

To: Councillor Terry (Chair)
Councillors Leng, Dennis, Eden, Ennis,
Griffith, Lanzoni, McEwan, McGoldrick,
Nikulina, Smith, R Singh, Thompson, White,
Williams and Yeo

Email:
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5 June 2026

Your contact is: **Simon Hill / Jemma Durkan - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 15 JUNE 2026

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Monday, 15 June 2026 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES** **5 - 12**
4. **DELEGATED DECISIONS** **13 - 14**
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS**

Public petitions and 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.**
6. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**
7. **DRAFT READING TOWN CENTRE VISION AND DELIVERY PLAN** **BOROUGH WIDE** **15 - 102**

This report sets out a Draft Reading Town Centre Vision for the purposes of undertaking wider public and stakeholder consultation as the overarching place-shaping framework for Central Reading.
8. **PROCUREMENT OF FIXED TERM ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP** **BOROUGH WIDE** **103 - 138**

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This report provides an overview of the outcomes of the enhanced environmental enforcement trial and seeks approval to proceed with the procurement of a fixed-term enhanced environmental enforcement contract.

- 9. OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES 2026/27** **BOROUGH WIDE** **139 - 162**
- This report proposes a package of updates to the Council's off-street parking tariffs to modernise and simplify the structure, improve consistency, support town-centre activity, and ensure charges remain aligned with wider transport, environmental and public health objectives.
- 10. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME UPDATE** **BOROUGH WIDE** **163 - 180**
- This report provides an update on schemes for Battle Street, Southcote Lane and Dee Park Phase 3 and seeks relevant approvals to progress these to the next phases of development. It also provides an update on LANB delivery to date including new sites in feasibility, the new Whitley Wood Community Centre, acquisitions and the fourth round of MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Fund programme and seeks approvals to progress these schemes including spend and budget approvals and permission to bid for Homes England grant funding.
- 11. READING LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY SEND REFORM PLAN** **BOROUGH WIDE** **181 - 248**
- This report sets out for approval the proposed Local Area SEND Reform Plan for Reading.
- 12. SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS** **BOROUGH WIDE** **249 - 262**
- This report provides an overview of all elements of Crisis & Resilience Fund support being proposed to support low-income households within the borough.
- 13. OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS** **263 - 264**
- This report asks the Policy Committee to make appointments to outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN CLOSED SESSION

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion will be moved by the Chair:

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

15. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR CLOSED SESSION
ITEMS**

16. **FLEXIBLE RESPONSE SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPING** **BOROUGH** **265 - 276**
WIDE

WEBCASTING NOTICE

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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.**

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Eden, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, Rowland, R Singh, Thompson, White and Yeo

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emberson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 74.

69. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

70. PUBLIC PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

A question on the following matter was submitted by a member of the public:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Tony Page	Proposal for Naming Sir John Madejski Way	Cllr Ennis

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

71. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr R Singh	Homelessness Strategy	Cllr Yeo
2.	Cllr R Singh	Rough Sleeping	Cllr Yeo
3.	Cllr R Singh	Thames Valley School Satellite Provision Site	Cllr Eden
4.	Cllr Thompson	Homes for Reading	Cllr Terry

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

72. THE HEXAGON

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 APRIL 2026

The Committee considered a report which set out the details of funding applied to the Arts Council England's (ACE) Creative Foundations Fund for £2,068,000 of grant funding, with match funding of £230,500 being provided by the Council (consisting of: £109,000 in-kind contribution, £71,500 fundraising and £50,000 capital funding). The funding would be for improvements to the Hexagon Theatre seating, drainage, fire stopping and fire door remedial works.

If successful the Director of Culture, Leisure and Skills would accept the grant offer and, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance would progress the procurement and enter into the necessary contracts to carry out the works.

In the event of the Arts Council England (ACE) bid being unsuccessful, a capital supplementary budget of £564,000 was requested to replace the stall and arena seating in the Hexagon Theatre's main auditorium and for the costs of this investment to be met through revenue savings of £18,800 per year. The drainage, fire stopping and fire door remedial work would remain unfunded and either required funding through existing budgets or required a Capital Bid submitted via the usual budget setting process.

Resolved –

- (1) That if the Arts Council England bid was successful for £2,068,000 of grant funding with match funding of £230,500, the grants spend be approved and the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts to deliver the outputs of the bid;**
- (2) That if the Arts Council England grant was unsuccessful, that spend for £564,000 be approved to replace the arena and stall seating at the Hexagon and the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts to supply and install new arena and stall seating in the Hexagon main auditorium.**

73.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Committee considered a report that set out options around the further development of the Armed Forces Covenant, principally its re-signing, which was currently being encouraged by Ministry of Defence (MoD) following the updating of the original covenant in 2018. Alongside there was also a proposal to apply for the Employer Recognition Scheme silver award as the Council was a key local employer, already met most of the criteria and for which re-signing was a requirement.

Following a suggestion officers would investigate hosting a Reserve recruiting event in the new library.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Armed Forces Covenant, with associated pledges be re-signed;**
- (2) That an application for the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme silver award, be approved.**

74. HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

The Committee considered a report on an updated set of policies to align with new legislative framework set by the Government. The updated policies were attached the report and included:

- Appendix 1 - Housing Standards Enforcement Policy
- Appendix 2 - Housing Standards Civil Penalty Procedure
- Appendix 3 - Statement of Principles for a penalty under Part 4 of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
- Appendix 4 - Statement of Principles for a penalty for a breach of minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) with respect to domestic privately rented property
- Appendix 5 - Relevant Lettings Agency Legislation Civil Penalty Procedure

The report explained that the Council as Local Housing Authority and Weights and Measures Authority had a range of enforcement powers relating to housing standards and consumer redress, including in relation to the private rented sector. Enforcement powers included powers to require work, prohibit use and the issue of financial penalties for breaches of legislation.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 introduced a significantly expanded civil penalty framework and placed new duties on the Council to enforce a broader range of landlord obligations. The Government was also introducing a range of updates to statutory guidance relating to some of the Council's existing enforcement powers. To meet these requirements, the Council had to ensure its relevant policies were fully aligned with the new legislative framework. The substantial changes would be made from 1 May 2026 and updating the Council's policies was essential to ensure that the statutory obligations could be met.

The report noted that the policies were intended to promote greater consistency, transparency and robustness in local authority enforcement approaches, while allowing for appropriate local discretion. Aligning the Council's policies with the nationally recognised framework supported a consistent and defensible approach to enforcement, reduced the risk of unfavourable outcomes to legal challenge and strengthened the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Renters' Rights Act.

Following a question regarding awareness of the policies, it was noted that landlords had been contacted, the website had been updated, there had been a Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government campaign and officers were working on further ways to publicise the scheme for residents and staff. It was difficult to know the resourcing needed at this early stage, however, officers were receiving training to support on any future capacity needed and this would be monitored.

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 APRIL 2026

Resolved –

- (1) That the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy be adopted;
- (2) That the Private Rented Sector Civil Penalty Procedure be adopted;
- (3) That the Statement of Principles for a penalty under Part 4 of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 be adopted;
- (4) That the Statement of Principles for a penalty for a breach of minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) with respect to domestic privately rented property be approved;
- (5) That the Relevant Lettings Agency Legislation Civil Penalty Procedure be approved;
- (6) That it be noted that stakeholder consultation would take place on the proposals;
- (7) That the Director of Planning Transport and Public Protection, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing and Director of Legal & Democratic Services be authorised, to make future minor amendments to the policies where necessary to reflect changes in the law or to correct inaccuracies.

75. BLOCK PLANNED MAINTENANCE - 2026 - 2034

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to procure and award a cyclical planned maintenance contract for housing stock block properties. This would cover external and communal works over an up to eight-year programme (2026–2034) managed by Housing Repairs and Property Services. The most advantageous route to market was a call off via a compliant framework enabling robust supplier field, a supported market engagement and expression of interest process. The intended contract was a Measured Term Contract designed for the construction industry, utilising the National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates which was industry standard and widely used in sourcing Housing Repairs and Property Services contracts managed by the service area.

The estimated annual value of the contract was £550,000 (£660,000 inc. VAT), funded from the Housing Revenue Account, based on the planned works budget annually approved at the Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in each financial year.

It was noted that planned cyclical external maintenance was essential for local authorities to protect building condition, prevent health and safety risks, ensure legal compliance, reduce long-term costs, and support positive regulatory outcomes. It formed a cornerstone of good asset management and was central to meeting the Regulator for Social Housing's standards around safe, decent, well-maintained homes. In addition, it was a factor in meeting Decent Homes Standards and was referenced in the Housing Ombudsmen's

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Complaint Handling Code: failing to maintain external elements often leads to service failure and findings of maladministration.

The report explained that there were 284 Housing-owned blocks of flats and the contract would not include housing/bungalows outside of blocks, which was managed and maintained by the direct service organisation (DSO) in collaboration with the existing contract for voids and planned works which had been let in 2025. The contract would also not include three Wensley Road tower blocks, or four Granville Road blocks for which planning would commence for a standalone programme of works to meet the Building Safety Regulator requirements. Once all works had been completed according to the (BSR) requirements on these seven blocks, they would be incorporated back into the cyclical external maintenance programmes and treated as service area business as usual stock.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to:**
 - a) Procure and enter a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the Block Maintenance contract to be provided. The contract to be for up to eight years (four-year initial term with extension provisions) with a total maximum value of £4.4m for the eight-year duration;**
 - b) Negotiate with the successful tenderer to mobilise the contract, vary the contract, extend the contract at the appropriate time, and otherwise contract manage the contract throughout its lifecycle.**

76. LAND AT MINSTER QUARTER CENTRAL

Further to Minute 44 of the Policy Committee meeting in January 2024, the Committee consider a report to proceed with the disposal of open space land by long leases to McLaren (Minster Quarter) Limited.

The report explained that in January 2024 the Committee agreed to select McLaren Living Ltd as preferred bidder for Minster Quarter Central and also authorised officers to proceed with the necessary statutory steps, under s.123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, to advertise the disposal of the open spaces for two consecutive weeks and consider any objections to the disposal of such open space land forming part of the site.

The statutory notices of the proposed disposal were published on 26 February 2026 and 5 March 2026 and a notice was also available to view on the Council's website. No objections were received.

The January 2024 Policy Committee report confirmed the Council's strategy for Minster Quarter Central and the requirement for land assembly, including disposal of certain open space areas forming part of the development site necessary to facilitate the redevelopment.

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This disposal aligned with the Minster Quarter Area Development Framework (SPD) and the Local Plan allocation (CR12e).

The report explained the two options available to the Council in relation to disposal of the parts of the open spaces comprised in the Minster Quarter Central site:

- (a) Option 1 – Proceed with the disposal. This enabled delivery of the proposed regeneration scheme approved by Policy Committee in January 2024.
- (b) Option 2 – Do not proceed. This option would frustrate the January 2024 decision and stall delivery of Minster Quarter Central regeneration.

Officers recommended with proceeding with Option 1 as the statutory requirements had been met with no objections and disposal was required to deliver the approved regeneration scheme.

Resolved –

- (1) That having considered the outcome of the statutory advertising and with no objections received, the disposal of the open space land by way of the grant of long leases to McLaren Living Ltd to facilitate delivery of the Minster Quarter Central regeneration scheme, consistent with the January 2024 Policy Committee decision be approved.**
- (2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance, Director for Asset and Property Management and, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council be authorised to finalise and complete all legal documentation required to give effect to the disposal.**

77. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 78 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

78. LAND AT MINSTER QUARTER CENTRAL

The Committee received a confidential report and appendices on the disposal of open space land by long leases to McLaren (Minster Quarter) Limited. (Minute 76 above refers). The report and appendices contained exempt information and were therefore submitted separately from the main report which had been considered in the public session.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 27 MAY 2026

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair)
Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Dennis, Eden, Ennis, Griffith,
Lanzoni, McEwan, McGoldrick, Smith, R Singh, Thompson,
Williams and Yeo.

Apologies: Councillors Nikulina & White.

1. APPOINTMENTS TO JOINT BODIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRUSTEES' SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved:

(1) That the following appointments (or nominations, where indicated) be made for the Municipal Year 2026-27:

(a) Berkshire Prosperity Board

1 representative Councillor Terry

(a) Joint Waste Disposal Board

2 Representatives Councillor McGoldrick
Councillor Terry

(b) Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

3 Representatives Councillor Gittings
Councillor Griffith
Councillor McElroy

(c) Local Government Association

Conference Councillors Leng & Terry
General Assembly Councillor Terry

(e) PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee

1 Representative & Deputy Councillor Ennis
Councillor Cross (Deputy)

(2) That the Trustees Sub-Committee be established for the Municipal Year 2026/27 in accordance with Article 7.2.2 and Part 3 Section 2 of the Constitution of the Council and within the terms of reference set out therein;

(3) That the following Councillors be appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee:

Trustees Sub-Committee

POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 27 MAY 2026

Labour
Councillors

Gavin
Hornsby-Smith
Lanzoni
Terry

Green Councillors

McCann

- (4) That the following Councillors be appointed as Chair/Vice-Chair of the Trustees Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2026/27:

Chair

Councillor Hornsby-Smith

Vice-Chair

Councillor Terry

Committee	Date of meeting	Minute number	Item title	Decision	Officer delegated to	Lead Councillor portfolio	Expected timescale for decision
Policy Committee	07/04/25	79 (2)	DISPOSAL OF YEOMANRY HOUSE	That if the purchaser did not perform to an acceptable timescale the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets, to: a) Agree a revised offer price and terms where appropriate which secure Best Consideration; b) Re-engage with other bidders as appropriate or remarket the property for disposal at Best Consideration.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	This delegation is only required if purchaser does not perform to an acceptable timescale.
Policy Committee	17/09/25	25	Joint Procurement for Parking Enforcement Services	(1) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, and Director of Finance be authorised to: a. Commence a procurement exercise independently or in partnership with other councils for parking enforcement, permits, Penalty Charge Notice processing and postal services; b. Terminate, if appropriate, the existing contract for parking enforcement with Trelint (part of the Modaxo Group) by mutual agreement at a date that allowed an orderly handover to new contract arrangements; c. Enter into a suitable agreement with another council or councils to undertake the necessary procurement exercises on behalf of Reading Borough Council; d. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to provide on street and off-street parking enforcement services; e. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to deliver Penalty Charge Notice processing, issue permits for residents and businesses and provide postal services for same; f. Undertake any required contract modifications (to include extension / variation) as might be required from time to time to ensure effective operational management of the contract, subject to that impact not exceeding key decision thresholds.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#AD of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer/Returning Officer;#Director of Finance/s151 officer	Climate Strategy and Transport	Stage 1 of procurement complete
Policy Committee	17/09/25	27	Broad Street Mall Redevelopment	(4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance, and Assistant Director of Property and Asset Management, to: (a) Negotiate and conclude terms with relevant parties in respect of the Heads of Terms for the surrender and the Construction and Management Agreement; (b) Negotiate and conclude terms for disposals and acquisitions in accordance with sections 123 and 120 of the Local Government Act 1972; (c) Negotiate to enter into any required and/or ancillary documentation and agreements to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development, and; (d) Procure commercial, professional technical and legal advisors and consultants as necessary, to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#Director of Finance/s151 officer;#AD of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer/Returning Officer;#AD of Property & Asset Management	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	(a)i.Target for Conditional Exchange of Carpark Surrender Agreement – June 2026 ii.Target for agreeing Construction and Management Agreement (CMA) – Oct 2026 (b)i.Target for Conditional Exchange of Carpark Surrender Agreement – June 2026 (c)i.This would be in parallel to and following agreement of the CMA and would continue up to BSM starting on site in Q3 of 2027; there may also be requirements to enter in to agreements following works starting on site, this is TBD. (d)i.Procurement process commencing Oct 2025
Policy Committee	17/11/25	41	Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Contract	That the Assistant Director of Property & Asset Management, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Lead Councillor for Health, the Director of Finance, the Director of Public Health and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to grant a new lease to the successful provider for the use of 4 Waylen Street, Reading, on terms aligned with the duration of the treatment contract, as set out in section 3.6 of the report as further required to protect the Councils interests.	AD of Property & Asset Management	Leadership;#Education and Public Health	Following award of treatment contract

Committee	Date of meeting	Minute number	Item title	Decision	Officer delegated to	Lead Councillor portfolio	Expected timescale for decision
Policy Committee	17/11/25	44	Adelphi House	(2) That, if the tenant subsequently changed their negotiated position, the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance, Leader of the Council, the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to agree revised terms that represented best value to the Council.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	Only required if there is a change to the negotiated position
Policy Committee	17/12/25	56	160-163 Friar Street	2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets, the Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to dispose of the property to a selected bidder on the best terms available to secure Best Consideration;	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Planning and Assets;#Leadership	Currently concluding the appointment of a marketing agent with a view to commence marketing in September 2026.
Policy Committee	13/04/26	76 (2)	LAND AT MINSTER QUARTER CENTRAL	That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance, Director for Asset and Property Management and, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council be authorised to finalise and complete all legal documentation required to give effect to the disposal.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Leadership	
Policy Committee	13/04/26	75 (1)	BLOCK PLANNED MAINTENANCE	(1) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to: a) Procure and enter a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the Block Maintenance contract to be provided. The contract to be for up to eight years (four-year initial term with extension provisions) with a total maximum value of £4.4m for the eight-year duration; b) Negotiate with the successful tenderer to mobilise the contract, vary the contract, extend the contract at the appropriate time, and otherwise contract manage the contract throughout its lifecycle.	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Adult Social Care	End of July 2026
Policy Committee	13/04/26	72	THE HEXAGON	(1) That if the Arts Council England bid was successful for £2,068,000 of grant funding with match funding of £230,500, the grants spend be approved and the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts to deliver the outputs of the bid;	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#Director of Finance/s151 officer	Leadership	Projected project delivery by March 2028 with contracts awarded over the next 12 months.

Policy Committee

15 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Draft Reading Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Sam Rackham, Acting Director of Infrastructure, Economy & Capital Projects
Lead Councillor	Cllr Liz Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	All
Recommendations	<p>That Policy Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorses the Draft Reading Town Centre Vision attached at Appendix 1 for the purposes of undertaking wider public and stakeholder consultation as the overarching place-shaping framework for Central Reading. 2. Endorses the Draft Reading Town Centre Delivery Plan attached at Appendix 2 for the purposes of undertaking wider public and stakeholder consultation as the Council's approach to prioritising, coordinating and enabling town centre delivery. 3. Agrees that, subject to consultation, the Draft Vision and Delivery Plan may be used on an interim basis alongside existing policy documents to inform decision-making, investment priorities, regeneration activity and partnership working within the town centre.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Central Reading (as identified at CR1 in the Local Plan) is undergoing one of the most significant periods of change in its recent history. Major regeneration schemes, rapid growth in town-centre living, evolving travel patterns and changing retail, business and cultural activity are collectively reshaping the role of the town centre as a place to live, work, visit and invest.
- 1.2. The draft Reading Town Centre Vision (Appendix 1) has been prepared to provide a clear, long-term place-shaping framework for this transformation. It sets out a shared vision for Central Reading over the next 20 years and defines what success should look like for the town centre as a liveable, inclusive, economically resilient and climate-resilient place. It does not replace statutory planning policy but instead brings together existing plans and strategies into a single, place-specific narrative that is easier to use, communicate and apply in decision-making.
- 1.3. The Vision is supported by a draft Town Centre Delivery Plan (Appendix 2), which moves from vision to action. The Delivery Plan identifies key strategic projects that have already been delivered, are currently underway, or are proposed for the future, and clarifies the role of the Council and its partners in delivering them. It also establishes

criteria to prioritise investment, coordinate activity across services and partners, and focus limited resources on projects that deliver the greatest civic, social, environmental and economic benefit.

- 1.4. Together, the Vision and Delivery Plan provide both a clear direction of travel and a practical framework for delivery. Endorsement of the draft documents for consultation will allow the Council to align future decisions, investment and partnership working within an agreed spatial vision, and to progress priority feasibility work and funding bids from the financial year 2026/27 onwards.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Reading Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan sits within an established policy and strategy framework and is intended to complement, not replace, existing statutory and non-statutory documents. Key relationships include:

- a. **Reading Local Plan** (including Policy CR1 – Central Reading, and the emerging Partial Update to 2041)
 - which provides the statutory planning framework for development. The Vision adds a place-specific narrative to help interpret how Local Plan policies should work together on the ground in Central Reading.
- b. **Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy** (proposed for adoption June 2026)
 - which sets design standards and principles for public realm. The Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan identifies where and why those standards should be applied to support town-centre living, movement and identity.
- c. **Reading Transport Strategy 2040**
 - which provides the borough-wide transport framework. The Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan focuses this at a town-centre scale, identifying priority routes, gateways and spaces where walking, cycling and public transport should be prioritised.
- d. **Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025–30**
 - which establishes borough-wide climate commitments. The Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan embeds climate mitigation and adaptation into the area of highest growth, footfall and visibility, ensuring climate action is delivered where it has the most impact.
- e. **Reading’s Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-30 and the Reading Economic Development Framework**
 - which set strategic objectives for economic growth, cultural participation and heritage protection. The Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan brings these together spatially, strengthening links between cultural anchors, regeneration sites and public spaces.

- 2.2. In summary, the Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan acts as an integrating framework. It aligns multiple strategies and policies around a single geography, helping members, officers, developers, businesses and partners understand how different priorities come together in Central Reading and providing a consistent basis for coordinated decision-making.

3. The Proposal

Current Position

- 3.1. Central Reading is already changing rapidly. Major regeneration schemes such as Station Hill, the Civic Centre and Library, upgrades to the Hexagon and Studio Theatre, riverside development along the Kennet and Thames, and substantial town-centre residential growth are reshaping the physical form and daily life of the town centre.

Many of these projects have been delivered successfully, with others well advanced or coming forward through the Local Plan.

- 3.2. However, the pace, scale and cumulative impact of this change presents new challenges. Without a clear, shared place shaping framework there is a risk that individual projects, while successful in isolation, do not collectively deliver a cohesive, inclusive and high quality town centre. There is increased pressure to ensure that:
- a. infrastructure, public realm and services keep pace with a rapidly growing residential population;
 - b. public and private investment is aligned around common priorities;
 - c. movement, accessibility and safety are improved as footfall increases;
 - d. climate resilience, greening and long-term management are embedded consistently rather than project by project.
 - e. the right conditions are created to encourage business investment, growth and relocation into central Reading;
- 3.3. The draft Town Centre Vision responds to this need by setting out a clear definition of what Central Reading should become and how change should be shaped over the long term.

The Town Centre Vision

- 3.4. The draft Reading Town Centre Vision is a long term, non-statutory place shaping document covering Central Reading over the next 15–20 years. Its purpose is to provide a clear and accessible framework that explains how growth, regeneration and investment should contribute to a successful town centre, rather than simply identifying development capacity or individual sites.
- 3.5. The Vision is structured around:
- a. a robust understanding of Central Reading's context, including population growth, movement patterns, heritage, cultural and natural assets;
 - b. seven place shaping principles that articulate the qualities the town centre should deliver, such as healthy and connected communities, active travel, climate resilience, culture and heritage, and support for growth and innovation;
 - c. spatial priorities for the Core, Station & River, West Side and East Side Opportunity Areas identified in the Local Plan.
- 3.6. Importantly, the Vision does not introduce new planning policy or supersede existing documents. Instead, it provides a shared reference point for members, officers, developers and partners when considering development proposals, infrastructure investment, public realm schemes and partnership initiatives. It sets clear expectations about design quality, inclusivity, movement, public space, and long term management, helping ensure that individual decisions contribute to a coherent whole.
- 3.7. The Vision is intended to be used alongside existing policy documents to inform decision making, investment priorities, regeneration activity and partnership working within the town centre.

The Delivery Plan

- 3.8. The Delivery Plan:
- a. groups projects into delivered, current (in development) and future interventions, providing visibility over progress and the pipeline of change;
 - b. clarifies delivery roles, distinguishing between Council led projects, shared delivery with partners, and partner led schemes where the Council plays an enabling role;

- c. applies transparent prioritisation criteria, including impact, feasibility, funding, inclusivity and visibility, to guide how resources and attention are focused;
 - d. identifies a small number of priority projects for early feasibility and investment that can deliver visible improvements and help unlock wider regeneration.
- 3.9. This approach allows the Council to focus its resources on high impact, high visibility interventions that are critical to creating a successful town centre, such as public realm improvements, active travel connections and family friendly spaces.
- 3.10. The Delivery Plan is intended to be a live document, updated as projects progress, funding opportunities emerge and priorities evolve. It will support future funding bids, business cases and annual reporting, and will be the primary tool for coordinating and monitoring town centre delivery across services and partners.
- 3.11. A programme of public realm improvements is proposed to create safer, more welcoming and family-friendly streets in Central Reading. Feasibility work will assess opportunities for greener, more comfortable spaces; improved play; better pedestrian-vehicle balance; accessibility; and proportionate security measures. This phase will identify capital options and ensure future investment delivers the resilient town-centre spaces outlined in the delivery plan.
- 3.12. Options Appraisal
- a. Option 1 - Endorse the draft Vision and Delivery Plan for wider public and stakeholder consultation (recommended): Provides clarity, alignment and confidence for investment and delivery, supporting coordinated regeneration and improved outcomes for residents, businesses and visitors.
 - b. Option 2 - Do not endorse the documents for consultation: Would risk fragmented decision-making, reduced confidence among partners and missed opportunities to align funding and delivery.
- 3.13. Endorsing the draft Vision and Delivery Plan for wider public and stakeholder consultation is recommended as the most effective way to guide the next phase of town-centre transformation.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Vision and Delivery Plan support all five Council Plan priorities by strengthening economic resilience and competitiveness within the town centre, growing and diversifying Reading's economy, improving quality of life for residents, enhancing environmental performance within the town centre environment, supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities, businesses and visitors, and ensuring the Council is fit for the future through coordinated, value for money investment.
- 4.2. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. The Vision embeds climate resilience, low-carbon movement, greening and sustainable drainage as core principles. Specific projects in the Delivery Plan prioritise active travel, greener streets and low-carbon infrastructure. Endorsement has positive environmental implications by guiding future schemes toward climate-aligned outcomes.

- 5.3. The Reading Town Centre Vision gives practical effect to the Climate Emergency Strategy 2025–30 by embedding climate action into the area of highest activity, growth and visibility in the borough.
- 5.4. It supports carbon reduction by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, reducing car dependency for a largely car-light town centre population, and setting clear expectations for low-carbon, energy-efficient development, including heat-network readiness in major regeneration areas.
- 5.5. It also addresses climate adaptation by integrating green infrastructure, SuDS (national standards for sustainable drainage systems) and tree planting into streets and public spaces, improving resilience to heat, flooding and extreme rainfall, and strengthening the role of rivers and parks as cooling and flood-management infrastructure.
- 5.6. By aligning planning, regeneration and public-realm investment with Reading's climate targets, the Vision helps deliver a low-carbon, climate-resilient and healthier town centre, supporting an equitable transition that improves quality of life while accommodating growth.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Approval is sought to undertake a programme of public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Vision and Delivery Plan. This will provide an opportunity for residents, businesses and partners to comment on the vision, strategic priorities and proposed interventions. The consultation will include online access to the draft documents, supported by targeted engagement with key stakeholder groups, including businesses, landowners, community organisations, older people's and disabilities working groups, the University and REDA. Feedback received will inform the refinement of the Vision prior to its finalisation.
- 6.2. The Vision to date has been informed by internal officer, councillor and partner engagement, alongside analysis of town-centre demographics, needs and trends. Further engagement will continue to accompany individual projects and future phases of the Delivery Plan.
- 6.3. Previous community engagement for the first iteration of the Vision explored how Reading town centre could be more sustainable, inclusive and liveable. A network of local partners informed this work, championed by REDA (Reading's Economy and Destination Agency) supported by Reading Voluntary Action, the University of Reading and ACRE (Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality). Workshops with Councillors, undertaken through the Reading Economic Development Framework, explored priorities for town centre placemaking. Insights from these sessions have directly informed the Vision and its proposed approach.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The Vision places strong emphasis on inclusive design, accessibility, town-centre services, play provision and equitable access to public space. The proposals are expected to reduce inequalities in access and participation. A full Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this stage; Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken at project level where appropriate.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The Council has powers under the Local Government Acts to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Endorsing the Vision does not in itself create binding obligations but provides a framework to inform future decisions.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. Endorsement does not commit the Council to specific expenditure beyond agreed budgets. The Delivery Plan supports value for money by prioritising schemes, aligning funding streams and de-risking investment into town centre projects. Project specific Business Cases will be brought forward on a case by case basis to unlock relevant funding.

11. Timetable for Implementation

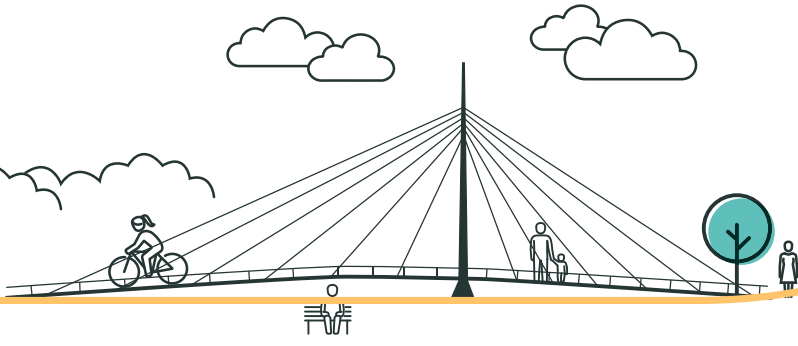
- 11.1. Subject to approval, public consultation on the Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan is proposed to commence in July 2026 and run for a period of ten weeks.
- 11.2. Following the close of consultation, responses will be analysed and used to inform revisions to the Vision and Delivery Plan. It is proposed that the final Vision is brought back to Committee in December 2026, allowing sufficient time for the review of representations and preparation of the final documents prior to adoption.
- 11.3. Following approval to proceed to consultation, the Vision will begin to be used as a material guide to inform decision-making where appropriate. In parallel, priority feasibility work identified within the Delivery Plan is proposed to commence during 2026/27.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Draft Town Centre Vision
2. Appendix 2 - Draft Town Centre Delivery Plan



READING



TOWN CENTRE VISION



DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Central Reading is entering a period of significant transformation. Major regeneration, rapid population growth and changing patterns of work, travel and leisure are reshaping its role and identity. The town centre is the borough's most visible gateway and civic heart, defined by the station, its rivers, cultural anchors and the intensity of daily life. Success will depend on creating a centre that is more liveable, better connected, greener, culturally confident and economically resilient.

Central Reading is one of the South East's most distinctive urban areas: young (49.5% aged 20–39), internationally connected (54.9% born outside the UK), highly urban (70.7% flats) and car light (50.7% of households without a car). These characteristics shape expectations for walkability, accessibility, public spaces, health provision, housing quality and cultural life.

Central Reading's transformation is already underway. Cultural investment is reshaping the town's civic heart through the upgraded Hexagon and new Studio Theatre, while the new central library strengthens Reading's learning and community offer. At Station Hill,

new squares, workplaces and homes are already occupied, with commercial space close to fully let. These milestones together create a clear sense of momentum across the town centre.

The spatial structure of the centre is shaped by four essential elements:

- The Station–Retail Core arrival route
- Riverside links to the Thames and Kennet
- Cultural routes connecting heritage anchors such as the Abbey Quarter and Minster Quarter

- East–West connections across the Inner Distribution Road and rail barriers

Together these form the backbone of a coherent, legible and walkable town centre.



Change is focused within the **Opportunity & Character Areas**: Station & River, West Side, East Side and the Core, where regeneration can deliver new homes, public realm upgrades and stronger links to rivers and cultural destinations.

The vision is built around seven principles:

1. Healthy & Connected

Communities: Town centre living supported by accessible services, inclusive design, high quality homes and considerate long-term management and upkeep.

2. Transforming Rivers & Public Spaces

Making the Thames, Kennet and parks part of everyday life through better access, upgraded paths and climate ready design.

3. Connected & Active Travel:

Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport by fixing barriers such as the IDR and improving station arrival routes.

4. A Greener, Climate Resilient

Centre: Embedding low carbon design, greening, SuDS and cleaner mobility in all development and public realm projects.

5. Culture, Heritage & Identity:

Strengthening links between cultural anchors, respecting and embedding heritage in development and supporting diverse, grassroots creativity.

6. Reimagining the Town

Centre Experience: Creating a more welcoming day to evening environment with active streets, events, independents and a stronger riverside.

7. Supporting Growth & Innovation:

Providing flexible workspace, supporting enterprise and strengthening connections with major employment and research hubs.

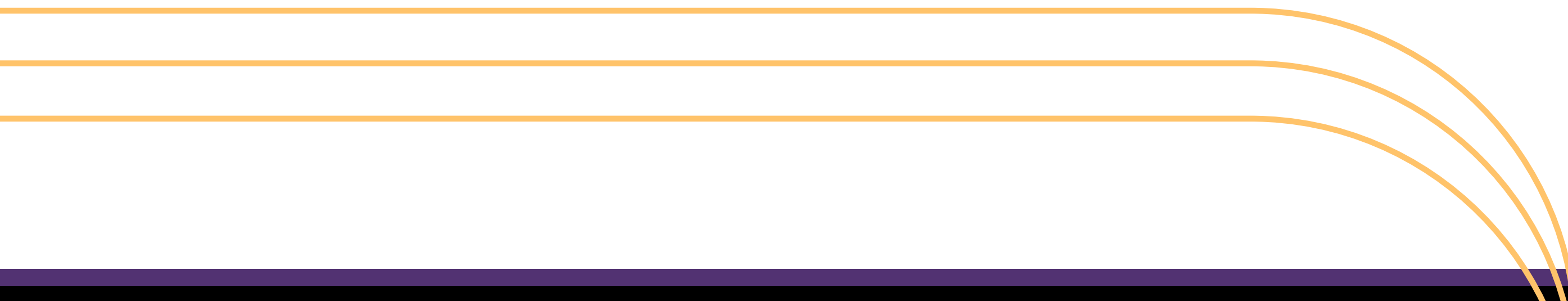
The vision sets clear expectations for delivery, aligning planning, transport, public realm investment, cultural partners, developers, landowners and community organisations. A dedicated **Delivery Plan** will translate these principles into coordinated projects, priorities, funding routes and responsibilities.

Overall, the vision sets out a shared direction for a town centre that functions as a liveable, green and connected neighbourhood at the heart of Reading's wider economic and cultural geography.



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WHY THIS VISION IS NEEDED

Reading town centre is entering a defining period of change. Major regeneration, shifting patterns of work and shopping, and rapid growth in town-centre living will reshape how the centre looks, feels and functions over the coming decades.



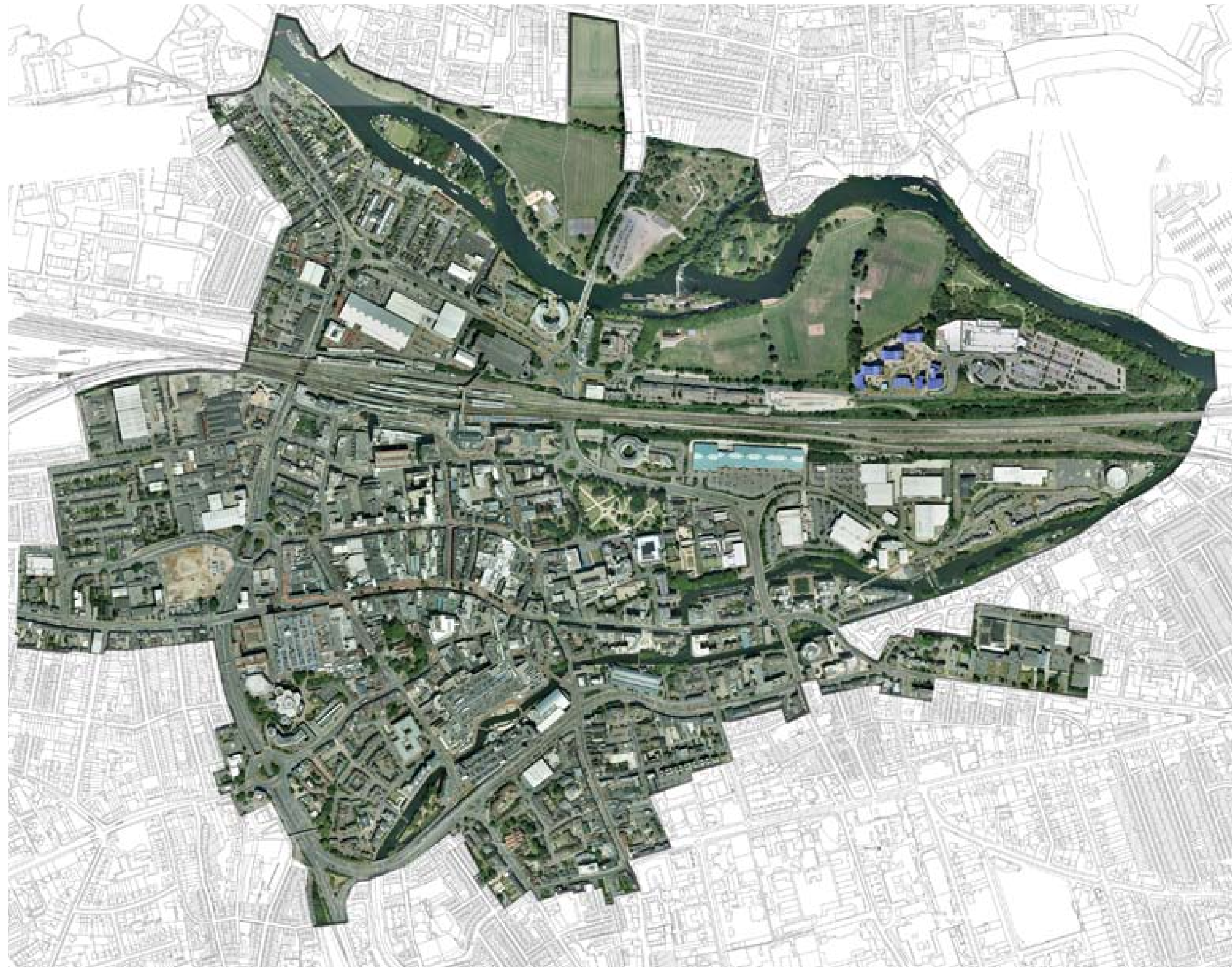
BACKGROUND

The town centre is the borough's most visible front door, anchored by the station, the Thames and Kennet, Broad Street, The Oracle and cultural assets such as the Abbey Quarter and the Hexagon. As it grows, success will depend on high-quality streets and public spaces, strong connections, and a cultural and economic offer broader than retail alone.

This vision provides a place-shaping framework for Central Reading, aligned with the Local Plan (Policy CR1). It is rooted in Reading's heritage, rivers, transport network and active regeneration projects, ensuring a genuinely place-specific approach. It complements wider plans such as the Local Plan and Reading 2050 Vision but is not an operational management document; instead, it sets a clear direction for shaping change and defining what a successful town centre should deliver.

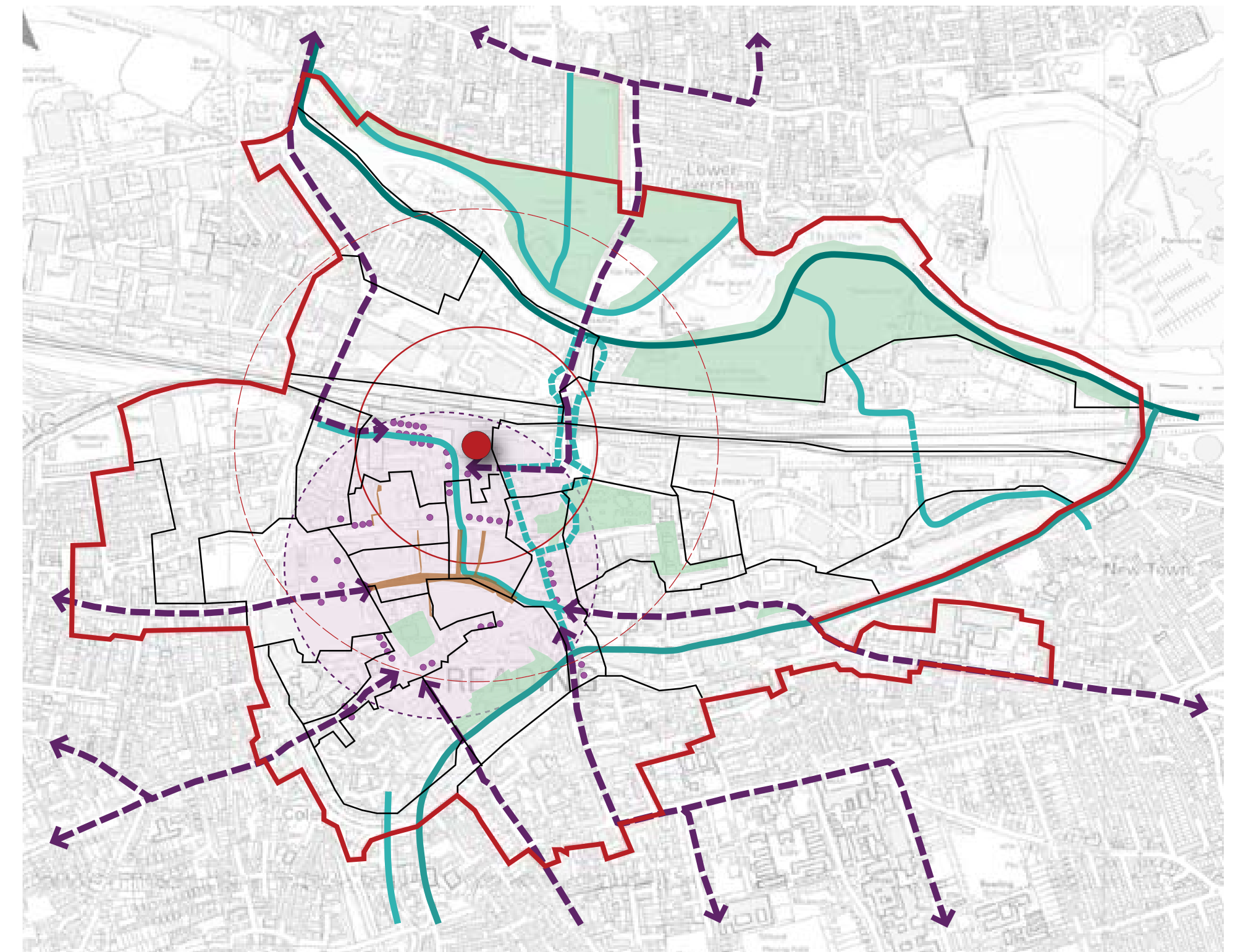
The vision sets expectations for development and investment by prioritising the infrastructure needed for a growing residential population. It guides regeneration and investment decisions so individual schemes contribute to a coherent, liveable centre. A separate Delivery Plan will translate these principles into a phased programme of projects.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY AREA - CENTRAL READING CR1



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CENTRAL READING CONTEXT

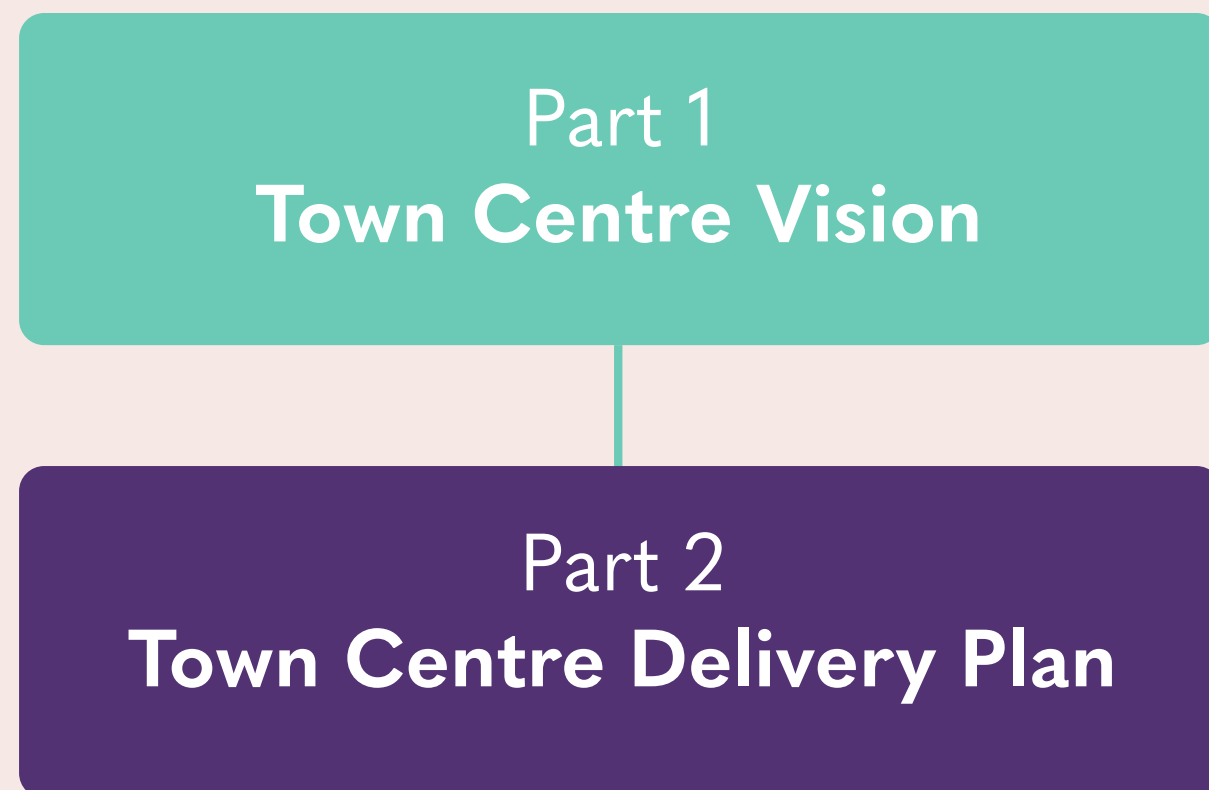


- Reading central area
- Railway station
- 5 minute walking distance
- 10 minute walking distance
- Bus stops
- General bus routes
- City centre
- Pedestrian area
- National cycle network
- Traffic free & on-road cycle network
- Proposed future cycle route
- Open spaces
- Character areas

VISION STRUCTURE

The vision will be delivered in two parts, with this vision supported by a separate delivery plan. Combined, they will provide a template for delivering the town centre's regeneration.

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SHARED UNDERSTANDING

A clear, shared understanding of Central Reading's future is essential to shaping coordinated change. This vision draws together the many existing plans, policies and ambitions that influence the town centre into a single, accessible narrative.

Focused on the next 20 years of transformation, the vision does not replace these documents; instead, it aligns with them and provides a user-friendly blueprint that explains how their collective intent comes together for Central Reading. It signposts key frameworks so partners can see how town-centre decisions fit within wider policy direction, such as:

- Reading Local Plan Partial Update (2041) and emerging planning policies
- Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
- Reading Transport Strategy 2040
- Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025–30
- Reading Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015–30
- Reading Economic Development Framework
- Reading 2050 Vision
- Reading Council Plan – 2025 to 2028

READING'S WIDER CONTEXT

Reading's influence extends well beyond its boundary. Around 180,000 people live within the borough, but Greater Reading totals nearly quarter of a million, with daily travel for work, education, shopping and leisure routinely crossing local authority lines. This regional role brings opportunity but also concentrates pressure on homes, services, transport and public space in and around the town centre.

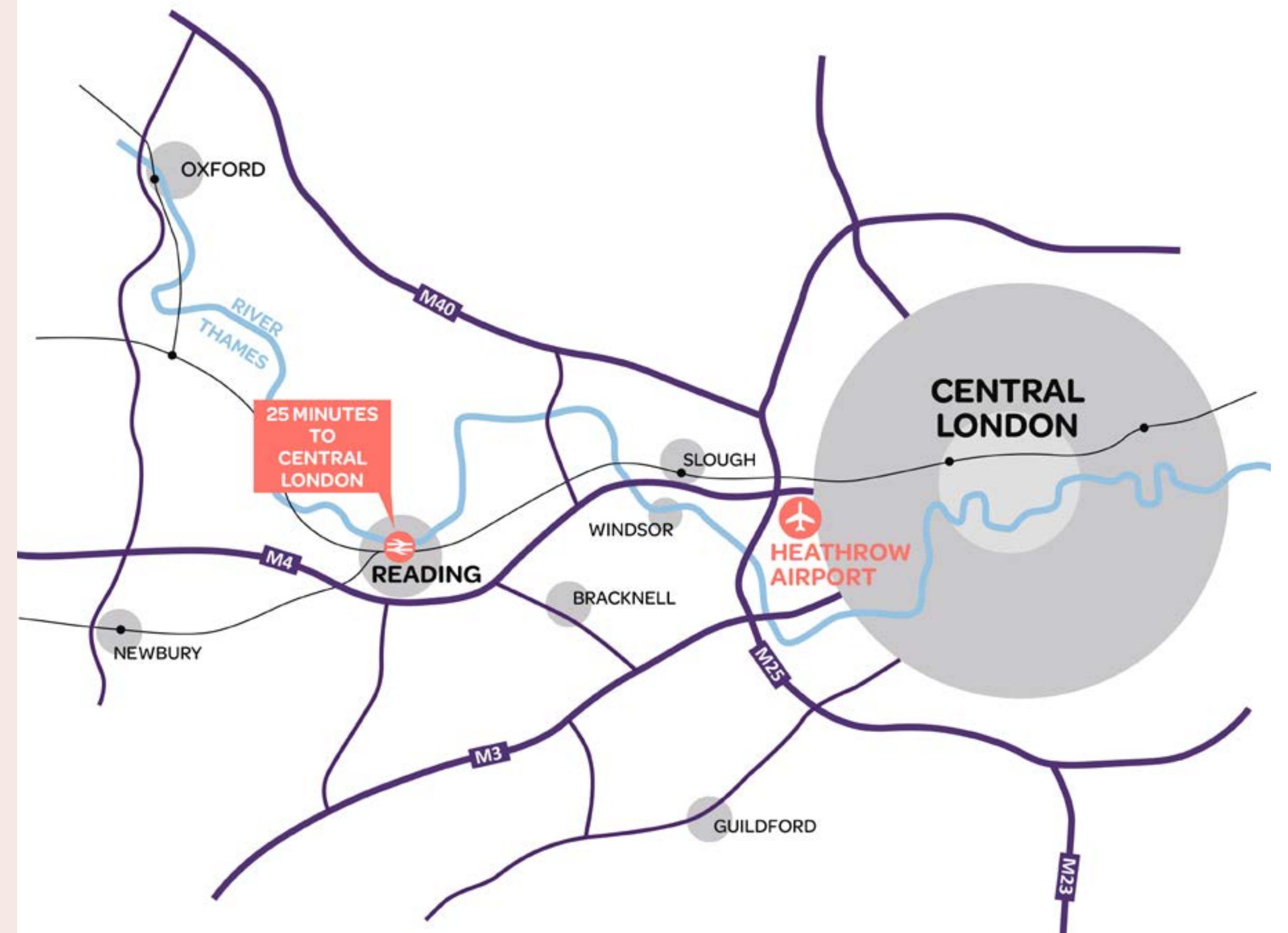
Page 28

Population: The population has grown rapidly (up 12% between 2011 and 2021) and is ageing, with residents over 65 increasing by over 17%. Reading is also one of the South East's most diverse places, with nearly half of residents identifying as Global Majority.

Economy: Economically, Reading has shifted from an industrial base to a knowledge driven economy centred on IT, professional services and finance. It attracts a large, highly skilled workforce, but benefits are unevenly shared. Pockets of deprivation persist, and

affordability pressures continue to widen gaps in outcomes.

Connectivity: Connectivity remains one of Reading's defining strengths. Its position on the Great Western Main Line and the M4 corridor, alongside Reading Station's role as a major national and regional rail interchange, gives the town exceptional reach. However, car dominated infrastructure and heavy traffic on the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) still fragment walking and cycling routes, undermining air quality and the everyday experience of moving around central Reading.

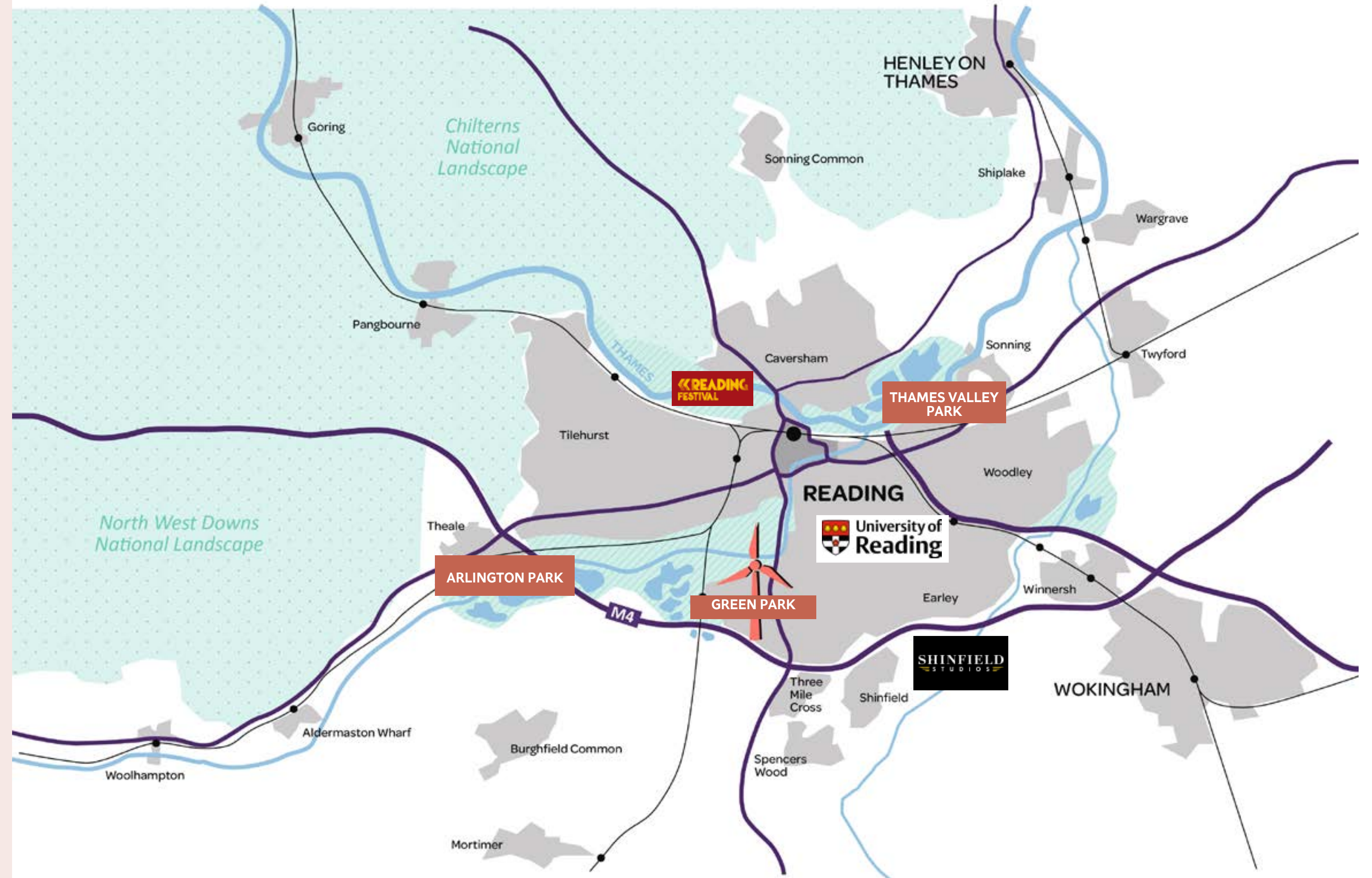


WIDER ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

Reading's town centre anchors a network of major employment, innovation and education hubs, and its success depends on strong, sustainable links between these out of centre areas and the town centre as the primary hub.

- Green Park:** One of Reading's largest employment areas, now supported by Reading Green Park Station. Improved sustainable travel links will help workers, residents and stadium visitors access the town centre more easily while supporting employment growth.
- University of Reading:** Contributes around £1 billion annually to the UK economy, with almost half retained locally. Better transport and cultural links will reinforce collaboration and strengthen the town centre's role in innovation and learning.
- Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP):** Home to around 80 knowledge based companies and major research facilities.

- Stronger connections will broaden access to high value jobs and reinforce Reading's position in the regional science and technology corridor.
- Thames Valley Park (TVP):** Hosts global employers such as Microsoft, Oracle and Huawei, with free bus links to Reading Station. Enhanced sustainable travel will help the town centre benefit more directly from this large international workforce.
- Shinfield Studios:** The UK's largest new film and TV studio complex; improved transport and cultural connections will help the town centre capture more value from this high growth sector.



CENTRAL READING CONTEXT

Central Reading is **compact, intensely used and highly visible**. It is where local life meets a much wider catchment and where opportunity and pressure are most concentrated. This activity gives the centre its energy but places **high demands on space, movement and design quality**.

Its character is long established and layered. The Abbey Quarter, founded in 1121, established Reading as a place of national importance and continues to shape its identity. Victorian expansion added commercial frontages, arcades and street patterns that still guide how people move through the centre.

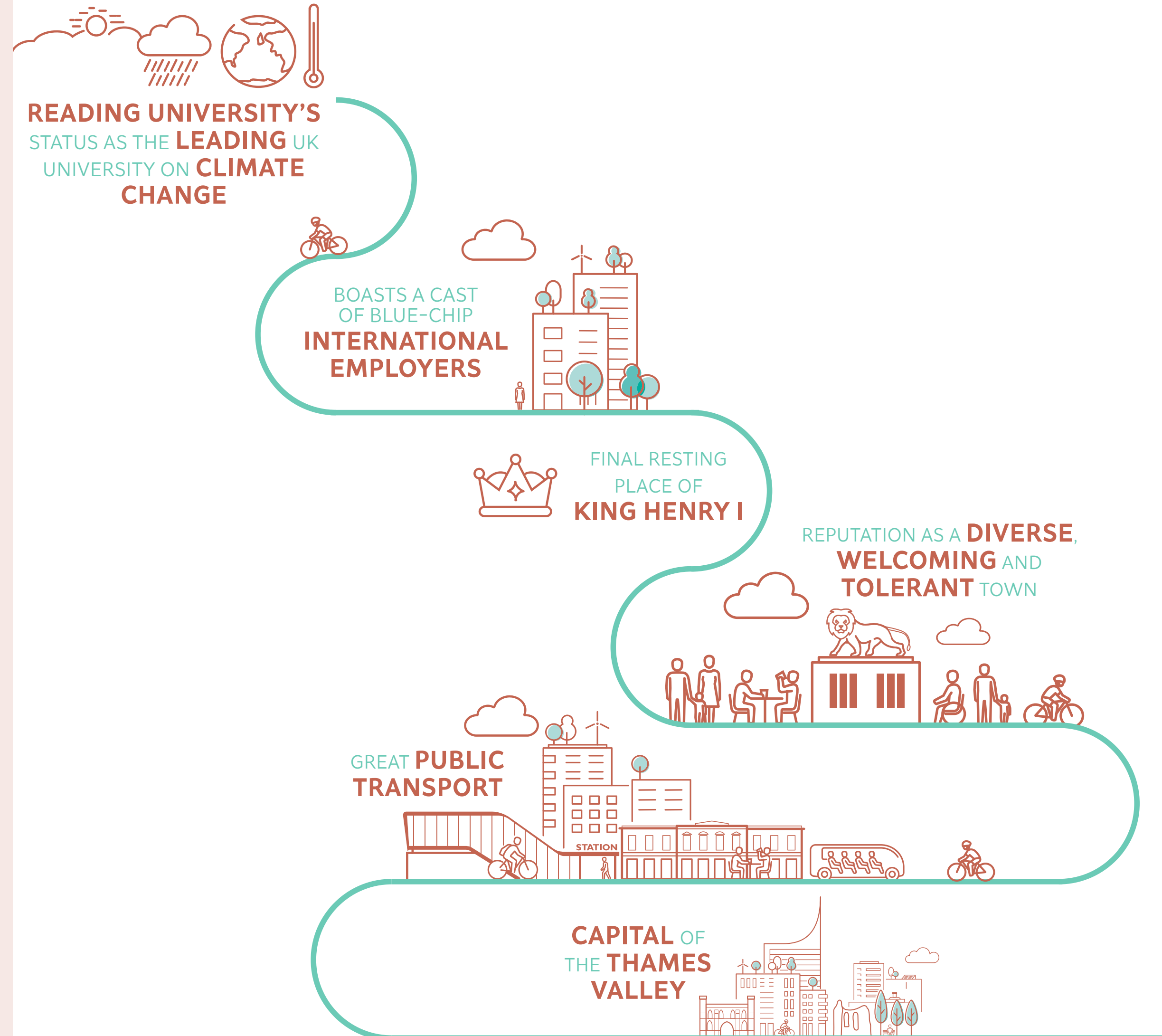
Recent decades have brought major interventions. Broad Street Mall and The Oracle reshaped the retail offer and improved access to the rivers, while investment in Reading Station redefined the town as a national transport hub. Current regeneration, including Station Hill, is strengthening Central Reading as a place to work and live. The mix of

medieval landmarks, Victorian streetscapes and contemporary development is a defining strength, but also raises expectations for architectural quality, heritage sensitivity and well designed public spaces.

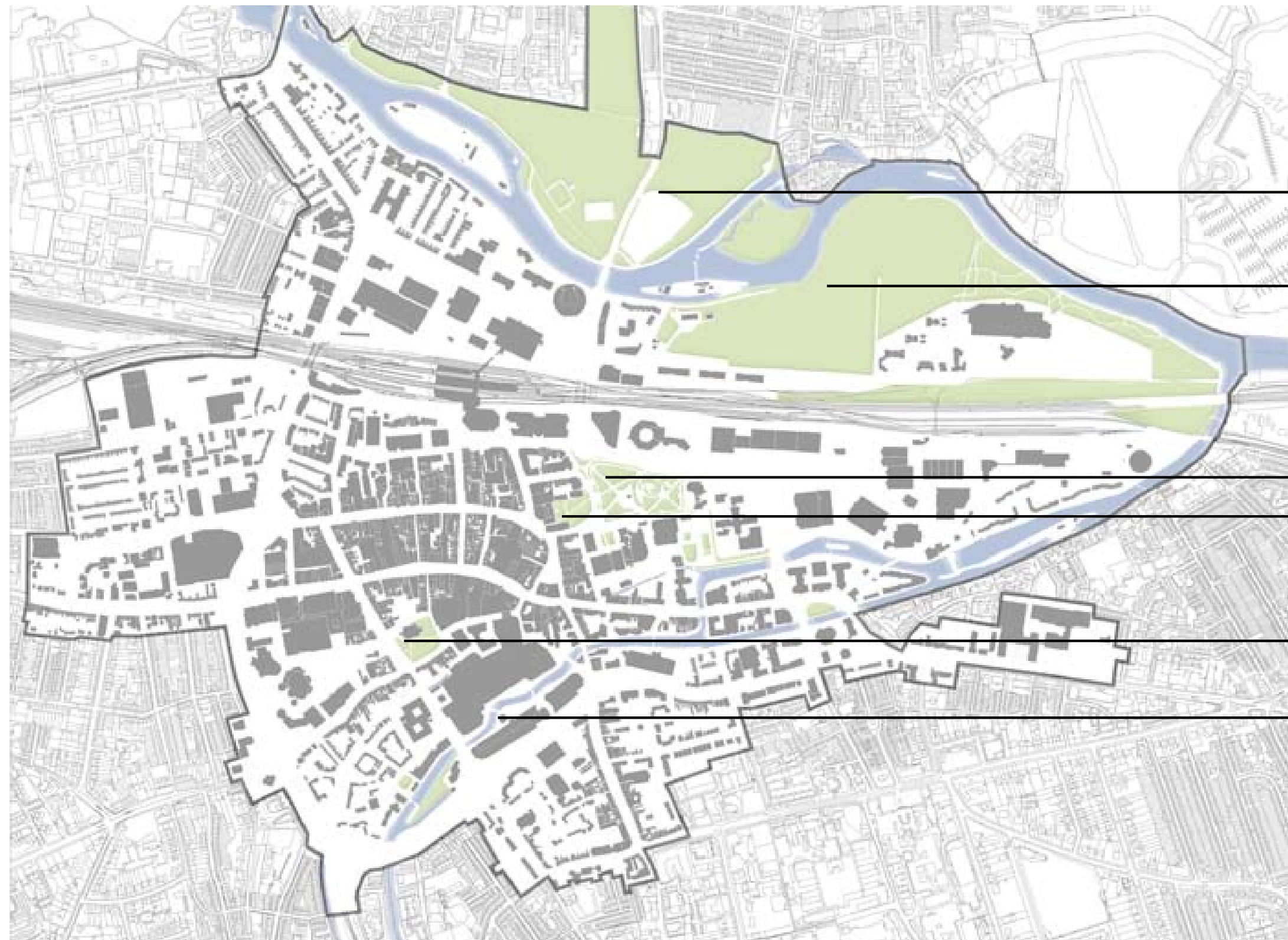
The town centre is also shaped by its rivers. Sitting between the Thames and Kennet, it benefits from riverside walking and cycling routes, opportunities for nature and quiet, and valued green spaces such as Forbury Gardens and Kings Meadow. As the residential population grows, the accessibility and quality of these spaces become a key test of liveability.

Reading Station and the routes linking it with shops, workplaces,

venues and rivers provide a critical first impression. Because these are among the busiest public spaces in the borough, targeted improvements here can significantly enhance how welcoming and easy to navigate the town centre feels.



OPEN SPACES IN CENTRAL READING



Open space

Christchurch Playing Fields

King's Meadows

Forbury Gardens

St Lawrence's Churchyard

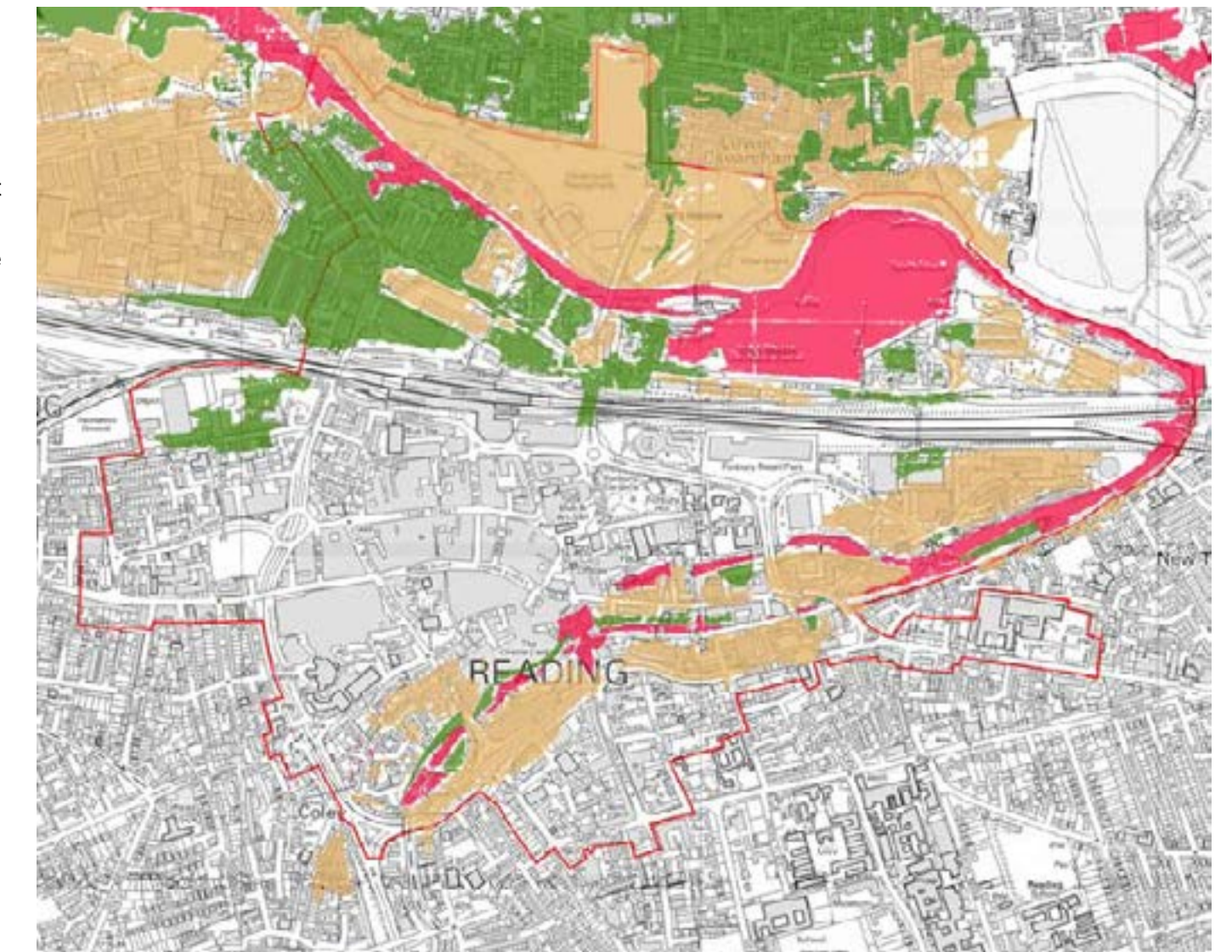
St. Mary's Churchyard

Kennetside/Oracle public realm

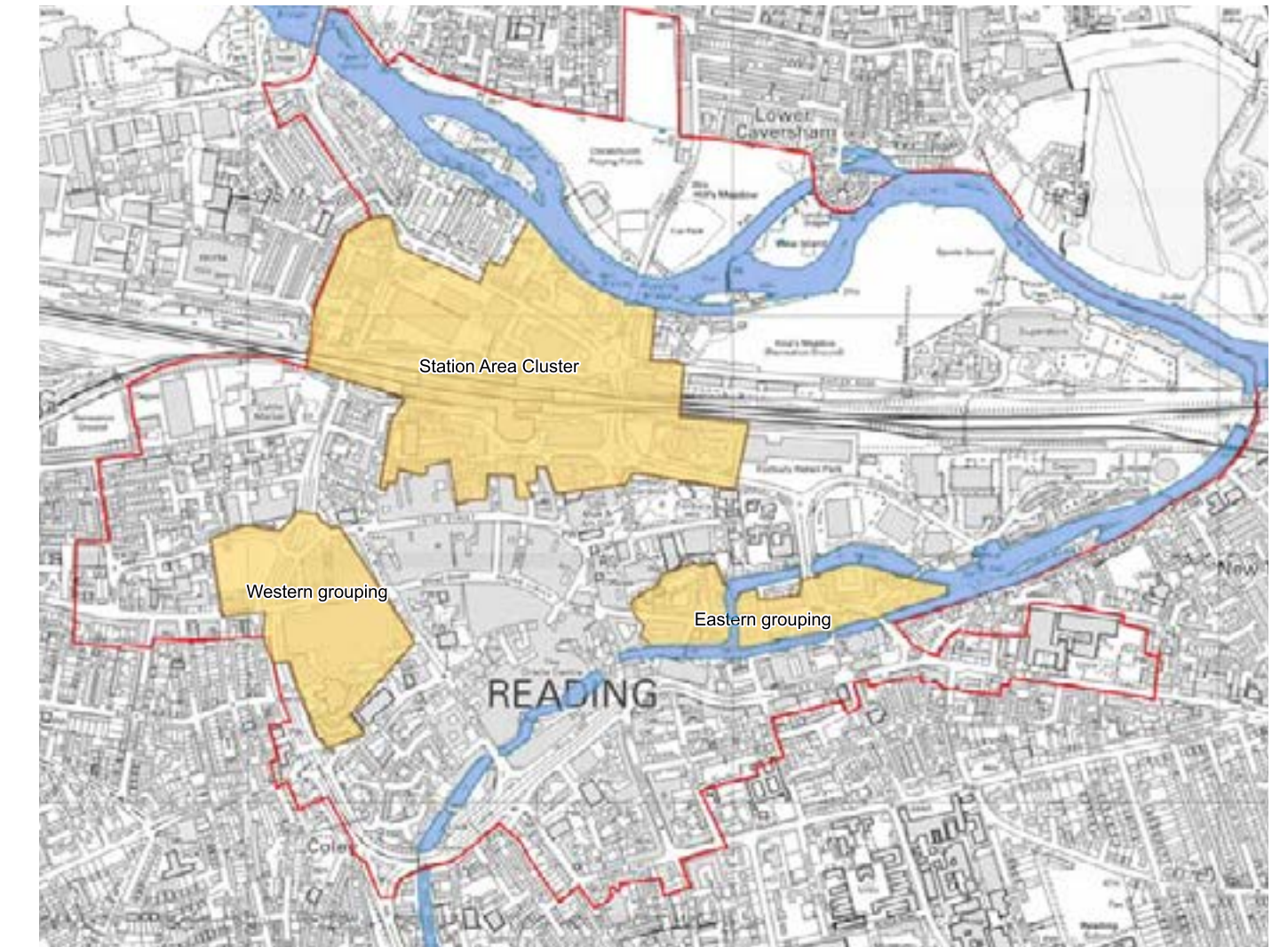
- Zone 3b Functional Floodplain
- Zone 3a High Probability
- Zone 2 Medium Probability

Reference should be made to the Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment completed by Jacobs (2007) for accurate flood risk zone boundaries

CENTRAL READING FLOOD ZONES



CENTRAL READING TALL BUILDING CLUSTERS



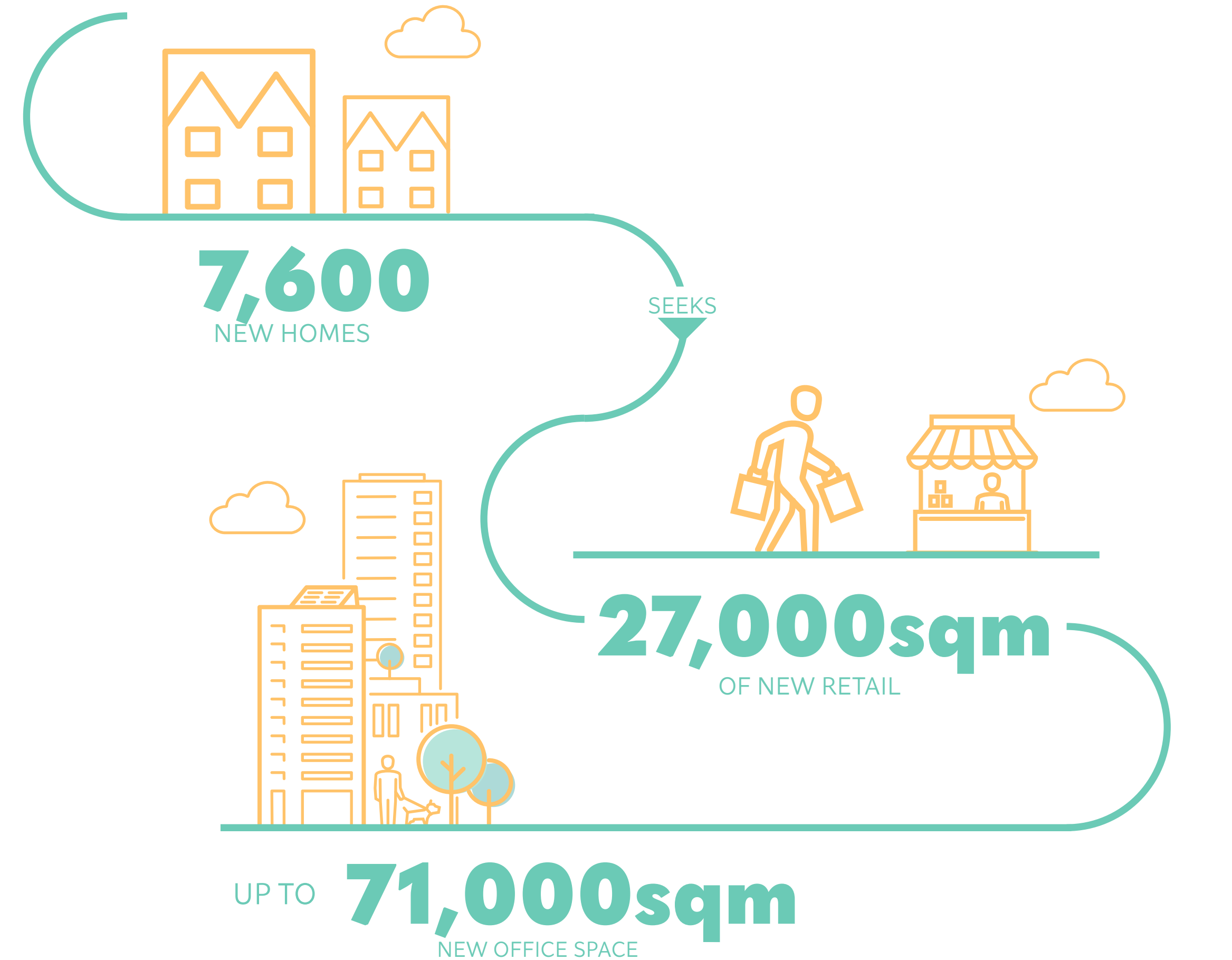
FUTURE TOWN CENTRE GROWTH

Reading's transformation will accelerate dramatically over the next two decades. The number of homes in Central Reading is projected to **more than double by 2041** according to the Local Plan, the fastest growth anywhere in the borough. Major developments such as Station Hill, Minster Quarter Central, Oracle and Broad Street Mall will redefine Reading's centre as a high-density, mixed-use neighbourhood.

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Demographic change will follow. Young adults will continue to dominate, drawn by the benefits of central living and connectivity, while older residents increasingly seek accessible urban homes. This shift will heighten demand for compact, flexible housing, walkable streets, amenities and health and community services within easy reach.

The seven principles outlined later in the vision define how this growth should be shaped.



(FIGURES ARE FOR CENTRAL READING)

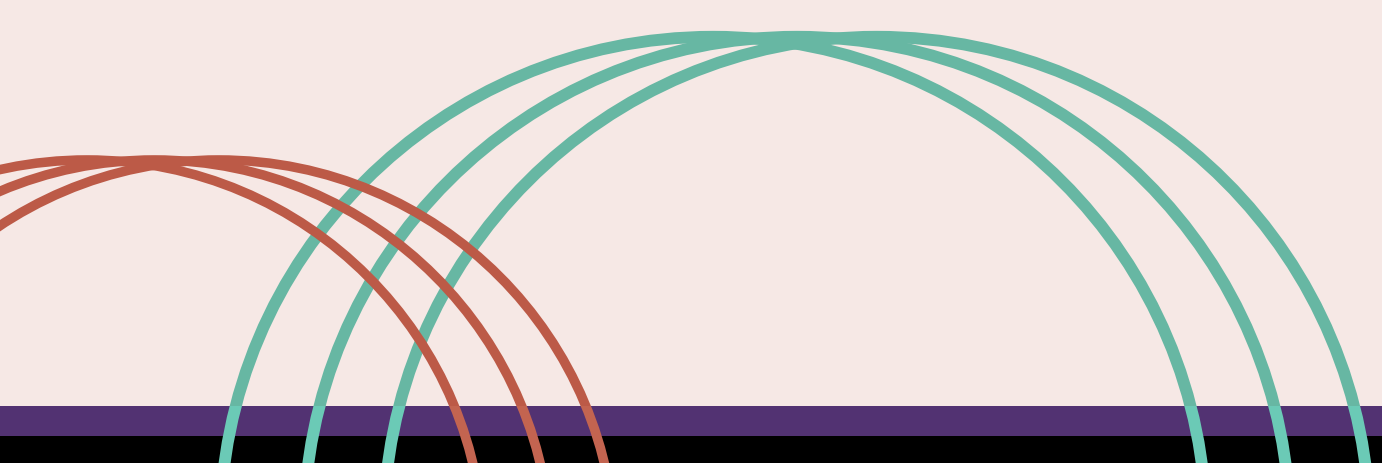
CENTRAL READING POPULATION & LIVING PROFILE

Central Reading has a distinctive and fast-changing residential profile. This table summarises the key characteristics of the town centre population, what these patterns mean for how the centre functions, and what this requires from future design and investment.

(See Appendix A for additional statistics and comparators)

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KEY STATS (Source: ONS 2021)	WHAT THIS IMPLIES ABOUT CENTRAL READING	DESIGN AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
20,546 residents live in Abbey + Thames wards	A sizeable, dense town centre community already exists and is growing.	Plan for everyday community infrastructure (health, childcare, advice, community hubs).
70.7% of homes are flats	High-density, apartment-led living is the norm; limited private outdoor space.	Provide high-quality shared amenity, play, rooftop/communal spaces, and noise/overlooking mitigation.
59.2% privately rented	High mobility households without long-term anchors.	Ensure strong long-term estate management, secure cycle storage and welcoming communal areas.
49.5% aged 20–39 (very young population)	High demand for accessible amenities, social spaces, active lifestyles and hybrid-working environments.	Support co-working spaces, active ground floors, flexible public realm and everyday recreation.
54.9% born outside the UK	Extremely diverse population with varied linguistic and cultural needs.	Provide multilingual wayfinding, inclusive design, culturally relevant programming, and accessible information.
50.7% of households have no car	Town centre residents rely on walking, cycling and public transport.	Prioritise walking comfort, crossings, cycle storage, bus reliability, legibility and stepfree design.
50.5% work mainly from home	Weekday life is local; demand for nearby services, cafés, third spaces and daytime vibrancy.	Strengthen weekday economy, improve public realm comfort, support workfriendly venues.
38.9% one-bed homes	Families are present but underserved; limited space for children.	Deliver family friendly play, pushchair-friendly routes, childcare access, and larger unit mixes in new schemes.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Reading is starting from a strong base. Connectivity, skills attainment and disposable income levels are high in the town, but there is a recognition that equality of opportunity does not reach everyone.

CHALLENGES

Pressure on infrastructure and services

Rapid population growth is increasing demand on healthcare, community facilities and youth provision, with infrastructure needing to keep pace.

Ensuring inclusive growth

Not all communities currently feel connected to the town centre's success, highlighting the need to share benefits more widely.

Public realm quality and gateways

Some key spaces, including station approaches and civic areas, feel cluttered and dominated by vehicles.

Barriers to movement

The IDR and rail lines create severance, limiting safe and attractive walking and cycling connections.

Riverside accessibility gaps

Parts of the Thames and Kennet remain difficult to access and are not fully integrated into the town centre experience.

Retail transition and town centre vitality

Structural changes in retail are leading to uneven activity and a need to strengthen evening and leisure uses.

Housing mix imbalance

A predominance of smaller flats limits options for families and long-term residents.

Land constraints and delivery challenges

Limited large sites, underused assets and stalled developments require more coordinated and innovative approaches.

Environmental and climate pressures

Flooding, overheating and air quality issues require continued investment and adaptation.

Energy and infrastructure transition

Moving to low-carbon systems will require upgrades to energy capacity and supporting infrastructure.

Impact of permitted development

Variable housing quality and loss of employment space risk undermining long-term place quality.



OPPORTUNITIES

Leverage exceptional connectivity

Build on Reading's status as a major rail hub, including the Elizabeth Line, to support sustainable growth and car-free living.

Support a vibrant, diverse community

Respond to a young and growing population with well-designed homes, services and public spaces.

Deliver a wider choice of homes

Provide a broader mix of housing, including family and affordable homes, close to jobs and transport.

Harness regeneration momentum

Maximise the impact of major developments such as Station Hill

Strengthen the local economy

Build on key sectors while enabling growth in creative, science and innovation industries, supported by aligned skills and training.

Create great public spaces

Transform streets, squares and gateways into greener, more welcoming and pedestrian-focused environments.

Unlock the riverside

Enhance access to and along the Thames and Kennet, creating continuous, active and inclusive waterfront spaces.

Enable sustainable, compact growth

Build on strong walking, cycling and public transport use to reduce car dependency and support a low-carbon town centre.

Use land creatively

Unlock constrained and underused sites through land assembly, mixed-use development and co-location of services.

Deliver accessible local services

Provide healthcare, education and community facilities in convenient, central and well-connected locations.

Enhance culture and heritage

Build on Reading's historic assets and cultural venues to strengthen identity and attract visitors.

Strengthen regional leadership

Position Reading as the Thames Valley's leading economic and cultural centre, attracting investment and talent.



HERITAGE & CULTURAL ANCHORS

Reading town centre contains a rich concentration of heritage, cultural and civic assets that define its identity and sense of place. These anchors span the medieval Abbey Quarter, Victorian civic buildings and contemporary cultural institutions, forming the foundation for cultural activity, everyday wayfinding and placemaking.

KEY HERITAGE ANCHORS

ABBHEY QUARTER

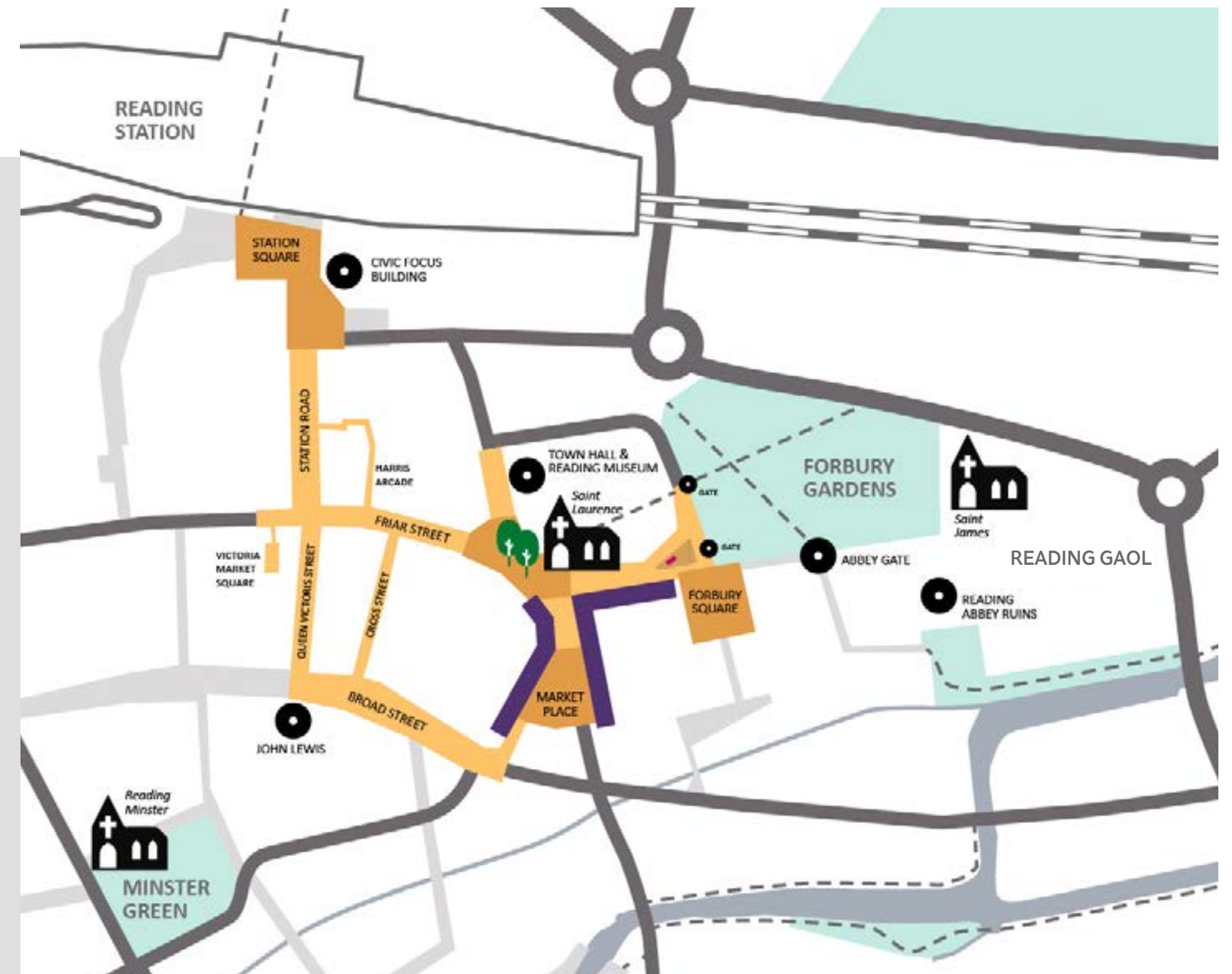
- A nationally significant heritage cluster containing Reading's most important historic assets, including:
 - internationally known for its association with Oscar Wilde and central to plans for a culture led future for the site.
- Abbey Ruins (Grade I, Scheduled Ancient Monument): A major medieval site, conserved and reopened in 2018, now used for events and cultural activity.
- Abbey Gateway (Grade I): The historic entrance associated with Jane Austen's schooling.
- Reading Gaol (Grade II): A landmark Victorian gaol
- Forbury Gardens (Grade II, Park and Garden): A Victorian park forming part of the wider Abbey Quarter setting and supporting heritage and recreation.



HISTORIC CHURCHES

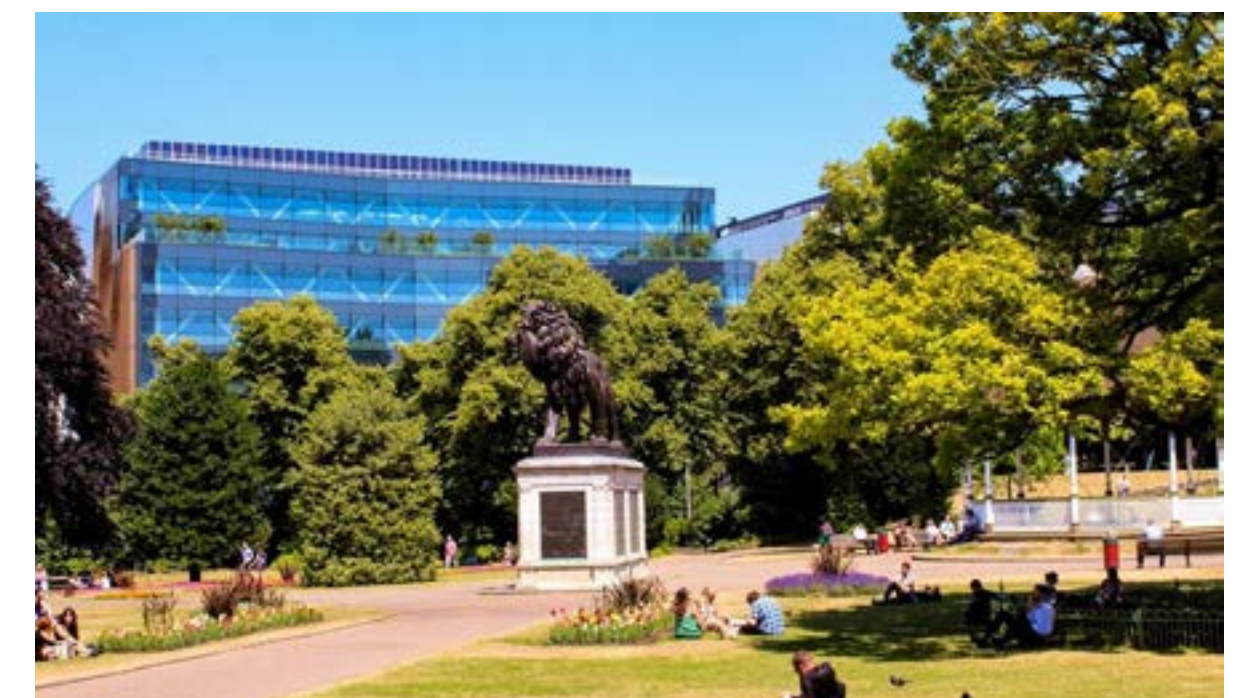
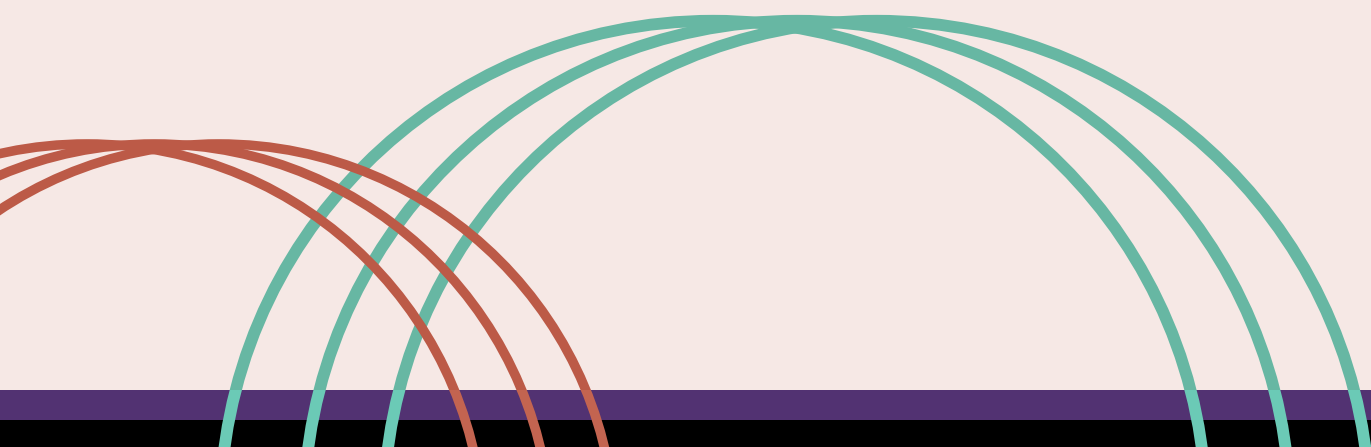
- St Laurence's Church (Grade I)
- Reading Minster (Grade I)
- Greyfriars Church (Grade I)

Together form a prominent group of medieval anchors shaping the historic townscape.



KEY CULTURAL ANCHORS

- **Reading Museum and Town Hall:** A civic and cultural hub home to the full-size Victorian Bayeux Tapestry copy.
- **The Hexagon and new Studio Theatre:** Major cultural venues supporting events, performance and creative participation.
- **Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations** such as CultureMix, Jelly, Museums Partnership Reading and Readipop providing diverse cultural programming.



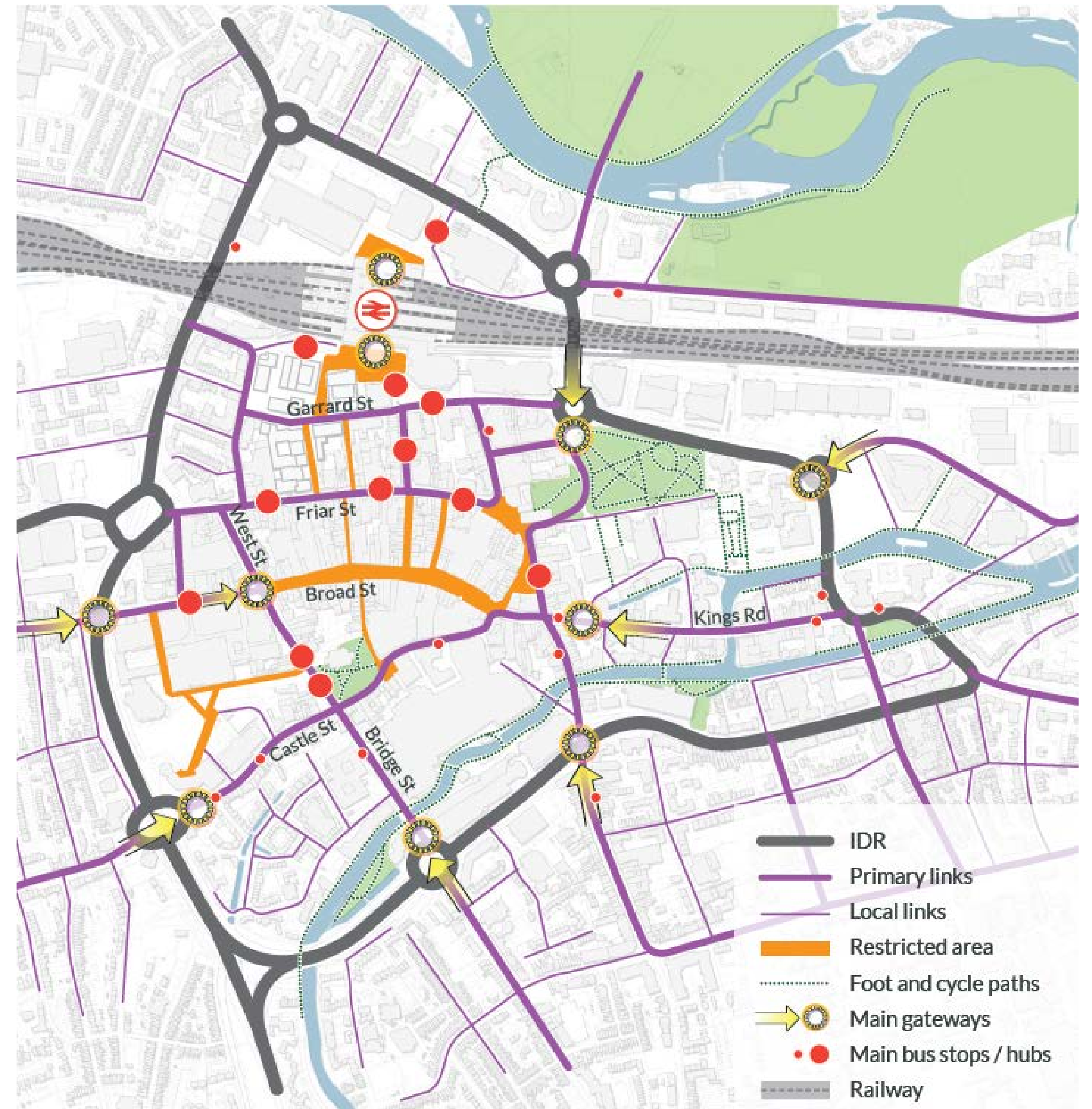
HOW PEOPLE MOVE THROUGH CENTRAL READING

Central Reading relies on movement patterns that support a **dense, young, largely car-free population** and one of the busiest transport hubs outside London. Its compact form, high levels of walking and position between the Thames and Kennet mean everyday travel depends heavily on the quality of connections, crossings and public spaces. However, **the IDR and Great Western rail line create barriers** that make short trips feel longer and less intuitive.

GATEWAYS AND ROUTES

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ROUTE TYPE	FUNCTION
Arrival <i>(Station ↔ Retail Core)</i>	The primary gateway where arrival is experienced. Focus includes clear sightlines, connected footways and active frontages that reinforce the station-to-centre routes.
Riverside Links <i>(Core ↔ Thames / Core ↔ Kennet)</i>	Routes that connect the town centre to the rivers, requiring visible signage and generous access points.
Cultural Routes <i>(Abbey Quarter ↔ Town Hall/Museum ↔ Minster/Hexagon)</i>	Legible connections between historic and cultural anchors, supporting identity and wayfinding.
East-West/North-South Routes	Corridors that cross IDR and rail severance, where improvements to crossings, pinch points and continuity are most impactful.



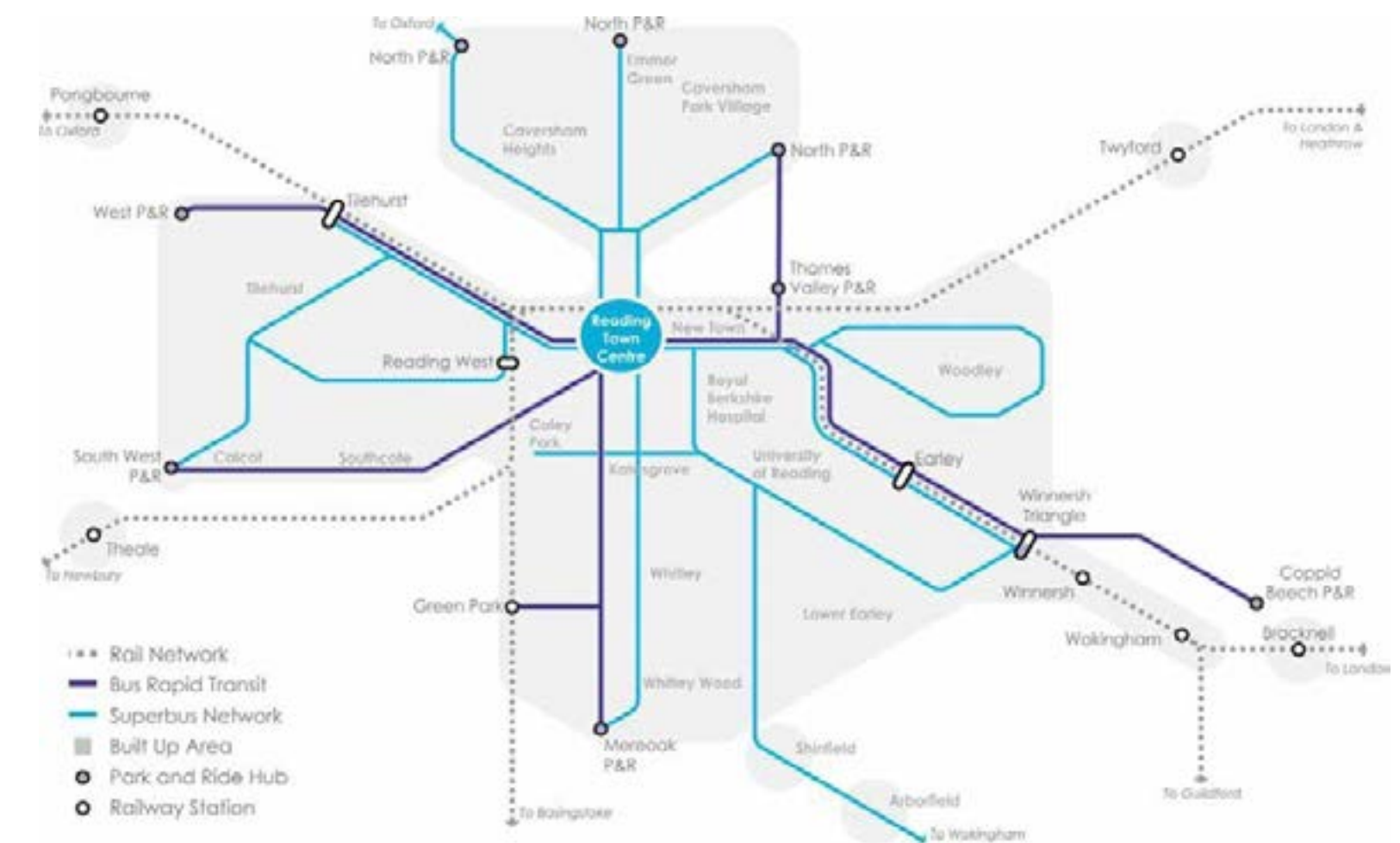
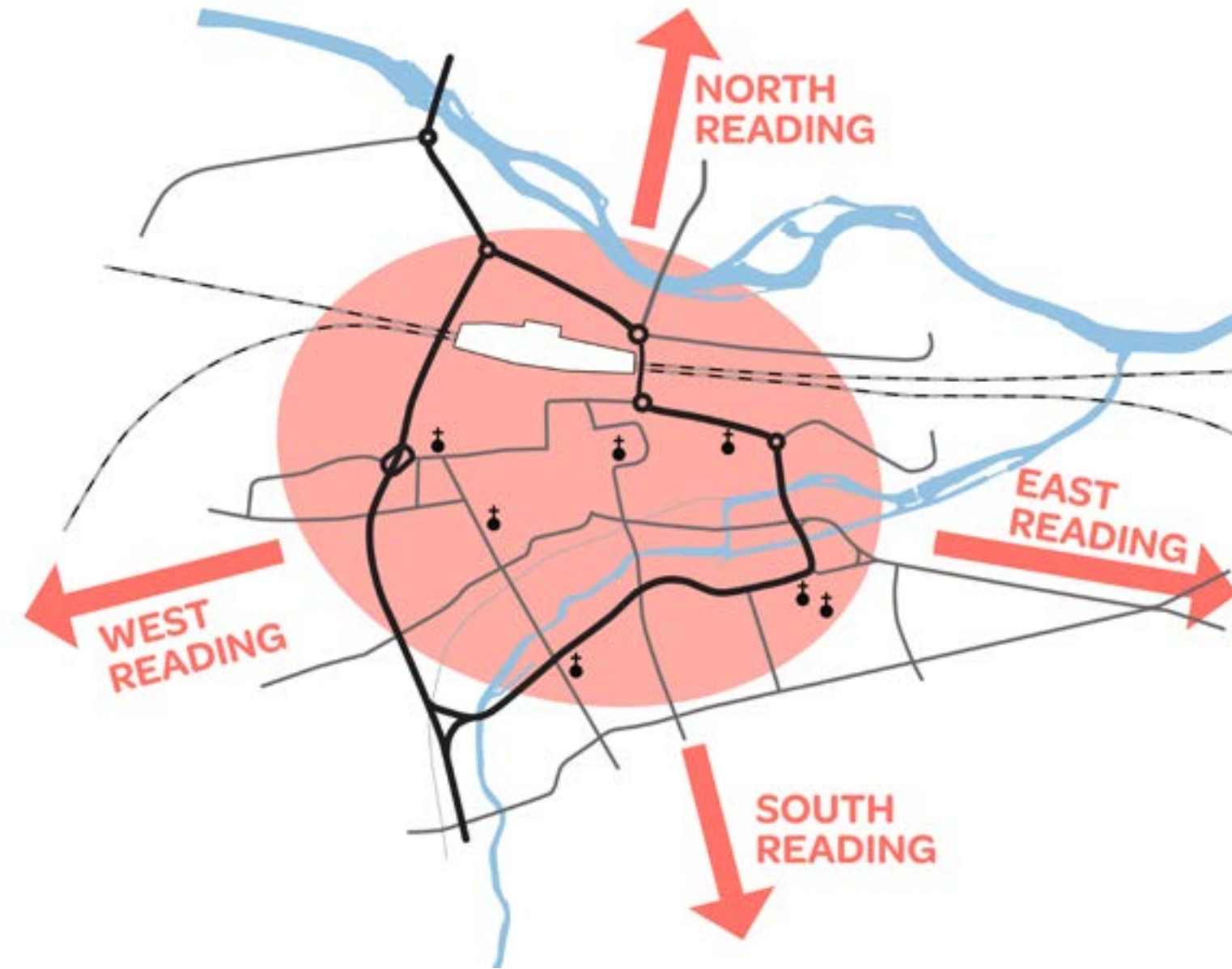
NEIGHBOURHOOD TO TOWN CENTRE ACCESS

To support inclusive access and reduce car dependency, neighbourhoods such as Caversham, South Reading, Tilehurst, Whitley and Earley should be connected via:

- **High quality public transport corridors** (Bus Service Improvement Plan/Bus Rapid Transit routes and Reading Station interchange improvements).
- **Continuous walking and cycling networks** with improved footways, crossings and cycle parking.
- **Great placemaking at key interchanges such as the station and bus stop clusters** enables easy movement between transport options, prioritising comfort, legibility and safe movement.

- **Inclusive access for all communities**, including mobility hubs, safer routes, School Streets and well maintained surfaces.
- These links enable local trips without relying on the centre, while ensuring that journeys through the town centre are safe, legible and welcoming.

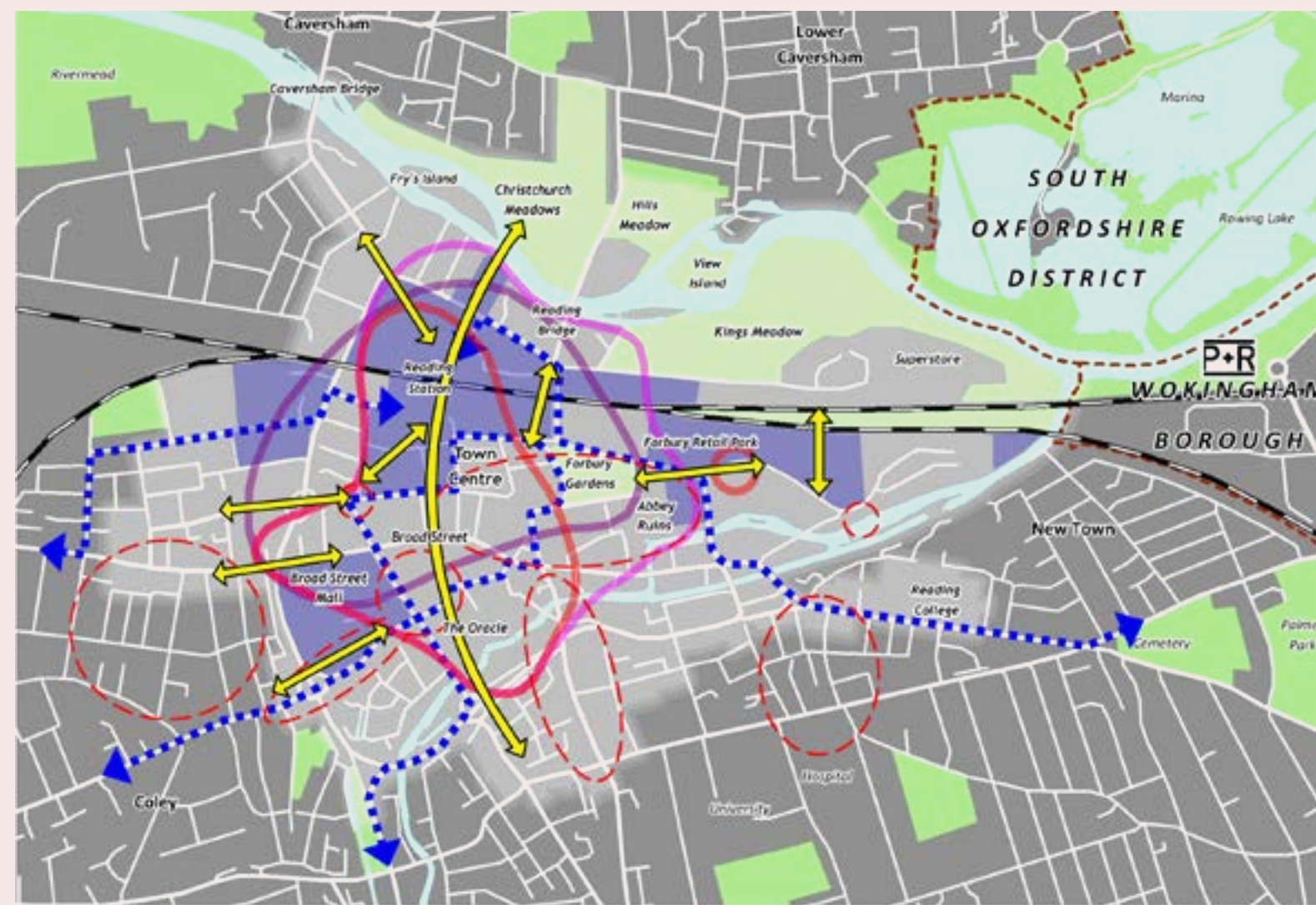
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OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Central Reading will change most visibly in three Opportunity & Character Areas identified in the Local Plan: **Station & River**, **West Side**, and **East Side**. These areas have the scale to deliver new homes and workplaces, upgraded public spaces, and stronger links to the Thames and Kennet, supporting Reading's evolution as a walkable riverside town centre. These all centre around the 'Core' of Broad Street and the Oracle.

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STATION & RIVER AREA

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Role	Reading's most prominent gateway, defined by the station and high levels of people arriving on foot, bike and public transport.
Strengthens	The Station–Core Arrival Route, Riverside Links, and the Station Gateway.
Top Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent, high-quality station-to-centre arrival sequence (Station Road/Queen Victoria Street <u>or</u> Friars Walk/Union Street → Broad Street → Oracle) • Reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians; improve legibility and stepfree access • Strengthen north–south access across the rail line to unlock Thames links • Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors will prioritise bus travel along certain routes to the town centre and station
Case Study	<p>Station Hill — New squares, pocket parks, active ground floors, and a more welcoming station arrival.</p> <p>Reading Riverworks - Unlock high quality public access to the Thames while strengthening the town centre's riverside identity</p>



Key

- Sub-area boundary
- Major Opportunity Area
- Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area
- Existing building
- Recent building or building under construction
- Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential
- Nearby sensitive location—heritage assets
- New area of open space
- Vehicle access point
- Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)
- Location of transport interchange
- Proposed Bus Rapid Transit route
- Retained or new public access along waterways
- Activation of key routes and spaces with town centre uses

Sub-Areas

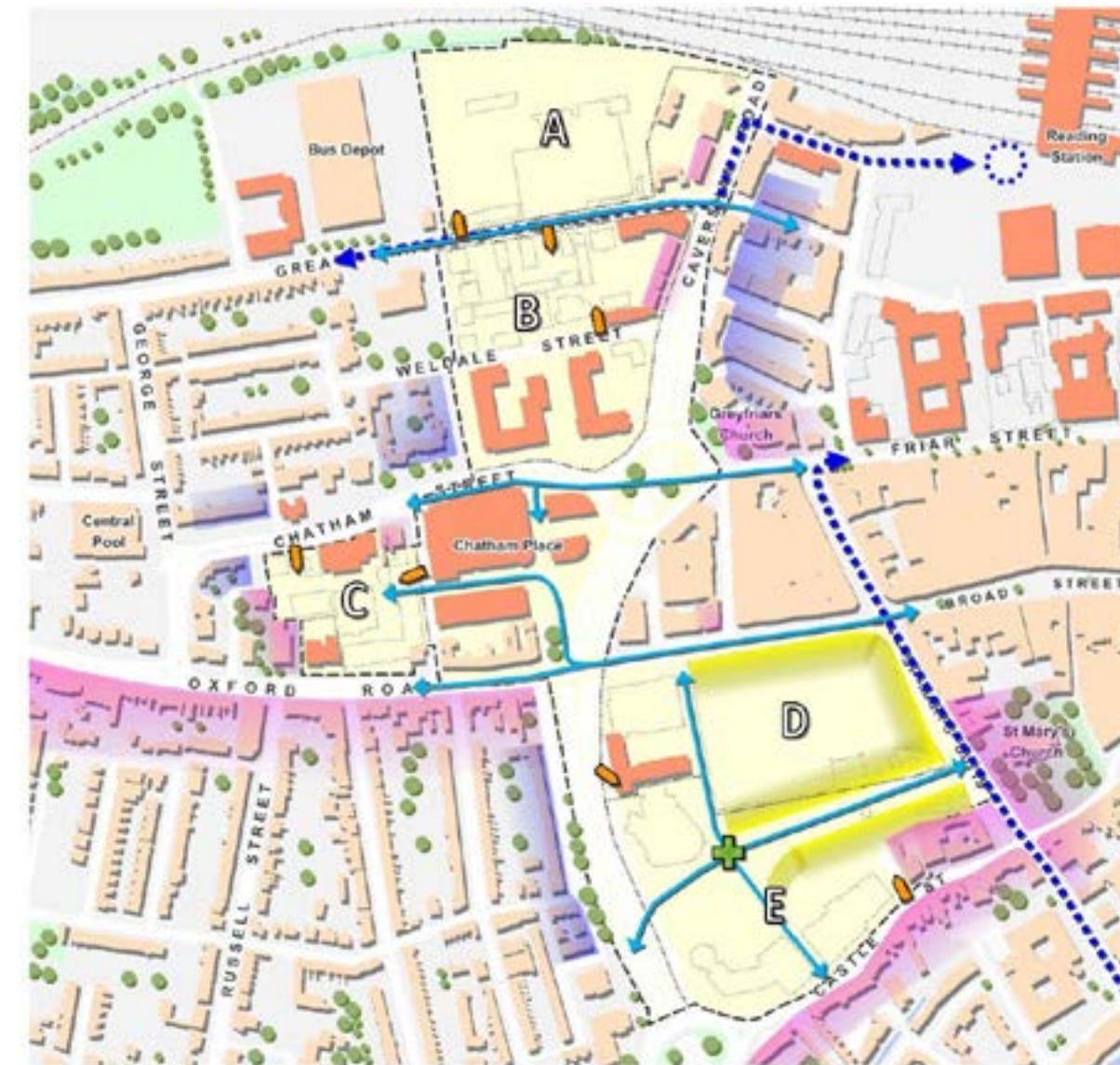
- A** CR11a: Friar Street and Station Road
- B** CR11b: Greyfriars Road Corner
- C** CR11c: Station Hill and Friars Walk
- D** CR11d: Brunel Arcade and Apex Plaza
- E** CR11e: North of the Station
- F** CR11f: West of Caversham Road
- G** CR11g: Riverside
- I** CR11i: Napier Court



WEST SIDE

Role	A major regeneration opportunity capable of becoming a coherent neighbourhood with homes, community uses and people friendly streets.
Strengthens	East–west routes across the IDR, and Cultural Routes connecting the Minster, Hexagon and town centre destinations.
Top Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer east–west crossings to reduce IDR severance and improve arrivals from neighbouring communities • Balanced mix of uses, strong civic/community offer and high quality public realm • Heritage sensitive regeneration around Castle Hill, Minster and St Mary’s Butts
Case Study	Minster Quarter regeneration — Heritage sensitive redevelopment providing new civic space, cultural links and hundreds of new homes.

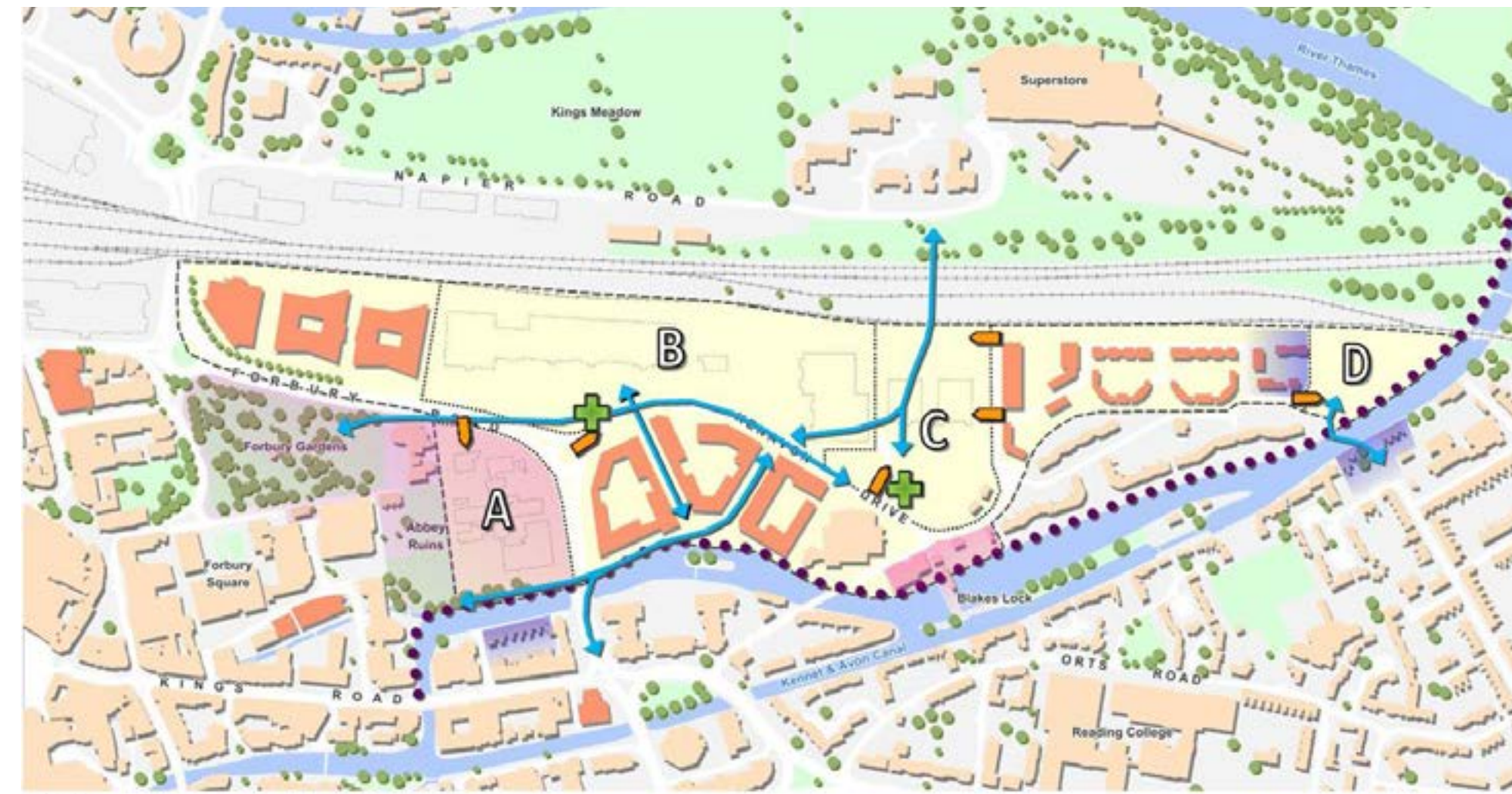
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EAST SIDE

<p>Role</p>	<p>An emerging riverside quarter centred on heritage, culture and the River Kennet.</p>
<p>Strengthens</p>	<p>Riverside Links, Cultural Routes, and key east–west links across rail and IDR edges.</p>
<p>Top Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver continuous, fully public riverside space along the Kennet • Strengthen cultural connections to the Abbey Quarter and heritage settings • Improve underpass/bridge connections to integrate East Side into the centre • Support a culture led future for Reading Gaol
<p>Case Study</p>	<p>Huntley Wharf — Demonstrates how new homes and public realm animate the Kennet and create a welcoming riverside environment.</p>

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Key

Sub-area boundary	Vehicle access point	Existing building
Major Opportunity Area	Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)	Recent building or building under construction
Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area	Retained or new public access along waterways	Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential
New area of open space		Nearby sensitive location—heritage assets

Sub-Areas

A	CR13a: Reading Prison
B	CR13b: Forbury Retail Park
C	CR13c: Forbury Business Park & Kenavon Drive
D	CR13d: Gas Holder



CORE

Role	The retail and pedestrian heart of Reading — Broad Street, Friar Street, The Oracle and primary pedestrian network.
Strengthens	All major routes
Top Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive public realm with comfort, shade, seating, and clear sightlines • Strengthen day to evening activity and active frontages • Improve wayfinding and heritage legibility within Victorian street patterns • Reduce clutter and enhance crossings on key shopping streets



RECENT AND EMERGING PROJECTS

Central Reading is experiencing one of the most significant periods of transformation in its recent history. A coordinated pipeline of civic, cultural, regeneration and infrastructure projects delivered by the Council and partners, is reshaping how the town centre looks, feels and functions. Individually, these projects are delivering new homes, workplaces, public spaces, cultural facilities and green infrastructure. Collectively, they represent clear momentum that this vision seeks to channel into a coherent, long term strategy.

These projects reflect the delivery roles set out in the Delivery Plan, with the Council focusing its resources on high impact, high visibility interventions, and collaborating with partners where major regeneration or infrastructure can be unlocked through partnerships or private delivery.

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Together, these projects demonstrate that Reading's town centre transformation is already well advanced. They collectively deliver:

- new homes and growing mixed use neighbourhoods
- strengthened cultural infrastructure
- investment in public realm, green streets and family friendly spaces
- better connections to the Thames and Kennet
- improved gateways and movement corridors
- climate ready energy and infrastructure
- enhanced heritage settings and independent business environments

HEXAGON STUDIO THEATRE & CULTURAL UPGRADES

Council Led
West Side Opportunity Area

Investment in Reading's cultural heart is modernising its key public venues and strengthening the evening economy. The Hexagon upgrade and the new Studio Theatre introduce flexible, accessible spaces that support performance, community use and cultural programming. These improvements reinforce the Minster Quarter as a connected cultural cluster that can host activity throughout the day and into the evening.



DEVELOPMENTS

Recent award-winning developments have enhanced the quality of facilities across the town centre, including the Thames Lido and mixed-use developments such as Huntley Wharf.

The new Civic Centre enhancements and Hexagon

Studio Theatre are fully funded, while the prominent Minster Quarter, Station Hill and Broad Street Mall developments are progressing. Market appetite is strong for re-purposing sites such as the Oracle and Reading Gaol, with further capacity on town centre retail sites.

BUILT

1. Reading Station & Elizabeth Line
2. Forbury Place
3. Thames LIDO
4. Thames Quarter
5. Rivermead Leisure Centre
6. Palmer Park Leisure Centre
7. Green Park Station & Reading West Station
8. Blue Collar
9. Huntley Wharf
10. Weldale Street
11. River Academy
12. Station Hill (Phase 1 & 2)
13. Civic Centre Upgrades

ACTIVE INITIATIVES

14. Reading Metropolitan
15. Vastern Court
16. Reading Riverworks
17. Broad Street Mall redevelopment
18. Minster Quarter Central
19. Oracle East
20. Reading Gaol
21. Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street
22. Hexagon Studio Theatre
23. Norman Place
24. John Lewis
25. Kings Meadow View
26. Napier Road



Figure 1. Map of indicative development locations

DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDIES

STATION HILL

Partner Led: Delivered [Phases 1-2] & Ongoing [Phase 3]
Station & River Opportunity Area

Phased regeneration to redefine the station gateway. As a new mixed use quarter, Station Hill is already contributing to an active, employment rich, residential and leisure destination.



HUNTLEY WHARF

Partner Led – Delivered
East Side Opportunity Area

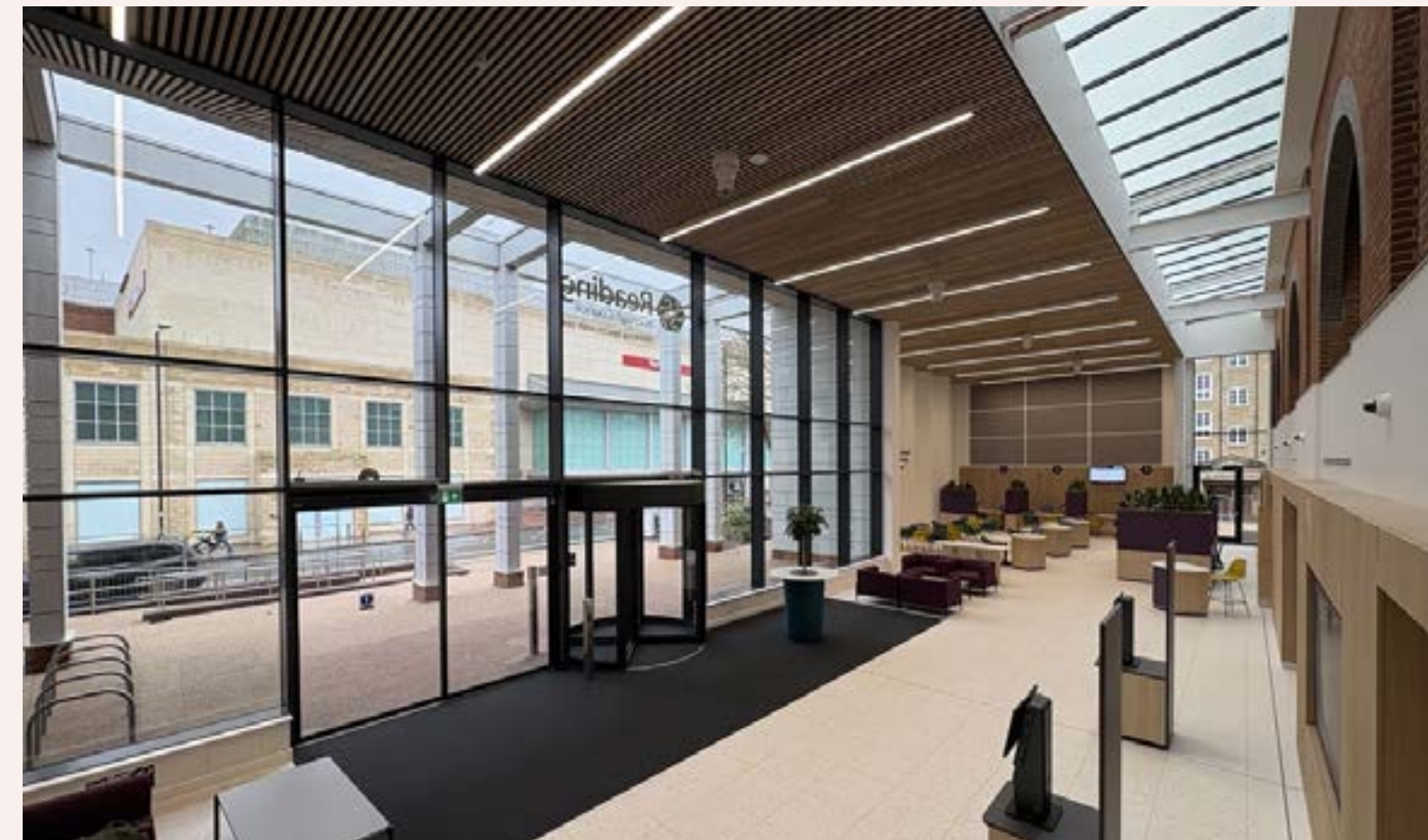
Redevelopment along the Kennet has activated the riverside with new homes, leisure uses and a welcoming waterfront environment. The site exemplifies how high quality residential development can unlock access, routes and placemaking along Reading's waterways.



MINSTER QUARTER

Joint Led
West Side Opportunity Area

A major opportunity site in the heart of Reading, Minster Quarter will integrate new homes, community spaces and a civic square, connecting the Hexagon, Minster Street and Broad Street Mall.



CIVIC CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS // CENTRAL LIBRARY

Council Led
The new library delivers a modern civic anchor focused on learning and digital access. As part of wider Civic Centre enhancements, it establishes a welcoming and coherent civic gateway and supports the shift toward a more inclusive, accessible town centre.

DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDIES

READING RIVERWORKS

Partner Led
Station & River Opportunity Area

Riverworks represents a step-change in how Reading connects with the Thames. The project aims to deliver high quality access, new routes and riverside activation, strengthening the east-west Thames corridor and reinforcing Reading's identity as a riverside town.



ORACLE RIVERSIDE

Partner Led
Core Opportunity Area

Emerging proposals will open up the riverside, introduce improved public realm, broaden leisure and hospitality uses, and create new routes along the Kennet. These enhancements support a stronger waterside economy and re position the Oracle as a more diverse destination.



STATION ROAD, FRIAR STREET, BRUNEL ARCADE AND STATION ARRIVAL

Joint Led
Station & River Opportunity Area

Phased upgrades will create a clearer, safer and more attractive station gateway. This includes exploring changes to bus routing, public transport interchange improvements and enhanced walking environments that reflect Reading's role as a regional hub.



UPGRADES TO ARCADES, UNION STREET AND HISTORIC ROUTES

Partner Led
Core Opportunity Area

Enhancements to characterful routes such as Harris Arcade, Union Street (Smelly Alley), Queen Victoria Street and Reading's historic passages will support independent businesses and reinforce heritage character.

CENTRAL READING PRINCIPLES

The opportunity areas set out where the greatest change and investment is expected to take place. The principles below explain how that change should be shaped. These principles are supported by a delivery plan that sets out early actions, medium-term projects and longer-term opportunities to shape investment decisions.

This vision is built around seven principles:

OUR PRINCIPLES

1. BUILDING HEALTHY AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Supporting wellbeing, accessibility and belonging through inclusive streets, services and shared spaces.

2. TRANSFORMING READING'S RIVERS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Making the Thames, the Kennet and the town centre's parks, squares and streets central to daily life.

3. ENABLING CONNECTED AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport so the town centre is easy to reach and get around without relying on a car.

4. BUILDING A GREENER, CLIMATE-RESILIENT TOWN CENTRE

Embedding climate resilience into design and day-to-day management so the town centre is lower carbon, greener, cooler in summer, and better adapted to rainfall.

5. CELEBRATING READING'S CULTURE, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

Protecting and showcasing Reading's heritage assets, supporting a strong cultural offer, and reinforcing what makes Reading unique.

6. REIMAGINING THE TOWN CENTRE EXPERIENCE

Evolving Reading's historically strong retail core by strengthening the wider mix of leisure, food and drink, culture, services and experiences.

7. SUPPORTING GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Supporting business growth and new ways of working by creating high-quality workplaces and the right mix of spaces.

Principle 1

Building Healthy and Connected Communities

WHY?

Thousands of new homes have already been delivered in the town centre, with many more planned. This growth offers a major opportunity to set a benchmark for high quality urban living, but only if new housing is matched by the services, spaces and amenities that make daily life work.

Reading's town centre population is diverse, young and largely car free. For many residents who experience the centre on foot, the quality of streets, public spaces, healthcare access, community facilities and everyday services directly affects wellbeing and social connection. Without coordinated planning, increased density risks putting pressure on already busy facilities, widening inequalities in access, and creating isolated developments rather than places that function as part of a community.

This principle recognises that building homes must go hand in hand with building community. Growth should be supported by investment in accessible healthcare, education and advice services, childcare, inclusive public spaces, and homes that are genuinely affordable, high quality and liveable over the long term. By embedding these expectations in future development, Reading can create a stable, healthy town centre community rooted in the town's character, not just new housing.



WHAT

1.1 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- Provide community spaces within walking distance of major growth areas such as Station Hill, Minster Quarter Central and the Oracle, ensuring town centre residents can access early help, advice, learning, youth support and health services without crossing the IDR.
- Work with health partners to expand local capacity around new residential developments such as at Broad Street Mall, Local Plan development sites such as Cattle Market and explore co-located healthcare hubs in redevelopment areas.
- Use temporary units in locations like Friar Street, Broad Street, Oxford Road or Broad Street Mall to host outreach clinics, ESOL sessions and social prescribing programmes to keep space active while major sites evolve.



1.2 DESIGNING FOR ALL GENERATIONS

- Ensure the centre's busiest walking routes such as Station Road, Broad Street, Friar Street, Kings Road, Oxford Road include shaded seating, places to pause and step free continuity so older residents, families and people with mobility needs can move comfortably.
- Support mixed communities in new developments such as Minster Quarter Central and Station Hill by requiring communal gardens, rooftop spaces, rooms for resident events and flexible ground floor spaces for clubs, classes and community gatherings.
- Strengthen family friendly provision by creating a visible network of "play on the way" spaces on routes between homes, schools, the Hexagon, Forbury Gardens, Kennet riverside and the Abbey Quarter and identify a site for a flagship town centre play space accessible from the core.

1.3 INCLUSIVE DESIGN

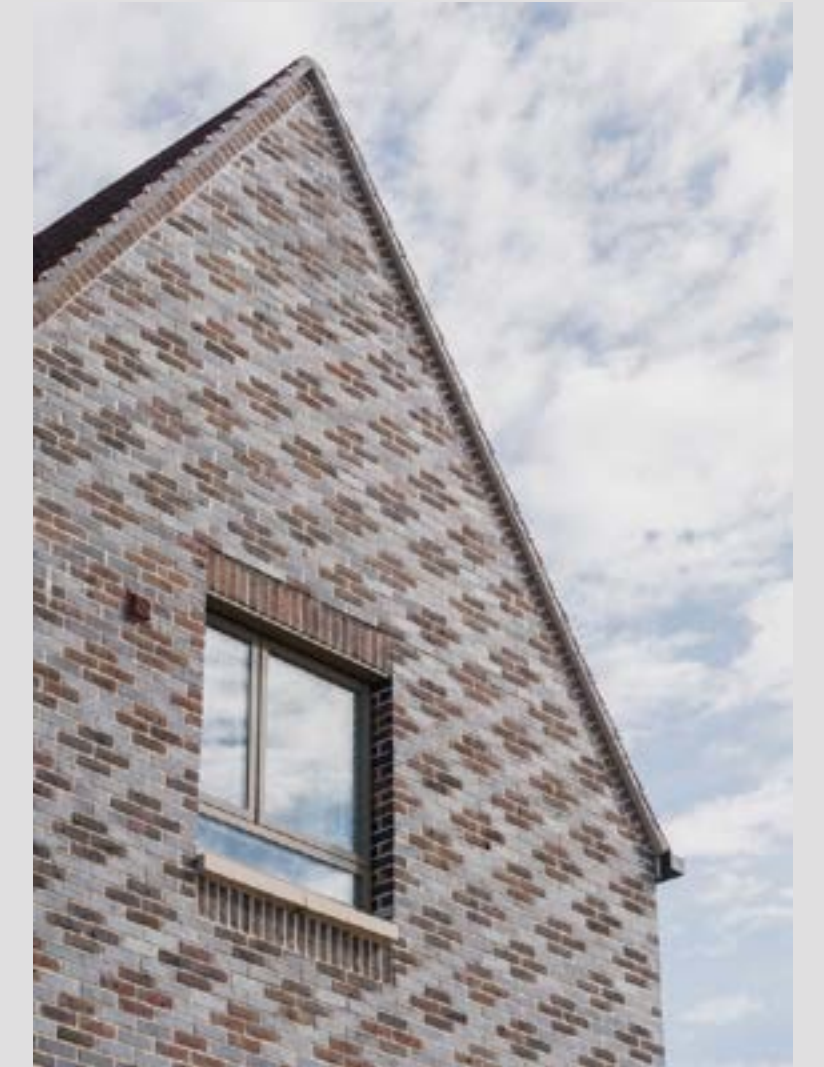
- Prioritise inclusive design on high stress routes such as IDR crossings and Station approaches, ensuring clear wayfinding.
- Use lighting and materials that support sensory comfort in spaces like Hexagon Square, and the Abbey Quarter, creating quieter zones away from the busiest streets.
- Expand multilingual wayfinding across key walking routes, riverside paths and cultural anchors to reflect Reading's highly international population (55% born outside the UK). Work with groups such as CultureMix, Jelly and community ESOL providers to co design inclusive information.
- Embed Reading's cultural identity from the Abbey ruins to the town's long history of migration and creativity, through public art, heritage interpretation, cultural routes and community led commissions.

WHAT

1.4 DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY TOWN CENTRE HOMES

- Ensure new development demonstrates high-quality, place-specific architecture that draws on Reading's Victorian, medieval and industrial heritage, reinforcing the town centre's distinctive character.
- Ensure new homes in Opportunity Areas (Station & River, West Side, East Side) deliver private balconies, accessible communal courtyards or roof terraces. This is essential in a town centre where around 70% of homes are already flats, and that proportion will continue to increase.
- Call for dual aspect homes along constrained town centre sites to maximise daylight and reduce overheating.
- Align new homes with Reading's need for a broader mix: more two and three-bed units for families, accessible homes for older residents and high quality studios or 1 beds for young renters.
- Ensure layouts, ventilation and noise strategies respond to the centre's vibrant cultural scene by balancing comfort with the needs of venues around Friar Street, Gun Street, the Hexagon and the riverside.
- Require robust, long term management plans for shared spaces, landscaping, rooftops and resident facilities especially in large mixed use schemes such as Minster Quarter Central, Broad Street Mall and Station Hill to ensure safety, pride and long term stewardship

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GUIDANCE PROJECT CHECKLIST

This checklist sets out the key expectations for residential development in Reading Town Centre. It is designed to help shape proposals that align with the ambitions of this vision, supporting a vibrant, inclusive and high-quality place to live.

This is a practical guide to inform design, viability discussions and delivery from the earliest stages. It highlights core principles, ranging from affordability and design quality to long-term stewardship that reflect best practice and local priorities.

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PROJECT CHECKLIST		✓
Affordable and Mixed	Minimum 30% affordable housing, with a tenure mix reflecting local needs and integrating affordable homes seamlessly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide homes for a broad range of households including key workers, older residents and families to support a balanced community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure affordable homes match market units in design quality, specification, access and amenity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
High-Quality Design	Prioritise dual-aspect homes and minimise north-facing single-aspect units unless exceptional quality is demonstrated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Exceed BRE daylight standards, particularly in taller buildings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide private outdoor space (balconies, winter gardens) and high-quality shared spaces such as courtyards or roof gardens.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Maintain appropriate privacy and overlooking distances using massing, orientation and façade design.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver generous, functional layouts that meet or exceed national space standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balanced, Practical and FamilyReady	Ensure design responds to Reading’s industrial and riverside character.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide a balanced mix of 1, 2 and 3-bed homes, with a meaningful proportion designed for families.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure noise and ventilation strategies support comfort while enabling evening and cultural venues to operate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-Term Care and Stewardship	Offer easy access to play space, green space, schools, health services, local shops and safe walking/cycling routes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Set clear expectations for management, maintenance, servicing, waste and recycling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Design communal areas to feel welcoming and genuinely shared.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide long-term management strategies for shared spaces including planting, rooftops, play areas and public realm.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Support community-building through shared facilities and active resident engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**PRECEDENT:
SOUTH GARDENS, ELEPHANT PARK,
LONDON**

This integrated landscape design of 3 courtyards and 2 communal roof gardens was a finalist in the Landezine International Award and delivers a 'liveable, engaging, playful and beautiful residential landscape with intrinsic ecological value'. The roofscape covers an area of just under 0.5 hectare which is larger than the surrounding ground landscape.

www.landezine-award.com/south-gardens-elephant-park



**PRECEDENT:
PORTOBELLO SQUARE, KENSINGTON, CATALYST HOUSING**

This 1,000 home super-density development in the west of London comprises a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, 3 bedroom mews houses and 4 bedroom family homes.

Inspired by London's most successful housing typologies, the mews and the mansion block, the scheme borrows heavily on this part of London's Victorian heritage, (something it shares with Reading) to create a mixed tenure and varied scale of neighbourhood, blending family living with smaller starter units.



Principle 2

Transforming Reading's Rivers and Public Spaces

WHY?

Reading town centre is shaped by its rivers. The **Thames**, **Kennet** and **Holy Brook** meet at its heart, creating a distinctive landscape that has supported trade and industry for centuries and now offers major benefits for quality of life, climate resilience and economic vitality.

As the centre grows denser, access to high quality public space and everyday contact with nature become increasingly important. More residents, workers and visitors place greater pressure on streets and parks, while hotter summers and heavier rainfall require public spaces that can provide shade, comfort and resilience. In this context, rivers and parks must function not only as leisure spaces but as essential urban infrastructure.

Yet many riverside corridors remain hard to find, disconnected or lacking the comfort, lighting and activity needed for regular use. Parks such as **Forbury Gardens**, **Christchurch Meadows** and **King's Meadow** are valued but often operate as isolated destinations rather than part of a joined up network. As a result, rivers and green spaces are still experienced as edges, not integral elements of the town centre.

This principle responds to that challenge by positioning Reading's rivers and public spaces as a connected system that cools streets, manages surface water, supports biodiversity, enables cultural activity and provides everyday places to spend time. Transforming these assets into a coherent, welcoming network will strengthen wellbeing, civic pride and the overall appeal of the town centre.



WHAT

2.1 A PARKS AND RIVERS NETWORK

- Create a seamless network linking the Thames, Kennet and Holy Brook to town centre parks (Forbury Gardens, Kings Meadow, Christchurch Meadows), cultural anchors (Abbey Quarter, Town Hall/Museum) and key routes (Station–Core via Union Street or Station Road), Minster Quarter, Oracle Riverside).



unlocked while strengthening Reading's riverside identity and creating new walking and leisure opportunities.

2.2 IMPROVED ACCESS TO OUR RIVERS

- Strengthen everyday access between the station area and Thames via Vastern Road, Christchurch Bridge and Norman Place, and between the Core and Kennet through the Oracle Riverside, Kings Road, and Huntley Wharf. Reading Riverworks demonstrates how high quality public access to the Thames can be

- Prioritise upgrades along Napier Road, Reading Bridge, King's Meadow connections, and fragmented stretches of the Kennet so rivers become natural destinations for residents, workers and visitors.
- Provide seating, shading, clear wayfinding and event ready spaces along riverside routes such as Oracle Riverside, Chestnut Walk, Abbey Wharf and Huntley Wharf.





**PRECEDENT:
POCKET PARK
PROGRAMME,
LONDON**

The Mayor of London’s Pocket Park Programme saw the delivery of over 100 ‘parklets’ in 26 London boroughs. £2m of seed funding was utilised by communities to deliver a programme of orchards, edible bus stops and small public spaces to provide “relief from the hustle and bustle of city streets”.

www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/pocket-parks-map



**PRECEDENT:
PLAY ON THE WAY, FEN
COURT, CITY OF LONDON**

Neither a sculpture nor a traditional playground, this project brings an element of unexpected play into the city, inviting people to interact with one another and their surroundings in new ways and shifting perceptions of public space.

By looking at design from an unusual perspective – that of a child’s – the architects saw the opportunity for bringing in a more playful or even contemplative atmosphere to the spaces in the heart of the business area which can engage families, visitors and city-workers alike.



**PRECEDENT:
GENERAL EXAMPLES
OF GREEN
PLACEMAKING**

Increased urban greening and biodiversity should be an inherent aim of any development or public space improvement scheme.

Linking to RBC’s existing Tree Strategy, doorstep greening can be accommodated on walls, roofs, and in the street.

Opportunities can be found everywhere and can lead to additional spaces to reflect, dwell and provide a platform for community stewardship.



**PRECEDENT:
OPEN SPACE INSTEAD OF
PARKING**

The German town of Siegen shared similar difficulties to Reading in that much of its urban water space was land locked and without meaningful access. In 2013 the municipality ran a European landscape design competition to remodel a 230 space car park along the River Sieg and re-purpose this as a quality new promenade and waterfront access. Completed in 2015, the re-profiling of the urban watercourse has become a destination for waterfront retail and recreation.

www.zukunft-mobilitaet.net/116021/urbane-mobilitaet/siegplatte-abriss-siegeberkrugung-siegen-zu-neuen-ufern



WHAT

2.3 HISTORIC GATEWAYS, CIVIC SQUARES AND PARKS

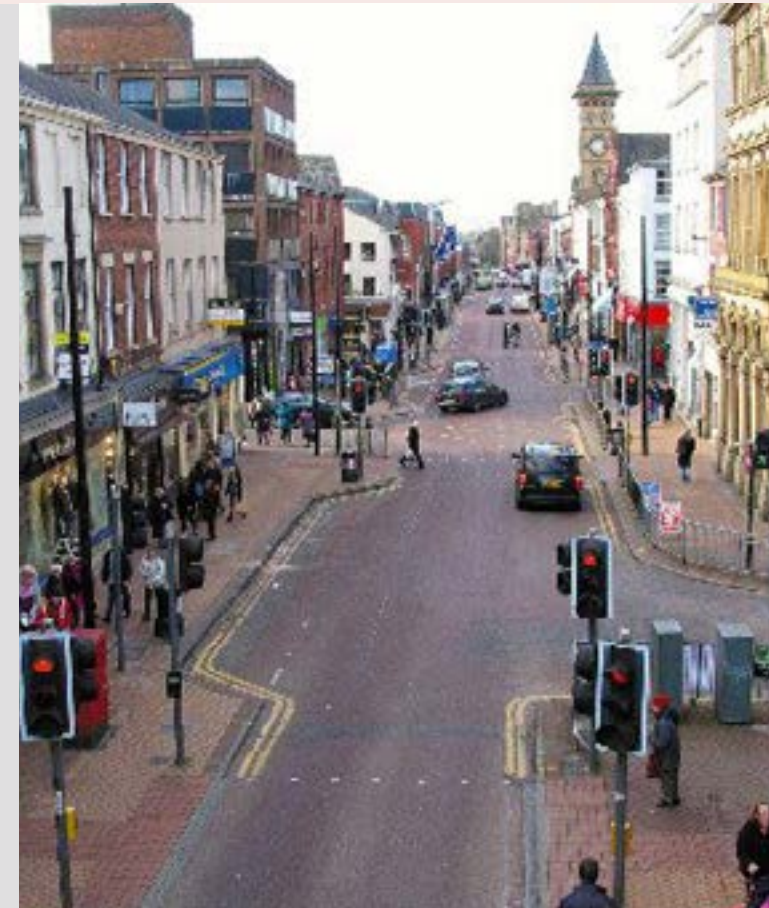
- Transform civic gateways such as St Mary's Butts, Market Place, the approaches to the Abbey Quarter, and the Minster Quarter, so they feel welcoming, heritage led and easier to navigate.
- Reinforce Forbury Gardens as Reading's central green space for events, gatherings and cultural programming, linked more visibly to the Abbey Quarter and Town Hall.
- Ensure new squares at Station Hill and Minster Quarter Central provide high-quality, flexible public space with clear heritage connections (e.g., views to the Minster, Abbey, or reflect historic street patterns).

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PRECEDENT: FISHERGATE, PRESTON

The project, funded by £1.38m from the European Regional Development Fund and £2m from Lancashire County Council, aimed to improve key gateways into the city.

www.preston.gov.uk/media/2300/Preston-City-Transport-Plan-2019-/pdf/preston-ctp.pdf?m=637079473620800000&ccp=t rue#cookie-consent-prompt



before



after



before



after (proposal stage)

PRECEDENT: GLASGOW AVENUES, BY URBAN MOVEMENT

The Glasgow Avenues project is a key initiative proposed as a catalyst to dramatically improve the quality of the city centre environment. This would be achieved through rethinking the city's main streets.

www.urbanmovement.co.uk/glasgowavenues



PRECEDENT: GREY TO GREEN, SHEFFIELD

This innovative environmental and economic development strategy undertaken by Sheffield City Council delivers on 3 objectives:

- re-connecting the Castlegate area with the rest of the city centre;
- finding a more efficient use for large areas of underutilised highway land; and
- mitigating the severe impact that the floods in June 2007 had on Castlegate.

As a consequence of its completion in summer 2020, the project has become a catalyst for environmental and economic regeneration.

www.greytogreen.org.uk

WHAT

2.4 POCKET PARKS AND PLAY

- Introduce small green moments and playful elements along the most-used walking desire lines such as Station Road to Broad Street; Oxford Road corridor; Gun Street/Minster Street; Kings Road; Kennet towpaths, especially near schools, youth spaces, and high-density housing on the East and West Sides.



2.5 SAFE AND RESILIENT

- Strengthen town centre safety and resilience by integrating Martyn's Law-aligned measures into public realm and venue design including clear sightlines, reduced clutter, well lit transitions, and proportionate hostile vehicle mitigation in busy areas such as Broad Street and St Mary's Butts, ensuring safety enhancements support (rather than conflict with) accessibility and the creation of welcoming streets.

2.6 INTEGRATED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Embed nature-based design in all upgrades to Friar Street, Oxford Road, St Mary's Butts, Kings Road and IDR crossings, using rain gardens, green verges, shade, trees and habitat links.
- Align with Reading's climate and biodiversity goals so new development delivers measurable gains in the town centre.



Principle 3

Enabling Connected and Active Travel

WHY?

Movement defines the experience of Central Reading. The town centre is a major transport hub, with one of the country's busiest rail stations and the western terminus of the Elizabeth line. Tens of thousands of people arrive daily on foot, by bike, bus and train, while others pass around the centre via the IDR and Thames crossings.

This connectivity is a strength, but it creates pressure. Key streets, crossings and gateways can be busy, uncomfortable or confusing, and wide roads and complex junctions make short walking trips feel longer and less inviting. Through traffic also contributes to congestion, poor air quality and competition for limited street space.

As the town centre accommodates more homes, jobs and activity, these pressures will grow unless movement is rebalanced. Reading cannot deliver a high quality, liveable centre if walking, cycling and public transport remain secondary to car movement, or meet its climate and health ambitions without making sustainable travel the easiest, most attractive choice.

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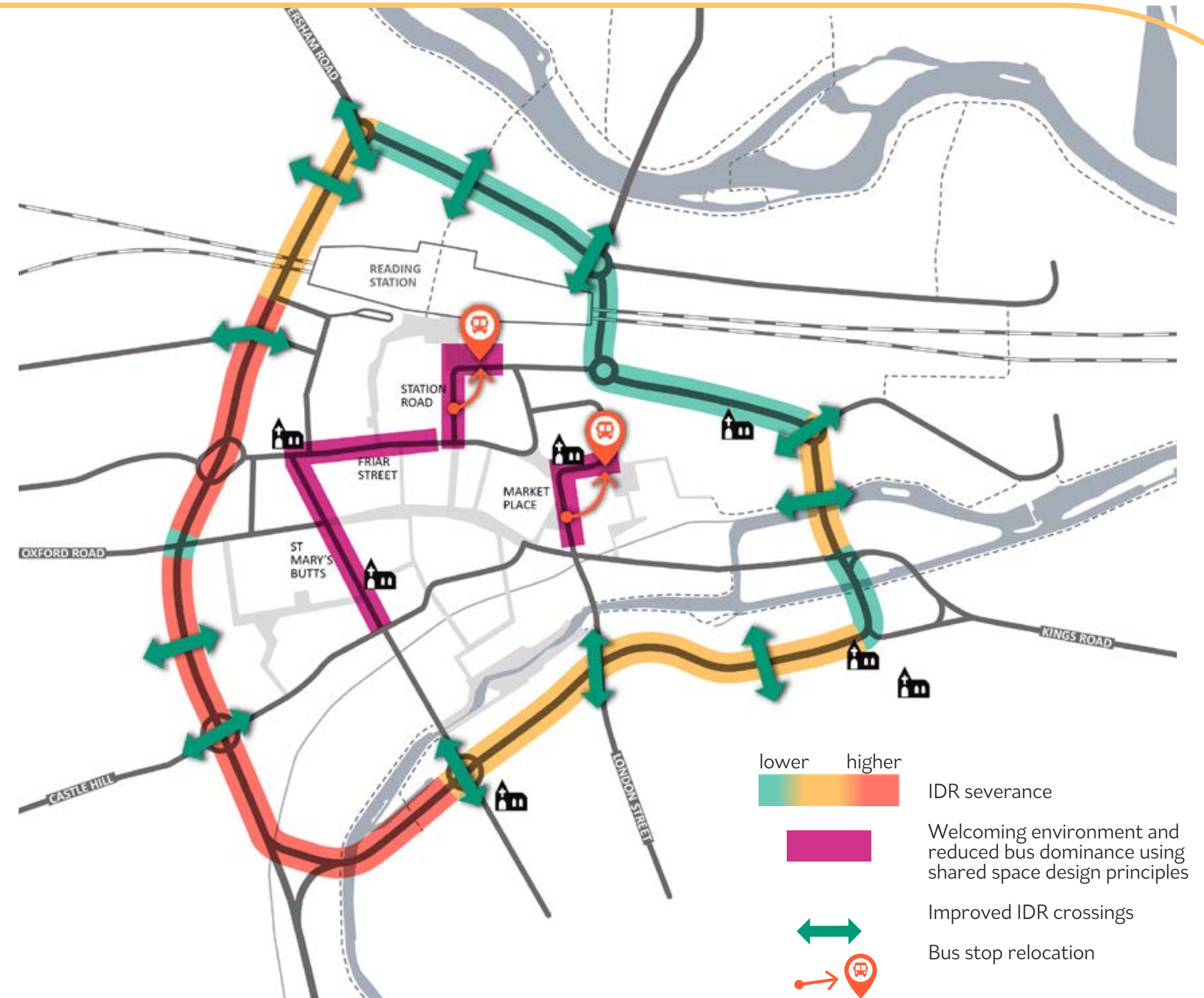


Figure 2. Improvements to IDR severance and bus dominance

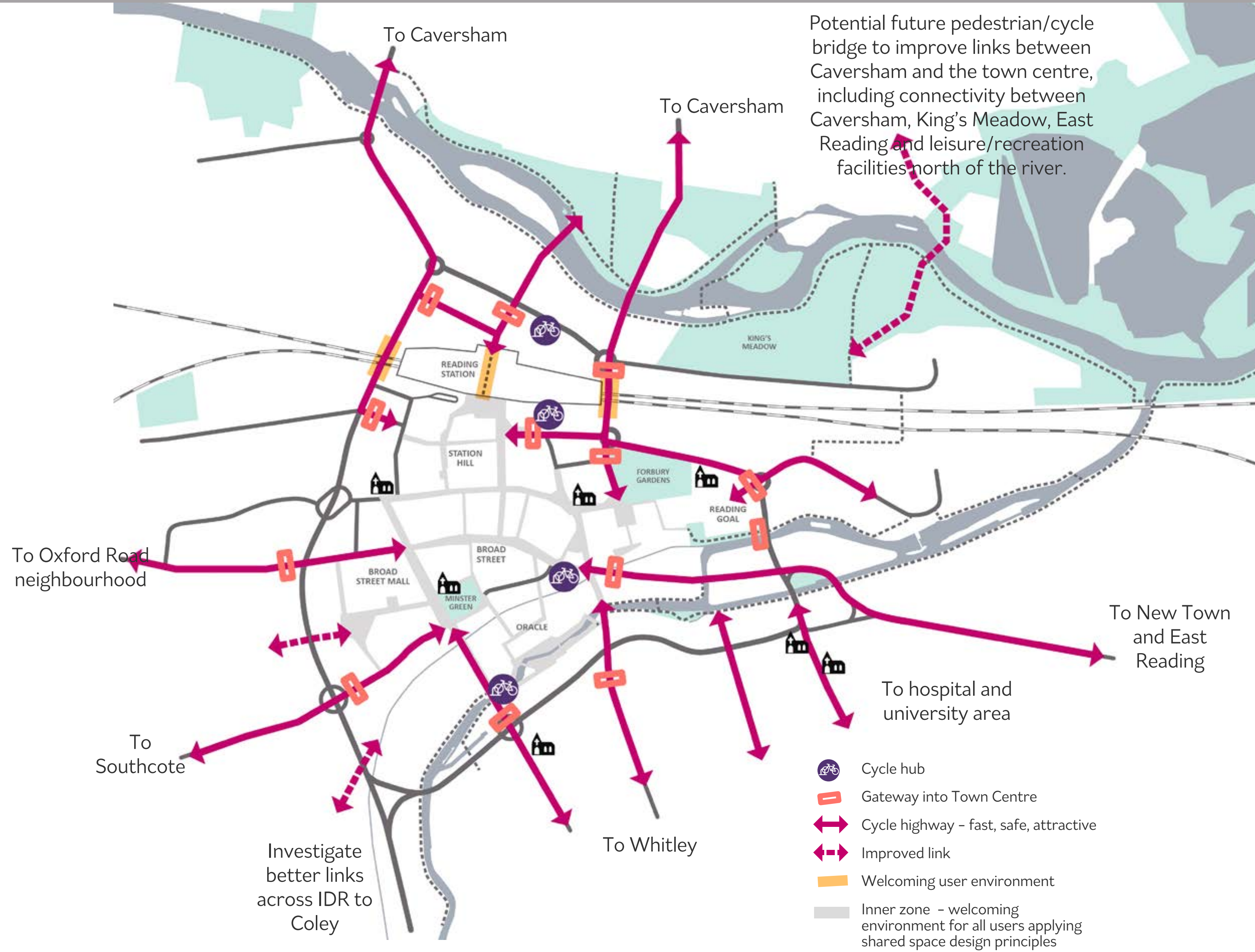


Figure 3. Modal shift towards walking and cycling

WHAT

3.1 A COHERENT, WELCOMING STATION GATEWAY

- Transform the Brunel Arcade area and Station Road into a legible, low stress gateway that clearly guides people to Broad Street, Abbey Quarter, the Thames and the retail core. As one of the town centre’s most significant arrival points, the Arcade should evolve into a welcoming, well designed public environment that matches the scale of footfall and the strategic role it plays. Upgrading this space as part of a coordinated gateway approach will be critical to delivering a station arrival that reflects Reading’s ambitions for a modern, accessible and people focused town centre
- Reduce conflict between buses, taxis and pedestrians at the station approaches, especially the Station Road bus cluster and the north-south links between the

station and Vastern Road.

- Enhance a consistent station-to-core walking route via Station Road, Queen Victoria Street and Broad Street, with high-quality paving, planting, seating, lighting and active frontages.
- Enhance alternative station-to-core walking routes through Station Hill, Friar Street and Union Street (Smelly Alley) with high quality animated uses and attractive shop frontages.

3.2 FIXING BARRIERS

The IDR remains a major barrier to walking and cycling due to high traffic volumes and difficult crossings; bridges and junctions also undermine safety and legibility. Actions include:

- Upgrade the highest-stress IDR crossings at Castle Hill, Queens Road, Oxford Road, Chatham Street/ West Side approaches with better lighting, visibility,

green infrastructure and simplified junctions.

- Improve underpasses and bridge approaches including Queens Road, Vastern Road underpass, Reading Bridge, and connections between the East Side and Kings Road.
- Developing long term cross Thames improvements with neighbouring local authorities to reduce vehicular congestion in the town centre.

These changes reconnect communities such as Caversham, West Reading and east side neighbourhoods to the town centre.

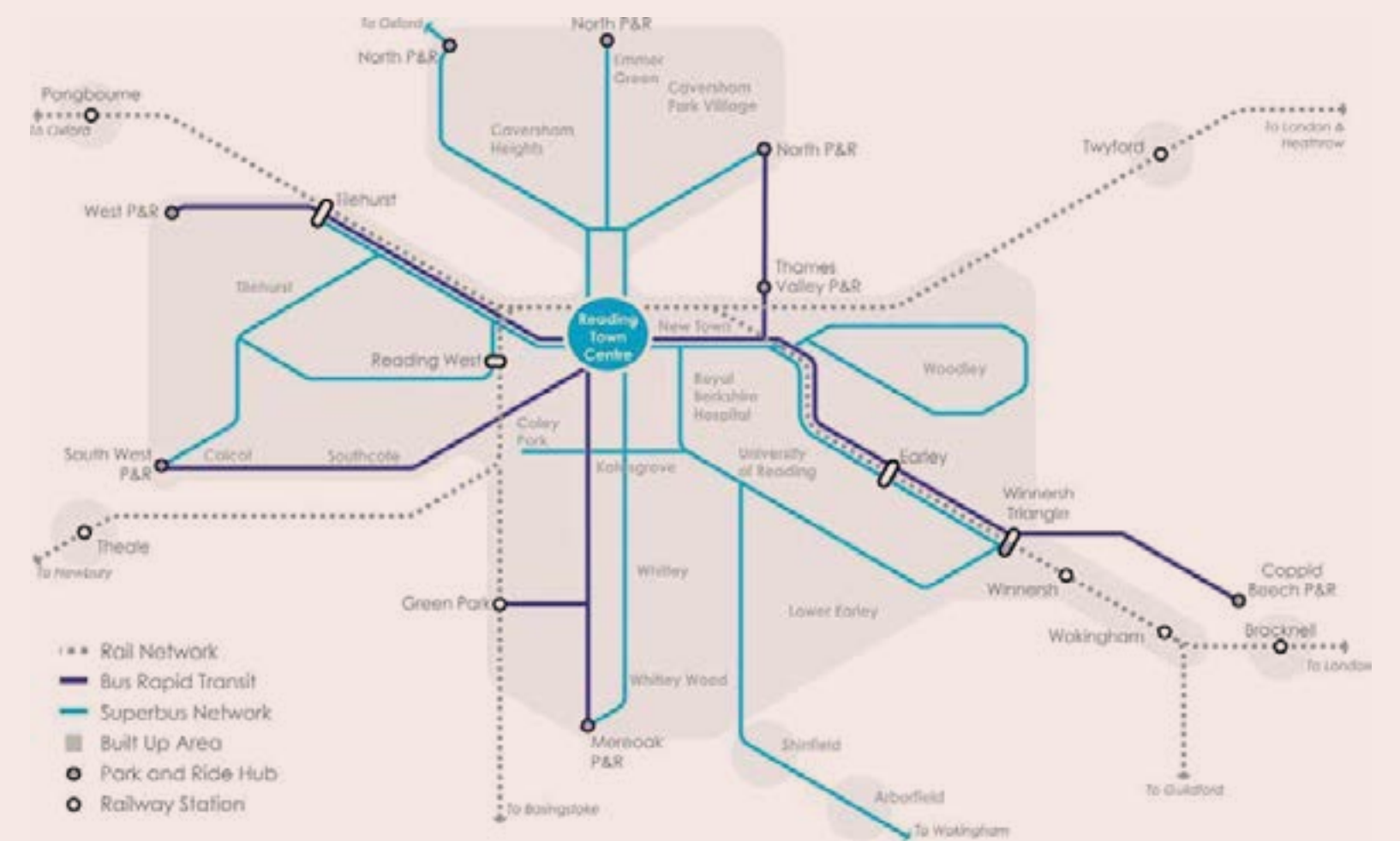
3.3 COMPLETING CONTINUOUS WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

Low car lifestyles depend on safe, direct, comfortable routes along priority corridors. This means:

- Deliver continuous,

uncluttered pedestrian and cycling routes linking the station with the Core, Thames, Kennet, Abbey Quarter, Minster Quarter, West Side and cultural anchors.

- Expand high-quality cycle hubs near the station (including on both north and south sides) and at key destinations such as the Oracle, Broad Street Mall and Minster Quarter.
- Upgrade riverside paths so they support everyday commuting as well as leisure, with safer surfaces, lighting and wayfinding.
- Highlighting national trails (Thames Path and St James’ Way) as part of Reading’s identity.



WHAT

3.4 MAKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT THE RELIABLE ALTERNATIVE

Public transport must remain the most convenient way to reach and move through the centre. Key actions include:

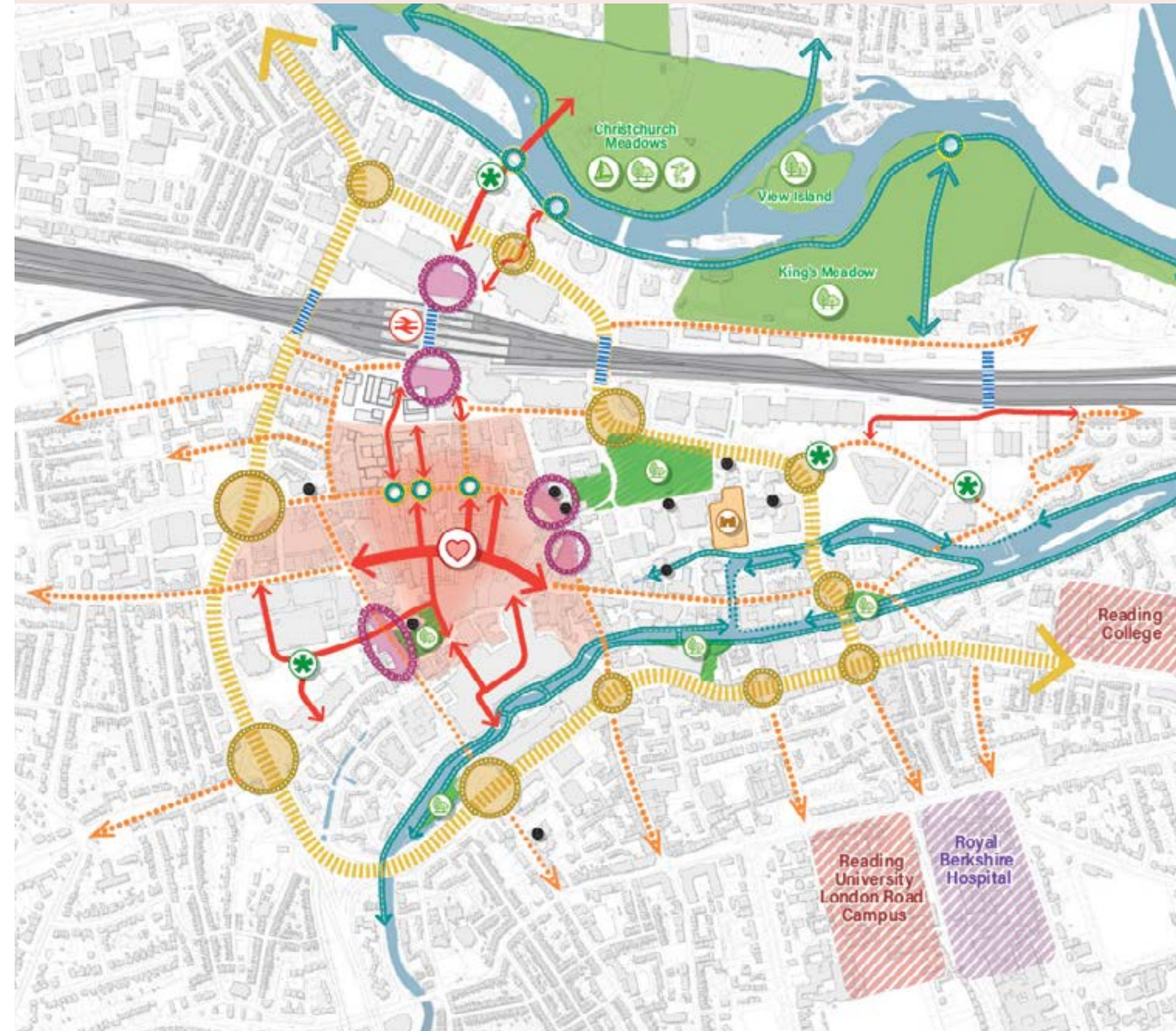
- Delivering Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors and Park & Ride capacity.
- Strengthen town-centre bus priority at key pinch points (Friar Street, Kings Road), ensuring smoother links to neighbourhoods and employment hubs.
- Improve clarity and wayfinding at the station so passengers can easily connect between train, bus, taxi and cycle modes.

This supports the shift to sustainable travel, improves air quality and provides inclusive access.

3.5 SMARTER MOBILITY

Smart technology and shared mobility can reduce pressure on streets and parking, especially in a low car town centre. These measures support households without cars while enabling occasional vehicle access:

- Expand car clubs and mobility hubs around major residential clusters such as Station Hill, Chatham Place, Minster Quarter/Broad Street, Huntley Wharf, or edge of town to reduce parking pressure.
- Integrating real time public transport information, journey planning and smart traffic management in key locations.



This diagram presents an aspirational layout for the town centre, with extended pedestrian and cycle networks, good linkages, quality civic and green spaces and good access to the rivers Thames and Kennet.

- Key primary pedestrian and cycle only network through the core of the town centre. These links should be preserved, enhanced and extended
- Enhanced secondary and tertiary links to extend the reach of the town centre and encourage walking and cycling to overcome the severance generated by the IDR
- Existing and future public and civic spaces. These should be inviting, allow gatherings and events and be at the heart of the town's life
- Transformed IDR through the introduction of green infrastructure, SuDs and carriageway width reduction where possible
- Enhanced nodes to allow better pedestrian & cycle connectivity
- Sub nodes / decision making points for pedestrians
- New areas of open space (as identified in Local Plan)
- Enhanced and safe underpasses for pedestrians & cyclists
- Continuous long distance cycle and pedestrian routes
- Enhanced urban green spaces to include community amenity spaces, good linkage and biodiverse planting
- Extensive green space with clear and inviting pedestrian access from the town centre
- Key town centre landmarks

Principle 4

Building a Greener, Climate-Resilient Town Centre

WHY?

Reading has declared a climate emergency and committed to a net zero, climate resilient future for the town. Central Reading, with its density, connectivity and concentration of activity, is where these commitments must be most visibly delivered.

The town centre already faces the impacts of a warming climate: hotter days intensified by hard surfaces, surface water flooding after heavy rainfall, and poorer air quality on the busiest corridors. Many buildings and infrastructure are older and require retrofit rather than replacement.

Embedding climate resilience into everyday decisions is therefore not just about new development. It means creating streets and buildings that are comfortable, healthy and affordable to run, and using investment to demonstrate that low-carbon approaches to heating, cooling and energy generation can be practical and trusted by residents, businesses and developers.



WHAT

4.1 CLEAN ENERGY FOR HEAT AND BUILDINGS

- Enable low-carbon heat solutions through planning, including heat-network readiness and decentralised energy where appropriate. Ensure large schemes in opportunity areas are heat network ready, especially where concentrated demand exists (Minster Quarter, East Side riverside) to reflect emerging government policy.
- Apply a fabric-first approach in new developments and integrate renewables where feasible, particularly on large sites with high solar exposure.
- Expand retrofit programmes for existing and heritage buildings to improve comfort, efficiency and insulation while respecting Reading's unique historic character.

4.2 GREENING THE CENTRE (COOLING, BIODIVERSITY AND COMFORT)

- Use trees and planting to cool the busiest walking routes including Broad Street, Friar Street, Station Road, Kings Road, Oxford Road, and the IDR crossings.
- Strengthen access to nature by treating the Thames, Kennet and parks as the backbone of Reading's green identity.

4.3 WATER MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (SUDS)

- Integrate high-visibility SuDS (rain gardens, planters, permeable surfaces) into upgrades on Kings Road, St Mary's Butts, Minster Quarter, and the Oracle riverside area

to manage surface water.

- Use redevelopment and public-realm projects to deliver visible, well-maintained SuDS features that also enhance character and comfort.

4.4 CLEANER MOBILITY AND AIR QUALITY

- Build on Reading's low-emission bus investment by prioritising clean fleets for the most congested corridors around the IDR and Kings Road.
- Accelerate the shift to lower-emission travel through cleaner fleets and charging infrastructure, ensuring EV measures support, rather than undermine, wider aims to reduce car dependency.
- Embed air-quality improvements in all public-realm redesigns, focusing on Station Road, Friar Street and

Kings Road where footfall and bus movement are highest.

4.5 LOW CARBON OPERATIONS AND GREEN JOBS

- Continue to support local businesses to reduce energy and encourage participation in local energy and sustainability initiatives as they develop through town-centre climate programmes such as the Reading Climate Change Partnership.
- Explore opportunities for expanding green skills and climate research linked to the University of Reading.
- Promote the town centre as a focal point for low carbon services through workspace clusters, particularly in the Station & River area.



Principle 5

Celebrating Reading's Culture, Heritage and Identity

WHY?

Reading's identity is shaped by its rivers, rail, industry and strong Victorian legacy, reflected in its buildings, streets and civic institutions. New growth should strengthen this character, so development feels rooted in the town's history rather than diluting it.

Reading's story is layered. From its abbey and medieval core to its industrial heritage, diverse communities and contemporary cultural scene. Culture and heritage are not just assets to protect; they drive community life, wellbeing and economic growth and help distinguish Reading from competing centres.

As the town centre grows, there is a risk that local character is weakened unless heritage, culture and local stories are deliberately embedded in design and programming. Major anchors, the Abbey Quarter, Town Hall and Museum, the Hexagon and Minster, remain under-connected and less

visible than they could be. Recent developments such as Station Hill show the importance of weaving Reading's heritage and identity into new public spaces so they feel rooted in place rather than generic.

This principle ensures culture and heritage are woven into everyday town centre life, reflecting Reading's long tradition of openness and the many communities who have shaped it, creating a centre that feels welcoming and familiar to everyone who arrives here.



WHAT

5.1 CONNECTING CULTURAL ANCHORS

- Strengthen legible, heritage-led routes linking Abbey Quarter, Minster Quarter and riversides using wayfinding, storytelling and public realm cues.
- Make cultural journeys visible from the busiest arrival routes such as the Station, Oxford Road and Oracle through signage, lighting and active frontages.

5.2 EMBEDDING CULTURE IN REGENERATION

- Secure cultural and creative spaces as part of major regeneration particularly at Minster Quarter Central, Station Hill and emerging development sites, supporting rehearsal, small performance, community arts and learning

activities with the new Hexagon Studio Theatre providing a benchmark.

5.3 SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS CREATIVITY

- Treat heritage context as a design asset, especially around Reading Gaol, where culture and heritage should shape future proposals.
- Grow community-led arts, music, markets and maker activity through affordable units in Station Hill, Harris Arcade, Queen Victoria Street and Broad Street Mall.
- Support meanwhile cultural uses in vacant units during large regeneration phases.

5.4 ANIMATING PUBLIC SPACES

- Ensure new and existing civic spaces such as Hexagon Square, Station Hill squares, Market Place and Forbury Gardens are event-ready with power, lighting and flexible layouts.
- Use riverside spaces (Chestnut Walk, Oracle Riverside, Kennet towpath, Kings Meadow, Christchurch Meadow) as outdoor stages for cultural activity.



Principle 6

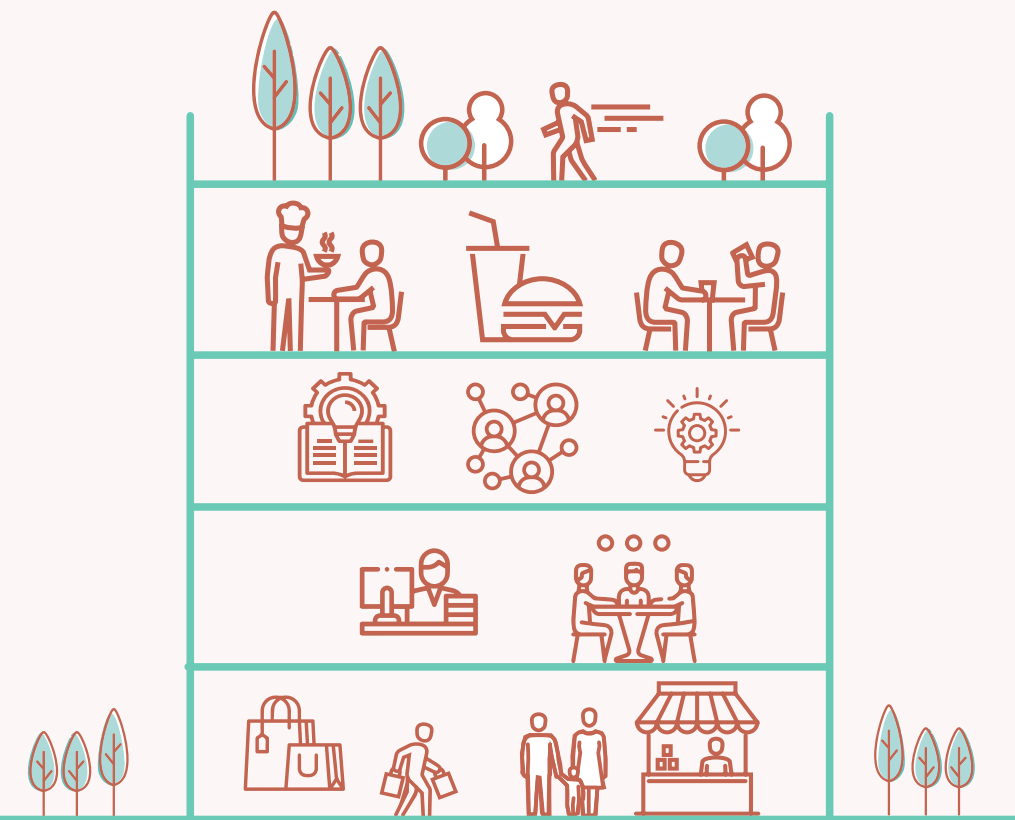
Reimagining the Town Centre Experience

WHY?

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Reading has long been a strong retail destination, but national trends mean retail alone can no longer sustain vitality. The town centre's future depends on the quality of its overall experience; the mix of uses, the comfort of its streets, and a welcoming atmosphere across the day and evening.

Although the centre remains busy and economically strong, some streets feel dominated by movement or single uses, and certain areas struggle with vacancy or weaker evening activity. This principle strengthens the reasons to spend time in the centre, stay longer and return more often, while supporting local businesses and a balanced evening economy.



ADAPTABLE FLOORPLATES AND LAYERED ASSETS

OPPORTUNITY FOR MIXED USE INCLUDING F&B, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY, WORKSPACE, RESIDENTIAL, HEALTH AND LEISURE



**PRECEDENT:
CRATE, WALTHAMSTOW**

Former council car park developed into a micro retail and leisure hub. Affordable micro space let to a blended mix of occupiers within retail, F&B and workspace. Increased activity throughout the day and local retailer increased sales. Business mentoring and collaborative tenant workshops provided by Crate to support occupiers.

www.stjamesstreet.crateuk.com



WHAT

6.1 A DISTINCTIVE RETAIL EXPERIENCE

- Strengthen and support Reading's retail anchors (Oracle, Broad Street Mall, Broad Street) while enhancing characterful arcades and streets (Harris Arcade, Queen Victoria Street, Cross Street, Union Street) to support independents and a future Heritage Retail Quarter.
- Keep smaller units available in key areas, learning from the Station Hill approach along Friars Walk to support future independents in areas such as Union Street, Harris Arcade, Chain Street and Queen Victoria Street.

6.2 REBALANCING KEY STREETS AND SPACES

- Improve lighting, shade, seating and crossings along Broad Street, Friar Street, Oxford Road and Kings Road, and reduce clutter to

enhance comfort and appeal.

- Work with transport partners to make streets and intersections such as Market Place more balanced between vehicle movement and pedestrian activity.

6.3 SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE USES

- Activate quieter streets (Gun Street, Cross Street, King's Road edges, Oxford Road east end) with short-term leases, pop-ups, creative uses and food markets.
- Use flexible licensing for street food, micro-events and makers' markets to build activity during regeneration cycles.

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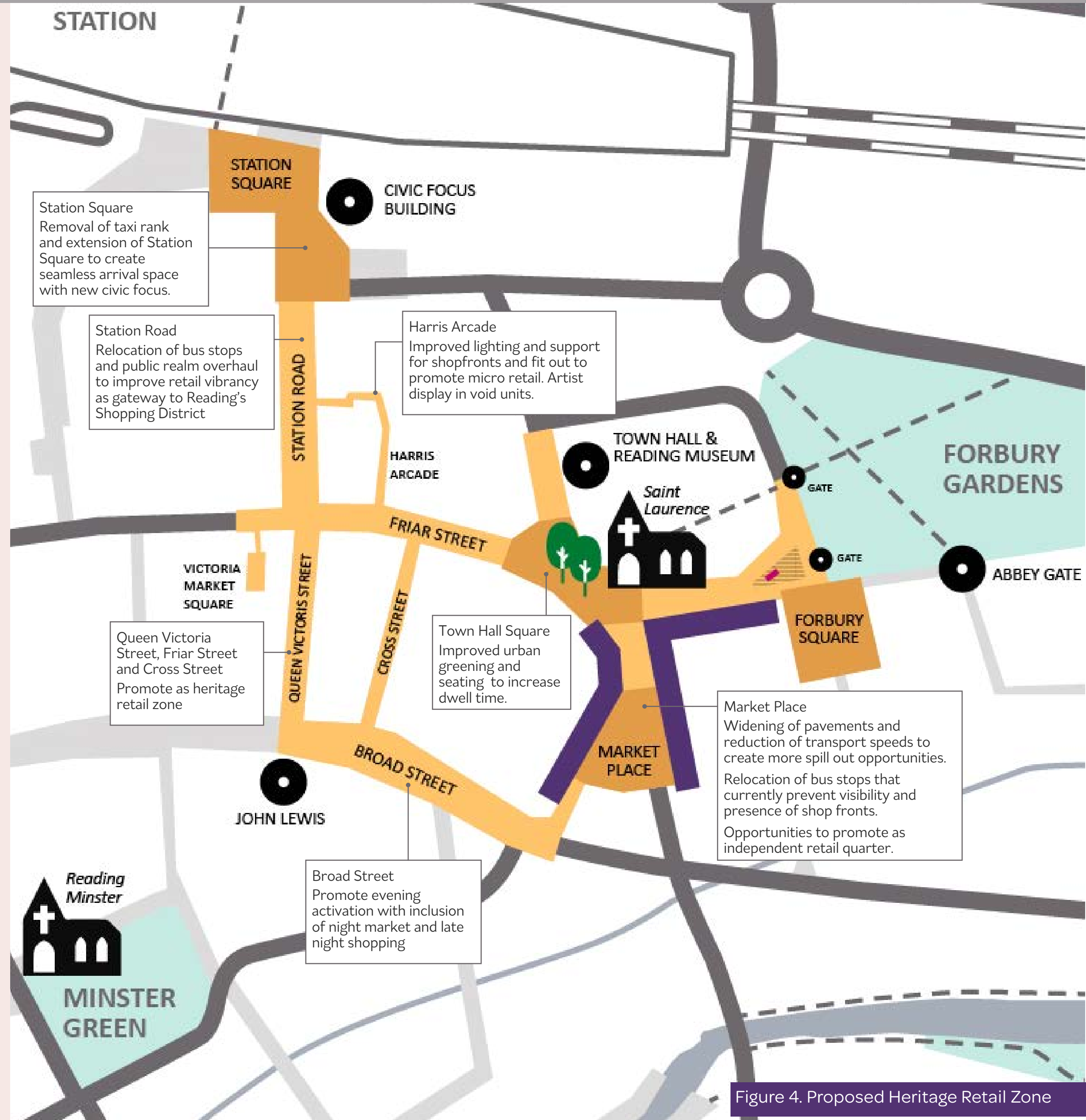


Figure 4. Proposed Heritage Retail Zone

WHAT

6.4 A THRIVING WATERSIDE ECONOMY

- Build on major sites already reshaping the riverside. Oracle proposals introduce new public realm along the Kennet; at Huntley Wharf, a riverside square animated the water's edge. Existing destinations such as Thames Lido show how high quality leisure uses can anchor a stronger waterside economy.
- Work with waterways partners to support appropriate leisure, activity and culture on and beside the water, and ensure the town centre is welcoming to people arriving by boat.
- Improve the visibility of the Thames Path and Kennet from the retail core so riverside time becomes part of the town centre experience.

6.5 A VIBRANT AND SAFE EVENING ECONOMY

- Diversify evening activity around the Hexagon, Station Hill, Oracle Riverside and Friar Street, Castle Street and Gun Street, supporting later cafés, family-friendly events and cultural programming.
- Coordinate safety improvements with the Community Safety Partnership to improve lighting, visibility and confidence at night.

6.6 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT THAT STRENGTHENS EXPERIENCE

- Secure active, welcoming ground floors in major schemes such as Station Hill, Broad Street Mall and Minster Quarter Central, ensuring day-to-evening vibrancy.
- Support grassroots operators through continuity spaces such as Blue Collar markets and Blue Collar Corner during redevelopment phases.



Principle 7

Supporting Growth and Innovation

WHY?

Reading has long been a strong retail destination, but national trends mean retail alone can no longer sustain vitality. The town centre's fuReading is one of the UK's most productive economies, with strong growth in tech, professional services and knowledge-based sectors. The town centre must continue to support this success while remaining accessible and inclusive.

Successful town centres provide space not only for major employers but also for startups, creatives and small businesses that benefit from proximity, visibility and collaboration. In Reading, this is reinforced by exceptional connectivity, a strong skills base and close links to major employers and institutions.

This principle ensures Central Reading can support innovation at different scales, strengthening long-term

competitiveness and opportunity.

Reading competes in a high-performing, highly connected region. Evidence shows that it is already one of the UK's most productive places, with forecasts identifying it as a leading location for near-term growth. The town centre plays a specific role in this story: town-centre clusters are where knowledge-based businesses grow. To stay attractive to skilled workers, the centre must offer the right mix of workspaces, services and public spaces for modern working patterns, especially for smaller businesses, startups and creative or tech activity that benefits from proximity and networking.

Creating room for innovation also broadens access to good jobs for local people, helping Reading sustain its economic advantage.



WHAT

7.1 AFFORDABLE AND FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES

- Build a pipeline of flexible workspace around Reading's major regeneration and opportunity areas, including incubators where feasible.
- Support maker and creative spaces (e.g., Reading Hackspace) through small format ground floor units that help ideas grow into longer term town centre enterprises.
- Re-use suitable vacant units for co-working, studios and small business space in locations that support footfall and safety.

7.2 SUPPORTING HIGH GROWTH SECTORS

- Build on Reading's strengths in tech and professional services by fostering meet-ups, grow-on space and digital innovation around Station Hill and the station's north-south interchange. This is an

emerging hub that connects the town centre directly to Thames Valley Park, Green Park and wider regional employment networks.

- Support creative and digital production linked not only to Shinfield Studios, Hexagon and the new Studio Theatre, but also to Reading Biscuit Factory, South Street Arts Centre and independent content studios across the town centre, strengthening a connected system of places where creators can produce, rehearse and innovate.
- Explore opportunities for town-centre footholds in science and health-adjacent activity, creating space for training, community outreach and innovation showcases connected to the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the University's health and life-sciences strengths.

7.3 FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND "STREET LEVEL INNOVATION"

- Secure small and flexible ground-floor units in new developments so independents and startups can enter the town centre.
- Use meanwhile spaces across the town centre such as underused units to incubate early-stage businesses, testing new food, retail, cultural and creative concepts. Popular high potential routes to Broad Street such as Union Street, Queen Victoria Street and Cross Street provide ideal environments for local independents.
- Work with local business networks including the Central and Abbey Quarter BID, and Reading's Economy & Destination Agency (REDA) to link enterprise support and events with on the ground opportunities.

7.4 PUBLIC FACING ANCHORS FOR GROWTH

- Strengthen civic anchors such as the new Civic Library, Reading Museum, Hexagon Studio Theatre, and emerging community hubs to increase footfall, participation and learning in the heart of Reading.

7.5 EVIDENCE LED MANAGEMENT

- Track vacancies, footfall, evening activity, riverside use, and the impact of interventions across the town centre
- Use data to prioritise quick wins (e.g., temporary pedestrian space trials on Friar Street, or wayfinding improvements identified in the movement audit) and guide long-term decisions on workspace, retail balance and access to skills.



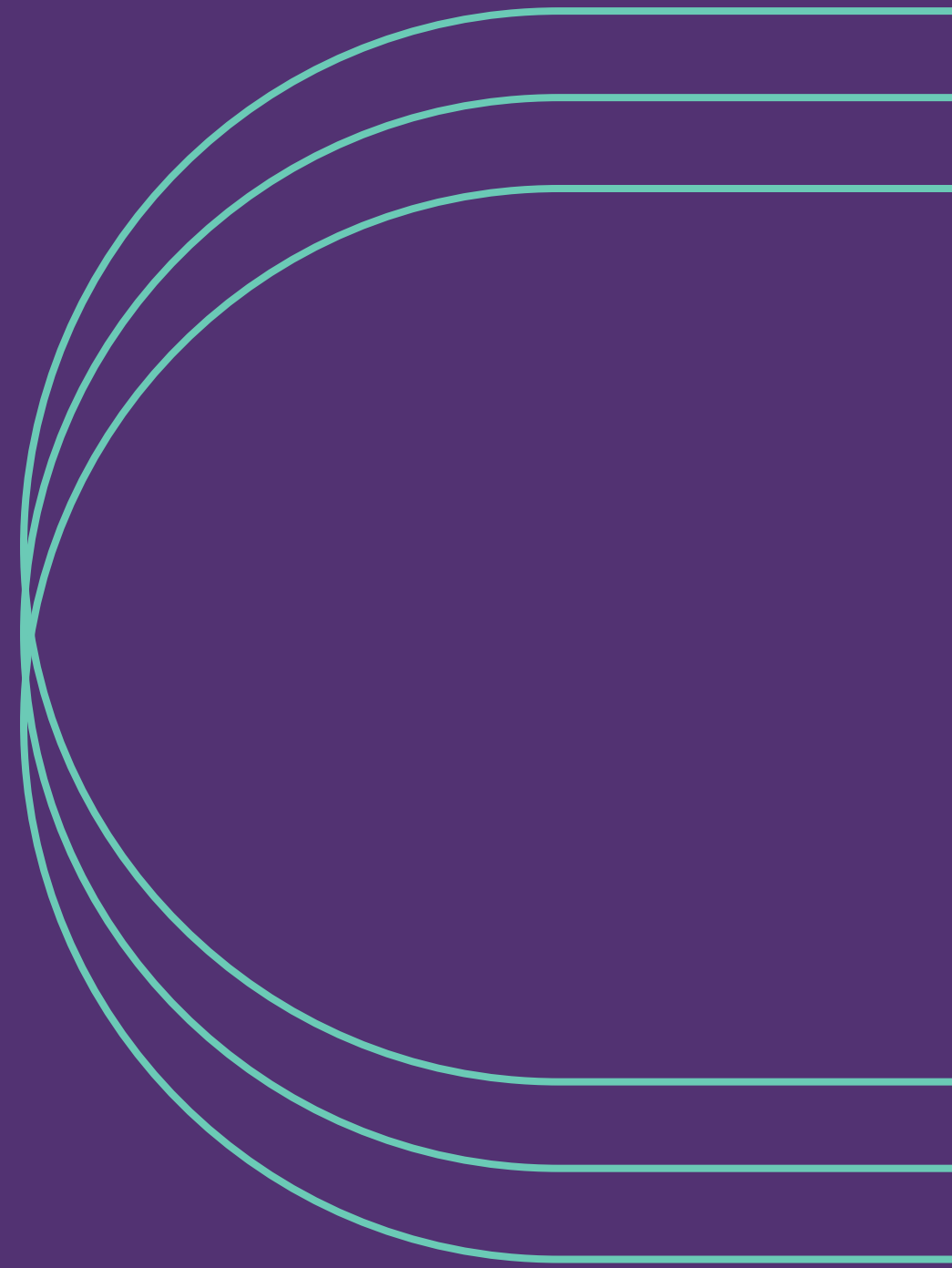
NEXT STEPS FROM VISION TO DELIVERY PLAN

This vision sets the direction for Reading town centre. The next stage is a Delivery Plan that turns the principles into a coordinated programme of projects, priorities, funding routes and responsibilities. It will show what happens, when, by whom, and how progress will be measured.

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SECTION	ACTION/DETAIL
1. What Happens Next	→ Translate the principles into a structured set of projects.
	→ Set out short, medium and long term priorities.
	→ Identify ownership (Council lead, partners, joint delivery).
	→ Clarify dependencies (transport, land, approvals).
	→ Establish funding routes (Council capital, external grants, developer contributions, partnerships).
2. How the Delivery Plan Will Be Developed	→ Build a single programme – combine all existing commitments and identify gaps.
	→ Map principles to workstreams – group the principles into a deliverable set of workstreams.
	→ Prioritise using clear criteria (impact, deliverability, Value for Money, inclusion, climate resilience, ability to unlock regeneration).
	→ Confirm delivery routes and responsibilities.
	→ Define measures of success — establish a small set of indicators for consistent tracking.
3. Partnership Working and Engagement	→ Coordinate across: landowners/developers; cultural organisations/venues; businesses and the BID; transport partners/neighbouring authorities; health, education and community partners; voluntary and resident groups.
4. Governance, Accountability & Reporting	→ Define governance: named leads and partners.
	→ Produce annual reporting: progress and risks.
	→ Maintain the vision as the overarching framework while the Delivery Plan is in development.
	→ Ensure proposals demonstrate improvements in: public realm quality; riverside/green connections; evening safety; cultural identity; inclusive economic growth; liveability.
	→ Adopt the Delivery Plan as the primary tool for coordinating investment and monitoring progress across the town centre.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

TOWN CENTRE DATA

KEY METRICS	CENTRAL READING (ABBEY+THAMES WARD)	READING BOROUGH	ENGLAND	SOURCE / YEAR
Population (people)	20,546	182,907	58,620,101	ONS Mid-year est. 2024
Age 20–39 (%)	49.5%	34.3%	26.5%	ONS MYE 2024
Born outside UK (%)	54.9%	33.5%	17.4%	Census 2021
Non-UK passport (%)	44.2%	22.9%	10.2%	Census 2021
<5 yrs in UK (%)	27.7%	11.5%	4.2%	Census 2021
Level 4+ quals (%)	54.7%	40.4%	33.9%	Census 2021
Professional occupations (%)	34.7%	25.6%	20.3%	Census 2021
Flats (%)	70.7%	33.4%	22.2%	Census 2021
1-bed homes (%)	38.9%	16.7%	11.6%	Census 2021
Private rent (%)	59.2%	32.1%	20.6%	Census 2021
No car households (%)	50.7%	28.4%	23.5%	Census 2021
Work mainly from home (%)	50.5%	39.3%	31.5%	Census 2021
Walk to work (%)	14.4%	11.4%	7.6%	Census 2021
Drive to work (%)	18.0%	31.4%	44.5%	Census 2021
EPC B+C (%)	72.6%	51.6%	48.4%	EPC FY 2024

TOWN CENTRE DATA

YOUNGER, INTERNATIONAL, HIGHLY EDUCATED CORE

- Half of residents (49.5%) are aged 20–39, creating a notably youthful base.
- Over half (54.9%) were born outside the UK, reflecting a globally connected population.
- More than a quarter (27.7%) are recent arrivals indicating high mobility.
- Level 4+ qualifications reach 54.7% aligning with knowledge–economy roles.

COMPACT, RENTAL-LED, APARTMENT LIVING

- Flats and maisonettes dominate (70.7% vs 33.4% Reading, 22.2% England).
- One-bedroom homes account for 38.9% (Reading 16.7%, England 11.6%).
- Private renting (incl. rent-free) at 59.2%, is almost double Reading (32.1%) and triple England (20.6%), with correspondingly low owner-occupation.

CAR-LIGHT AND HYBRID WORK PATTERNS

- Half of households (50.7%) have no car
- Driving to work is just 18% (Reading 31.4%, England 44.5%), while walking (14.4%) and train use (5.2%) are higher than both comparators.
- Work-from-home stands at 50.5%, well above England (31.5%), signalling strong demand for amenity-rich local work settings even when accounting for COVID pandemic effects in 2021.

HEALTHY OUTCOMES AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

- Very good/good health reported by 87.6% (England 82.2%).
- Professional occupations account for 34.7%, compared to 20.3% nationally, with a strong higher managerial/professional presence.

STRONG ENERGY PERFORMANCE

- Energy efficiency is strong: 72.6% of homes are EPC B or C (Reading 51.6%, England 48.4%).

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READING

**TOWN CENTRE
DELIVERY PLAN**

DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Delivery Plan sets out to ensure RBC's resources are focused on enabling high-impact, high-visibility projects that catalyse change.

The delivery plan identifies projects that:

- Align directly with the town centre strategy's principles for growth
- Deliver high civic, social, and environmental value but may not be commercially viable.
- Enable or de-risk wider regeneration and investment.
- Address long-standing spatial, accessibility, or environmental challenges identified in the town centre strategy.



WHAT THE COUNCIL AND PARTNERS CAN INFLUENCE

WHAT THE COUNCIL CAN INFLUENCE

- Setting the direction for decisions through this place shaping strategy, so individual schemes add up to a coherent, liveable centre.
- Using planning and regeneration levers to set clear expectations for design quality, inclusive access, public realm, sustainability and the mix of uses, especially in the Opportunity Areas.
- Targeting investment and coordination (via the Delivery Plan) to prioritise projects, align programmes, and unlock funding and delivery routes.
- Convening partners and coordinating governance across transport, culture, community safety, health and infrastructure so delivery is joined up.
- Leading on public realm standards and stewardship expectations for Council led schemes and influencing long term maintenance expectations across the centre.

WHAT PARTNERS CAN INFLUENCE

- **Developers and landowners:** designing schemes that contribute to the principles and funding them through delivery and planning obligations.
- **Transport partners and operators:** improving interchange quality, public transport reliability, accessible routes and the everyday experience of arriving and moving through Central Reading.
- **Health, education and community partners:** planning services and capacity so infrastructure keeps pace with town centre population growth, with accessible, easy to reach provision.
- **Cultural organisations and venues:** programming, partnerships and public space uses that strengthen Reading's cultural identity and animate the centre across the day and year.
- **Business organisations (including the BIDs):** town centre management, events, marketing, business support and action to support a welcoming, thriving centre and a safer evening offer.
- **Community and resident groups:** shaping priorities through lived experience, testing what works on the ground and co designing inclusive local activation and use of spaces.

REVISITING THE TOWN CENTRE VISION PRINCIPLES

OUR PRINCIPLES

- 1. BUILDING HEALTHY AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**
Supporting wellbeing, accessibility and belonging through inclusive streets, services and shared spaces.
- 2. TRANSFORMING READING'S RIVERS AND PUBLIC SPACES**
Making the Thames, the Kennet and the town centre's parks, squares and streets central to daily life.
- 3. ENABLING CONNECTED AND ACTIVE TRAVEL**
Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport so the town centre is easy to reach and get around without relying on a car.
- 4. BUILDING A GREENER, CLIMATE-RESILIENT TOWN CENTRE**
Embedding climate resilience into design and day-to-day management so the town centre is lower carbon, greener, cooler in summer, and better adapted to rainfall.
- 5. CELEBRATING READING'S CULTURE, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY**
Protecting and showcasing Reading's heritage assets, supporting a strong cultural offer, and reinforcing what makes Reading unique.
- 6. REIMAGINING THE TOWN CENTRE EXPERIENCE**
Evolving Reading's historically strong retail core by strengthening the wider mix of leisure, food and drink, culture, services and experiences.
- 7. SUPPORTING GROWTH AND INNOVATION**
Supporting business growth and new ways of working by creating high-quality workplaces and the right mix of spaces.

MAKING DELIVERY REAL

Delivering the Reading Town Centre Strategy requires coordinated action across planning, transport, public realm investment, culture, community infrastructure, developers, businesses and residents. This section brings together all delivery expectations into a single framework that partners can use to shape, assess and implement proposals.

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THEME	ACTION
1. Building Healthy and Connected Communities	→ Plan community infrastructure with health, education and community partners so services keep pace with town-centre population growth.
	→ With partners, secure community hubs through planning and regeneration, providing accessible space for advice, health, learning and community activity.
	→ Use meanwhile space for temporary health, wellbeing and community uses in vacant or under-used units.
	→ Embed inclusive design in all schemes, ensuring step-free routes, clear wayfinding and welcoming public spaces for all ages and abilities.
	→ Strengthen family-friendly provision by securing play space, safe routes and communal areas in and around new development.
2. Transforming Reading's Rivers and Public Spaces	→ Set clear design expectations via Reading's Public Realm Strategy.
	→ Collaborate with developers/partners to secure green infrastructure and public realm through new schemes and planning obligations where appropriate.
	→ Plan for maintenance so spaces remain clean and welcoming.
	→ Use temporary activation to bring underused spaces to life while longer term projects materialise.
	→ Align planting and sustainable drainage with the Biodiversity Action Plan and Tree Strategy. → Secure measurable biodiversity net gain in town centre schemes.
3. Enabling Connected and Active Travel	→ Use the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 as the statutory framework for sustainable mobility and align town centre interventions to it.

THEME	ACTION
4. Building a Greener, Climate Resilient Town Centre	→ Align with Reading’s climate strategies and targets, including climate emergency commitments and partnership led boroughwide action through the Reading Climate Change Partnership.
	→ Use the Local Plan sustainability policy framework to secure consistent standards through development.
	→ Coordinate phasing and funding through the Delivery Plan, prioritising early wins (EV charging, cleaner buses) alongside longer term energy infrastructure.
	→ Collaborate with developers and energy partners to progress investable heat network opportunities and embed low carbon solutions in major schemes.
5. Celebrating Reading’s Culture, Heritage and Identity	→ Align delivery with Reading’s Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015–30 and related action planning so the Town Centre Strategy reinforces (rather than duplicates) existing direction.
	→ Use planning tools, agreements and contributions to secure cultural spaces and the event ready public realm needed to sustain programming over time.
	→ Collaborate with partners across arts, heritage, education and community sectors to embed culture in regeneration and broaden participation.
6. Reimagining the Town Centre Experience	→ Work with the BID and retail stakeholders to protect diversity, support independents and coordinate events, marketing and town centre management.
	→ Coordinate with the Community Safety Partnership so evening economy growth is matched by safety, prevention and support measures.
	→ Use planning tools and the Local Plan framework to guide the location and mix of retail/leisure/culture in ways that support vitality and viability.
	→ Support temporary uses and pop ups through a more flexible approach to activation and licensing, particularly in transition areas.
7. Supporting Growth and Innovation	→ Track trends such as vacancies, footfall patterns, sector mix, and the performance of interventions (meanwhile use, events, public realm changes).
	→ Use this evidence to target quick wins (e.g. activating underused space) and to shape longer term decisions on workspace, retail/leisure balance and skills alignment.
	→ Strengthening the Town Centre’s role at the heart of Reading’s wider economic geography through improved connections to major hubs (Green Park, Shinfield Studios, University, TVP, TVSP).

PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST FOR PROJECTS

To ensure strategic alignment and delivery readiness, RBC will apply the following draft criteria to assess and prioritise interventions:

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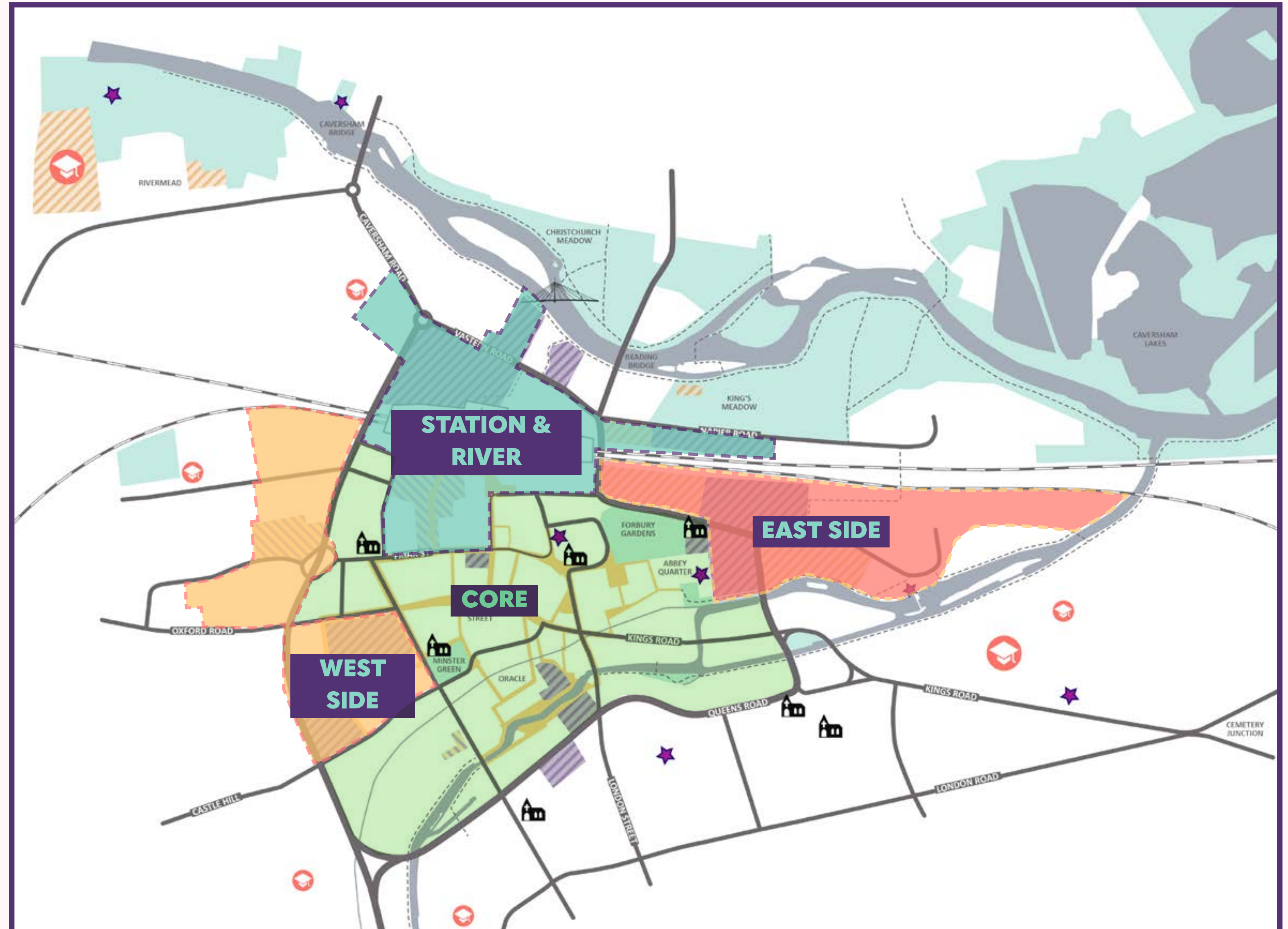
THEME	ACTION	✓
1. Building Healthy and Connected Communities	→ Provides a mix of home sizes and tenures, including family suitable homes, and meets affordable housing policy requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Contributes to accessible community infrastructure on site or nearby.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Delivers inclusive play and family friendly provision close to homes and routes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Ensures usable, well managed communal spaces with long term management plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Creates social ground floor and public realm environments that encourage belonging and interaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Identifies meanwhile uses that fill gaps during transition.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Transforming Reading's Rivers and Public Spaces	→ Provides homes that meet space standards, daylight, amenity, and include private/shared outdoor space.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Helps connect the Parks and Rivers network to the town centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Makes streets and squares more comfortable (shade, seating, planting, lighting).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Embeds climate comfort features and water management (SuDS, cooling, shade).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Enabling Connected and Active Travel	→ Strengthens legibility and heritage character at gateways and civic spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Removes or reduces severance (IDR crossings, underpasses, gateways).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Strengthens the station arrival experience and reduces pedestrian vehicle conflict.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Completes safe walking and cycling links between station, core, rivers and key destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Improves bus reliability and interchange quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Reduces car dominance to unlock space for public realm and accessibility improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/>

THEME	ACTION	✓
4. Building a Greener, Climate Resilient Town Centre	→ Uses low carbon, fabric first design and is heat network ready where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Delivers shade, greening and climate comfort in high footfall areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Integrates sustainable drainage and manages surface water through visible SuDS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Supports sustainable travel and contributes to improved air quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Celebrating Reading's Culture, Heritage and Identity	→ Improves legible links between cultural anchors (Abbey Quarter, Museum, Hexagon, riverside).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Secures cultural or creative space, or enables programming through event ready public realm.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Demonstrates a positive contribution to Reading's identity and heritage setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Supports grassroots creativity via affordable or flexible space and meanwhile uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Reimagining the Town Centre Experience	→ Supports independent and varied retail via small or flexible units and improved arcades/heritage streets.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Enables flexible, affordable meanwhile uses to reduce vacancy and support local enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Strengthens waterside activity and makes riverside space more legible from the Core.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Contributes to a balanced evening economy and improves night time vitality and safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Provides active frontages and public realm that increase dwell time and welcome.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Supporting Growth and Innovation	→ Provides affordable and flexible workspace or enables re use of vacant units.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Secures small units and flexible ground floor formats for makers and independent enterprises.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Strengthens cluster conditions (networks, visibility, grow on space).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Improves everyday usefulness of the centre through public facing anchors.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	→ Contributes to better data and monitoring for smarter town centre management. → Improves connections to major employment and education hubs (TVP, TVSP, University, Green Park).	<input type="checkbox"/>

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Central Reading will change most visibly in three Opportunity & Character Areas identified in the Local Plan: **Station & River**, **West Side**, and **East Side**.

These areas have the scale to deliver new homes and workplaces, upgraded public spaces, and stronger links to the Thames and Kennet, supporting Reading's evolution as a walkable riverside town centre. These all centre around the **'Core'** of Broad Street and the Oracle.



DELIVERY ROLES

Clear delivery roles are essential to turn strategic ambition into tangible outcomes. This section outlines how Reading Borough Council and its partners will share responsibility across delivered, present, and future projects, ensuring collaboration and accountability at every stage of regeneration.

DELIVERED PROJECTS

RBC-Led: Projects RBC have recently delivered

Shared Delivery: Joint initiatives

Partner-Led: Schemes already delivered where RBC enabled progress

PRESENT PROJECTS

RBC-Led: Tactical improvements and civic projects RBC are already delivering

Shared Delivery: Joint initiatives where RBC and partners co-invest or co-design

Partner-Led: Schemes already in motion where RBC enables progress

FUTURE PROJECTS

RBC-Led: Strategic capital projects requiring feasibility and funding

Shared Delivery: Joint initiatives where RBC and partners co-invest or co-design

Partner-Led: Long-term developments aligned with the Local Plan

DELIVERY PLAN PROJECTS MAP

DELIVERED

1. Station Hill (Phase 1 & 2)
2. Oracle Retail & Leisure Enhancements (2025)
3. Huntley Wharf

PRESENT

4. Civic Centre
5. Hexagon Studio Theatre
6. Heat Networks
7. Minster Quarter Central
8. Broad Street Mall Redevelopment
9. Oracle Riverside
10. Reading Riverworks

FUTURE

11. Friar Street Upgrades
12. Station Road Enhancements
13. Green Routes
14. Town Centre Play Park
15. Union Street ("Smelly Alley")
16. Queens Road & London Street Junction
17. Station Transport Interchange And Brunel Arcade
18. Community Spaces
19. St Mary's Butts
20. Arcades For Independents
21. Reading Gaol
22. Station Hill Phase 3
23. Garrard Street Activation

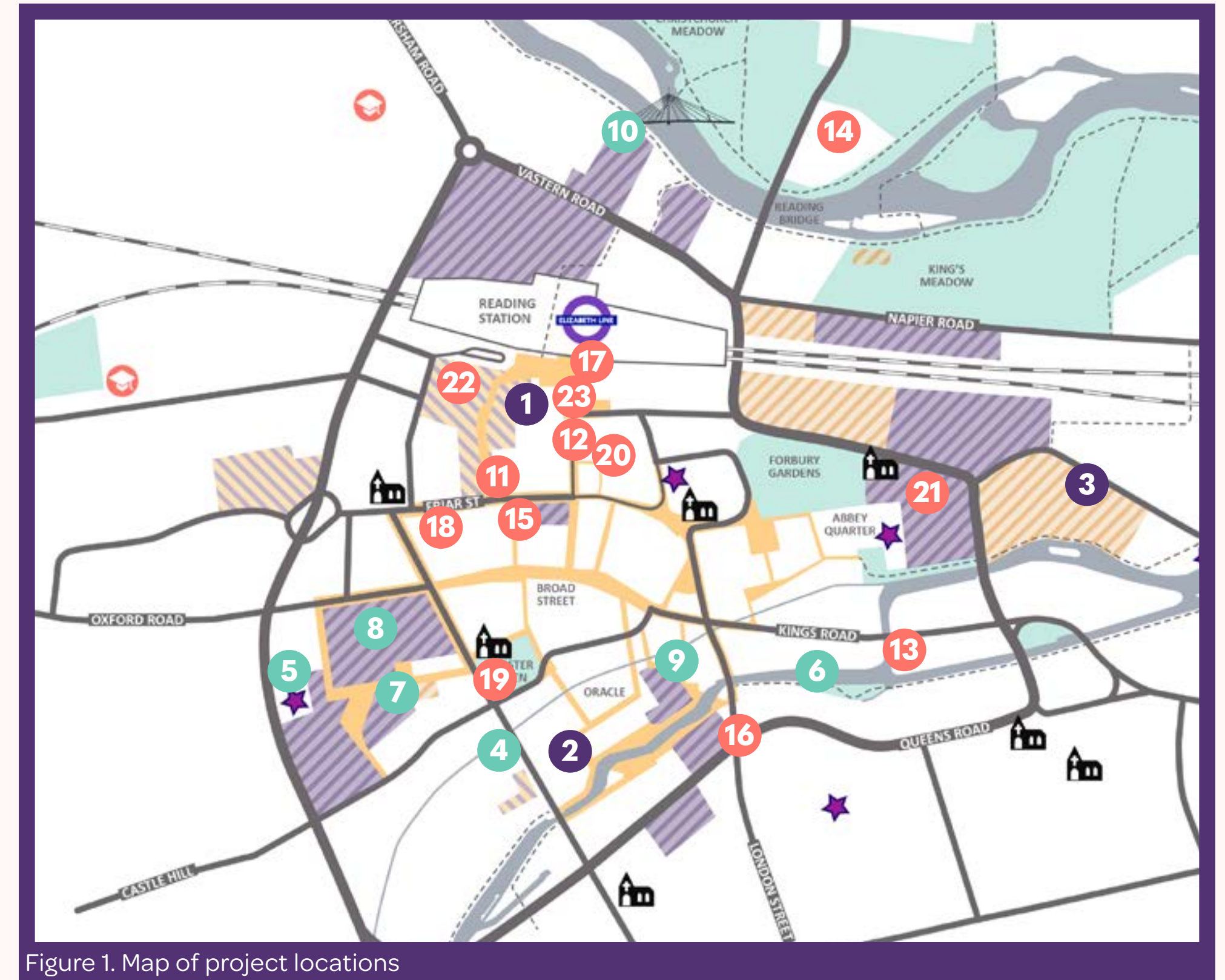


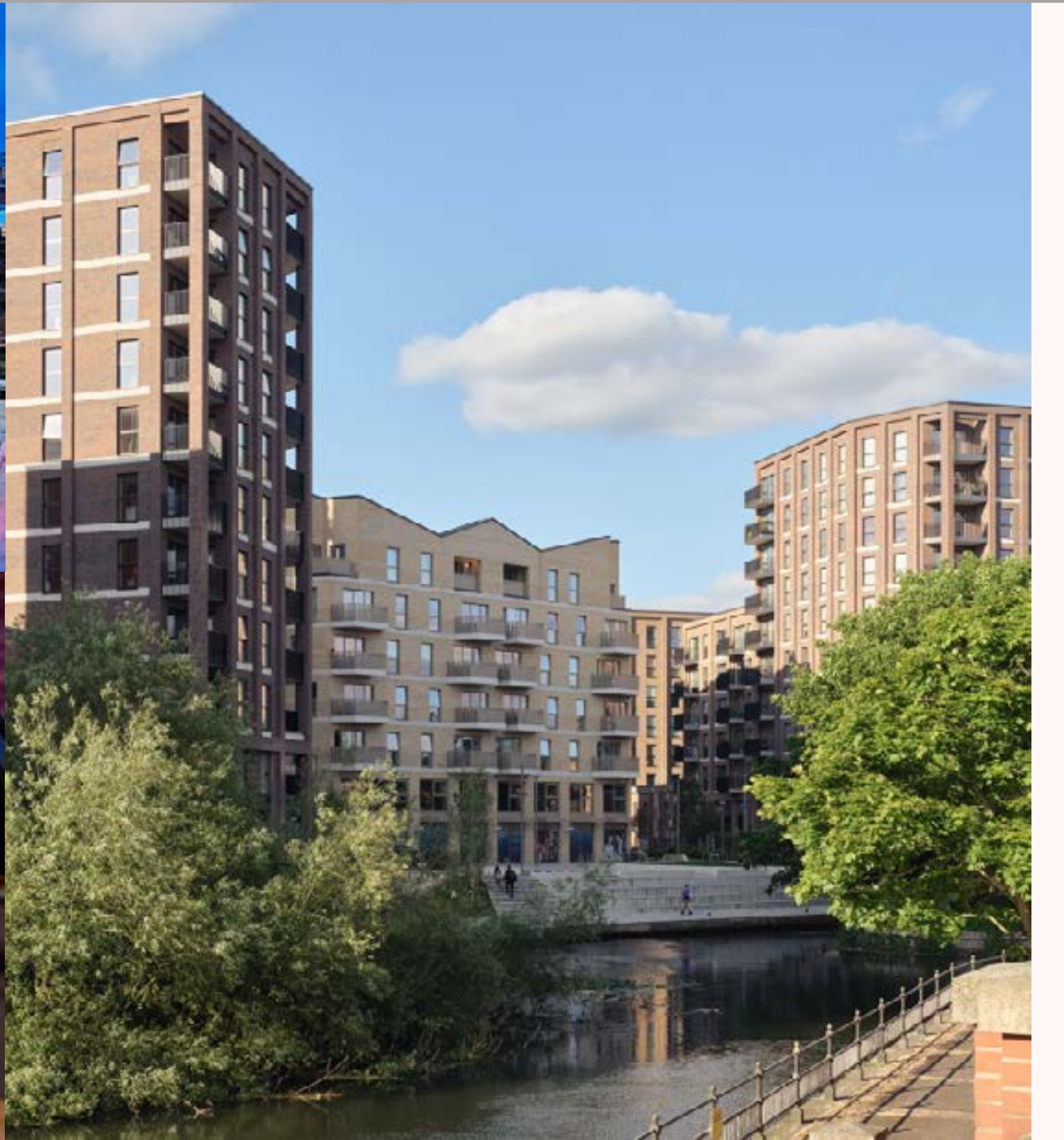
Figure 1. Map of project locations

SELECTED DELIVERED PROJECTS

DELIVERED PROJECTS

- **RBC-Led:** Projects RBC have recently delivered
- **Shared Delivery:** Joint initiatives
- **Partner-Led:** Schemes already delivered where RBC enabled progress

PARTNER LED PROJECTS



PROJECT	STATION HILL (PHASE 1 & 2)	ORACLE RETAIL AND LEISURE ENHANCEMENTS (2025)	HUNTLEY WHARF
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flagship mixed use regeneration scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diverse retail and leisure offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality riverside residential scheme.
NEXT STEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ebb and Flow - Build to Rent let • Ground floor commercial spaces opening • Coordinate with cultural programming to ensure year-round activation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in tier one retailers and flagship stores. • New bowling offer • Investment in riverside public realm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let remaining vacant ground floor units • Coordinate with cultural programming to ensure year-round activation.
DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincoln Property Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammerson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkeley Homes
STATUS	→ DELIVERED	→ DELIVERED	→ DELIVERED



SELECTED PRESENT PROJECTS

PRESENT PROJECTS

- **RBC-Led:** Tactical improvements and civic projects RBC are already delivering
- **Shared Delivery:** Joint initiatives where RBC and partners co-invest or co-design
- **Partner-Led:** Schemes already in motion where RBC enables progress

STATUS	MEANING
COMMITTED	→ Funded and in delivery
PLANNED	→ In progress with identified delivery route, subject to funding
PIPELINE	→ Identified priority with delivery route to be determined
ASPIRATIONAL	→ Long-term ambition requiring future funding or feasibility

COUNCIL LED PROJECTS



Page 93

PROJECT

CIVIC CENTRE

HEXAGON STUDIO THEATRE

HEAT NETWORKS

MINSTER QUARTER CENTRAL

OBJECTIVE

- A modern civic anchor for learning, culture, and community engagement.

- Regenerate Reading’s cultural infrastructure and support the night-time economy.

- Deliver low-carbon district heating infrastructure to support sustainable development and energy resilience across Reading Town Centre for both private and public sector developments

- Enable delivery of a new mixed-use neighbourhood at Minster Quarter, supporting town centre living and economic growth.

NEXT STEPS

- Finalise capital works
- Develop programming strategy aligned with other cultural venues.

- Deliver capital works and fit-out.
- Develop programming and partnerships.
- Coordinate with evening economy strategy.

- Engage with potential Heat Network users, National Wealth Fund, and ESCOs.
- Commission technical feasibility
- Explore delivery models (e.g. RBC-led SPV or joint venture).

- Design development and stakeholder engagement.
- Detailed planning application
- Planning, construction and infrastructure coordination with neighbouring landowners.

DELIVERY

- Levelling Up Fund (secured), RBC capital

- Levelling Up Fund (secured), Arts Council England, RBC capital, Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

- National Wealth Fund, Energy Service Company (ESCo) investment, Central Government Grants, Developer contributions

- Primarily private sector sought by McLaren Living MQC Ltd, with additional public sector enabling and infrastructure funding (such as Brownfield Land Release Fund).

STATUS

→ COMMITED

→ COMMITED

→ PIPELINE

→ PLANNED

PARTNER LED PROJECTS



PROJECT

BROAD STREET MALL REDEVELOPMENT

ORACLE RIVERSIDE - Residential

READING RIVERWORKS

OBJECTIVE

- Introduces 643 tenure-blind, build-to-rent apartments (1, 2, & 3-bed) to the area, including 12.5% affordable housing.
- Includes around 19,000 sq ft of new commercial space and significant public realm enhancements
- Extends the existing NHS Walk-In Centre and integrates with the Minster Quarter masterplan.

Hammerson are planning a significant mixed-use regeneration of the eastern end of their estate. Plans to introduce new retail, leisure, and residential units with:

- Over 400 homes
- Smaller replacement cinema
- Upgraded riverside area
- Ground floor commercial uses

- A major residential regeneration project located on a 1.9-acre former power station site on the banks of the River Thames.
- Transform the area into a new, sustainable waterfront community of 209 one, two, and three-bedroom apartments
- BREEAM Excellent certification, using eco-friendly construction materials, air-source heat pumps, and rainwater harvesting.

NEXT STEPS

- Construction Management Plans
- Enabling works on mall, car park and public realm
- Support integration with Minster Quarter.

- Upgrades to the mall
- Lease negotiations
- Design development and Planning application
- S106 negotiations

- Construction
- Sales and occupation

DELIVERY

- Private investment from AEW delivered by McLaren Living

- Hammerson and investment partners

- Private investment from Berkeley Homes

STATUS

→ PLANNED

→ PLANNED

→ COMMITED

SELECTED FUTURE PROJECTS

FUTURE PROJECTS

- **RBC-Led:** Strategic capital projects requiring feasibility and funding
- **Shared Delivery:** Joint initiatives where RBC and partners co-invest or co-design
- **Partner-Led:** Long-term developments aligned with the Local Plan

STATUS	MEANING
COMMITTED	→ Funded and in delivery
PLANNED	→ In progress with identified delivery route, subject to funding
PIPELINE	→ Identified priority with delivery route to be determined
ASPIRATIONAL	→ Long-term ambition requiring future funding or feasibility

COUNCIL
LED
PROJECTS



PROJECT	FRIAR STREET ENHANCEMENTS	STATION ROAD ENHANCEMENTS	GREEN ROUTES	TOWN CENTRE PLAY PARK
---------	---------------------------	---------------------------	--------------	-----------------------

OBJECTIVE

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transform Friar Street into a safe, vibrant, and walkable civic corridor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the primary walking route from the station to the town centre core, to improve legibility, ensure the first impression of Reading is attractive, welcoming and comfortable. Reconfigure Station Road to prioritise walking, placemaking, and civic identity. Explore bus movements to ensure the road remains balanced towards all types of transport and movement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve underused green corridors like Holy Brook Nook and along the Kennet/Thames, create new micro-parks and green links. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a high-quality, inclusive play space that supports family-friendly town centre living and leisure. |
|--|--|--|---|--|

NEXT STEPS

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission a feasibility study including traffic modelling and stakeholder engagement. Explore partial pedestrianisation with limited bus access and timed deliveries. Coordinate with Reading Transport Ltd to assess operational impacts and potential service redesign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission transport modelling and stakeholder engagement. Explore phased rerouting and infrastructure upgrades. Coordinate with Station Interchange/ Brunel Arcade improvements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority sites for greening and connectivity. Engage communities in co-design and stewardship. Integrate with the Public Realm Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify walkable options that are council owned or as part of upcoming development sites. Engage families and disability groups in design. Coordinate with cultural programming to ensure year-round activation |
|--|---|---|--|--|

DELIVERY

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Scheme Allocation (MSA), RBC borrowing, pooled S106 contributions from nearby developments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RBC capital programme, transport funding (e.g. Bus Service Improvement Plan), potential DfT support, S106. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106, environmental grants (e.g. Urban Greening Funds), potential match funding from REDA or BID. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), potential sponsorship or grant funding (e.g. Play England). |
|--|---|--|---|--|

STATUS

	→ PIPELINE	→ PIPELINE	→ ASPIRATIONAL	→ PIPELINE
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COUNCIL LED PROJECTS



PROJECT

ST MARY'S BUTTS

UNION STREET ENHANCEMENTS
"Smelly Alley"

COMMUNITY SPACES

To transform St Mary's Butts into a positive, clutter-free public space that celebrates its architectural heritage, supports walking and cycling, and manages vehicular movement more effectively.

Enhance and upgrade Union Street to encourage pedestrians to use it as a key route into the town centre from the Station/ Friar Street.

Developers and key landowners can repurpose or create new spaces for community use, integrating services and activities including providing centres for neighbourhood health support.

OBJECTIVE

- Reclaim road space to create a central civic space.
- Enhance the setting of Reading Minster
- Improve the market layout
- Introduce greening, seating, and opportunities for informal play and events.

- Engagement between owners, council and tenants (existing and prospective).
- Support business planning and tenant mix strategies
- Explore public realm interventions
- Private investment alongside landowners, with potential for business support grants and partnership funding.

- Identify suitable sites in partnership with landowners.
- Provide design guidance and support funding applications.
- Enable community engagement in design and delivery.
- Developer contributions (Section 106/CIL), with potential for grant funding and sponsorship.

NEXT STEPS

- Design development
- Agree funding strategy

DELIVERY

- Infrastructure grants (e.g. Active Travel England), potential developer contributions, S106, CIL.

STATUS

→ ASPIRATIONAL

→ PIPELINE

→ ASPIRATIONAL

SHARED DELIVERY PROJECTS



PEDESTRIAN ROUTES - STATION TO CENTRE & THAMES

QUEENS ROAD AND LONDON STREET JUNCTION

STATION SQUARE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE AND BRUNEL ARCADE

- Create a legible, inclusive pedestrian route linking Oracle, Broad Street and Station Hill to the River Thames, unlocking riverfront placemaking and making use of our characterful side streets such as Union and Chain Street.

Reduce severance caused by the IDR and improve the pedestrian and cycling experience along the north-south London Street corridor, while enhancing the setting for future development and celebrating local heritage.

- Transform the Brunel Arcade and surrounding interchange into a modern, welcoming gateway to Reading, improving connectivity, accessibility, and the visitor experience.

- Commission a route masterplan and river crossing feasibility study.
- Coordinate with Station Hill and other developers

- Design development
- Agree funding strategy

- Input into feasibility and design studies with stakeholders, led by Network Rail.
- Engage with Network Rail, transport operators, and local businesses.
- Develop a phased delivery plan aligned with station operations.

- Infrastructure grants (e.g. Active Travel England), potential developer contributions, S106, CIL.

- Development contributions and transport funding streams.

- Potential sources include Network Rail investment, government capital investment funds, Section 106/ CIL contributions, and private sector partnerships.

→ ASPIRATIONAL

→ ASPIRATIONAL

→ ASPIRATIONAL

PARTNER LED PROJECTS



PROJECT

ARCADES FOR INDEPENDENTS

READING GAOL

STATION HILL PHASE 3

GARRARD STREET ACTIVATION

OBJECTIVE

Encourage the creation of vibrant arcades and spaces for independent businesses, supporting local enterprise and diversity.

Property owners and developers can repurpose underused arcades or create new spaces tailored for independents, enhancing the town centre offer particularly at:

- Smelly Alley (Union Street)
- Bristol and West Arcade
- Harris Arcade

Enable the sensitive redevelopment of the former Reading Gaol, unlocking its heritage and cultural value. Ziran Education Foundation plan to transform Reading Gaol into a multi-functional space that includes:

- An educational centre providing services to the local community.
- Museum outlining the Gaol's history
- A public exhibition space,
- Partial development into a hotel.

Enable the successful delivery of the final phase of Station Hill, completing a major regeneration project for Reading.

Reactivate the frontage of a strategic building along the main thoroughfare (Station Road) into the retail core of the town centre

NEXT STEPS

- Engagement between owners, council and tenants (existing and prospective).
- Support business planning and tenant mix strategies

- Support engagement with Historic England and cultural partners.
- Facilitate planning and design guidance.
- Enable access to heritage and cultural funding streams.

- Planning Application

- Engage with owners to explore options and overcome barriers.
- Support planning and design processes.

DELIVERY

- Private investment alongside landowners, with potential for business support grants and partnership funding.

- Private sector-led, with potential for heritage and cultural grants.

- Lincoln Property Group

- Private investment, with potential for public sector enabling funds.

STATUS

→ ASPIRATIONAL

→ ASPIRATIONAL

→ PLANNED

→ ASPIRATIONAL

PROJECTS SUMMARY

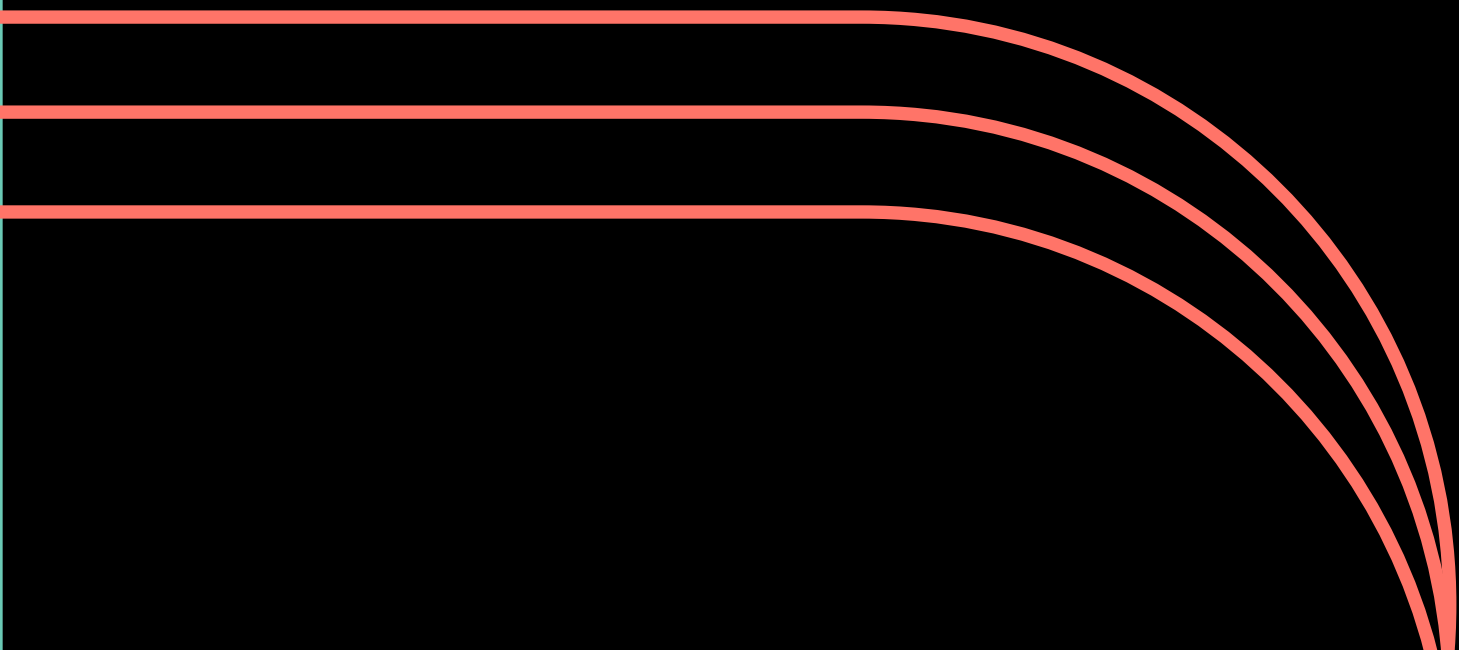
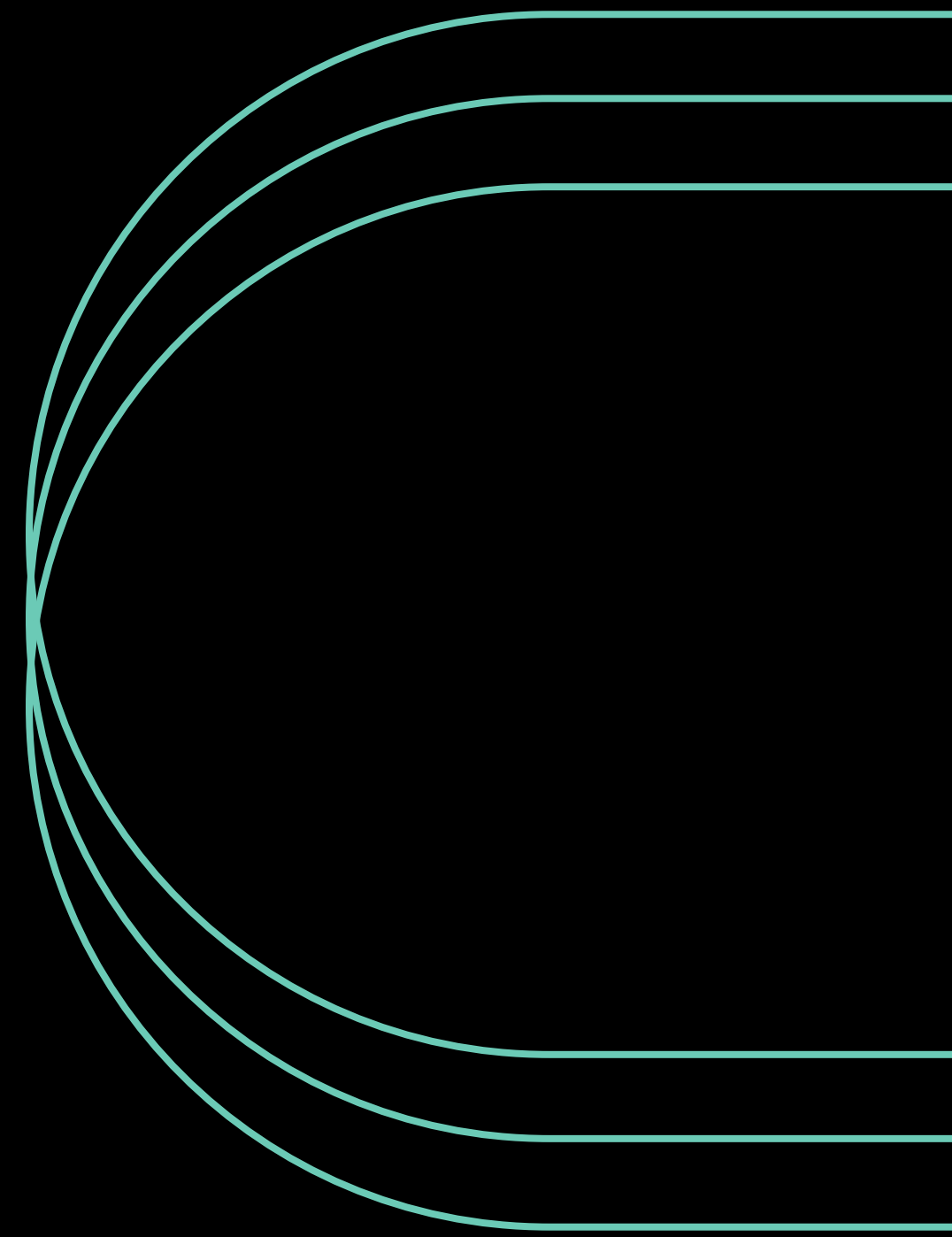
A programme of public realm improvements is proposed to create safer, more welcoming and family-friendly streets in Central Reading.

Feasibility work will assess opportunities for greener, more comfortable spaces; improved play; better pedestrian-vehicle balance; accessibility; and proportionate security measures.

This phase will identify capital options and ensure future investment delivers the resilient town-centre spaces outlined in the delivery plan.

RECOMMENDED PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Friar Street Enhancements
- Station Road Enhancements
- Union Street Enhancements
- Town Centre Playpark



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Policy Committee

15th June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Procurement of fixed term environmental enforcement partnership
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Partly open to the public and part exempt - see reasons below
Report author	Holly Tough – Senior Recycling & Enforcement Officer Marcus Hermon – Waste & Recycling Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Cllr McGoldrick, Lead Councillor Environmental Services and Community Safety
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>That Policy Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the outcomes, benefits and lessons learned from the 12-month enhanced environmental enforcement partnership with Kingdom Local Authority Support (KLAS) which will conclude in September 2026; and 2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to procure and enter into a contract for an environmental partnership for a period of 3-years, with an estimated value of £300k per annum.

This report contains within the annexe to Appendix 1 exempt information within the meaning of the following paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

And in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because:

- Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the current enforcement partner, as it could be used by competitors to gain a commercial advantage in future procurement exercises.
- Disclosure would also be likely to prejudice the Council's own commercial position, by undermining its ability to negotiate best value in future contracts with suppliers, who may be less willing to enter into agreements if commercially sensitive terms are disclosed.

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the outcomes of the enhanced environmental enforcement trial and seeks approval to proceed with the procurement of a fixed-term enhanced environmental enforcement contract, in line with the Council Plan 2025–2028.
- 1.2. The Council Plan 2025–2028 commits the Council to maintaining high environmental standards, promoting fairness across communities and ensuring the organisation remains fit for the future within a constrained financial context.
- 1.3. Environmental enforcement is a discretionary but strategically important function that contributes to these objectives by deterring environmental crime, encouraging responsible behaviour, and maintaining public confidence in the management of public spaces across the borough.
- 1.4. The Council's in-house Recycling & Environmental Enforcement Team delivers a range of statutory duties alongside discretionary enforcement functions, including resident engagement and the implementation of the Simpler Recycling reforms. These competing demands have historically limited capacity to deliver sustained, high-visibility environmental enforcement activity.
- 1.5. In response, the Council entered a 12-month trial enhanced environmental enforcement partnership in September 2025. The trial has delivered a significant increase in enforcement activity, improved visibility, and positive environmental outcomes, while maintaining appropriate governance and without introducing undue financial risk to the Council.
- 1.6. As the trial concludes in September 2026, a decision is now required on the future delivery model for environmental enforcement. Based on the evidence from the trial, this report recommends proceeding with the procurement of a fixed-term enhanced enforcement partnership, to sustain improved outcomes while protecting in-house capacity required to deliver statutory priorities, including Simpler Recycling.

2. **Background & Context**

- 2.1. Environmental quality is a defining feature of Reading as a place to live, work, study and visit. Effective environmental enforcement underpins the Council Plan priorities by supporting cleaner streets, well-managed public spaces and safe neighbourhoods.
- 2.2. As per DEFRA reporting, local authorities in England dealt with 1.26 million fly-tipping incidents in the 2024/25 period, an increase of 9% from the 1.15 million reported in 2023/24.
- 2.3. In Reading, the Council dealt with 3,832 fly-tipping reports in 2025/26, compared with 2,229 incidents in 2024/25 and 1,304 incidents in 2023/24, representing a year-on-year and a longer-term upward trend. As is the case nationally, this increase reflects a combination of factors, including heightened public awareness of environmental crime, increased focus on reporting at both local

and national level, and improved access to digital reporting channels. While reporting volumes provide an important indicator of environmental pressure, they do not necessarily represent a proportional increase in offending behaviour. Nevertheless, the sustained level of reported incidents highlights the ongoing need for robust, visible and consistent enforcement alongside preventative and educational measures.

- 2.4. In response to these reports, the Council and Partner issued a total of 1,722 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in 2025/26 compared to 221 FPNs in 2024/25 and 342 FPNs in 2023/24. These figures include fly-tipping, duty of care and litter offence FPNs.
- 2.5. At this stage in the trial, there has been a clear increase in the number of waste investigations and Fixed Penalty Notices issued. However, the available data does not yet demonstrate a corresponding reduction in the overall volume of reported fly-tipping incidents across the borough or at ward-level. Evidence from other local authorities suggests that enforcement-led approaches are most effective over the medium term, where sustained visibility and consistent application support wider public awareness and longer-term behavioural change.
- 2.6. Going forward, the impact of enhanced enforcement will be monitored through ward-level fly-tipping trend analysis over time, alongside enforcement activity, investigation outcomes and payment compliance data. This approach will enable the Council to assess whether sustained enforcement activity is contributing to longer-term reductions in fly-tipping and improvement in environmental quality.
- 2.7. The Recycling & Environmental Enforcement Team delivers a wide range of functions, including statutory waste and recycling support and discretionary enforcement against environmental offences. Where capacity conflicts arise, statutory duties must be prioritised. This pressure will increase during 2026–27 as in-house resources focus on the implementation of Simpler Recycling reforms.
- 2.8. Prior to the introduction of the enforcement partnership, the Council did not have sufficient capacity to deliver routine, high-visibility environmental enforcement activity alongside these competing priorities.

Enhanced Environmental Enforcement Trial

- 2.9. In September 2025, the Council commenced a fixed-term trial partnership with KLAS to provide enhanced environmental enforcement capacity. The partnership was designed to increase visible enforcement activity while ensuring that policy control, legal authority and reputational accountability remain firmly with the Council.
- 2.10. KLAS has been authorised to take enforcement action against those identified as having committed the below offences:

Brief description of Offence	Relevant section of Environmental Protection Act 1990
Littering	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 87(1) and 88

Fly-tipping	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 33
Breach of household waste (Duty of Care)	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 34(2A)
Failure to produce waste transfer documents for the transfer of waste to authorised persons	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 34
Failure to produce authority to transport waste	Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, section 5
Commercial waste presentation breaches	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 47
Vehicle repairs on the highway	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, section 4
Sale of vehicle on the highway	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, section 5

- 2.11. Environmental enforcement activity during the trial is delivered primarily through the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), a nationally recognised mechanism for addressing low-level environmental offences without recourse to prosecution.
- 2.12. The Council provides regular input on hotspots for monitoring and areas requiring frequent patrols by KLAS, and has an ability to divert resource to specific locations when required. Please refer to Appendix 1 for patrol and offence mapping.
- 2.13. Under the arrangement:
- All enforcement officers operate under delegated authority from the Council.
 - All FPN levels are set and approved by the Council as part of its budget and enforcement framework and budget-setting process.
 - The enforcement partner has no discretion to vary penalty levels or enforcement policy.
- 2.14. FPNs are issued in line with Council-approved policies on evidence, proportionality and fairness, supported using body-worn cameras.
- 2.15. Where an individual wishes to challenge a FPN, a structured representation process is in place. Complaints regarding conduct or the operation of the service are overseen by the Council, ensuring accountability and alignment with Council values. Please refer to Appendix 1 for data on complaints received by the Council.
- 2.16. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council remains the statutory “litter authority” and cannot lawfully delegate its decision-making powers in relation to criminal prosecution. While elements of the enforcement process may be delivered by a third-party provider, such as issuing Fixed Penalty Notices, gathering evidence, administering representations, and preparing prosecution files, the decision whether to commence legal proceedings must remain with the Council. Any case proceeding to the Magistrates’ Court is therefore brought under the authority of the Council as the statutory litter authority, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements and national guidance.

- 2.17. If an FPN remains unpaid, a court-ready prosecution pack will be prepared by KLAS for the Council. As the Council is the prosecuting authority, the decision to pursue a case rests solely with the Council. Each case is assessed on its legal merits, proportionality and public interest, ensuring the Council retains full control over escalation to court proceedings.
- 2.18. The partnership operates on an income-share basis, placing operational and financial risk with the provider rather than the Council, while retaining Council control over escalation and governance.

Performance and Outcomes

- 2.19. During the first six months of the trial, a total of 1,387 FPNs were issued, compared with 94 FPNs during a comparable pre-trial period. This demonstrates the impact of a dedicated enforcement resource operating alongside in-house services and reflects both increased visibility and the underlying scale of environmental non-compliance.
- 2.20. Over the same period, 884 FPNs were paid, equating to an average payment rate of approximately 71%, which compares favourably with typical payment rates for environmental enforcement activity nationally. As at February 2026, 358 FPNs remained outstanding and subject to further review and escalation, with 145 FPNs cancelled or written off in line with agreed evidential and proportionality criteria. This profile reflects both the operational realities of enforcement activity and the time lag inherent in progressing cases through escalation stages.
- 2.21. The six-month trial performance figures represent a subset of the full 2025/26 enforcement activity, which also includes additional offences and activity outside the core trial period.

2.22. Summary of FPN Performance (Sept 2025 – Feb 2026)

Measure	Volume
Total FPNs issued	1,387
Total FPNs paid	884
Average payment rate	71%
Outstanding FPNs (end of period)	358
Cancelled / written off	145

- 2.23. Payment rates for Fixed Penalty Notices should be interpreted in the context of statutory payment windows and representation processes. Monthly payment rates reflect the status of notices at the point of reporting and include cases that remain within their payment or challenge period. As a result, payment performance typically improves over time as cases progress through these stages. Aggregate figures therefore provide a more accurate reflection of overall compliance than individual monthly snapshots. Detailed monthly payment data, including issued, paid, outstanding and cancelled notices, is provided in Appendix 1.

- 2.24. The increase in enforcement activity reflects both the scale of environmental non-compliance present and the effectiveness of a dedicated, high-visibility enforcement resource operating alongside the Council's existing services. The impact has been most noticeable in priority locations, contributing to improved environmental standards and increased public reassurance.
- 2.25. The FPN payment and escalation data highlights the importance of clear governance arrangements within the enforcement model. While the contractor undertakes investigation, evidence gathering and administration, statutory responsibility for decisions relating to prosecution and court proceedings appropriately remains with the Council. The experience of the trial has informed the development of the proposed future operating model, which seeks to strengthen clarity around escalation thresholds, reporting, and decision-making responsibilities.
- 2.26. Environmental enforcement involves inherent risk due to public interaction. One serious incident occurred during the trial and was managed appropriately, including police involvement. Health and safety arrangements reflect best practice, with training, personal protective equipment, body-worn cameras and Council oversight in place. Overall, risks are considered manageable and proportionate given the benefits delivered.
- 2.27. Recruitment and retention in enforcement roles is recognised as a sector-wide challenge. The enforcement partner is responsible for recruitment, training and deployment. Where staffing pressures have arisen, experienced officers have been deployed temporarily from other contracts, maintaining service continuity without drawing on Council staffing capacity.
- 2.28. Media interest in the trial has been limited. One case attracted wider attention and was reviewed by the Council, which concluded that further legal action was not in the public interest. Overall public feedback indicates strong support for visible and consistent action against environmental crime, with no sustained adverse reputational impact.
- 2.29. As of 24 March 2026, additional enforcement activity undertaken under the Council's Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) has been delivered alongside, but separately from, environmental protection offences, with KLAS officers also supporting the Council's Animal Warden with dog-fouling enforcement, demonstrating additional flexibility within the partnership model.
- 2.30. More generally, feedback indicates strong public support for robust action against environmental crime, particularly where enforcement activity is perceived as fair, consistent and targeted. There has been no sustained adverse impact on the Council's reputation arising from the trial.
- 2.31. Overall, the trial demonstrates that enhanced environmental enforcement can be delivered safely, proportionately and effectively, with manageable operational risk and positive environmental outcomes. The partnership model has provided resilience, flexibility and improved visibility compared with in-house provision alone.
- 2.32. These factors support the conclusion that the enhanced enforcement partnership is delivering positive outcomes in line with the Council's strategic objectives.

2.33. A more detailed review of performance, including monthly FPN data, escalation processes and monitoring arrangements, is provided in Appendix 1.

3. Options for a Future Environmental Enforcement Service

Option 1 - Procure a Fixed-Term Enhanced Enforcement Partnership contract for up to three years (Recommended)

3.1. The trial of enhanced environmental enforcement has provided valuable operational and performance evidence to inform the Council's approach to future service delivery. Experience gained through the partnership model, including enforcement activity levels, payment compliance and escalation processes, has highlighted both the benefits of externalised delivery and the importance of clear contractual and governance arrangements. This learning has directly informed the options appraisal set out below, which considers a range of delivery models in light of operational effectiveness, value for money, risk and statutory responsibility. As the trial period concludes, it is therefore proposed to proceed with a new procurement approach that builds on this evidence, strengthens accountability, and supports the Council's strategic objectives.

3.2. Under this option, the Council would procure a fixed term contract for three years with an external enforcement partner to continue delivery of enhanced environmental enforcement activity.

3.3. The anticipated contract value set out in the Financial Implications section is provided for indicative planning purposes only, with market testing and value for money to be confirmed through procurement.

3.4. High level summary of the proposed model:

- Delivery through day to day, high visibility patrolling of identified areas of environmental concern.
- A budget neutral income share arrangement, with FPN receipts shared between the partner and the Council, supporting operating costs, contract management and cleansing services.
- A dedicated enforcement team provided by the partner and embedded alongside in house services, operating from a Council base.
- Clear visibility and accountability through Council branded uniforms, body worn cameras and defined complaint handling arrangements.
- Full Council control retained over enforcement policy, charging levels, legal escalation and prosecution decisions.
- Statutory decision-making responsibility for prosecution retained by the Council in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, with the enforcement partner limited to authorised operational and administrative functions.

- Performance oversight and reporting through the appropriate forum, with contract management undertaken by the Senior Recycling & Environmental Enforcement Officer.
- Flexibility within the contract to introduce additional enforcement responsibilities by mutual agreement, subject to approval and a clear cost benefit case.

3.5. This option sustains improved environmental outcomes, protects in house capacity for statutory reform, and manages financial, operational and reputational risk. It is therefore proposed, subject to committee approval, to proceed with a new procurement approach.

3.6. The following schedule reflects the Council's existing published Fixed Penalty Notice charges, which remain unchanged under the proposed option.

Offence type	Legislation	FPN Charge*
Depositing litter	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 87/88.	£500 (reduced to £100 if paid within 10 days).
Unauthorised disposal of waste/fly-tipping	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 33	£1,000 (reduced to £500 if paid within 10 days).
Breach of household duty of care	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34 2A	£600 (reduced to £300 if paid within 10 days).
Failure to produce waste transfer documents for the transfer of waste to authorised persons	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34	£300
Failure to produce authority to transport waste	Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, Section 5	£300
Commercial waste presentation breaches	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 47	£110
Vehicle repairs on the highway	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, Section 4	£100
Sale of vehicle on the highway	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, Section 5	£100
Dog fouling / breach of Public Spaces Protection Order	Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Poling Act 2014, Section 59	£100

* Note: The Council currently charges the maximum amount for FPNs relating to the above offences, as per limits set out in legislation.

Option 2 – Cease the Partnership and Revert to In House Provision

3.7. Under this option, the enhanced enforcement partnership would conclude at the end of the trial period, and responsibility for environmental enforcement would revert entirely to the Council's in-house resources.

- 3.8. This option would result in a significant reduction in proactive, high-visibility enforcement activity when compared with the trial period. Evidence from the trial demonstrates that the dedicated partnership model has materially increased enforcement presence and activity levels relative to historic in-house provision, reflecting both additional capacity and the ability to deploy resources flexibly in response to emerging environmental concerns.
- 3.9. Reversion to an in-house model would place additional pressure on existing staff at a time when capacity is already committed to delivering statutory reforms, including the introduction of Simpler Recycling. While recruitment and retention challenges have been experienced during the trial, these reflect sector-wide conditions and were mitigated through deployment flexibility available within the partnership model. Such flexibility would be considerably more limited if delivery relied solely on in-house staffing arrangements.
- 3.10. There is also a risk that ceasing the partnership would lead to a perceived regression in service effectiveness and environmental standards, given the increased visibility, public reassurance and improved outcomes achieved during the trial. Taking these factors into account, this option does not provide a sustainable or resilient approach to meeting the Council's environmental enforcement objectives and is therefore not recommended.

Summary of Options and Recommendation

- 3.11. There is a risk that ceasing a partnership approach would lead to a perceived regression in service effectiveness and environmental standards, given the increased visibility, public reassurance and improved outcomes achieved during the trial. Taking these factors into account, this option does not provide a sustainable or resilient approach to meeting the Council's environmental enforcement objectives and is therefore not recommended.
- 3.12. The proposed approach reflects established practice within the local government sector, where external environmental enforcement partnerships and income-share models are used to enhance capacity, manage operational and financial risk, and deliver value for money. Future performance reporting will therefore focus not only on enforcement activity, but also on longer-term indicators such as ward-level fly-tipping trends, to assess whether sustained enforcement activity is translating into measurable environmental improvement over time.
- 3.13. Overall, Option 1 provides resilience and flexibility that cannot be readily achieved through solely in-house provision, protects internal capacity for delivery of statutory reforms such as Simpler Recycling, and allows enforcement activity to be scaled and targeted in response to need. For these reasons, and taking account of performance evidence, risk, and value for money considerations, Option 1 is recommended.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Council's strategic aim of ensuring that Reading is a clean, green, and safe place to live, work and visit requires the behaviours of the town's residents, visitors, and business operators to be monitored and regulated to ensure

environmentally conscious practices. This initiative secures the additional resources required to meet this objective in a financially sustainable manner.

- **Promote more equal communities in Reading** - Enhanced and consistent environmental enforcement ensures that neighbourhoods benefit from clean, safe and well-managed public spaces. Applying Council-approved policies uniformly promotes fairness, shared responsibility and public confidence across the borough.
- **Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint** - Targeted environmental enforcement supports sustainability objectives by reducing littering, fly-tipping and poor waste management. The approach reinforces correct waste behaviours, complements recycling reform and contributes to cleaner public spaces and progress towards net-zero ambitions.
- **Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children** - Clean and well-managed public spaces support physical activity, mental wellbeing and perceptions of safety. Reducing environmental blight and hazardous waste contributes to safer, more welcoming environments and longer-term behaviour change.
- **Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future** - The partnership supports financial sustainability and organisational resilience by delivering enhanced outcomes without increasing base budgets or transferring risk to the Council. The flexible model protects in-house capacity during major service reforms and reflects a modern, best-value approach to service delivery.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The enhanced environmental enforcement partnership supports the Council's commitment to delivering a sustainable and healthy environment by reducing littering, fly-tipping and poor waste management that negatively impact environmental quality and local amenity.
- 5.2. By reinforcing correct waste behaviours, the service complements wider waste and recycling reforms, contributing to improved recycling quality, reduced contamination and lower environmental impact. Maintaining cleaner and better-managed public spaces supports environmental standards throughout the Council Plan period.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Evidence from resident surveys and the trial indicates that residents and stakeholders value visible and consistent action to address environmental crime. Public confidence depends on enforcement activity being fair, proportionate and transparent.
- 6.2. Any continuation of the service will be supported by clear communications explaining the purpose of enforcement, how decisions are made and the safeguards in place to ensure only evidenced offences are penalised. This

approach will promote transparency, manage expectations and reinforce understanding of the Council's role and responsibilities in protecting the public realm.

- 6.3. Community education and engagement is a key element of influencing behaviour change. The team will co-ordinate targeted public awareness campaigns about littering impacts and how the community can avoid being subject to enforcement action by being responsible with their rubbish. An annual communications plan will be produced by the team in advance.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and has identified no unlawful discrimination arising from the proposal. While there is potential for differential impact on some protected groups, these risks are mitigated through proportionate enforcement, clear policy safeguards, discretion in cases involving vulnerability, and full Council oversight of enforcement and prosecution decisions. Ongoing monitoring arrangements are in place to identify and address any adverse impacts.
- 7.2. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. All contractual, governance and enforcement arrangements will be subject to review and oversight by the Council's Legal Services.
- 8.2. The proposed enforcement model complies with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and associated statutory guidance, which require the Council, as the statutory litter authority, to retain control over enforcement policy and statutory decision-making, including decisions to initiate criminal proceedings.
- 8.3. Where FPNs remain unpaid, eligible cases may be progressed through the Single Justice Process (SJP), whereby cases are determined by a magistrate sitting with a legal adviser where the defendant has pleaded guilty or has not responded, and has not requested a full court hearing. The SJP provides an efficient mechanism for dealing with high volumes of low-level offences while preserving defendants' rights.
- 8.4. The Council is allocated a limited number of SJP cases per month. Where the number of eligible cases exceeds this allocation, proceedings would be progressed through the traditional magistrates' court process by way of summons.
- 8.5. Based on recent performance data, it is anticipated for planning purposes that a proportion of issued FPNs will remain unpaid and require legal review. This assumption informs resourcing considerations rather than constituting an enforcement or income target.
- 8.6. Any legal costs incurred, or costs awarded, arising from criminal proceedings remain the responsibility of the Council as prosecuting authority. Operational delivery risks associated with enforcement activity are managed through the contractual arrangements with the provider.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The current enhanced environmental enforcement arrangement was approved as a fixed-term trial for a twelve-month period, with an estimated contract value of approximately £300,000. This reflected the scale of activity required to deliver dedicated, high-visibility enforcement capacity alongside existing in-house services and was set out in the earlier report approving the trial arrangement.
- 9.2. For the purposes of forward financial planning, it is anticipated that any future enhanced enforcement contract would be of a broadly similar annual value. This estimate is indicative only and reflects current market practice for comparable local authority environmental enforcement services. The final contract value will be determined through a competitive procurement exercise and may vary depending on bids received from prospective providers.
- 9.3. No change to current revenue budget. Any reduction in direct in-house FPN receipts will be balanced by a share of the increased FPN receipts received by the Council's enforcement partner, presenting a budget neutral position. Any surplus income received from enhanced enforcement will be reported via monthly budget monitoring and must be used to contribute to environmental maintenance and cleansing services.
- 9.4. Income-share arrangements of this nature are commonly used within environmental enforcement contracts to align incentives and transfer operational and financial risk to the provider, while protecting the Council from fixed staffing and enforcement cost exposure.
- 9.5. A forecast level of Environmental Enforcement FPN receipts of £30,000 is included within the Recycling & Waste Service budget for FY26/27 for planning purposes.

10. Timetable for Implementation

Activity	Timeframe
Procurement strategy planning	April 2026
Tender publication & bidding period	June/July 2026
Tender Evaluation	August 2026
Award decision	August 2026
Contract finalisation & mobilisation	September 2026

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – KLAS partnership key performance indicators & monitoring

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment



Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators (KPI) & Performance Monitoring Data

Reading Borough Council

KLAS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Purpose and Context

This appendix provides detailed operational and performance information to support the summary analysis and conclusions set out in the main report. It presents activity-based and compliance-related data from the enhanced environmental enforcement trial period, including patrol activity, Fixed Penalty Notices issued, payment performance and complaints monitoring.

The information is intended to evidence trends in enforcement delivery and governance during the trial period, rather than to demonstrate short-term reductions in fly-tipping volumes, which are influenced by multiple external factors and are evaluated separately within the main report.

1. Performance and Contract Management

The Supplier shall keep performance data for the duration of the Contract.

In the performance of the obligations under the Contract, the Supplier shall, but not exclusively:

1.1	Appoint a Contract Manager before the commencement of the Contract, who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Contract & Specification terms. Liaise regularly with the Council's named person responsible for this contract.
1.2	Agree to meet with the Council's named person for the contract. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• *Monthly to discuss performance and operational issues and• Quarterly to review overall Service delivery (*) For the first three months the Supplier agrees to meet with the Council's named contract manager every two weeks.

1.3	<p>Provide monthly performance data for the duration of the contract. This information must then be collated for an annual report.</p> <p>This will include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of FPNs issued. • FPN by Offence Type • % of FPNs paid • Payment rate • Location of offence • Ethnicity, gender, age and any disability of perpetrator • Number of prosecutions files sent to the Council. • Outcome of prosecutions • Number of FPN Objections/representations • Number of FPNs withdrawn – including reason • Contractor Revenue • Contractor Expenditure • Details of partnership patrols/activities/operations • Detail of Enforcement Officer hours accrued on patrol • Details of any service complaints, investigations and outcomes. • Social value performance* <p>(*) Social value performance reporting to be provided quarterly.</p>
1.4	<p>Provide details of work-related incidents/accidents resulting in more than 5 days off work and near miss accidents, investigations and actions taken.</p>
1.5	<p>To ensure that the Council is informed of any changes to the Service at the earliest possible opportunity and that any shortfall in the Service is reported on the same day to the SET management Team that Service was due.</p>
1.6	<p>To provide the Council full access to any electronic management systems that the Supplier uses to log data and produce performance reports. The supplier will provide training in the use of any such systems.</p>
1.7	<p>The Supplier shall be aware that as part of the monitoring process the Council shall evaluate the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (“KPIs”) set out below</p>
1.8	<p>Undertake regular quality assurance checks to monitor the number of objections/representations that are lodged against FPNs and investigate all those that are upheld leading to cancellation of the FPN.</p>

Performance Management assumes that failure to meet a KPI is a Service Failure as detailed in Section 15.

There are 3 categories of Service Failure for each KPI.

- Minor
- Intermediate
- Serious

The Performance Management process and/or remedies for the different categories of Service Failure are detailed in Section 2.

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

2.1 As part of the performance monitoring process the Council shall evaluate the Contracts performance with regards to achievement of the Target KPIs as detailed below:

KPI No.	Target KPI name/ description	Frequency of measurement	Category of Service Failure To be Confirmed
KPI 1	<p>Staff- Enforcement Deploy a team per Operational Day (7.5 hrs), including public holidays and weekends, which equates to no less than the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1 (one) Team Manager/Supervisor (Monday to Sunday = 37.5 hours)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4 (Four) EOs (Monday to Sunday = 150</p>	Weekly	<p>Target KPI: 100% (504 hours per week)</p> <p><u>Minor failure</u> (-16 hrs) = 181.5 Hours per week</p> <p><u>Intermediate failure</u> (-40 hrs.) = 147.5 hours per week.</p> <p><u>Serious failure</u> (anything above -40hrs) = <147.5 hours per week</p>
KPI 2	<p>Finance</p> <p>Collection Note By the 10th working day of each month the supplier shall issue a collection note which summarises the full revenue collected for the</p>	Monthly	<p>Target KPI: 100%</p> <p><u>Minor failure</u>: 2 days late <u>Intermediate failure</u>: 3 days late <u>Serious failure</u>: 5 days late</p>

	<p>preceding month.</p> <p>Payment 100% of revenue collected shall be paid to The Council by the 15th day of each month for the preceding month.</p> <p>Invoice the Council for the agreed revenue share percentage █████ of the income received by the Supplier pursuant to the Contract for the preceding month.</p>		
KPI 3	<p>FPN Errors</p> <p>The number of FPNs cancelled/withdrawn due to agreed errors made by the EOs must remain below 5% of all FPNs issued.</p>	Monthly	<p>Target KPI: 100%</p> <p><u>Minor failure:</u> 1% <u>Intermediate failure:</u> 3% <u>Serious failure:</u> 5% or above</p>
KPI 4	<p>Prosecution Files</p> <p>Where FPNs are not paid within the specified timescales, and where the evidential standard is met, and it is appropriate and proportionate to do so, The Supplier will provide the Council with “court ready” prosecution files within the statutory timescales.</p>	Monthly	<p>Target KPI: 100%</p> <p>The “failure percentage” around this KPI are based on accuracy and timescales of files submitted and do not relate to any prosecution target.</p> <p><u>Minor failure:</u> 2% <u>Intermediate failure:</u> 3% <u>Serious failure:</u> 5%</p>
KPI 5	<p>Performance Reports</p> <p>Reports provided to the Council no later than five (5) working days after the reporting cycle, containing information as detailed in section 14 of this specification.</p>	Monthly	<p>Target KPI: 100%</p> <p><u>Minor failure:</u> 1-day <u>Intermediate failure:</u> 2 days <u>Serious failure:</u> 3 days</p>

KPI 6	<p>Replying to Complaints/Enquires/FOIs as directed by the Council.</p> <p>Provide full response to all enquiries received by the Council which relate to the provision of service. Responses to be provided to the Council's named contract officer in accordance with any statutory time frames and/or in accordance with the Council's complaints process.</p>	Weekly	<p>Target KPI: 100%</p> <p><u>Minor failure:</u> 1-day</p> <p><u>Intermediate failure:</u> 2 days</p> <p><u>Serious failure:</u> 3 days</p>
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2.2 **Minor Failure** will result in a performance meeting and for the Supplier to demonstrate in writing how the failure will be rectified within an agreed timeframe.

2.3 **Intermediate Failure** will result in a performance meeting and a written improvement plan to be defined and agreed.

2.4 **Serious Failure** will result in a performance meeting and the instigation of the Remediation Plan Process.

2.5 In this Contract, "**Consistent Failure**" shall mean:

A Serious Failure of the same KPI or a Serious Failure of more than one KPI, occurring two or more times in a 3-month rolling period.

OR

A failure to deliver any agreed improvement plan following an Intermediate Failure.

OR

the Supplier repeatedly breaching any of the terms of this Contract in such a manner as to reasonably justify the opinion that its conduct is inconsistent with it having the intention or ability to give effect to the terms of this Contract.

2.6 In the event of a Consistent Failure the Council may, at its

discretion, terminate the Contract under the terms of the Contract Conditions or commence the Remediation Plan process under the terms of the Contract Conditions.

- 2.7 The rights and remedies of the Council provided above are in addition to
and without prejudice to any other remedies that the Council may have under the Contract or at Law.

KLAS Performance Monitoring

3. KLAS partnership performance

3.1. Government guidance for local authorities in England strictly dictates that enforcement activity should be measured by improvements in environmental cleanliness, not by the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued. Authorities are explicitly told not to set targets for the number of FPNs issued or for revenue generated from them. However, this information is useful to monitor resource provision and to display benefits to the service area.

3.2. Please see breakdown of FPN data in the tables & maps below:

Table 3.2.1. Total number of FPNs issued (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
FPNs issued	205	277	248	169	240	248	1387

Table 3.2.2 Total FPNs issued by offence type

Offence type	Number of FPNs issued (Sept-Feb)
Depositing litter (S87/88 EPA 1990)	1237
Unauthorised disposal of waste/fly-tipping (S33 EPA 1990)	10
Breach of household duty of care (S34 2A EPA 1990)	139
Failure to produce waste transfer documents for the transfer of waste to authorised persons (S34 EPA 1990)	1
Failure to produce authority to transport waste (S5 COPA 1989)	0
Commercial waste presentation breaches (S47 EPA 1990)	0
Vehicle repairs on the highway (S4 CNEA 2005)	0
Sale of vehicle on the highway (S5 CNEA 2005)	0

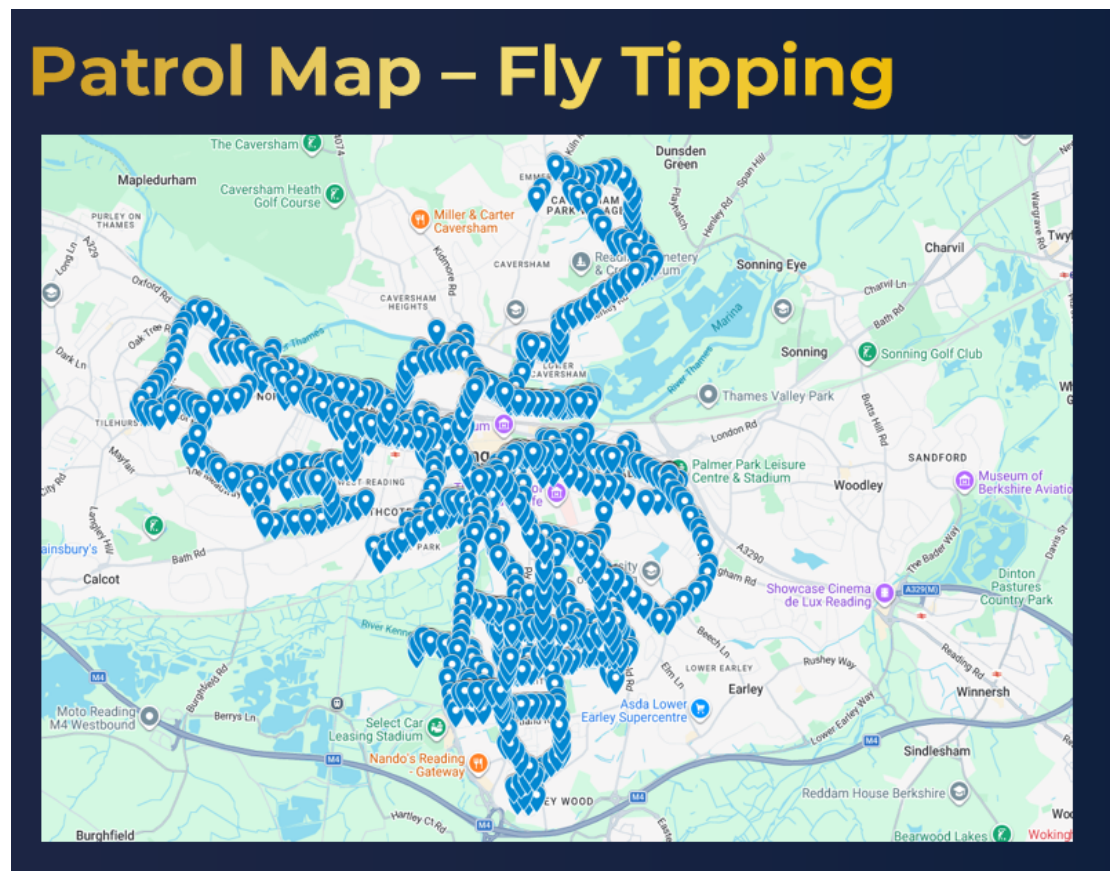
Table 3.2.3. Total FPNs issued by ward area

Ward area	Number of FPNs issued (Sept -Feb)
Abbey	1127
Battle	35
Caversham Heights	1
Caversham	4
Church	40
Coley	19
Emmer Green	13
Katesgrove	18
Kentwood	15
Norcot	22
Park	14
Redlands	4
Southcote	8
Thames	20
Tilehurst	11
Whitley	36

Map 3.4.4. Map showing typical litter patrol route by Officers on foot (tracking from March 2026)



Map 3.2.5 Map showing typical patrol route by Officer in streetscene vehicle (tracking from March 2026)



Map 3.2.6 Map showing distribution of fly-tipping offence FPNs (Sept-Feb)

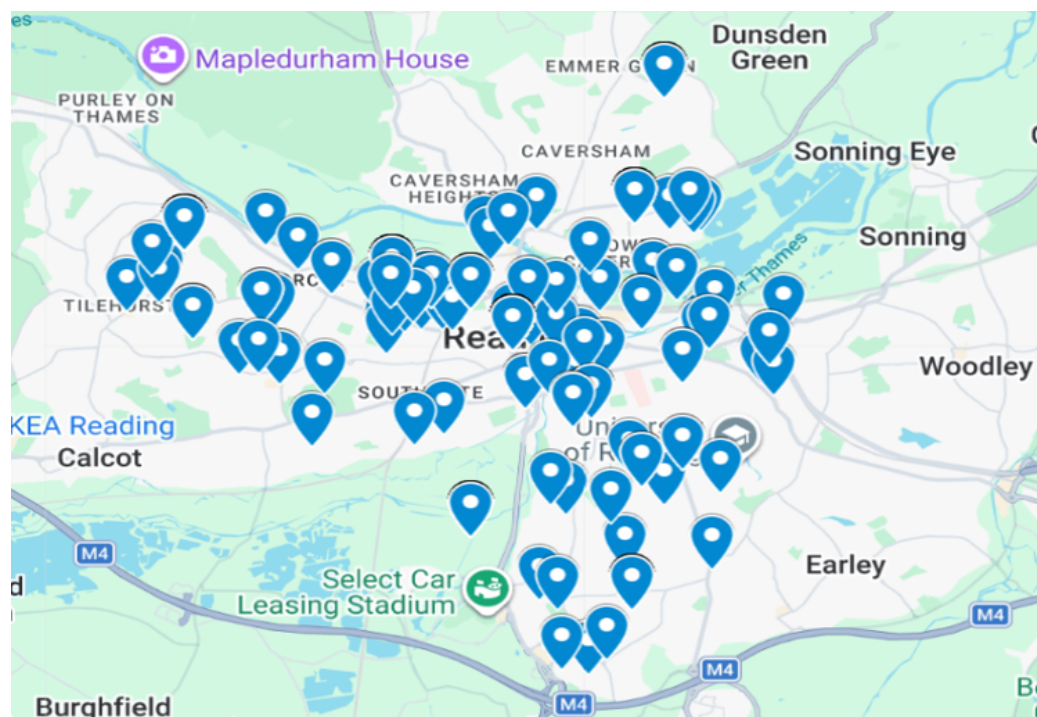


Table 3.2.6. FPN payment rate (by month)*

**At time of reporting. Rates may ultimately be higher than this as a proportion of the FPNs issued may still be within their payment window.*



Note: Monthly payment rates reflect the status of Fixed Penalty Notices at the point of reporting and include notices that remain within their statutory payment, representation or cancellation period. As a result, payment rates may vary between reporting periods and typically increase over time as cases progress through the full process. Aggregate payment figures therefore provide a more accurate indication of overall compliance than individual monthly snapshots.

Table 3.2.7. Income generated (by month)

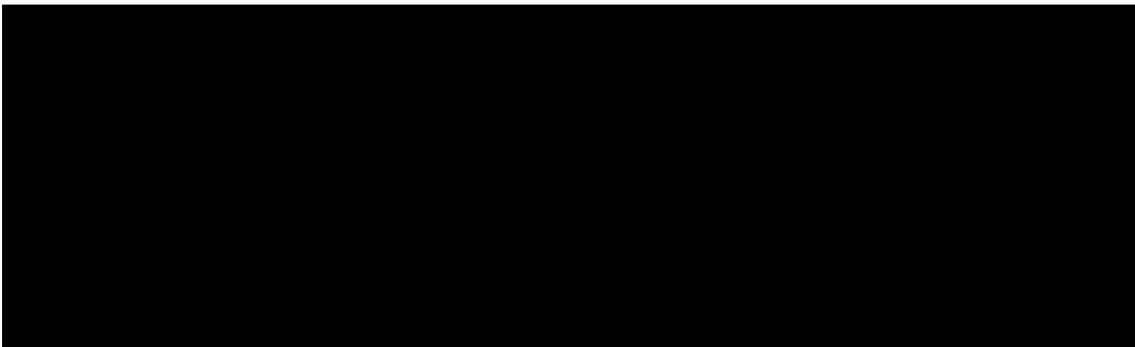


Table 3.2.8 Complaints received at Council for KLAS cases (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Total number	0	4	2	0	1	4	11

Complaints received during the trial period were managed in accordance with the Council’s established procedures, with oversight retained by the Council. Complaint volumes and outcomes do not indicate any systemic conduct, fairness or equality-related issues arising from enforcement activity during the trial.

3.3. In addition to the above data, a range of agreed key performance indicators are reported to the Council by KLAS in an agreed format monthly. These demonstrate performance against measures such as officer hours worked, FPN errors and provision of monthly reporting and responding to complaints.

3.4. Please see breakdown of agreed KPI target monitoring below:

Table 3.3.1: KPI 1 - KLAS Officer hours worked (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Avg.
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Officer hours	555	735	843.5	825	1015	1009	830
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On average, this is viewed to be satisfactory. However, Officers are currently working Monday to Friday and weekend or bank holiday staff provision has not yet been implemented as expected.

Table 3.3.2: KPI 2 – Timeliness of payments (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Timeliness of payment	On time	On time	On time	Late	Late	Late

Kingdom experienced a change over in accounting staff from January 2026 which has ultimately resulted in delayed transfer of funds since. The delay in December, January and February is deemed a serious service failure but has since been rectified with KLAS Management. Ongoing monitoring is in place.

Table 3.3.3: KPI 3 – Number of cancelled FPNs due to Officer error (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Avg.
% of total FPNs voided/cancelled (%)	5%	2%	1%	12%	3%	9%	5%

This has fluctuated significantly from month to month but tends to coincide with recruitment of new officers undertaking training on FPN devices.

Table 3.3.4: KPI 4 – Provision of prosecution files for unpaid FPNs (by month)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Avg.
Total files received	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Where Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) remain unpaid, cases are reviewed for evidential sufficiency and proportionality in line with Council policy. While the enforcement partner undertakes operational activity including investigation, evidence gathering and preparation of prosecution files, decisions to progress cases to court rest solely with the Council as the statutory authority. Progression of cases is subject to available legal capacity and relevant court processes, including limitations associated with the Single Justice Process.

The process for escalating unpaid FPN cases is under review with the Council's legal services team. Prosecution files will be produced by KLAS accordingly when

required.

Table 3.3.5: KPI 5 – Provision of performance reports (by month)

There are no concerns relating to provision of and quality of monthly performance reports provided to the Council by Kingdom.

Table 3.3.6: KPI 6 – Replying to complaints (by month)

When a representation is received by KLAS an acknowledgement and holding response is sent advising of a 10–14 working day review period. There have been a small number of cases where a holding response had not been sent or the review period lapsed without a response. This would be raised with KLAS management where Council is aware.

On average, responding to complaints by KLAS and provision of information for Council logged complaints is viewed to be satisfactory at this time.

The performance information contained within this appendix should be read alongside the main report, which provides the contextual analysis, governance interpretation and options appraisal informed by this data.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

For advice on this document please contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email Clare.Muir@reading.gov.uk.

Please contact the Project Management Office at pmo@reading.gov.uk for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

Name of proposal to be assessed: Enhanced Environmental Enforcement
Directorate: Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
Service: Environment & Commercial Services

Name: Holly Tough
Job Title: Senior Recycling & Enforcement Officer
Date of assessment: 19/02/2025

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
1		Holly Tough	19/02/2025	

Scope your proposal

- What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

The Council's strategic aim of ensuring that Reading is a clean, green, and safe place to live, work and visit is impacted by the behaviours of the town's residents, visitors, and business operators. Monitoring and regulating those behaviours relating to waste can ensure environmentally conscious practices.

The Council is seeking to extend their enforcement capabilities by entering a limited twelve-month trial contract with an external partner for the enforcement of environmental offences including littering, fly-tipping, and nuisance vehicles. The external partner will provide patrol Officers who will be contracted by the Council to enforce against certain environmental offences.

The partner will work alongside the Council's existing Recycling & Enforcement Team whose responsibilities include environmental enforcement activity, and resident engagement to improve recycling rates and to support the introduction of new statutory waste collection services to residential properties. The partnership will allow Council Officers to prioritise their recycling engagement alongside environmental enforcement.

- Who will benefit from this proposal and how?
All residents, businesses and visitors in Reading will benefit from this proposal in that there will be an increase in environmental enforcement to act as a deterrent to the offences being committed, resulting in a cleaner and greener environment.
- What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?
A reduction in the incidence of Environmental Crime supporting delivery of the Council's objective to provide a cleaner, greener and safer environment for the town's residents, businesses, and visitors. Making the town a more attractive place in which to live, work and visit.
- Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?
It has been established through resident engagement that high-profile environmental enforcement activity to address environmental crime is of importance to our residents.
The main stakeholders are:
 - Residents & resident groups

- Businesses & REDA/Reading BID
- Visitors to Reading

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

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

- Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community or care experience)? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.

Yes

The principle of good enforcement ensures that enforcement activity is consistent, proportionate, transparent, accountable, and targeted.

The enforcement policy recognises that fixed penalty notices should not be issued to people under the age of 18 years, to vulnerable people or where a disabled person is relying on a dog for assistance. The application of the Council's enforcement policy is a requirement of the partnership arrangement.

Prompt payment discounts are offered to help reduce fines and make them more affordable.

- Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.

No.

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

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

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

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[Consultation manager form - Reading Borough Council Dash](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted

<p>Residents Businesses Visitors</p>	<p>It is not proposed to consult with the identified stakeholder groups prior to implementation as the activities of the Council’s partner will be no different to that of the Council’s own staff.</p> <p>Approval is not sought for the activity to be undertaken as the Council has a legislatively compliant delegation to do so, and by extension so would the Council’s partner.</p> <p>The Council will however seek to engage all stakeholder groups with a positive PR campaign in the run up to the launch of the enhanced activity. The press campaign will state the rationale for enhanced enforcement activity in delivery of the Council’s strategic environment objectives and control measures in place to ensure activity is fair and proportionate with contractual safeguards in place to protect public and Council interests.</p>	
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Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups**

- **Is there a negative impact?** Possible

Reading has a remarkably diverse population, with 46.5% now belonging to a Black and Minority Ethnic community (including white and other communities), up from 35% in 2011.

All ethnic groups have increased since 2011 apart from British, Irish and Black Caribbean. There has been a significant increase in the number of Romanian speakers since 2011.

Levels of awareness of the requirements of legislation can be lower in some minority groups. As a result, people from some minority groups may face a disproportionate level of enforcement action. Language and literacy may exacerbate this problem, but information leaflets and translation services are available.

All letters go out in English but translated copies of any letters can be provided by the Council on request. Use of translation service during formal interviews as required under PACE.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)**
- **Is there a negative impact?** No

None identified.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**
- **Is there a negative impact?** Yes

Individuals caught committing an environmental crime may suffer from physical or mental afflictions that prevent them from adhering to the law. A diminished mental capacity may affect one's ability to understand the requirements of them to manage their own waste and dispose of it correctly. This may also apply to physical disabilities preventing one from being able to dispose of waste that may need further assistance.

Certain exceptions will continue to exist as part of carrying out day-to-day enforcement activities. Enforcement Officers will assess any situation at the point

of engagement for any relevant physical or mental disabilities that may prevent one from complying with the relevant UK laws.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
- Is there a negative impact? No

None identified.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on age
- Is there a negative impact? Yes

Reading has a generally younger population, however the proportion of older people aged 65+ increased by 17.2% between 2011 and 2021.

Enforcement Officers are required to establish a suspected offenders name, address, and date of birth before issuing an FPN. On identifying the age of a suspected offender to be below 18, Enforcement Officers would cease issuing an FPN.

Officers would not approach any young persons deemed to be under the age of sixteen. However, if deemed to be appropriate based on the circumstance and severity of the offence a warning can be issued to a young person aged 16-18. The Council's Enforcement Policy can be reviewed if there is a significant number of offences committed by those aged under 18.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief
- Is there a negative impact? No

None identified.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on the Armed Forces community (including reservists and veterans and their families)
- Is there a negative impact? No

None identified.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on care experienced young people and adults.
- Is there a negative impact? Yes

Enforcement Officers are required to establish a suspected offenders name, address, and date of birth before issuing an FPN. On identifying the age of a suspected offender to be below 18, Enforcement Officers would cease issuing an FPN. Officers would not approach any young persons deemed to be under the age of eighteen.

Care experienced young adults identified as residing in supported accommodation on initial contact may be offered a warning or education briefing in lieu of an FPN for their first offence. A young adult later identified as residing in supported accommodation, can still be offered a warning or education briefing to discharge their FPN at the discretion of the Council. A statement may be required from a Support Worker.

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative, then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not, you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

1. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason

The Council already has a practice of taking enforcement action for environmental offences where an offender is identified. This proposal is an extension of a practice that is already in place.

The principles of good enforcement followed by the Council ensures that enforcement activity is consistent, proportionate, transparent, accountable, and targeted.

The Council's enforcement policy recognises that fixed penalty notices may not be suitable for all and should not be issued to people under the age of 18 years, to vulnerable people or where a disabled person is relying on a dog for assistance. The application of the Council's enforcement policy is a requirement of the arrangement with the external partner.

2. Negative impact identified or uncertain

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

Robust Environmental Enforcement is known to be valued by those that wish for the Council to do more to reduce incident of environmental crime, such as littering and fly-tipping, as such activity blights the town and negatively impacts its amenity. Conversely robust enforcement is not welcomed by those that are on the receiving end of legislative enforcement action due to their own inconsiderate actions. It is therefore of vital importance that the Council and its partner operate in a transparent and legislatively compliant manner in tackling environmental crime, ensuring a robust evidence base is gathered and that penalties issued are proportionate to the offence committed.

It is also of vital importance that prior to the launch of enhanced enforcement activity that the Council promote the scheme publicly amongst its residents and stakeholders, raising awareness of the intended benefits and providing assurance of its proportionate nature and control measures to ensure recipients of fixed penalties can be evidenced as deserving of the action taken against them. The project will therefore feature an approved communication plan that has been

signed off by the Lead Councillor Environmental Services and Community Safety in consultation with the Council’s Communications Team.

To ensure that the approach adopted by the Council and its partner is legislatively compliant and beyond reproach, it will be controlled by means of documented contractual obligations. The Councils partner will be required to gather evidence in a manner compliant with legislative requirements that robustly supports the issue of a fixed penalty notice or, as appropriate, the instigation of legal action.

The Council will have the ability to review each case and intervene in the event that they believe there is a legitimate rationale for refraining from taking further action.

Arrangements of this nature have historically carried concern regarding the appointed partner potentially acting in an over-zealous and financially motivated manner. To address this concern the contract will specify that the partners' directly employed staff are not to be financially incentivised to issue fixed penalties. Staff employed in delivery of the partnership will receive a salary, with no performance related enhancements.

- **How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

The Council will receive monthly performance data from the enforcement partner at diarised contract review and performance meetings. These statistics will include factors such as number of FPNs issued, FPN by offence type, location of offence as well as the ethnicity, gender, age, and any disability of the perpetrator. The Council will also receive data on the number of FPNs withdrawn and the reason for withdrawal.

The data will be used to identify any possible adverse impacts and any instances where FPNs have been issued incorrectly and actions taken to rectify errors.

The Council will also have full oversight of Prosecution case files and related Prosecution outcomes and can report on ethnicity, gender, age, and any disability.

If the enforcement partner is deemed to be failing on these key performance indicators, the Council can choose to terminate the contract.

X

X

Completing Officer

Lead Officer

Policy Committee

15 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Off-Street Parking Charges 2026/27
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Phil Grant, Parking Service 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	<p>To note the contents of this report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorises the alignment of weekend tariffs with weekday tariffs at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, and Civic B car parks as set out in Appendix 1. 2. Authorises an increase to the first-hour tariff at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, and Civic B to match the second-hour charge (Appendix 1). 3. Approves a reduction in tariffs at Green Park to align with comparable car parks and address under-utilisation (Appendix 2). 4. Approves increases to off-street parking fees as set out in Appendix 3, rounded to the nearest 10p. 5. Authorise the Director of Environmental and Commercial Services to publish a Notice of Variation under Section 35c of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to bring these changes into effect.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes a package of updates to the Council's off-street parking tariffs to modernise and simplify the structure, improve consistency, support town-centre activity, and ensure charges remain aligned with wider transport, environmental and public health objectives. These revisions follow a detailed review of usage data, benchmarking activity, and site-specific considerations.
- 1.2 The proposals aim to simplify the tariff structure, align pricing with demand and inflation, support town-centre vitality, encourage sustainable travel, and ensure consistency across the Council's car park portfolio.

Key elements include:

- Standardising tariffs across the Council's three main town centre multi-storey car parks (Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, Civic B), including applying the same tariff throughout the week.
- Increasing the minimum stay from 1 hour to 2 hours at the multi-storey sites to support longer dwell times and economic activity.
- Reducing charges at Green Park car park to address persistent under-utilisation and better align with comparable locations.
- Increasing off-street parking tariffs by 5%, rounded to the nearest 10p.

1.3 The combined effect of these changes is projected to generate £244k in additional income for 2026/27. Any resulting surplus, in line with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, will be reinvested into transport and highway-related improvements.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Parking management supports the Council's strategic objectives in multiple ways, including improving air quality, reducing congestion, supporting sustainable transport, and helping to manage kerbside and off-street demand. The Council's statutory and policy framework for parking management includes:

- Reading Transport Strategy 2040, which sets a pathway towards a low-carbon, accessible transport network.
- Reading's Air Quality Action Plan (2024), approved by DEFRA, which identifies transport emissions as a major contributor to local pollution and sets out interventions to reduce NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide) levels.
- Council Plan 2025–28, establishing priorities around sustainable environments, economic vibrancy, health, wellbeing, and climate resilience.
- National policy context including the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which set the legal duties governing traffic management, parking enforcement, and the purpose of parking charges.

3. Background and Demand Trends

- 3.1 Parking fees have evolved incrementally over several years, resulting in inconsistencies in minimum stay requirements, tariff structures, and weekend/weekday differentials.
- 3.2 Vehicle ownership continues to rise across the Southeast, contributing to increased pressure on the highway and parking networks. From 2011 to 2021, the region saw a 4.35% rise in vehicles per household.
- 3.3 Reading's vehicle ownership increased from 74,000 in 2015 to 81,800 in 2024, reflecting sustained demand for parking.
- 3.4 Off-street parking provision plays a vital role in relieving congestion, supporting economic vibrancy, and managing travel behaviour. Under Section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, councils may provide off-street parking the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic.
- 3.5 Demand peaks between 10:00am and 14:30pm, with private-sector car parks (e.g., at the Oracle/Riverside) often at capacity. This places pressure on Council-operated multi-storey sites.

- 3.6 The proposed increase in minimum stay at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, and Civic B multi storey car parks is intended to encourage longer visits, which is consistent with approaches used by other authorities to influence turnover and support commercial centres.
- 3.7 Planned developments such as the Minster Quarter and the Broad Street Mall redevelopment will add significant new residential and commercial activity in the town centre, increasing the importance of a sustainable approach to parking management.

4 **The Proposals**

- 4.1 Historic tariff changes have been incremental resulting in variations across sites. This review seeks to simplify and harmonise the structure.
- 4.2 Tariff standardisation across Queens Road, Broad Street Mall and Civic B will provide a more consistent and equitable charging structure.
- 4.3 Increasing the minimum stay from 1 hour to 2 hours is intended to support economic activity and manage peak-time congestion.
- 4.4 Maintaining separate weekday and weekend tariffs introduces additional complexity. A single 7 day tariff provides a simpler, more transparent structure while ensuring consistency across all operating days.
- 4.5 A 5% uplift to off-street charges maintains alignment with inflationary pressures on managing these car parks.
- 4.6 Green Park car park has persistently low occupancy despite clear local need. Reducing charges will improve usage and better meet local demand.

5. **Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 5.1 The parking services contribute to the Council's 2025 - 2028 Council Plan themes around:
- **Promote more equal communities in Reading** - The proposed tariff changes help create a fairer and more consistent parking system by removing confusing disparities between sites and reducing unnecessary traffic in neighbourhoods. A clearer, standardised charging approach supports equitable access to the town centre, while reinvestment of any surplus into transport improvements benefits all communities, including those without access to a car.
 - **Secure Reading's economic and cultural success** - A simplified tariff structure and longer minimum stay encourage visitors to spend more time in the town centre, supporting shops, hospitality, and cultural venues. Aligning tariffs across key car parks improves customer experience and keeps Council facilities competitive, helping maintain a strong, resilient local economy.
 - **Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint** - Parking charges are an important tool for reducing unnecessary car trips, lowering emissions, and supporting the Council's Transport Strategy 2040. By discouraging short stays and removing weekend discounts, the new tariffs help cut congestion and improve air quality, addressing issues such as the 61 pollution-related deaths recorded in 2023 and the fact that transport accounts for around 30% of local carbon emissions.
 - **Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children.** - Reducing congestion and pollution has direct public-health benefits, particularly for children, older residents, and those with existing health conditions. Encouraging greater use of active and sustainable travel modes supports healthier lifestyles, while improved traffic flow benefits essential services travelling across the borough.

- **Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future** - Updating and simplifying tariffs helps keep the parking service financially sustainable, operationally efficient and aligned with statutory requirements. Reinvesting surpluses in transport and infrastructure strengthens the Council's long-term resilience and ensures it can continue delivering high-quality services into the future.

5.2 Full details of the Council Plan are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#).

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

6.1 Pricing is a proven tool for managing parking demand and influencing transport choices. The proposed tariff adjustments are designed not to penalise drivers but to keep pace with inflation, ensure parity with market conditions, and support Council objectives around reducing unnecessary car journeys. Removing disparities between weekday and weekend charges reduces the incentive for drivers to circulate between car parks seeking the lowest price behaviour that contributes directly to congestion and emissions.

6.2 The Council's new emissions-based on-street parking and permit charges must be supported by an off-street pricing regime that does not undermine modal-shift goals. Simplifying and harmonising tariffs at multi-storey sites ensures consistent messaging and prevents off-street parking becoming a cheaper alternative that weakens the impact of emissions-based pricing.

6.3 Usage data shows an increase of 3,500 additional transactions in February 2026 compared with February 2025, particularly at Broad Street Mall and Queens Road. While positive for the economy, this increases traffic pressure unless vehicles are managed effectively. Appropriate tariff setting assists in modulating peak-time demand and discouraging short car trips that can feasibly be replaced by sustainable modes.

6.4 Air pollution is a significant public health concern. National analysis estimates 28,000–36,000 UK deaths annually are attributable to long-term exposure to human-made air pollution. Locally, Reading's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2025) applies a comparable methodology estimating 61 of 1,144 deaths among adults aged 30+ in 2023 were attributable to particulate pollution. Measures that reduce unnecessary driving, even marginally, contribute cumulatively to improving health outcomes and reducing exposure among vulnerable groups.

6.5 Transport contributes around 30% of all carbon emissions within the borough. Adjustments to tariff structures make car use less attractive for short, discretionary trips and encourage behavioural shifts towards bus, rail, cycling, walking, and Park & Ride.

6.6 The proposed changes reinforce the Air Quality Action Plan (2024) and Transport Strategy 2040, supporting objectives to reduce NO₂ levels, cut carbon emissions, and increase sustainable travel uptake.

6.7 Together, these adjustments create a coherent, integrated approach that supports air-quality improvement, reduces emissions, and promotes healthier, more sustainable travel behaviours across Reading.

7. Consultation Requirements

7.1 In accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 a Notice of Variation will be published in local media and displayed at affected sites.

8 Equality Implications

8.1 No negative implications have been identified that affect those with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment is shown in Appendix 4.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1 Transport contributes approximately 30% of all carbon emissions. By using up to date technology and a pricing strategy, motorists' behaviour can be influenced towards cleaner modes of travel.
- 9.2 The equalisation of the charges for our main town centre car parks will remove any incentive to choose a car park based on price and encourage the customer to choose the most accessible car park in relation to their journey. The increase of the first hour charge to match the rate for two hours encourages longer dwell time, making better use of the journey. The removal of discounted rates at weekends may encourage greater use of park and ride or other public transport.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, sets out the conditions for the use of off-street parking places, including the applicable charges and tariff structure.
- 10.2 Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 permits a local authority to vary the level of charges for off-street parking places by issuing a Notice of Variation, provided that the variation relates solely to the amount charged. Where changes go beyond the level of charge, for example, by altering the tariff structure, a new order or amendment order would be required, made in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 10.3 The proposal to increase the first hour tariff at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall and Civic B so that it aligns with the second hour charge constitutes an adjustment to the level of charge within an existing tariff band. The underlying tariff structure remains unchanged, the charging periods continue to operate as first hour, second hour and subsequent periods, and there is no alteration to the basis on which charges are calculated or applied. The fact that the monetary value of the first and second hour tariffs will be the same does not, of itself, amount to a change in tariff structure.
- 10.4 Accordingly, the proposed changes fall within the scope of section 35C of the 1984 Act and may lawfully be implemented by Notice of Variation.
- 10.5 In accordance with the duty imposed by section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the level of parking charges must be set with a view to securing the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic. In doing so, the authority must have regard to the need to maintain access to premises, the effect on local amenity, the national air quality strategy, and the need to facilitate the passage of public service vehicles.
- 10.6 While the cost of providing, operating and maintaining parking facilities may be taken into account as a relevant secondary consideration, it must not be the primary purpose of setting charges. A local authority may therefore not set parking charges with the intention of generating revenue, although a surplus may lawfully arise as an incidental consequence of charges set for proper statutory purposes.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The projected net revenue increase for 2026/27:

Proposal	Expected Impact
Weekend/weekday alignment	£91,583
1-hour → 2-hour minimum stay	£39,667
5% uplift	£112,583
Total	£243,833

11.2 Under section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 any surplus as a result of these changes, after considering inflationary pressures, is required to be reinvested in transport and highways services for the benefit of Reading residents and businesses.

11.3 The financial implications are consistent with the 'Interim Parking Strategy' business case that was approved as part of the MTFS process.

12. Timetable for implementation.

12.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations set out in this report, implementation will be following the statutory process as set out in paragraph 10 and the changes will be implemented in August 2026.

13. Background Papers

13.1 There are none.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Proposed changes to main Town Centre car parks.
- Appendix 2 Proposed changes to other car parks.
- Appendix 3 Proposed increase in parking tariffs.
- Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 1: Town centre car parks

Queens road				
Tariff Monday to Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£2.30	Remove		
2 hours	£4.40	£4.60	£0.20	4.55%
3 hours	£6.70	£7.00	£0.30	4.48%
4 hours	£8.90	£9.30	£0.40	4.49%
5 hours	£10.60	£11.10	£0.50	4.72%
6 hours	£12.70	£13.30	£0.60	4.72%
24 hours	£16.70	£17.50	£0.80	4.79%
Weekend Tariff Saturday & Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
30 mins	£1.00	Remove		
1 hour	£2.10	Remove		
2 hours	£4.10	Remove		
3 hours	£5.10	Remove		
4 hours	£6.10	Remove		
5 hours	£7.10	Remove		
6 hours	£7.10	Remove		
24 hours	£8.10	Remove		
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Earlybird (Mon to Fri same day)	£8.00	£8.40	£0.40	5.00%
Night Rate (Mon to Sun)	£3.60	£3.80	£0.20	5.56%
Weekly Ticket (Mon to Fri for 5 consecutive days)	£50.00	£52.50	£2.50	5.00%
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual season ticket	£1,760.00	£1,850.00	£90.00	5.11%
Quarter season ticket	£510.00	£540.00	£30.00	5.88%
Monthly season ticket	£177.00	£185.00	£8.00	4.52%

Broad Street Mall				
Tariff		Proposed		
Monday to Sunday		New Tariff	Variance	%
Stay up to	Tariff			increase
1 hour	£2.10	Remove		
2 hours	£4.10	£4.30	£0.20	4.88%
3 hours	£6.10	£6.40	£0.30	4.92%
4 hours	£8.10	£8.50	£0.40	4.94%
5 hours	£10.10	£10.60	£0.60	4.95%
6 hours	£12.20	£12.80	£0.60	4.92%
24 hours	£16.00	£16.80	£0.80	5.00%
Weekend Tariff		Proposed		
Saturday and Sunday		New Tariff	Variance	%
Stay up to	Tariff			increase
1 hour	£2.10	Remove		
2 hours	£4.10	Remove		
3 hours	£5.10	Remove		
4 hours	£6.10	Remove		
24 hours	£8.10	Remove		
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed	Variance	%
Earlybird (Mon to Fri same day)	£7.00	£8.40	£1.40	20%
Night Rate (Mon to Sun)	£4.10	£3.80	-£0.30	-7.3%
Weekly Ticket (Mon to Fri for 5 consecutive days)	£40.00	£52.50	£12.50	31.3%
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed	Variance	%
Annual season ticket	£1,760.00	£1,850.00	£90.00	5.11%
Quarter season ticket	£510.00	£540.00	£30.00	5.88%
Monthly season ticket	£177.00	£185.00	£8.00	4.52%

Civic B

Tariff Monday to Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£2.10	Remove		
2 hours	£4.10	£4.30	£0.20	4.88%
3 hours	£6.10	£6.40	£0.30	4.92%
4 hours	£8.10	£8.50	£0.40	4.94%
5 hours	£10.10	£10.60	£0.50	4.95%
6 hours	£12.20	£12.80	£0.60	4.92%
24 hours	£16.00	£16.80	£0.80	5.00%
Weekend Tariff Saturday and Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£1.80	Remove		
2 hours	£3.00	Remove		
3 hours	£4.00	Remove		
4 hours	£5.50	Remove		
5 hours	£6.50	Remove		
6 hours	£8.50	Remove		
24 hours	£12.00	Remove		
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Earlybird (Mon to Fri same day), Entering between 6am and 8am, Exiting before 11.59pm)	£5.00	£8.40	£3.40	68%
Night Rate (Mon to Sun)	£4.00	£3.80	-£0.20	-5.00%

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Appendix 2: Proposed Fees and charges Green Park

Tariff	Green Park			
Monday to Sunday 6am to 6pm Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	NEW	£1.10	£1.10	100%
2 hours	NEW	£1.60	£1.60	100%
3 hours	£3.00	£2.10	-£0.90	-30%
6 hours	£6.00	£2.80	-£3.20	-53.3%
12 hours	£12.00	£5.30	-£6.70	--55.8%
24 hours	£12.00	£10.50	-£1.50	-12.5%
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Early arrival between 6pm to 7am for up to 3Hr	£1.50	Remove		
Early arrival between 6pm to 7am for up to 6Hr	£3.00	Remove		
Early arrival between 6pm to 7am for up to 12Hr	£12.00	Remove		
Early arrival between 6pm to 7am for up to 24Hr	£15.00	Remove		
Night Rate (Mon to Sun) 6pm to 6am	NEW	£2.20		
Season Ticket	Green Park			
	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual Business season ticket (0700-1900)	£1,500.00	Remove		
Annual residential season ticket (1700-0800)	£730.00	Remove		
Annual residential season ticket (24/7)	£2,920.00	Remove		
Annual season ticket	New	£607.00		
Quarterly season ticket	New	£157.50		
Monthly season ticket	New	£53.60		

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Appendix 3: Proposed Fees and charges increase for other surface car parks

Cattle Market				
Sunday to Friday Tariff	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Stay up to				
2 hours	£3.30	£3.50	£0.20	6.06%
4 hours	£4.30	£4.50	£0.20	4.65%
24 hours	£11.00	£11.60	£0.60	5.45%
Saturday Tariff	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Stay up to				
1 hour	£1.10	£1.20	£0.10	9.09%
2 hours	£2.10	£2.20	£0.10	4.76%
24 hours	£8.20	£8.60	£0.40	4.88%
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Night Rate (Mon to Fri) – Enter car park after 6.00pm – Exit car park before 8.00am next day	£2.10	£2.20	£0.10	4.76%
Night Rate (Sat to Sun) – Enter car park after 6.00pm – Exit car park before 8.00am next day	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.00%
Season Tickets	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual	£1430.00	£1500.00	£70	4.90%
Quarterly	394.00	£410.00	£16	4.10%
Monthly	£150.00	£157.00	£7.00	4.67%
Remarks	1 Weekday tariff applies on Sunday to Friday 2 Weekend tariff applies on Saturday only			

Chester Street				
Monday to Friday Tariff Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.00%
2 hours	£2.10	£2.20	£0.10	4.76%
3 hours	£3.00	£3.20	£0.20	6.67%
4 hours	£4.00	£4.20	£0.20	5.00%
24 hours	£10.00	£10.50	£0.50	5.00%
Saturday Tariff Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
30 mins	Free	Free	N/A	N/A
1 hour	£0.60	£0.70	£0.10	16.67%
2 hours	£1.20	£1.30	£0.10	8.33%
3 hours	£1.80	£1.90	£0.10	5.56%
4 hours	£2.50	£2.60	£0.10	4.00%
Sunday Tariff Stay between	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Sunday 08:00 to Monday 08:00	Free	Free	N/A	N/A
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Night Rate (Mon to Sat, Sunday till 08:00)	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.0%
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual season ticket	£578.00	£607.00	£29.00	5.02%
Remarks	1 Free Parking from 18.00-08.00 everyday 2 Free Parking on Sunday 3 Free parking on Sat for up to 30 mins			

Weekday Tariff Monday to Friday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
2 hours	£3.50	£3.70	£0.20	5.71%
5 hours	£6.50	£6.80	£0.30	4.62%
24 hours	£11	£11.60	£0.60	5.45%
Weekend Tariff Saturday and Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
3 hours	£3.10	£3.30	£0.20	6.45%
6 hours	£5.10	£5.40	£0.30	5.88%
24 hours	£10	£10.50	£0.50	5.00%
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Night Rate – Monday to Sunday – Enter car park after 6.00pm – Exit car park before 8.00am next day	£2.50	£2.60	£0.10	4.00%

Kings Meadow				
Weekday Tariff Monday to Friday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
2 hours	£3.50	£3.70	£0.20	5.71%
5 hours	£6.50	£6.80	£0.30	4.62%
24 hours	£11	£11.60	£0.60	5.45%
Weekend Tariff Saturday and Sunday Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
3 hours	£3.10	£3.30	£0.20	6.45%
6 hours	£5.50	£5.80	£0.30	5.45%
24 hours	£11	£11.60	£0.60	5.45%
Special Offer	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Night Rate – Monday to Sunday – Enter car park after 6.00pm – Exit car park before 8.00am next day	£2.50	£2.60	£0.10	4.00%

Recreation Road				
Monday to Saturday Tariff 6am to 6pm Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.00%
2 hours	£1.50	£1.60	£0.10	6.70%
3 hours	£2.00	£2.10	£0.10	5.00%
4 hours	£2.70	£2.80	£0.10	3.70%
12 hours	£5.00	£5.30	£0.30	6.00%
24 hours	£10.00	£10.50	£0.50	5.00%
Sunday Tariff Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Sunday 00:00 to Monday 06:00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	N/A
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual season ticket	£578.00	£607.00	£29.00	5.00%
Quarter season ticket	£150.00	£157.50	£7.50	5.00%
Monthly season ticket	£51.00	£53.60	£2.60	5.10%
Remarks	1 Free Parking from 18.00-06.00 everyday 2 Weekday tariff applies on Monday to Saturday 3 Free Parking on Sunday			

Week day Tariff Mon to Fri 6am to 6pm Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.00%
2 hours	£1.50	£1.60	£0.10	6.70%
3 hours	£2.00	£2.10	£0.10	5.00%
4 hours	£2.70	£2.80	£0.10	3.70%
12 hours	£5.00	£5.30	£0.30	6.00%
24 hours	£10.00	£10.50	£0.50	5.00%
Saturday Tariff 6am to 6pm Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
30 Minutes	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	N/A
1 hour	£0.60	£0.70	£0.10	16.60%
2 hours	£1.20	£1.30	£0.10	8.30%
3 hours	£1.80	£1.90	£0.10	5.60%
4 hours	£2.50	£2.60	£0.10	4.00%
12 hours	£4.50	£4.70	£0.20	4.40%
24 hours	£7.00	£7.40	£0.40	5.70%
Sunday Tariff Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Sunday 08:00 to Monday 08:00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	N/A
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual season ticket	£578.00	£607.00	£29	5.00%
Remarks	1 Free Parking from 18.00-06.00 everyday 2 Weekday tariff applies on Monday to Saturday 3 Free Parking on Sunday 4 Free parking on Sat for up to 30 mins			

Thameside Promenade				
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase

Stay up to				
1 hour	£1.00	£1.10	£0.10	10.00%
2 hours	£1.50	£1.60	£0.10	6.70%
3 hours	£2.00	£2.10	£0.10	5.00%
4 hours	£2.70	£2.80	£0.10	3.70%
5 hours	£3.50	£3.70	£0.20	5.70%
Remarks	1 Free Parking from 17.00-09.00 everyday 2 Free Parking on Weekend 3 Max stay of 5H with no return within 2H			

Kensington Road				
Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm Stay up to	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
1 hour	£0.00	£0.00	N/A	N/A
2 hours	£0.00	£0.00	N/A	N/A
3 hours	£1.80	£1.90	£0.10	5.60%
4 hours	£2.50	£2.60	£0.10	4.00%
5 hours	£3.00	£3.20	£0.20	6.70%
Season Ticket	Tariff	Proposed New Tariff	Variance	% increase
Annual season ticket	£150.00	£157.50	£7.50	5.00%
Remarks	1 Free Parking from 17.00-09.00 everyday 2 Max stay of 7H with no return within 2H			

Appendix 4

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: Introduction 2 hour minimum stay in multi storey car parks.

Directorate: DEGNS

Service: Parking Services

Name: Phil Grant

Job Title: Parking Services Manager

Date of assessment: 20/11/25

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By

Scope your proposal

- What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

To increase the minimum stay in multi storey car parks from 1 hour to 2 hours.

- Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Residents, businesses and visitors of the Borough. By encouraging behaviour change all members of society will benefit from cleaner air. Income from the scheme will be invested in schemes to improve the highways network.

- What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

Encourage behaviour change of motorists to elect to consider alternative modes of transport, such as more walking, cycling or public transport. Cleaner air through less pollution from the most polluting vehicles.

- Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Residents of the Borough. Cleaner air.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

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

- Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community)? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.

Air quality affects younger and older people disproportionately, which can cause breathing difficulties, making existing health conditions worse.

- Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.

No

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

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

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

The changes in the service delivery and introduction of an increased minimum stay will apply equally to all residents, visitors and businesses, regardless of disability, age, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

X

Lead Officer

X

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

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

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

Notice of Variation to be published

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
All residents and businesses	The process requires the authority to change the Traffic Regulation	To be confirmed

	<p>Order. The process requires consultation with the public through the publication of notices at all affected sites, publication in local press and web sites. There is a list of statutory consultees which must be contacted.</p>	
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Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups**
- **Is there a negative impact?** No

The changes in the system will be applied equally to all users, regardless of ethnicity.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)**
- **Is there a negative impact?** No

The changes in the system will be applied equally to all users, regardless of sex or gender identity.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**
- **Is there a negative impact?**

No. The changes will not impact Blue Badge holders

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**
- **Is there a negative impact?**

No. The changes in the system will be applied equally to all users, regardless of sexual orientation.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on age**

- **Is there a negative impact?**

No. The changes in the system will be applied equally to all users, regardless of age.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief**
- **Is there a negative impact?**

No. The changes in the system will be applied equally to all users, regardless of religious belief.

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on the Armed Forces community (including reservists and veterans and their families)**
- **Is there a negative impact?**

No. The changes in the system will not impact on the Armed Forces.

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you **MUST** assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

1. **No negative impact identified – Go to sign off**
 - **How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

Monitor complaints and address any unintended consequences through the management of the system.

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer

Policy Committee

15 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Local Authority New Build (LANB) Programme Update inc: Battle Street, Southcote Lane, Dee Park Phase 3 and Whitley Wood Community Centre.
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Partly open to the public and part exempt - see reasons below
Report author	Victoria Higgins, Head of Strategic Housing
Lead Councillor	Cllr Yeo, Lead Councillor for Housing
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Policy Committee approves the updated budget forecasts and associated spend approvals to progress the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Local Authority New Build (LANB) schemes at Battle Street, Southcote Lane, LANB Acquisitions, Dee Park Phase 3 and Whitley Wood Community Centre. The anticipated total cost of each scheme from 2026/27 until 2029/30 and total spend approval required for each scheme is detailed in the Confidential Financial Annex. 2. That Policy Committee approves permission to bid for Homes England grant funding for all appropriate schemes within the LANB programme, with final approvals of the details of the bids delegated to the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing. 3. That Policy Committee approves permission to progress with the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 4 and the Local Authority New Build acquisitions programme. 4. That Policy Committee delegates authority to enter into contract with relevant parties to enable delivery of the schemes in this report to the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing. 5. That Policy Committee notes the latest position on Dee Park and delegates approval to the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve the appointment of the multi-disciplinary teams required to progress Phase 3. 6. That Policy Committee delegates approval to the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into

	<p>collateral warranties as required on all phases of the LANB programme.</p> <p>7. That Policy Committee approves the appropriation of land required for Dee Park Phase 3 and the use of Section 203 Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) as required to enable Battle Street and Dee Park Phase 3 to come forward.</p>
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The annex to this report contains exempt information within the meaning of the following paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

And in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because:

The report contains financial information which, if published, would provide an unreasonable commercial advantage to future contractors and third parties. The public interest is to ensure the Council's investment in the Local Authority New Build programme is protected and not undermined by publication of data which would be of interest to contractors and third parties.

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 On the 20 January 2025, Policy Committee approved progression to onsite construction of the Local Authority New Build (LANB) schemes at Hexham Road, Dwyer Road and Amethyst Lane. This included budget and spend approvals, and permission to bid for grant funding for each scheme. We are pleased to report that these schemes are on site and expected to complete in this financial year.
- 1.2 Approvals were also given by Policy Committee in January 2025 to provide feasibility budgets to progress schemes for Battle Street, Southcote Lane and Dee Park Phase 3, including the new LEAP/LAP. This report provides an update in relation to this work and seeks relevant approvals to progress these schemes to the next phases of development.
- 1.3 Additionally, this report provides an update on LANB delivery to date and the forward look including new sites in feasibility, the new Whitley Wood Community Centre, acquisitions and the fourth round of MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Fund programme. We are seeking relevant approvals to progress these schemes also, including spend and budget approvals and permission to bid for Homes England grant funding.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy 2020-2025 set out a commitment to deliver c.200 local authority new build homes, in addition to 172 new homes and acquisitions already completed. This was subsequently uplifted to 400 units in total. Through our Local Authority New Build programme, the Council delivered 421 units by December 2025, including new homes at Wensley Road (46 units) and our acquisitions programme.
- 2.2 Our LANB pipeline for new council-owned homes will deliver another 362 units by 2029 (excluding acquisitions):

Site	Number of new homes	Current stage	Anticipated completion date
Hexham Road	42	In development	Q2 2026/27
Amethyst Lane	17	In development	Q2 2026/27
Dwyer Road	30	In development	Q4 2026/27
Battle Street	62	In development	Q2 2028/29
Phase 4 small sites	7	In development	2028/29
Southcote Lane	14	Feasibility	2028/29
Dee Park Phase 3 (subject to planning approval)	190	Feasibility	2028/29
TOTAL	362	-	-

- 2.3 In addition, the Council has an active acquisitions programme which is expected to deliver at least another 37 units over the next four years. This includes our continued participation in MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.
- 2.4 Officers are also progressing plans to continue the LANB programme, including the development and regeneration of council stock in the borough. A report updating on the proposals, the impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and options for delivery of this longer-term pipeline will be brought back to Committee in due course.
- 2.5 Funding for the current schemes is made up of a combination of HRA borrowing, Right to Buy receipts, S106 receipts and Homes England grant. Following announcements regarding Homes England grant funding beyond 2026, we have assumed grant funding availability in line with our understanding of expected rates.

3 The Proposal

Battle Street

- 3.1 Our new build scheme at Battle Street will see the redevelopment of the former Central Pool site to provide 62 new homes (20 x general needs homes, 13 x supported living flats and 29 sheltered flats), plus an older person's day opportunities service.

- 3.2 We have procured a contractor to undertake the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA), and we are currently in the final stages of this process, with a detailed design and full cost plan being finalised. We are working towards start on site in late summer 2026.
- 3.3 The development area is subject to a range of private rights, including rights of light. These rights have the potential to restrict or delay the delivery of the scheme if not appropriately addressed. The Council will use Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) to resolve private rights where required. This includes the payment of compensation under Section 204 of the HPA as appropriate. This is set out in greater detail in Section 9: Legal Implications.
- 3.4 We are therefore seeking approval to use Section 203 Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) as required to enable Battle Street to come forward.

Southcote Lane

- 3.5 Our LANB scheme at Southcote Lane will redevelop the former Southcote Library site to provide 14 new council-owned homes (indicatively, 1 x one bedroom wheelchair accessible flat, 10 x two-bedroom flats and 3 x three-bedroom flats).
- 3.6 The scheme is currently at feasibility stage, and we are working with our multi-disciplinary team to progress RIBA stages 0-3 and a pre-application planning submission. We will carry out further stakeholder and community engagement as our plans develop for this site.

Dee Park Phase 3 and LEAP/LAP

- 3.7 Phases 1 and 2 of the Dee Park Regeneration have delivered 515 new homes, including 60 self-contained extra care apartments, a new community centre and a new shop. The school refurbishment works have also been completed.
- 3.8 We have procured a contractor to deliver the new Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and Local Area for Play (LAP) in front of the new community centre. Planning approval for this scheme was granted in June 2025, and we are anticipating a start on site to deliver the scheme in autumn 2026.
- 3.9 Phase 3 is expected to deliver 190 new homes with a mix of unit sizes, including larger sized family homes. A further update on next steps will be provided once planning permission has been obtained.
- 3.10 To enable the scheme to proceed, sections of the land earmarked for Dee Park Phase 3 will need to be appropriated. The land within Phase 3 is also subject to a range of private rights, including rights of way, easements, access rights, and potential rights to light. These rights have the potential to restrict or delay the scheme if not appropriately addressed.
- 3.11 The Council will use Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) to resolve private rights where required. This includes the payment of compensation under Section 204 of the HPA as appropriate. This is set out in greater detail in Section 9: Legal Implications.

3.12 We are therefore seeking approval to proceed with the appropriation of land required for Phase 3 and to use Section 203 Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) as required to enable Phase 3 to come forward.

Whitley Wood Community Centre

3.13 The Whitley Wood Community Centre located at the junction of Swallowfield Drive and Copenhagen Close reached the end of its design life due to significant structural issues and was closed in March 2024. A temporary modular centre has been provided at Lexington Grove since March 2024 to ensure continuity of service for residents.

3.14 We have considered the site as a location for a new permanent community centre. However, it is too small for re-provision. Several options are therefore currently being explored for the redevelopment of the original site. A further report will be provided to set out the proposed plans as work progresses.

3.15 A study to assess the options for delivering a new permanent community centre in Whitley Wood has been undertaken. Five potential sites within the Swallowfield estate were considered for suitability to accommodate the new centre. Each site has been evaluated against a range of criteria including accessibility, development potential, community and integration.

3.16 Following detailed evaluation, a preferred site has been identified due to its strategic location and development potential. The site is held within the HRA and therefore any proposed scheme must be financially viable within the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

3.17 Officers are ready to commence the procurement process to appoint a contractor to work towards the submission of a planning application for the preferred site. A paper will be presented to Policy Committee in due course to provide further updates about this scheme, including the feasibility of broadening the scope of the scheme to deliver additional assets. Further community consultation and stakeholder engagement will be carried out as plans progress.

Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Acquisitions

3.18 The following table summarises the Council’s involvement with previous LAHF rounds:

LAHF Round	No. of homes	Purpose	Complete By
1	15	Move on and settled accommodation for Afghan and Ukrainian families.	March 2024
2	6	Afghan resettlement and easing homelessness pressures.	March 2024
3	10	Temporary accommodation and resettlement; 4+ bedrooms included.	March 2026
3+	4	Four additional units agreed. Delivery extended to July 2026.	July 2026

3.19 We are seeking permission from Policy Committee to continue with our Local Authority Housing Fund delivery for Round 4 as follows:

LAHF Round	No. of homes	Funding	Expected completion	Latest position
4	21	Grant funding, match funded by HRA borrowing and S106 funds.	2029/30	<p>Following successful delivery of Rounds 1 -3 of LAHF, we have been allocated 21 units under Round 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 homes for temporary accommodation. • 10 homes for resettlement (five to be 4+ bedrooms). <p>Delivery is split over four years to 2029/30.</p>

3.20 We are seeking permission from Policy Committee to progress with the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4.

Feasibility

New Build

3.21 In November 2022, Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee agreed spend approval to continue the delivery of Phase 4 of the LANB programme at £29.6m for up to 87 new homes. Much of this delivery has now been completed or is in progress, including our LANB schemes at Dwyer Road and Amethyst Lane.

3.22 A number of small sites have been identified for feasibility work. Dates for planning submissions and approvals, starts on site and completions will be set as these schemes progress. We will also be carrying out further community and stakeholder consultation in due course for these schemes.

3.23 Officers are also currently carrying out initial feasibility and viability studies in relation to a number of other potential sites. Progress in relation to these sites will be reported back to Committee in due course if they are deemed suitable for the LANB programme.

Acquisitions

3.24 In addition to building new homes, we have maintained a programme of property acquisitions as part of the LANB programme. Our biggest acquisition scheme to date has been at Watchman's Place, which completed in August 2025 and provides 16 new council-owned homes.

3.25 Over the next four years, we plan to acquire an additional four properties per year to add to our existing HRA stock under Phase 4 of the LANB programme. We are therefore

seeking permission from Policy Committee to continue with the LANB acquisitions programme.

- 3.26 Additionally, we will seek to explore all suitable acquisition opportunities which present in the borough, including S106 units and new opportunities arising out of recent government announcements. These include bidding for low-interest PWLB loans to acquire Section 106 homes if a suitable scheme is identified. Up to 10% of the £2.5bn in funding for loans available over four years (2026-2030) will be available to support the delivery of social and affordable homes via this route. There is also now the ability to add Right to Buy receipts to purchase S106 units.

HRA Business Plan 2026/27 Budget & Spend Approval forecast

- 3.27 Please refer to Section 10: Financial Implications and the Confidential Financial Annex.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025 to 2028. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading.
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success.
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our 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 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first.
- Building on strong foundations.
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities.
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents.
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading.

- 4.3 By supporting the delivery of new sustainable, affordable council-owned homes in Reading, this proposal will support these priorities and principles.

5 Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 On the 26 of February 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to act to accelerate a carbon neutral Reading to 2030. Reading Climate Change Partnership's Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and the new RBC corporate Carbon Plan 2020-25 was adopted in November 2020. The Council will therefore seek to ensure the scheme delivers on this commitment by developing designs that maximise all sustainability options.

- 5.2 The Council's existing approach for Local Authority New Build homes is to seek to ensure that where possible schemes are built to Passivhaus principles. The application of a fabric first approach of Passivhaus reduces greenhouse gas emissions and delivers significant long-term energy savings to the tenants. The low running costs and higher quality building mean that costs are significantly reduced over the life of the building for the occupiers.

- 5.3 The use of sustainable materials plays an important role in the design. This, combined with the high quality of building physics achieved through insulation, thermal bridge-free

design and airtightness, ensures that the sustainable benefits of Passivhaus principles will last.

- 5.4 In addition to the above, the Council is committed to delivering new homes that offer a sustainable location for residents in terms of access to employment, schools, and other local services via good public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks. While seeking to encourage and support sustainable travel, where possible our schemes will also provide charging points for electric vehicles.

6 Community Engagement

- 6.1 Individual schemes will have their own community consultation and engagement plan, which will support the statutory consultation required as part of the planning process.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8 Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 There are none.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council has powers under Sections 9 and 17 of the Housing Act 1985 to provide housing accommodation and to acquire land and housing for the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985.

- 9.2 Proposals to deliver new council homes would need to have planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any other necessary consents.

- 9.3 This report recommends and seeks approval to progress the developments / redevelopments detailed above at paragraphs 2 to 9. There are various statutory and constitutional obligations the Council must observe in order to proceed. These are as follows:

9.3.1 Under Section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 a Local Authority proposing to develop/redevelop land which is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held has power to (and must) appropriate the land for planning purposes.

9.3.2 Under Section 122(2) and (2A) of the Act where the proposed redevelopment affects land which is wholly or partly allotment or common land of more than 250 square yards or open space land the authority must advertise the intention to appropriate the land for 2 consecutive weeks in a local newspaper before formal appropriation of the land takes place.

9.3.3 Appropriation under S122 is an administrative process where the authority documents that the land is no longer required for its original purpose and is to be formally appropriated. Providing the land in question is not allotment land, common land, open space or land held within the HRA, Section 122 is engaged and may be relied on and the land will be effectively appropriated.

- 9.3.4 Appropriation away from Housing Revenue Account use is not permitted without the Secretary of State's prior approval. This is the case even where the authority believes the housing purpose is exhausted or the dwelling is derelict.
- 9.3.5 Where the proposed redevelopment affects land which is held under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (i.e. currently held within HRA) the authority must first obtain the Secretary of State's prior approval by submitting an application to the Secretary of State under Section 19 of that Act. Having obtained the Secretary of State's consent the land (or housing) must then be appropriated under s122 of the 1972 Act.
- 9.3.6 Once land has been appropriated for planning purposes under Section 122 of the 1972 Act, providing it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest to do so, the Council may rely on Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override any private rights there may be which would otherwise prohibit or impede the proposed development/redevelopment. Section 203 provides a statutory power to override easements, rights of way, rights of light etc where land held for planning purposes is to be developed/redeveloped, planning permission has been obtained for the proposed development, and the Council could exercise its compulsory purchase powers.
- 9.3.7 The general principal which applies to compulsory purchase, i.e. that there must be a demonstrable compelling reason and it must also be in the public interest in order to justify depriving a property owner of their property, also applies when exercising Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- 9.3.8 Just as the power to exercise compulsory purchase should be a last resort so too should engaging s203. Efforts should be made to reach agreement by negotiation with private owners in both instances.
- 9.3.9 Where it is justified to do so Section 203 of the 2016 Act can be relied on to interfere with private owners rights and, under Section 204 of the Act, such owners would be entitled to compensation from the Council on the same basis as would apply if the interference had occurred through compulsory acquisition.
- 9.4 Works contracts worth £5,193,000 (Works Threshold) or more must be advertised via the UK's central e-notification Find a Tender Service and then tendered or be procured via a Reading Borough Council approved framework agreement/Dynamic Purchasing System which itself has already been advertised in Find a Tender and undergone a tender process. Where the works contracts proposed in this report are procured separately, resulting in classification of some of these as below-threshold contracts, the following would apply. Under the Procurement Act 2023 local authorities procuring below-threshold works contracts, under £5,193,000, have more flexibility in respect to the procurement process. While there is no requirement to advertise the tender, the authority must ensure fairness, value for money, and transparency. It must consider barriers to participation for small and medium sized providers. The authority can choose to advertise the tender, and when it chooses to do so, a Below-Threshold Tender Notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform (Find a Tender). The contracts can be awarded through the process of open competition or direct awards, and the contract details must be published.
- 9.5 These contracts must be awarded in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules.
- 9.6 In accordance with all of the above, Committee approval is sought to authorise officers to:

- 9.6.1 Submit an application under Section 19 of the Housing Act 1985 to apply for the Secretary of State's consent to appropriate land currently within the Housing Revenue Account to enable the development/redevelopments proposed in this report;
 - 9.6.2 Appropriate the required land for planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;
 - 9.6.3 Where there are private rights which would otherwise impede or prohibit the proposed development/redevelopments to: (a) negotiate terms to seek to reach agreement with the owners and, if needs be, where doing so is in the public interest, to exercise the powers available under s203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to appropriate rights in relation to such private rights as there may be; and (b) engage the compensation provisions under Section 204 of that Act; and
 - 9.6.4 Enter into appropriate Works contracts in the manner described at paragraphs 13.4 and 13.5 above of this report.
- 9.7 Any legal encumbrances for sites will need to be identified at an early stage and any issues that could impede or prevent development be highlighted and where possible resolved as each individual site is progressed.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The case for capital investment into each individual site will examine the impact on the HRA 30-year Business Plan to ensure the overall programme will achieve a neutral or positive impact on the financial performance of the HRA. In the event that capital expenditure does not ultimately lead to the creation of a capital asset, then costs incurred will fall to revenue, where they are currently unbudgeted.
- 10.2 All of the schemes included within the LANB programme will only progress to the construction stage if they continue to pass the financial viability tests. The viability position for schemes will be reviewed again once there is more certainty on the scheme costs and Homes England grant availability.
- 10.3 The schemes identified in this report have been included within the 2026/27 refresh of the HRA 30 Year Business Plan, agreed by members in February 2026 and updated during April 2026. Please refer to the Confidential Finance Annex for further details.

11 Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1 Not applicable

12 Background Papers

- 12.1 There are none.

References

LANB previous reports:

- 1. Policy Committee Report July 2015.
- 2. HNL report November 2015.

3. Policy Committee Report July 2017.
4. HNL report June 2021.
5. HNL report November 2022.
6. LANB Update (Wensley Phase One and Two) November 2024.
7. LANB Update report January 2025.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Policy Committee

16 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Reading Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability SEND Reform Plan
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Lara Patel, Executive Director Children’s Service
Report author	Brian Grady, Director of Education
Lead Councillor	Rachel Eden, Lead Councillor Public Health and Education
Council priority	Safeguard & support the health & wellbeing of Reading's adults & children
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Policy Committee review the proposed Local Area SEND Reform Plan for Reading. 2. That Policy Committee approve the Plan, subject to HM Government funding allocations as proposed being made available. 3. That Policy Committee delegate sign off of the Plan to the specified officers in line with published guidance, namely the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Executive Director of Children’s Services.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. On Monday 23 February HM Government published wide ranging reforms for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability in its [SEND reform consultation Putting Children and Young People First](#).
- 1.2. Through the proposals set out in the SEND reforms, the Government aims to: provide children with SEND with a broader curriculum, boost outcomes for the most disadvantaged, and transform support to create a more inclusive system for those with SEND.
- 1.3. The reforms include a roadmap to access the financial support being made available to Local Authorities for both transformation and for the High Needs Block, including access to a Sustainability Grant equating to 90% of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit as of end of financial year 2025/26.
- 1.4. The SEND Reform Plan must be a partnership plan. Plans need to be signed off by both the NHS ICB and Council and delivered to the DfE by 19 June for money to be released to Local Authorities in the autumn term.
- 1.5. The SEND reform proposals align strongly with how we work in Reading and will help us fulfil our ambition in Reading for an even more inclusive education system, where every child has a school place in their neighbourhood that meets their needs, they

achieve well at school and have better outcomes, and to achieve a balanced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block budget.

- 1.6. Officers have worked with Health partners, parents and carers, children and young people and school leaders to deliver a shared vision and response to the proposals, and to deliver a partnership SEND Reform Plan by the deadline of 19 June 2026. This plan is attached for Policy Committee review and consideration as Appendix 1.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. HM Government have commissioned each local area partnership to develop and submit a Local SEND reform plan by 19 June 2026, underpinned by a Local Partnership Maturity Assessment. The Plan is required to set out how the local area partnership (convened by Reading Borough Council and including schools, NHS integrated Care Board and NHS providers, and children and families) will improve and further strengthen our local SEND system, with a focus on stronger inclusive practice and early intervention, and ensuring that the conditions underpinning effective long-term outcomes for children with SEND are in place.
- 2.2. All local authorities with a SEND deficit will be eligible in 2026–27 to receive a High Needs Stability Grant covering 90% of their High Needs related DSG deficit accrued up to the end of 2025–26. This grant will only be paid once each local authority has secured approval from HM Government of the local area's SEND reform plan. Payments will be made from Autumn 2026 for local authorities whose local area plans are approved in the first round of assessment. For deficits that arise in 2026–27 and 2027–28, HM Government have stated they will take an "appropriate and proportionate approach, though it will not be unlimited". Future support will take into account LAs' successful delivery of their approved Local SEND Reform Plan, including appropriate use of investment to establish an Experts at Hand offer.
- 2.3. Where a local authority's Plan does not meet the threshold for approval, they will be required to revise and improve their Plan, with continued support from advisers, to ensure they meet the required standard. Revised Plans meet the required approval threshold, will receive payments in Spring 2027, within the 2026-27 financial year. Local authorities will not receive any payments until their Local SEND Reform Plan has been approved.
- 2.4. HM Government SEND reform proposals are focused on building the most inclusive education system. The reform proposals cite international jurisdictions of education in their examples and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To achieve this more inclusive education system, HM Government propose to:
 - strengthen the law to ensure evidence-based support for children and young people is provided early in mainstream settings so they can stay in education, achieve and thrive alongside their peers;
 - integrate support across health, care, and family services, ensuring children's needs are identified and addressed as soon as they emerge; and
 - increase upfront investment so support is readily available for classes and communities of children, rather than locked behind lengthy and bureaucratic individual assessment processes.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. Reading's Draft Reform Plan is attached at Appendix 1. The proposed actions aim to deliver a whole-system transformation. Delivery of the Plan will be supported through joint partnership governance with the NHS ICB, schools, parents and carers, shared data infrastructure and ongoing partnership evaluation, ensuring that both implementation and impact are continuously monitored and refined.

3.2. The Plan is structured around four key priorities as set out in the below diagram:

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production– putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

3.3. Over the three year period of the Plan, proposed actions will, subject to funding, result in:

- Increased capacity within mainstream settings to meet a wider range of children’s needs.
- Reduced reliance on statutory assessment and specialist placements.
- More consistent inclusive practice across the education system.
- Stronger alignment between education, health and care services.
- Reduce costs of placements, and in particular reduce the number of children attending Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools.
- Support improved outcomes for children.

3.4. **Early Intervention – Experts at Hand (EAH) Model.** Aligned to the Government model set out above of strengthening inclusion across education settings, the Reading Local Area Plan includes an expansion of our current advisory support offer to create a multi-disciplinary Experts at Hand (EAH) Offer. Experts at Hand is a core pillar of the reforms, with the intention that local areas receive investment to secure more timely access to Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, behaviour and emotional health support.

3.5. This multi-disciplinary team will provide direct delivery of specialist support into mainstream and specialist school as well as FE settings, including out-of-area providers. The proposals set out in the attached Plan aim to ensure children’s needs are met as early as possible, so that more children can attend a mainstream school.

3.6. The Expert at Hand model extends across the entire children’s system, as is illustrated in the diagram below:



3.7. The local area partnership proposes to build capacity through this model, which shifts the focus from provision-led responses to evidence-informed, partnership-delivered early intervention. Rather than operating as a standalone service, Experts at Hand is a system enabler, strengthening the ability of mainstream, specialist and post-16 settings to meet need earlier and more effectively. This is achieved through coordinated multi-disciplinary input, including Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, behaviour support and wider emotional health services.

3.8. **Strengthening Mainstream Inclusion**

3.9. Aligned to the Plan priority of mainstream inclusion as the default, we are seeking to build on the already inclusive education system we have in Reading. We will achieve this through investment in workforce development and inclusive practice and the expansion of our SEND advisory behavioural and outreach support offer as part of our Experts at Hand approach

3.10. Strengthening mainstream inclusion will result in an increased proportion of children with SEND supported in mainstream schools, and improved attendance, engagement and outcomes for children with SEND.

3.11. **Sufficiency and Local Provision**

3.12. Aligned to the Plan focus on local capacity and reduced reliance on independent provision, we are continuing to deliver our ambitious school place expansion programme of investment in Additionally Resourced Provision and more specialist places, with the delivery of 120 new special school places by 2027/28 and a further 120-200 places by 2030, co located on mainstream school campuses to create truly inclusive education campuses for Reading children.

- 3.13. Our proposals also include plans to continue expansion of Additionally Resourced Provision, particularly in secondary and Further Education settings and the development of a clear continuum of provision able to meet the full range of children's needs.
- 3.14. Actions to develop sufficiency will see a reduction in Independent and Non-Maintained Special School placements and out-of-area costs,
- 3.15. **Data, Commissioning and Financial Sustainability**
- 3.16. The Partnership is embedding data dashboards and shared metrics to track inclusion, early identification, exclusions, attendance and escalation, using screening tools and outcome data to inform early intervention and provision planning and drawing on national programmes, including the NHS-led Partnerships for inclusion of neurodiversity in schools (PINS) programme to embed inclusive practice across the system.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for 2025/28. These priorities are:
 - Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our 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. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
 - Putting residents first
 - Building on strong foundations
 - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
 - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
 - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 4.3. Proposals set out in the reforms will help the Council achieve its objectives to safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children, promote more equal communities in Reading and secure Reading's economic and cultural success

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. Proposals set out in our reform plan aim to enable more children to access a local school place, reducing the need for school transport.
- 5.2. Our plans for new school places focus on developing currently existing spare capacity in our school estate, therefore promoting sustainable building use and reducing carbon impact associated with new build.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Headteachers, parents and health partners are being engaged through weekly borough wide meetings and local school cluster sessions to inform proposals. Parents are being engaged through Reading Families Forum. Education Partnership Board have met twice to consider and endorse plan proposals.
- 6.2. Further community engagement will be undertaken to publicise the transformational nature of the local area reform plan to communicate the benefits for local children and families in July, before the end of term. Where significant changes are being made for

children and families or where significant changes are being made to provision, formal consultation will be undertaken as appropriate.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Plan proposals are anticipated to make a positive impact for children with disabilities.
- 7.2. There are a range of substantive changes in the proposals, including potentially to school organisation arrangements, which will require an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. Substantive changes to school organisation may lead to a risk of staffing implications, including potential redeployment requirements and redundancy impacts. RBC HR team are assessing options for potential impacts which will inform future reports brought to relevant Committees.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. Full legal assessment of proposals will need to be considered as the SEND reform proposals consultation concludes and legislation is prepared.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. Funding

- 10.2. The White Paper outlines £4bn of what is badged as new revenue funding over the next 3 years. This is not broken down to individual Local Authority level. Funding will come through as a separate grant for 26/27 and then merge into the school's formula in 27/28 with the majority of funding following relevant deprivation measures.
- 10.3. Of the total investment available, the White Paper identifies £1.6 billion to be allocated to early year's, school and post-16 settings, to run targeted and small group interventions at the earliest signs of children having additional needs.
- 10.4. The total investment also includes £1.8 billion for 'Experts at Hand':
 - every council working with Integrated Care Boards and health board will commission local professionals – educational psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and more – so they are routinely available in every area, whether or not children have an EHCP
 - special and alternative provision schools to provide expert training, direct interventions with children and short-term placements in their schools
 - once rolled out an average secondary school will receive over 160 days – around an additional full school year - worth of dedicated specialist time every year
- 10.5. Reading Borough Council have received confirmation of the proposed 26/27 and estimated 27/28 and 28/29 investment for Experts at Hand. The investment allows for up to 10% of the investment to be allocated to management of Experts At Hand (EAH) and a further 10% for capacity to lead reforms locally.

	26/27 proposed	27/28 estimated	28/29 estimated
Reading Total	£1,291,084	£2,255,571	£2,556,314

80% for EAH	£1,032,867	£1,804,457	£2,045,051
10% Transformation	£129,108	£225,557	£255,631
10% EAH	£129,108	£225,557	£255,631

- 10.6. £200 million to fund a dedicated SEND outreach and support offer in every Best Start Family Hub.
- 10.7. £200 million to ensure all local authorities can transform how they operate in line with our reforms while maintaining current SEND services
- 10.8. £200 million to train every teacher to be a teacher of children with SEND
- 10.9. In addition, there is £3.7 billion of capital funding to create 60,000 new places for children with SEND, including the 10,000 places already delivered.

10.10. Other Changes

- 10.11. Over time, there is also a plan to re-balance funding, directing more funding into core budgets for schools and colleges, while maintaining strong support for those with the most complex needs. This will require a transfer of funding from the High Needs Block to the Schools Block of the DSG. This is not additional funding, but it will give schools greater certainty of funding. At the moment, this money is currently allocated to education settings through EHCP 'top-ups', but in future, more of it will go straight into schools' and colleges' core budgets so they can respond to children and young people's needs more quickly and flexibly.
- 10.12. From 2027, the DfE will consider transitional arrangements that local areas can take to further increase the amount of funding that mainstream schools receive to provide SEND support directly, in advance of statutory changes. The aim is to improve inclusive provision by putting more funding for SEND into schools' and colleges' core budgets – with settings meeting a greater proportion of SEND costs out of their budgets and to ensure top-up funding is only for higher cost provision.

Independent Special Schools will come under a new regulatory regime; changing the law on independent special schools to ensure that children get suitable high-quality placements and that local authorities pay a reasonable price for them.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. The reform changes in total will be rolled out between 2026 and 20230, with the emphasis on investment in the first years before the introduction of legislation.

12. Background Papers

HM Government Local SEND Reform Plan – guidance and template
HM Government Local SEND Reform Quality Assessment Framework

Appendices

1. Draft Reading Local Area SEND Reform Plan submission

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Annex A: Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

Name of Local Authority:

Name of Integrated Care Board:



Signatories

Role	Name	Signature	Email contact	Date
RBC Chief Executive	Yates, Jackie		Jackie.Yates@reading.gov.uk	
ICB Chief Executive	Nick Broughton			
RBC Director of Children's Services	Lara Patel		Lara.Patel@reading.gov.uk	
RBC Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer)	Darren Carter		Darren.Carter@reading.gov.uk	
ICB SRO Equivalent				

Executive Summary

A brief summary of your local system 'change story' – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics.

Please structure your 'change story' using the following aims:

- *Build a 0-25 system where Children and Young People (CYP) receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships*
- *Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need*
- *Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system*
- *Stabilise finances and improve value for money*


Word limit 500: 499 words.

Reading's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reform journey is rooted in a strong partnership commitment to belonging, inclusion and shared responsibility. The local area partnership has established weekly partnership meetings to support co-production of the Local Area reform plan in Reading. This work is informed by the SEND Reform Plan maturity assessment, our May 2026 SEF and DfE adviser support. The system has taken an honest, evidence-led view of current strengths and weaknesses.

The local area benefits from committed practitioners, engaged schools and strong partnership working. However, these strengths coexist with challenges: fragmented access to support, variable inclusive practice, workforce fragility, inconsistent experiences for families, and sustained financial pressure driven by rising demand and reliance on specialist provision.

Over the next three years, Reading will embed a coherent 0–25 SEND system in which more children and young people have their needs met successfully in inclusive local settings. The ambition is a system where children belong locally, with stable transitions, and escalation to statutory processes becomes the exception rather than the default.

Partnership feedback highlighted the need to simplify pathways, clarify accountability and strengthen ownership across education, health, social care and the voluntary sector.



SEND reform will be delivered in alignment with Families First and Best Start in Life, using family hubs and place-based working to connect services around families. Improving workforce capacity and capability is a central reform lever. While practice quality is strong in parts of the system, it is not yet equitable or sustainable.

Over the next three years the partnership will implement a Experts at Hand offer, providing coordinated multi-agency support to early years, schools and further education providers. Experts at Hand will strengthen mainstream Inclusion, improve timely access to education and health expertise, and reduce demand across the system. Delivery will be underpinned by shared expectations and workforce development. This will build on and incorporate the existing work of Reading's multi-disciplinary SEND advisory service (RISE), which will continue to be funded via the Schools Block transfer to the High Needs Block.

Confidence and readiness of children, families and stakeholders will be strengthened by developing our approach to parental and professional confidence. Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and Children and Young People's (CYPs) voice will shape design, delivery and assurance. Communication about what support is available, when it can be accessed and how pathways work will improve.

Progress will be evidenced through improved attendance, stable placements and smoother transitions, and qualitative feedback from families, CYPs and schools that support is felt earlier and more consistently.

Reading faces sustained financial pressure from EHCP growth, increasing complexity and high-cost placements. Reform therefore shifts investment upstream, strengthening universal and targeted support, reducing reliance on independent and out of area provision, and expanding inclusive mainstream capacity. Success will be demonstrated through slowed EHCP growth, stabilised placement patterns, improved unit costs, better value for money, and closer alignment between investment, outcomes and lived experience for children and families. Together, these reforms create a confident, and sustainable SEND system for Reading.

Reading's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reform journey is rooted in a strong partnership commitment to belonging, inclusion and shared responsibility. The local area partnership has established a weekly partnership meeting structure that has allowed the whole system to engage in the co-production of the Local Area reform plan in Reading. This work has been informed by the Local SEND Reform Plan maturity assessment and supported by our DfE adviser. The system has taken an honest, evidenced view of current strengths and weaknesses.

The local area benefits from committed practitioners, engaged schools, improving sufficiency planning and an established culture of partnership working. However, these strengths coexist with persistent challenges: fragmented access to support, variable inclusive practice, workforce fragility, inconsistent experiences for families, and sustained financial pressure driven by rising demand and reliance on specialist provision.

Over the next three years, Reading will embed a coherent 0–25 SEND system in which more children and young people have their needs met successfully in inclusive local settings. The ambition is a system where children belong in their communities, transitions are stable, and escalation to statutory processes becomes the exception rather than the default.

Partnership feedback highlighted the need to simplify pathways, clarify accountability and strengthen collective ownership across education, health, social care and the voluntary sector.

SEND reform will be delivered in alignment with Families First and Best Start in Life, using family hubs and placebased working to connect early help, education and specialist expertise around children and families. Improving workforce capacity and capability is a central reform lever. While practice quality is strong in parts of the system, it is not yet equitable or sustainable.

Over the next three years the partnership will implement a fully-fledged Experts at Hand offer, providing planned, relational, multiagency support to early years, schools and further education providers. Experts at Hand will strengthen mainstream inclusion, improve timely access to education and health expertise, and reduce demand across the system. Delivery will be underpinned by shared expectations for inclusive practice, targeted workforce development. This will build on the existing work of Reading's Reading Inclusion Support in Education (RISE) team, which is Reading's existing multi-disciplinary SEND advisory service providing existing support across mainstream schools in line with the vision of the SEND reforms. The RISE Team is currently funded via schools forum agreement for a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (HNB), which we hope to keep in place until 2029. The RISE Team will be incorporated into Experts at Hand, alongside the additional workforce provided through the Experts at Hand funding.

Confidence and readiness of children, families and stakeholders will be strengthened by developing our approach to parental and professional confidence which is a core enabler across Readings reform plan. Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and Children and Young People's (CYPs) voice will shape design, delivery and assurance. Communication about what support is available, when it can be accessed and how pathways work will improve.

Progress will be evidenced through improved attendance, reduced placement instability, smoother transitions, and qualitative feedback from families and schools that support is felt earlier and more consistently.

Financially, Reading faces sustained pressure from growth in Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), increasing complexity and highcost placements. Without system change, demand and expenditure are forecast to continue rising. Reform therefore shifts investment upstream, strengthening universal and targeted support, reducing reliance on independent and out of area provision, and expanding inclusive mainstream capacity. Success will be demonstrated through slowed EHCP growth, stabilised placement patterns, improved unit costs, better value for money, and closer alignment between investment, outcomes

Section 1 – Vision and Goals

1. What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?

Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

- Outcomes for children
- Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
- Management of finances to secure value for money

Wordcount limit 250, current 284

The Reading local area partnership aims to create a high-performing, inclusive 0–25 SEND system that enables children and young people to thrive in their local communities, reduces reliance on statutory intervention, and delivers sustainable value for money. Through Reading’s SEND and Inclusion strategy the partnership aligns the priorities with the SEND reform, Families First and the Best Start in Life programme ensuring a connected approach in the way the system will access resources. This reflects the shared ambition developed through recent system engagement and illustrates how reform programmes interconnect to improve outcomes and lived experience for children, young people and families.

Our core goals are to:

Through strategic alignment and system leadership, the partnership will act as one joined-up system, with shared priorities, clear roles, and joint decision-making, reducing duplication and fragmentation.

Data, insight and impact will underpin improvement, bringing together shared performance information, quality assurance and lived experience to understand what is working, for whom and why, and to drive accountability and learning.

Co-production, workforce development and culture change will be a golden thread across delivery. Children, young people and families will shape design, implementation and review, supported by a confident workforce using shared language, inclusive behaviours and consistent practice models across education, health and care.

Equity and consistency across schools and settings will ensure a shared understanding of inclusion and timely access to the right support. Families will experience smooth and clearly shaped pathways, without the need to navigate multiple systems underpinned by our ‘tell it once’ approach.

Joint commissioning will align Best Start in Life, Families First and SEND reform, with partners sharing accountability for child-centred practice, value for money and outcomes. This approach supports confidence, sustainability and system delivery.

The Reading local area partnership aims to create a highperforming, inclusive 0–25 SEND system that enables children and young people to thrive in their local communities, reduces reliance on statutory intervention, and delivers sustainable value for money. Through Reading’s SEND and Inclusion strategy the partnership aligns the priorities with the SEND reform, Families First and the Best Start in Life programme ensuring a connected approach in the way the system will access resources. This reflects the shared ambition developed through recent system engagement and illustrates how reform programmes interconnect to improve outcomes and lived experience for children, young people and families.

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Joint commissioning will align Best Start in Life, Families First and SEND reform, with partners sharing accountability for childcentred practice, value for money and outcomes. This approach supports confidence, sustainability and system delivery.

Section 2 – Strategy

2. Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.



In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, making reference to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production– putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
<p>Building blocks One Strengthening inclusion across education settings</p> <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Capital investment strategy across Early Years (EY), mainstream and Further Education (FE)</i> - <i>Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) Alternative Resource Provisions (ARPs)</i> - <i>Strong relationship across the SEND partnership</i> - <i>LA workforce is well-trained and regularly kept up to date with latest developments.</i> - <i>Strategic co-production with parent carer forum</i> - <i>Families First Programme</i> - <i>Best Start in Life</i> - <i>Arrival of SEND Reforms</i> - <i>Strengthened multi-disciplinary team working in school clinics</i> - <i>Mainstream Inclusion Fund + EYs and Post 16 grant funding</i> - <i>Improved legislation to underpin Mainstream responsibilities</i> 	<p>Working well</p> <p>Reading has a well-established foundation for inclusive practice across its education system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A shared, research-informed approach to inclusion is embedded through the Education Partnership Board, with aligned values, training and school-to-school collaboration. ● Strong inclusive practice is evident across many schools, as identified through Ofsted, School Effectiveness and PINS programme reviews. ● Reading Inclusion and Support for Education (RISE) has strengthened workforce capability through targeted training and follow-up support, improving classroom adaptations and access for pupils with SEND. ● Robust termly Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) planning meetings (co-led by Educational Psychology and RISE) support early identification and coordinated intervention across all schools. ● A mature model of MLD and SLD ARPs in primary settings supports mainstream inclusion, with secondary ARPs developing. ● Quality assurance demonstrates consistently strong practice across ARPs. ● A whole-system approach to emotional health and wellbeing is in place, including MHSTs and additional support commissioned through the voluntary and community sector. ● Culturally humble and anti-racist approaches are outlined in documents and all staff are provided training in this area. ● The SEND team has a developing robust, professional and collaborative relationship with the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS), particularly through the SEND resolutions lead. Where parents permit, IASS supports families to set out their concerns to the SEND team, enabling meaningful discussion. This is resulting in more rapid resolution and positive outcomes for families without the need for complex, stressful and time-consuming legal processes. <p>What needs to change?</p> <p>Despite strong foundations, further development is required to achieve consistency and scale:</p>	<p>Reading will have a consistently inclusive education system, aligned to SEND Reforms, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools and settings deliver a high-quality, broad SEND offer, extending beyond statutory requirements, as judged by our SEND Partnership (including School Effectiveness) and Ofsted. ● A fully embedded continuum of provision supports children at universal, targeted and specialist levels across all phases, including FE as judged by our SEND Partnership (including School Effectiveness) and Ofsted. ● A higher proportion of children with EHCPs are successfully supported in mainstream settings. This will be judged via settings reporting lower risk of placement breakdown for individual students via the Experts at Hand referral and triage process. ● Inclusive practice is consistent across all schools, underpinned by a fully implemented workforce development strategy and triage model. This will be measured by increased numbers of children at risk of suspension, exclusion and placement breakdown being flagged to Experts at Hand, and support being put in place and reviewed within adequate timeframes. ● Children with SEND achieve stronger outcomes, including improved attendance, attainment and preparation for adulthood. ● Children reporting increased inclusion and belonging within their settings. A program will be in place to ensure that this is collected, qualitatively analysed and reported to across the partnership. ● School-to-school improvement networks are mature and provide and/or facilitate a sustained system-wide support. This will be another measure of increased inclusion (i.e. fewer placement breakdowns, fewer suspensions/exclusions and support being sought in the right place at the right time). ● Attendance improves, and suspensions and exclusions continue to reduce. ● Reduced number of children on part-time timetables. ● Increased average time spent in school for children on part-time timetables. ● Post-16 pathways are strengthened, with commissioning oversight across the Thames Valley Footprint around Further Education, enabling more young people with SEND to access employment and meaningful adult outcomes. ● SEND sufficiency planning is dynamic and data-led, giving confidence to partners in the system's ability to meet need locally.

- Variability in inclusive practice remains across schools and phases.
- Training needs analysis (via RISE and PINS) has identified gaps in workforce capability.
- A fully embedded continuum of provision across EY, mainstream, ARPs, specialist and FE is not yet in place.
- Workforce development is not yet fully aligned through a single integrated plan.
- Opportunities to increase the proportion of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in mainstream settings need to be further realised.
- The Universal Offer needs to be consistently understood or delivered across all settings.
- The use of needs-led, shared data must drive consistency, target variability and inform continuous improvement, and this is not yet fully embedded.
- Partnership ownership, governance and accountability for the universal offer are not yet strong enough to ensure consistent implementation at scale.
- Transitions at all stages (EY, primary, secondary and FE) will be proactively planned to ensure continuity of inclusive support.
- We recognise that children, families and staff from world majority communities can experience systemic barriers, including discrimination and inequitable access to support. The partnership will continue to prioritise and embed culturally humble and anti-racist practice across all areas of SEND and Alternative Provision delivery.
- Greater links with Adult Social Care when considering Preparing for Adulthood are required.
- To support IASS service delivery in a complex and evolving system, it will be necessary to establish more consistent commissioning arrangements across health, education and social care. Demand for the service continues to increase and secure funding streams will be necessary to ensure that the service remains compliant with the SENDIASS minimum standards.
- Parental confidence in the national SEND system is variable and may not immediately translate to local confidence; rebuilding trust will require sustained, transparent engagement and continuous learning from feedback over time.

Status of the enablers that underpin your system.

- The Experts At Hand (EAH) model is fully embedded, providing consistent access to specialist support and enabling early intervention across all settings.
- An observable reduction in pupils with SEND becoming Electively Home Educated (EHE) from our 2026 baseline.
- Reduction in yearly agreed Educated Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) packages, alongside clearer thresholds and processes around agreeing EOTAS.
- Increased numbers of CYP returning to mainstream (or appropriate setting) after short intervention.
- A robust future universal offer will be co-developed and regularly refreshed across the partnership with schools, MATs, early years and post-16 providers, underpinned by up-to-date, needs-led data and aligned to the National Inclusion Standards. This offer will be formally agreed and signed off by the local authority, ICB, MAT and school representatives, and the Parent Carer Forum to ensure shared ownership and accountability.
- No child or young person will move between phases without clear, coordinated planning and appropriate support in place.
- All partners will consider policy, practice, commissioning and decision-making through an equity lens, supported by ongoing workforce development in cultural humility, racial literacy and inclusive practice.
- This approach will be aligned with Adult Social Care strategies to ensure a life-course approach to inclusion, supporting children and young people to build independence from an early stage.
- We will be regularly mapping opportunities for parents and children to co-produce services for themselves and contribute to service design more widely. This will be published and publicised to families when accessing services including EHCPs and school-based interventions.

By the end of the three-year period, Reading will have established a highly inclusive, financially sustainable and evidence-informed funding model where resources are aligned to complexity and impact, mainstream inclusion is strengthened across all phases, and children and young people with SEND are able to thrive within their local communities. This will be underpinned by our complexity matrix.

	<p>The SEND Partnership has been working collectively towards the SEND Reform vision over the past 18 months, with key enablers established and rated as strong (Green).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Capital</i>: Investment is aligned to sufficiency planning, including expansion of ARPs and specialist provision. ● <i>Workforce</i>: A skilled workforce is in place, with ongoing development through RISE, PINS and partnership training. ● <i>Partnership working</i>: Strong collaboration across education, health and care, with shared commitment to inclusion. This includes a Universal Offer which will be jointly agreed and signed off by the local authority, ICB, school and MAT representatives, and the Parent Carer Forum ● <i>MDT delivery</i>: Established MDT approaches supporting early identification and intervention. ● <i>Co-production</i>: Strategic engagement in place, with further development required to embed consistently. <p>The Inclusion Funding Framework and complexity matrix will directly support the development of a more coherent and sustainable approach to school funding, EHCP delivery and mainstream inclusion. The model will create greater alignment between ordinarily available provision, targeted inclusion funding and statutory EHCP provision, ensuring that resources are allocated proportionately to levels of need and complexity.</p>	
<p>Success measures Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve attendance of pupils in all maintained schools (mainstream and special) with SEND. - Reduce reliance on Independent Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) places. - Mainstream settings with increased access to Education Psychologists (EPs), Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) and Occupational Therapists (OTs). - Reduced Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rates for SEND CYP at age 16. - Reduction in the number of children with SEND permanently excluded. 	<p>Baseline (outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance in Maintained Special Schools – 83.7%. 2. Total Number of INMSS places – 139 3. Number of pupils with EHCPs placed in maintained mainstream settings (including ARPs) – 938 4. Percentage of CYP with an EHCP aged 16-17 not in education or employment – 9% 5. Since academic year 2023/24 2 pupils with EHCPs and 15 pupils receiving SEN support have been permanently 	<p>Target Metrics (outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarized above – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template) By financial year 2029/30:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve attendance in Reading Maintained Special Schools to be in line with the national average. 2. Increase the number of maintained special provision within Greater Reading by 35%. 3. Increase the number of pupils with EHCPs placed in maintained mainstream settings 12%. 4. Reduce the pct of CYP with an EHCP not in education or employment to 6%. 5. Reduce the number of pupils with annual reviews stating “school

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced number of part time timetables. - Sustainable number of children in mainstream resource spaces. - Continued reduction in corporate complaints regarding SEND. - Increased positive feedback through systematically collecting the data from parents and CYP. 	<p>excluded</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Percentage of pupils with EHCPs who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) as a proportion of all EHE pupils in May 2026 – 28 (7%) 7. Percentage of unplaced children require Education Other Than School (EOTAS) as a proportion of all unplaced children May 2026 – 14 (13.4%) 8. Reduce number of part-time time timetables (current position not currently available – processes being updated to ensure data is collected by schools). 9. A reduction in the number of complaints needing to be resolved through the corporate complaints process 	<p>can't meet need" being permanently excluded to 0.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Increase the proportion of EHE pupils that also EHC plan moving back into a maintained setting by 20%. 7. Reduce the proportion of unplaced and EOTAS pupils with EHCPs by 60%. 8. Decrease the average length of time that a CYP is unplaced by 20%. 9. Reduce the average length of time that schools commission AP by 20%. 10. Increase the average time a child on a part-time timetable spends in school by 20%. 11. Reduce the number of corporate complaints by at least 25%.
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Access to specialist support and local placements		
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
<p>Building blocks Access to specialist support and local placements</p> <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital investment strategy across Early Years, mainstream, Further Education - Joint commissioning of integrated therapy services into specialist bases - Strong relationship across the SEND partnership 	<p>Working well</p> <p>Reading has a clear strategic direction aligned to the SEND Reforms, with a strong focus on inclusion, sufficiency and sustainability across the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reform-aligned strategy is in place to reduce reliance on EHCPs in mainstream, decrease INMSS placements and remodel Alternative Provision ● Delivery of 180 new special school places is on track for September 2027/28, increasing local capacity ● A mature SLD ARP model in mainstream primary schools supports children to access local provision ● A well-established risk pathway, supported by a five-point plan and behavioural support team, provides 	<p>Reading will have a fully inclusive, integrated education system where all partners share responsibility for outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>System outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced reliance on EHCPs through effective early intervention. ● INMSS numbers will reduce and be reserved for the most exceptional and complex cases, not due to local capacity constraints. ● A balanced and sustainable system, with provision aligned to local need. ● Improved educational outcomes, particularly at Key Stage 4 ● Stronger mainstream inclusion, with children supported

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA workforce is well-trained and regularly kept up to date with latest developments. - Strategic co-production with PCF - Family First Programme - Best Start in Life - Arrival of SEND Reforms - Existing SLD ARPS - Currently building and co-locating specialist provision for children on mainstream sites - Building of LA managed Children's homes in borough - Behavioral support team within RISE. - Strengthened multi-disciplinary team working in school clinics - Emerging work to draw on the views of CYP cohorts who have gone through the SEND system, including Youth Justice and AP, building on their experiences to create a more inclusive and child-centred system. 	<p><i>MDT input to manage risk in mainstream settings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A clear school organisation strategy, promoting federations to strengthen leadership capacity and support financial sustainability ● Early progress in data and financial transformation, supporting strategic planning <p><i>Reading has large migration across borders, which means that some children's local school is not Reading. Within Reading we refer to this as Greater Reading, which we have defined with schools.</i></p> <p>What needs to change?</p> <p>Despite strong foundations, there are key areas requiring further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data systems and usage are not yet fully integrated to support predictive planning and shared accountability ● There remains a gap between demand and specialist provision, due to historic sufficiency challenges and delivery timelines. A fully embedded continuum of provision across mainstream, ARPs and specialist settings is not yet in place. This will be underpinned by delivering the specialist places required and planned through capital investment. ● Utilise learning of the behavioural support to inform wider system changes. ● Leadership capacity across some schools requires strengthening to improve consistency and outcomes ● Attainment outcomes for pupils with an EHC plan, particularly at Key Stage 4, require significant and sustained improvement <p>Status of the enablers that underpin your system.</p> <p>The local area partnership has been working collectively towards the SEND Reform vision over the past 18 months, with key enablers established and progressing well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery of 180 new special school places across two Reading primary sites ○ Ongoing investment in specialist and mainstream provision ● Workforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong existing workforce across education and support services ○ Development of federations to strengthen leadership capacity ○ Behavioural support team (RISE) providing 	<p>effectively within their local communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A fully operational Preparation for Adulthood outcomes toolkit will be in regular use, strengthening annual reviews, improving the quality of EHCPs, and supporting better-matched placements across the a clearer continuum of provision for Reading's Post-16 learners requiring specialist support. <hr/> <p>Provision and sufficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A fully developed continuum of provision, enabling movement between mainstream, ARPs and specialist settings. ● The effective use of a local 3-tiered AP model. A locality-based Approved Provider List for Alternative Provision will be established, comprising quality-assured Reading providers to support children to access provision locally. ● Increased local specialist capacity, reducing out-of-area placements. ● A consistent approach to curriculum and provision design across all settings <hr/> <p>Workforce and system leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A confident, skilled workforce across all settings ● A mature system of federations and school partnerships, strengthening leadership and school improvement. ● Expanded behavioural support model (delivered through the wider Experts at Hand model), supporting all settings including specialist provision. <hr/> <p>Data, finance and commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fully embedded data-led decision making, with integrated systems. ● Strong financial modelling aligned to SEND Reform priorities. This will be informed by up-to-date, needs-led data to ensure it reflects the emerging profile of children and young people across Reading. ● Improved commissioning arrangements around AP, ensuring value for money and sustainability. SEND Case Officers will utilise the Approved Provider List to ensure consistent quality, oversight and informed placement decision-making. ● The partnership will strengthen its use of disaggregated data to identify and respond to inequalities across the system, including differences in early identification, access to provision and outcomes for children and young people from world majority communities. This will inform commissioning, service design and resource allocation, ensuring that decisions are increasingly needs-led, equitable and responsive to local population trends.
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	<p style="text-align: center;">MDT input, with plans for expansion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data and digital systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increasing use of data to inform planning ○ Further work required to integrate systems and strengthen predictive modelling ● Service integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early implementation of MDT approaches, including therapy input within specialist settings ○ Development of the Experts at Hand model to support wider system delivery 	<hr/> <p>Role of the Experts at Hand (EAH) model</p> <p>The Experts at Hand model will underpin system transformation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing timely access to specialist advice and intervention ● Supporting early identification and reducing escalation ● Building workforce capacity and confidence around meeting SEND needs within mainstream schools ● Ensuring consistent MDT support across the system, with the Experts at Hand model delivering equitable, needs-led access across early years, primary, secondary and post-16 settings, so that all phases benefit proportionately from specialist input, and no part of the system is disproportionately reliant on or excluded from support. ● Strengthening integration across education, health and care. ● Expanding the capacity, reach and impact of the current RISE model, aligning and integrating it with the Experts at Hand offer to create a coherent, graduated system of support, strengthening early intervention and delivering scalable consultation, training and intervention across all phases (EY, primary, secondary and post-16).x ● Embedding a clearly defined graduated response (Universal, Targeted and Targeted Plus), strengthening the universal offer through timely specialist input and reducing unnecessary escalation to EHCPs. ● Systematically enhancing and sustaining the universal offer across all settings, with Targeted and Targeted Plus pathways providing consistent, early intervention and improving outcomes within mainstream provision.
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<p>Success measures <i>Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>	<p>Baseline</p> <p><i>(outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p><i>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</i></p>	<p>Target metrics</p> <p><i>(outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarized above – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p><i>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</i></p>
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System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production		
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
<p>Building blocks <i>System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production</i></p> <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Increased standards for children within Specialist Support Bases</i> - <i>Improve attendance of pupils in Special Schools and Specialist Support Bases</i> - <i>Reduce number of Independent Special School places</i> - <i>Increased access to EP/SaLT/OT within specialist support bases to prevent avoidable special school placements.</i> - <i>Reduced NEET rates for SEND YP at age 16</i> - <i>Reduction in the number of children with SEND permanently excluded and/or suspensions.</i> - <i>Cost</i> 	<p>Working well</p> <p>Reading is strengthening its system leadership and partnership approach, with a clear focus on sustainability, inclusion and improved outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthened school leadership through federations By consolidating functions across federations and appointing Executive Headteachers supported by Heads of School, Reading is developing more sustainable models of provision and increasing leadership capacity across schools. ● Strong and improving local area partnership The Local Area Partnership is united in its commitment 	<p>While strong foundations are in place, co-production and engagement with families require further strengthening and consistency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening parental engagement at strategic level Engagement of parents and carers, particularly through the Parent Carer Forum (PCF), is not yet consistent. Attendance and participation at partnership boards and SEND/AP strategic forums remain limited. ● Embedding co-production as consistent practice While there is a clear understanding of co-production principles, practice is not yet fully embedded across the system, in line with our 'SEND Good Practice Guidelines' (influenced by NHSE guidance). Engagement is developing but not yet consistently influencing service design and

- *Reduced number of part time timetables.*
- *Number of children in mainstream resource spaces*
- *School Standards*
- *Number of children unplaced*
- *Number of children on EOTAS*

to improving outcomes for children and young people, working collaboratively and with increasing transparency. There is a clear focus on listening to lived experiences and taking meaningful action.

- **Co-production embedded as a core principle**
Co-production sits at the heart of system delivery, guided by the Co-production Charter. Practice is developing across individual, operational and strategic levels, supported by a skilled workforce and a culture of reflective practice and strong relationships.
- **Commitment to early intervention**
The partnership champions early intervention, ensuring families are engaged early and receive the right support at the right time.
- **Strategic school organisation and place planning**
The School Place Planning Strategy promotes federations to address both quality and financial sustainability, particularly for smaller primary schools. This approach is strengthening school-to-school support and leadership resilience.
- **Improving relationships with families through SEND resolution pathways**
The SEND team has a developing robust, professional and collaborative relationship with the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS), particularly through the SEND Resolutions Lead. Parental Feedback indicates that they see Reading's IASS Team as impartial, and feel that they provide high quality, independent information and guidance. This is leading to more timely resolutions and increased parental confidence.

What needs to change

While strong foundations are in place, co-production and engagement with families require further strengthening and consistency.

- **Strengthening parental engagement at strategic level**
Engagement of parents and carers, particularly through the Parent Carer Forum (PCF), is not yet consistent. Attendance and participation at partnership boards and SEND/AP strategic forums remain limited.
- **Embedding co-production as consistent practice**
While there is a clear understanding of co-production principles, practice is not yet fully embedded across the system. Engagement is developing but not yet consistently influencing service design and delivery.
- **Developing the role of the Parent Carer Forum (PCF)**
Although a formal structure exists, the PCF is relatively

delivery. Adherence to these guidelines must be measured against our current baseline.

- **Developing the role of the Parent Carer Forum (PCF)**
Although a formal structure exists, the PCF is relatively new and requires further support to actively engage with partners and represent the voice of families at a strategic level.
- **Improving relationships and trust with families**
Relationships with some parent groups remain fragile, with vocal concerns indicating a need to rebuild trust through transparency, responsiveness and meaningful involvement. The work between IASS and Resolutions will continue to strengthen and be monitored. Further communications around this project highlighting the importance of IASS's independence will be shared across the partnership.
- **Strengthening feedback loops and impact**
While mechanisms exist to gather feedback, there needs to be clearer evidence that children, young people and families understand how their views influence decisions and shape services.
- **Clear processes enabling CYP views to be systematically collected across the partnership**
There is no current formal structure around gaining CYP views systemically or constructively. This will be developed and sampled on a regular basis, feeding into SEND Strategy across the partnership. This will be overseen by Experts at Hand and link closely in with Social Care systems.
- **Co-production around equalities**
We will strengthen culturally responsive engagement with children, young people and families from diverse communities to ensure that services reflect a wide range of lived experiences. This includes creating safe and accessible opportunities for dialogue, working closely with the Parent Carer Forum and community networks, and recognising the additional barriers some families may face in navigating the SEND system. Feedback from these groups will directly inform service development and review.
- **Strengthened transition**
Children and young people at highest risk will receive enhanced, coordinated transition support informed by shared data and professional insight.
- **Locally defined clusters of education settings** (including early years, schools, AP and FE) will operate as formal partnership groups, sharing accountability for inclusion, outcomes and sufficiency. These clusters will collaborate on workforce development, resource deployment and peer support, ensuring collective responsibility for children and young people across their locality, linking in closely with the Family Hubs and identifying target cohorts of children based on need (e.g., social care needs, mental health, vulnerability, attainment, attendance). Accountability around responsibilities for meeting the needs of these cohorts must

new and requires further support to actively engage with partners and represent the voice of families at a strategic level.

- **Improving relationships and trust with families**
Relationships with some parent groups remain fragile, with vocal concerns indicating a need to rebuild trust through transparency, responsiveness and meaningful involvement.
- **Strengthening feedback loops and impact**
While mechanisms exist to gather feedback, there needs to be clearer evidence that children, young people and families understand how their views influence decisions and shape services.
- **Children are not yet systematically collected across the partnership**
There is no current formal structure around gaining children's views systemically or constructively. This means that views are not always reported on or considered during system development.
- **Strengthening the transition offer**
While there is an emerging offer of joint planning meetings between the EPS and current RISE Team, this must be expanded to ensure all children are being identified and wraparound support is provided where needed.
- **Strengthening partnership working** around the most complex children in the system, underpinned by strengthen governance, financial oversight to ensure better outcomes for the complex children.
- **Involving parents around decision making.** Parents do not consistently feel aware of opportunities to be involved in discussions with the LA about SEND services and local decision making.

Status of the enablers that underpin your system

Enablers

The system has a clear and well-defined set of enablers that underpin delivery of the SEND Reform vision.

Capital

- *A strategically planned estate across early years, mainstream, specialist and post-16 provision*
- *Alignment to forecast need, supporting sufficiency and reducing reliance on out-of-area placements*

Workforce

- *A confident and increasingly skilled workforce across all settings*

be clearly defined and shared via communications with the local community.

- **A strengthened local governance model** will be in place, with clear roles and responsibilities aligned to Schools White Paper expectations, including greater system leadership from trusts and school leaders. Cluster-level governance arrangements will provide oversight of inclusion, performance and resource use, supported by transparent data, shared accountability and formalised decision-making structures across partners.
- **Commitment to improved communications**, including involving parents in decision making, and regular engagement with CYP & parent carers to work towards improving parental confidence in improving outcomes locally. Parents need to be fully aware of opportunities to be involved in discussions with the LA about SEND services and local decision making.

The three-plan approach will ensure there is a tripartite partnership-based approach to supporting children and young people living with high levels of complexity that sit at the interface between Local Authority and Continuing Care funding. A joint approach will ensure safe and appropriate support, improving governance whilst reducing variation and duplication in funding arrangements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthened SEND expertise within mainstream schools ● Growing integration across education, health and care professionals ● Leadership capacity enhanced through federations and system leadership roles <hr/> <p>Data and digital systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development towards a fully integrated data system ● Increasing ability to provide real-time insight and predictive modelling ● Strengthening shared accountability across partners ● Data increasingly informing commissioning, sufficiency planning and performance management 	
<p>Success measures</p> <p><i>Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template E.g.</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>	<p>Baseline</p> <p><i>(outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>	<p>Target Metrics</p> <p><i>(outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarized above – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>
<p>Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours</p>		
<p>Local blueprint for the next 3 years</p>	<p>Where we are</p>	<p>Where we will be in the next 3 years</p>
<p>Building blocks <i>Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours</i></p> <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased standards for children within Specialist Support Bases - Improve attendance of pupils in Special schools and Specialist Support Bases - Reduce number of Independent Special School places - Increased access to EP/SaLT/OT within specialist support bases to prevent avoidable special school placements. - Reduced NEET rates for SEND YP at age 16 - Reduction in the number of children with SEND permanently excluded and/or suspensions. - Cost - Reduced number of part time timetables. - Number of children in mainstream resource spaces 	<p>Working well</p> <p>Reading has a strong commitment to inclusion, underpinned by effective partnership working across education, health and care. There are clear examples of good practice within schools and services, particularly through early intervention support, outreach services and existing specialist provision. The system demonstrates a shared ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>However, this practice is not yet consistently embedded across the whole system. Variability remains in inclusive practice, early identification and access to specialist advice. Demand for statutory assessment and specialist placements continues to rise, placing pressure on High Needs Block sustainability and impacting timeliness and sufficiency.</p> <p>There are also gaps in how system partners operate as a single,</p>	<p>Reading will have a fully integrated, inclusive education system where all partners share responsibility for outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Inclusion will be the default, with children supported effectively within their local communities wherever possible. System leadership will be strengthened through clear shared accountability across the partnership, with locally defined clusters of settings working collaboratively to meet need, deploy resources and take collective responsibility for outcomes.</p> <p>Early identification and intervention will be embedded across the system, supported by a clearly defined and consistently applied Experts at Hand (EAH) Offer. This model will provide timely access to specialist advice and intervention, enabling schools to meet need earlier and reduce reliance on statutory processes. Multi-disciplinary working and coordinated transition planning will ensure continuity of support at all key stages.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>School Standards</i> - <i>Increased CHC and Mental Capacity Assessments?</i> - <i>Number of children unplaced</i> - <i>Number of children on EOTAS</i> - <i>Standardised reporting systems across all education settings.</i> - <i>Young Person Voice will be utilized and listened to throughout the SEND system</i> 	<p>integrated system. While services such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy contribute positively, access pathways and capacity are not always aligned with early intervention or statutory processes.</p> <p>What needs to change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater consistency in inclusive practice across all schools ● Earlier identification and intervention to reduce escalation ● Stronger alignment of education, health and care services ● A more strategic, data-led approach to sufficiency and place planning ● A shared culture of accountability across the whole system ● Parental confidence in the mainstream sector being able to adequately support their child/ Confidence of educational setting staff to meet SEND within mainstream system ● Stronger sense of belonging of CYPs in their local education community ● Confidence levels of education setting staff to meet SEND within the mainstream system. ● Assess and review parental & setting confidence ● Develop mechanisms to capture/rate parental confidence (including levels of unmet needs (including resulting in EHE) / complaints / tribunals / IASS service demand / children reaching crisis point) ● Review staff confidence to deliver interventions / manage certain needs or situations as a result of EAH training ● Review parental satisfaction of advice provided to school staff about their CYP from EAH ● Ensure parents feel their concerns are acknowledged and that support can be accessed through EAH services 	<p>Provision will be aligned to need through a robust, data-driven sufficiency strategy. Specialist and mainstream provision will operate within a shared framework, ensuring the right child is in the right place, at the right time, with the right support. Improved data and digital capability will provide real-time insight, predictive planning and shared intelligence across partners, strengthening decision-making at both system and cluster level.</p> <p>The system will demonstrate strong financial sustainability, with High Needs Block pressures mitigated through effective early intervention, joint commissioning arrangements, improved commissioning and better use of existing resources. Workforce development will be aligned through a single integrated plan across education, health and care, ensuring consistent capability and capacity across all settings and clusters.</p> <p>A systematic programme of workforce development will be implemented across the partnership to build capability in cultural humility, racial literacy and anti-discriminatory practice. Partners will regularly review policies, practice and provision against cultural humility principles, informed by feedback from children, families and communities. Leadership at all levels will champion this agenda to ensure it is embedded, sustained and reflected in everyday practice across the system</p>
<p>Success measures</p> <p><i>Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template E.g.</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>	<p>Baseline</p> <p><i>(outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>	<p>Target Metrics</p> <p><i>(outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarized above – these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i></p> <p>See the strengthening inclusion across education settings section.</p>



INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

3. What is the local area partnership’s strategy for delivering on the above?

A brief summary of your local system’s theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your *Local System ‘change story.’*

Word count max: 250, current 248

The local area partnership’s strategy is grounded in a clear theory of change: early, consistent and inclusive support, delivered through strong partnerships and enabled by data-led decision-making, will improve outcomes, rebuild confidence and stabilise the system financially.

Based on the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment, Reading recognises it has strong foundations—established partnership governance, effective MDT working and a shared commitment to inclusion—but that impact is constrained by variability, fragmentation and rising demand. The strategy therefore focuses on scaling what works and embedding consistency.

The core delivery mechanism is the new integrated Experts at Hand (EaH) service, which provides additional resource from EPs, SaLTs at OTs, and incorporates Reading’s RISE Team. EAH aims to strengthen early identification (having data that shows more children receive specialist support at an earlier time) and an observable reduction in escalation to statutory processes due to strengthened OAP and GR. This is complemented by a clear continuum of provision across early years, mainstream, ARPs, specialist and post-16, underpinned by sufficiency planning and capital investment.

System leadership is strengthened through clearer shared accountability, joint commissioning and the development of clusters, enabling schools to act collectively to meet need locally. Workforce development is aligned through a single integrated plan, while data and digital capability are improved to support real-time insight, predictive planning and financial modelling.

Co-production is a system enabler, with renewed focus on transparency, feedback and meaningful involvement of children, young people and families to rebuild confidence and trust. Together, these elements form a coherent strategy that moves the system from reactive and variable to preventative, inclusive and sustainable, delivering outcomes and value for money.



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The core delivery mechanism is the transition of the existing RISE service into a fully operational Experts at Hand (EAH) model. EAH provides mainstream settings with direct access to specialist expertise, strengthens early identification, and reduces escalation to statutory processes. This is complemented by a clear continuum of provision across early years, mainstream, ARPs, specialist and post16, underpinned by sufficiency planning and capital investment.

System leadership is strengthened through clearer shared accountability, joint commissioning and the development of MAT, enabling schools to act collectively to meet need locally. Workforce development is aligned through a single integrated plan, while data and digital capability are improved to support realtime insight, predictive planning and financial modelling.

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4. Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

5. What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?

Reflecting on the broad timescales and expectation for deliverables set out in the Schools White Paper, key documents and core minimum requirements set out in this document, please provide a high-level roadmap for the next 3 years. Please highlight key milestones and a trajectory to the target metrics identified above, including leading indicators.

In the 2026-27 column, in particular, please reference how you plan to meet the core minimum requirements in your narrative, including details and evidence in supporting documents.

You can insert or upload supporting documents including graphics/visuals that illustrate your data trajectory.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Building blocks	Design and mobilisation of the local SEND Reform programme aligned to national reforms and local inclusion priorities.	Embedding and scaling integrated delivery models across education, health and care.	Sustainable system transformation with fully embedded inclusive practice and local sufficiency.
<i>Strengthening inclusion across education settings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed a strong ordinarily available provision and graduated response approach through Experts at Hand (EAH) model, providing schools with robust inclusion strategies (by December 2026) that align to and support Reading's SEND Strategy and Reform plans. Launch a co-produced inclusion partnership framework across all Reading schools, which will review current ability to deploy Universal Offer consistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed locality-based inclusion support models. Scale peer review and inclusion quality assurance frameworks. Increase specialist outreach into mainstream settings. Reduce reliance on part-time timetables and suspensions. Embed inclusion accountability through partnership KPIs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully integrated inclusive education system with shared accountability. Consistent inclusive practice across all phases. Reduced variation between settings. Stronger outcomes for vulnerable cohorts through earlier intervention. Inclusion embedded as core partnership culture. Further development and expansion of EaH offer, based on feedback and

	<p>across settings and co-develop with partners. Map opportunities for CYP and parents to co-produce services and contribute to service design. Publish these opportunities and publicise to families when accessing services</p> <p>All CYP / Parents will be invited to feed into decision making about the services they receive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - during the EHCP annual review process - During an intervention • Develop inclusion funding framework linked to complexity and intervention. • Expand workforce training in adaptive teaching, neurodiversity and SEMH. • Strengthen early identification processes across EYFS and primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development and expansion of EaH offer, based on feedback and learning from the partnership following the first year of EaH. • A clear universal offer and continuum of provision will be embedded across Reading, following publication of National Standards. • Transitions at all stages (EY, primary, secondary and FE) will be proactively planned to ensure continuity of inclusive support. • Develop and agree a joint SEND and Adult Social Care transition framework, including pathways, roles and responsibilities. 	<p>learning from the partnership following the first year of EaH, ensuring it is a fully fledged equitable offer across Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Further Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a joint SEND and Adult Social Care transition framework, including pathways, roles and responsibilities.
<i>Access to specialist support and local placements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue delivery of ARP and specialist provision expansion programme. • Strengthen placement panels and sufficiency planning. • Improve access to EP, SALT, OT and MDT support. • Develop pathways reducing dependency on diagnosis-led support. • A review post-16 sufficiency and transitions will have taken place to inform development of pathways from specialist provision into post-16 placement, or children receiving high levels of support in mainstream to transition into a suitable post-16 placement. • Develop and implement a quality-assured Alternative Provision Approved Provider List, including commissioning standards and due diligence processes. Train SEND Case Officers to use the Approved Provider List within placement decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open additional specialist and co-located provision. • Reduce use of independent/non-maintained placements. • Expand integrated therapies within local provision. • Increase in-borough specialist capacity, including special school outreach capacity, advisory support, special school places and resource provision places. • Embed behavioural support and risk management pathways. • Further development and expansion of suitable post-16 pathways identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of children and young people educated within local communities. • Stable sufficiency model across mainstream and specialist provision. • Reduced external placement dependency and transport pressures. • Integrated specialist support embedded within local settings. • A strong post-16 pathway, with commissioning oversight from across the Thames Valley Footprint around Further Education, that meets the needs of most learners across the Reading system in place.
<i>System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh SEND partnership governance aligned to reforms. • Develop shared partnership KPI dashboard. • Strengthen co-production with families and CYP. • Align commissioning across LA, ICB and education partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed integrated commissioning arrangements. • Expand partnership-led delivery models. • Strengthen Reading-led sector improvement and system leadership. • Deliver shared partnership priorities through locality collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature partnership governance with embedded accountability. • Strong co-production influencing strategic delivery. • Fully integrated planning across education, health and care. • Sustainable leadership and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish strategic workforce planning framework. • Establish cluster-based working across education settings, with clear expectations for collaboration, shared responsibility for inclusion, and initial governance structures defined and agreed across partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sustainable leadership pipelines across the system. • Embed cluster-level accountability and joint working through formalised governance arrangements, shared data dashboards and strengthened system leadership roles aligned to Schools White Paper expectations. 	<p>commissioning arrangements supporting long-term reform delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increasing proportion of post-transition placements are sustained through strengthened cross-phase collaboration between settings, demonstrating effective early support for CYP without reliance on EHCP escalation. • Clusters will operate as mature, self-improving partnerships with fully embedded shared accountability, joint commissioning approaches and collective responsibility for outcomes, inclusion and resource use across their locality.
<i>Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch partnership-wide inclusion charter and values framework. • Promote shared responsibility for SEND outcomes. • Deliver workforce development linked to reforms. • Strengthen communication and parental confidence. • Embed inclusion narrative across schools and services. • Systematically capture and respond to the views of CYP across a wide range of settings in Reading (including, but not limited to, primary, secondary, FE, youth justice, specialist provision, etc.) through the Experts at Hand team, with a clear focus on belonging and inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed inclusion expectations across all partners. • Increase participation of CYP and families in decision-making. • Reduce conflict, complaints and tribunals through early resolution approaches. • Embed a consistent, system-wide culture of early and effective transition planning and preparation for adulthood, supported by updated, streamlined documentation and clear multi-agency processes to ensure accountability and measurable outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion consistently reflected across leadership, workforce and provision. • High parental confidence in local provision. • Strong partnership culture focused on early intervention, belonging and achievement. • Sustainable culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement.
Enablers			
Capital and sufficiency planning	<p>Delivery mobilisation for specialist places, ARPs and co-located provision.</p> <p>Work in partnership with education settings to systematically review the current education estate, using this intelligence to drive strategic capital investment and sufficiency planning across Reading.</p>	Continued expansion of specialist and mainstream capacity.	Long-term estate strategy aligned to demand and inclusion.
Workforce	Recruitment and retention strategy across SEND workforce.	Integrated multidisciplinary workforce development.	Sustainable workforce model with strengthened local expertise.
Data and digital systems	Develop shared performance dashboard and data reporting.	Embed predictive analytics and sufficiency modelling.	Fully integrated, multi-layered intelligence-led decision making. Local

			clusters will be provided with access to these systems, so they can have clear oversight of their clusters.
Joint commissioning	Align commissioning priorities across partnership.	Integrated commissioning and pooled approaches where appropriate.	Mature joint commissioning supporting sustainable provision.
QA and governance	Embed multi-agency QA and audit frameworks.	Consistent partnership-wide quality assurance.	Continuous improvement embedded across the system.
Financial sustainability	Develop inclusion funding framework and banding review.	Monitor value for money and impact of investment.	Sustainable HNB planning linked to improved local sufficiency.
Success measures			
Strengthening inclusion across education settings			
Attendance	Improved attendance for pupils with SEND across maintained schools.	Reduction in persistent absence for SEND cohorts.	Attendance gap narrowed against national averages.
Inclusion	Reduction in suspensions, exclusions and part-time timetables.	Increased mainstream inclusion stability.	Sustained reduction in specialist escalation and crisis placements.
Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours			
Parental confidence	Reduction in complaints and tribunals.	Improved parent/carer feedback measures.	Strong co-production and partnership confidence.
CYP Voice & Belonging	Baseline established through Experts at Hand engagement across settings.	CYP voice shaping service design; belonging measures improving.	Sustained, system-wide participation with evidenced belonging impact.
Workforce engagement	Increased participation in SEND training.	Workforce confidence improving.	Strong retention and specialist capability.
Access to specialist support and local placements			
Specialist support	Increased CYP supported by EP/SALT/OT in maintained settings.	Reduced waiting times and improved access pathways.	Earlier intervention embedded across the system.
Early intervention access	Increased referrals and support through EAH pathways.	Earlier support reducing escalation.	Consistent early intervention model embedded.
Outcomes	Improved educational progress and preparation for adulthood outcomes.	Improved destination measures and transitions.	Improved long-term outcomes for SEND cohorts.
NEET	Reduction in NEET for SEND young people.	Increased participation in education, employment and training.	Sustained positive post-16 destinations.
System leadership, partnership & co-production			
Sufficiency	Reduction in INMSS spend growth. With INMSS Unit cost increase of 6% (2025/26), reducing to 5% (2026/27) and then 4% (2027/28).	Increased in-borough placement rates reducing to 5/4%.	Stable local sufficiency with reduced external dependency.
Local placement trends	Reduction in unplaced CYP and external placements.	Increased local placement sufficiency.	Stable local placement model.
Partnership delivery	Shared KPIs routinely monitored.	Multi-agency accountability embedded.	Mature partnership governance and delivery.

Financial indicators	Improved forecasting and spend oversight.	Reduction in reactive high-cost placements.	More sustainable HNB trajectory.
% schools engaged in inclusion framework	Baseline established and rollout commenced.	Majority of schools actively engaged.	Full system participation.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

6. What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?

Please outline the key workstreams, milestones and trajectory your local area partnership will deliver and achieve in 2026-27 as well as how you plan to spend the investment allocation that will help fund this year’s delivery. Please share key milestones and anticipated dates, success measures, cost breakdown and category. These should incorporate the core minimum requirements, be mapped to the building blocks above and should reflect a more detailed trajectory to the narrative, milestones and target metrics outlined in the 2026-27 column above.

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
<p>Workstream outline – mapped to building block</p> <p>Outcome - what you want to achieve with this workstream</p> <p>Success measures – how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template</p>	<p>Responsible lead per workstream – accountable for the delivery of the workstream and the identified outcome.</p>	<p>Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory</p> <p>July - Sept</p>	<p>Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?</p>	<p>Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory</p> <p>Oct –Dec</p>	<p>Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?</p>	<p>Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory</p> <p>Jan – March</p>	<p>Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?</p>

<p>Strengthening inclusion across education settings</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The launch of a fully operational Experts at Hand Service, providing additional capacity for EP/SaLT/OT, and incorporating the existing RISE Service.</p> <p>To ensure more effective and consistent utilisation of screening tools to support early identification of need.</p> <p>Success measure</p> <p>Observable increased confidence within mainstream settings to meet need and reduce reliance on statutory intervention.</p> <p>To achieve a reduction or plateau in permanent exclusions and improved inclusion outcomes across schools.</p>	<p>RISE Service Lead (Accountable) Supported by SEND Strategic Lead and wider partnership (Education, Health, Care)</p>	<p>Formalise the arrangements for EAH based on analysis of demand and capacity across the local area, aligning this with support already in place</p> <p>Approval of financial allocation of the Experts at Hand Service, and system wide understand of other funding mechanisms already in place.</p> <p>Develop branding and communications for the partnership, including schools and families.</p> <p>Development of a SENCo induction and refresher programme.</p> <p>Development of 'Inclusive Champion' network of senior leaders in schools to facilitate strategic leadership across school systems to be inclusive by design.</p> <p>Target senior leaders (SENcos and Headteachers) through strategic training to establish a shared vision and expectations for inclusive practice.</p> <p>Complete an options analysis around screening tools that can be used across primary, secondary and FE settings. These must</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Baseline established for exclusions, suspensions and SEN Support, viewable in automated dashboards.</p> <p>≥50% of settings engaged in awareness and initial engagement of Experts at Hand.</p> <p>Communication across all settings around screening tools available and the support they can facilitate</p>	<p>Confirm clarity of funding mechanisms used for all schools.</p> <p>Deliver soft launch of Experts at Hand aligned to SEND reforms.</p> <p>Complete gap analysis of the model in practice and consider implications for expansion of Experts at Hand for year 2 planning.</p> <p>Reading to lead on the recruitment and/or commissioning to address gaps.</p> <p>Review early impact with schools and gather feedback.</p> <p>Strengthen family engagement through Family Hubs and co-production.</p> <p>Continued roll out of a SENCo induction and refresher programme.</p> <p>Provide example inclusion strategy documents, and continue to support the co-production of exemplar strategies across settings, which align with Reading's consistent approaches and are monitored by Experts at Hand.</p> <p>Extend training to teachers, middle leaders and higher-level TAs to embed inclusive strategies consistently within</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Support offered free-to-access for all schools, with ≥75% of settings actively engaging with the new support and ways of working with Experts at Hand.</p> <p>Increased confidence reported by schools in meeting need against identified risk.</p> <p>Continued low number of suspensions and exclusions across the majority of Readings settings.</p> <p>Uptake of evidence-based screening tools (e.g., Wellcomm, Language Link) across targeted cohorts, building the universal offer and facilitating targeted support..</p> <p>Consistent use of screening tools across agreed settings.</p>	<p>Review outcomes from soft launch and overall impact.</p> <p>Report progress to the SEND Partnership Board.</p> <p>Strengthen interface of Experts at Hand with statutory SEND services (EHCNA, place planning).</p> <p>Embed Experts at Hand within local governance and delivery systems.</p> <p>Have a program of refining the Experts at Hand model based on data, feedback and QA findings.</p> <p>Review of the impact of SENCo induction and refresher programme.</p> <p>Continue to provide workforce training and workshops around development of inclusion strategies.</p> <p>Scale workforce development across all school staff to ensure a whole-setting, sustainable approach to inclusive culture and practice.</p> <p>Continue to provide support from RISE and the school effectiveness team via whole-school SEND audits, to inform future plans</p> <p>A finalised inclusion partnership framework</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Sustained reduction or plateau in permanent exclusions.</p> <p>90% or more of settings actively engaged with Experts at Hand.</p> <p>Emerging evidence of earlier intervention strengthening Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Response.</p> <p>Positive parental feedback on SEND support in mainstream provided by Experts at Hand and the wider system.</p> <p>Fully operational inclusion dashboard informing decision-making.</p> <p>Obtain initial parental feedback from parents who have experienced EAH support in mainstream</p> <p>Review parental satisfaction that children have received appropriate intervention/ advice from EAH</p> <p>Review parental satisfaction that access to EAH is sufficient and was appropriately timed</p> <p>Review parental satisfaction that school staff are sufficiently</p>
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		<p>provide advice and strategies around with specific needs, particularly those associated risk factors (e.g. SALT/ literacy needs being associated with increased suspensions).</p> <p>Establish presence of Experts at Hand within Family Hubs.</p> <p>Develop data dashboards for inclusion indicators (including exclusions).</p> <p>Allocate EAH (RISE) Consultants to support development of Inclusion Strategies at a Cluster level, and facilitate shared learning and development</p> <p>Provide workforce training and workshops around development of inclusion strategies</p> <p>Continue to provide support from RISE and the school effectiveness team via whole-school SEND audits, to inform future plans.</p> <p>Undertake demand and capacity review alongside the Berkshire West therapy review.</p> <p>Begin to co-produce an inclusion partnership framework that will have buy in</p>		<p>classroom practice and team leadership.</p> <p>Continue to provide workforce training and workshops around development of inclusion strategies.</p> <p>Continue to provide support from RISE and the school effectiveness team via whole-school SEND audits, with aggregated audit outcomes systematically reported as a core performance metric to monitor improvements in inclusive practice and shape future planning.</p> <p>ICB to review recommendations demand and capacity review alongside the Berkshire West therapy review.</p> <p>Draft inclusion partnership framework to be completed and shared across the partnership.</p> <p>An inclusion funding mechanism linked to complexity and intervention will be trailed and feedback sought.</p> <p>Feedback to be sought on Experts at Hands training offer, and consideration of any identified gaps in training.</p>		<p>will be launched which can be reviewed via Experts at Hand and must align with our consistent approaches, shared via the Local Offer.</p> <p>An inclusion funding framework linked to complexity and intervention will be launched.</p> <p>Expansion of Experts at Hand training offer in line with needs analysis.</p> <p>A strong Experts at Hand multi-disciplinary planning meetings will be launched, supporting transitions.</p>	<p>trained to deliver interventions or manage needs & situations as a result of EAH training</p>
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		<p>across all Reading schools.</p> <p>Consult with the partnership around a mechanism for inclusion funding, linked to complexity and intervention.</p> <p>An initial training program based on previously launched consistent approaches to be commissioned, focusing on teaching, neurodiversity and SEMH. This will be delivered via Experts at Hand and other integrated teams.</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary planning meetings will be trialled to coordinate support for children and young people during transition periods.</p>					
<p>Access to specialist support and local placements</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>To improve access to specialist support and local placements through a sufficiency-led, partnership approach.</p> <p>To increase local capacity and reduce reliance on independent and out-of-area provision.</p>	<p>Strategic Lead for SEND (Accountable)</p>	<p>Partnership of specialist 16-19 places will complete mapping of current specialist support and pathways, including Post-16 provision and consider next steps in line with the commissioning agreements across the Thames Valley Footprint around Further Education.</p> <p>Undertake sufficiency planning to identify gaps across the system and required provision, including a comprehensive assessment of the current 0–5 childcare market covering the</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Clear baseline of current placement types and pathways.</p> <p>Continue to identify gaps in specialist provision via the council's sufficiency strategy, identifying priority cohorts. This includes working alongside MATs and early years providers to establish Inclusion Base capacity.</p> <p>Increased engagement from schools in cluster discussions.</p>	<p>Shared FE mapping informs development of a coherent continuum of provision, including planning for new ARPs/units and aligned courses that meet a wider range of learner needs.</p> <p>Agree local area approach to joint commissioning across the SEND partnership.</p> <p>Strengthen early years to primary transitions through a structured, multi-agency review process that ensures timely information flow, early specialist input,</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Reduction in new INMSS placements, targeting children identified as having SEMH needs via Experts at Hand and Behavioural Support (who are the highest represented cohort in this area at around 40%).</p> <p>Increased use of local specialist provision and resource bases.</p> <p>Improved planning for phase transfer cohorts.</p>	<p>Expanded FE offer and newly developed units/ARPs begin to deliver a seamless pathway, with courses supporting learners consistently from mainstream through to specialist provision.</p> <p>Launch of co-location model delivering 128 special school places within mainstream primary sites.</p> <p>Review impact of cluster model and flexible provision approach.</p> <p>Embed joint commissioning</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Sustained reduction in INMSS placements.</p> <p>Increase in local specialist placements and capacity utilisation.</p> <p>Reduction in exclusions for children with EHCPs.</p> <p>Evidence of improved local sufficiency and placement stability.</p> <p>Embed consistent multi-agency planning and placement pathways, resulting in</p>

<p>To ensure children and young people receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time, reducing escalation and improving outcomes.</p> <p>Success measure</p> <p>Reduction and continued low numbers in comparable INMSS new in-year placements.</p> <p>Increase in number of specialist resource spaces across the local area.</p> <p>Reduction in children with an EHCP who are permanently excluded or suspended.</p> <p>Reduction in children on part-time timetables.</p> <p>Reduction in children on EOTAS.</p> <p>Reduction in children requiring high levels of AP within mainstream settings, which will be monitored through data dashboards and workflow.</p>		<p>availability of early years places, specialist SEND early years provision, and gaps for children with complex or emerging needs, alongside a clear, partnership-led plan (including the role of Best Start Family Hubs) to address identified shortfalls.</p> <p>This can support identification of how children currently access support and where barriers exist.</p> <p>Develop offers of training and support through the new Experts at Hand service via full engagement with PCF, all levels of settings and across the community/partnership to strengthen local provision.</p> <p>Review and agree approach to assets across the school system.</p> <p>Continue engagement with Headteachers, the PCF, early years and FE settings regarding cluster-based approaches across Reading.</p> <p>Increase early identification and panel oversight of children at risk of EOTAS, part-time timetables and high-cost AP, with targeted specialist support initiated.</p>	<p>Early alignment of support through Experts at Hand offer.</p>	<p>and robust planning for identified children with additional need, particularly those requiring places within the new special school.</p> <p>Begin implementation of cluster-based delivery models.</p> <p>Demonstrate reduced reliance on interim EOTAS, part-time timetables and high AP through improved access to local specialist provision, including new special school placements.</p> <p>Refinement of the PfA toolkit informed by feedback, supporting more consistent annual reviews and clearer, outcome-focused EHCPs to guide placements.</p>	<p>Schools actively participating in cluster-based solutions.</p>	<p>arrangements across partners.</p> <p>Refine sufficiency planning based on data and demand trends.</p> <p>Agree Reading's approach to flexible provision through clusters to meet specialist need.</p> <p>PfA toolkit embedded in practice, leading to higher-quality EHCPs and more appropriate, well-matched placements across the continuum of provision.</p>	<p>sustained reductions in EOTAS, part-time timetables and high-cost AP packages.</p>
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		Trial of a new PFA outcomes toolkit launched to strengthen annual reviews and improve the quality of EHCP outcomes and planning. Reviewing its effectiveness will also be required.					
<p>System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>To develop a MAT model, strengthening system leadership and shared accountability across the partnership.</p> <p>To establish a clear, co-produced local area vision for SEND aligned to national reforms.</p> <p>To embed strong partnership working and co-production with children, young people and families.</p> <p>Success measure</p> <p>Delivery of a co-produced SEND Strategy for 2027 aligned to reforms.</p> <p>Establishment of a MAT model with clear governance and accountability.</p> <p>Evidence of joint commissioning arrangements across the SEND partnership.</p>	<p>Director of Education (Accountable)</p>	<p>The local area partnership to review existing workstreams and agree key priorities to inform Reading's SEND Strategy for 2027 aligned to reforms.</p> <p>Co-produce the local area vision for MAT model across the partnership (including parent community, early years and school leaders), including shared accountability for inclusion, SEND outcomes and pupil engagement.</p> <p>Engagement across the SEND partnership on commissioning approaches to meet reform requirements.</p> <p>Scope a tripartite partnership-based approach to supporting children and young people living with high levels of complexity that sit at the interface between Local Authority and Continuing Care funding.</p> <p>Strengthen the local area partnership</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Agreed priority areas for SEND Strategy development.</p> <p>Draft vision for MAT model established.</p> <p>Evidence of engagement across partnership stakeholders.</p> <p>Initial co-production activity with families and young people underway.</p>	<p>Agree the local area partnership vision for engagement and co-production with children, young people and families.</p> <p>Develop and draft Reading's SEND Strategy for 2027.</p> <p>Establish a draft joint commissioning approach across the SEND partnership.</p> <p>Prepare draft strategy for consultation.</p> <p>Review recommendations for a tripartite partnership-based approach to supporting children and young people living with high levels of complexity that sit at the interface between Local Authority and Continuing Care funding.</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Draft SEND Strategy for 2027 completed.</p> <p>Clear model for MAT model and distributed leadership agreed.</p> <p>Draft joint commissioning framework in place.</p> <p>Increased engagement and participation from families and partners.</p>	<p>Move from design to implementation planning for the MAT model, with distributed leadership across trusts and clusters.</p> <p>SEND Partnership Board to sign off Reading's SEND Strategy for 2027 aligned to reforms.</p> <p>Finalise and agree joint commissioning approach to initiate commissioning intentions.</p> <p>Implement the MAT model.</p> <p>Implement the local area partnership vision for engagement and co-production with children, young people and families.</p> <p>Agree recommendations for a tripartite partnership-based approach to supporting children and young people living with high levels of complexity that sit at the interface between Local Authority and Continuing Care funding.</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Approved and published SEND Strategy for 2027. Operational MAT model in place.</p> <p>Joint commissioning arrangements embedded and active.</p> <p>Demonstrable increase in parental confidence and co-production activity.</p> <p>Review parental confidence measures and any and all relevant learning</p> <p>Stronger, more consistent system leadership across the partnership.</p>


<p>Increased parental confidence in the SEND system.</p> <p>Strengthened co-production with children, young people and families.</p> <p>Collaboration on financial investment on physical environments of settings</p> <p>Evidence of partnership-led decision making across education, health and care.</p>		<p>approach to engagement and co-production with children, young people and families.</p> <p>Begin co-production of Reading's SEND Strategy for 2027.</p> <p>Develop mechanisms to improve local area partnership governance and parental confidence in the SEND system.</p>					
					<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Increased consistency in curriculum and provision design across settings.</p> <p>Improved access to and coordination of early intervention services.</p> <p>Clear evidence of shared leadership across services.</p> <p>Increased partner confidence in delivering reform priorities.</p>	<p>Implement a consistent culture of inclusive curriculum design across mainstream and specialist provision.</p> <p>Fully embed the local area partnership vision, with clear roles in delivering SEND reforms.</p> <p>Align delivery to Reading's SEND and Inclusion Strategy, ensuring consistency across the system.</p>	<p>Where do you expect your data to be?</p> <p>Measurable improvement in inclusive practice across schools.</p> <p>Reduction in exclusions, part-time timetables and escalation to high-cost provision.</p> <p>Consistent application of inclusive curriculum approaches.</p> <p>Strong, embedded system-wide culture of inclusion and shared accountability.</p>
Projected Investment Spend per quarter		Q2		Q3		Q4	
<p><i>Programme oversight / leadership capacity</i></p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>Workforce training and development</p> <p>Data/Digital</p> <p>Total Spend</p>		<p>Establish programme governance, SEND Partnership Board support, additional leadership capacity to design reforms</p>		<p>Ongoing programme delivery oversight, workstream coordination, MAT and Experts at Hand implementation leadership</p>		<p>Embedding governance, performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting</p>	

Workforce (EP, SALT, OT, RISE, outreach)	Workforce mapping, demand and capacity analysis, identification of gaps.	Expansion of workforce aligned to Experts at Hand model, multidisciplinary working strengthened.	Workforce fully operational, stabilisation and reduced reliance on reactive support.
Data / Digital/ Finance	Development of inclusion dashboards, identification of data/system gaps (education, health, care)	Implementation of dashboards, improved data sharing across partnership.	Fully operational data systems supporting decision-making, ongoing improvements.
Workforce training and development	Review of current training offer, identification of gaps, design of Experts at Hand training model.	Delivery of training across schools, FE, early years and partners (inclusive practice, SEND reforms, early identification)	Embedding continuous CPD model, evaluation of impact on practice.
Finance forecast on spend per quarter (Full finance breakdown attached with upload)			

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

7. How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?

Please set out how you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage



delivery against the plan, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.

Word count max. 250, current 229

Programme and delivery capability

Delivery is overseen through a well-established SEND governance structure, including the SEND Strategy Board and themed partnership workstreams, with routine performance reporting and risk management embedded.

Dedicated programme leadership will be strengthened through additional delivery capacity (including programme oversight and workstream leads), ensuring effective prioritisation, milestone tracking and alignment to reform requirements such as the Experts at Hand (EAH) model. Clear accountability across education, health and care partners, supported by cluster and federation models, will enable delivery at scale.

Workforce capacity and capability

The partnership is investing in a system-wide workforce development strategy, building on RISE and MDT approaches to expand capability in early identification and intervention. This includes targeted recruitment and commissioning (particularly EP, SaLT and OT), expansion of behavioural support, and a coordinated training offer through SENDCo networks, inclusive leadership programmes and EAH delivery.

This ensures mainstream settings are better equipped to meet need and reduces reliance on specialist and statutory pathways.

Data and analytics capability

The partnership is strengthening integrated data systems and dashboards to provide real-time insight, predictive modelling and performance tracking, supporting sufficiency planning, financial modelling and decision-making.

Investment in data integration across education, health and care will improve system visibility, enable earlier intervention, and support transparent reporting against key metrics

Together, these approaches ensure delivery is well-governed, data-driven and workforce-enabled, providing the capacity required to implement SEND reforms successfully.

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Other funding **Local Authorities.**

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block) for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

2025/2026 and 2026/2027 Reading Council has consulted with Reading Schools Forum to transfer funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to pay for the RISE Team that was first created using the DBV £1m grant. The RISE team includes specialists and consultants with experience and knowledge of the different areas of children and young people's needs (e.g. mental health, neurodiversity, behaviour, speech and language and communication needs and sensory needs). We plan to keep this funding stream open until 2029 to help embed the SEN Reforms and continue the Reading SEN strategy for inclusion.

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Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion in high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

- a. Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education
- b. Every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one
- c. Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement
- d. Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for inclusion bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as inclusion bases. If you are

receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency planning.

Word limit 500, current 482

The local area partnership has a clear, inclusive and data-led capital strategy aligned to SEND Reform priorities, focused on increasing local capacity, strengthening mainstream inclusion and reducing reliance on out-of-area provision.

Building inclusive capacity in mainstream settings

A central component of our strategy is a major capital investment programme already underway, delivering 128 additional specialist SEND places across two mainstream schools, opening in September 2027. This reflects our commitment to delivering inclusion bases within mainstream environments, ensuring that children whose needs cannot be fully met through ordinarily available provision can still be educated locally within inclusive settings.

This approach directly supports the reform ambition that inclusion is the default, by:

- *Increasing access to local specialist provision embedded in mainstream schools*
- *Reducing reliance on independent and out-of-area placements*
- *Enabling children to remain in their communities, reducing travel distances and improving stability for families*

The target cohorts are children with complex learning needs (including SLD/MLD), autism and SEMH, where demand and sufficiency pressures are most significant within the borough.

Strategic estate planning and partnership engagement

Our capital programme is underpinned by robust sufficiency planning and asset strategy, informed by demand forecasting and system data. The capital and SEND teams meet regularly, ensuring alignment between estate planning, commissioning and education strategy. Together, they have undertaken a review of capacity across the borough, identifying opportunities to repurpose or expand existing mainstream sites to provide inclusive spaces and resourced provision.

We are working closely with schools, trusts and partner organisations to develop cluster-based solutions and co-located provision models, ensuring that capacity is distributed strategically across phases (early years, school-age and post-16) and localities. This enables a balanced continuum of provision, from mainstream support through to specialist placements.


Delivering a full continuum of provision

While capital investment prioritises mainstream inclusion, we recognise that some children require specialist placements. The expansion of local specialist capacity (including ARPs and co-located provision) is designed to meet this need within the local area wherever possible, rather than through standalone specialist institutions or out-of-area placements. This ensures that specialist provision complements, rather than replaces, mainstream inclusion.

Enhancing the suitability of the estate

Investment is also focused on improving the accessibility and adaptability of mainstream environments, ensuring schools can meet a wider range of needs and we will be working closely with partners to assess the current estate. This includes:

- *Adapted learning spaces and sensory environments*

- 
- *Integration of therapeutic and MDT support within school settings (aligned to the Experts at Hand model)*
 - *Exploration of assistive technology to support access, communication and independence*

Outcomes and impact

Through this strategy, the partnership will:

- *Increase the number of children with SEND supported in mainstream and inclusion bases*
- *Ensure all children needing a specialist place locally can access one*
- *Reduce INMSS placements and long-distance travel*
- *Deliver a financially sustainable system, aligned to demand and improving value for money*

Overall, the capital strategy enables a shift from a reactive, placement-led model to a proactive, inclusion-led system, fully aligned to SEND Reform expectations.



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Overall, the capital strategy enables a shift from a reactive, placement-led model to a proactive, inclusion-led system, fully aligned to SEND Reform expectations.

9. System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

Word limit 500, current 475

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The local area partnership will deliver SEND Reform through strong, inclusive and transparent engagement with all system partners and stakeholders, underpinned by co-production and shared accountability.

Education partners (schools, early years, AP and FE/post-16), *Engagement with education settings is central to delivery, particularly given the reforms' emphasis on mainstream inclusion and collective responsibility. The partnership will:*

- *Work through established Education Partnership Board structures, cluster networks and federations to ensure schools and MATs co-design and implement the Experts at Hand (EAH) model and inclusive practice.*
- *Use SENDCo networks, headteacher briefings, Inclusive Champion networks and ARP forums to build capability, share learning and provide feedback loops into system design.*
- *Engage early years providers and FE/post-16 institutions, including out-of-area settings attended by Reading young people, to ensure a fully integrated 0–25 continuum of provision.*
- *Strengthen engagement with Alternative Provision (AP) through improved commissioning, quality assurance and partnership forums, ensuring AP is used appropriately and time-limited.*

This reflects changing roles set out in the Schools White Paper, with schools and trusts taking greater responsibility for inclusion within a strong local partnership framework.

Parents, carers, children and young people, *Co-production is a core system principle. The partnership will:*

- *Strengthen engagement with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF), building capacity to ensure consistent representation at strategic boards and workstreams.*
- *Expand the role of Family Hubs as accessible community-based engagement points, supporting early help and communication.*
- *Embed “you said, we did” feedback loops, demonstrating how lived experience shapes decision-making.*
- *Develop a mechanism for CYP views to be gained frequently and systemically. This will be developed and sampled on a regular basis, feeding into SEND Strategy across the partnership. This will be overseen by Experts at Hand and link closely in with Social Care systems.*

- Continue to develop participation mechanisms for children and young people, ensuring their voice informs service design, particularly at transition points.



This approach directly addresses current variability in engagement and aims to build further trust and confidence in the system.

Health, care and wider partners, *The partnership will strengthen collaboration across education, health and care, including the ICB, therapy services and social care, through:*

- Joint commissioning arrangements aligned to reform priorities
- Integrated MDT working, including EAH delivery
- Shared governance, performance reporting and quality assurance processes

Voluntary and community sector organisations will continue to support engagement, early intervention and culturally responsive practice.

Managing transition to reform, *The partnership recognises that reform requires a shift from fragmented delivery to shared ownership and accountability. This will be supported through:*

- Clear communication of the reform vision and partner roles
- Phased implementation (e.g. EAH rollout) with ongoing partner feedback
- Strengthened data sharing and transparency to support joint decision-making

Additional support required, *To maximise engagement and momentum, the partnership would welcome DfE support to:*

- Participate in summer term engagement events with school leaders and the Parent Carer Forum to build shared understanding of reforms
- Provide national clarity and consistency of messaging around expectations for inclusion and EAH delivery
- Support engagement with FE and out-of-area providers, where influence is more limited

Overall, the partnership's approach ensures engagement is systematic, inclusive and action-focused, enabling successful co-production and sustained delivery of SEND reforms.

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10. Risks and Mitigations

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Inconsistent understanding and implementation of inclusion and pathways across settings, including workforce capacity and capability restraints	High – continued escalation to EHCPs, exclusions and specialist placements	High	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, jointly owned pathways across early years, schools and post-16 • Equity-focused monitoring and targeted support to settings • Ongoing engagement with schools and providers • Workforce development embedded as a golden thread across reforms • Consistent language, expectations and practice models • Peer learning, networks and reflective supervision • Phased implementation with targeted support 	Amber
Parental confidence and trust do not improve at pace,	Medium– High – reputational	Medium	Amber	Strengthen co-production via Parent Carer Forum; clearer communication of EAH offer and pathways; improved SEND resolution routes; regular feedback loops	Green

	risk and increased demand on statutory processes			demonstrating “you said, we did”	
Insufficient pace of local sufficiency delivery (specialist places)	High	Medium	Red	Robust sufficiency and pupil-level planning; delivery of co-located special provision and ARPs; cluster-based flexible provision; regular review of demand trends. Department of Education assurance that planned projects are delivered on time.	Amber
Financial pressures undermine sustainability and value for money. Continued reliance on late, high-cost intervention limits investment in early support.	High	High	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Joint commissioning aligned to reform priorities ● Early investment through Best Start in Life and Families First ● Regular financial oversight and demand modelling Clear accountabilities for financial and outcome impact	Amber
Data and financial systems not fully integrated, limiting	Medium	Medium	Amber	Continue to develop integrated dashboards across education, health and care; strengthen financial modelling linked to reform milestones; embed shared accountability at Partnership Board level. This will be underpinned by our complexity Matrix.	Green

11. Dependencies

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

- NHS reforms
- SEND and Inclusion strategy 2027 - 2039
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Reforms to Children's Social Care
- Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs
- Best Start In Life Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review

Word limit 500 max, current 500

Dependencies

The successful delivery of the local SEND Reform Plan is dependent on a number of national and local transformation programmes. The partnership has a clear understanding of these dependencies and will proactively manage alignment to ensure delivery remains on track.

NHS reforms

Delivery of the Experts at Hand (EAH) model and early intervention approach is critically dependent on health system capacity and integration, particularly across Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT) and neurodevelopmental pathways. Workforce pressures and waiting times continue to impact early identification and statutory timeliness.

***Mitigation:** Strengthened joint commissioning with the ICB, alignment to NHS recovery plans and integrated MDT delivery will embed health partners in system reform. A continued shift to needs-led (not diagnosis-led) pathways will reduce reliance on clinical thresholds and enable earlier intervention.*

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Potential changes to local authority structures could affect governance, commissioning and delivery capacity.

***Mitigation:** A robust SEND governance framework, led by the SEND Strategy Board and delivered through multi-agency workstreams, provides stability. Clear accountability, shared priorities and formal partnership agreements will maintain continuity through any structural change.*

Children's Social Care reforms

Reforms strengthening early help and safeguarding are critical to meeting the needs of vulnerable children with SEND.



Mitigation: The Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) role, alongside improved integration between SEND and social care, will ensure alignment through co-produced pathways and strengthened information sharing.

Best Start in Life and Family Hubs

Expansion of Family Hubs and early years reforms is central to improving early identification, engagement and prevention.

Mitigation: Family Hubs are embedded as key delivery routes for SEND advice, engagement and early help, aligned to EAH pathways. This enables earlier access to support and reduces escalation to statutory services.

Curriculum, Assessment and National SEND Reform

National policy developments will shape expectations for inclusion, accountability and provision. Key dependencies include: national minimum standards; changes to the national funding formula; an updated SEND Code of Practice; potential mainstream inclusion legislation; increased transparency of Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) SEND funding; and enhanced Ofsted scrutiny of Trust-wide inclusion.

There are also timing and delivery uncertainties regarding: publication of national standards; introduction of inclusion legislation; implementation of Ofsted Trust inspections; alignment between school inspection and local inclusion plans; financial transparency requirements for MATs; and future high needs funding reforms.

Mitigation: The partnership will maintain close engagement with the DfE, regional partners, schools and Trusts to ensure readiness and alignment. A continued focus on inclusive practice, shared accountability and evidence-based sufficiency planning will enable adaptability to national reform.

SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2027–2039

Long-term national direction will influence local priorities, expectations and funding.

Mitigation: The local roadmap is designed to be iterative and aligned to emerging national strategy, ensuring flexibility and strategic coherence.

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)

National rollout is a dependency for integrated SEND and mental health support. In Reading, 100% MHST coverage is already achieved.

Mitigation: Full local coverage provides a strong foundation; continued integration with SEND pathways and EAH will maximise impact regardless of national rollout timelines.

The successful delivery of the local SEND Reform Plan is dependent on a number of national and local transformation programmes. The partnership has a clear understanding of these dependencies and will actively manage alignment to ensure delivery remains on track.

NHS reforms

The delivery of the Experts at Hand (EAH) model and early intervention approach is critically dependent on health system capacity and integration, particularly across Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT) and neurodevelopmental pathways. Current workforce pressures and waiting times impact early identification and statutory timeliness.

Mitigation: Strengthened joint commissioning with the ICB, alignment to NHS recovery plans, and integrated MDT models will ensure health partners are embedded in system delivery. Continued development of needs-led pathways (not diagnosis-led) will reduce reliance on clinical thresholds and support earlier intervention.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Potential changes to local authority structures could impact governance, commissioning and delivery capacity across the partnership.

Mitigation: The partnership's strong governance framework and shared SEND Strategy Board provides stability, with delivery structured through multi-agency workstreams. System leadership will maintain continuity through clear accountability, shared priorities and partnership agreements.

Children's Social Care reforms

Reforms to social care, including strengthening early help and safeguarding approaches, are critical to ensuring joined-up support for complex and vulnerable children.

Mitigation: The appointment of a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and strengthened integration between SEND and social care will ensure alignment, with co-produced pathways and improved information sharing across partners.

Best Start in Life and Family Hubs

The expansion of Family Hubs and early years reform programmes is central to improving early identification, parental engagement and prevention.

Mitigation: Family Hubs are being embedded as key delivery channels for SEND engagement, advice and early help, aligned to EAH and early intervention pathways. This ensures children and families access support earlier, reducing escalation to statutory services.

Curriculum, Assessment and National SEND Reform

National changes to curriculum, assessment and SEND legislation may significantly impact how schools identify, assess and support children and young people with SEND, particularly in relation to inclusion expectations, attainment measures, accountability and post-16 pathways. The successful delivery of the local reform programme is therefore dependent on wider national policy developments, including:

- Introduction of national minimum standards to support greater consistency in SEND identification, provision and thresholds across local areas.
- Rebalancing of the national funding formula to better reflect levels of need, demand growth and the financial pressures associated with inclusion and specialist provision.
- Publication of an updated SEND Code of Practice to provide greater clarity on statutory expectations, accountability and implementation of reforms.
- Potential mainstream inclusion legislation to strengthen expectations around inclusive practice and the responsibilities of education providers within an inclusive system.
- Improved transparency surrounding the allocation and use of SEND funding within Multi-Academy Trusts.
- Increased Ofsted scrutiny of Trust-wide inclusion arrangements and SEND outcomes, recognising the growing strategic role of Trusts in shaping local inclusion capacity.

These reforms will shape expectations around inclusive practice, consistency of provision, statutory processes and system accountability. As Trusts continue to play an increasingly significant role within the education system, their capacity and commitment to inclusion will remain critical to the success of local reform delivery.

Mitigation: The partnership will continue to align local strategy and operational delivery to emerging national reforms through strong engagement with schools, Trusts, regional partners and the DfE. Reading will maintain a proactive focus on inclusive practice, shared accountability and evidence-based sufficiency planning to ensure readiness for future legislative, accountability and inspection changes.



Cross-cutting dependency: Data and financial reform

Across all programmes, there is a dependency on integrated data systems and financial modelling to support predictive planning, sufficiency management and value for money.

Mitigation: *The partnership is investing in shared dashboards, performance tracking and financial modelling to ensure informed decision-making and alignment across reforms.*

Overall, the partnership will manage these dependencies through strong governance, joint commissioning, co-production and a shared reform narrative, ensuring that national and local changes act as enablers rather than barriers to delivering an inclusive, sustainable SEND system.

Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

12. How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

- **Monitoring tools and processes** - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

Some local area partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.

In some local area partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.

Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

- **Feedback and adaptation mechanisms** - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.

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The partnership will ensure delivery is on track through a robust, data-led performance framework, supported by regular governance, real-time insight and continuous feedback loops. We will build on the data submission completed within the reform plan to continue to monitor the impact across the 4 building blocks.

Monitoring tools and processes

Integrated data dashboards and performance reporting

A central component of monitoring is the development of integrated SEND dashboards, bringing together data from education, health and care. These dashboards will be used weekly at an operational level to identify trends, risks and emerging pressures (e.g. demand for EHC needs assessments, therapy waiting times, exclusions). This builds on existing plans to strengthen data integration and predictive modelling across the system.

Strategic oversight through governance

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be reviewed monthly by the SEND Strategy Board, enabling leaders to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and service delivery. Performance reporting is embedded within established governance structures, ensuring shared accountability across partners.

Tracking across four core domains

- *Demand: EHC needs assessment requests and decisions, Growth in EHCPs and SEN Support cohorts*
- *Service delivery: Deployment and reach of Experts at Hand (EAH) and MDT services, Number of inclusion places and ARP/specialist spaces created, Timeliness of assessments and professional advice*
- *Service quality: CYP views systematically collected via Experts at Hand, Parental satisfaction, complaints and tribunal trends, Quality assurance audits of EHCPs and multi-agency practice*
- *Outcomes: Attendance, exclusions and suspensions, NEET rates and preparation for adulthood outcomes, Proportion of children supported in mainstream vs specialist placements*


This aligns with existing quality assurance processes, audits and performance tracking mechanisms already embedded across the partnership

Feedback and adaptation mechanisms

Co-production and stakeholder feedback

Feedback from children, young people and families will be gathered through a systematic project, led by Experts at Hand. Parent Carer Forums will provide feedback on Family Hubs and SEND resolution processes, ensuring lived experience informs performance review and service redesign.

Learning from complaints, tribunals and audits



The partnership will systematically use complaints, tribunal data and multi-agency audits to identify themes, reduce variation and improve practice. This includes strengthened early resolution processes and clearer “you said, we did” feedback loops.

Workforce and system feedback loops

Regular engagement with schools and partners through SENDCo networks, headteacher briefings and MDT forums will provide real-time insight into delivery challenges and impact, enabling rapid adaptation.

Continuous improvement approach

Performance data, qualitative feedback and financial modelling will be triangulated to inform decision-making at all levels. Where delivery is off track, the partnership will implement targeted improvement actions, supported by clear accountability and oversight.

Overall, the partnership will know delivery is on track through a system that is data-driven, transparent and responsive, ensuring that progress against SEND Reform outcomes is continuously monitored, understood and acted upon.

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Service quality: Parental satisfaction, complaints and tribunal trends, Quality assurance audits of EHCPs and multi-agency practice

Outcomes: Attendance, exclusions and suspensions, NEET rates and preparation for adulthood outcomes, Proportion of children supported in mainstream vs specialist placements

This aligns with existing quality assurance processes, audits and performance tracking mechanisms already embedded across the partnership

Feedback and adaptation mechanisms

Co-production and stakeholder feedback

Feedback from children, young people and families will be gathered through the Parent Carer Forum, Family Hubs and SEND resolution processes, ensuring lived experience informs performance review and service redesign. [SEND Draft...is Version | PowerPoint]

Learning from complaints, tribunals and audits

The partnership will systematically use complaints, tribunal data and multi-agency audits to identify themes, reduce variation and improve practice. This includes strengthened early resolution processes and clearer “you said, we did” feedback loops.

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Overall, the partnership will know delivery is on track through a system that is data-driven, transparent and responsive, ensuring that progress against SEND Reform outcomes is continuously monitored, understood and acted upon.

13. Reporting to DfE

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance**, **Exclusions**, and **Unauthorised absence**.

Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

Section 4 – Governance

14. How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?

Please outline the governance structures in place to oversee delivery. Clearly set out who is responsible for overseeing reform delivery, what each governance group or individual is accountable for, and how these arrangements ensure progress is monitored and decisions are made transparently. Please identify where the named SRO for the Local SEND Reform Plan sits within the governance structure and ensure your response incorporates the core minimum requirements.

Governance Mechanism <i>This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).</i>	Purpose/ Responsibilities <i>What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?</i>	Membership <i>Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this. (Include n/a if an individual).</i>	Cadence <i>How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?</i>	Decision Rights <i>What decisions can this governance mechanism make?</i>	Escalation Route <i>Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?</i>
<i>SEND Strategic Partnership Board</i>	<i>Provides strategic oversight of SEND reforms across education, health and care. Ensures joint ownership, alignment with wider system priorities, and effective co-production. Monitors progress against milestones and outcomes; agrees corrective action where progress is off-track.</i>	<i>Executive Director of Children's Services (Chair), Director of Education, LA Strategic Lead for SEND, ICB executive lead for SEND, NHS provider reps, education leaders (including FE and early years), Adult Social Care, Parent Carer Forum reps, voluntary sector, link to schools forum and CYP representative.</i>	<i>Bi- monthly</i>	<i>Approves strategic direction, key policy decisions, system-wide changes, and escalation of risks</i>	<i>Health & Wellbeing Board / ICB Board / Local Authority Corporate Management Team</i>
<i>Director of Education (SRO) / Executive Director of Children's Services</i>	<i>Overall accountability for delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan. Responsible for ensuring reforms remain on track, risks are managed, resources are aligned, and</i>	<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Continuous oversight; formal reviews monthly</i>	<i>Final sign-off on programme priorities, major changes to scope, resource allocation,</i>	<i>SEND Strategic Board / ICB Chief Executive / Local Authority Director of Children's Services/ Local Authority</i>

	<i>statutory partners deliver agreed commitments. Holds system to account for outcomes. Receives programme performance, risk and finance reports.</i>			<i>and escalation of decisions to board</i>	<i>Corporate Leadership Team</i>
<i>Transformation and Efficiency Board</i>	<i>Provides corporate leadership and assurance for all major transformation, efficiency, and change programmes across the Local Authority. Oversees delivery against agreed outcomes, financial savings, benefits realisation, and risk. Ensures alignment with corporate priorities, Medium Term Financial Strategy, and statutory responsibilities, including SEND reform and High Needs sustainability. Receives highlight reports, benefits tracking, financial forecasts, and risk/issue logs for all major programmes. Holds programme SROs to account for delivery and pace.</i>	<i>Chief Executive (Chair); Executive Directors; s.151 Officer; Programme Management Leads</i>	<i>Six weekly</i>	<i>Approves corporate transformation priorities; agrees corrective actions for underperforming programmes; authorises scope changes, re-prioritisation, or cessation of projects; endorses investment and savings proposals within delegated authority; directs escalation where delivery or financial risk exceeds tolerance.</i>	<i>Cabinet / Elected Members; Corporate Leadership Team; Audit & Governance Committee (where risk or control issues arise); external assurance bodies where required</i>

<p><i>Strategic High Needs Block Working Group</i></p>	<p><i>Provides strategic oversight of the High Needs Block within the DSG. Responsible for monitoring HNB financial performance, demand pressures, cost drivers, and impact of SEND reforms on sustainability. Oversees delivery of HNB management and recovery plans, ensures alignment with SEND Reform priorities, and advises on use of HNB resources to support improved outcomes and value for money. Receives detailed finance, forecast, and demand reports, including placement trends and risks.</i></p>	<p><i>Director of Children's Services or s.151 Officer (Chair); LA Finance (DSG/HNB); SEND Strategic Lead; ICB finance / commissioning representative; education representatives (e.g. special schools, mainstream, AP); PCF representative; programme lead (attendance as required).</i></p>	<p><i>Monthly</i></p>	<p><i>Recommends strategic use of the High Needs Block; agrees mitigation actions for in-year pressures; endorses HNB recovery and investment proposals; agrees commissioning and system-change proposals within delegated authority (noting Schools Forum retains statutory decision-making role).</i></p>	<p><i>SEND Strategic Partnership Board / Corporate Leadership Team</i></p>
<p><i>SEND Reform Programme Board / SEND Operational Group</i></p>	<p><i>Oversees day-to-day delivery of the Reform Plan. Tracks performance, milestones, risks and dependencies. Coordinates</i></p>	<p><i>Director of Education (Chair), SEND Strategic Leads, ICB operational leads, education reps, PCF reps, programme management support</i></p>	<p><i>Monthly</i></p>	<p><i>Agrees delivery plans, mitigations for slippage, reallocates resources within agreed tolerances</i></p>	<p><i>SEND Strategic Partnership Board / SRO</i></p>

	<i>workstreams and ensures issues are resolved at pace. Reports delivery progress to the Strategic Partnership Board.</i>				
<i>Delivery Workstreams</i>	<i>Deliver specific reform priorities and improvement actions. Responsible for implementation, reporting progress, identifying risks, and engaging stakeholders and families at a delivery level.</i>	<i>Operational leads from LA, EAH, health practitioners, schools/settings, PCF reps</i>	<i>Fortnightly/ Monthly</i>	<i>Operational decisions within agreed scope and resources</i>	<i>SEND Reform Programme Board/ SEND Operational Group</i>

If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here.

*****INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK*****

Section 5 – Central Government Support

15. How can we help you?

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

- Access to specialist expertise or advisory support
- Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges
- Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation
- Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration
- Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care
- Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers

We are well positioned to deliver reform but would benefit from targeted practical support from central government to accelerate implementation and ensure consistency with national expectations.

Specialist expertise and advisory support

Targeted input on the implementation of the Experts at Hand model, particularly around best practice in scaling multidisciplinary delivery and embedding early intervention across all settings, would support consistent and high-quality delivery.

Workforce development and recruitment

Support to address national shortages in key specialist roles (EP, SaLT, OT) would be critical. This could include national recruitment campaigns, training pipeline expansion and shared workforce solutions across regions.

Data, tools and reporting frameworks

Provision of standardised data tools, dashboards and KPI frameworks aligned to SEND Reforms would support benchmarking, reduce local variation and strengthen system assurance. National templates for financial modelling and sufficiency planning would further support value for money.

Peer learning and regional collaboration

Facilitated opportunities for peer learning across local area partnerships, including access to high-performing systems and regional networks, would help accelerate improvement and share innovative practice.

System-level coordination

Support to strengthen alignment across education, health and care reforms, particularly in relation to NHS pathways and data integration, would help ensure dependencies are effectively managed.

Policy clarity and regulatory guidance

Clear, consistent national guidance on expectations for inclusion, thresholds and delivery models would support local partners to implement reforms confidently and reduce variation.

Additionally, we would welcome DfE participation in local engagement events with schools and Parent Carer Forums to build shared understanding and momentum for reform delivery.



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Annex B - Supporting Documents

Document	Link
The Schools White Paper	Every Child Achieving and Thriving
SEND Consultation Document	SEND reform: putting children and young people first.
LA and Schools Budget 2026-27	Schools Operational Guide 2026-27
Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Guidance and Tool	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan – Data template	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework	Included in commission pack
Local Inclusion Partnership Grant 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Experts at Hand Guidance	To be published Spring 2026
High Needs Capital Allocations 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Guidance on Inclusion bases	To be published Spring 2026

Annex C – Risk Matrix

IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY/LIKELIHOOD				
		<u>≤ 10%</u>	>10% - <30%	>30% - <60%	>60% - <90%	>90%
		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
Cannot deliver Reform Plan; Failure of mission critical activity.	Crisis					
Significant impact to objectives; Significant and sustained disruption to activity.	Critical					
Delivery targets are compromised; Project delay / budget overrun.	Moderate					
Limited impact on delivery targets; Deviations from project resource, timescale or targets.	Marginal					
Minimal impact on delivery targets; Minimal impacts to project / programme efficiency.	Negligible					

Policy Committee

15 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Support for Low-Income Households
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director of Resources Melissa Wise, Executive Director, Communities &, Adult Social Care
Report author	Mark Redfearn, Social Inclusion & VCS Partnerships Manager
Lead Councillor	Liz Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	Promote more equal communities in Reading
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee agree the utilisation of the DWP Crisis & Resilience Fund as detailed in Para 4.41 for 2026/27 to support low-income households in Reading. 2. That the Committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to confirm and make changes to the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme for Reading Borough whilst maintaining compliance with the funding allocation requirements from DWP, as detailed in para 4.45. 3. That the Committee notes the decision taken under officer delegation by the Director of Policy, Change and Customer Service to utilise an element of the funding for staff resource and initial Crisis Payments and Housing Payments as detailed in para 3.5.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) was allocated to the Council to deliver support to low-income households from 1 April 2026. The CRF allocation to Reading has been confirmed as £2,335,307 each year from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This funding from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) replaced the funding received by the Council for the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) schemes but is a new scheme with different requirements.
- 1.2 By comparison, the Council received £367,440 for Discretionary Housing Payments and £1,992,735 for the Household Support Fund in 2025/26, totalling £2,360,175. HSF was allocated for 6–12-month periods, making longer term planning challenging.
- 1.3 The aim of the CRF is to provide support for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock, whilst also investing in local financial resilience to enable communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing dependence and repeat need. Within Reading, the Council wants the CRF to bring positive and sustained change to the financial health of residents, many of which face ongoing financial challenges because of their specific circumstances. As well as providing the immediate crisis support residents

need, the Council will proactively provide access to ongoing support and consistently direct residents to take up these opportunities to avoid falling into crisis in the future.

- 1.4 Reading has an effective voluntary and community sector within the borough which provides a substantial amount of support to low-income residents, and the Council will work in partnership with these and other statutory organisations to achieve its CRF ambitions.
- 1.5 There is an expectation from Government that the current DHP arrangements will continue (as the Housing Payments element) for at least the first two-years of the CRF.
- 1.6 This report provides an overview of all elements of Crisis & Resilience Fund support being proposed to support low-income households within the borough. These elements include:
 - Enabling residents facing a financial crisis to apply for support throughout the year.
 - Increasing the flexibility of financial support available to each household to be able to offer more support to those with the highest need.
 - Specifically supporting residents on means-tested benefits with their housing costs.
 - Applications for support considered by trained staff who can identify and refer to wider support options available to residents.
 - Funding an enhanced range of local services which support residents' long-term financial resilience.
 - Pro-actively identifying residents who may be at risk of falling into financial crisis.
 - Improving the co-ordination and collective joint working of organisations within the borough who provide cost-of-living support to low-income households.
- 1.7 The Council is required to submit a CRF delivery plan to DWP by 1 July 2026 and will be required to provide monitoring reports every six months on spend and outcomes in accordance with DWP guidance. The delivery plan is required to be approved by the Lead Councillor and Section 151 Officer before submission.
- 1.8 As mandated within the statutory CRF guidance issued by DWP, the Council has been administering applications for Crisis Payments and Housing Payments since 1 April 2026. By launching Crisis Payment and Housing Payment application schemes, the Council has met a key requirement of ensuring that immediate financial support is available to residents in a way that can continue throughout the year.
- 1.9 Whilst the CRF replaces the funding received via the HSF and has broadly similar objectives relating to supporting residents who are struggling financially, there are substantial differences in the expected scheme elements and approaches for doing this. This means that it shouldn't be expected that all the support offered via the HSF in recent years will be able to continue to be delivered by the Council.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 In providing support to tackle the immediate and longer-term financial needs of residents, the Crisis and Resilience Fund contribute to the Council Plan objectives of promoting more equal communities within Reading, and safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children.
- 2.2 The introduction of the CRF presents the Council with an opportunity to plan over the medium term (three years) for the delivery of services that support residents who are struggling to meet the cost of living. Whilst the Council is required to develop and submit plans to utilise all the CRF funding provided each year, the Council can carry any unused funding into the next financial year for years 2026/7 and 2027/8. All the CRF funding must be spent by 31st March 2029. The approach proposed throughout this paper is based on developing an understanding, particularly in the current financial climate, of the demand on the crisis and housing elements of the CRF, whilst developing sustainable and impactful resilience services.

- 2.3 The HSF, by contrast, was funded on a 6–12-month basis through various rounds (the funding for 2025/26 represented the seventh round of funding). This created significant challenges for planning and delivering the scheme.
- 2.4 The recent Indices of Deprivation 2025 contain specific information about the scale of income deprivation within the borough, including specific data on income deprivation for households with children and those with older people. These are being used to develop the Resilience elements of the scheme.

3. CRF Requirements

- 3.1 The CRF requires local authorities to focus on the following four core elements:
- **Crisis Payments:** Providing support to those in crisis.
 - **Housing Payments:** Providing financial support towards housing needs, to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs.
 - **Resilience Services:** Funding for services delivered by Authorities or external providers to improve financial resilience.
 - **Community Coordination:** Investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape.
- 3.2 Further information on the requirements of the CRF are presented in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Within the CRF guidance the key delivery principles detailed are:
- **Person-centred:** Ensure that people's preferences, needs and values stay central to professional decisions, providing support that is respectful to them.
 - **Needs-based:** Recognise the varied circumstances that individuals may experience, seeking to meet the underlying needs, not just the crisis symptoms.
 - **Holistic:** Provide integrated support that helps the individual and their households, with local authorities considering the wide range of services and actions they have access to.
 - **Encompass a no wrong door approach:** Connect individuals to the right service and support through warm referrals, regardless of their initial point of contact.
 - **Cash First:** Prioritising digital or physical cash payments when providing Crisis Payments (including bank transfers, cash-out vouchers such as through PayPoint, Post Office and ATMs).
 - **Warm Referrals:** Where someone is referred by one organisation or service to another with a focus on ensuring a smooth transition. Sufficient and accurate information is also provided, with informed consent, as part of the referral to prevent people from having to explain their circumstances and needs on multiple occasions
 - **Trauma Informed Approach:** The Trauma Informed Approach recognises the extensive and continuing impacts that trauma may have on an individual's life. The impacts of trauma, some of which may not be obvious or disclosed, can make interacting with services a difficult and potentially retraumatising experience. The Trauma Informed Approach aims to avoid and mitigate this risk whilst creating a safe and empowering environment for all colleagues and customers. The six principles of trauma-informed practice: Safety; Trust; Choice; Collaboration; Empowerment; Cultural consideration.

Administration

- 3.4 The following are some key points from the guidance relating the administration of the CRF:
- Payments made monthly to the Council from DWP.
 - The use of the Fund to deliver and maintain activity for which the Authority is already receiving funding from HM Government **is not** permitted.
 - Authorities should assess how CRF funding aligns with their existing funding sources and determine how to use the CRF to complement current services without creating duplicate provisions. The Authority can choose to supplement or expand through the Fund existing provision delivered by, or on behalf of, the Authority where it aligns with CRF policy intent.
 - Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) provision: Authorities should consider how CRF can complement their existing LWA schemes. The Government does not expect local authorities to use CRF to replace existing LWA funded provision. It is important that Authorities' existing LWA schemes continue to be funded as they have been previously so that the CRF funding can be used to build or expand upon existing services.
 - DWP will contact local authorities for initial compliance and where further clarification is needed.
- 3.5 On the 8 April 2026, an Officer Delegation Notice was completed by the Director of Policy, Change & Customer Services, to enable £225,000 of the £2,335,307 budget for the Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation to Reading from the Department for Work & Pensions be utilised to enable the provision of Crisis Payments from 1 April 2026, to ensure continuity of support during this transition phase.

4. Delivering a Reading CRF

CRF Development

- 4.1 The development of the various elements of the CRF involved input from officers from across the Council and has also included input from key voluntary and community organisations within the borough to ensure a full understanding of existing provision feeds into the development of new proposals.
- 4.2 This development has included reviewing the statutory guidance as it has been issued over recent months, an analysis of the latest available Indices of Deprivation and other data to identify local priorities, mapping the existing provision of cost-of-living services within the borough, engaging with DWP events, and piloting a more flexible application process for providing support to low-income households during the final months of the HSF scheme.
- 4.3 This work has enabled the Council to develop a new CRF scheme which meets its ambition to bring positive and sustained change to the financial health of residents. This includes offering immediate support to residents in financial crisis, working with them to identify the circumstances that have caused the crisis, and doing as much as possible to help residents to take-up the further resilience support that will enable them to have a more self-sustaining financial future.
- 4.4 The Council has been administering applications for Crisis Payments and Housing Payments since 1 April 2026, which was enabled by a delegated officer decision. By launching the Crisis Payment and Housing Payment application schemes, the Council

has met a key requirement of ensuring that immediate financial support is available to residents in a way that can continue throughout the year.

Crisis Payments

- 4.5 The administration of the Crisis Payments applications continues to be based within the Money Advice Team. Applications for Crisis Payments can be made online, by telephone, or in person within the Civic Offices.
- 4.6 The Council also accept applications made on behalf of residents from local VCS organisations and has provided briefings and guidance to support these organisations.
- 4.7 Every resident who receives a crisis payment will also have their current financial situation assessed to identify what further support is needed to improve their ongoing financial resilience. Residents receiving crisis support will be strongly encouraged to take-up this further support and where possible a direct referral will be made.
- 4.8 The eligibility criteria to apply for a Crisis Payment (which an applicant must meet in full) has been developed locally (in line with the statutory guidance) and is split into three elements and can be summarised as:

Residency requirements:

- Live in the Reading Borough Council area, have been placed in temporary accommodation by Reading Borough Council, or are sofa surfing/sleeping rough in the borough and supported by local services.
- Have recourse to public funds or can access support through alternative statutory powers.
- Not be a dependant, unless they are a young person without parental support.

Financial requirements:

- Be on a low income, for example passported benefit, or not receiving benefits but the household income is lower than essential household costs based on benchmark figures.
- Have savings or other capital below £1,000.
- Not have the money, resources or access to safe and affordable credit needed to deal with the immediate crisis and not go without essentials, taking on unmanageable debt or worsening your financial situation.
- Not be able to get support from anyone else in your household

Need requirements:

- Not receiving a Crisis Payment will put them or their household at risk.
- The crisis cannot be avoided before they receive further income.
- Not receiving support will worsen their financial situation.
- They have not received a Crisis Payment for the same need in the last 3 months unless there has been a material change in circumstances or a new crisis has arisen.

- 4.9 Applicants will be required to provide some evidence of their need for crisis support, such as their financial details or a crime reference number. The processes for confirming a crisis will be reviewed against best practice as CRF delivery becomes more established across the country.

Crisis Payments will be offered to residents for the following types of support:

- Food – per week / Other shopping – per week / Clothing / Utilities / Household item (single) / Household item (multiple) / Transport / Broadband / Phone Bill / Other Support

- 4.10 As Crisis Payments applications are a new element of service being delivered by the Council, forecasting demand throughout the year is challenging. The take-up and reasons

for applying will be closely monitored to identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness and operational efficiency of the Crisis Payment application scheme, including whether any amendments to the eligibility criteria are needed, whilst also balancing the volume of applications throughout the year with the available budget. As an initial budgetary control mechanism, any request for a Crisis Payment above £500 will need to be authorised by a manager.

- 4.11 Whilst the Government expects for Crisis Payments to mostly be delivered through an application-based scheme, there is also an expectation that councils use other methods to deliver CRF outcomes which may fall outside of application-based support. The other elements of crisis support would not necessarily need to have the same eligibility criteria as the Crisis Payments application scheme.
- 4.12 This includes targeting vulnerable individuals, families, or communities to directly provide Crisis Payments or to make them aware of other crisis support and Resilience Services available. In this context we could also look at providing crisis support to residents who are currently unable to receive specific types of support due to nationally prescribed eligibility criteria.
- 4.13 DWP provides data and information to the Council to support the identification of those in need within the borough, which along with other local data sources may be used by the Council to proactively provide financial support to residents who may be in financial crisis.
- 4.14 Deciding whether to issue crisis payments in this way will be dependent on the volume of Crisis Payment applications and the amount of budget available to do so.
- 4.15 The proposed CRF budget allocation for Crisis Payments is **£900,000**. Currently the average value of Crisis Payments is £290 per household, which means that the Council would have the capacity to issue approximately 3,100 Crisis Payments to low-income households throughout the year.

Housing Payments

- 4.16 Applications for Housing Payments can be made using the same form and processes for making a Crisis Payment application.
- 4.17 Every resident receiving a Housing Payment will also have their current financial situation assessed to identify what further support is needed to improve their ongoing financial resilience.
- 4.18 The Housing Payment provides financial support towards housing costs and is paid by the Council when we are satisfied that an applicant requires further financial assistance with housing costs. These payments can be made to claimants who are entitled to either:
 - Housing Benefit, or
 - Universal Credit with housing costs towards rental liability. This includes Shared Ownership properties which carry a rental liability.
- 4.19 Residents who are not eligible for a Housing Payment, may be able to access further financial assistance through the Crisis Payment scheme.
- 4.20 Housing costs are not specifically defined, but in general refer to rental liability, as well as:
 - Rent in advance.
 - Rental deposits.
 - Other lump sum costs associated with a housing need, such as removal costs.
- 4.21 Unlike Crisis Payments, the Housing Payment may be paid in multiple instalments. The duration of the Housing Payment is determined by the Council. The award period and any

end date will be clearly communicated to the applicant for ongoing awards. For one-off costs (such as, deposit or rent in advance) specifying a period is not required.

- 4.22 A Housing Payment can be awarded in respect of two homes when someone is treated as temporarily absent from their main home. This includes those who have fled their main home because they are a victim of domestic abuse. In such cases of temporary absence, if the claimant is treated as liable for rent on both properties and, in both cases, there is a shortfall, it is possible to award a Housing Payment in respect of both properties subject to the maximum eligible rent on each property.
- 4.23 Applicants must notify the Council of any changes which may be relevant to the Housing Payment application or award.
- 4.24 The proposed CRF budget allocation of **£370,000** for Housing Payments is based on maintaining the same amount of resource available for housing support that was available under the previous Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.

Resilience Support and Community Co-ordination within Reading

- 4.25 Government recognises that the Resilience Support and Community Co-ordination elements of the CRF are long-term and therefore will develop and evolve over the 3 years funding period.
- 4.26 The Council already directly provides a substantial amount of local welfare provision via services like the Money Advice Team, community-based services provided by Children's Services and the Sustainable Communities Team, and services for Council Tenants.
- 4.27 In addition to these, the Council also contributes to local welfare provision through its financial support of the local VCS to help low-income households at greater risk of financial shocks. A significant amount of this is included with the Closing the Gap commissions, which provide £1.4M p.a. in funding to the VCS for the next three to five years, and includes £274,000 of funding p.a. for Cost-of-Living and Debt Advice services. Closing the Gap also includes commissioning services to support older residents, carers, women's wellbeing, ethnically diverse communities, and other services that support residents physical and mental wellbeing.
- 4.28 These commissions are complemented by other funding opportunities for the VCS, such as the Better Care Fund and the Small Grants Fund.
- 4.29 To help ensure that Reading continues to have a vibrant and effective local voluntary and community sector, the Council has committed £130,000 p.a. to the commissioning and contracting of VCS infrastructure support services.
- 4.30 We also know that the range of VCS services available to low-income residents is far wider than just those supported by the Council. Key established organisations such as Citizens Advice Reading, Readifood, Communicare, Launchpad, and Age UK, continue to play a crucial role in providing support to residents, alongside a network of local community and faith organisations who provide grassroots support to communities across the borough.
- 4.31 This means that there is already a strong baseline of coordinated resilience support available within the borough to residents experiencing a financial crisis.

Resilience Services

- 4.32 The statutory CRF guidance states that the Council should spend a *significant proportion* of its CRF allocation on the provision of resilience services, and it is expected that the Council will work closely with voluntary and community sector organisations in the delivery of resilience services. Every resident receiving a Crisis Payment or a Housing Payment

will also have their current financial situation assessed to identify what further support is needed to improve their ongoing financial resilience. Residents receiving this support will be encouraged to take-up this further support and where possible a direct referral will be made.

4.33 CRF funded Resilience Services must positively impact one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Reduced experiences of material deprivation,
2. Reduced need for emergency food parcels,
3. Increased access to appropriate and quality advice services,
4. Increased savings,
5. Reduction in priority debt,
6. Maximisation of individuals' incomes,
7. Decreased need for Crisis Payments and Housing Payments.

4.34 To identify the need and potential options for Resilience Support within the borough which will improve the long-term financial self-sustainability for low-income households, the Council has reviewed the existing data relating to residents' deprivation, income, and welfare benefits, along with collating the existing local welfare provision within the borough, to determine any service delivery gaps or services which require an enhanced level of provision.

4.35 From this analysis, the following has been identified:

- When comparing the Indices of Deprivation data for 2025 with the previous results for 2019, there are still some areas of the borough who are continuing to experience relatively significant levels of general deprivation.
- From the Indices of Deprivation data for 2025, there are nine wards within the borough where income deprived older residents could be priority targets for resilience support.
- Data shows that within the borough there are approximately 11,400 households in receipt of universal credit support, including 2810 households with children with income below the free school meal threshold.
- Food Pantry services are not available to residents in all areas of the borough.
- Reviewing the current support available to residents within the borough against the seven resilience outcomes within the CRF identified an opportunity to enhance the provision of services to increase savings and reduce priority debt for low-income households.
- There remain key life events/circumstances that present a significant risk to the immediate and ongoing financial health of a household, including becoming a victim of crime / domestic abuse.

4.36 It is therefore proposed that the initial development of resilience services focus on supporting:

- enabling residents to access cost-of-living support within their neighbourhoods,
- low-income families with children,
- pensioners experiencing income deprivation,
- creating more opportunities to save and reduce debt,
- expanding the food pantry offer within the borough,
- protecting residents from the financial harm of unwanted life events.

4.37 The proposed budget allocation of **£760,126** for commissioning resilience services represents over 30% of the total CRF funding to the borough, in addition to the substantial amount of funding that the Council already commits to the provision of local welfare services each year.

Community Coordination

4.38 The Council is required to use part of its CRF allocation to create a more connected local welfare landscape, with strong partnerships and referral pathways that make both immediate crisis responses and longer-term resilience building possible.

4.39 The effective co-ordination of statutory services, voluntary and community sector organisations, grassroots projects and place-based initiatives delivers benefits to both individuals needing support and the professionals involved, creating more financially resilient communities.

4.40 The proposed budget allocation of **£30,000** for Community Co-ordination is to provide additional capacity for these types of activities, alongside the Council's existing £130,000 p.a. commission for VCS Infrastructure Support.

Allocation of Crisis & Resilience Funding

4.41 The table below summarises the proposed allocation of the CRF grant to the four core elements of delivery required by the statutory guidance (Crisis Payments, Housing Payments, Resilience Support, Community Co-ordination).

Support	Budget
Crisis Payments (including any necessary targeted support)	£900,000
Housing Payments	£370,000
Resilience Support – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood-Based Services • Low-income Families with Children • Food Pantry Support • Community Banking • Priority Debt Reduction • Low-Income Pensioner Support • Victims of Domestic Abuse Support 	£760,162
Community Co-ordination	£30,000
Administration	£175,145
Contingency	£100,000
TOTAL	£2,335,307

4.42 The budget proposal of **£175,145** for the administration of the CRF is based on the costs of delivering the previous HSF and DHP schemes within the borough, and include the costs associated with:

- staffing,
- digital or I.T. costs,
- local promotion of the CRF,
- data and analytics for targeting support,
- webpage design,
- reporting costs.

4.43 The budget proposal of **£100,000** for providing contingency within the CRF is slightly less than 5% of the total budget allocation for the borough. It is felt to be prudent to retain this amount of contingency to allow for any additional unfunded expectations from

Government on the use of the CRF, and to provide additional capacity to respond to unforeseen cost-of-living pressures within the year.

- 4.44 If the cost-of-living challenges faced by residents change within the year, the amount and type of CRF support made available may also change so that the Council can respond appropriately to emerging needs.
- 4.45 To enable changes to be made promptly, it is proposed that authority for this, including the submission of the initial and any subsequent delivery plans, be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director, Communities & Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, whilst maintaining compliance with the funding allocation requirements from DWP.

Oil Heating Support

- 4.46 The Government has announced £27 million in targeted support for low-income households in England who rely on heating oil and who are being impacted by the spike in costs. This funding is being delivered via a top up to the Crisis and Resilience Fund for priority local authorities which have been identified by Government as areas that have higher rates of heating oil.
- 4.47 Within Berkshire, Wokingham, West Berkshire, and Windsor & Maidenhead councils have been identified as priority local authorities to receive additional funding support. It is also up to each local authority to determine what specific eligibility criteria to use for the provision of heating oil support in their area.
- 4.48 Reading Borough did not receive any additional funding for heating oil support but is expected to meet any demand for support from its existing Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation. Within Reading borough, the latest Census data (which is how Government are identifying eligible authorities) shows that there are just 90 households within the borough who are solely reliant on oil heating for their homes.
- 4.49 These households, where they need support, will be directed to the Crisis Payments application process (which already includes fuel costs as a category for support), along with referrals to any appropriate Resilience Support.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 5.1 Within the Council Plan priority to Promote more equal communities in Reading, there is a specific objective to tackle social and economic inequalities in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, and a project to provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Household Support Fund (HSF).
- 5.2 The creation of the CRF to replace the HSF means that this work is directly contributing to this Council Plan priority.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1 None which are applicable to this report.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1 The establishment and delivery of the CRF will require engagement and collaboration with the local voluntary and community sector organisations within the borough who support residents to manage their cost of living.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 Some cost-of-living support provided within the CRF will focus on the risks or experiences of residents with specific protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1 There are wider Public Health benefits because of the support provided by the CRF. In providing services which support residents immediate and longer-term financial wellbeing, the CRF will also be contributing to improving residents physical and mental wellbeing.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 None which are relevant to this report.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The CRF replaces the funding the Council has been receiving for the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments. The CRF allocation to Reading Borough Council for 2026/7 is £2,335,307.
- 11.2 The Council received £367,440 p.a. for Discretionary Housing Payments and received funding of £1,992,735 for the Household Support Fund for 2025/26.
- 11.3 The CRF has been provided as a ring-fenced grant within the local government finance settlement. Local authorities have received a three-year settlement for locally delivered crisis support which gives greater certainty when delivering the new scheme.
- 11.4 Whilst the Council is required to develop and submit plans to utilise all the CRF funding provided each year, the Council can carry any unused funding into the next financial year for years 2026/7 and 2027/8. All the CRF funding must be spent by 31st March 2029.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1 CRF delivery commenced on 1 April 2026. However, there will be an acceptance from Government that some elements of the new CRF provision will not be implemented immediately and will become available to residents later within 2026/7.
- 12.2 A delivery plan is required to be submitted to DWP by 1 July 2026.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Crisis & Resilience Fund Summary

Appendix 1 – Crisis & Resilience Fund Summary

1. Crisis Payments

The Council is required to offer Crisis Payments throughout the year to support those on low income who experience a financial shock. Features of this include:

- Broad eligibility which maintains local discretion.
- Person-centred and needs-based approach in assessment and award of payments.
- Cash first, with vouchers and goods in-kind available as alternatives.
- No routine use of FSM vouchers – there will not be special provision for food needs during the holidays, as this should be treated the same as other crises.
- Wraparound support – local authorities must use crisis support as a gateway for people to access resilience services, where appropriate.
- Accessible support – range of application methods must be offered (minimum of 2) and local support offer should be easy to find and up to date.
- Expectation that crisis payments will be made within 48 hours.
- The cause or preventability of the crisis is not considered a relevant factor when determining an application for support.
- Applications for support can be made by representatives.

2. Housing Payments

The Housing Payment will replicate Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to provide financial support to those in receipt of a qualifying benefit to help with rent or moving costs. The integration of housing support will take place in a phased approach over the first two years of the CRF.

The Council must operate a Crisis Payment and Housing Payment scheme that accepts applications continuously throughout the year.

3. Resilience Services

The Council is required to use a significant part of its funding on services and programmes that increase local financial resilience to enable communities to better deal with crises in the long-term.

CRF-funded Resilience Services must positively impact one or more of the following outcomes:

Outcome	Description
Reduced experiences of material deprivation	Material deprivation captures inability to afford essentials (heating, adequate clothing, basic household goods and food). By tackling the underlying conditions that prevent households from affording essentials, Authorities can support their citizens to build protection to avoid hardship.
Reduced need for emergency food parcels	Insufficient food is a crisis need negatively effecting health and wellbeing if not addressed. More resilient households are less likely to experience financial crises that lead to emergency food need.

Increased access to appropriate and quality advice services	Access to high quality, free-at-the-point-of-use advice is a proven lever for income gains, arrears resolution and improved social wellbeing. Advice should lead to improved understanding of rights/entitlements for individuals, ideally provide individuals with an intention to act on the advice and for the issue to be progressed or resolved. Where appropriate, advice should support early problem resolution. Advice may focus on areas such as debt, welfare, housing and other wider support.
Increased savings	Encouraging individuals to build buffers that prevent small shocks becoming crises when an unexpected bill or income dip hits.
Reduction in priority debt	Rent, council tax and utilities arrears are the debts most likely to tip households into crisis, trigger legal action and increase health and homelessness risks. By supporting citizens to manage or reduce these debts, Authorities create more resilient households.
Maximisation of individuals' incomes	Authorities can support individuals to increase their household income through a combination of raising income and reducing expenditure. This could include helping individuals identify and claim financial support they are entitled to, identifying savings and building skills to help with employment and in-work progression.
Decreased need for Crisis Payments and Housing Payments	By building the financial resilience of individuals and enabling effective pathways between crisis support and Resilience Services, Authorities should see reduced crisis need over time.

The Council can choose to use the Fund to supplement or expand existing provision where it aligns with the CRF policy intent.

The Council will need to be able to demonstrate a clear rationale for how the CRF investment in their chosen Resilience Services will meet medium and long-term CRF outcomes. Services that only meet short-term outcomes are more aligned with crisis support, rather than increasing financial resilience.

Resilience services will not be restricted to those who receive crisis payments or the housing element. However, there should be a strong two-way referral pathway between services and grant support, with a no wrong door approach being adopted.

The Council needs to consider the number of resilience outcomes they can meet, and the impact of the service on the outcome(s).

Examples of resilience services that the Council could fund are:

- Budget maximisation, such as by funding community supermarkets or advice services (debt, energy, housing). Advice services could be in-house or external.
- Income maximisation, such as through benefit application support, CV building services, or closer connection with the Jobs and Careers Service.
- Income smoothing, such as enabling access to affordable credit or supporting saving behaviours.
- Financial capability, such as supporting future planning services and financial education.

It is expected the Council will work closely with the VCS in delivery of resilience services.

There is an expectation from Government that the Council should also work closely with local Job Centres and DWP Services and actively seek to integrate the delivery of their CRF schemes with other local and national frameworks aligned to building financial resilience. This includes initiatives such as National Strategies on Financial Inclusion, Child Poverty and

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping and placed-based initiatives including, but not limited to, Local Get Britain Working Plans, Get Britain Working Trailblazers, Connect to Work and WorkWell.

4. **Community Co-ordination**

The Council is required to use part of their funding to create a more connected local welfare landscape.

The activities that the Council undertakes through CRF's Community Coordination strand will build partnerships and referral pathways that make both immediate crisis responses and longer-term resilience building possible. The effective co-ordination of statutory services, voluntary and community sector organisations, grassroots projects and place-based initiatives delivers benefits to both individuals needing support and the professionals involved, creating more financially resilient communities.

Policy Committee

15 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Outside Body Appointments
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Jayne La Grua, Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Report author	Simon Hill, Acting Democratic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Terry, Leader nominations of the Council
Council priority	All
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee make nominations to the outside bodies listed on the schedule (to be circulated); 2. That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and (if applicable) the relevant Group Leader, be authorised to appoint to any vacancies not appointed to at this meeting or arising mid-year.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report asks the Policy Committee to make appointments to outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2026/27, or longer where required. A schedule of nominations is attached at Appendix 1 (to be circulated).

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Appointing the Council's representatives on outside bodies is a Key Decision reserved to Policy Committee under Part 2 Article 13.3 and Part 3 Section 2(5) of the Council's Constitution. This annual report requests a delegation to the Monitoring Officer to appoint to any vacancies remaining or arising mid-year in consultation with the Leader of the Council and (if applicable) the relevant Group Leader.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. Appointments to the Berkshire Prosperity Board, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Joint Waste Disposal Board, LGA Conference and General Assembly and PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee were made by Policy Committee at Annual Council on 27 May 2026 (see the Minutes elsewhere on this agenda).
- 3.2. A schedule of nominations to the remaining vacancies is set out at Appendix 1. Appointments with a longer term not expiring in 2026 are omitted from the list – full details of all appointments can be found on [the Council's website](#).
- 3.3. The following bodies have been removed from the Schedule as they are either no longer active or the Council is no longer required to make a nomination:
 - Flexible Home Improvements Limited

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. Representation on joint committees and outside bodies gives the Council an opportunity, through its representatives, to work with partner organisations to achieve the priorities set out in the Council Plan:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading;
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success;
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our 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 - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). 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. There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the decision to make appointments to outside bodies.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. Representation on outside bodies gives the Council an opportunity, through its representatives, to engage with the community on matters that affect the Borough.

7. Equality Implications

7.1. No adverse implications have been identified.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. No other considerations.

9. Legal Implications

9.1. The Council is required to decide the appointments to the joint bodies and other bodies to which the Council is invited to nominate representatives. Appointments to Outside Bodies is within the Council's definition of a Key Decision. Council has delegated this function to the Policy Committee.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. Attendance by Councillors appointed to outside bodies will be an approved duty for the purposes of the Council's scheme made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 1991. This means that travel and subsistence claims may be made in respect of expenses incurred in attending meetings. Non-Councillors who are appointed to represent the Borough on outside bodies may claim financial loss allowance and travel and subsistence, if applicable.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Details of the new appointments will be circulated to the relevant organisations and published on the Council's website in the week following this meeting.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Schedule of Nominations (to be circulated)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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