memorial Garden; and
- Address signage, street clutter and material.

The report stated that, if approved, the CAAC would manage the implementation of the Action Plan but that responsibility for certain actions would lay with the Council. The report noted that an informal consultation exercise had been conducted by the CAAC which had attracted 13 responses. The report recommended that the Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, as attached at Appendix 2, be approved for formal public consultation. The

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025**

proposed public consultation would be undertaken by the Council and responses received during the consultation process would be considered when preparing the final draft appraisal document. Subject to the results of the consultation process, it was anticipated that a report would be submitted to the meeting on 11 March 2026 at which approval would be sought to adopt a final version of the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal document.

At the invitation of the Chair, Evelyn Williams, Chair of the Reading CAAC, delivered a presentation on the work that had been carried out by the CAAC in order to conduct the Eldon Square appraisal and to prepare the draft appraisal document.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal be approved for public consultation;**
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, prior to the start of consultation on the draft document.**

13. READING CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2025-30 AND ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2024/25 ON (I) THE READING CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2020-25 AND (II) CORPORATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

The Committee considered a report that sought approval to adopt the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy for the period 2025 to 2030. The report also introduced the annual performance reports for the current Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and the Council's Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2024-25. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1. Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025-2030
- Appendix 2. Reading Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025-2030
- Appendix 3. The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 - Annual Report 2024/25
- Appendix 4. Reading Borough Council Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Report 2024/25

At the invitation of the Chair, Ben Burfoot, Sustainability Manager and Dylan Parkes, Co-Chair of Reading Climate Change Partnership Board (RCCP), delivered a presentation on the work that had been carried out by the Council and the RCCP since the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019, and on the development of the updated Reading Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025-30.

The report and presentation set out the national and local policy context. At its meeting in February 2019, the Council had declared a Climate Emergency and had set a target for the borough to reduce emissions to net zero by 2030. The Council had subsequently adopted the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 based on the net zero by 2030 ambition. At the same time the Council had adopted its own Carbon Plan for the period covering 2020

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

to 2025 which had included an interim target for the Council to reduce its corporate carbon emissions by 85% by 2025 on route to net zero by 2030.

The report stated that the transition to net zero would take some time to achieve and that the 2030 date should be considered as a key milestone towards achieving the ambitious net zero goal. The report explained that modelling now focused on 2040 with the ambition of achieving a close to 90% reduction against the 2005 baseline by that year, provided that national policies enabled this to happen.

The report set out the impacts of Climate Change globally, nationally and in Reading. It stated that the summer of 2025 had been the warmest summer on record for the UK with a mean temperature of 16.1°C meanwhile, the winter of 2024/25 had been the eight wettest on record, and that eight out of the ten of the warmest and wettest winters had occurred since the turn of the century. This demonstrated the reality of global warming which drove a range of impacts, risks and costs at home and abroad including floods, heatwave, storms and wildfires. Consequently, there was an increasing need for the Council and its partners to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to plan for, as well as mitigate, the associated risks.

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025 to 2030

The report introduced the new Reading Climate Emergency Strategy for the period covering 2025 to 2030 (Appendix 1) and recommended its adoption, along with the associated Action Plan (Appendix 2). Developed by the Reading Climate Change Partnership in association with 'Dialogue Matters', the updated Strategy had been designed to accelerate progress toward a net zero town that was resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The report explained that the updated Strategy had built on the collective efforts of partner organisations without duplicating existing approaches and strategies that were already driving progress. It recognised that, while significant progress had been achieved, further work would be required beyond 2030 to reach net zero. The updated Strategy remained a five-year plan, with an emphasis on laying the groundwork for a faster transition. It also sought to strengthen partnerships and to enable member organisations to contribute effectively and implement their own strategies.

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 (Annual Report for 2024/25)

The report also introduced the annual report for 2024/25 on the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 (Appendix 3). The annual report had been prepared by the RCCP and reflected the activity of a range of partners across Reading, not just the Council. The annual report set out examples of projects that had been delivered during the period and provided emissions data for 2023 (the latest year for which data was available). The report stated that, in 2023, emissions had fallen compared to 2022. This showed a continuation of the year-on-year reductions which had now fallen to 57% below the 2005 baseline. The represented the lowest level that emissions had been in Reading to date and was the 12th largest recorded reduction in emissions out of 374 UK local authority areas. The modelling had been carried out using the latest report from the National Committee on

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

Climate Change (7th Carbon Budget Report) and indicated that a 75% reduction towards net zero could be possible by 2030 from the 2005 baseline if delivery kept on track.

The annual report for 2024-25 listed a number of achievements over the period of the 2020-25 Strategy by partners in Reading, including several Council-led initiatives such as zero carbon bus travel, a zero carbon depot (including electric waste vehicles), decarbonisation of the Library, Civic Offices and Hexagon Theatre, a Green Events Code of Practice for Reading Festival and the Reading Climate Festival, 12-years of model climate conferences, rewilding and nature initiatives, and an 'A Rating for Climate'.

The annual report acknowledged good progress toward net zero but warned that current trends made achieving the 2030 target challenging. The UK Clean Power Plan, launched nationally, aimed to deliver a 95% clean energy mix by 2030 and to cut emissions to less than 25% of current levels. This reinforced the need for the Council and its partners to accelerate the transition of heating and transport to electrified sources. Electric heat pumps and vehicles were approximately three times more efficient than fossil-fuel alternatives, presenting a major opportunity to further decarbonise. By replacing boilers and vehicles with electric equivalents at the end of their service life, substantial decarbonisation would be achieved by 2040.

RBC's Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Annual Report for 2024/25)

The report also introduced the Council's Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions annual report for 2024/25 (Appendix 4). The report tracked the progress made towards the implementation of the Council's Carbon Plan and the targets set within it. The report highlighted that the Council's carbon footprint had been cut by 73.4% since 2008/09 (or 75% if renewable energy generated by Council assets is considered). This figure remained ahead of that of the Borough reductions which demonstrated that the Council had been leading by example and represented a small improvement on the previous, albeit accepting that reductions had plateaued over the last three reported years.

The report stated that, should the Council's emission reductions be achieved in the 2025/26 year, the Council would likely achieve a 75-80% reduction in its carbon footprint against the current carbon plan target of 85% by the end of 2025/26. However, it noted that a greater amount of investment in decarbonisation in the 2025 to 2030 period would be required to realise the Council's target of net zero by 2030.

The report explained that the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions was to reduce energy consumption and that the Council had been reducing its consumption and emissions consistently against the baseline year. The cumulative avoided costs associated with this, set against the cost if no action had been taken, was estimated as £34.9m to date with the figure for 2024/25 alone at £6.4m.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025 to 2030 be adopted;**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025**

- (2) That the publication of the annual performance report for the Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 to 2025, which showed progress in reducing Reading Borough's carbon emissions, which had fallen by 57% since 2005, be noted;**
- (3) That the publication of the Council's Annual Greenhouse Gas Report 2024-25, which reported on the progress in reducing Reading Borough Council's corporate emissions, which had fallen by 73.4% since 2008/09, be noted;**
- (4) That it be noted that, whilst progress was being made, the Council and other partners would need to redouble efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption and switch to electricity powered heat and transport to achieve net zero;**
- (5) That it be noted that 2024/25 had been the eighth wettest winter on record and that the summer of 2025 had been the warmest on record in the UK and that the increased risks that climate change posed for both the Council and residents required the implementation of adaptation strategies.**

14. REPORT OF THE ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK & FINISH GROUP - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee considered a report that introduced the findings and recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group, following the completion of the Group's scrutiny exercise. The report also recommended that appropriate officers conduct a review of the Group's recommendations and that they submit an evaluation for consideration at a subsequent meeting of the Committee. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference and Membership of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group.
- Appendix 2 - Active Travel Task and Finish Scrutiny Group Report.

The report explained that a councillor-led Task and Finish Group had been established by the SEPT Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2025 ([Minute 26](#) 2024-25 refers) at which the Terms of Reference for the Group and its cross-party membership had been agreed. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group had been to scrutinise the implementation of Reading's Active Travel strategy, a sub-strategy of the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 (the Local Transport Plan for the Borough), and to submit a report setting out its findings and recommendations back to the Committee.

The report explained that the scrutiny exercise had been conducted in line with the Council's scrutiny procedure rules. The Task and Finish Group had gathered evidence from Council officers, local community groups (including the Reading Cycle Campaign) and from other local authorities through various means of written correspondence, online and in-person meetings as well as other evidence gathering activities which were summarised in

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

the report. The report stated that Council officers had provided a significant amount of information to the Task and Finish Group throughout the scrutiny process, that covered a wide range of areas that included central Government guidance and funding, the Council's statutory duties, roles and capacities of teams within the Council, previous decisions taken by Committees and detailed information regarding specific designs of active travel schemes. The report explained that there was an opportunity to implement recommendations from the Group through the refresh of the Council's adopted Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which would be reviewed in the context of the challenging financial circumstances faced by the Council and the need to prioritise available resources, both financial and in terms of staffing, to the most effective way in order to meet the overall objectives set out in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040.

The Active Travel Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations were set out in its Scrutiny Group Report, a copy of which was attached at Appendix 2. The Task and Finish Group had found that, whilst a strong commitment to active travel existed and that good progress in Reading towards modal shift had been made, the effective implementation of active travel schemes faced certain operational challenges and that there was an opportunity for local improvement to allow the Council to better meet its strategic goals. At the same time the report acknowledged the financial situation faced by the Council. It had therefore not made any recommendations for unfunded expenditure but instead looked at how processes could be improved and how existing funding could potentially be better utilised and prioritised. The report included 12 recommendations, categorised into three themes, set out under the following headings:

Scheme Design And Prioritisation

1. Avoidance of missing links;
2. Increased use of wands for better value versus effect ratio;
3. Considered use of shared spaces where appropriate;
4. Continuous footways and informal side-road zebra crossings;
5. Cyclist-level traffic lights;
6. Pavement parking and accessibility for disabled pedestrians;

Funding

7. Making best use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) Contributions;
8. Consideration of other sources of income, including demand management measures;

Implementation

9. Reprioritisation of the Waiting Restrictions Review Programme;
10. Setting out a clear pathway from scheme request to implementation;
11. Embedding active travel across the Council;
12. Senior leadership oversight and project management to ensure delivery at pace.

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025**

At the meeting it was noted that, in addition to requiring consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, the Terms of Reference should have also included reference to the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services also consulting with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, when it came to deciding on the acceptance and/or priority given to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations. Consequently, the Committee agreed that the Terms of Reference be adjusted so that they included reference to the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets being consulted by officers when they prepared their evaluation report in response to the Task and Finish Group's findings.

At the meeting the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport said that, to continue the positive cross-party work of the Task and Finish Group, he would be requesting that officers discussed the content and findings of their evaluation report with members of the Task and Finish Group prior to the evaluation report being considered by the Committee.

The Committee also agreed to include a specific reference to the ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) within paragraph 4.6 of the Task and Finish Group's Scrutiny Group Report and for the report to be updated accordingly.

Resolved -

- (1) That the findings and recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Scrutiny Group, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;**
- (2) That appropriate officers review the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and provide an evaluation report to a future meeting of the Committee;**
- (3) That the Terms of Reference be adjusted to ensure that the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets were both consulted when officers considered the acceptance/prioritisation given to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations;**
- (4) That paragraph 4.6 of the Task and Finish Group's Scrutiny Group Report (Appendix 2) be updated to insert: "*and ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan).*", at the end of the sentence that read: "*Currently, the various request lists and the CIL request lists include the Request for Traffic Management Measures, the Cycle Forum request list and the CIL request list, as well as the LCWIP.*"**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm closed at 8.32 pm)

SIGNED: _____

DATED: _____

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 26 NOVEMBER 2025

- Present:** Councillor Lanzoni (Chair);
Councillors Barnett-Ward, Cross, Eden, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, Hornsby-Smith, Keeping, McGrother, O'Connell (for Items 24-32), R Singh and White.
- Also present via Microsoft Teams:** Councillor Nikulina (for Items 24-32).
- Apologies:** Councillors Ayub and Hacker.

24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25. PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee received the list of delegated decisions from previous meetings.

26. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were received:

- Reading Cycle Forum – 4 September 2025.

27. A33 BUS RAPID TRANSIT STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of the feedback that had been received from the statutory consultation process associated with the amendments required to the traffic regulation order to incorporate the new sections of the bus lane that had been implemented on the A33, and made recommendations on whether these changes should be implemented. The Consultation Results were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the statutory consultation process had taken place between 26 September and 16 October 2025. A summary of the results was set out in a table in the report. In total four responses had been received, with three objections, summarised as follows:

- The effectiveness and use of bus lanes, with some residents observing that buses did not consistently use the designated lanes;
- Suggestion that the funding should be directed towards repairing and improving existing roads rather than developing new bus rapid transit (BRT) infrastructure;
- Concern that prioritising buses over cars could negatively impact local business and deter people from commuting into Reading, suggesting that the Council's approach might be unfavourable to car drivers.

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

Responding to these concerns officers noted that:

- On occasions buses would exit the bus lanes when they needed to be in a turning lane, however in the most part these bus lanes were used frequently;
- The funding associated with the delivery of this phase of the A33 BRT had been provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) to support the delivery of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan and was ring fenced by DfT for this purpose;
- The aim of the Council's Local Transport Plan was to deliver a sustainable transport system in Reading, which would create an attractive green and vibrant town which promoted healthy choices and wellbeing. The provision of public transport improvements such as this supported this objective and no general traffic capacity had been removed and the bus lane had been created by maximising the existing highway space.

The report stated that although noting the objections that had been received to the statutory consultation, on the basis of the benefits that would be delivered by the bus lane, and its contribution to the wider strategic aims of the Council, through the Council Plan and Reading Transport Strategy, it was proposed that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should be approved.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report and the consultation feedback set out in Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) That the Officer recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed, and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services given authority to make the Traffic Regulation Order;**
- (3) That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.**

28. MOTORCYCLE USE OF BSIP BUS LANES – STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESULTS

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of the feedback that had been received from the statutory consultation associated with the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, allowing motorcycles to access the bus lanes that had been delivered through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), and made recommendations on whether this should be made permanent. The Consultation Results were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that a six month statutory consultation period had taken place between 13 September 2024 and 13 March 2025. The permanent TRO would grant permission for motorcycles to use the following three bus lanes, which had already been implemented:

- A329 Oxford Road – Outbound bus lane between Zinzan Street and George Street;

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- A329 Oxford Road – Outbound bus lane between Pangbourne Street and Norcot;
- A4 London Road – Inbound bus lane between Liverpool Road and Cemetery Junction.

This permission would also be granted to the remaining bus lanes subject to their implementation:

- A327 – Southampton Street – Inbound bus lane from Pell Street to The Oracle roundabout;
- A4 London Road – Inbound bus lane between Sidmouth Street and London Street.

The report included a summary of the statutory consultation results in tables that highlighted the common themes raised and outlined both the positive and negative feedback that had been received from respondents.

The report proposed making the Experimental TRO into a Permanent TRO for each of the bus lanes that had been implemented already and would also be extended to the remaining lanes.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report and the consultation feedback set out in Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) That Officer recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services given authority to make permanent the existing Experimental Traffic Regulation Order;**
- (3) That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.**

29. CIVITAS ACADEMY SCHOOL STREET SCHEME

The Sub-Committee received a report that sought approval to make permanent an experimental traffic order for the school street scheme on Great Knollys Street for the Civitas Academy. The Consultation Results were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the Civitas School Street Plan was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that following the introduction of the scheme the school had experienced a positive improvement in the environment outside of the entrance. It was more relaxed and safer as the removal of vehicles from this section of Great Knollys Street had removed many of the conflict points. The location had previously been a chaotic and, at times, dangerous environment with many vehicles trying to access or making dangerous turning movements in the road. There was continued support from the school's leadership and senior management team for the scheme, however, as with all school street schemes there were some concerns over the ongoing resourcing requirement. Despite this issue the school was keen that the scheme continued but, also that the Council investigated

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

alternative approaches to enforcement that might remove this requirement in the future, such as camera enforcement.

Officers had recently engaged the services of transport consultants to carry out a review of the Council's wider approach to school streets and road safety near schools. The review would include assessing feasibility of alternative options for enforcing school streets, such as camera enforcement but, would also review alternative traffic calming measures that could improve road safety outside of schools. A report on this work was expected to be submitted to a Sub-Committee meeting in 2026 and might offer a solution to the current resourcing issues that were being faced by schools.

The report explained that a consultation had been carried out between 13 September 2024 and 13 March 2025. There had been four responses and of those two had supported the scheme, one had objected and one did not know and left no comment.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and it was suggested that air quality should be measured outside schools to illustrate the environmental impact and benefits of school street schemes.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report and the consultation feedback set out in Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) That the Officer recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services given authority to make permanent the existing Experimental Traffic Regulation Order;**
- (3) That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.**

30. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER RECTIFICATION - UPDATE

Further to Minute 21 of the previous meeting, the Sub-Committee received a report informing them that the statutory consultation that had been agreed at the meeting on 11 June 2025 (Minute 7 refers) for rectifying a TRO and signing issue associated with the London Street southbound bus lane had been carried out. An objection had been received and the Sub-Committee were asked to consider this feedback alongside any officer comments.

The report also highlighted an issue with a TRO in East Street related to a Pay and Display parking bay which had been discovered as part of the Emissions Based Charging Project and sought agreement to carry out the necessary processes to rectify this TRO issue. The following appendices were attached to the report:

Appendix 1 London Street bus lane, referred in Section 3.11, objections/feedback received during statutory consultation

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

Appendix 2 Drawing to highlight the location of the East Street Pay & Display bay, referred in Section 3.11

The report also provided an update on the Digital TRO Project and explained that the supplier which would be providing the TRO management suite had been appointed and the Boroughwide survey/capture of restrictions was now complete. The software supplier was populating the TRO management package with the data that had been captured during the survey and it was expected that the Waiting Restrictions element of this work would be completed by the end of the year. The next phase of the project would be substantive and resource intensive, with officers populating the background data to the mapped restrictions, quality checking the mapping data and setting up the software package in preparation for statutory consultation and expected launch. The lead time for this phase of the work was more challenging to anticipate as this would be the Council's first time operating in this way. The project was prioritising the Waiting Restrictions TRO first, as this was expected to be the most substantial element, with the subsequent movement and speed restriction Order expected to be more streamlined. Development of the project was being monitored and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee as part of the wider Action Plan remit of that Committee.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and officers confirmed that with respect to monies paid back to individuals, this was being reported at meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee and that the work now being carried out to amend TROs was not having a significant impact on officer time.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That the officer recommendation in Section 3.7.1 be agreed and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services authorised to make the London Street bus lane Traffic Regulation Order as advertised;**
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultations to address the Traffic Regulation Order issue identified and recommendation proposed in item Section 3.7.2, in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996;**
- (4) That the Assistant Director of Environment and Commercial Services be authorised to make minor amendments to any proposals to be consulted, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee;**
- (5) That subject to no objections being received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order;**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- (6) That any objection(s) received during the statutory advertisement be submitted to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee, where a decision on the outcome of the proposal can be made;**
- (7) That no public enquiry be held into the proposals.**

31. REQUESTS FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of requests for traffic management measures that had been raised with officers. These were measures that had either been previously reported or those that would not typically be addressed in other programmes, where funding had yet to be identified. The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 The Principal List of requests, revised to include priorities (where applicable);
- Appendix 2 The requests proposed for removal from the list;
- Appendix 3 New requests for potential inclusion in the Principal List.

The report explained that following meetings between Ward Councillors and the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, agreements had been made regarding those requests that could be removed and those that were considered to be a relatively higher priority. The report therefore sought to have the outcome of those decisions reflected in the principal list moving forward and sought agreement for these changes that were summarised in Section 3.6.1 of the report and in Appendices 1 and 2.

With regard to the Principal List the report explained that the Council received many requests for new traffic management measures across the Borough and had several programmes in which they might be addressed, including the Waiting Restriction Review Programme and major strategic schemes. However, funding to address smaller scale, desirable general traffic management measures, was harder to secure. Additionally, the Council's limited engineering staffing resources covered a range of different workstreams and outsourcing did not necessarily represent best value for money. A list of requested measures had been maintained for many years and numerous schemes had been delivered from it, primarily through local 15% Community Infrastructure Levy funding nominations. The regular update reports had been clear that those requests on the list were not investigated, designed nor fully costed schemes and that undertaking such work would attract financial and resourcing costs and divert these resources away from developing other funded schemes. The officer comments against the requests were high level observations/estimates, that had been based on a limited desktop exercise and owing to potential feasibility issues, and that the majority of requests would require legal statutory consultation, no requests on the list could be guaranteed as deliverable.

The report explained that the list had grown more rapidly than schemes could be delivered, which had led to understandable frustration about the length of time many requests had

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

been on the list, without development being carried out. Any estimation regarding the time at which development of a request would be likely to commence had not been possible. There was a desire to change this position and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport had met with Ward Councillors to scrutinise the list of requests, to streamline and prioritise them. The results of these meetings had been reflected in Appendices 1 and 2 which indicated the agreed priorities and those requests that should be removed from the list. The results of this work had helped to streamline and focus the list and, alongside existing and potential new opportunities for funding and resourcing, sought to expedite potential delivery of these beneficial schemes across the Borough.

Ongoing scrutiny of the list was essential and Councillors and officers were asked to apply additional scrutiny when considering any new requests for inclusion on the list. The Principal List represented a list of requests worth a considerable financial investment to the Council and decades of linear officer time to deliver and had been an open book for many years. Any new requests should have considerable merit for being added and the report proposed that the focus should be on realising the development of these schemes and not returning to a situation where schemes were being regularly added with relatively low chance of development for many years.

The report did not necessarily affect major strategic transport and cycling schemes that had been funded as part of any major scheme project award from central Government and/or other sources. However, it did currently include requests that had been received from the Reading Cycle Forum. These had intentionally not been assigned a priority, as initiatives around Active Travel priorities that were being developed on other forums were expected to result in such requests being transferred to other strategic workstreams. The Principal List was therefore expected to be adjusted accordingly in the future but, until that time, these initiatives would be retained.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and it was agreed to remove the priorities for each request set out in Appendix 1, The Principal List of requests, and for each request to be reprioritised. The Sub-Committee also agreed that the cycling schemes, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2, be removed and that they be looked at more strategically in other programmes/workstreams for example those relating to Active Travel and the forthcoming Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That the priority scores listed against each request on the Principal List, as attached at Appendix 1, be removed and that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the prioritisation of the entries remaining on the List;**
- (3) That having considered the Principal List, as attached to the report at Appendix 1, the following requests be removed:**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- **Caversham Ward – Chiltern Road (Line no. 49);**
 - **Caversham Ward – Church Street (Line no. 50);**
 - **Caversham Heights Ward – Albert Road (Line no. 54);**
 - **All cycling related entries (also see (6) below).**
- (4) **That the removals agreed through Ward Councillor meetings, as set out in Section 3.6.1 and listed in Appendix 2 of the report, be agreed subject to the following entries being retained on the revised Principal List of requests:**
- **Caversham/Thames Wards – Various Streets in Lower Caversham (Line no. 34);**
 - **Norcot/Southcote Wards – Shilling Close/Honey End Lane (Line no. 36);**
 - **Caversham Heights Ward – Upper Woodcote Road (and Woodcote Road) (Line no. 16);**
 - **All entries that related to 20mph zones located north of the river (also see (5) below).**
- (5) **That all requests listed in Appendix 2 of the report relating to 20mph zones located north of the river be retained on the revised Principal List pending further discussion by Ward Councillors;**
- (6) **That all cycling related requests listed in Appendices 1 and 2 be removed from the Principal List of requests on the condition that they be collated and be retained on a new strategic list for consideration in other programmes/workstreams;**
- (7) **That having considered the officer recommendations for each new request listed in Appendix 3 attached to the report, the four entries be added to the revised Principal List.**

32. WAITING RESTRICTION REVIEW PROGRAMME:

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of objections that had resulted from the statutory consultation for the agreed proposals that had formed the 2024B Programme, sought agreement to recommended changes to the Waiting Restriction Review Programme commencing from the 2025 Programme and provided the Sub-Committee with the list of new requests for potential inclusion in the 2025 Programme.

With regard to changes to the Waiting Restriction Review Programme commencing from the 2025 Programme this included a proposed scoring system to help inform the relative prioritisation of requests to be included, optimising the number of requests to be included against the resource implications, holding a single programme per year and introducing a process of writing to requestors, where their requests had not been agreed for inclusion. These changes were intended to provide better information to Councillors, enable

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

a more strategic approach to the programme and optimise the resource implications of the programme in the context of other desired workstreams expected from the same resources.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Results of statutory consultation (2024B programme) (Part A); |
| Appendix 2 | Recommended Scoring Criterion and Rationale (Part B); |
| Appendix 3.1 | New requests (2025 programme), arranged by Total Score, Ward, Street (Part C); |
| Appendix 3.2 | New requests (2025 programme), arranged by Ward, Total Score, Street (Part C). |

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and in response to questions on the changes to the Waiting Restriction Review Programme officers explained that those requests that had not been coded meant that a decision had to be made on each one and that although they might not have a high score they might be of high importance in each Ward. The aim was to optimise resources and work on the Waiting Restriction Review Programme was the most demanding in terms of officer time and the hope was that the changes proposed would help balance resource and help in the delivery of other schemes.

At the invitation of the Chair Luke Horton addressed the Sub-Committee in respect of parking difficulties experienced by residents of Neath Gardens, where a scheme had also been recommended for inclusion 2025 Programme.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That having considered the consultation feedback, set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report, the proposals in the 2024B Programme, which were advertised as part of the same, single draft Traffic Regulation Order, be implemented as advertised subject to the following amendments to the programme:**
 - **Beresford Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Linden Road/Beech Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Windemere Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Reservoir Crescent – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Rosendale Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Long Barn Lane – Remove from the programme;**
 - **Boulton Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Southcote Road – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Dalton Close/Aylsham Close – Implement as advertised;**
 - **Recreation Road – Implement as advertised;**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- Victoria Road – Remove from the programme;
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make and seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order;
- (4) That the respondents to the statutory consultation be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting;
- (5) That the recommended changes to the Waiting Restriction Review Programme, as set out in Section 3.5 of the report, be agreed;
- (6) That having considered the officer recommendations in section 3.6 of the report against the requests made for waiting restriction changes listed in Appendix 3.2, the following requests be included for investigation by officers in the Waiting Restriction Review Programme 2025, or removed from the programme as follows:

Abbey Ward:

- Russell Street/Goldsmid Road (Line no. 20) – Removed;
- Kings Road (Line no. 64) – Removed;

Battle Ward:

- Stone Street (corner with Tidmarsh Street) (Line no. 1) – Included for officer investigation;
- Beresford Road (Line no. 4) – Removed;
- Kensington Road (Line no. 61) – Included for officer investigation;
- Valentia Road/Catherine Street (Line no. 65) – Removed;
- Cranbury Road (Line no. 74) – Removed;

Caversham Ward:

- Henley Road (Line no. 5) – Included for officer investigation;
- Hemdean Road (Line no. 10) - Included for officer investigation;
- Amersham Road (Line no. 46) – Removed;
- Briants Avenue (Line no. 62) – Removed;
- North Street (Line no. 66) – Included for officer investigation;

Caversham Heights:

- Highdown Hill/Soane End (Line no. 6) – Included for officer investigation;
- Charlotte Close/Kidmore Road junction (Line no. 21) – Removed;
- Surley Row (Line no. 22) – Included for officer investigation;

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

Church Ward;

- **Barnsdale Road (Line no. 11) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Tamarisk Avenue junction with Whitley Wood Road (Line no. 23) – Removed;**
- **Whitley Wood Road (Line no. 24) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Callington Road junction with Merton Road North (Line no. 47) – Removed;**

Coley Ward:

- **Lesford Road (Line no. 12) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Wensley Road (Line no. 63) – Removed;**
- **Brunswick Street (Line no. 67) – Removed;**

Emmer Green:

- **St Benets Way (Line no. 7) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Glenrhondda (Line no. 25) – Removed;**
- **Tredegar Close (Line no. 26) – Removed;**

Katesgrove Ward:

- **Basingstoke Road (Line no. 13) – Removed;**
- **Home Farm Close (Line no. 27) – Removed;**
- **Rowley Road junction with Basingstoke Road (Line no. 28) – Removed;**
- **Basingstoke Road (Line no. 68) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **London Road (Line no. 75) – Removed;**
- **Sherman Place (Line no. 76) – Removed;**

Kentwood Ward:

- **Armour Hill/Larisa Close (Line no. 2) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Scours Lane (section between Deacon Way and overhead bridge) (Line no. 14) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Brandon Close/Vale Crescent (Line no. 29) – Removed;**
- **Kentwood Close (Line No. 30) – Removed;**
- **Lyndhurst Road junction with Kinson Road (Line no. 31) – Removed;**
- **Pottery Road (Line no. 32) – Removed;**
- **Pottery Road/Wealden Way (Line no. 33) – Removed;**
- **Romsey Road/Bramshaw Road junction (Line no. 34) – Removed;**
- **Vale Crescent (Line no. 35) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Broomfield Road (Line no. 48) – Removed;**
- **Pottery Road (Line no. 49) – Removed**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- **Overlanders End (Line no. 77) – Removed;**

Norcot Ward:

- **Grovelands Road (Line no. 50) – Removed;**
- **Links Drive (Line no. 51) – Removed;**
- **Stoneham Close (Line no. 52) – Removed;**
- **Shilling Close (Line no. 69) – Included for officer investigation;**

Park Ward:

- **Pitcroft Road (Line no. 8) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Wokingham Road (Line no. 36) – Removed;**
- **Hamilton Road (Line no. 53) – Removed;**
- **Tuns Hill Cottages (Line no. 70) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Wokingham Road (Line no. 71) – Removed;**

Redlands Ward:

- **Addington Road (section between Craven Road and Redlands Road) (Line no. 3) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Allcroft Road (Line no. 15) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Upper Redlands Road (Line no. 16) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Upper Redlands Road (Line no. 17) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Addington Road (Line no. 37) – Removed;**
- **Eldon Terrace (Line no. 38) – Removed;**
- **Lower Mount (Line no. 72) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **St Johns Hill (Line no. 78) – Removed;**
- **Sutton Walk (Line no. 79) – Removed;**

Southcote Ward:

- **Westcote Road (Line no. 39) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Southcote Road/Maria Court (Line no. 54) – Removed;**

Thames Ward:

- **Cardiff Road (Line no. 18) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Addison Road (Line no. 40) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Milford Road junction with Printers Road (northside) (Line no. 41) – Removed;**
- **Mill Road junction with Champion Road (Line no. 42) – Removed;**
- **Caversham Road (before the Moderation pub) (Line no. 55) – Removed;**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

- **Trafford Road on both sides (Line no. 56) – Removed;**

Tilehurst Ward:

- **Neath Gardens (Line no. 9) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Westwood Road (Line no. 57) – Included for officer investigation;**

Whitley Ward:

- **Longships Way (Line no. 19) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Blandford Road junction with Studland Close (Line no. 43) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Drake Way (Line no. 44) – Removed;**
- **Exbourne Road junction with Blandford Road by the roundabout (Line no. 45) – Included for officer investigation;**
- **Blandford Road junction with Heatherdene Clase (Line no. 58) – Removed;**
- **Shirley Avenue (Line no. 59) – Removed;**
- **Wincanton Road/Northumberland Avenue (Line no. 60) – Removed;**
- **Whitley Wood Lane (Line no. 73) – Removed;**

- (7) **That the officer recommendations, following investigation of the new requests, be shared with Ward Councillors, providing opportunity for local engagement, and for any comments differing from the officer recommendations to be included in the next report submitted to the Sub-Committee;**
- (8) **That should funding permit, a further report be submitted to the Sub-Committee seeking agreement to conduct the Statutory Consultation on the recommended schemes for the 2025 programme.**

33. 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 the item 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.

34. APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY PARKING PERMITS

The Sub-Committee received a report giving details of the background to the decisions to refuse applications for Discretionary Parking Permits from nine applicants who had subsequently appealed against these decisions.

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -
26 NOVEMBER 2025**

Resolved –

- (1) That, with regard to application 4, a first discretionary resident permit be issued, personal to the applicant and charged at the standard rate;**
- (2) That with regard to application 6, discretionary visitor parking permit books be issued and charged at the standard rate;**
- (3) That, with regard to application 7, a temporary, 12-month, first discretionary resident permit be issued, personal to the applicant and charged at the standard rate, and, additionally, Kategrove Ward Councillors be asked to explore the demand for and feasibility of expanding Zone 10R to include properties on Christchurch Gardens;**
- (4) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' decision to refuse applications 1, 2, 5, and 8 be upheld;**
- (5) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' decision to refuse application 3 be upheld and that Parking Services officers be instructed to write to the applicant to:
 - (a) provide advice on applying for a Blue Badge;**
 - (b) suggest that they contact their university or relevant accommodation provider regarding the provision of an on-site parking space;****
- (6) That, with regard to case 9, the request to amend the allocation of Educational Establishment Permits for Cranbury College be granted, with the college's allocation of 24 permits redistributed as follows:**

Zone:	Granted Allocation:
07R	19
13R	1
14R	4
Total:	24

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

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 9.21 pm).

Minutes of 112 AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 6 November 2025

Aldermaston

Present:

Ian Rogers	Chair, Chief Nuclear Officer and Executive Director Assurance, AWE
Cllr Philip Bassil	Brimpton Parish
Cllr Mike Bound	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Cllr Graham Bridgman	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Cllr Avril Burdett	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Cllr Colin Cooper	Baughurst Parish Council
Cllr Sophie Crawford	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Kevin Cross	Mortimer West End Parish Council
Cllr Stephen Hoskins	Ashford Hill with Headley Parish
Cllr Mark Keeping	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Paul Lawrence	Burghfield Parish
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Clive Littlewood	Holy Brook Parish Council
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cllr Clarence Mitchell	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Ian Montgomery	Shinfield Parish Council
Cllr Brenda Muir Kerr	Pangbourne Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Vicky Poole	West Berkshire Council
Cllr John Seto	Theale Parish Council
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Jo Slimin	Basingstoke and Deane Council
Cllr Simon Taylor	Swallowfield Parish Council
Cllr Jim Thompson	Wokefield Parish Council
Cllr Rob Wallace	Purley on Thames Council
Cllr Paul Woodley	Wasing Parish Council
Cllr Diane Woodward	Sulhamstead Parish Council

Estate Planning and Development Lead	AWE
Head of Delivery – Safety and Health	AWE
Head of Environment	AWE
Head of Security	AWE
Head of Workforce Planning	AWE
Manager Site Response Group	AWE
Responsible Business Manager	AWE
Responsible Business Specialist	AWE
Senior Responsible Business Manager	AWE
Site Director	AWE
Superintendent	Ministry of Defence Police

Regulators:

Rob Green	Environment Agency
Karl Pallester	Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator
Gareth Lock	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Toby Forster	Office for Nuclear Regulation

Local Authority:

Carolyn Richardson	West Berkshire Council
--------------------	------------------------

Introduction:

Ian Rogers, Chair, welcomed members to the 112 LLC meeting.

Membership changes

- Stephen Hoskins is the new representative of Ashford Hill with Headley Parish Council
- Paul Lawrence from Burghfield Parish Council is the new LLC representative
- Brenda Kerr Muir from Pangbourne Parish Council replaces Suzie Ferguson as the new LLC representative
- Rob Wallace from Purley on Thames Parish Council replaces Jane Langford
- Diane Woodward is the new LLC representative for Sulhamstead Parish Council

- John Seto has been re-appointed as Theale Parish Council representative
- Andrew Hyde replaces Penee Chopping as Ufton Nervet Parish Council representative
- Mark Keeping and Clarence Mitchell have both been reappointed as Reading Borough Council representatives
- Mike Bound and Jo Slimin reappointed as Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council representatives

Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Lyndon Austin	Silchester Parish Council
Adrian Betteridge	Wokingham Borough Council
Dominic Boeck	West Berkshire Council
Kevin Cross	Mortier West End Parish Council
Robert Jones	Padworth Parish Council
Andrew Hyde	Ufton Nervet Parish Council

Approval of 111 LLC minutes

Questions arising from 111th LLC minutes

Cllr Sophie Crawford: on page 10 of the minutes, this does not completely capture the conversation. Can the minutes be amended to include the West Berkshire Council response.

Chris Daniels: We will double check this and see if we have missed anything for the next meeting. [NOTE: 111 LLC minutes have been amended and updated on the website].

Actions from 111 LLC Meeting

Action 111/01: Ian Rogers proposed to close action 110/02 as investigation is currently underway and made a commitment to share learning from the Barrow fire when it becomes available.

Barrow is not able to currently share this information.

Closed

Action 111/02: AWE to share results of six-month review of shuttle bus service at 112 LLC

This as part of the Development update in the 112 LLC

Closed

Action 111/03: AWE to provide an answer to Vicky Poole's question on 'text to voice' system for landlines

This is part of the Emergency response update in the 112 LLC

Closed

Action 111/04: How do West Berkshire follow up on conditions of planning applications to be a specific agenda item for 112 LLC

After review, this is the responsibility of West Berkshire District Council and any queries or concerns should be followed up directly with them. This is a separate part of West Berkshire District Council to Emergency Response that Carolyn Richardson represents at LLC meetings.

Closed

Action: 111/05 to investigate light pollution and mitigation in the local area.

AWE sites maintain perimeter lighting for security purposes but also to make the fence line visible for the safety of any passers-by.

- Buildings inside the perimeter run on minimal lighting outside of core business hours.
- Street light sensors make the lights turn on at dusk and off at dawn.
- Our external lighting is directed to reduce light pollution.

AWE received a recent community concern from a Burghfield resident about new lighting. AWE made sure that it was redirected away from the property.

Closed

Action 111/06: AWE to provide a future skills and workforce update at 112 LLC.

This is part of the Strategic and Future Skills update in the 112 LLC

Closed

Action 111/07: AWE to share the environmental monitoring programmes that it undertakes at its sites.

This is part of the SHEQ update in the 112 LLC

Closed

Action 111/08: Rob Green to provide an update at the next LLC as to whether there has been a change in methodology for capturing the estimate gamma radiation dose at AWE sites.

Rob Green, Environment Agency: There has not been a change in methodology for capturing the estimate gamma radiation dose. It is a statistical issue, not an issue relating to an increased hazard on site.

Closed

Action: 111/09: AWE to provide update at November LLC meeting on discharges going into waterways

This is part of the SHEQ update in the 112 LLC

Closed

Action 111/10: To provide information on AWE's focus groups including Wellbeing.

Provide information at the next LLC as part of the agenda.

Closed

Action 111/11: Chair to explore possible options for revising the format of future AWE LLC meetings.

AWE to investigate the format that other companies use to understand options.

Closed

Questions arising:

Cllr Graham Bridgman: Can the process for a large group of visitors requiring access to the site as part of the LLC be looked at as in the past it has been a much smoother process?

Action 112/01: AWE to provide an update on the process for visitors entering a nuclear licenced site

Chair's Update**Organisation update including site operations****1. ONR findings into The Hub construction fatality**

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) announced its investigation findings following the fatality in The Hub construction enclave on its Aldermaston site on 6 July 2023.

The ONR has confirmed that AWE plc will not be recommended for prosecution in this matter. Action will be taken by the ONR against Balfour Beatty Group Limited for alleged health and safety breaches.

2. Secretary of State visit

On Thursday 19 June, AWE Aldermaston hosted the Rt Hon John Healey, the UK Secretary of State for Defence, alongside our local MP, representatives from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and the Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO). This visit was a unique opportunity to showcase the cutting-edge science and technology AWE is known for and the crucial role it plays in keeping the country safe.

AWE also welcomed national and regional media, marking the first time in over 10 years that journalists have been invited on site.

3. £15 billion investment to renew the nuclear deterrent

The Secretary of State visit came as the government confirmed a £15 billion investment in this parliament into the renewal of the UK's sovereign nuclear warhead - confirmed through the recent Strategic Defence Review - to keep the British people safe while supporting almost 10,000 UK jobs.

4. Three AWE colleagues named in King's honours

Three AWE colleagues were named in the King's Birthday Honours list which recognises the service and achievements of people across the UK.

1. Professor Andrew Randewich CBE (for Services to Defence)
2. John Whitaker OBE (for Services to Defence)
3. Giles Hartill MBE (for Services to Engineering)

This prestigious recognition reflects the significant contribution that Andrew, John and Giles have made in their service to the strategic and national defence of the UK.

5. Text Alert Services (National)

On 7 September 2025, at approximately 15:00, the UK Government undertook the second national test of the **National Emergency Alert system**. More information on September's alarm testing is available on the Government's website. Previously, alarm testing took place on 23 April 2023.

The system is designed to provide an alert to relevant areas of the UK on a range of events which may pose a risk or harm to that area – such examples include severe flooding, fires, extreme weather.

This phone alert test was a standalone test and has no connection with the AWE community text alert capability which is a separate system.

The AWE Text Alert system will provide an emergency alert text message to local residents who register for the service. It will be used in the unlikely event of an emergency at Aldermaston or Burghfield which has the potential to affect the surrounding Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ).

6. Site Parking

In addition to the issues addressed as Community Concerns, AWE continues to monitor, and respond to, any queries from local residents regarding parking. Teams, including roads and grounds, work hard to manage access and exit of site traffic and on-site parking. Reminders are issued via the internal communications portal and other channels.

7. Partnering for National Defence Report

AWE published its Partnering for National Defence 2025/26 report, providing insight into its strategic partnerships with industry, academia and other sectors – and why they matter to its mission in national defence and its role in protecting the UK.

[AWE publishes Partnering for National Defence 2025/26 report – AWE](#)

Questions since the last meeting:

Cllr Sophie Crawford asked why there seemed to be an increase in unusual activity around the site (May 2025) with a large emergency vehicle presence.

There had been an AWE site exercise that all LLC members were emailed about in advance.

Cllr Sophie Crawford informed us that she and other individuals in Aldermaston Parish didn't appear to be receiving the residents' letter, AWE/WBDC text alerts or Connect magazine

Response sent from West Berkshire District Council:

The distribution list did include the post codes referred to. The delivery agreement was with the Royal Mail therefore cannot confirm house by house if they were delivered. There is the possibility the letters were seen as junk mail. If the residents would like us to send a letter to them then if you could send on their full address details we shall arrange for this to happen. Alternatively, they can review the details and how to register on the West Berkshire Councils website: [AWE Text Alert - West Berkshire Council](#).

Cllr Sophie Crawford asked if AWE was involved in a loud bang that sounded like an explosion around the Aldermaston area.

The noise was not linked to any activity at AWE. Instead, an unexploded tank shell was found in Theale. Thames Valley Police and the local authorities made the decision for a controlled detonation in the grounds of Aldermaston Manor House.

Cllr Sophie Crawford – requested for Nicholas Alexander Emergency Planning and OSEP to attend 112 LLC.

Unfortunately, not able to attend 112 LLC. However, Gareth Lock from the ONR is here today and can take any questions if they arise.

Cllr Sophie Crawford asked about a rumour from several sources that Aldermaston Manor House is being bought by the MOD or AWE.

We do not have a formal position on Aldermaston Park.

Cllr Avril Burdett – complaint from the residents of Plantation Road, Tadley which runs parallel to the A340 which runs parallel to West Gate as contractors are parking their vehicles in the road and then walking to AWE. When asked by residents, they were told that there was not enough parking for them on site. Few of these houses have their own driveways and are then left with nowhere to park.

This was covered in the chair's comment.

Community Update

Responsible Business Manager

Responsible Business Specialist

Data for the school academic year August 2024 to July 2025 shows that AWE reached 52,123 young people across 277 schools with many schools having multiple visits throughout the year. AWE works primarily with schools in a 20 mile radius of Aldermaston. Financial year April 2024 – March 2025 social value impact is over £6million.

AWE has around 400 STEM Ambassadors who support with delivery of school engagement sessions. AWE's current offer for primary schools includes: sponsorship of the Queen Mary's College Basingstoke, presentations, guest speakers and STEM workshops. In secondary schools, AWE offers careers fairs, presentations, career talks, guest speakers and mock interviews.

As part of the AWE 75 Anniversary celebrations, local primary school students were challenged to draw what they thought a scientist or engineer may look like in 75 years time. AWE received over 800 entries from students. The winning student from Brimpton Primary School received a Royal Institution Science show for their whole school.

Data for August 2024 to July 2025, AWE employees have delivered 1,150 volunteering activities in local communities, meaning that it has over doubled the number of volunteering hours used from 2023 to 2024.

AWE organises an annual Give a Gift collection. Each year it collects for a variety of local charities including our charity partner PACT. Last year, A member of the Executive Team and their leadership team visited PACT to help women supported by the charity to choose and wrap gifts for their children. For many of those women, it was the first time they were able to select a gift for their children. This year AWE will also be collecting for West Berkshire Food Bank, Hampshire Hospitals charity and SWAT.

The partnership has been in place since October 2024. During this time, AWE employees have raised over £27,501.56 for its corporate charity partner PACT through employee donations, which has enabled 44 families to go through the Supporting Families programme.

The year long installation at West Berkshire Museum to celebrate the 75 anniversary of AWE has seen over 7,800 visitors to its free exhibit on the history of AWE. Alongside this exhibition, AWE delivered a free primary school STEM Day to 180 local students from five primary schools, providing opportunities for students to engage in hands-on workshops linked to science, technology, engineering and maths.

AWE's recent Connect magazine has had 625 views through its QR code.

Questions arising:

Cllr Vicky Poole: How many of these activities have been for students not in education or special needs schools?

Responsible Business Specialist: AWE work with a number of primary and secondary schools with specialist provision units to deliver STEM sessions.

Cllr George McGarvie: Does AWE support tax efficient giving, salary sacrifice or Gift Aid?

Responsible Business Manager: Gift is individual, so when people donate they have the opportunity to add Gift Aid.

Cllr George McGarvie: What are you doing to continue driving an increase of employees using their volunteering time?

Senior Responsible Business Specialist: AWE is continuing to promote volunteering opportunities with its employees.

AWE Development Update

Estate Planning and Development Lead

Only one planning appeal occurred with the description of proposed development as *land east of Hayes Drive and north of Church Lane in Three Mile Cross for 148 dwellings, with associated infrastructure including public open space, with only access to be considered.*

The Secretary of State called in the appeal. The Secretary of State agreed with the Planning Inspector in refusing the appeal citing in his decision (dated 22 September 2025):

“..the adverse impacts of granting permission, including the unacceptable risk to the future capability and capacity of AWE Burghfield to operate effectively and the implications for national security, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole...”

Appeal Decision, Secretary of State

Appeal [Reference: APP/X0360/W/24/3354607](#)

The Aldermaston shuttle bus service from Aldermaston train station to AWE Aldermaston trial has ended and from September 2025, it has become a permanent service for AWE employees with an average of 65 employees using it weekly. AWE has added an additional early morning shuttle bus service and is investigating the feasibility of extending this service.

Questions arising:

Cllr Colin Cooper: What do you mean by ‘a great weight given to ONR (Office for Nuclear Regulation) witnesses professional views that the Off Site Emergency Plan (OSEP) is under pressure’?

Estate Planning and Development Lead: This means that a greater weight was taken from the professional regulator for the country (Office for Nuclear Regulation – ONR) and their independent assessment as opposed to the evidence presented by the developer.

Cllr Rob Wallace: We don’t understand the part in the statement ‘the Off Site Emergency Plan is under pressure’.

Ian Rogers: The law requires that arrangements must be put in place to protect the public in the unlikely event of a radiation emergency from this site. There are two parts to that: the duty placed upon the operator AWE and the local authority has various duties; including to put in place an adequate Off Site Emergency Plan (OSEP). Over the years, there has been increased housing built within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ). West Berkshire District Council have objected to planning applications because of the pressure they may put on their ability to maintain an adequate Off Site Emergency Plan. Office for Nuclear Regulation will also object to increasing the population within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone if it has the potential to negatively impact the Off Site Emergency Plan.

AWE SHEQ Update

Head of Delivery – Safety and Health

In the last twelve months, 28 individuals sustained work-related injuries (September 2024 – September 2025). 17 were AWE employees, 11 were contracted staff on AWE sites. 20 required more than one day away from work to recover, resulting in 321 days lost.

AWE's OSHA rate continues to be below its target of 0.3 of 200,000 hours worked. In the last six months, there has been a number of individuals traversing the site resulting in ankle injuries including fractures and torn ligaments. Each incident is investigated to see if additional safety measure can be put in place.

There have been two Process Safety Loss of Control / Containment events between 1 March 2025 – 30 September 2025. One related to a maintenance check on a pressure system where the alarm was alarming outside of its tolerance. The second was associated with the failure of a chuck during a lifting operation. Both have been investigated and actions put in place.

AWE continues to roll out process safety across the business to prevent high consequence low frequency events.

AWE has slightly dropped on diversion from landfill from 99% to 98.8%.

Doses to members of the public and AWE workers continue to be significantly below regulatory levels.

Head of Environment

AWE has two ecologists who are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of its sites. AWE currently has peregrine falcons, great crested newts, badger setts, bat roosts, house martins, woodlark nests as well as reduced mow areas to support pollinators and ancient oaks.

AWE completes annual bird surveys, biennial surveys of great crested newt population counts and reptile population counts.

AWE makes sure that, where possible, site operations are carried out in so as to minimize impacts on biodiversity, for example ground nesting birds (woodlark being a recent example).

Action 112/02: To provide additional information about biodiversity at AWE sites from an ecologist

There are seven permitted surface water discharges at AWE Aldermaston. These are permitted, monitored and approved by the Environmental Agency. Surface water discharge largely consists of surface drainage from rainfall.

AWE has a trade effluent network on site, discharges are collected at the on-site effluent plant. AWE is not a heavy user of chemicals and chemical processes. It has a consent through Thames Water to discharge effluent trade into the foul network. AWE collates, monitors and then discharges any material that goes into

the trade effluent plant. It is also monitored as it leaves site. AWE Burghfield has eight consents for discharge of surface water in the same way as AWE Aldermaston. AWE Burghfield has its own sewage treatment system before discharging to the brook. These points are also monitored.

Cllr Graham Wright: On the way that you dispose of the effluent, is the release into Silchester sewage works flow controlled?

Head of Environment: Yes, we can control the release of flow for monitoring purposes.

AWE Strategic and Future Workforce Update

Head of Workforce Planning

AWE currently has approximately 9,600 employees. Over the next eighteen months to two years, that may rise to a maximum of 10,000. There has been a significant investment in recruitment for early careers including apprenticeships, graduates and a year in industry. Around 1,000 of AWE 's current workforce are within early careers employment, with many of these coming from the local area. Approximately 1,000 employees are moving to an alternative location in Reading, Berkshire which will relieve some of the activity on site.

Approximately half of the current employees have the ability to hybrid work or work from home, but this does depend on the work they are doing. Around 100 employees work internationally with partners and approximately 250 employees working nationally with industry, academia and partnerships that AWE has across the UK.

Questions arising:

Cllr Jo Slimin: Does that include contractors?

Head of Workforce Planning: Those figures are AWE's employees only.

Cllr Ian Montgomery: How many apprentices did you take on this year?

Head of Environment: It was approximately 90 apprentices.

AWE Estates and Liabilities Update

Site Director

Since 111 LLC in April 2025, AWE has received 12 calls to its community concerns line – only two were related to AWE regarding parking and construction on its sites.

The issue raised was in relation to people parking in local streets. There has been an increase in traffic due to increased employee numbers and increased contractors as part of AWE's infrastructure projects. There have been multiple communications with current workforce, asking them not to park in the local vicinity and to respect site gate opening times so as not to cause congestion in the local area.

In terms of building contractors, there are arrangements in place for vehicle sharing to minimise the amount of traffic. AWE is also working with Human Resources to see if employees can stagger the times that they arrive at site. AWE is looking at a long-term Parking and Travel Strategy to include park and rides as well as looking at the feasibility of extending the shuttle bus service to other local train stations such as Mortimer and Basingstoke. In the longer term, for larger capital projects, AWE will look at how to minimise lorry movements to and from AWE.

A concern was raised to AWE about lighting from the Burghfield site. AWE surveyed this area and subsequently moved some of the construction lighting.

AWE received a concern about construction work at the Blacknest site. There were concerns about the proximity of welfare units to neighbouring housing. These units were subsequently moved from the boundary.

There were also noise issues from an air conditioning unit. Initially, AWE tried to mitigate this with a new fence and sound barriers, but this was not effective. As a result, a new air conditioning system has been ordered, which will be located on the opposite side of the building to minimise the likelihood of noise.

The Women's Peace Camp continue to protest on every second weekend of each month. There are no additional known or planned events.

Questions arising:

Cllr Susan Mullan: Do you have any incentive for car sharing?

Site Director: People who car share are able to park in priority spaces before a certain cut off time.

Cllr Avril Burdett: Recently we have had complaints about vehicles going through estates. A lot of our estates don't have driveways and so need to park on the road. There are issues with people trying to get children to school and having to move between parked cars as well as cars moving through residential roads at speed resulting in several near misses.

Site Director: We do send out regular messages to employees asking them to respect local residents and not to cut through residential roads.

Cllr Jim Thompson: Goring Lane between Burghfield Common and Grazeley Green is going to be closed to through traffic for nine months. The posted diversion will take people through the middle of Mortimer and past two schools. Are you aware of this?

Estate Planning and Development Lead: AWE has not currently been informed. AWE will contact West Berkshire Highways to see if it is a nine-month total closure or whether it is a rolling closure.

AWE / West Berkshire District Council Emergency Planning Update:

Manager Site Response Group - AWE

Carolyn Richardson - West Berkshire District Council (WBDC)

Plans:

AWE has been updating the On Site Emergency Plan, which is currently with the Regulators awaiting approval. The AWE Off Site Emergency Plan is in the final stages of revision by WBDC and is now progressing through the Council's governance procedures for final sign off, with an anticipated completion of December 2025. The first session of training on this new plan has already happened. The plan is currently OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE and will therefore not be released into the public domain. However, it has been recognised that the public would like access to some of this information as to how the responders will be responding should there be a nuclear emergency, therefore, a version of the plan is currently being created.

Alerting the Public

The text alert system which was launched in Jun 25 is now in place. So far 22,021 phones have been registered - approximately 11,500 for the Aldermaston site and 10,500 for the Burghfield site. Approximately 9,000 have registered for both.

Planning Applications

WBDC has received 118 planning applications over the last six months. At this moment in time, there are no appeals pending.

Review of DEPZ

WBDC is expecting the Consequences Report from AWE as part of the legislative requirement to review and determine the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) which is expected on or before 19 November 2025. WBDC will then re-determine the DEPZ as necessary for both AWE sites as is routine every three years. The REPPiR legislation will be followed for this.

Questions were asked by Cllr Graham Bridgman and Cllr Simon Taylor as to the impact on any DEPZ redetermination with regard to planning applications on or near the boundary of the existing DEPZ.

Response: Carolyn Richardson advised that there are a number of variables in relation to this and the process set out in REPPiR 19 as to the considerations in relation to redeterminations. Therefore, it is not a simple answer. It may be that it would result in the DEPZ extending further but it is not a definite outcome with each application being considered on their own merits. Carolyn Richardson also advised that if the DEPZ changed then the Off-Site Emergency Plan (OSEP) would need to cover the new DEPZ. Noting however that already within the OSEP is the area known as Outline Planning Zone (OPZ) which is an area larger than the DEPZ for which outline emergency planning is in place within the OSEP.

Exercises

WBDC and AWE are currently preparing for Aldex 26, which is a three-yearly major exercise to test the Emergency Off-Site Plan. This will involve 27 different agencies and approximately 400 people will be involved. It will be over 2 days and involve a Level 1 (onsite) and Level 2 Off-Site element to it.

There have been two Level 1 (on site) exercises delivered – one at Aldermaston and one at Burghfield since the last LLC in April 2025. Both were assessed as 'adequate' by the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

AWE has delivered 48 in-house, local facility and site wide exercises outside of the Level 1 exercises since the last LLC in April 2025, with the current calendar year total at 60 exercises.

Activations:

Since the last 111 LLC in April 2025, there have been five activations of the Emergency Control Room at Aldermaston site and none at Burghfield. AWE has fielded 218 calls from site workers at Aldermaston and 46 at Burghfield. The majority of these calls were for automatic fire alarms and non-work related medical conditions.

WBDC has been informed of all five activations of the Emergency Control Room, with no potential consequences to outside of the site.

Questions arising:

Cllr Colin Cooper: 22,000 people have signed up for the AWE test alert system, with 9,000 of those registered for both sites. How many people have signed up?

Manager Site Response Group: It's approximately 13,000 people who have signed up.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: How many is that against the number of people who could sign up?

Carolyn Richardson: We will have to come back to you with an answer for that question.

Action 112/03: West Berkshire District Council to provide a response to Cllr Sophie Crawford's question on 'number of people who could sign up for the AWE text alert service'.

Cllr Paul Lawrence: Will there be a public version of the Off Site Emergency Plan?

Carolyn Richardson: No because it is aimed at responders and is marked as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE but as stated previously, we are creating a public plan to explain what the responders will be doing.

Cllr Stephen Hoskins: What is the validity of what there is already on the website?

Carolyn Richardson: Those documents and plans which are not on the WBDC or AWE website are not valid. The WBDC website is currently being updated.

Cllr Graham Bridgman: I know that there is an interactive map of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone, but it is not a layer within the normal West Berkshire map. Why is this?

Carolyn Richardson: We will engage with the GIS team to investigate this.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: There seems to be inconsistency with planning applications and commercial units, where an 'informative' was used rather than a condition.

Carolyn Richardson: I am aware of the questions relating to this that have been sent to me and I have referred these to the Planning Service to discuss with Aldermaston Parish Council at one of their routine meetings.

Cllr Jo Slimin: The Off-Site Emergency Plan is important for school governors who have to look at Emergency Plans for schools. It is quite difficult to tell them what to put in if we don't know exactly what it is that we are supposed to do.

Carolyn Richardson: The Off Site Planning Group have been working with schools and their plans.

Office for Nuclear Regulation

Gareth Lock

Reporting period 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025

Routine matters

Inspections:

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has completed 7 inspections in the reporting period which reflects the move of AWE to Routine Attention. All ONR inspections are risk informed, so the inspections target high risk areas. These inspections include: management of operations including control and supervision, training, qualifications, fire safety, emergency preparedness. All evidence gathered by ONR supports the decision of AWE moving to Routine Attention.

Other work:

ONR have regular updates with all the safety representatives within operational processing areas.

AWE has initiated its new Business Unit operating model. ONR is satisfied that AWE provided adequate evidence to demonstrate its readiness to initiate the Business Units and will continue to monitor its implementation.

ONR continues to provide advice to local planning authorities on any planning applications for developments around nuclear sites. ONR will be part of the Level 1 and Level 2 AWE exercises next year.

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Team from ONR will deliver an inspection of West Berkshire District Council to assess the Off-Site Emergency Plan.

The exercise at Burghfield in October 2025 was rated 'green' by ONR.

Action 112/04: To include a representative from the ONR Emergency Preparedness and Response Team and the Land Use Planning Team at a future Local Liaison Committee meeting.

Non-Routine matters

ONR's investigation into the Hub Construction Enclave fatality has finished and found that Balfour Beatty breached the Health and Safety at Work Act. This will now proceed through court.

In August the ONR closed an improvement notice issued to AWE after the company successfully addressed a safety concern at its Aldermaston site. The improvement notice required AWE to better plan, oversee and control activities in the Explosive Technology Centre. There was no risk to the public or the environment from this event.

Questions arising:

Cllr Vicky Poole: You commented that AWE has moved to different Business Units so what is the impact of that on the ONR and is there scope for improvement?

Ian Rogers: AWE is now designing, manufacturing and building a replacement warhead, so the restructure into business units has moved AWE from a campus environment into a manufacturing environment.

Gareth Lock: It doesn't affect how the ONR interacts with AWE. The only part that may change is how the ONR aligns itself with the new Business Units.

Cllr Paul Lawrence: When you test the plan, who assesses that?

Gareth Lock: The ONR, DNSR and EA assessor assess the on-site plan.

Environment Agency

Rob Green

Reporting period 9 April 2025 to 17 October 2025

Over the reporting period, the Environment Agency (EA) has undertaken several compliance inspections at AWE. The first inspection completed during the period focused on laboratories and management of regulatory samples.

We also completed an inspection focussed arrangements within AWE for roles associated with Environmental Permit Compliance.

An additional inspection of the Old Waste Management Yard area of Aldermaston site was undertaken.

The EA also completed a compliance inspection at the main combustion facility at Aldermaston site.

The EA did not find any permit non-compliances during these inspections but we provided regulatory advice to AWE on potential improvement areas.

In addition to site-based inspections, we review data and information that AWE is required to submit to the us as part of its permit. We completed a compliance assessment activity in July 2025 following notification by AWE that an autosampler at the Aldermaston Site's Trade Effluent Treatment Plant (TETP) had been inoperable for an extended period. The autosampler's role is to ensure that AWE takes representative samples of low activity radioactive liquid effluent to support its process for discharging the effluent into the environment, via the public sewerage network.

The EA recorded 3 minor permit non-compliances, noting that the autosampler failure had no potential to impact on the environment, and required AWE to take appropriate remedial action. AWE has since replaced the autosampler. There were no radiological or other potential impacts on the environment.

The updated MoU that sets out working arrangements between the Environment Agency and ONR was published in July 2025 and is available on ONR's website.

The EA provided responses to the 'call for evidence' by the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce, which has been tasked by the Government to undertake a review of civil and defence nuclear regulation in the UK. The Taskforce published its Interim Report on 11th August.

In April 2025, Dan Corry published his report: 'Delivering economic growth and nature recovery: an independent review of Defra's regulatory landscape'. The report puts forward 29 recommendations and the EA is assessing the impacts.

Following Jane Longman's retirement in June, Tim Fediw has now taken over Jane's role as Team Leader covering the AWE regulatory team. Darryl Messer has also replaced Chris Glaister as our Nuclear Waste Assessor covering AWE's nuclear sites.

Questions arising:

Cllr Mark Keeping: Is the autosampler failure for water? How long was it out of order and how was it picked up?

Rob Green: It samples the liquid effluent discharged from the Trade Effluent Treatment Plant. It was out of order for approximately six months. AWE informed the EA of the failed autosampler at the time. AWE did put in place mitigation measures, so it was still able to sample discharges before making them. Environmentally, there was no potential or actual impact from the autosampler being out of action.

Cllr Mark Keeping: The six months of the failed autosampler didn't result in six months of lost samples?

Rob Green: Within a period, there will be a number of discharges made. AWE will then collate this information and report to us. AWE put alternative measures in place to sample the effluent while the autosampler was out of action.

Cllr Mark Keeping: Is there an Examination, Maintenance, Inspection, Testing (EMIT) schedule that picked it up?

Rob Green: This was one of the shortfalls that we identified in our investigation.

Head of Environment: In terms of controls, AWE did not miss any of its monitoring. During the six months of the auto sampler failure, an alternative monitoring technique was used.

Cllr Ian Montgomery: AWE used to provide updates on low level and intermediate level waste management as part of the LLC. Is AWE still involved in this?

Ian Rogers: AWE does generate waste, however it has appropriate waste management arrangements in place that are monitored by the Regulators.

Rob Green: Radioactive waste management in all of its forms whether its gaseous, liquid or solid is a core part of what the EA regulates at the AWE nuclear sites.

Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator**Karl Pallester**

The Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) is part of the Defence Safety Authority which sits under the Department of State within the Ministry of Defence. Changes in Defence during the period include a new Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) Jeremy Pocklington, 2 new ministerial appointments and the re-affirmation of John Healey as the Secretary of State for Defence and one of his first actions was to visit AWE.

The DNSR is not a statutory regulator. The DNSR is responsible to pick up where there are Disapplications, Exemptions or Derogations from Statute.

The DNSR Assurance Rating of AWE is currently MODERATE, which is the second highest rating. There are no Prohibition or Improvement notices that have been served on AWE by DNSR. There are 9 Corrective

Action Requirements outstanding: There are 7 at Burghfield centred around safety cases, 1 on tooling and 1 at a corporate level. There is one Regulatory Hold Point at Burghfield, however the DNSR assessment for this has been completed and a letter releasing the hold point has been drafted.

Interventions:

May 2025: The DNSR places Regulatory Hold Point on the Explosives Business Unit as a result of a routine inspection. AWE made improvements in this area, a subsequent inspection was carried out and the Hold Point was released.

May 2025: The DNSR was part of the assessment team for the site exercise at Aldermaston.

July 2025: The DNSR was involved in the Annual Review of Environment, Safety and Security with AWE at board level.

August 2025: The DNSR has been working with AWE on its organisational changes alongside the ONR and EA to support moving from technology centres to business units.

September 2025: The DNSR received the Periodic Review of Safety for the assembly at Coulport Business Unit. This is currently being triaged by DNSR and ONR.

October 2025: The DNSR was part of the assessment team for the site exercise at Burghfield.

Questions arising:

Cllr Jim Thompson: How long did the Regulatory Hold Point last on the Explosives Business Unit? Did you come back for another inspection

Karl Pallester: Several months and yes, to ensure that all points noted had been addressed before releasing the Hold Point.

Ministry of Defence Police Update

Superintendent, AWE Group, Ministry of Defence Police

Police Constable

Police Constable

Project Servator Officer

Head of Security AWE

The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) is a civilian police force that protects the UK's Defence community, capabilities and assets. Unlike territorial police forces, their jurisdiction and expertise are focused on protecting the critical infrastructure that underpins national security. This includes defence national infrastructure.

90% of MDP officers are Authorised Firearms Officers Counter Terrorism. They are a specialist armed police presence and are trained to national police firearms standards. MDP is a visible security presence within and beyond protected sites, including AWE to: provide immediate response capability, provide rapid response to incidents and deter potential threats through visible presence.

The MDP includes Police Dog Handlers who are specialist armed officers partnered with highly trained police dogs. They provide enhanced security capabilities across defence establishments and are a crucial component of the operational security framework.

There are two types of police dogs at AWE: specialist search dogs who are trained to find drugs, firearms cash and explosives as well as specially trained firearms support dogs.

In the communities around AWE sites, you are most likely to see Project Servator Officers. They are a specialist policing tactic team to disrupt criminal activity including terrorism. They create a network of vigilance with police, businesses and the public. They are disruptive offence trained and look for signs and behaviours that someone may not be telling the truth or is doing something that they shouldn't be.

The MDP work alongside other UK forces including: Hampshire Police, Thames Valley Police, British Transport Police or any police force that requests assistance. There are two main deployment types: a spontaneous incident and planned deployments. The aim of this is to enhance national policing capability.

The AWE MDP has changed the way that it is policing within local communities around AWE sites to be more proactive by being visible out in the community to make areas around AWE sites hostile to criminality in order to keep the site and surrounding areas safer.

Action 112/05: To provide LLC representatives with a digital copy of Project Servator leaflet

Questions arising:

Cllr Jonathan Chishick: How long does it take to train a police dog and at what age would the dog be effective?

Police Constable: Approximately 8 weeks to train but they must have a ball drive. They are effective at approximately one year of age. Depending on the dog, they can have a working life of around ten years.

Cllr John Seto: Do you work with the Home Office or are you called upon to help with other operations?

Police Constable: Yes, we are asked if we are able to assist other police forces or operations.

Cllr Vicky Poole: When you are out in public and the dog starts presenting to you, what do you do?

Police Constable: If something serious is found, we contact the force for assistance.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: When you talk about 'hostiles' who specifically are you looking for?

Project Servator Officer: Essentially, we are here for terrorism and serious organised crime, but we do stop anyone that displays key behaviours and markers that may deter an incident.

Cllr Avril Burdett: There have been many films of convoys on social media recently. Is that something that bothers you?

Project Servator Officer: There is a media strategy within the Ministry of Defence Police that is handled by a specific team.

Cllr Clive Littlewood: Do you get called out to help other police forces?

Project Servator Officer: Yes. Project Servator is a national project and there are fifteen forces that have it. They are a national resource.

Cllr Graham Bridgman: What are your thoughts on 'stop and search' and how that can be used?

Project Servator Officer: It is a tool that needs to be used within the guidance and in the correct manner.

Superintendent: As a force, any 'stop and search' that happens anywhere in the country is then put through an assurance process. Every time a 'stop and search' happens by a MoD police officer, it is sent for an assurance check and to make sure that it is delivered within the confines of the law and without any prejudice.

Head of Security: From a site security perspective, those that come onto an AWE site give consent to be searched as part of their employment or as a visitor. They can be searched by the MDP but also by the guard force to ensure that the site is kept secure.

Cllr Clarence Mitchell: You mentioned liaising with other forces, does that include British Transport Police?

Superintendent: Yes. Recently, there were two MDP Officers who went to the Huntingdon incident to attend and carry out first aid.

Cllr Mike Bound: Would you ever use Thames Valley Police or Hampshire Police with AWE sites?

Superintendent: Yes, if we needed to use specialist capability that we did not have at one of our sites.

Cllr Diane Woodward: How long does it take to train to be in the MDP?

Superintendent: As a Specialist Firearms Officer, it takes 17 weeks of law training and then a further 9 weeks of firearms training. If you decide to do a specialism such as police dogs, this would incur additional training.

Cllr Jim Thompson: You said that you have the same powers as civil police, if you saw suspicious activity outside of the perimeter fences, would you stop them?

Superintendent: Yes, this may include drink driving, speeding or an accident. Anyone breaking the law, we are obliged to stop them.

Cllr Jo Slimin: How far out from AWE sites do you patrol?

Superintendent: It tends to be a 10 – 15 minute response time back to site.

Cllr George McGarvie: I would like to personally thank the MoD police for their service in the local area as I do believe that it does reduce crime considerably in the area by displacing it.

Any Other Business:

Cllr Avril Burdett: Traffic cutting through estates in Tadley with near misses of children at a school, traffic backing up near the Esso garage

Response given in the Estates and Liabilities Update

Cllr Jim Thompson: Update on the tender for renewable electricity for AWE Burghfield

Head of Environment: We are looking at purchase power arrangements for solar farms which would contribute towards AWE carbon reduction targets. This is still in progress.

Questions arising:

Cllr George McGarvie: Would AWE create car ports so that solar panels can be included?

Head of Environment: It's something that AWE has considered.

Cllr Mrk Keeping: You have a lot of buildings with flat roofs and spaced out buildings. Has any thought been given to including solar panels in roofs or between buildings?

Head of Environment: AWE has to consider maintenance, access and safety when considering this approach.

Cllr Avril Burdett / Cllr Vicky Poole: Circus Farm site update

Site Director: AWE has worked with West Berkshire District Council to put a temporary stop notice in place on the development site. AWE is also aware that there were some unauthorised connections to utilities which have subsequently been disconnected by Scottish & Southern Energy.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: A planning application has also been submitted for development on this site.

Cllr Stephen Hoskins: Does AWE check the state of roads around its site with a focus on the B3051?

AWE is not responsible for the maintenance of roads outside of its sites. If someone is concerned about the state of a road, they should contact the council or report it through:

West Berkshire Highways mapping tool [Map](#)

Hampshire Council reporting tool [Report a pothole | Transport and roads | Hampshire County Council](#)

Cllr Colin Cooper: I am aware that large developments accumulate a fund that would be used by the community surrounding that development to mitigate the effects over time. This is known as S106 money. Is this applicable for the current AWE developments?

Cllr Graham Bridgman: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is not payable in West Berkshire.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: It's only payable on residential and retail in West Berkshire. Of the £15 billion investment, none will come our way.

Ian Rogers: There will be secondary benefits of the £15 billion investment including using local services as far as reasonably practicable.

Meeting closed

Date of Next meeting:

Thursday 30 April 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

CLEANER AIR AND SAFER TRANSPORT (CAST) FORUM AGENDA

Date:	Thursday 12 th June 2025	
Location:	Reading Council Chamber), Civic Offices, Reading Borough Council, Bridge Street, Reading	
Time:	6:30pm - 8pm	
Chaired by:	Councillor Cross	
Attendance:	Cllr Will Cross (Chair) Cllr John Ennis Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward Cllr Jacopo Lanzoni Cllr Karen Rowland Cllr Jenny McGrother Cllr Andrew Hornsby-Smith Cllr Mohammed Ayub Ross Jarvis (RJ) James Turner (JT) No RBC Attendees Redacted	Reading Borough Council (RBC) RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC
Agenda Items:		
No:	Item:	Action:
1.	Introduction and Apologies: Apologies had been received from: Cllr Meri O'Connell - RBC Cllr Sarah Magon - RBC Emily Talib - Community Development Officer RBC	

2.

Air Quality Update

Air Quality Monitoring Report

Ross Jarvis (RJ) provided an update on Air Quality following publication of the 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).

The ASR presents a number of graphs outlining Automatic Monitoring Stations Annual Mean NO₂ since 2024 as well as Historic Diffusion Tube Trend.

NO₂ levels are still of concern due to being elevated in some busy roadside locations, but for the last couple of years NO₂ no longer exceeds the national annual mean objective. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are also pollutants of concern due to their effects on health even at low concentrations.

The Council's monitoring of these pollutants indicates that the levels are now falling. Levels of air pollution fell significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic because of less traffic being on the roads during the lockdown restrictions. Levels rose again in 2022 as people returned to normal routines. Since then NO₂ levels have fallen in successive years, this is most likely, predominantly due to the continuing gradual improvements in vehicle emissions as more older vehicles are replaced with EURO6 and electric vehicles.

The report also notes all monitoring results within existing AQMA have been below the air quality objectives for the past 2 years. If the downwards trend continues in 2025 and all the data collected is compliant with air quality objectives, Reading Borough Council will revoke the AQMA.

A link to the ASR is here:

https://images.reading.gov.uk/2025/10/ReadingBC_ASR_2025.pdf

Question: *A question was asked from the forum if air quality improvements had been matched to traffic levels (decreasing). RJ answered that the general trend is led by vehicles getting cleaner with the advent of Euro 6 engines making a particularly big improvement to air quality.*

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Update

Reading Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy has outlined a target to install 2,500 - 3,000 on-street chargers to meet this demand.

Reading Borough Council has been awarded £866,000 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital funding. The funding is designed to encourage the roll-out of low charge on-street electric vehicle charging for residents who do not have access to off-street charging at their residence. This includes people living in terraced streets or in flats where parking is predominantly on-street and Reading has a high proportion of these types of residencies.

The Council has started a 2-stage procurement exercise to appoint a supplier to deliver on-street EV charging.

Stage 1 (shortlisting) has been completed with 5 suppliers shortlisted to receive the Invitation to Tender.

- Shortlisting was based on the demonstration of minimum and added value experience, similar to RBC's scheme.
- Tender preparation has been completed, and documents have been approved.
- Tender documents have been published - Stage 2 is now LIVE!

The tender exercise will run over the summer and into the Autumn and the Council intends to appoint a supplier before the end of 2025. Delivery of on-street infrastructure is planned for 2026/27.

Question: *A member of the forum asked if we have procurement professionals and energy experts involved in the tendering process. RJ*

confirmed that there are and that the Office for Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) as well as the Energy Saving Trust (EST) are involved and will sign off all contracts prior to these being entered in to.

Berkshire Revolution - EV Awareness Event

In co-ordination with the other Berks LAs the Council is hosting a free event at Winnersh Business Park for people to view and test drive a range of EV vehicles, find out more about grants and financing, listen to live presentations and talk to experts. The event is on Friday 11th July 10am-2pm.

Clean Air Living Matters (CALM) Update

The CALM project has now finished and RJ provided a summary of its impact.

- CALM activities at 18 different primary schools out of a reduced target of 16
- CALM activities at 6 different secondary/private/independent schools out of a target of 9
- A cumulative total of 1,260 pupils with an increase in knowledge through in class activities and a further 70 children through other engagements including careers fairs, community events etc., totalling 1,330 (reduced target is 1,400 pupils - 95%).
- A cumulative total of 4,145 pupils with increased awareness through attending CALM assemblies and a further estimated 2,164 pupils through other engagements including careers fairs, community events etc., totalling 6,309 (reduced target 8,000 - 79%).
- A cumulative engagement of 4,309 parents through activity sheets from primary schools, community events and school gate interviews (reduced target 1,500 parents - 287%). This number includes 860 interviews at school gates, and 2,458 adults indirectly engaged through wider distribution of CALM booklets.
- Deployment of 27 indoor (static) and 25 outdoor sensors (static) in schools (target 10 static and 20 mobile). We also have 30 mobile sensors which are taken to the schools when activities are run and have been loaned to four families on a fortnightly basis.

Discussion with the Institute of Education at the University of Reading to produce lesson plans that can be used by schools long-term following completion of this project.

End-of-project video/animation. The aim of the video is to signpost air quality resources after the project ends, to give a summary of the CALM programme and to act as a call to action for behavioural change and improving local air quality.

Final workshop on 24th June to coincide with Clean Air Day following the success of a similar workshop last year. This will likely be the final delivery of the CALM programme.

More information can be found on the website:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/climate-and-pollution/clean-air-living-matters-exploring-reading-with-schools/>

3.

Strategic Transport Update

Page 51

James Turner (JT) provided an update on the following Strategic Transport items.

Active Travel Update

ATF2 Shinfield Road Scheme - JT confirmed that the outstanding lining required for Shinfield Road will be undertaken later this month. This will address any safety issues, particularly at the end of the scheme near Cressingham Road where the hatching was directing vehicles too far left after the island and the double yellow lines will provide additional demarcation for the cycle scheme.

ATF3 Bath Road - Following discussions with members the following has been agreed with regards to the delivery of the ATF3 Bath Road scheme.

- the scheme should be delivered commencing from the town centre and working west out of town as far as the funding enables to link to existing facilities on the Bath Road.
- Redesign arrangements at the Castle Hill-IDR Roundabout to take cyclists around the perimeter of the roundabout rather than through the middle as per original design.
- Review arrangements at the Bath Road - Coley Avenue junction and assess overall impact on traffic with further modelling.
- Incorporate plans for an extension of the scheme in to Castle Street as far as Cusden Walk and existing facilities.

A further members session is planned for July and updates will be provided following this.

Active Travel Schemes - Revenue Update

- Active Travel Officer role continues working with school promoting active and sustainable travel
- Free adult cycle training courses offered to all residents continues
- Free bicycle maintenance training offered to all residents continues
- Monthly 'Dr Bike' pop-up sessions continue in town centre as well as now also in local communities.
- Support for Reading Cycle Festival - taking place Sept 2025.

Wellbeing Walks Leaflets

The Council has now produced 3 Wellbeing Walks Leaflets and is in final design review of the 4th. These provide guided walks throughout Reading where people can enjoy the history, nature and scenery in different areas of Reading. The leaflets are available to pick up in the libraries, Town Hall and Museum, Reading Station and can also be downloaded as a pdf form the Council's website - www.reading.gov.uk/walk.

Whitley Street Cycle Lane - the issue of delivery vehicles and general parking blocking the Whitley Street cycle lane was raised. This is a known issue and has been discussed previously. Enforcement officers have been patrolling the area and issuing FPNs and will continue to do so.

Bus Service Improvement Plan and Zebra

The Council has continued delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme to promote and improve bus use throughout Reading. This programme has included:

- **A33 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - continuing construction of the A33 BRT scheme phase 5 element to deliver further bus lanes and priority between central Reading and Green Park and Mere oak to the south on the A33. This work also includes the delivery of a brand new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Kennet and is scheduled to open in the autumn.
- **Bus Stop Audio System** - Introduction of audio push buttons which will provide an audio announcement of the next bus services to call at the bus stop at 100 bus stops throughout the borough.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bus lanes at Oracle Roundabout and London Road (Sidmouth St to London St). • Bus stop enhancements and upgrades. • Signals upgrade - Basingstoke Road Bennet Road junction • Service enhancements <p>Zero Emission Bus Regional Area 2 (ZEBRA 2) - Update</p> <p>The Council has successfully bid for funding through the ZEBRA 2 scheme for the delivery of 32 new electric double deck buses in Reading. The first 24 buses due later this year will service the routes 17 and 21 and these will be followed by a further 8 buses in summer 2026 to serve route 26.</p> <p>The funding provides 75% of the extra cost of the electric buses compared to the diesel equivalent as well as 75% of the infrastructure costs. Technical info noted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5MVA grid connection • 16x 150kW dual vehicle chargers • 1x 180kW dual vehicle charger as spare • 1x 30kW mobile vehicle charger for workshop • 472kWh battery • 260-mile theoretical range when new (buses on these routes do 140-180 miles a day) • modelling for summer and winter extremes undertaken • no changes to 24/7 operation required • 3hr fast charge or 6.5hr normal charge for 0% to 100% • Reduces carbon emissions by 84% based on current grid electric (and will improve) • Current biomethane gas buses also reduce carbon emissions by 84% (but are not quite zero emission) 							
5	<p>Active Travel Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Cllr Cross provided a summary of the Active Travel Task & Finish group which has recently been set up as reported through SEPT Committee.</p> <p>A report regarding the Task and Finish Group as well as the Terms of Reference can be seen in the minutes from March's SEPT Committee.</p> <p>https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5529&Ver=4</p> <p>The Group will submit a report containing its findings and recommendations to the meeting of the Strategic Environment and Planning Committee in November 2025.</p>							
8.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Blocked Footways</p> <p>A comment was made about footways being blocked, particularly by wheelie bins or pavement parking. Reference was made to BS 5906 - Waste Management in Buildings. Code of Practice. Cllr Rowland noted that this had been previously discussed, and the Council is aware of this issue.</p>							
	<p>Date of Next Meetings:</p> <p>All meetings are scheduled for 18:30 at the Council's offices.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>CAST Forum:</td> <td>Cycle Forum:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• 2nd Dec 2025</td> <td>• 4th Sept 2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• 31st Mar 2026</td> <td>• 11th Feb 2026</td> </tr> </table>	CAST Forum:	Cycle Forum:	• 2 nd Dec 2025	• 4 th Sept 2025	• 31 st Mar 2026	• 11 th Feb 2026	All to Note
CAST Forum:	Cycle Forum:							
• 2 nd Dec 2025	• 4 th Sept 2025							
• 31 st Mar 2026	• 11 th Feb 2026							

This page is intentionally left blank

2.

Air Quality Update

Particulate Monitoring Update

Ross Jarvis (RJ) provided presentation on the Council's intention to run a project on Particulate Monitoring. RJ Noted that the Council has been monitoring air quality for over 20 years in Reading but with a focus on NO₂ and we currently only have 2 monitors for PM_{2.5}. The National Air Quality Strategy (2023) set targets for the reduction of PM_{2.5} with the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended average level is 5µg/m³

Project Aim(s)

- To understand hyper local variation in PM_{2.5}, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Ozone (O₃) air pollutant concentrations across Reading. We aim to identify trends and potential sources that improve knowledge of their contribution to varying temporal profiles; to evidence the effectiveness of prevention and mitigation interventions.
- To use the monitoring data derived from the network data to inform public health interventions that help raise awareness of how to reduce and mitigate risk of exposure; to identify effective mitigation and incentivise behavioural change to reduce exposure in local neighbourhoods

How

- Procure and install 30 low-cost sensors
- Locate near to high risk/ vulnerable populations; high pollution locations; schools; solid fuel burning; close to healthcare and social care setting; strategic points on outskirts.
- Maintain the network over a minimum period of two years
- Data analysis and interpretation by University of Reading.
- Engagement Portal - for residents to access, use of data and Public Health messaging.

The timeframe for this project is for the Council to procure a contractor early 2026 with contract award and deployment from April 2026. The two years of data collection will then follow through to April 2028.

Questions/comments - ██████████ made a point that 30 sensors throughout the whole of Reading may not seem like enough and the key will be finding the best locations for these. Most residents are aware of the issues surrounding air quality and the accompanying communication campaign will be key so as to convey the message without causing alarm.

██████████ noted that the WHO figures state that the difference between 10µg and 5µg translates to an extra 4 deaths per 100,000 and we should be aiming for the WHO levels. It was also noted that electric vehicles produce tyre and brake dust contributing to PM_{2.5} so the transition to greater EV use will still have issues for air quality.

With regards to the sensor locations RJ confirmed that these will be published on the council's website through a map which will also have the data readings from each sensor. It has not currently been decided where these locations will be.

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Update

The LEVI project will see the delivery of a minimum of 1,500 on-street electric charging points across Reading to predominantly serve residents who do not have access to off-street parking.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 tender evaluations are now complete with 5 suppliers being shortlisted from the 10 original applicants at Stage 1.

Page 56

Following Stage 2 a preferred supplier has been selected and we are currently in the standstill period through to 8th December.

Following the standstill the award letter will be issued, and it is intended that a final contract will be executed by the end of January 2026.

On completion of the contract the successful bidder must submit an implementation plan within 3 months of contract award, to be agreed by the Council.

As well as the on-street lamp column chargers funding has also been awarded for a cross pavement solution, such as the pavement gully, where residents can still charge from their home supply.

Questions - Cllr Barnet-Ward asked if residents understood that the pavement channel solution would not enable them to have a dedicated parking space on the highway. RJ confirmed this is the case and is included in the information. It is a common misconception though as was evident in the recent highways trial.

RJ confirmed that all the lamp column charge points will be Type 2 which are suitable for electric motor bikes but not electric bicycles.

The question was asked what the costs to the residents for opting for the pavement channel option. RJ replied that the grant only covers the infrastructure costs and residents are required to pay for the installation (approx. £500) and there is a £75 annual license fee.

The proximity of residents to the new on-street chargers was discussed and in particular the requirement within the contract, derived from our EVCI strategy, that 90% of residents are within 100m of a publicly accessible charger. RJ clarified that this is 90% of residents without off-street parking, not all residents. It is also anticipated that where there is high density population the LEVI contractor will have commercial interest in ensuring there is adequate charging provision for the residents and not just meeting the minimum 100m provision through one charger.

Cllr Lanzoni asked what powers the Council had to ensure the charge per KW was kept low or competitive when compared to at-home charging. RJ confirmed that through the contract there would be 2 benchmarking opportunities per year for the supplier to propose amending the rate. The charging rate was also part of the tender process with suppliers assessed on their proposed rates. Unfortunately, the rate would not be as low as at-home charging as there are costs and overheads involved.

██████████ commented whether there would be powers to stop people parking petrol or diesel vehicles in front of chargers. RJ replied there would not be and that parking would remain as it is currently. However the intention of the LEVI project is to ensure there are a high number of charge points installed throughout streets so if one is not accessible or being used then others will be available.

Clean Air Living Matters (CALM) Update

The CALM project has now finished, and RJ provided a summary slide of its impact.

The final report can be seen on the Council's website here:

<https://images.reading.gov.uk/2025/11/CALM-Impact-Report-reduced.pdf>

██████████ asked if the resources for the lesson plan developed for this project were available and RH confirmed that they would be. They are available through the Council's website under the heading **CALM:ER for educators:**

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/climate-and-pollution/clean-air-living-matters-exploring-reading-with-schools/>

3.

Strategic Transport Update

James Turner (JT) provided an update on the following Strategic Transport items.

Active Travel Update

ATF2 Shinfield Road and ATF4 Upper Redlands Road Scheme

JT noted that signage has recently been installed on the Shinfield Road cycle scheme and the Council will now be requesting Active Travel England (ATE) undertake a review of both schemes as part of their design review process. This will gain us valuable feedback and help in the preparation and design of future schemes.

ATF3 Bath Road - Castle Hill Scheme

JT updated the forum with the latest update on work on the ATF3 Bath Road - Castle Hill scheme. Following various design reviews a revised proposal is now in place for the Castle Hill - IDR roundabout element and for most of Castle Hill section. The key design element still to be determined are the proposals for the Bath Road - Cole Avenue junction.

Following a Members working meeting earlier in the summer it was agreed that further modelling work was needed on the impact this scheme would have on this junction. Traffic surveys were undertaken in September and modelling work carried out using this data. Officers are currently waiting for this report.

The design and implementation of any priority measures for pedestrians or cycles at this junction will inevitably impact the overall capacity of the junction. The modelling will identify what the likely impacts will be on the rest of the junction. Whichever design is taken forward there will inevitably need to be some trade off between user groups. By giving priority measures to one arm of the junction, or to one user flow or group, we would need to take priority away from another. The modelling report will identify what impact this has on the overall junction including queue lengths as well as the time it takes for vehicles to traverse through the junction.

To put this in context it was agreed that a key element of the design was to include a safe segregated pedestrian crossing at the end of Coley Avenue where there is currently only an informal crossing. However, by providing this priority it takes priority away from other arms of the junction which impacts the overall capacity of the junction.

The next step for this scheme will be for officer to present the output of the modelling report to members with the impact of the options identified as well as the benefits of each. This will lead to further discussion and recommendation on appropriate options to take forward.

Question - ██████████ asked if the Council had data on the number of cycle trips currently being made on this corridor and how the scheme would be monitored. JT commented that a number of classified surveys had been undertaken which would include cycle counts and we would continue to survey the area at the same time each year in May as the town centre cordon count. It was also discussed that an intention of the scheme is to generate new cycle trips where they currently do not exist, in part due to the lack of safe and segregated facilities. It was agreed that this section of the A4 corridor is harder to navigate on a bicycle, and the scheme would provide a valuable missing link.

Question - ██████████ asked if the traffic signals would take account of traffic levels and flows and adapt accordingly. JT answered that the traffic signals should, depending on their age, have this functionality to adapt to real world traffic conditions. However, the modelling and forecasting work is based on the traffic counts and that all arms are at capacity during the peak periods.

JT confirmed that the design included in the slides is the previous version and has not been amended to reflect the modelling work. A discussion over advising cyclists to dismount and walk with the pedestrian priority was had however the impact to the capacity of the junction is largely from the reduced capacity in the approach arms rather than through the junction. ATE would also not fund a scheme that is not compliant with LTN 1/20.

Active Travel Discussion

Comment - [REDACTED] noted that the University of Reading has installed some impressive cycle parking facilities with secure enclosure with controlled access etc... JT noted that officers were aware of this having regular meetings with the team at the University and therefore can discuss information such as costs, suppliers etc to gain better understanding. This is the type of facility the Council would like to deploy, costs depending, but a key element of this is having a footprint of land available and this is difficult within the town centre.

Cycle Hangars - following the discussion over cycle security the status of the cycle hangar pilot scheme was raised. JT commented that each cycle hangar can only hold 6 bicycles on a subscription basis and, with only a budget for a small number the location of these is going to be key to the success of any trial. Installation in the town centre or near the station would likely be popular but only benefit a very small number of people whereas installation in the local neighbourhoods would require consultation to identify demands and also careful planning not to displace parking. Further consultation work on this is needed.

Wellbeing Walks Leaflets

JT noted that the 4th Wellbeing Walk has now been produced and all 4 leaflets are available from the library, town hall and Museum. If any members of the forum would like to have some or knows an organisation or venue to distribute these we have a large amount in boxes upstairs at the Bridge Street offices and can arrange for these to be delivered.

Bus Service Improvement Plan and Zebra 2 Fund

The Council has continued delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme to promote and improve bus use throughout Reading. Over the Autumn following programmes have been delivered.

BSIP Schemes - recent initiatives

- **A33 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - opening of the latest phase of the A33 BRT scheme phase 5 delivering further bus lanes and priority on this corridor. This phase 5 included the construction of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Kennet providing a spacious and well-lit attractive option for both pedestrian and cyclists.
- **Real-Time Bus Information Audio Announcements** - Introduction of audio push buttons which will provide an audio announcement of the next bus services to call at the bus stop at 100 bus stops throughout the borough.

Question - Cllr Lanzoni asked if there is a list of stops or locations where these can be found. JT stated they were installed at all stops with an existing real-time display in Reading, but officers would look in to providing more information on our website.

It was also confirmed that throughout this project officers have engaged with the Access and Disability Working Group for both feedback on positioning and design and publicity. Cllr Hornsby-Smith requested that officers attend the next ADWG on March 5th to talk about the scheme.

	<p>Zero Emission Bus Regional Area 2 (ZEBRA 2) - Update</p> <p>Following the previous successful bid for funding through the ZEBRA 2 scheme Reading Buses has taken delivery of the first electric buses. This includes one which in a zebra livery as well as one with the University's climate stripes. The first 24 buses for routes 17 and 21 are all ready and will be introduced early in 2026 following testing of all the charging infrastructure. The project has been delayed due to issues with the distribution network operator (DNO) SSE providing power upgrades to the bus depot.</p> <p>A further 8 electric buses will be delivered in summer 2026 and will be introduced on the route 26 ensuring that more arms of Reading's transport corridor benefit from electric buses.</p> <p>JT shared some slides from Reading Buses which included the forecast fleet composition from June 2026. This shows an improving picture with the new electric buses now included, a larger number of Bio-Gas buses and no Euro V buses remaining. A further slide showed the green credentials of the various type buses and it was noted of the good performance of not only the electric but also the Bio-Gas buses which make up a large element of the fleet.</p>	
5	<p>Active Travel Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Cllr Cross provided a summary of the Active Travel Task & Finish group. A report, summarising the findings and recommendations, was taken to the last SEPT Committee in November with member recommendations. This is now for officers to review and respond to at the next SEPT Committee in March 2026.</p> <p>The report regarding the Task and Finish Group can be seen here:</p> <p>https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&Mid=5706&Ver=4</p> <p>Question - ██████████ noted that under Recommendation 8 in the report regarding Demand Management Measures the prospect of further exploring the potential for a Workplace Parking Levy (WPPL) in Reading was referenced but not any other demand management measures and would these be considered. It was noted that the Council has recently introduced an emissions-based parking scheme.</p>	
8.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Traffic Mgt Measures List</p> <p>This item was requested by both RCC and CADRA specifically the decision taken at last week's Transport Management Sub-Committee's to remove several items from the Principal Transport Measures List including some of the 20mph zones put forward. It was also repeated in the meeting that there were rumours that there are going to be other measures taken out of the principal list.</p> <p>The Committee resolved that all cycling related requests would be removed from the principal list and would be collated and retained on a new strategic list for consideration in other programmes/workstreams.</p> <p>It was also noted that in the absence of 20mph zones, which cover larger areas and are relatively costly to introduce, these could be replaced by the introduction of smaller 20mph speed limit change schemes. Whilst these do not have the same overall impact as 20mph 'zones' there is still some evidential research showing that these do have some impact therefore making these still worthwhile interventions</p>	

	<p>Footway Blocking</p> <p>The issue of footways (pavements) being blocked, in particular by bins, was raised as a requested item. It was also commented that this is an ongoing problem and in particular for partially sighted people. The example of Hemdean Road was referenced as particularly bad for footway blocking.</p> <p>Cllr Rowland commented that the Council is looking into this issue particularly in streets with terraced houses where this problem is evident. There are many people who do take out and return their bins as they should but there are a lot that do not that and this needs to be enforced or communicated with.</p> <p>Residents have been sent information letters written in some areas where bins are being left out on pavement, including a section of Hemdean Road.</p> <p>The question was asked if the binmen could/should return the bins to inside the property and off the footway. Cllr Rowland commented that this has been looked at but, although it is only a few seconds for each property it does have a very large impact on the overall time and therefore not practical.</p> <p>It is residents responsibility to comply and if they do not enforcement action could be taken. Where there are specific issues it was stated members would inform the council who will review and take action.</p> <p>London Road Crossing</p> <p>██████████ commented that the new pedestrian and cycling crossing on the London Road outside the hospital is excellent. The phasing changes within 4 seconds on call for pedestrians to cross. Compliments to the Council.</p>			
	<p>Date of Next Meetings:</p> <p>All meetings are scheduled for 18:30 at the Council’s offices.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>CAST Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st Mar 2026 </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Cycle Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th Feb 2026 </td> </tr> </table>	<p>CAST Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st Mar 2026 	<p>Cycle Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th Feb 2026 	<p>All to Note</p>
<p>CAST Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st Mar 2026 	<p>Cycle Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th Feb 2026 			

This page is intentionally left blank

Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) Board Meeting
16 OCTOBER 2025
Minutes & Actions

Chair: Dylan Parkes

Attendees

- Dylan Parkes (Chair, University of Reading)
- Freese, Gudrun (Coordinator)
- Burfoot, Ben (Reading Borough Council)
- Tracey Rawling Church
- Rachel Spencer
- Scott Witchalls
- Heather Marshall
- Tricia Marcouse
- Chris Maddocks

Minutes (by agenda item)

1. **People changes & resourcing**

- At Reading Borough Council, senior management is considering how to position climate within the organisational structure. Budget challenges and a recruitment freeze mean changes are unlikely before next business year.
- RCCP Coordinator hours: Gudrun will increase paid hours from 1.5 to 2.5 days/week (2.5 days per week is the original role budgeted for) from January 2026 and use these extra hours to (1) shape a bare minimum programme of comms and engagement for the new strategy and (2) build and convene a comms working group.
 - o **ACTION:** GF to present comms plan for new strategy at next Board Meeting in Jan 2026.
 - o **ACTION:** Ops Team to develop new Partnership Agreement by June 2026. (Who will lead this process?)

2. **Climate Emergency Strategy — finalisation & design**

- Tracey reported that the final draft, incorporating public consultation feedback (plus one in-person session) and will be submitted to Committee on Monday 20 October. Feedback ranged from constructive to climate scepticism. Scope-appropriate points have been integrated.
- Full strategy will be typeset by a designer. **ACTION:** GF to procure typesetter.

4. Annual Report

Ben Burfoot outlined the structure: emissions progress (2023 down ~4% YoY after post-pandemic rebound), contextual indicators/policy, case studies, and Action Plan RAG ratings.

ACTION: GF to invite theme leads and wider network of delivery partners to submit case studies

ACTION: GF to gather RAG ratings and overviews from theme leads

ACTION: GF to gather, edit and format case studies

ACTION: GF to compile Annual Report sections and publish online

ACTION: GF to promote Annual Report via newsletter and website

ACTION: Ben to write updates to section on emissions progress

5. National Lottery Climate Action Fund Bid

Gudrun has prepared a bid for £1.5M, which would include several paid roles and resources for new and existing flagship projects. The bid document is a de facto strategy for RCCP's Scenario 2 (where RCCP is sufficiently resourced). In this scenario RCCP would actively support delivery of the new climate emergency strategy and action plans for 2025 – 2030 and provide a mechanism for evolving it. RCCP would deliver several flagship projects and services directly as well. University of Reading is a key partner (with resources allocated to developing net-zero pathways and related dashboards plus scoping of a 'transition hub'). Inputs sought from Board Members. Gudrun has circulated the latest draft.

ACTION: GF to integrate inputs, prepare final version and submit to Lottery.

6. Reading Climate Festival 2026

2025 ran with constrained resource and reduced partner involvement. For 2026, reconvene a broader steering group (Arts & Culture team, Uni of Reading, REDA, etc.) and map realistic resource before planning 'tentpole' activity.

ACTION: DP to meet with A&C team to determine their level of involvement and resource.

ACTION: DP to set up series of steering group meetings.

7. Theme Leads — roles & recruitment model

GF circulated a proposal for paired Theme Leads (Council Lead for governance/reporting + Community Lead for engagement and idea generation). Board agreed to proceed with the concept.

ACTION: GF to present concept to RBC Climate Board.

ACTION: Ops Team to agree process for recruiting new positions.

8. Finance

ACTION: Ben to present RCCP finances alongside Strategy and Council Carbon Plan at Committee.

ACTION: Ben to present RCCP finances at next Board Meeting

9. AOB & Next meeting

Next Board meeting: 15 January 2026

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

11 March 2026

Title	Adoption of the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the responses received during the consultation on the Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 2) be noted. 2. That the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 3) be adopted. 3. That the Eldon Square Conservation Area be extended as set out in the Appraisal (Appendix 3).

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Eldon Square Conservation Area was designated in 1972 under the Town & Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended), the first conservation area in Reading, and the most recent full conservation area appraisal was produced in 2007. Following discussions over the Council's approach to the historic environment, the Council agreed to support the setting up of a Reading Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (CAAC). One of the primary concerns of the CAAC was the length of time since many conservation area appraisals had been prepared and adopted. According to best practice appraisals should be updated every 5-10 years and many of these appraisals are now in need of review. It was subsequently agreed that the CAAC would lead on reviews of conservation area appraisals in consultation with local communities.
- 1.2. The Eldon Square appraisal is the fourth review to be completed, following St Peters in 2018, Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road in 2020 and Christchurch in 2024. This Committee approved consultation on a Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal on 19 November 2025 (Minute 12 refers). The results of consultation are summarised in Appendix 2. This report recommends the adoption of the final version of the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal attached as Appendix 3.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 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'.
- 2.2 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

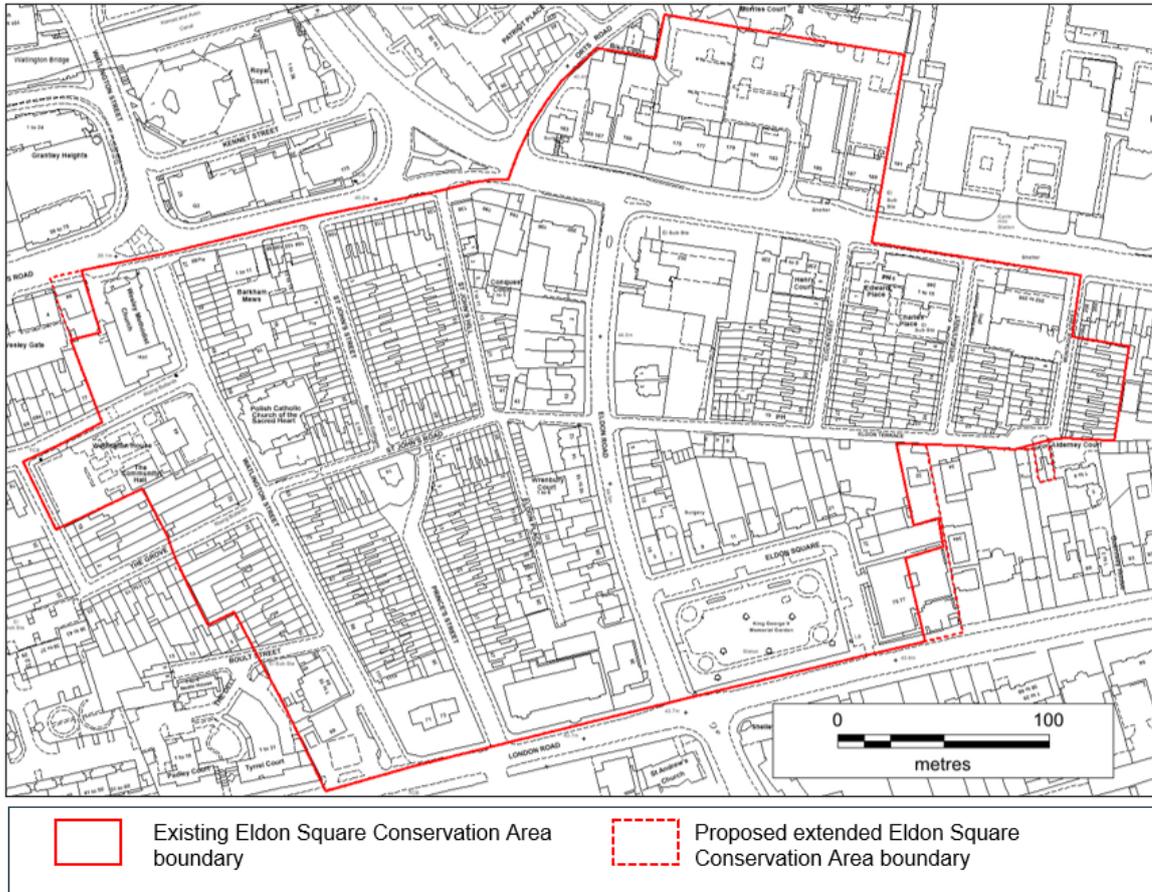
applications and are specifically referred to as a consideration in policy EN3 of the Local Plan. They can also form a key piece of evidence for the preparation of planning policy.

3. The Proposal

Current position

- 3.1 The Eldon Square Conservation Area was originally designated in 1972 and was Reading's first designated Conservation Area. The area was extended to include Watlington Street, Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street in 1982. The most recent appraisal was prepared in 2007. That appraisal recommended that 84 Queens Road be considered for inclusion in the Conservation Area, but no extension resulted from the appraisal.
- 3.2 A review and the updated appraisal has been carried out as a community-led project by the CAAC, with assistance from RBC planning officers and interested local community representatives. The review made use of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, which was recommended by officers of Historic England. This provided a methodology for preparing assessments of the character of the landscape and built environment of the area, but the methodology has been adapted to local circumstances by the CAAC.
- 3.3 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 19 November 2025 agreed a Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal for consultation (Minute 12 refers). As well as assessing the conservation area, identifying issues and vulnerabilities and setting out an action plan for the area, the appraisal also identified some minor extensions to the boundary to bring an additional five addresses into the area. The existing and proposed amended boundary are shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1: Existing and proposed extended Eldon Square Conservation Area boundary



- 3.4 Consultation was carried out between 25 November 2025 and 20 January 2026. A total of 14 responses were received. The Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2 summarises the consultation undertaken and the representations received. Some of the main points made during the consultation are as follows:

- Matters of detail relating to wording changes or map changes
- Questioning whether the climate emergency has been considered in expanding the conservation area
- Concerns about traffic and waste management in this area
- Concerns about newly painted double yellow lines in the area

Option proposed

- 3.5 Committee is recommended to adopt the revised version of the Conservation Area Appraisal as attached at Appendix 3.
- 3.6 The main changes that have been made to the Appraisal compared to the version that was consulted upon are detailed changes to wording or maps mainly to correct errors and keep the document, for instance the reopening of the former Eldon Arms on Eldon Terrace as Sip n'Spin. The Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2 highlights the changes that have been made in response to the comments.
- 3.7 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.

Other options considered

- 3.8 The main alternative option to the proposed option is to not adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 3.9 Not adopting the Appraisal will mean continued reliance on an Appraisal from 2007 which is now out-of-date. This will have implications for planning decisions within the area and the degree to which those decisions can respond to an up to date assessment of the area. It will also mean that those areas proposed to be included in the extension will not benefit from conservation area status and will not benefit from the enhanced protection as a result of that status.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The Eldon Square CAA, through identifying areas of particular heritage importance and their significance, will contribute to the following priority in the Council Plan 2025-2028:
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint: The CAA will contribute to the objective to 'Further improve the physical environment of Reading by improving air quality, access to green space, and the quality of public spaces' by offering enhanced protections and identifying improvements to one of Reading's most historic and characterful areas.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 There are a variety of ways in which the appraisal could have environmental and climate implications.
- 5.2 Bringing more buildings within the conservation area exercises greater control over demolition, which in turn makes it more likely that buildings will be reused rather than demolished and redeveloped, albeit that this will be a matter to consider site by site through the planning application process.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The inclusion of new areas within the extended conservation area could have implications in terms of the ability of those premises to make physical alterations to improve their environmental performance without needing planning permission. In particular, there are

greater restrictions on solar panels and equipment, wind turbines, air source heat pumps and flues associated with biomass heating or combined heat and power where they would face the highway or be closer to the highway than the existing building. This would need to be addressed on a site by site basis through the planning application process, taking account of policies in the Local Plan.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 Community involvement exercises were undertaken by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee as part of undertaking the review before the Draft was finalised, as included in Appendix 1 of the appraisal document. Following approval of the draft, a formal consultation was carried out over an eight week period between 25 November 2025 and 20 January 2026. There were 14 responses to this consultation, which have been considered in preparing this final version. Details of the consultation are set out in the Statement of Consultation in Appendix 2.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 Areas within the Conservation Area, including the proposed extensions if 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 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 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.
- 10.2 Existing budgets are sufficient for the publication of the final documents and to notify occupiers affected. The bulk of the work on the draft has been undertaken by CAAC members on a voluntary basis and any Council work on the draft has been funded from existing budgets.

- 10.3 Some of the actions within the Action Plan fall to the Council to undertake. Some would be accommodated within existing budgets, albeit would be reliant on officer time, such as progressing an Article 4 direction. Where additional resources may be required, e.g. on maintenance of the gardens, the action plan identifies alternatives including support of voluntary groups.
- 10.4 Steve MacDonald, Strategic Business Partner, has cleared these Financial Implications.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1 Following adoption of the appraisal, it will immediately be a material consideration in determining planning applications for the area. The extensions to the area that it proposes will be applied immediately, subject to a number of notification requirements in the legislation.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. Statement of Consultation on the Draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal
3. Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (adoption version)

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal adoption

Directorate: DEGNS – Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Manager

Date of assessment: 12/01/2026

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To update the existing Eldon Square 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 required because the limited boundary extensions and proposed actions set out in the Appraisal would not be likely to have differential effects on racial groups, gender/transgender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

Signed (completing officer) Mark Worringham Date: 12th January 2026

Signed (Lead Officer) Mark Worringham Date: 12th January 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION ON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL FOR THE ELDON SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA

February 2026

1. Summary of Consultation Measures

- 1.1 Consultation took place from 25th November 2025 to 20th January 2026.
- 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.
- 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 the Central Library 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.

2. Summary of Responses

- 2.1 A total of 14 responses were received. Of these, two responses opposed the proposed boundary extension, one had no opinion and 11 supported the proposed boundary.
- 2.2 Detailed summaries of each individual representation, as well as a response from the Council are included below:

Name	Representation	Council Response
Anonymous	How has the retro fit of existing buildings been considered with the CA in general to bring them to current standards? Has the climate emergency been considered with regards to expanding the CA?	<p>It is recognised that there can be tensions between sustainability measures and heritage assets. There is existing Historic England guidance¹ on how these can be addressed in historic buildings, and it is not within the scope of the CAA to provide advice on this matter.</p> <p>The climate emergency has been considered in proposing the small extension to the CA, and this was</p>

¹ [Technical Guidance | Historic England](#)

Name	Representation	Council Response
		set out in the 'Environmental and Climate Implications' section of the relevant committee report.
Anonymous	The content rightly references traffic and waste management as key subjects. Speeding, illegal vehicle exhaust noise decibels, and fly-tipping are regular in this and the connected areas, especially on London Road, and cause significant environmental damage. Speed cameras, vehicle noise cameras, cctv, and more regular police presence may add benefit.	The Council agrees that traffic impacts, noise and fly-tipping can harm the conservation area's amenity and setting. This issue is included within the actions for the management of the conservation area in the appraisal. However, matters such as speed and noise enforcement and CCTV it primarily with Highways/Thames Valley Police and are not within the scope of the Appraisal.
Anonymous	Please see my PDF Umbrella Representation emailed to you.	A separate e-mail was not received and no contact details for further enquiries.
Page 74 Anonymous	<p>Negative element to be included: Towards the end of 2024, new double yellow lines were painted on streets in Character Area 2. The lines have been poorly painted and are the wrong shade of yellow for a CA. They are an eyesore in the CA, severely detracting from the historic character and appearance of the CA. I believe this should be included in the appraisal as: a) a feature that has a negative impact on Character Area 2, b) an issue in 7.5 Street Furniture and Surfacing, and c) rectification of the lines should be a suggested action in Table 2.</p> <p>Also, Table 2 is incorrectly titled Actions for Christchurch Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Agreed. Street markings can adversely affect the appearance of the conservation area if poorly applied. This issue is partially noted within section 5.5.1. A change proposed to the action plan to ensure that road marking reflects the conservation area status.</p> <p>Title of Table 2 has been changed.</p>
CAAC	<p>Substantive changes --</p> <p>Second page - text can be removed re: Sip n'Spin. Updated in body of document</p> <p>Contents - Sections 4.3 & 4.4 do not appear in contents. Formatting to be updated for these headings in body of document.</p> <p>Page 9 - Fourth bullet replace 'former early nineteenth century residences' with 'nineteenth century properties'. Some were residences and still are but not all.</p>	Changes proposed to correct errors or add points for clarification (all).

Name	Representation	Council Response
Page 75	<p>Page 10 - SS2 third paragraph replace 'two public houses' by 'three public houses'. This change because Sip n'Spin now occupies the former Eldon Arms and later Weather Station premises.</p> <p>Page 20 - add a sentence before last sentence of bullet 'HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing.' There will also be a linked listing correction for 7 Eldon Square. NB before this appraisal is finalised for adoption a decision on the listing may have been received. The consultation ended on 23 December 2025.</p> <p>Page 24 - penultimate paragraph, replace final sentence by 'The planters are sporadically maintained and add at least a token touch of green to the streetscape'. This change because shrubs outside the Lyndhurst Arms had been replaced by cyclamen in November 2025 (see photographic appendix)</p> <p>Page 34 - Sentence starting 'Of the many public houses...' reword 'Of the many public houses in the area, only The Retreat, The Lyndhurst and the Sip n'Spin (formerly the Eldon Arms) are still in business.'</p> <p>Page 35 - First bullet starting 'The Weather Station...' remove as now back in business as Sip n'Spin.</p> <p>Page 38 - final paragraph insert mention of benches including memorial bench. '... a public park with a lawn, flower beds, trees and benches including a memorial bench to Reading musician Robert John Rose (1956-2014).'</p> <p>Page 40 - Figure 28 replace 'Princes Lodge' by 'Princes House'.</p> <p>Page 41 - Add wording 'temporarily improved in late 2025 with the painting of a mural on the hoarding.' (image below not for inclusion in the appraisal).</p>	

Name	Representation	Council Response
Page 76	 <p>Page 41 - section 6.2 first sentence replace 'two public houses' by 'three public houses'.</p> <p>Page 46 - remove stalled renovation bullet. As at 12 January 2026 work was taking place.</p> <p>Page 49 - Negative impact list. Remove 'Conversion of the Weather Station ...' bullet. As at 12 January 2026 the property was in use and had an improved appearance.'</p> <p>Page 70 - penultimate bullet. Replace '(later Weather Station)' with '(now Sip n'Spin)'</p> <p>Page 81 - 5 Eldon Square and 15 Eldon Road (adjoining) Replace '(Listing correction has been requested)' by 'HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing.' NB before this appraisal is finalised for adoption a decision on the listing may have been received. The consultation ended on 23 December 2025.</p> <p>Page 124 - Planters on Watlington Street. replace by updated image of planters with cyclamen (below) and caption to read (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Name	Representation	Council Response
	 <p>Minor changes --</p> <p>Front cover - Social media icons are out of date (X and Instagram)</p> <p>Throughout document - inconsistent use of Conservation Area, conservation area, CA, Conservation Area Appraisal, CAA, appraisal and Appraisal. This also impacts the contents page. See separate schedule of pages where updates required.</p> <p>Throughout document - inconsistent use of hyphens e.g. two storey to be replaced by two-storey. See separate schedule of pages where updates required.</p> <p>Throughout document - should semi-colons be used at end of each bullet and a full stop at the end of last bullet? Current lists inconsistent.</p> <p>Page 4 - final bullet insert 'for' between 'included' and 'listed'.</p> <p>Page 9 - Tenth bullet replace 'old lamp posts' by 'historic lamp posts'.</p>	

Name	Representation	Council Response
Page 78	<p>Page 9 - Penultimate bullet replace colon by semi-colon.</p> <p>Page 10 - SS2 second paragraph replace '173- 183' by '173-183'.</p> <p>Page 10 - Fourth paragraph replace 'main roads are' by 'main roads is'</p> <p>Page 12 - Paragraph below Figure 2 replace 'no adjustment' by 'no adjustments'.</p> <p>Page 15 - Third paragraph insert '(NPPF)' after 'Framework'.</p> <p>Page 15 - Last sentence replace 'plan' by 'Plan'.</p> <p>Page 16 - Public consultation replace 'Reading ...' by 'CAAC'.</p> <p>Page 18 - replace 'north/south or east/west' by ' north-south or east-west'.</p> <p>Page 23 - insert 'which' after '(1885-1934)' in final paragraph.</p> <p>Page 25 - add image credit (image Evelyn Williams)</p> <p>Page 26 - third paragraph, second sentence, replace 'with a range of' by 'but included'.</p> <p>Page 26 - sixth paragraph, first sentence replace 'part north/south' with 'part of a north-south route'.</p> <p>Page 28 - Figure 18 replace 'Zoe' by 'Zöe'.</p> <p>Page 31 - Entry for 5 Eldon Square (and 15 Eldon Road adjoining) could be updated for HE listing entry change before appraisal adopted.</p> <p>Page 32 - Third para, third sentence remove comma after 'buildings'.</p> <p>Page 36 - section 5.5.2 insert comma after '64 Watlington Street'.</p> <p>Page 38 - second paragraph insert 'directed by' before Patrick Keillor.</p> <p>Page 39 - Figure 27 add to caption after '(right)' 'showing the former three-storey tower of 7 Eldon Square.'</p>	

Name	Representation	Council Response
Page 79	<p>Page 43 - penultimate para last line, insert 'a' before warehouse.</p> <p>Page 44 - para 2 first sentence, replace 'with this CA' by 'within this CA'.</p> <p>Page 48 - Character Area 3: Features that link title to list so that it appears at the top of the next page.</p> <p>Page 49 - last para, replace 'conservation' by 'CA'.</p> <p>Page 51 - Section 7.4 last para, replace 'trees' by 'tree' and 'is' by 'are'.</p> <p>Page 52 - last word replace 'roads' by 'streets'.</p> <p>Page 54 - 'insensitive development'. In the 'WHO' column replace 'Update as at May 2025....' by 'Update as at July 2025. This is partially covered in the guidance leaflet for householders that has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.</p> <p>Page 55 - 'Reduction...'. In the 'ISSUE" column replace 'on' by 'in'.</p> <p>Page 56 - 'Busy main road...' In the 'WHO' column replace 'in' by 'on'.</p> <p>Appendix 1 - update for results of public consultation</p> <p>Page 65 - footnote. Reword to say after '...p2. Press report of contested votes at the 1837 general election when Hodges' vote was contested.'</p> <p>Page 66 - last paragraph. Replace 'Evangelists" by 'Evangelist'.</p> <p>Page 69 - penultimate paragraph. Remove 'the' before 'Reading's first...'</p> <p>Page 71 - first paragraph. Insert semi-colon after 'today'. Insert 'the' before 'Golden Lion'.</p> <p>Page 71 - last para. Replace '(Then DOE)' by '(then DOE)'</p> <p>Page 73 - fourth para. Insert apostrophe 'Lord Isaacs' widow'.</p> <p>Page 91 - 1 & 3 Eldon Road. Insert 'pair' between 'are a' and 'semi-detached'.</p>	

Name	Representation	Council Response
	Page 94 - 1 Princes Street. Third sentence replace 'The double front houses' with 'The double fronted house'.	
Richard Bennett, Reading Civic Society	<p>On behalf of Reading Civic Society Committee I wish to endorse this updated Conservation Area Appraisal and note the extensive work by committed volunteers over a number of years which brought it to this point.</p> <p>I am also a Trustee at Watlington House. I have minor points re elements around the Map of Listed buildings on P30 re Watlington House. In particular to the west of the Garden Hall (large red rectangle) is a small red square identified as a building being listed by curtilage. This small red square is a 1970s wooden hut. It should be removed. The GII* listed walls surrounding the garden of the house on South St and The Grove are not shown on the map, consideration should be given to doing so.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to marking the listed railings on Eldon Square.</p>	Agreed. Map changed as requested.

Eldon Square Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2026

A community-led Conservation Area Appraisal

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee on behalf of Reading Borough Council



Eldon Square Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal

A community-led Conservation Area Appraisal

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
on behalf of Reading Borough Council

Foreword by Councillor Micky Leng

I am very pleased to introduce this appraisal for the Eldon Square conservation area, which covers the very first conservation area designated in Reading. It contains one of the finest collections of historic buildings in the town.

This conservation area appraisal, along with other recent appraisals, are entirely the work of volunteers from the local community who make up Reading's Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). These volunteers have brought considerable expertise and local knowledge to bear on the project, as well as investing significant amounts of their time in ensuring that we can best protect the areas which make Reading unique. On behalf of the Council, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the members of the CAAC for their hard work, without which we would not have made this progress with the appraisals.



Eldon Square is one of the key clusters of heritage interest in Reading, focusing around a unique collection of buildings dating mainly from the 19th Century between Kings Road and London Road, as well as the King George V Memorial Gardens which forms a vital green space on the edge of central Reading. Areas such as this are what brings character and distinctiveness to our town, and it is vital that their special interest is conserved.

However, whilst some parts of our historic environment have been sensitively preserved, it is also true that many important streets and buildings have not been treated well over the years. There have been inappropriate additions, loss of original features, a failure to maintain certain buildings as well as more modern development that is not always respectful of the original character. An appraisal such as this gives us a vital tool to prevent these changes and to enhance the area wherever possible.

I would encourage anyone who wants to be involved in future work on Reading's conservation areas, in particular those with particular professional expertise, to contact the CAAC, who are always keen to welcome anyone with interest and knowledge in the local historic environment.

Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets

Initial Statement

Reading has fifteen conservation areas. Each conservation area (CA) has an individual conservation area appraisal (CAA).

Historic England (HE) recommends that appraisals should be undertaken for each conservation area and that these should be reviewed every five years to ensure that they reflect the up-to-date situation and are continuing to do the job they are designed for – to protect ‘the character or appearance of an area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is an independent community led body set up in 2016 to advise Reading Borough Council when reviewing CAAs or policies for the preservation and enhancement of CAs, heritage sites or other features of historic importance.

The Eldon Square CA was formally designated in 1972, following a period of public consultation. In 1982 it was extended to include Watlington Street to the west and Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street to the east. It was last appraised by the Council’s external consultants, The Conservation Studio of Cirencester, in 2007. Their report was formally adopted by the Council at that time and, where the report’s findings and recommendations have been found to remain relevant today they have been carried forward in this Appraisal.

This community led Conservation Appraisal has been prepared by Reading CAAC, using an adaptation of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, an approach to carrying out appraisals recommended by HE.

The Appraisal is preceded by a one page summary of the CA. The first part of the appraisal comprises a Statement of Special Interest, which summarises the key qualities and features which give the area its character and which justify the special protection afforded by a conservation area. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of each of the key elements and areas.

A number of changes have been made to the appraisal and the format of the document since the 2007 review:

- The content of the document is in line with current HE guidance;
- We have placed an increased emphasis on trees and green space in this appraisal because of our heightened awareness of their importance in an urban area such as the Eldon Square CA;
- We have placed more emphasis on documenting historic shopfronts as their importance to the streetscape is increasingly valued in the town;
- An action plan has been included to set out recommendations for the future management of the area to maintain its special character;
- National and local planning legislation, frameworks and policies have not been listed in detail but are summarised in para 1.1;
- Photographic appendices have been included for listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, views, trees and green spaces and shopfronts;

- Details of the consultation process are included in Appendix 1;
- A full description of the archaeology and history of development of the area is included in Appendix 2 with a summary in para 3.

Within the body of the document, where there have been significant changes for better or worse to the area since the last review e.g. property renovation or neglect, these have been mentioned.

The approach to Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM) in the CA has been reviewed and brought into line with that in other CAs. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of BTMs and the reasoning is set out in full in para 5.3.2.

The existing boundaries of the CA have been reviewed and all of the areas currently included merit retention. Kings Road, the core of the original 1972 conservation area designation, is challenged by the A329 and some of the more recent developments on the south side but it is important to remember that the 1830 road layout that enabled development in the area is a key part of the special and defining character of the CA.

An extension is proposed to include:

- The vicarage at 84 Queens Road which was recommended for consideration at the 2007 review. The building dates from c1900 and was built as The Manse to the Wesley Methodist Church and is part of the same site. The architects were Morris and Son. It is a two-storey brick building with bands of contrasting white brick, Welsh slate roof, brick stacks with clay pots. The east door (facing the Wesley Methodist Church) is recessed within a porch with a pointed arch and a faintly ecclesiastical appearance. It helps to mark the transition between the historic church and modern development further west along Queens Road.
- 77 London Road, which together with 75 London Road, already in the CA, now forms one office building and a boundary line should not be drawn through the middle.
- 32 Eldon Terrace should be included to rationalise an eastern boundary with 75-77 London Road and the rear of 27 Eldon Square.
- 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace, a pair of attractive Victorian houses, once a terrace of three.

The inclusion of all properties along the south side of Eldon Terrace was considered. With the exception of nos 32, 46 & 48 this was rejected for two reasons. First, London Road east of Eldon Square has many fine, dramatic examples of Victorian architecture which as with the houses of Eldon Square have past or present access to Eldon Terrace. Although it might be advantageous to include the south side of Eldon Terrace for completeness, including the property on London Road would require a new character area. Second, other properties on the north side of London Road plots, 34 Eldon Terrace and Alderney Court, are modern and in themselves are not worthy of inclusion. 79 London Road which has a boundary with No 34 is protected by being listed. The permeability of the London Road and also Eldon Square to Eldon Terrace boundary is an ongoing development issue.

The inclusion of Reading College was considered but again it could not be justified without undermining the integrity of the CA. Views out of the CA to the college are important.

Along Kings Road to Fatherson Road there is a terrace of properties the final three of which, Victoria Place, are particularly fine examples of Victorian gothic. There is another similar property on Fatherson Road. We recommend that consideration is given as to how best to protect the heritage of the area between the CA and Fatherson Road including London Road properties, only three of which are listed, 79 and 95 & 97. This is outside the scope of this appraisal review.

The Grove and Boulton Street were considered for inclusion and have many merits but could not be justified at this time without a full consideration of the potential of further extension to South Street.

We are grateful to Berkshire Archaeology, Reading Borough Libraries, Reading Museum and Royal Berkshire Archives for their assistance with producing this revised appraisal and permission to reproduce images and maps as noted in the text.

Contents

Foreword by Councillor Micky Leng	3
Initial Statement	4
Contents	7
Statement of Special Interest	9
SS1 Introduction and Summary	9
SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features	10
SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities	11
SS4 Recommended measures	11
SS5 The 2024 Boundary and Character Area Adjustments	12
Character area 1	12
Character area 2	13
Character area 3	13
Conservation Area Appraisal.....	15
1. Introduction.....	15
1.1 Policy context.....	15
1.2 Public consultation	16
2. Landscape setting	16
3. Brief History of the Area.....	17
4. Spatial Analysis	18
4.1 Key characteristics and plan form	18
4.2 Views into, within and out of area.....	21
4.3 Trees and green spaces	23
5. Buildings and Public Realm	26
5.1 Key positive characteristics	26
5.2 Materials, styles and features.....	26
5.3 Buildings of local historic interest and positive buildings.....	30
5.4 Historic shopfronts	34
5.5 Public Realm.....	35
6. Character Areas	36
6.1 Character Area 1 - Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square.....	37
6.2 Character Area 2 - Terraced streets west of Eldon Road	40
6.3 Character Area 3 - Terraced streets east of Eldon Road.....	45
7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement.....	48
7.1 Loss of original architectural features and detail.....	48
7.2 Neglect and opportunities for enhancement	49
7.3 Advertising and shop signage	50

7.4 Tree loss	50
7.5 Street furniture and surfacing	50
7.6 Rubbish and bins	51
7.7 Development pressure and changing skyline	51
7.8 Traffic noise and pollution	51
8. Action Plan	52
Table 1 – All Conservation Areas	52
Table 2 – Eldon Square Conservation Area	54
Appendix 1 Public Consultations	56
Appendix 2 Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area	62
1. Archaeology	62
2. Historical Development	62
Appendix 3 Listed buildings	74
Appendix 4 Buildings of townscape merit	90
Appendix 5 Conservation Area Views	106
Appendix 6 Conservation Area Trees	112
Appendix 7 Original or substantially original heritage shopfronts	125

Statement of Special Interest

SS1 Introduction and Summary

This section summarises those elements which create the area's character and justify its designation as a Conservation Area (CA) to assist key decisions on its development and enhancement. Later sections of this appraisal provide fuller details. The key characteristics are:

- Eldon Square, a mid-nineteenth century planned formal town square comprising an enclosed garden surrounded on three sides by Bath stone detached and semi-detached buildings;
- Eldon Road, at its southern end part of the formal arrangement of Eldon Square, notable for a row of mid-nineteenth century dwellings on its west side;
- The former residents' garden at Eldon Square, now known as King George V Memorial Gardens, enclosed by grade II listed railings and containing mature trees and other greenery and a large statue of the first Marquess of Reading;
- Nos 163 to 189 (odd) Kings Road, a long row of prestigious Bath stone nineteenth century properties with good quality Classical and Italianate detailing;
- A cohesive development of mid-nineteenth century mainly terraced houses occupied by artisans, local tradesmen and especially later in the century, workers at the nearby Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory, the largest employer in nineteenth century Reading;
- The prevalent use of Bath stone and local brick;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, include two grade II* listed buildings or groups of buildings (Watlington House and 173-183 (odd) Kings Road);
- Two listed churches in unusually close proximity (Wesley Methodist Church and the Sacred Heart Church (built as the Church of St John the Evangelist)) the spires of which are a local landmark;
- Re-use of former light industrial and commercial enterprises adds depth to the understanding of the historic development of the area;
- Distinctive local details such as cast iron street name signs, ghost signs and historic lamp posts;
- Lengths of historic stone kerbs and gulleys and remnants of old railings;
- Protected trees and groups of trees and public and private green space;
- There are 30 listed buildings or groups of buildings in the CA and 26 buildings or groups of buildings of townscape merit;
- The CA has three character areas distinguished by age, architectural style and building materials;
- Character area 1 is the central area of 1830s onwards development including Eldon Square, Eldon Road and Kings Road;

- Character area 2 includes terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street, Eldon Place and Queens Road (south);
- Character area 3 includes later nineteenth century terraces to the west of Eldon Road i.e. Eldon Terrace, Eldon Street, Victoria Street, Montague Street, Town Place.

SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features

Historically, the conservation area was developed as a residential area with small scale industrial activity and workshops. Facilities to serve the community included churches and a Sunday school, public houses, shops and bakeries.

Today, the area is still predominantly residential but some of the larger houses are now in multiple occupation or flats or converted into doctors surgeries (e.g. no. 9 Eldon Square) or offices (e.g. nos 173-183 Kings Road). A few shops remain, notably three convenience stores and an upholstery workshop. There is a modern petrol station with small supermarket at the south west corner of Watlington Street which was built on the site of a former stonemason's yard.

Within the conservation area there are two active places of worship (Wesley Methodist Church and the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart) and three public houses (The Lyndhurst, The Retreat and Sip n'Spin). Purpose-built late twentieth century office blocks, Hanover and Berkshire House, in Kings Road have now been converted to residential.

The terraced streets of the CA are enclosed and protected from noise and disturbance by traffic. Vehicular access beyond the main roads is discouraged by means of artificially created cul-de-sacs and blockages that prevent 'rat-runs'.

Focal corner locations occupied or previously occupied by shops, public houses, bakeries or light industrial uses are identifiable within the area e.g. St Johns Street which had a public house at the north-east corner (now a convenience store), a bakery at the north-west corner with a (vacant) retail unit and ghost sign, a public house at the south-west corner and a beerhouse/grocers at the south-east corner.

The area is typified in the title of F C Padley's 1973 history of the area 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area'. The special character of the CA includes the social and community life of 'The Village'.



Figure 1: The Kenet Morris performing in St Johns Street in front of The Retreat public house in summer 2023 (image Evelyn Williams)

SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Historic streetscape and local distinctiveness are under threat from the requirements of traffic management and public amenities;
- Loss of original architectural details;
- Poor appearance of George V Memorial Gardens.
- Ongoing decline in local amenities such as public houses;
- Street clutter;
- Traffic noise and pollution detract from the character and environmental quality of the main streets;
- Kings Road only has two crossing points and presents a barrier to and a negative environment for pedestrians to experience the oldest and grandest character area of the CA.

SS4 Recommended measures

In order to address the issues and vulnerabilities set out above, Section 8, The Conservation Area Action Plan, sets out in tabular form a series of measures with timescales which should be undertaken to ameliorate these issues.

SS5 The 2024 Boundary and Character Area Adjustments



Figure 2: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary (inclusive of proposed area extensions)

The boundary extensions proposed are minimal and rectify anomalies in the 1982 boundary. Over and above the incorporation of additional properties, no adjustments to character areas are required.

Character Area 1

- The inclusion of 77 London Road is required to include the whole premises of 75-77 London Road as a boundary through the middle of a building is not practical.



Figure 3: 75-77 London Road (image Evelyn Williams)

Character Area 2

- The vicarage attached to the Wesley Church was recommended for inclusion in 2007 but this was not followed through. The property dates from c1900 and was built as The Manse to the Wesley Methodist Church and is part of the same site. The architects were Morris and Son. It is a two storey brick building with bands of contrasting white brick, Welsh slate roof, brick stacks with clay pots. The east door (facing the Wesley Methodist Church) is recessed within a porch with a pointed arch and a faintly ecclesiastical appearance. It helps to mark the transition between the historic church and modern development further west along Queen's Road, beyond the CA before reaching Grade II listed Queens Crescent.



Figure 4: Vicarage of the Wesley Church (image Zoë Andrews)

Character Area 3

- 32 Eldon Terrace is included to match the inclusion of 77 London Road which sit north and south respectively of the garden of 27 Eldon Square. The entrance from Eldon

Terrace is a distinctive historic feature of the street, abutting the flint and brick wall which extends west from here to the junction of Eldon Terrace and Victoria Street.



Figure 5: 32 Eldon Terrace (image Evelyn Williams)

- 46 and 48 Eldon Terrace, are two remaining properties of a terrace of three similar to those in the immediate area and are worthy of protection within the CA. They close the view south along Montague Street.



Figure 6: Left 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace from Montague Street (image Zoë Andrews) right 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace (image Evelyn Williams)

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 CA 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 CAA describes and defines the particular historical and architectural character and interest of the Eldon Square CA, 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 CAA has been produced within current national and local planning policy guidelines. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.'*

Sustainable development

The government has outlined a presumption in favour of sustainable development with economic, social and environmental objectives. In relation to the environmental objective the NPPF states:

'...to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

New development in conservation areas

In relation to new development in conservation areas the 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.'

In order to accurately make these judgements clear, evidence must be laid out detailing the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.

Local Plan

Reading adopted a new Local Plan in November 2019 which set out policies for the protection of Reading's historic environment including designated heritage assets such as

conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets. A partial update to the Plan commenced in 2023.

This CAA cannot hope to mention every building or feature within the CA 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.

1.2 Public consultation

This appraisal is in a format recommended by Historic England. It has been prepared by the CAAC. In this CA, there are many local residents to consult with and also local businesses. Consultation has been aimed at engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the area to help define what continues to be of special significance and worthy of protection and/or enhancement.

2. Landscape setting

Eldon Square Conservation Area lies well within the east side of urban Reading just beyond the Inner Distribution Road (IDR). It is 1km from Reading's Saxon centre at the St Mary's Butts/ Gun Street crossroads, 0.8km from Reading's Medieval Market Place at the gates of Reading Abbey, under 1km from The Oracle in the town centre and 1km from Reading Station.

The CA includes parts of the north and south side of Kings Road but otherwise lies between London Road and Queens Road. These are three wide heavily trafficked east-west routes through Reading. Eldon Road, the north-south 'spine' of the conservation area is a major route linking Kings Road and London Road. Watlington Street was also once a thoroughfare between Kings Road and London Road but is now closed to traffic at its northern end. St Johns Street, where there is no parking, and Eldon Terrace form an east-west route from Watlington Street to Montague Street which is only available to pedestrians and cyclists in its entirety.

The row of grand early nineteenth century dwellings on the north side of Kings Road (nos 163 to 189 Kings Road) face south as do most of the properties on Eldon Square showing off the honey glow of Bath stone on a sunny day.

From Eldon Road there is a slight fall in the land westwards to Watlington Street. Throughout the area there is a general fall northwards to the River Kennet, hence the side-street named St Johns Hill.

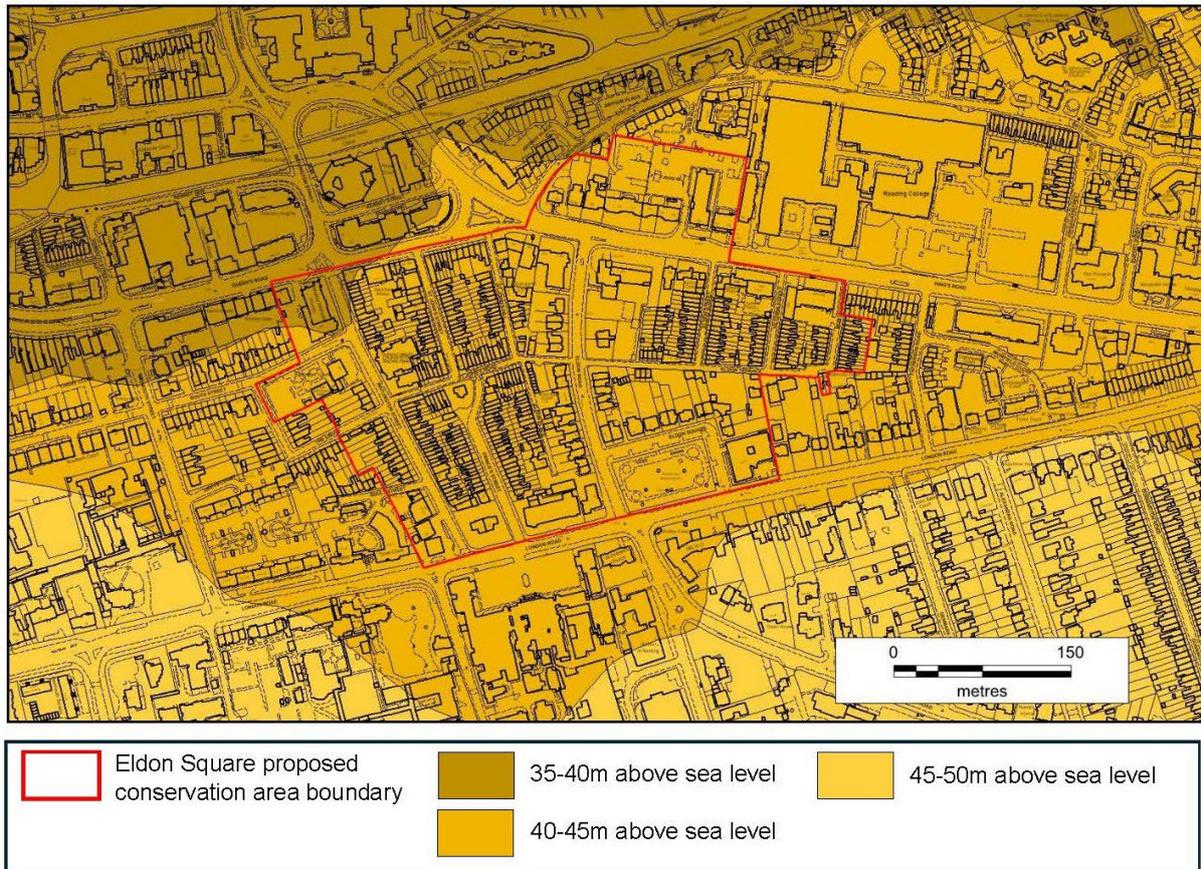


Figure 7: Landscape map of the conservation area.

3. Brief History of the Area

The land sales by Reading Corporation and the Crown and the building of two new roads across the land in 1834, Kings Road (named after King William IV) and Queens Road (after Queen Adelaide) were the catalysts for the development of the Eldon Square district on what had previously been mainly agricultural land.

High class houses were built in Eldon Square and in Kings Road, out of Bath stone brought to Reading by the Kennet and Avon Canal. The Oval was at the centre of a planned development which was not completed, being over taken by the need for smaller terraced houses.

Early occupants of the Bath stone houses were mainly of independent means and the residents of the terraced houses were tradesmen, artisans and labourers who worked either on their own account or were employed in Reading's development boom and local industries.

On the south side of London Road opposite the CA is the Royal Berkshire Hospital which opened in 1839, sited on land donated by Lord Sidmouth.

The church of St John the Evangelist on Watlington Street was built in 1872 and replaced the original 1837 church on the same site which could not accommodate the growing number of worshippers in the area. The foundation stone for the Wesley church on Queens Road was laid 1872 and the vicarage was built c1900.

The area changed in the second half of the twentieth century as Reading changed when Brewing (H & G Simonds/Courage), Biscuits (Huntley & Palmers) and Bulbs (Suttons Seeds), the industries of Reading's 3Bs moved out of the town centre.

Today the area has lost almost all the local businesses, public houses and shops and is mainly residential. However, former retail premises, public houses and light industrial properties are identifiable and are often situated at street corners. It has a strong community spirit and residents are proud of living there. Most properties are well maintained and some, but not all, have been improved with the re-instatement of previously lost heritage features.

A more detailed history can be found in Appendix 2.

4. Spatial Analysis

4.1 Key characteristics and plan form

The conservation area is in a wholly urban location and comprises a dense network of streets of detached and semi-detached buildings running north-south or east-west. It comprises all or parts of 14 streets, roads, places and terraces which range from pedestrian only pathways to major A roads.

The most distinctive element of the street pattern is Eldon Square where development commenced in 1834. The development of prestigious Bath stone houses surrounds three sides of a small rectangular, and now public, park enclosed by railings containing a lawn, trees and shrubs and a statue of Rufus Isaacs, first Marquess of Reading (1860-1935). Building height is mainly two or, less commonly, three-storey. Modern, late twentieth century office and residential blocks rise to as many as five storeys.

South facing nos 163 to 189 Kings Road are set well back from the road. These large Bath stone houses, elevated above semi-basements are, because of a slight bend in the road and its width, prominent in views along Queens Road and Kings Road. Nos 173-183 form a terrace of three pairs of similar properties linked at ground floor level. Northward views along Eldon Road and Eldon Street are enhanced by a glimpse of the stone facades of no. 169 and no. 187/189 respectively.

The most prominent landmarks in the conservation area and surrounding locality are the spires of the Wesley Methodist Church and the Church of St John the Evangelist, now the Polish Church of the Sacred Heart. The churches have a presence in Watlington Street and the two spires, only a few hundred metres apart, are a positive feature of the conservation area and further afield.

The Oval, no. 14 St Johns Road, is a detached mid-nineteenth century brick building. An 1834 map indicates that it was to be the focal point of a planned cruciform layout of streets which never came to pass. The Oval looks directly down St Johns Street to the point where Queens Road and Kings Road merge. Similarly, to the south, it is directly aligned with Princes Street and there is a fine, but off-centre, view of the façade of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, built in 1839 and Grade II* listed (1156091). The central portion shares an architect, Henry Briant, and building material, Bath stone, with many of the grander residential properties of Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square. Trees in The Oval's rear garden soften the urban street scene in the view north along Princes Street.

Corner sites along St Johns Road, Eldon Terrace, Queens Road, Kings Road and London Road were generally and sometimes still are, occupied by public houses, retail or industrial buildings. St Johns Street for example had at one time, the Beehive public house on the south-western corner, a beerhouse/ bakery and grocers shop on the south-eastern corner a bakery on the north-western corner and the Military Arms public house, now a convenience store, on the north-eastern corner.

Nearly all of the CA's terraced houses have a small front garden between the building line and pavement. The main exceptions are nos 16-30 (even) and nos 13-21 (odd) St Johns Hill which are built directly up to back-of-pavement line. More prestigious detached and semi-detached properties in Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square were built with large rear gardens but increasingly these are being lost to car parking.

The pattern of 'streets', 'roads', 'hill', 'terrace' and 'places' was clearly established by 1853 when the Board of Health maps were produced. With the exception of today's Watlington Street and London Road this had taken place within a 20 year period since the 1830s. Eldon Road is the widest road entirely within the CA and Princes Street is wider than its terraced counterparts.

At least 50% of today's residential properties are shown on the 1853 Board of Health map (coloured in turquoise on the map below) and most of the rest (coloured purple on the map below) from the later Victorian era. There are a few infill properties from Edwardian times (coloured yellow on the map below), for example 11-13 Eldon Road which has a '1902' date stone. The only inter-war property is the County Arms public house which was built on the site of an existing pub of that name. Modern properties especially along Queens Road, largely date from the 1970s or later and replace older properties but there are one or two infill properties and garden or former industrial yard developments such as 26 Eldon Place.

The gardens of Eldon Square have changed in layout but the site and railings remain as when first laid out for the use of residents in the 1830s.

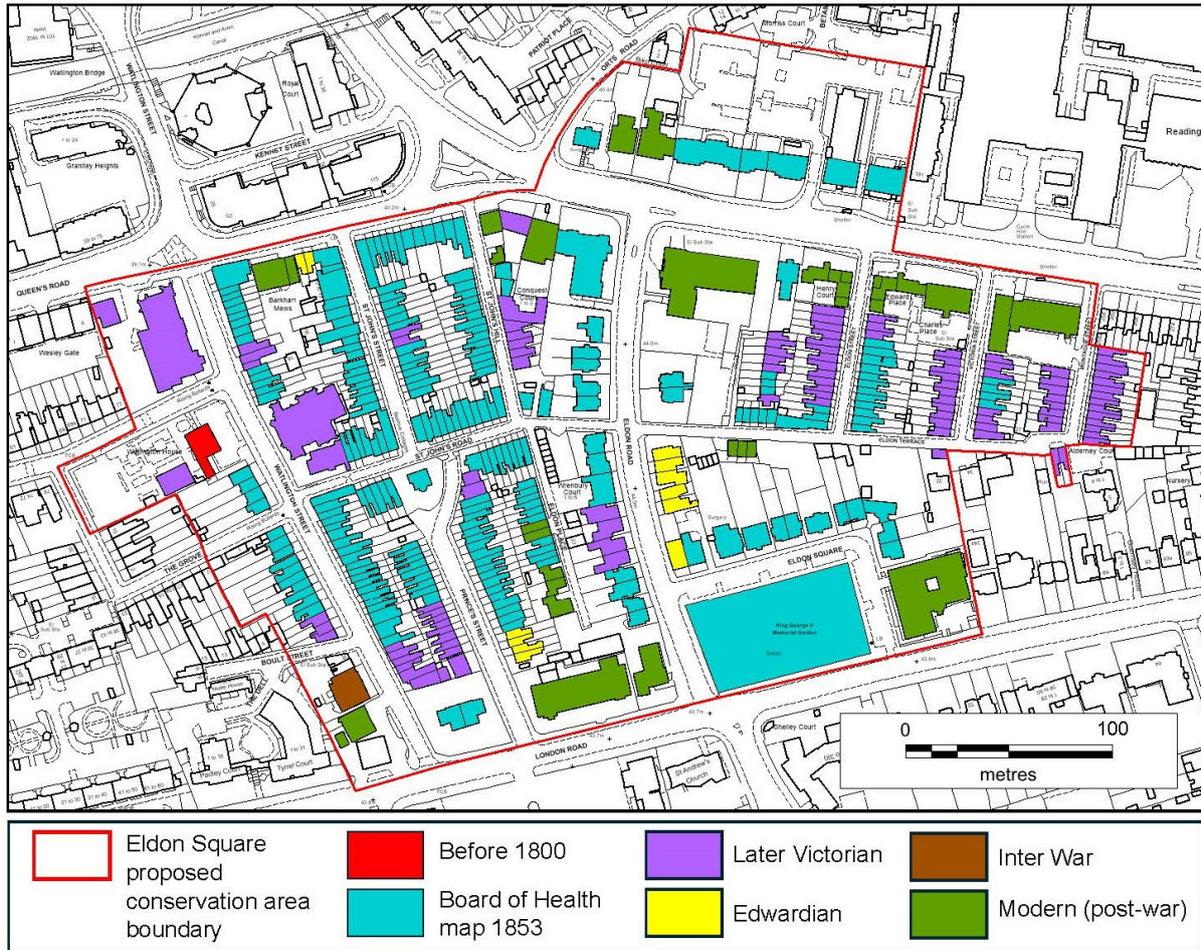


Figure 8: Buildings by age

Notes on the map of buildings by age:

The dating of properties has followed the date of first appearance on a map and sometimes this can be confirmed or refined by other evidence such as visual inspection, newspapers, directories, censuses or Historic England listing descriptions. In general, although properties may have been extended and in some case considerably, the date is the date of first appearance of a property on the site. This is fairly straightforward for most terraced residential properties but the precise dating of some properties has proved problematic:

- 5 Eldon Square/ 15 Eldon Road is listed Grade II. The Board of Health map (1853) shows a single property on the plot which is now occupied by 5 Eldon Square/15 Eldon Road and 7 Eldon Square. Evidence from maps, directories, photographs and external physical inspection indicate that 5 Eldon Square/ 15 Eldon Road dates from the beginning of the twentieth century on the site formerly occupied by the western section of 7 Eldon Square. HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing. 5-13 Eldon Road were also built around this time.
- 190 Kings Road is a modern makeover, with at least one additional storey, of a Victorian building.

4.2 Views into, within and out of area

(see Appendix 5 for images)

The map below shows the direction of views into, within and out of the CA with blue arrows.

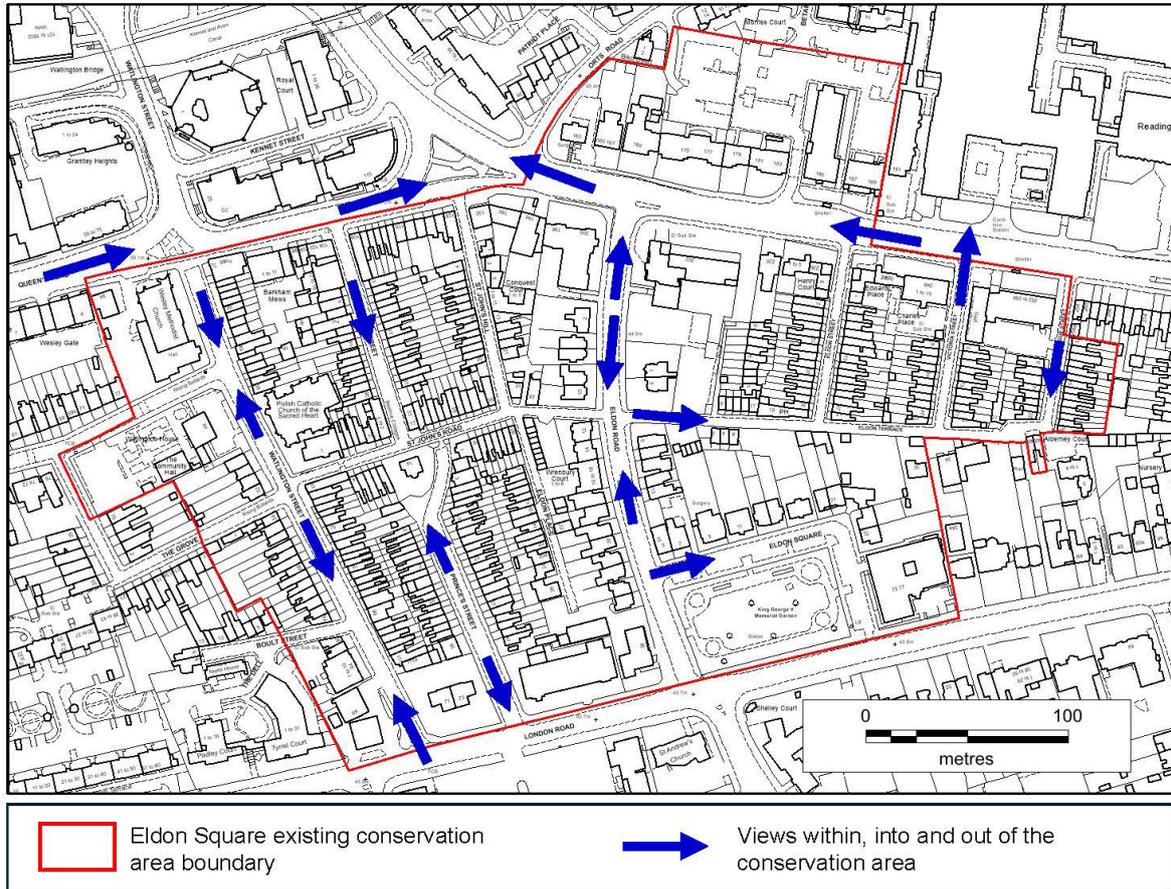


Figure 9: Views into, within and out of the area

4.2.1 Views into the area



Figure 10: Views into the CA - east along Queens Road (image Evelyn Williams)

Views into the area tend to be marred by roads and traffic on major thoroughfares which are a distraction to the viewer. Modern developments and car parks are concentrated at key junctions on the main roads. There are three historic views of note:

- Looking east along Queens Road to the junction with Kings Road and beyond. From the west end of Queens Road, adjacent to Queens Crescent, which is listed and of a similar era, the listed buildings on the north side of Kings Road come in to view as does the spire of the Wesley church. As the viewer approaches and the road curves more properties are visible.
- Looking north down Watlington Street from in front of the Royal Berkshire Hospital on London Road. In this view the curve and incline of Watlington Street, and the two church spires are visible. The view continues down towards the river, the Verto building and Watlington Bridge.
- Looking west from Reading College (Activate Learning) has a view, albeit currently marred by traffic, of listed properties to the north and more modern developments within the CA to the south

4.2.2 Views within the area

There are a limited number of views within the area because of the short horizon resulting from the street plan. The following are important views:

- Looking north towards The Oval (rear) from Princes Street. This view shows the Oval as it was meant to be seen, as a focal point, when approaching down Princes Street.
- Looking south towards The Oval (front) from St Johns Street. This view of the front of The Oval was not planned, unlike the view from Princes Street. However, it attracts the eye into the CA and also towards The Retreat public house.
- Looking east along Eldon Terrace from Eldon Road. This is an intriguing view down a side street.
- Looking south along Montague Street towards Eldon Terrace. This view shows the variety of terraced housing on Montague Street. The view is closed by 46 and 48 Eldon Terrace in the middle distance and behind that, the rear of one of the taller London Road properties.
- Looking east from Eldon Road into Eldon Square. From this spot you can see the houses of Eldon Square and also the comparative quietness compared with Eldon Road.
- Looking north down Eldon Road towards Kings Road;
- Looking south up Eldon Road towards Eldon Square. This view could show off the properties on the west side of Eldon Road. It is marred not as much by the block of Hanover House but all paraphernalia of traffic management including the yellow box markings at the junction;
- Looking south from the foot of Watlington Street.

4.2.3 Views out of the area



Figure 11: View out of CA towards the Queens Road and Kings Road junction (image Evelyn Williams)

Beyond the CA there are very few idyllic views but nevertheless there are some which are important in understanding the growth and development of the area.

- View west towards the traffic gyratory, more or less at the historic junction of Queens Road and Kings Road, the area to the north, on the right, is out of the CA;
- From Princes Street south to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. There are no views from the CA that align precisely with the portico of the hospital, this is the closest;
- From Watlington Street there is a view towards Reading Gaol and depending on any development that takes place on this site it may improve. The removal of the modern block close to the boundary wall would increase the visibility of the prison building;
- North from Victoria Street to Reading College (Activate Learning).

4.3 Trees and green spaces

(see Appendix 6 for images)

The most significant green space in the area and the only public garden is the King George V Memorial Garden. Once the private garden for Eldon Square residents, the council took ownership in 1944¹ planning to use the King George V memorial fund to convert it to a Garden of Ease which opened in 1951². The gardens are poorly maintained, visibly neglected and the listed railings are in need of repainting. Within the gardens is a statue of Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, by Charles Sergeant Jagger (1885-1934) which was cleaned early in 2025 after a long period of neglect. The gardens are enclosed by railings and the name plate on the gates 'P. B. & E. Reading' indicates that they were made by Perry,

¹ Reading Standard 6 October 1944 p5

² Reading Standard 18 May 1951 p3

Barrett and Exall, a successor of Perry and Barrett³ and one of the precursors of the Reading Ironworks Company Ltd.



Figure 12: Aerial view of Watlington House rear garden. The garden has been laid out in the style of an apothecary's garden based on a plan from the first half of the eighteenth century (image Richard Bennett)

Another significant green space is the rear garden of Watlington House which has been restored (2012-2014) since the last appraisal review. It is laid out according to a mid-eighteenth century plan with planting typical of an apothecary's garden as Samuel Watlington's uncle was an apothecary⁴. It is sometimes open to the public. The front garden and parking was remodelled in 2021 with a new wall and railings and has been planted with trees, shrubs and flowers.

Most residential properties have a front garden and many are very well maintained with shrubs and flowers although others have been paved.

The grounds of Hanover House have been well landscaped with mature silver birches and other trees, protected by a TPO, which are visible from Kings and Eldon Roads.

A number of other trees are protected including an ancient black mulberry at 1a Eldon Road (now a vacant building plot).

Properties on St Johns Road and Eldon Square have an exuberant display of wisteria when in flower.

There are two sets of planters preventing access to Watlington Street from South Street and Queens Road. The planters are sporadically maintained and add at least a token touch of green to the streetscape.

The island at the junction of Queens and Kings Roads, just outside the CA is a welcome contrast to the surrounding tarmac and traffic but should be better maintained.

³ Reading Mercury 27 April 1835 p1

⁴ Watlington House website [the garden restoration](#) accessed 23 May 2025



Figure 13: Traffic island at the junction of Queens Road and Kings Road (image Evelyn Williams)

Protected trees, other significant trees and green spaces are marked on the map below. It has not been possible to identify every notable tree and lack of a specific reference does not imply that it is not of value.

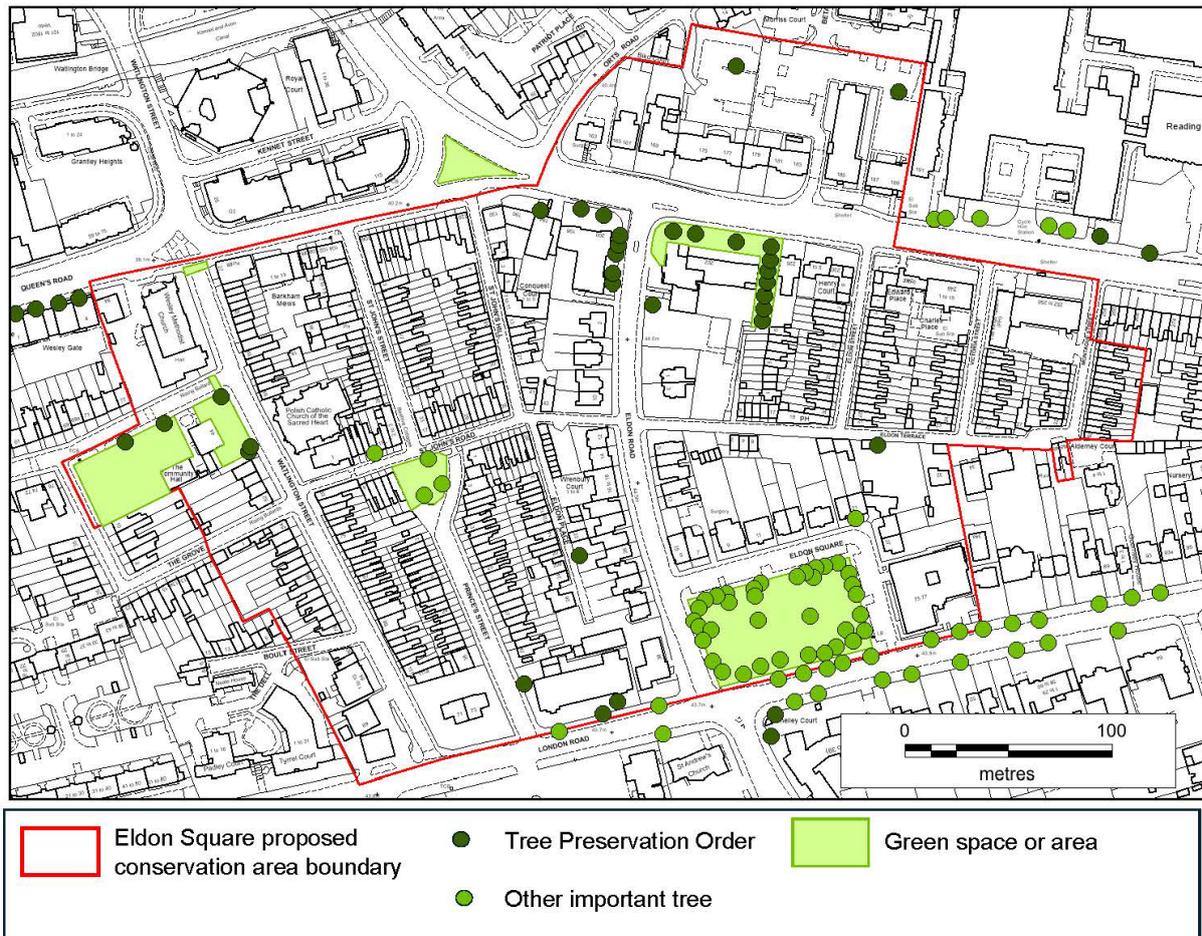


Figure 14: Trees and green spaces within the conservation area

5. Buildings and Public Realm

5.1 Key positive characteristics

With the exception of Watlington House and now long lost farm buildings, the area was a greenfield site of agricultural land when in the 1830s Queens Road and Kings Road were laid out and the land sold on lease by the Crown and Reading Corporation. Development progressed rapidly from then onwards especially to the east of Watlington Street.

The result of this development boom is a time capsule of grand villas and squares overtaken by demand for terraced housing for trades people, artisans and factory employees on the east side of Reading and the facilities and amenities required.

It is possible to read this progression today in the layout of the streets and range of building styles. The area was never entirely residential but included small industrial enterprises, retail premises, public houses and a large brewery. Many of these were still in existence into the second half of the twentieth century and apart from a few survivals have now been converted to housing. These have been noted below within the relevant character areas.

5.2 Materials, styles and features

The Eldon Square Conservation Area contains, for the most part, nineteenth century housing built during a 40 year period between c1835-1875. Apart from landmark buildings such as the two churches, Watlington House, The Oval, the St John's Road Mission Hall and Reading Room and the inter-war County Arms, there are three distinctively different predominant architectural styles within the conservation area: large detached and semi-detached Bath stone houses, narrow-frontage brick terraced houses of two or three storeys and 1970s and later office and residential development mainly along the south side of Kings Road.

The large houses on the north side of Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square mostly date from the 1830s and 1840s and are built from Bath Stone in the Classical style favoured in the first half of the nineteenth century. The exception is the semi-detached pair of 1 & 3 Eldon Road which are yellow stock brick at the front and red brick at the rear.

Watlington Street is part of a north-south route between the road to Shinfield on the ridge to the south of Reading and the town centre that existed before Queens Road and Kings Road were laid out. It forms the boundary between Corporation and Crown lands and apart from seventeenth century Watlington House, developed slowly from the 1830s onwards with a more eclectic mix of building materials and design than other streets in the CA. 99 Watlington Street is particularly worthy of mention.

Two-storey red brick terraces predominate in the narrower streets between London Road and Kings Road. These residential properties are characterised by a narrow frontage with, at ground floor, a front door with a single window beside and above is a single matching window. A brick dentilled eaves course is common. Brick chimney stacks protrude through the slate roof well below the ridge with the effect that the lively roofscape created by a row of chimney stacks and red clay pots is highly visible from the street. The street frontages, though terraced, are not uniform and do not always follow a regular building line but are made up from short rows of differing design reflecting the piecemeal development of the area.

Terraced housing typologies fall into 7 groups according to number of storeys, colour and pattern of brickwork, style and material of door surrounds and window lintels. The brick bond is mainly Flemish and the roof materials of slate.

- i) Two-storey, round arched brick door surround, one downstairs and one upstairs window with a chequerboard brick pattern.
- ii) Two-storey, round arched brick door surrounds, one downstairs and one upstairs window, red brick.



Figure 15: Left Watlington Street foot (i) and right St Johns Street (ii) (images Zoë Andrews)

- iii) Two-storey red brick, plain brick or stone door surrounds and window lintels, one downstairs and one upstairs window. Variations include stone string courses.



Figure 16: Eldon Street (iii) (image Zoë Andrews)

- iv) Taller three-storey properties occur singly or in groups on some streets with single or double sets of upper floor windows with cills supported by corbels. Grander examples of this typology such as 17 St Johns Street have grey brick with red brick door and

window surrounds and string courses and 73 Watlington Street has full height windows on the second floor.



Figure 17: Left four three storey houses on St Johns Road and right a three storey house on St Johns Street (iv) (images Evelyn Williams)

- v) The west side of Watlington Street is predominantly comprised of short runs of three-storey brick terraces of slightly varying design but most have two windows on the first and second floor and a front door and window on the ground floor which is not aligned with those above. Some front doors have recessed entrances behind a rounded arch. The detailing around the windows varies with 74-78 Watlington Street being the most ornate.



Figure 18: 78 and part of 76 Watlington Street (v) (image Zoë Andrews)

More rarely:

- vi) Two-storey, arched doorway, downstairs bay, one central window above, grey and red brick with cream brick window surrounds e.g 8-12 Montague Street.



Figure 19: Bay windowed houses on Montague Street (image Zoë Andrews)

- vii) St Johns Hill has a unique terrace of five houses of grey brick with red brick door and window surrounds



Figure 20: Houses on the east side of St Johns Hill (vii) (images 1 & 2 Zoë Andrews, image 3 Evelyn Williams)

The south side of Kings Road is not as homogenous which reflects the more complex twentieth century development on this side of the road. Office blocks built in the 1970s have now been converted and/or remodelled for residential use. At the corner of Eldon Road and Kings Road the site of Hanover House was once a large villa, Swiss Villa, and a short terrace of housing. Travelling east from 220 Kings Road there is a long stretch of 1990s residential development set back from the road behind a hedge which terminates at the corner of Victoria Street. The block between Victoria Street and Montague Street and the CA boundary, now Cityblock student accommodation, was occupied by the Berkshire Brewery, established in 1865 which later became a Salmons tea warehouse. The car parks at the rear

of Hanover House and Cityblock could be improved as they are a very visible distraction on the narrow terraced streets to the south.

Historically, slate was the prevalent roofing material, brought to the town first by canal but later by the railway. Nowadays, many slate roofs have been re-roofed with concrete tiles or artificial slate. The County Arms (dated 1936) has an original clay tile roof but this is unusual. No. 27 Princes Street has a slate roof with a 'fishscale' effect created by alternate use of straight and rounded slates and the ground floor bays of 41-47 Princes Street also have a fishscale roof.

5.3 Buildings of local historic interest and positive buildings

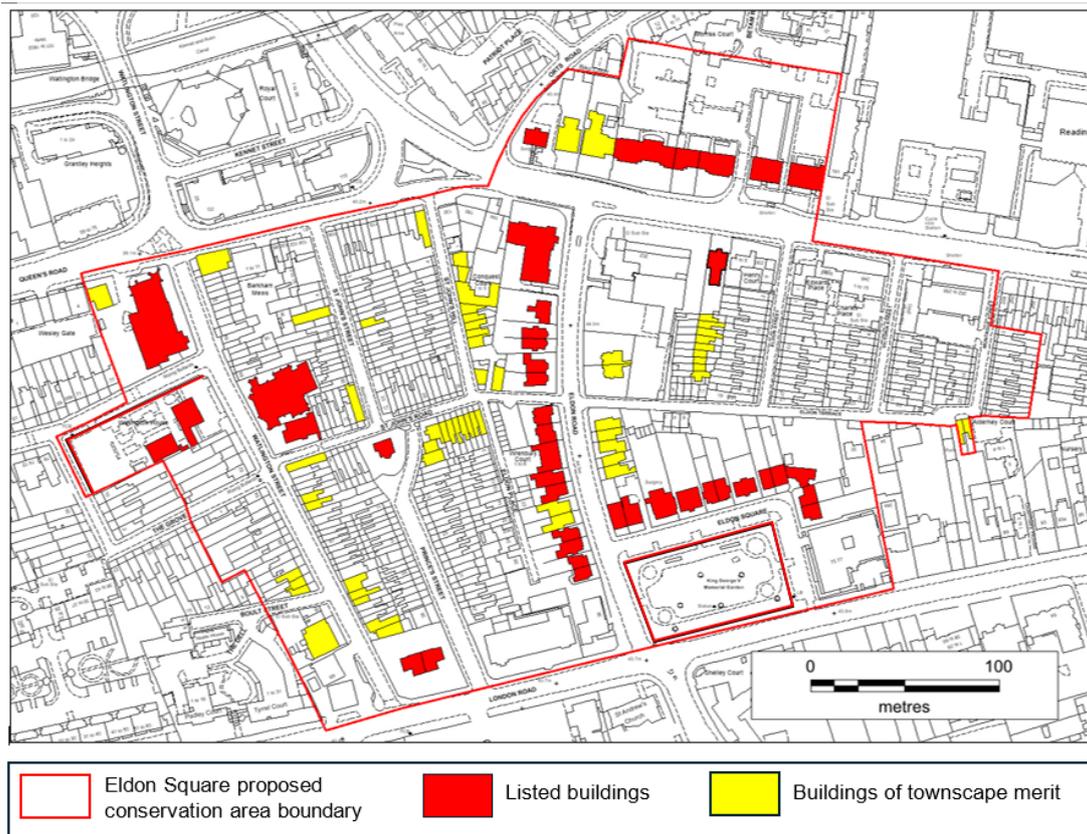


Figure 21: Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit

5.3.1 Listed buildings

There are 30 listed buildings and structures or groups of buildings and structures in the CA and most are within character area 1.

The buildings and structures are all identified on Map 8 and are also listed in Appendix 3 where images are provided along with a short summary and link to the Historic England listing entry.

Character Area 1

- 163 Kings Road
- 173-183 Kings Road
- 185 Kings Road

- 187-189 Kings Road
- 196-200 Kings Road
- 220-222 Kings Road
- 2 Eldon Road
- 4 & 6 Eldon Road
- 8 & 10 Eldon Road
- 12 & 14 Eldon Road
- 16 & 18 Eldon Road
- 20 & 22 Eldon Road
- 28 & 30 Eldon Road
- 32 & 34 Eldon Road
- 5 Eldon Square (and 15 Eldon Road adjoining)
- 7 Eldon Square
- 9 Eldon Square
- 11 Eldon Square
- 13 & 15 Eldon Square
- 17 Eldon Square
- 19 & 21 Eldon Square
- 23 Eldon Square
- 25 & 27 Eldon Square
- Railings to George V Memorial Gardens

Character Area 2

- Watlington House including the Garden Hall, Watlington Street
- Walls enclosing west wall of Watlington House
- Wesley Methodist Church, Watlington Street
- Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart including the school room, Watlington Street
- 71 & 73 London Road
- The Oval

Character Area 3

There are no listed buildings in Character Area 3

5.3.2 Buildings of Townscape Merit

There are 26 buildings or groups of buildings of townscape merit and most are within character area 2.

These are identified on Map 8 below and with a photograph and short description in Appendix 4.

At the last appraisal review almost every building in the CA was recognised as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) because of the special contribution that they make to the street scene. This differs from the approach in other Reading CAs. Historic England guidance is that locally important buildings should meet specific criteria to demonstrate that they contribute positively to the area. The criteria in summary relate to the importance to the context of a listed heritage asset, landmark quality, significance of design or architect, historic associations with local people or past events, reflect former uses of the area or contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The criteria are similar to those to be used for locally listed buildings (LLB) and as Reading does not designate LLB in its conservation areas it is understood that BTM should be the equivalent within a CA.

We consider that many of the properties designated as BTMs do not meet the criteria and that there is sufficient recognition of their contribution to the villagescape as a whole and as part of the special character of the area, by their inclusion within the CA.

Many properties, although in most cases well maintained have had windows replaced, brickwork painted over or other modifications made over time which have had a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area e.g. the east side of Victoria Street.



Figure 22: Victoria Street looking north in the direction of Reading College (image Zoë Andrews)

The Garden Room at Watlington House and the schoolroom at the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart were included as BTMs on the 2007 appraisal but it is considered that they are listed as they lie within the curtilage of the related listed building and are now shown as such.

Character Area 1

- 165-169 Kings Road
- 1&3 Eldon Road

- 5-13 Eldon Road
- 26-28 Eldon Road

Character Area 2

- 84 Queens Road
- 88 Queens Road
- 104 Queens Road
- 63 Watlington Street (Swift Upholstery)
- 73-79 Watlington Street
- 74-78 Watlington Street
- 86 Watlington Street (former County Arms public house)
- 99 Watlington Street
- 111 & 111a Watlington Street
- 3 St Johns Hill
- 5 St Johns Hill
- 7-11 St Johns Hill
- 13-21 St Johns Hill
- 39 St Johns Road (former Lifeboat public house)
- 41 & 43 St Johns Road
- 16-28 St Johns Road
- 15 St Johns Road and Beehive Cottages
- 8 St Johns Street (Retreat Public House)
- 17 St Johns Street
- 1 & 3 Princes Street

Character Area 3

- 1-9 Town Place
- 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace

Recommended for removal from the list of BTMs

Character Area 1

No BTM properties were removed, most properties in this character area are nationally listed.

Character Area 2

- 65-71 Watlington Street

- 77-97 Watlington Street
- 101-109 Watlington Street
- 46-72 Watlington Street
- 80 & 82 Watlington Street
- 2-36 Princes Street
- 5-47 Princes Street
- 1-39 St Johns Road
- 4-14 St Johns Road
- 2-12 Eldon Place
- 14-20 Eldon Place

Character Area 3

- 6-24 Victoria Street
- 3-21 Victoria Street
- 8-22 Montague Street
- 3-28 Montague Street
- 2-30 Eldon Street
- 1-27 Eldon Street
- 9-25 Eldon Terrace

5.4 Historic shopfronts

There are four examples of historic shopfronts or shopfronts with heritage features in the CA. Images are included in Appendix 7.

- corner site of 63 Watlington Street, Swift Upholstery, has a traditional shopfront with awning;
- no 111, boarded up and To Let as of February 2025, is traditional in style with a recessed entrance.
- 104 Queens Road has a modernised but traditional style shopfront and the fascia board is topped by decorative ironwork (in need of repair).
- 23 Victoria Street has a historic shopfront dating probably from the 1960s/70s.

Of the many public houses in the area, only The Retreat, The Lyndhurst and the Sip n'Spin (formerly the Eldon Arms) are still in business. Former public houses where evidence of this use remains include:

- County Arms on Watlington Street, converted to flats;
- The Beehive on St Johns Road;
- Golden Lion beerhouse at 54 Watlington Street has a painted over Simonds logo on the front elevation;

- The Lifeboat has a ghost 'Ind Coope Burton Ales & Stouts' sign on the St Johns Hill elevation.



Figure 23: L - former Beehive public house, St Johns Road and R former Golden Lion with Simonds sign painted over, fascia board and shop window bricked in (images Zöe Andrews)



Figure 24: Ghost sign on the former Lifeboat public house, St Johns Road/St Johns Hill corner (image Evelyn Williams)

5.5 Public Realm

5.5.1 Floorscape, street lighting, street furniture and local detail

Although carriageway and pavements are paved in modern tarmac or concrete slabs, there are many examples of natural stone roadside kerbs and gutters which, like the brick chimney stacks and clay pots of the roofscape, add to the conservation area's special character and appearance. Watlington Street has long thin kerbstones with two or three lines of granite setts forming the gutter. In Eldon Place the kerb and gutter is formed by long wide granite stones. Paving and kerbstones in Eldon Square are concrete, to the detriment of the character of the area, but the gutter is formed by lengths of stone grooved with a wide channel to contain the flow of water. Eldon Place retains two areas of stone setts in the

carriageway and there are further paved areas of setts outside The Retreat and a former workshop in St Johns Street.

Street lighting in the area is almost exclusively modern. Two cast iron lamp posts on Princes Street were removed in the 2010s as part of the introduction of LED lighting. There are, however, a small number of historic fluted iron lamp posts in the conservation area; at no. 9 Town Place (not in working order), and three (some re-used) in Eldon Square. On Eldon Road replica heritage lamp posts line both sides of the street.

The rear of Kings Road, offices and residential blocks, are almost always given over to car parks which do not present an interesting or pleasing face to the street, for example the rear of Hanover House on Eldon Terrace and the rear of City Block from Victoria Street. Similarly the car park to the rear of Melrose House at the entrance to Watlington House has a negative impact on the setting of the Grade II listed house and the entrance to or exit from the street.

Road re-surfacing in the last few years has enabled the introduction of narrow double yellow lines, albeit with some initial issues such as on Eldon Road, which are more suitable for a CA. Some of the pavement surfaces are poor and uneven with a noticeable camber making them uncomfortable for pedestrians e.g. Watlington Street.

Blocked drain covers and poor drainage results in flooding at times of heavy rainfall particularly on Princes Street.

5.5.2 Local details and features

Eldon Square Conservation Area's local identity is enhanced by a number of small details and features that cumulatively help to give the conservation area a sense of place. The following are some of the small but not insignificant elements that contribute to the conservation area's special interest and are worthy of protection: cast-iron street name signs (e.g. Eldon Terrace, St Johns Road, South Street), stone channels to help the run-off of rainwater (e.g. The Grove), remnants of historic railings (e.g. nos 48, 50 & 52 Watlington Street), coal hole cover at no 64 Watlington Street, hand painted Eldon Road sign on no. 30 Eldon Road, Rosetta House on Eldon Square, Venetian Cottages faintly visible on 32 & 34 Eldon Road and ghost signs.

6. Character Areas

The conservation area can be divided into 3 character areas according to building type and period. Area 1 contains large prestigious predominantly Bath stone residences including Eldon Square whilst Areas 2 and 3 contain predominantly brick terraces. Areas 2 and 3 have many similarities but the terraces east of Eldon Road are more uniform, smaller in scale and of a slightly later date than the terraced development west of Eldon Road.

The three character areas are as follows:

- Area 1: Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square;
- Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street, Eldon Place, Queens Road (south);
- Area 3: Terraced streets east of Eldon Road i.e. Eldon Terrace, Eldon Street, Victoria Street, Montague Street, Town Place.



Figure 25: Character Areas (inclusive of proposed area extensions)

6.1 Character Area 1 - Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square



Figure 26: 175-179 Kings Road (Evelyn Williams)

This area contains the majority of the conservation area's listed buildings and is characterised by tall detached or semi-detached residences in Italianate style faced with Bath stone. They are set back from the highway and have long rear gardens in some cases now given over to car parks.

Nos. 163 to 189 on the north side Kings Road form an almost continuous row of buildings of architectural interest enriched by large stone porticos, rusticated ground floors and pairs of full height bows. They rise to three storeys with basement and are approached up a flight of stone steps. No 163, Encombe House is the oldest property and continuing the 'Eldon' theme was probably named after the seat of the Earls of Eldon. Nos 165 & 167 were gutted and rebuilt in the 1990s. Despite this, 165 is possibly the most famous in the row as the address where, in 1874 the French poet Arthur Rimbaud advertised that he gave French lessons. The rebuilding is recorded in the opening shots of the film *Robinson in Space*, directed by Patrick Keillor (1997).

Eldon Square is a formally planned composition (c1830) of houses around three sides of a residents' garden with contemporary railings, unique in Reading. To the north of Eldon Square is a service road, Eldon Terrace. Eldon Square properties appear in several early photographs from William Henry Fox Talbot's *Reading Establishment*. The garden now known as the George V Memorial Gardens is a public park with a lawn, flower beds, trees and benches including a memorial bench to Reading musician Robert John Rose (1956-2014).



Figure 27: The view north down Eldon road with Eldon House (left) and Eldon Square (right) showing the former three-storey tower of 7 Eldon Square. c1860. Eldon Square a print by J Macaulay courtesy of Reading Library local studies collection

Eldon Road connects the major thoroughfares of London Road and Kings Road. Nineteenth century buildings on the west side are nearly all listed and dating from the same period as Eldon Square, but nos 20/22 and 24/26 do not appear on a map of 1879.

The east side of Eldon Road is less intensively developed and contains a large brick pair (nos 1/3) and a large stucco pair of 1902 (nos 11/13) on either side of a c1900 row of three terraced houses built in Bath stone.

Many of these former houses have been converted to flats, offices or professional uses.

The frontage of the buildings comprise open lawn and flower beds with low boundary roadside walls of mixed construction: stone blocks, brick, poured concrete, or rendered concrete blocks. The front pedestrian accesses are mainly gated with a variety of wrought iron and forged steel options, and flagged concrete paths leading to steps up to raised ground floor entrances above accessible semi basements.

Part of the garden frontage to 163 has been converted to hard standing for car parking but vehicle access is mainly via the rear of the properties.

There are some modern developments in this area which appear out of keeping with the prevailing first half of the eighteenth century character:

- On the south side of Kings Road the appearance is less uniform and a modern block (Hanover House) on the corner of Kings Road and Eldon Road, once offices, now apartments is out of keeping with the prevailing character. The block occupies the site of Swiss Villa, York Villas and York Place.
- A B Walker, funeral director, premises at 36 Eldon Road and Princes House 73a London Road was the site of Eldon House which occupied the whole block west to Princes Street.
- Eldon Court, 75-77 London Road replaced an earlier house, known as Rose Cottage in 1842, also with a London Road address.



Figure 28: Eldon House, now the site of A B Walker, funeral directors, and Princes House, from the 1860 auction catalogue courtesy of Reading Borough Libraries local studies collection

Character Area 1: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- The high concentration of listed buildings including Grade II*;
- The architectural cohesion of prestigious mid nineteenth century residential development;
- Grandeur of nos 163 -189 Kings Road;
- The formal planning of Eldon Square;
- King George V Memorial Gardens and railings in Eldon Square, a green space with mature trees;
- Good quality townscape;
- Prevalent use of Bath stone;
- Many example of historic railings and good boundary treatments, including restoration on some properties;
- Three cast iron lampposts in Eldon Square.

Character Area 1: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Loss of original front boundary walls and railings;
- Insensitive alterations to listed buildings e.g. garage door in basement of no. 2 Eldon Road;
- Poor quality and poor condition of paving around Eldon Square;
- Poor state of maintenance of George V Memorial Gardens;
- No. 36 Eldon Road (A B Walker funeral directors), in a prominent corner location, is out of character with the prevalent architectural cohesion of Eldon Road and Eldon Square;
- Car parks at the rear of Hanover House and 10 Eldon Road;
- Modern developments on south side of Kings Road;
- Loss of rear gardens to parking and garages;
- The gated demolition site on Eldon Terrace at the rear of Eldon Square, temporarily improved in late 2025 with the painting of a mural on the hoarding;
- Building plot at 1a Eldon Road surrounded by HAZ fencing;
- Continual disturbance, noise and pollution of traffic on main roads.

6.2 Character Area 2 - Terraced streets west of Eldon Road

This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation. There are three shops (one currently empty), an upholsterers, two places of worship and three public houses. Watlington House, a seventeenth century clothier's mansion and garden, managed by the Watlington House Trust providing office space for rent mainly to charities and the garden hall can be hired for events. A modern petrol station and shop

serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street. Melrose House west and east, 71/73 London Road, houses Royal Berkshire Hospital medical facilities and a GP practice.

Watlington Street is the oldest and primary street within this character area with an eclectic mix of historic properties of different scales, architectural styles and construction materials. It is a major pedestrian thoroughfare to and from the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the town centre. Traffic control measures, bollards and planters, only allow access from London Road.



Figure 29: The rear of The Oval facing Princes Street (image image Zoë Andrews)

The other side-streets in this area are narrower and have a more intimate feel than Watlington Street and two storeys is the norm. St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street and Eldon Place are characterized by short rows of modest two-storey terraced housing built to accommodate Reading's expansion in the mid/late nineteenth century.

The Oval, 14 St Johns Road, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St Johns Street and closes the view down Princes Street from London Road. Although it now stands alone in its brick grandeur it was part of planned development which did not come to fruition. There is a pleasing coherence to the brickwork patterns on the south side of St Johns Road (nos 16-28) with the brickwork of 1 Princes Street and the Oval which may have taken cues from the brickwork of Watlington House.



Figure 30: Coherent brick patterns 16-28 St Johns Road, 1 Princes Street and The Oval (images Zoë Andrews)

St Johns Street and St Johns Hill lead north and slightly downhill towards Queens Road. With the exception of two three-storey properties, one of which forms The Retreat public house, St Johns Street is comprised of similar but not identical two-storey, red brick, terraced properties. Most of the houses on St Johns Hill, nos 16-30 and 13-21, do not have a front garden and open onto the street. 3 and 5 St Johns Hill and the former mineral water works at nos 7-11 are completely different in character.

Eldon Place is accessible from St Johns Road and is a service road for Eldon Road properties. There are five modern infill properties, three built on the rear gardens of Princes Street and two in the middle where there was a large property which was last used as a warehouse but had had previous light industrial uses.

Princes Street was planned as a wide street leading to planned development around the Oval. It only has vehicle access from London Road and at the southern end comprises two-storey, red bricked properties which are fairly uniform in style but not identical. Nos 19 and 41-47 have ground floor bay windows and 31 and 33 have a fish scale slate roof and cream brick string course, door and window surrounds. The ground floor bay windows of 41-47 Princes Street also have fish scale roofs. At the northern end is the former St John's Road Mission and Reading Room. The camber of the roadway and shallow kerbs has caused issues with flooding in the very wet weather which is becoming increasingly common.

Queens Road is a busy one-way thoroughfare that flows in an east-west direction through the northern edge of the CA. 118-128 are a terrace of six substantial but poorly maintained three-storey and basement residential properties originally part of Grenville Terrace.

Of the three character areas within this CA, it is this area where current residential uses have most replaced a once thriving small industrial, artisan and commercial community. Swift Upholstery on Watlington Street is the only workshop remaining on the street in 2025. The corner premises had been a butchers shop.

The former Somerville & Andrews glass merchants premises at 111a Watlington Street has been vacant for some years.

Some previous industrial and commercial properties are listed below:

- Two properties on Eldon Place replace the former 1970s Bradley and Bliss Ltd warehouse. Former uses of the site include a builders, a mineral water company and an engineering shop;



Figure 31: (Left) workshop on Eldon Place c1972 courtesy Reading Libraries Local Studies and (right) 12 and 12a Eldon Place in the same space March 2025 (image Evelyn Williams)

- 43 St Johns Road was the former warehouse of 1970s C and W Andrews, glass merchants who also occupied no 41 as offices;
- 7-11 St Johns Hill is a conversion and development incorporating the former 1970s Conquest Works, previously Humphries & Holt Mineral Water Works, earlier W E Line & Co (from c.1892, telephone no 45);
- Former undertakers at 1a and 1b Princes Street.
- At the rear of 36 Princes Street, backing on to 111a Watlington Street there is a former tailors' workshop;
- 16 St Johns Street had been a pork butchers shop with a small slaughter house in the garden.
- Meaby & Co had a large bakery enterprise for Triticumina biscuits on Queen's Road. The business was linked to Meaby's bakery at the foot of St Johns Street but it did not prosper. The building was used for producing rennet in the UK by Danish Company Christopher Hansen from 1916 and from the 1960s as a wallpaper store. There was a fire in 1968 and the site which now also links through to Watlington Street was sold and redeveloped as Barkham and Watlington Mews.



Figure 32: Conquest Court, a residential conversion of a former light industrial premises (image Evelyn Williams)

Character Area 2: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Two grade II listed churches with landmark spires;
- Trees and gardens in front of Grade II* Watlington House soften the urban landscape;
- Formal garden to rear of Watlington House is a valuable 'breathing space' within the town;
- Old brick and flint boundary wall (grade II) to curtilage of Watlington House (grade II*);
- Variety of terraced houses with high quality brickwork, generally well maintained and in some cases original features restored by owners/occupiers;
- A sprinkling of ghost signs, unique properties, public houses and small scale industrial conversions add depth to the fabric of the villagescape;
- Vestiges of early-nineteenth century planned formal layout around The Oval (grade II) and Princes Street;
- Coherence of brickwork patterns on the south side of St Johns Road with the brickwork of 1 Princes Street and the Oval;
- Historic stone kerbs and gulleys;
- Areas of historic setts in Eldon Place and St Johns Street;

- Lively roofscape of brick chimneys and clay pots.

Character Area 2: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls;
- Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;
- Loss of front gardens for car parking e.g. no 80 Watlington Street;
- Painting over the brick on some properties;
- The addition of porches e.g. no. 19 St Johns Road;
- Water outflow pipes on the front of buildings converted to HMO/flats on Watlington Street;
- Poor condition of older properties on Queens Road;
- Works to the roof and removal of chimneys at 41 St Johns Road;
- Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street, however it should be noted that it replaces a garage and other former commercial uses including a stone masons yard;
- Car park of Melrose House;
- Litter and rubbish on the street is unsightly;
- Wheelie bins on pavement or crowding into small front gardens;
- Intrusive traffic noise from London Road and Queens Road.

6.3 Character Area 3 - Terraced streets east of Eldon Road

This character area is primarily residential but also contains a shop on Kings Road and the former 'Out to Lunch' sandwich shop on Victoria Street which retains its shopfront.

Eldon Terrace was built as a narrow service road to the rear of properties in Eldon Square and provides access to four streets that run northwards onto Kings Road as well as rear access to some of the large properties on London Road. A modern terrace of 'mews' style properties at 2-6 Eldon Terrace was built c2010 replacing garages and workshops.



Figure 33: Modern housing on Eldon Terrace (image Zoë Andrews)

Town Place is the oldest in origin and unique in the CA as a row of 9 houses with long front gardens that can only be reached by a footpath. The later nineteenth century houses at the north end of the place were a redevelopment of part of the area occupied by Keeps Buildings which had access from Queens Road.

Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street are three short streets laid out in the 1860s/70s and adopted by the borough council in 1874. They have terraced houses on either side with small gardens to the front and larger gardens to the rear.



Figure 34: Victoria Street (image Zoë Andrews)

Victoria Street was the first to be laid out and is the most uniform in appearance being mainly simple red brick properties of uniform design. Victoria Square, a development similar in style to Eldon Square, was opposite the end of the street on the north side of Kings Road. It was demolished in the 1950s to build Reading College (now Activate Learning).

Montague Street terminates the view east down Eldon Terrace and has some individual variation in the groups of buildings. Nos 8-12 have ground floor bay windows, are built from grey brick with cream brick window surrounds and red detailing at first floor level.

Eldon Street has the most individual variation in the brickwork design of groups of properties.



Figure 35: (Left) former Berkshire Brewery while in use as a Salmons tea warehouse c1905 (R W Ford's album 'The Borough of Reading as it Was') and right 1933 the new Salmons tea building on the same site. Images courtesy Reading Borough Libraries Local Studies

Approaching from Kings Road the terraced housing starts at the boundary of now demolished nineteenth century industrial or residential properties which have now been replaced by modern housing or offices converted to residential.

- Between Victoria and Montague Street, Cityblock student accommodation occupies the site of the former Berkshire Brewery (1865), later Salmons Tea Warehouse (1884) and first rebuilt c1933.
- Charles Place (246 Kings Road), Edward Place (240 Kings Road) and Henry Court (230 Kings Road) is a two to four-storey development of flats flanking Eldon Street, dating from the mid 1990s. This is a mature and thoughtful low rise yellow and red brick and stucco development behind a low wall, railings and hedge. It replaces Riplingham and Laurel Place.

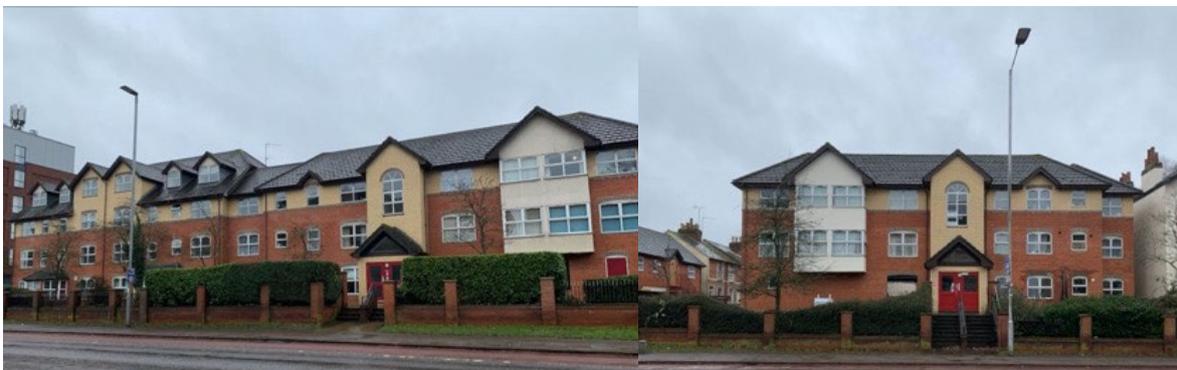


Figure 36: Charles Place, Edward Place and Henry Court (images Evelyn Williams)

Character Area 3: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Rectilinear grid pattern of streets;
- Nineteenth century brick terraced houses typical of Reading;
- Good quality brickwork;
- Flint wall on south side of Eldon Terrace;
- Historic stone kerbs;
- Some attractive well maintained gardens;
- Cast iron lamp post (not working) on Town Place;
- Cobden Terrace ghost sign at corner of Victoria Street and Eldon Terrace.

Character Area 3: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;
- Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as iron gates and railings;
- Painting over original brickwork;
- Addition of porches;
- Loss of front gardens;
- Unsightly concrete boundary walls;
- Vacant and boarded up building sites at 12 Eldon Terrace, and 14 Eldon Terrace/rear of 17 Eldon Square where approved works have not yet begun following demolition of existing garages etc;
- Dominant appearance of modern development along Kings Road with car parks to the rear;
- Forecourt of the shop at 252 Kings Road (ground floor of City Block);
- Car park behind Cityblock;
- Impact of the appearance of the car park at the rear of, Grade II listed, 81 London Road which has an exit onto Eldon Terrace.

Much improved since the last appraisal review is 23 Eldon Terrace at the junction of Eldon Terrace and Victoria Street.

7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement

7.1 Loss of original architectural features and detail

Many of the unlisted, and some of the listed, buildings in the CA have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Common faults include:

- the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC or aluminium is common;

- the loss of original panelled front doors and their replacement with stained hardwood, uPVC or aluminium doors is common;
- addition of a porch which obscures the original front entrance;
- loss of chimney stacks and clay pots;
- the replacement of stone slate or Welsh slate roofs with concrete tiles;
- overpainting of brickwork;
- loss of original front boundary walls.

7.2 Neglect and opportunities for enhancement

The general condition of properties in the conservation area is good. Empty properties may fall into disrepair unless a new and viable use is found. The Oval was long in need of refurbishment and maintenance which took place in 2023.



Figure 37: Front of The Oval from St Johns Road (image Evelyn Williams)

In addition to the problems of traffic and the loss of architectural detail noted above, street parking is an issue in the area and may lead to an increase in pressure for off-street parking, particularly in Watlington Street.

There is potential to improve the look of car parks at the rear of buildings which impact the character and appearance of the area. They are often at odds with the landscaping or garden at the front of the property:

- rear of Hanover House;
- rear of Melrose House;
- rear of 10 Eldon Road;
- rear of Cityblock;

- rear of 81 London Road (not in the CA).

The conservation area contains a number of streets paved with stone setts or flags, which must be protected. This appraisal has identified the most important examples of these surfaces and they should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials.

7.3 Advertising and shop signage

65 Watlington Street (currently Twins News and Mart) has an unsympathetic fascia board, vinyls, fly posting and is plagued with graffiti.

The garage and shop on the corner of London Road and Watlington Street although improved since the last appraisal, could be further improved by the removal of the advertising on the Watlington Street side.

The forecourt of the retail unit of the ground floor Cityblock, 106 Queens Road and 65 Watlington Street could be more sympathetic to their surroundings, particularly so in the case of the latter two which have a more immediate heritage context.

7.4 Tree loss

A large sycamore tree was removed from the garden of Watlington House in 2025 due to the damage that it was causing the wall with 10 The Grove. Other Watlington House trees were removed during the garden restoration completed in 2015, when they were replaced with plants and shrubs more appropriate to the age of the building.

There has in general been an increase in tree cover in the area due to council tree planting although the locations along South Street are questionable due to the potential impact on the wall of Watlington House.

7.5 Street furniture and surfacing

Historic streetscape and local distinctiveness is under threat from the needs of traffic management and public amenity bodies.

Throughout the area there are bollards restricting access and one way signage on the road surface and on street signs. This is a distraction from the character of the area but is very much appreciated by local residents who would otherwise find themselves living within a maze of rat runs between Queen and Kings Roads and London Road.

Along Queens Road and Kings Road the importance of the road as a major route has required large direction signs.

The concrete paving slabs in Eldon Square are not appropriate to the high quality environment of the historic buildings and formal square. Repaving with natural stone would be a definite enhancement.

Street furniture and streetworks should take account of the designation of the area as a CA when maintenance is carried out.

7.6 Rubbish and bins

Trade bins placed in front of the few retail premises in the CA are unsightly but until a better solution is found, inevitable. Similarly domestic wheelie bins stored in front gardens and multiple bins required for HMOs are inevitable.

7.7 Development pressure and changing skyline

The site of the former Mulberry House Dental Surgery at 1a Eldon Road remains undeveloped with the site and the mulberry tree protected by HAZ fencing. The current appearance of the site is poor, detracts from the appearance of the area as a whole and there are no extant planning permissions for development of the site. The protected mulberry appears to be thriving.

High rise developments on the north side of Queens Road and in the town centre are visible from the CA. The quality of design and materials of any future developments should be appropriate to the proximity to the CA.

The future of the site of Reading Gaol is currently uncertain but there is the potential for the view from Watlington Street to improve.

7.8 Traffic noise and pollution

The core streets of the conservation area (Queens Road, Kings Road, Eldon Road, London Road) are part of the principal traffic circulatory routes through Reading. The route finally decided on for the eastern section of Reading's IDR in the 1980s used existing roads but widening and new bridges were required. The result is a very busy gyratory passing the former site of Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory with a complex traffic system. The character and environmental quality of these streets are spoiled by noise and pollution which is not pedestrian or resident friendly.

A red route was introduced along Kings Road in 2018 in addition to outbound and inbound bus lanes. Despite these measures, traffic congestion is a constant feature. London Road is the main vehicle inbound route into Reading and is similarly congested.

It is beyond the scope of this appraisal to do more than recommend that every opportunity to improve this situation would have heritage as well as lifestyle and health benefits to local residents and pedestrian users of the streets.

8. Action Plan

Table 1 – All Conservation Areas

Policies, attitudes and actions which need to be applied to all of Reading’s Conservation Areas if the town’s remaining historic character is to be protected and enhanced as it should be. These apply to the Eldon Square Conservation Area as fully as they do to all, particularly with regard to the careful protection of architectural detail in any building alterations. It is acknowledged that these proposals have resource implications, especially for Reading Borough Council, at a time when resources are stretched and limited.

Table 1: Actions for all conservation areas

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
<p>Loss of original architectural features and details (see 7.1). Insensitive change and development not requiring planning permission, permitted development</p>	<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> <p>Material prepared by other planning authorities could be used as a model for preparing written guidance</p>	<p>RBC and CAAC</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. A Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published in March 2021. This has general guidance on and examples of roof dormers, roof lights and extensions which would be acceptable or unacceptable in conservation areas.</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. A Design Guide for Shopfronts SPD was published in January 2022. A new or replacement shopfront will always require planning permission. The guidance includes the specific sensitivities in relation to shopfronts, fascia boards, lighting etc in conservation areas and on heritage buildings.</p>

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
		Update as at July 2025. A guidance leaflet for householders has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.
Loss or change to original boundary features.	<p>Awareness: Provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of boundary walls and railings</p> <p>Policy: Article 4 directions could be implemented as resources allow (see Table 2 for further recommendations on what this should cover in this CA)</p>	RBC and CAAC
Insensitive development undertaken without permission	<p>Guidance: Provision of property owner guidance on legal requirements for alterations/development/tree works in conservation areas.</p> <p>Enforcement: Legal enforcement by RBC to secure reversal of changes</p>	<p>RBC and CAAC</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. This is partially covered in the guidance leaflet for householders has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.</p> <p>Enforcement - RBC</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.	<p>Guidance, Policy: Supplementary Design guidance planning document for development in historic areas.</p> <p>Support: Use CAAC to gain informed comment on planning applications affecting Conservation Areas</p>	RBC and CAAC

Table 2 – Eldon Square Conservation Area

Policies and actions which are specific to this Conservation Area, to retain and enhance its important contribution to the life of Reading as a whole. They may require some limited revenue resources, which it is recommended should be given high priority, but little or no public capital expenditure.

Table 2: Actions for Eldon Square Conservation Area

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
Boundary extensions should be implemented as proposed in this revised appraisal.	Policy: Boundary extension to be implemented.	RBC
Reduction in number of Buildings of Townscape Merit should be implemented as proposed in this revised appraisal	Policy: Recommendations to be implemented.	RBC
Loss of original features of properties including boundary walls and railings.	<p>Policy: An Article 4 direction should be considered to remove permitted development rights (PDR) to protect these features. This would require planning permission to be obtained for these works to be undertaken in the future. Although some works in CAs are not covered by PDR more clarity is required.</p> <p>Action: Draft wording of suitable Article 4 for agreement with RBC.</p> <p>Enforcement action taken against unauthorised works which do not comply with PDR restrictions in a CA or without planning permission required by an Article 4 should be consistent.</p>	<p>CAAC/RBC</p> <p>Additional clarity on what is not covered by PDR in a CA is provided in the forthcoming guidance leaflet for householders that has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.</p>

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
The conversion of some larger properties to HMOs and flats has exacerbated the issues with bins and rubbish in front gardens and on pavements	Action: Enforcement by RBC streetscene of numbers of bins at each property and the inspiration for some innovative solutions.	RBC with assistance of CAAC and local councillors
The conversion of some larger properties to HMOs and flats has caused obtrusive pipework on the front of properties and utilitarian railing which detract from the historic fabric.	Action: Opportunities should be taken to improve the public face of these properties.	CAAC/RBC when next a planning application is submitted to make changes to the property.
Busy main road along Kings Road, Queens Road, London Road	Action: Future transport strategies should aim to improve the blight caused by the main roads	RBC CAAC to comment on transport strategies
Poor maintenance of George V Memorial Gardens	Action: If RBC is not able to maintain the flower beds and volunteer groups are not able to continue, a lower maintenance planting plan should be initiated. The statue of Lord Reading needs regular cleaning.	RBC
Car parks in large residential blocks are detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and are very visible to pedestrians in the area	Action: Owners should be encouraged to landscape at the rear as well as the Kings Road front of sites.	RBC and CAAC
Street clutter, materials and traffic signage that impacts conservation area character area and views	Action: Guide to be produced to assist RBC streetscene staff. Road marking to reflect conservation area status.	RBC and CAAC

Appendix 1 Public Consultations

This appraisal has been in progress for some years and was relaunched on 16 June 2022 with a community event at The Retreat public house. This was attended by a number of residents, councillors and Reading CAAC members.

On Saturday 3 December 2022 a boundary walk took place which was attended by local residents, councillors and Reading CAAC members.

2023 kicked off with a small community event on 3 January again at The Retreat.

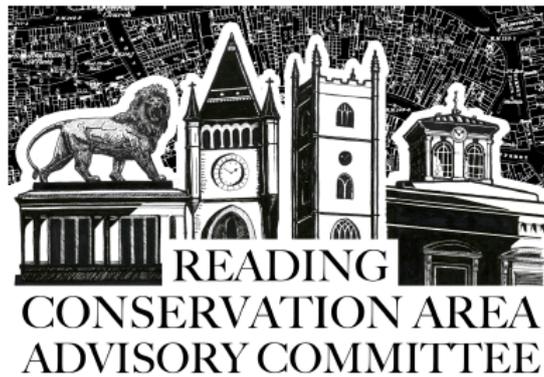
While the initial events were mainly aimed at engaging with local residents Reading CAAC took part in the inaugural Reading Walks Festival and led a walk around the CA on Sunday 14 May 2023 which was open to the general public.

2024 was a quiet year for progress but a set of photographs was taken for inclusion in the appraisal.

In January and February 2025 a draft appraisal was produced in the course of which a walkabout for Reading CAAC members with a local resident was organised on 14 February.

Following Reading CAAC approval on 3 March 2025 of the draft for publication a community meeting was held on 24 March 2025 at The Retreat. An informal public consultation ran from then until the 6 May 2025. There were 13 responses, 12 from the online questionnaire and a single response to the hard copy questionnaire placed in the Central Library which was substantially similar to the online questionnaire. The survey included space for additional comments or by writing directly to chair.readingcaac@gmail.com which was taken up by some respondents. 10 of the 13 respondents lived or owned property in the CA.

Formal public consultation on a draft appraisal was carried out between 25 November 2025 and 20 January 2026. The draft appraisal was placed on the website, and notifications sent to the planning policy consultation list. A total of 14 responses were received.



The Eldon Square Conservation Area was first designated in 1972 and was last reviewed in 2007. The conservation area appraisal describes and defines the special historical and architectural character and interest of the Eldon Square CA. It highlights those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced. It also identifies negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

In this review Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (readingcaac.org) are recommending an extension of the boundary to include five additional properties.

1. Do you agree that the designation of conservation areas is important to protecting the special character of Reading? Please tick the box that applies.	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you agree with the proposed boundary extension to include five additional properties? Please tick the box that applies. If other please comment in the box below.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Space for comments on Question 2

3. Do you agree that current appearance of some of the properties is the biggest challenge to the character and appearance of the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

4. Do you agree with our recommendation that an Article 4 designation is required to protect original exterior features on properties in the Eldon Square Conservation Area?

Please tick the box that applies. If other please comment in the box below.

Yes

No

Other

Space for comments on Question 4

5. Are you satisfied with the appearance and cleanliness of the streets and public realm in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

6. Do you live in or own property in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Yes

No

7. Do you work in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Yes
No

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If have any further comments please use the space below or email chair.readingcaac@gmail.com.

9. How interested are you in the work of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee?

Please tick the box that applies.

Very
Slightly
Not at all

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire.
www.readingcaac.org
@CaacReading

The results of the consultation indicated general support for the protection offered by conservation area designation to the special character of Reading, the draft revised appraisal and boundary revision. Only one respondent disagreed with the boundary extension.

The potential for introducing an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights for certain alterations to properties and the implications of that were questioned. A better explanation of what this would mean and clarification that it would only apply to future alterations has been included in the management plan. Nevertheless in the current climate emergency and prevailing economic situation anything that appears to prevent climate adaptation and be expensive to residents is subject to challenge. In terms of explanation and understanding of what it means to own a property or live in a property in a conservation area we await the forthcoming 'Guidance and Advice for Householders' to be published by RBC.

The question which had the broadest range of responses was in relation to the appearance and cleanliness of public areas. There were no 'very satisfied' responses, 2 'satisfied', 2 neither 'satisfied nor dissatisfied', 8 'dissatisfied' and 1 'very dissatisfied'.

We are grateful to those respondents who took the time to make suggestions on improving the document and pointed out errors. The Initial Statement has been expanded to give more information on changes, not just the boundary changes, made in this Appraisal compared with the 2007 version and corrections to the text have been made where necessary.

Appendix 2 Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area

1. Archaeology

Excavations have uncovered pre-historic, Roman, Saxon and later medieval finds in the wider area particularly north of Queens Road and Kings Road towards the town centre and River Kennet.

Closer to the CA but outside the boundary there were the following finds: a lower-paleolithic (500,000 BCE to 150,001 BCE) hand axe at 52 London Road in 1945; a neolithic (4,000 BCE to 2,351 BCE) ground axe at 58 London Road in c1947 and in London Road, precise location unknown a partial skeleton was found from the late Roman to early Saxon period. There have been excavations in conjunction with modern developments such as the extension to Clarendon House, Queens Road in 2019 which uncovered finds from earlier developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The HER does not record any finds arising within the CA from the construction of modern developments along the south side of Kings Road. These late twentieth century office and residential properties replaced mid nineteenth century buildings which had been built on a greenfield site. Other parts of the CA have remained largely undisturbed since that time and it is an area of archaeological potential.

2. Historical Development

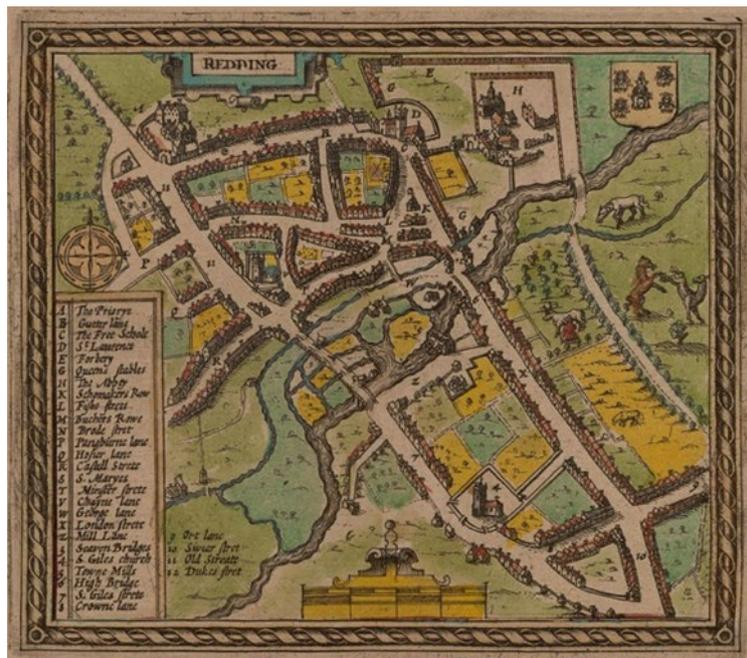


Figure 38: Speed's plan of Reading 1611 – The Eldon Square CA is on the extreme right. There are horses on Crown Lands to the north and south of the stream (now Gunter's Brook and Kennet & Avon canal)

At the dissolution of Reading Abbey, land which had belonged to the abbey was taken over by the Kings (Crown) Estate. Queen Elizabeth I in 1560 leased part of the Abbey lands to Reading Corporation.

Watlington Street, named after Robert Watlington, a seventeenth century clothier, roughly follows the course of what was formerly known as Ort Lane or Abbey Lane, part of a historic north-south trackway (including today's Redlands Road) leading over the Kennet to the Abbey. Watlington House is a grade II* listed building dating from 1688 with the eastern part

fronting Watlington Street added in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is the only building still standing from the time before the sale of Crown and Corporation Estates which began in the 1830s.

Sale of Crown and Corporation Estates

The land sales by Reading Corporation and the Crown and the building of two new roads across the land in 1834, Kings Road (named after King William IV) and Queens Road (after Queen Adelaide) were the catalysts for the development of the Eldon Square district on what had previously been mainly agricultural land.

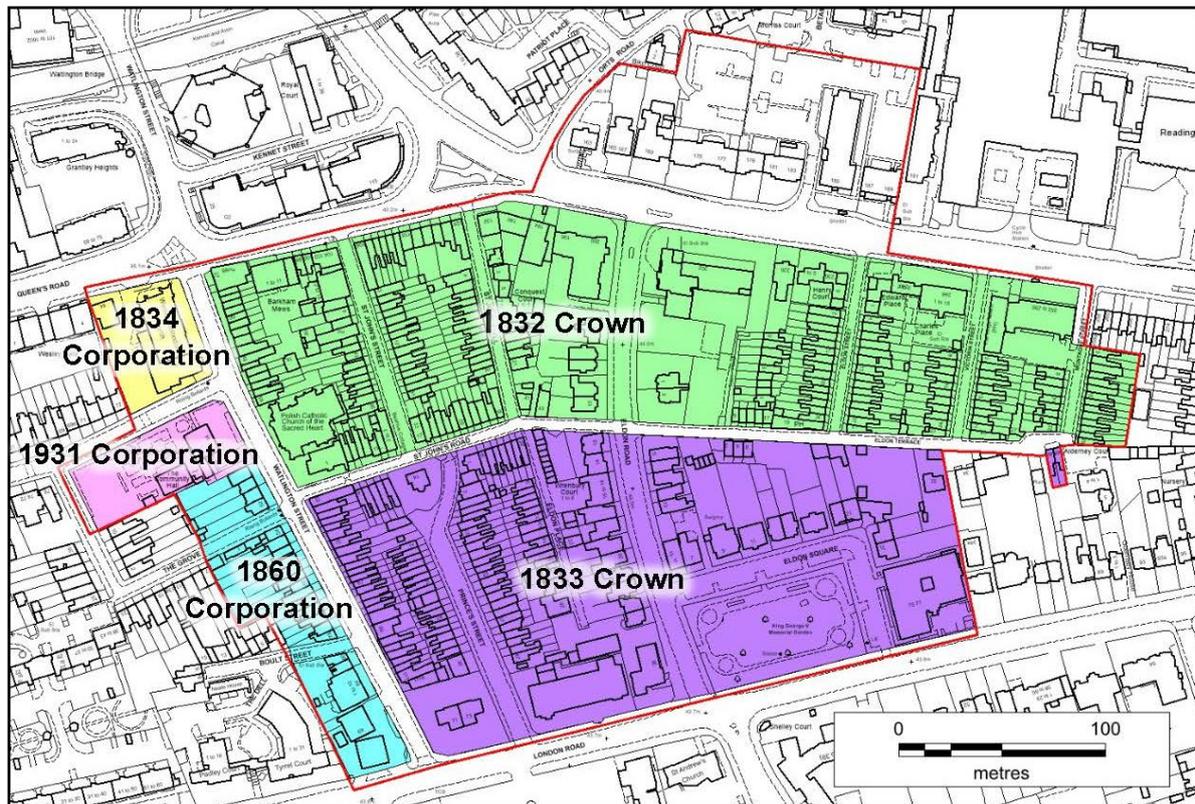


Figure 39: Dates of land sales within the 2025 CA boundary

Eldon Square was named after Lord Eldon (1751-1838) who started life as John Scott of Newcastle, entered Parliament in 1783, was created Lord Eldon in 1799 and became Lord Chancellor in Addington's Government in 1801. After the loss of his wife in 1831, he is said to have spent much time at Erleigh Court in Sonning in Berkshire with his brother, Lord Stowell. He was a great patron of Reading's Royal Berkshire Hospital which opened in 1839. Newcastle, his birthplace, also has a town square in his name.

High class houses were built in Eldon Square and in Kings Road, out of Bath stone brought to Reading by the Kennet and Avon Canal. A press report stated that masons also came from Bath to work on the properties⁵. The first houses to be built on Eldon Square were Rosetta Villa and nos 19 and 21. The first stone was laid on Monday 16 June 1834 by Mrs Hodges, wife of Edward Hodges described in the press report as 'purveyor to the forces' who had purchased some of the land. Mr Hodges suggested that the development should be named after Lord Eldon and the Mayor, Thomas Lawrence, who was involved in developing

⁵ Reading Mercury 1 April 1833

the area, agreed⁶. There is evidence that it was not completed until 1837 by which time Mr Hodges was living there⁷. On Kings Road, Encombe House, sometimes Villa, is marked on the 1834 Commissioner's map but may not have been habitable at that time.

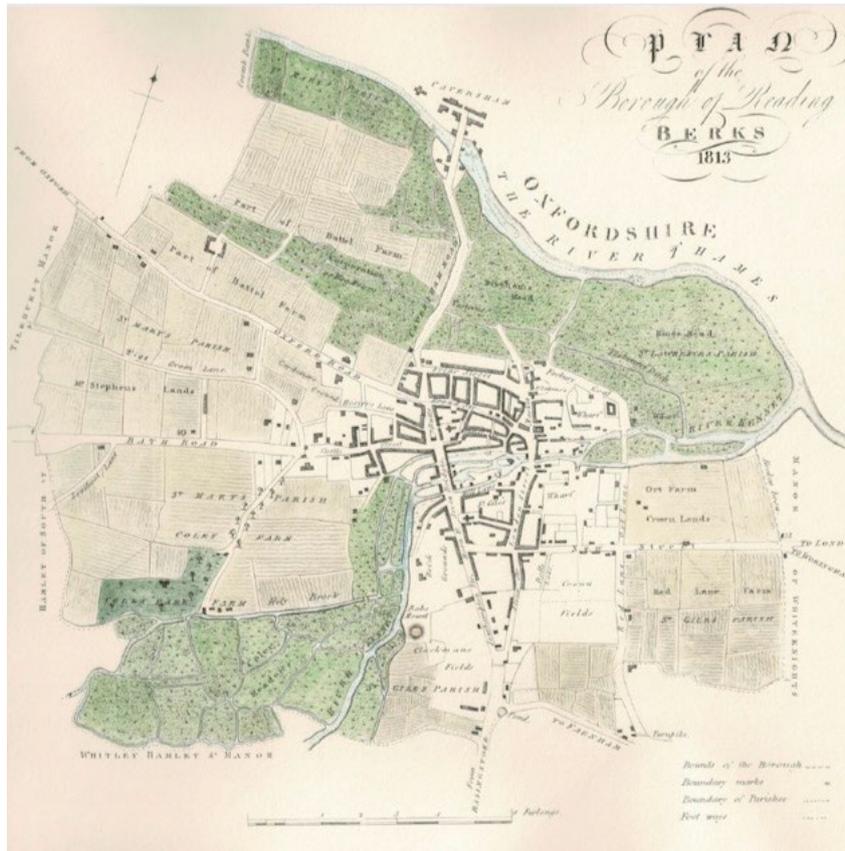


Figure 40: Plan of the Borough of Reading 1813 when most of the area was farmland. Courtesy Richard Bennett.

⁶ Berkshire Chronicle 21 June 1834 p2

⁷ Mercury 17 March 1838 p2. Press report of contested votes at the 1837 general election when Hodges' vote was contested.



Figure 41: Commissioner's plan of the Borough of Reading 1834. Kings Road and Queens Road have been laid out as has Eldon Square 'Not completed' and The Oval and its mirror image to the north marked out.

A further boost to the development of Reading was the construction of the Great Western Railway which reached the town in 1840.

The coming of the railway resulted in a rapid growth of major industries, notably Huntley & Palmers, biscuit makers, and Suttons Seeds, which provided work for a rapidly increasing population. The terraced streets in the conservation area east and west of Eldon Road were among the many terraces built during Reading's rapid expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century.

By 1842 building on the north and south side of Kings Road and Eldon Square was almost complete and some development of the west side of Eldon Road had taken place.

The first St John the Evangelist Church was built on the site of Collins Farm at the corner of Watlington Street and St Johns Street in 1837. The church was rebuilt in 1872 as it had been outgrown by the congregation and is the building we have today, now the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart. The parish covered most of Newtown and was very involved with the temperance movement.

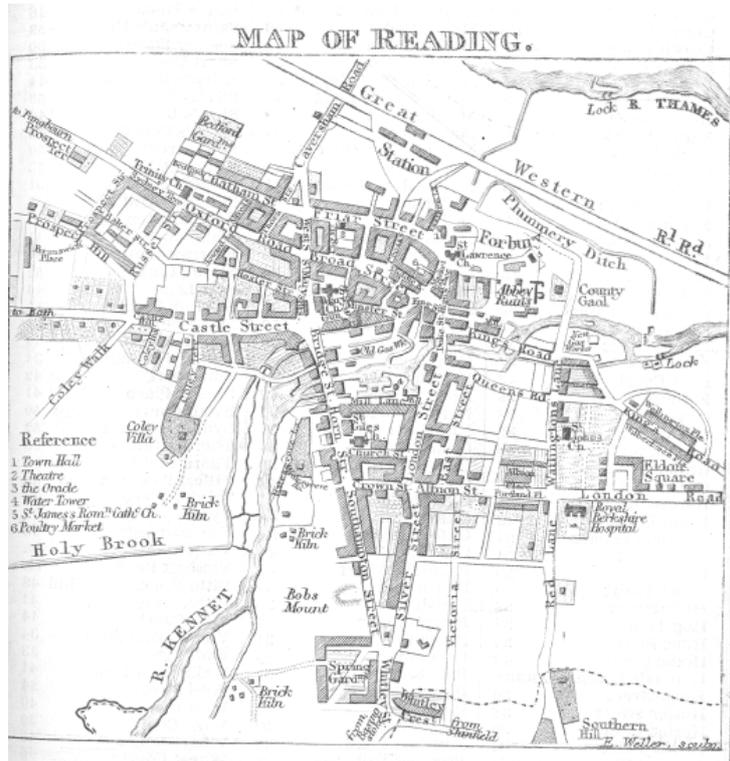


Figure 42: Map of Reading in 1842 from the Post Office Street Directory

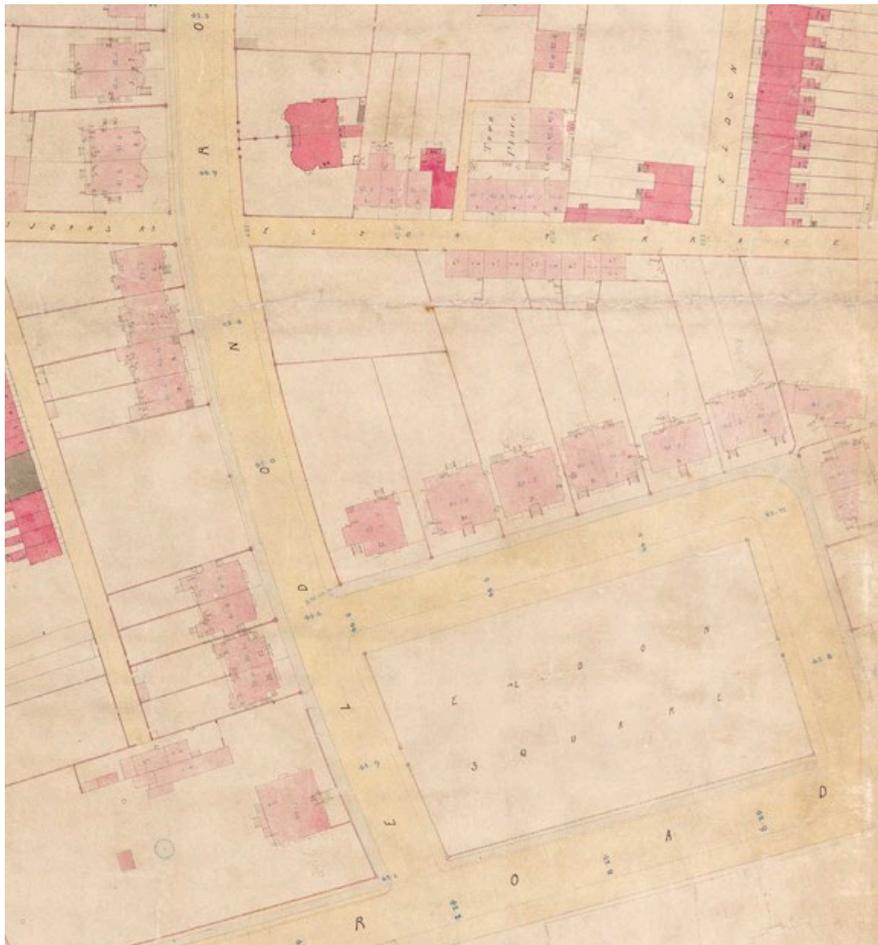


Figure 43: Extract from Board of Health map 1853 Eldon Square and part of Eldon Road, R/AS/2/4/12 courtesy Royal Berkshire Archives

By the end of the 1870s when detailed Ordnance Survey maps are available there are still undeveloped plots in the CA on Watlington Street, Eldon Road, St Johns Hill, Town Place, Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street but the street pattern is clear. By c1900 the area is almost fully developed.

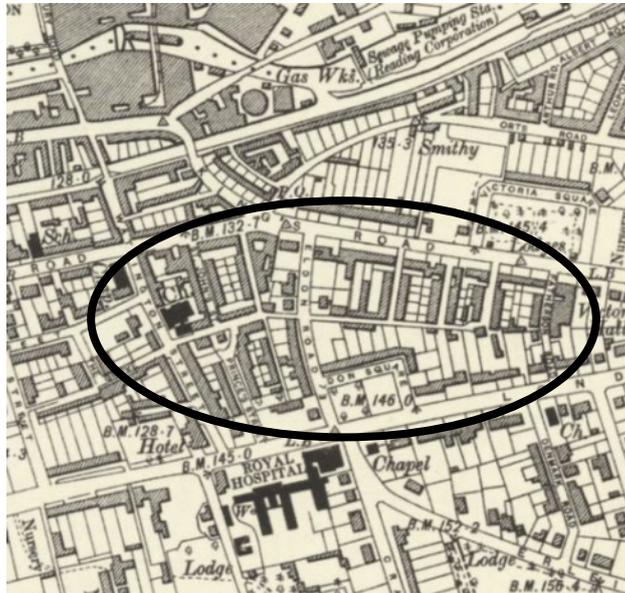


Figure 44: Eldon Square area 1900 OS map surveyed 1898

There has been a limited amount of rebuilding in the late twentieth century, particularly along London Road and the south side of Kings Road but the street pattern has not been altered, except for works to prevent vehicular access to certain side-streets.

To the north beyond the CA, along the northern section of Watlington Street and Orts Road, redevelopment in the 1970s and 1980s including the completion of the IDR circuit changed the face of the area. Industrial premises and public houses as well as older residential properties of Newtown to the north of the CA were demolished.

The first residents of the Eldon Square Conservation Area – terraced streets

Reading's population grew rapidly throughout the nineteenth century. In the first national census, in 1801, the population of Reading was about 9,400. By 1851 the population had more than doubled, to 21,500, and at the end of the century, it stood at around 59,000.

Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory grew steadily following the opening of the Kings Road premises in the late 1840s and by the end of the nineteenth century 5,000 employees worked there. Many of those who worked there lived in the CA and the impact can be seen in censuses from later in the nineteenth century.

From reviewing a sample of census records in 1851 very few people in the area work for Huntley & Palmers. Male residents of St Johns Street worked in a variety of trades and other jobs, there were millwrights, carpenters, stonemasons, painters and glaziers, tailors, bakers and gardeners. Some of these trades would have been involved in the building and development boom in Reading and supplying services to the growing population around them. Many women in the area, either living on their own or the wives and daughters of a male head of household worked as dressmakers, upholsterers or needlewomen. The same pattern is repeated in other streets.

People moved to Reading to take up the opportunities offered. It was suggested in the press that stonemasons from Bath came to work on Bath stone buildings⁸. Two stonemasons moved from Wiltshire and their families were living next door to one another in St Johns Hill in 1851; John Gibbs and Susannah Aust, wife of John Aust. Mrs Aust lived to be almost 100 years old and in 1911 featured in the Reading Standard as 'One of the oldest, if not the oldest old-age pensioner in Reading...'. Her husband had come to Reading to work as a stonemason on the building of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. She had worked as a dressmaker and a nurse. When her husband retired they were able to live in the almshouses on Castle Street but when he died she had to move out and lived at Finch Court. She died in 1913 at the Workhouse Infirmary after having broken her leg⁹.

By 1881 there were many more occupants working at the biscuit factory, or with family members at the factory or who had lodgers working at the factory. In the eastern part of the CA e.g. Eldon Street almost all the heads of households were working in the biscuit factory (we assume Huntley & Palmers) and sometimes children too.

The first residents of Eldon Square Conservation Area – Eldon Square, Kings Road and Eldon Road

In the 1841 and 1851 censuses the occupants of Kings Road and Eldon Square properties were mainly people of independent means, fundholders and property owners. There were also members of the armed forces, an architect, clergymen, and there were a number of schools.

Francis Trench who as curate of St Giles built the first St Johns Church in 1837 lived at 7 Eldon Square in 1841 and No 11 in 1851.

By 1881/1891 more residents are professionals such as Reading's first full time salaried, Town Clerk, Henry Day (18 Eldon Road) and Edward Margrett, artesian well boring hydraulic engineer (9 Eldon Square) or business owners such as iron founder T C Williams (169 Kings Road).

One of the largest properties, now demolished, was Swiss Villa on the corner of Kings Road and Eldon Road. It was built for William Silver Darter but he never seems to have lived there. From 1838-1863 it was occupied by brewer Harry Sowdon. The 1879 map below shows the extensive gardens and glass houses that attached to the property and the mulberry tree growing at 1a Eldon Road probably came from this garden.

⁸ See 2.3.3 above

⁹ Reading Standard 21 January 1911 p8 and Reading Observer 21 June 1913 p6.

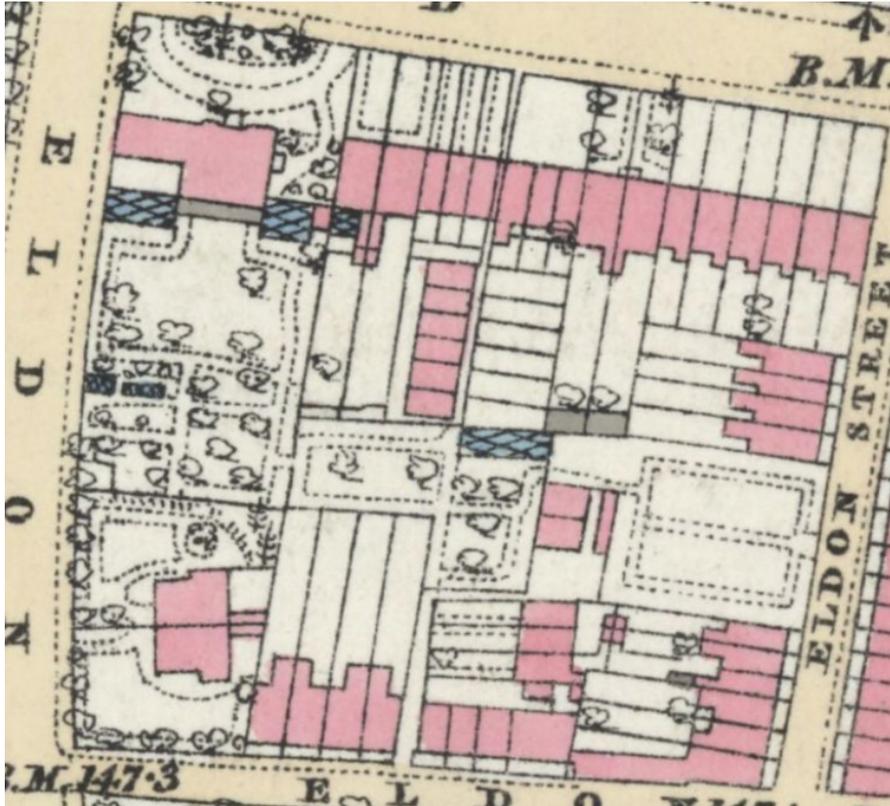


Figure 45: Swiss Villa and the area between Eldon Road and Eldon Street. OS map 1875-1877 published 1879, courtesy National Library of Scotland.

The community as described in the 1903 Licensed Premises survey

A snapshot of the population is found in the description, using the direct vocabulary of the time for licensing purposes, of the area and clientele of licensed premises (beerhouses and alehouses) in the CA in the 1903 licensing survey.

- Watlington Street was a 'Street and neighbourhood composed of dwelling houses chiefly occupied by the better class of artizans who are employed at the biscuit factory';
- Eldon Terrace 'Street comprised of private houses occupied by artizans and the working class';
- St Johns Road and St Johns Street 'Street composed of cottages, and occupied by artizans, labourers &c';
- Kings Road 'West end of street is devoted to trade purposes, Eastern end residential houses, tradesmen, professional men and artizans residing therein';
- Queens Road 'Street chiefly residential, the better working classes being in residence in the vicinity of the house [The Lyndhurst]'.

There were 12 licensed premises:

- Victoria 15 & 17 Eldon Terrace
- Eldon Arms, Eldon Terrace (now Sip n'Spin)
- Berkshire, 252 Kings Road

- Military Arms, 106 King's Road (now a convenience store)
- Beehive, St Johns Road
- Lifeboat, St Johns Road
- 17 St Johns Road (later Deane's)
- Retreat, St Johns Street
- Lyndhurst Arms, 19 Watlington Street
- Boatbuilders' Arms 2 & 4 Watlington Street
- County Brewery Tap, 88 Watlington Street
- Golden Lion, 54 Watlington Street

Not all the licensed premises would be recognised as public houses today; for example 17 St Johns Road had a 6 day licence and was also a baker and grocer and the Golden Lion on Watlington Street was also a grocer's shop.

Reading's first conservation area

Eldon Square was Reading's first conservation area designated in 1972. It was closely followed by St Marys Butts/Castle Street and Russell Street/Castle Hill (now Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road).

The principle of creation of conservation areas to protect the important heritage of areas and neighbourhoods rather than solely individual buildings was established under Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Reading Civic Society had been founded a few years before and was in the forefront of the campaign for conservation areas in Reading.

Reading events that gave impetus to the initiative were the redevelopment of parts of the town centre and the future route of Reading's Inner Distribution Road. Also in the 1970s the 3Bs, Biscuits (Huntley & Palmers), Beer (H & G Simonds) and Bulbs (Suttons Seeds), all left Reading town centre and permanently changed its appearance and function.

Just north of the CA, redevelopment of the Orts Road area with modern residential properties was being planned and the council compulsorily purchased pre-Victorian properties in preparation for that¹⁰.

In 1973 Frederick Padley wrote 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area'¹¹ which was followed by an update 10 years later. Mr Padley had lived in the area all his life and as well as telling its history and that of the people who lived there, he documented businesses and organisations. The booklet is an invaluable shortcut to understanding the streets west of Eldon Road and an updated edition would be welcomed.

In the late 1970s there was a major local heritage conservation victory when St John the Evangelist Church was saved from demolition. The church was listed Grade II by Historic England (then DoE) in 1974.

¹⁰ Reading Museum 'Revealing Reading's Hidden History, Orts Road & Newtown'. Happy Museum Project. 2013. Copy available in Reading Central Library.

¹¹ Frederick Charles Padley, 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area' (1973), Reading Branch Workers Educational Association

In 1973, a history of the church and its activities in the area 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading' by John McKechnie¹² had been published looking forward to changes in the parish.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) undertook a 1970 Campaign to review the needs of the parish and its buildings. It decided that St John's School no longer represented suitable premises and that both its churches (including St Stephens, Orts Road, a fine William White building, demolished in 1976) should be replaced¹³. It decided to build a new school combined with a Parish Centre and dispose of the redundant sites and buildings. At the time demolition could be approved even when a viable alternative use was available.

Once the Parish Centre was built, the parish church would be declared redundant (on 15 August 1978) and vested in the Church Commissioners who would demolish the building and sell the site. A Pastoral Scheme approved by the Diocese and the Queen, was drawn up to enable this. However things did not go according to this plan.

The Save St John's Association and Reading Civic Society led a campaign of protests against the proposed demolition. The determination to demolish the church persisted 'for pastoral reasons' although it would have adversely affected the half of the parish in the conservation area. This resulted in a conflict over several years including the intervention of Marcus Binney's 'Save Britain's Heritage' group (founded in 1975). The church is mentioned in 'Change & Decay' by Marcus Binney and Peter Burman as an example of a former church that made a major contribution to the townscape¹⁴.

In February 1981 the previous Pastoral Scheme was revoked and a revised scheme allowing for alternative use resulted in a 999 year lease of the church to Reading's Polish community¹⁵.

Reading Borough Council also played its part in the drama. Although Ecclesiastical Exemption allowed decisions to be made by the church while it was still in use, this did not apply to the walls around the church. These could not be demolished because they were within a conservation area and at 5 feet tall exceeded the height at which conservation area consent was required for demolition. This consent was not given which prevented demolition vehicles entering the site. Safety was also an important consideration as the spire is 150 feet (45m) high, on a very confined site. This together made demolition prohibitive.

The legislation relating to Ecclesiastical Exemption has now changed in favour of re-use, with all major denominations covered.

The two histories of the area and the creation of a conservation area within a few years of one another are indicative of the level of change that was happening in the built and community environment.

¹² John McKechnie, 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading'

¹³ John McKechnie, 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading'

¹⁴ Marcus Binney and Peter Burman (1975), 'Change & Decay. The Future of Our Churches' p30, image p33. The book accompanied an exhibition at the V & A in 1977 in which the Church of St John the Evangelist was featured.

¹⁵ Reading Evening Post 3 March 1981, p9 and Public Notice p10

Historic Associations

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), the French Decadent poet, lived as a French tutor at 165 Kings Road, from August to December 1874. While there he wrote most of 'Illuminations' generally considered his greatest work. The rebuilding of the property features in the opening sequence of Patrick Keillor's 'Robinson in Space'. Ironically this has therefore become the most famous of all the grand Kings Road houses.

Henry Briant (1813-1884) and his brother Nathaniel Briant (1813-39) were local architects. Henry Briant was responsible for the Royal Berkshire Hospital, houses in Eldon Square (reputedly with his brother) and the ornate Italian Palazzo style town-centre bank in King Street. Nathaniel Briant (1813-39) was probably responsible for the layout of Reading Cemetery.

William Henry Fox Talbot/ Nicolaas Henneman photographed houses on Eldon Square in the 1840s.

Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading (1860-1935) and MP for Reading 1904-1913, whose statue is within the George V Memorial Gardens was Viceroy of India 1921-26. The statue was one of two of past viceroys, the other was Lord Harding, that were commissioned from the sculptor Charles Sergeant Jagger (1885-1934) by Sir Edward Lutyens for the Indian capital of New Delhi. Following Indian Independence in 1947 Lord Isaacs' widow was concerned for its fate and sought its return to Reading and paid for it to be shipped¹⁶, arriving in 1969. In 1971 it was decided, after some debate, to place the statue in the gardens¹⁷. There was a suggestion from councillors that this decision should be reviewed and consideration given to relocating it when the new law courts had been constructed¹⁸. The site in the gardens was approved of by Stella Isaacs, the Dowager Marchioness and she was expected to unveil it but died on 22 May 1971. The unveiling by the third Marquess of Reading took place on 8 July 1971.

The Three Bs

- As described above, due to the proximity of the area to Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory many employees lived in this area. George Palmer is recorded as living at Wilberforce Place in the 1851 census and was described as a biscuit baker employing about 130 hands. William Isaac Palmer was responsible for the Lodge Temperance Hotel on Queens Road¹⁹. It replaced a public house on the same site in the 1870s.

¹⁶ Reading Civic Society newsletter [Spring 2024](#), David Stevens 'Lord Reading's Statue'

¹⁷ Reading Evening Post 4 March 1971

¹⁸ Presumably the law courts referred to were the new Magistrates Courts on Castle Street. Minutes of the Town Planning and Buildings Committee 5 March 1971, endorsing the decision of the Public Entertainment and Parks Committee 23 February 1971

¹⁹ Berkshire Chronicle 28 January 1916 p6 Death of Mr J Humphries of The Lodge Hotel

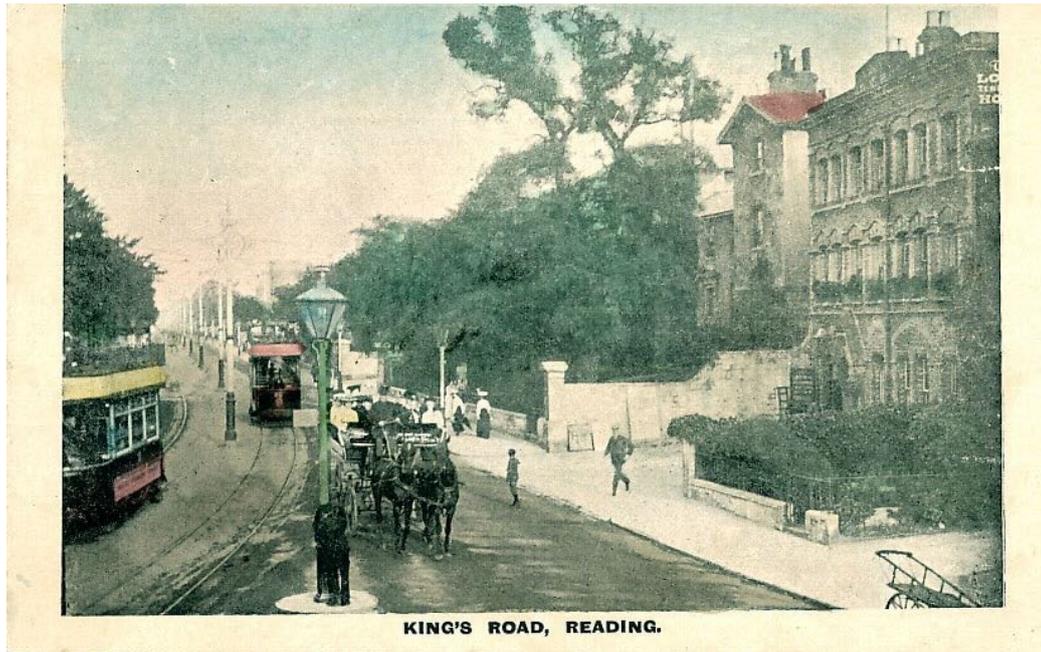


Figure 46: Kings Road, Reading c1905. The Lodge Hotel is on the right. Courtesy of Reading Libraries Local Studies Collection

- Alfred Sutton (1818-97), brother of Martin Hope Sutton and third son of the founder of Sutton Seeds, John Sutton funded the St John's Road Mission and Reading Room on Princes Street²⁰.
- Brewer Harry Sowdon lived for some time at Swiss Villa, now part of the site of Hanover House. Sowdon's brewery on Bridge Street was acquired by H & G Simonds in 1851.
- Another brewer, Samuel Henry Gutteridge Higgs of the Lion Brewery on Castle Street lived and was landlord of the Berkshire Inn on Kings Road in the early twentieth century.

Bibliography

S T Blake. The Development of Crown and Corporation Estates at Reading, 1828-1860. Published in C W Chalkin & J R Wordie (eds). Town and Countryside, The English Landowner in the National Economy, 1660-1860.

John Dearing, David Cliffe and Evelyn Williams. Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees, History of Reading Society. 2021.

John G McKechnie. Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist & St Stephen, Reading. 1973.

F.C.Padley. The Village in the Town, Reading's First Conservation Area. Reading Branch Worker's Educational Association 1973. Reprinted and updated 1983.

Rosemary Yallop. Eldon Square, Reading: an early Italianate suburban development. 2013.

Census information via findmypast

British Newspaper Archive via findmypast

²⁰ Berkshire Chronicle 13 June 1868 p5

Appendix 3 Listed buildings

Table 3: Listed buildings in Character Area 1

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
163 Kings Road (N) (formerly Encombe Lodge)	1303084 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303084?section=official-list-entry		None	Grade II Probably the oldest property of the properties on the north of Kings Road, the most westerly of an array of similar prestige buildings formerly known as Wellington Place. It is c.1840 and attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant two storeys, attic & basement faced with Bath stone (image Evelyn Williams)
173-183 Kings Road (N) (Wilton House, Malvern House, Oakley House)	1155954 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155954	 		Grade II* Built after 1832 as part of Wellington Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant three groups of semi-detached properties with single storey links. Three storeys with a basement. French casements with balconies and cast iron railings. The buildings are almost but not completely identical in particular the capitals of the pilasters on the central pair are different from those of the outer pairs. (images 173-175, 175-177 and 179-181 Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
<p>185 Kings Road (N) Kings Court (Waterloo Lodge)</p>	<p>1113499 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113499</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Built after 1832 as Waterloo Lodge and part of Wellington Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant comprises three floors with a basement and modern attic level. Faced with Bath stone (image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>187-189 Kings Road (N) (Waterloo Place)</p>	<p>1321921 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321921</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Built before 1840 and part of Waterloo Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant symmetrical pair of houses with glazing bar sash windows. Comprises three floors with a basement and a later addition of an attic. Faced with Bath stone (image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>196-200 Kings Road (S) Eldon Lodge (Wilberforce Place)</p>	<p>1321922 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321922</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Constructed in the early 1840's and formerly known as Wilberforce Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant Less grand than 163-189 on the north side of the road. A block of three houses faced with Bath stone. Modern extensions onto Eldon Road. One window on each building floor with cast iron railings at ground floor. (Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>220-222 Kings Road (S) (Nelson Place)</p>	<p>1113502 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113502</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Previously known as Nelson Place, they were faced with Bath stone but are now rendered. Double gabled 3 storey and basement front. Wide eaves to slate roof. Each house has one arched window on the ground floor, and common stairwell landing also with an arched window. The upper windows are glazing bar sashes. A modern semi-replica entrance door. French casements to basement. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>2 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1248744</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Known to be by Nathaniel Briant. Altered. 2 storeys and basement. Stucco, ground floor channelled. Central pedimented doorcase with modern applied pilasters (originally a window). Steps to door. Garage doors inserted to left hand basement. Hipped slate roof with flat eaves.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>4 & 6 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113462</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 2 storeys and basement. Bath ashlar. Hipped slate roof with central chimneys. Deep bracketed eaves. On 1st floor outer small round-headed windows, inner French casements with flanking wall thickenings. On ground floor: tripartite glazing bar sashes in bows with vermiculated dividing quoin strip. Vermiculated voussoirs to outer round-headed doorways. Flanking extensions. Projecting front garden walls terminate in the Eldon Square type of polygonal pier with crested capping.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>8 & 10 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321940</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath ashlar pair. Rusticated ground floor and quoins. 3 storeys and basement, 1st and 2nd floors have 2 windows each, glazing bar sashes, round-headed on 2nd floor, bracketed pediments on 1st floor. Each has a wide 3 light bay with casement windows. Entered from side in porches with Doric piers, cornice and blocking course.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
<p>12 & 14 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113463</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone pair. 2 storeys and basement with 3 storey end pavilions. Slate roof with projecting eaves. Outer doors, No 12 in angle, porch with stilted segmental arch. 1 bay end pavilions with shaped surrounds to 1st and 2nd floor windows; round-headed on ground floor with panels below and impost and label moulds; ground floor channelled. Bath stone garden walls to front with pierced roundels and moulded coping.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>16 & 18 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113464</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone ashlar pair. Hipped slate roof with stone eaves brackets. Ornamental frieze (simplified guilloche). Glazing bar sash windows in 4 ranges, bracketed pediments to ground floor windows and bracketed balconies. Set back side bays for entrance, No 16 has pilasters, balustrade over, in projecting porch. No 18 has 2 storey porch with round-headed doorway.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>20 & 22 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321941</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Bath stone ashlar with rusticated quoins, cornice over ground floor and brackets to eaves. Slate roof with crested ridge. Paired central round-headed arches to entrances. Front garden wall has flanking Eldon Square-type piers (polygonal with crested capping).</p> <p>Although listing entry says 1840-58 and nearer to later date, Henry or Nathaniel Briant, Sidney Gold suggests earlier and likely to be Nathaniel Briant as 20 Eldon Road named Tressilian, the name later given to his son.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>28 & 30 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113465</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Probably Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone ashlar pair with hipped slate roofs and 2 central chimneys. Flat eaves, obscured in front by wide break with coved cornice in which are 2 small attic windows with marginal glazing; guilloche panels below. Recessed round-headed porches on either side. Front garden walls project and have Eldon Square-type piers: polygonal with crested capping.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
<p>32 & 34 Eldon Road</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321942</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Venetian Cottages is faintly visible on the central pillar.</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 3 storeys and basement pair. Bath stone ashlar with hipped slate roof. Marginal glazing on ground floor with overall segmental pediments and corbelled balconies with delicate wrought-iron patterns. Recessed flanking 2 storey porches with round-headed doorways and round-headed side lights. Plain gable roofed wings set back on each side behind porch extensions.</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

				(image Zoë Andrews)
5 Eldon Square and 15 Eldon Road (adjoining)	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113467		None	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Listing description dates this property to c.1840. Attributed to the Briants. The evidence suggests that this is an early twentieth century building arising from the subdivision of the plot on which 7 Eldon Square stood and demolition of the western bay of No 7. HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing.</p> <p>Bath stone. Slate roof with large 2 light dormer with marginal glazing. End chimneys. 2 windows on 1st floor with stop-beaded surrounds, large tripartite window on ground floor with segmental head, all sashes with marginal glazing. Ground floor window has moulded architrave and panelling in tympanum. Recessed doorway to right with architrave surround. Bath stone corner pier to south-west of garden with chamfered sides.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
7 Eldon Square	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321943		None	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. 2 and 3 storey Bath ashlar 'pair' to No 5 (qv). Italianate style. Raised surround on 1st floor, bracketed segmental pediment on ground floor with corbelled balcony. One window to left over recessed modern door in plain doorway. Slate roofs with projecting eaves.</p> <p>Considerably modified at the turn of the twentieth century when the plot on which it stands was partitioned, the western bay demolished, a new front entrance created where there was once a window.</p> <p>(Listing correction has been requested)</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>9 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113468</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840 detached. Italianate. 2 storey wings flanking 3 storey centre. Basement. Bath stone ashlar, ground floor channelled. 1st floor cill string to wings and modillion cornice with blocking course; centre plain cornice with high parapet. Central doorway flanked by pilasters and projecting gabled porch with arched entrance. End piers to front garden, similar to others in the area. Hidden slate roof with ashlar chimneys, (moulded capping).</p> <p>((image Zoë Andrews))</p>
<p>11 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321944</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Italianate. The largest house on the north side of the layout. 3 storeys. Bath stone ashlar on plinth. Gabled side bays. 2nd floor outer windows modified Venetian with corbelled stone balconies. Outer 1st floor windows have bracketed cornices, centre has trellis verandah balcony over porch. Central panelled double door with rectangular overlight and projecting porch on square piers, modillion cornice and pierced parapet, arched windows to sides. Slate roof with projecting eaves. Garden wall pier (of Eldon Square pattern) to right.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>13 & 15 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155144</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Italianate pair. Bath stone ashlar. Central arched panel with window in attic, flanking round headed windows with corbelled cills. Glazing bar sash windows with marginal glazing. Inner ground floor windows French casements to wide balconies with arched railings supported on short Doric-type column from basement area retaining walls. Outer 2½ glazed doors with steps, No 13 with projecting stone porch having shouldered lintel. Central panel pier on 1st floor with urn capping.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>17 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113469</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Asymmetrical Italianate. 2 1/2 storeys and basement. Bath stone ashlar on plinth. Band over ground floor. Central 2 panelled door with arched fanlight. Steps to projecting gabled porch with corner piers and arched opening. Flanking corner garden piers (of the Eldon Square-type).</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>19 & 21 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113470</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Two of the first houses to be built on Eldon Square.</p> <p>Circa 1840s pair. Bath stone ashlar with band over ground floor. 2 storeys. Outer gabled breaks, 4 bays in all, with paired windows (C19 sashes) arched on 1st floor. The ground floor windows are tall casements, the inner 2 with verandah linking outer breaks, cast iron guard rails and stone brackets and supports from area wall. Central arched groove to 1st floor. Wall thickened and channelled for arched doorways. Slate roof.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>23 Eldon Square Rosetta Villa</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155151</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>One of the first houses to be built on Eldon Square. Rosetta Villa has been carved above the front door.</p> <p>Set back house in angle of square. Circa 1840s. Dressed Bath stone, centre ashlar with channelled ground floor. Gabled bay to left, central angled entrance bay with shaped panel over cornice; lower bay to right. Plate glass sash windows. Re-entrant curved walls to front garden gate which has the crenellation-capped piers of Eldon Square type.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>25 & 27 Eldon Square</p>	<p>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321945</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Pair. 2 storeys, attic and basement. Bath stone ashlar, ground floor channelled with band over. Flat eaves with plain brackets. Hipped slate roof with central ashlar chimney. On the ground floor: tall French casements with 2 tented verandah balconies with pierced stone parapets on stone brackets. Flanking set-back doorways which have shaped low relief pediments, No 25 as a glazed door and a 2 storey 2 window extension.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Railings to King
George V Memorial
Gardens

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113466>



Grade II

(images Zoë Andrews (pillars & gate) & Evelyn Williams (pedestrian gate no longer in use))

Mushroom topped railings (1830s) thought to have been manufactured by Perry, Barrett and Exall of Reading. Lock plate on two of the three gates is marked P.B. & E. Reading.

The railings are models for other railings in the area whether original (The Oval) or reproduction (Watlington House).

The eastern gate does not have mushroom tops and may not be of the same era.

(images Evelyn Williams)

Table 4: Listed buildings in Character Area 2

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Watlington House	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321898			<p>Grade II*</p> <p>The western part built 1688 for Samuel and Anne Watlington, see rainwaterheads: 1688 W S A. Eastern part said to have been added 1763 (probably earlier).</p> <p>Red and silver grey brick with a raised brick string at 1st floor level. Moulded and bracketed wood eaves cornice. Hipped old tile roof, brick end chimneys, dormered to west; valley roof with dormers facing valley. Garden door with moulded architrave surround in trellis porch and central half-landing stair window above it under a moulded brick pediment. A single storey 'bothy' wing to the south. Interior: panelled hall with 2 arch screen on fluted piers. Turned balusters to stairs (straight string), double ramped mahogany dado rail and baluster rail, panelled. dado (circa 1740 probably). Samuel Watlington was Mayor of Reading in 1695 and in 1711.</p> <p>The listing includes the late nineteenth century garden hall as it is within the curtilage of the house.</p> <p>This tin building was brought to the garden of Watlington House in the late nineteenth century when the house was being used by Kendrick School. It is now used for meetings and functions.</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Walls enclosing west end of Watlington House	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113607		None	Grade II Late C17 or early C18. Massive brick and flint walls of varying heights. North and south walls about 80-90 yards long. West wall about 30 yards long. (image Evelyn Williams (Jan 2025))
Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113606			Grade II Church of England. 1872-73 by W.A. Dixon. Large Early English style rock faced Kentish Ragstone church with red Mansfield stone and Bath stone dressings. Replaced a smaller church of the same name on this site from the first half of the eighteenth century. The church was on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and extensive restoration works were undertaken in the 2010s. Unfortunately this resulted in the removal of original railings and replacement with modern ones. The schoolroom on the southern side of the church appears not to be included in the listing entry. (images Zoë Andrews)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Wesley Methodist Church	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321916			<p>Grade II</p> <p>QUEEN'S ROAD 1. 5128 Wesley Chapel SU 7273 7/557 II 2. Dated 1872. Red brick with stone and white brick dressings - steeple principally white brick. Tiled roofs. Gothic plan and elevation. 4 bay aisled nave with flush transept and 1 bay chancel. 3 sided gallery interior. Main porch to north-east with 3 stage tower and steeple. Lancet windows. Decorated tracery in large north window. The 2 spires of St John's and Wesley Chapel are close together and important landmarks for Reading. 1872 foundation stone on Watlington Street elevation)</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
The Oval	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1156910			<p>Grade II</p> <p>Early nineteenth century, 2 storey detached villa. Red brick with silver grey brick headers. Toothed brick cornice. Wide eaves to low pitched slate roof. A symmetrical 'T'-plan design carefully aligned so that the south end closes the vista along Princes Street from the Reading Hospital with a full height bow (1 window, French casement on ground floor). North front faces down St John's street; 3 bays, glazing bar sash windows and central 6 panel door in recessed arch with fanlight. Garden to south surrounded by cast iron mushroom capped rails (see George V Memorial Gardens, Eldon Square) on stone plinths.</p> <p>Railings at the rear of The Oval are the same style as those of the Eldon Square gardens (image left top Evelyn Williams, right and left bottom Zoë Andrews)</p>
71 & 73 London Road (Melrose House)	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113507			<p>Grade II</p> <p>Now one house, early nineteenth century, 3 storeys and basement. Stucco with rusticated ground floor and quoins. Moulded cornice at 1st floor level. 4 Roman Ionic pilasters embracing 2 upper floors with plain frieze and moulded and bracketed cornice breaking forward over pilasters. Large central stuccoed chimney stack.</p> <p>There are two entrances one from each side that appear to have been added in 1990 (see image of portico).</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

There are no listed buildings in Character Area 3.

Appendix 4 Buildings of townscape merit

Table 5: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 1

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
165 & 167 Kings Road		None	<p>Both properties were entirely rebuilt in the 1990s in a style to match the surrounding buildings. The rear of 167 has a very large modern extension.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
1 & 3 Eldon Road			<p>1 & 3 Eldon Road, Beaufort and Ditton Lodge are a pair of semi-detached houses built of yellow stock brick with patterned brick on the chimney stack. The rear of property which can be seen from Eldon Terrace is red brick. Many original exterior features remain.</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
5-7 Eldon Road		None	(image Zoë Andrews)
11 & 13 Eldon Road		None	Semi-detached pair of Edwardian houses. Egyptian style pylon doorways. 1902 date stone at first floor level. (image Evelyn Williams)
24 & 26 Eldon Road		None	Semi-detached stone fronted pair of late Victorian houses. Features include tall ground floor windows and small front dormers. (image Evelyn Williams)

Table 6: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 2

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
84 Queens Road			<p>The late Victorian vicarage (manse) attached to the Wesleyan church. Important because of its link with the church and sharing the same site.</p> <p>(images Zoë Andrews)</p>
102-104 Queens Road			<p>Former Meaby's Bakery, later A Lee Bakery.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p> <p>Cast iron decoration on Queens Road shop window</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
1 Princes Street		None	<p>The Lodge at the corner of Princes Street and St Johns Street. Red and grey brick chequerboard pattern with a grey brick string course. The double fronted house faces the side of The Oval and was probably part of the original plan for the area. From 1870 the home of undertaker H North with premises next door now 3a & 3b Princes Street (see below). The family business was taken over by William Bourton who moved from 111 and 111a Watlington Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
3a and 3b Princes Street		None	<p>Originally the premises of H North undertaker – see 1 Princes Street above. Now converted to two residential units.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
3 Princes Street		None	<p>Formerly St John's Mission and Reading Room, 1868. Built at the expense of Mr Alfred Sutton.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
16-28 St Johns Road		None	<p>Chequerboard red and grey brick terrace running from Eldon Place to 1 Princes Street.</p> <p>Group value with The Oval (Grade II listed) and 1 Princes Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
The schoolroom at the Polish Catholic Church, Watlington Street		None	<p>The schoolroom is not mentioned in the listing entry for the church itself although the style is similar and it is on the same site. It was included as a building of townscape merit in the 2007 appraisal and so has (for now) been included here.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
63 Watlington Street		None	<p>Swift Upholstery has a corner position and the junction of Watlington Street and St Johns Road. The traditional shop front has an awning. The last workshop of its kind now in the CA.</p> <p>In 1972 the premises were occupied by a butcher. (image Zoë Andrews)</p>
73-79 Watlington Street			<p>73 Watlington Street is unique in the CA in having full height windows on the third floor. The next door properties at 75 is more typical of this typology within the CA. The properties have retained or restored original features, railings, windows, window corbels, blind boxes etc and are well maintained. Unfortunately the brickwork of No75 has been painted over.</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
99 Watlington Street		None	<p>This is an attractive double fronted property, with slightly asymmetrical first floor windows with a porch and other heritage features. Landmark building on the east side of Watlington Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
111 Watlington Street		None	<p>The shop was at the time of the last appraisal occupied by Somerfield Glass who also operated from the workshop at 111a. Both properties seem to have been linked from the time of the first occupiers Boughton builders (see below). There is an indecipherable ghost sign on the gable.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
111a Watlington Street		None	<p>Former W Boughton, Andrews glass merchants and Somerville glass merchants. Historically linked with 111 above and a vestige of the light industrial and commercial past of the area.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
74-78 Watlington Street		None	<p>This row of three are distinctive and retain or have restored many original features.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
84 Watlington Street (County Arms)		None	<p>County Arms 1936 replaced an earlier public house of the same name. Converted and extended to provide flats in the 2010s.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
13-21 St Johns Hill			<p>13-21 St Johns Hill date from c1900 much later than properties on the opposite side of the hill. The grey brick with red window and door surrounds are distinctive. The properties have very tall chimneys that have been retained.</p> <p>(left image Zoë Andrews) (right image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
7-11 St Johns Hill (Conquest Court)		None	<p>Built as a mineral water factory for Humphries and Holt, taken over by Tunbridge, Jones & Co of Castle Street in 1932. In the later twentieth century it was occupied by Conquest Products Ltd a small leatherwork factory, hence the current name.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
5 St Johns Hill		None	<p>Double fronted red brick.</p> <p>With No 7 St Johns Hill appears on the Board of Health Maps 1853. Set back from St Johns Hill.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
3 St Johns Hill		None	<p>With No 7 St Johns Hill appears on the Board of Health Maps 1853. Set back at an angle from St Johns Hill.</p> <p>Two storeys and basement, stucco.</p> <p>Magnificent display of climbing roses when in flower.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
39 St Johns Road			<p>Former Lifeboat public house with ghost sign revealed.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
41 St Johns Road		None	<p>Former Eldon Cottage which had an extensive garden to the rear on which 11-13 St Johns Hill were constructed. Later occupied as offices of C and W Andrews glass merchants.</p> <p>Unfortunately the chimney stack was removed when the property was reroofed in 2023.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
43 St Johns Road		None	<p>Formerly warehouse of C and W Andrews Glass Merchants.</p> <p>Converted to residential.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
15 St Johns Road and Beehive Cottages		None	-
8 St Johns Street		None	<p>The Retreat public house. The property was licensed in the second half of the nineteenth century when the property was occupied by Thomas Law pork butcher and beer retailer. In 1903 it was a beerhouse tied to Higgs brewery.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
17 St Johns Street		None	<p>Recently refurbished three storey grey brick with red brick window and door surrounds.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
88 Queens Road		None	<p>The Lyndhurst public house. At the foot of Watlington Street (once Lyndhurst Street) and named after the first Lord Lyndhurst who succeeded Lord Eldon as Lord Chancellor.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
118-128 Queens Road		None	<p>Although not particularly well maintained these properties represent the taller red bricked terraces built along Queens Road from c1850. There are six in this terrace. The eastern three have lost their chimney pots but the western three have retained them.</p> <p>(image Richard Bennett)</p>

Table 7: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 3

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
1-9 Town Place		None	<p>Some of the older cottages on Town Place. A unique terrace in the CA with no vehicular access.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
46 & 48 Eldon Terrace		None	Landmark buildings on the corner of Eldon Terrace where it meets Montague Street. (image Evelyn Williams)

Appendix 5 Conservation Area Views

See the text of the appraisal for the significance of these views

Table 8: Views into the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
<p>East along Queens Road to the junction with Kings Road and beyond. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	 A street-level photograph showing a view east along Queens Road. The road is paved and has a double yellow line on the right side. On the left, there are modern brick and white buildings. On the right, there are older, traditional stone buildings. The sky is clear and blue.
<p>Further east along Queens Road closer to the CA. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	 A street-level photograph showing a view further east along Queens Road. The road is paved and has a double yellow line on the right side. On the left, there are modern brick and white buildings. On the right, there are older, traditional stone buildings. The sky is clear and blue.
<p>North down Watlington Street from in front of the Royal Berkshire Hospital on London Road. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	 A street-level photograph showing a view north down Watlington Street. The street is paved and has a double yellow line on the right side. On the left, there are modern brick and white buildings. On the right, there are older, traditional stone buildings. The sky is clear and blue.

Location of view	Image
<p>West from Reading College (Activate Learning) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Table 9: Views within the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
<p>North towards The Oval (rear) from Princes Street (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>South towards The Oval (front) from St Johns Street (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Location of view	Image
East along Eldon Terrace from Eldon Road (image Evelyn Williams)	
South along Montague Street towards Eldon Terrace (image Zoë Andrews)	
East from Eldon Road into Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of view	Image
North down Eldon Road towards Kings Road (images Jennifer Berdolt)	
South from Kings Road up Eldon Road towards Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)	
South from the foot of Watlington Street (image Jennifer Berdolt)	

Table 10: Views out of the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
<p>View west towards the traffic gyratory, more or less at the historic junction of Queens Road and Kings Road, the area to the north, on the right, is out of the CA.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>From Princes Street south to the Royal Berkshire Hospital.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>From Watlington Street there is a view towards Reading Gaol.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Location of view	Image
<p>2016 view from almost the same spot before the Verto building was constructed but after the demolition of Kings Point. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>North from Victoria Street to Reading College (Activate Learning) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Appendix 6 Conservation Area Trees

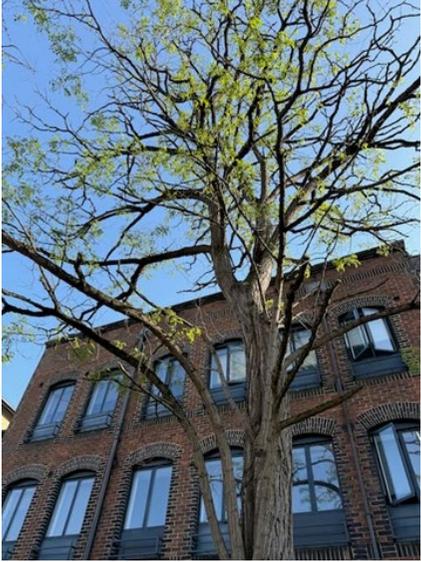
Table 11: Trees with a Tree Preservation Order

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
1a Eldon Road		None	<p>1 tree, 58/05</p> <p>Black mulberry tree in leaf June 2021 while works were going on at Hanover House to remove dangerous cladding and replace with new.</p> <p>It is highly likely that the mulberry was within the garden of Swiss Villa which is known to have had a mulberry tree.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
24 Eldon Road		None	<p>1 tree, 4/22</p> <p>Monterey Cypress at the rear</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
23 Eldon Square		None	<p>1 tree, 150/05</p> <p>Plane tree in rear garden overhanging Eldon Terrace</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
175 & 177 Kings Road (land to rear)		None	<p>1 tree, 95/06</p> <p>Plane tree at rear.</p> <p>There are also other trees screening the boundary of the site</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
185-189 Kings Road			<p>1 tree, 44/13 Plane tree in car park at rear. (images RBC)</p>
194 Kings Road (Kings Lodge)		None	<p>1 tree, 145/05 False acacia in front garden/parking area (image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
196-200 Kings Road (Wilberforce Place)		None	7 trees, 61/13 7 ornamental pears (image Evelyn Williams)
202 Kings Road			7 trees, 1 group, 60/13 6 silver birch on east boundary, Maple, Whitebeam, Beech and silver birch on Kings Road frontage (images Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	3 trees 149/05 Walnut (image Evelyn Williams)
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	Horse Chestnut (image Evelyn Williams)

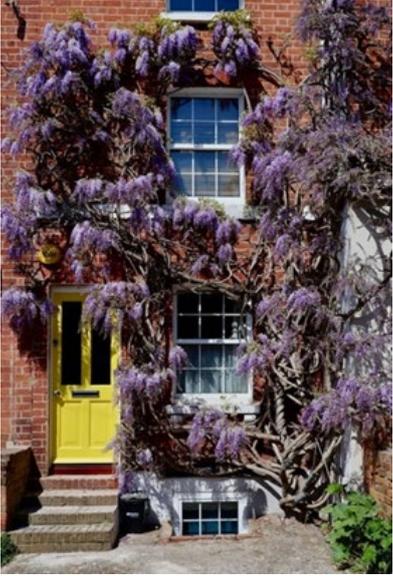
Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	Horse Chestnut (image Evelyn Williams)
Watlington Street, Watlington House & Hall		None	13 trees, 77/002 Following the rear garden improvement in 2012-2014 and a sycamore felled early in 2025 there are now 5 TPO trees at Watlington House. 2 sycamores at the front, a Hornbeam that replaced a diseased sycamore at the front and a Magnolia and Persian Ironwood at the rear. (image Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
Watlington Street, Watlington House & Hall		None	Replacement hornbeam at rear of flower bed (image Evelyn Williams)
Watlington Street, Watlington House & Hall		None	Rear garden in March 2025 showing the Persian Ironwood (left) and Magnolia (right) TPO tallest trees close to the wall. (image Richard Bennett)

Table 12: Other significant trees and green spaces

Location of tree	Image
<p>Eldon Square Wisteria (image Zoë Andrews)</p>	
<p>St Johns Road Wisteria (image Zoë Andrews)</p>	
<p>George V Memorial Gardens mulberry planted by Reading CAAC in memory of member Roger Williams, with larger tree behind (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Location of tree	Image
George V Memorial Gardens Trees on north side (images Evelyn Williams)	
George V Memorial Gardens trees (images Evelyn Williams)	
Trees at the front and rear of The Oval (images Evelyn Williams)	 

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image
<p>London Road plane trees along southern border of CA (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>Trees along southern boundary of Reading College (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Table 13: Green spaces (please note there are some overlaps with TPO and significant trees listed above)

Location of space	Image
<p>George V Memorial Gardens on Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Location of space	Image
Watlington House garden (rear) (image Richard Bennett)	
Watlington House car park and garden (front) (images Evelyn Williams)	
Watlington House path from front door looking east	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of space	Image
Watlington House north-east corner of front garden (panoramic)	 A panoramic photograph showing the north-east corner of the front garden of Watlington House. The house is a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent gable and a tall, thin spire. The garden is bordered by a low brick wall and has some greenery. In the background, other residential buildings and a modern apartment block are visible under a blue sky with scattered clouds.
Watlington House south-east corner of front garden (pano)	 A panoramic photograph showing the south-east corner of the front garden of Watlington House. The view is dominated by the large, ornate Gothic Revival church building with a tall spire. The garden area is bordered by a brick wall and has some trees and shrubs. The sky is blue with some clouds.
Planters on South Street (image Zoë Andrews)	 A photograph showing a view down South Street. In the foreground, there are two large, rectangular planters made of dark wood or stone, filled with green plants and flowers. The street is paved and has a few cars parked along the side. The buildings on either side are mostly brick and have a traditional architectural style. The sky is blue with some clouds.
Planters on Watlington Street (image Evelyn Williams)	 A photograph showing a view of Watlington Street. In the foreground, there is a large, rectangular planter made of red bricks, filled with bright red flowers. The street is paved and has a few cars parked along the side. The buildings on either side are mostly brick and have a traditional architectural style. The sky is overcast.

Location of space	Image
<p>Traffic island on Queens Road and Kings Road junction (adjacent to CA) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Appendix 7 Original or substantially original heritage shopfronts

Table 11: Original or substantially original heritage shopfronts

Location	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
63 Watlington Street		None	Swift Upholstery, awning in place. (image Zoë Andrews)
111 Watlington Street		None	Now unoccupied. Recessed doorway. Features in the Shopfronts Design Guide SPD (image Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
104 Queens Road			<p>Corner shop doorway, A Lee Bakery sign. Most recently it was Ewemove estate agency.</p> <p>Right: Decorative ironwork in need of repair above fascia board.</p> <p>(images Zoë Andrews)</p>
23 Victoria Street		None	<p>Out to Lunch Catering Co</p> <p>Long closed but fondly remembered as a delicatessen/sandwich shop. In 1972 it was a grocers run by Mrs M Day.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

11 March 2026

Title	Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Ross Jarvis, Principal Air Quality Project Officer
Lead Councillor	Cllr John Ennis
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	1. That the Committee note the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To update the Strategic Environment Planning & Transport Committee of the achievement of the Clean Air Living Matters; Exploring Reading, Air Quality Awareness Programme at completion.
- 1.2. Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading (CALM, or CALM:ER) was a two-year educational programme funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA's) 2022-2023 Air Quality Grant scheme, with the purpose of engaging primary and secondary school pupils to increase knowledge and awareness of air quality, learn about its causes, and understand impacts and find solutions through behavioural change. It was delivered with partners Stantec, University of Reading and Design Nature between February 2023 and July 2025 across Reading schools.
- 1.3. The programme made substantial progress across all key performance indicators (KPIs), exceeding many of its original targets while leaving a lasting educational and environmental legacy. A main success of the programme is highlighted by the inclusive engagement, having directly reached over 9,000 children, over 2,000 through practical knowledge sessions and nearly 7,000 through awareness activities.
- 1.4. The programme also made significant progress in terms of community and parental engagement. Through face-to-face conversations at school gates and participation in community events, over 860 parents and carers were directly engaged, and the estimated total reach extended to over 17,000-24,000 adults through indirect channels such as CALM materials shared at home and public events. This outreach helped to stimulate important conversations about air quality at home, contributing to behaviour changes such as reduced car idling and more frequent active travel.
- 1.5. Knowledge acquisition was measured through pre- and post-assessments, revealing an average knowledge increase of 28% among primary school pupils and 9% among secondary school pupils. These improvements demonstrate that the educational components were well-structured, accessible, and impactful. Pupils actively engaged with resources such as interactive presentations, videos, practical monitoring activities,

and were able to confidently apply this knowledge during action planning and discussions.

- 1.6. Beyond knowledge gains, the programme succeeded in supporting behavioural change. Action planning activities were completed in 8 primary schools and 5 secondary schools, where pupils developed and presented proposals to improve air quality in their schools and wider communities.
- 1.7. CALM also made a strong contribution to curriculum integration. Although air quality is not currently a standalone topic within the national curriculum, the programme's materials aligned well with subjects such as science, geography, mathematics, and citizenship. The development of a dedicated Key Stage 2 lesson plan, in collaboration with the University of Reading and a local teacher, has further embedded air quality education into mainstream learning and will remain accessible as part of the university's climate education resources. Additionally, the availability of materials on the RBC and Design Nature websites ensures that the programme's legacy will continue beyond the programme's official end.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council Plan 2025-28 sets out a vision to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success and focuses on five priorities, of which the CALM programme most obviously aligns with the priority to: Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint.
- 2.2. The CALM programme directly relates to several actions outlined within the RBC Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2024-2029. The relevant AQAP measures are outlined below:
 - RDAQ7 – Promoting Travel Alternatives: School Streets
 - RDAQ8 – Promoting Travel Alternatives: Continue to Promote Active and Low Emission Travel Options
 - RDAQ11 – Traffic Management: Healthy Streets and Quiet Neighbourhoods
 - RDAQ16 – Transport Planning and Infrastructure: New Pedestrian and Cycling Routes
 - RDAQ28 – Promoting Travel Alternatives: School Awareness Events
 - RDAQ29 – Public Information: Health Promotion Work with NHS
 - RDAQ32 – Public Information: Smoke Control Area Awareness Campaign
 - RDAQ34 – Public Information: Engagement in National Clean Air Day
 - RDAQ35 – Public Information: Indoor Air Quality Awareness Campaign

3. The Programme

Overview

- 3.1. Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading (CALM, or CALM:ER) was an educational programme funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA's) 2022-2023 Air Quality Grant scheme. It ran between February 2023 and July 2025 in schools in Reading Borough Council (RBC) with the purpose of engaging primary and secondary school pupils to increase knowledge and awareness of air quality, learn about its causes, and understand impacts and find solutions through behavioural change.
- 3.2. RBC were the applicant of the DEFRA Air Quality Grant funding bringing in the support of three project partners over the duration of the programme: Stantec, University of Reading and Design Nature.

- 3.3. Stantec provided overall programme management, coordination and management of air quality monitoring programme, provision of air quality technical advice.
- 3.4. University of Reading (UoR) carried out school and stakeholder engagement, managing and leading school deliveries, preparation of school materials, evaluation of programme progress and outcomes, provision of air quality technical advice. The CALM programme builds on a PhD research project currently undertaken by Marta O'Brien within the Department of Geography and Environmental Science at the UoR which focuses on air pollution spikes at school gates, community engagement and air quality education.
- 3.5. Design Nature also carried out school and stakeholder engagement, managing and leading school deliveries, preparation of school materials, management and co-ordination of the programme's branding and graphic design.

Aims

- 3.6. The primary objectives of the CALM programme were to:
 - Increase knowledge of air quality, its causes, impacts and solutions, for primary and secondary school children with a range of age suitable programmes.
 - Use the programme to increase awareness in the wider community including schools outside of the programme, parents, and the communities around the schools.
 - Encourage behavioural change both in activities that impact on poor air quality by parents and the wider community, and in terms of measures that the school children, and others, can take to reduce their exposure to poor air quality.

To monitor progress against the aims and to evaluate the success of the programme, 14 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set by the CALM team and are set out in Table 1 in the appendix.

- 3.7. Although NO₂ has been the only pollutant that until recently exceeded a national air quality objective in Reading, particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) is a pollutant of concern due to its effects on health even at low concentrations. The Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) suggests that the fraction of mortality attributable to PM_{2.5} air pollution in Reading in 2023 was 5.3%, above the national rate of 5.2%¹. Domestic solid wood burning contributes the single largest local contribution of PM_{2.5} (estimated at 38% nationally³) and is a key air pollution of concern in Reading given the high percentage of terraced houses (26%) in the borough that burn solid fuel. The use of solid fuels is expected to have risen with the recent energy crisis.
- 3.8. Despite this, awareness of air quality issues in Reading is considered to be limited. Although numerous projects to improve air quality have been carried out over the years, air pollution remains high due to people's entrenched behaviours. The CALM programme was therefore introduced and set out to target specific areas through a school engagement programme, aiming to directly engage 33 of the 49 RBC schools with a knowledge and awareness campaign, with the potential to reach over a quarter of the population of RBC through engagement with the wider community.

Delivery

- 3.9. As part of the CALM programme, a total of 53 interactive activities were delivered to 28 schools during the 18-month delivery phase, which began in January 2024. These activities ranged from whole-school assemblies to practical, interactive hands-on air quality monitoring sessions conducted both indoors and outdoors. The delivery culminated in dedicated action-planning workshops and creative sessions designed to be fully interactive, engaging, and aligned with curriculum objectives across Key Stages 2 to 5.
- 3.10. Although air quality is not currently included within the school curriculum, the CALM programme aligns strongly with the secondary school science curriculum aims by promoting active scientific inquiry throughout its activities.

- 3.11. CALM activities also embedded geographical enquiry, mathematics and environmental thinking, earth and atmospheric science, citizenship and biology. Children collected air quality data on school playgrounds or local streets using low-cost sensors and discussed how urban factors, such as traffic, can affect air quality in schools. The pupils considered human–environment interactions, evaluated how their surroundings shaped pollution exposure, and applied this understanding when designing sustainable air quality action plans.
- 3.12. For younger learners, CALM's hands-on use of sensors and data logging created meaningful, age-appropriate STEM experiences. Pupils engaged in structured investigations exploring, for example, how CO₂ levels change during a lesson or how air quality shifts upon opening windows.
- 3.13. The below range of different types of activities were undertaken as part of the programme:
- **Assemblies** were delivered in participating schools to introduce pupils to the concept of air quality, its causes, and health impacts. These sessions used interactive presentations, videos, and real-life examples to make the topic engaging and accessible. Assemblies served as the first point of contact for many pupils, raising awareness and sparking curiosity about how everyday behaviours influence air pollution.
 - **Workshops** provided a deeper dive into air quality issues through hands-on learning. Pupils explored sources of pollution, its effects on health, and practical solutions. Activities included group discussions, problem-solving exercises, and creative tasks such as designing posters or campaigns. These sessions encouraged critical thinking and empowered pupils to identify actions they could take to improve air quality in their schools and communities.
 - **Air Quality Monitoring** activities allowed pupils to use portable sensors (AirGradient and Atmotube PRO) to measure pollutants such as PM_{2.5}, CO₂, and VOCs. Pupils collected data around school gates and classrooms, then analysed results to understand pollution patterns. This practical element connected theory to real-world evidence, helping pupils appreciate the importance of reducing emissions and improving ventilation.
 - **Clean Air Day Workshops** were held to coincide with National Clean Air Day, focusing on the theme of collective action for cleaner air. Pupils participated in interactive games, pledges, and creative activities such as designing anti-idling posters. These events amplified national messaging and encouraged schools to showcase their commitment to air quality improvement.
 - **Laboratory Indoor Air Quality Experiments** were held in collaboration with the University of Reading, pupils engaged in experiments to investigate indoor air quality. Using controlled setups, they explored how ventilation, cleaning products, and human activity affect pollutant levels indoors. These experiments highlighted the importance of good ventilation and informed practical recommendations for classrooms and homes.
 - **Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE)** sessions integrated air quality education into broader wellbeing topics. Pupils learned about the link between clean air and physical health, mental wellbeing, and lifestyle choices. These sessions reinforced the idea that environmental health is part of personal health, encouraging pupils to adopt behaviours that benefit both.
 - **Air Quality Action Planning** exercises were conducted in selected schools, where pupils worked in groups to develop proposals for improving air quality locally. Plans included initiatives such as promoting active travel, reducing car idling, and planting greenery. Pupils presented their ideas to peers and staff, fostering ownership and leadership in tackling air pollution.

- **School Gates Interviews** - Project staff engaged parents and carers at school gates to discuss air quality and behaviour change. These informal conversations provided an opportunity to share practical tips, distribute CALM materials, and gather feedback. This approach helped extend the programme's impact beyond pupils, influencing family habits such as reducing car idling and walking to school.

3.14. Evaluation of Success

- 3.15. Although not without obstacles, overall the project has been considered a success. Table 2 in the appendix provides a summary of the performance against the KPIs set out at the start of the programme.
- 3.16. The main difficulties encountered included:
- **Procurement & Staffing** – delays with procurement and contracting of project partners caused delays in getting the programme up and running. This left limited time for preparation of materials for delivery in the first term of 2023/24 academic year as planned.
 - **School Engagement** – Getting schools to engage with the programme was the most significant challenge. We attempted to engage schools through multiple avenues such as sending out advertisements in Headteacher's briefings, email correspondence, telephone correspondence, school gate engagement and leafleting. Unfortunately, several schools did not engage with the CALM programme despite these attempts.
- 3.17. Areas of particular success were:
- 3.18. **Public awareness and education** - One of the core strengths of the programme was in its ability to raise awareness around air pollution. In terms of improving children's knowledge of air pollution, the programme delivered clear, measurable outcomes. Pre- and post-assessments revealed an average knowledge increase of 28% among primary school children and 9% among secondary school pupils. By engaging directly with children and members of the public, it successfully promoted understanding of the sources and impacts of poor air quality. The CALM activities helped individuals understand air pollution and make more informed decisions about their travel habits and environmental behaviours. The initiative also served as a valuable educational opportunity for those involved in the organisational preparation for climate action plans, allowing them to refresh and deepen their understanding of key environmental issues.
- 3.19. **Support for local decision making** - The data collected through the programme provides meaningful insights into public attitudes and behaviours, which in turn can inform local authority strategies. This evidence base is particularly valuable in supporting council decision-making, ensuring that policies and interventions related to air quality are grounded in current, community-level information. Additionally, it helps to target effective budget allocation, ensuring that resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.
- 3.20. **Competency building and skill development** - For participants, the programme offered hands-on experience in field research, public engagement, and data collection. This contributes to skill development in areas such as communication, teamwork, and time management, while also enhancing employability and academic learning, particularly for UoR students in environmental or geography related disciplines

Legacy

- 3.21. Following the completion of the CALM programme many of the schools expressed an interest in the programme continuing. More than 70% expressed an interest in retaining the AirGradient monitors they had been loaned. As a result a number of legacy materials were prepared to provide an air quality education resource. These include:

- 3.22. **Legacy Video** - Highlighting the impact of the programme. It is hoped that it will inspire children and encourage the uptake of similar programmes in the future. As a result interest in our programme has been received from other Local Authorities wishing to do their own air quality awareness programmes in schools.
- 3.23. **RBC Webpage** – has all the programme resources allowing teachers to run similar air quality sessions in the future.
- [Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading with Schools - Reading Borough Council](#)
- 3.24. **Call to Action** - Design Nature to develop webpage providing resources for teachers who want to continue with the CALM programme. The page will act as a forum to allow teachers to discuss air quality lesson plans and sessions.
- 3.25. **Air Quality Action Plans/Promises** - 13 schools completed air quality action planning sessions. To date this has led to air quality planting and an anti-idling campaign. It is hoped that other schools will take their plans forward into action behavioural change.
- 3.26. **Community of Practice** – The CALM team will work with a smaller group of interested schools. For primary schools ‘train the trainer’ sessions will be run providing lesson plans and advice. For secondary schools the possibility of one school hosting an after-school workshop is being investigated. This will build on the information available on the online forum where teachers can share their experiences to help continual improvement in the delivery of air quality sessions.
- 3.27. **Future Air Quality Initiatives** – The CALM programme links with several AQAP measures and has demonstrated a strong appetite amongst those involved for further air quality initiatives such as school streets and active travel schemes, which will continue to be promoted through the Reading Transport Strategy.
- 3.28. The CALM programme also relates to AQAP measure RDAQ31: Increase PM2.5 monitoring to help understanding of levels and sources in Reading. This project is currently being developed to help increase our understanding of particulates across the borough. The insight that the data provides will be shared with the public to further increase awareness about the harm of particulate air pollution on health.

Conclusions

- 3.29. In conclusion, CALM has delivered a high-impact, inclusive, and sustainable environmental education programme. Overall engagement (adults and children) is estimated to be over 26,000 people (or nearly 33,000 if two adults at home engaged with the CALM materials). The programme not only met its original objectives but has also laid a foundation for long-term engagement with air quality and climate education across schools, households, and the wider Reading community.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The CALM programme contributed to the strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan by improving environmental literacy and promoting a healthier environment through active travel and sustainable practices. It contributed to equitable outcomes by working across Reading’s diverse communities.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. Positive implications include reductions in exposure to air pollution around schools through anti-idling and modal shift behaviours, and better indoor ventilation practices. No adverse environmental impacts arise from decisions sought in this report.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The programme also made significant progress in terms of community and parental engagement. Through face-to-face conversations at school gates and participation in community events, over 860 parents and carers were directly engaged, and the estimated total reach extended to over 17,000-24,000 adults through indirect channels such as CALM materials shared at home and public events.

- 6.2. The CALM team encouraged adults to make personal “Air Quality Promises”, further reinforcing commitment to small but meaningful changes. These promises, initiated during the Community Festival at the UoR, allowed adults to reflect on their role in supporting clean air and set achievable goals such as using active travel, reduce idling or reduce wood burning. These pledges served as both motivational tools and accountability markers, strengthening the link between environmental education and community actions.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The programme placed strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, and it was delivered in schools spanning all IMD deciles, representing Reading’s diverse communities where 46.5% of the population identifies as being from a Black or Minority Ethnic background. All programme activities were designed to be accessible and adaptable, ensuring pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds could engage meaningfully and equally.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. The programme was delivered under DEFRA Air Quality Grant conditions. No additional legal powers or delegations are required to note this report.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The programme was carried out with a budget of £387,000 consisting of a DEFRA Air Quality Grant (£291,000 revenue, £36,000 Capital) and up to £60,000 RBC match funding via officer support. The final cost of the programme was £353,113.50.
- 9.2. Based on the programme’s total community reach of 26,000 – 33,000 people, the cost of the programme was estimated to be approximately £10.70 - £13.60 per resident. This is considered strong value for money given the long-term educational and behavioural change outcomes of the programme.

10. Timetable for Implementation

- 10.1. Not applicable.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1. There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Table 1 - Summary of Key Performance Indicators for CALM

Appendix 2: Table 2 - Performance against KPIs

Appendix 1: Table 1 - Summary of Key Performance Indicators for CALM

Key Performance Indicator	Description of KPI	Method of Measurement
Key Performance Indicator	Description of KPI	Measurement of KPI
KPI001 - Number of Children Engaged	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct: 2,800 pupils - Awareness: 16,000 pupils 	Number of children engaged would be measured at each CALM delivery and outcomes would be categorised by 'increased awareness' (e.g. assembly) or 'increased knowledge' (e.g. lesson/workshop).
KPI002 – Number of Schools Engaged	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 secondary schools - 24 primary schools 	Number of school visits to be recorded.
KPI003 – Impact on Parents and Community	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct: 3,000 parents and guardians - Awareness: 40,000 adults 	Record to be made of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of adults engaged at each CALM event (such as teachers, parents) - Numbers of children engaged who take activity sheets home. - Webpage and social media views/engagement - Approximate number of people engaged in wider marketing (posters, billboards etc.)
KPI004 – Deployment of Sensors	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 No. static monitors - 20 No. portable sensors 	Record to be made of number of static sensors installed at schools and when portable sensors are used in activities at schools.
KPI005 – Legacy Teaching Aids	Resources to be made available for teachers and wider community following completion of the CALM programme.	Teaching aids to be prepared and uploaded to the CALM website. Record to be made of the number and description of teaching aids produced.
KPI006 – Knowledge Acquisition	Pre- and post-assessments to be used to evaluate the level of knowledge children have about air quality before and after educational sessions.	Quizzes and tests to be used to measure the retention and understanding of key concepts related to air pollutants, sources and their effects.

KPI007 – Behavioural Changes	Determine whether there is evidence of behavioural change following activities in schools, engagement with parents and the wider community.	A parent's questionnaire is to be developed to understand behavioural response. Questions to be asked at school gates and/or link to be provided to an online questionnaire. Follow-up activities to be provided to pupils during CALM deliveries. Data to be collected on changes in behaviour, such as whether children are more likely to adopt practices that reduce air pollution exposure, reduce personal pollution sources, or encourage environmentally friendly habits at home.
KPI008 – Participation in Environmental Initiatives	Encourage children to increase their involvement in wider environmental initiatives.	Questions to be asked during class activities to see how many pupils are involved in environmental initiatives such as environmental clubs, community clean-up events etc.
KPI009 – Communication Skills	Improve children's communication skills through the CALM sessions.	Evaluate pupils' ability to communicate air quality concepts through presentations, posters or projects.
KPI010 – Attitude and Perception Shifts	Determine whether attitudes to air quality improve as a result of the programme.	Undertake focus group discussions with a sub-set of schools to discuss attitude and perception to air quality and air pollution exposure.
KPI011 – Integration into the Curriculum	Seek opportunity to integrate air quality education into the school curriculum.	Review CALM activities against the existing school curriculum and discuss the potential to incorporate air quality elements into the curriculum with a sub-set of schools.
KPI012 – Parental Involvement	Determine whether children's involvement in the CALM programme has influenced household behaviours or encouraged discussions about air pollution.	Online survey to be created and promoted to parents through materials sent home with children, an air quality brochure, a poster competition and engaging parents at school gates.
KPI013 – Use of Technology and resources	Assess how well students utilize educational resources, such as books, videos, or guest lectures, to enhance their air quality knowledge.	Record through observation in class during activities and recording downloads from website.
KPI014 – Levelling Up Agenda	Determine whether the programme has been delivered in an equitable way across school children from different socio-economic backgrounds.	Plot engaged schools against deprivation indices to identify whether catchments are reflective of the economic mix of RBC.

Appendix 2: Table 2 - Performance against KPIs

Key Performance Indicator	Description of KPI	Evaluation
KPI001 - Number of Children Engaged	Target: - Direct: 1,400 children - Awareness: 8,000 children	The engagement targets were adjusted to reflect more realistic levels of participation. Over 9,000 children were engaged all together, with 4,765 taking part in awareness sessions at schools, 2,234 engaged at community events and 2,071 engaged through knowledge practical sessions.
KPI002 – Number of Schools Engaged	Target: - 9 secondary schools - 16 primary schools	A total of 28 schools engaged with the programme: 20 primary schools and 8 secondary schools. Although this exceeds the revised total target, it is important to highlight the particular challenge of recruiting secondary schools to participate in such activities.
KPI003 – Impact on Parents and Community	Target: - Direct: 3,000 parents and guardians - Awareness: 40,000 adults	Direct and indirect engagement of parents and the wider community has been successful, achieved through a variety of approaches involving schools and children. This also included face-to-face interactions at school gates and conversations during various community events. Each participating child received a worksheet or CALM booklet, resulting in nearly 7,000 individual engagements. Given that most children typically share these materials with at least one adult at home, this significantly extended the programme's reach. In addition, 860 parents and carers were engaged directly through in-person conversations at school gates enhancing the already planted knowledge. Further connections were made during a range of public events. Based on these figures, we estimate that school-based engagement alone reached over 11,000 adults, or over 18,000 adults if a second parent/guardian/adult sibling or grandparent

		<p>engaged with materials at home. In addition, over 1,200 adults were reached through events, though the actual number is likely higher, considering the size and scale of some of the events attended by CALM team members. Additional engagement was achieved through digital platforms, as well as through physical outreach such as posters and lamppost wrap campaigns. While it is difficult to quantify the exact impact of these methods, their prominent locations suggest that reach and visibility were likely significant. Numbers that can be confirmed are: 743 online YouTube views and 5,220 Clean Air Night social media views. More information on numbers in summary section 7.3. In total, it is estimated that between 17,000 - 24,000 adults were engaged through the CALM programme.</p>
KPI004 – Deployment of Sensors	<p>Target: - 10 No. static monitors - 20 No. portable sensors</p>	<p>45 No. AirGradient Open Air monitors, 45 No. AirGradient ONE monitors and 30 No. Atmotube PROs were used during the delivery of the programme. More details on monitors in section 2.</p>
KPI005 – Legacy Teaching Aids	<p>Resources to be made available for teachers and wider community following completion of the CALM programme.</p>	<p>Throughout the delivery period, a range of educational materials was developed to support teaching and learning across Key Stages 2, 3, and 4. These resources include lesson plans, data collection sheets, and supporting presentations, all of which are available on the RBC website and will remain downloadable after the programme concludes. An electronic version of the CALM booklet is also available in both web and PDF formats as well as the videos that were produced to support the delivery of activities. Additionally, a Key Stage 2 lesson plan is being developed in</p>

		<p>collaboration with the Department of Education at the UoR.</p> <p>This resource, supported by input from a local teacher, will be permanently hosted on the UoR's website as part of its climate education resources.</p> <p>Further information on legacy resources is provided in section 6.</p>
KPI006 – Knowledge Acquisition	<p>Pre- and post-assessments to be used to evaluate the level of knowledge children have about air quality before and after educational sessions.</p>	<p>Knowledge acquisition assessment has been undertaken during the practical workshops through targeted questions with multiple-choice answers to facilitate consistent measurement and analysis.</p> <p>Results showed a measurable increase in knowledge, with an average improvement of 9% between the pre- and post-activity assessments for the secondary school children and 28% for the primary school children, indicating a positive impact on pupils' learning.</p>
KPI007 – Behavioural Changes	<p>Determine whether there is evidence of behavioural change following activities in schools, engagement with parents and the wider community.</p>	<p>Significant behavioural change actions have been implemented by children in schools taking part in the action planning (8 primary schools and 5 secondary schools).</p> <p>Behavioural change conversations have been taking place during the face-to-face engagement with parents at school gates (860) and during various events (over 4000) reaching not just parents directly but wider community.</p> <p>While the extent of impact on behavioural change is hard to quantify, engagement suggests that CALM has had a significant positive impact in this area.</p>

<p>KPI008 – Participation in Environmental Initiatives</p>	<p>Encourage children to increase their involvement in wider environmental initiatives.</p>	<p>All schools taking part in the delivered activities either already had eco/environmental groups/clubs or were using the engagement with the programme as an opportunity to implement one. The air quality action planning sessions encouraged children to take action related to environmental issues.</p>
<p>KPI009 – Communication Skills</p>	<p>Improve children’s communication skills through the CALM sessions.</p>	<p>As part of the action planning activities, children had the opportunity to present their ideas and promote their proposals for actions to improve air quality. These sessions took place both during in-school activities and at off-site workshops.</p>
<p>KPI010 – Attitude and Perception Shifts</p>	<p>Determine whether attitudes to air quality improve as a result of the programme.</p>	<p>Following engagement with both adults and children, it has become clear that, as a result of the educational sessions and discussions, participants are increasingly aware of the impact of air pollution and are willing to make changes to help improve it. This is evident in the action planning activities with school children, as well as in the feedback received during the school gate engagements</p>
<p>KPI011 – Integration into the Curriculum</p>	<p>Seek opportunity to integrate air quality education into the school curriculum.</p>	<p>Although air quality is not explicitly included in the national curriculum, it is directly connected to climate change and strongly linked to several subjects across Key Stages 2 to 5. These include Science, Mathematics, Earth and Atmospheric Science, Geography, Citizenship, Biology, all of which were integrated into the programme’s teaching approach. All the programme’s teaching materials are available on the RBC website.</p>

		<p>Through the development of a dedicated lesson plan, now hosted on the UoR's platform, air quality education has been effectively embedded into curriculum teaching and is readily available for use in schools.</p>
KPI012 – Parental Involvement	<p>Determine whether children's involvement in the CALM programme has influenced household behaviours or encouraged discussions about air pollution.</p>	<p>Initial feedback suggests that children's involvement in the CALM programme has positively influenced household behaviours and encouraged discussions about air pollution at home. Parents and carers engaged during school gate interviews reported that children shared what they had learned, prompting conversations about air quality and, in some cases, small behavioural changes such as walking to school more often or reducing car idling. These early signs indicate that the programme's impact extended beyond the classroom, raising awareness and promoting healthier habits within families.</p>
KPI013 – Use of Technology and resources	<p>Assess how well students utilize educational resources, such as books, videos, or guest lectures, to enhance their air quality knowledge.</p>	<p>The programme was delivered in an area with very diverse population, with 46.5% belonging to a Black and Minority Ethnic community, which was reflected across schools. All activities were designed to be accessible and adaptable to varied school contexts. Evidence from knowledge assessments, feedback, and parental engagement indicates that pupils from different backgrounds were able to benefit from the programme's content and contribute meaningfully to discussions around air quality. Figure 45 plots CALM schools against the index of multiple deprivation and illustrates the CALM programme reach across all ten deciles.</p>

<p>KPI014 – Levelling Up Agenda</p>	<p>Determine whether the programme has been delivered in an equitable way across school children from different socio-economic backgrounds.</p>	<p>As part of the action planning activities, children had the opportunity to present their ideas and promote their proposals for actions to improve air quality. These sessions took place both during in-school activities and at off-site workshops.</p>
-------------------------------------	---	---

This page is intentionally left blank

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

11 March 2026

Title	Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Update Report
Purpose of the report	To present an overview of the latest position with the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Chris Maddocks, Strategic Transport Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	1. That the Committee notes the latest position with the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group as set out in the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview on the latest position with the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The recommendations were approved by this Committee in November 2025, subject to an evaluation of each recommendation being brought to a future meeting.
- 1.2. In addition, the report provides context to the delivery of active travel schemes and initiatives in Reading over recent years, the outcomes that have been achieved to date and future plans; alongside a summary of our partnership and stakeholder working which is a key element of the Council's work in this area.
- 1.3. The latest position with each recommendation of the Task and Finish Group is set out in Appendix A, which reflects the input of a number of different teams and service areas from across the Council involved in the delivery of active travel work. The full recommendations from the Task and Finish Group are set out at Appendix B.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council adopted its new Local Transport Plan (LTP), the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, at the meeting of full Council on 15 October 2024. The Strategy sets out a vision to create healthier, greener and more equal communities through the future provision of travel choices in Reading. The Strategy is focused on promoting sustainable transport options as a realistic alternative to the private car, setting out how transport facilities and services will be developed to 2040 to help achieve the Council's wider objectives for the town as set out in the Council Plan.
- 2.2. The LTP sets the overarching vision for future transport provision in Reading, with sub-strategies providing more detailed implementation plans for specific topics. These include the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan,

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

- 2.3. In line with the Council's overview and scrutiny procedure rules, the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) Committee established a Councillor-led Task and Finish Group on 12 March 2025, and approved the recommendations of the Group at its meeting on 19 November 2025.
- 2.4. Active Travel refers to modes of travel that involve a level of physical activity, such as walking, wheeling (e.g. using wheelchairs, mobility scooters) and cycling, as alternatives to private cars.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Councillor-led Active Travel Task and Finish Group prepared a series of recommendations for the delivery of the Council's Active Travel Strategy and objectives. The recommendations were approved by this Committee in November 2025, subject to an evaluation of each recommendation being brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.2. The Council has a strong track record of delivering an ambitious programme of active travel schemes and initiatives, focused on achieving its overall aims and objectives in relation to both active travel and wider sustainable transport objectives. This programme of work is set in the context of the Council's adopted Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a sub-strategy to the Reading Transport Strategy 2040.
- 3.3. The LCWIP was prepared jointly with neighbouring Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils, to set out plans for a joined up active travel network for the wider Reading urban area. The sub-strategy provides an agreed basis for future enhancements to improve active travel routes as part of a wider network, although it is fully acknowledged that delivery will be incremental as funding for different elements of the overall network is secured.
- 3.4. In line with the proposals set out in the LCWIP, the Council has prepared a branded walking and cycle network for the urban area, providing materials for residents and visitors which highlight key active travel routes throughout the urban area. The branded materials produced by the Council include an overall network plan and individual route maps, wayfinding boards at key destinations and signage, stickers and on-carriageway markings to highlight each route.

Infrastructure Enhancements

- 3.5. The Council has secured significant external investment in Reading and delivered an ambitious programme of active travel infrastructure enhancements in recent years, with some examples highlighted below:
 - Reading Station Interchanges – pedestrianisation of the interchange areas to the north and south of the station and more recently secured further improvements as part of the Station Hill development including the pocket park and new shared pedestrian cycle route between the station and town centre.
 - Reading Station Subway – reduced a significant barrier for active travel through securing public access through the Reading Station subway, initially for pedestrians and more recently for cyclist through refurbishment works.
 - Napier Road Underpass – introduced public access through the underpass from Napier Road to Kenavon Drive, providing a missing link to the active travel network linking Newtown to the River Thames for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Christchurch Bridge – provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Thames, providing a missing link to the active travel network linking Caversham to the station and wider town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

- National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 422 – provision of a new national cycle route between Newbury and Windsor, including a section within Reading providing enhanced east-west cycle infrastructure between Calcot, Reading town centre and East Reading.
- London Road Shared Path – provision of a shared path enhanced facility between London St / Silver St, Royal Berkshire Hospital and Cemetery Junction, including side road priority measures for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reading Bridge Cycle Lanes – provision of advisory cycle lanes on Reading Bridge, reprioritising capacity away from general traffic on this key pinch point on the network.
- Oxford Road Cycle Lanes – provision of advisory cycle lanes on Oxford Road between Norcot Road roundabout and Tilehurst Station, providing a safer facility on this key arterial route as part of the overall network.
- Shinfield Road Active Travel Route – provision of segregated cycle lanes and enhanced pedestrian facilities as part of this key route between Reading town centre / Silver Street / Southampton Street / Christchurch Road and the University of Reading and beyond.
- A33 Shared Path – provision of a dedicated bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over the River Kennet as part of the bus rapid transit scheme, to maintain a shared facility on this key arterial route.
- Pedestrian Facilities – on-going programme of enhancements to pedestrian facilities throughout the borough, with recent examples including the new shared path facility on Portman Road, and shared crossings on Gosbrook Road, Upper Redlands Road, London Road and Richfield Avenue, providing access to key local amenities.
- Cycle Parking – on-going programme of cycle parking provision including the Reading Station cycle parking hub which has recently been refurbished, and more secure ‘cyclepod’ style cycle parking installed at key locations throughout the town centre.
- Highway and Footpath Resurfacing – on-going programme of road and pavement resurfacing which provide improvements for all modes including active travel.

Initiatives, Training and Incentivisation

3.6. The Council has complemented these infrastructure enhancements with a comprehensive programme of initiatives to encourage the uptake of active travel, with some recent examples highlighted below:

- Bikeability Cycle Training – provision of cycle training in schools with approximately 1,800 children taking part each year in schools throughout the borough.
- Learn to Ride Cycle Training – provision of initial cycle training for younger children and/or less confident cyclists, with approximately 200 children taking part each year.
- Road Safety Education – provision of road safety education workshops to 35 primary schools in the borough last year.
- Adult Cycle Training – provision of adult cycle training courses, with over 230 participants last year.
- Cycle Repair Events and Maintenance Training – provision of Doctor Bike pop-up cycle repair events, and bicycle maintenance workshops to provide residents

with the skills to maintain their bicycles, including a series of women only sessions.

- School Street Schemes – on-going programme of working with schools to delivery school street schemes, with seven schools currently covered by a scheme in the borough.
- Walk to School Week – working with Living Streets to promote walk to school week, with 26 primary schools participating in the borough in 2025. A further 21 schools and nurseries participated in the Little Feet initiative during Walk to School Week last year, designed for younger children.
- School Active Travel Officer – working with Sustrans to provide specialist support for schools to promote sustainable travel, including materials provided through the Modeshift STARS travel planning portal.
- Beat the Street – walking and cycling challenge for schools which was initially provided through an external transport grant secured by the Council with subsequent challenges funded by Public Health.
- Wellbeing Walks – promotion of local walks in Reading to promote both physical and mental wellbeing through provision of a leaflet to complement the local cycle network and route maps.
- Community Events – participation and provision of funding for community events including the East Reading Festival, Children’s Festival, Climate Festival and Reading Cycle Festival.
- Maintenance Activities – on-going programme of maintenance of the walking and cycle routes in the borough, including the rights of way network.

3.7. In many cases ongoing provision of these initiatives is subject to continued funding being allocated by the Council for these activities.

Partnership Working and Outcomes

3.8. The Council has worked positively with partners in order to deliver active travel schemes, with the objective of achieving better facilities for residents. We have worked closely with a wide range of key stakeholders and delivery partners on the active travel programme, alongside learning from best practice and sharing our experiences with others.

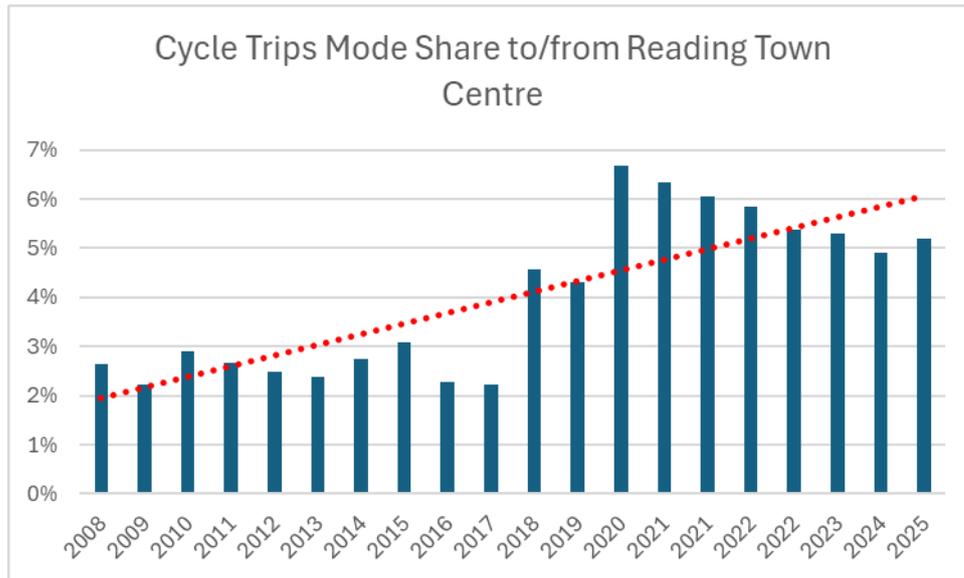
3.9. Recent examples of close partnership working include work with neighbouring local authorities to develop joined-up active travel networks and deliver cross-boundary schemes such as the NCN 422 route and the Woodley to Reading cycle route; working with local schools to deliver School Street schemes and other initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to school; working with Government and Active Travel England to secure grant funding and design approval for our Active Travel Fund schemes; and working with private developers through the planning process to secure improvements to the local walking and cycle networks as part of new developments.

3.10. In addition, Officers have worked extensively with local interest forums, groups and stakeholders to seek input to schemes as they are being developed and to seek feedback to improve future schemes. This includes local Councillor working groups for specific schemes, the Cleaner Air and Safer Transport (CAST) Forum, Cycle Forum, Access and Disabilities Working Group, Older Peoples’ Forum and the Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum (LAF).

3.11. The outcomes that have been achieved through this work have resulted in Reading having amongst the highest mode-share of sustainable travel in the country, outside of London, with a considerable shift to the use of sustainable travel modes in recent years.

3.12. An example of this progress is the travel trends highlighted by the annual cordon counts undertaken by the Council to monitor trends in trips to/from Reading town centre. These

highlight that approximately 55,000 walking trips and 11,000 cycle trips are undertaken every day, with the trend for cycle trips shown below:



- 3.13. The graph highlights the considerable progress that has been made with increasing levels of cycling to/from the town centre, from a mode share of 2-3% between 2008-17 to a mode share of 5-6% in recent years. However, the peak in mode share of over 6% in 2020 during the pandemic highlights there is still further potential for growth, and that active travel has an important role to play to help deliver the Council's objectives. In overall terms, the mode share for travel to/from the town centre by taxi and private car is approximately 23%, with the vast majority by public transport and active travel.

Task & Finish Group Recommendations

- 3.14. The work of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group and their recommendations as set out in appendix B will help the Council build on the considerable success achieved to date.
- 3.15. There are a number of workstreams currently underway which align with and will help deliver some of the recommendations of the Group. This includes work which has been undertaken to reprioritise the Council's Waiting Restrictions Review Programme, and on-going work to clearly map the process from scheme request to implementation, specifically focused on the Council's Requests for Traffic Management Measures List.
- 3.16. In addition, there is an opportunity to further consider a number of the recommendations through future work being undertaken by the Council. This includes the design of the active travel scheme for Bath Road / Castle Hill which is currently being updated with input from Councillors and local stakeholders, and through an update of the Council's LCWIP to refresh our future active travel delivery plans, for which a number of the recommendations are particularly pertinent.
- 3.17. The greater flexibility recently provided by Government for future year active travel funding provides an opportunity for the Council to consider its priorities moving forward. For instance, the focus may be on packages of smaller active travel schemes as part of the wider network.
- 3.18. The longer-term recommendations of the Group, such as investigating the potential for banning pavement parking and the investigation of further demand management measures, will require further work at the appropriate time to understand resourcing and funding requirements. Any decisions regarding progression of these recommendations will be made through the appropriate Council decision making process at that time.
- 3.19. The Council remains keen to learn from best practice and to improve outcomes, an example of this being the on-going work with the University of Reading and Reading Cycle Campaign to undertake a joint research project focused on learning lessons in the

delivery of active travel infrastructure, which can then be applied to the delivery of schemes and initiatives in Reading.

- 3.20. The current status of each of the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group is provided at Appendix A, including a number of factors to be considered as workstreams are taken forward. Next Steps
- 3.21. The proposed next steps for the Council's active travel programme are set out as part of the overall Local Transport Delivery Plan report to this Committee. Government has recently announced annual active travel funding allocations for Local Authorities for both capital grant (until 2029/30) and revenue grant funding (until 2028/29). Whilst this does represent a reduction on previous levels of funding secured by the Council for active travel, due to the move to allocating funding by a standard formula rather than a competitive process, it does provide longer-term certainty and greater flexibility for the Council to take decisions on how best to utilise this funding in the future.
- 3.22. Future plans include delivery of active travel infrastructure enhancements such as the Bath Road / Castle Hill and Sidmouth Street schemes, alongside working with Wokingham to deliver the Woodley to Reading active travel route. In addition, it is proposed to continue delivering the comprehensive programme of initiatives, training and incentivisation which we believe is critical to maximising usage of infrastructure enhancements and increasing levels of active travel in the borough and beyond.
- 3.23. The proposed Delivery Plan also includes an ambitious programme of wider sustainable travel enhancements for public transport as part of the Council's future plans. Therefore, there will be a need to carefully manage and prioritise the finite resources available to the Council, both financial and staff capacity, to effectively deliver this overall programme and ensure best use of available resources.
- 3.24. As a core element of this future work, it is proposed to continue working closely with partners and stakeholders. This will ensure the Council continues to build on past successes and maximises the effectiveness of the schemes and initiatives contained within the Delivery Plan. This would include continuing to both learn from best practice and share our experiences with others, to enable us to further develop and enhance active travel options in the most effective way for residents and visitors to Reading.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The delivery of the programme of active travel schemes and initiatives as set out within this report will help to deliver the five priorities in the Council Plan to promote more equal communities in Reading; secure Reading's economic and cultural success; deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint; safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children; ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.2. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website. These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around one quarter of total carbon emissions, therefore significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council.
- 5.2. The Climate Impact Assessment tool has been used to assess the full programme of works as set out within this report, resulting in an overall Net Medium Positive impact. This is due to the programme being focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The programme will enhance facilities to encourage more use of sustainable transport and active travel options, therefore reducing the use of the private car and resulting

congestion, carbon emissions and other air quality issues. There are inevitably emissions associated with the construction of some schemes, although the Council is working to reduce these short-term impacts in order to achieve the longer-term modal switch benefits.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The active travel schemes and initiatives included within this report have and will be communicated to the local community through public exhibitions, consultations and Council meetings.
- 6.2. Statutory consultation will be conducted as appropriate in accordance with legislation, including Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate. Notices will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area.

7. Equality Implications

- 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. At its meeting on 12 March 2025, SEPT Committee agreed to amend the Task and Finish Group's Terms of Reference to include "inclusion and equality of access" as a key consideration within the scrutiny exercise.
- 7.3. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not considered applicable to the recommendations contained within this report.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. There are none.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. A number of the recommendations from the Active Travel Task and Finish Group have financial implications as set out in the current status and considerations for next steps at Appendix A.
- 10.2. It should be noted that specific grant conditions are attached to the individual external grants which have been secured to fund the delivery of the programme of schemes and initiatives as set out within this report. These conditions relate to both the type of works that the grants can be used to fund and the timescales within which the funding needs to be spent. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Council being required to repay the grant funding, either in part or in full.
- 10.3. The availability of funds for any Active Travel schemes is limited to Active Travel Grants, S106 and CIL funding, there are no other sources of funding available.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. Next steps and further considerations are set out in Appendix A.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Current Status

Appendix B: Recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Full Report

APPENDIX A: ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS - CURRENT STATUS

The table below sets out the current status with each of the recommendations from the Council's Active Travel Task and Finish Group.

It should be noted that the status updates have been prepared by a number of different teams and service areas from across the Council involved in the delivery of active travel work. The lead team is identified against each recommendation.

Summary of Recommendation	Lead Team	Current Status
<p><u>Recommendation 1: Avoidance of 'missing links'</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The group felt that elected members had given a clear 'steer' on increased pedestrian and cyclist priority as part of the Local Transport Strategy, and that officers should ensure that any consideration of statutory duties to facilitate the expeditious movement of traffic on the road network gives sufficient weight to the movement of cyclists and pedestrian traffic, so as not to undermine modal shift.</p> <p>Members of the task and finish group further recommend that a primary criterion for all future strategic scheme selection should be the prioritisation of linking up existing infrastructure to form a contiguous cycle superhighway network. This might often involve starting in the town centre and building outwards, but specific cases would need to be considered in more detail as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update.</p>	<p>Transport Planning</p>	<p><u>Status: Ongoing</u></p> <p>The Council (both Members and officers) has a clear focus on prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements, as it is a key objective in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 to deliver modal shift away from journeys made by private motor vehicle to sustainable and active travel instead. The Council has set an ambitious vision and objectives which were supported through responses received to the consultation process undertaken as part of developing the Transport Strategy.</p> <p>During the planning and design stages, for both active travel schemes as well as bus and other schemes on the highway, work is undertaken to ensure consideration of the impact on the wider network is identified and assessed. This ensures informed decisions are taken with full knowledge of what these impacts are. Whilst it is the Council's policy to promote the active travel, walking and cycling, the Council must still consider the impact on the wider network; recognising that bus services rely on the wider highway network as well as other services including emergency services and Council services such as refuse collections. The Council has a network management duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004, part of which is a duty is to make most efficient use of our existing highway network which is critical to managing congestion within a tightly constrained urban area and schemes are assessed against this backdrop.</p>

		<p>The Transport Strategy includes policies that promote road safety, including improving the safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists as well as prioritising our walking and cycling network to be safe, clean and green. We will design our walking and cycling network to accommodate all users, including wheelchair users, adapted cycles and visually impaired and we will consider carefully the design where pedestrians and cyclists interact. In many, if not all of these cases this will require priority to shift away from general motor traffic and private vehicle trips.</p> <p>The avoidance of 'missing links' will form a core part of the Council's work to update our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), taking onboard feedback from the Group to review and identify missing links in the existing network and opportunities to deliver a more integrated network emanating from the town centre. An example of this is the work the Council is currently undertaking to review options for the segregated cycle facility on Sidmouth Street with the objective of avoiding missing links. This may involve delivering a series of smaller scale interventions at key junctions and intersections. This does however need to recognise that closer to the centre of Reading there is more demand for space as well as less highway space to provide segregated cycle facilities and pedestrian priority, therefore the Council needs to be clear on the impact that the delivery of these facilities will have when taking decisions.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2: Increased use of 'wands' for a better value-vs-effort ratio</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The group recommends that officers should reconsider their approach to segregation, explicitly taking into account the use of lower-cost options (such as bollard/wand protection) where they can deliver a lengthier, more integrated cycle</p>	Transport Planning	<p><u>Status: Ongoing</u></p> <p>It is agreed that there are opportunities within the borough where 'light segregation' may be appropriate, such as the increased use of 'wands' for a better value-vs-effort ratio in comparison to other forms of segregation which require more extensive civil engineering works. It is proposed that the Council continues to consider the various segregation options available, on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that a number of factors are considered in making final recommendations. An</p>

<p>network more quickly, sharing experiences with other local authorities when it may be beneficial.</p> <p>A further recommendation is to review the town's existing painted cycle lanes as part of the LCWIP update, with a view to identifying locations for wands to be installed to improve segregation, as a 'quick win'.</p>		<p>example being the Bath Road / Castle Hill active travel scheme where are currently reviewing the feasibility of incorporating greater levels of light segregation such as the use of wands, as opposed to stepped or full segregation.</p> <p>Alongside this, it is agreed for the Council to undertake a review and update to the LCWIP, to incorporate a review and update to design principles, and which shall include a clear approach to each of the road types and the associated segregation options. As part of the review of the LCWIP, it is agreed that a review should be undertaken of the appropriateness of enhancing the existing on-street cycle facilities in the borough considering the different options for segregation that are available.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 3: Considered use of shared spaces where appropriate</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> Noting that these 'gaps' may be fairly quick and cost-effective to deal with, the group recommends that appropriate consideration be given to extensions to shared space routes as part of the LCWIP review, as part of locally-funded small schemes, to complement the emerging segregated cycle network.</p>	<p>Transport Planning</p>	<p><u>Status: Ongoing</u></p> <p>In developing the cycle network, it is agreed that the Council should continue to consider the implementation of shared spaces, where suitable. It is important to note that active travel (and the adopted LCWIP) covers both pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore, ensuring that the space also remains safe, comfortable and accessible for pedestrians, remains a shared priority.</p> <p>Examples of shared facilities that the Council has delivered in recent years include the shared path on London Road, between the junctions with Silver Street / London Street and Cemetery Junction, the shared path facility on Bath Road between the borough boundary and the junction with Berkeley Avenue and the shared path recently delivered on Portman Road.</p> <p>As part of the review of the LCWIP, it is proposed to commission a survey of "missing links" and consider whether cost effective schemes may be available to complement the active travel network in the borough.</p>

<p><u>Recommendation 4: Continuous footways and 'informal' side-road zebra crossings</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> Options were generally being ruled out by officers on the grounds of inconvenience to motorists, or cost, and felt that they were not currently being sufficiently prioritised in the 'toolbox' of measures available to the council. The group therefore recommends that the council consider examples of best practice in other local authorities and take into account how such crossings can be considered in future major and minor schemes.</p>	Network Services	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>Continuous footways and 'informal' side-road zebra crossings are not being ruled out by the Council, and are supported in principle, but there are implications both in terms of cost and feasibility that need to be considered, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting legislative requirements to ensure that liability/risk is managed. 'Informal' zebra crossings do not exist in current national regulations. • At grade crossings are a vertical traffic calming feature and require statutory notice and consultation. They also require specific advance warning signing on all carriageway approaches unless in a 20mph area. • Surface water management can be a very challenging and costly issue, as the feature blocks normal run-off channels. There are regular experiences of pipework being 4m+ below the carriageway level, for example. • Achieving correct levels – i.e. many carriageways being 'barrelled', whereby the centre can be as high as – or higher than – the footway on either side. • Site-specific risks around intervisibility and or how people will interact with the crossing, in close proximity to the junction. • Cost – the features are material-heavy and will be labour-intensive to install, so they can be a relatively costly feature.
---	------------------	--

		It is recommended that any roll-out is undertaken as cohesive areas on a priority basis, with relatively high footfall to amenities being a significant weighting factor.
<p><u>Recommendation 5: Cyclist-level traffic lights</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The group recommends that the installation of cyclist-level traffic lights should be adopted as the default where new traffic light infrastructure is installed (e.g. on new housing estates),</p> <p>and in junctions undergoing a complete replacement (e.g. via the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant or as part of those ATF works which require a full signal replacement.</p>	Network Services	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>The Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant (TSOG) funding has been used to replace as many high-risk sites as possible. These are sites that are at risk of being offline for potentially significant periods of time if they were damaged, owing to a lack of spare parts and very old infrastructure.</p> <p>The TSOG replacement schemes have been value-engineered to meet the ambition of removing as much risk from the borough's infrastructure as possible and in this regard, the Council has significantly over-achieved.</p> <p>While it is an ambition to have additional features, including cyclist-level traffic lights, these come at additional cost and potential incompatibility with some existing aged equipment at older sites.</p> <p>With the current risk, which is being experienced nationally, the approach that has been taken to date with the capital-funded TSOG work is strongly recommended. Delivering significantly fewer replacements, but with additional features, increases the risk of an overall reduction in active travel benefits and increased road safety risks as sites fail. The reliance to then repair these would then be on very pressured revenue budgets that may not be available at that time.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6: Pavement parking and accessibility for disabled pedestrians</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> It is recommended that the council should await forthcoming government</p>	Network Services / Parking Services	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>Government has recently responded to a previous consultation on pavement parking and any future changes would be subject to Government bringing legislation forward on this. Government's</p>

<p>updates on a national pavement parking ban, and consider to becoming an early adopter or pilot local authority for any opportunities that arise to address pavement obstructions.</p> <p>A further recommendation, specifically concerning the needs of disabled pedestrians, is that the council gives due consideration to benches/perching places as part of proposals to improve the town's public realm, recognising that elderly and infirm people struggle to access amenities without adequate places to rest.</p>		<p>preferred options from the consultation is to 'enable local authorities to enforce against unnecessary obstruction of the pavement', however this requires further work by the DfT to develop powers which will enable local transport authorities to prohibit pavement parking in their areas, including legislation followed by the development of a regulatory framework governing how devolved solutions on pavement parking are to be implemented.</p> <p>Given the infrastructure of the residential areas, there would need to be a considerable amount of work done in assessing the potential impact of displacement. Many residents use the pavements as additional parking spaces to allow vehicles to pass. A ban on pavement parking, while desirable will require significant resources to achieve the objective. Other factors to consider would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TROs will require statutory consultation, alongside the other demands for resources available to undertake TROs. • If pavement parking is banned by default, any 'exceptions' could only be made where the footway is constructed and adjusted for the purpose to ensure the Council does not have any liabilities. This could require significant funding due to the feasibility issues associated with utility apparatus, drainage etc. <p>In principle, it is agreed that a pavement parking ban would fit with the Council's overall objective of prioritising more sustainable modes of transport such as walking.</p> <p>In addition, it is fully agreed that the Council should give due consideration to benches/perching places as part of proposals to improve the town's public realm. Any opportunities to provide additional seating and other accessibility improvements should be taken and this should be a core part of the design process for public realm schemes as and when they come forward through Council and/or developer funded/delivered schemes.</p>
---	--	--

<p><u>Recommendation 7: Making best use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) contributions</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The task and finish group recommends that officers should review processes around how S106 and CIL funds are managed and allocated for active travel, and to ensure that officers are proactively putting forward schemes for funding.</p>	<p>Finance / Planning Policy / Transport Development Control</p>	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>The Council has secured considerable contributions from private developers through the statutory Planning process for improvements to the walking and cycle networks as part of new developments, either through securing Section 106 funding from developers or by securing enhancements to be delivered by the developer themselves. Recent examples include £4.5m S106 contribution towards Green Park Station, contributions towards NCN 422 route and delivery of the shared path facility on Richfield Avenue. The Council intends to continue working with developers to seek further opportunities to deliver active travel enhancements.</p> <p>The Council has an adopted spend protocol for CIL funding. Significant funding has been allocated from 15% CIL for active travel initiatives and 80% is allocated towards the Council's overall Capital programme. The Council's Planning active travel policies are being further strengthened through the Local Plan Partial Update, which has been updated in line with the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, including the Healthy Streets principles.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 8: Consideration of other sources of income, including demand management measures</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> It is recommended that the Council should formally monitor and evaluate examples of income generation from demand management measures implemented in other local authorities, and consider further exploring the potential for a WPPL in Reading when the time is right.</p>	<p>Transport Planning</p>	<p><u>Status: Ongoing</u></p> <p>The opportunity to develop demand management measures to reduce congestion in the borough is included in the Council's Transport Strategy, which sets out the need for any demand management measures to be complemented by measures to increase capacity for travel by sustainable modes and measures to reduce traffic being diverted through unsuitable residential areas.</p> <p>The Council has implemented a number of measures that manage demand, for instance through the reallocation of road space away from private vehicle use for the use of public transport and/or active travel,</p>

		<p>alongside introducing emissions-based parking charges. These are forms of demand management that the Council has successfully introduced over the last few years.</p> <p>In addition, the Council undertook a considerable feasibility study in 2020 to consider the implementation of various demand management measures, including a Workplace Parking Levy and a Clean Air Zone. At the time the decision was taken not to proceed with any of these options, in part due to the risks associated with the financial business cases for the various options.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Council continues to monitor the implementation of demand management measures in other cities and towns throughout the country, enabling the success or impact of these to inform our understanding of synergies with Reading and whether they may be appropriate to deliver in the future.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 9: Reprioritisation of Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (WRRP)</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The majority of the task and finish group members agreed to recommend that the Reading Borough Council should limit the size of the WWRP to allow for greater officer time to be allocated to active travel work. Furthermore, the council should introduce a transparent scoring matrix for the WRRP submissions, which weights requests according to the council's various priorities (including active travel), and aligns with the LCWIP.</p>	Network Services	<p><u>Status: Complete</u></p> <p>Changes to the Council's Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (WRRP) were proposed to, and agreed by, Traffic Management Sub-Committee in November 2025. These included a reduction to a single programme per year, introducing a scoring system to help prioritise requests for inclusion and measures to optimise the number of requests to be investigated.</p> <p>These changes were proposed to help balance the resourcing cost against this programme and other workstream development and will, of course, be kept under review.</p>

<p><u>Recommendation 10: A clear pathway from scheme request to implementation</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The task and finish group recommends that the existing ‘request lists’ be combined into one, with clear criteria for progression from idea to approval, to implementation.</p> <p>Officers are also requested to ensure that engagement with key stakeholders, including the Reading Cycle Campaign, takes place at the earliest formative stages of scheme development.</p>	<p>Network Services / Transport Planning</p>	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>The Council has been working to prioritise and refine the ‘Requests for Traffic Management Measures’ list that is regularly reported to Traffic Management Sub-Committee. There is still work to do, following the first reporting of this work at the November 2025 meeting. It is agreed the ambition to appropriately collate thematic requests for potentially different purposes, with reaching agreement on the prioritisation and for there to be a focus on funding and delivering, rather than adding to existing long lists.</p> <p>Once funding is available, the Council will begin to map out the investigation and development journey around other workstreams undertaken by Network Services. Resourcing does not currently allow for development of unfunded schemes, as this would impact on resourcing availability to develop other funded schemes that are expected.</p> <p>In addition, the Council has worked hard in recent years to improve engagement with key stakeholders, including the Reading Cycle Campaign, to improve the working relationship and lines of communication. This has enabled discussion of schemes at an earlier stage of design development to gain valuable insight and input and for stakeholders to better understand how the Council develops schemes, the conditions under which decisions are taken and any funding criteria associated with schemes.</p> <p>The Council meets regularly with members of the Reading Cycle Campaign (RCC) to discuss individual schemes as well as a wider general discussion on cycling issues. An example of this in practice was the design changes proposed by RCC to the NCN 422 scheme on Bath Road which were incorporated into the final designs for the scheme.</p>
--	--	--

<p><u>Recommendation 11: Embedding active travel across the Council</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The task and finish group recommends that the council should formally reiterate its commitment to active travel, and that the council should take steps to ensure that the active travel strategic vision is consistently embedded across all relevant council departments, thereby ensuring that day-to-day operational decisions consistently support the growth of safe and cohesive cycling and walking infrastructure.</p>	Council-wide	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>It is agreed that the Council's strategic vision for active travel and its ambitious objectives should be embedded across all relevant Council departments and teams, whilst recognising the wide-range of objectives and balancing of differing demands that are required, particularly due to limited highway space on many roads in the borough.</p> <p>The Council is currently undertaking reorganisation with an objective to more closely align some of the teams currently engaged in transport activities, including active travel. This aligns with the objectives as set out in the Council Plan to deliver improvements to public transport, cycling, and walking infrastructure in Reading, in particular to deliver funded active travel schemes to encourage more walking and cycling in line with the Council's adopted Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 12: Senior leadership oversight and project management to ensure delivery at pace</u></p> <p><u>Summary:</u> The recommendation is that the council should review mechanisms for senior leadership oversight, and ways to ensure that the strategic vision for active travel is being consistently implemented and that delivery is proceeding at pace, with clear reporting lines from the Chief Executive to the Executive Director.</p>	Senior Leadership / Transport Planning	<p><u>Status: On-going</u></p> <p>The Council has delivered a wide-range of strategic active travel schemes in recent years. Internal and external governance and progress reporting for the delivery of active travel schemes is regularly undertaken. This includes reporting to senior leadership including the Council's Capital Board, Climate Board, Transport & Highways Procurement Board, Department Management Team (DMT) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). Budget monitoring, both capital and revenue (of which active travel is one part), is regularly undertaken with the Council's Finance team every period. This includes reporting of budget pressures as required.</p> <p>In addition, progress on the delivery of transport schemes and initiatives is subsequently reported to elected Members, local interest groups and residents through a variety of ways. This includes regular progress reports to Lead Councillor Briefings, CAST and Cycle</p>

		Forums, Traffic Management Sub-Committee and SEPT Committee, alongside Council press releases.
--	--	--

This page is intentionally left blank

Active Travel Task and Finish Scrutiny Group Report (updated Nov 2025)

1. Summary

- 1.1 The cross-party task and finish group was established by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) committee in March 2025, with a remit to scrutinise the implementation of the council's cycling and walking strategy, and to make recommendations.
- 1.2 The group took written evidence from Reading Borough Council officers, local community groups, and high-performing local authorities for active travel. Further oral evidence was taken via a meeting with representatives of the Reading Cycle Campaign, and a meeting with Transport officers.
- 1.3 In line with the terms of reference, the task and finish group has not proposed any changes to the council's recently-agreed Local Transport Strategy, but has instead concentrated on identifying ways to improve the implementation of the existing strategy. The group has sought to reach unanimity, and its recommendations have been agreed '*nem con*' unless otherwise specified.
- 1.4 Reading's Local Transport Strategy has been independently assessed, in a recent Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) report, as setting ambitious goals for modal shift to active and public transport. The report, considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 9 April 2025 [[viewable here](#)], noted that staffing constraints mean that it will only be possible to achieve these targets if all resources are prioritised in a way that aligns with the council's strategic objectives. Members recognised that these constraints are a national issue affecting all councils, it is noted that current Transport for the South East (TFSE) studies and consultations [[viewable here](#)] have verified that active travel in Reading is further ahead in their journeys towards modal shift than other councils in the South East and elsewhere and that there is opportunity for local improvement to better meet our strategic goals.
- 1.5 The group was mindful of the financial position that the council faces, and therefore has not made any recommendations for unfunded additional expenditure. The focus has instead been on looking at how processes can be improved, and how existing funding sources could best be used and prioritised, as several areas of concern were identified in this area.
- 1.6 Members found that while a strong strategic commitment to active travel exists, its effective implementation is currently facing operational challenges. This report sets out 12 recommendations across three themes, focusing on rebalancing scheme design priorities, best utilising available funding, and aligning internal processes to accelerate the delivery of a cohesive and safe active travel network, in order to meet the council's existing targets for modal shift:

Recommendations

- 1: Avoidance of 'missing links'
- 2: Increased use of 'wands' for a better value-vs-effort ratio

- 3: Considered use of shared spaces where appropriate
- 4: Continuous footways and 'informal' side-road zebra crossings
- 5: Cyclist-level traffic lights
- 6: Pavement parking and accessibility for disabled pedestrians
- 7: Making best use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) contributions
- 8: Consideration of other sources of income, including demand management measures
- 9: Reprioritisation of Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (WRRP)
- 10: A clear pathway from scheme request to implementation
- 11: Embedding active travel across the council
- 12: Senior leadership oversight and project management to ensure delivery at pace

- 1.7 The task and finish group members would like to extend our thanks to the local community groups, Reading Borough Council officers, and officers from other authorities who provided evidence to this scrutiny process; and to Andrew Wood and Committee Services officers for providing valuable administrative support to assist members in carrying out this review.

Recommendations

2. Scheme Design and Prioritisation

- 2.1 The group assessed whether the council is striking the right balance in its approach to scheme design and prioritisation, taking evidence from other councils and carefully considering feedback and suggestions from local stakeholders. Members were particularly mindful of evidence from leading local authorities, which showed that the areas which have seen the greatest level of modal shift to active travel are those which have implemented extensive, segregated and connected cycle networks, enabling people to feel safe when using active travel.
- 2.2 Members found a range of examples of best practice from other local authorities. Glasgow City Council has seen significant modal shift due to its segregated network; Greater Manchester councils have worked with the mayoral authority to deliver an integrated network across local authority areas; Edinburgh has developed new Street Design Guidance to incorporate dropped kerbs, tighter junction radii and pavement widening during infrastructure renewal schemes; Nottingham has introduced a Workplace Parking Levy to fund sustainable transport infrastructure; Lambeth has developed a kerbside use strategy to reallocate space from cars to pedestrians, cyclists and sustainable urban drainage; and Southwark's Streets for People scheme is moving away from favouring cars in order to free up space for cycling and walking.

Recommendation 1: Avoidance of 'missing links'

- 2.3 Members of the group acknowledged that there was a strong perception from public stakeholders that Reading's cycling network contained numerous 'missing links', which hindered uptake among potential cyclists. The group noted that even short gaps in

connectivity can have the effect of forcing cyclists onto busy main roads where they feel less confident, which precludes people from using the bicycle for the entire journey. As mentioned above, it was noted that the local authorities which had seen the greatest increase in cycle usage were those who had successfully delivered a connected and segregated network via a 'cycle superhighway' approach.

- 2.4 Members considered three case studies of Active Travel Fund (ATF) funded schemes to try and ascertain why missing links could arise:

Shinfield Road

The Shinfield Road cycle scheme has delivered a long length of stepped track, but active travel upgrades to the Christchurch Green junction are intended to take place in a subsequent phase, thereby resulting in a missing link between the new Shinfield Road scheme and Redlands Road. Members noted that previous ATF bidding requirements had limited the types of schemes that the council could put forward in specific funding rounds but noted that the funding allocation mechanism had recently been made more flexible, providing an opportunity for a reconsideration of the approach taken in putting schemes forward.

Members found that the prioritisation matrix for previous ATF-funded strategic cycle schemes had led to missing links, by preferring schemes which had the highest net level of support in the public consultation, rather than preferring schemes which would most help to deliver a connected cycle network.

Castle Hill

The group welcomed the approach taken with the proposed Castle Hill scheme, whereby the initial phase of delivery will concentrate on the more dangerous Inner Distribution Road (IDR) roundabout end (which connects with existing cycle routes in the town centre) as opposed to delivering a long length of cycle track along the Bath Road which would end with a missing link when cyclists arrived at the IDR roundabout.

Southampton Street

Members noted that a lengthy mandatory cycle lane (between the Hindu Temple and the former Red Cow pub, via an existing bus lane) had been introduced quickly and effectively as part of Covid-era ATF measures, but that there is then a gap in the form of a busy road between the Red Cow junction and the bus lane at the Oracle roundabout. No subsequent progress had been made with connecting these two schemes, due to officer concerns about the potential impact on car traffic at the roundabout, thereby resulting in a missing link.

The group felt that elected members had given a clear 'steer' on increased pedestrian and cyclist priority as part of the Local Transport Strategy, and that the council should ensure that any consideration of statutory duties to facilitate the expeditious movement of traffic on the road network gives sufficient weight to the movement of cyclists and pedestrian traffic, to promote modal shift.

Members of the task and finish group further recommend that a primary criterion for all future strategic scheme selection should be the prioritisation of linking up

existing infrastructure to form a contiguous cycle superhighway network. This might often involve starting in the town centre and building outwards, but specific cases would need to be considered in more detail as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update.

Recommendation 2: Increased use of ‘wands’ for a better value-vs-effort ratio

- 2.5 It was recognised that a variety of Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) compliant methods of cycle lane segregation exist, including stepped tracks and bollards/wands. The group noted that existing strategic schemes in Reading had largely used stepped tracks, which are high quality and good practice, but are significantly more costly, and do not allow as long a length of cycle track to be implemented for the same amount of money as methods such as wands.
- 2.6 From officer evidence, it was noted that the primary reason for not using wands in schemes was a concern that it would be harder to clear leaves from these routes, however, members noted from the evidence of leading local authorities that this had seemingly not proved to be an impediment to wand-based schemes elsewhere, and felt that the gutter issue was a factor to be weighed up against other priorities, rather than a reason to rule out wands altogether. It was also noted that wands can be used to deliver large lengths of segregation quickly, with the potential to upgrade the schemes at a later stage if warranted.
- 2.7 The group recommends that the council should reconsider its approach to segregation, explicitly taking into account the use of lower-cost options (such as bollard/wand protection) where they can deliver a lengthier, more integrated cycle network more quickly, sharing experiences with other local authorities when it may be beneficial.
- 2.8 A further recommendation is to review the town’s existing painted cycle lanes as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update, with a view to identifying locations for wands to be installed to improve segregation, as a ‘quick win’.



Figure 1: a stepped cycle track (DfT - Department for Transport)



Figure 2: a cycle lane with wand segregation (TfL - Transport for London)

Recommendation 3: Considered use of shared spaces where appropriate

- 2.9 The group noted that shared spaces are not preferred by Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) guidance, and therefore any schemes involving these would be unlikely to qualify for Active Travel Fund (ATF) funding. However, it was also recognised that, while there are some issues with pedestrian and cyclist interface on shared paths, they can also feel safer to novice cyclists (including women and children), and therefore may be beneficial in encouraging modal shift, especially in areas with existing wide paths and low footfall.
- 2.10 Members noted that there are numerous ‘gaps’ in the town’s existing shared space network, as well as some missing pavement markers, missing tactile paving, instances of signage on the pavement surface not being reflected on the cycle network map, and instances of routes indicated on the map not having the appropriate indication on the pavement surface.
- 2.11 Noting that these ‘gaps’ may be fairly quick and cost-effective to deal with, the group recommends that appropriate consideration be given to extensions to shared space routes as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) review, as locally-funded small schemes, to complement the emerging segregated cycle network.



Figure 3: a shared-use path for cyclists and pedestrians (DfT)

Recommendation 4: Continuous footways and ‘informal’ side-road zebra crossings

- 2.12 Members noted that recent changes to the Highway Code had given increased priority to pedestrians and cyclists and side road junctions, and noted that a growing number of local authorities have been redesigning such junctions to increase the physical sense of priority, such as continuous footways/Copenhagen crossings. These entry treatments physically maintain the pavement level and surface material, indicating to drivers that they are crossing a continuous pedestrian route, rather than the other way around. This design enhances accessibility for disabled users and pushchairs by eliminating the need to navigate kerbs, making the walking route more direct and uninterrupted. A further, and more cost-effective measure, can be found in pilots of ‘informal’ side road zebra crossings, in Westminster and other local authorities.

- 2.13 The group found that there had been some examples of good practice with continuous footways in Reading, but this was not consistent and did not form part of a larger commitment to such entry treatments.
- 2.14 It was also noted that some London authorities had implemented continuous paths for cyclists and pedestrians where segregated cycles tracks had been installed. Members noted that there would be cost considerations to such an approach, but that this type of infrastructure may avoid some of the issues with sharp kerbs that have affected the Shinfield Road scheme where the raised path ends and restarts at each side road, as well as improving the sense of priority.
- 2.15 While the group noted that continuous footways would not be suitable for every junction, it was felt that such options were generally being ruled out on the grounds of inconvenience to motorists, or cost, and felt that they were not currently being sufficiently prioritised in the 'toolbox' of measures available to the council. The group therefore recommends that the council consider examples of best practice in other local authorities and take into account how such crossings can promote modal shift in future major and minor schemes.



Figure 4: Shinfield Road stepped cycle track with white painted entry treatment (Google Maps)



Figure 5: a stepped cycle track with 'flush kerb' entry treatment (Google Maps)



Figure 6: an entry treatment of both a stepped cycle track and continuous footway (Google Maps)



Figure 7: a continuous footway for pedestrians (Google Maps)



Figure 8: an informal side-road zebra crossing (Google Maps)

Recommendation 5: Cyclist-level traffic lights

- 2.16 Cyclist-level traffic lights can be installed alongside normal traffic lights at advance stop lines, or as part of segregated infrastructure. These can sometimes be phased differently to allow early release, they improve visibility and safety, and more generally provide a visual reminder to all road users that cyclists are using the junctions.
- 2.17 The group found that there were very few such traffic lights in Reading, and although the Council had supported their use in principle, there had been no progress towards installing any, due to cost considerations. Members recognised that cost would generally prohibit the retrofitting of cyclist-level lights on existing infrastructure due to its fragility, as this would require a full replacement of the existing traffic lights, but noted that many other local authorities have similar issues with ageing infrastructure yet had introduced a significant number of cyclist-level lights. It was further noted that no cyclist-level signals had been installed as part of the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant funded programme on cost grounds; members did not feel that this reflected the correct balance of strategic priorities.
- 2.18 The group recommends that the installation of cyclist-level traffic lights should be adopted as the default where new traffic light infrastructure is installed (e.g. on new housing estates), and in junctions undergoing a complete replacement (e.g. via the

Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant or as part of those Active Travel Fund (ATF) works which require a full signal replacement).



Figure 9: cycle traffic lights at eye level (DfT)

Recommendation 6: Pavement parking and accessibility for disabled pedestrians

- 2.19 A recurring theme in the evidence from stakeholders was that pavements are routinely obstructed by parked cars, which causes a significant impediment for pedestrians and disabled people. It was noted that there are some streets where pavement parking restrictions would result in a reduction in car parking capacity, due to the roads in question being too narrow for cars to park on both sides unless using the pavement. Members felt that that a loss of parking capacity was not, in itself, a good reason to rule out pavement parking restrictions, as the Local Transport Strategy specifically commits to the reallocation of space from cars to pedestrians, whose needs are not currently being adequately prioritised.
- 2.20 In 2014, the council implemented a pavement and verge parking ban via Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), in Tilehurst and Southcote. Members recognised that for administrative reasons it would not be feasible to implement a boroughwide ban via this method, and that the council is waiting for the government to make an announcement on changes to national legislation. In the meantime, individual problem streets could be considered for parking restrictions via the existing waiting restrictions review programme, noting the significant capacity constraints.
- 2.21 It is therefore recommended that the council should await forthcoming government updates on a national pavement parking ban, and consider becoming an early adopter or pilot local authority for any opportunities that arise to address pavement obstructions.
- 2.22 A further recommendation, specifically concerning the needs of disabled pedestrians, is that the council give due consideration to benches/perching places as part of proposals to improve the town's public realm, recognising that pregnant women, disabled and elderly people, those living with chronic pain, and carers with small children etc struggle to access amenities without adequate places to rest.

3. Funding

- 3.1 The group considered whether the council is making the best use of all current and potential funding sources to finance active travel schemes.
- 3.2 Members noted that constraints on local authority finances mean that active travel schemes must generally be funded from income sources outside of the council's general revenue streams. In Reading, strategic active travel schemes have largely been funded via the government's Active Travel Fund (ATF), as well as some use of Section 106 monies. A key theme noted in the response from Reading Cycle Campaign was the slow progress with the backlog of 'small scheme' implementation, due to a lack of funding, and the task and finish group has focused on making recommendations to improve the CIL process in order to address this.
- 3.3 Members recognised that transport schemes are only one of several 'themes' for Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) expenditure, with others including parks, public realm improvements and community facilities. It was recognised that transport expenditure should be balanced with these other areas of spending, but members felt that the right balance was not currently being struck, particularly when it came to 80% CIL, where the lack of any funding for cycling infrastructure was not felt to reflect the council's strategic priorities.

Recommendation 7: Making best use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) contributions

- 3.4 The group took evidence on the current use of developer contributions (such as CIL and S106 funds) for major and minor active travel schemes.
- 3.5 Members expressed significant concern that the 15% CIL process did not appear to be operating effectively in this area. The current situation is that minor active travel measures (such as improved cycling facilities, pedestrian refuges, speed calming features, modal filters etc) are agreed by committee, subject to funding, with the main source of potential funding being 15% CIL. The CIL terms of reference allow either councillors or officers to submit funding bids, to be agreed by the Policy Committee; however, officer feedback indicated that officers had not submitted any CIL funding requests for these schemes, meaning that a backlog of agreed schemes has built up. Members noted that, in practice, 15% CIL bids only originate from ward councillors – this leads to a failure point in the process, as an active travel network will have gaps if ward members in different areas have different priorities. It was also noted that, where members have put forward new cycling and walking measures for CIL funding, these are often schemes that do not feature in the existing list of agreed schemes.
- 3.6 Members noted that £500,000 of 80% CIL funding had been used (by Network Management) to successfully and quickly deliver a programme of dropped kerbs and grab rails to benefit pedestrians. However, this was a new programme that did not originate from the agreed list of schemes, which are still forming a backlog. Evidence from Finance officers was that no bids had been received from the Strategic Transport team for 80% CIL funding, which members considered to be a missed opportunity. It was noted that there had been significant use of 80% CIL funding for road resurfacing,

which will provide some benefit to cyclists and pedestrians, but members did not consider that this balance of funding adequately reflected the changing priorities of the council for active travel.

- 3.7 The group also noted that there had been use of S106 contributions in funding schemes by both Network Management and Strategic Transport, however, it was observed that a significant number of pending schemes in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and other request lists are located in the town centre, and that progress has not been made with these despite significant housing development in this area, and associated developer contributions.
- 3.8 Members noted that a source of frustration from cycling groups was the lengthy list of small measures in the town centre area, which had been outstanding for many years, predominantly signage and wayfinding measures, without an identified funding source.
- 3.9 The task and finish group recommends that the council should review processes around how S106 and CIL funds are managed and allocated for active travel, and to ensure that officers are proactively putting forward schemes for funding.

Recommendation 8: Consideration of other sources of income, including demand management measures

- 3.10 As mentioned above, a significant constraint on active travel scheme delivery is the limited available funding. Members noted that in the medium term a metro-mayoral authority will be introduced; this is a potential source of additional funding, and many of the councils with the highest active travel capability rating are part of combined authorities. A risk is that Reading Borough Council will not be able to fully benefit from this funding due to capacity issues, and members therefore request that officers plan ahead for any opportunities that are likely to arise from devolution.
- 3.11 Members also recognised that the several leading authorities have introduced schemes such as the Workplace Parking Levy, Clean Air Zone or Congestion Charge. These are demand management measures, the primary function of which is to change travel behaviours, but which have the second order effect of raising income which is ringfenced to transport expenditure, including active travel. The task and finish group noted that a Workplace Parking Levy (WPPL) had previously been considered by Reading Borough Council, which had the potential to raise a significant amount of income depending on the area covered, but this had not been progressed due to uncertainty about post-Covid travel behaviours.
- 3.12 The group recognised that any such scheme would be a significant undertaking, and felt that the current priority should be to ensure that all existing funding sources are being fully utilised, and that processes are working properly. However, it is recommended that the council should formally monitor and evaluate examples of income generation from demand management measures implemented in other local authorities, and consider further exploring the potential for a WPPL in Reading when the time is right.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 The group considered whether officer time, processes, and high-level vision are adequately aligned with strategic active travel aims.

Recommendation 9: Reprioritisation of Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (WRRP)

- 4.2 It was recognised in the recent Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) review that Reading Borough Council has an ambitious target for active travel, and that a key risk is lack of officer capacity in delivering the necessary programme of work. The evidence which the task and finish group took from officers highlighted the fact that a significant proportion of officer time is currently taken up by the Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (involving changes to double yellow lines, parking bays etc), and associated Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) administration, investigation and consultation work. This has limited the amount of time available for active travel measures, and resulted in a backlog. While noting that double yellow lines can be popular with residents, they are not a strategic priority in the Local Transport Strategy, unlike active travel, and members did not feel that the council is currently getting the balance right.
- 4.3 The majority of the task and finish group members agreed to recommend that Reading Borough Council should limit the size of the Waiting Restrictions Review Programme (WRRP) to allow for greater officer time to be allocated to active travel work. Furthermore, the council should introduce a transparent scoring matrix for the WRRP submissions, which weights requests according to the council's various priorities (including active travel), and aligns with the LCWIP.

Recommendation 10: Clear pathway from scheme request to implementation

- 4.4 Members of the group found that the current progress route for scheme requests lacks clarity and consistency, and that there are too many 'request lists', leading to mismanaged expectations and frustrations from members of the public.
- 4.5 In their written evidence, officers set out the route that schemes should take through the council's processes:
- Inclusion/alignment with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - Optioneering
 - Concept design
 - Funding secured
 - Scheme and spend approval (Policy/Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (SEPT))
 - Initial public consultation (including engagement with local interest groups)
 - Review feedback and amend plans as appropriate
 - Detailed design
 - Approval to undertake statutory consultation (Traffic Management Sub-Committee (TMSC))
 - Statutory consultation
 - Review feedback and amend plans as appropriate
 - Report objections / scheme amendments (TMSC)
 - Procurement of a contractor

- Construction
- Scheme opening
- Scheme monitoring

- 4.6 Members felt that in practice, requests were not consistently following this pathway, with too many 'on ramps' and 'off ramps' throughout. For example, some completely new schemes were being put forward for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding by councillors which did not form part of the agreed LCWIP, schemes that had been approved by committee or are in the existing LCWIP had not been progressed for funding, and there were too many 'request lists' with no clear pathway for progression. Currently, the various request lists include the Requests for Traffic Management Measures, the Cycle Forum request list and the CIL request list, as well as the LCWIP and ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan). In some locations, multiple conflicting schemes have been developed, and it is not always clear which proposals have been superseded, so this will need to be considered as part of the LCWIP review to ensure clarity and effective prioritisation.
- 4.7 The task and finish group recommends that the existing 'request lists' be combined into one, with clear criteria for progression from idea, to approval, to implementation.
- 4.8 Officers are also requested to ensure that engagement with key stakeholders, including the Reading Cycle Campaign, takes place at the earliest formative stages of scheme development.

Recommendation 11: Embedding active travel across the council

- 4.9 Members noted that the council has undergone a significant change in strategic priorities around active travel in recent years, and recognised the strong commitment to cycling and walking from key officers, but noted that in order for the ambitious modal shift targets to be achieved, it will be necessary to ensure that these new priorities are fully embedded across a range of departments, including Network Management, Anti Social-Behaviour (ASB) and Public Realm, Planning etc.
- 4.10 The task and finish group recommends that the council should formally reiterate its commitment to active travel, and that the council should take steps to ensure that the active travel strategic vision is consistently embedded across all relevant council departments, thereby ensuring that day-to-day operational decisions consistently support the growth of safe and cohesive cycling and walking infrastructure.

Recommendation 12: Senior leadership oversight and project management to ensure delivery at pace

- 4.11 Members of the task and finish group noted that perceptions of the progress to-date on active travel differed between officers and public stakeholders. The group felt that there needs to be more clarity around the effective project management of major schemes, with concern about the number of strategic Active Travel Fund (ATF) schemes that have yet to be completed.
- 4.12 The recommendation is that the council should review mechanisms for senior leadership oversight, and ways to ensure that the strategic vision for active travel is

being consistently implemented and that delivery is proceeding at pace, with clear reporting lines from the Chief Executive to the Executive Director.

5. Next steps

Progress tracker

- 5.1 Officers are requested to provide a report to the next meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee, agreeing or rejecting each recommendation; and to update councillors by way of a light-touch progress tracker to every second meeting of SEPT Committee, until all accepted recommendations are completed.

(Version: updated following SEPT Committee on 19 November 2025)

This page is intentionally left blank

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

11 March 2026

Title	Local Transport Delivery Plan
Purpose of the report	To seek approval for submission of the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan to Government
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Chris Maddocks, Strategic Transport Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee notes the allocation of local transport grant funding from Government for the period 2026/27-29/30. 2. That the Committee approves the submission of the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan to Government, as provided at Appendix A.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the submission of the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan to Government. This Plan sets out a high-level programme for the investment of both capital and revenue grant funding which has been allocated to the Council by the Department for Transport (DfT). The Plan period covers 2026/27-29/30 for capital, and 2026/27-28/29 for revenue grant funding.
- 1.2. The Council is required to submit its initial version of the Local Transport Delivery Plan to the DfT by 20 March, with the final version having to be submitted to Government by 18 September 2026.
- 1.3. In addition, the report provides context to the delivery of transport schemes and initiatives in Reading over recent years, and the outcomes that have been achieved by the Council working with key partners. This has resulted in Reading achieving amongst the highest levels of sustainable travel in the country, outside of London, as demonstrated by the latest Government bus and rail usage statistics as set out within the report.
- 1.4. There is the opportunity to build on this past success utilising the funding which has been allocated by Government for future years.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council adopted its new Local Transport Plan (LTP), the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, at the meeting of full Council on 15 October 2024. The Strategy sets out a vision to create healthier, greener and more equal communities through the future provision of travel choices in Reading. The Strategy is focused on promoting sustainable transport options as a realistic alternative to the private car, setting out how

transport facilities and services will be developed to 2040 to help achieve the Council's wider objectives for the town as set out in the Council Plan.

- 2.2. The LTP sets the overarching vision for future transport provision in Reading, with sub-strategies providing more detailed implementation plans for specific topics. These include the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 2.3. Government is currently preparing a new Integrated National Transport Strategy. This will focus on creating a transport network that works well for people; and is safe, reliable and accessible, so everyone can make the journeys they need to easily. Priorities will include aligning transport with development, simplifying payments and information, improving accessibility and inclusion, and providing safe and dependable journeys. It is anticipated that the DfT will also publish updated LTP guidance for local authorities in line with the new national strategy.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. In December 2025, Government announced a new consolidated approach to funding for local transport for the next Spending Review period, starting in April 2026. This approach moves away from providing opportunities for local authorities to bid for funding for transport schemes and initiatives through competitive processes, to a system whereby the majority of funding is allocated via needs-based formula to local authorities.
- 3.2. As part of this new approach, the DfT requires local authorities to produce a Local Transport Delivery Plan. This should set out details of how the new Integrated Transport Fund (ITF) grant will be prioritised, with details of schemes and interventions or programmes and packages of spend. The initial versions of these Delivery Plans are required to be submitted to the DfT by 20 March 2026, with final versions submitted by 18 September 2026.
- 3.3. The grant funding allocations to local authorities from Government remain based on different modes, such as highways maintenance, bus services and active travel; however, they will be consolidated into the ITF grant payments with greater flexibility provided to authorities on how they can be spent.
- 3.4. The grant allocations for Reading are set out below:

Capital Grant	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Local Transport Grant	1,741,400	2,285,300	3,131,700	3,978,100
Bus Grant	1,498,600	1,528,700	1,558,900	1,589,000
Active Travel Grant	575,600	575,600	575,600	575,600
Highways Maintenance	2,873,000	3,377,000	3,641,000	4,162,000
Total	6,688,600	7,766,600	8,907,200	10,304,700

Revenue Grant	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Local Transport Grant	234,500	234,500	234,500	N/A
Bus Grant	1,074,000	1,074,000	1,074,000	N/A
Active Travel Grant	180,600	180,600	180,600	N/A
Electric Vehicle Charging	138,600	138,600	138,600	N/A
Total	1,627,700	1,627,700	1,627,700	N/A

- 3.5. The new funding arrangements provide longer-term certainty and more flexibility for the Council to take decisions on how best to utilise this funding, with fewer grant specific conditions than has been the case in recent years. In addition, the Council has recently received confirmation that it will continue to receive a separate grant for the provision of Bikeability cycle training in schools for the period 26/27 - 28/29.
- 3.6. Whilst authorities have been provided with this greater flexibility, Government has made clear that this funding should be used to achieve national priorities which will be set

through the Local Transport Outcome Framework. This will outline measurable priority outcomes Government wants local authorities to achieve, reflecting shared national and local priorities for transport which will be aligned with the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy.

Progress to Date

- 3.7. The Council has made considerable progress in delivering local transport schemes and initiatives in recent years, in a large part due to successfully securing significant amounts of external grant funding through competitive bidding processes. This has enabled the Council to improve travel options for residents, with a focus on sustainable transport choices, in line with our overall transport vision and objectives.
- 3.8. Examples of schemes the Council has successfully delivered in recent years include the redevelopment of Reading Railway Station interchanges; Reading Green Park Station; Reading West Station redevelopment; South Reading Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); three new park and ride sites; Reading All-Bus multi-operator ticket discount scheme; a programme of bus service enhancements and bus priority measures; National Cycle Network (NCN) route 422; Christchurch Bridge; School Street schemes; and a programme of initiatives, training and incentivisation particularly focused on active travel choices.
- 3.9. Alongside the delivery of major transport schemes and initiatives, the Council has successfully delivered an on-going programme of road safety, traffic management, parking, highway resurfacing and streetlighting maintenance schemes, to improve travel facilities for all users.
- 3.10. In addition to grant funding from the DfT, the Council has worked successfully in recent years to secure further external funding for transport schemes. This has included securing considerable funding directly from Network Rail, Great Western Railway, Innovate UK, and historically from EU funded programmes. The Council has also worked proactively with private developers through the statutory planning process to secure funding and/or deliver improvements to the transport network as part of new residential and commercial developments in the town.

Outcomes

- 3.11. The outcomes achieved from this work to promote sustainable travel has resulted in Reading achieving amongst the highest levels of sustainable travel in the country, outside of London, as set out below; with a considerable shift to the use of sustainable transport modes in recent years.
- 3.12. The latest statistics for rail usage show that passenger numbers grew at all four stations in the borough during 2024/25, with usage at Reading West Station increasing by 43% following the station redevelopment works. Passengers at Reading Station increased by almost 1 million to 14.3 million compared to the previous year, making it one of the UK's busiest railway stations outside of London.
- 3.13. Bus usage also continued to grow in 2024/25 following the significant programme of enhancements delivered by the Council in partnership with local operators. This has resulted in usage heading back to pre-Covid levels, with 20 million passenger journeys on local bus services in the borough during 2024/25, compared with 19.5 million the previous year. This means Reading continues to have the third highest bus use, outside of London, per head of population in the UK; however we are aware of falling fare-paying passenger numbers on some services in the Reading area during the current year.
- 3.14. Levels of active travel are also increasing, with approximately 55,000 walking trips and 11,000 cycle trips undertaken every day to/from Reading town centre. The trend for levels of cycling to/from the town centre has considerably increased, from a mode share of 2-3% between 2008-17 to a mode share of 5-6% in recent years, peaking in 2020 during the pandemic at over 6% of trips to/from the town centre.

Local Transport Delivery Plan

- 3.15. The Initial Local Transport Delivery Plan (attached at Appendix A) sets out how the Council proposes to build on this past success and allocate the ITF grant from Government for the period 2026/27-29/30 for capital funding, and 2026/27-28/29 for revenue funding.
- 3.16. The Delivery Plan includes a number of schemes and initiatives which are currently underway, including the Council's annual highways resurfacing programme; introduction of new electric buses; delivery of further bus priority measures; improved passenger facilities at Mere oak Park and Ride site; provision of enhanced bus services including Buzz 9 and 18 routes; delivery of the Bath Road / Castle Hill active travel scheme and the provision of a comprehensive programme of active travel initiatives, training and incentivisation to encourage higher levels of walking, cycling and wheeling.
- 3.17. Further schemes and initiatives have been included in the Delivery Plan to build upon the success of the Council's previous Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Active Travel Fund (AFT) programmes in recent years. Examples of new items include: updating the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and improvements for all users in Sidmouth Street through a redesign of the existing road layout. However, it should be noted that approval for progressing individual schemes such as this one will be sought from the relevant Council Committee or Sub-Committee in the usual way.
- 3.18. In addition, funding has also been allocated to the Council's on-going programmes relating to road safety, traffic management, parking and highway maintenance schemes.
- 3.19. The proposed initial Local Transport Delivery Plan is provided at Appendix A of this report. The Council is required to submit an Initial Plan to the DfT by 20 March. There is opportunity thereafter to fully develop the Council's final Delivery Plan before the deadline for it to be submitted to Government by 18 September.

Next Steps

- 3.20. In conclusion, the allocation of ITF grant funding from Government provides the Council with future year funding certainty and provides an opportunity to build on our past success. It will enable the Council to continue to deliver travel enhancements to help achieve its transport vision and wider objectives relating to sustainable economic growth, housing delivery, air quality and the climate emergency.
- 3.21. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the grant funding, it will be important for the Council to continue to work positively and proactively with key delivery partners and stakeholders, alongside working with others to learn from best practice as each element of the Delivery Plan is further developed and implemented.
- 3.22. There are a wide range of key partners who will be critical to the successful implementation of the Delivery Plan. These include: Government, Active Travel England, Transport for the South East, organisations such as APSE to ensure we can learn from best practice and share our experiences, neighbouring local authorities to develop joined-up networks and deliver cross-boundary schemes, rail industry partners including Network Rail, Great Western Railway and South Western Railway; continue our close working with local bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership arrangements, as well as a broad range of local interest groups and forums.
- 3.23. Government recognises that priorities may change in the future and therefore there will be flexibility for authorities to make amendments to the Delivery Plan, particularly for the later years. However, the initial Local Transport Delivery Plan as provided at Appendix A sets out the Council's proposed priorities for the grant funding to enable us to continue delivery of enhanced travel choices, particularly by sustainable means, for local residents and visitors to Reading.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The proposed Local Transport Delivery Plan as set out within this report will help to deliver the five priorities in the Council Plan to promote more equal communities in Reading; secure Reading's economic and cultural success; deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint; safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children; ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.2. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website. These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around one quarter of total carbon emissions, therefore significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council.
- 5.2. The Climate Impact Assessment tool has been used to assess the programme of works as set out within this report, resulting in an overall Net Medium Positive impact. This is due to the programme being focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The proposed Programme will enhance facilities to encourage more use of sustainable transport and active travel options, therefore reducing the use of the private car and resulting congestion, carbon emissions and other air quality issues. There are inevitably emissions associated with the construction of some schemes; although the Council is working to reduce these short-term impacts in order to achieve the longer-term modal switch benefits.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The local transport schemes and initiatives included within this report have and will be communicated to the local community through public exhibitions, consultations and Council meetings.
- 6.2. Statutory consultation will be conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation, including Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate. Notices will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected areas.

7. Equality Implications

- 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. The Council, and where appropriate partner delivery organisations, will undertake an equality impact assessment scoping exercise for the projects included within the current programme of transport schemes.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. There are no Traffic Regulation Orders required directly resulting from this report. However, where schemes are being developed and there is a need to create new

and/or change existing Traffic Regulation Orders, this will be done in accordance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and 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. A report will be presented to the relevant committee for approval pursuant to our constitutional arrangements where any new or changes to existing Traffic Regulation Orders are proposed.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The capital programmes in the Delivery Plan are included in the Council's Capital Programme, which includes the funding profile for each scheme. This programme of works is funded by external grants and funding contributions which have been secured from various external sources as set out within the report. Both the capital and revenue schemes and initiatives within this programme are monitored regularly as part of the Council's internal budget monitoring processes.
- 10.2. Whilst the new funding arrangements do provide greater flexibility for local authorities, there are still grant conditions attached and the need to align spend with the Local Transport Outcome Framework. These conditions can relate to both the type of works that the grants can be used to fund and the timescales within which the funding needs to be spent. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Council being required to repay the grant funding, either in part or in full.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. The Delivery Plan will be developed in more detail as individual schemes are brought forward to seek scheme approval from Council Committees, for instance the programme of roads as part of the annual resurfacing programme. The final plan will be brought back to Committee for approval prior to submission to the DfT in September.
- 11.2. The timetable for implementation of the programmes is set out in Appendix A.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix A: Local Transport Delivery Plan (March 2026)

Appendix A - Local Transport Delivery Plan (March 2026)

REV / CAP	LTG	Transport Strategy Development, Tools and Monitoring	Development and monitoring of the Council's Local Transport Plan, the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, and its sub-strategies. This will include a review of the Council's LCWIP, update of the Reading Transport Model and town centre movement study in partnership with key stakeholders. This fund is also used for the capitalisation of staff time, associated with the delivery of transport schemes.	ITF Total Funding		ITF Funding 26/27		ITF Funding 27/28		ITF Funding 28/29		ITF Funding 29/30	
				REV	CAP	REV	CAP	REV	CAP	REV	CAP	REV	CAP
REV / CAP	LTG	Transport Strategy Development, Tools and Monitoring	Development and monitoring of the Council's Local Transport Plan, the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, and its sub-strategies. This will include a review of the Council's LCWIP, update of the Reading Transport Model and town centre movement study in partnership with key stakeholders. This fund is also used for the capitalisation of staff time, associated with the delivery of transport schemes.	£ 253,500	£ 1,680,000	£ 84,500	£ 420,000	£ 84,500	£ 420,000	£ 84,500	£ 420,000	£ 84,500	£ 420,000
REV	LTG	Public Transport Development Programme	Programme includes undertaking transport studies, feasibility and concept designs across the borough in order to support the development of schemes in line with the Council's adopted LTP. This will include studies of Caversham, as well as P&R facilities to the North and West of Reading.	£ 450,000	£ -	£ 150,000	£ -	£ 150,000	£ -	£ 150,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
REV	LABG	Bus Services Support Programme	Provision of socially necessary bus services throughout the borough including Buzz 9, Buzz 18 and Kennet Island services, which are currently under contract until March 2027, alongside other service enhancements. In addition, the provision of fares initiatives, including the ongoing Park and Ride bus fare subsidy offer, and a contribution towards discretionary elements of the Concessionary Travel scheme.	£ 2,593,860	£ -	£ 845,860	£ -	£ 874,000	£ -	£ 874,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
REV	LABG	Bus Enhanced Partnership Management	To support the ongoing legal and administrative costs associated with maintaining the Reading Bus Enhanced Partnership, in line with DfT requirements.	£ 100,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 50,000	£ -	£ 50,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
REV	AT	Active Travel Development and Behaviour Change Programme	Programme of ongoing revenue initiatives to support behaviour change and encourage more active travel trips. This includes cycle training for children and adults, Dr Bike sessions, bike maintenance workshops as well as other ongoing support for events in the community such as Reading Cycle Festival.	£ 375,000	£ -	£ 125,000	£ -	£ 125,000	£ -	£ 125,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
REV	LEVI	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Programme	To support the scheme development and staff costs associated with the planning and delivery of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital funded project.	£ 415,800	£ -	£ 138,600	£ -	£ 138,600	£ -	£ 138,600	£ -	£ -	£ -
CAP	HM	Highways Maintenance Programme	Programme of ongoing investment and maintenance of the Council's public highway, including roads and pavement resurfacing, streetlighting and structures.	£ -	£ 14,053,000	£ -	£ 2,873,000	£ -	£ 3,377,000	£ -	£ 3,641,000	£ -	£ 4,162,000
CAP	LTG	Local Traffic Management & Road Safety Schemes	Development and delivery of local traffic management schemes across the borough, including road safety. Additional budget has been assigned to support the delivery of improvement schemes including at Sidmouth Street.	£ -	£ 1,677,094	£ -	£ 620,288	£ -	£ 241,492	£ -	£ 352,225	£ -	£ 463,089
CAP	LTG	Local Traffic Management Routes to School	Programme of local traffic management schemes to provide safer routes to school, including the delivery of a review undertaken in 2025 to review the feasibility of specific measures that could be introduced to improve and enhance active travel journeys to/from schools across the borough.	£ -	£ 818,063	£ -	£ 113,525	£ -	£ 160,995	£ -	£ 234,817	£ -	£ 308,726
REV / CAP	LABG	Strategic Bus Priority Measures Programme	Delivery of the Council's adopted BSIP, including the conclusion of existing schemes such as London Road bus lane (approaching London Street) and the Oracle Roundabout bus lane, both of which have received Committee approval, alongside the introduction of new bus priority measures on key routes.	£ 409,120	£ 10,089,212	£ 209,120	£ 1,603,393	£ 100,000	£ 2,360,518	£ 100,000	£ 2,803,741	£ -	£ 3,321,559
REV / CAP	LABG / LTG	Local Public Transport Infrastructure Enhancements	Programme of localised public transport enhancements, including accessibility improvements at bus stops and enhanced waiting facilities at the Mere oak Park and Ride site to the south of Reading, which has received planning consent and Committee approval.	£ 119,020	£ 599,268	£ 19,020	£ 149,268	£ 50,000	£ 150,000	£ 50,000	£ 150,000	£ -	£ 150,000
REV / CAP	AT / LTG	Strategic Active Travel Schemes Programme	Delivery of the Council's adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), including delivery of the Bath Road / Castle Hill active travel scheme, which has been reported through Committee, as well as the development and delivery of new schemes in line with the updated LCWIP.	£ 166,800	£ 2,111,300	£ 55,600	£ 210,100	£ 55,600	£ 500,000	£ 55,600	£ 650,600	£ -	£ 750,600
CAP	AT	Local Active Travel Infrastructure Enhancements	Programme of localised active travel schemes, including schemes such as enhancements to the existing infrastructure at Christchurch Green junction and improved active travel connections for journeys to River Academy, as reported through Committee. In addition, this funding will support improvements to the Rights of Way network.	£ -	£ 941,100	£ -	£ 365,500	£ -	£ 175,600	£ -	£ 200,000	£ -	£ 200,000
CAP	LTG	Car Park Investment Programme	Programme of improvements to the Council's public car parks, to modernise the facilities and ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. This fund is also used for the capitalisation of staff time (including Network Services), associated with the delivery of traffic management and parking schemes.	£ -	£ 1,698,063	£ -	£ 333,525	£ -	£ 380,995	£ -	£ 454,817	£ -	£ 528,726
Total Budget				£ 4,883,100	£ 33,667,100	£ 1,627,700	£ 6,688,600	£ 1,627,700	£ 7,766,600	£ 1,627,700	£ 8,907,200	£ -	£ 10,304,700

This page is intentionally left blank