Jackie Yates
Chief Executive

Civic Centre, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU
☎ 0118 937 3787

To: Councillors Cross (Chair), Hornsby-Smith, Dominguez, Ennis, Goss, Gurung, Keeping, Leng, McCann, McElroy, McGoldrick, McGrother, Moore, Nikulina, Saadat, DP Singh and Stevens

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2744
e-mail: committee.services@reading.gov.uk

15 June 2026

Your contact is: Andrew Wood - Committee Services

NOTICE OF MEETING - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE 23 JUNE 2026

A meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee will be held on Tuesday, 23 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.

		WARDS AFFECTED	Page No
1.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**		
2.	**DELEGATED DECISIONS**		
3.	**MINUTES** To confirm the Minutes of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committees held on 11 March 2026 and 27 May 2026.		5 - 14
4.	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE** To receive the Minutes for meetings of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 5 March 2026.		15 - 24
5.	**MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES** To receive the Minutes for meetings of the: • Cleaner Air Safer Transport (CAST) Forum on 31 March 2026. • Joint Waste Disposal Board on 5 February 2026 and 23 April 2026. • Reading Climate Change Partnership Board (RCCP) on 15 January 2026 and 16 April 2026.		25 - 46

CIVIC CENTRE EMERGENCY EVACUATION: *If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

6. PETITIONS

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

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

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

9.	**THE MOUNT DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**	**REDLANDS**	**47 - 134**

A report seeking approval to conduct a public consultation on the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal for The Mount Conservation Area. A short presentation will also be given by representatives from the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC).

10.	**LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE MAIN MODIFICATIONS**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**135 - 202**

A report seeking approval to conduct a public consultation on the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) Main Modifications and Proposals Map Modifications.

11.	**ADOPTION OF THE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY**	**ABBEY; COLEY; KATESGROVE; REDLANDS; THAMES**	**203 - 432**

A report summarising the feedback received during the consultation on the Draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and seeking approval of the Council's proposed responses to the consultation comments. The report also recommends the adoption of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes**.

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

This page is intentionally left blank

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 11 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillor Cross (Chair), Hornsby-Smith (Vice-Chair), Davies, Ennis, Goss, Keeping, Leng, McCann, McElroy, McGrother, Moore and Rowland.

Apologies: Councillors Ballsdon, Juthani, Lanzoni, Magon and McGoldrick.

15. DELEGATED DECISIONS

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

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Minutes of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 26 November 2025 were received and noted.

18. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

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

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

19. ADOPTION OF THE ELDON SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Further to Minute 12 of the meeting held on 19 November 2025, the Committee considered a report that outlined the results of the public consultation that had been held in relation to the draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal. The report recommended adopting a final version of the Appraisal, within which minor extensions to the conservation area boundary were proposed. The following documents were appended to the report:

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

The report explained that Eldon Square Conservation Area, Reading's oldest conservation area, had first been designated in 1972 and had been expanded in 1982 to include Watlington Street, Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street. The last appraisal review had taken place in 2007 and had not resulted in any further boundary changes.

The latest review had been carried out by means of a community-led project by the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) on behalf of Reading Borough Council, supported by Council planning officers and interested community representatives. The review had utilised the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, recommended by Historic England as a methodology for assessing landscape and built environment character, but with the approach adapted by the CAAC to suit local circumstances.

The review had formed the basis of the draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by the CAAC. The draft Appraisal had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2025, at which approval had been granted for public consultation. In addition to comprehensively assessing the conservation area, identifying issues and vulnerabilities, and setting out an Action Plan for the area, the Appraisal also proposed minor extensions to the boundary to bring an additional five addresses into the conservation area. The existing and proposed amended boundaries were shown in Figure 1 of the report and in the proposed Appraisal at Appendix 3.

The public consultation had been conducted over an eight-week period between 25 November 2025 and 20 January 2026. A total of 14 responses had been received, which were summarised in the Statement of Consultation at Appendix 2. Points raised during the consultation included suggested wording changes, proposed amendments to maps, a query regarding the consideration of the climate emergency in relation to expanding the conservation area, and concerns about waste management, traffic management, and newly painted double yellow lines. The Statement of Consultation also set out the Council's responses to each of the comments received.

An updated version of the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal was attached to the report at Appendix 3, it incorporated detailed amendments to wording and maps, as well as other updates to ensure the document remained current. The changes made arising from the public consultation comments were highlighted in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix 2).

At the invitation of the Chair, Evelyn Williams, Chair of the Reading CAAC, gave a presentation on the work undertaken by the CAAC to develop the Eldon Square Appraisal, as well as on its future work that included the next planned appraisal of The Mount Conservation Area.

The Committee discussed the proposed updated Appraisal for Eldon Square and expressed its thanks to the CAAC for its ongoing work.

Resolved –

(1) That the responses received during the public consultation on the draft Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;

(2) That the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, as attached at Appendix 3, be adopted;

(3) That the Eldon Square Conservation Area be extended as set out in the Appraisal (Appendix 3).

20. CLEAN AIR LIVING MATTERS: EXPLORING READING

The Committee considered a report that updated on the Clean Air Living Matters; Exploring Reading (CALM:ER), Air Quality Awareness Programme following the completion of the project. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1: Table 1 - Summary of Key Performance Indicators for CALM;
- Appendix 2: Table 2 - Performance against KPIs.

The report explained that CALM:ER was a two-year educational project funded by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) through the Air Quality Grant Scheme 2022-2023. The purpose of the project had been to engage primary and secondary school students to increase their knowledge and awareness of air quality issues, learn about its causes, and understand impacts and find solutions through behavioural change. The programme had been delivered across schools in partnership with the Council, Stantec, the University of Reading and Design Nature between February 2023 and July 2025.

The report stated that the programme had made substantial progress across all of its key performance indicators (KPIs), had exceed many of its original targets and had left a lasting educational and environmental legacy. A main success of the programme had been to directly reach over 9,000 children, over 2,000 through practical knowledge sessions and nearly 7,000 through awareness activities.

The report highlighted significant progress in engaging the wider community and parents. Through school-gate conversations and community events, over 860 parents and carers had been directly involved, with an estimated additional 17,000 to 24,000 adults reached indirectly through CALM materials shared at home and at public events. The outreach had encouraged important discussions about air quality within households and contributed to positive behaviour changes such as reduced car idling and more frequent active travel.

Assessments of the programme showed strong learning gains had been achieved, with primary pupils improving their knowledge by 28% and secondary pupils by 9%. These results indicated that the educational materials were effective and easy to understand. Pupils were highly engaged with the presentations, videos, and hands-on monitoring activities, and were able to apply what they had learned confidently during planning and discussions. Beyond knowledge gains, the programme had succeeded in supporting behavioural change. Action planning activities had been completed in 8 primary schools and 5 secondary schools, where pupils developed and presented proposals to improve air quality in their schools and wider communities.

CALM had made a strong contribution in-terms of its curriculum integration and, although air quality was not currently a standalone topic within the national curriculum, the programme’s materials had aligned well with subjects such as science, geography, mathematics, and citizenship. The development of a dedicated Key Stage 2 lesson plan, in

collaboration with the University of Reading and a local teacher, had further embedded air quality education into mainstream learning and would remain accessible as part of the university's climate education resources. Additionally, the availability of materials on the Council's and Design Nature's websites ensured that the programme's legacy would continue beyond its official end.

The report explained the CALM:ER programme had aligned well with priorities set out in The Council Plan 2025-28, in particular the priority to deliver a sustainable and health environment and to reduce Reading's carbon footprint. The programme had also contributed directly towards the delivery of several actions outlined in the Council's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2024-2029 which were listed in the report. The report also provided a broader overview, setting out the programme's aims and delivery methodology in detail, and included an evaluation of the project's successes, supported by a table at Appendix 2 summarising the programme's performance against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The report concluded that the CALM:ER programme had successfully delivered a high-impact, inclusive, and sustainable environmental education programme that had engaged with over 26,000 people (or near 33,000 if two adults at home engaged with CALM materials). The programme had not only met its original objectives but had also laid the foundations for long-term engagement with air quality and climate education across schools, households and the wider Reading community.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

21. ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE REPORT

Further to Minute 14 of the meeting held on 19 November 2025, the Committee considered a report on the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The report provided an officer evaluation of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations and provided an update on the delivery and outcomes of recent active travel schemes in the Borough, as well as providing detail on the Council's partnership working and setting out future plans in respect of active travel. A summary table containing an officer assessment of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and their current implementation status was attached to the report at Appendix A. A copy of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group findings and recommendations report was attached at Appendix B.

The report stated that the Council had adopted the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 (the Local Transport Plan (LPT)) in October 2024. The LTP aimed to promote healthier, greener, and more equal communities through sustainable travel and reduced reliance on private cars. Active travel was a central feature of the strategy which was supported by several sub-strategies, these included the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (PROWIP). The councillor-led, cross party, Task and Finish Group had been set up by the Committee specifically to scrutinise the implementation of the Council's active travel strategy.

The report highlighted that the Council had secured substantial external investment and had delivered an ambitious programme of active travel infrastructure improvements in

recent years. Key achievements included pedestrianising areas around Reading Station and Station Hill, enhancing the Reading Station pedestrian subway, creating new pedestrian and cycle routes such as the Napier Road underpass and Christchurch Bridge and the delivery of east-west cycle infrastructure as part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 422. Additional projects included new shared use paths (such as London Road and the A33), cycle lanes on major roads (e.g. Oxford Road and Shinfield Road), enhanced pedestrian facilities throughout the town, expanded cycle parking (with cycle hubs in the town centre and at Reading Station) and the ongoing programme of road and pavement improvements across the Borough.

The Council had delivered these infrastructure improvements alongside a comprehensive programme of initiatives aimed at encouraging greater uptake of active travel. These included the introduction of various School Streets, Bikeability training in schools, Learn to Ride sessions for younger and/or less confident cyclists, road safety education in primary schools, adult cycle training, and cycle repair and maintenance events. Other examples included Walk to School Week, the Beat the Street walking and cycling challenge, a dedicated School Active Travel Officer (through Sustrans), Wellbeing Walks, the promotion of active travel schemes at various community events, and the ongoing programme of maintenance works for cycling and walking routes in the town.

The report stated that the Council had worked closely with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to deliver active travel schemes. This had included collaboration with neighbouring local authorities on cross boundary routes, with schools on initiatives such as School Streets, with Government and Active Travel England to secure grant funding and scheme approvals, and with private developers to enhance active travel infrastructure through the planning processes. The Council had also engaged extensively with local interest groups and stakeholders, including Councillor working groups for specific schemes, the Cleaner Air and Safer Transport (CAST) Forum, the Cycle Forum, the Access and Disabilities Working Group, and others to gather input during scheme development and improve future projects. These efforts, alongside the successful delivery of active travel infrastructure and the incentive initiatives set out in the report, had contributed to Reading achieving one of the highest levels of sustainable travel use in the UK outside London.

The report stated that the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, as set out in Appendix B, would help the Council to build on the considerable progress that had already been made in relation to active travel. It explained that several workstreams were underway that aligned with the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, for example the work that had been done to reprioritise the Council's Waiting Restrictions Review Programme, and the work underway in relation to the Requests for Traffic Management Measures List. Further opportunities to implement the Group's recommendations would also arise through the delivery of planned schemes, such as the design and implementation of the Bath Road/Castle Hill active travel scheme, which was being progressed with input from councillors and local stakeholder groups. Several of the Group's recommendations were also relevant and would be considered alongside input from key stakeholders as part of the planned refresh of the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP).

The report noted that the Task and Finish Group's longer-term recommendations, such as reviewing potential approaches to address pavement parking and the potential use of

demand management measures, would require additional work to assess funding and resource implications and that any decisions made in relation to the progression of such schemes would need to follow the Council's formal decision making processes. The report also noted that the Council continued to seek to learn from examples of best practice and to improve outcomes, and noted the joint research project that had been carried out in partnership with the University of Reading and the Reading Cycle Campaign, which sought to identify the lessons learned from delivering previous active travel schemes and how they could be applied the delivery of schemes in the future.

The report set out the proposed next steps for the Council's active travel programme which it noted were included in the overall Local Transport Delivery Plan report due to be considered by the Committee later in the meeting (see Minute 22 below). It noted that the Government had announced a new approach to how funding would be allocated and that, whilst funding levels were lower than had previously been the case with the competitive allocations system, they did now offer greater long-term certainty and flexibility for planning.

The report highlighted several planned future active travel related projects that included improvements to Bath Road/Castle Hill, Sidmouth Street, and the planned partnership work with Wokingham on the Woodley-Reading active travel route. The report noted that the Council intended to continue to deliver a wide programme of initiatives, training, and incentives to increase active travel uptake. It also noted that the wider Delivery Plan set out ambitious sustainable travel enhancements for public transport which meant that careful priorisation of financial and staff resources would be required. The report stated that the Council would continue to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to build on past successes and to ensure the effective development active travel options. The Council would also continue to learn from examples of best practice and, through sharing its own experiences, would seek to improve future schemes for residents and visitors.

Resolved – That the latest position as to the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group as set out in the report and in Appendix A be noted.

22. LOCAL TRANSPORT DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee considered a report that set out the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Transport Grant funding allocation for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 and sought approval to submit the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP) to Government. The report also updated on progress and outcomes on the delivery of transport schemes and initiatives in Reading over recent years. A copy of the proposed Local Transport Delivery Plan (March 2026) was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report set out the Government's new approach to local transport funding. The new approach replaced the previous competitive bidding model with a needs-based formula for allocating grant funding to local transport authorities. Under the new system, local authorities would be required to produce a Local Transport Delivery Plan setting out how the Integrated Transport Fund (ITF) grant would be prioritised, including details of proposed schemes, interventions, programmes and packages of expenditure. Initial versions of

Delivery Plans were required to be submitted to the DfT by 20 March 2026, with a final version then needed by 18 September 2026.

The report also set out Reading's grant funding allocation for capital and revenue grants. The allocation covered capital funding for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 and revenue funding for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29. Under the new funding model, grant allocations would continue to be based on different modes, such as highways maintenance, bus services and active travel, which would be consolidated into ITF grant payments. The new approach would provide local authorities with longer-term certainty and greater flexibility to decide how best to utilise the funding, with fewer grant-specific conditions than in previous years. The report also confirmed that the Council would continue to receive a separate grant for the provision of Bikeability cycle training in schools for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29.

The report noted that whilst authorities had been provided with greater flexibility, the Government had also made it clear that the grant funding needed to be used to achieve national priorities which would be set through the Local Transport Outcome Framework. This would outline measurable priority outcomes that the Government wanted local authorities to achieve and would reflect shared national and local priorities for transport which would be aligned with the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy.

The report stated that the Council had made considerable progress in delivering a range of local transport schemes and improvements, in part due to successfully having secured significant amounts of external grant funding through the competitive bidding process. This had allowed the Council to improve travel options for residents, with a particular focus on sustainable transport choices, and aligned with the overall vision and objectives set out in Reading's Local Transport Plan (LTP). A broad range of transport schemes and improvements had been delivered that included major upgrades to Reading's railway stations, new bus and cycling infrastructure and active travel initiatives.

The outcomes achieved from the work to promote sustainable travel had resulted in Reading achieving amongst the highest levels of sustainable travel in the country, outside of London, with a considerable shift to the use of sustainable transport modes in recent years. The report highlighted that passenger numbers had increased at all four rail stations in the Borough in 2024/25, with usage of Reading West up 43% after its redevelopment and Reading Station having gained nearly 1 million more passengers compared to the previous year to reach 14.3 million, making it one of the busiest train stations outside of London. Bus usage in 2024/25 had also continued to grow and had almost returned to pre-Covid levels with 20 million journeys made on local services, a rise from 19.5 million journeys compared to the previous year. Outside London Reading had remained the third highest area for bus use per capita, though the report acknowledged some recent declines in the numbers of fare-paying passengers during the current year. Levels of Active Travel had also increased, with approximately 55,000 walking trips and 11,000 cycling trips undertaken every day to and from the town centre. The trend for levels of cycling to and from the town centre had increased considerably, from a mode share of 2-3% between 2008-17 to a mode share of 5-6% in recent years.

The Initial Local Transport Delivery Plan (attached at Appendix A) set out how the Council proposed to build on its past successes and how it intended to allocate the ITF grant allocation from Government for the period 2026/27-2029/30 for capital funding, and 2026/27-2028/29 for revenue funding. The Delivery Plan contained several schemes that were already underway, these included:

- the annual highways resurfacing programme;
- the introduction of new electric buses;
- the delivery of further bus priority measures;
- improved passenger facilities at the Mereoak Park and Ride site;
- provision of enhanced bus services (including the Buzz 9 and 18 routes);
- delivery of the Bath Road / Castle Hill active travel scheme;
- the provision of a comprehensive programme of active travel initiatives, training and incentivisation to encourage higher levels of walking, cycling and wheeling.

The Delivery Plan also included detail on new schemes and initiatives designed to build upon the Council's recent Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Active Travel Fund (ATF) programmes. Examples of new items included the planned Local Cycling, Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update and improvements for all users in Sidmouth Street through a redesign of the existing road layout. Funding had also been allocated to the Council's ongoing programmes and schemes relating to road safety, traffic management measures, parking and highways maintenance. The report noted that the Council was required to submit its initial Delivery Plan to the Department for Transport by 20 March 2026 and that there would be an opportunity thereafter to develop a final Delivery Plan before the final deadline on 18 September 2026.

Resolved –

(1) That the allocation of local transport grant funding from Government for the period 2026/27-29/30 be noted;

(2) That submission of the Council's initial Local Transport Delivery Plan to Government, as provided at Appendix A, be approved.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.48 pm)

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
MINUTES - 27 MAY 2026

Present: Councillor Cross (Chair);
Councillors Dominguez, Ennis, Gurung, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Keeping, Leng, McCann, McGoldrick, McGrother, Moore, DP Singh and Stevens.

Apologies: Councillors McElroy, Nikulina and Saadat.

1. ESTABLISHMENT, MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Resolved –

(1) That, a Traffic Management 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;

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

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

Labour Councillors	Green Councillors	Conservative Councillors	Liberal Democrat Councillor
Ayub	Dominguez	Goss	O'Connell
Cross	Walkem	R Singh	
Davies	White		
Ennis			
Griffith			
Hornsby-Smith			
Keeping			
Lanzoni			
Leng			
DP Singh			

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

Chair	Vice-Chair
Councillor Cross	Councillor Hornsby-Smith

This page is intentionally left blank

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 5 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillors Lanzoni (Chair), Ayub (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Cross, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, Hacker, Hornsby-Smith, Keeping, McGrother, Nikulina, O'Connell, R Singh and White

Apologies: Councillors Eden

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to officers confirming that Tamarisk Avenue - junction with Whitley Wood Road, Church Ward, should have been removed from the Waiting Restriction Review Programme 2025 (Minute 32 refers).

36. PREVIOUS DECISIONS

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

37. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were received:

- Reading Cycle Forum – 11 February 2026.

38. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY MODIFICATION ORDER - FOOTPATH 11

The Sub-Committee received a report that sought approval from the Sub-Committee to undertake a statutory consultation to make a Public Path Extinguishment Order to stop up part of Footpath 11 under Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 ("the 1980 Act") and under Section 53A(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ("the 1981 Act"). The Footpath 11 Rearrangement Plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and Councillor McGrother proposed that the report be deferred for consideration to the next meeting to allow time for officers to provide further information.

Resolved – That consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting to allow officers time to submit further information.

39. SIDMOUTH STREET CYCLE LANE - REQUEST TO CONSULT ON REDUCTION IN CYCLE LANE

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of proposals to reduce the width of the cycle infrastructure on Sidmouth Street, and sought approval to undertake a statutory consultation to amend the Traffic Regulation Order as required. The Sidmouth Street Scheme Design – Option 2 was attached to the report at Appendix A.

In making the proposal consideration had been given to several factors, including the following:

- The availability of alternative cycle facilities within the local cycle network, which were more desirable and provided more direct, or linked routes;
- The underutilisation of the infrastructure implemented on Sidmouth Street;
- The impact of the approved bus lane, due to be implemented on London Road between the junctions with Sidmouth Street and London Street.

The report explained that the cycle lane facility on Sidmouth Street had been installed following the allocation of Tranche 1 funding through the Government's emergency Active Travel Fund, which had been received in 2020. It had been one of the short-term proposals that had specifically addressed the immediate need to promote active travel and facilitate social distancing based on Government advice around the Covid 19 pandemic at the time. The cycle lane on Sidmouth Street had initially been installed as a temporary measure, which later became permanent following a statutory consultation and had been approved by the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2022 (Minute 19 refers). As a result of the cycle scheme being implemented, the southbound traffic lane had been removed and replaced by a two-lane cycle facility. However, the lack of linking routes, and the provision of alternative cycle routes, including those on London Street and Watlington Street, had resulted in the cycle lanes being underutilised.

The report explained that, as part of the ongoing review of the transport network, officers had carried out an optioneering exercise to consider various changes that could be made to improve the overall network performance in this area. As part of this, officers had considered the potential impact of the previously approved BSIP scheme to introduce a new bus lane on London Road and the possible impact this could have on London Road and the wider network. Sidmouth Street functioned as a key distributor road within the local highway network, linking London Road to Queens Road. And was commonly used as an alternative route during peak periods. The new bus lane on London Road had been designed to improve public transport reliability and journey times and although minimal reallocation of road space was necessary, it was expected that some general traffic might be displaced onto Sidmouth Street. As well as the improvements for public transport, the implementation of the bus lane would also create another shared space for cyclists travelling westbound towards the town centre and would provide safer facilities for cyclists travelling through the London Street junction, towards the town centre. Officers had also considered whether the loss of cycle provision could be expected to have a significant impact on Active Travel opportunities in the area.

As part of the scope of the optioneering exercise, officers had considered the existing road layout, and in particular the benefits of the existing cycle infrastructure. At this stage officers had not conducted a cycle survey of this route. However, through communication with the local cycle groups, it was understood that this route was used for southbound movements, connecting cyclists from London Street, via South Street but, due to the lack of northbound connections it was had not been clear how well used the route was for travelling towards town. The existing cycle provision on Watlington Street, and in particular the facilities for crossing Queens Road had also been noted.

The report stated that in preparing options for consideration, the primary design principle that had been applied was to maximise the carriage way widths and to provide additional

northbound vehicle capacity. The secondary design principle had been to retain as much Active Travel provision as possible. Following these principles officers had worked with design consultants to develop four options each of which had the following similar characteristics:

- Sidmouth Street would remain a one-way street;
- Two lane entry to Sidmouth Street from London Road would be introduced which would require amendment of the traffic signals in that area and two northbound lanes for general traffic;
- Two lanes of traffic between London Road and South Street would be introduced;
- Three lanes of traffic between South Street and Queens Road would be introduced (one left turn, two right turn).

Having reviewed the options that had been presented by the design team, the report proposed that option two, which would retain a southbound (contra-flow) cycle lane (south of South Street only, two northbound lanes and would retain pay and display parking, provided the best balance of benefits/value for money and would provide additional vehicle capacity on Sidmouth Street and would improve flows onto Queens Road. Alongside this it would still provide a valuable southbound active travel connection from the town centre towards the shared path facilities on London Road, and southbound towards the cycle infrastructure on Shinfield Road, and would complement the existing provisions on Watlington Street. The detailed designs would be developed in parallel to this proposed consultation, which included further analysis and traffic surveys to support the initial assumptions, both in terms of use of the cycle facilities, as well as understanding potential impacts on traffic flows both on London Road and Queens Road.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted;

(2) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be granted authority to undertake the statutory consultation for the proposed amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order for Sidmouth Street;

(3) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee, be granted authority to make minor amendments to the agreed proposals, if required, prior to the implementation;

(4) That subject to no objections being received the scheme be considered as approved and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be granted authority to amend the Traffic Regulation Order;

(5) That should any objections be received during the statutory consultation period, a report be submitted to a future meeting for consideration and decision regarding scheme implementation.

40. INFORMAL CONSULTATION - A4 LONDON ROAD CORRIDOR & SUTTON SEEDS ROUNDABOUT PROPOSALS

The Sub-Committee received a report informing them of the work officers had undertaken alongside officers at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to develop proposals for the continued improvement to the A4 London Road corridor and Sutton Seeds Roundabout and the informal consultation, that had been launched by Wokingham, into these proposals. Concept Design Drawings for the A4 London Road and Sutton Seeds Roundabout Improvement Scheme were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that, following the implementation of the new bus lane on London Road between Liverpool Road and Cemetery Junction, the Council and WBC had jointly commissioned WSP Engineering Consultants to design a number of options that could deliver further improvements to this corridor. These designs had now been subject to traffic modelling to assess the impact with a view to recommending a proposed option.

The London Road bus lane had been introduced in August 2024 and had seen the implementation of a new westbound lane between Liverpool Road and Amity Road, near Cemetery Junction. This bus land had been created through the reallocation of lane 1, which had previously been a general traffic lane towards Reading. The bus lane required all general traffic travelling towards Reading, from both the A4 and A3290, to merge into a single lane (lane 2) shortly after Liverpool Road. The bus lane could be used by licensed hackney carriages, motorcycles and bicycles. The bus lane was used by a number of routes including park and ride services to the town centre as well as to the hospital and university, local services from Woodley, and longer distance routes from Twyford, Maidenhead and High Wycombe. The bus lane was also used by the RailAir buses from Heathrow Airport.

The report explained that officers working with colleagues at WBC and WSP had held a series of site meetings and workshops where a number of options had been developed for this corridor on the approach to the new bus lane. These had included amendments to the bus lane, general vehicle lanes and traffic signals both through the London Road and at the junction of the Sutton Seeds Roundabout. Traffic surveys had been carried out in June 2025 with further validation surveys in November 2025. This data had been used to model the impact of the options to assist with options appraisals. Of the proposed options, a number had been discounted due to the impact on general traffic movements with no substantial benefit for bus journeys. Safety concerns had also been cited for vehicles queuing on the A3290 with some of the options. The option assessment had led to a preferred option which had provided benefits for both general vehicles and bus trips through the corridor without increasing the safety issues forecast with previous options.

The option proposed was to provide a new bus lane on the A4 London Road eastern approach to the Sutton Seeds Roundabout and closing the bus gate from the services road. A new bus lane would be installed through the roundabout using vacant highway

space and not removing capacity for general traffic. Within Reading the proposals involved shortening the bus lane by approximately 30 metres and introducing a dedicated right-hand turn lane for vehicles turning into Liverpool Road.

The option involved works both in Wokingham Borough and Reading and were set out in the report and provided benefits to journey times for both general motor vehicles and bus services as well as enabling a more consistent journey times. Modelling had shown that this option performed better than current baseline conditions, improvements had also been shown for bus journeys and if the full scheme was implemented over nine minutes of journey time saving had been identified for buses during the morning peak hour. For general traffic there would be the equivalent of a total of six hours and forty-five minutes worth of journey time saving during the morning peak hour for traffic heading into Reading. This option would also benefit motorists using Liverpool Road to access areas of New Town as they would now have dedicated lane access as well as more space when exiting Liverpool Road towards Reading.

The report explained that in order to meet the conditions of the funding award for the delivery of the scheme, as well as meeting the requirements to proceed with consultations prior to the pre-election period, WBC had commenced a five week informal consultation commencing on 23 February 2026. Officers had briefed the Leader of the Council, the Lead Councillor and Chair of the Sub-Committee prior to the consultation and delegated authority had been exercised to support the consultation and had been detailed in an Officer Decision Notice that had been published on the Council's website on 12 February 2026.

In order to proceed with the changes proposed within the Borough a statutory consultation would be required subject to the outcome of the informal consultation and should Wokingham decide to proceed with the overall scheme.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report and Councillor Ennis thanked officers for the outstanding joint work that had been carried out between the two authorities on the proposals and the dedication on all sides to active travel.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted;

(2) That, subject to the outcome of the informal consultation, and should Wokingham Borough Council proceed with the scheme:

(a) The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be granted authority to undertake the statutory consultation for the proposed amendments to the existing Traffic Regulation Order relating to the London Road Bus Lane;

(b) The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and

Democratic Services, the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee be granted authority to make minor amendments to the agreed proposals if required prior to implementation;

(c) The scheme be considered as approved and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order, subject to no objections being received;

(d) Any objections received during the statutory consultation period, be submitted to a future meeting for consideration and decision regarding scheme implementation.

41. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER RECTIFICATION: EAST STREET RESULTS OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Further to Minute 30 of the meeting held on 26 November 2025, the Sub-Committee received a report informing them that the statutory consultation agreed at the meeting in November 2025 for rectifying a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and signing issue associated with a pay and display parking bay on East Street had been carried out and had ended on 9 January 2026. Objections and other feedback that had been received to the statutory consultation were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the original purpose of the process had been to resolve an issue with the TRO as the on street signs for the bay had stated that the restriction had a three hour maximum stay and the TRO stated it should be two hours. As three hours was considered to be the intended restriction, the consultation was proposing a change to the order to ensure the signs matched the TRO. One objection had been received, which included a request to change the days of operation from Monday to Sunday to Monday to Friday. The reason provided was to provide greater flexibility for residents, visitors and local activity on weekends. The report did not propose that the changes that had been requested by the objector were implemented at this time as this was a substantially different change to the one proposed in the consultation and therefore a new consultation would need to be carried out before this requested change could be considered further. Amending the operational times of the bay would also cause some inconsistency in the restrictions in the area as the nearby permit pay and display bays were all in force from Monday to Sunday. The report therefore proposed to create the TRO as advertised.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted;

(2) That having considered the consultation feedback in Appendix 1, attached to the report, the scheme be implemented;

(3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be granted authority to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order;

(4) That respondents to the statutory consultations be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee accordingly, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting;

(5) That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

42. WAITING RESTRICTION REVIEW PROGRAMME (2025): PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Sub-Committee received a report that sought approval for officers to carry out statutory consultation for recommended new/alterations to waiting restrictions as part of the 2025 programme. The recommendations followed officer investigation of requests, which were submitted and agreed for investigation at the meeting on 26 November 2025 (Minute 32 refers). The Recommendations for Statutory Consultation (2025 Programme) set out in Appendix 1, attached to the report, had been shared with Ward Councillors and an opportunity had been provided for their comments.

The report stated that the schemes taken forward to statutory consultation would be included within a single proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which would then be subject to public consultation for a period lasting at least 21 days. The full process was set out in the report. The report explained that those schemes taken forward for statutory consultation that did not receive any objections during the consultation period would be recommended for implementation, subject to final decisions being made on the remaining items within the TRO. For those schemes where objections were received, a further report would be submitted to the Sub-Committee seeking a decision on the outcome of the scheme.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted;

(2) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be granted authority to undertake a statutory consultation for the 2025 programme in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996;

(3) That, having considered the officer recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report, the following schemes in the Waiting Restriction Review Programme 2025 be proposed for implementation, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation (see (6) below):

No.	Ward	Street/Location
1.	Battle	Stone Street/Tidmarsh Street
2.	Battle	Kensington Road
5.	Caversham	North Street
6.	Caversham Heights	Highdown Hill/Soane End
7.	Caversham Heights	Surley Row
8.	Church	Barnsdale Road
9.	Church	Whitley Wood Road

10.	**Coley**	**Lesford Road**
12.	**Katesgrove**	**Basingstoke Road**
13.	**Kentwood**	**Armour Hill/Larissa Close**
14.	**Kentwood**	**Scours Lane**
16.	**Norcot**	**Shilling Close**
17.	**Park**	**Pitcroft Avenue/Norris Road**
18.	**Park**	**Tuns Hill Cottages**
19.	**Redlands**	**Addington Road (section between Craven Road and Redlands Road)**
20.	**Redlands**	**Allcroft Road**
21.	**Redlands**	**Upper Redlands Road 1**
22.	**Redlands**	**Upper Redlands Road 2**
23.	**Redlands**	**Lower Mount**
24.	**Southcote**	**Westcote Road**
25.	**Thames**	**Cardiff Road**
26.	**Thames**	**Addison Road**
28.	**Tilehurst**	**Westwood Road**
29.	**Whitley**	**Longships Way**
30.	**Whitley**	**Blandford Road**
31.	**Whitley**	**Exbourne Road**

(4) That, having considered the officer recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report, the following schemes be removed from the Waiting Restriction Review Programme 2025:

No.	**Ward**	**Street/Location**
3.	**Caversham**	**Henley Road**
4.	**Caversham**	**Hemdean Road**
11.	**Emmer Green**	**St Benets Way**
15.	**Kentwood**	**Vale Crescent**
27.	**Tilehurst**	**Neath Gardens**

(5) That subject to no objections being received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order for the 2025 programme;

(6) That any objection(s) received during the statutory consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee for an outcome decision.

43. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

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

44. APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY PARKING PERMITS

The Sub-Committee received a report giving details of the background to the decisions to refuse an application for a Healthcare Professional Permit from one applicant who had subsequently appealed against these decisions.

Resolved – That, with regard to application 1, a Healthcare Professional Permit be issued, personal to the applicant and charged at the standard rate.

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

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.04 pm)

This page is intentionally left blank

CLEANER AIR AND SAFER TRANSPORT (CAST) FORUM AGENDA

Date:	Tuesday 31st March 2026	
Location:	Reading Council Chamber), Civic Offices, Reading Borough Council, Bridge Street, Reading	
Time:	6:30pm – 8pm	
Chaired by:	Councillor Cross	
Attendance:	Cllr Will Cross (Chair) Cllr John Ennis Cllr Jenny McGrother Cllr Meri O'Connell Cllr Adele Barnet-Ward Cllr Andrew Hornsby-Smith Cllr Mohammed Ayub Ross Jarvis (RJ) James Turner (JT) Non-RBC Attendees Details Redacted	Reading Borough Council (RBC) RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC

Agenda Items:

No:	Item:	Action:
1.	**Introduction and Apologies:** Apologies had been received from: Cllr Karen Rowlands - RBC Cllr Sarah Magon - RBC Miriam Fuertes – Transport - RBC	

2.	**Air Quality Update** **Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Update** The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project is a government-funded programme in England that supports local authorities to plan and deliver public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, especially on-street charging for residents without off-street parking. Reading Borough Council was awarded £866,000 from the LEVI fund. The two key objectives of the LEVI fund are: 1. Delivering a step-change in the scale of deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure across England. 2. Accelerating the commercialisation of, and investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector Reading's LEVI fund will be managed through a 15yr concession contract with the successful bidder delivering 2620 standard speeds sockets, with 50% of these delivered in the first 2 years of the contract. Sites will be selected in areas where residents do not have access to off-street parking. The contract is expected to be formalised soon, and the Council will then be able to publish the full details of the successful contractor and the services offered. The Council has also allocated £100k from the LEVI Fund as well as £102k funding from the Pavement Channel Grant Fund for the installation of cross pavement solutions (up to 400 resident's properties). This will enable residents to use their own electricity connection to charge their electric vehicle and benefit from lower tariffs and reduced vat. It should be noted that the cross-pavement channel provision will not include priority parking on the highway or any marked bay. Ross Jarvis (RJ) also referenced the recent challenge concerning whether electricity supplied via public EV charge points should be charged VAT at 5% (the domestic electricity rate) rather than 20% (the standard rate). This would impact the tariffs and charges for use of Reading's on-street chargers provided through LEVI. The Tribunal ruled that public EV charging can qualify for the reduced 5% VAT rate under existing law, without any change to legislation but it is understood that this ruling is be challenged by HMRC. **Particulate Monitoring Update** RJ provided presentation on the Council's particulate monitoring network. Particulate matter (PM) is a mixture of very small particles and liquid droplets in the air (e.g. dust, soot, smoke…). PM10 is particulates under 10 micrometres (coarse dust) whereas PM2.5 are particulates under 2.5 micrometres, and these are finer particles. The National Air Quality Strategy (2023) set targets for the reduction of PM2.5 • Annual mean concentration target: Reduce PM2.5 concentrations to 10 μg/m^3or below by 2040. (EU target is 10 μg/m^3 by 2030) • Population exposure reduction target: Reduce average population exposure by 35% by 2040 compared to a 2018 baseline. • WHO recommended average level is 5μg/m^3 Through this project the Council will procure and install 30 low-cost sensors that will be located near to high risk or vulnerable populations, near schools or at locations where there is likely to be high pollution. This network will be maintained over a period of 2 years with data analysed by University of Reading. There will also be an Engagement Portal – for residents to access and use the data as well as for public health messaging.	

	The procurement process for this project is expected to complete early summer 2026 with deployment over the remainder of the summer. Data collection will last from August 2026 to August 2028.	
3.	**Strategic Transport Update** James Turner (JT) provided an update on the following Strategic Transport items. **Local Transport Delivery Plan Update** In December 2025, Government announced a new consolidated approach to funding for local transport for the next Spending Review period, starting in April 2026. This approach moves away from providing opportunities for local authorities to bid for funding for specific transport schemes and initiatives through competitive processes, to a system whereby the majority of funding is allocated via a needs-based formula to local authorities The new funding arrangements provide longer-term certainty and more flexibility for the Council to take decisions on how best to utilise this funding, with fewer grant specific conditions than have been the case with other funding stream in recent years. The grant allocations for Reading are set out below:	

Capital Grant	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**
Local Transport Grant	1,741,400	2,285,300	3,131,700	3,978,100
Bus Grant	1,498,600	1,528,700	1,558,900	1,589,000
Active Travel Grant	575,600	575,600	575,600	575,600
Highways Maintenance	2,873,000	3,377,000	3,641,000	4,162,000
Total	**6,688,600**	**7,766,600**	**8,907,200**	**10,304,700**

Revenue Grant	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**
Local Transport Grant	234,500	234,500	234,500	N/A
Bus Grant	1,074,000	1,074,000	1,074,000	N/A
Active Travel Grant	180,600	180,600	180,600	N/A
Electric Vehicle Charging	138,600	138,600	138,600	N/A
Total	**1,627,700**	**1,627,700**	**1,627,700**	**N/A**

As part of this new approach, the DfT requires local authorities to produce a Local Transport Delivery Plan. This sets out details of how the new grant will be prioritised, with details of schemes and interventions or programmes and packages of spend. An initial version of Reading's delivery plan is to be submitted to DfT in March 2026 with a more detailed plan due to be submitted September 2026.

Active Travel Infrastructure Schemes Update

ATF 3 Bath Road Castle Hill

Following the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group officers and designers continue to review the scheme, including reviewing segregation options to assess lower cost options. This would involve delivering the scheme with less civil works needed enabling more of the scheme to be delivered.

We are also undertaking traffic modelling to show the impact on Coley Avenue Junction of various options. Plans to be shared with councillors for comment, but we will also be looking to get feedback from RCC.

Active Travel Revenue Activity

The Council is continuing with its active travel capability revenue activity including the delivery of:

- Free Adult Cycle Training sessions
- Free Women only Cycle Training sessions
- Free Maintenance Workshops, delivered with Reading Bike Kitchen and Reading Bike Hub.
- Town Centre Dr Bikes: April – November
- Dr Bike's in the Community
- Reading Cycle Festival Support 2026
- Walk to School Week 2026
- School Street and School Road Safety Review
- Bikeability Programme 2026-27

Cycle Hangars

Officers to undertake a more detail assessment of each location, including liaison with Network Services and other stakeholders, inc. RCC, to assess feasibility. Recommendations to be presented at Summer Cycle Forum

Sidmouth Street Cycle Scheme Update

The Council is proposing amendments to Sidmouth Street as part of wider network review taken to March's meeting of the Traffic Management Sub Committee. The plans will involve:

- Sidmouth Street remaining a one-way road northbound.
- Introduction of 2 lane entry to Sidmouth St from London Road (this requires amendment of the traffic signals in and provision of two northbound lanes for general traffic
- Introduction of a further third lane after South Street to as far as the Queens Road junction.
- Retaining a narrower contra-flow cycle lane

JT confirmed that previous feedback from RCC had been incorporated but further opportunity available through the statutory consultation. Cllr Ennis stated that RCC should send any comments over to the Council now and not wait for the statutory consultation.

LCWIP Review

Officers are currently putting together a brief for a review and update of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This work will be supported through the appointment of external consultants, and it is intended that this commences summer 2026. Officers will provide an update on the timeframe for the LCWIP at the June CAST Forum.

RCC expressed an interest to be involved in this review process rather than just as at the consultation point.

Bus Service Improvement Plan and Zebra 2 Fund

Reading Buses launched its first set of 24 zero emission electric buses on 6th February 2026 on both routes 17 and 21. A further 8 electric buses will be delivered later in the spring 2026 for use on the route 26 with an overall total of 32 zero emission buses in Reading.

Further to this in early 2026 the Council was awarded a further £3m from the ZEBRA 2 grant for a further 17 electric buses to be delivered between now and 2030. This will bring the overall total electric buses to 49.

	Cllr Barnett-Ward asked why the buses had fewer seats and less capacity than previous model. JT confirmed the specification for the buses was chosen by the operator, but the vehicles were shorter than the previous vehicles. The removal of the central door had enabled this space to be used for seating.	
4.	**Highways and Network Services Update** **Last Crumb Junction** The Forum discussed the junction of Prospect Street, Henley Road and Peppard Road which is known as the Last Crumb Junction after the pub by the same name nearby. Colleagues in Network Services are leading any work in this area, but it was noted that this is a large junction and any amendments will be time consuming and require significant funding. **20mph Speed Limit Zones** The Forum discussed the implementation of 20mph speed limit zones including the effectiveness of installing these without associated adequate traffic calming measures.	
5.	**Any Other Business** **Cyclist and Pedestrian Road Safety** This item was requested by forum members for further discussion and suggestion that it should be a regular topic of discussion at CAST or a standing agenda item. **CALM Project Feedback** Feedback on the CALM report had been sent in by __ however there was insufficient time to discuss. Officers will review the feedback and amend accordingly.	
	Date of Next Meetings: All meetings are scheduled for 18:30 at the Council's offices. **CAST Forum:** • 9th June 2026 • 1st December 2026 • 1st April 2027 **Cycle Forum:** • 3rd September 2026 • 10th February 2027	**All to Note**

This page is intentionally left blank

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
5 FEBRUARY 2026
(10.00 - 11.56 AM)

Present:
Councillor Mary Temperton, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Liz Terry, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Martin Alder, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Katrin Harding, Wokingham Borough Council

1 Apologies for Absence

24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25 Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

The minutes of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on 18 September 2025 were approved as a correct record.

26 Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

27 re3 Progress Report

Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer presented the re3 Progress report.

Members' attention was drawn to the introduction of the expanded DIY waste charges, which had gone live at the recycling centres from 1 December. Communications had focused on reminding residents that their free allowance remained in place, and staff continued to distinguish between householders and suspected traders, noting that frequency of visits was often the main indicator. Work was underway to introduce a vehicle-flagging feature within

the check-in system to help staff record repeat visits and identify likely commercial users. Members also noted the arrangements in place for small businesses to use the sites through the paid scheme, alongside the availability of the neighbouring transfer stations for larger commercial loads.

Members also noted the update on the third-party doorstep reuse scheme, which had performed well since implementation. Tonnages had increased in November, with a seasonal drop over Christmas, and officers continued to monitor performance. Toys collected through the scheme had been redistributed to local charities, with around 600 items provided for children over the festive period. Members further discussed the suggestion of allowing households to consolidate their four-weekly allowance into one visit, recognising potential environmental benefits, and indicated support for progressing this work.

In response to members' questions, the following points were noted:

- Members discussed the challenge for staff in distinguishing householders from traders and supported the development of the flagging feature to improve monitoring.
- Members noted the measures in place to prevent commercial abuse of the free household service, including the paid business scheme and transfer-station access.
- Members were updated on the positive early results of the doorstep reuse scheme and the distribution of donated toys by local charities.
- Members supported further exploration of enabling households to use their monthly allowance in a single visit, subject to cost considerations referenced elsewhere in the report.
- Officers confirmed that tonnages from the doorstep scheme would continue to be monitored as the service matured.

Having discussed the matter, it was **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of this report be noted

28 **r3 Communications Report**

Monika Bulmer, re3 Communications and Marketing Officer presented the re3 Communications report.

The behavioural change communication campaign had been focused on increasing food waste capture, with implementation varying across the three councils depending on available resources. Reading had implemented a borough-wide campaign, targeting 55,000 households with individual bins. Interventions included bin stickers, leaflets and liners delivered to homes, supported by an intensive communications campaign using re3 and council channels, social media, digital advertising and on-bus screens. Early performance data showed a 19% increase in food waste captured in December and a further 12% increase in January, with 708 tonnes collected, the highest monthly tonnage since the service began in 2021. Officers planned to continue the campaign and develop the next phase targeting residents in communal bin areas.

Officers also reported an increase in requests for caddies and food bins during the campaign period, suggesting residents were restarting the service or engaging with it for the first time. Members noted that the positive trend was not visible in other partner areas, indicating that improvements in Reading were directly attributable to the campaign.
.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Members noted the scale and intensity of the food waste campaign and welcomed the early positive results and continued monitoring.
- Members recognised the planned next phase of work to target harder-to-reach areas and households with communal bins.
- Members noted the increase in resident requests for caddies and food bins during the campaign period, indicating renewed engagement.
- Officers would continue to track tonnages in the coming weeks and months to assess the longer-term impact of the campaign.
- Officers confirmed there were no recommendations attached to the report and that campaign activity would continue.

Having discussed the matter, it was **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of the report be noted

29 **re3 Strategy Report**

Monika Bulmer, re3 communications and marketing officer presented the re3 strategy report.

The evaluation of the consultation results was outlined, following the joint six-week public consultation undertaken from early November to mid-December. Members were informed that 3,460 responses had been received across the three boroughs, with particularly high participation in Wokingham, followed by Bracknell and Reading. The strong engagement demonstrated significant public interest in the subject and provided a clear evidence base for the development of the strategy.

Members noted the feedback received through the consultation, including views on service accessibility and comments relating to bag-splitting proposals. It was highlighted that only a small proportion of respondents were willing to support mandatory bag splitting, and members discussed how such an approach might be introduced safely and effectively, including the need to understand how similar schemes operated elsewhere. Officers confirmed that a proposal outlining potential options and associated evidence would be brought to the next meeting.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Members recognised that some residents faced challenges accessing recycling centres without a car, and officers noted the need to promote alternative access options such as travel by foot, bicycle or with support from family members.
- Members discussed concerns about the practicalities and safety of implementing bag-splitting at recycling centres, and the need to understand how staff could be supported in managing interactions with residents.
- Officers confirmed that a proposal for how bag-splitting could be introduced, along with evidence from other areas, would be brought forward for future consideration.
- Members reiterated the importance of effective communication to support behaviour change and promote accessible routes to reuse and recycling services.
- Officers confirmed that the findings from the consultation would inform the development of the next stage of the strategy.

Having discussed the matter, it was **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of the report be noted

30 **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of items 10, 11 and 12 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

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

31 **re3 Financial Management Report**

Oliver Burt, re3 Finance Officer presented the financial management report.

Having discussed the report, it was **RESOLVED** that

1. Members note the Forecast financial position for the re3 partnership as detailed in the report.
2. That Members note the 2nd draft proposed re3 FY26/27Budget
3. That Members note the updated Climate Change figures to FY24/25
4. That Members request a report on the future provision of the glass bottle bank service, to be brought to the next meeting.

32 **re3 Contract Transition Report**

Oliver Burt presented the re3 Contract Transition report.

Having discussed the matter, members **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of this report be noted

33 **re3 Emissions Trading Scheme Expansion Report**

Oliver Burt presented the re3 Contract Transition report.

Having discussed the matter, members **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of this report be noted

2. Members request further reports on ETS and the moderation of associated financial impacts.

34 **Date of the Next Board Meeting**

Board members agreed the date of the next meeting will be 2 April 2026, 10am.

CHAIR

JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
23 APRIL 2026
10:00AM-12:30PM

Present:

Councillor Karen Rowland, Reading Borough Council (Chair)
Councillor Martin Alder, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Katrin Harding, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Helen Purnell, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Ryan Frost, Bracknell Forest Council

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Liz Terry, Reading Borough Council.

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board

The minutes of the Joint Waste Disposal Board held on 5 February 2026 were approved as a correct record, subject to slight amends.

1 Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

1 Progress Report

Sarah Innes, re3 Monitoring and Performance Officer and Monika Bulmer, re3 Marketing and Communications Officer presented the Progress report.

Members were advised that provisional recycling figures for the period April to January showed a variance ranging between 0% and -1.8% compared with the same period in the previous year across the councils. Members acknowledged the presentation of funds raised to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and recognised both the importance of the service and the contribution made by residents through pop-up shop activity.

An update was noted on reuse initiatives, including the continuation and expansion of book reuse activity. It was reported that books were being redistributed through a range of partner organisations, Council events, and charities, reducing waste and supporting local communities. The commitment of staff and contractors to supporting these initiatives alongside their existing workload was acknowledged, and members were advised of forthcoming pop-up shop activity at the Reading Recycling Centre.

In response to members' questions, the following points were noted:

It was noted the provisional recycling performance figures and that officers would continue to monitor trends across the year.

- Members acknowledged the successful fundraising for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and the role of community participation in pop-up shop events.
- Members noted the continued development of reuse initiatives, including redistribution of books through charities and Council family events.
- Ideas were discussed for future consideration, including learning from other authorities on emergency response measures within waste services, noting existing contractor training and practices.
- Members were advised that reuse schemes and tonnages would continue to be monitored as the initiatives matured.

Having discussed the matter, it was **RESOLVED** that

1 the contents of this report be noted

1 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of items 10, 11 and 12 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

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

1 **Financial Management Report**

Stephen MacDonald, Finance Business Partner, presented the financial management report.

Having discussed the report, it was **RESOLVED** that

1. Members note the Forecast financial position for FY26/27 as detailed in the report.
2. That Members note the FY26/27 Budget Pressure.
3. That Members note the Benchmarking exercise as detailed in the report.
4. That Members note the passthrough costs position as detailed in the report.
5. Members instead requested that the Project Director liaise with the Contractor to identify a bottle bank transition programme which recognises and best accommodates the councils' individual and collective requirements.
6. That Members support the proposed approach in regard to the potential overcharging of DIY waste as detailed in the report.

1 **Flexible Plastics Report**

Oliver Burt presented the Flexible Plastics report.

Having discussed the matter, members **RESOLVED** that

1. The contents of this report be noted.
2. Members indicate a preference for options, for sorting and onward processing, to be pursued to a Business Case
3. That Members indicate a preference for options, for roll-out and collection of flexible plastics, to be pursued as part of a Business Case

1 **Contract Transition Report**

Oliver Burt presented the re3 Contract Transition report.

Having discussed the matter, members **RESOLVED** that

1. The contents of this report be noted.
2. That Members endorse the design principles listed in the report.
3. That Members recommend the adoption of the design principles listed in the report, by each Council.
4. That Members recommend the respective re3 councils formally adopt the inter authority agreement (IAA) for the Outline Business Case phase for a new waste management contract.
5. That Members recommend the preparation of an re3 plan for its role in, and aspiration for, a regional collaboration on waste management.

1 **Risk Register**

1 Oliver Burt presented the re3 Risk Register report.

Having discussed the matter, members **RESOLVED** that

1. That Members note the contents of this report and specifically the risk actions identified at Appendix 1.

1 **Date of the Next Board Meeting**

Board members agreed the date of the next Joint Waste Disposal Board meeting will be on the 11th June 2026.

CHAIR

remember reduce reuse recycle recover repeat
zeroing in on waste

RCCP Board Meeting – Minutes
Date: 15 January 2026
Time: 10 – 12pm
Chair: Dylan Parkes

---

1. Welcome & previous minutes and actions

- Previous minutes were endorsed and progress towards actions noted.

---

2. Update on Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan (GF)

- The new 5-year plan has been **formally adopted by Council**.
- Work still required on:
    - Communications
    - Distilled version

The comms will position the strategy & action plan as a **shared vision** for a "greener, happier, healthier, more connected and climate-friendly Reading" and **framework for collective action.** We will invite all local people and organisations to find their place in this framework for place-based climate action. Key objectives will be to (1) attract new people into RCCP working groups and (2) to inspire new climate action in local homes and organisations in line with the shared vision.

RELATED ACTIONS:
The Reading Climate Festival will take the bulk of GF's 2.5 days per week from March until end of June 2026, leaving little to no time to do targeted stakeholder engagement for the new plan. As a minimum GF will:

- Commission and oversee final layout and design of new strategy and supporting images (*done*)
- Prepare key messages and narrative around why and how to get involved (*done*)
- Set up mechanisms for participation (*done – good response*)
- Set up website landing page (*done*)
- Email core deliberative group and other key stakeholders (*done*)
- Send a newsletter announcing the new strategy (*done*)
- Work with RBC on a press release (*done*)

When time allows, GF will work on:

- a distilled and more action-oriented version of the plan (*in progress but additional research is needed*)
- Master slide deck for presentations (*to be completed for Reading Climate Festival prezi*)
- Basic comms toolkit
- Local Climate Communications Alliance

- Launch Comms Working Group

---

3. Review of Partnership Agreement (DP)

- Current agreement is **outdated** (membership, expectations, purpose).
- Needs refresh aligned with:
    - New strategy
    - Current resources
    - Future growth ambitions

ACTIONS:

- DP & HM
    - Lead review of partnership agreement

---

5. Schools engagement discussion

- Challenges:
    - School capacity
    - Overcrowded engagement landscape

Agreed direction

- Focus on **signposting existing resources** on our website
- Use **Comms Alliance model** to amplify reach

ACTIONS:

- GF: Include schools within Comms Alliance approach
- DP: Explore linking RCCP with university school engagement work

---

6. Update on Theme Leads (GF)

- New model will be to split role into:
    - One Council co-lead per theme
    - One Community co-lead per theme
- Council commitment to this new model has been confirmed. It may take some months before Council people are appointed and time is allocated for the roles.
- Board to vote on two new candidates before next Board Meeting: Adrian Lawson (Nature) and Eugene Mohareb (Food). No current candidate for the vacant Beyond Waste / Circular Economy role. (*GF has approached Erica Purvis – waiting to hear*.)

ACTIONS:

- GF: Set up Board vote
- GF & BB: Drive Council participation
- DP & GF: Meet with successful candidates to discuss Nolan Principles, job role
- All Board Members: Help find candidate for Beyond Waste theme

---

7. Update on National Lottery Bid (Climate Action Fund) (GF)

Update on Bid

- GF submitted bid on 16 Dec 2026
- Request: £1.5 million over 3 to 4 years
- We can expect to hear if we have been invited to progress to Stage 2 within 8 to 14 weeks; we will hear either way

Scenarios

- **A:** Continue with current limited resources and rewrite RCCP Partnership Agreement to better reflect reality; minimal role for RCCP to include guiding new 5-year plan and related Working Groups; running annual Climate Festival and minimal comms related to above
- **B:** Fully funded model; if the bid for £1.5 million is successful we could transition into a resourced and staff organisation set up to drive place-based transformation through whole systems approaches
- **C:** If the bid is not successful we could seek smaller pots of funding for discrete projects and roles, but this would require resource within RCCP, i.e. to convene, write and service bids

If successful

- RCCP transitions into a staffed, resourced organisation with a Board
- RCCP positions itself as an orchestrated ecosystem for place-based change
- RCCP commissions science-based pathway to net zero as part of a larger, more holistic approach to place-based change

ACTIONS:

- GF: Re-circulate final bid document
- Board: Begin considering fallback funding options (Scenario C)

---

8. General Points

- Need to **revitalise partnership** alongside strategy launch
- Urgency to:
    - Fill theme lead roles and attract people into working groups
    - Strengthen engagement structure to allow groups to work holocratically

---

This page is intentionally left blank

RCCP Board Meeting – Minutes & Actions | 16 April 2026

Attended by:

- Heather Marshall (Chair)
- Gudrun Freese
- Ben Burfoot
- Chris Maddocks
- John Ennis (Councillor)
- Adrian Lawson
- Dylan Parkes
- Michael Waddelove
- Tricia Marcouse
- Eugene Mohareb
- Bryan Puszkar

People changes

Tricia (outgoing Nature Theme Lead)

- There was grateful recognition of Tricia's exceptional contribution to making Reading a greener place to live and celebration of the significant legacy of her work and impact across Reading. Notably
    - Community leadership and convening over several decades
    - Results including tree planting, community gardens and improvement of green spaces
    - Strategic contribution and collaboration with Council
- Tricia will continue to represent GREN on the RCCP Board

Adrian Lawson (new Nature Theme Lead)

- Joined from the field, literally, overseeing project to plant 3000 trees
- Strong track record of local environmental work, campaigning and community action
- Emphasised preference for focus on action now over rethinking RCCP's structure and fundraising efforts; funding opportunities will emerge as projects and initiatives take shape within / between working groups

Reading Borough Council (RBC) restructure

- BB shared RBC's new org chart
- Head of Climate Strategy role formally deleted but will be replaced with **Director of Transport & Climate** – a more senior role than the Head of Climate Strategy role
- Benefits: Raises profile of climate at senior level; improved integration with transport; more joined-up decision-making
- Risks: Could narrow climate action focus to measurable, technical aspects of net zero

- Cllr Ennis & Chris Maddocks provided strong reassurance:
    - Climate is embedded across all council functions
    - Capacity and funding remain a constraint, but not intent
- **Board action (GF to gather inputs from Board; co-chairs to shape and submit):** As a key "conscience" and accountability partner of RBC's climate work, RCCP will canvas Board opinions and respond formally to RBC's restructure

Bringing the Action Plan to life: Update on Theme Leads & Working Groups

- Each theme will have a **Council co-lead** and a **Community co-lead**
- Still waiting to hear from RBC who will take the Council co-lead roles for the 2025 – 2030 action plan period
- Community co-lead roles are filled for Nature, Energy, Water, Food
- We have a potential community co-lead candidate for Beyond Waste – meeting scheduled
- We have a potential community co-lead candidate for Transport. Subject to budget for childcare. **Action:** RCCP co-Chairs to explore options
- Purpose of Theme Lead roles:
    - Drive delivery and evolution of action plans
    - Convene working groups / host a space for collaboration and innovation
    - Oversee RAG rating of actions plans for Annual Report, plus commentary and recommendations
    - **Theme Lead action:** Ben, Heather, Chris, Eugene and Adrian to each email Gudrun a date and 1hr time slot for their own theme's Working Group kick-off meeting – during the second week of Reading Climate Festival (15 – 19 June 2026); please offer 2 to 3 options so I can avoid clashes with other events
    - GF can support Theme Leads to plan a kick-off meeting, but broadly:
        - Named delivery partners introduce the actions they are overseeing
        - Some activities to support prioritisation of existing actions or arguments for replacing any of these with new actions
        - Agree an approach to deciding some targets and milestones for priority actions if these are missing
        - Some activity to agree next steps
        - Share news and opportunities to get involved in action
    - Theme Leads encouraged to meet with each other informally to explore overlaps and opportunities to collaborate

Partnership Agreement Review for 2025 - 2030

- **Challenges with outgoing 2020 – 2025 Partnership Agreement:**
    - Partner disengagement / attrition (nearly 50% of previous signatories no longer active)

- Mismatch between non-executive governance structure vs delivery expectations; nearly 50% of actions are listed as “led by RCCP”; there is a growing set of ReadingCAN assets to maintain and develop; there is public-facing messaging about becoming an ReadingCAN member but there are no mechanisms to service this in a consistent way
- Expectations from core partners and public that RCCP will raise funds / enable funds to be raised, engage businesses and marginalised communities, run individual behaviour change campaigns, etc.
- RCCP presents as a resourced delivery body; expectations have been raised due to past investments in Festival, Pledges, website, comms channels, etc.

- **Funding discussion:**
  - There was consensus to avoid creating complex new organisation structure
  - Acknowledgement that RCCP would need additional central resource if it wants to develop the reach and impact potential of current assets, deliver new projects, support ongoing fundraising or provide additional support to Theme Groups and co-Chairs as part of its purpose
  - The option to become a charity was rejected (note – this is not necessarily a prerequisite to raising money; RBC or another partner can accept funds on RCCP’s behalf)
  - Project-based funding preferred (onus on volunteers to raise funds for their own projects)
  - Keen to explore member contributions to a central pot
  - Keen to explore crowdfunding opportunities
  - Suggestion that RCCP should enable partners to access funding
  - **Action:** Operations Group to decide next steps regarding funding options
  - New comms working group will address some of these shortfalls and may lead to fundable comms-led projects (e.g. our Advent of Good & Green Deeds campaign was launched as a beta campaign in 2025 without funding; this enabled us to win funding for it in 2026)

- **RCCP’s unique value?** Something to consider as RCCP and RBC both restructure and as REDA seeks to develop a ‘green’ business improvement district: How can RCCP offer value to core partners? What would make it worth their while to contribute financially? What gap could we fill? We could be championing and owning the concept of **place-based transformation in line with the climate and nature emergencies** – going far beyond the narrower and more technical (Scope 1 and 2) definition of net zero. There is still work to do to bring REDA, RBC, UoR and RCCP into that broader and more ambitious framing of the climate and nature emergency. We could offer value by holding the space for that discussion,

commissioning more granular, local, decision-grade data to guide joined-up action for systemic change, and shaping climate innovation challenges to surface local solutions to local challenges, in the Business Improvement Districts and across the borough.

Decision, agreed with a strong majority:

- Retain existing partnership structure
- Focus on updating and strengthening agreement

ACTION: Co-chairs to continue leading this process

Update on National Lottery bid

- Heard last week that our bid for £1.5m was **unsuccessful**. This was disappointing but not unexpected as our proposal was about funding a way of working but the fund was looking for a more singular focus.
- What now?: Consider breaking the bid proposal into smaller fundable components and gather alternative funding sources.
- **ACTION:** Operations team to decide and take next steps
- **New Funding Opportunities:** Eugene highlighted new **National Lottery** food-related fund; Bryan shared **Powering Communities to Net Zero fund (£20k grants)**

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

23 June 2026

Title	The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal
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 and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Council priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	1. That The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 2) be approved for consultation. 2. That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, prior to the start of consultation on the draft document.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Mount Conservation Area was designated in 1987 under the Town & Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended), and the most recent full conservation area appraisal was produced in 2009. Following discussions over the Council's approach to the historic environment, the Council agreed to support the setting up of a Reading Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (CAAC). One of the primary concerns of the CAAC was the length of time since many conservation area appraisals had been prepared and adopted. According to best practice appraisals should be updated every 5-10 years and many of these appraisals are now in need of review. It was subsequently agreed that the CAAC would lead on reviews of conservation area appraisals in consultation with local communities.

1.2 The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal is the fifth review to be undertaken, following St Peters in 2018, Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road in 2020, Christchurch in 2024 and Eldon Square in 2026. This report seeks approval of the draft review of The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal. Committee is asked to approve the draft appraisal for consultation commencing in July 2026.

1.3 Appendix 2 contains a copy of the draft appraisal and associated documents. The results of the consultation will feed into a revised appraisal to be adopted later in 2026.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework impose a duty on local planning authorities to review their existing conservation areas and designate as conservation areas any 'special areas of architectural or historic interest'.

2.2 Although not required by law, Historic England recommends that Conservation Area Appraisals are reviewed and updated regularly, every five to ten years. Conservation Area Appraisals are material considerations in the determination of relevant planning applications and are specifically referred to as a consideration in policy EN3 of the Local Plan. They can also form a key piece of evidence for the preparation of planning policy.

3. The Proposal

Current position

3.1 The Mount Conservation Area was originally designated in 1987. The most recent appraisal was prepared in 2009, which did not recommend any changes to the boundary.

3.2 The boundaries of the conservation area are provided in the plan below.

Figure 1: The Mount Conservation Area boundary

3.3 The review and the updated appraisal is the result of a community-led project carried out by the CAAC, with assistance from RBC planning officers and interested local community representatives. The review made use of an adaptation of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, which was recommended by officers of Historic England. This provided a methodology for preparing assessments of the character of the landscape and built environment of the area, but the methodology has been adapted to local circumstances by the CAAC. The appraisal has been updated partly as a result of that assessment.

3.4 The appraisal does not identify any proposals for changes to the conservation area boundary.

3.5 The updated appraisal identifies issues and vulnerabilities (page 11), including:

- Some walls and railings overgrown or in need of repair;
- Lack of traditional street furniture, including street lighting;
- Poor street and pavement surfaces with little use of traditional materials; and
- Mixed ‘conservation area’ signage;

3.6 Recommended measures (within the Action Plan, section 8) include:

- Achieving consistency of street signage
- Providing information to householders on walls and railings

- Provide street care information document on importance of materials

3.7 CAAC will manage the action plan but responsibility for some of these actions can only rest with RBC. Other actions can be undertaken by local volunteer organisations and community groups (e.g. CAAC) with limited support from council officers.

3.8 An informal consultation exercise on the review of the Conservation Area was carried out by the CAAC in March 2026 and this has fed into the draft.

3.9 Committee is recommended to approve The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 2) for further consultation.

Other options considered

3.10 The two alternative options considered are;

- Not to progress the draft conservation area appraisal; and
- To include a proposed boundary extension in the appraisal.

3.11 To not progress the appraisal at this stage would fail to capitalise on the good work done by volunteers of the CAAC, and would mean that the appraisal for the conservation area is somewhat out of date and is of less use for decision making on planning applications, as well as failing to take the opportunity to protect the character and interest of a wider area not currently falling within the conservation area.

3.12 In terms of inclusion of a possible boundary extension, there is no clear opportunity for an extension that would meet the tests of having special architectural or historic interest, and therefore an extended boundary would risk watering down the importance of the protections of the area. In any case, this is an area of Reading in which there are a number of other conservation areas including Christchurch (recently extended), Kendrick Road and Redlands, and special interest in the local area is generally within one of those areas.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1 The Mount CAA, through identifying areas of particular heritage importance and their significance, will contribute to the following priority in the Council Plan 2025-2028:

- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint: The CAA will contribute to the objective to 'Further improve the physical environment of Reading by improving air quality, access to green space, and the quality of public spaces' by offering enhanced protections and identifying improvements to one of Reading's most historic and characterful areas.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1 The appraisal will have limited environmental and climate implications. Putting an up-to-date appraisal in place will serve to better conserve the significance of the area which will maximise the quality of the environment. This includes identifying important trees, which will better ensure their protection, with the multiple environmental benefits that trees bring. The proposed actions are small-scale in nature and would have minimal climate implications, whilst they would enhance the quality of the general environment.

6. Community Engagement

6.1 The Council's consultation process for planning policy, as set out in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, adopted June 2025), is that the widest and most intensive community involvement should take place at the earliest possible stage, to allow the community a genuine chance to influence the document. Although the SCI deals mainly with development plan documents, the general principles are useful for documents such as a Conservation Area Appraisal. Community involvement exercises have been undertaken by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee as part of undertaking the review. Details of community involvement on the initial stages are set out

in Appendix 1 of the appraisal document. These included walks around the conservation area, a community meeting and questionnaire.

6.2 A formal consultation led by the Council will be undertaken on the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal. Responses received will be considered in preparing a final draft appraisal for adoption. The draft conservation area appraisal consultation will be based around making the document available for comment.

7. Equality Implications

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

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1 There are none.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 Areas within the Conservation Area will benefit from the controls set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The legislation would control the demolition of buildings as well as ensure a closer control over new development in the area.

9.2 The following would apply:

a. In the exercise of planning powers the Secretary of State and planning authorities are under a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the area;

b. the demolition of buildings within the conservation area requires planning permission;

c. “Permitted Development” rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas, and Article 4 Directions restricting “permitted development” rights in Conservation Areas do not (as is the case elsewhere) have to be referred to the Secretary of State for consent;

d. more controls exist in relation to works to any trees, not necessarily just TPO trees;

e. more exacting standards of advertisement control should be applied to advertisements in the Conservation Area, so long as the authorities are sensitive to the needs of businesses within the Conservation Area;

f. development proposals within conservation areas should either make a positive contribution to the preservation of the character or appearance of the area, or leave the character or appearance unharmed.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 Existing budgets are sufficient for the publication of the final documents and to notify occupiers affected. The bulk of the work on the draft has been undertaken by CAAC members on a voluntary basis.

10.2 Consultation exercises can be resource intensive. However, the Council’s consultation process is based mainly on electronic communication, which helps to minimise resource costs, and costs of the consultation exercise for the Conservation Area Appraisal will be minimal and met from existing budgets.

10.3 Some of the actions within the Action Plan fall to the Council to undertake. Some would be accommodated within existing budgets, albeit would be reliant on officer time, such as progressing an Article 4 direction. Where additional resources may be required, the action plan identifies alternatives including support of voluntary groups.

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 The expectation is that, subject to the results of consultation on the draft, a report will be submitted to a future meeting and a final version of The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal will be adopted in November 2026.

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

Directorate: DEGNS – Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Manager

Date of assessment: 01/05/2026

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?
To update the existing The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal

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

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?
Adoption of an updated appraisal will contribute to the protection and management of heritage assets.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?
Developers/landowners, the public and community groups. All parties want an updated appraisal so as to best protect and enhance the historic environment in the area.

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

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

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)
Yes ☐ No ☒

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.
Yes ☐ No ☒

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

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because the proposed actions set out in the Appraisal would not be likely to have differential effects on racial groups, gender/transgender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	1st May 2026
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	1st May 2026

Appendix 2: The Mount Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

The Mount Conservation Area
Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, June 2026

A community-led Conservation Area Appraisal

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee on behalf of Reading Borough Council

www.reading.gov.uk

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

The Mount Conservation Area
Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

A community-led Conservation Area Appraisal

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
on behalf of Reading Borough Council

Foreword by Councillor Micky Leng

[To be added]

Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets

Initial Statement

Reading has fifteen Conservation Areas. Each Conservation Area (CA) has an individual Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA).

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

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

The Mount Conservation Area was formally designated on 24 April 1987, following a period of public consultation. It was last appraised by the Council's external consultants, The Conservation Studio of Cirencester, in April 2009. Their report was formally adopted by the Council at that time and, as many of that report's findings and recommendations have been found to remain relevant today, they have been carried forward in this Appraisal where appropriate.

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

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

The existing boundaries of the CA have been reviewed and all of the areas currently included merit retention. An extension to the boundary of the CA is not proposed.

A number of changes have been made to the appraisal and the format of the document since the 2009 review:

- The content of the document is in line with current HE guidance;
- We have placed an increased emphasis on trees and green spaces in this appraisal because of our heightened awareness of their importance in an urban area such as The Mount CA;
- An action plan has been included in paragraph 8 to set out recommendations for the future management of the area to maintain its special character;
- National and local planning legislation, frameworks and policies have not been listed in detail but are summarised in paragraph 1.1;
- Photographic appendices have been included listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, views, trees and green spaces;
- Details of the consultation process are included in Appendix 1;

- A full description of the archaeology and history of development of the area is included in Appendix 2 with a summary in paragraph 3.

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

At the time of the last review The Progress Theatre was not highly valued and was regarded as having a negative impact on the character and appearance of the CA. It was included, not on its own merits, but to "…reasonably round off the area". In this review that opinion has been reassessed for the reasons below.

The Progress Theatre is a landmark building in the CA contrasting with the surrounding nineteenth century residential properties. Its modern 1960s architecture pre-dominates, a style which is increasingly being appreciated today. The origins of the building go back to 1881 when the Mildmay Club, founded by Arthur Warwick Sutton two years earlier, moved into a corrugated iron building on the site. It originally had an ornamental 'Swiss front and porch' to the south designed by prolific local architect F W Albury.

The building has been in community use for almost 150 years. The hall of the club for working men now houses the stage and auditorium of the theatre and is a hidden survival of a metal structure very common in the mid nineteenth-century but much rarer today. Additions were made to the hall during the First World War when it was an extension to Sutherlands war hospital. It had various uses including as a boys' club until it was sold in 1949 and purchased by the Co-operative Society. The Co-op converted it to a theatre which was rented by Progress from 1951. Major improvements for use a theatre, mainly carried out by volunteers took place in the 1960s.

The Progress Theatre has links with notable local and national figures. It was supported by both Albert Cusden and Phoebe Cusden (former Mayor of Reading responsible for the post-war twinning of Reading and Düsseldorf). Famous actors and performers who have taken part in productions at the theatre include Kenneth Branagh and Marianne Faithfull. Vanessa Redgrave visited the theatre in December 1961 to be interviewed about her work by Progress Director, Norman Bishop.

Improvements to the boundary treatment of the site would enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

Figure 1: Progress Theatre from the south east in 1964. A cropped version of this image appeared in the Reading Chronicle. Image courtesy of Reading Museum/Reading Chronicle Collection (Reading Borough Council). All rights reserved.

Figure 2: The Progress Theatre November 2025 (Image Claire Truman)

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

Contents

Foreword by Councillor Micky Leng 3
Initial Statement 4
Contents 7
Statement of Special Interest 9
SS1 Introduction and Summary 9
SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features 10
SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities 10
SS4 Recommended measures 11
SS5 The 2026 Boundary 11
Conservation Area Appraisal 12
1. Introduction 12
1.1 Policy context 12
1.2 Public consultation 13
2. Landscape setting 13
3. Brief history and development of the area 14
4. Spatial Analysis 14
4.1 Key characteristics and plan form 14
4.2 Views 16
4.3 Open spaces 19
4.4 Character of massing 19
4.5 Trees and green spaces 19
4.6 Building Plots 21
5. Buildings and Public Realm 21
5.1 Key positive characteristics 21
5.2 Materials, styles and features 21
5.3 Buildings of local historic interest and positive buildings 22
5.4 Public Realm 23
6. Character Areas 25
6.1 Character Area 1 - The Mount and its Christchurch Road frontage 26
6.2 Character Area 2 - Hillside, Lower Mount/Allcroft Road 30
6.3 Character Area 3 - 53, 53A, Linden Mews, 55 Christchurch Road and the Progress Theatre 32
6.4 Contributions to character 34
6.5 Activities and uses 34
6.6 Ambience 35
7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement 35

7.1 Loss of original architectural features and detail 36
7.2 Neglect and opportunities for enhancement 37
8. Action Plan 39
Table 1 – All Conservation Areas 39
Table 2 – The Mount Conservation Area 41
Appendix 1 Public Consultations 42
Appendix 2 Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area 48
Archaeology 48
Historical Development 48
Appendix 3 Listed buildings 62
Appendix 4 Buildings of townscape merit 68
Appendix 5 Conservation Area Views 71
Appendix 6 Conservation Area Trees and Green Spaces 75

Statement of Special Interest

SS1 Introduction and Summary

The Mount Conservation Area is located to the south of the town centre of Reading on a contour ridge that runs east-west. The Conservation Area (CA) comprises two parallel streets running south to north, linked by two shorter streets of the same name running west-east at the northern end and middle of the south-north 'arms'. The majority of the buildings in The Mount itself comprise a unique and distinctive group of buildings of both architectural and local historic value. They form the core of the conservation area. They are listed Grade II. These buildings date from c.1876 and were built for Huntley & Palmers' clerks, foremen and managers. They comprise a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses with common design and decorative features. All the properties were constructed of London stock bricks with paler detailing and banding, and with slate roofs.

Below is a summary of elements which create the area's character and justify its designation as a CA to assist key decisions on its development and enhancement. Later sections of this appraisal provide greater detail. The key characteristics are:

- The close-knit street block listed houses purpose-built for Huntley & Palmers' employees;
- The distinctive and unique character of the houses, constructed of London stock bricks with paler brick banding and detailing;
- The consistent retention of much of their original character and appearance with few detrimental changes by way of the addition of inconsistent materials;
- Retention of original brick walls including frontage and railings throughout the area;
- Retention of the urban grain, with few detrimental changes by way of new development;
- Distinctive local details such as the use of Caithness Flagstone Series of stone to form roadside kerbs and channels – only found elsewhere in Reading in Fatherson Road - close to the Eldon Square Conservation Area - and iron drain covers manufactured in Katesgrove;
- Good tree cover within the grounds of individual properties and throughout the area;
- Properties fronting Christchurch Road within the CA are of a similar age, but of a different style, more typical of this area of Reading, and again retaining original walls and/or railings;
- The CA has three character areas distinguished by age, architectural style and building materials:

  Character area 1: The Mount and its Christchurch Road frontage – the 'core' of the CA

  Character area 2: Hillside, Lower Mount/Allcroft Road – green with less urban density

  Character area 3: 53, 53A, Linden Mews, 55 Christchurch Road and the Progress Theatre – to the west of the core of the CA
- The curtilage of the Hillside site is enhanced by its extensive boundary tree cover;

- Together, Hillside and The Mount represent an urban and industrial counterpart of 'the country landowner's estate village and big house'; Suttons' ownership and influence prevail in Character Area 3 where buildings remain that were associated with 'Sutherlands' – the 1840s substantial landmark domestic property that the Sutton family occupied during the 1880s, demolished in the 1970s. These two properties, along with 'Cintra Lodge' directly to the south of Christchurch Road (since demolished), formed a cluster of Sutton family properties in close proximity to The Mount.

SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features

The core of the designated Conservation Area clearly demonstrates a planned form being built specifically for a group of Huntley & Palmers' employees, and formed part of the continuing development spread of substantial suburban villas in this south east direction out of Reading.

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

- Retention of original buildings and their settings with few detrimental changes by way of new development and/or addition of non-traditional materials;
- Retention of original brick walls and railings throughout the area;
- Good tree cover within the grounds of individual properties and throughout the area;
- The tranquil nature of area: it is a tranquil environment in the core area, away from Christchurch Road, reflecting the original street pattern and urban development.

SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities

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

- White painted brickwork at number 25 The Mount;
- Some walls in need of repair on the Christchurch Road frontage;
- Some overgrowth of walls and railings with hedges along Christchurch Road obscuring these features;
- Lack of traditional street furniture, including street lighting;
- Poor street and pavement surfaces with little use of traditional materials;
- Mixed 'conservation area' signage;
- Over-reliance on individual telegraph poles throughout the area with attendant wires radiating out to the houses within;
- Whilst there are some localised parking restrictions in The Mount, there are areas without, which leads to daytime parking by commuters and users of the Christchurch Road shopping parade to the east;
- Heavily trafficked route to the south of the conservation area.

SS4 Recommended measures

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

SS5 The 2026 Boundary

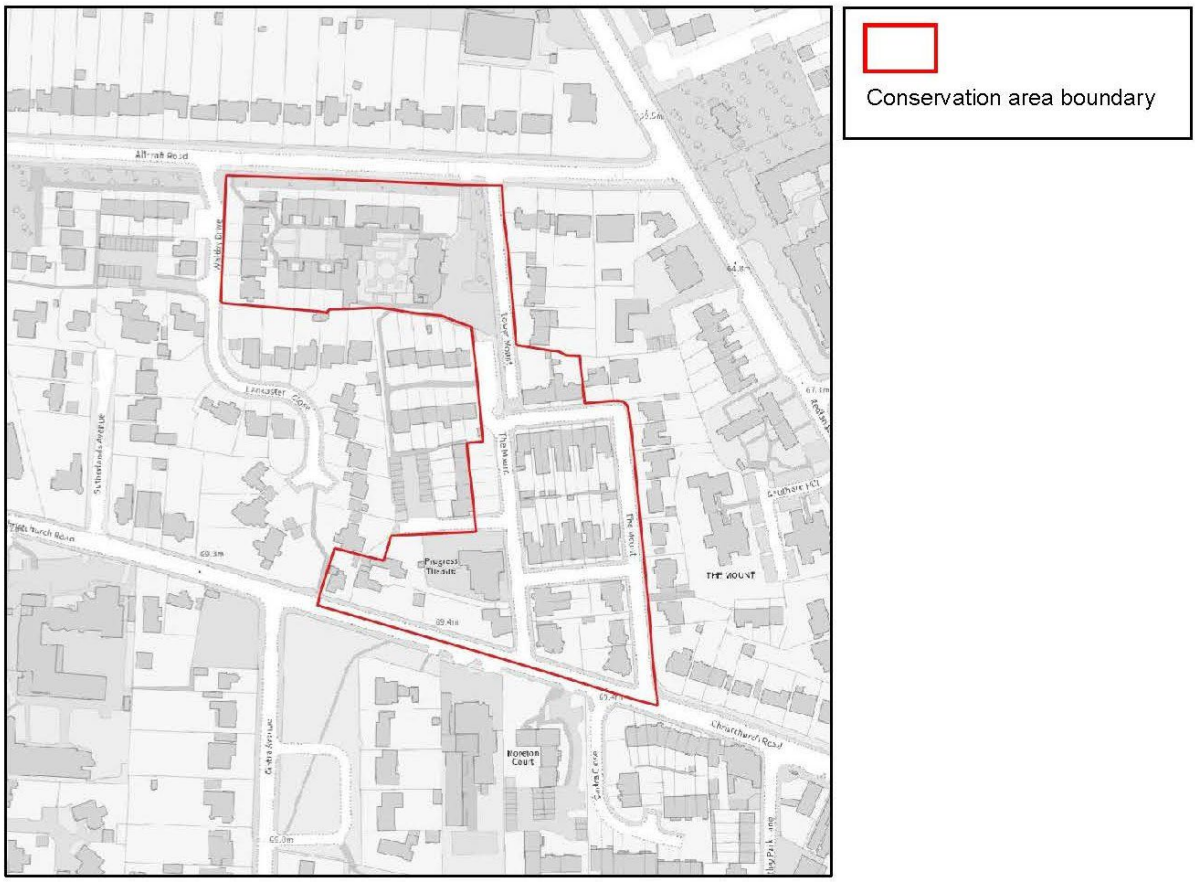


Figure 3: The existing conservation area boundary

Conservation Area Appraisal

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy context

The purpose of an Appraisal document is to ensure that the special interest justifying designation of the CA is clearly defined and analysed in a written statement of its character and appearance. This provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for development plan policies and development control decisions, and also forms the basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

This Appraisal describes and defines the particular historical and architectural character and interest of The Mount CA, highlighting those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced and identifying negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

The Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) has been produced within current national and local planning policy guidelines. Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - states that, *"When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest."*

Sustainable development

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

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

New development in conservation areas

In relation to new development in conservation areas the NPPF states:

"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."

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

Local Plan

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

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

This Appraisal cannot hope to mention every building or feature within the CA that might be of value. Any omission should not be taken to imply that it is not of any interest or value to the character of the area.

1.2 Public consultation

This Appraisal is in a format recommended by Historic England in its Advice Note 1 (Second edition) 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' (2019) . It has been prepared by the Reading CAAC and includes a management plan and photographic appendices. In this CA, there are many local residents to consult with one business and one theatre group. Consultation has been aimed at engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the area to help define what is of special significance and worthy of protection and/or enhancement.

2. Landscape setting

The Mount CA lies less than 2km south east of Reading town centre. It is centred on The Mount, which lies immediately to the north of the west-east aligned Christchurch Road, which is part of the busy main A327, leading to Shinfield Road and points south out of Reading. Immediately to the north is Allcroft Road, which runs parallel to Christchurch Road. Christchurch Road and Allcroft Road were once linked by The Mount (and the Lower Mount to the north of The Mount), but this through route was closed off as part of a conservation area enhancement scheme implemented shortly after the formal designation of The Mount CA on 24 April 1987.

The geology is similar to Christchurch: a ridge with clay over gravel beds.

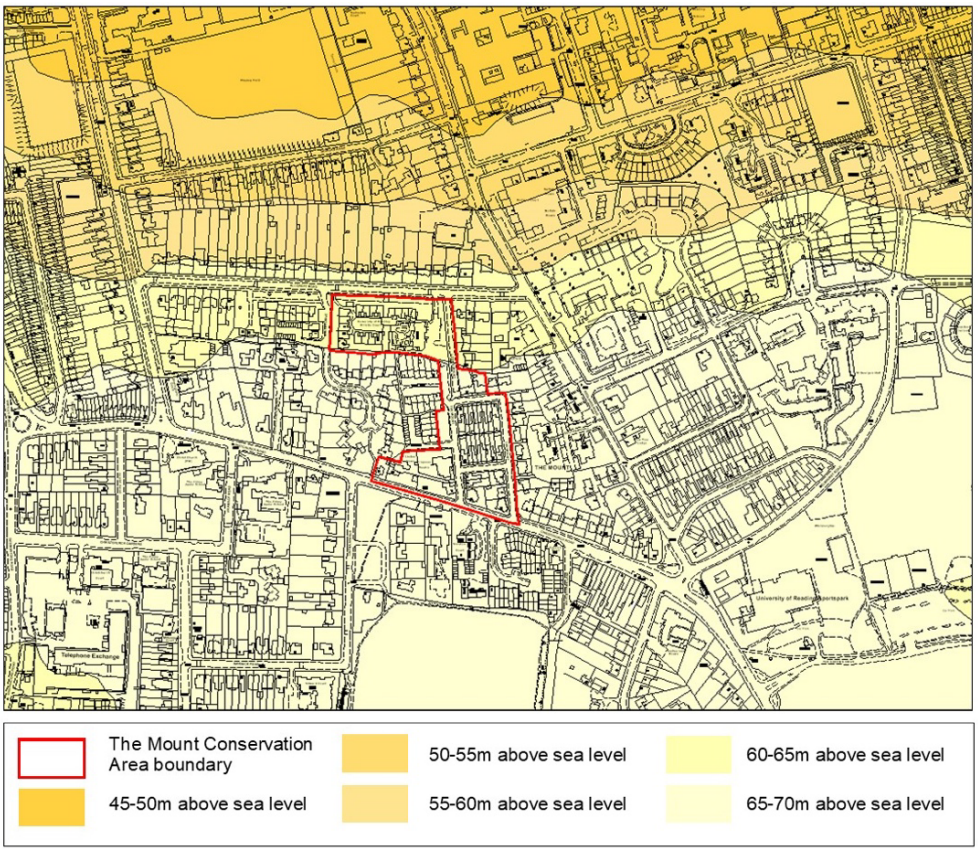


Figure 4: The height above sea level within the conservation area

3. Brief history and development of the area

The Kennet and Avon Canal was opened in 1810 bringing London and Bristol, two major sea ports, into direct communication by water. Of much greater significance, however, was the construction of the Great Western Railway which reached the town in 1840. The coming of the railway resulted in a rapid growth of major industries, notably Huntley & Palmers and Suttons Seeds, which provided work for a rapidly increasing population.

The history of The Mount Conservation Area is inextricably tied up with the growth of Huntley and Palmers in its heyday. William Isaac Palmer (1824 – 1893) developed the estate of 24 properties on The Mount in the 1870s (Character Area 1) and Hillside (Character Area 3) as his own home in the early 1880s. Progress Theatre apart, The Mount Area dates almost wholly from the 1870s, and shows few real changes since that period.

A more detailed history can be found in Appendix 2.

4. Spatial Analysis

4.1 Key characteristics and plan form

The core of the designated Conservation Area clearly demonstrates a planned form being built specifically for a group of Huntley & Palmers' employees, and formed part of the continuing development spread of substantial suburban villas in this south east direction out

of Reading. Unfortunately, in the immediate vicinity of, and except for, the conservation area itself, few of the original Victorian buildings remain, having been redeveloped.

The Conservation Area does not benefit from any obvious open spaces and the once extensive grounds of Hillside were developed in the 1990s to add to the university accommodation. There is however an important linear open strip on the west side of The Mount and Lower Mount containing trees and frontage railings which contributes to softening the general built up feel within the core of the CA as well as defining the edge of this part of the conservation area.

Except for the extensions in the grounds of Hillside, the defined area is not one which has been subject to pressures for significant (re)development in recent years. Although areas immediately outside the defined conservation area have experienced more development pressures, only the aforementioned site within the CA – Hillside – has experienced development in its grounds. However, to quote the list entry description, "…the house retains its entrance drive, gate piers, gates and railings and some of its garden giving it its original sense of scale, space and context", (Historic England, 2026).

Apart from the Christchurch Road frontage and the Progress Theatre site, the area exhibits a certain formality to the layout of the dwellings within it, and in general terms the area has in its core a fairly compact and formal "urban" rather than "suburban" feel to it (also serving to distinguish it from surrounding areas, which includes single storey bungalows facing the CA along the east boundary).

Some alterations and extensions to original dwellings have taken place but these generally reflect the character and appearance of the original buildings by using compatible materials and retaining important boundary wall and railing details. Certainly from the front, the properties appear little changed, but the rear elevations indicate examples of inappropriate additions, including flat-roofed dormers.

The properties in the conservation area have varying depths, but none have particularly large rear garden spaces. Single storey garages at the rear of corner-plot properties open directly onto the road. There is a communal alleyway between the east and west arms of The Mount at the centre of the largest block of properties, secured at each end with a gate. The houses all have front gardens with many retaining their original chequerboard tiling from the street to the front door.

Throughout the area, front boundaries are defined by brick walls and railings - whose design is consistently of a fleur-de-lys style - which are a key element of the character of the conservation area as a whole as well as providing a good setting for individual properties.

As previously stated, there has been little pressure for redevelopment here. Nevertheless there is significant tree cover throughout the area and without, which gives the area some verdant character. There are important trees around the Hillside site, on the west side of The Mount and Lower Mount, on the Christchurch Road frontage and outside the area. These are shown on Map 6, Figure 10.

The Progress Theatre relocated from the centre of Reading to The Mount in 1950 into what had been 'Mildmay Hall', constructed in 1881 in the grounds adjoining Mildmay Cottage. The

Mildmay Hall had been the second venue for Reading's Mildmay Club - established in 1879 by A W Sutton.

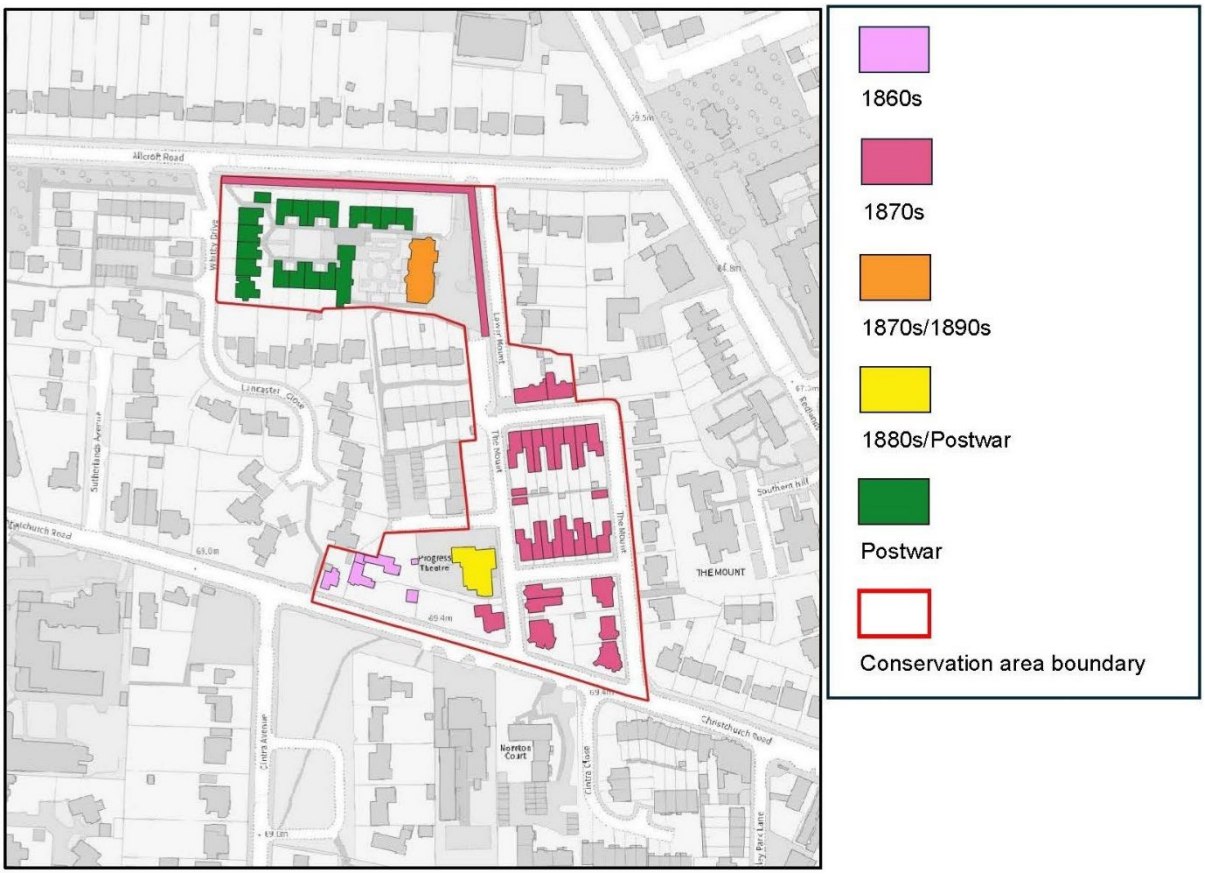


Figure 5: Buildings by age

4.2 Views

Views into, within and out of the CA contribute to its special character. Despite the slight rise from north to south, the conservation area is generally approached ‘on the flat’ from the levels of Allcroft Road to the north and Christchurch Road to the south. The Hillside site is prominent at the Allcroft Road side of the conservation area not only because of its intrinsic size but also prominent tree cover and original surrounding boundary walls and railings. Whilst these trees, walls and railings are visible from along the length of Allcroft Road itself, they (and Hillside itself) are not highly visible from any great distance.

Similarly, the core buildings in The Mount and on its Christchurch Road frontage are more prominent close up than from a distance although, again, these walls and railings, and some trees on the frontage, are visible from along the length of Christchurch Road itself.

4.2.1 Views into the area

These views contribute to the sense of arrival when approaching the CA. Photographs of each of the views can be found in Appendix 5.

Figure 6: View 2 - northwest at the corner of 'The Mount' (east) and Christchurch Road (Image Claire Truman)

Views into the area are north-south along the grid between Christchurch Road (to the south boundary) and Allcroft Road (to the north boundary). The view looking north from the south is from the higher vantage point in the conservation area. The roads forming the north-south/west-west grid are all called 'The Mount':

- Looking north along 'The Mount' (west) road – View 1
- Looking north along 'The Mount' (east) road – View 2
- Looking south from the lower position of Allcroft Road along Lower Mount which rises up toward The Mount – View 3

4.2.2 Views within the area

Figure 7: View 4 – view west towards the Progress Theatre along The Mount (south) (Image Claire Truman)

Views within the area are more enclosed but are enhanced by the landscape setting. Photographs of each of the views can be found in Appendix 5.

Within the area:

- View 4: an interesting stopped-off view looking up the Lower Mount from the north towards number 22 The Mount;
- all the corner properties within The Mount represent key views within the conservation area as these tend to be the larger end-terrace, semi-detached and detached properties;
- open space, trees and railings fronting Sutton Walk to the west of The Mount and Lower Mount are an important visual element and aspect for the properties immediately opposite them. These form part of a conservation area enhancement scheme implemented shortly after designation of the conservation area in 1987.
- View 5: a less attractive internal view is that west along the road in front of numbers 24-36 The Mount towards Progress Theatre and from numbers 38 and 40 opposite.

4.2.3 Views out of the area

There are a limited number of good views out of the area.

Figure 8: View 6 - west along The Mount (north) (Image Claire Truman)

Photographs of each of the views can be found in Appendix 5.

Generally ‘views out’ from the front and rear of properties in the CA, where they are not protected by tree cover, are to 1930s and later dwellings outside the CA.

- View 6: The Mount (north) offers views further afield towards the spire of Christ Church to the west;
- View 7: A distant view to Wantage Hall in the northeast direction.

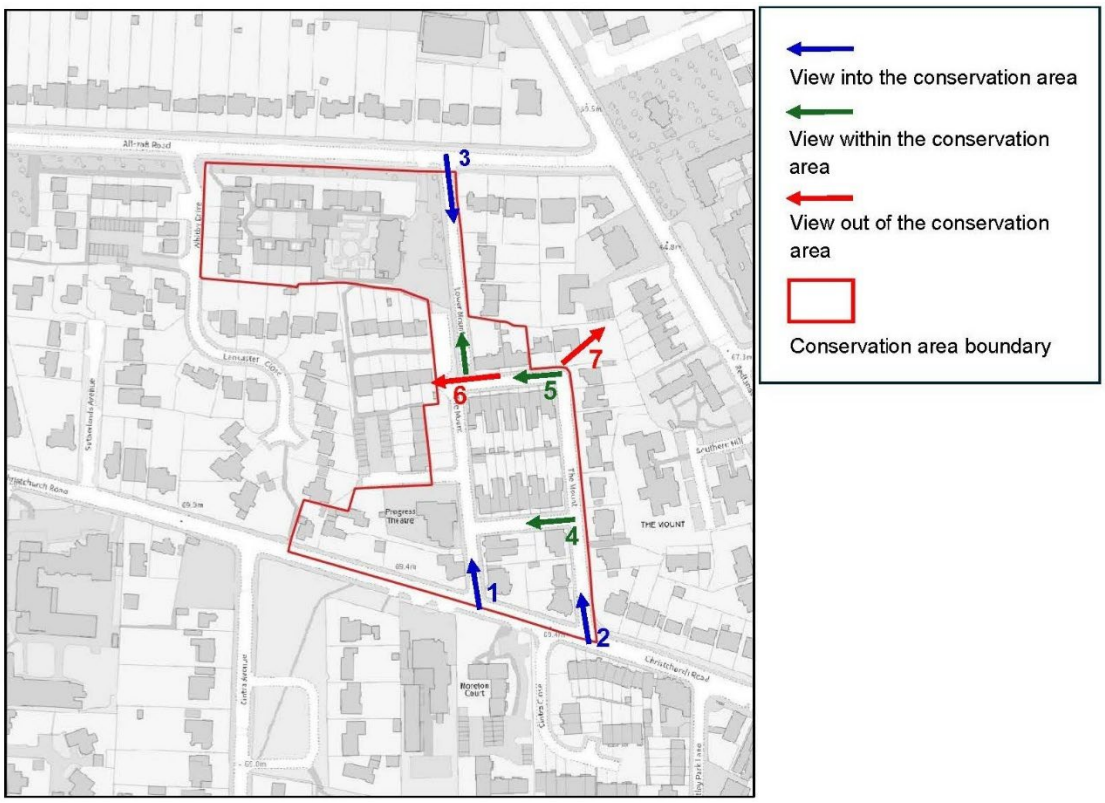


Figure 9: Views into, out and within the conservation area

4.3 Open spaces

The CA benefits from a linear open strip on the west side of The Mount and Lower Mount containing trees and frontage railings, that contributes to softening the general built up feel within the core of the CA, as well as defining the edge of this part of the CA. The large open front gardens without boundaries, laid to lawn along the west boundary facing onto The Mount, also contributes a green and open character to the setting. There are no planned open spaces, such as a park, with the CA.

4.4 Character of massing

The properties in the CA are 2-3 storeys in height with pitched and hipped roof profiles. It is possible to view the rear of some of the properties which reveal some original pitched dormer roofs, and create a regular rhythm to the rear of the large central block. The massing of the corners of the blocks are softened at times with hipped roof profiles, angled wall planes, turrets and turret roofs to bay windows, and the stepping down of garden walls that flank the end-of-terrace properties. The roofscapes are broken up with regular chimney stacks.

The longer terrace facades are organised into 4-5 bays, articulated with projected semi-detached pitched entrance porch roofs, The building plots are of varying depths with the semi-detached and detached houses having relatively larger rear gardens, albeit none have particularly large spaces.

4.5 Trees and green spaces

The CA generally comprises mature trees, and although these tend to have small gardens (The Mount and Christchurch Road) and/or little garden space around them, there is

important tree cover on the Christchurch Road and 'Hillside Court' frontages, which gives a general verdant feel to the area of buildings and trees in harmony. Street trees exist to the west side of The Mount/Lower Mount in front of Sutton Walk which generally make a significant contribution to this urban conservation area's special character and sense of identity (see Appendix 6). Tree cover immediately adjacent to the CA (some protected by Tree Preservation Orders) also contribute to the setting of the CA, and in particular those in the adjacent Christchurch Conservation Area and Redlands Conservation Area. A group of three trees to the south of the CA at the front of Moreton Court, Christchurch Road are under TPO 86/06. Trees therefore make a significant contribution to the CA's special character and sense of identity. Significant tree groups are shown on Map 5, overleaf.

Because of their importance to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, where they are not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), it is necessary to give the local planning authority 6 weeks' notice of any intention to cut down, top or lop any tree in a Conservation Area, which also enables a local planning authority to consider whether the trees should be formally protected by the making of a TPO.

There are currently TPOs covering trees at 55 Christchurch Road (type T2) and 79-81 The Mount (type T1) (part of the Sutton Walk development). The Ash tree outside the Progress Theatre (TPO order number 2/03) was approved for felling in June 2020 (felled in the August) and a replacement was planted - Sorbus 'Autumn Spire' - in 2021. The replacement tree retains the same TPO order number (2/03). Planters to Lower Mount were constructed following Community Infrastructure Levy funding received in 2021 and were first fully planted in 2024. These are maintained by a group of local residents of The Mount and Lower Mount.

Figure 10: Trees (with TPO trees), other significant trees and green spaces within and adjacent to the CA

4.6 Building Plots

Throughout the area, the front of the building plots are defined by brick walls and railings which are a key element of the character of the conservation area as a whole as well as providing a good setting for individual properties. The terraced houses have low level brick walls and railings to the front, while taller brick boundary treatment is also common on The Mount. These compare to the semi-detached and detached properties which have railings and hedging. These larger properties have their own vehicular entrances while the terraced houses do not - other than four garages serving the end properties.

5. Buildings and Public Realm

5.1 Key positive characteristics

The pre-eminent local detail throughout this CA, and 'unifying' it, is the presence of rich, often unique, examples of traditional polychromatic brickwork from the late Victorian period and of brick walls and railings on property boundaries. Much of the history of The Mount Conservation relates to its connection with the Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory, with housing in The Mount itself provided for senior employees of the factory and 'Hillside' providing a Palmer family house. 'Hillside' is also attributable to the prolific and important local architects, Morris and Stallwood.

5.2 Materials, styles and features

The CA is essentially a residential area, clearly highly prized because of its location close to local amenities, Reading University and the Royal Berkshire Hospital. It contains properties from the late Victorian period.

The buildings in The Mount itself are of slate roof and London stock brick with paler facings, with cast iron fleur-de-lys style railings atop low brick walls. 'Hillside' is built of grey brick with red brick and terracotta dressings. The remaining Victorian properties fronting Christchurch Road are rendered, but all of them possess intricacies of detailing prevalent in the 'richer' houses of the period and reflecting Reading's heritage of Victorian patterned brickwork.

Conceived as an urban block, The Mount's houses are designed as a collective whole: the two main approaches from Christchurch Road are turrets to the two detached properties, whose forms are echoed within The Mount with turret roofs to projecting two-storey bay windows at the ends of the terraces and act as a unifying feature with the remaining properties. Bands of pale brick are used to define a common datum between the properties, and do not step up or down with the differing internal floor levels across the site (refer to Figure 18).

Altogether, these (different) brick built buildings therefore possess the distinguishing features of Reading's architecture and there are examples of good quality brickwork throughout the CA. Brick was a popular building material in the 19th century and the ready availability of different coloured bricks provided the opportunity for the lively polychromatic brickwork found throughout this part of Victorian Reading.

The Progress Theatre presents to the street a 1960s style architecture and largely conceals the pitched roof of the original Mildmay Hall towards the rear. Whilst this is a contrasting

style and use of materials, it adds another historic and social layer, not a competing one, to the CA.

5.3 Buildings of local historic interest and positive buildings

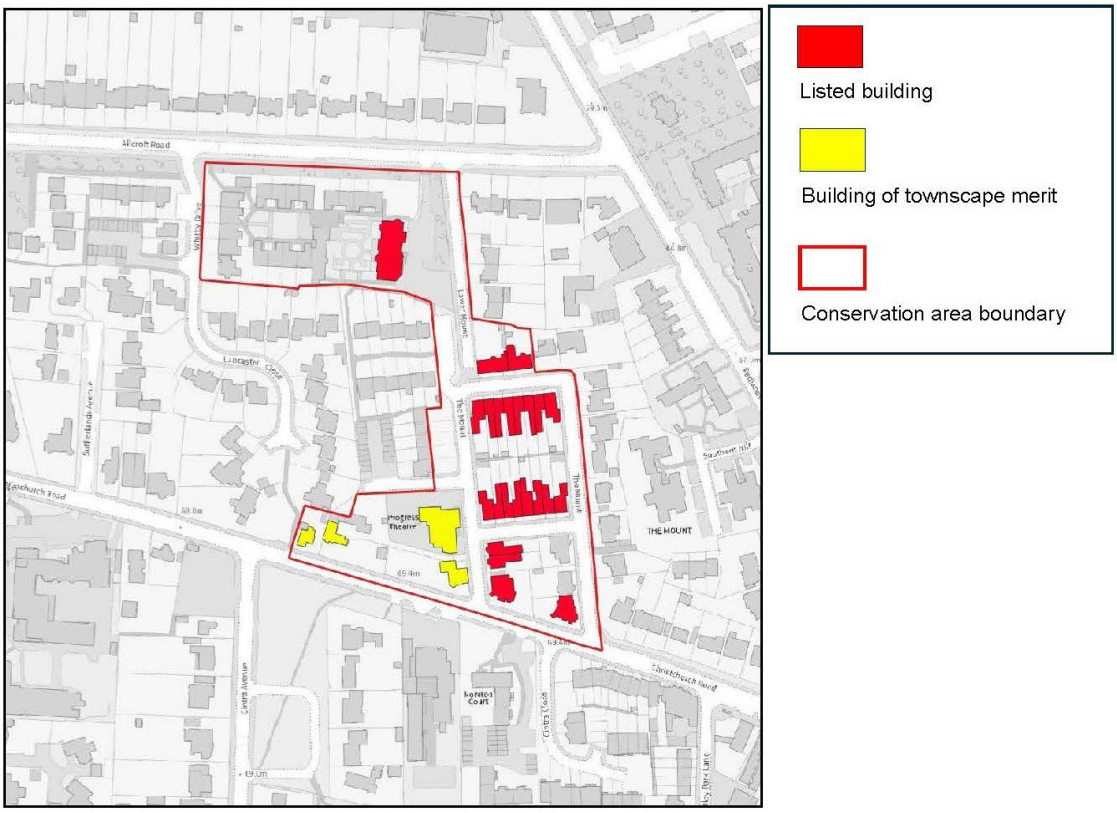


Figure 11: Listed buildings (red) and Buildings of Townscape Merit (yellow) within the CA

5.3.1 Listed buildings

There are 9 listing entries in the CA – many of the buildings are listed as groups. Geographically north to south these are:

- Gatepiers, Walls, Gates and Railings on Allcroft Road and Lower Mount to Hillside, Allcroft Road (List Entry Number 1392868)
- Hillside, Allcroft Road (List Entry Number 1392866)
- 23 and 25, The Mount (List Entry Number 1154876)
- 8- 22, The Mount (List Entry Number 113439)
- 6 and 24- 36, The Mount (List Entry Number 113438)
- 38 and 40, The Mount (List Entry Number 1321967)
- 57 Christchurch Road (List Entry Number 113440)
- 59 Christchurch Road (List Entry Number 1321968)
- Wall Between Nos 57 and 59, Christchurch Road (List Entry Number 1154887)

The buildings and structures are all identified on Map 6 and are also listed in Appendix 3 where images are provided along with a short summary and link to the Historic England listing entry.

5.3.2 Buildings of Townscape Merit

Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM) in Reading's CAs are measured against the same criteria as locally important buildings outside CAs. The criteria include: age and integrity; historic and architectural interest; social and community importance and association with notable local and national figures.

- There are 6 buildings of townscape merit. The following non-listed buildings are considered to be BTMs:
- 53 and 53A Christchurch Road
- 55 Christchurch Road (Mildmay Cottage)
- 2 and 4 The Mount
- Progress Theatre
- These are identified on Map 6 and listed with a short description in Appendix 4.

5.4 Public Realm

5.4.1 Floorscape, street lighting, street furniture and local detail

Road and footway surfaces are predominantly modern i.e. tarmac and concrete kerbs.

Whilst generally in average condition (there is evidence of repairs by ‘utilities’ throughout the area), these surfaces are not attractive and not ‘traditional’ in conservation area terms.

Street lighting columns, signage and street furniture are modern, and this is another area with considerable potential for improvement. There are no examples of traditional lighting in the CA.

Properties in the CA rely on individual telegraph poles throughout the area with attendant wires radiating out to the houses.

Brick walls and railings are to be found throughout the area and are clearly an essential part of the public realm and character of the CA. The cast iron railing design across the CA is consistently of a fleur-de-lys style. No.6 has lost its double leaf gate: it was one of what was 4 pairs. The other three, at No.s 8 and 22 (opposing pairs) and No. 24 (opposing pair to No.6) remain. It is notable that where the railings have been well maintained and repaired these create a positive enhancement to the wholistic character of the CA. The repair and re-painting of railings is encouraged; conversely, there is a conflict between enlarged tree roots that threaten the integrity and retention of historic railings at the corner of No.59 Christchurch Road (refer to Figure 26B).

Figure 12: (Left) Single leaf gate at No.4 – also at No.s 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 38, 40 and side gates to No. 40 and 57 as a reflected pair. (Right) Figure 13 Double leaf gate at No. 24; and opposing detached houses No.s 22 and 8.

Road and footway surfaces are a mixture of finishes: the original kerbs and channels are a distinctive local detail of the stone 'Caithness Flagstone Series' of stone – only found elsewhere in Reading in Fatherson Road (adjacent to the Eldon Road Conservation Area); iron drain covers are partially retained and were manufactured in nearby Katesgrove (refer to section 5.4.2 below); the surfaces are tarmac.

5.4.2 Local details and features

Original drain covers can be found in The Mount. Reading Ironworks went into liquidation in 1888 and in the same year The Universal Patent Pulley Co Ltd acquired the patent for the Universal Wrought Iron Split Pulley and manufactured it on part of the former ironworks. They also produced castings using the patterns from Reading Ironworks (Mercury 8 September 1888). The company was wound up in 1894.

Figure 13: Universal Patent Pulley Co drain set within 'Caithness Flagstone Series' gutter and kerb stones (Image Evelyn Williams)

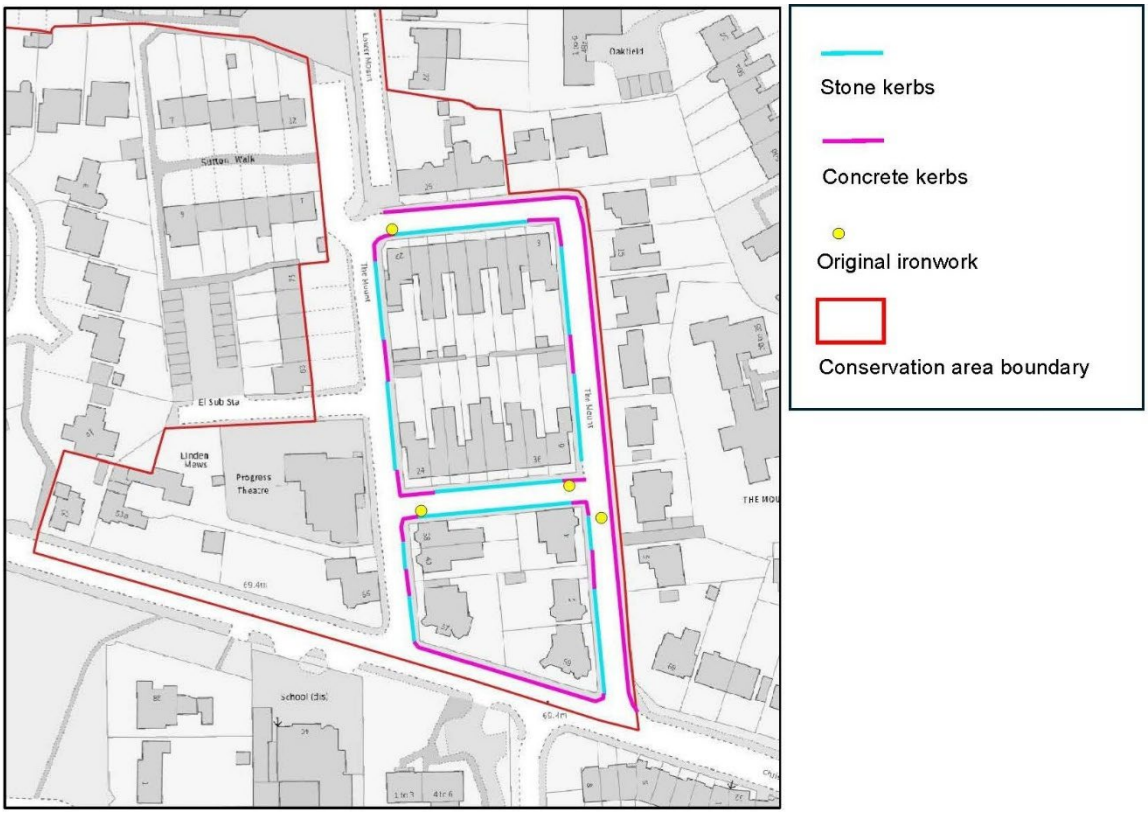


Figure 14: Diagram of location of stone and concrete kerbs, and original ironworks at The Mount (compiled by local resident)

6. Character Areas

The CA divides into three character areas defined according to the predominant age, style of architecture and urban grain.

The CA is a tightly drawn area centred on the Grade II listed properties in The Mount itself and includes adjacent properties of similar age on the Christchurch Road frontage to the south and the listed Hillside to the north fronting Allcroft Road and Lower Mount.

The area is therefore clearly defined as dating from the late Victorian period, specifically circa 1870s. Two anomalies to this historical period are: the Progress Theatre whose modern extension to the 1881 Mildmay Hall is an architectural expression of the late 1960s; and the 1990's development in the grounds of Hillside. Apart from these, the area has generally resisted pressure for (re)development, and in this respect must be considered to be quite unique. The character of the area therefore remains strong. The area can be divided into the following three character areas:

Figure 15: Character Areas 1-3

6.1 Character Area 1 - The Mount and its Christchurch Road frontage

The Mount itself comprises a close knit street block of listed houses with local historic interest being originally built for Huntley & Palmers' employees. These houses comprise a unique and distinctive group of buildings of both architectural and local historic value and form the core of the conservation area. They are listed Grade II. These buildings date from c.1876 and were built for Huntley and Palmers' clerks, foremen and managers, but as set out in Appendix 2 - History and Development of the Area - not all the early residents of the area were linked to the biscuit factory.

The buildings comprise a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses with design and decorative features in common. All the properties were constructed of London stock bricks with paler detailing and banding, and with slate roofs. They retain much of their original character and appearance, including frontage walls and railings. An east-west service alleyway central to the main urban 'block' is located to the rear of these terraced houses.

Common unifying architectural details throughout Character Area 1 are (refer to Figure 16):

- London stock bricks with white brick bands;
- cast iron flower basket guards retained at No.s 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 30, 36 and 38;
- modillion eaves cornice;
- chevron-moulded first floor brick window arches;
- moulded stone lintels to ground floor and some first floors;
- paired doorways with bracketed arch entrance and joint gable over;

- 4-panelled door design with upper panels glazed, cast iron central door knob, scrolled knocker and vertical post box;
- chequerboard black and white encaustic tiles to pathway from entrance gate to door – largely retained at The Mount;
- sash windows, some with margin lights expressing a hierarchy of design for the respective occupants (at No.s 4, 6, 8, 22, 24, 25, 38 and 40, and two upper windows at No.2); at the ground floor windows (only) of No.s 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18);
- slate roofs: some with fish scale courses (e.g. at No. 57 and 57A The Mount), some with geometric shaped courses (e.g. at Uplands and 23 The Mount);
- the inclusion of turret designs at key corner locations;
- prominent brick chimneys with dogtooth brick course details;
- fleur-de-lys railing design on a low brick wall.

Figure 16: Unifying architectural details (Image Claire Truman)

The properties were planned to reflect social hierarchy within Huntley & Palmers' employees. The two substantial properties at the east and west 'entrances' to The Mount – are listed separately: 59 Christchurch Road, list entry no. 1321968, and 57 Christchurch Road, list entry no. 1113440. These may have been designed for managers at the biscuit factory. The architecture of both include a palette of Gothic features, such as turrets, canted bays, diaper brickwork, bespoke to each property.

The Mount was designed as an urban group, and is expressed in a number of ways:

- Unifying walls between properties – such as the enclosing wall with paired garden access between No.s 57 and 40 (refer to Figure 17) illustrate the wholistic urban design.
- The consistent brick band details are located at the same height across the north and south ‘blocks’ despite the fall in gradient north-south along the road, and internal level changes between rooms and between properties. In particular the band detail carried through between No.6 and No.8 (refer to Figure 18) remains consistent yet the internal floor levels of the two properties differ in their relationship with the banding.
- The unifying architectural details, as listed on the previous page.

Figure 17: Unifying urban design (Image Claire Truman)

Figure 18: Unifying yellow brick bands between properties in the north-south road directions (Image Claire Truman)

The two groups of terraced houses share these unifying architectural details which subtly obscure differences between them: the north terrace has a third ‘attic’ floor with original dormer windows whereas the south terrace properties have roof lights that align with the roof, however both terraces appear the same from the street elevation.

Figure 19: Original dormer windows to the rear of the north terrace of The Mount

Figure 20: Roof lights to the rear of the south terrace of The Mount

A resident in The Mount who has occupied a home in both terraces has noted in March 2026:

"The North side houses have full height rooms throughout the first and second floors, but the South side do not - our back rooms have a standard ceiling height. The North side houses have additional internal features (servants bells, mouldings in the hallway, different types of marble fireplaces on the ground floor etc.) and fireplaces on the third floor… The tiles on the front paths are also larger on the North side terraces…the terrace houses on both North and South sides become slightly wider as they go from East to West. This also cannot be seen from the street but is noticeable when you compare the inside of number 26 to number 36 for example."

6.2 Character Area 2 - Hillside, Lower Mount/Allcroft Road

Hillside, to the north of The Mount, is a good example of a large Victorian detached house, which also retains its original walls and railings. It is dated 1880 by Morris and Stallwood for WI Palmer of Huntley and Palmers, and was extended and dated 1898 by the same Stallwood (working alone) for Leonard Goodhart Sutton (1863-1932), grandson of John Sutton founder of Suttons Seed. L G Sutton moved to Hillside after the death of W I Palmer. It is built of grey brick with extensive red brick and terra cotta dressings, slate roofs and red tile cresting. The listing describes it as, "…one of the most opulent buildings of this period in Reading, which has a rich diversity of late C19 housing. Morris and Stallwood were prolific and accomplished local architects, well-tuned to the tastes and trends in public and private building, suited to a wealthy client wishing to invest in a building of the highest quality" (Historic England, 2026). The building is now owned by Turner Property and subdivided into flats. Although the grounds have been built over in part, the house retains its entrance drive, gates and railings and some of its garden, giving it its original sense of scale space and context.

The gate piers, walls, gates and railings form two sides of the boundary to Hillside to Allcroft Road and Lower Mount. These date from circa 1880-1900 and are valuable in putting the house in context, and are listed separately (List Entry Number 1392868). A pair of brick piers with an enriched terracotta frieze of rosettes are located either side of the main driveway, inscribed with 'Hillside'. At the entrance off Lower Mount two less ornate paired brick gatepiers remain: the original timber gates are currently in storage at Hillside awaiting repair

and reinstatement. The adjoining wall (Figure 20) was originally that of the stable block (evident in the Ordnance survey maps of 1911 and 1932) and had been much taller. The stable block was lost in a fire and demolished in the 1980s[1], and this east wall retained as the Hillside boundary wall along Lower Mount.

The quality of the Hillside site is also enhanced by its extensive boundary tree cover.

Figure 21: View of the east elevation of Hillside from Lower Mount (Image Claire Truman)

Figure 22: The brick piers and railings to Hillside are falling into disrepair – view along Lower Mount (Image Claire Truman)

[1] An image of the stable block is held by the Museum of English Rural Life

6.3 Character Area 3 - 53, 53A, Linden Mews, 55 Christchurch Road and the Progress Theatre

Nearby properties fronting Christchurch Road are of a similar age, if different style, being of rendered finish, but again retaining original walls and/or railings. 53, 53A, Linden Mews and 55 Christchurch Road are all shown on the 1877 map of Reading and are therefore of the same date or earlier than the properties in Areas 1 and 2. They are included in the CA for their group value and character. Number 53 is a single storey classic lodge building which adjoined the main entrance to 'Sutherlands', which site was redeveloped in the 1970s as Lancaster Close (accessed from Allcroft Road).

Part of the original pierced and decorative wall also remains. 53A and Linden Mews were formed from 'Sutherlands' outbuildings, and although altered and extended, these retain their original spatial pattern. 55 is a prominent two storey white rendered building of classic proportions located at the west 'entrance' to The Mount, however the Georgian style windows to the main elevation have been replaced with uPVC since the last appraisal, which diminishes its status as a building of townscape merit. Original railings enclose the frontage, however their condition is noted as in a deteriorated state.

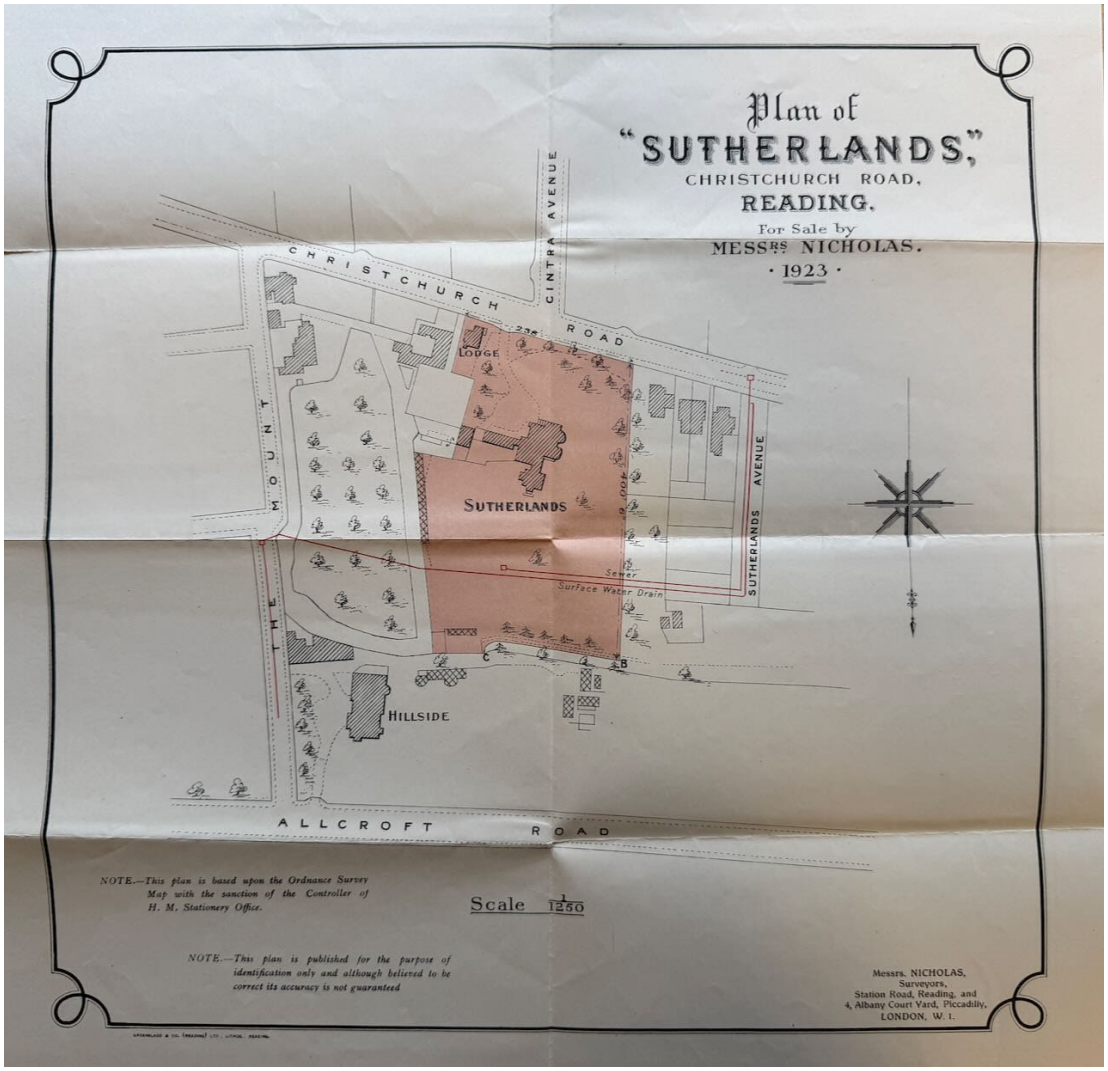


Figure 23: 1923 Sales Particulars map of Sutherlands showing the relationship with 55 Christchurch Road, Mildmay Hall and Hillside. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries.

The Progress Theatre, founded in 1946, moved in 1950 from the W I Palmer Memorial Hall in West Street to new premises in The Mount which had formerly been the Mildmay Club, a working men's club founded in 1879 by Arthur Warwick Sutton which moved to the newly built hall in 1881, sufficiently large to hold 200 people. The hall has been enlarged in phases since its initial occupation, particularly after the freehold was secured in 1964. The design of the main entrance façade onto The Mount dates from 1968.

The Progress Theatre has social and cultural importance whose origins are directly associated with the Sutton family. Its avant-garde design contributes substantially to the layers of history within the CA, and specifically to the setting of Character Area 1; every effort should be made to keep the property and the associated external spaces well maintained and managed.

Figure 24: The Progress Theatre November 2025 (Image Claire Truman)

Figure 25: The Progress Theatre today (Image courtesy Progress Theatre)

6.4 Contributions to character

Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the CA:

- Retention of original buildings and their settings with few detrimental changes by way of new development and/or addition of non-traditional materials;
- Retention of original brick walls and railings throughout the area;
- Good tree cover within the grounds of individual properties and throughout the area;

Surrounded by much more modern buildings, the CA itself and the buildings within it have generally retained their original character. Although there have been relatively few pressures to redevelop sites in the past, these have generally respected the prevailing character and appearance of the CA.

Positive changes that have occurred since the 2009 appraisal that were identified as opportunities for enhancement:

- Reinstatement of brick wall and railings at 6 The Mount.
- The top of Lower Mount has received attention with new planters installed to reduce incidences of bikes travelling at high speed through The Mount, however the previous bench and rubbish bin were also removed advised as owing to anti-social behaviour.
- New seating has been installed to the front of the Progress Theatre.

6.5 Activities and uses

The area has historically been and currently is a residential area of individual family

houses to the north of Christchurch Road. Hillside – now named Hillside Court - is now home to the offices of Turner Property on part of the ground floor, who acquired the site from Reading University in 2014. Hillside Court offers flat accommodation for private rent within the main house, and halls of residence with a common room to Reading University students within the fifteen 1970s and 1980s houses in the grounds. Turner Property since added two more houses within the grounds. The Progress Theatre is the only building in non-residential use.

It is only on the outside of the area, particularly on the south side of Christchurch Road that non-residential uses have prevailed, but recent (re) developments have introduced more residential uses here. At the time of its original designation there was a car sales/repair garage immediately opposite the conservation area, which was a source of complaint for using The Mount for overflow and visitors car parking. However, its redevelopment for housing has had the effect of removing that problem, to the benefit of the conservation area.

Properties in the area appear to very much in demand and therefore generally fully occupied and in a good state of repair.

Despite its position just north of the busy Christchurch Road the area possesses a quiet (residential) atmosphere, which is helped by the cul-de-sac arrangement of both the Mount and Lower Mount which are separated by bollards introduced as part of a conservation area enhancement scheme implemented shortly after the conservation area was designated. This prevents rat runs through the area between Allcroft Road and Christchurch Road.

6.6 Ambience

During the daytime the ambience is quiet within The Mount, away from Christchurch Road – this contrasts with the ambience in the evenings (refer to section 7.2.6).

7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement

The general state of repair of the buildings in the CA is good with properties not remaining vacant for any length of time. However, in common with many of Reading's conservation areas, The Mount is lacking in the quality, if not the state of repair of the highway environment (roadways, footways and street furniture).

All of these areas would benefit from continued monitoring, and the seizing of opportunities for improvement as they arise.

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

- flat-roofed dormers appear out of keeping with the roofscape character;
- railings and low wall damaged by overgrown tree at number 59 Christchurch Road – this has dramatically changed since the last appraisal;
- deterioration of original railings;
- white painted brickwork at number 25 The Mount;
- some walls in need of repair on the Christchurch Road frontage;

- over growth of walls and railings with hedges along the Christchurch Road frontage obscures walls and railings and impedes the pavement;
- lack of traditional street furniture, including street lighting;
- over-reliance on individual telegraph poles throughout the area with attendant wires radiating out to the houses within;

Within the CA itself there are few recent developments, but these have generally respected the character, scale of buildings and materials used in the conservation area, thus maintaining its character and appearance. A small number of elements within the conservation area detract from its character. Generally developments immediately outside the CA heed their context adjoining or nearby The Mount Conservation Area and do not have a notably negative effect on its character and appearance. The design of new development within and adjoining/near the conservation area should however be carefully considered.

7.1 Loss of original architectural features and detail

Figure 26: Images of loss or deterioration of details (Images Claire Truman)

A – Deteriorating railings

B – Deteriorating low brick wall and railings

C – uPVC windows to building of townscape merit

D – Chain link fence with unmanaged vegetation forming boundary of CA

E – Pavements and kerbs a 'patchwork' of finishes

In general terms the loss of original features, particularly front elevation and boundary features is very limited. There are few examples of non-traditional windows in the buildings in the conservation area. The worst examples of inappropriate changes tend to be at the rear of properties. There is a clear issue here in terms of respecting the setting of individual

buildings as well as enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with advice contained in the Reading Borough Local Plan.

For unlisted buildings it is recommended that an Article 4 direction is considered to remove permitted development rights within the CA or parts thereof and prevent further erosion of the special character and appearance of the area. The management plan (Table 2) sets out to remedy some of these issues.

7.2 Neglect and opportunities for enhancement

Floorscape (refer to Figure 26E) and street furniture improvements should be considered in this area, including replacing telegraph poles.

Selected examples and opportunities are highlighted below:

7.2.1 Street furniture and surfacing

The boundary treatment of the Progress Theatre car park forms the boundary of the conservation area, adjacent to an access road to garages to the rear of Sutton Walk. The boundary treatment is chain link fencing and supports the growth of weeds (refer to Figure 26D).

Inconsistent street signage for ‘The Mount’: three different types are in-situ – refer to Figure 27, below. Figure 27B shows the current design consistent to Reading’s conservation areas.

Figure 27: Images of three different conservation area signage styles (Images Claire Truman)

7.2.2 Development pressure and changing skyline

Surrounded by much more modern buildings, the conservation area itself and the buildings within it have generally retained their original character. Although there have been relatively few pressures to redevelop sites in the past, these have generally respected the prevailing character and appearance of the conservation area. However there is clearly scope to redress some quite modest failings apparent in the foregoing list.

7.2.3 Traffic noise and pollution

The character and environmental quality of the CA to its southern edge is impacted by noise and pollution of traffic using the main A327 Christchurch Road running along the southern boundary of the area, particularly during the rush hours, which contrasts with its otherwise tranquil environment.

7.2.4 Ambience

In the evenings, when dark, The Mount (west) is less overlooked than the other roads within The Mount and has become subject to anti-social behaviour, such as damage to parked cars along the street and fast-moving cyclists ‘cutting through’ the urban environment. This specific street is less naturally overlooked by houses and directly links to Lower Mount to facilitate the cut through.

8. Action Plan

Table 1 – All Conservation Areas

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

Table 1: Actions for all conservation areas

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
Loss of original architectural features and details (see 7.1). Insensitive change and development not requiring planning permission, permitted development	**Guidance:** Provide guidance document on 'approved' methods for common small scale alterations **Awareness:** Provide householder information on the added value of 'period detail' and detail on economic alternatives for energy efficiency savings Material prepared by other planning authorities could be used as a model for preparing written guidance	RBC and CAAC Update as at July 2025. A Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published in March 2021. This has general guidance on and examples of roof dormers, roof lights and extensions which would be acceptable or unacceptable in conservation areas. Update as at March 2026. A guidance leaflet for householders is now available on the council's website as text only by RBC. https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas-listed-buildings/conservation-areas-guidance-and-advice-for-householders/

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
Loss or change to original boundary features.	**Awareness:** Provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of boundary walls and railings **Policy**: Article 4 directions could be implemented as resources allow (see Table 2 for further recommendations on what this should cover in this CA)	RBC and CAAC
Insensitive development undertaken without permission *(see 7.2 e.g. window replacement in listed buildings and those in conservation areas)*	**Guidance:** Provision of property owner guidance on legal requirements for alterations/development/tree works in conservation areas. **Enforcement:** Legal enforcement by RBC to secure reversal of changes	RBC and CAAC Update as at March 2026. This is partially covered in the guidance leaflet for householders and is now available on the council's website as text only by RBC. Enforcement - RBC
Redevelopment within or adjoining the Conservation Area should respect the general height, massing and alignment of existing buildings and use a palette of materials which reflect its existing character.	**Guidance, Policy:** Supplementary Design guidance planning document for development in historic areas. **Support:** Use CAAC to gain informed comment on planning applications affecting Conservation Areas	RBC and CAAC

Table 2 – The Mount Conservation Area

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

Table 2: Actions for The Mount Conservation Area

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
Low wall at 59 Christchurch Road. is breaking up and railings damaged. Cause: tree roots and also vehicular impact (accident).	**Awareness:** Provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of boundary walls and railings	RBC and CAAC
Replacement of broken kerbstones especially on corners by concrete. One especially badly placed.	**Awareness:** Provide street care information document on the added value and visual importance of the treatment of the urban materials upon the conservation area's historic qualities and cohesive character.	RBC
Thames Water did not repair gully/kerb correctly after work in The Mount.	**Awareness:** Thames Water to be made aware of its duty to pay particular care and attention to repair work.	RBC
The sign instructing 'Park only in marked bays' is causing confusion; additionally dash white lines are faded.	**Awareness:** Parking wardens to be provided guidance over the use of parking bays where this sign is located.	RBC
Inconsistent 'conservation area' styled street signage (section 7.2.1).	**Awareness:** Replace superseded signage design with current design to achieve consistency within The Mount and across Reading's conservation areas.	RBC

Appendix 1 Public Consultations

Members of CAAC met with a local resident twice to walk together around The Mount; with the owner of Turner Property twice and with the manager of The Progress Theatre.

An initial community meeting was held on 10.12.2025 at The Queen's Head, Christchurch Road, Reading and feedback from that meeting was incorporated into later drafts of the appraisal.

An informal public consultation was launched at a community meeting at the Progress Theatre, The Mount on 25.3.2026 and ended on 13.5.2026. The consultation took place online using surveymonkey and two copies of the draft appraisal were placed in the nearest libraries: the Whitley Library and the Central Library along with questionnaires (below).

READING
CONSERVATION AREA
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Mount Conservation Area (CA) was first designated in 1987 and was last reviewed in 2009.

The conservation area appraisal describes and defines the particular historical and architectural character and interest of The Mount CA. It highlights those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced. It also identifies negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (readingcaac.org) are seeking your views on our document, the appearance of the conservation area and how the area should be managed in future to retain its special character.

The results of this survey will inform the next version of the appraisal that we will formally submit to Reading Borough Council who will undertake the final stages of the process to adoption of an updated appraisal document for The Mount CA.

You can also email us at chair.readingcaac@gmail.com.

The survey will close at 11.45 pm on 13 May 2026.

1. Do you agree that the designation of conservation areas is important to protecting the special character of Reading? Please tick the box that applies.	Strongly agree	☐
	Agree	☐
	Neither agree nor disagree	☐
	Disagree	☐
	Strongly disagree	☐

2. Do you agree that current appearance of some of the properties is the biggest challenge to the character and appearance of the conservation area? Please tick the box that applies.	Strongly agree	☐
	Agree	☐
	Neither agree nor disagree	☐
	Disagree	☐
	Strongly disagree	☐

3. Are you satisfied with the appearance and cleanliness of the streets, pavements and signage in the CA? Please tick the box that applies.	Very satisfied	☐
	Satisfied	☐
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	☐
	Dissatisfied	☐
	Very dissatisfied	☐

4. Do you agree with our recommendation that an Article 4 designation to remove specific permitted development rights is required to protect original exterior features of non-listed properties in The Mount CA? Please tick the box that applies. If other please comment in the box below.	Yes	☐
	No	☐
	Other	☐

Space for comments on Question 4

5. Do you live in or own property in the conservation area? Please tick the box that applies.	Yes	☐
	No	☐

6.Do you work in the conservation area? Please tick the box that applies.	Yes	☐
	No	☐

7. Do you have any further comments on the appraisal? Please let us know if there are ways in which the document could be improved, if there is anything positive or negative in the area that we should have mentioned or any issues that we have not identified for inclusion in the management plan.

Please use the space below or email chair.readingcaac@gmail.com.

8. How interested are you in the work of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee?

Please tick the box that applies.

Very	☐
Slightly	☐
Not at all	☐

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire.

Six responses were received to the online questionnaire and none from the copies placed in the libraries. Of the six responses we have omitted one response from the summary below as it was clear that the responder had confused The Mount CA with The Mount in Caversham.

All five responders agreed that CA designation is important to protecting the special character of Reading with three agreeing that an Article 4 direction to remove specific permitted development rights is required to protect original exterior features of non-listed properties. Responses to the question about appearance and cleanliness of streets and signage were evenly balanced. Only one of the respondents lived or worked in the CA. There was one additional comment about emptying of litter bins and lax parking restrictions in the area for non-residents.

The survey results have not resulted in any changes to the draft appraisal. In relation to parking, the management plan reflects the lack of clarity in relation to parking restrictions and any other measures are beyond the scope of a CA appraisal.

Updates have been made to the appraisal arising from correspondence and meetings with individual residents and at the two community meetings. This enabled us to make early enhancements to the document:

- Historic England have updated the addresses for listing entries within The Mount CA character area 1 after we contacted them after a local resident pointed out that the addresses were not correct.
- The participation of The Progress Theatre in the review has meant that the importance of the theatre and character area 3 is better reflected in this revised draft.
- Exploration of why the name 'Mildmay Cottage' was given to No55 Christchurch Road and the 'Mildmay' to the club located in the building that became the Progress Theatre.
- Completing as far as possible the story of the Robin Hood public house, formerly on Christchurch Road.

We are grateful to all everyone who has met with us and assisted in providing documentation and information to assist with our review.

Next steps. This draft of the revised appraisal for The Mount Conservation Area will be presented to Reading Borough Council's Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23 June 2026 for endorsement for public consultation.

Appendix 2 Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area

Archaeology

There have been no archaeological finds clearly identified as within the conservation area (CA). Within the area of 'Southern Hill' which could include the CA, hand axes and an iron age cup have been found.

Within 100 metres of the area, hand axes have been found in Glebe Road (neolithic), in a gravel pit south of Christ Church (unspecified age) and on Morgan Road (neolithic). At 32 Morgan Road there is a mesolithic findspot and in Redlands a neolithic findspot.

Historical Development

Before The Mount

Figure 28: Extract from 1798 map of Reading. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. The dashed line represents the borough boundary. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries.

The Mount CA lies north of the east-west road along the ridge to Shinfield. Early development clustered around the junction with what is now Redlands Road, and there was a smaller group of buildings near what is now the Queens Head and Whitley Park Lane. The area was referred to as ‘Southern Hill’ and was within St Giles parish. With the exception of the land on which Hillside was later built it was outside the boundary of the Borough of Reading.

Figure 29: Extract from 1813 map of Reading. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. The dashed line represents the borough boundary. Note the turnpike and cluster of houses at the top of Red Lane (Redlands Road). Courtesy Richard Bennett.

When St Giles tithe apportionment survey was carried in 1841 there were very few buildings along the road. The fields (55 and 56) on which The Mount estate would be built were owned by Millicent Eaton at that time and the land advertised for auction in 1873 including the Robin Hood public house[2].

The land on which Hillside was built was registered as owned by the trustees of John Kendrick whom were succeeded as a charity by Christ's Hospital.

[2] Reading Mercury 17 May 1873 p3. The occupant of field 55 on the tithe map was Thomas Attwell and 56 was occupied by Joel Patey and the owner was Millicent Eaton. The Patey family ran a public house there for some years and their piggeries caused a nuisance in the area (see Reading Mercury 7 November 1868 p2 and Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees (2021) John Dearing, David Cliffe and Evelyn Williams).

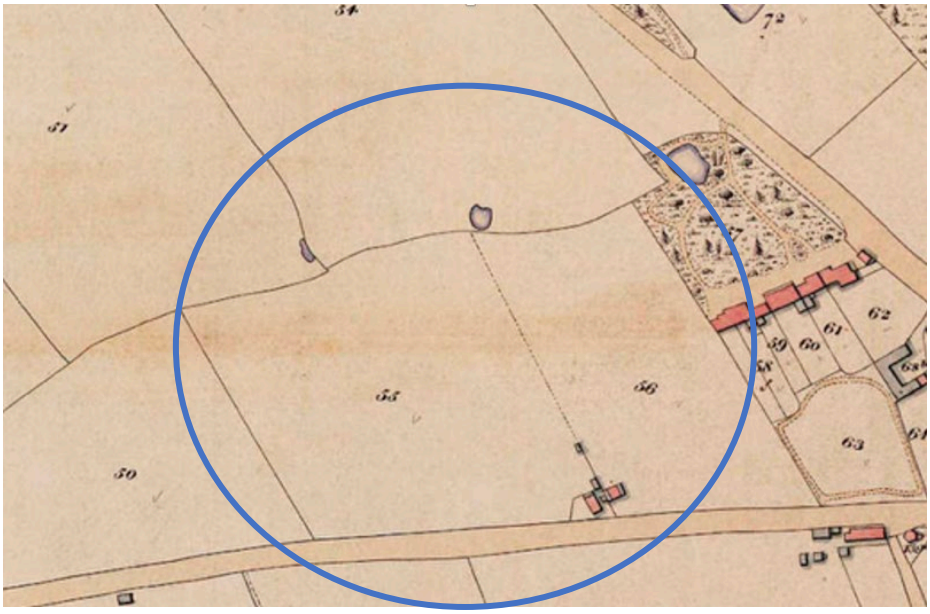


Figure 30: Extract from 1841 tithe apportionment map (1840) for St Giles Parish D/D1/96/1. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. Courtesy Royal Berkshire Archives.

In the mid nineteenth century large properties began to appear along the ridge: Cintra Lodge; Ashton Lodge; Merton Lodge and Sutherlands. Within The Mount CA the only buildings that definitely survive from this period are: 53 Christchurch Road, the eastern lodge of Sutherlands, and 53a Christchurch Road and Linden Mews both former stables and outbuildings of Sutherlands which are within character area 2. Mildmay Cottage dates from the 1870s. The cottage was built on the site of a public house, named the Robin Hood as above[3]. The Robin Hood was a thatched building demolished c1874[4]. These properties with the later addition of Mildmay Hall (now the Progress Theatre) form Character Area 2 of the CA.

A tank to hold 100,000 gallons of water erected within the grounds of Sutherlands in the 1850s supplied by water pumped from the Bath Road reservoir [5]. It is no longer mentioned in directories from 1920.

[3] Newspaper article 'Progress Indeed!' from 1963 quoting the wife of Noel Sutton thought the pub had been called The Pheasant who was living at Sutherlands at the time. Progress scrapbook D/EX1151/17/4.
[4] Newspaper article with image of the public house Reading Chronicle 21 September 1962 shown to us by a local resident. The photograph was said to have been provided by L Noel Sutton. A follow up article a week later identified the pub as the Robin Hood. The Robin Hood does not appear in licensing records from 1875, the earliest that we could find for Whitley Parish.
[5] O.Kean, Brief history and development of Reading Waterworks (1950). County Borough of Reading Water Department.

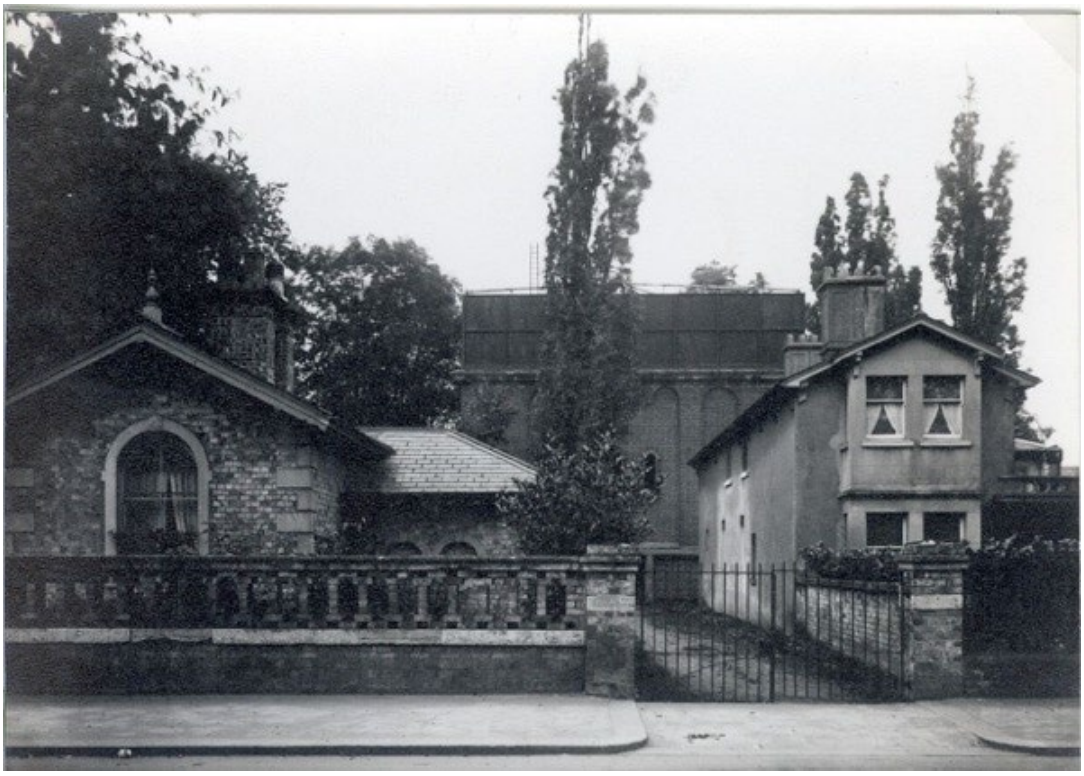


Figure 31: The eastern lodge of Sutherlands, 51 Christchurch Road and 53 Christchurch Road with the water tank behind c1900. Image courtesy Reading Libraries

The Mount Estate, Hillside and W I Palmer

William Isaac Palmer (1824 – 1893) developed the estate of 24 properties on The Mount in the 1870s (Character Area 1) and Hillside (Character Area 3) as his own home in the early 1880s.

The northern border of The Mount follows the pre-1887 borough boundary. It was perambulated in 1874 by the Mayor, members of the Corporation and a large party of officials and other participants. The report of the perambulation gives an indication of the low density development of the area. Having reached Redlands House the perambulating party '…crossed the road, and immediately crawled through the hedge on the opposite side, and by a turn to the south entered the garden of Mr Gregory [Oaklands], who gave the party every assistance. Proceeding along the meadow at the rear of the water tank, a serious obstacle to further progress presented itself in the high wall of Mr Darter's vinery [Sutherlands] a portion only of which was found to be within the boundary.'[6]

The Ordnance survey map of 1877 shows that 22 properties had been built in The Mount. To the west lay Mildmay Cottage and Sutherlands. The small building just behind Mildmay Cottage may have been provided by for use by cabmen and travellers as a replacement for the Robin Hood public house[7].

[6] Reading Mercury 17 October 1874 p6

[7] Reading Chronicle 28 September 1962 possibly confuses this structure with the later and larger Mildmay Club. Follow up to the newspaper article with image of the public house Reading Chronicle 21 September 1962 shown to us by a local resident.

Figure 32: Extract from OS map 1877 showing The Mount which is complete apart from the northernmost two properties. Hillside has not yet been built. Mildmay Cottage had been built. The borough boundary is marked by the long dashed line and BP marks a boundary post. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Listed properties with addresses in The Mount are dated c.1876 by Historic England (HE). Map evidence indicates that nos. 23 and 25, the two most northerly properties, were built slightly later, although both had been built by the time of the 1881 census. The listing for 59 Christchurch Road (Uplands) suggests the moulded brick rosettes are reminiscent of the work of Joseph Morris, but otherwise does not attribute the estate to a named architect.

Figure 33: Nos 8-22 The Mount c1910. Postcard by P O Collier. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Gold cites H Godwin Arnold and this is also repeated in 'Pevsner',[8] in crediting the estate to R Austin the architect of the Shaftesbury Park Estate in Battersea, also a conservation area, built by the Artizans', Labourers', and General Dwellings Company (ALGDC)[9]. The aim of the company and its founder William Austin (no relation to the architect) was "...to build decent accommodation for the working classes, at a time when overcrowding and other related housing matters were a problem amongst the poor in London."[10] 82 and 84 Crescent Road, south of Palmer Park, have some similar features to The Mount. Importantly there is a motif above the porch to the two terraced properties 'RA 1872'. This clearly acknowledges that the architect was Robert Austin. The same motif with a date of 1874 appears at 18 Eversleigh Road in the Shaftesbury Park Estate[11]. Elsewhere the initials of the ALGDC are prevalent.

The use of London stock bricks[12] is exceptional in Reading. It is not currently known where the bricks were sourced but it is unlikely that they were made locally. It is clear that the location, the building materials and the architectural style mark the development out as something special. It is possible that bricks for The Mount were brought from London. W I Palmer's brother Samuel lived in London at 40 College Crescent (Camden). His house 'Northcourt', dating from 1880/81 was designed by Reading architects Morris & Stallwood and constructed of grey and Reading bricks and terracotta[13]. If bricks could travel to London from Reading it represents strong circumstantial evidence that they could travel in the opposite direction.

There is a hierarchical status of buildings. At the centre, facing south, is a terrace of two storey properties with more prestigious properties on the corners, the gardens back on to a similar terrace facing north. There are also semi-detached houses and solid square double-fronted villas. The frontage to Christchurch Road is occupied by two very large and dominating Victorian Gothic fantasies with turrets.

[8] Sidney M Gold, A Biographical dictionary of Architects at Reading (1999). H. Godwin Arnold and Sidney M.Gold in 'Morris of Reading' (1989) state that it was built for staff of Sutton's Seeds. Other sources generally agree on Huntley & Palmers involvement. Tyack et al, The Buildings of Berkshire p276 (2010) also reference R Austin and the Shaftesbury Estate.
[9] The company also developed the Queens Estate in Westminster. Information including a design guide can be found on Westminster Council's website.
[10] Wandsworth Borough Council (2009). Shaftesbury Park Estate, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy
[11] Referenced in Survey of London, volume 50, chapter 12, Shaftesbury Park Estate, draft online version on UCL, Bartlett School of Architecture website, <accessed 16 July 2025>. The final version was published by Yale University Press in 2013. The chapter includes more information about the story of the ALGDC.
[12] The colour of the bricks of The Mount are variously described as 'gault bricks' in the HE listings and grey brick in Tyack et al, Buildings of Berkshire. We have used 'London stock bricks' as this is what we believe that they are and it is the description used in the Shaftesbury Park Conservation area Appraisal and Management Strategy. The bricks at 82 & 84 Crescent Road, in so far as they have not been painted over, and others on the street are similar in colour.
[13] Historic England Listing entry 1386727 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1386727 (accessed 31 October 2025)

Figure 34: The Mount c1920. Uplands (59 Christchurch Road) in the foreground and Nos 2-8 The Mount, A postcard by H A Giles. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Shaftesbury Park, a forty acre site was on a much, much larger scale than The Mount. When it opened in 1874 it already had 479 houses and a final total of 1,200 was expected although plans and layout were later modified before completion[14]. The Architect reported, "The houses are built in four classes, containing five, six, seven or eight rooms respectively – the latter including a bath room – at moderate rentals with the option of purchase."[15]

The 1911 census records the number of rooms in each property and for the Mount Estate the number of rooms including the kitchen were: one property with ten rooms (57 Christchurch Road), three with nine, two with eight, ten with seven and eight with six[16].

In contrast, Hillside is built from the more typical Reading red and grey bricks. The Architect reported the commencement of the building for William Isaac Palmer in 1879 on land leased from the governors of Christ's Hospital. The architects were Morris & Stallwood and the builders, Wheelers Bros[17].

William Isaac Palmer, who never married, died in 1893.

[14] Shaftesbury Park Estate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. Wandsworth Borough Council 2009.
[15] The Architect 25 July 1874 p47
[16] Census records do not include No36 and so we have assumed that it would have 6 rooms. A comparison with the 1911 census for Brassey Square in the Shaftesbury Park Estate shows that many properties had 6 rooms but had been split between two households. Sabine Road had smaller four roomed properties, possibly built later as they are not mentioned in the report in The Architect.
[17] The Architect 11 October 1879

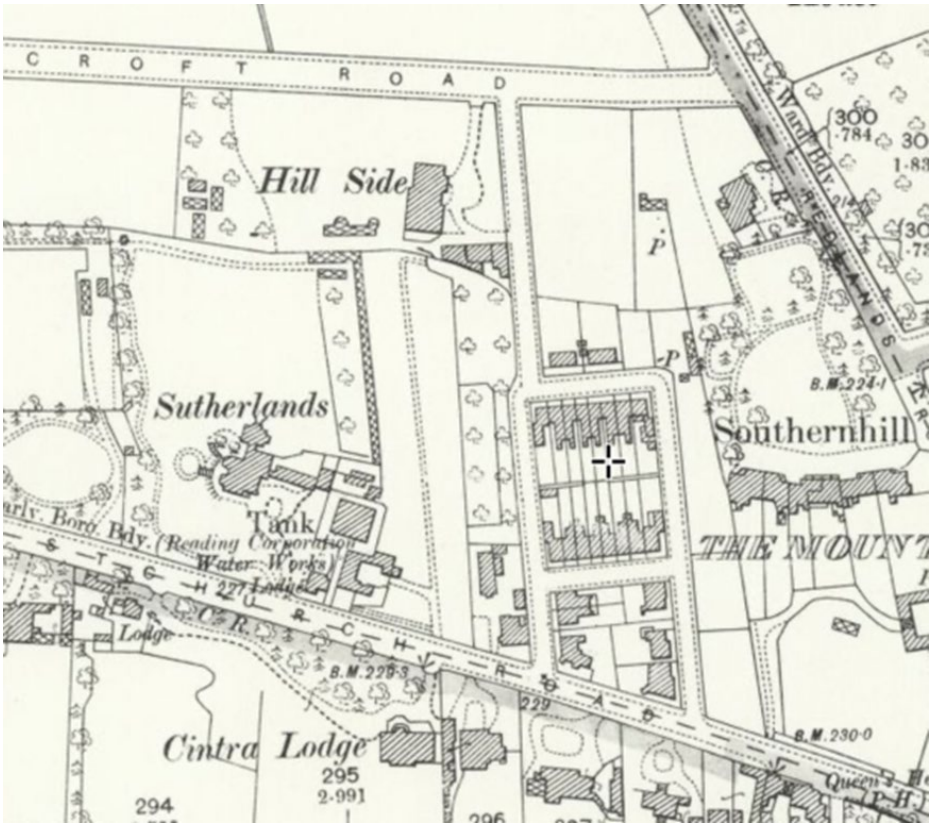


Figure 35: Extract from OS map 1898 published 1899. The Mount and Hillside have been completely built and there is a new building, the Mildmay Club, at the rear of Mildmay Cottage on the corner of Christchurch Road and the Mount. Courtesy National Library of Scotland

Hillside, properties adjacent to Sutherlands and the Sutton family

Arthur Warwick Sutton, second son of Martin Hope Sutton lived at Sutherlands from 1884-1888. His younger brother Leonard Goodhart Sutton (1863-1932), moved to Hillside after the death of W I Palmer and it was considerably extended for him by Spencer Slingsby Stallwood. Their father Martin Hope Sutton (1815-1901) had lived at Cintra Lodge on the south side of Christchurch Road from 1857 until his death when it was sold. Leonard Noel Sutton (1893-1965), son of L G Sutton grew up at Hillside and later lived at Sutherlands until his death. The house was sold when in his wife died in the 1970s and a modern property was built on the site.

Some western portions of the grounds of Sutherlands had been detached and developed before the First World War and Sutherlands Avenue laid out. In 1949 a piece of land off Sutherlands Avenue and eastern parts of the grounds and land owned by the Suttons were sold by order of Leonard Noel Sutton including, 53a Christchurch Road with buildings attached, Mildmay Cottage 55 Christchurch Road, the Mildmay Club and orchard frontage land in The Mount[18].

The name 'Mildmay' may be linked with Mildmay Park in London but it has not been possible to find a direct connection between the Club, founded in 1879 by Arthur Warwick Sutton on the suggestion of Miss Pym[19] which then moved to the newly built hall in 1881[20], and

[18] Reading Standard 14 October 1949, p1
[19] Berkshire Chronicle 26 March 1881 p5 and Reading Mercury 26 March 1881 p5. A W Sutton married Arabella Constance Pym in April 1881.
[20] Reading Mercury 19 November 1881 p5

Mildmay Park in the 1870s or 80s. There is a Mildmay Club on Newington Green in London founded in 1888 as the Mildmay Radical Club which post-dates the Reading Club but the area was well known for 'evangelical, missionary and philanthropic work'[21]. Rev William Pennefather's Mildmay Institutions were particularly well known[22].

By the turn of the twentieth century there are clear links between Reading, the Sutton family and Mildmay Park. Rev Daniel Bell Hankin, vicar of St Jude's Church retired to Reading and from 1905 he was a trustee at St Mary's, Castle Street[23]. On his death in 1915 he was living at Mildmay Cottage. He was one of the officiating clergy at the marriage in 1899 of Martin Hubert Fouquet Sutton, the nephew of Arthur Warwick Sutton, in Kensington in London. M H F Sutton married Eleonora Morton, the daughter of Colonel Morton. He also retired to Reading and on his death in 1915 he was described as having been the superintendent of Mildmay Institutions in north London[24].

The Progress Theatre, founded in 1946 with its first production in 1947, moved in 1950 from the W I Palmer Memorial Hall in West Street to new premises in The Mount which had originally been the home of Mildmay Club.

Figure 36: The north side of the Progress Theatre. (Left) stage door c1950 and (right) today when the corrugated iron club hall has been obscured by later extensions. Images courtesy Progress Theatre

[21] We are grateful for the assistance of the Mildmay Club Archive Group who corresponded with us about the possibility of a link between the two clubs.
[22] William Pennefather https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Pennefather <accessed 19 May 2026>
[23] Information provided by John Dearing.
[24] Reading Mercury 24 April 1915 p5. Colonel Morton lived at 20 Cintra Avenue.

Figure 37: Progress Theatre from the north west in 1964. Image courtesy of Reading Museum/Reading Chronicle Collection (Reading Borough Council). All rights reserved.

A brick wing of two rooms with a bath and kitchen was added during the First World War when the hall was used as an extension to the Sutherlands war hospital.

Figure 38: Sutherlands Auxiliary Hospital. Courtesy Reading Libraries Local Studies Collection

Between the wars its uses included a boy's club. During the Second World War, 16 evacuee children from the East End of London lived there before more suitable accommodation was found. Between then and its sale it was used by the WVS to keep clothing and stores[25].

At first the theatre was rented from Reading Co-operative Society but in the 1960s the freehold was purchased. Over time the theatre has expanded beyond the boundaries of the

[25] Newspaper article 'Progress Indeed!' from 1963 quoting the wife of Noel Sutton who was living at Sutherlands at the time. Progress scrapbook D/EX1151/17/4

Mildmay club but the extensions and additions from the central corrugated hall are still readable within the building.

Reading University

The Reading Extension College was founded in 1892 and based in Valpy Street. By 1906 most of the college had moved to land on London Road, including the Acacias, donated by the Palmer family. By the time Reading gained its own charter in 1926 new buildings had been built within what is now the London Road Campus.

The University acquired Hillside in 1949 and in the 1950 directory it was a Reading University Student Hostel. In 1979 permission was given to build additional student accommodation in the grounds[26]. There had been fears that the house would be demolished. Hillside was only listed in 2005, compared with the 1978 listing for properties in The Mount. The gates, gatepiers, walls and railings were separately listed at the same time. The house is currently owned by Turner Property who use part of the main building as offices with flats above and within the grounds the 1970s low rise student accommodation has been retained. Recent improvements to the site include lounge extensions to student buildings, two new accommodation buildings, a common room and attached to the house, the remodelling of the gardens in 2020-2021 with a memorial to the four sons of Leonard Goodhart Sutton who died in the First World War and a history plaque[27].

Surrounding Developments following the Second World War

The comparatively green but urban situation of The Mount ended as plots on the boundary were gradually developed. Bungalows were built in the mid-1950s land on the eastern edge of The Mount. Sutton Walk on the west side of The Mount and Whitby Drive which has a pedestrian route, Lancaster Close, joining Christchurch and Allcroft Roads, in the 1970s.

First occupants of The Mount

Properties in The Mount are thought to have been built for managers and clerks at the biscuit factory however census information shows that this was not a universal rule with a third of properties in 1881 having a definite connection and a further three a possible connection.

The following properties included residents with a connection to ‘the biscuit factory’:

- Thomas Allen at No 3 (now 30) was a foreman
- William Baskett at No 4 (now 32) was a gardener but his son was a clerk at the biscuit factory
- John Simmance at No 6 (now 36) was a retired Baptist minister but his son was a junior clerk
- John Allen at No 9 (now 10) was a foreman and also housed a boarder who was a clerk
- Arthur Spry at No 11 (now 14) was an invoice clerk
- Edward Maze at No 12 (now 16) was an export clerk

[26] Reading Evening Post 9 February 1979 p4
[27] We are grateful for the information provided by Turner Property and a guided tour of Hillside and its grounds.

- John Broad at Woodhill (now 4) was a legal clerk
- John Waugh at what is now 57 Christchurch Road was a commercial clerk

Others with possible links are:

- Edward Freeman (numbering unclear in 1881) at what is probably now 25 was a commercial traveller
- Thomas Coltman at Uplands (now 59 Christchurch Road) was a commercial traveller
- Cornelius Carr at no 5 (now 34) was a confectioner and in 1891 a biscuit maker

The rate records for 1888 after the area was included within the Borough boundary show that 6 properties were not owned by W I Palmer at that date four of which were owner-occupied[28].

- 2 The Mount owned by W B Williams and occupied by Henrietta Codd
- 4 The Mount owned and occupied by John Broad
- 22 The Mount (Edith House) owned and occupied by James Quelch a coal merchant who carried out business from the address
- 24 The Mount (Kates Villa) owned by J Belcher and occupied George Goodwin
- 57 Christchurch Road owned and occupied by John Waugh
- 59 Christchurch Road owned and occupied by Thomas Coltman

Figure 39: Kates Villa (No 24) and Edith House (No 22) c1915. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Other occupants in 1881 included a surveyor, a schoolmaster, clergymen, an insurance agent, an agricultural engineer, a commercial traveller for 'engineers and agricultural machinery', an inspector and assistant in the education department, a mess master, the high bailiff of the County Court, and a merchant and commission agent. Only one resident, a

[28] Royal Berkshire Archives R/FR2/ 40 - 1888

farmer's widow lived on her own means. It is possible that some of these residents had direct or indirect connections with the biscuit factory or William Isaac Palmer.

University Connections

In 1911 Henry Francis Maze, an accountant at the University College, lived at 4 The Mount and in 1921 he had three physical drill students as boarders. He was probably the son of Edward Francis Maze who had had been a clerk at the biscuit factory in 1881. George Frederick Drew at No 8 in 1911 was an agricultural instructor. In 1921 Professor of Geology Herbert Leader Hawkins lived at No 38. Other residents at this time also had boarders from the college.

Historic Associations

The development of two of Reading's largest family firms Huntley & Palmers and Sutton Seeds is well documented elsewhere and so below are mentioned briefly members of the families with particular connections with The Mount CA.

- William Isaac Palmer was the youngest brother of George Palmer and a partner in Huntley and Palmers from 1857. He was a successful breeder of shorthorn cattle at his estate at Grazeley Court and was particularly involved in the temperance movement in Reading and more widely.
- Arthur Warwick Sutton (1854-1925), brother of Leonard Goodhart Sutton (see below) founded the Mildmay Club and was involved in many similar organisations such as the Grovelands Club[29] and the Silver Street Fireside Club and Mission[30].
- Leonard Goodhart Sutton (1863- 1932) was Mayor of Reading three times and was involved in many civic, religious and sporting organisations.
- Leonard Noel Sutton (1893-1965) like his father was involved in many civic and religious organisations.

Other notable residents:

- Edith Mary Routh lived at 23 The Mount, previously No13, and was related to Dr Martin James Routh rector of Tilehurst, giving his name to the Routh Lane Conservation Area. Her obituary in the Reading Standard in 1940 recorded her work with the Red Cross including at Sutherlands Hospital during the First World War. After the war she nursed an ex-serviceman who had been shot in the spine at Salonika. The serviceman was probably Frederick William Hill who in 1921 moved in to Sutherlands Cottage, 41 Northumberland Avenue which had been built for him and was opened by Leonard Goodhart Sutton[31]. She left her house in The Mount to Christ Church where she was a member of the congregation[32].
- Alice Constance Miller lived at 2 The Mount, often referred to as Belvoir Lodge, and died in 1946[33]. She was associated with the University and in 1936 had donated

[29] Reading Mercury 26 March 1881 p5
[30] Reading Standard 23 September 1905 p8
[31] Reading Standard 27 August 1921 p7
[32] Reading Standard 23 February 1940 p6 and 12 July 1940 p7
[33] Reading Standard 1 November 1946 p9

Broadfield, 16 Northcourt Avenue, to the University as a sanatorium when she moved to The Mount. It is now used as student accommodation[34].

- Alice Moxhay lived at 15 The Mount and was also a nurse and a superintendent at the Queen Victoria Institute until 1923[35]. She lived with her sister Gertrude who appears in advertisements for a fundraiser for the Zenana Missionary Society in 1908[36].
- Rev Daniel Bell Hankin former vicar of St Jude's Mildmay Park was living at Mildmay Cottage when he died in 1915[37].

Bibliography

As well as the specific references above the publications below have been an invaluable source of information about the area and its occupants with particular thanks to Dennis Wood, author of Views from the Hill, for his insights.

T A B Corley, Quaker Enterprise in Biscuits: Huntley and Palmers of Reading 1872-1972 (1972)

Earley Local History Group, Suttons Seeds – A history 1806-2006 (2006)

Sidney M Gold, A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading (1999)

Dennis Wood, Views from the Hill, The Story of Whitley (2017)

Archives of the Progress Theatre. Royal Berkshire Archives reference D/EX1151

Newspapers and censuses via findmypast.

Street directories

[34] Penny Kemp, Northcourt Avenue: it's history & people (second edition 2024)
[35] Reading Standard 3 March 1923 p8
[36] Reading Standard 1 February 1908 p5
[37] Berkshire Chronicle 21 January 1915 p6

Appendix 3 Listed buildings

Table 3: Listed buildings in Character Area 1

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Wall between No.57 and 59 Christchurch Road	1154887 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1154887			Grade II (Group Value). Circa 1876. In 2 sections. Gates missing and opening widened. About 6 foot 6 inches high. Brick with 3½ and 2½ paler yellow diaper patterns and cogged courses below moulded capping. End piers with moulded capping.
59 Christchurch Road	1321968 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321968			Uplands on corner with Christchurch Road. House for manager at Huntley and Palmers Factory. Decorative features face approach from Christchurch. 1876. 2 storeys gault brick with yellow brick cill and lintel bands and patterning to square corner turret. Elevation to The Mount (east) altered to the detriment of its historic character.

57 Christchurch Road	1113440 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113440			Grade II (Group Value). House for manager of Huntley and Palmers. On corner of Christchurch Road and The Mount estate. Angle turret towards Christchurch. Circa 1876. 2 1/2 storeys. Gault brick with paler brick bands at cill and lintel levels.
38 and 40, The Mount	1321967 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321967			Grade II (Group Value). Circa 1876. 2 storey pair, similar position to Nos 2 and 4. Gault brick with paler bands at cill and lintel levels. Linked to No 57 by garden entrances - a pair of gables breaking short length of wall with moulded cope
6 (Image 1) and 24-36, The Mount	1113438 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113438			Grade II (Group Value). Circa 1876. A 2 storey terrace for the clerks at Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory with foremen's end terrace houses. Gault brick with white brick bands and chevron-moulded 1st floor brick window arches.

8-22, The Mount	1113439 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113439			Grade II (Group Value). Circa 1876. A 2 storey terrace for the clerks at Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory with foremen's end terrace houses for foreman. Gault brick with white brick bands and chevron moulded 1st floor brick window arches.
23 (Image 2) and 25 (Image 1), The Mount	1154876 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1154876			Reflected pair circa 1876. Gault brick (No 25 previously painted) with white brick bands at cill and lintel levels, cogging to porch and modillion eaves cornice. Probably for under-managers of the Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory.

Table 4: Listed buildings in Character Area 2

Address of building	**HE listing number**	**Image 1**	**Image 2**	**Brief description mainly derived from listing entry**
Entrance to Hillside from Allcroft Road	1392868 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1392868			Grade II Gatepiers, walls, gates and railings forming two sides of the boundary to Hillside. Circa 1880-1900. Two entrances with gates: from Allcroft Road and Lower Mount. The gateways, gates and railings are valuable in putting the house in context.
As above	As above			As above

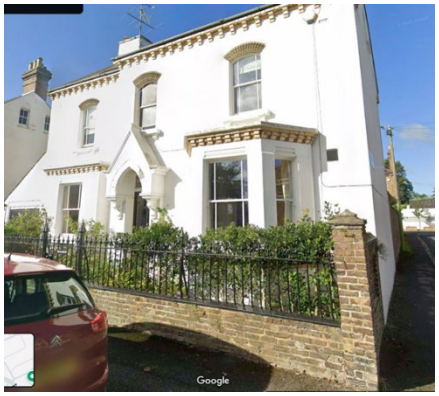
Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Hillside, Allcroft Road	1392866 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1392866		None	Grade II Large house, now flats, dated 1880 by Morris and Stallwood for W I Palmer of Huntley and Palmers, extended and dated 1898, by S.S. Stallwood. Grey brick, slate roofs with red tile cresting, extensive red brick and terracotta dressings.

There are no listed buildings in Character Area 3.

Appendix 4 Buildings of townscape merit

Table 5: Buildings of townscape merit

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
53a Christchurch Road		None	View of property largely obscured from the public realm. Appears to be of Italianate Villa style, stucco finished. 53A and Linden Mews were formed from “Sutherlands” outbuildings, and although altered and extended, these retain their original spatial pattern Image from Google Maps, October 2020
55 Christchurch Road			Prominent 2-storey white rendered building of classic proportions framing a key view, with No.57, into The Mount. Original railings enclose the frontage. Original timber sash windows replaced with uPVC since previous CA appraisal in 2009 to the detriment of its historic character and contribution to the historic significance of the conservation area. Image 1 January 2025 (Image Claire Truman) Image 2 April 2025 (Image Claire Truman)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
The Mount, 2, The Mount		None	Substantial detached property, which appears to have been constructed as a reflected pair with No. 4 – if so the entrance door pediment has been lost and the bay window has been extended to 2-storeys. Original gate, railings and low boundary wall have all been replaced. Sash windows to the three bay windows have all been replaced. Entrance door retained. Image January 2025 (Image Claire Truman)
The Mount, 4, The Mount		None	Substantial detached property, which appears to have been constructed as a reflected pair with No.2. Retains original gate, railings and low boundary wall, sash windows, entrance door and pediment and brick cornicing Image from Google Maps September 2024

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
Progress Theatre			The theatre's architectural composition and appearance demonstrates how it has evolved since its origins as a corrugated iron-clad meeting hall from 1881, and has been incrementally extended to its latest iteration: the 1960's modernist envelope. The corrugated iron-clad structure is rare for Reading. It has strongly contributed to Reading's cultural and social development with notable nationally important figures visiting in the past. Image 1 January 2025 (Image Claire Truman) Image 2 November 2025 (Image Claire Truman)

Appendix 5 Conservation Area Views

See the text of the appraisal for the significance of these views

Table 6: Views into the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
View 1: North along The Mount (west) from Christchurch Road. (Image Claire Truman)	
View 2: North along The Mount (east) from Christchurch Road, looking northwest. (Image Claire Truman)	

Location of view	Image
View 3: South (uphill) along Lower Mount, from the junction of Lower Mount and Allcroft Road. (Image Claire Truman)	

Table 7: Views within the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
View 4: West along The Mount (south) towards The Progress Theatre, from The Mount (east) (Image Claire Truman)	

Location of view	Image
View 5: West along The Mount (north) from The Mount (east) (Image Claire Truman)	
View 6: North along Lower Mount from The Mount (Image Claire Truman)	

Table 8: Views out of the Conservation Area

Location of view	Image
View 7: East along The Mount (north) towards Wantage Hall (Image Claire Truman)	
View 8: West along The Mount (north) towards Christ Church (Image Claire Truman)	

Appendix 6 Conservation Area Trees and Green Spaces

Table 9: Trees with a Tree Preservation Order

Location of tree	Image 1 if available	Image 2 if available	TPO details and number if applicable
55 Christchurch Road	None	None	Order No. 119/06, type T2
79 and 81 The Mount	None	None	Order No. 24/03, type T1
Progress Theatre		None	Order No. 2/03 The Ash tree outside the Progress Theatre (TPO order number 2/03) was approved for felling in June 2020 (felled in the August) and a replacement was planted - Sorbus 'Autumn Spire' - in 2021. The replacement tree retains the same TPO order number

Table 10: Trees with Tree Preservation Orders immediately adjacent to the CA (see map for all TPOs)

Location of tree	Image 1 if available	Image 2 if available	TPO details and number if applicable
51 Christchurch Road	None	None	Order No. 155/01, type T10
1-4 Lancaster Close	None	None	Order No. 154/01, type T8

Location of tree	Image 1 if available	Image 2 if available	TPO details and number if applicable
11,12,14,15,16 Lancaster Close	None	None	Order No. 152/01, type T10
9 and 10 Lancaster Close	None	None	Order No. 153/01, type T4
17-20 Lancaster Close	None	None	Order No. 151/01, type T5
40 Christchurch Road	None	None	Order No. 8/19, type T2
42 Christchurch Road, Moreton Court			Order No. 86/06, type T5
9,10,11,12,14,16,21,22,23,24,28 and land adjacent Cintra Close	None	None	Order No. 8/21, type T11

Table 11: Other significant trees and green spaces

Location of tree or space	Image
Vegetation to west, north and east boundaries of Hillside (Whitby Drive, Allcroft Road and Lower Mount respectively)	
Trees and vegetation between Lower Mount and Sutton Walk	

Location of tree or space	Image
Cintra Avenue – to the south of the conservation area	

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

23 June 2025

Title	Local Plan Partial Update Main Modifications
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	1. That the Local Plan Partial Update Main Modifications (Appendix 1) and Proposals Map Modifications (Appendix 2) be approved for consultation. 2. That the Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Main Modifications and Proposals Map Modifications that do not alter the policy direction as identified in any letter from the Planning Inspector, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, prior to consultation.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2019. There is a statutory requirement to undertake a review of a local plan within five years of adoption. A Review to comply with this requirement identified that there was a need to undertake a Partial Update of the Local Plan, and this was agreed by Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport committee on 23rd March 2023 (Minute 36 refers). Consultation on Scope and Content was undertaken between November 2023 and January 2024, and consultation on a Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) took place in November and December 2024.

1.2. The LPPU was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. This resulted in a public examination led by an independent Planning Inspector, including hearings held in November 2025 (stage 1) and February 2026 (stage 2).

1.3. The Inspector has identified a number of main modifications that are needed to make sure that the LPPU is sound and legally compliant. These main modifications need to be subject to consultation, and a proposed consultation document is set out in Appendix 1. The Inspector can then incorporate these main modifications in the final inspector's report.

2. Policy Context

2.1. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted by Council on 4th November 2019 (Minute 28 refers). Since that point, the Local Plan has been the main consideration in determining planning applications within Reading.

2.2. There is a statutory duty for local planning authorities to review their local plans within five years of the adoption date. Such a review should determine whether there is a need to update the Local Plan in full or in part. A review of the Reading Borough Local Plan as

reported to SEPT Committee on 23rd March 2023 (Minute 36 refers) and identified a need to carry out a Partial Update of the Local Plan.

2.3. Changes to national policy and guidance, in particular in relation to the level of housing need for the authority, represent particular reasons why plans or individual policies may require updating. There have been a variety of changes to national policy, including new versions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021, September 2023 and December 2023 (and subsequently also in December 2024). These make significant changes to how local plans are expected to identify housing need. This was the main reason that a need to update the Local Plan was identified, but there are a number of individual reasons for the particular policies.

3. The Proposal

Current position

3.1 The first consultation stage in undertaking the Partial Update was a Consultation on Scope and Content under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 15th November 2023 approved this document for consultation (Minute 20 refers), and consultation was undertaken between 27th November 2023 and 31st January 2024.

3.2 The second consultation stage was a Pre-Submission Draft under Regulation 19. This was approved for consultation at Council on 15th October 2024 (Minute 22 refers). Consultation was subsequently carried out between 6th November and 18th December 2024.

3.3 Following consultation, the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) along with its evidence base was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Submission of the document commences a period of public examination held by an independent Planning Inspector. The purpose of the examination was to establish whether the plan is sound, legally compliant and fulfils the statutory duty to co-operate. The Inspector appointed was Joanna Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI.

3.4 The examination was conducted in two stages. Stage 1 covered legal and procedural matters and housing need, and included virtual hearings held on 11th and 12th November 2025. The Inspector provided a letter with her findings from Stage 1 on 24th November, which among other findings confirmed that the Council had complied with the duty to co-operate, and this enabled the examination to proceed to Stage 2.

3.5 Stage 2 covered all other matters, in particular the details of policies and sites. In-person hearings were held between 3rd and 12th February 2026, with an additional virtual hearing on 23rd February to allow a participant to speak who had been unavailable for the main hearings.

3.6 The Inspector has identified that 'main modifications' would be required to ensure that the plan is sound and legally compliant. Main modifications are those that would be significant enough to require consultation and to be subject to sustainability appraisal. It would be unusual for a plan to escape the need for main modifications, and such modifications have been identified with each of the most recent development plan documents in Reading. Through the examination process, the Inspector has identified where these modifications are required and liaised with the Council and, in some instances, other participants, to set out the drafting. A formal letter setting this out is expected imminently, but has not yet been received.

3.7 The main modifications are set out in Appendix 1, and they cover a range of matters, varying from fairly modest changes to wording to much more significant matters. The modifications of greatest significance are summarised below:

- Combination of the policies relating to energy efficiency, water consumption and related matters (CC2 and part of H5) into a single policy.

- Updating of policy CC3 to deal with heat networks rather than decentralised energy and bring the text of the policy up to date.
- Reliance on the housing need figure from the national standard method (822 per year) rather than the local assessment of need (735 per year) which does not alter the amount of homes planned for which was always 825 per year.
- Deletion site WR3a: 2 Ross Road and Part of Meadow Road as the landowner confirmed that they had no intention to develop for residential.
- Deletion of sites WR3s: Land at Kentwood Hill and WR3t: Land at Armour Hill due to their designation as a Local Wildlife Site based on information about the species and habitats present.
- Deletion of site CA1a: Reading University Boat Club, Thames Promenade due to its flood risk.
- Extension of the allocation CR14x: Sapphire Plaza to include the adjacent Royal Court, owned by the same landowner where it is intended to bring forward a comprehensive development.
- Changes to the amount of development on some sites, in particular to reflect the progress of these sites through the planning application process, for instance CR12d: Broad Street Mall and CR14r: John Lewis Depot, Mill Lane.
- Updated housing trajectory to take into account the changes to sites outlines above as well as to include up to date planning permissions.
- A number of changes around policy OU2 which relate to development in the vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield to satisfy other stakeholders, in particular West Berkshire District Council, AWE and the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
- Deletion of requirements for electric vehicle charging provision in new developments, which is now covered by the Building Regulations
- Additional supporting text to policy OU1 to reflect the specifics around provision of new primary healthcare facilities.

3.8 There would also be consequential changes to the Proposals Map and these are set out in a separate schedule in Appendix 2.

3.9 At the stage of publication of this report, the Council had not yet received the formal letter requiring the main modifications as it is held up in internal processes in the Planning Inspectorate, but it is not anticipated that the letter will have any implications for the modifications in Appendix 1 and 2. Should that be the case however, delegation is sought to enable any minor changes as a result of the final letter can be made before consultation.

Option proposed

3.10 Main modifications require consultation before they can be incorporated into the LPPU. The proposal is therefore to consult on the main modifications set out in Appendix 1 and the proposals map modifications in Appendix 2. This is currently expected to run between 26 June and 7 August.

3.11 Consultation responses will be provided directly to the Inspector, and it will be for her to consider them in preparing her final report. Only when the final Inspector's Report which concludes that the plan is sound, legally compliant and fulfils the duty to co-operate has been received can the Council adopt the LPPU.

Other options considered

3.12 Alternative options are very limited. The Inspector has identified the main modifications she considers necessary to make the LPPU sound and legally compliant, and there is no

scope for the Council to make additional or alternative modifications, or to reject certain modifications. The only alternative option is not to undertake the main modifications consultation, which would mean that the examination process could proceed no further and the Council would not be able to adopt up-to-date planning policies which are considered essential for putting a robust basis in place for determining planning applications.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1 The Local Plan Partial Update, through setting out the way Reading will develop to 2041, will contribute to the following priorities in the Council Plan 2025-28:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading: through ensuring that communities have access to the services and facilities to live a healthy life, including inclusion of a new policy requiring health impact assessments;
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success: through meeting the development needs of Reading including delivery of 825 homes per year, including affordable housing, and employment needs totalling up to 253,000 sq m;
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint: through promoting a sustainable pattern of development with good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, with increases in green infrastructure and by seeking the highest standards of energy efficiency in new development; and
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children; through measures including planning for the needs for residential care and other specialist accommodation, ensure accessible housing and identifying opportunities for new primary healthcare provision.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1 There is a requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal of each stage of a Local Plan document. A sustainability appraisal assesses the impact of each policy, proposal and alternative option against a range of sustainability objectives covering environmental, economic and social matters. A Sustainability Appraisal of the main modifications has been prepared and will be published alongside the consultation as a background document. The environmental and climate implications of each policy and option are considered as part of that document.

5.2 In general terms, there are relatively limited implications of the modifications themselves. The combining of the climate policies does not affect the overall standards sought. The changes to the decentralised energy policy are likely to have a positive effect in terms of referring to more up-to-date technologies. The removal of four sites will have implications for the environment in those locations, which in view of the identification of the sites at Kentwood Hill and Armour Hill as Local Wildlife Sites will be positive in nature in those cases.

5.3 The main modifications will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which assesses the modifications against a range of environmental, social and economic objectives, and this will be published alongside the consultation.

6 Community Engagement

6.1 There have already been two consultation stages on the Local Plan Partial Update, as set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.

6.2 'Main modifications' are those that would require additional consultation. A further six-week period of consultation is therefore required, which will be carried out in line with the Statement of Community Involvement (adopted October 2024), as for previous LPPU consultations. The consultation would be focused on the main modifications only, not the remainder of the Local Plan. The consultation period is proposed to be undertaken from

26 June to 7 August, albeit it is dependent on receipt of the final letter from the Inspector. As this is an extremely focussed consultation, no consultation events are planned.

7 Equality Implications

7.1 As set out in relation to section 5, a Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Draft has been prepared and will be published alongside the consultation. One of the sustainability objectives is to "Avoid significant negative effects on groups or individuals with regard to race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation", and appraisal of the main modifications against this objective therefore addresses the equality implications of the policies.

7.2 In general terms, there are relatively limited implications of the modifications themselves. These modifications generally make reasonably modest changes to proposed policies that will not have particular equality implications.

8 Other Relevant Considerations

8.1 There are none.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 Local plans are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Under Section 20(7C) of the Act, an Inspector can recommend main modifications, but only if requested to do so by the local authority. The process for producing local plans is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulations 23, 24 and 25 concern the process for examination of a Local Plan and publication of an Inspector's Report.

9.2 A new system for preparing local plans was introduced as part of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 26 March 2026, set out the detailed process. However, these do not apply to the current LPPU as it was submitted before the deadline for transition to the new system.

10 Financial Implications

10.1 Production of the LPPU prior to examination stage has been carried out within existing planning budgets. The holding of an examination is a significant cost to the Council and the full scale of the cost will only become known once the Inspector's Report has been issued and the Planning Inspectorate provides an invoice. Up to the end of February 2026 (which includes all of the hearing dates) the total cost of the examination including Inspector time, venue cost, consultant support and additional evidence was around £75k. The costs associated with the proposed consultation on main modifications will be very limited and will be met from existing budgets.

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 The timetable for adoption of the LPPU will depend on when a final Inspector's Report is received which confirms that the plan is sound, legally compliant and complies with the duty to co-operate. It is anticipated that this will be by the Autumn. Once the Report is received, the LPPU will be brought to full Council for adoption and this is currently expected to be at the October meeting.

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Local Plan Partial Update Main Modifications
2. Local Plan Partial Update Proposals Map Modifications

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Schedule of Main Modifications to the Local Plan Partial Update

This Schedule sets out 'main modifications' to the Local Plan Partial Update that have emerged from the examination process. This is a 'live' document in that it will continue to be updated throughout the examination.

'Main modifications' are those that have been identified as needing to be made to a local plan to ensure that it is sound and legally compliant. Main modifications need to be subject to consultation, as well as to go through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

For the avoidance of doubt, the modifications and references in the following table show changes to the Local Plan Partial Update Pre-Submission Draft, November 2024 (LP003b on the examination documents list).

The above document is already in tracked changes format and shows how the adopted Local Plan (November 2019) would be amended. Please therefore be aware that there are two types of amendments shown in this schedule.

Changes already proposed to be made in the LPPU Pre-Submission Draft [LP003b]:

- Additional text that would amend the adopted Local Plan (2019) is shown in green and underlined: Example
- Deleted text that would amend the adopted Local Plan (2019) is show in green and struck through: ~~Example~~

Changes proposed as a main modification through the examination process:

- Additional text that would amend the Pre-Submission Draft LPPU (November 2024) is shown in blue and underlined: Example
- Deleted text that would amend the Pre-Submission Draft LPPU (November 2024) is show in blue and struck through: ~~Example~~

Amendments in blue supersede those in green, so for instance where a change proposed to the adopted Local Plan in green is proposed to be further amended or deleted, this is shown in blue only.

Consultation, when held, will only relate to the latter changes shown in blue.

There are two further schedules to be aware of, which form separate documents:

- A schedule of 'minor modifications' which are small changes to the plan which would not need to be subject to consultation and sustainability appraisal
- A schedule of consequential changes to the Proposals Map.

Table 1: Schedule of main modifications

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
MM01	11-12	1.5.2	*Amend the first four sentences of paragraph 1.5.2 as follows:* 1.5.2 Perhaps the most significant documents and evidence are those which identify the development needs. In the case of housing, this is based on the standard method in Planning Practice Guidance ~~Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, published 2016)~~~~Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, published 2024)~~[14], which identifies the ~~'objectively assessed need~~local housing need[15]~~'~~ for ~~housing for each Berkshire authority as well as South Bucks~~Reading up to ~~2036~~2041. ~~For Reading, a~~A need of ~~699~~ ~~735~~ 822 new dwellings each year is identified. The ~~SHMA HNA~~ Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, published 2024)[14] ~~also~~ looks at the need for affordable housing, different dwelling sizes and some specific types of housing such as residential care. [14]~~http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2959/Housing-Market-Assessment/pdf/Berkshire_Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment_Feb_2016.pdf~~ https://images.reading.gov.uk/2024/10/Reading-Housing-Needs-Assessment-July-2024.pdf	Consequential change as a result of MM1.2 identified in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Inspector's letter following Stage 1 hearings [EX030] to ensure that the plan is justified.	Matter 2 Not in Hearing Statement
MM02	18-19	3.1.3	*Amend paragraph as follows:* There is no agreed overarching spatial strategy that applies to the local area, but there is a need for development plans in the area to complement one another. This is particularly the case across the main functional area, the West of Berkshire area. Within this area, each authority has an adopted or emerging local plan that is at an advanced stage. Figure 3.1 sets out the overall spatial context for the area, including major areas of development outside Reading's boundaries. ~~Of particular significance for Reading are the s~~Strategic development locations (SDLs) in Wokingham will affect Reading due to their proximity to our boundary, including the South of the M4 SDL (~~much of which has already been completed~~ only approximately 360 dwellings in the submitted plan and is not therefore shown), and the proposed Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL comprising phased delivery of 3,930 homes that forms part of Wokingham's Proposed Submission Local Plan Update. Developments on this scale will be expected to deliver a significant improvement in infrastructure, and transport links into Reading in particular by public transport will be of vital importance.	To update due to recent completions and to clarify the relative scale of each development	As discussed in wash-up hearings session on 12/02/2026
MM03	19	After paragraph 3.1.3	*Insert new paragraph as follows:* 3.1.4 Figure 3.1 also illustrates constraints such as the extent of the AWE Burghfield Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ). Information on the DEPZ and its implications for development within the Borough are detailed within Policy OU2: Hazardous Installations.	To provide context to Figure 3.1 to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.9
MM04	25 - 27	CC2	*Amend the policy as follows:* ***Proposals for new development, including the construction of new building(s) and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of building(s) and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.*** ~~***To meet these requirements:***~~	To significantly restructure the policy for clarity, including moving the energy elements of Policy H5 into CC2	As discussed in Matter 4 hearing discussions on 04/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			~~*All major non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards to achieve net-zero development defined as "a scenario in which the quantity of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions arising from the development's operational energy use on an annual basis is zero or negative, and where whole-life emissions are reduced through sustainable design measures." Net zero building status must be achieved through the application of the following energy hierarchy:*~~ • ~~*Minimise and manage operational energy demand through building design, fabric performance and servicing measures;*~~ • ~~*Use local low carbon energy resources (such as secondary heat) wherever possible to meet residual demands;*~~ • ~~*Meet remaining residual energy demands by producing, storing and using renewable energy on-site; and*~~ • ~~*Monitor and report on energy performance.*~~ • ~~*where possible;*~~ ~~*All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Very Good' standard as a minimum;*~~ ~~*All non-residential development proposals must include an energy statement which confirms that proposals:*~~ • ~~*Can generate at least the same amount of renewable electricity on-site (and preferably on-plot) as they demand over the course of the year (reasonable estimates of regulated and unregulated use) using a methodology proven to accurately predict post-occupancy performance; and*~~ • ~~*Achieve a site average space heating demand of 15-20kWH/m2/yr and a site average total energy demand of 70kWH/m2/yr. No unit shall exceed total energy demand of 90kWH/m2/yr, irrespective of the amount of on-site renewable production. ('Total energy demand' means the amount of energy used as measured by the metering of the building with no deduction for renewable energy generated on site).*~~ ~~*An energy statement should include pre-built estimates and as-built calculations prior to occupation. Weight will be given to proposals which demonstrate a commitment to on-going monitoring post-occupation which can be clearly communicated to the occupier.*~~ ~~*All non-residential development or conversions to residential should incorporate water conservation measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the appropriate levels set out in the applicable BREEAM standard. Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective. must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption in accordance with the 'fittings approach' detailed within the Building Regulations. Proposals that achieve water neutrality will be particularly supported. Both residential and non-residential development*~~		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			~~*should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy- and cost-effective.*~~ ~~*The demolition of an existing building should be accompanied by a full justification for demolition and demonstrate how 95% of all construction waste will be diverted away from landfill. For non-listed buildings, demolition will only be acceptable where:*~~ • ~~*The building is in such a poor state that it is not practical or viable to refurbish or re-use;*~~ • ~~*Such refurbishment or re-use would result in a similar amount or a greater amount of embodied carbon generation; or*~~ • ~~*Such refurbishment or re-use would result in a building with poor thermal efficiency resulting in a greater lifetime carbon emissions than would arise from a re-build.*~~ ~~*All applications for new-build commercial floorspace of 5000m2 or more must include an embodied carbon assessment. This assessment must demonstrate that a score of less than 800kg/m2 of carbon can be achieved within the development for the substructure, superstructure and finishes.*~~ ~~*Exceptional basis clause: In cases where the above points cannot be met for technical, viability or other policy reasons (such as heritage), the highest possible standards are required. In these cases, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the requirements can be met. For major developments of 1000 sqm or more, applicants must also either:*~~ • ~~*Enter into a legal agreement to provide renewable energy infrastructure off-site that is equivalent to at least offsetting the additional energy requirements not achieved on site; or*~~ • ~~*Provide a financial contribution to the LPA of a value sufficient enough to offset the remaining performance not achieved on site (with this being a minimum contribution of £5k and a maximum of £100k per 1,000 sq m) ; or*~~ • ~~*Demonstrate the buildings will be connected to a heat network; or*~~ • ~~*Demonstrate that the proposal is compliant with BREEAM Outstanding or Excellent (or equivalent certification method).*~~ ***Proposals should demonstrate application of the following energy hierarchy:*** *i.* ***Minimise and manage operational energy demand through building design, fabric performance and servicing measures;*** *ii.* ***Use local low carbon energy resources (such as secondary heat) wherever possible to meet residual demands;*** *iii.* ***Meet remaining residual energy demands by producing, storing and using renewable energy on-site.*** ***It is accepted that the amount of detail given in the demonstration of this energy hierarchy should be proportionate to the scale of the development and the scope of works proposed. In new-build proposals, compliance with the applicable targets described in A1 or A2 below will be deemed sufficient demonstration of having applied the energy hierarchy. Other major proposals***		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			(10+ homes or 1,000+ m^2 floorspace) should quantify the improvement made at each step of the hierarchy, from a baseline of basic regulatory compliance. ***Large-scale proposals (relating to 50 or more homes, or 5,000+ m^2 floorspace) are also encouraged to proceed to this final step of the energy hierarchy:*** *iv. Monitor and report on energy performance.* ***A. Energy*** ***A1: New build Non-residential Development*** ***All new build non-residential developments are required to achieve net-zero development defined as[21] "a scenario in which the quantity of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions arising from the development's operational energy use on an annual basis is zero or negative". Additionally, whole-life emissions should be reduced through sustainable design measures.*** ***All new build non-residential development proposals must include an energy statement which confirms that proposals:*** • ***Can generate at least the same amount of renewable electricity on-site (and preferably on-plot) as they demand over the course of the year (reasonable estimates of regulated and unregulated use) using a methodology proven to accurately predict post-occupancy performance; and*** • ***Achieve a site average space heating demand of 15-20kWH/m^2/yr and a site average total energy demand of 70kWH/m^2/yr. No unit shall exceed total energy demand of 90kWH/m^2/yr, irrespective of the amount of on-site renewable production. ('Total energy demand' means the amount of energy used as measured by the metering of the building with no deduction for renewable energy generated on site)[22].*** ***An energy statement should include:*** • ***The predicted performance at design stage[23], expressed in the metrics by which the above targets are expressed (annual space heat demand, annual energy use intensity, and amount of renewable energy generation per year)*** • ***The proposed building specifications through which this performance is expected to be achieved, for comparison with the specifications that would have been used for basic regulatory compliance.*** • ***For outline schemes: It is accepted that where precise details of construction and design choices are not known at this stage, the energy statement should instead identify specifications by which energy performance figures within the target range could be achieved in the type of building proposed, and commit to establishing the details by which the targets will be achieved through a subsequent reserved matters application.*** ***In major developments: Prior to occupation, the performance should be re-calculated, reflecting any changes to design or construction that could lead to a change in performance compared to the design-stage predictions.***		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			Weight will be given in favour of proposals that demonstrate a commitment to on-going monitoring post-occupation that can be clearly communicated to the occupier. ***Exceptional basis clause: In cases where the above energy demand and on-site renewables requirements cannot be met for technical, viability or other policy reasons (such as heritage), the energy statement should demonstrate that the applicant has pursued the targets as far as feasible and viable, and the proposed performance should be stated in the same metrics as the targets. In these cases, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the requirements can be met. For major developments of 1000 sqm or more, applicants must also either:*** • ***Enter into a legal agreement to provide off-site renewable energy infrastructure sufficient to offset the shortfall between the development's annual energy demand and its on-site annual renewable energy generation; or*** • ***Provide a financial contribution to the LPA of a value sufficient enough to offset the amount by which the proposed onsite annual renewable energy generation falls short of the annual energy demand; or*** • ***Demonstrate the buildings will be connected to a heat network, where the networked heat would not be gas-driven and would be lower-carbon than the alternative heating solution that would have been used for regulatory compliance.*** ***A2. New build Residential Development*** ***All new-build housing will be required to achieve net-zero development as defined above and to achieve the following (calculated using a methodology proven to accurately predict a building's actual energy performance):*** • ***Site average space heating demand of 15-20kWh/m^2/annum;*** • ***Site average of total energy demand less that 35kWh/m^2/annum;*** • ***No single dwelling unit to have a total energy demand in excess of 60kWh/m^2/annum, irrespective of the amount of on-site renewable energy production; and*** • ***On-site renewable energy generation to match total energy use over the course of the year, with a preference for roof-mounted solar PV.*** ***Exceptional basis clause: In cases where the above energy demand and on-site renewables requirements cannot be met for technical, viability or other policy reasons (such as heritage), the energy statement should demonstrate that the applicant has pursued the targets as far as feasible and viable, and the proposed performance should be stated in the same metrics as the targets. In these cases, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the requirements can be met. For major developments of 10 dwellings or more, applicants must also either:*** • ***Enter into a legal agreement to secure off-site renewable energy infrastructure sufficient to offset the shortfall between the development's annual energy demand and its on-site annual renewable energy generation; or***		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			• ***Provide a financial contribution to the LPA of a value sufficient enough to offset the amount by which the proposed onsite annual renewable energy generation falls short of the annual energy demand; or*** • ***Demonstrate the buildings will be connected to a heat network, where the networked heat would not be gas-driven and would be lower-carbon than the alternative heating solution that would have been used for regulatory compliance.*** ***In cases where the points cannot be met for reasons of viability, an Energy Statement must set out in full the degree to which the requirements can be met in order to enable the development to become viable.*** ***An Energy Statement should include pre-built estimates and as-built calculations prior to occupation. Weight will be given to proposals which demonstrate a commitment to on-going monitoring post-occupation which can be clearly communicated to the occupier.*** ***A3. Other Non-residential or Conversions to Residential Development*** ***Major proposals that relate to either works to existing non-residential buildings or conversion to residential should demonstrate that the energy hierarchy has been followed as far as practicable and viable. These are not required to reach net zero but should apply the energy hierarchy in the design process and demonstrate the resulting improvement via the provision of energy and/or carbon performance figures that would occur before and after the proposed works.*** ***B. Water Efficiency*** ***All development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption in accordance with the 'fittings approach' detailed within the Building Regulations[24]. Proposals that achieve water neutrality[25] will be particularly supported. Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy- and cost-effective.*** ***As a minimum, all water fittings and appliances within new-build housing should be compliant with the 'optional' standard outlined in Table 2.2 Part G of the Building Regulations.*** ***C. Demolition and Embodied Carbon*** ***The demolition of an existing building of 500 m² floorspace or more should be accompanied by a full justification for demolition[26] and demonstrate how 95% of all construction waste will be diverted away from landfill[27]. For non-listed buildings of this size threshold or higher, demolition will only be acceptable where:*** • ***The building is in such a poor state that it is not practical or viable to refurbish or re-use;*** • ***There is no demand for the building in its current use or state and that it is not practical or viable to remedy this through conversion or refurbishment.***		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			• ***Such refurbishment or re-use would result in a similar amount or a greater amount of embodied carbon generation; or*** • ***Such refurbishment or re-use would result in a building with poor thermal efficiency resulting in a greater lifetime carbon emissions than would arise from a re-build.*** ***All applications for new-build commercial floorspace of 5000m² or more must include an embodied carbon assessment. This assessment must demonstrate that a score of less than 800kg/m² of carbon can be achieved within the development for the substructure, superstructure and finishes.*** *Include new footnotes as follows and renumber subsequent footnotes* [21]This net-zero definition, and the energy hierarchy, are aligned with industry best-practice as defined by the UK Green Building Council [22]Applicants should refer to the LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide for specific guidance with regard to different types of non-residential buildings, such as schools or commercial offices: https://www.leti.uk/_files/ugd/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf [23]Applicants should refer to CIBSE TM54: Evaluating Operation Energy Use at Design Stage. [24]All water fittings and appliances installed must be compliant with Table 2.2 'fittings approach' as outlined within Part G of the Building Regulations. [25]Water neutral development is development which does not increase the rate of water abstraction for drinking water supplies above existing levels. For every new development, water demand should first be minimised and then any remaining water demand offset, so that the total demand on the public water supply is the same after development as it was before. [26]Sites allocated within the Local Plan are not subject to the requirement for full justification for demolition. [27]Applicants should refer to the RICS Professional Standard Whole Life Cycle Assessment as a preferred methodology. Additional guidance can also be found at https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/def ault/files/circular_economy_statements_lpg_0.pdf		
MM05	27 – 28	4.1.2 – 4.1.5	4.1.2 ~~The future growth of Reading in terms of the~~ The amount of new development taking place within Reading has the potential to impose a large environmental footprint in terms of consumption of resources and materials, the use of energy and the associated emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to~~wards~~ climate change. As such, the incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques are essential in order to minimise this impact ~~in the context of Reading~~. ~~Reading's Climate Change Strategy~~ The Reading Climate Emergency strategy (2020-25) ~~(Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013-2020)~~ seeks ~~to tackle the Borough's contribution to climate change by reducing Reading's carbon footprint by 34% by 2020 in comparison to 2005 levels~~ to achieve a net zero carbon Reading by 2030. New development has a significant role to play in achieving these aims and will ensure buildings are fit to exist without replacement for many years.	To restructure the text for clarity, including moving the energy elements of Policy H5 into CC2	As discussed in Matter 4 hearing discussions on 04/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			4.1.3 The general principles of this policy ~~in terms of new development~~ applies to both residential and non-residential uses. ~~For non-residential uses (including non-C3 forms of accommodation) and for conversions to residential, t~~This policy incorporates ~~the use of BREEAM standards~~ new metrics which stand alone from BREEAM for on-site renewables, space heating demand and total energy demand. The~~se~~ BREEAM standards remain a useful guide and cover a wide range of matters including building fabrics and materials, energy and water use, amenity areas and ecology, waste recycling, the location and accessibility of developments, daylighting, sound insulation etc. However, the current standards give high scores to development in urban areas to which use ~~using~~ previously developed land that is close to services, amenities and public transport routes. Developments in Reading will therefore naturally score relatively highly before any consideration of the impact of development itself. As such, Reading Borough Council ~~believes~~ requires that development ~~should~~ must mitigate effects further by reducing greenhouse gas and other polluting emissions and ~~providing higher energy conservation, hence the requirement for BREEAM 'Excellent' ratings.~~ reducing energy demand. ~~4.1.4 For a number of uses, including offices, the requirement to achieve 'Excellent' ratings is unlikely to significantly affect viability. However, some types of development, such as industrial uses, warehouses and schools might find it more difficult to meet these standards. In these cases, developments must demonstrate that the standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the development, and at a minimum meets the BREEAM 'Very Good' standard.~~ 4.1.~~5~~4 ~~Additional e Expectations for performance of new-build homes in terms of emissions are set out in policy H5 on housing standards.~~ An existing Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document[27] is in place and, and the general principles, where in compliance with the overall policy, will continue to apply. ~~An updated version of the SPD will be published in 2019 to supplement this policy and will provide further detail on how developments will be expected to achieve the BREEAM ratings required by policy CC2.~~ 4.1.5 Regarding the expectations around demonstration of the energy hierarchy: • It is accepted that outline proposals may not be able to give great detail in the exact improvements that will be made, even if the proposal exceeds the threshold for major development. Outline proposals should therefore demonstrate that the appropriate solutions and technologies have been initially identified/explored, as appropriate to the scale of the proposal, and commit to pursuing the next stage of detail in the reserved matters application. For example, a large-scale outline proposal might demonstrate consideration of how energy efficiency outcomes can be affected by building orientation, density and development mix, and that opportunities or technologies for low-carbon heating and renewable energy have been considered and their suitability at the site has been identified. The aim should be to show that the parameters set in the outline proposal will enable (or at least not prevent) the pursuit of energy hierarchy improvements in the next stages of detailed design. • Proposals that neither meet the 'major' threshold nor the applicability of parts A1/A2 of this policy should simply provide narrative on consideration given to each hierarchy step in the design process, and design/construction decisions made as a result.		

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			• It is accepted that where the scope of proposed works does present any opportunities to significantly improve energy performance in any of the steps in the hierarchy, then there will be no need to demonstrate having followed the energy hierarchy. • It is accepted that householder applications (such as for small extensions or minor changes to homes) will not need great detail of detail on energy hierarchy. Applicants of such proposals are encouraged to consider what opportunities the proposed works present and give information on energy-related design decisions where relevant. For example, an extension or loft conversion may present opportunities to improve insulation, airtightness, or glazing, compared to the basic standards required by Building Regulations. However, it is accepted that not all such householder applications will be financially able to pursue energy-related improvements above those set by Building Regulations. 4.1.~~5~~6 Particular attention should be paid to historic buildings. As historic buildings continue to change, they must contribute to a net zero future and be fit for future users. Through sensitive adaptation and keeping buildings in use, historic buildings can make an important contribution to reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. Applicants should refer to advice from Historic England on adapting historic buildings for energy and carbon efficiency[28]. The LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide[29] is also a useful resource for applicants. 4.1.67 In terms of water efficiency, there is a clear need to ensure that the highest possible standards are in place, particularly given the likely effects of climate change. The Thames Water area is classed as a 'water-stressed area' by the Environment Agency, and the Thames River Basin Management Plan stresses the importance of demand management in the area. For clarity, the tighter water efficiency standard referred to in the policy is set out in the 'Optional' standard within Part G of the Building Regulations and should be achieve through a fittings approach. 4.1.78 Reading Council encourages all new housing development to utilise Thames Water's 'environmental incentive' which offers financial assistance to achieve high performance levels for water fittings and appliances, the inclusion of water reuse technologies (rainwater and/or greywater recycling), and water neutrality.		
MM06	29	CC3	*Amend third bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• All development must address the risks of overheating through passive cooling and energy efficiency measures in the first instance[34]*** *Insert new footnote and renumber subsequent footnotes as follows:* [34] Applicants should refer to the Good Homes Alliance Early Stage Overheating Risk Tool Checklist: https://goodhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GHA-Overheating-in-New-Homes-Tool-and-Guidance-Tool-only.pdf	To provide a specific linked reference for applicants to access the overheating risk tool checklist	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.7.9
MM07	31	4.1.10	*Amend final sentence as follows:* While Reading itself was not significantly affected by the floods of 2007 and 2008, around two thirds of flooding during the 2007 floods was caused by surface water[34]~~39~~. Further incidents occurred in 2013 and 2014, as well as in January 2024[40].	To provide a specific linked reference for applicants to access the January 2024 Reading Flood Investigation Report	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.7.9

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			[40]The January 2024 Reading Flood Investigation Report can be found here: https://images.reading.gov.uk/2024 /04/Section19-Flood-Report-RBC-final.pdf		
MM08	31	4.1.12	*Amend second sentence as follows:* Ultimately, raising the height of flooring above ~~predicted~~ design flood level~~s~~ is a better alternative. All types of flooding (fluvial, surface water and groundwater) must be considered.	To align language with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.7.9
MM09	31	CC4	*Amend policy title as follows:* ***CC4: ~~DECENTRALISED ENERGY~~ HEAT NETWORKS***	To align terminology with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraphs 4.8.7, 4.8.8
MM10	31	CC4	*Amend second and third paragraphs of policy as follows:* ***Any development of more than 20 dwellings and/ or non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m ~~shall consider the inclusion of~~ must ~~include decentralised energy provision, within the site~~ demonstrate how a connection will be made to a suitable low carbon heat network where available in the vicinity, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable ~~for this form of energy provision.~~. Where no such network is available, heat and/or cooling must be supplied from low carbon sources[41] and be connectable to future heat network.*** ***Where there is an existing ~~decentralised energy provision~~ low carbon heat network present within the vicinity of an application site, further developments of 10 dwellings or more or non-residential development of 1000 sq m or more will be expected to link into the existing ~~decentralised energy network~~ low carbon heat network or demonstrate why this is not feasible.*** *Insert new footnote and renumber subsequent footnotes as follows:* [41]Defined as meeting the Government standard of 100g/CO_2/kwh for heat networks. For centralised or site-based schemes, defined as SCOP 2.8 of the UK Net Zero Building Standard.	To clarify definitions, refer to national policy standards and align language with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraphs 4.8.7, 4.8.8
MM11	31	4.1.13	*Delete paragraph and insert new paragraph as follows:* ~~Decentralised energy is produced locally and provides energy to buildings close to the site of production. The term covers a variety of technologies including various renewable technologies, and more efficient energy generation such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), which provides heating and electricity at the same time. This policy promotes the use of decentralised energy including CHP and district heating, which has particular applications to dense urban areas such as Reading. It provides an explanation of when CHP or district heating should be considered as an energy efficient design measure to achieve the most up to date requirements for net zero development. More information on decentralised energy will be published in the forthcoming Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.~~ Heat networks distribute heat or cooling from a central source or sources and deliver it to a variety of different customers such as public buildings, shops, offices, hospitals, universities and homes. By supplying multiple buildings, they avoid the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building. Heat networks are also uniquely able to use local sources of low carbon heat which would otherwise go to waste. This could be from factories, the ground or even from rivers. Environmental heat or waste	To update language according to emerging technologies and to clarify terms	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraphs 4.8.7, 4.8.8

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			can be captured and 'stepped' up using heat pumps to supply heating and/or cooling for buildings. These sources can include air, water sources such as rivers and aquifers and/or the ground. Air source heat pumps can either be communal within a development or provided individually in dwellings/premises. The former would typically be considered to be connectable to a heat network, provided a suitable design is used whereas the latter would not.		
MM12	32	4.1.14	*Amend paragraph as follows:* Electricity production ~~is currently dominated by a centralised~~ in the UK comes from a range of sources and is delivered via the national electricity ~~generating system~~ network. ~~Centralised~~ ~~e~~Electricity generating stations that use fossil fuels waste around two thirds of the energy in the fuels they use through the production of waste heat in generation then in electricity transmission and distribution to end users. On average, around ~~60~~ 30% of the energy is lost before it ~~even~~ reaches consumers. ~~If better use could be made of this waste heat, and transmission distances could be reduced, there would be major benefits in tackling climate change and improving security of supply. A decentralised energy system (which might include CHP) can help address these issues.~~ Renewable energy generation which is fed into the National Grid (transmission network) is a much more efficient and clean energy source and is typically combined with other renewable and non-renewable sources at differing proportions according to weather conditions and demands. This means that the carbon intensity of grid electricity varies over time.	To align language with emerging technologies and clarify terms	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraphs 4.8.7, 4.8.8
MM13	32	4.1.17	*Amend paragraph as follows:* Following the ~~production of heat spot maps~~ work by the Council working with the Heat Network Delivery Unit in the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, a heat-mapping and masterplanning study was produced by Element Energy. Subsequently, two~~, a~~ feasibility stud~~y~~ies for the North of the Station and Minster Quarter areas were produced. These areas represent the main opportunity areas within the Town Centre and schemes within these areas are considered to be strategically significant and will enable the viability of heat networks. ~~of the Borough, carried out by Thames Valley Energy (TVE), has identified potential opportunities for decentralised energy provision including district heat energy provision and CHP plant, which consider both existing and likely new development in the Borough as currently allocated.~~ Potential for ~~district~~ heat networks continues to be ~~and energy provision is being~~ explored ~~in areas of~~ across the town centre, much of which is expected to fall within the Heat Network Zone in forthcoming regulations. ~~but represents just one of the many possible ways of fulfilling the requirements of policy CC4.~~	To update the explanatory text based on recent work within the Council.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.8.9
MM14	33	4.1.19	*Amend paragraph as follows:* The success of such a scheme relies on ~~both in terms of, for example,~~ establishing the ~~CHP plant (as part of a decentralised energy network) and~~ heat sources and energy centres, but also needs to consider pipework, thermal storage and future connections. ~~to the plant of both existing buildings and new buildings,~~ It must also consider the internal design of buildings which need to accommodate wet distribution systems, preferably with underfloor heating, laterals, risers and space for plant. The implementation of the scheme will be dependent on the creation of strong partnerships between Reading Borough Council where relevant, the developer or representative of existing businesses and an Energy Service Company (ESCO). The	To update according to emerging technologies	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraphs 4.8.7, 4.8.8

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			involvement of an ESCO will allow multiple users to access the energy from the scheme and set out the contracts for doing so.		
MM15	33	4.1.20	*Amend paragraph as follows:* 4.1.20 Decentralised energy infrastructure has the potential to impact on the significance of heritage assets, including their setting. Such impacts should be assessed via proportionate heritage impact assessment, as appropriate. Due to the underground nature of heat networks, particular attention should be paid to any possible archaeological impacts as detailed in Policy EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance.	Agreed in Statement of Common Ground with Historic England [EX014]	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.8.7
MM16	35	CC7	*Amend the first paragraph of the policy as follows:* ***All development must be of high-quality design, employing characteristics to create, maintain and enhance physical character, nurture and sustain a sense of safety and community and positively address environmental issues affecting the climate. Proposals will be assessed ~~to ensure that~~ against the extent to which the development makes a positive contribution ~~within~~, having considered the following characteristics:***	To emphasis safety as an overarching principle of design and provide clarification for means of assessment	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.9.8 As discussed in Matter 4 hearing discussions on 04/02/2026
MM17	35	CC7	*Amend the first bullet point of the policy as follows:* ***Context – ~~enhances the surroundings~~ is based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and its surroundings; ~~and~~ is responsive to local history, culture and heritage~~.~~; and enhances the site and its surroundings, where possible.***	To provide clarification for means of assessment and to avoid undue burden	As discussed in Matter 4 hearing discussions on 04/02/2026
MM18	35	CC7	*Amend the fifth bullet of the policy to read:* ***Nature – enhances ~~and optimises~~ nature by integrating existing and new natural features into a multifunctional network to support quality of place, biodiversity, water management and climate change mitigation. Schemes should ~~retain existing trees and aim to establish new trees~~ be consistent with EN14 in respect of trees.***	To avoid undue burden and repetition	As discussed in Matter 4 hearing discussions on 04/02/2026
MM19	41	CC9	*Amend fifth bullet point under third paragraph of policy as follows:* ***• Economic development services and infrastructure, including employment, skills and training development initiatives, digital infrastructure and childcare provision.***	To refer to the importance of digital infrastructure as identified in LP011	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 4 [EX047] Paragraph 4.11.10
MM20	52-53	EN4	*Amend the policy as follows:* ***Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological, landscape or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.*** ***~~Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in substantial harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance.~~ The effect of an***	To ensure that language is closely aligned with the NPPF and that protections may be applied to landscape considerations; for instance, a locally-listed park or garden. To ensure alignment with paragraph 4.2.24	As discussed in Matter 5 hearing discussions on 05/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. ***In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*** ***Where it is accepted by the decision-maker ~~Local Planning Authority~~ that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant while avoiding pastiche. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.***		
MM21	53	4.2.20	*Amend paragraph 4.2.20 as follows:* Local heritage plays an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment and the Council has established and maintains a List of Locally Important ~~Buildings~~ Assets. The local significance of assets may become known at any time throughout the duration of this plan and the list will be revised dependent on any new information. Criteria for inclusion of locally listed assets can be found in Appendix 2. Local heritage assets do not qualify for statutory listing and are not protected from loss in the same way as listed assets or Conservation Area designations. It should be recognised that seeking the reuse of historic buildings and, where appropriate, their modification to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development, without harming the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, helps to mitigate the effects of climate change. Therefore, buildings on the Local List should be re-used, where possible.	To ensure that language is closely aligned with the NPPF and that protections may be applied to landscape considerations; for instance, a locally-listed park or garden	As discussed in Matter 5 hearing discussions on 05/02/2026
MM22	53	4.2.21	*Amend paragraph 4.2.21 as follows:* For clarification purposes, this policy is not intended to be applied to heritage assets with national designation, such as listed buildings, nor ~~other types of non-designated heritage assets, e.g.~~ to identified buildings of townscape merit in conservation areas.	To clarify what the policy refers to, so that it is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.1.7
MM23	67	EN12	*Amend criterion b) of policy as follows:* ***b) Biodiversity Net Gain*** ***Except for householder applications there will be no net loss of biodiversity on development sites. On all development sites, a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) must be achieved, except that which is exempt as set out within The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 or as amended. The 10% BNG should be delivered on-site wherever possible. However, if on-site provision is not achievable, or Readings Green Network can be more coherently enhanced through off site provision, off-site gain can be pursued, in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy. Where practicable off-site provision should be directed towards areas within the ~~b~~Borough and identified in the ~~Council's Natural Environment SPD~~, BLNRS ~~(or Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) until such a time as the BLNRS and the SPD is in place)~~.***	See EX099 which clarifies the position with the proposed changes to Biodiversity Net Gain that result in the need to reinstate the no net loss requirement. To bring the policy up-to-date as the BLNRS is now published and the SPD is unlikely to be produced. To reflect the replacement of SPDs with a Supplementary Plan for effectiveness. To ensure that the statement around irreplaceable habitats is consistent with national policy, in	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.7.7 Matter 5 hearings discussion on 05/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			Notwithstanding the above development that results in the loss or deterioration of 'irreplaceable habitats' will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.	line with a point made by the University of Reading.	
MM24	67	EN12	*Amend fifth bullet point of criterion c) of policy as follows:* ***• Provide wildlife friendly landscaping using wildlife-friendly species (preferably native) as appropriate; and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, and bird nesting and bat ~~boxes~~roosting opportunities integral within new buildings (such as universal swift bricks and integrated bat ~~bricks~~ boxes or tiles) ~~wherever practicable~~; and***	To respond to representation from Swifts Local Network: Swifts and Planning Group to ensure policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.7.10
MM25	68	EN12	*Amend fourth bullet point of criterion d) of policy as follows:* ***• ~~Not cover over watercourses~~ Not culvert watercourses and de-culvert watercourses wherever possible***	To improve the clarity of the policy for effectiveness, in line with a point made by the Environment Agency.	Matter 5 hearings discussion on 05/02/2026
MM26	71	4.2.66	*Amend paragraph as follows:* The Statutory Metric is a spreadsheet tool for calculating habitat losses or gains from a project using habitats, measured using Habitat, Hedgerow and Watercourse Units as a proxy measure for biodiversity. It is accompanied by an excel spreadsheet calculator that assigns values to habitats before a change and assumed habitat values after the change. Development needs to result in a net gain in Habitat Units as measured with the Statutory Metric. The Statutory Metric should also be used to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity even where Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply.	To clarify statutory requirements See EX099 which clarifies the position with the proposed changes to Biodiversity Net Gain that result in the need to reinstate the no net loss requirement.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.7.13 Matter 5 hearings discussion on 05/02/2026
MM27	72	4.2.72	*Amend paragraph as follows:* At present, there are no established schemes to provide off-site BNG within the Borough of Reading. ~~Details of The Council's approach to off-site habitat delivery will be provided within the Natural Environment SPD.~~ Although these may emerge over time, it is acknowledged that given the urban nature of the ~~b~~Borough, the availability of off-site gains within the ~~b~~Borough boundary may at least in the first instance be limited. Therefore, off-site provision may need to be delivered outside of Reading Borough. Applicants are however advised that the provision of offsite habitat units close to the application site and within the ~~b~~Borough may help demonstrate compliance with the ~~he~~ Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy and the Mitigation Hierarchy referred to above. The BLNRS identifies opportunities for enhancements for biodiversity within Reading and other Berkshire authorities, and this should help to identify appropriate opportunities for off-site delivery where they match up with established schemes as these arise. ~~As well as those habitats already defined, there are many undesignated sites where there may be important biodiversity interest. The overall principle here is that there should be no net loss of biodiversity, and a net gain, as supported by the NPPF, wherever it can be achieved. Ecological information supplied should be in accordance with the British standard for biodiversity management, BS42020. A mitigation hierarchy approach, as set out in paragraph 118 of the NPPF, will be used to consider the loss of on-site biodiversity. In exceptional circumstances where the benefits of development outweigh the loss, and where the mitigation hierarchy has been followed, off-site compensation may be acceptable. There are established metrics for considering off-site mitigation at a national level,~~	To bring the policy up-to-date as the BLNRS is now published and the SPD is unlikely to be produced. To reflect the replacement of SPDs with a Supplementary Plan for effectiveness. To correct errors.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.7.7 Matter 5 hearings discussion on 05/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			~~including those described in DEFRA's biodiversity offsetting guidance[74], and more specific local metrics may be produced during the plan period.~~		
MM28	73-74	4.2.76	*Amend paragraph as follows:* Whilst no part of Reading Borough falls within ~~an~~ a National Landscape ~~Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)~~, there are two ~~AONBs~~ National Landscapes in close proximity. The Chilterns ~~AONB~~ National Landscape runs along part of the boundary between Reading and South Oxfordshire, but does not cross it. It is vital that the rural-urban fringe at this point is managed to ensure that development does not jeopardise the characteristics of the ~~AONB~~ National Landscape. ~~A review by Natural England of the Chilterns National Landscape boundary is underway, and this may change the degree to which the boundary interacts with Reading's boundary, but at the time of preparing this plan no amended boundary is available.~~ The North Wessex Downs ~~AONB~~ National Landscape is, at its closest point, 200m west of the Borough boundary at Tilehurst. Therefore there are fewer visual linkages, but development in this area must nevertheless take into account any impact on this ~~AONB~~National Landscape.	To reflect the decision to cancel the Chilterns National Landscape extension, ensuring that the plan is justified.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.8.1
MM29	74	EN14	*Amend criterion 5 b. as follows* ***b. Planting should consider the historic environment as appropriate ~~and avoid potential future harm to designated heritage assets~~ informed by an understanding of the significance of any heritage assets that would be affected;***	To make clear that tree planting should consider heritage assets so that it is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.9.9 and Statement of Common Ground with Historic England [EX014].
MM30	84	EN18	*Amend first sentence of the third paragraph of the policy as follows:* ***All major development must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)*** […]	To clarify that SuDS requirements do not apply to minors	As discussed at Matter 5 hearing session on 05/02/2026
MM31	86	4.2.113	*Amend final sentence of paragraph as follows* Depending on the vulnerability of development proposed, and the flood risk classification, ~~different allowances should be taken into account.~~ the appropriate allowance must be taken into account within the Flood Risk Assessment. ~~The SFRA models and maps allowances of 25%, 35% and 70%, which correspond to the upper end allowances for the Thames basin.~~	To clarify FRA requirements to ensure that the plan is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 5 [EX048] Paragraph 5.11.8
MM32	88	EN19	*Amend first sentence of policy as follows:* ***Proposals must demonstrate how an appropriate proportion of green cover will be delivered on site through an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) assessment. This may include both existing and newly established landscaping. These requirements will only apply to the types of applications listed in the table below.***	To clarify which proposals are subject to UGF	As discussed at Matter 5 hearing session on 05/02/2026
MM33	88	EN19	*Delete the third row of the table as follows:* ***~~Non-householder applications that are Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) exempt (as they are below the de-minimis threshold)~~*** ***~~50%~~***	To account for recent changes in national policy	As discussed at Matter 5 hearing session on 05/02/2026

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
MM34	89	EN19	*Addition of footnote to the final sentence of the policy as follows:* ***Where detailed landscaping plans have not been provided at application stage, the Council may impose a condition for plans to be submitted at a later stage that are in accordance with the UGF assessment and site plans.[96]*** [96]For outline planning permissions, a condition will be attached requiring final UGF calculation to be submitted at Reserved Matters stage which demonstrates compliance.	To provide clarification on how this will be applied for Reserved Matters and Outline permissions	As discussed at Matter 5 hearing session on 05/02/2026
MM35	90	4.2.125	*Addition of sentence to the paragraph as follows:* The requirements of UGF are not to be used in place of other policy requirements, such as the requirements for mandatory BNG or any requirements through Policy EN12. Any greening elements used to meet BNG requirements can be "double-counted" to meet UGF requirements.	To clarify that UGF greening elements themselves are not in addition to elements included for BNG	As discussed at Matter 5 hearing session on 05/02/2026
MM36	92	4.3.4	*Amend second sentence of paragraph as follows:* The results of the ~~EDNA~~CDNA are ~~summarised in the box below, but in summary it is considered~~ that the figures that Reading needs to plan for between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~ 2041 are:	To correct an error to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 6 [EX049] Paragraph 6.1.11
MM37	99-100	4.4.2 and 4.4.3	*Amend as follows:* 4.4.2 ~~The SHMA identifies Reading as being part of a Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, together with West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. Within this area, an 'objectively assessed need' is identified for a total of 2,855 new homes every year up to 2036. Reading's share of this need is 699 homes per year, or a total of 16,077 between 2013 and 2036. The expectation in the NPPF is that local planning authorities should meet their need unless they can demonstrate that doing so is not possible.~~ The NPPF expects local plans to assess housing needs by using a standard method~~ology~~, detailed in Planning Practice Guidance. ~~Using the figures for 2024, the standard methodology would result in a need for 878 new homes in Reading per year.~~ As the Partial Update to the Local Plan was examined under the 2023 version of the NPPF under the transitional arrangements detailed in NPPF paragraph 234, it is the standard method set out in the 2023 NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance that is relevant. It is important to note that, because Reading is one of the 20 largest urban areas in England, the method~~ology~~ includes a 35% uplift which makes a significant difference to the level of homes proposed~~, but which is not based on actual levels of local need~~. 4.4.3 ~~To determine the actual level of local housing need in Reading, a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was undertaken, which was finalised in 2024. This identified Reading's housing need to 2041 as being 735 homes per year, or a total of 13,230 between 2023 and 2041. It is considered that there are exceptional circumstances in Reading that justify using this local assessment of need rather than the standard methodology. In particular, Reading is in the unusual situation that the standard methodology (if the urban uplift is excluded) would result in a housing need that is too low, whilst the inclusion of the urban uplift results in a housing need that is too high. In addition, Reading is in a unique position of being by some distance the smallest of the authorities affected by the urban uplift (outside London) in terms of both spatial area and existing population, which makes the application of an arbitrary urban uplift that applies only to the biggest cities inappropriate here.~~ The standard	Identified in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Inspector's letter following Stage 1 hearings [EX030] to make the plan sound.	Matter 2 Not in Hearing Statement

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
			method results in a need of 822 homes per year based on 2025 data, and this forms the basis in terms of need for policy H1. This is calculated as follows: • Step 1 – setting the baseline – 501 • Step 2 – an adjustment to take account of affordability – 609 • Step 3 – capping the level of any increase – 609 • Step 4 – cities and urban centres uplift – 822 ~~4.4.3 However, Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough. The Council therefore needs to set targets for housing provision that are capable of being met.~~		
MM38	106	H3	*Amend criterion 3 of policy as follows.* ***3. In the event that a policy-compliant affordable housing contribution cannot be secured at application stage, a deferred contribution mechanism will be included in a Section 106 agreement that, based on the conclusion of a later viability review required at an agreed level of occupancy, secures an appropriate proportion of any increased profits over and above those identified at application stage as a financial contribution towards affordable housing.***	To ensure that the plan sets out the terms of engagement on deferred contributions in line with Planning Practice Guidance.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 3 [EX046] Paragraph 3.11.2
MM39	107	4.4.21	*Amend the first two sentences of paragraph 4.4.21 as follows:* 4.4.~~19~~21 The ~~Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment~~Reading Housing Needs Assessment (~~SHMA~~HNA, ~~2016~~2024) has once again emphasised the critical need for affordable housing within Reading ~~as well as the remainder of Berkshire~~. The ~~SHMA~~ HNA identified a need for 406 ~~new~~ additional affordable homes per year in Reading, which represents ~~the majority~~ a substantial proportion of the overall housing required.	Consequential change as a result of MM1.2 identified in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Inspector's letter following Stage 1 hearings [EX030] to make the plan sound.	Matter 2 Not in Hearing Statement
MM40	109	4.4.27 and 4.4.28	*Amend paragraph as follows and renumber subsequent paragraphs* 4.4.27 However, viability assessments are a snapshot in time. Although a viability assessment at application stage may have justified a reduced affordable housing contribution, circumstances may have improved by the time that development takes place, such that an improved affordable housing contribution would be viable. A deferred contribution mechanism will therefore be included within Section 106 agreements for developments where viability has justified a reduced affordable housing contribution to secure some of the uplifted profit towards affordable housing. 4.4.28 The Affordable Housing SPD provides more detail on how ~~this~~ deferred contributions will work in practice and includes a formula for a profit share approach which will generally be used. It will be based on a late viability review undertaken on a comparable basis to the viability assessment at application stage and linked to an agreed stage of occupation of the development, generally either upon 75% occupation or at twelve months after first occupation, unless another approach is agreed between	To ensure that the plan sets out the terms of engagement on deferred contributions in line with Planning Practice Guidance.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 3 [EX046] Paragraph 3.11.2

			the parties. For very large or phased developments there may need to be multiple triggers.		
MM41	112-114	H5	***H5: SPACE AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING (Strategic policy)*** ***New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:*** ***a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.*** ***~~b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations. achieve water neutrality, where possible. As a minimum, all water fittings and appliances within new-build housing should be compliant with the 'optional' standard outlined in Table 2.2 Part G of the Building Regulations which requires a fittings approach[112].~~*** ***~~c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes. All other new-build housing will be required to achieve net-zero development as defined in Policy CC2 and to achieve the following (calculated using a methodology proven to accurately predict a building's actual energy performance:~~*** ***~~• Site average space heating demand of 15-20kWh/m2/annum;~~*** ***~~• Site average of total energy demand less that 35kWh/m2/annum;~~*** ***~~• No single dwelling unit to have a total energy demand in excess of 60kWh/m2/annum, irrespective of the amount of on-site renewable energy production; and~~*** ***~~• On-site renewable energy generation to match total energy use over the course of the year, with a preference for roof-mounted solar PV.~~*** ***~~Exceptional basis clause: In cases where the above points cannot be met for technical, viability or other policy reasons (such as heritage), the highest possible standards are required. In these cases, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the requirements can be met. For major developments of 1,000 sqm or more, applicants must also either:~~*** ***~~• Enter into a legal agreement to provide renewable energy infrastructure off-site equivalent to at least offsetting the additional energy requirements not achieved on site; or~~*** ***~~• Provide a financial contribution to the LPA of a value sufficient enough to offset the remaining performance not achieved on site (a minimum contribution of £5K and a maximum contribution of £15K per dwelling unit will be required); or~~*** ***~~• Demonstrate the buildings will be connected to a heat network; or~~*** ***~~• Demonstrate that the proposal is compliant with Passivhaus Plus or Premium or Passivhaus Classic supplemented with evidence of meeting on-site renewable generation requirements (or equivalent accreditation scheme that is demonstrated to be consistent with the requirements of the policy).~~*** ***~~c. In cases where the points cannot be met for reasons of viability, an Energy Statement must set out in full the degree to which the requirements can be met in order to enable the development to become viable.~~*** ***~~d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013~~***	To restructure CC2 and H5 for clarity, including moving the energy elements of H5 to CC2	As discussed at Matter 4 hearing session on 04/02/2026

			~~***Building Regulations. An Energy Statement should include pre-built estimates and as-built calculations prior to occupation. Weight will be given to proposals which demonstrate a commitment to on-going monitoring post-occupation which can be clearly communicated to the occupier.***~~ ~~***e.***~~ ***b. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).*** ~~***f.***~~ ***c. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least ~~5~~10% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be 'wheelchair adaptable' as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be 'wheelchair accessible'.***		
MM42	114-117	4.4.39 – 4.4.50	4.4.~~37~~39 The Government has sought to consolidate the wide range of standards required for new housing across the country. The approach has been to rely on minimum requirements in the Building Regulations for most matters, but to set a small number of 'optional' national standards over and above the Building Regulations minima, which local planning authorities can choose to apply in their areas. These 'optional' standards cover internal space, water efficiency and accessibility. ~~Local planning authorities cannot seek any additional, or higher, standards for new housing.~~ The 'optional' water efficiency standard is required under policy CC2. 4.4.~~38~~40 These 'optional' standards can only apply where a policy is included in a Local Plan. This policy therefore applies those standards in Reading Borough. It should be noted that the standards are only 'optional' for the local planning authority to apply in their areas, but that once applied, compliance in line with the policy is compulsory. Conditions will be applied to relevant planning permissions to ensure compliance with the policy. For water efficiency and accessibility, the standards will be applied through the Building Regulations. Planning conditions may be required to secure compliance. Where references to the Building Regulations in the policy change, the requirement shall be taken to refer to the most up-to-date standard. Housing in the centre will also need to consider the requirements of policy CR6. These standards apply to residential uses in the C3 use class only. 4.4.~~39~~41 As recommended in Planning Practice Guidance, it is appropriate to avoid immediate application of new standards to allow time for any associated costs to be factored into developments, including land deals, as they emerge. It is considered that the date of adoption of the plan is appropriate, as the draft policy has been public since April ~~2017~~2024. 4.4.~~40~~42 Housing standards serve an important role in ensuring resident health and well-being. Providing the appropriate types of housing at affordable levels can reduce overcrowding, unhealthy living conditions, injuries in the home and social isolation[113]. Deprived residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a result of substandard housing[114]. ***Internal space*** 4.4.~~41~~43 Ensuring sufficient levels of internal space is essential to the quality of life of residents of the Borough, which is a key element of the vision for the Borough. The Council is concerned that a great deal of development has now taken place under permitted development rights that provides inadequate internal space. This cannot be controlled, but, where it is possible to do so, it is important to ensure that there is as much housing with adequate internal space as possible. However, it is considered that there is a distinction between what counts as adequate internal space within the	To restructure CC2 and H5 for clarity, including moving the energy elements of H5 to CC2	As discussed at Matter 4 hearing session on 04/02/2026

			centre of Reading and elsewhere. The expectations of those choosing to live in the centre of Reading, in terms of both internal and external space, as well as issues such as noise, tend to be different to those in other parts of the Borough. In addition, in central Reading, applying the space standard could have the effect of reducing the ability of the area to make its expected portion of the housing need, as many existing developments, including some that are well-regarded, would not have gone ahead in their current form were the space standard in force. 4.4.~~42~~44 However, even where it does not apply, the nationally ~~prescribed~~ described space standard offers a useful point of reference and a good basis for design of new developments. The standard as of ~~at~~ March 2015 is set out below, and requires that: a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Figure 4.7 below; b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom; c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sq m and is at least 2.15m wide; d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5 sq m; e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide; f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1 sq m within the Gross Internal Area); g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all; h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72 sq m in a double bedroom and 0.36 sq m in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement; i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area		

Figure 4.~~75~~: Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (sq m)

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage	
1b	1p	39 (37)*			1.0	
	2p	50	58		1.5	
2b	3p	61	70		2.0	
	4p	70	79			
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5	
	5p	86	93	99		
	6p	95	102	108		
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0	
	6p	99	106	112		
	7p	108	115	121		
	8p	117	124	130		
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5	
	7p	112	119	125		
	8p	121	128	134		
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0	
	8p	125	132	138		

4.4.~~43~~45 The full standard can be viewed on the gov.uk website[115].

~~Water efficiency~~

~~4.4.4446 In terms of water efficiency, there is a clear need to ensure that the highest possible standards are in place, particularly given the likely effects of climate change. The Thames Water area is classed as a 'water stressed area' by the Environment Agency, and the Thames River Basin Management Plan stresses the importance of demand management in the area. For clarity, the tighter water efficiency standard referred to here and set out in the Building Regulations is 110 litres per person per day.in the policy is set out in the 'Optional' standard within Part G of the Building Regulations and should be achieve through a fittings approach.~~

~~4.4.46 Reading Council encourages all new housing development to utilise Thames Water's 'environmental incentive ' which offers financial assistance to achieve high performance levels for water fittings and appliances, the inclusion of water reuse technologies (rainwater and/or greywater recycling), and water neutrality.~~

~~Emissions~~

~~4.4.4547 Reading's Climate Change Strategy (Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013-2020)The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2025 sets challenging targets for tackling the Borough's contribution to climate change, and aims to reduce Reading's carbon footprint by 34% by 2020 in comparison to 2005 levels achieve a net-zero carbon Reading by 2030. One of the Strategy's strategic principles is that buildings in Reading should be built to high standards of energy efficiency incorporating on-site renewable energy where possible. Given the scale of residential development in Reading up to 204136, achieving the aims of the Climate~~

			~~Change Strategy will not be possible without that development having a minimal impact on carbon emissions.~~ ~~4.4.46 Therefore, the requirement will be that major new housing is built to zero carbon homes standard. A revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD to be produced in 2019 will contain more detail on achieving this requirement, but in general, where homes are not designed to be carbon neutral, this will mean as a minimum a 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the 2013 Building Regulations plus a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon offsetting within Reading (calculated as £60 per tonne over a 30 year period). Where it is proposed to meet the zero carbon homes requirement in another way, clear evidence should be provided to demonstrate how it will be achieved at planning application stage. Zero carbon homes is an achievable standard that, until recently, was intended to be a national requirement in the Building Regulations. All other housing should be built to a level equivalent to the emissions requirement of former Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, which is a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. Where the 19% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions cannot be achieved on site, an offset may be possible through planning contributions. Further guidance on such an off-set will follow the Local Plan.~~ ***Accessibility*** 4.4.~~47~~~~48~~46 There are two levels of 'optional' standards for accessibility. M4(2) of the Building Regulations is for accessible and adaptable dwellings, and relates to relatively straightforward design measures that can allow homes to be adaptable as the needs of the occupier change. In that sense, it is broadly in the same vein as Lifetime Homes, although not identical. M4(3) relates more specifically to wheelchair user housing. The specific requirements can be seen in the Part M approved document. In terms of part M4(3), Part M distinguishes between 'wheelchair accessible' dwellings (which apply only where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual) and 'wheelchair adaptable' dwellings (which can apply to any homes), and the policy therefore reflects this distinction. 4.4.~~48~~~~49~~47 The requirements for wheelchair housing have been set at a level that would allow Reading to meet its expected requirement. The need for wheelchair user housing is expected to grow with an ageing population, and this has been factored into the requirements. In terms of accessible and adaptable homes, it is more difficult to identify a specific requirement. This standard is about more than addressing specific needs, rather it is a changing approach, which enables those who may not have specific needs now to remain in their homes as their circumstances change. Since it involves relatively simple design features, it is considered that 100% of new dwellings can be built to this standard without it being an overly onerous requirement. 4.4.~~49~~~~50~~49 In terms of applying the ~~5~~10% requirement, where it would result in a fraction of a wheelchair user dwelling, provision should be to the nearest whole dwelling. For instance, ~~5~~10% of a development of 35 homes would be ~~1.75~~3.5, which should result in provision of ~~two~~ four homes.		
MM43	123-125	4.4.62 - 4.4.78	*Amend paragraphs as follows:* 4.4.~~60~~ 62 Conversions, either individually or cumulatively, can also have a harmful impact on the character of the area through unduly diluting mixed and sustainable communities. In certain parts of the Borough, there are high concentrations of flat conversions and houses in multiple occupation, in part reflecting the very high student population which is especially prevalent around the University. Given that students are predominantly present during term time only, it can leave some roads and areas	To ensure that the policy is effective by improving the structure and content of the supporting text	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 3 [EX046] Paragraph 3.16.9

			feeling quite dormant at other times, failing to achieve a mixed and sustainable community. In locations with already high numbers of flats or houses in multiple occupation, conversions to single family housing could help create a more mixed and sustainable community. For this reason, the policy seeks to control the concentration of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and flat conversions by applying a limit to the amount of HMOs and/or flat conversions within close proximity of an application property. 4.4.6~~1~~3 This policy relates to both small and large ~~Houses in Multiple Occupation (~~HMOs~~)~~ in addition to conversions to flats. A small HMO (those occupied by 3-6 unrelated individuals sharing one or more basic amenity/ies) falling within a C4 use class has permitted development rights to change between the C4 and C3 (general residential) use classes without the need for a planning application, unless it is subject to an Article 4 direction (see below). 4.4.~~62~~ 64 If there are more than six unrelated occupants sharing one or more basic amenities, the property is likely to be classed as a 'large HMO' (sui generis) which will be outside use class C4. Planning permission will always be required for a change to a large HMO. 4.4.~~63~~65 In areas where there is considered to be a need to control the spread of HMOs, the Council can introduce an 'Article 4 direction', which removes the automatic right to convert a dwellinghouse to a small HMO, and means that planning permission is required. Two such directions have so far been introduced – in a large area covering much of Katesgrove, Park and Redlands wards close to the University, and in a smaller area covering Jesse Terrace in west Reading. Details of these areas can be found on the Council's website[121]. If any new directions are introduced after publication of this Plan, those details will also be on the website. 4.4.66 It is important to ensure that conversions under this policy do not unduly harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing in line with the policy criterion 2 b. However, the different characteristics of areas within and outside the Article 4 areas mean that different 'threshold' approaches apply depending on whether or not a property falls within an Article 4 direction area covering small HMOs as set out in points 3 and 4 of the policy. ***Threshold approach within the Article 4 areas*** 4.4.~~64~~ ~~66~~ 67 ~~In ensuring that any change of use to a HMO within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction, either individually or cumulatively, does not unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing in line with the policy, t~~The following guidance will be used to determine a planning application for change of use from C3 (dwellinghouse) to a HMO within an Article 4 area that controls small HMOs. 4.4.~~65~~~~67~~ 68 Planning permission will not normally be granted for an HMO where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site. ***Threshold approach outside the Article 4 areas*** 4.4.69 Outside an Article 4 area that controls small HMOs, the nature of the type of development that could threaten a mixed and balanced community is different and includes both HMOs and flat conversions. In these locations, planning permission will not normally be granted for HMOs or conversions to flats where the combined proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) and properties that have been converted to flats will result in HMOs and converted properties representing 50% or		

			more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site. Planning permission will also not normally be granted where the application is for an HMO and the area falls within the 30% most deprived areas in England according to the latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation, or where there is other evidence of dilution of a mixed and balanced community. ***Applying the threshold approaches in practice*** 4.4.70 For the avoidance of doubt in applying the threshold approaches outlined in this policy, residential properties in this case means residential buildings rather than residential dwellings (i.e. a dwelling that has been converted to two flats is one property for these purposes). 4.4.~~66 68~~ 71 The centre of the radius will be the front door of the property. A 50m radius will be drawn from this point and any properties or any part of a building falling within the radius will be taken into account in the assessment. If a part of a building falls within the circle and partly without, then the property will form a part of the assessment. 4.4.~~67 69~~ 72 Where the radius includes properties that lie outside Reading Borough's administrative boundaries (for example they fall within Wokingham Borough boundary), they will not be taken into account in the assessment and only those properties in Reading Borough will contribute to the assessment. 4.4.~~68 70~~ 71 Where the radius includes entire buildings falling within an A, B, C1 or C2, D or sui generis use class (apart from a sui generis HMO) they will be discounted from the total number of buildings in the radius. Similarly, purpose-built flats will be discounted from the total number of buildings in the radius. Any existing flat conversions will be included in the number of C3 dwellings and will not be included in the number of HMOs for the purposes of the threshold calculation. 4.4.~~6971~~ 72 The Council will use information available to it to identify which properties are within an HMO use (either C4 or sui generis) or have been converted to flats. It is anticipated that the information to calculate the percentage will initially be based primarily on Environmental Health and Council Tax information, given data protection and other regulations preventing the use of certain information. Where there is significant doubt as to whether a property is an HMO, it will not be counted towards the threshold. For the avoidance of doubt, the application property will be taken into account in calculating this percentage of properties. 4.4.~~7072~~ 73 The applicant should also undertake their own estimate of the number of HMOs and, where applicable, flat conversions to accompany the planning application and provide all of their supporting data. It is advised that pre-application advice is sought prior to submitting any planning application. 4.4.~~71 73~~ 74Planning permission will be required to change the use of a small HMO to a large HMO, or to intensify the use of a lawful large HMO (without any physical extension or external alteration to the property) by increasing the number of occupiers. In this instance the threshold limit will not be triggered as the HMO has already been established in the street and, therefore, have no further effect on the concentration of HMOs and balance and mix of households in the local community. ~~4.4.74 The same technical approach as set out above should be used when calculating the 50% threshold for proposals for HMOs or flat conversions in all areas not covered by the Article 4 direction area.~~ ~~4.4.75 In part 2.h of the policy, there is a requirement for 25% of flats resulting from a flat conversion to be two-bedroom or more. The purpose of this is to retain some~~		

			~~larger accommodation. For clarity, the retention of a two-bedroom flat does not fully mitigate the impact of the loss of a three-bedroom dwelling or larger and does not therefore mean that other parts of the policy around a mixed and balanced community and the threshold approach have been complied with.~~ ***Sandwiching*** 4.4.~~76~~ 75 'Sandwiching', as referred to in criterion 2.j, where a proposal for a conversion would result in a dwellinghouse being located directly between two HMOs should be avoided, due to the noise and disturbance issues that can arise, particularly in locations where there are thin party walls without sound insulation. Avoiding 'sandwiching' of HMOs also contributes towards maintaining a mixed and balanced community. For the avoidance of doubt, 'sandwiching' only applies where a property would directly adjoin an HMO on either side with a party wall. It would not apply where, on one side, a dwellinghouse is separated from the HMO property by a gap such as a road, pathway or side garden. 4.4.~~77~~ 76 Proposals which resolve a situation where a dwellinghouse is sandwiched between two HMOs will be given weight in planning decisions. ***Retaining larger dwellings within flat conversions*** 4.4.77 In part 2.h of the policy, there is a requirement for 25% of flats resulting from a flat conversion to be two-bedroom or more. The purpose of this is to retain some larger accommodation. For clarity, the retention of a two-bedroom flat does not fully mitigate the impact of the loss of a three-bedroom dwelling or larger and does not therefore mean that other parts of the policy around a mixed and balanced community and the threshold approach have been complied with. ***Further information*** 4.4.~~72~~ 78 It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity, as many of the planning issues associated with house conversions relate to impacts on neighbours. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Conversions provides further guidance on these points including worked examples of the threshold approaches. ~~The method for calculating nearby HMOs using a 50m radius reflects current practice, but this may be amended by any future changes to the SPD.~~		
MM44	132	4.4.104	*Amend paragraph as follows:* 4.4.~~98~~104 The ~~SHMA~~ HNA (~~2016~~2024) looked at the issue of need for additional student housing. ~~It anticipates a growth in student numbers at the University of Reading from 13,135 in 2015 to 16,095 in 2018. However, the SHMA notes that, as this is in line with historic high student numbers, that it should not result in the need for significant new accommodation. More recent evidence from the University indicates that this growth, underpinned by changes to the tuition fee system and the removal of student number controls, has indeed generated a need for new accommodation. In 2016/17, 74% of students were from outside the South East, and 28% were from outside the UK, and these groups are particularly reliant on student accommodation.~~ It notes, based on information from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) that full-time student numbers have remained relatively unchanged at the University of Reading between 2017 and 2022. It did not identify a specific need for additional purpose built student accommodation, although it did note that the impacts of the Covid pandemic will have impacted figures over this period. Ultimately, the need for accommodation is very dependent on any growth plans at the University, and, although there are no current firm plans for expansion, this is subject to change. The University will continue to keep this under review in order to support and deliver any	To ensure that the plan is justified and effective in response to a representation from the University of Reading.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 3 [EX046] Paragraph 3.17.5 Matter 3 hearings discussion on 03/02/2026

			new buildings including student accommodation (either through new buildings, redevelopment/replacement, refurbishment, extension or repurposing/conversion of existing buildings for student accommodation) should this be required to meet the needs of the University. The University will continue to regularly engage with both the Council and Wokingham Borough Council as it implements the Estate Strategy and any successor strategy which may be prepared in the Local Plan period. ~~There~~ It is agreed that there is a current shortfall in University accommodation of around 1,000 bed spaces for first year students ~~and,~~ to address the anticipated growth to 2030 and to ensure additional capacity (for decanting space) to support the ongoing rolling programme of refurbishment and maintenance across University student accommodation. A~~a~~cross all years of study, for ~~2017~~2021~~2021~~2023/~~18~~2224, ~~5,000 students were not housed in purpose built student accommodation 3,400~~ around 4,000 students were housed in rented accommodation other than university or private halls.		
MM45	146	4.5.8	*Amend twelfth bullet point and insert new bullet point below it as follows:* ● Strategic and local pedestrian routes: As per the LCWIP, improvements to strategic and local pedestrian routes as identified in the latest version of the LCWIP will take place that follow the Healthy Streets principles. ● Strategic, town centre and local cycle routes: The strategic cycle network (made up of the strategic, orbital and town centre routes shown in the latest version of the LCWIP) will be improved based on LCWIP and Healthy Streets principles, alongside an improved local cycle network using the local routes identified in the latest LCWIP.	To ensure that the policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 7 [EX050] Paragraph 7.4.3
MM46	153-154	TR5	*Delete second paragraph of policy as follows:* ***Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.*** ***~~Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:~~*** ***~~• All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points;~~*** ***~~• W~~Within communal car parks for ~~residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 off-road parking spaces, 2~~10% of spaces should provide an active electric vehicle charging point.*** ***There will be a presumption in favour of electric vehicle charging infrastructure within Reading unless there are clear detrimental impacts on: accessibility by foot and cycle or by those with limited mobility; highway safety; residential amenity; important trees; or the significance of a heritage asset or its setting.***	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 14
MM47	154	4.5.23	*Amend paragraph as follows:* Reading has local air quality issues linked to traffic and congestion, which are highlighted in reference to policy EN15 on air quality. Increased use of low-emissions vehicles would make a major contribution to tackling this issue, as well as helping to tackle carbon emissions. However, one of the main barriers to increased use of low-emissions vehicles is the lack of supporting infrastructure. ~~Therefore,~~ ~~Therefore, for non-residential car parks with at least 10 spaces, at least 20% of spaces should provide an active charging point.~~ New ~~residential~~ development must adhere to the Building Regulations Approved Document S, which sets out specific requirements for such development, for example, the provision of a charging point per dwelling or per parking space.~~new development should make adequate provision for electric vehicle~~	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 14

			~~charging points. Where a house has its own off-street parking, this can be a relatively simple design measure factored into the construction, and should generally be achievable in all cases. Elsewhere, where at least 10 spaces are provided, 10% of spaces should contain active charging points.~~		
MM48	158	4.6.9	*Amend paragraph as follows:* The ~~Council worked jointly with Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council to~~ commission~~ed~~ consultants to identify the need for additional retail and leisure development in ~~the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area~~ Reading to ~~2036~~2041. The final ~~Retail and Leisure Study~~ Commercial Development Needs Assessment reported in ~~May 2017~~ November 2024. It found a ~~positive need for~~n overprovision of ~~5,467~~ 2,919 sq m of comparison goods floorspace (net) ~~of 54,400 sq m (net) by 2036, much of which is required in the second half of the plan period after 2026~~ up to 2041. In terms of convenience goods, ~~an overprovision~~ a very small positive need of ~~428~~ 727 sq m (net) was identified ~~of 19,500 sq m (net)~~ by ~~2036~~ 2041. Our approach is to consider this as a whole, as no planning permission is generally required to change between convenience and comparison goods, unless it is controlled by planning condition. ~~The Council's approach is also to treat this as very much a maximum, as there is considerable uncertainty about the retail landscape after 2026, when most of the need arises.~~ As a result, no positive overall need for retail floorspace has been identified.	To ensure that the policy is justified in relating fully to the evidence base and is effective in clarifying that the floorspaces are net.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 8 [EX051] Paragraph 8.1.4
MM49	159	RL3	*Amend second bullet point in criterion a) as follows:* ***• There would be no net loss of 'centre uses' for 'non-centre uses' at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors), particularly in the Key Frontages as identified on the Proposals Map, except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential ('living over the shops') will be acceptable.***	To ensure that the policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 8 [EX051] Paragraph 8.2.5
MM50	162	RL4	*Amend section and policy title as follows:* ***Betting Shops ~~and~~, Payday Loan Companies and Gambling Establishments*** ***RL4: BETTING SHOPS ~~AND~~, PAYDAY LOAN COMPANIES AND GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS***	To make the coverage of the policy clear	Matter 8 hearings discussion on 06/02/2026
MM51	168	After 4.7.9	*Add new paragraphs to the supporting text to policy OU1 as follows:* 4.7.10 Healthcare provision has been recognised as one of the highest infrastructure priorities in policy CC9 and sufficient high quality healthcare provision is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living. Provision of new or extended facilities will be required to support the level of growth planned in Reading. However, primary healthcare facilities differ from most other types of community use due to the complexities of how these facilities are funded, and there is a risk that, should healthcare facilities be planned without significant co-ordination between the relevant parties, including a primary care commissioner, they will not be able to be delivered. 4.7.11 As a primary care commissioner, NHS Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (TV-ICB) has the delegated responsibility for the area including Reading to ensure all primary care provision is operationally and financially viable. Proposals for providing, extending or upgrading primary healthcare provisions will need to be agreed by TV-ICB or any successor body with similar responsibilities. However, TV-ICB has no dedicated capital funding for primary care estates development and it will be expected	To set out how primary care facility provision will differ from other community facilities, to ensure the plan is effective.	Matter 9 hearings discussion on 05/02/2026

			that developers of new or extended and/or reconfigured primary care facilities will carry out pre-project work at their own expense to identify the size of facility required and its adequacy to support the existing primary care facilities in the local area to support the new population growth, with the agreement of TV-ICB or any successor. Developers will also be expected to build and deliver the completed (i.e., "turnkey") facility including its associated infrastructure to TV-ICB. Health Building Note 11-01: Facilities for primary and community care services[1] (or any successor document) provides best practice guidance on delivering primary and community care services. *Add footnote as follows:* [145]NHS England » Health Building Note 11-01: Facilities for primary and community care services		
MM52	168	OU2	*Amend policy as follows:* a. ***Proposals for hazardous substances consent, or development in the vicinity of hazardous sites or pipelines, will not be permitted unless it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount, type and location of hazardous substances would not pose adverse health and safety risks to the surrounding population and environment; and that any necessary special precautions to limit other potential societal risks to acceptable degrees would be put in place prior to the development commencing.*** b. ***Any proposal for development within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of AWE Burghfield (AWE B), shown on the Proposals Map or as subsequently amended, that would increase the residential or non-residential population and/or level of activity will ~~not be acceptable~~ be refused unless:*** • ***it does not prejudice the security and ~~future~~ current and future operations and defence capabilities of AWE B; and*** • ***any increase in population within the DEPZ can be accommodated in the context of the AWE B Off-Site Emergency Plan (or any successor under an alternative name) at the time of the planning application.*** ***Development in the DEPZ is likely to be refused planning permission where the ONR, as the regulator for nuclear licensed sites, advises against the proposed development.*** a. ***A proposal that falls within the consultation zones for nuclear sites set out by the Office for Nuclear Regulation at the time of the planning application and which triggers the relevant criteria will be subject to consultation with ONR. If the proposal poses an external hazard to a nuclear site or if it cannot be accommodated within the Off-Site Emergency Plan it will be refused.***	To respond to Reg 19 comments by ONR and MOD. To be effective and justified.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.8 Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 12
MM53	169	4.7.14	*Amend paragraph as follows:* The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) ~~and, for nuclear licensed sites, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR),~~ acting jointly with~~and~~ the Environment Agency (EA), ~~who together~~ form the statutory body of the COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) Competent Authority~~,~~ and provide specialist advice to the Borough on matters relating to non-nuclear hazardous sites. Therefore, both planning applications for development within specified distances of non-nuclear licensed hazardous sites, or pipelines,	To separate references to COMAH and nuclear regimes to avoid confusion.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.8

1

			and/or proposals for new hazardous installations will be referred to the HSE and/or EA and Emergency Planners. The principal aim of the COMAH Competent Authority is to reduce the risks of potential major accidents that are associated with the handling of hazardous substances. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is the independent nuclear regulator and, acting jointly with the EA, is the COMAH competent authority responsible for nuclear-licensed sites.		
MM54	169-170	4.7.16	*Amend paragraph as follows:* ~~WBDC maintains the Off-Site Emergency Plan (OSEP) for AWE Burghfield, and~~ Emergency Planning at RBC will be best placed, in consultation with WBDC, which maintains the Off-Site Emergency Plan (OSEP) for AWE Burghfield, and the AWE Off-Site Emergency Planning Group as necessary, to judge how a proposal will impact the OSEP and therefore the health, safety and wellbeing of the community. Proposals for any increase in population or activity within the DEPZ (including working or visiting population) should be subject to consultation with ONR, AWE and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as well as Emergency Planning services in both West Berkshire and Reading. ONR should also be consulted on planning applications of certain types within the Outer Consultation Zone (a 5 km radius) of AWE Burghfield and the 12 km zone of both AWE Burghfield and AWE Aldermaston. Details of these types of application are provided by the ONR[145]. The consultation zones are shown on the Proposals Map. Consultation zones, as well as the DEPZ, are not defined by the Council may be updated during the plan period. The ONR will provide the latest information on consultation zones, and the DEPZ will be shown on West Berkshire District Council's website. The ONR will normally advise against a development should they not receive adequate assurance that the development can be accommodated within the AWE OSEP. As a result, the ONR will consider feedback provided by WBDC Emergency Planning Service, as the AWE OSEP owner under REPPIR. As the regulator, the ONR's response will carry significant weight. Should an unacceptable risk to the AWE OSEP be identified, a planning application would be refused. *Add footnote as follows:* [145]Land use planning | Office for Nuclear Regulation	To accurately reflect consultation arrangements and refer to consultation zones.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.8 Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 13
MM55	182	5.2.16	*Amend first sentence and first bullet point of paragraph as follows:* It is expected that between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~ 2041 Central Reading will accommodate approximately: • ~~7,600~~8,~~700~~8,800 homes to ~~2036~~ 2041 (around ~~49~~59% of the total planned for – this includes ~~1,284~~~~749~~1,195 homes already completed ~~between 2013 and 2017)~~~~during~~ between 2023~~-~~ and ~~24~~2025);	To update the figures to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.1.5
MM56	185	5.3.8	*Delete this paragraph as follows:* ~~Supplementary Planning Documents may be prepared for elements of design where necessary. These may include Design Codes that reflect local character and local design preferences which can provide a framework for high-quality place-making.~~	To account for changes in national legislation which will end the production of new SPDs	As discussed in Matter 10 hearing on 10/02/2026
MM57	185	5.3.10	*Amend fifth sentence of paragraph as follows:* In addition, the use of green and brown roofs or green walls will enhance the biodiversity value of developments in the centre, and other measures such as swift ~~boxes~~ bricks may be appropriate to the town centre.	To address comments to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.2.7

MM58	196	CR10	*Amend sixth bullet point under criterion vii) as follows:* ***• Conserve and, where possible, enhance or better reveal the significance ~~the setting~~ of conservation areas, scheduled monuments and listed buildings;***	To ensure that relevant heritage assets are referred to and better align with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.6.11
MM59	200	5.3.50	*Amend paragraph as follows* Tall buildings that include residential will need to take account of noise and air quality issues in the same way as all additional residential development. All developments will need to comply with the Civil Aviation Authority's aerodrome safeguarding criteria, where buildings should be below 242 metres AOD, and Heathrow Airport is a consultee for any buildings above 150m within Central Reading.	To bring up to date with new safeguarding criteria	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.6.13
MM60	201	CR11a: Friar Street & Station Road	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 1.36 ha*** ***Indicative potential: ~~150-270~~120130-190 dwellings, up to 5,000-7,000 sq m hotel, offices, retail and leisure (no significant net gain assumed).***	To reflect the HELAA results to ensure that the policy is justified	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.15 (Appendix 1)
MM61	201	CR11b: Greyfriars Road Corner	*Amend policy as follows:* ***There will be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street, with a mix of uses on higher floors and in the rest of the area. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road and the Grade I listed Greyfriars Church will require careful design treatment. Listed buildings in the area will be conserved, including the contribution to their significance made by their settings.***	To highlight the sensitivity of nearby Grade I listed building for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.26 (Appendix 1)
MM62	209	CR12a: Cattle Market	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 2.46 ha*** ***Indicative potential: ~~330-490~~560-840 dwellings, ~~10,000-15,000 sq m net gain of retail,~~ primary healthcare, retained market uses if required.***	To ensure that the policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.112 (Appendix 1)
MM63	210	CR12d: Broad Street Mall	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 2.75 ha*** ***Indicative potential: ~~280-420~~420-600650-850 dwellings (relating to the whole site, not solely the Mall), retail and leisure (no significant net gain assumed), potential for hotel.***	To amend dwelling ranges to reflect recent development management decisions, correct errors and ensure that it is clear what the figures relate to, to ensure the plan is justified and effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.155 - A1.156 (Appendix 1)
MM64	215	CR13	*Amend criterion v) of policy as follows:* ***v) Conserve and enhance the significance of the listed buildings in the area, Reading Abbey ~~s~~Scheduled ~~m~~Monument and Forbury Gardens~~historic garden in the area~~ (including the contribution to their significance made by ~~and~~ their settings) where possible;***	To amend references to heritage assets for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.10.6
MM65	216	CR13a: Reading Prison	*Amend text on indicative potential as follows:* ***Indicative potential: ~~conversion of prison could result in 65-90 dwellings. No figures for additional development, as highly dependent on assessment of archaeology~~ approximately 10,000 sq m of mixed uses (as a result of conversion of the existing building) including cultural, leisure or heritage uses***	To clarify that the floorspace reference is to the existing building	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.182 (Appendix 1)

MM66	218	5.4.28	*Amend fifth to sixth sentences of paragraph as follows:* Reading Prison is a highly constrained site, and the Framework contains much more detailed information on these issues and how they should be addressed. It is important that options for uses that may secure the future of the listed prison building are kept open at this stage, ~~which is why student accommodation remains under consideration in a site that would otherwise be contrary to policy H12~~ but a cultural, heritage or leisure use that is in accordance with the historic importance of this building should be the focus informed by proportionate heritage impact assessment.	To add the need for heritage impact assessment for Reading Prison for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.182 (Appendix 1)
MM67	223	CR14d: 173-175 Friar Street and 27-32 Market Place	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Avoid or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance of the listed buildings within and near the site and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by ~~and~~ their settings);***	To consider listed buildings both within and nearby and align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.235 (Appendix 1)
MM68	224	CR14g: The Oracle Riverside East	*Amend first paragraph of policy as follows:* ***Development of the ~~area between the River Kennet and Mill Lane for retail, with use of site at Letcombe Street for public car park~~eastern end of the Oracle Riverside for residential development with commercial development including retail and/or leisure or appropriate footfall generating town centre uses at the ground floor.***	To provide appropriate flexibility to ensure the policy is effective, in response to a representation from The Oracle	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.247 (Appendix 1)
MM69	224	CR14g: The Oracle Riverside East	*Amend third bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Avoid or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance of listed buildings and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by ~~and~~ their settings); ~~Enhance the setting of the Conservation Area~~;***	To align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.246 (Appendix 1)
MM70	224	CR14g: The Oracle Riverside East	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 1.~~67~~2609 ha*** ***~~1,600–2,000 sq m of retail or town centre uses~~250-370 dwellings, retention of retail and/or leisure or footfall generating town centre uses on key frontages on ground floor***	To provide appropriate flexibility to ensure the policy is effective, in response to a representation from The Oracle. To remove the River Kennet from the site boundary.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.247 (Appendix 1)
MM71	225	CR14i: Enterprise House, 89-97 London Street	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Avoid or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance of listed buildings within and near the site and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by ~~and~~ their settings);***	To align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.263 (Appendix 1)
MM72	226	CR14l: 187-189 Kings Road	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Avoid or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by their settings);***	To align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.279 (Appendix 1)
MM73	226	CR14n: Reading Central Library, Abbey Square	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Development for residential, with design appropriate to the historic significance of the site, subject to provision of a new central library at the Civic Offices.*** ***Development should:*** ***• Be informed by heritage impact assessment;***	To align language with the NPPF and highlight the historic significance of the site for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.296 (Appendix 1)

			*• Take measures to **avoid or minimise harm to ~~prevent any detrimental impact on~~ the scheduled ~~ancient~~ monument by ensuring sensitive scheme design that is informed by archaeological desk-based assessment, followed by adequate archaeological investigation where necessary;*** *• Deliver heritage benefits, which better reveal heritage significance and foster greater connectivity between this site and the other Scheduled remains of Reading Abbey*** *• Avoid **or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the setting of the Conservation Area;*** *• Avoid development in Flood Zone 3 and consider opportunities to enhance the biodiversity potential of the Holy Brook including through deculverting;*** *• Address noise impacts on residential use;*** *• Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*** *• Address any contamination on site.*** *Site size: 0.1 ha*** *22-32 dwellings*		
MM74	227	CR14r: John Lewis Depot, Mill Lane	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* *• Avoid **or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance of listed buildings and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by ~~and~~ their settings);*	To align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.327 (Appendix 1)
MM75	228	CR14r: John Lewis Depot, Mill Lane	*Amend policy as follows:* *Site size: 0.37 ha* *76-~~110~~170 dwellings*	To reflect resolution to grant permission subject to S106, to ensure the policy is justified	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.328 (Appendix 1)
MM76	228	CR14s: 20-22 Duke Street	*Amend second and third bullet points of policy as follows:* *• Take measures to prevent any impact on the scheduled ~~ancient~~ monument;* *• Avoid **or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance ~~setting~~ of listed buildings and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by their settings);*** *Add additional bullet point beneath as follows:* *• Address flood risk issues;*	To align language with the NPPF and to identify flood risk issues in order to be effective and for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraphs A1.336 – A1.337 (Appendix 1)
MM77	228	CR14t: Aquis House, 49-51 Forbury Road	*Amend second bullet point of policy as follows:* *• Avoid **or minimise harm to ~~detrimental effects on~~ the significance ~~setting~~ of listed buildings and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by their settings);*	To align language with the NPPF for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.347 (Appendix 1)
MM78	229	CR14u: 33 Blagrave Street	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* *• Contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of ~~Enhance~~ the Conservation Area where possible and avoid or minimise harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed Reading Town Hall;*	To emphasise the need for contributing to character of conservation area for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.355 (Appendix 1)

MM79	230	CR14x: Part of Tesco Car Park, Napier Road	*Amend fourth bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Address flood risk issues, including ensuring that sufficient compensatory storage is provided to compensate for any loss of floodplain storage as a result of development or infrastructure provision;***	To ensure that development is deliverable in the context of the identified flood risk, to ensure that the plan is effective.	Matter 10D hearing discussions on 11/02/2026
MM80	231	CR14z: Sapphire Plaza, Watlington Street	*Amend policy as follows:* ***CR14z SAPPHIRE PLAZA, WATLINGTON STREET AND ROYAL COURT, KINGS ROAD*** ***Development for residential.*** ***Development should:*** ***• Include tree planting and other landscaping where possible on the Kennet and Avon Canal to enhance the treed corridor;*** ***• Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential;*** ***• Ensure that the development is phased and managed to allow existing residents of Royal Court to be accommodated within the development before Royal Court is vacated;*** ***• Address air quality impacts on residential use;*** ***• Address noise impacts on residential use;*** ***• Address any contamination on site; and*** ***• Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*** ***Site size: ~~0.2~~50.41 ha*** ***~~50-74~~56-84 dwellings (net gain)***	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15b)
MM81	231-232	CR14aa: Part of Reading College, Kings Road	*Insert additional bullet point into policy as follows:* ***• Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential;*** ***• Investigate impacts on the Superficial Secondary A aquifer and Bedrock Principal aquifer through a desk-based study at a minimum;*** ***• Address air quality impacts on residential use; and***	To reflect a constraint identified by the Environment Agency at Regulation 19 stage to be effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.406 (Appendix 1)
MM82	232	CR14ab: 160-63 Friar Street	*Add new bullet point before existing first bullet point as follows:* ***• Avoid or minimise harm to the significance of listed buildings and the Conservation Area (including the contribution to their significance made by their settings);*** ***• Address air quality impacts on residential use; and***	To reflect the surrounding heritage assets for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A1.414 (Appendix 1)
MM83	233-235	5.4.38	*Amend table below paragraph as set out in Appendix 1*	To bring up to date	Matter 10D hearing discussions on 11/02/2026
MM84	236	CR15	*Amend final paragraph of policy as follows:* ***The Abbey Quarter should be considered in the context of the adjacent historic Reading Prison site identified in policy CR13, which represents an opportunity to further consolidate the cluster of heritage interest and cultural setting of The Abbey Quarter. The areas should link into and complement one another.***	To emphasise the importance of avoiding harm and delivering heritage benefits for consistency with national policy	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.12.4

			providing public access via the linkages where possible, while avoiding or minimising harm to heritage significance. Proposals should deliver heritage benefits.		
MM85	236	5.4.39	*Amend paragraph as follows:* The Abbey is Reading's most significant heritage asset. This historic site is particularly evocative with layers of history including the burial place of King Henry I, the civil war defences of Forbury Hill, the Abbey Gate where Jane Austen attended school, the Victorian Maiwand Lion and Reading Gaol where Oscar Wilde was imprisoned[155]. The Abbey Ruins and Forbury Gardens area provides a significant opportunity to create a new heritage and leisure quarter including Reading Museum at the Town Hall. ~~This will be accomplished with recently secured Heritage Lottery Funding and matching funds intended to re-open the Abbey to the public and to repair and interpret the site.~~ Proposals in this area, in particular affecting the site of the scheduled monument, should be informed by early engagement with Historic England. In 2018, the Abbey ruins will ~~fully~~ re-opened to the public following repairs. More information on the project, including an overall map of the area, is available at www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk.	To emphasise importance of pursuing early engagement with Historic England for effectiveness	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.12.4
MM86	238-239	6.1.6	*Add sentence at the end of the paragraph:* To the southwest of Reading's boundary lies the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) facility at Burghfield. This is a significant local employer, but its presence also imposes a constraint on development within both its Detailed Emergency Planning Zone, which extends into Reading, and potentially larger consultation zones.	To ensure that the location of the DEPZ is identified to ensure that the plan is effective.	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082]
MM87	239	6.2.1	*Add additional key principle as follows:* j. The Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for AWE Burghfield places a constraint on development in parts of South Reading, and development within the zone will need to comply with the relevant policies in particular OU2.	To ensure that the DEPZ is recognised as a high-level issue in South Reading as highlighted in a representation by AWE and MOD.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.8
MM88	241	Figure 6.1	*Amend the map to show the boundary of the DEPZ for AWE Burghfield as shown in Appendix 6*	To ensure that the location of the DEPZ is identified to ensure that the plan is effective.	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082] Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM89	241	6.2.4	*Amend first sentence of paragraph as follows:* It is considered that South Reading can accommodate around ~~3,700~~2,700 homes between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~2041, around ~~24~~18% of the total planned for (this includes ~~479 185~~ 481 homes completed ~~between 2013 and 2017~~during between 2023 and ~~24~~2025).	To update the figures to ensure that the plan is effective.	Paragraph 10.19.7
MM90	242	6.2.9	*Amend the paragraph as follows:* West of the A33 and south of the Kennet & Avon canal is the area which will see the greatest amount of development over the plan period, particularly for employment uses. Green Park will continue to ~~expand~~ operate as a premier business location, together with ~~a~~ the new residential community, in a high quality setting and supported by a new station. The areas around Island Road to the north offer potential to meet the vast majority of Reading's need for new industrial and warehouse floorspace, although this area falls within the DEPZ for AWE Burghfield.	To ensure that the location of the DEPZ is identified to ensure that the plan is effective.	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082] Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026

MM91	243	New paragraph 6.2.13	*Add new paragraph 6.2.13 as follows:* 6.2.13 A significant part of South Reading falls within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone for AWE Burghfield and this is a strategic consideration that will need to be carefully considered. Policy OU2 and its supporting text provides more detail.	To ensure that the DEPZ is recognised as a high-level issue in South Reading as highlighted in a representation by AWE and MOD.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 9 [EX052] Paragraph 9.2.8
MM92	243-244	SR1	*Amend policy as follows:* ***SR1: ISLAND ROAD MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA (Strategic policy)*** ***Development in the Island Road Major Opportunity Area will provide ~~approximately 120,000 to 150,000 sq m of~~ new business space comprising mainly industrial ~~and~~, warehouse and/or research and development uses, with some supporting office uses.*** ***Development will:*** ***i. Locate the noisiest elements of the development away from any existing or planned residential, and include an adequate landscaped buffer to residential to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects through noise and disturbance;*** ***ii. Through sensitive design, layout and landscaping, ensure that development does not detract from the character and appearance of the Kennet Meadows major landscape feature;*** ***iii. Avoid negative impacts on drainage, water quality and flood risk on or off the site, including in relation to the river intake and groundwater protection zone of the nearby Fobney Water Treatment Works;*** ***iv. Take account of potentially contaminated land and potential odour issues arising from the sewage treatment works;*** ***v. Protect and where possible enhance biodiversity, particularly related to any development in close proximity to the watercourses and any priority habitats, taking the findings of an ecological assessment into account;*** ***vi. Protect existing public rights of way and enhance links to the east, across the A33;*** ***vii. Safeguard land which is needed for proposed ~~mass~~ bus rapid transit routes and stops;*** ***viii. Take steps to mitigate any significant adverse impacts on the transport network;*** ***~~viii.~~ix. Not prejudice the security and future current and future operations and defence capabilities of AWE Burghfield and b~~B~~e capable of being accommodated within the Off-Site Emergency Plan for AWE Burghfield;*** ***~~ix.~~x. Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure and electricity infrastructure in conjunction with ~~Thames Water~~relevant infrastructure providers, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*** ***~~x.~~xi. Provide measures to ensure that the increase in new employment opportunities offers benefits to the local workforce, including through employment, skills and training measures.***	To clarify that not all uses must be included to ensure the policy is effective. To ensure that the language of the policy aligns with modified policy OU2 to ensure the policy is effective	Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026 West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082]

			Development ~~in surrounding areas~~ will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area: ***SR1a, FORMER LANDFILL, ISLAND ROAD:*** ***The former landfill site will be developed for warehouse uses with some potential for industrial and/or research and development uses where it would not cause detrimental impacts to existing or planned residential. Development on past landfilled areas will need to demonstrate that it will not cause any negative effects on human health or on the wider environment. The noisiest elements of the development should be located away from any existing or planned residential, in particular residential at Green Park to the south, and development should include an adequate landscaped buffer to residential to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects through noise and disturbance, and a 10m undeveloped buffer to the top of the bank of the watercourse to the east. Development should have regard to the development of the whole site and access should be considered as a comprehensive whole.*** ***Site size: 32.13 ha*** ***Indicative potential: ~~95~~90,000-~~116~~133,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse/R&D use*** ***~~SR1b, NORTH OF ISLAND ROAD:~~*** ***~~This site will be developed for industrial/warehouse uses. Development should include a strong undeveloped ecological buffer to the River Kennet, as well as an ecological buffer to the brook to the west, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the biodiversity value of the watercourse. A buffer should also be provided to existing residential to the west to ensure that there are no significant negative impacts on residential amenity.~~*** ***~~Site size: 3.17 ha~~*** ***~~Indicative potential: 7,400-9,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse use~~*** ***SR1c, ISLAND ROAD A33 FRONTAGE:*** ***This site will be developed for commercial use. Proposals for industrial, ~~or~~ warehouse and/or research and development use will therefore be appropriate, as will offices in line with the existing permission. Related commercial uses as part of the mix may also be appropriate, although proposals that would involve main town centre uses (excluding offices) will only be appropriate where there is no significant adverse impact on existing centres. The frontage to the A33 will be of high visual quality and incorporate tree planting to enhance the A33 as a treed corridor, and an alignment for a ~~mass~~ bus rapid transit route through the site in a north-south direction will be a requirement.*** ***Site size: 9.7 ha*** ***Indicative potential: ~~27~~25,000-~~32~~38,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse/R&D uses, or alternative commercial uses***		
MM93	245	6.3.1	*Amend the paragraph as follows:* The land around Island Road provides the main opportunity to meet the identified needs for industrial and warehouse land in Reading. It is located in close proximity to some of the areas of greatest concentration of unemployment and low skills, and could therefore potentially provide substantial economic benefits to the town. It is recognised the operational requirements of employment buildings continues to change due to evolving market conditions whereby industrial and warehouse	To reflect market demand to ensure that the plan is effective	Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026

			occupiers seek modern spaces and facilities, and this area represents an opportunity to meet those needs. The adopted Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan identifies this area as potentially suitable for small scale waste activities requiring enclosed industrial premises, which can be included within development of the site.		
MM94	245	6.3.2	*Amend the paragraph as follows:* However, the particular circumstances of much of the land mean that development will need to be sensitively designed and constructed. To the south of the area, over ~~700~~ 1,000 new homes have been or are being constructed at Green Park, and development risks creating tensions between these two uses. The areas to the north are identified as a major landscape feature, and development would potentially be visible from this feature, particularly where land is raised. Much of the site was previously used as sludge beds before becoming landfill, some of which was filled fairly recently, whilst other areas are within Flood Zone 2. The area also falls within the DEPZ for AWE Burghfield, for which particular considerations apply set out in policy OU2. For this reason, development will be dependent on adequately overcoming these constraints	To ensure that the location of the DEPZ is identified to ensure that the plan is effective.	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082] Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM95	247	Figure 6.2	*Amend the map to show the boundary of the DEPZ for AWE Burghfield as shown in Appendix 7*	To ensure that the location of the DEPZ is identified to ensure that the plan is effective.	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082] Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM96	253	SR4b: Rear of 3-29 Newcastle Road	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 0.47 ha*** ***~~18-27~~14-22 dwellings net gain***	For clarity to ensure that the policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A2.68 (Appendix 2)
MM97	254-255	SR4e: Part of Former Berkshire Brewery Site	*Amend the final bullet point as follows:* ***Not prejudice the security and future current and future operations and defence capabilities of AWE Burghfield and be capable of being accommodated within ~~Provide measures to mitigate any impact on~~ the Off-Site Emergency Plan for AWE Burghfield.***	To ensure that the language of the policy aligns with modified policy OU2 to ensure the policy is effective	West Berkshire District Council Hearing Statement on Matter 10B [EX082] Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM98	256	SR4h: 11 Basingstoke Road	*Amend first bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Be accessed primarily from Christchurch Gardens;***	To ensure that the plan is effective by not ruling out an alternative arrangement if it can be justified.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A2.116 (Appendix 2)
MM99	256	SR4i: 85-87 Basingstoke Road	*Amend policy as follows:* ***Site size: 0.06 ha*** ***12-~~15~~18 dwellings***	To correct an error and ensure that the plan is justified	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A2.124 (Appendix 2)
MM100	258-260	6.3.17	*Amend table below paragraph as set out in Appendix 2*	To bring up to date	Matter 10B hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM101	265	7.2.4	*Amend first sentence of paragraph as follows:* It is considered that West Reading and Tilehurst can accommodate around ~~2,400~~1,~~900~~1,800 homes between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~2041, around ~~15~~13~~12~~% of the total planned for (this includes ~~554~~ ~~45~~ 80 dwellings that were completed between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2017~~~~2041~~2025).	To update the figures to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.30.3

MM102	270-271	WR3b: 2 Ross Road & Part of Meadow Road	*Delete site allocation as follows:* ~~***WR3b 2 ROSS ROAD & PART OF MEADOW ROAD***~~ ~~***Development for residential.***~~ ~~***Development should:***~~ ~~***• Take account of access restrictions on surrounding streets and ensure that residential access is generally separated from accesses to commercial areas;***~~ ~~***• Include all parking requirements within the site to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets;***~~ ~~***• Ensure appropriate separation or buffers between residential and industrial areas, to improve the relationship between the two uses in the local area;***~~ ~~***• Address air quality impacts on residential use;***~~ ~~***• Address noise impacts on residential use;***~~ ~~***• Address any contamination on site;***~~ ~~***• Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and***~~ ~~***• Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and***~~ ~~***• Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment.***~~ ~~***Site size: 0.6 ha***~~ ~~***39-6041-61 dwellings***~~	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15d)
MM103	273-274	WR3i: Land at Portman Way	*Amend second bullet point of policy as follows:* ***• Address flood risk issues arising from a Flood Risk Assessment, including from surface water and to ensure that floodplain storage is not compromised;***	To ensure that the plan is effective	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15e)
MM104	277-278	WR3s: Land at Kentwood Hill	*Delete policy as follows:* ~~***WR3s LAND AT KENTWOOD HILL***~~ ~~***Development for residential, subject to the site not being identified as a Local Wildlife Site.***~~ ~~***Development should:***~~ ~~***• Be supported by information showing how development fits within a comprehensive approach to the whole area (including WR3t and the protection of the neighbouring allotments and recreation ground);***~~ ~~***• Assess and mitigate any impacts on the Kentwood Hill/Norcot Road/School Road junction;***~~ ~~***• Provide adequate footway/cycleway provision to link into existing routes;***~~ ~~***• Include a landscaped border to Kentwood Hill;***~~ ~~***• Provide for well-vegetated green links between the copse and the Victoria Recreation Ground, and between the copse and Kentwood Hill;***~~	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Further Letter [EX107] Paragraph 6

			• Avoid adverse effects on important trees, including those protected by TPO, and on the stream in the copse; ***• Avoid any detrimental impacts uponRetain and avoid detrimental impacts on important areas of biodiversity, and provide for biodiversity net gain wherever possible;*** ***• Avoid adverse visual impacts on the West Reading Wooded Ridgeline major landscape feature, and ensure that views can be gained through the site from the recreation ground and neighbouring streets towards the Chiltern escarpment;*** ***• Take account of potential archaeological significance;*** ***• Ensure that development will not have a detrimental effect on land stability on the site and nearby; and*** ***• Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*** ***Site size: 1.430.97 ha*** ***41-6232-48 dwellings***		
MM105	278-279	WR3t: Land at Armour Hill	*Delete policy as follows:* ***WR3t LAND AT ARMOUR HILL*** ***Development for residential, subject to the site not being identified as a Local Wildlife Site.*** ***Development should:*** ***• Be supported by information showing how development fits within a comprehensive approach to the whole area (including WR3s and the protection of the neighbouring allotments and recreation ground);*** ***• Ensure that there is no reduction in vehicle access to, parking for and security of the allotments or reduction of the allotments themselves as a result of the development;*** ***• Assess and mitigate any impacts on the Armour Hill/Kentwood Hill junction;*** ***• Include a landscaped border to Armour Hill;*** ***• Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*** ***• Avoid any detrimental impacts uponRetain and avoid detrimental impacts on important areas of biodiversity, and provide for biodiversity net gain wherever possible;*** ***• Avoid adverse visual impacts on the West Reading Wooded Ridgeline major landscape feature;*** ***• Take account of potential archaeological significance;*** ***• Ensure that development will not have a detrimental effect on land stability on the site and nearby; and***	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Further Letter [EX107] Paragraph 6

			~~• Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.~~ ~~Site size: 0.45 ha~~ ~~12-1810-14 dwellings~~		
MM106	279	WR3u: 132-134 Bath Road	*Add additional bullet point of policy as follows:* • Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; ~~and~~ • Address surface water flood risk issues, including the provision of a site-specific flood risk assessment; and • Avoid discharging surface water flows into the public sewer.	To ensure that the plan is justified based on the evidence of flood risk on the site	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A3.133 (Appendix 3) Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15f)
MM107	280	WR3w: Part of Tesco Car Park, Portman Road	*Amend second bullet point of policy as follows:* • Be accessed from the existing car park access or, subject to not having an adverse impact on the operation or safety of the highway, the adjacent service access;	To ensure that the plan is effective by not ruling out an alternative arrangement if it can be justified.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A3.150 (Appendix 3)
MM108	280-281	WR3y: 72 Berkeley Avenue	Amend policy as follows: Change of use to residential with potential for carefully designed and located additional development.	To ensure that the policy is justified.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A3.167 (Appendix 3)
MM109	282-283	7.3.18	*Amend table below paragraph as set out in Appendix 3*	To bring up to date	Matter 10C hearing discussions on 11/02/2026
MM110	285	8.2.3	*Amend first sentence of paragraph as follows:* It is considered that Caversham and Emmer Green can accommodate around 700 homes between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~2041, around 5% of the total planned for (this includes ~~65~~ ~~27~~ 118 homes completed ~~between 2013 and 2017during~~ between 2023 ~~and 24~~2025).	To update the figures to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.41.2
MM111	288-289	CA1a: Reading University Boat Club, Thame Promenade	*Delete site allocation as follows:* ~~CA1a READING UNIVERSITY BOAT CLUB, THAMES PROMENADE~~ ~~Development for residential. Where retention of the existing boathouse is not proposed, development will only be permitted subject to its relocation or clear demonstration that its loss is justified in line with policy RL6 or national policy.~~ ~~Development should:~~ ~~• Avoid detrimental visual effects on the Thames Valley major landscape feature;~~ ~~• Take account of the risk of flooding, and locate development only in the portion of the site in Flood Zone 2, closest to Abbotsmead Road;~~ ~~• Provide for a green link across the site from Christchurch Meadows to Abbotsmead Road;~~ ~~• Conserve the setting of the listed war memorial;~~ ~~• Address air quality impacts on residential use; and~~	To ensure that the plan is justified.	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15g)

			~~• Take account of potential archaeological significance, and be supported by a desk-based archaeological assessment which should inform the development.~~ ***~~Site size: 0.56 ha~~*** ***~~16-2518-28 dwellings~~***		
MM112	292	CA1h: Hemdean House School, Hemdean Road	*Amend the second bullet point as follows:* ***• Retain those buildings that make the most significant contribution ~~of~~to the character of the surrounding area including the locally listed school and lodge buildings;***	To reflect the local listing of the school and lodge and ensure the policy is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A4.51 (Appendix 4)
MM113	293-294	8.3.5	*Amend table below paragraph as set out in Appendix 4*	To bring up to date	Matter 10A hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM114	297	9.2.4	*Amend first sentence of paragraph as follows:* It is considered that East Reading can accommodate around ~~1,100~~800 homes between ~~2013~~ 2023 and ~~2036~~2041, around ~~7~~6% of the total planned for (this includes ~~132 22~~ 44 homes already completed ~~between 2013 and 2017during~~ between 2023 and ~~24~~2025).	To update the figures to ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph 10.51.2
MM115	301	ER1c: Land rear of 8-26 Redlands Road	*Amend the policy as follows:* ***Site size: 0.74 ha*** ***18-26 dwellings (~~12~~14-20 dwellings net gain)***	To clarify the net gain for dwellings to ensure the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] Paragraph A5.19 (Appendix 5)
MM116	306-307	9.3.6	*Amend table below paragraph as set out in Appendix 5*	To bring up to date	Matter 10A hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM117	307-308	9.3.8	*Amend the second sentence of paragraph as follows:* The University currently has around ~~17~~23~~20~~,000 students[170] ~~from over 150 160 countries plus over 4,000 staff,~~ and Whiteknights is the hub of university activity.	To bring up to date	Matter 10A hearing discussions on 10/02/2026
MM118	308	9.3.10	*Amend the paragraph as follows:* An Estates Strategy for the University is in preparation to cover the period to 2032, which will outline the role that the estate, including the Whiteknights Campus, will help to deliver the four University strategic principles set out in the Strategic Plan of community, excellence, sustainability and engaged university. It is already clear that the University's Net Zero Carbon Plan 2021-2030 entails development within the campus to achieve decarbonisation. In addition, the main focus of the Estates Strategy is expected to be the concept of the 'University within a park', and that there will be a significant emphasis on repurposing and refurbishing existing buildings, as well as creating a campus heat and improving accessibility across the campus. At this stage, there is no indication that the strategy will involve a significant increase in the amount of floorspace on the campus in the short term. The University will continue to keep this under review in order to support and deliver any new buildings or student accommodation (either through new buildings, redevelopment/replacement, refurbishment, extension or repurposing/conversion of existing buildings for student accommodation) should this be required to meet the needs of the University. The University will continue to regularly engage with both the Council and Wokingham Borough Council as it implements the Estate Strategy and any successor strategy which may be prepared in the Local Plan period. ~~In 2008, the University drew up a Whiteknights Campus Development Plan, which set out the University's principles for future development of the site, including providing 1,297 additional bedspaces, waste and catering facilities and changes to the accesses and internal circulation. The~~	To reflect the need to keep changes under review to ensure that the plan is sound, in response to a representation by the University of Reading.	Paragraph 10.53.9 (EX053) Matter 10A hearing discussions on 10/02/2026

			~~Development Plan does not form part of the Council's strategy, but it outlines the changes that are proposed to occur on the site in the coming years, and has informed this policy. Much of the development proposed in that plan has now been built out, but there remains the likelihood of further development over the plan period, including for student accommodation as a result of a growth in student numbers of 28% between 2007/8 and 2016/17, together with any additional growth over the plan period.~~ ~~9.3.11 Proposals within the Whiteknights Development Plan include rationalising the substantial number of vehicle access points around the campus. Given that growth is likely to occur on the campus, it is vital that access points are appropriately located. The Council is therefore supportive of this principle in the Whiteknights Development Plan.~~		
MM119	315-322	Figure 10.1	*Delete the following sites:* • *WR3b: 2 Ross Road & Part of Meadow Road* • *WR3s: Land at Kentwood Hill* • *WR3t: Land at Armour Hill* • *CA1a: Reading University Boat Club, Thames Promenade* *For site CR13a (Reading Prison), remove from the 'Short (2023-2028)' category and place in the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category.* *For site CR14i (Enterprise House, 89-97 London Street), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site CR14l (187-189 Kings Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site CR14x (Part of Tesco Car Park, Napier Road), remove from the 'Long (2033-2041)' category and place in the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category.* *For site CR14z, change title to CR14z Sapphire Plaza, Watlington Street and Royal Court, Kings Road* *For site SR4d (16-18 Bennet Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site WR3f (4 Berkeley Avenue), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site WR3o (The Meadway Centre, Honey End Lane), remove from the 'Short (2023-2028)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category. Retain the site in the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category as currently shown.* *For site ER1b (Dingley House, 3-5 Craven Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site ER1d (Land adjacent to 40 Redlands Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site ER1l (Princes House, 73A London Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.* *For site ER1m (Land adjacent to 17 Craven Road), remove from the 'Medium (2028-2033)' category and place in the 'Long (2033-2041)' category.*	To ensure that the plan is justified and effective	Following paragraphs in RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX053] • A1.183 (Appendix 1) • A1.262 (Appendix 1) • A1.278 (Appendix 1) • A1.380 – A1.381 (Appendix 1) • A2.85 (Appendix 2) • A3.18 (Appendix 3) • A3.86 (Appendix 3) • A5.10 (Appendix 5) • A5.28 (Appendix 5) • A5.62 (Appendix 5) • A5.70 (Appendix 5) Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101]
MM120	323	After 10.3.4	*Insert new paragraph as follows:* 10.3.5 Work to underpin the Local Plan has also identified that by 2041, Reading Sewage Treatment Works (STW) would exceed its volumetric permit capacity and	To ensure that the results of an amended Water Quality Assessment are reflected within	Environment Agency Hearing Statement on Matter 10 [EX074]

			would not be able to serve the proposed level of development by the end of the plan period. The Council will work with Thames Water to ensure that required infrastructure improvements at Reading STW are phased in line with developments coming online. Development should not outpace the delivery of sewage infrastructure. Modelling of development is needed to understand the impacts of growth on statutory objectives under the Water Environment Regulations (WFD). Policy EN16 already requires that adequate water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure will be in place to support the proposed development prior to occupation and this requirement will need to take into account the need for upgrading of Reading STW.	the plan and ensure that the plan is effective.	Updated Water Quality Assessment [EX112]
MM121	353	11.1.4	11.1.~~54~~ Where monitoring, particularly the updated housing trajectory that will be published in the Annual Monitoring Report, demonstrates that there will not be sufficient progress on meeting ~~this shortfall~~ housing targets, the Council will consider the reasons for this, and will consider whether the extent of the lack of progress is sufficient to trigger a full or partial review of the Local Plan.	To ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 12 [EX055] Paragraph 12.1.5
MM122	355	Figure 11.1: Monitoring Framework	*Insert two new rows between 'Development in Major Landscape Features' and 'Air quality targets in the UK Air Quality Strategy' as follows* *First row:* Indicator: Trees planted Relevant policies: EN14 Target: 300 per year on Council land, net gain on development sites Target date: Annual Source: RBC Date: Annual Where presented: AMR *Second row:* Indicator: Borough-wide canopy cover Relevant policies: EN14 Target: 25% canopy cover Target date: 2030 Source: RBC Date: 2030 Where presented: Canopy cover assessment	To ensure that the plan is effective.	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 12 [EX055] Paragraph 12.1.10
MM123	355	Figure 11.1: Monitoring Framework	*Insert new row between 'Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches' and 'Dwellings delivered and offices lost through office to residential prior approvals' as follows* Indicator: New planning permissions for major or minor development that exceed the relevant urban greening factor score Relevant policies: EN19 Target: 80% Target date: Annual Source: RBC Date: Annual Where presented: AMR	To ensure that the plan is effective.	Matter 5 hearing discussions on 05/02/2026 Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 12

MM124	357	Figure 11.1: Monitoring Framework	*In row 'Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches' for Policy H13 under the column 'Target'* ~~TBC~~ ~~None~~ 10-17 permanent pitches Transit site for 5 pitches 2 plots for travelling showpeople	To reflect identified needs, reflecting soundness concerns raised by Bracknell Forest Council and highlighted in Inspector's Action List at the conclusion of Stage 1 hearings.	Matter 2 Not in Hearing Statement
MM125	357	Figure 11.1: Monitoring Framework	*Insert new row between 'Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches' and 'Dwellings delivered and offices lost through office to residential prior approvals' as follows* Indicator: Dwellings delivered through Local Authority New Build as regeneration and renewal of residential areas Relevant policies: H14 Target: 400 Target date: By 2041 Source: RBC Date: Annual Where presented: AMR	To ensure that the plan is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 12 [EX055] Paragraph 12.1.9
MM126	366	12. Glossary	*Amend entry as follows:* **Locally listed ~~building~~ assets**: Identified locally-significant ~~buildings~~ assets, which do not benefit from the same statutory protection as ~~buildings~~ assets on the national list.	To ensure that language is closely aligned with the NPPF and that protections may be applied to landscape considerations; for instance, a locally-listed park or garden	As discussed in Matter 5 hearing discussions on 05/02/2026
MM127	373-378	Appendix 1	*Insert new Housing Trajectory 2023/24 to 2040/41 as at 31st December 2025 as shown in Appendix 8 to this document to replace existing Housing Trajectory 2023/24 to 2040/41 as at 31st March 2024*	To update based on more recent monitoring to ensure that the plan is effective	RBC Hearing Statement on Matter 3 [EX046] Paragraphs 3.2.15 - 3.2.19
MM128	380-381	Appendix 2	*Amend as follows* **CRITERIA FOR LOCALLY LISTING ~~BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES~~ ASSETS** **Exclusions** ~~Buildings and structures~~Assets will not be considered for the Local List when they are already part of a Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument, or subject to an Article 4 direction relating to historical or architectural interest. **Principles of Selection for the Local List** This guidance sets out the general principles that Reading Borough Council applies when deciding whether an ~~building~~asset~~,~~ or group of ~~buildings or structure~~assets should be added to Reading's List of Locally Important ~~Buildings and Structures~~Assets: a. pre-1840: Any ~~building, structure or group of buildings~~ asset or group of assets where its/ their original character and form are clearly identifiable. b. 1840 - 1913: Any ~~building, structure or group of buildings~~ asset or group of assets that is/are of clearly defined significance in the local context and where elements that contribute to its/ their heritage significance remain substantially complete.	To ensure that language is closely aligned with the NPPF and that protections may be applied to landscape considerations; for instance, a locally-listed park or garden	As discussed in Matter 5 hearing discussions on 05/02/2026

			c. 1914 - 1939: Any ~~building, structure or group of buildings~~ asset or group of assets where the elements that contribute to a high level of significance in the local context remain substantially complete. d. post-1939: Any ~~building, structure or group of buildings~~ asset or group of assets where the elements that contribute to its/ their exceptional heritage significance in the local context are wholly complete and unaffected by inappropriate changes. In identifying significance in the local context it must be shown that the ~~building, structure or group of buildings~~ asset or group of assets contribute(s) to the heritage of the Borough in accordance with at least one of the significance criteria detailed below: **Historic interest** a. Historical Association i. The ~~building or structure~~asset has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event. ii. The ~~building or structure~~asset has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest. b. Social Importance The ~~building or structure~~asset has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities. Such ~~buildings/ structures~~asset may include places of worship, schools, community buildings, places of employment, public houses and memorials which formed a focal point or played a key social role. c. Industrial Importance The ~~building or structure~~asset clearly relates to traditional or historic industrial processes or important businesses or the products of such industrial processes or businesses in the history of Reading or are intact industrial structures, for example bridges. **Architectural interest** a. Sense of place i. The ~~building or structure~~asset is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading. b. Innovation and Virtuosity i. The ~~building or structure~~asset has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials. ii. The ~~building or structure~~asset is the work of a notable local/national architect/engineer/builder/landscaper. iii. The ~~building or structure~~asset shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering. c. Group Value i. The ~~buildings/structures~~assets form a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area. The ~~buildings/structures~~assets are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947.		

Appendix 1: Modified list of planning permissions in Central Reading

Site	App ref	Summary of development
Former Gas Works Building, Gas Works Road	16/0378	Change of use, conversion and extension for 20 dwellings
~~Jacksons Corner, 1-9 Kings Road~~	~~160849~~	~~Change of use and redevelopment for 33 dwellings and retail use (under construction)~~
~~83-85 London Street~~	~~181880~~	~~Change of use of offices to 18 dwellings~~
~~Havell House, 62-66 Queens Road~~	~~181464, 181466, 181467, 181468~~	~~Change of use of offices to 13 dwellings~~
~~160-163 Friar Street~~	~~160212~~	~~Change of use of offices to 28 dwellings~~
~~Former Gas Works Building, Gas Works Road~~	~~160378~~	~~Change of use and extension for 20 dwellings~~
~~Private Car Park, East Street~~	~~170019~~	~~Development for 103 units of student accommodation~~
~~City Wall House, 26 West Street~~	~~170251~~	~~Change of use of part of apart-hotel to 10 dwellings~~
~~3-4 Wesley Gate, Queens Road~~	~~170314~~	~~Change of use of offices to 14 dwellings (under construction)~~
Clarendon House, 59-75 Queens Road	18/0909	Extensions and additional development for 43 dwellings (4 dwellings completed, remainder not started)
~~54 Queens Road~~	~~180982~~	~~Change of use of offices to 20 dwellings~~
~~Clarendon House, 59-75 Queens Road~~	~~181056~~	~~Change of use of offices to 49 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~16 King Street~~	~~181064~~	~~Change of use from retail to restaurant~~
~~33 Blagrave Street~~	~~181074~~	~~Change of use of offices to 28 dwellings~~
34-38 Southampton Street[154]	18/1117	Demolish pub and one dwelling to provide 11 dwellings (under construction)
~~1-2 Wesley Gate, Queens Road~~	~~181321~~	~~Change of use of offices to 15 dwellings~~
~~10 Southern Court, South Street~~	~~182027~~	~~Change of use of offices to 16 dwellings~~
43 London Street	19/1043	Redevelopment and change of use for 21 dwellings (under construction)
54 Queens Road	19/1660, 20/1749	Change of use of offices to 20 dwellings and extension for 9 additional dwellings (under construction)
12-18 Crown Street	20/1138	Change of use from serviced apartments to 44 dwellings
~~The Faculty, 23-27 London Road~~	~~201221~~	~~Change of use from serviced apartments to 15 dwellings~~
115 Chatham Street	21/0349	Development of 54 dwellings (under construction)
Great Brigham's Mead, Vastern Road	21/0587	Change of use of offices to 110 dwellings (under construction)

Site	App ref	Summary of development
75-77 London Street	22/0244	Redevelopment and conversion for 15 dwellings
71-73 Caversham Road	22/0922	Partial redevelopment and change of use for 29 dwellings and retail use
1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 145-148 Friar Street	22/1232	Part demolition and change of use for serviced apartments and ground floor commercial (under construction)
138-144 Friar Street	22/1235	Part redevelopment for hotel
20-30 Kings Road	23/1190	Change of use to law courts
Civic Offices, Bridge Street	23/1495	Extension and part change of use for new library (under construction)
The Hexagon, Queens Walk	24/0063	Extension for theatre use
87 Castle Street	24/0949	Change of use of offices to 50 dwellings
25-31 London Street	24/1504	Change of use of offices to 24 dwellings
40 Caversham Road	24/1572	Change of use of offices to 31 dwellings (under construction)
St Mary's House, 66-68 St Mary's Butts	24/1593	Change of use of offices to serviced apartments
Abbey Gardens, 4-6 Abbey Street	25/0202, 25/0918	Change of use of offices to 92 dwellings (North and Middle Block) and 107 dwellings (South Block)
5-6 Southern Court, South Street	25/0344	Change of use of offices to 18 flats
121 Kings Road	25/0470, 25/1573	Change of use of offices to 77 dwellings (eastern building) and 44 dwellings (Beta Building)
Abbey Wharf, 57-75 Kings Road	25/1059	Change of use of offices to 78 dwellings

Development progress is correct to 31st March 20~~24~~19~~24~~25

~~[154] Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

Appendix 2: Modified list of planning permissions in South Reading

Site	App ref	Summary of development
Plot 8, 600 South Oak Way	07/0488	Development for offices (20,430 sq m)
Madejski Stadium, Royal Way	10/1623	Expansion of football stadium (28,442 sq m net gain)
~~Lok n Store, 5-9 Berkeley Avenue~~	~~101656~~	~~Redevelopment for 112 dwellings (under construction)~~
Green Park Village, Longwater Avenue	10/2172, 18/0691	Development for 836 dwellings including extra care housing, offices (16,000 sq m), primary school, community use (381 sq m), retail and related facilities (684 sq m) (under construction)
~~Foudry Place and 22 Commercial Road~~	~~120408~~	~~Remainder of permission for development for offices (2,295 sq m) and serviced apartments (1,400 sq m)~~
~~Land west of Longwater Avenue~~	~~141944~~	~~New railway station (6,106 sq m) (under construction)~~
177 Basingstoke Road	15/0715	Development of student accommodation for 34 bedspaces (under construction)
~~Warwick House, Warwick Road~~	~~151407~~	~~Development for 10 dwellings~~
~~Worton Grange~~	~~151944, 161496~~	~~Development of 175 dwellings, industrial/warehouse units (2,452 sq m), car showrooms (2,510 sq m), hotel (4,134 sq m), retail and related uses (6,075 sq m) (under construction)~~
Land at the Madejski Stadium	16/0199	Development for up to 618 dwellings, convention centre and ice rink, 246 bedroom hotel, up to 102 serviced apartments, decked car parking, ancillary retail, open space, transport interchange
~~400 Longwater Avenue~~	~~160569~~	~~Development for offices (27,207 sq m) (under construction)~~
~~452 Basingstoke Road~~	~~162108~~	~~Redevelopment and refurbishment on site, including new research and development building (net gain of 10,736 sq m) (under construction)~~
~~Green Park Village Phase 6A~~	~~171019~~	~~Development for 339 dwellings and retail space) in place of office element of Green Park Village (see 102172 above)~~
~~1 Darwin Close~~	~~171971~~	~~Redevelopment of building (2,025 sq m) for new B1/B8 building (2,291 sq m) (under construction)~~

Site	App ref	Summary of development
~~Cadogan House, Rose Kiln Lane~~	~~172277, 181643, 182166~~	~~Three alternative proposals for change of use of offices to 19, 39 and 24 dwellings respectively~~
~~14 Arkwright Road~~	~~180654~~	~~Change of use of offices to 37 dwellings~~
~~Unit 1, Acre Road~~	~~181059~~	~~Change of use to flexible B2/B8 use (6,183 sq m)~~
~~Imperium Building, Imperial Way~~	~~181518~~	~~Change of use of second floor from office to flexible office/conference use (2,658 sq m)~~
~~85-87 Basingstoke Road~~	~~182091~~	~~Change of use of offices to 17 dwellings~~
~~Atlantic House, Imperial Way~~	~~190856~~	~~Change of use of office to police HQ (4,707 sq m) (under construction)~~
Brunel Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane	20/1853, 23/0953	Alternative permissions for storage and distribution and/or industrial use of all or part of retail park
220 Elgar Road South	22/0258	Development for 16 dwellings
Bennet Court, Bennet Road	22/1936	Development for industrial or storage and distribution uses (4,108 sq m)
2 Hexham Road[158]	23/0279	Development for 42 dwellings and social care services (under construction)
Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane	23/0826	Redevelopment for light industrial/ general industrial/ storage and distribution (3,081 sq m)
Thales, Worton Grange[159]	23/1254	Redevelopment for new industrial or storage building
40 Bennet Road	23/1607	Change of use from B2 industrial to vehicle servicing and/or B2 including extensions (1,588 sq m)
1 Arkwright Road	24/0800	Redevelopment for industrial unit (1,499 sq m)

Development progress is correct to 31st March ~~2019~~~~2024~~2025

[158] ~~Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

[159] ~~Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

Appendix 3: Modified list of planning permissions in West Reading and Tilehurst

Site	App ref	Summary of development
1025-1027 Oxford Road	07/0937	Development of 12 dwellings
~~Elvian School, Bath Road~~	~~151175~~	~~Development of former school for 118 dwellings and new secondary school (approximately 6,000 sq m net gain of education) (under construction)~~
~~1 Castle Crescent~~	~~151924~~	~~Conversion and additional development for 13 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~St Georges Hall, St Georges Road~~	~~152301~~	~~Church extension and development of 12 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~Land at Conwy Close~~	~~161390~~	~~Development of 57 dwellings (under construction)~~
2-6 Water Road and 158 Dee Road	16/1507	Redevelopment of 4 dwellings ~~homes~~ for 11 dwellings
53-55 Argyle Street[160]	17/0134	Change of use of clinic to 10 dwellings (under construction)
~~Moorlands Primary School, Church End Lane~~	~~180171~~	~~Expansion of school (1,139 sq m net gain)~~
127a Loverock Road	19/0591	Development for employment uses (1,667 sq m)
~~Wensley Road~~	~~200122~~	~~Development of 46 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~42 Portman Road~~	~~200693~~	~~Change of use of office to 14 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~18 Parkside Road~~	~~210582~~	~~Development of 10 dwellings (under construction)~~
Dellwood Community Hospital, Liebenrood Road	21/1728	Partial demolition, change of use and extension to form care home
~~Richfield Driving Range, Richfield Avenue~~	~~212061~~	~~Development of secondary school of 11,333 sq m (under construction)~~
103 Dee Road	22/1130	Development of 54 dwellings (under construction)
~~Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road~~[161]	~~221345~~	~~Redevelopment of club for 30 dwellings~~
63-86 Rowe Court	22/1693	Development of 54 dwellings (under construction)

Development progress is correct to 31st March ~~2019~~~~2024~~2025

[160] ~~Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

[161] ~~Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

Appendix 4: Modified list of planning permissions in Caversham and Emmer Green

Site	App ref	Summary of development
Chazey Farm, The Warren	03/0275	Development of 78-bed nursing home
Unit 1, Paddock Road Industrial Estate	10/0384	Development for industrial/warehouse units totalling 1,577 sq m
St Martin's Precinct, Church Street	14/0997	Redevelopment for retail (501 sq m net gain), restaurant (524 sq m net gain), leisure (652 sq m net gain), residential (40 dwellings) plus additional works
Reading Golf Club, Kidmore End Road	21/1843	Development for 223 dwellings (under construction)
205-213 Henley Road[164]	22/0189	Development for 50 retirement living dwellings
~~199-207 Henley Road~~	~~170959, 180418~~	~~Demolish 3 dwellings and develop 42 dwellings (two alternative permissions, of which one is outline)~~
~~Mapledurham Playing Fields, Upper Woodcote Road~~	~~171023, 182200~~	~~Development of primary school (2,072 sq m)~~

Development progress is correct to 31st March ~~2019~~2024~~2025~~

[164] ~~Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement~~

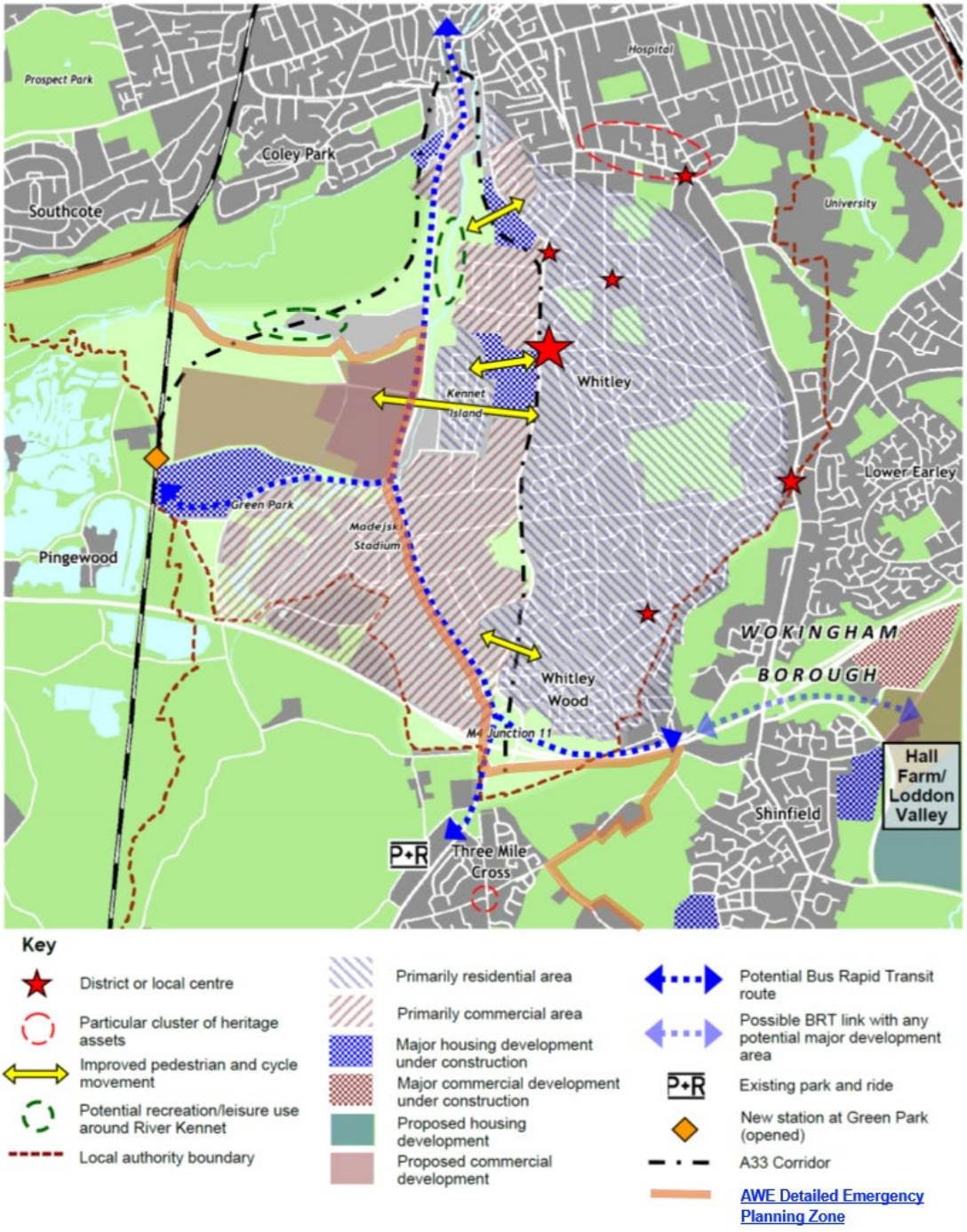
Appendix 5: Modified list of planning permissions in East Reading

Site	App ref	Summary of development
~~Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road~~	~~Various~~	~~Additional hospital floorspace outstanding under existing outline permissions~~
University of Reading, The Chancellers Way & Shinfield Road	100726	Development of 151-bed hotel and conference centre
~~35 Christchurch Road~~	~~151034~~	~~Conversion of house in multiple occupation into 10 dwellings~~
~~Aspen House, 300 Kings Road~~	~~170512~~	~~Change of use of office to 78 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~79 Silver Street~~	~~170685~~	~~Development of building for 56 student rooms~~
~~The Woodley Arms, Waldeck Street~~	~~171893~~	~~Development of student accommodation for 38 rooms (under construction)~~
~~Land adjacent to 300 Kings Road~~	~~180683~~	~~Development of 14 dwellings~~
40 Silver Street[169]	20/1766	Development of 23 dwellings
~~Alexander House, 205-207 Kings Road~~	~~210902, 210906, 230400~~	~~Change of use and extension for a total of 43 dwellings (under construction)~~
~~75-81 Southampton Street~~	~~211636~~	~~Development of 19 dwellings~~
Land adjacent to 300 Kings Road	221162	Development of 14 dwellings
Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road	230321	Development of new urology block
9 Upper Crown Street[~~169~~]	230814	Development of 46 dwellings

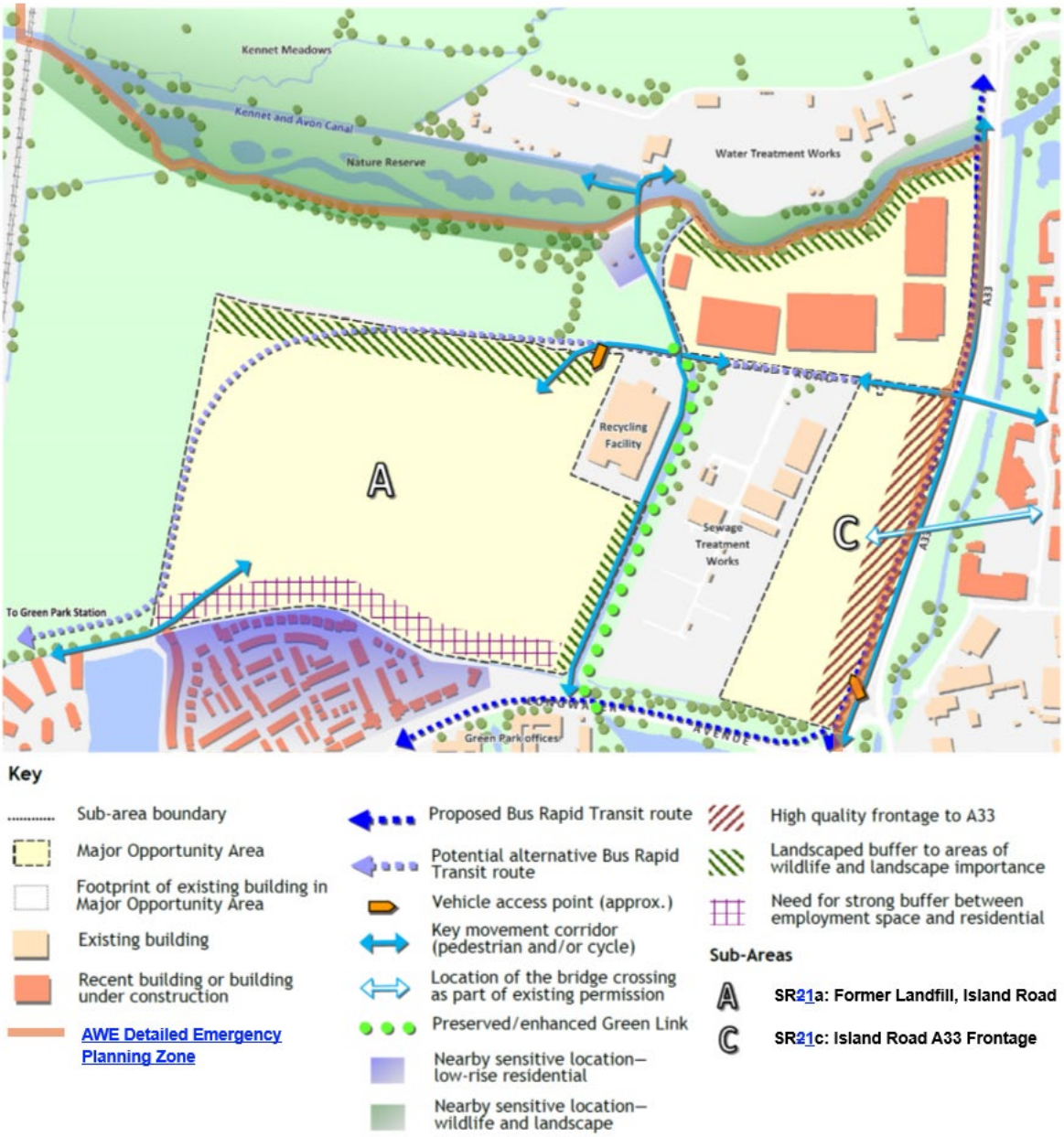
Development progress is correct to 31st March ~~2019~~2024~~2025~~

[169] Resolved to grant permission subject to signing of Section 106 agreement

Appendix 6: Amended Figure 6.1



Appendix 7: Amended Figure 6.2



Appendix 8: Updated Housing Trajectory 2023/24 to 2040/41 as at 31 December 2025

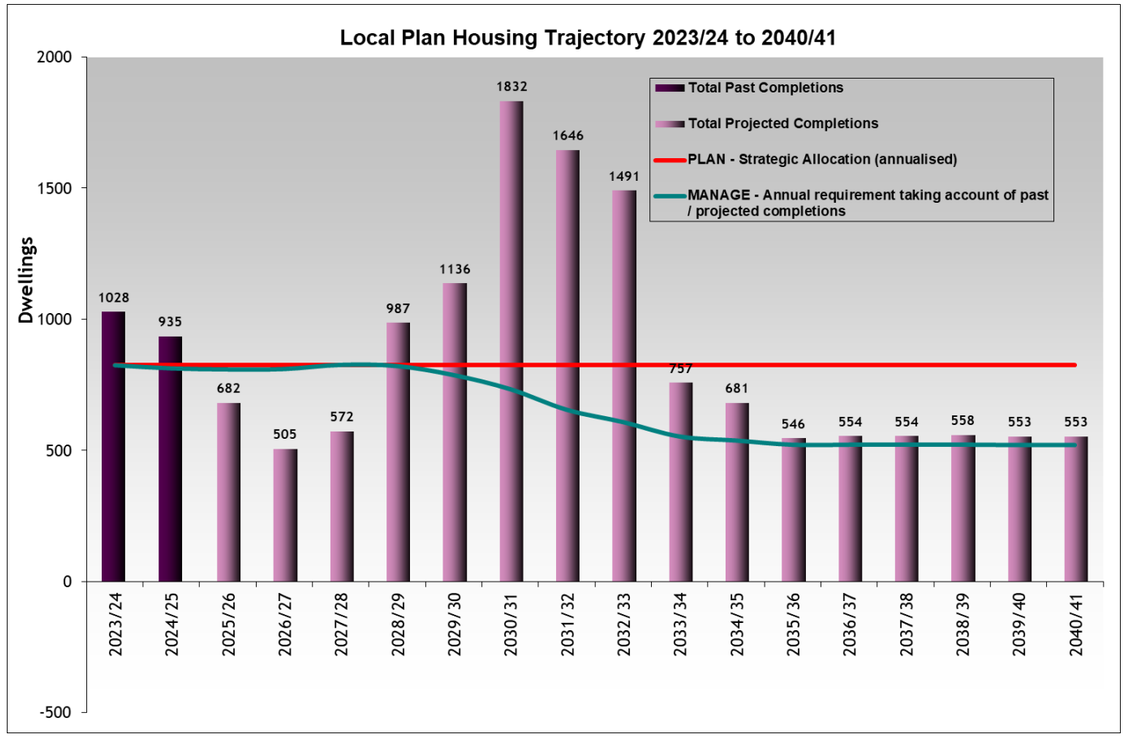
A4.1 An Excel version of the Housing Trajectory at 31st December 2025 is included as a separate document [EX041]. It contains all of the site-by-site information. The version shown here is the version that would appear in a modified LPPU.

Table A4.1: Housing Trajectory 2023/24 to 2040/41 as at 31 December 2025

Site	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41	TOTAL (2023-41)	Variance rate (%)
Small Scale unidentified windfalls (< 10 units)	91	90	96	96	96	96	91	91	91	91	91	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	1619	91
Local authority new build	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	52	52	23	23	23	27	27	27	32	32	32	400	0
Remaining student accommodation on sites in line with H12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	84	0
Permitted and under constr (10+), no variance rate	N/A	N/A	539	359	258	88	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1338	**N/A**
Permitted and not started (10+) incl variance rate	N/A	N/A	47	51	225	722	816	502	523	345	211	139	0	8	8	8	8	8	3622	**N/A**
Permitted subject to S106 (10+) incl variance rates	N/A	N/A	0	-1	0	81	84	368	193	229	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	954	**N/A**
Sites in Local Plan including variance rate	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	802	769	786	418	418	417	417	417	417	417	417	5697	**N/A**
Other identified sites (10+) incl variance rates	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	29	**N/A**
Past Completions (C3 Housing)	1021	890	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1911	**N/A**
Past Completions (Non-C3 residential)[2]	7	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	**N/A**
Total Past Completions (All)	1028	935	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1963	**N/A**
Total Projected Completions	N/A	N/A	682	505	572	987	1136	1815	1628	1474	757	681	546	554	554	558	553	553	13556	**N/A**
Cumulative Completions	1028	1963	2645	3150	3722	4708	5845	7659	9288	10761	11519	12199	12745	13299	13853	14412	14965	15519	N/A	**N/A**
PLAN – Strategic housing allocation per annum	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	825	14850	**N/A**
PLAN – Strategic student accommodation allocation per annum	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	250	
MONITOR - No dwellings above or below cumulative allocation	189	285	128	-206	-473	-325	-27	948	1738	2373	2291	2133	1839	1555	1270	989	704	419	N/A	**N/A**
MANAGE - Annual requirement taking account of past / projected completions	839	828	821	830	854	875	866	841	744	646	542	512	483	471	450	416	344	135	N/A	**N/A**

[2] Expressed as a dwelling equivalent – see paragraph A1.3

Figure A4.1: Housing Trajectory 2023/24 to 2040/41 as at 31 December 2025 (graph)



This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2

Schedule of Consequential Modifications to the Proposals Map resulting from the Local Plan Partial Update examination

This Schedule sets out consequential modifications to the Proposals Map accompanying the Local Plan Partial Update that have emerged since submission and generally as part of the examination process. This is a ‘live’ document in that it will continue to be updated throughout the examination.

As the Proposals Map is not being examined in its own right as part of the examination, amendments to the map that have emerged through the process are listed separately from modifications to the text of the plan.

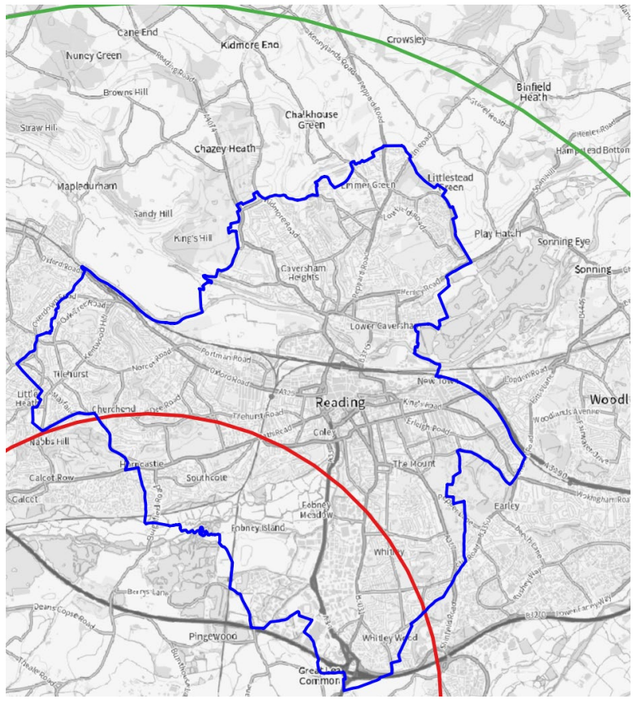
For the avoidance of doubt, the modifications and references in the following table show changes to the Local Plan Partial Update Proposals Map Pre-Submission Draft, November 2024 (LP004 on the examination documents list).

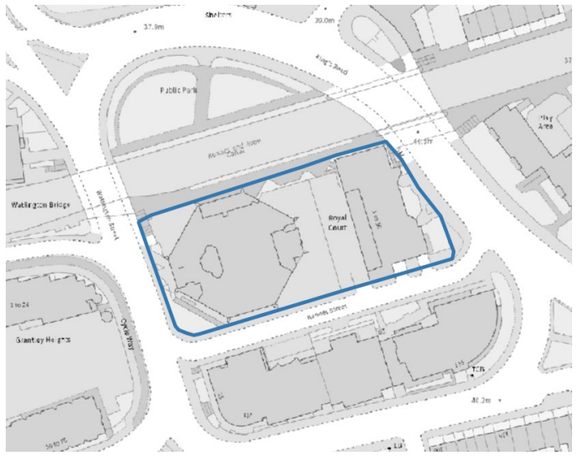
The modifications are described in text format in the following table unless it requires changes to a boundary to be shown.

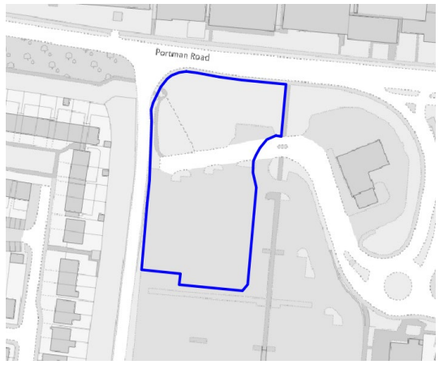
There are two further schedules to be aware of, which form separate documents:

- A schedule of ‘main modifications’ which are material changes to the plan that would require consultation and sustainability appraisal.
- A schedule of ‘minor modifications’ which are small changes to the plan which would not need to be subject to consultation and sustainability appraisal.

Table 1: Schedule of consequential modifications to the Proposals Map

Modification Number	Map page	Map designation	Consequential Modification	Reason for Consequential Modification	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
CM1	All	New designation - Office for Nuclear Regulation Consultation Zone	Add Office for Nuclear Regulation Outer Consultation Zone and 12km Zone, as shown below, to the Proposals Map. OCZ is shown in red, 12km Zone in green, with 12km Zone covering the whole of Reading. 	To ensure that the plan is effective	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 13
CM2	B	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Delete site WR3s	To ensure that the plan is justified	Matter 10 Hearings discussion on 11/02/26
CM3	B	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Delete site WR3t	To ensure that the plan is justified	Matter 10 Hearings discussion on 11/02/26

Modification Number	Map page	Map designation	Consequential Modification	Reason for Consequential Modification	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
CM4	B	Area of identified biodiversity interest (see policy EN12)	Add whole of newly designated Local Wildlife Site (Land at Kentwood and Armour Hills) to designation as shown below	To ensure that the plan is justified	Matter 10 Hearings discussion on 11/02/26
CM5	D	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Delete site WR3b	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15d)
CM6	D	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Delete site CA1a	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15g)
CM7	K, N	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Extend site CR14z to include Royal Court as shown below 	To ensure that the plan is justified	Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter [EX101] Paragraph 15b)

Modification Number	Map page	Map designation	Consequential Modification	Reason for Consequential Modification	Link to Hearing Statement with Matter No. where relevant
CM8	M	Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)	Amend site CR14g boundary to remove the River Kennet (existing boundary shown as dotted line, proposed modified boundary in solid line) 	To ensure that the plan is effective	Matter 10D hearing discussions on 11/02/2026
CM9	Q – Oxford Road West Inset	Site identified for development or change	Correct error for site WR3w (Part of Tesco Car Park, Portman Road), which overlaps the local centre boundary, but is only shown on the main Proposals Map and not on the Oxford Road West inset, as shown below. 	To correct an error and ensure that all relevant boundaries are shown	Council's Hearing Statement on Matter 1 [EX016] Paragraph 1.32.4

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

23 June 2026

Title	Adoption of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	**1.** That the responses to representations on the Draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy within the Statement of Consultation (Appendix 2) be agreed. **2.** That the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD (Appendix 3) be adopted.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report recommends that the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Appendix 3) be adopted. The document provides detailed policy and guidance to improve the quality of the public realm throughout central Reading, and will be used to supplement the Local Plan in making decisions on planning applications in the town centre. In addition, it will also inform works that affect the town centre public realm outside the development process, including the Council's own works. Consultation was undertaken in January and February 2025, and a summary of the comments received is included as Appendix 2.

2. Policy Context

2.1 In November 2019, Reading Borough Council adopted a new Local Plan. This sets out planning policies and proposals up to 2036 and is the main consideration in determining a planning application. A Partial Update of the Local Plan has been progressed and is currently at examination.

2.2 Some of the policies within the Local Plan require additional detail to be provided to assist with their implementation. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a type of planning policy document that provides this additional detail. A SPD cannot make policy on its own, and can only provide additional detail on how policies in the Local Plan will be implemented.

2.3 The Local Plan places a considerable focus on Reading town centre to meet much of the development needs, including delivering at least 50% of the new homes across the plan period (up to 2036), meaning there is both a significant challenge and opportunity in terms of improving the quality of the public realm. The Local Plan also contains policy CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) which seeks to guide the quality of the public realm associated with new development. It seeks flexibility of open space and the public realm, requires the provision of water features, planting and hard landscaping, and has particular focus on the waterside areas and historic environment. Policy CR3 is not amended as part of the Partial Update.

2.4 The Transport Strategy, adopted in October 2024, identifies a number of schemes and initiatives of relevance to town centre public realm, in particular town and local centre public space enhancements to *''enhance the experience of visiting central Reading and local centres by focusing on sustainable travel modes and removing or reducing conflicts between motorised transport and walking and cycling"*.

2.5 An emerging Town Centre Strategy is of particular relevance to the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy, and will include a great deal of the strategic context to the strategy. A consultation version of the Town Centre Strategy was considered by Policy Committee on 15th June 2026.

2.6 A number of other policy documents have relevance for the public realm in the town centre, and these include:

- Minster Quarter Area Development Framework (2018);
- Reading Prison Framework (2015);
- Kenavon Drive Urban Design Concept Statement (2004);
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2020);
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2007);
- Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030; and
- Tree Strategy (2021).

3. The Proposal

Current position

3.1 Other than the high-level Local Plan policy, which contains no detail, there is no single document that guides the quality of public realm in the centre. As many of the key development sites that will deliver growth in the town centre are currently already at planning application or pre-application stage, or are expected to be soon, there is considered to be a lack of more specific guidance to ensure that all improvements are working to an agreed framework for where and how the public realm is to be improved. This includes the Council's own interventions in the public realm outside the development process. Without a full strategy, there is a likelihood that decisions that affect the public realm are made on an ad-hoc basis, undermining the character and cohesiveness of central Reading.

3.2 A draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD was approved for consultation by Policy Committee on 18 December 2024 (Minute 43 refers). This covered the following elements:

- An audit of the existing public realm and pedestrian and cycle movement in the town centre;
- An overall pedestrian and cycle movement framework, including defining a typology of streets and spaces;
- A design manual to cover the following matters, and to guide both planning applications and investment decisions:
    - Reclaiming road space;
    - Paving;
    - Vegetation;
    - Tree planting;
    - Rain gardens;

- Street furniture;
- Lighting;
- Play provision;
- Wayfinding and signage;
- Public art and animation;
- Street activation;
- Meanwhile uses;
- Hoarding; and
- Maintenance.

- More detailed public realm proposals for five particularly significant streets and spaces, including illustrative proposals – the purpose is not to design every space but to use a small number of exemplar spaces to demonstrate how the proposals can be achieved:
  - St Mary's Butts;
  - Market Place and Town Hall Square;
  - Queens Road and London Street Junction;
  - Station Road; and
  - Green space on River Kennet.
- Less detailed guidelines on some other exemplar areas which demonstrate important principles of the strategy:
  - Trooper Potts Way & IDR junction;
  - Oxford Road;
  - Queen Victoria Street; and
  - Chain Street.
- Action plan setting out both short-term and long-term implementation measures.

3.3 The consultation was carried out between 15 January and 26 February 2025. There were 41 representations on the document. A summary of the representations received is included as in Appendix 2. Some of the key matters that were raised in consultation are summarised below:

- Respondents had concerns about the impacts of the proposed public realm designs on the operation of bus services and stated the importance of ensuring buses remain highly accessible within the town centre, particularly for vulnerable users and older residents.
- Representations cited the poor quality of existing paving throughout the town centre, the blight of trade waste bins and the lack of effective maintenance.
- Respondents emphasised the need for safe continuous cycle routes, segregation from pedestrians, and secure bike parking.
- Many comments highlighted areas of the town centre that are unpleasant to walk in and present particular challenges for older residents, children, those with visual impairments and wheelchair users.

- Comments received emphasised the importance of valuing Reading's historic assets, improving the quality of public art and creating a sense of place around shared cultural identity.
- Respondents noted the importance of trees, planting, biodiversity, and riverside enhancements in improving quality of life within the town.
- Many groups and individuals expressed concern about funding and deliverability and raised the need for a clear action plan.
- Representations cited crime and antisocial behaviour as a significant problem within the town centre.
- Comments called for long-term upkeep of schemes, significant improvements to litter control and the use of more durable materials.
- Some respondents called for the Strategy to create an environment that better supports independent shops and creates a true mix of retailers.

3.4 A Statement of Consultation is included as Appendix 2 which summarises the representations received and includes a proposed Council response to each representation.

Option proposed

3.4 Committee is recommended to adopt the SPD, which is Appendix 3.

3.5 The SPD has been amended as a result of consultation, and the main amendments proposed are set out below:

- Clarification that proposals for specific areas and spaces are indicative, not prescriptive, and will be refined through collaboration with stakeholders as funding becomes available. The executive summary has been amended to clarify that the Strategy aims to outline best-practice design guidance that will be used to inform decisions as applications come forward.
- Updates throughout to account for recent development within the town centre since the consultation as some sites are now completed, under construction or have recently received planning permission.
- Amendments to reinforce the important contribution made by buses within the town centre and to seek a balance between the needs of bus operators and other public realm users.
- Strengthening inclusive design and universal access, with clearer consideration of wheelchair users, visually impaired people, cognitive impairments, and other additional needs.
- Highlighting the importance of protecting disabled parking, especially where general parking is reduced or removed.
- Changes regarding cycling infrastructure to emphasise the importance of visible cycle parking to deter theft and to note that one way cycle routes can reduce network connectivity.
- Increased reference to the importance of heritage, including the retention of historic signs.
- Reference to the importance of community safety and for schemes to consider the impacts of design on antisocial behaviour, including continued use of CCTV within the town centre.
- Correction of an error in the consultation document which omitted the bus lane on the Oxford Road between Zinzan Street and Prospect Street.

3.6 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in determining planning applications in the town centre. It will be taken into account alongside the Local Plan and other relevant development plans and SPDs.

Other options considered

3.7 The main alternative option is not to adopt the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD. This would continue the current situation of decisions affecting the public realm being undertaken without reference to a comprehensive strategy. There are a large number of major town centre developments for which planning permission is likely to be determined in the coming years, and failure to produce this strategy now would therefore miss an opportunity to ensure that the associated public realm improvements link into a wider strategy for the town centre.

3.8 Under The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026, local planning authorities have up to 30 June 2026 to adopt any SPDs, which have been replaced in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 by a new system of supplementary plans, which have different production processes and are more limited in scope. Therefore, there is no option to proceed with a significantly different alternative version of the SPD that would require further consultation, as the Council would not be able to adopt it.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1 The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy, through providing a framework for improving public areas in the town centre, will contribute to the following priority in the Council Plan 2025-28:

- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint: The Council Plan contains an objective to "further improve the physical environment of Reading by improving air quality, access to green space, and the quality of public spaces." The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy aims to significantly improve the quality of the public realm in Reading town centre.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1 The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD will have a number of direct positive implications for the natural environment and climate in the town centre, including the following:

- Increasing vegetation within landscaping in the town centre, and specifying appropriate tree and other planting including species which maximise benefit for wildlife and climate adaptation (for instance by providing larger canopies);
- The provision of rain gardens, as set out in the design manual, will assist with adaptation to climate change by allowing water to drain away and reduce risk of flooding; and
- Reclaiming road space, making the town centre easier to access and navigate by foot and cycle and therefore promoting more sustainable modes of travel.

5.2 Works to alter the public realm and replace existing paving, street furniture and other features will have implications in terms of carbon emissions. However, it is not intended that the strategy immediately leads to significant works other than where these would be required as part of development proposals, rather than that when there is a need to carry out replacement works, those works will be in line with the strategy.

6. Community Engagement

6.1 Consultation was undertaken between 15 January and 26 February 2025, a period of six weeks. Consultation was undertaken in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (adopted 2014), which has now been replaced, but the general principles remain in place. Consultation involved publicising the document on the website and

sending to the Council's planning consultation list. The results of consultation are summarised in section 3 of this report and the responses received are in Appendix 2.

7. Equality Implications

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in Appendix 1 which highlights that there are expected to be positive impacts in terms of age and disability through public improvements that make the town centre more accessible and easier to navigate.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1 There are none.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the requirements for adoption of SPDs. Although these Regulations were revoked on 25 March 2026, Regulation 6 of The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026 saves the relevant Regulations for the preparation of a SPD up to 30 June 2026. Once an SPD is adopted by the Council, it will hold weight in the determination of planning applications for any development in the Borough. SPDs will continue to be in force alongside any local plans produced under the current system.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 The SPD has been produced within existing budgets.

10.2 The SPD is intended to be used both as a document to guide private developers but also to inform the Council's decisions on its own interventions in the public realm, such as works to the highway or in public spaces. Therefore its contents will have potential direct financial implications to the Council in terms of choice of paving, lighting, planting, street furniture etc, as well as on maintenance. Cost has been considered in arriving at the recommendations in the Strategy with a view to avoiding additional cost pressures. Financial implications will vary across time and depending on the specifics, and it is not possible to summarise them at this point.

1. Revenue Implications

10.3 None in addition to those outlined above

2. Capital Implications

10.4 None in addition to those outlined above

3. Value for Money (VFM)

10.5 The production of a strategy which provides a comprehensive guide on improvements to the public realm is considered to represent good value for money because it would ensure that all improvements, including those by the Council, contribute towards a wider long-term plan and strategy.

4. Risk Assessment

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

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. There are no set timescales for specific interventions outlined in the document, and opportunities to undertake changes to the public realm will need to be identified alongside major developments or as funding and other considerations allow.

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. Statement of Consultation on the Draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD
3. Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD for adoption

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Adoption of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy

Directorate: DEGNS – Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Manager

Date of assessment: 10/03/2026

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?
To improve the quality of the public realm in central Reading

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?
The local community will benefit from an improvement in

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?
The change will enhance the quality of public realm in the town centre, which will benefit residents, visitors and businesses located in the town centre.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?
Local residents, visitors, shoppers – an attractive, easy to navigate town centre with places to dwell and meet, spaces for events etc.
Local businesses – a public realm that enhances Reading as a visitor destination and increases footfall and dwell time

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

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

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)
Yes ☒ No ☐

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.
Yes ☐ No ☒

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

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

N/A

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

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

Consultation

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Local residents Local businesses	Through formal consultation in line with the Statement of Community Involvement	January 2025

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how could this proposal impact on Racial groups
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Disability
The proposals in the strategy include reducing clutter, reclaiming road space, and creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists, which will also benefit those with limited mobility, including by making it easier to cross roads and navigate the town centre.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Age
The proposals in the strategy include reducing clutter, reclaiming road space, and creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists, which will also benefit those with limited mobility, including by making it easier to cross roads and navigate the town centre.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Religious belief?
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Make a Decision

Tick which applies

1. No negative impact identified Go to sign off ☒

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

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

Reason
N/A

3. Negative impact identified or uncertain ☐

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

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?
Adverse impacts should be highlighted in changes in how streets and spaces in the town centre of Reading are used.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	10/03/2026
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	10/03/2026

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Adoption of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy

Directorate: DEGNS – Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Manager

Date of assessment: 10/03/2026

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?
To improve the quality of the public realm in central Reading

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?
The local community will benefit from an improvement in

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?
The change will enhance the quality of public realm in the town centre, which will benefit residents, visitors and businesses located in the town centre.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?
Local residents, visitors, shoppers – an attractive, easy to navigate town centre with places to dwell and meet, spaces for events etc.
Local businesses – a public realm that enhances Reading as a visitor destination and increases footfall and dwell time

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

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

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)
Yes ☒ No ☐

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.
Yes ☐ No ☒

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

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

N/A

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

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

Consultation

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Local residents Local businesses	Through formal consultation in line with the Statement of Community Involvement	January 2025

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how could this proposal impact on Racial groups
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Disability
The proposals in the strategy include reducing clutter, reclaiming road space, and creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists, which will also benefit those with limited mobility, including by making it easier to cross roads and navigate the town centre.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Age
The proposals in the strategy include reducing clutter, reclaiming road space, and creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists, which will also benefit those with limited mobility, including by making it easier to cross roads and navigate the town centre.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Describe how could this proposal impact on Religious belief?
No specific impacts are identified.
Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

Make a Decision

Tick which applies

1. No negative impact identified Go to sign off ☒

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

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

Reason
N/A

3. Negative impact identified or uncertain ☐

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

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?
Adverse impacts should be highlighted in changes in how streets and spaces in the town centre of Reading are used.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	10/03/2026
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date:	10/03/2026

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2: Statement of Consultation on Draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

June 2026

1. Summary of Consultation Measures

1.1 Consultation took place from 15th January to 26th February 2025. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) supplements policies in the Local Plan, and at the time the outcome of the Local Plan Examination was not known. However, it was considered to be essential to undertake the consultation on the assumption that the Local Plan would be found sound, to enable adoption of the SPD as soon as possible after Local Plan adoption.

1.2 Consultation involved contacting all those on the Council's planning policy consultation list, which includes a mix of statutory consultees, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and interested individuals. The document was also published on the Council's website and was available to view in Reading Borough Council libraries and in the Civic Offices.

2. Summary of Responses

2.1 A total of 41 responses were received.

2.2 The following issues were raised by respondents (from most frequently cited to least frequently cited):

- Public transport – This was the most frequently cited issue within the proposed Strategy. Respondents had concerns about the impacts of the proposed public realm designs on the operation of bus services and stated the importance of ensuring buses remain highly accessible within the town centre, particularly for vulnerable users and older residents.
- Aesthetics of the public realm – Representations cited the poor quality of existing paving throughout the town centre, the blight of trade waste bins and the lack of effective maintenance.
- Cycling infrastructure – Respondents emphasised the need for safe continuous cycle routes, segregation from pedestrians, and secure bike parking.

- Pedestrian access and accessibility – Many comments highlighted areas of the town centre that are unpleasant to walk in and present particular challenges for older residents, children, those with visual impairments and wheelchair users.
- Heritage and culture – Comments received emphasised the importance of valuing Reading's historic assets, improving the quality of public art and creating a sense of place around shared cultural identity.
- Green Spaces – Respondents noted the importance of trees, planting, biodiversity, and riverside enhancements in improving quality of life within the town.
- Strategy implementation – Many groups and individuals expressed concern about funding and deliverability and raised the need for a clear action plan.
- Public safety – Representations cited crime and antisocial behaviour as a significant problem within the town centre.
- Maintenance – Comments called for long-term upkeep of schemes, significant improvements to litter control and the use of more durable materials.
- Retail and Business – Some respondents called for the Strategy to create an environment that better supports independent shops and creates a true mix of retailers.

2.3 Detailed summaries of each individual representation, as well as a response from the Council are included below:

Name	Summary of Representation	Council Response
Alli, Paul	This draft offers a valuable framework for enhancing Reading's public spaces. However, to truly revitalise the town centre, the following key considerations should be prioritised: 1. Diversify the retail landscape by promoting independent businesses. Actively encourage and support local, independent businesses that foster a unique and vibrant retail scene like Filter House Coffee and discourage an over-concentration of phone repair shops, nail salons, vape shops and chain stores. Curate a retail mix to achieve a balance of types such as boutiques, specialist shops and high-quality eateries.	Noted. 1. Although the strategy and the Local Plan aim to achieve a diverse retail landscape, this is largely out of the scope of planning, as planning is simply concerned with the types of uses in units (i.e. "retail" or "café") and is unable to dictate specific uses within these larger categories.

	2. Address anti-social behaviour and improve public safety by implementing strategies for drug and alcohol-related problems, homelessness and public harassment. This may involve increased police presence and support for vulnerable individuals. Anti-social behaviour results in litter and discourages tourism. Note the preponderance of prostitutes near the Oxford Road. Enhance lighting, increase the visibility of CCTV and create more welcoming and secure public spaces, particularly for vulnerable groups. 3. Enhance Reading's cultural identity through embracing its heritage, developing cultural destinations and supporting local arts. Explore opportunities for placemaking through public art installations, historical walking tours and cultural events. Develop destinations, such as Reading Gaol as an arts centre or museum. Encourage street art in appropriate locations and ensure it enhances the public realm. This could involve improving the visual appeal of the IDR with murals. The existing arcades are tacky and the theatre only shows pantomimes. The "Reading" Christmas sign above the Boots on Broad Street is beyond tacky. 4. Improve public realm aesthetics by promoting visual appeal, greenery and cleanliness. Address visual blight by improving the appearance of buildings, removing scaffolding (for example near St Lawrence's Church) and implement creating solutions (vegetation, painting, artwork) for drab surfaces, such as the walls of the IDR. Increase greenery throughout the town. Implement robust litter	2. Creating more welcoming and secure public spaces is one of the main aims of the Strategy. Enhancing public lighting is a guiding principle within the document. CCTV is also referenced within the design manual. Public safety strategies or increased police presence is not within the scope of the SPD. 3. The Strategy aims to improve the visual appeal of the town through public art (Section 5.13). The Arcades themselves are not considered part of the public realm, but opportunities for improvement to interiors are considered at such time applications come forward. It is not within the scope of the SPD to specify what is shown at the Theatre, change temporary Christmas decorations, create a programme of walking tours or events. 4. It is not within the scope of the SPD to require removal of scaffolding, although the detrimental effects of long-term scaffolding are noted within the document. The strategy aims to increase vegetation and public art throughout the town centre. Section 5.9 emphasises the importance of providing litter bins in

	control measures, more bins, regular street cleaning and public awareness campaigns. Oxford Road is particularly blighted by rotting food and litter. 5. Create a network of safe and well-maintained cycle and pedestrian routes throughout the town. Cyclists should be able to access the whole town safely without using busy roads. Create pedestrian-friendly zones with reduced traffic, better crossings and dedicated pedestrian spaces. 6. Implement an effective action plan by including SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) objectives. Allocate adequate resources and staffing. Regularly monitor progress, evaluate and make necessary adjustments. The Council should employ individuals to act immediately rather than simply producing plans. 7. Community Engagement – ensure ongoing engagement with residents, businesses & community groups. Actively solicit and consider feedback on the strategy. By focusing on these areas and working closely with the community, Reading can create a vibrant and attractive town centre that is a source of pride for residents and a magnet for visitors.	areas of high demand and near seating areas. The SPD cannot implement litter control measures, street cleaning or awareness campaigns, as these are not within the remit of planning. 5. The Strategy aims to create a network of safe cycle routes throughout the town, better crossings and dedicated pedestrian spaces. These should be read alongside the 2040 Local Transport Plan. 6. The Strategy intends to provide indicative examples of how the public realm will be improved at such time developments come forward. More detail is described on page 12. The Action Plan is detailed in Section 8.1. This Strategy once adopted will be a material consideration in the consideration of planning applications and Planning Officers will use the SPD to require public realm improvements of developers. 7. Noted. This consultation has actively solicited the feedback of residents, local business & community grounds.
Bryant, Helen (RBC Access Officer)	Camber is an important factor for pavements and roads, especially for wheelchair users. Page 10. – Disabled parking needs to be taken into consideration in St Mary's Butts. Page 10 – Cyclists and pedestrians really do not mix – especially pedestrians who are older, have walking	Change proposed to add reference to the needs of wheelchair users, those with visual or cognitive impairments and other additional needs. Page 10 -- Change proposed to clarify that consideration of "universal access" may include

	difficulties or visual impairments or some cognitive conditions. Page 34 – The bricks look lovely but they become dislodged very easily as the streets are not level. There will be need for levelling works to make sure that these dips and bumps are smoothed out. Page 49 – Leaves can also cause slip/trip hazards, esp. when wet. They can also hide dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Page 51 – Grass isn't easy for wheelchair users to move on, especially if it is wet. Page 58 – Tree pits must be designed so that they do not become a trip hazard or a nuisance to wheelchair users, parents with buggies, etc. Page 62 – The edges of rain gardens must not present a trip hazard to blind or visually impaired people. Page 66 – More seating is definitely needed – some disabled people find the large expanse of paving very daunting and need places to rest Page 67 – Colour contrast is very important with any street furniture and the paving surrounding it Page 68 – The DDA no longer exists. It is now the Equality Act.	disabled parking. If parking is removed, disabled parking should be retained, if possible. Page 10 -- Noted. Section 4.4 clarifies that a major objective of the strategy seeks to "resolve public transport conflicts by putting pedestrians first and all other road users as 'guests' in the town centre." Page 34 – Noted but this is not considered necessary to cite detailed requirements of building works within the strategy. Page 49 -- Change proposed to add language on page 49 to ensure that tree planting considers where falling leaves may obstruct paths for those with additional needs. Page 51 -- Noted, but it is not considered necessary to cite this within the Strategy. Page 58 -- Change proposed to add language to state that tree pits must be designed with pedestrians and wheelchair users in mind. Page 62 -- Change proposed to state that the edges of rain gardens should be legible by blind or visually impaired people. Page 66 – Noted.

	Page 70 – Lightning columns must not be so visible as to cause a hazard to visually impaired people. Page 74 – Colour contrast is also very important on signage – the writing must contrast with the background Page 75 – Signs must be carefully placed. Sign type 4 might be a hazard to blind and visually impaired people. Page 76 – Lighting levels need to be adequate for people who are visually impaired to see sufficiently, and shouldn't change colour values of surroundings Page 77 – Restaurants and cafes, etc should not spread out over time and reduce access for wheelchair users, blind people, parents with prams and others Page 78 – Any raised stages should be or should be capable of being made accessible to wheelchair users. Any floor markings should not cause visual confusion for people who are blind or those with cognitive impairments Page 80 – Outdoor dining spaces must not spill out too far and cause obstructions for people using wheelchairs, scooter and walking aids and those who are visually impaired Page 89 – Blue badge parking also needs to be considered here	Page 67 – Change proposed to add language to ensure that street furniture is visible (or legible to those with visual impairments). Page 68 – Change proposed to replace DDA with the Equality Act. Page 70 – Noted, but it is not necessary to cite this here as this applies to all street furniture. Page 74 – Noted but it is not considered necessary to cite this here. Page 75 – Change proposed to ensure that special care is taken to ensure all signage does not create a hazard. Page 76 – Noted, but it is not necessary to re-state this within this section. Page 77 – Change proposed to reiterate that street activation should not result in additional barriers. Page 78 – Change proposed to cite this. Page 80 – It is not considered necessary to re-state this here. Page 89 – Change proposed.

Butcher, Heather	It is good to invest in our public services as well as the natural habitats of green space and social housing. The NHS and education are the main key players in the growth of the community. We can be the best town, we need that city status now, we deserve it, a fast-growing town. With also much diversity in people and culture, we have lots to celebrate in the success and vibrancy of learning together - The city of Berkshire, Reading.	Noted.
Conservation Area Advisory Committee	**1. SUMMARY** 1.1 Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee is pleased to comment on the Draft Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy but we would have welcomed an opportunity to comment in advance of this consultation. 1.2 We support the introduction of the Strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the town centre and the improvements that it could bring to the public realm. 1.3 Our comments below, both positive and negative, and areas where we feel that the strategy has missed opportunities in the public realm, are in the main specific to our interests in Reading's heritage. 1.4 In addition to the Strategy we have also read the officer's report that was submitted to Policy Committee on 18 December and listened to councillors' discussion at that meeting.	1.1 Noted, but it is not considered necessary to engage community groups on specific SPD's before the consultation stage, particularly as this is not a heritage-specific strategy. 1.2 – 1.4 Noted.

	2. SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY 2.1 The officer's report states (our bold): *Para 1.1 The document would provide detailed policy and guidance to improve the quality of the public realm throughout central Reading and will be used to supplement the Local Plan in making decisions on planning applications in the town centre.* ***In addition, it will also inform works that affect the town centre public realm outside the development process, including the Council's own works.*** **Comment**: Currently the design guide includes proposals which will cause harm to Reading town centre's heritage, culture and sense of place if implemented without the need for planning permission. We have listed our concerns below in paragraph 4. 2.2 We are aware that this Strategy is only part of the vision for the town centre, the officer's report states: *Para 2.5 An emerging Town Centre Strategy (2024-2050) will be a comprehensive vision for transforming Reading's town centre into a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable hub that addresses the rapid population growth forecast for the central area up to 2050.* **Comment:** We will welcome the opportunity to review the Town Centre Strategy at the earliest opportunity. 2.3 Section 3.3 of the Strategy is a street audit overview and refers to Reading Town Centre Street Audit as a complementary document.	2.1 Please see comments in reply to paragraph 4. 2.2 Noted. The Town Centre Strategy will undergo a period of public consultation when complete. 2.3 This document was used internally, but has not been published.

	Comment: How can a copy of this document be obtained or when will it be published? **3. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY** 3.1 Of the ten objectives, the three below have the most impact on our area of interest: • Enhancing green and blue infrastructure • Highlighting Reading's Heritage • Decluttering the Streets 3.2 Of the ten guiding principles, the three below have the most impact on our area of interest: • 3 Sustainable movement • 4 Ensure consistency in design (paving and street furniture) • 6 Ensure consistency in design (restoration … and celebration…) 3.3 We are aware of current principles of best practice in public realm design and management and how they have been implemented in Reading and elsewhere in the UK and Europe. 3.4 We participated in Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone surveys undertaken by Feria Urbanism. **4. DETAILED COMMENTS** Our comments below cover the sections of the design manual that most impact Reading's heritage. **4.1 Paving materials**	3.1 – 3.4 Noted

	4.1.1 There are some streets and alleyways in the town centre that have historic paving and these should be protected, for example but not limited to: Market Place/London Street Conservation Area • Setts/cobbles in Thorn Street • Stone paving on the alleyway to 112 London Street • Stone paving of Sims Court 4.1.2 In some parts of the town centre projects have been undertaken to improve paving and enhance the space. Replacing them for consistency with the rest of the town centre requires strong justification which may not happen if planning permission is not required, for example but not limited to: • York stone paving in Market Place • The slate that commemorates the completion of the pedestrianisation of Broad Street on 17 May 1994 4.1.3 Most of the town centre public realm has a *background and structure* of red brick block paving in herringbone and block patterns but this is not without its own contribution to a thoughtful urban realm for example but not limited to: • Grey stone roundels at major pedestrian junctions on Broad Street such as Queen Victoria Street and Cross Street • Differentiation between the paving on wider Queen Victoria Street with bands of grey paving, from that on Cross Street • The paving on the Oracle Riverside which commemorates its previous use through patterns and inset slabs	4.1.1 No change needed. Protection of existing heritage paving is clearly stated in the last paragraph of page 44. 4.1.2 If planning permission is not required, this is difficult to enforce. However, the general principles stated for paving state that the visual appearance of proposed paving will be considered and that paving should serve to enhance areas with existing heritage assets, such as Market Place. Therefore, it is not considered necessary or effective to cite these specific features within the document. 4.1.3 Please see response above.

	4.1.4 Most of the buildings in the town centre are not red brick, for example but not limited to the following listed buildings: • Queen Victoria Street (yellow brick with terracotta) • Reading Town Hall (substantially constructed of grey brick with terracotta) • St Lawrence's Church, St Mary's Minster, St Mary's Castle Street and Greyfriars comprise flint and stone • The Horn public house and 35-37 St Mary's Butts (timber framed)	4.1.4 Noted, but it is not considered that it is necessary to state these here.
	Comment Therefore, there is a risk that heritage paving will be harmed and the proposed paving palette would not necessarily highlight the importance of these buildings any better than the existing paving at much greater capital cost and loss of embedded carbon.	The strategy does not intend to replace heritage paving with a proposed paving palate, rather it states that surrounding heritage assets and visual appearance will inform new paving decisions.
	4.2 Street furniture	
	4.2.1 Benches	
	The variety and location of street benches is often intentional, thoughtful and important to Reading residents, for example but not limited to: • The bench to Barbara Morley in Town Hall Square • The bench donated by the National Council of Women in Town Hall Square • The seating area on Broad Street (where Paddington currently sits eating a marmalade sandwich) is a work of art commissioned by Reading Borough Council in 1997 from Matthew Fadden	4.2.1 Noted.

	• The seating along Chestnut Walk which was commissioned as part of the Oscar Wilde Walk project • The seating in Forbury Gardens is painted crimson and bears Reading's hexagon logo • The seat on Broad Street that was installed as part of the Abbey Quarter project **4.2.2 Lampposts** The variety of lampposts is sometimes intentional and an important part of Reading's heritage. When the majority of Reading's lampposts were converted to LED in 2018/19 the budget and condition of the lamp posts only allowed the conversion of a small number of cast iron lamp posts. • Within the town centre there are three on Chestnut Walk; two next to the river and one just beyond the Oscar Wilde gates **Comment** Therefore, there is a risk that heritage street furniture important to the town will be harmed by this strategy. **4.2.3 Bollards** There are good reasons why town centre bollards e.g. in Market Place, unsightly as they may be, should not and cannot be removed which we are sure others are better placed to comment on. **4.2.4 Buses** Buses are part of the solution to a sustainable net zero Reading but throughout this document they are treated as part of the public realm problem situation rather than being in need of a public realm solution for the benefit of all including buses.	4.2.2 Page 66 states that existing heritage street furniture should be retained, as appropriate. In some cases, the existing condition of heritage street furniture may not allow for repair. 4.2.3 The Strategy does not intend to remove bollards where they are necessary but rather to reduce visual clutter where some elements of street furniture are redundant. 4.2.4 The Strategy aims to recognise the important role of buses in sustainable travel while attempting to reduce the negative impacts of buses on the public realm. A high level of bus

	There is an opportunity in this strategy to design a solution that enables more bus travel by making connections between routes and navigation between bus stops easier. This might be solely through improved wayfinding or more sophisticated solutions may be possible. For example: • Our buses are a different colour for different routes and not unlike the underground it should be possible to have indicators and announcements that show that you can 'change here for 5,6, and 6a Emerald' if alighting from a '4 or 4a Lion' as on the tube map and tube announcements. • From each town centre bus stop it should be possible to see where you can get your next connection. • When arriving at the station bus connections should be clearly signposted and visible within the station and all exits. **4.2.5 Wayfinding** We agree that the wayfinding signage and information boards put in place as part of the Abbey Quarter project is a success. It is clear that it forms a coherent group from the Station through to the Abbey Quarter and along Market Place and Broad Street. Other signage is not as coherent and varies from location to location e.g. The Oracle, Station Hill development and the Station Area having their own designs that are different from standard town centre direction signs. Wayfinding can be direct (e.g. signposts) or indirect and subliminal (e.g. bunting, lighting, public art trails). One	accessibility must be maintained while improving use by other users (pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists). Indicators and announcements are not within the scope of the Public Realm Strategy, but a change is proposed to state on page 32 that improvements may include signage with regard to buses. 4.2.5 Noted. The strategy states on page 75 states that signage should be coordinated wherever possible. Noted.

	solution will not meet all Reading's signage needs, for example, scallop shell signage in streets marking the route to the Abbey for walkers on St James' Way will be instantly recognisable to walkers. **Comment** Signage should be noticeable, clear, good quality and durable and does not need to be uniform for all routes. **5. WHAT IS NOT COVERED** 5.1 The town centre currently suffers from trade and domestic refuse bins and bags on pavements, overflowing litter bins and fly tipping. Increased residential density in the centre will exacerbate waste issues. The Strategy does have any solutions to address this fundamental problem. 5.2 Street name signs are not mentioned. Heritage signs should be left in place and there is a convention that street name signs should be green in conservation areas. 5.3 Advertising screens on Broad Street and Station Hill are part of the current urban realm but a future strategy is not mentioned in the document. A 2024 proposal for a new sign in Broad Street was refused following widespread condemnation. 5.4 Urilifts in Town Hall Square and St Marys Butts are not mentioned in the document. The provision of suitable public conveniences as part of making the town centre an attractive destination should be part of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy.	Noted. This is well-covered on page 75. 5.1 The Local Plan emphasises the importance of providing dedicated areas for trade and domestic refuse as applications come forward. Page 66 highlights the importance of new litter bins in areas of high demand. Flytipping and frequency of waste collection is not within the scope of the strategy. That being said, the Strategy aims to minimise street clutter and this can include bins and refuse bags. 5.2 Change proposed on page 75 to note that historic signs should be retained where possible and street name signs within Conservation Areas should be green instead of black. 5.3 Advertising screens will be considered against the general criteria for street furniture outlined in Section 5.9 which aims to ensure that new street furniture is positioned appropriately and is not excessive.

	5.5 Provision for dog walkers and dog poo bins is not mentioned. 5.6 Motorcycle parking is incorrectly mentioned on St Marys Butts as 'informal parking' rather than a designated motor cycle parking place. 5.7 Cycle delivery drivers (electric bike or otherwise) are a feature of modern life especially for town centre residents and as an additional customer base for Reading restaurants. Provision is required for parking and resting between pick-ups. As a category of people working in the town centre their needs should be considered. 5.8 Birds, ducks and small animals may be covered under the general heading of biodiversity but are not given sufficient prominence. For example, the Kennet by Queens Road car park (specific project example 6.6.) is well used by waterfowl and that is why it looks muddy as it does now. The ducks are part of Reading town centre's biodiversity and the area would be best left as it is. **6. MAINTENANCE** 6.1 Reading CAAC is very concerned about the long term appearance of the town centre public realm. Maintenance costs must be considered or our beautiful new public realm with soon become degraded and look dirty and dismal. Section 5.17 Maintenance Good Practice sets out the requirements and we do not believe that this is realistically achievable. For example but not limited to:	5.4 It is not considered necessary to highlight the existing urilifts within the Town Centre. Due to funding constraints, the Council is unable at this time to create new public toilets. 5.5 Change proposed to include this on page 66. 5.6 Change proposed. 5.7 Because delivery cyclists do not cluster in one area for pick-ups, it would not be effective to provide a few larger parking areas within the town centre. A dedicated delivery cyclist area is very difficult to enforce. The strategy seeks to accommodate these users within wider cycle parking considerations instead. This is stated on page 67. 5.8 Noted, but it is considered that the indicative examples on page 103 would not harm these animals or prevent their access. 6.1 Noted. It is not considered appropriate to avoid new planting simply because it may harbour litter. The many benefits of green infrastructure outweigh this risk and each area will be required to accord with a maintenance plan are outlined in 5.17. The Strategy also accounts for the effects of increasingly extreme weather and

	• The town centre pavement surfaces are not just used by pedestrians. There is a certain amount of vehicle traffic for deliveries, maintenance vehicles and, on Broad Street, Readibus. Reading's larger paving slabs whether basic concrete or stone do not cope as well with this as brick paving. The proposed stone paving should be able to cope with the load. • Food markets, other events traffic and general wear and tear can cause damage to pavement surfaces. Brick paving usually copes well and is lower maintenance than say the York Stone on Market Place. • Green planting on road and pavement verges or planters often becomes a permanent home for stray litter which is discarded or blown by the wind into available spaces. Litter picking from new planting is unlikely to be affordable with current budget constraints. • Green planting will only look good if its maintained and watered. In the current economic situation and with very wet and very dry seasons becoming more common neither are a given. We are not convinced that, apart from trees, the planting solutions proposed along roadways or even in public squares are capable of being economically maintained. • Planters, hanging baskets and floral displays should not even be considered unless as with those supported by Reading BIDs they are funded for maintenance. **7. CO-ORDINATION OF THE STRATEGY** The strategy is an SPD. How will RBC ensure that the agreed strategy is implemented or enabled across RBC departments including those responsible for Climate Change, Culture and	recommends specific species and regular watering regimes. Planters, hanging baskets and floral displays will also be subject to maintenance plans. Do not agree that the indicative paving materials proposed would be less durable than brick or require lower maintenance. In any case, these are merely examples and the Strategy clearly cites that material durability and maintenance will be considered at such time schemes come forward. 7. Colleagues across the Council has been consulted extensively during the formulation of the Strategy. At such times schemes come

	Leisure, Streetscene and Traffic? **8. LANGUAGE AND TONE** There are words and phrases used in this SPD that we would prefer to see substituted by more suitable language. • Executive summary para 2 'preserving its historical and cultural identity'. If nothing else please change 'preserving' to 'conserving and enhancing'. We contend that Reading's identity continues to change and develop and that is really what this strategy should be part of. • The document is not consistent in relation to the terms used for people and organisations in the town centre. Is it 'residents and visitors', is it 'families and other user groups' or is it 'businesses and visitors'. The phrase 'people who live, work and visit' has been used in other scenarios and is better. • It should recognise 'Kennet Side' as Chestnut Walk. • It is not helpful that principles 4 and 6 are both titled 'Ensure consistency in design' • The strategy reads as if it could have been written for any town, anywhere. Whilst the principles of best practice are universal that should not mean that every town looks the same with the same paving, same seating and playful places.	forward, various RBC departments will be consulted again. 8. Change proposed to state "conserving and enhancing." Change proposed to state "people who live, work and visit." Change proposed to replace "Kennet Side" with "Chestnut Walk." Change proposed to re-title principle 6. The schemes in the Strategy are indicative and Section 3.6 aims to identify character areas that should provide a locally-informed starting point for proposals. At such time proposals come forward, schemes which reflect the unique elements of Reading would be viewed favourably.

Carr, Tony	I would strongly support the strategy as an overall plan to make Reading town centre more pleasant, accessible and sustainable. In particular, I am supportive of the measures to upgrade facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and that these users should have a higher priority over private motor vehicles in the town centre. Also, I would agree that these facilities need to be linked and upgraded to form continuous, coherent and attractive routes in order to be effective. There are some details of cycle routes that need to be considered: - provide a walking/cycling route through the Vastern Court development site to form a convenient and safe route to the town centre and station from the residential area to the west of Caversham Road - allowing northbound cyclists on the western side of Market Place as well as allowing two-way cycling on the eastern end of Friar Street to provide a north-south route from the south to the town centre and station - improving paths along the Thames and Kennet as well as links to these routes.	Noted. Noted. Noted. The Vastern Court site does include walking and cycling routes. The roundabout at Vastern Court is also identified within the Strategy for improvement of cyclists and pedestrians. Allowing changes directional travel for cyclists on existing routes is not within the scope of the Strategy. This is best addressed by transport planning, although these areas (market Place and Friar Street) are both highlighted as areas that would benefit from improvements to cycling infrastructure. Noted – this is detailed on page 25.

Collinge, Matthew	Fundamentally believe this will be a great boost to the town, specifically the part about refreshing paving etc. Aesthetics go a huge way to making the town a more pleasant place to be. Improving the aesthetics is a (relatively speaking) cheap thing to do, so it's a quick win. Whilst I want bus travel to be as pleasant as possible, I still believe having a lay-by for a bus stop rather than stopping in the road will be more sensible. This will reduce car congestion and therefore emissions/idling, but also incidents of impatience. I know that strictly this isn't covered in the strategy, but I think the one thing Reading desperately needs is a modern bus station. Possibly where the old part of the train station is/where the railair coach stops. I think the benefits to multi-modal transport would be huge. Also a dry/warm place to wait is so much more appealing and makes changing to public transport so much more appealing. Thanks.	Noted. Do not agree. The Strategy aims to reduce congestion by encouraging transport by other modes. Lay-bys for buses (as detailed on page 33) create narrow footways and harm pedestrian circulation. It is considered that there is not sufficient space within the surroundings of the train station site to accommodate a new bus station. Public transport is still clustered within the area and interchanges are easily achieved.
Crabolu, Gloria	It looks good but I advise two consider two missing items: it's very important to consider the types of businesses around the town centre. Businesses should be aligned to the common vision for Reading. Reduction or removal of phone repair shops whose ethics and legality is quite questionable. Same things for all fast foods around city centre. It's full of them, and it only contributes to an unhealthy and 'cheap' feel. I wish I could go more often in town, but there is nothing that attracts me to go there, very few healthy options.	Although the strategy and the Local Plan aim to achieve a diverse retail landscape, this is largely out of the scope of planning, as planning is simply concerned with the types of uses in units (i.e. "retail" or "café") and is unable to dictate specific uses within these larger categories.
Cross, Will	I am supportive of the draft strategy, with the following comments:	

	- In addition to considering changes to Broad Street to allow cycling along the full length, consideration should also be given to allowing a contra-flow cycling facility on Minster Street / Gun Street between John Lewis and Prezzo; and a contra-flow cycling facility eastbound on the eastern end of Friar Street, between the Harris Arcade and O'Neill's. These are not currently on the consultation's map of preferred cycle movements, however they are both on the Reading Cycle Campaign request list, and would involve less conflict between cyclists and pedestrians compared to Broad Street.	Allowing changes directional travel for cyclists on existing routes is not within the scope of the Strategy. This is best addressed by transport planning, although these areas both highlighted as areas that would benefit from improvements to cycling infrastructure.
	- Castle Street should be included in the scope of this plan as it is a key route in the town centre and links into the St Mary's Butts area, where significant changes are proposed to road layout etc. Castle Street is also subject to significant upcoming redevelopment as part of the old Civic/police station site.	Castle Street was not selected as one of the specific areas to be featured in the indicative examples, but the Strategy simply uses these areas to illustrate examples of best-practice public realm interventions that can be applied to different types of environments throughout the town centre, including at Castle Street.
	The pavements along the Castle Street conservation area are concrete slabs which are subject to significant damage, replacement with squares of tarmac, and large and unsightly utility trenches reinstated with tarmac rather than slabs. These slabs are in a worse condition that the red bricks that are proposed to be upgraded elsewhere, the area should be included in the public realm strategy to ensure that when the development happens, the pavements are dealt with sympathetically.	Noted. The proposed guidance on paving in the Strategy seeks to improve these conditions.
	- Lots of consideration has been given to desired traffic and pedestrian/cycle movements, however Castle Street should also be included. Significant new cycle tracks are being introduced from Castle Hill across the IDR roundabout, but	Please see answer regarding Castle Street above.

	then people will arrive on Castle Street, which is not as safe due to traffic. It should be made safer by reducing the number of parking bays, giving more space for walking and cycling, and limiting through-traffic. My suggestion is that Castle Street be made access only, with a bus gate at the Brew Dog end (St Mary's Butts junction). If people want to access the Oracle car park they should be using the A329.	This is not within the scope of the Public Realm Strategy.
Drukker, Mark	My comments are divided into the sections. 2.3 Bus and bus stop dominance - they should remain dominant. There is no mention of the lack of public toilets. 3.1 Wide variety of street furniture, because the post-box and bus shelter are important. 4.2 Cyclist passage through the pedestrianised zone is not safe. 4.3 It would be wrong to reduce the impacts of buses on the town centre. 4.4. It would be wrong to reduce the impacts of buses on the town centre. They are too important to be 'guests' in the town centre. 4.5 Build-outs for bus shelters are not suitable in Reading, with the 3 or 4 buses arriving at the same time, or buses terminating.	2.3 The strategy does not seek to affect the operation of buses within the town, but rather to address any negative impacts of buses and balance bus transport with the needs of other users. Due to significant budget constraints, the Council cannot maintain additional public toilets within the town centre. 3.1 The Strategy seeks to retain a wide variety of appropriate street furniture. 4.2 It is not considered appropriate or effective to completely ban cyclists from the pedestrianised zone, as this provides an important no-traffic route for cyclists. The Strategy acknowledges that this will create some conflict and safety concerns with pedestrians and aims to manage cycling. More detail is provided on pages 34-37. Diagram 3 (recommended) would provide a shoulder on each side of Broad Street for pedestrians and

	4.6 Pedestrians and "wheelers" (wheelchairs? pushchairs? trolleys?) should have priority over cyclists. Buses should have priority over cyclists. Disabled motorists should have priority over other drivers. Bans on e-bikes, electric bikes and e-scooters should be enforced Pedestrians often prefer to walk in the middle of Broad Street, not by the shop frontages. I walk as far away from smokers, vapers and dogs as possible There should be a complete ban on hate rallies, magicians and people promoting religious, political, commercial and charity interests. Cycling should be banned in Broad Street - cyclists should dismount. 4.7 Cycling should be banned in Broad Street, which is often packed with pedestrians - cyclists should dismount. The brick roadway should be completely replaced by more durable material. The bricks are uneven, likely to cause falls, and there are big puddles whenever it rains. 5.3 Granite is better than bricks. All pedestrian roads and paths are likely to be used by emergency, council, maintenance and unloading vehicles, so the surface must take them and drain well. 5.5. Trees should not be planted close to buildings, and trees should be monitored so that buildings and paths should not be damaged by the roots. Benches should not be placed under trees, because of problems with bird droppings. 5.9 litter bins should be large enough for litter. The tops of bins should be open, so that people do not leave cigarette	cyclists could use the central lane. This seeks to strike a balance between the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. 4.3 “Reducing the impacts” of buses refers to negative effects of buses such as noise and pollution, not reducing services themselves. Buses remain a key part of Reading’s transport strategy. 4.5 It is not considered that build-outs will not be suitable in some areas of the Borough. The Council intends to work closely to Reading Buses to ensure build-outs are located in appropriate locations. 4.6 The Highway Code requires that pedestrians (including wheelchair and pushchair users) have priority over cyclists, but enforcement is not within the scope of the Public Realm Strategy. The Strategy can only illustrate possible designs that may positively influence behaviour. It is also not within the scope to give disabled motorists priority over other drivers, although the Strategy does make reference to the importance of disabled parking. Encouraging cyclists to travel alongside the frontages would increase conflict with pedestrians going in and out of shops. It is considered that temporary or spontaneous activities such as those listed can help to activate the street. (Anyone promoting religious

	ends on the top. Bollards are important to stop pavement parking, and to protect against terrorism, burglaries and thefts. Finger masts should be fixed to avoid the frequent habit of people turning them round. They should be supplemented by fixed boards with arrows. There should be signs pointing to public toilets. 5.10 There is no over-lighting, but lots of under-lighting in Reading. Broad Street is now the only street in Reading that is well-lit, with strong lights, close together. Personal safety should trump light pollution. Light pollution can be reduced by lowering the hights of the lamps. LED lights in Reading are very poor - the streets are too dark to walk safely, and they cause pedestrians and drivers to be dazzled by the glare from headlights. LED lights must be stronger and closer together - the distance between LED lights should be half that between sodium lights. Pavements must be lit. 5.11 Play provision should be fenced off to stop dogs entering the area. 5.12 Finger masts should be fixed to square poles to avoid the frequent habit of people turning them round to point in the wrong direction. Road signs should not be ambiguous - one in Market Place about access is not clear when it is allowed, and when it is not allowed. 5.13 Graffiti should be removed, and tags identified and the perpetrators prosecuted.	or political speech is allowed to do so under UK law in most cases). 4.7 Considerate cyclists will dismount or use other routes if Broad Street is too crowded. Again, it is not considered appropriate to ban cyclists from this area as it provides a safe, traffic-free route within the town. Bricks are considered one of the best and most durable materials, but do require maintenance. 5.3 Noted. This is stated on page 43. 5.5 Do not agree. Trees can provide important shading for nearby buildings or seating. Nonetheless, tree placement will be carefully considered as described on page 49. 5.9 It is considered that bins with very large openings allow for flytipping of household rubbish or cardboard, rather than litter as intended. The Strategy does not aim to remove bollards unless they are considered redundant. It is considered too prescriptive to specify that directional fingerposts be fixed. This is best covered by the first paragraph in 5.12 which states signs should be durable. As there are very few public toilets within Reading that are owned by the Council, visitors rely on facilities that are usually within privately-owned shopping centres and it would not be considered appropriate for the Council to provide directions.

	6.2 Narrowing the road in St Mary's Butts will cause more bus congestion. Buses often arrive in bunches. There must be room for buses to overtake each other, including those changing drivers or terminating. There should also be provision for the disabled in cars. Public toilets should be reintroduced in St Mary's Butts. 6.3 Narrowing the road in Market Place will cause more bus congestion. Buses often arrive in bunches. There must be room for buses to overtake each other. Public toilets should be reintroduced in Market Place. Town Hall Square and Butter Market must be capable of being used by buses when The Forbury or Market Place are closed by roadworks. 6.4 Removing the left hand turns, and the bus gate, at the London Street / Queens Road junction will delay buses because of the poor traffic light phasing. Reducing the lanes in Queens Road will cause tailbacks. The bottom of London Street should be widened to allow the bus lane to start at the junction, because buses often cannot reach the bus lane. 6.5 Narrowing the road in Station Road will cause more bus congestion, particularly when lorries are unloading. Buses often arrive in bunches. There must be room for buses to overtake each other, including those changing drivers or terminating. 6.2 to 6.5 Buses terminate, change drivers and drivers take relief breaks in these streets because the two bus stations next to the railway station have been replaced by buildings.	5.10 The levels of lighting seek to strike a balance between ensuring public safety and avoiding light pollution. In any case, the Strategy states that areas should be assessed under current British Standards. As schemes come forward, this will be considered in detail. 5.11 Fencing all play provision prevents smaller elements from integrating with the surrounding area. It may be appropriate to fence in formal play areas, but not always pocket play spaces or playful elements. This will be considered on a case by case basis. 5.12 Road signage is not within the scope of the Strategy. Please see comment above with regard to fingerposts. 5.13 Removal of graffiti is required by section 5.17. Prosecution is a police matter and is not within the scope of the Strategy. 6.2 The schemes in the Strategy are intended to be indicative. The Council acknowledges that there is often a conflict between the ability of bus companies to operate and other public realm considerations, such as concerns over bus dominance. The Strategy seeks to strike a balance and at such time specific works are pursued, the Council will engage very closely with bus operators to ensure operability.

	The only way to reduce this is to demolish the bottom floors of buildings opposite the railway station and replace them by a large bus station. 6.6 For personal safety, particularly for older people, handrails must be provided next to the river and canal, and also next to busy roads. 7.2 Narrowing the road in Oxford Road will cause more bus congestion. Buses often arrive in bunches. There must be room for buses to overtake each other. Much of the parking in Oxford Road is taken by out-of-town taxis and private hire cars between jobs, and for drivers to attend local places of worship. 8. There must be well-signposted public toilets and washing facilities, with proper security. There should be good access for the disabled.	Change proposed to refer to the need to protect disabled parking if existing parking spaces are reduced or removed. It is not possible for public toilets to be reintroduced in St Mary's Butts due to funding constraints. 6.3 Please see comments with regard to 6.2 above. It is not possible for public toilets to be reintroduced in Market Place due to funding constraints. It is not appropriate to allow buses traffic through Town Hall Square or Butter Market as these are safe, traffic-free zones for pedestrians. 6.4 Addressing tailbacks or attempting to affect traffic flows is not within the scope of the Strategy. 6.5 Please see comments with regard to Section 6.2 above. The Council is working closely with bus operators to ensure a balance is struck between the ability of buses to operate and concerns over the impacts of buses for other uses, particularly pedestrians. 6.2 – 6.5 The decision to remove the town centre bus station was taken nearly 20 years ago and since then, the bus company has been able to manage effectively within the town centre. At this point, there is no land available to reinstate a bus station and it is not considered necessary.

		6.6 Handrails are provided in areas where the pavement is particularly narrow or it is necessary to prevent pedestrian movements across the street in certain locations. It is not practical or necessary to have handrails throughout the town centre or alongside the river or canal, although many parts of the waterside do have handrails. 7.2 Increasing the road space on the Oxford Road would create a more hostile environment for pedestrians. It is not possible to dictate who uses the parking spaces on the Oxford Road. 8. As stated above, due to budget constraints and the availability of toilets at larger shopping centres in the town, it is not possible to reinstate public toilets.
El-Eter, Tarek	I think this draft is amazing and should be started immediately.	Noted.
Elliot, Keith	Very strongly support this strategy and hope that it will influence the development of the town centre in my lifetime. Minor comments on details: 1. Cycle parking is identified as street clutter, but don't 'throw out the baby with the bath water'. Cycle parking needs to be highly visible to deter cycle theft. 2. Section 4.6: the east end of Friar St is one way which prevents a direct west to east route for cyclists. A contra-	Noted. 1. Change proposed to state that cycle parking should be highly visible in order to deter cycle theft. 2. Allowing changes directional travel for cyclists on existing routes is not within the scope of the

	flow cycle lane would help here. Similarly a south to north route contra-flow on Market Place. The key to the figure does not specifically mention contra-flow but just 'strengthened for cycling'. I would like the one-way issue that restricts cycle routes to at least be recognised.	Strategy. This is best addressed by transport planning, although these areas (Market Place and Friar Street) are both highlighted as areas that would benefit from improvements to cycling infrastructure. Change proposed to acknowledge that one-way cycle routes within the town centre negatively impacts the connectivity of the cycle network.
Essery, Tracey	It's good to see sustainable development centred in the strategy. However, the executive summary mentions Reading's ambition to be a carbon-neutral town by 2030. This is not correct. The ambition is Net Zero by 2030 - the terms are not interchangeable and mean quite different things.	Change proposed.
Fenemore, David	I would have liked to have seen the frame of reference the designers were given. I think it includes - do not question why a road is pedestrianized/not, do not question why a road is one way or not, do not question if a road is one way why its that way not the other. Have all the regulations and recommendations been taken on board from government departments, charities (wheelchair users, sight loss, guide dog etc) police and anti crime organisations (no shadowy places s for people to hide by low planting on walk routes etc), separation of cycles and pedestrians and motor vehicles. This seems broadly just to replicate the past mistakes on a grander scale.	A detailed discussion of the elements to be covered by the Public Realm Strategy is within Item 7 of the Policy Committee Report 18 Dec 2024 ((Public Pack)Agenda Document for Policy Committee, 18/12/2024 18:30). Although the Strategy contains some limited discussion of which roads within the town centre are pedestrianised or one-way, management of highways is not within the scope of this project. The Reading Transport Strategy 2040 may be of interest: Reading Transport Strategy 2040 - Reading Borough Council Yes, these groups have been consulted and recommendations taken into account. It is not considered possible to completely segregated

	Is there a short pedestrian route from the railway station to the hospital, with minimal pollution and road crossings, same for cyclists. can i safely walk/cycle from the railway station to the hexagon/civic centre/town hall/ palmer park sports hall without undue diversion, with few road crossings and low pollution	cyclists and pedestrians within the town centre, as many pedestrianised areas provide important traffic-free routes for cyclists. Rather, the strategy aims to manage conflicts between these users. The analysis of areas and intersections on page 35 highlights these issues and illustrates which areas are most in need of interventions. Ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists can reach key locations from transport hubs with safe crossing and reduced pollution is a key aim of the Strategy.
Gardiner, John	I wanted to raise a point in response to the above: At the back of Reading Central Library is a light post that hasn't been functioning for several months. The lack of lighting makes the area dark and unsafe, particularly when the walkway from the library is icy. Staff in the building have been raising the issue for months without resolution. Given this, I note with disappointment that section 5.10 of the draft strategy, which concerns lighting strategy, makes no mention of consideration being given to the maintenance of the lighting to be used. Please could you ensure future plans take into consideration that it already takes RBC several months to fix broken light bulbs. Perhaps the most effective way to achieve the desired lighting effects would be to spend less on glossy reports and more on basic maintenance.	Noted. This has been passed to the relevant team within the Council. Page 81 details specific considerations for maintenance going forward, including lighting. This could include an asset register to ensure that public realm elements within the town centre are accounted for and that their management and repair is allocated to a specific body. This will help to ensure that no asset is overlooking despite the Council's significant funding constraints.
Germer, Ian	The content of the document is impressive - well done. However, there are some significant omissions.	Noted.

	Bicycles - no provision for SECURE bike parking. Oxford Road - some mention but no solution to the blight of bins, until this is solved no amount of planting and remodelling will raise the aspirations and feel of this cultural melting pot. Traffic - none of the traffic plans have real credibility whilst there is no comprehensive traffic journey monitoring, mapping and control. No new bus routes etc, should be allowed until the traffic light system across the town is upgraded to included route tracking and dynamic flow control. Once journeys have been mapped (end-to-end) then roads and routes and be properly redesigned based on knowledge not dogma. Architecture - architecture looms over all public spaces yet there is little said about this and little involvement of residents in choosing the style being built or refurbished. Station hill at ground level is lovely but the buildings are square and inhuman. Limit all new buildings to 10 stories, double the levies on developers for every floor above the fifth. Signing - what is the first thing you see when exiting Reading station? Not a welcome to the culture, environment, events and facilities but an enormous ugly electronic advertising hoarding promoting anything but Reading!	Although specific sites are not identified, the need for secure cycle parking is stated on pages 31 and 32 and sites will be identified when opportunities arise. Proliferation of bins and the lack of appropriate bin storage will be considered under guidance to address clutter. The Local Plan also requires consideration of proper bin storage when applications for development come forward. The traffic light system is not within the scope of the Public Realm Strategy. The Local Transport Strategy 2040 and the Local Plan have been informed by thorough transport modelling. These strategies aim to reduce congestion by encouraging more sustainable journeys rather than increasing the number of car journeys within the town centre. The design on buildings within the town is not within the scope of the Strategy, but proposed updates to the Local Plan aim to improve the aesthetic quality of new and refurbished buildings in the town. It is not possible under national planning guidance to increase levies based on floors over five storeys. Moreover, tall buildings are an effective way of delivering the appropriate amount of residential units and commercial floorspace to meet Reading's economic needs.

	Rivers and Canals - so important and great to be mentioned but more should be done - will Holy Brook be uncovered? Introduce water-buses. Outdoor dining - yes! but more cover is needed using a combination of tree and canopies. Trees, shrubs, planting - excellent focus, please don't let this be watered down :-)	Applications for new illumination advertising screens will be considered individually according to the criteria for street furniture generally, which on page 66 states that it should be "positioned in a rational way to ensure pedestrian movements, create uncluttered spaces and respond to the function of the space." Noted. The Local Plan states that "development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access, as well as consider any opportunities for deculverting it, which will provide ecological and potentially flood risk benefits." "Hidden rivers" are also cited on page 18 of the strategy as a current issue to be addressed. It is not within the scope of the Strategy to create water buses. Noted. These aims are also bolstered by new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
Godfrey, Lin	If all plans go ahead there'll be even more clutter & no room for pedestrians. Pedestrians & cyclists together fill me with horror. They don't mix especially in a small area such as Broad St. in fact whole strategy seems geared to cyclists, pedestrians are 2nd class citizens. The town centre to me is Market Place, Broad St & Queen Victoria St. Friar St, Station Rd & St. Mary's Butts are where you catch the bus. OK so you're trying to change that. Good luck	Reducing conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians is emphasised within the Transport Plan and the Public Realm Strategy. All opportunities to resolve these conflicts will be considered. Within the Town Centre itself, it is very difficult to provide a segregated cycle path and it is not considered appropriate to ban cycling from Broad Street as this provides a safe, no-traffic route for cyclists. Diagram 3 on page 37, for instance, aims to create a central

		corridor for cyclists to deter cycling in pedestrianised areas on either side.
Guide Dogs Charity	The charity Guide Dogs provides mobility services to increase or maintain the independence of people with sight loss across the UK. Alongside our mobility services we campaign nationally to break down physical and legal barriers to enable people with sight loss to live their lives on their own terms. In Reading there are an estimated 4,000 people living with sight loss. Due to a variety of reasons, including an ageing population, the number of people with sight loss is predicted to increase to 4,700 in Reading by 2032. This number excludes the thousands of vision impaired residents of neighboring local authority areas who visit Reading for retail, recreation, health and employment reasons. Guide Dogs expert local teams work from our centre in Burghfield Common and supports clients across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey from this location. Although universally recognised for our iconic guide dogs, we also provide adult vision rehabilitation and children and young people habilitation and family support services which empower individuals of all ages with a vision impairment to get out and about in their local community. The RNIB estimates that only one in four people of working age who are registered as blind or partially sighted are employed and that blind and partially sighted people are twice as likely to be inactive than people without sight loss. Guide Dogs welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Draft Reading Town Centre Public	Noted. Noted. Noted. Noted.

	Realm Strategy. We commend the council's commitment to making Reading a more accessible and inclusive environment for all users. However, we wish to highlight specific concerns and recommendations to ensure that the strategy fully accommodates the needs of blind and partially sighted individuals. Key Issues and Recommendations 1. Tactile Paving and Wayfinding • The strategy acknowledges the importance of appropriate tactile paving in aiding visually impaired users, but it is critical that tactile surfaces comply with Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines. • There must be consistency in tactile paving across the town centre to avoid confusion for blind and partially sighted pedestrians. • Audio and tactile wayfinding elements should be integrated into the town's signage strategy to improve independent navigation. 2. Pedestrianised Zones and Shared Spaces • We welcome the emphasis on reclaiming road space for pedestrians but strongly advocate against the implementation of shared space schemes without clear demarcation between pedestrian and vehicular areas. • Kerbs and delineated pedestrian pavements are essential to ensure safety and confidence for blind and partially sighted individuals. • Seating, cycle stands, and other street furniture must be positioned to avoid creating obstacles within pedestrian pathways.	Change proposed to cite Department for Transport guidance with regard to tactile surfaces. Change proposed to ensure consistent use of tactile paving. Change proposed to ensure audio and tactile wayfinding elements are considered. Change proposed to highlight the importance of clear demarcation between pedestrian and vehicular areas for the visually impaired, including kerbs and delineated pedestrian pavements. Change proposed to ensure all street furniture is positioned in a way that avoids creating obstacles for the visually impaired.

	3. Lighting and Visibility • Enhanced and consistent lighting is necessary to assist those with partial sight in navigating the town centre safely, particularly along pedestrian routes, crossings, and bus stops. • Glare from inappropriate lighting or reflective surfaces should be minimized to avoid causing discomfort or additional difficulties for those with visual impairments. 4. Public Transport Accessibility While the strategy recognises the importance of bus accessibility, bus stop placement and design must consider the needs of visually impaired users. No one should feel unsafe when they walk or use public transport in the streets and spaces where they live or work. Yet we increasingly hear that street designs are creating barriers for disabled people. That is why Guide Dogs commissioned University College London (UCL) to explore the impact of four different types of design on disabled people, including blind people and people with a vision impairment. The research focused on Floating Island Bus Stops, Shared Bus Stop Boarders, Segregated Cycle-footways and Continuous Footways. These designs all incorporate cycle paths into their design. The research recently published included a literature review, focus groups with disabled people, workshops with professionals, site visits and controlled experiments at UCL's Person-Environment-Activity Research Laboratory (PEARL), identified significant problems with these designs and identified 15 recommendations for improvements. Key recommendations include:	Change proposed to ensure that the needs of partially sighted users are considered with regard to lighting, including reducing glare. Noted.

	• Local communities (including disabled people) and professional specialists must be involved in the co-cultivation of pedestrian infrastructure to ensure that inclusion and accessibility are embedded into the planning and design process. • Investigate different ways of enabling cycle lanes and bus stops to interact which do not raise safety concerns amongst passengers and pedestrians using the stop. This investigation should include consideration of alternative positions, alignments and routes for the cycle lane to ensure that both cyclists and pedestrians are safe around bus stops. Until findings from this research are available, stop the further installation of Floating Island Bus Stops and Shared Bus Stop Boarders. • For Segregated Cycle-footways, a tactile paving delineator should be used at all times rather than a painted white line. Such routes should only be considered if the recommended space can accommodate the requirements for both users. Tactile paving should be installed at the beginning and end of each section, as well as at regular intervals within the Segregated Cycle-footway, in line with the guidance. • Local authorities should install tactile paving and other signalling at all continuous pavement crossings so that there is a consistency of approach. Notably… “research found that Shared Bus Stop Boarders pose a greater threat to disabled people and are considered less safe than Floating Island Bus Stops. Participants in our research were universally opposed to the use of Shared Bus Stop Boarders, and the experts consulted were equally sceptical of their safety. These problems are inherent in the	The Strategy does not propose the use of Floating Island Bus Stops or Shared Bus Stop Boarders. Change proposed to ensure tactile paving is used consistently, with particular attention paid to segregated cycle-footways.

	design of Shared Bus Stop Boarders, and we do not think they should be used in their current form. Some of the main risks of this design include the higher travelling speeds of cyclists and risks boarding and leaving buses directly onto a cycle path. More research is needed to understand if these designs can be made to be safe and accessible, but until this is complete, the design should not be further implemented." Guide Dogs would urge decision makers involved with street design, and transport planning to engage with this significant new research and seriously consider the recommendations contained within it in relation to current and future regeneration and infrastructure schemes across Camden. 5. Street Clutter and Obstructions • We support the council's initiative to declutter the streetscape; however, enforcement is necessary to prevent businesses from placing A-boards or outdoor seating in pedestrian walkways. • Temporary obstructions, such as construction hoardings, should include clear tactile warnings to alert blind and partially sighted individuals. 6. Inclusive Play and Public Spaces • Any play spaces or interactive public realm features should be designed with sensory elements that cater to visually impaired individuals. • Seating and resting areas should be clearly identifiable, free from trip hazards, and positioned thoughtfully along pedestrian routes.	Noted. Noted. The importance of enforcement is noted on page 81. Change proposed to require tactile warnings for construction hoardings on page 80. Noted. Page 72 states that play spaces should include consideration of visually impaired users.

	Conclusion Guide Dogs supports the overarching vision of the Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy but urges the council to ensure that accessibility measures to ensure the town centre is truly inclusive for disabled people including blind and partially sighted people. We share Reading Council's ultimate goal of "setting out a clear, consistent and usable set of principles, to allow high quality and appropriate development of the public realm in Reading, with the aim of achieving an attractive, memorable and vibrant town centre." To help in achieving this goal, Guide Dogs has published comprehensive guidance to assist designers, architects, and local authorities in creating places that are both inclusive for people with sight loss, and ready to address the challenges towns and cities face in the future. The "Making the built environment inclusive" guidance can be viewed and downloaded by clicking on the following link: www.guidedogs.org.uk/inclusive-regeneration/ I would be grateful if you could share the link to this guidance document with your colleagues and partner organisations.	Change proposed to ensure seating placement considers visually impaired users on page 66. Noted. Noted. Noted.
Hammerson PLC	We write upon behalf of our client Hammerson PLC, being the owners of The Oracle in Reading Town Centre in response to the ongoing consultation on the draft Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD. We note that the SPD is intended to supplement and expand upon higher level planning policies, and in this case	Noted. Noted.

	the SPD supplements Policy CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) contained within the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted on 4th November 2019. Policy CR3 requires (inter alia) that proposals for new development make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm of the central area.	
	Hammerson recognise many of the issues raised within the draft SPD concerning the existing poor state of the public realm in Reading Town Centre, including street and highway clutter, mismatching and poor-quality materials, litter, lack of green space, and difficulty wayfinding.	Noted.
	In general terms, Hammerson PLC therefore support the Council's objective of preparing a comprehensive vision aimed at transforming the town's public spaces into pleasant, accessible, and sustainable environments that can support the town's growing population and economic development, with a view to developing a cohesive network of routes and public spaces over time.	Noted.
	Hammerson PLC therefore support in-principle the 10 key objectives and guiding principles of the draft strategy, including: •Unifying the Public Realm Design •Improving Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure •Enhancing Green and Blue Infrastructure •Promoting a Sustainable and Inclusive Town Centre •Addressing Vehicular Dominance •Highlighting Reading's Heritage •Activating Public Spaces •Decluttering the Streets	Noted.

	•Integrating High-Quality Materials •Encouraging Temporary and Flexible Uses Hammerson PLC agree that the quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of identity, where people will choose to spend their time. It gives great scope for, community-based activities, temporary interventions / events, 'greening' the town with landscaping and the inclusion of creative lighting schemes. The work to set out a typology of streets within the town centre is also supported along with the analysis and audit of such. The identification of key development sites within the town centre is also considered a positive step. Within the Oracle Estate, we note that the 'Vue' (or Yield Hall Place 2) site is identified as a development site on the Heritage and Conservation Plan on Page 22, but that the 'Debenhams' (or Yield Hall Place 1) site to the north is not. We suggest that the plan on Page 22 is updated to reflect both sites being identified as per Page 23. Hammerson also note and support the identification of The Oracle Estate as a particular 'character area' within the town centre, reflecting is different character and much larger scale to its surrounds. Hammerson note that Section 3.7 'Aspirational Town Centre Structure' identifies existing mall routes through The Oracle as primary routes which should be preserved, enhanced and extended. The new pedestrian route and mall entrance	Noted. Noted. Change proposed. Noted. Change proposed.

	onto the Riverside by the retained retail floorspace as part of the Yield Hall Place 1 planning application is a good example of the Council's ambition already being realised. We suggest this new route is added onto the plan in Section 3.7. The Pedestrian, Wheelers & Cycle Framework, confirms that Reading town centre has a comprehensive current movement and transport hierarchy and that the bus and road networks, whilst highly successful assets, create both challenges and opportunities for the future growth and development of the town. In particular, the Inner Distribution Route (IDR) is an important strategic movement corridor that helps to keep traffic out of the town centre core. However, due to its nature it severs access from surrounding neighbourhoods and creates a barrier or collar to walking, wheeling and cycling. Hammerson PLC support the overall recommendations for improvement listed on page 32, including to IDR permeability: "Improve permeability of pedestrians and cyclists from the surrounding neighbourhoods across the IDR to the town centre including improved junctions and crossings". The inclusion of a 'Design Manual' which describes all of the components which contribute to the overall public realm forms a significant part of the draft SPD and is also welcome. It is intended to be a guide which helps steer in making design, material and style decisions for future projects and enhancement works. Hammerson PLC consider this essential to both achieving the Council's ambitions and addressing future maintenance issues.	Noted. Noted.

	Chapter 6 then goes on to identify a number of areas that best demonstrate how the public realm can be enhanced following the guidelines set out in the draft strategy and goes on to stage that these areas should be viewed as examples of what can be achieved and the principles set out should also be applied to other corresponding and similar streets and spaces. These are known as the 'Major Public Realm Enhancement Schemes'.	Noted.
	The draft SPD goes on to confirm that: The specific projects are also considered key areas where change will bring the best impact and value for Reading Town Centre. The diagrams, plans and sketches should be considered as guidance and subject to a full design led process where surveys, studies, assessments, engagement and design development look to resolve the existing issues and aim to achieve the desired vision. They are provided to help illustrate the aspirations of the public realm strategy. It is very important to note that, at this stage, the schemes presented are no more than illustrations or a series of 'diagrams, plans and sketches' (as confirmed above) and that no technical assessment has been undertaken to underpin the feasibility of such at all.	Noted.
	The Queens Road & London Street Junction of the IDR to the south of The Oracle Estate is identified as one of the 6 Major Public Realm Enhancement Schemes. It is without doubt the most complex and likely the most expensive of the 6 Major Public Realm Enhancement Schemes listed within the draft SPD. Indeed, based upon the sketches, it is the only planned significant change to the IDR other than	Noted, although it is important to remember that "These areas should be viewed as *examples of what can be achieved* and the principles set out should also be applied to other corresponding and similar streets and spaces" (page 86).

	Trooper's Potts / IDR Junction, which is very limited in ambition by comparison. On the scheme for the Queens Road & London Street Junction: Works at this junction of the type and scale shown on the sketches are likely to have a very significant knock-on impact on the wider road network, buried services and river channels. They cannot be considered or planned in isolation to the wider road network and without the required technical input, including highway modelling and surveys, can only be considered an 'aspiration' at this stage. Moreover, all the planned public realm improvements, taken together, will benefit the town centre as a whole and will act as a catalyst for further inward investment and regeneration. Hammerson PLC note with concern that at Page 12 the draft SPD suggests: "Major developments will be expected to contribute towards the enhancement of the surrounding public realm, including undertaking or funding works outside their own site boundary wherever there are opportunities to do so. In some cases, financial contributions will also be pooled towards wider town centre public realm improvements, but this will not be in place of essential improvements to the areas surrounding development sites". This cannot mean that works (or entire schemes) should be required to be undertaken by developers without limitation. Indeed, the draft SPD does not discuss or quantify the cost of any of the works identified, or indeed the town centre wide ambition for public realm improvements as a whole,	Noted. See above. Noted. It is important to remember than the examples provided are indicative and simply illustrate the types of schemes that could be achieved. Improvements to the public realm are still

	and merely notes that funding requirements are unknown (Page 116).	subject to the policies of the Local Plan which consider impacts on viability.
	Public Realm works beyond application site boundaries can be delivered by a 'Grampian' style condition imposed upon a planning permission for a development. This is usually where the scope and scale of the works is known. Otherwise, it is usual to secure such works by way of a Planning Obligation.	Noted.
	The NPPF (December 2024) discusses the use of conditions and planning obligations. In relation to planning conditions, NPPF Paragraph 56 tells us that: "Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition."	Noted.
	NPPF Paragraph 57 goes on to tell us that: "Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects."	Noted.
	Importantly, in relation to planning obligations, NPPF Paragraph 58 tells us that: "Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; and	Noted.

	c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development." On the basis that the 6 Major Public Realm Enhancement Schemes in particular will undoubtedly benefit the Town Centre as a whole, Hammerson PLC are concerned that the draft SPD contains no mechanism or attempt to apportion the benefit of such improvement works to existing and proposed development across the town centre as a whole and, hence, then fairly apportion the cost of such works to different landowners and development schemes. Indeed, Section 8.1 'Emerging Action Plan' (see below) identifies the first stage in implementation is to understand what steps are needed for each major scheme to proceed to a project – surveys, understanding of funding requirements etc. This suggests that the Council must take the lead and progress next steps in undertaking the preparatory work for each scheme and checking they are deliverable. This must be given further detailed consideration and the NPPF tests set out in Paragraph 57 must be met in all cases. In summary, whilst Hammerson PLC support the principle of a strategy to improve public realm in Reading town centre, they consider that much more work needs to be done in relation to how the public realm improvements will be fairly funded and delivered, in order to prevent ad 'hoc and disproportionate requests being made of particular developers or development schemes, which can have a very significant impact on development viability.	This will be considered at planning application stage in line with the policies of the Local Plan. The Strategy does not suggest that the whole of these specific, indicative proposals will be required of Hammerson PLC. Change proposed to emphasise that these steps are to be undertaken jointly between the Council and developers. Noted. Noted. The Council would not impose requirements which would deliver development unviable according to the policies within the Local Plan.

	The document is considered to be generally lacking any clarity on deliverability or identification of responsibility within the Council for bringing forward the changes proposed. No timescales are put alongside any of the actions, and 'delivery' is limited to 2 pages in a 117 page document.	The Strategy is not intended to provide detailed timescales, but instead identifies possible next steps for the Council and provides a useful guide for planning officers when determining applications as schemes come forward.
Hennell, Jane of The Canal & River Trust	The Canal & River Trust act as Navigation Authority for the area covered by this strategy. However the strategy is comprehensive and we support its introduction. The Trust is currently preparing a 'Design Coding for Waterways' guidance document which will be sent to the Borough council in due course.	Noted.
Historic England	Thank you for consulting Historic England on the Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy. We welcome preparation of this Strategy and broadly support most of its contents, especially the sustained focus on better appreciation of the historic environment. In this cover letter, we highlight one part of the town centre that we believe is currently insufficiently recognised in the Strategy, namely Abbey Square. We encourage greater consideration of this, as an integral part of the Abbey Quarter, both in terms of its significance (e.g. on page 22) and the potential for public realm improvements. Also, we highlight the potential for implementation of the Strategy to deliver an integrated approach to the management of the historic and natural environment, thereby delivering added value.	Noted. Change proposed on page 5 to clearly communicate that the areas of the town centre identified within the Strategy are merely examples. These examples are intended to illustrate how public realm improvements should be applied to different types of environments within the town centre, not to prioritise areas for interventions. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to include Abbey Square, as the Strategy does not preclude the area from being a focus for improvements. Noted.

	The Council may wish to draw from Historic England's 'Streets for All' documents, which contain a wealth of information on streetscape improvements and set out means to improve public spaces without harming their valued character, including recommendations for works to surfaces, street furniture, new equipment, traffic management infrastructure and environmental improvements. As a final point, liaison with the Council's conservation team and archaeological advisers is recommended throughout work on the Strategy. They are best placed to advise on local heritage issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record; how the Strategy can be tailored to avoid or minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment and to maximise opportunities for securing wider benefits for conservation and management of heritage assets. Page 5—Objectives It's good to see highlighting Reading's heritage is one of the objectives. Page 13—Vision While we realise it is not the Council's intention for "build upon the heritage" in a literal sense, we query if this could be phrased to avoid that resonance. "This vision looks to both ~~build upon~~ conserve and better appreciate the heritage and look towards the future growth of the town, encouraging people to explore, businesses to flourish and creating a safe, inclusive and vibrant street scene."	No change proposed. This is best addressed by policies within the Local Plan which require close working with these groups as proposals come forward. Noted. Noted. Change proposed.

	Page 14—Guiding Principles Principle 4 is the same as principle 6. We query if principle 6 should be renamed and suggest wording for consideration. "06 ~~Ensure consistency in design~~ Celebrate Reading's heritage"	Change proposed.
	Page 18—Photograph bottom right Reading Town Hall is listed Grade II* rather than Grade II	Change proposed.
	Page 22—Section 3.4: Heritage and Conservation The text omits reference to Grade II* buildings. Perhaps simpler to refer listed buildings? Also, it risks inaccurately conveying the multiple sites associated with Reading Abbey that are Scheduled. We suggest rewording. This risk is increased by the map, which does not include all the Scheduled sites within the study area. This needs to be rectified.	Change proposed to include reference in text to Grade II* listed buildings. It is not considered necessary to amend the map as it is intended to provide an overview, not a high level of detail.
	"Reading town centre counts three Conservation Areas, many ~~Grade I and II~~ listed buildings, a R~~re~~gistered park with Forbury Gardens and multiple S~~s~~cheduled M~~m~~onuments associated with Reading Abbey ~~area at the Abbey, Prison site and.~~ High Bridge on Duke St. is also Scheduled. For more information, refer to Reading's Historic Area Assessment ***include weblink***"	
	Page 23—Section 3.5 Development sites Refer to which local plan, not simply "Sites identified for development or change in Local Plan"	It is not considered necessary to state which Local Plan as it can be assumed that the relevant Local Plan is the version most recently adopted by the Council.
	Page 30—Section 4.3	Change proposed to reformat bullets.

	Bullets 1 and 8 in the middle column need to be formatted differently to help the reader. Page 31—Key to the wheel Surely the key to the wheel should be shown without colours? The colours in the larger wheel make it harder to interpret the map & smaller wheels. Page 50—Principles for vegetation We recommend adding a point that connects with the historic environment. •"**Connection with heritage** – Consider the historic context of the location; how this might be used to greatest advantage in an integrated approach" Page 58—Tree planting We recommend adding a point that connects with the historic environment. "There are a number of factors to consider, which include; competition for space beneath the streets with utilities, the proposed usage and character of the public realm, suitability for an urban environment, impacts on and connection with heritage assets above and below ground, visual characteristics, resilience and adaptability to climate change. Retention of existing trees, especially mature trees also needs to be carefully considered and conditions of trees continued to be monitored by RBC." Page 89—Vision & Schematic Proposal for St. Mary's Butts We welcome plans to enhance the local environment and enable the better appreciation of heritage assets in this location.	It is considered that the colours in the wheel help to visually delineate between each section. These colours also align with the TfL Healthy Streets Strategy. It is unclear why reference to the historic environment is relevant in considerations for vegetation. Change proposed. Noted. Change proposed to correct typo.

	Note typo. “Enhanced setting of Grade I listed Reading Minster” Page 98—Vision & Schematic Proposal for Market Place & Town Hall Square We welcome plans to enhance the local environment and enable the better appreciation of heritage assets in this location. Note typo. “Celebrate heritage monuments and listed buildlings, creating focal points and removing clutter.” Page 107—Other Area Guidelines Abbey Square has the potential to better integrated within the Abbey Quarter and appreciated as an integral part of that Quarter. Note this includes sites of the Scheduled Abbey, which are currently invisible. There is the potential to enhance the appreciation of these assets, potentially including Holy Brook too (informed by a careful approach to the redevelopment of central library), as well as the Grade I Abbey Gate. We suggest Abbey Square is considered further in the Public Realm Strategy. Page 111—The Forbury We welcome plans to enhance the flow and appreciation of heritage in this location.	Noted. Change proposed to correct typo. Please see response above with regard to Abbey Quarter. Noted.
Hunter, Nick	Thanks for sending round the plans you have for the town centre. In general I feel that the sentiment and ideas are good. I just have a few specific comments:	Noted.

	1. I very much agree with the analysis of "before". Essentially the town centre is really pretty scummy, mainly due to the open space feeling claustrophobic, inconsistent and cheap. 2. I think in your "after" pictures there is still too much clutter. Less is more. Spend a bit more on quality and consistent paving instead. 3. A problem in Reading is there is no single large public square. I think you should remove the cemetery south of Reading Minster and incorporate that into an enlarged public space (again, with less clutter than your illustrations foresee). 4. Don't overdo it on the vegetation. It would be nice, but you would never be able to maintain it I suspect and soon it would look bad with litter permeating it. 5. Have a look at Newbury. I know it was easier for them as it is smaller but I don't think they have done a bad job in the Market Place and Northbrook Street. Somehow the atmosphere is much better now. 6. I have sympathy on the bikes and scooters. Whatever you enact, I am sure that they will still carry on charging through, maiming people.	1. Noted. 2. It is important to remember that the schemes are indicative and simply provide examples of what could be achieved. 3. It is not considered feasible to remove a cemetery. Broad Street provides an extensive pedestrianised area within the town centre. 4. Vegetation provides important ecological benefits, can help to cool the urban area and can reduce surface water flooding during storm events. Clear maintenance plans will be required as detailed in Section 5.17. 5. Noted. 6. The Strategy aims to establish design elements that will deter irresponsible cycling and scooting, but it is not considered appropriate to ban cycling and scooters within the town as many pedestrianised areas provide important no-traffic routes.
Jacobs, Adam	General wider comment - in our view, this work is #1 importance to town centre: it affects public perception and confidence to shop in RG1. If delivered will potentially reduce security issues and add to economic growth by attracting business and spend local - understand the point of having a policy in place, but the key	Noted. The Strategy is not intended to be funded solely by the Council, but rather provides indicative examples of how developer contributions can be spent improving the public realm in the coming years.

	driver should be proactively looking to fund it. If funding isn't found, and work not started, then the report would be out of date. Specific - When designing any public realm physical furniture (lamps, signs, benches etc), can they have some wit/ verve/ personality reflecting Reading - the private sector manage to incorporate imaginative nods to Reading in design. Appreciate the 'neutrality' of tone to assist with looking at buildings, but we have an opportunity to think outside the box and inject something personal and engaging. - How does it aligns/ syncs with Caversham, Tilehurst and other small conurbations in satellite to Reading - design with them in mind for rolling out wider. - Security - with a lot of public realm I see, bollards/ furniture are in place to stop terrorist incidents w/ cars or lorries. Or indeed a vehicle out of control to protect pedestrians. I saw no indication of these in any drawings. Purposely omitted? Legal obligation?	It is considered that neutral street furniture contributes to a cohesive and consistent look and feel within the town centre. Should applications come forward that exhibit particular creativity or reflect local character, these will be considered individually. This strategy focuses solely on the town centre itself. It is not the intention of the Strategy to preclude the use of bollards. As applications come forward, the need for bollards will be assessed alongside other considerations for safety and crime prevention. It is not considered necessary to include these within the drawings.
John Lewis Partnership	JLP are the owners of land at Mill Lane and therefore have a significant interest in the Public Realm Strategy (PRS). The site currently accommodates a vacant warehouse building formerly used as customer collections facilities, ancillary car park and servicing area. This use is no longer needed. The site is now identified as a draft allocation for residential development (CR14r) in the Reg 19 Local Plan Partial Update (November 2024) and is subject to a live planning application (ref. PL/24/1155) submitted August	Noted. Noted.

	2024 for: *Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site comprising erection of a new building for up to 215 build to rent residential dwellings (Use Class C3) together with flexible commercial/community space (Use Class E/F1/F2), residents' facilities, landscaping, public realm, amenity space, cycle parking and disabled car parking.* The draft PRS identifies a number of proposed public realm improvements around the Site. Purpose of the Strategy (Chp 2) The draft Public Realm Strategy explains that its purpose is to "…achieve the ultimate goal of setting out a clear, consistent and usable set of principles, to allow high quality and appropriate development of the public realm in Reading, with the aim of achieving an attractive, memorable and vibrant town centre" (section 2.1). Section 2.1 adds that the draft Public Realm Strategy is intended to comprise a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), linked to Policy CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) of the Local Plan (2019), which will inform decisions on planning applications. The latest Local Development Scheme (LDS) targets adoption of the Public Realm Strategy in March 2025. Notably the Council is currently progressing a draft LPPU in order to address various changes since the adoption of the Local Plan (2019) including new legislation, increasing housing requirements and changes in local circumstances. The emerging LPPU is intended to be submitted later in	Noted. Noted. Noted.

	February 2025, with adoption scheduled for September/October 2025. Whilst the recent Regulation 19 LPPU (November 2024) does not propose updates to Policy CR3, a number of changes are proposed to other adopted Local Plan policies relevant to development in Central Reading, including Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H1 (Housing Provision), H2 (Density and Mix) and CR14 (Other sites for development in Central Reading). The Regulation 19 LPPU (November 2024) also proposes to accommodate an even greater proportion of development (59%) in Central Reading. Given the amount of new development proposed in the town centre, the overall aim of the draft Public Realm Strategy – to set out principles to support the achievement of an 'attractive, memorable and vibrant town centre' – is supported. In particular JLP support the ambition to improve the public realm in order to enhance the experience, safety and environmental credentials for the long-term benefit of the town centre and local people. The submitted development proposals at the Site (ref. PL/24/1155) seek to follow this approach and incorporate high quality design principles to support the aims and vision of the draft Public Realm Strategy. It is however important to ensure that the Public Realm Strategy is aligned with and supplements the emerging LPPU to provide appropriate up-to-date guidance. Town Centre Appraisal (Chp 3) The 'fast-paced transformation' of the town centre and the need to thereby preserve and enhance the public realm to 'help deliver Reading's full potential' (section 5) is acknowledged and supported. The 'Development Sites'	Noted. It is not considered necessary to include reference to specific planning applications.

	shown at section 3.5 should be updated however to acknowledge that an application has been submitted at the Site which is relevant to the public realm strategy. Notably the submitted development proposals (ref. PL/24/1155) seek to address several of the identified 'current issues and concerns' (including 'lack of street activation' and 'lack of green') (section 3.1), through the provision of increased active frontages along Mill Lane and delivery of new public landscaped spaces and significant Biodiversity Net Gain. The aims for a 'transformed IDR' with enhanced links to 'overcome the severance generated by the IDR', as identified in the 'Aspirational Town Centre Structure' (section 3.7), are particularly supported. In this regard, it is important that development proposals within individual Character Areas are not considered in isolation, but also recognise the opportunities to deliver 'attractive urban spaces' linked across Character Areas (e.g. between London Street Area and The Oracle). Pedestrian, Wheelers & Cycle Framework (Chp 4) Building on the challenges identified in the Town Centre Appraisal (chapter 3), the need to overcome the 'barriers' caused by the IDR is further highlighted at section 4.1. The identified opportunity in this regard to enhance the junction of the IDR / London Street for walking and cycling (section 4.2) will help address these challenges and support links across the IDR, and is therefore also supported. Design Manual (Chp 5) The design manual provides recommendations for a number of design components relevant to the overall public realm.	Noted. Noted. Change proposed to make clear that schemes within the document are indicative and aim to

	The details and recommendations set out are intended as a 'guide' rather than being overly prescriptive, which is an approach that is supported. The design manual should be clear however to allow for alternative high quality design solutions to come forward at the detailed design stage. It is essential therefore that text to this effect is added to the SPD before it is adopted.	provide examples of what could be delivered. Alternative high-quality design proposals will be considered.
	The recommendation for lighting columns to be 'simple' and be of 'minimal design' is supported and will help to facilitate increased high quality development within the town centre.	Noted.
	Specific Projects (Chp 6) One of the specific projects identified includes the 'Queens Road & London Street Junction' (section 6.4) which is located approximately 50m to the east of the Site. The proposals include realignment of the pedestrian crossing, increased footpath widths and increased greening and landscaping. The stated objective is to 'strengthen the North-South link for walking and cycling to support sustainable and active travel from the south to the town centre and reduce the significant severance caused by the IDR to communities in this area.'	Noted.
	The proposed public realm improvements at the Queens Road & London Street Junction will provide improved legibility and connections across the IDR between London Street / Mill Lane and The Oracle, as well as helping to reduce noise and pollution impacts. The proposals will therefore be positive for future residents of the proposed development at the Site and are therefore fully supported.	Noted.

	Emerging Action Plan (Chp 8) The Emerging Action Plan sets out proposed next steps towards achieving specific projects, including the 'Queens Road & London Street Junction'. The Action Plan explains that this would include undertaking surveys, understanding funding requirements and other considerations. These next steps are acknowledged and supported. It will be important that any planning obligations sought to support the funding of these projects are necessary, directly related and reasonably related in scale to development, in line with the provisions of paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).	Noted.
Jones, Peter	Please find my wishes to improve your excellent planning scheme. I think your ideas to make the IDR easier for residents to cross to and from the centre of town are commendable. I have marked up your illustrations with my comments. See attached: Principally, I would make Broad St shopping zone a gated cycle free zone with only VIP disabled vehicle access allowed (including Union Street, Chain Street, Queen Victoria St and Cross St) Redevelop the roundabouts at Forbury Rd/Vastern Rd and Queens Rd/London St. Redevelop area around junction at A329 and A33.	Noted. Broad St provides and important traffic-free route for cyclists. Banning cyclists from the area would force them onto busier routes and may deter many from cycling. The Strategy recognises the conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and recommends various designs that could help reduce incidences of conflict, for instance, by creating a central lane for cyclists. These roundabouts are identified on page 29 at junctions identified for enhancement.

	Create footpaths to cross the IDR to link the inner town with residential areas, particularly from Kenavon Dr to Forbury Gardens. Friar St to The Forbury must be a 2 way cycle route. 2 way cycle routes should be established throughout the town centre. IDR and all roads within IDR boundary should be 20mph speed restricted. The northeastern arc of the IDR should be reduced to 2 lanes. Queens Rd to Kings should be 2-way to stop vehicles queueing on the Watlington St gyratory. The southwest IDR A33 junction is a brutal mess… in wet weather I just pray I am in the 'correct' lane to get through safely. Generally, Reading is an interesting town to walk around, but all the walking routes seem to end abruptly. The pedestrian is either confronted with heavy traffic, a long wait to cross many wide lanes of traffic, or the path just ends in a broken-down part of town. Visitors leave with a bad impression. Your scheme will make a big impact… please persevere and make it happen.	It is considered that the junction at A329 and A33 already benefits from good pedestrian and cycling infrastructure as it is completely separate from vehicle movements. Noted. These junctions are identified as areas for enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling on page 29. It is not within the scope of the Strategy to specify directional cycle routes on particular streets, but a change is proposed as stated above to state that one way cycle routes within the town centre may limit the connectivity of the network. It is not within the scope of the Strategy to restrict vehicle speeds long the IDR or reduce the number of lanes along the IDR. Traffic flows at this intersection (A33 Junction) are not within the scope of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy. Noted. The Strategy notes these negative elements within the existing conditions assessment and seeks to better connect walking routes, reduce town centre traffic, shorten crossings and improve visual amenity. Noted.

Kennet & Avon Canal	The consultation document makes extensive reference to pedestrian and vehicle movement but appears to overlook river traffic. The River Kennet is a prominent feature of Reading Town Centre. Active boats can enhance the visual effect of the areas adjacent to the Kennet and can emphasise the recreational opportunities of the river whilst bringing the commercial benefits of holiday boating traffic to town centre businesses.	River traffic is not within the scope of the Strategy, but page 8 states “establishing principles to enhance access and amenity values of riverways” as an aim of the Strategy.
	Proposals in Para 6.6 describe the area adjacent to Queens Road Car Park as “offering very little opportunity to dwell”. The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust welcomes the proposed improvement of this area but also believes this could be enhanced by promoting short term mooring facilities by holiday boats to bring additional colour and animation to this area.	Change proposed to include consideration of new mooring facilities.
	Charged mooring is currently permitted in this area but Reading is the only place on the whole of the Kennet and Avon Canal where the local authority applies mooring charges. Notices about payment emphasise penalties for non-payment and are unwelcoming. The local holiday hire base advises hirers not to stop in Reading as the Council conditions are so tight as to put hirers (and the boat-yard as boat owners) at risk of prosecution. The Trust would be very pleased to work with Council officers to develop a system where short term mooring for holiday boats adds to Reading’s urban landscape. Mooring space at County Lock is required for boats operating or waiting to operate the lock but the adjacent open area has potential for improvement as an attractive waterside space.	Removing mooring charges or considering existing mooring space is not within the scope of the Strategy.

	Proposals in Para 5.12 for improved directional and interpretative signage are welcomed. The town centre waterways offer opportunities for several circular walks of varying lengths. The Trust would be pleased to work with RBC to develop and promote these walks and may be able to use our archives to assist input to interpretative displays. Add reference to five local leisure marinas (Burghfield Island, Frouds Bridge, Greenham, Newbury Boat Co. and Newbury) and advise boaters not to stop in Reading, but rather travel to Henley, Marlow, Pangbourne, Abingdon, Wallingford, etc where they are more friendly towards holiday/leisure boaters.	Change proposed to Section 5.12 to highlight the need for wayfinding to feature waterway walking routes. Direction leisure boaters to marinas outside the Borough is not within the scope of the Strategy.
Lalley, Christine	1. The 10 Guiding Principles are all extremely sound and worthy but many are dependent on funding which is lacking. The most important principle is the last one – maintenance, which is equally underfunded. Initial surfaces, finishes of schemes are usually good but then they are dug up by utilities and the subsequent reinstatement is non-existent/poor/wrong materials etc. Graffiti, litter, flytipping, weeds in gutters all degrade the public realm and are not attended to as they should be. 2. Green roofs on bus shelters or PV on the roofs of bus shelters – use every surface positively. Glass gets dirty and is never cleaned. See those at the back of Primark. 3. The strategy certainly identifies the many problems in the public realm very well – muddled, visual clutter of street furniture – signs, bins of different ages, manufacturers, design, materials, etc but is thin on the solutions.	1. Noted. The Strategy aims to emphasise the importance of maintenance going forward. 2. Change proposed to ensure PV and/or green roofs are considered for bus shelters. With regard to cleaning and maintenance, please see response above. 3. The Strategy seeks to provide many descriptions and illustrations of examples of how these problems can be resolved.

	4. The Emerging Action Plan has many potential studies but where is the funding and skilled officers to carry them out? Good luck.	4. Due to significant funding constraints at the Council, the Strategy seeks to provide an outline of how developer contributions may be spent as schemes come forward.
Leonidas, Gerry	Having read and participated in previous related projects, this is impressive in its scope. There is a genuine holistic approach, and finally – a recognition that the town centre has incredible potential if it is enabled to become more than a forced trip to reach shops and little else. The foregrounding of walking/cycling is long overdue, and at the very least of the level required by forward-looking, sustainable plans. Streetcraft interventions are both realistic and enabling. One area that is missing and marks out the plan as lacking in relation to approaches in continental towns, is the active consideration of the journeys walkers/cyclists/wheelers take up to the boundaries of the town centre. No plan for the centre will embed new behaviours unless people can get there safely from nodes like the RBH, UoR, and residential neighbourhoods. Safe routes need to extend in an uninterrupted manner to the periphery of the town, from north Caversham to Lower Earley, Whitley, Tilehurst, etc. This is a standard consideration on the continent, as well and the few towns in the UK that have got this right, and should be included in the plan as an enabling measure.	Noted. Noted. Noted. The geographic scope of this Strategy is limited to the Town Centre itself, although many of the intersections at the edge of the centre are identified as areas for improvement. The Local Transport Strategy and the policies of the Local Plan identify priorities for enabling active travel throughout the Borough. The Local Transport Strategy in particular emphasises the importance of safe routes throughout Reading's suburbs and surrounding communities.
Murphy, Jason	The draft plan sets out a strong vision. However, it is lacking in reference to how the changes can design out crime, with the unintentional consequences of some schemes being that crime may be more likely. Location and impact of CCTV and its merits is a critical issue, as well as	Change proposed to include reference to the Reading Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy.

	understanding existing crime hotspots and the enablers for this. Crime, such as aggressive begging takes place in the public realm and the solution to resolve this is to remove one of three things - the victim (making a place less likely to lead to harm); the offender (making a space less encouraging of crime) or changing the environment so that opportunities for crime are reduced. There is no reference in the document to the Reading Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy and no mention of recent community safety survey findings which highlight the impact of crime is having on public perceptions of safety; in particular from aggressive begging, and consumption of alcohol and drugs.	Change proposed to refer to the importance of considering the impacts of design on aggressive begging, crime, perceptions of safety and the consumption of alcohol and drugs. Each scheme will also seek comments from Thames Valley Police as proposals come forward.
	There is also no reference to children and children's insight to how to design and utilise a space. A child friendly designed urban space is well known to be a more enticing, safe and attractive space and therefore the plan is lacking insight from children's point of view; a space presumably they are more likely to use in the future than adults commenting on it. What work has there been to hear from children and young people, and not just those from well healed backgrounds?	It is considered that the extensive section on play elements and language addressing the needs of different users such as prams and “wheelers” will help to create an environment that meets the needs of children and young people. Although the Consultation did not host any events specific to children, it was widely advertised.
	It is a surprise that among the guiding principles there is no reference to safety, or a safer public realm. The document also implies that CCTV is contributing to the clutter in the urban space which overlooks the functionality of CCTV and the optimum deployment to ensure its utility in preventing and detecting crime.	Change proposed to clarify the important role of CCTV and to ensure that CCTV will not be removed unless it is redundant.

National Highways	We are concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case the M4 motorway. We therefore have no comments.	Noted.
Natural England	Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. We support the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications. Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not relate to our remit to any significant extent. We do not therefore wish to comment, except to support the approach to integrate nature rich green infrastructure, urban greening and nature-based solutions into the streetscape as widely as possible. Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment -- In principle SPDs should not be subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive or the Habitats Directive because they do not normally introduce new policies or proposals or modify planning documents which have already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment. However a SPD may occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects which have not been formally assessed in	Noted. Noted. Noted. Noted. This is not the case.

	the context of a higher level planning document. This may happen, for example, where the relevant high level planning document contains saved policies within a saved local plan which predates the need to carry out a SA or HRA and therefore no higher tier assessment has taken place. If there is any doubt on the need to carry out a SA or HRA a screening assessment should be carried out.	
Norman, Peter	The strategy document puts forward a vision of a much improved public realm for Reading. Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist connectivity would be huge improvements particularly addressing how the IDR severs the town centre from the outer areas.	Noted.
Oatway, Brian	The plan appears to prioritise the convenience of younger and so generally more physically able residents above that of the safety of older and so generally less physically and mentally able residents. For example, potentially moving bus stops further from town centre shops but at the same time potentially allowing cyclists to cycle straight through the town centre and perhaps even allowing cyclists to use contraflow along one way traffic roads endangers older pedestrians especially those with sight, hearing and motion difficulties. Elderly residents already have to walk further to get into the town centre when arriving by buses 17, 4 and 4a than before the bus stop was moved to opposite Jackson Corner and then also have to squeeze through the narrow gap between the cycle stands and shops to get onto Broad Street. These cycle stands are a real pain in the neck to less able pedestrians trying to get onto Broad Street after already navigating on- pavement cyclists between the bus stop and Broad Street.	The Strategy does not intend to move bus stops further from town centre shops, but rather to enable further analysis of kerbside usage to ensure ease of pedestrian circulation. It is not considered feasible to remove cyclists from the town centre or eliminate existing cycle routes as these provide important low- and no-traffic routes for cyclists. The Strategy aims to improve the design of shared spaces to reduce conflict. Cycle parking helps to encourage more sustainable journeys within the town. The Strategy seeks to strike a balance between the needs of different users. This includes further analysis of kerbside usage to ensure that pavements are wide enough for foot traffic in busy areas.

	Given the forecast increase in the number of older residents and decrease in the number of younger residents over coming years surely the needs of older hence less physically and mentally able residents should be given priority over the convenience of younger hence generally more physically able cyclists? Please let us enjoy the town centre please rather than being stressed out by being forced to share the centre with far too many cyclists who, I think it is fair to say, act on far too occasions as if pedestrians should jump out of their way. Please. Can I suggest that planners visit Bracknell town centre where there is a ban on cycling through the town centre, a ban which is enforced with the result that shoppers can meander at will between shops with far, far, far less stress that Reading town centre].	The Strategy does not wish to privilege cyclists over older residents and indeed, many older residents are cyclists themselves. The Strategy seeks to strike a balance as explained above. A complete ban on cycling would be very difficult to enforce and therefore, the Strategy aims to reduce conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians rather than ban cyclists entirely.
Reading Buses	I write to set out our views on the proposed strategy and vision for the town centre. We fully agree with the need to support the town's growing population and economic development, and to set out common design guidelines for developers to consider, but think more detailed thought is needed on how bus services should be accommodated. We are one of eight remaining Council owned bus companies in the UK, with a remit to provide the best possible bus service to the residents of Reading and the travel to work area. We operate a network of demand-led services that support the Council's aims to minimise the use of private vehicles, improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, and reduce congestion. Reading has the third highest level of bus usage per head of population outside London with 19.5 million passenger journeys starting within	Noted.

	to Borough per annum, and is seeking to grow that figure further. Annual surveys undertaken by the Council have shown that 27.3% of people travel to the town centre by bus, second only to 28.3% who walk, 16.9% who travel by car, 14.6% by train, 7.2% by taxi and 5.3% by bicycle. Furthermore, the expansion of the town's population has been facilitated almost entirely by growing bus usage over the last 20 years as the only practical way to make better use of space and for journeys from increasingly distant suburbs. It is therefore vital for the town's success to aspire to provide excellent facilities for bus users. Reading Station is the ninth busiest rail station outside of London, with 13.5 million entries and exits a year. Sales of the integrated rail-bus ticket Plus Bus are the third highest in the UK, highlighting the significant level of integration and interchange that takes place between the bus and rail networks, in addition to destinations in the town centre. It is therefore vital for the town's success to aspire to provide excellent interchange facilities between bus and rail services. The bus network has adapted to many changes over the years to help improve the public realm in the town centre, which is an equally vital part of the town's success. Our traditional hub in Broad Street was pedestrianised in the 1990s, which required buses to be diverted onto narrower service roads around the town centre in a one-way loop, which coupled with increasing traffic congestion made cross-town services less efficient to provide. Then Station	

	Hill was pedestrianised in 2011, making interchange more difficult. Significant effort went into establishing the current arrangements to try to ensure that what remains works as effectively as possible within a much more constrained environment. It is no surprise or coincidence that some of the busiest areas in the town centre are the locations where bus stops are located. The strategy itself identifies these as “primary and strategic roads”, and the meaning of these needs to be considered more closely. Reducing space for buses in these locations will only serve to concentrate more buses into a smaller space. The pedestrian flow is determined by the location of the transport links, and in their absence, footfall is likely to shift, affecting the viability of the retail and entertainment units nearby, and the definition of those roads as primary or strategic. Bus services are not just an investment in transport, but in the town centre. They are important to urban areas for several reasons: • Bus use enables more people to be moved along a corridor of limited vehicle capacity; • Buses enable people who either do not have a car or who do not wish to use one to travel farther than they can walk, with benefits to social equality; • Bus services from peripheral developments can reduce car use from those developments and the resulting congestion on main radial roads;	

	• Bus users contribute substantially to retail activity in town centres; • Towns and cities in which access to the centre is largely by bus can achieve a better city centre environment through more pedestrian space and better air quality; • Buses contribute to active travel and healthier lifestyles because of walking (or cycling) to and from bus stops. It can therefore be said that buses sustain town centres, strengthen communities and protect the environment. Please see "Buses in Urban Developments, CIHT, January 2018" and "Bus Back Better, National Bus Strategy, 2021" for more detail. Larger tram-like shelters are needed at all stops on Friar Street, Station Road, Blagrave Street, Market Place, Jackson's Corner and St Mary's Butts. We have some specific points regarding various sections of the draft strategy as follows: **Section 2.6** principle 03 for sustainable movement prioritises making Reading a pleasantly walkable and cyclable town. However, this isn't practical for those travelling longer distances, or those with mobility problems, for whom buses are the only real environmentally sustainable alternative. Moving bus services further away from the destinations people wish to reach makes the bus less attractive, encouraging greater private car use, and lower overall visitor levels. The strategy should be that buses become accepted with a sort of preferential access to	Noted. The principles and schemes within the Strategy are intended to be indicative, rather than provide detailed proposals for plans. At such time plans for larger shelters come forward, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Noted. The Council acknowledges that buses serve an important function for town centre users, particularly those with mobility issues. The schemes in the Strategy are intended to be indicative and illustrate larger principles for a high-quality public realm. It does not intend to move services further away from destinations. It acknowledges that buses are an important element, but it would not be appropriate to grant

	a pedestrian focused town centre in the areas that are not fully pedestrianised. The guiding principles for the design of streets for buses include the following: • Bus stops sited to directly serve passenger objectives; • Buses protected from delays due to other traffic; • Bus stops equipped for passenger comfort and convenience, including seating, shelters and information for passengers; • Bus stop infrastructure designed for minimum 'dwell time'; • Bus infrastructure capable of handling the type and frequency of services being provided; • Compatibility with other 'movement and place' functions expected of the street in question. **Section 4.1** we are concerned by the view that bus movements negatively affect the public realm in some locations and make it difficult to navigate for other user groups such as pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists. One could say the same thing about street markets, buskers or special events, but they are an equal necessity of a vibrant town centre. We do however think that there are some interventions that could be made to improve facilities for everybody by more closely studying how each part of the town centre is being used, and obtaining a more detailed understanding of the measures that will actually help buses service the area efficiently. We would be happy to work with you on this.	preferential access to pedestrian area without careful consideration on a case-by-case basis. We agree with the principles stated but do not feel that amendments providing this level of detail regarding street design for buses is necessary within the Strategy. There is also an onus on bus operators to ensure that schedules are efficiently minimising dwell time and carefully considering the types and frequency of services to reduce negative impacts on the public realm. A change is proposed to pp. 28 to highlight the important positive contribution that buses make to Reading's town centre. It is not necessarily the presence of buses that negatively impacts the public realm, but rather a combination of existing design factor and demands from different users. Further detailed work is required to understand how these various demands can be balance to accomplish wider aims, but this is not within the scope of the Strategy.

	Section 4.2 highlights Station Road, Market Place and St Mary's Butts as locations where the balance between movement and placemaking is skewed. However, this is the result of a strategic decision made to prioritise other parts of the town centre, including many of those outlined in section 4.3 as healthy streets. We do not agree that the footways on Station Road are narrow, that buses are part of the issue in Market Place, or that Bridge Street is an area where there is significant demand for enjoyment, and we have seen no evidence of the alleged road safety issues linked to buses in Duke Street. **Section 4.3 and 4.4** we do not agree that reducing carriageway widths would help to reduce the impact of buses on the town centre – concentrating more vehicles into a narrower space could increase the impact, and will make it even more difficult for buses to navigate these areas. More space needs to be provided for buses to help relieve the congested parts of the town centre, and accommodate the council's projected growth in population and public transport usage. **Section 4.5** the proposed bus stop improvements appear to be very generic solutions that work well on normal urban roads with standard traffic and standard bus stops, but don't reflect any of the roads in Reading town centre. It states, "where services are frequent this can lead to buses being stacked and unable to pass one another, which increases their impact on the public realm and can negatively affect the perception of buses". In reality, all of the bus stops in the town centre are used on a frequent basis, and having buses obstructing the highway wouldn't just affect perception of	This section simply seeks to identify pressures in particular areas that may need improvement as opportunities arise. Station Road's footpaths are some of the busiest in Reading. Previous strategies have increased demand for bus movements on Station Road as the station interchange is a key destination. Improvements to the public realm are needed, but this would not necessarily need to be at the expense of public transport. This is also the case at Market St, Bridge St and Duke St. The Strategy states that carriageway widths will be reviewed to identify where these can be reduced. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Restricting the highway could also negatively impact cycle movements and this would be considered as well in order to seek a balance. We agree that reducing carriageway widths may in some cases have negative consequences. We acknowledge that there remain issues with bus stacking throughout the town, either due to the volume of services (which is positive for users) or where timetables conflict, drivers change or rest. Many of these issues could be resolved which would go a long way to improving perception and access at many stops.

	buses, it would make the area more dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Reducing the amount of space for buses would increase the number of occasions buses are unable to pass each other, and cyclists the buses.	The examples provided are indicative of options that would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
	Section 4.7 we would note that the current use of Broad Street is intended to provide a variety of uses for pedestrians in addition to being a thoroughfare, and that the gateways to the town centre could be considered to be where the existing pedestrianised areas start and finish, and the areas beyond considered supporting parts of the wider town centre. The railway station and bus network should be considered supporting parts of the town centre.	Noted.
	Section 5.2 outlines the purpose of reclaiming road space to redress the balance between vehicles and pedestrians. As per section 4.5, this is a good generic approach for normal urban roads, but doesn't reflect any of the roads in Reading town centre. Whilst reduced width crossing points help pedestrians cross more quickly/easily, it is not necessarily safer in an environment with already very low vehicle speeds, if the result is pedestrians and vehicles in much closer proximity to each other.	The reallocation of road space will be considered on a case-by-case basis, carefully considering impacts on different types of vehicles and the wider transport and economic objectives of the Council. The diagram aims to illustrate best-practice for consideration in schemes and is not intended to be prescriptive. A balance must be struck in order to ensure safety for pedestrians and cyclists while ensure public transport users can access key destinations.
	Section 5.12 public transport information should be included within the wayfinding displays.	Section 5.12 does not aim to provide detail as to what information should be included, although the Council would support this.
	Section 6.2 describes some proposals for St Mary's Butts that make very little practical sense, and offers the complete opposite to the stated aims of the strategy by misunderstanding the area. There are some historical	

	features in this area that could be made more accessible without impacting bus passengers. The area marked 10 is primarily used by bus passengers waiting for services to the west of Reading, with 11-15 buses an hour departing from the two stops. Whilst not a terminal point, large numbers of customers board in this location, meaning that the proposed single stop would not be adequate for either the number of vehicles or people boarding at peak times. The churchyard wall is used extensively by people waiting for buses, in addition to the two current shelters, adding to the character of the area. Moving those people to a narrow roadside with no seating would significantly worsen the waiting experience. Ideally the two would be combined somehow, so that the bus waiting area remains an integrated part of the design. Kerbs and a segregated carriageway must however be retained to maintain accessibility for wheelchair users onto the buses. The key challenge in the area is enabling easy passage for pedestrians through the queue of people waiting for buses, so we understand why a realignment has been proposed, albeit with inadequate provision for the queue. We are also not convinced that the proposed garden by the church wall would improve the quality of the area - there is very little leisure use of the existing churchyard because it is a graveyard, the nearest retail units would be on the other side of a narrower and more intensively used road, and it would be disconnected from the additional garden in Hosier Street. The direct path from Bridge Street to West Street is why pedestrians use this area in the first place, instead of walking through the churchyard, and the walkway through	Do not agree. The proposals are intended to be indicative of best practice, not prescriptive. Any proposed changes to the public realm would be assessed in order to determine possible impacts on buses. A change is proposed to include both bus stops on southbound route alongside the graveyard. We agree that two stops are necessary here due to high volume. Again, the maps provided are indicative. It includes a garden space alongside Hosier Street, as well. This will significantly increase the quality of the area. We do not agree that a garden alongside the graveyard would not be well-used of result in an indirect path to West Street.

	the garden would no longer be direct. Hosier Street would be a more logical location for a garden to create a use for the area that was previously occupied by additional market stalls – the remaining stalls only use St Mary's Butts because of higher footfall. Removing the "wall of cars" that is present on both sides of the monument island should be a priority, and we would suggest limiting this whole area to buses and loading only. It would be preferable to retain traffic lanes on both sides of the island rather than trying to segregate bus users from the town centre to reflect the desire lines of pedestrians. Removing the parking would create significant scope to enhance the pavements and central island, and create a much more open feeling when buses aren't present loading. Having two stops means that there are currently times when no buses are present, moving to one stop would mean buses are more likely to be constantly present. A secondary challenge is posed by the lack of capacity for buses arriving on the other side of St Mary's Butts, at point 03 outside the Broad Street Mall. There is a much larger flow of buses from South to North due to the one-way system for most buses around the town centre. The lack of space here can often lead to queues of buses waiting to get through, making the road difficult to cross, and the "gateway" point an uninviting pinchpoint. Ideally this would be removed, the carriageway redesigned, and the gateway relocated to point 06 with the junction of Bridge Street as part of a redesigned central island.	Agree that removing wall of cars on each side is a priority. Do not agree that retention of traffic lanes on both sides of the island is absolutely necessary, but this is something that should be considered in detail. The Council acknowledges issues with queues of buses at this location and this should be looked at in more detail. The proposals on pp. 89 are indicative, not prescriptive and the Strategy would not preclude reconfiguration of bus stops if a detailed analysis provided evidence for this.

	We are not convinced that the proposed delivery bays on footpath pads are a good idea, the one in Station Road does not work in a satisfactory manner due to the bins and debris that are always present alongside, despite it being a prime part of the town centre that this strategy is specifically seeking to improve, and because vehicles can rarely park neatly on it. **Section 6.3** contains proposals for Market Place, which again don't make much practical sense. Page 93 point 08 proposes to "reduce the carriageway width to the minimum possible, for buses to safely move through the area at a slow pace." in a very busy	Agree – change proposed to remove delivery bays on footpaths. Agree that a proposal for a layby may be impractical here as this may lead to buses queuing to access the layby and increase the perception of bus dominance in this area..

	boarding point for buses to the South. Buses in this area already travel at a very slow speeds due to the confined nature of the road. Point 09 proposes a raised pedestrian crossing in a location that not on a desire line. We do not think that a raised crossing is necessary or desirable given the low volume and very low speed of traffic in this area, and the negative impact raised tables have on bus passenger comfort. It would be most sensibly located at the junction at road level. Previous work has shown that it is not necessary to have a signalised crossing due to the relatively low volume of traffic, and our drivers are trained to give way to pedestrians here. Point 03 proposes a wide comfortable footpath, which we believe is already in place, apart from the loading bays that are generally used for estate agent cars. Removing this parking would create a wide path that neatly flows into the pedestrianised area. At Point 04, we would propose that the spikey chain fence around the market place is removed to allow free access to pedestrians from any point, with updated paving to match the rest of the town centre, and so that the pedestrianised area doesn't feel like a road. Delineation from that area to the vehicle movement area should still be obvious.	Change proposed to remove reference to layby. "Reducing the carriageway to the minimum possible" remains an aspiration. This would be assessed in detail. A case for a crossing and whether or not it would need to be raised would be considered in detail at a later stage, but a change is proposed to remove reference to "raised tables" due to the impact on buses and associated maintenance of the raised crossing due to high volume of buses. The footpath here is not currently wide but would be if the loading bays were removed as indicated in the diagram. This is proposed under point 5 on pp 93.

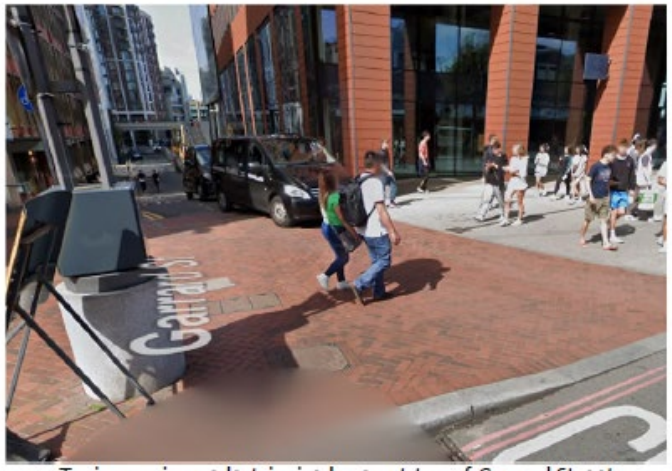
Wall of cars in Market Place

Uninviting entrance pad and chain fence around Market Place

	Section 6.4 proposes the removal of all the slip roads to/from the IDR, which is not advisable. The slip road from Duke Street onto Queens Road is essential to maintain the bus priority measures that are provided for buses leaving the town centre, as it is the only permissible route for vehicles that aren't buses to use. There is no pedestrian demand for this movement due to the proximity of the riverside path and Star Lane which provides access to the same locations.	The Strategy does not proposed to remove all o the slip roads to/from the IDR. Given the low number of routes using the slip road from Duke Street onto Queens Road, we anticipate the impact on buses to be minimal.
	This also proposes narrowing the slip road from Mill Lane into London Street, which is present to help manage the significant demand for traffic movements. This could cause traffic tailbacks to the Oracle Roundabout, which would not be desirable.	The slip road from Mill Lane into London Street already narrows at the end to a single lane. It is unclear how this would create more significant tailbacks.
	This also proposes the removal of the slip road from Queens Road onto London Street, which is not desirable because it is the only alternative route following the introduction of a one way system along Sidmouth Street to create an active travel route. Whilst not heavily used movement, it would need to be reconsidered for residents of South Street.	Change proposed to ensure removal of this slip road retains vehicle movements from Queens Road onto London Street through the intersection itself.
	The proposed narrowing of Duke Street High Bridge (shown as London Street in the strategy document) would not be practical for the volume of bus movements in the area. Buses need to be able to pass each other in this location due to the limited time available for buses with phasing of the traffic lights across the IDR. Otherwise, additional "bus walls" of queueing buses would be created. The bus priority link across the IDR is important for the efficient provision of	Do not agree. There is a high volume of pedestrians in this area and the additional weight of electric buses may result in changes to weight restrictions. This will be looked at in further detail.

	services to the South of the town, Hospital and University, and the Council is legally committed to retain all existing bus priority measures as part of the statutory Bus Enhanced Partnership.	
	There is a lot less traffic running east to west along Queens Road due to the rest of the one-way system, so it would appear that the IDR could be reduced to one lane in this direction without affecting traffic throughput too greatly, helping to reduce the dominance that motor traffic has in this area.	Noted. Detailed consideration of spare network capacity is not within the scope of the Strategy but rather the Strategy seeks to provide examples of how best practice principles could be applied in areas of the town.
	Section 6.5 suggests that Station Road is "currently cluttered, congested and dominated by buses". It is strategically important for this area to be the focus of the bus network, providing an interchange with both the town centre and railway in the absence of any other option. The area is only busy because it is the only location that can efficiently be served by buses for both the town centre and station. Reducing the number of stops would intensify the usage of the remaining stops, and make the so called "bus walls" longer and more congested. There is a significant lack of space and facilities for buses in this area, with a lot of services already relegated to surrounding roads. It is also not fair to say that the road is dominated by buses – there is a wide footpath that has been shown to be the maximum possible width following trials undertaken with ourselves and the Council ahead of the current layout being adopted in 2011. Furthermore, the reopened Friars Walk should help separate pedestrian flows, and provide a fully pedestrianised experience.	It is considered that the existing issues identified are accurate but the Strategy does not intend to remove buses from this important focus of the network. The proposals for a new junction, 4 m wide one way lane, enhanced pedestrian crossings, street trees and pockets spaces will not disrupt the operation of buses in the area. The proposals do not seek to widen the footpath, but rather to declutter it.

	The waiting area for bus passengers generally works well, with space for pedestrians to pass waiting passengers, and only really suffers because of the begging by individuals who target the area because of the number of people passing through. It is nonsense to suggest that “bus walls create an intimidating place for people”. However, the road could be more pleasantly designed in an integrated way with the rest of the surroundings, perhaps with a continuous shelter covering the whole area for pedestrians and bus passengers alike. The east pavement is more lightly used, so there may be scope to narrow it slightly to create more space on the more popular west side.	Begging and rough sleeping is not within the scope of the Strategy. The Council acknowledges that bins associated with a nearby pub and fast food contribute to clutter, as well as the introduction of the loading bay at Sainsbury’s. A safe crossing o nutside the Malmaison may result in more pedestrians using the east side footpath, but it would likely not be appropriate to narrow the east side footpath as it is not very wide as is.
	The report does not make any mention of the significant problem that has been caused by the relaxed approach that has been taken to providing space for taxi ranks, especially compared to the original vision for Station Road which was to provide a traffic-free walkway from the Station to Friar Street, and is why so many bus services now have to depart from Station Road and the surrounding area. The horse-shoe taxi rank was developed as a temporary measure during the remodelling of the Southern Interchange, but was subsequently retained due to pressure from taxi operators having gained extra business. This needs to be removed to allow the top of Garrard Street to be closed to allow the bus stands to be more spaced out, and to provide a clear pedestrian walkway. The horse-shoe taxi rank also undermines the bus service, especially with people unfamiliar with the area, and encourages un-necessary vehicle mileage within the town centre. The taxi operators state that there is a significant loss of trade during times when the rank has been closed, confirming that the rank is	Detailed consideration of taxi ranks and movements is not within the scope of the Strategy, but the Strategy seeks to reduce conflicts between vehicles and other users (pedestrians, cyclists) generally. This will be considered in detail at such time schemes come forward.

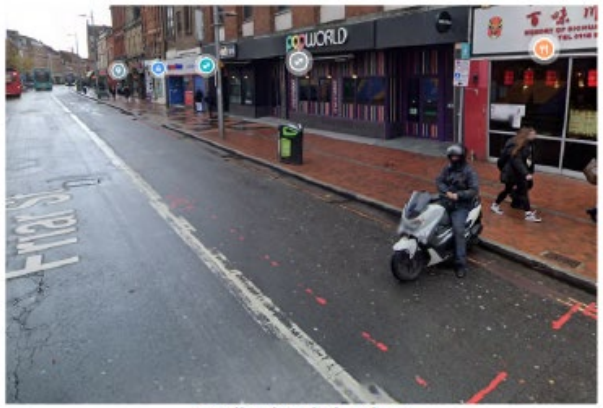
	not necessary, and that they are taking trade from more sustainable and economic modes. The taxi rank at the Southern Interchange should be sufficient to cover all needs of the entire town centre, and particularly Station Hill and Friar Street. We therefore also recommend the removal of the taxi rank on Friar Street East, by point 02, which creates an unpleasant “wall of taxis” for pedestrians to get past.  Taxis crossing pedestrianised area at top of Garrard Street	

	 Friar Street taxi rank - regular over-ranking, and the one bus carries more people than all the taxis combined	
	7.1 Trooper Potts Way The strategy doesn't make any specific comments about the Station North bus interchange, but this would benefit from radical simplification and the addition of more greenery to link in with the proposals for the IDR junction, given the relatively low level of usage.	Noted. The Strategy emphasises the importance of establishing wide green verges and medians. Any simplification would need to continue to provide facility for rail replacement and special events, such as Reading Festival.
	7.2 Oxford Road This is an extremely busy area that is difficult to get right because it is a key corridor to the west, carriageway space is very limited, and often heavily dominated by on-street parking. Parking needs to be minimised, and any spare highway space used to allow bus services to flow more freely.	Noted. The Strategy seeks to rationalise on-street parking.
	Parking on the bridge over the IDR should be removed because there are no houses or shop fronts, and the remaining carriageway is not wide enough for buses to	Change proposed to allow for consideration of removal of one side of on-street pay and display parking on the Oxford Road just over the IDR.

	safely pass, even when cyclists are present. The car parking re-enforces the impact of the IDR on the town centre, but some greenery could be added to significantly improve this. **Not mentioned - Station Square** We would also like to add that the station forecourt area is underutilised and currently consists of various rows of bollards and other street clutter, rather than anything that makes the area desirable. It is a very large area that currently feels like a chore to walk through due to being open, windswept and devoid of any character. The paving doesn't align with the rest of the town centre, or the vision to add greenery. A radical but potentially attractive solution would be to relocate the statue of King Edward VII that is currently isolated within the roundabout onto the square. Relocating the roundabout slightly could allow the bus shelters to be moved out, therefore creating a clearer line of sight from the station exit to Broad Street. Ideally the Station building and John Lewis building would be visible from the other.	The inclusion of new street trading pitches has resulted in better utilisation of this area. It is not considered that this recently re-developed area represents an area of the town centre most in need of improvement.

	 Street clutter and bland paving at Station Square One final suggestion for this area would be to ensure that provision is made for a full bus interchange as part of any redevelopment of the Brunel Arcade, and in the meantime to take ownership of the RailAir layby to allow better use of the space for bus services to free up space elsewhere. **Not mentioned - Friar Street West** The strategy doesn't contain any specific points about Friar Street, but with the emergence of the Station Hill development and reopening on Friars Walk, greater attention should be given to this area. The road surface is extremely poor, which is a point that I have already expressed serious safety concerns to officers about because it affects pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users as well as bus passengers and bus operators. This needs urgent attention, and repairing in a way that helps create multiple links across to Broad Street, West Street and the rest of the town centre. Proper ongoing maintenance would	It is not considered likely that a bus station on this site would be deliverable without significantly affecting viability. Moreover, this is not within the scope of the Strategy. Any redevelopment of the site would be assessed in detail to ensure support for the high volume of buses in this area and its importance as an interchange. The Council agrees that resurfacing is needed at Friar Street, but this is not within the scope of the Strategy.

	significantly improve the appearance and perception of Friar Street. Crossing outside Friars Walk unsuitable for wheelchairs due to road surface defects that have been present for an extended period of time. The creation of a loading bay in the westbound bus lane along Friar Street a few years ago means that buses are frequently required to wait for an opportunity to get past the vehicles. This causes queues of vehicles that didn't exist before the loading bay was added. The loading bay is often only occupied purely by delivery bikes that could be accommodated elsewhere. Removing obstructions would help to smooth the bus flow, and reduce the occurrence of "bus walls".	Noted, but this level of detail and this area at Friar Street is not within the scope of the Strategy.

	 Loading bay in bus lane **Conclusion** We are struggling to see a significant opportunity to reduce the impact of buses on the town centre by reducing carriageway widths – in most cases this would have the opposite effect. The challenge can only be solved by providing more pavement space for buses, allowing their impact to be more spread out, removing all remaining on-street parking, and reviewing taxi and loading provision with the aim of removing any duplicated provision.	A change is proposed to ensure that the Strategy clearly acknowledges the important contribution that buses make to the town and that the impact on buses will be considered when specific proposals come forward. Nonetheless, reducing carriageway width is an important tool in improving the public realm and remains an aim of the Strategy. Detailed review of infrastructure for buses, street-parking and taxi is not within the scope of the Strategy.
REDA	REDA welcomes the Reading BC Town Centre Public Realm Strategy, believing it to be a positive and useful tool to be used in the future regeneration of the town centre bringing together all who live work, do business and redevelop our sites and building in a common design guide approach which we believe is pivotal to securing future public and private sector funds to implement it. This was the overall conclusion of a webinar that REDA hosted on Friday	Noted.

	28th February comprising over 30 representatives of business and interested parties. The audience was provided with a presentation summarising the Strategy, by the consultants who had written it; notably Mehron Kirk and Marine Goudoffre of Studio DWG, our thanks to them for this. Below are the main points raised by the audience about the draft strategy for consideration before the strategy is adopted by the Council.	
	Overall Response REDA welcomed the opportunity for our Town Centre BID team to be involved in the development for this strategy at the early stage and throughout its development and we hope to continue this partnership working with you as we move forward to identify funding streams, design specific solutions and implement them and improve reading Town Centre.	Noted.
	The need to move quickly into implementation, as the town centre is long overdue a comprehensive make over and beyond welcome, but a piece meal and ad-hoc approach so far has been taken. We need to move swiftly so that we don't miss opportunities in the here and now of securing S106 money for the strategy on sites coming forward for example, this year.	Noted.
	On February 28th REDA hosted a webinar to get some final responses to the draft strategy. The main points raised at our webinar and endorsed by REDA, for your consideration in the final document and or for use in the implementation of the Strategy are as follows:	Noted.

	1. Importance Of The Strategy: REDA operates the Business Improvement District on behalf of more than 650 businesses in the town centre. There is evidence that the state of the public realm directly affects the perception and behaviour of visitors, employees, businesses and residents in their use of the town centre. Having a poor public realm means people are less likely to want to visit, work, relocate businesses to, or invest in the town centre. The Police having undertaken research in Reading also point to the fact that a poor public realm perpetuates begging, rough sleeping, vandalism and crime as people that do not feel out of place. A design guide type tool of this nature is therefore vitally important in reducing crime and simulating economic growth.	Noted.
	2. Delivering The Strategy: The audience was understanding of the message given by the consultants in the presentation that this was not a fully planned and funded strategy, rather a toolkit to be used in all negotiations and proposals that would be undertaken in the town centre. But S106 was mentioned numerous times as the solution to funding the strategy. The audience therefore expressed the wish that RBC should embrace this fact and in the absence of the necessary public funds currently, RBC should prioritise proposals in the public realm strategy, in any future planning application discussions with a view to extracting as much financial contribution to the enhancement and upgrade of the public realm as possible. We agreed with the consultants that further reference to good practice and expertise in Northern Europe should go hand in hand with more detailed plans in Reading as they are seen to be bolder and more impactful especially in tackling the climate	Noted. The Strategy is intended to be used as a tool to enable S106 receipts and prioritise public realm improvements.

	emergency and reducing the carbon emissions effect of vehicles.	
	3. Reading Climate Mitigation And Net Zero Targets: REDA welcomes more planting outlined in the strategy, shady tree-lined walks will be essential in maintaining cool spaces for people during heatwaves, especially if we want to discourage them to use air-conditioned cars. Where possible, semi-permeable surfaces should be used in place of impermeable ones to assist with drainage in the event of heavy rainstorms, which are already becoming more frequent due to climate change. The Strategy should cross reference advice in the 2025 Climate Emergency Strategy on this matter.	Noted. These aims are also supported by policies within the Local Plan. Change proposed to refer to the Climate Change Emergency Strategy.
	4. Reading A Living Place: We welcome this as an underlying philosophy however there are issues that we don't feel have been sufficiently addressed in the Strategy. Firstly, child friendly recreation areas. There are examples where signs prohibit ball games and skating and little or no areas for play activity. With more and more families living in the town centre the strategy should outline how our urban area can be designed in a way to make such areas available and safe. Secondly our audience felt that despite design measures to mitigate the impact of cars and large vehicles the balance would still be in favour of them and not people. A balance that must be reversed if Reading is to be a 'living place'. REDA has seen a detailed response from Reading Buses and supports the case for public transport and reducing cars in the town centre. However landscaping measures are not enough, there are still some bold decisions that need to be taken alongside this Strategy to	It is considered that the strategy makes extensive reference to play spaces and playful elements within public spaces. Noted. The Strategy aims to improve the public realm within the town centre to encourage cycling, walking and public transport use. It is unclear what specific and further changes to the language in the Strategy would effectively reduce the number of cars or delivery lorries within the town centre. Reducing journeys by private car is an overarching aim within the town, reiterated by the Local Transport Strategy

	reduce the visual impact, threat to safety and personal experience people have of a large number of cars, delivery lorries, waste collection lorries and buses in the town centre. Not forgetting that cycling as a sustainable and healthy form of transport is very welcome if the right segregation and signposting is put in place. Again, Northern Europe may have the answer.	and the Local Plan. The Strategy also includes extensive discussion of the importance of safe cycle routes, wayfinding and cycle parking throughout the town centre.
	5. Wayfinding: We welcome the reference to wayfinding in the Strategy and need for consistency. This needs a masterplan approach across the whole town centre and should not be addressed by incremental signage schemes as at present. In particular we would like to see emphasis in the strategy of signage to our visitor destination points – cultural, heritage, arts and entertainment venues as well as hotels. Perhaps colour coding areas / quarters of the town centres could be included in the strategy. in a similar way to the successful colour coding of our Reading Buses.	Because the implementation of the Strategy relies on developer contributions, it is not possible to impose a specific design for signage. It is considered more effective to outline design guidance and evaluate each scheme on its own merits as it comes forward.
	Reading borough Council recently adopted the Reading place brand and we would like to see this referenced in the design guide for use on any wayfinding, street art, entry signs street furniture etc. It is not just a logo and very adaptable with a full range of colours and adaptions to many situations as outlined in the detailed place brand toolkit. https://www.visit-reading.com/readingbrand The brand is more than just a logo and we would ask that the Public Real Strategy specifically recommends that any physical structures (lamps, signs, benches etc), are designed in a way that is authentically Reading with personality that reflects the town. (Station Hill Development and its public	Please see above – likewise, it is not possible to require use of the Reading place brand across the town centre.

	realm have really raised the bar and set a new benchmark in this respect.	
	6. Public Art: Reading has adopted a very comprehensive public art strategy, most recently delivered excellently in the Station Hill development. We would like to see more detailed guidance on this in the strategy so it can benefit from developer funding as well.	Section 5:13 provides guidance on public art. Although it is not within the scope of the Strategy, it identifies the need for further work to provide detailed public art guidance.
	7. Our Riverside Public Realm: Reading has three waterways. We would like to see more guidance on our rivers and canal side walkways and moorings as an integral and often overlooked part of the town centre, in which people arrive at and depart from, or at least try to as the moorings are limited and not always well maintained. They are a great part of our heritage and hold great potential for more sustainable water ways to travel along the Thames, through the Oracle and down to south Reading with some investment and public realm design guidance.	Mooring is not considered to be within the scope of the Strategy, but the Strategy makes frequent reference to the importance of improving and connecting waterside areas, as well as create new access to waterside areas that are not accessible.
	8. Digital Screens: We would like to see guidance on the use of digital screens for advertising in the street scape. There was no support for digital screens and in fact REDA spearheaded a major campaign against the proposal for such a large screen in Broad Street which was finally rejected. However, guidance on where screens are out of character in the public realm may have prevented such an application being made in the first place.	8. It is not considered necessary to provide specific guidance on digital screens for advertising as these proposals will be considered under general considerations for street furniture within the Strategy and the advertisement policies of the Local Plan which include visual impact and illumination guidance.
	9. Counter Productive Influences: A number of negative influences on the public realm were highlighted by our audience, notable unsightly rows of bins (especially on	9. These elements are identified as issues within Section 3.1. It is very difficult for the Strategy to enforce proper bin storage, but bins will be assessed as proposals come forward

	Station Road and Oxford Road), the poor reinstatement of works on utilities infrastructure, cycle safety and infrastructure. (eg confusing signs on Broad Street and ugly new black bicycle racks on Broad Street). While bin collection is the subject of legislation their storage on the pedestrian areas and pathways is unsightly. Perhaps the guidance could advocate underground storage options. Could cycle racks and parking areas be given consistent design guidance in the strategy. It is also important that public realm design of landscaping and signage is included to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and families with children from cyclists. 10. Influences Outside The Remit Of The Strategy: We congratulate the consultants in referencing a wide range of other strategies that seek to shape the town centre including REDA's own BID Plans (2024-29) and Reading 2050 City Vision. It is important that the Strategy explicitly references the need for those using it to refer to these wider plans as they can sometimes hold the key to both solving some of the solutions that can enhance the public realm and tackling issues that can be counter productive. The reason for not doing a detailed guide for Union Street (Smelly Alley) as was provided for Chain Street was given that a master plan approach was needed outside the remit of the public realm strategy. This was because there were so many issues in Smelly Alley that a simple make over was not the long-term solution. REDA fully supports the audience response that RBC should urgently bring forward the master plan for Smelly Alley.	when looking at street clutter. The Local Plan also requires consideration of proper bin storage when individual planning applications come forward. It is not considered feasible to require underground bin storage. The Strategy includes specific guidance for cycle racks, but parking requirements are outlined in a separate Supplementary Planning Document. The document includes design strategies to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. 10. Change proposed to refer to the BID Plans and Reading 2050 Vision. The area examples provided in the document are intended to be indicative, illustrating the possible public realm interventions that could be employed in different types of environments within the town centre. Therefore, it does not preclude improvements to Union Street (Smelly Alley) and in fact, many of the principles applied to the Chain Street example could be applied to Union Street. Significant improvements to Union Street remain a priority for the Council.

	Going Forward The Audience having accepted the strategy did not have detailed costed and funded actions plans currently but did emphasise the need for the Council to priorities Section 106 funding towards an implementation plan as soon as possible. This means engaging developers immediately. However, one final point that was well made was that a complimentary approach could be one of mitigation, to avoid the need to keep on searching for funding. The idea that we should seek to engage all residents, landlords, businesses owners and their employees in taking pride in their public realm was well made and we would recommend it to the Council. This especially means public realm directly surrounding the properties of those living or using the town centre for business, but also being involved in collective activities such as tree planting and litter picking etc. REDA would be willing to work with the Council to further develop this idea with a pilot project. REDA would also like to be involved in shaping further detailed plans and celebrating success. To these ends we would be willing to convene similar focus group meeting to help shape and prioritise detailed proposals and also feedback regularly on progress made in implementing the strategy to businesses and interested parties.	Noted. Noted and welcomed, although this is outside of the scope of the Strategy itself.
Rey, Thomas	This is an amazing initiative and needs to be adopted ASAP. My only concern is how bus lanes could be impacted by some of the proposals on Oxford Road, where a reduction in road space would seemingly remove the newly created bus lane. Public transport infrastructure needs to be expanded alongside this type of scheme.	Change proposed to amend the drawings to clarify that there is no intention to remove the new bus lane between Zinzan St and Prospect Street. At the time of the initial audit to inform the Strategy, the bus lane was not in place and so it was unintentionally omitted from the illustrations.

Robinson, Peter	Promising strategy. I hope many of these proposals can come to life. I oppose the proposed cycle lane down the middle of Broad Street. We should deck over the IDR.	Noted. The Strategy does not endorse this option, but simply provides a recommended example that could help to protect and separate pedestrians and cyclists. A detailed proposal will be considered in detail at such time it comes forward. Noted. The cost of decking over the IDR is likely prohibitive, but any proposals would be considered at such time they come forward.
Silva, Jade	This looks great! Very good design and the pages are well constructed. But we do need another bridge to redirect traffic that doesn't need to be in Reading.	Noted. This is not within the scope of the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy, but remains an aim of the Local Plan and the Local Transport Strategy.
Smith, Colin	I wholeheartedly support your plans to encourage cycling, especially as the bus service to Caversham ends at 7.30pm There is a key issue that needs addressing - bike theft. I know many people who are put off cycling in the strong belief that their bike will be stolen in town. Similarly, I know others who did cycle but soon stopped when their bike WAS stolen. It is a real obstacle to this objective.	Noted. Noted. This is chiefly a police matter, but the Strategy includes elements of design that will help to discourage bike theft, such as a preference for secure cycle parking in the town centre, cycle parking that is highly visible and design guidance for Sheffield stands.
Sport England	Although, this draft document does not relate specifically to the provision of any sport related spaces, Sport England does wish to see places to be designed so that they encourage people to be more active. Sport England's Active Design (May 2023) [https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-	Noted.

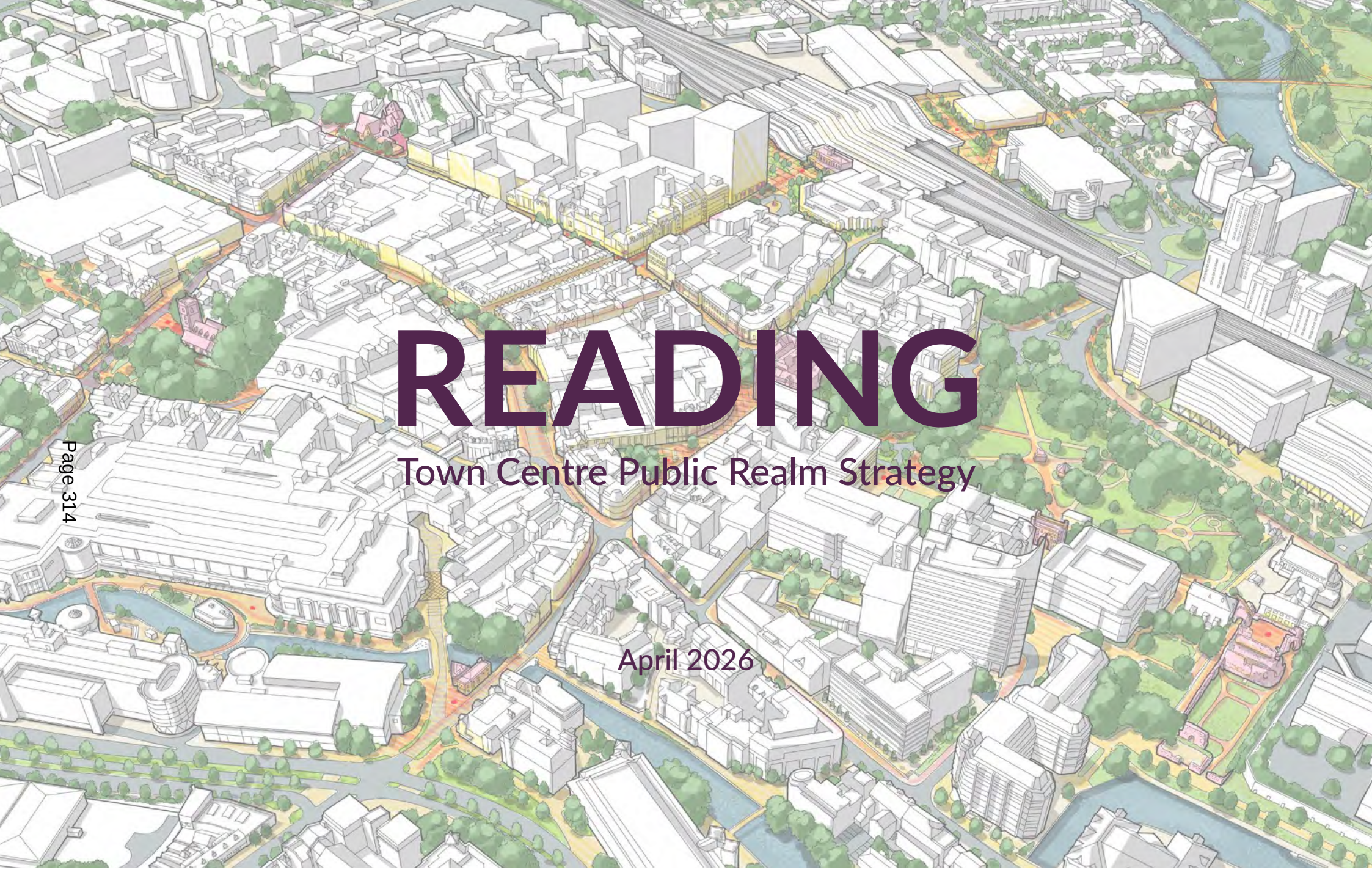
	and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design] document sets out how places can enable this. The draft strategy's aspirations for the town centre appear to align closely to this Active Design document and Sport England supports the broad principles that the strategy is trying to achieve.	
Stevens, Cllr David	1. A good document and very welcome. 2. I think that we should make clear that the document is 'aspirational." On page 8, the second paragraph states 'the recommendations within this document are to be implemented through both public and private development projects.' That gives the strong impression that there is no flexibility once the strategy is adopted. Funds and planning of schemes has not been finalised. When each scheme comes forward we will be keen to inspect and comment and consider the context. 3. I think we need to be very careful about increasing town centre cycling. Slow moving pedal powered bikes are one thing. We are now seeing increasingly powerful e-bikes – essentially powerful motorbikes often ridden by delivery riders who have little respect for one way streets pavements and unwary pedestrians. I do not want to encourage their use in the pedestrianised areas of the town.	1. Noted. 2. Change proposed to include this language on page 8. 3. Noted. We recognise the issues caused by increasingly powerful e-bikes, many of which are not legal. This is largely a police matter, but the Strategy aims to design public spaces in order to reduce conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. Allowing cycling in pedestrianised areas of the town provides important traffic-free routes and can encourage sustainable journeys, but unfortunately interventions in the built environment are unable to differentiate slow moving cyclists and speeding and often illegal e-bikes.
Webb, Richard	Excellent to be seeing this report and some great work and guidance. Just one comment. The red brick paving is very much part of Readings streetscape and seems to have been dropped	Noted. It is considered that because many of the heritage buildings in Reading are red brick, a

	in preference to other materials. Just look at Reading from google earth (page 4 in report) and you can see the warm red everywhere. Reasons for brick: 1. Brick is very relevant to Reading as a material, it could be considered the fourth b - beer biscuits bulbs and bricks! 2. It is typically more sustainable than concrete or granite + can be permeable. 3. Used appropriately it is very attractive. Also, there's a lot of it already on the ground so to replace it would be unsustainable and costly and could make Reading public realm even more patchy. Perhaps worth reconsidering and working with it.	neutral paving palette could serve to accentuate the historic environment within the town centre. This is explained in detail in Section 5.3. That being said, each proposal will be considered individually and the paving guidance specifically cites that paving should be appropriate to the heritage of the area and durable. It also states that concrete slabs should be avoided.
Wilkins, John	Very interesting, lots of nice ideas but has major weaknesses such as no consideration of costs of implementation and ongoing maintenance. Want to keep cars out of centre of Reading, concerns about number of buses in some roads but no clear solution. (What about a bus station?) It would be good to have uniform pavement materials but in many parts of Reading as safe undamaged surface of any colour would be an improvement. Lots of emphasis on cycling but many no attempt on how to deal with over enthusiastic cyclists who plague parts of Reading.	Noted. The Strategy states that projects will be implemented at such time Council funding or developer contributions become available. This will include maintenance arrangements as detailed in 5.17. The decision to remove the town centre bus station was taken nearly 20 years ago and since then, the bus company has been able to manage effectively within the town centre. At this point, there is no land available to reinstate a bus station and it is not considered necessary. Noted. The Strategy cites the existing poor condition of paving throughout the town centre

	I like trees and other green planting but to be successful MUST be properly maintained. This has not always been the case in the past. Are trees in planters really a practical proposition, a dead tree is far worse than no tree. The IDR is seen as a problem but the report lacks a substantive solution. Lots of consultant jargon. In places plain English would have helped.	and identifies this as a major focus for improvements. It is not possible for built environment interventions to address dangerous cycling, which is largely a police matter. Rather, the Strategy aims to implement design measures that will reduce speeds and lessen opportunities for conflict with pedestrians. Noted. Detailed maintenance plans are a key focus of the Strategy, particularly for green infrastructure. Because the decking of the IDR or the elimination of the IDR is not considered to be feasible, the Strategy focuses improvements on major intersections along the IDR to reduce negative effects (such as noise and pollution) and to improve the experience of users not travelling by car (walking, cycling and wheeling). Noted, but it is difficult to propose changes here as it is unclear which specific areas are considered by the representor to be “jargon.”

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3: Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD for adoption



READING

Town Centre Public Realm Strategy

April 2026

BDP. urban flow movement people places dwg.

Reading Borough Council

Document Control

Document Title	Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
Revision & Date Issued	1st Issue - Final Document - October 2024 2nd Issue - Post Consultation Update - April 2026

Contents

01 Executive Summary.....05

02 Introduction.....07

2.1 Purpose of the Guide
2.2 Reading Town Centre
2.3 Policy & Strategies Context
2.4 What Makes a Good Public Realm
2.5 Vision for Reading's Public Realm
2.6 Guiding Principles

03 Town Centre Appraisal.....17

3.1 Current Issues & Concerns
3.2 Strategic Typology
3.3 Street Audit Overview
3.4 Heritage and Conservation
3.5 Development Sites
3.6 Character Areas
3.7 Aspirational Town Centre Structure

04 Pedestrian, Wheelers & Cycle Framework.....27

4.1 Existing Movement Hierarchy
4.2 Overarching Challenges & Opportunities
4.3 'Healthy streets' Criteria Plan
4.4 Overall Recommended Improvements
4.5 Bus Stop Improvements
4.6 Enabling Town Centre Cycling
4.7 Broad Street Layout

05 Design Manual.....39

5.1 Design Manual Introduction
5.2 Purpose of reclaiming road space
5.3 Paving
5.4 Vegetation
5.5 Tree planting
5.6 Rain Gardens
5.7 Green Verges along Carriageway
5.8 Parking & Integrated Green Infrastructure
5.9 Street Furniture
5.10 Lighting
5.11 Play Provision
5.12 Wayfinding & Signage
5.13 Public Art & Animation
5.14 Street Activation
5.15 Meanwhile Use
5.16 Hoarding & Construction Site
5.17 Maintenance

06 Specific Examples.....85

6.1 Introduction & Overview of Examples
6.2 St Mary's Butts
6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square
6.4 Queen Road & London Street Junction
6.5 Station Road
6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

07 Other Area Guidelines.....107

7.1 Trooper Potts Way & IDR Junction
7.2 Oxford Road
7.3 Queen Victoria Street
7.4 The Forbury
7.5 Chain Street

08 Emerging Action Plan.....115

1.1 Executive Summary

The Reading Town Centre Public Realm Strategy sets forth a comprehensive vision aimed at transforming the town's public spaces into pleasant, accessible, and sustainable environments that can support the town's growing population and economic development. Key elements of this strategy focus on improving the quality, cohesion, and usability of the public realm while fostering a sense of identity, cultural vibrancy, and sustainability.

This strategy is crucial for the future of Reading because it addresses the growing demands of a rapidly developing town while conserving and enhancing its historical and cultural identity. The quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of place, where people will choose to spend their time. By enhancing public spaces, improving accessibility, and integrating sustainability, the strategy ensures that Reading remains a vibrant, attractive, and liveable town for people who live, work and visit. With projected population growth, the plan provides a framework for creating a more walkable, cyclist-friendly, and inclusive urban environment, while promoting green infrastructure to combat climate change. It also supports economic growth by fostering a strong sense of place and community, making Reading a desirable destination for business, culture, and tourism.

The strategy identifies several challenges, including a lack of consistency in public space design, vehicular dominance, and underutilised green spaces. Many areas suffer from clutter and inconsistent street furniture, which detracts from the town's heritage assets and makes navigation difficult for pedestrians. To address these issues, the strategy proposes a unified design approach to create clear, attractive, and comfortable streetscapes.

The document emphasises the importance of green and blue infrastructure, proposing the incorporation of more trees, biodiverse planting, and better access to riverways, particularly the Thames and the River Kennet. This is aligned with Reading's broader ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. It also highlights the value of heritage and placemaking in enhancing the town's identity, while balancing new developments with conservation.

10 key objectives include:

- Unifying the Public Realm Design
- Improving Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure
- Enhancing Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Promoting a Sustainable and Inclusive Town Centre
- Addressing Vehicular Dominance
- Highlighting Reading's Heritage
- Activating Public Spaces
- Decluttering the Streets
- Integrating High-Quality Materials
- Encouraging Temporary and Flexible Uses

The strategy concludes with worked examples of a number of priority areas and an emerging action plan which identifies physical public realm projects, enabling projects and studies to help prepare for the future. The schemes included in the strategy are intended to be indicative, not prescriptive. They aim to outline best practice guidance and are intended to inform decisions as applications come forward. The areas identified are illustrative examples of different town centre conditions, demonstrating how public realm improvements can be applied, rather than prioritising locations for intervention.

THE
THREE GUINEAS
FULLER'S
Reading
TAXIS

02

Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Guide

2.2 Reading Town Centre

2.3 Policy & Strategies Context

2.4 What Makes a Good Public Realm

2.5 Vision for Reading's Public Realm

2.6 Guiding Principles

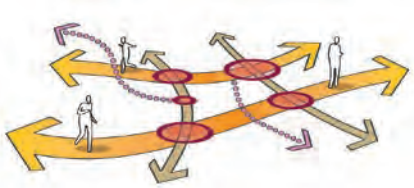
2.1 Purpose of the Guide

This Public Realm Strategy seeks to achieve the ultimate goal of setting out a clear, consistent and usable set of principles, to allow high quality and appropriate development of the public realm in Reading, with the aim of achieving an attractive, memorable and vibrant town centre.

This document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), meaning that it supplements and expands upon higher level planning policies. A SPD should therefore be linked to a policy in a development plan. This SPD supplements policy CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) in the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted on 4th November 2019. Policy CR3 requires that proposals for new development make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm of the central area.

The recommendations within this document are to be implemented through both public and private development projects, including Reading Council's own work. It should also encourage private landowners to ensure that improvements are consistent with the strategy, whether or not they will need Council approval. The overall aim is that this guide is highly usable and adoptable and leads to real positive and cohesive change.

These guidelines will inform the design and assessment process for future development and maintenance, demonstrate a commitment to best practice and provide a consistent approach to planning and design, whilst ensuring consistency in quality and aesthetics.



Establish a legible hierarchy of streets & spaces and associated attributes

Set out what the public realm's appearance & feel should be

Identify the poor and missing links and set out how these can improved

Enhance the existing heritage without competing and distracting from it

Set out design principles & guidelines for construction sites

Promote green & blue infrastructure as an essential component of the streetscape

What should the Public Realm Strategy do for Reading town centre?

Establish principles to enhance access & amenity value of the riverways

Set out good practice principles on decluttering & unification of furniture

Promote meanwhile uses to bring life to the streetscape before change

Demonstrate how bus shelters can be better integrated in the public realm

2.2 Reading Town Centre

Reading town centre's current and future development presents opportunities to uplift the urban landscape to foster a strong, distinctive identity, directing investment and renewal towards a revitalized public realm and a culturally successful town.

Based on the whole urban area, Reading is the largest town in England. It sits within the heart of the South East and Thames Valley and has one of the UK's highest economic activity rates with great connections to London and has benefited from the arrival of the Elizabeth Line. It is a significant medieval centre with a rich heritage and local cultural life, a world-renowned university and it is ideally located on the Thames and Kennet River banks.

Reading has a growing residential population and its increasing demands for space create challenges and opportunities alike. The projected growth in Reading plans an increase of over 14,000 homes and 30,000 people by 2050. This means the town centre needs to adapt itself into a walkable, liveable and hard-working set of spaces to live for long term and new residents.

This renewed identity focused on culture, diversity, and sustainability will help support local businesses and attract families and other user groups to spend more time in the town centre.

For this vision to become reality, the public realm's quality, robustness and attractivity needs to be lifted to meet best practice standards and set out a positive framework where Reading can achieve its potential.

2.3 Policy & Strategies Context

This document builds upon a strong backbone of town wide and area specific strategic studies, frameworks and proposals. A rigorous review of these previous documents has been carried out to ensure a joined up and consistent approach to the forward development of the public realm strategy.

The need for improvement and guided transformation has long been recognised in Reading, this is reflected by the large number of studies undertaken over the last 15 years. From architectural conservation to planned regeneration, this guideline aims at bringing together the main considerations, findings and guiding principles established in previous studies, to set out a clear strategy for the evolution of the public realm.

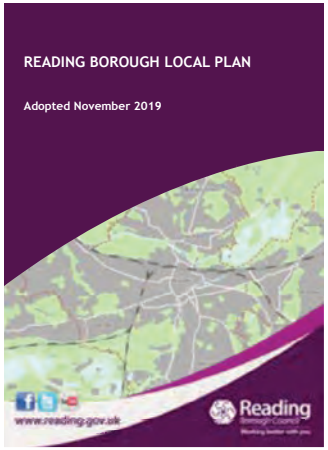
The documents reviewed include, but are not limited to:

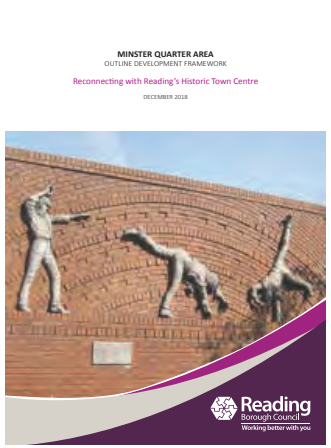
- The Reading Borough Local Plan adopted (2019)
- Reading Local Plan Partial Update (2019)
- Outline Development Framework The Site of Reading Prison (2015)
- Minster Court Area Outline Development Framework (2018)
- Local Cycling Infrastructure Plan 2020 to 2030 (2019)
- Readings Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015 to 2030
- Reading City Centre Framework (2008)
- Reading Transport Strategy 2040 (2024)
- Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone Research Report (2023)
- Reading Historic Area Assessment (2023)
- Reading Borough Council Tree strategy (2021)
- Russell Street Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)
- Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal
- Saint Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)
- Design Guide for Shop fronts. Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- Choose Reading. Town Centre Strategy 2021 to 2050 (Draft 2021)
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020 to 2030 (2019)
- Bus Improvement Plan 2012-26 (2021)
- Climate Emergency Strategy (2025)
- REDA BID Plans (2024-29)
- Reading 2050 Vision

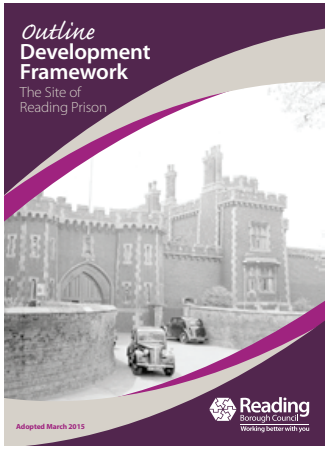
Consultation events, both public and with Reading Borough Council teams, were previously carried out and reflected in the reviewed documents. Some key findings that relate to the public realm have been summarised below:

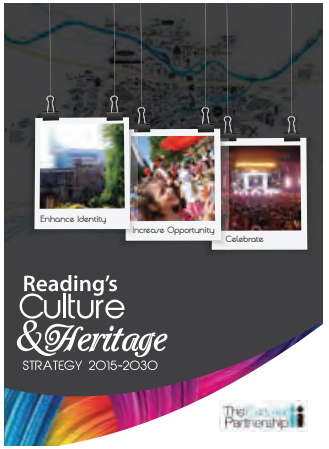
- Lack of planting & green
- Flooding issues
- Refuse & litter problem
- Car dominance
- Lack of crossings
- Universal access issues
- Needs of wheelchair users
- Disabled parking inclusion
- More seats needed
- Bus & bus stops dominance
- Poor paving condition
- Heritage not celebrated
- More space for events needed

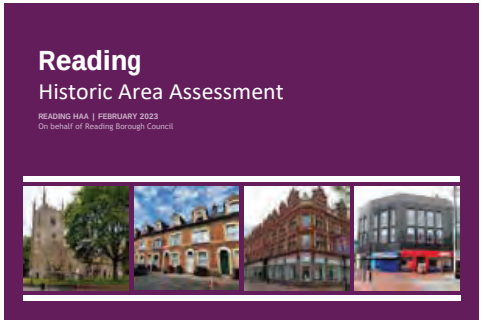
2.3 Policy & Strategies Context

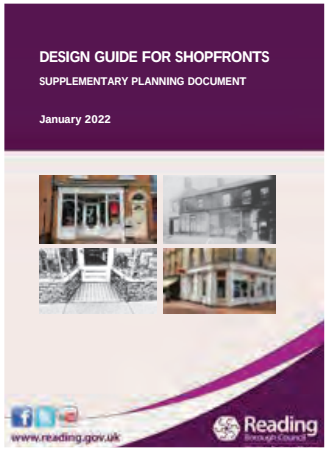












2.4 What Makes a Good Public Realm

Public realm is more than just the physical environment, its about place-making, identity, movement, community and management. When these components are all present and balanced, it becomes a successful place where people want to spend their time.

The quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of identity, where people will choose to spend their time. It gives great scope for public art, community based activities, temporary interventions / events, 'greening' the town with landscaping and the inclusion of creative lighting schemes.

The public realm also provides the ideal canvas for highlighting built heritage. A good quality, well considered public realm plays a major role in a positive user experience that will encourage return visits to a town. Movement strategies also play a pivotal role in the success of a place. When the right balance is struck a successful, well maintained and functional town can be achieved.

Great public realm is achieved when a wide range of social, environmental, economical and functional gains are facilitated for the town. Placemaking creates enriched, memorable and viable town centres where businesses can thrive and visitors wish to linger and enjoy the town.

Under policy CR3 of the Local Plan, major developments are expected to provide new public space or to contribute towards improvement in the public realm. It is therefore expected that this Strategy will in part be implemented through works in the public realm by developers or in some cases financial contributions. Major developments will be expected to contribute towards the enhancement of the surrounding public realm, including undertaking or funding works outside their own site boundary wherever there are opportunities to do so. In some cases, financial contributions will also be pooled towards wider town centre public realm improvements, but this will not be in place of essential improvements to the areas surrounding development sites.

Supports community cohesion
Makes space more accessible for all users
Creates spaces where people want to be & meet
Improves wellbeing through exercise
Produces a heightened satisfaction for users
Assists in the interpretation of heritage

Attractive to investment & development
Invests to save & reduce maintenance
People stay longer & help vitality
Encourages inward investment
Impact on property value
Increases tourism & day visits

Reduces air pollution
Enhances the identity of a place
Brings nature & biodiversity to the town
Protects, conserves and enhances heritage
Helps with rain water management & attenuation
Contributes to positive image & perception

Supports public art
Encourages walking & cycling
Improves orientation & wayfinding
Inclusive for all users, universal design
Helps rationalising movement& transport
Creates outdoor spaces for retail & leisure

2.5 Vision for Reading's Public Realm

Our vision for Reading is to improve the image and setting of the town by establishing a new appropriate set of guidelines for the enhancement of the public realm.

This vision looks to both conserve and better appreciate the heritage and look towards the future growth of the town, encouraging people to explore, businesses to flourish and creating a safe, inclusive and vibrant street scene.

2.6 Guiding Principles

The public spaces and streets of Reading should be geared towards people and focus on providing a clear, attractive and comfortable streetscape for its inhabitants and visitors. All future improvement to the public realm should take account of these principles.

01

Vibrant streets

Create vibrant, engaging streetscapes for all users that allow for everyday use as well as street activation, temporary events, public art, outdoor dining, performance and markets.

02

Universality & Inclusivity

Ensure all spaces are inclusive by design and allow all users including people with disabilities, neurodiverse or visually impaired, to safely navigate the public realm.

03

Sustainable Movement

Encourage carbon neutral transportation by creating safe pedestrian and cycle routes, reclaiming road space, providing cycle parking, and promoting public transport. Make Reading a pleasantly walkable and cyclable town.

04

Ensure consistency in design

Use an appropriate palette of high quality, discreet paving throughout the town centre, as well as coordinated street furniture and elements.

05

Improve streetscape legibility

A clear, legible and functional public realm will be provided through the simplification and coordination of street components, the decluttering of unnecessary streetscape elements and the implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy.

06

Celebrate Reading's Heritage

Support the restoration of key architectural and artistic features in the town centre, whilst celebrating Reading's heritage through streetscape intervention and public art.

07

Green & Sustainable

Maximise urban greening, encourage tree planting and support biodiversity and SUDs wherever practicable.

08

Safe public environment

Enhance public lighting by making it proportionate and consistent, including on secondary and remote pedestrian and cycle only links, along with the creation of clear and open sight lines to increase visibility throughout the town centre.

09

Create memorable spaces where people want to be

Allow dwelling on the street and activate the use of public spaces by people. Define the character and key attributes of feature spaces through design, allowing flexibility and diversity of usage. Enhance outdoor play and leisure provision throughout the town, catering for all users, including teenagers and adults.

10

Maintenance and construction action plan

Create a robust action plan for the management of hoarding and temporary fencing during construction. Develop a detailed maintenance plan for all elements and spaces of the public realm.

savers
savers
ruby

03

Town Centre Appraisal

3.1 Current Issues & Concerns

3.2 Strategic Typology

3.3 Street Audit Overview

3.4 Heritage and Conservation

3.5 Development Sites

3.6 Character Areas

3.7 Aspirational Town Centre Structure

3.1 Current Issues & Concerns

The public realm in Reading is diverse, as can be expected in a large historic town that has lived through many periods of growth and expansion. Public and private spaces, streets, lanes and squares are now interwoven to create a rich and complex urban landscape. However, some recurring issues run through the town centre and are identified here.

Lack of consistency and coherence - There is a wide variety of paving materials, street furniture or wayfinding signs used throughout the town centre. Whilst some of these may bring interest to the public realm, the result in most areas is a lack of cohesive approach that is detrimental to the overall legibility and quality of the town centre.

The invisible heritage - Reading's heritage is one of its best assets, yet few visitors and residents may think of Reading as a heritage town. It is too often rendered invisible by clutter, hard to locate or set in uninviting spaces.

Lack of quality and robustness in material - With the exception of some historical streets in the Abbey Quarter and some private developments, the majority of the public realm uses mid to low quality surfacing materials.

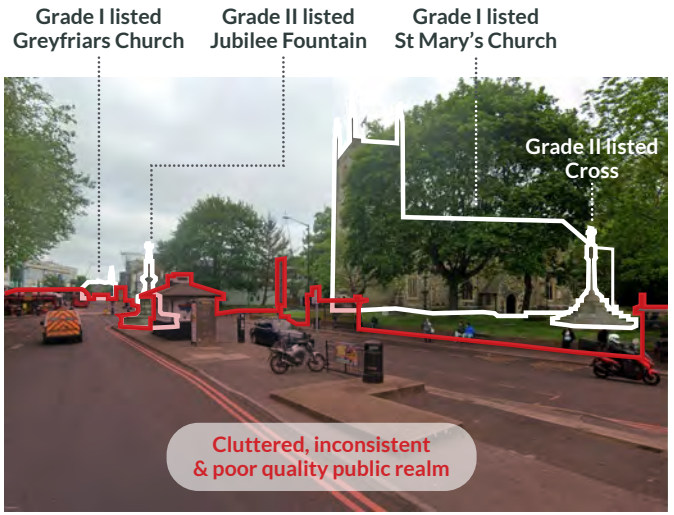
Vehicular dominance - In many streets and spaces, vehicular traffic movement negatively impacts the quality of the public realm through traffic, speed, noise and on-street parking.

Clutter - Key streets and spaces, including at the very core of the town, are cluttered by a variety of objects and signs that detract from the heritage and make the town hard to navigate. A simplification and rationalisation of the public realm will help put an accent on the existing town's assets.

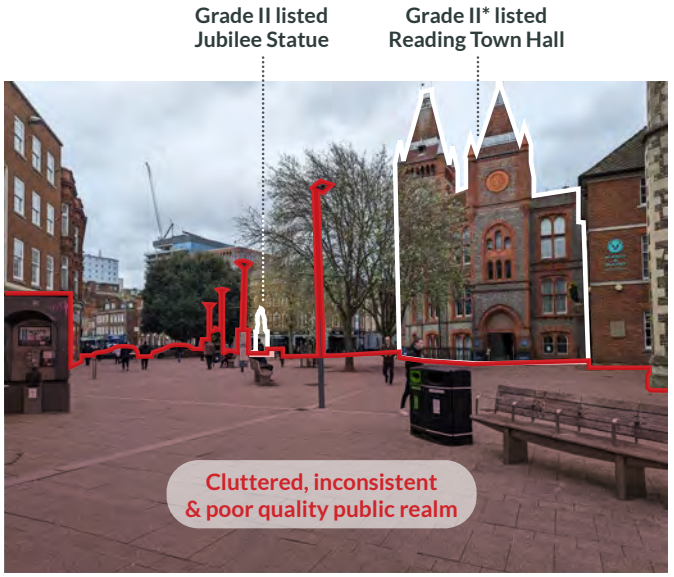
Lack of green - Biodiversity, raingardens, planting beds and vegetation are sorely lacking throughout the town centre. Lots of spaces and hidden corners could be reclaimed for green to turn Reading into a leader in green infrastructure. The introduction of planting and trees could help soften, integrate and reconnect heavily engineered roads, whilst working towards achieving the carbon neutral target of 2030 as set out in the Local Plan.

Hidden rivers- The River Kennet, canals and Thames run through or close to the town centre, forming a network of pedestrian and cycle paths that give direct access to valuable natural areas. This is a unique asset, however, access to the river walks are hard to find and the river paths lack consistency and openness. Some waterways, in particular the Holy Brook, are literally hidden in culverts.

Lack of street activation - The town centre lacks quality pocket spaces for people to meet and dwell, active spaces conducive to play and wonder for children and adults alike. These are not limited to formal play options but can include street art, murals, sculptures or playful lighting at night-time.



Clutter competing with heritage on St Mary's Butts



Clutter competing with heritage on Town Hall Square

3.1 Current Issues & Concerns

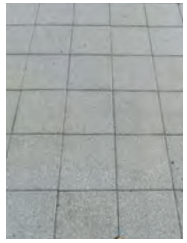
The below is a visual summary of some of the recurring challenges encountered throughout the town centre.

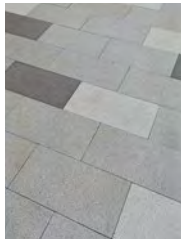
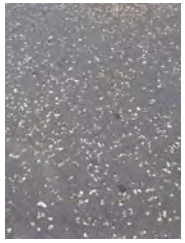
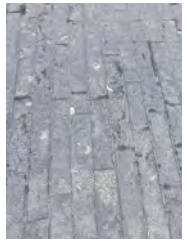
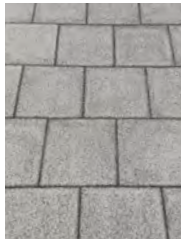
Clutter throughout the town centre

Wide variety of street furniture

Wide variety of wayfinding and signs

Wide variety of surfacing types



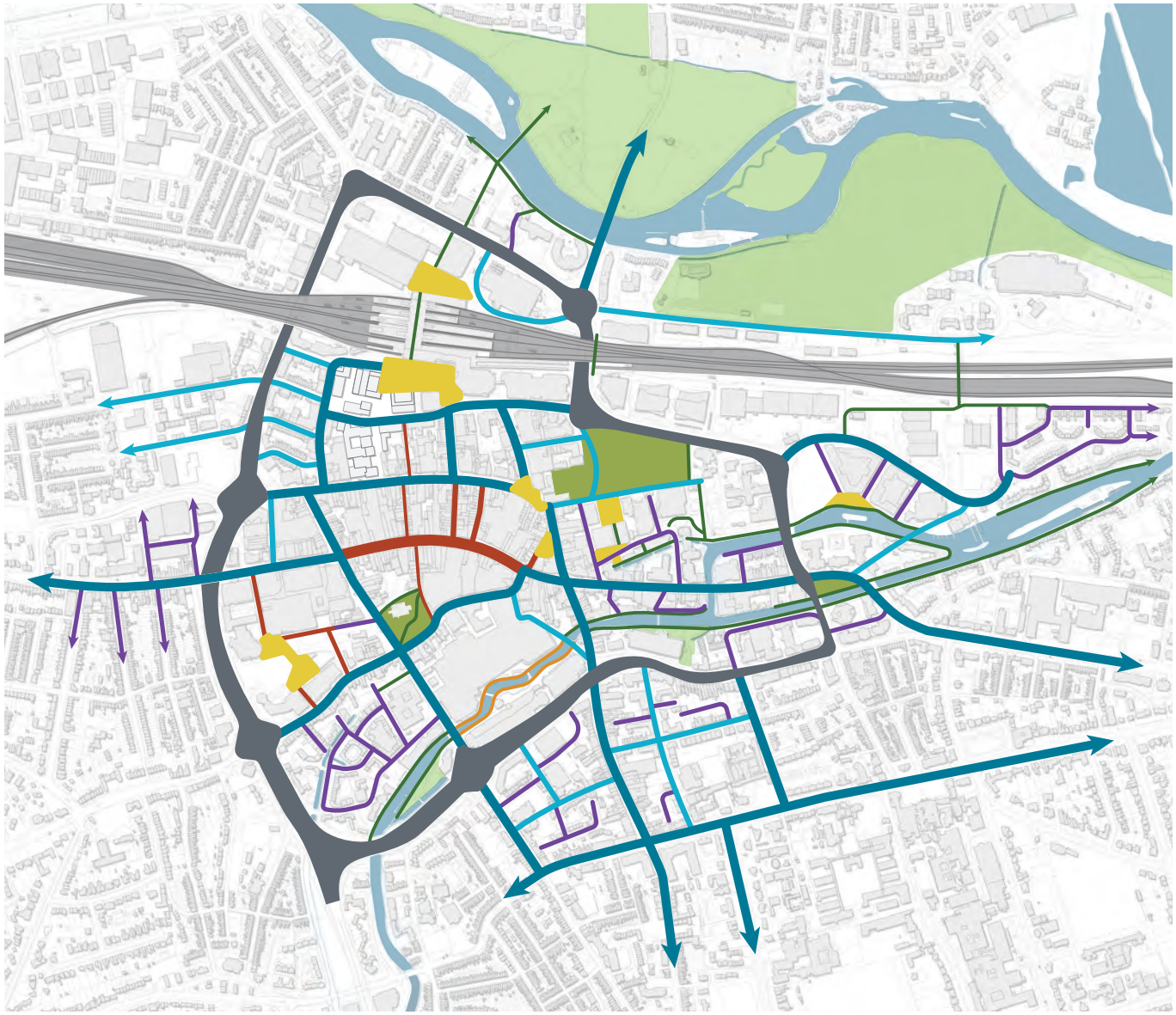
3.2 Strategic Typology

This strategic typology groups streets and spaces in categories based on their common characteristics such as street width, public realm appearance, traffic patterns, pedestrian footfall and surrounding building uses.

The town centre has a comprehensive and rich network of street and spaces, ranging from pedestrian narrow lanes to large, heavily trafficked strategic roads.

Establishing a clear typology brings a comprehensive understanding of the existing condition and structure of the town centre and is an important step to identify strengths and weaknesses in the public realm. It also helps define the different spaces and street types to then establish adapted design and intervention guidelines.

This typology is the base of the street audit, a descriptive catalogue of the current condition of the streets and spaces in the town centre.



- Pedestrian priority streets, lanes and passages
- IDR
- Primary and strategic roads
- Secondary streets
- Tertiary and residential streets
- Public and civic spaces
- Green spaces
- Footpaths, pedestrian links and riverpaths
- Pedestrian link through the Oracle

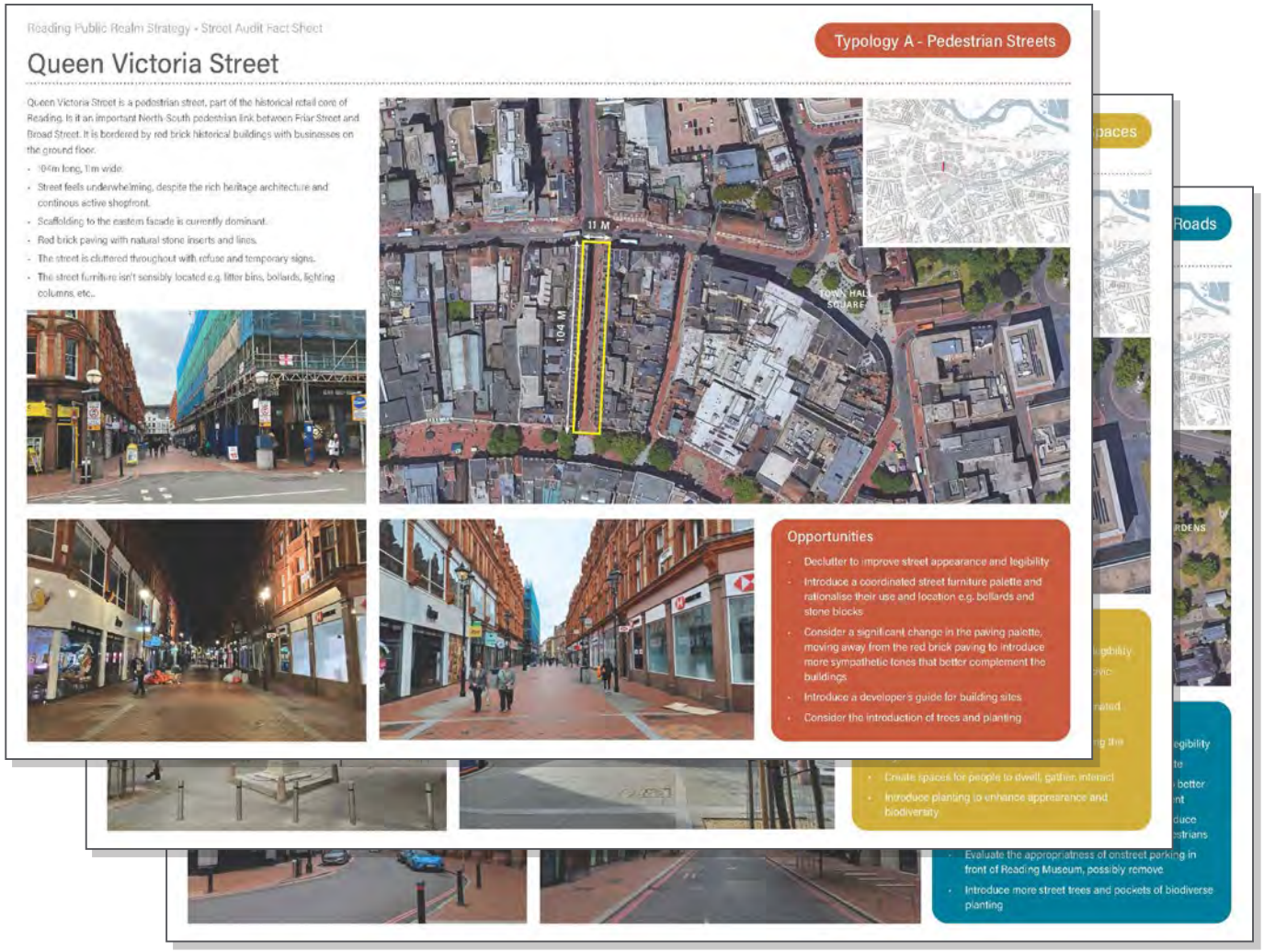
3.3 Street Audit Overview

As part of the baseline analysis and study of the town centre necessary to the production of the Public Realm Strategy, a street audit was undertaken. The aim of the street audit is to understand Reading, how the streets and spaces function and perform, what works well or needs improvement.

The audit is centered on the physical analysis of the streets and spaces within the town centre. This includes physical components such as materials, street furniture, general dimensions, architecture, presence or not of heritage buildings and landmarks, traffic, footfall and use (retail, residential, mixed-uses, office, etc). It also considers the potential of the space and the usage for events, activities and movement. A fact sheet has been created for each street, space or street type.

The street audit and strategic typology have been elaborated jointly, the fact finding study necessary to conduct the street audit feeding into the typology. The typology is presented as a colour coded plan where streets and spaces have been grouped under 9 categories. The street audit uses the same colour code to bring a granular understanding of the issues and opportunities of each street and of the town centre as a whole.

Please refer to Reading Town Centre Street Audit as a complementary document to this guideline.

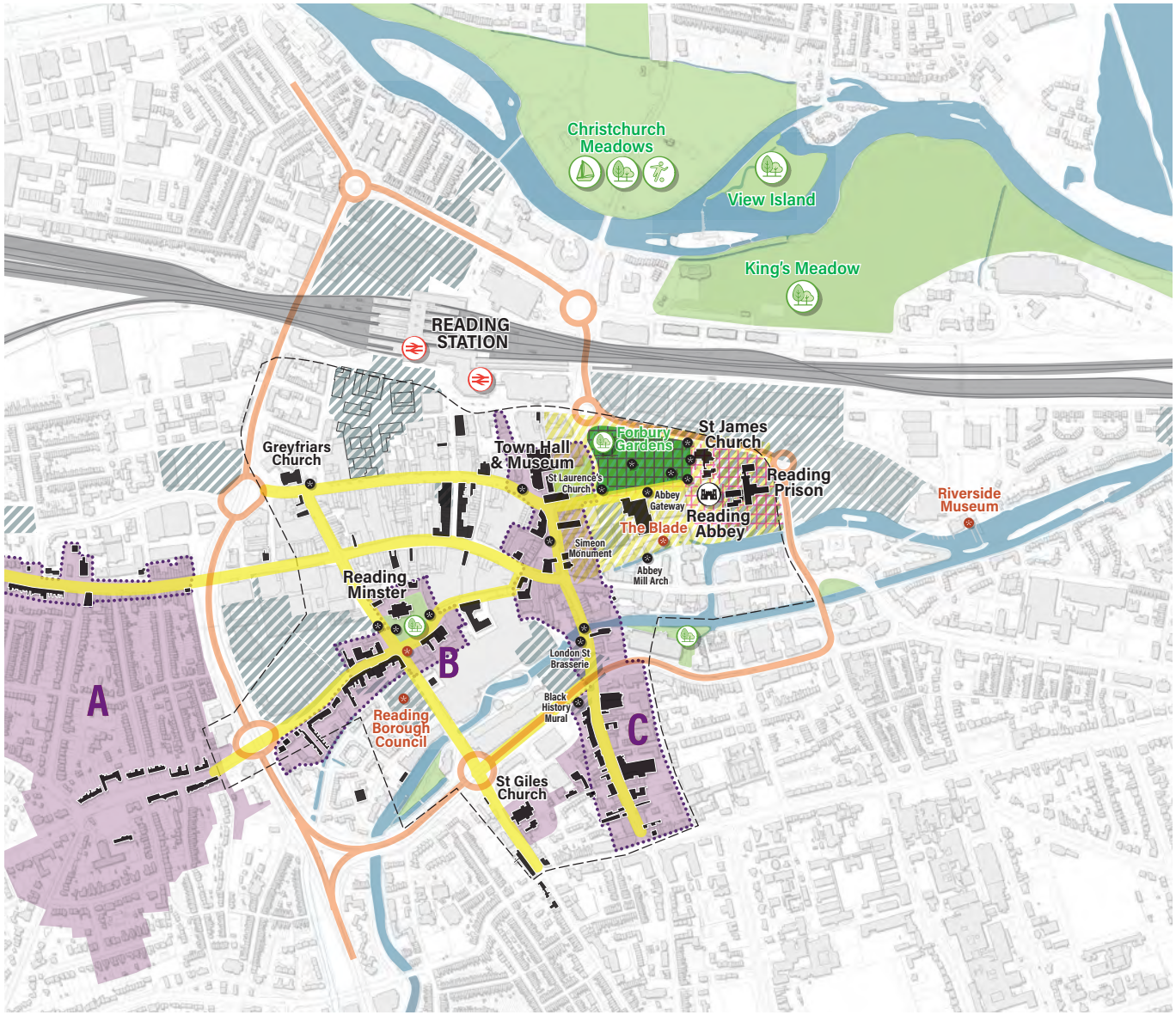


3.4 Heritage and Conservation

Reading is an ancient town of Anglo-Saxon foundation that has lived and thrived through time. Its rich heritage is a testimony to this history and it is present at every corner in the town centre.

Reading town centre counts three Conservation Areas, many Grade I, II and II* listed buildings, a registered park with Forbury Gardens and scheduled monuments area at the Abbey, Prison site and High Bridge on Duke St. New developments and improvements to the public realm should be highly contextual and considerate to Reading's heritage, to build on the town's strengths by revealing and promoting its existing value and assets.

- Listed buildings (within strategy area)
- Listed monuments (within strategy area)
- Other landmarks (within strategy area)
- Registered parks & gardens
- Scheduled monuments
- Conservation Areas (within strategy area):
  - A Castle Hill / Russell Street / Oxford Road CA
  - B St Mary's Butts & Castle Street CA
  - C Market Place & London Street CA
- High Street Heritage Action zones
- Medieval abbey precinct
- Principal medieval roads
- Extent of medieval town
- IDR
- Development sites

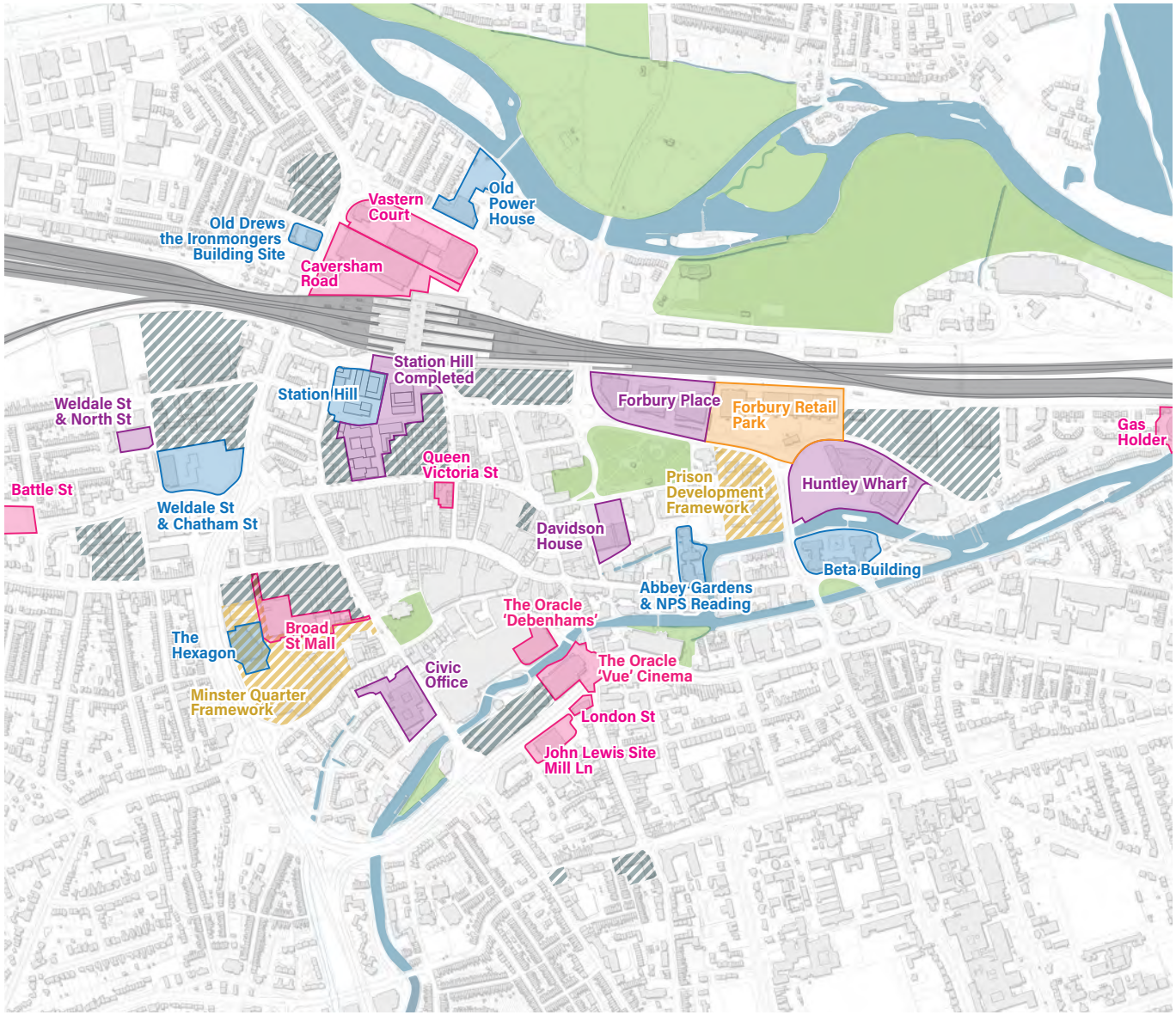


3.5 Development Sites

Reading is a fast evolving town. The 2019 to 2036 Local Plan assigns almost half of the borough's housing need to the central area of Reading, along with 71,000 sqm of new office and 27,000 of new retail. The high number development sites with on-going planning applications is a testimony to the town's social and economic appeal and dynamism.

The growth in the town centre is already tangible with many developments including residential, office and mixed-use schemes having been delivered or about to be completed on site, such as Forbury Place, Chatham Street or Huntley Wharf. The most significant area of change lies around the new station with Station Hill, which will become the main gateway into the town centre for commuters and visitors arriving by train.

Many more transformations are to come with planning permissions having been granted for significant development north of the railway, around Vastern Court, and with two important frameworks for Minster Quarter and the Prison development. This fast-paced transformation across the town centre calls for a clear strategy that sets out how the public realm should be coherently preserved and enhanced to accompany change and help deliver Reading's full potential.



- Development under construction
- Planning permission granted
- Planning application submitted
- Recently completed with public realm
- Existing framework for redevelopment
- Sites identified for development or change in Local Plan

3.6 Character Areas

One of the key characteristics of successful urban space is a sense of identity and unique character. Reading has undergone countless transformations, periods of growth and expansions. These have shaped areas, quarters and neighbourhoods that are distinctive from one another.

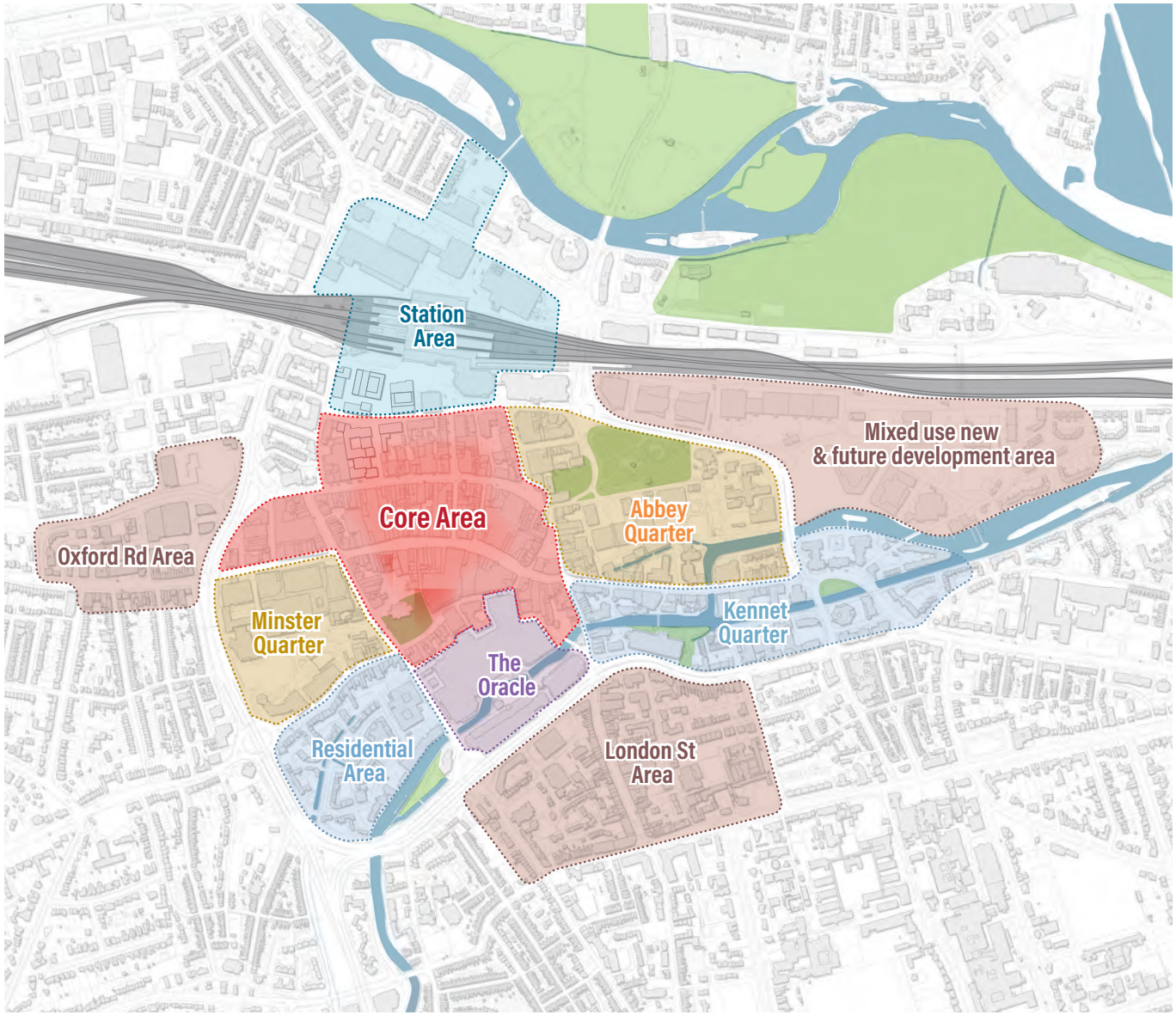
The town centre is currently divided into a number of areas of distinct character and identity. These areas have been defined based on the assessment of the built form, the urban fabric, the location of key links but also the uses and activities, the feel and identity that characterise an urban area or a neighbourhood.

The core area, Abbey Quarter and adjacent residential areas along the River Kennet tend to be well defined and dynamic, present a mix of uses, retain the original urban structure of the town centre and count more characterful streets at human scale than some outer areas of the town centre.

Oxford Road and London Street areas have distinctive identity and work well as independent and complementary quarters to the town centre, however, the IDR severs them from the core of the town. Some streets to the north of Oxford Road present significant opportunities for redevelopment.

Areas adjacent to the railway corridor present a less defined urban grain formed of larger blocks, less linkage at pedestrian scale and therefore a less attractive character. However, ongoing and future developments in these areas will seek to reconnect them to the core of the town and deliver attractive urban spaces.

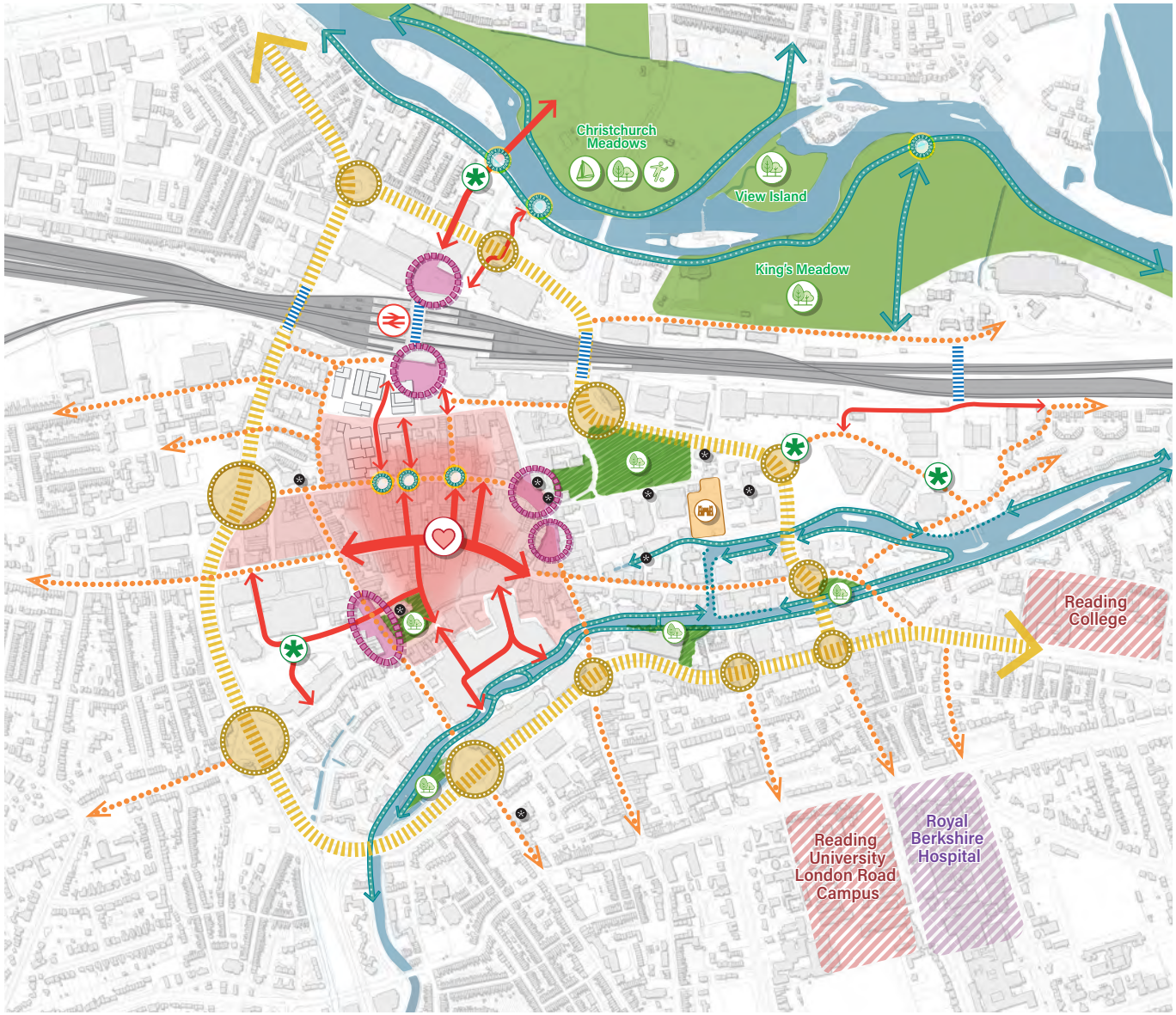
New developments and public realm enhancement projects should seek to reinforce the positive character and identity of an area, whilst aiming to remediate identified challenges.



3.7 Aspirational Town Centre Structure

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



04

Pedestrian, Wheelers & Cycle Framework

4.1 Existing Movement Hierarchy

4.2 Overarching Challenges & Opportunities

4.3 ‘Healthy Streets’ Criteria Plan

4.4 Overall Recommended Improvements

4.5 Bus Stop Improvements

4.6 Enabling Town Centre Cycling

4.7 Broad Street Layout

4.1 Existing Movement Hierarchy

Reading town centre has a comprehensive current movement and transport hierarchy. The bus and road networks, whilst highly successful assets, create both challenges and opportunities for the future growth and development of the town.

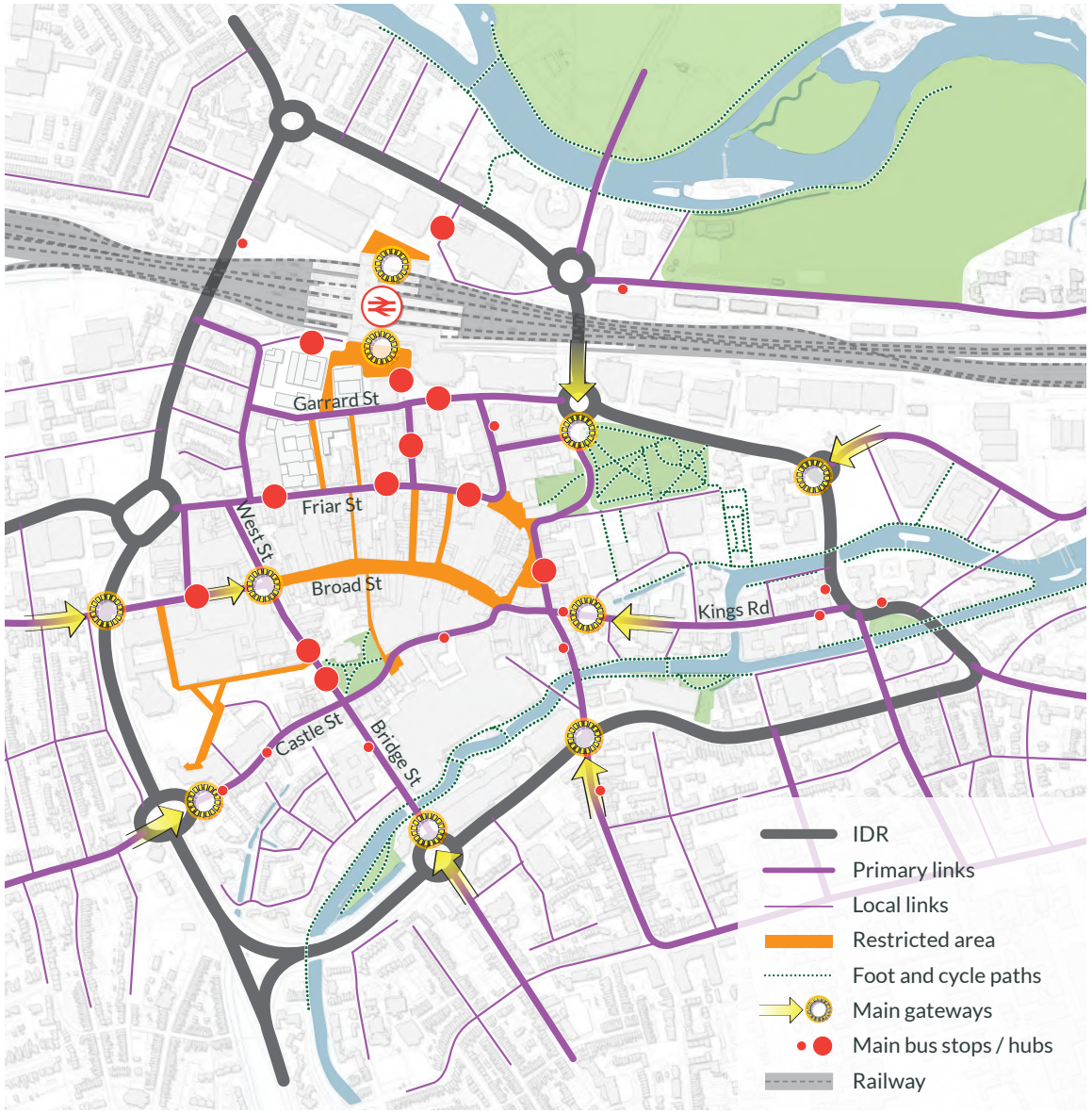
The Inner Distribution Route (IDR) is an important strategic movement corridor that helps to keep traffic out of the town centre core. However, due to its nature it severs access from surrounding neighbourhoods and creates a barrier to walking, wheeling and cycling.

There are several important primary links within the town centre which perform key roles including access for emergency services, deliveries and servicing, buses, taxis and disabled drivers. These include Bridge Street, St Mary's Butts, Kings Road and Friar Street.

Local links include small routes and passages giving access to residential blocks and back of buildings servicing. These are largely one-way with restricted access.

General traffic is largely prohibited within the town centre core, although there is significant movement of delivery vehicles. Buses make a positive contribution to the town centre, with their high level of accessibility a key factor in enabling this approach and essential to Reading's continued success. In some locations, higher levels of bus movement can influence the character and function of the public realm, requiring careful design to ensure spaces remain legible and comfortable for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists. The challenge will be to retain this high level of accessibility while achieving a balanced and well-functioning environment for all users.

There are several off-road tracks and river paths that cross the town centre and have the potential to become fantastic greenways; however these are often fragmented, feel unsafe during the hours of darkness and are not fully accessible to all.



4.2 Overarching Challenges & Opportunities

Legible, well-connected active travel networks and accessible public transport are key to a functional and successful town centre. The adjacent diagram identifies the main challenges that Reading currently faces and the main opportunities upon which the town centre's sustainable regeneration can be built.

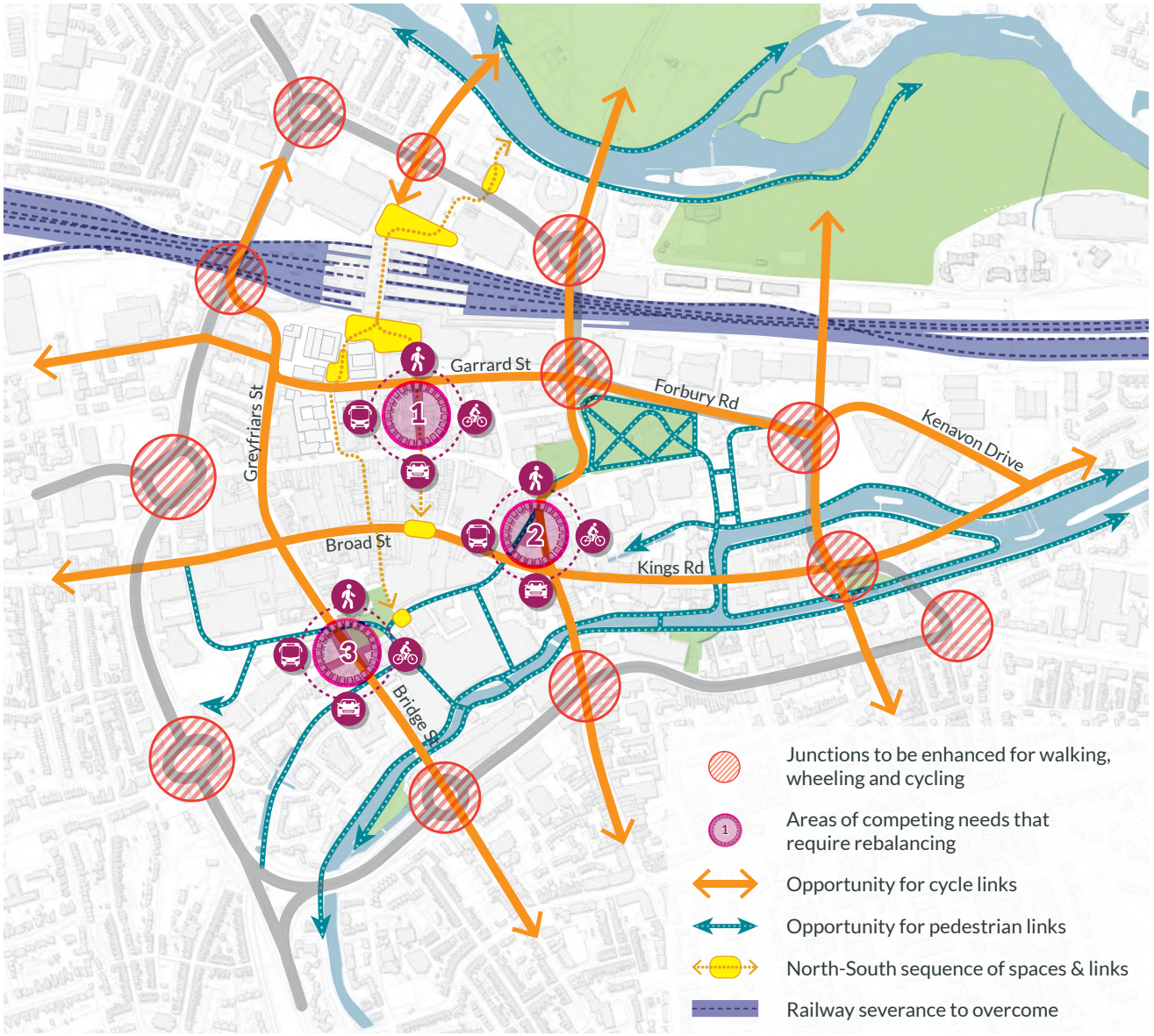
Junctions not designed for people - Major junctions on the IDR generate issues in terms of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, road safety, wayfinding and gateways between neighbourhoods and the town centre.

Areas of competing needs for movement & place - Station Road (1), Market Place (2) and St Mary's Butts (3) are locations where the balance between movement and placemaking is significantly skewed. Cyclists, pedestrians, wheelers, buses, delivery vehicles and taxis compete for space in a historical setting, negatively impacting the visitor experience, safety and functionality.

Need for cycle routes on desire lines - Continuous links for safe cyclist passage should be sought, including through the pedestrianised zone, with the appropriate infrastructure.

Joining the dots - There is a need to improve safety, route continuity and wayfinding along the off-road pedestrian and cycle network to unlock the potential connections to the wider surroundings of Reading, in particular along the rivers and within adjoining neighbourhoods.

Creating a strong north-south sequence - Opportunity to connect key destinations with a strong pedestrian friendly link from Christchurch Meadows to the Oracle through Station Hill/Station Road and Union St/Chain St/Minster Churchyard.



4.3 'Healthy Streets' Criteria Plan

A 'Healthy Streets' approach to street design aims to improve air quality, reduce congestion and help make town's and cities' diverse communities greener, healthier and more attractive places to live, work, play and do business.

A Red-Amber-Green (RAG) Healthy Streets assessment was undertaken across the study area, where red is 'poor', yellow is 'average', and green is 'good'. The assessment reviews 10 key street indicators which are summarised in the diagram on the following page and includes an assessment of:

- People from all walks of life
- Ease of crossing
- Shade and shelter
- Places to stop and rest
- Not too noisy
- People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
- People feel safe
- Things to see and do
- People feel relaxed
- Clean air

This diagram can be summarised with the following main messages:

The town centre benefits from some quality streets and spaces that support healthier and more attractive places for people to spend time. These key areas include:

- The newly built **Reading Station environment** (3 & 9).
- The historic area around the **Abbey and Forbury. Gardens** (13).
- **Blagrave Street / Town Hall Square** (16).
- The pedestrianised areas on **Broad Street and Queen Victoria Street** (21/26).
- **Chestnut Walk** (24).
- **The Oracle** (38).

However, there are many problematic areas, where highway infrastructure, high volumes of buses and street clutter impact negatively on people and the environment. These include by place:

- **Station Road** (15) where extensive bus stops, narrow footways and the space between buildings impact on the quality of the environment, navigation and safety.
- **Market Place** (22) is an historic space that is greatly impacted by the amount of clutter and competing needs for buses, deliveries, cycle access and enjoyment of the square.
- **West Street** (25) is a significant corridor which creates a north-south link via St Mary's Butt and Bridge Street. Currently it is an uninviting street environment for all users and does not enhance the setting of the Grade I Greyfriars Church.
- **St Mary's Butts** (33) is a historic street with impressive buildings and monuments, however the environment is significantly impacted by competing needs of buses, taxis, deliveries and servicing, accesses, disabled parking and cycle access.
- **Bridge Street** (37) and the **junction with Mill Lane** (44) are an extension of **St Mary's Butt** where currently general movement is prioritised over local walking, wheeling and cycling access and enjoyment.
- **Duke Street** (28) is a narrow, historic street that crosses the River Kennet. The footways are narrow and it is dominated by buses, impacting on road safety and the quality of this historic and riverside environment.
- The junction with **Mill Lane** (39) is poor with regards to crossings and a 'gateway' to the town centre from the south.

Traffic Management and Road Safety

Create a calmer, place-making led environment which enables, where possible, a self-enforcing traffic management system, reduces clutter and significantly reduces the highway infrastructure that is required.

4.3 ‘Healthy Streets’ Criteria Plan

Buses

Reading has a comprehensive and well used bus network which is to be commended. There is however opportunity to reduce the impacts of buses on the town centre by reviewing where carriageway widths can be reduced and where bus stops can be placed to align with improved pedestrian circulation.

Cycling

Enable the safe and convenient passage of cycling in the town centre including improvements to routes, junctions and signage, and ensuring measures are introduced that enable desire lines to be permitted.

Introduce secure cycle parking at key, highly visible locations through the town centre.

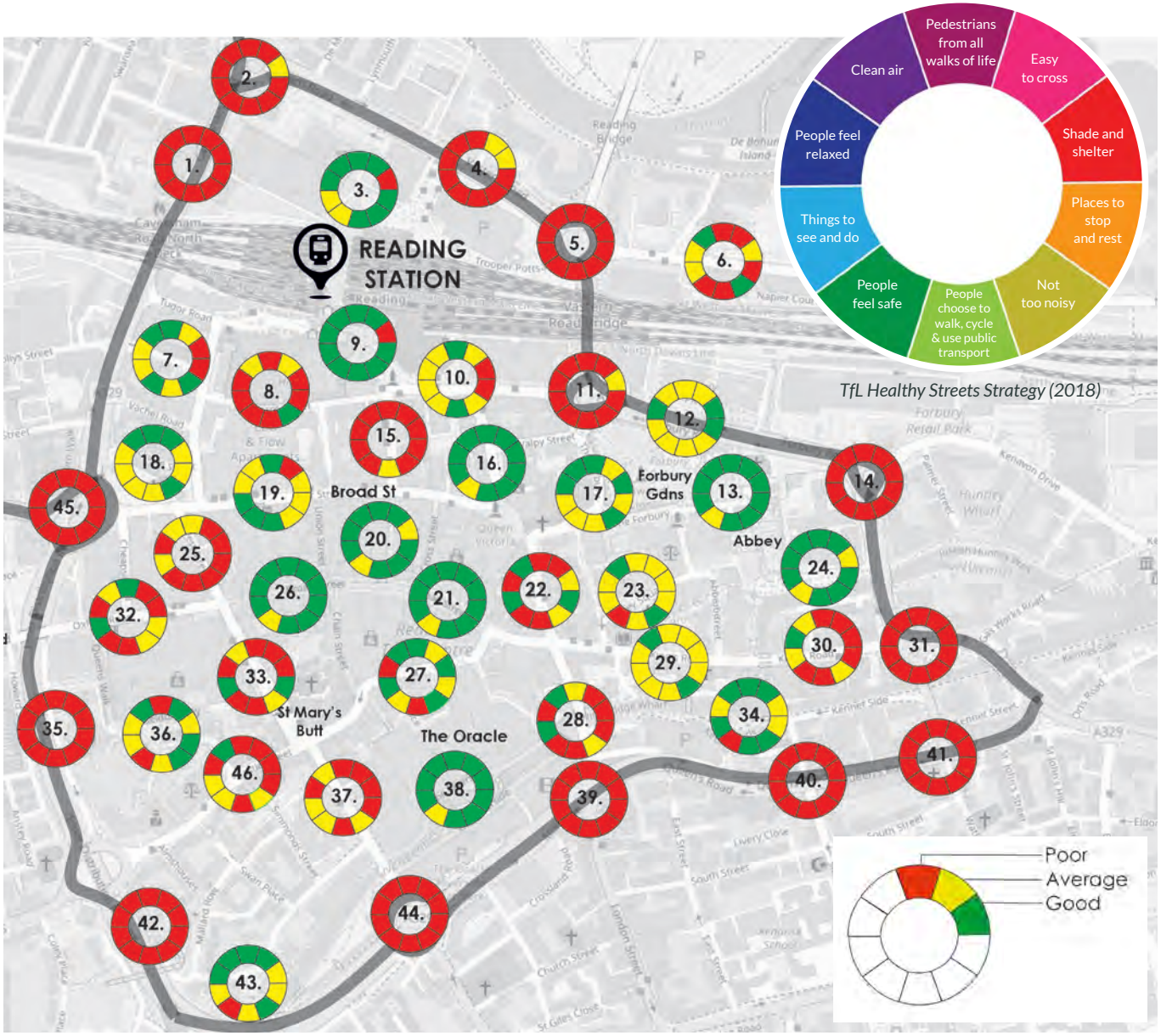
Manage micro-mobility, particularly food delivery bikes and their movement through the town centre.

Walking

Create a clutter-free, safe, legible and enjoyable network of streets and spaces that enable access for all, including seating and signage where appropriate.

Personal Security

The aim should be to activate intimidating, uninteresting and uninviting streets and spaces. Where possible, natural surveillance should be a fundamental principle.



TfL Healthy Streets Strategy (2018)

4.4 Overall Recommended Improvements

Building on Reading's quality transport system, there is an opportunity to enhance walking and cycling connectivity and create healthy streets for people. The following recommendations have been identified to support this opportunity:

IDR permeability - Improve permeability of pedestrians and cyclists from the surrounding neighbourhoods across the IDR to the town centre including improved junctions and crossings.

Rebalancing Movement and Placemaking - Create calmer, more inviting and attractive places, as well as addressing poor air quality and road safety.

Unlocking safe and convenient cycle routes - Address severance and poor road safety for cyclists. Greater priority and associated infrastructure throughout the town centre and the IDR to improve cycling in line with LTN 1/20.

Personal safety and security - Improve personal safety and security on key routes including along the river Kennet and other secluded locations. The aim should be to activate intimidating, uninteresting and uninviting streets and spaces, considering the impacts of design on crime, anti-social behaviour, perceptions of safety and substance misuse, in line with the Reading Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy, with input from Thames Valley Police as proposals come forward. Where possible, natural surveillance should be a fundamental principle.

Accessibility and legibility - Address accessibility and legibility ensuring that streets and spaces are designed to accommodate all types of users.

Futureproofing new links as part of redevelopment - New developments to improve sight lines, access and permeability throughout the town centre.

Cycle parking and micro-mobility - Improve access to secure cycle parking. Micro-mobility, scooter and e-bike hire should all be carefully considered.

Traffic Management and Road Safety - Create a calmer, place-making led environment which enables, where possible, a self-enforcing traffic management system, reduces clutter and significantly reduces the highway infrastructure that is required.

Buses - Reduce the impacts of buses on the town centre by reviewing where carriageway widths can be reduced and where bus stops and improved associated signage can be placed to align with improved pedestrian circulation. PV and/or green roofs should be considered for bus shelters.

Cycling - Enable the safe and convenient passage of cycling in the town centre including improvements to routes, junctions and signage, and ensuring measures are introduced that enable desire lines to be permitted.

Walking & Wheeling - Create a clutter-free, safe, legible and enjoyable network of streets and spaces that enable access for all, including seating and signage where appropriate.

These are the Reading town centre transport strategy vision and objectives

Resolving public transport conflicts by putting pedestrians first and all other road users as 'guests' in the town centre

Promoting healthy and active lifestyles by linking up to the countryside on the edge of town & waterside areas

Achieving growth in cycle patronage and sustainable mode shift

Contributing to liveable Reading, through green streets, 'play on the way' and 'arrival in green'

Creating a connected network of primary streets and spaces, providing the town with a green loop

Introduce low carbon bus fleet and associated public realm improvements

Enabling and encouraging walking and cycling across the borough

Creating an emphasis on gateways and arrival spaces as part of a comprehensive public realm network

Re-imagining the IDR and breaking the 'collar' effect

Reducing through traffic within the town and improve air quality. Support the uptake of low carbon transport modes

4.5 Bus Stop Improvements

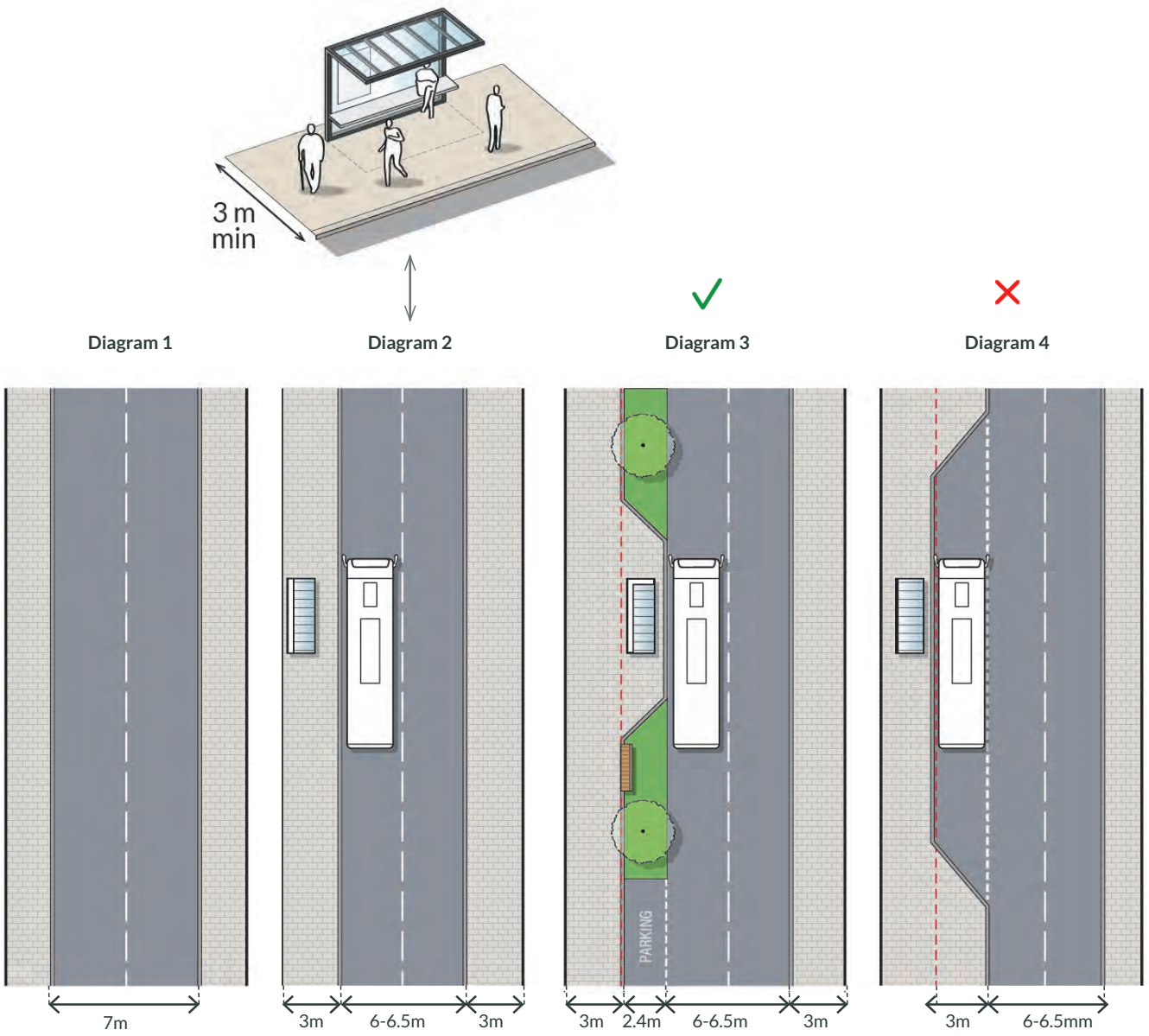
A series of bus stop improvements should be implemented across the town centre to enhance pedestrian comfort, aid movement, enable the much needed introduction of greening, and increase biodiversity and urban drainage.

Diagram 1 - Typical existing Reading street with a 7m wide road. This layout enables vehicles to speed and dominate the street. Bus shelters, located on the remaining narrow footpath, block pedestrian movement.

Diagram 2 - This shows a scenario where the carriageway width is reduced, allowing for wider footpaths. The bus shelter is located at the rear of the footpath, which is ideally wider 3m wide and allows free flowing pedestrian movement. Buses stop on the road.

Diagram 3 - This shows an ideal scenario where if the street width allows, a build-out for the bus shelter is introduced. The carriageway width is reduced and the footpath width is maintained past the bus stop. Greening, is introduced both sides of the bus build-out and shelter and buses stop on the road. In this location, the bus shelter can be semi-enclosed. This solution will need to be used carefully, as where services are frequent it can lead to buses being stacked and unable to pass one another, which increases their impact on the public realm and can negatively affect the perception of buses.

Diagram 4 - Shows a scenario which is not desirable within the town centre. Laybys should be avoided in urban areas as they create narrow footways, poor pedestrian circulation and impact significantly bus accessibility.



4.6 Enabling Town Centre Cycling

Cycling has the opportunity to play a leading role in creating a sustainable and green town centre, helping to better connect neighbouring communities and supporting healthy and safe streets and places.

Designing appropriately for cycling is paramount to make the town liveable and adaptable. As part of design and development, schemes that come forward should:

- Ensure a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces which welcome safe cycling. The identified streets and spaces should be easy to navigate by all types of cyclists within the context of the local environment.
- Create streets and spaces which rebalance and prioritise the needs of pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists over other motorised vehicles, whilst retaining the current bus provisions.
- Enable street environments that do not require user or movement segregation and related infrastructure and are self-enforcing, supporting a more positive, calmer and welcoming place for pedestrians and cyclists alike.
- Ensure that where cycle infrastructure is required, it is designed with pedestrians and placemaking in mind. It should be sympathetic to the surrounding context, whilst not unduly impact upon pedestrians.

This section explores the pros, cons and considerations needed for appropriately designing streets for all in currently pedestrianised zones.

'No cycling' - Significantly impacts the access of responsible cyclists who want to shop and use the facilities in Reading, whilst potentially creating an enforcement issue as it would likely be ignored. However, a benefit of prohibiting cyclists is that pedestrians do not have to contend with them. Alternative routes are often less direct, longer, can involve negotiating major junctions and requiring dismounting and present additional risk from general motorised traffic movement. The diverse journey patterns of cyclists in the town centre requires safety to be improved throughout the road network to create a network of cycle-friendly streets rather than being focused in one location.

Unrestricted Cycling - Delivery bikes and vans currently impact on the pedestrian zones. Irresponsibly ridden electric delivery bikes on Broad Street create an intimidating space for pedestrians. Whilst the pedestrian zones within the town centre are signed and restricted, the spaces are not currently enforced and the rules are ignored.

A Flexible Street - Managed cycling - Considerate cyclists adapt their speed to suit pedestrian density and dismount if required. Conflicts are minimised by cyclists taking strategic avoiding action.
During busy periods, when shops and cafes are open, cyclists are likely to divert to other locations. However, during out-of-hours, cyclists could utilise the pedestrianised spaces to allow important access to the town centre and station, and deter antisocial behaviour.

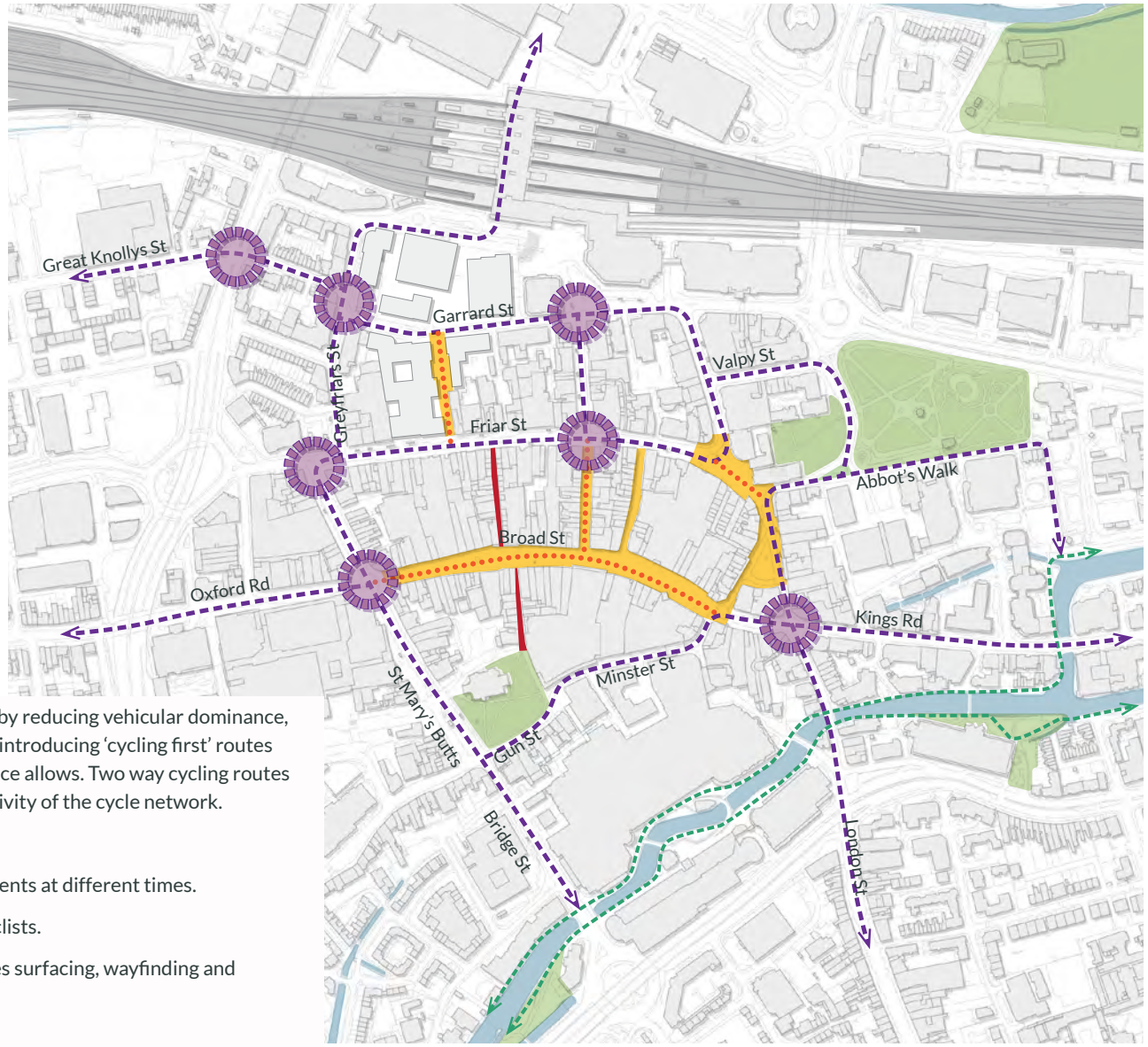
There is a need to manage and enforce the use of pedestrian zones for electric bikes and vans, particularly the increase in food deliveries. This may be achieved to some extent by modifying the origin and nature of those trips and better management.

Where cycle flows are likely to be relatively high, the surface treatment and placing of street furniture and retail 'A' boards can have a significant influence on cycle movement. A sensitively designed movement corridor could potentially aid movement provision, with pedestrians tending to walk along the street frontages and cyclists focused along the centre of the street.

4.6 Enabling Town Centre Cycling

Consideration should be given to providing safe and convenient routes for cyclists to move around the town centre.

A number of north-south and east-west routes are required to enable greater cycling permeability through the town centre. However, key routes are currently missing for safe cyclist passage including access through the core pedestrianised area and Broad Street. This diagram sets out the key routes where cycling should be improved. The proposed routes consider those identified within the LTP4, LCWIP, other previous studies and site audits. The identified routes aim to improve permeability, safety and accessibility to cycling within the town centre and wider connections. These proposals are largely designed around the existing bus operations. In the longer term, significant cycling improvements beyond those proposed here would rely on a reconsideration of movement of vehicles in the centre, including buses



- Key routes that should be strengthened for cycling. This can be done by reducing vehicular dominance, introducing traffic calming measures such as carriageway tightening, introducing 'cycling first' routes with low speed limits or by creating segregated cycle lanes where space allows. Two way cycling routes are preferable as one way cycle routes negatively impact the connectivity of the cycle network.
- Key routes that should allow managed cycling.
- Streets which should be designed with flexibility for different movements at different times.
- Important junctions that require re-designing for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Key pedestrian and cycling shared routes to be improved, this includes surfacing, wayfinding and continuity.
- Lanes where no cycling should be permitted.

4.7 Broad Street Layout

Broad street is the main pedestrian street in the town centre. It is a wide, historical street with a multitude of shops and traders and a very heavy footfall during shopping hours. It is the heart of Reading and an important east-west connection linking the town centre to its surrounding neighbourhoods, making it an attractive desire line for cyclists.

There is an over provision and proliferation of street furniture and kiosks leading to a cluttered and confusing environment. This causes conflicts between cyclist, pedestrians and wheelers. There is no clear zone that is easily navigable for pedestrians. Cycle parking should be well located and highly visible to deter theft, without contributing to clutter.

Currently, cycling is permitted on the eastern half of Broad Street, but prohibited on the western half, creating a confusing situation for cyclists. Delivery vehicles and dial-a-ride buses also access the area through the day, further exacerbating the confused environment.

The paving colour also causes difficulties, especially for users with visual impairments, by creating a mono pallet or red paving against red buildings, making visual navigation confusing.

The adjacent diagrams show various aspects that currently exist on Broad Street including existing tree location, street furniture and paving patterns and colours.

Diagram 1

Diagram 2

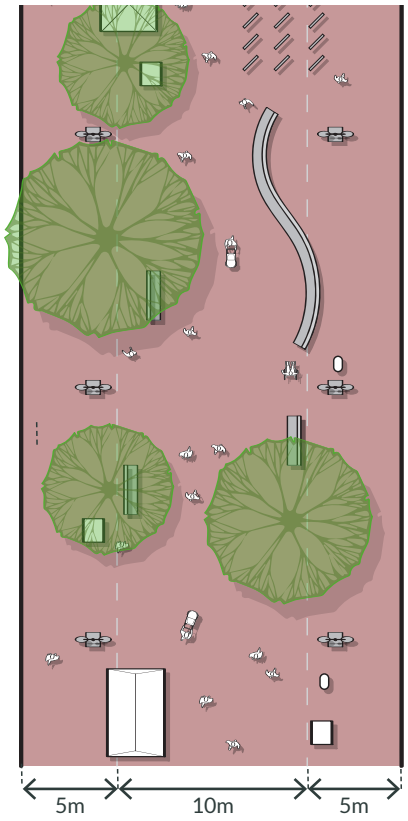
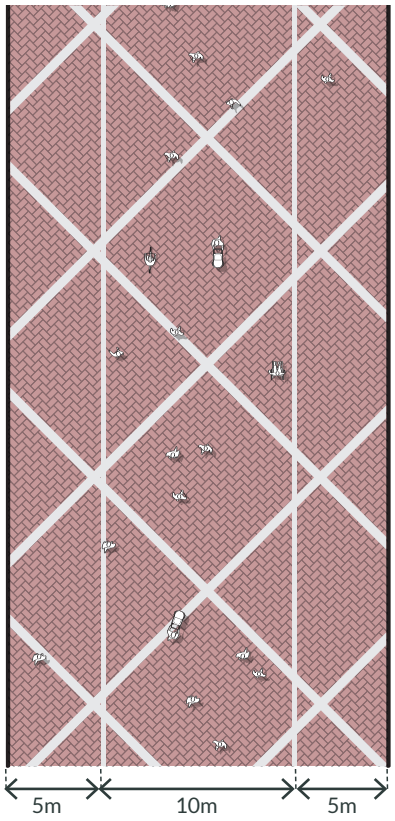
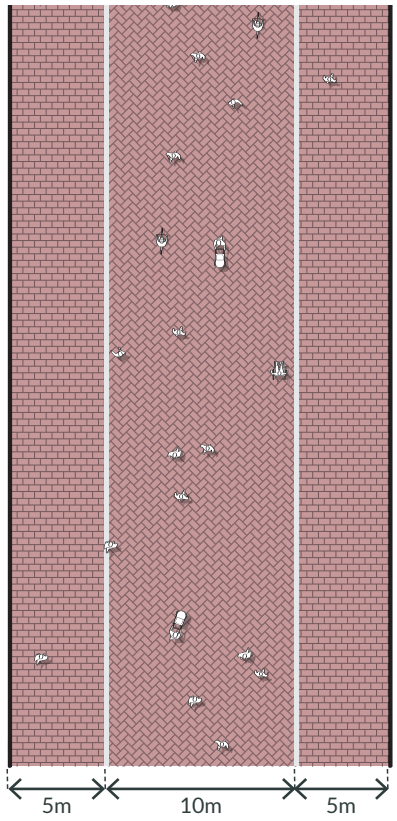


Diagram 3





4.7 Broad Street Layout

Managed cycling and public realm renewal should be considered in conjunction so that cycling can be 'designed in' positively as part of a set of comprehensive proposals for Broad Street. This would enhance the public realm appearance, general movement and enable considerate cycling at off-peak times.

Cycling should be permitted on the whole length of Broad Street to help creating a comprehensive cycling network throughout the centre and connecting neighbourhoods. However, cycling should be managed by design to avoid conflicts with pedestrians, including considering how pedestrians will safely move across the street and movement of delivery cyclists to premises or side streets.

The adjacent diagrams show 3 scenarios that include cycling on Broad Street in different ways. The 3 scenarios show the same level of decluttering and street furniture rationalisation. None of them suggest the creation of a segregated cycling lane, but rather, they explore different degrees of managed cycling by design.

Gateways to Broad Street should be carefully treated to highlight the sharing of the space and reduce conflict. Gateway treatments should avoid the excessive use of bollards, signs and lines. It is important to ensure clear demarcation between pedestrian and any vehicular areas for the visually impaired.

The development of a plan or business 'Code of Conduct' which sets out when, how and who can utilise the pedestrianised area is paramount. The plan should set out measures to mitigate the impacts of delivery bikes and vehicles, and reduce the dominance of delivery routes from the central pedestrian areas.

Diagram 1

10m central flexible zone for pedestrians and cyclists to share. The proportions are the same as the existing layout. Clear zones run between facades and trees for retail access. Little cycle management is possible in the central flexible zone.

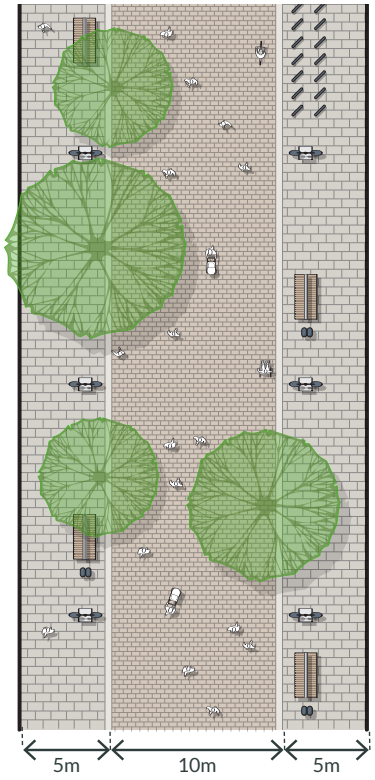


Diagram 2

No movement corridors or clear zones are indicated using surfacing, the paving pattern carries across the street continuously. Street furniture location is rationalised but this scenario presents the least management for cyclists.

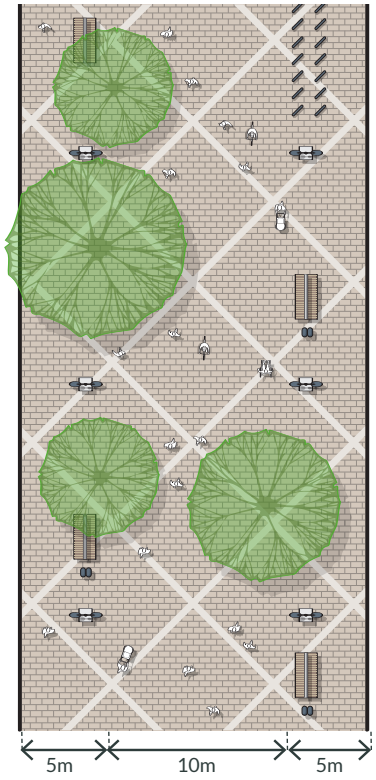
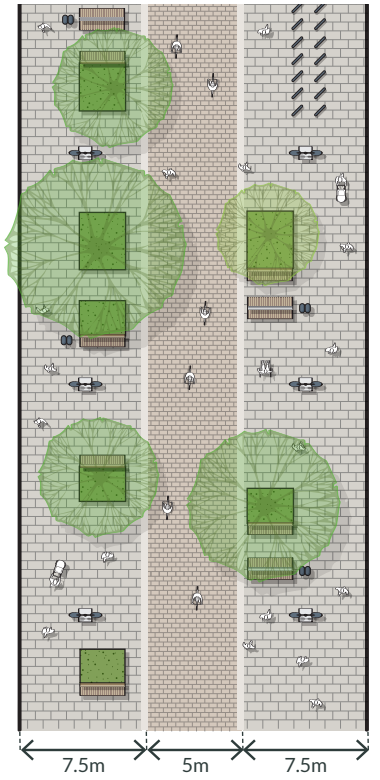


Diagram 3

Creation of a 5m movement corridor down the centre of the street. Furniture location and surfacing aim to encourage cyclists to use this route, whilst the bulk of the pedestrian flows can move along the facades and planting / seating areas.



05

Design Manual

5.1 Design Manual Introduction

5.2 Purpose of reclaiming Road Space

5.3 Paving

5.4 Vegetation

5.5 Tree Planting

5.6 Rain Gardens

5.7 Green Verges Along Carriageway

5.8 Parking & Integrated Green Infrastructure

5.9 Street Furniture

5.10 Lighting

5.11 Play Provision

5.12 Wayfinding & Signage

5.13 Public Art & Animation

5.14 Street Activation

5.15 Meanwhile uses

5.16 Hoarding & Construction Sites

5.17 Maintenance

5.1 Design Manual Introduction

This design manual describes all of the components which contribute to the overall public realm. It is intended to be a guide which helps steer in making design, material and style decisions for future projects and enhancement works.

The manual is sub divided into a number of sub headings including paving, vegetation, street furniture and lighting. The descriptions of each are accompanied by diagrams, sketches and visuals which aim at clearly identifying the appropriate use of the material or component.

This guidance is further demonstrated in the worked examples in chapter 6&7, which show the principles in practice over a range of specific projects. These worked examples are to help visualise the potential redesign of key areas and inclusion of the components included in the manual. Surveys and a full design process will still need to be commissioned to determine the actual designs.

The recommendations within this document are intended to guide both public and private development projects. The overall aim is that this guide is highly usable, adoptable and leads to positive and cohesive change.

5.2 Purpose of Reclaiming Road Space

An important ambition for Reading town centre is to redress the balance between vehicles and pedestrians. This can be achieved by reclaiming road space, reducing road widths and introducing more comfortable and visually pleasing environments.

Reclaiming road space has huge social, safety and ecological impacts, making more equitable streets. Greener streets have a profound impact. Schemes such as introducing rain gardens, green verges and improved planting, as well as narrowing road widths have a multitude of benefits. Greener streets are more sustainably resilient to climate change and create a reduced sense of vehicular dominance. There is also the added advantage of improved road safety, where road widths are narrowed and planting introduced, It tangibly redresses the balance between vehicles and pedestrians.

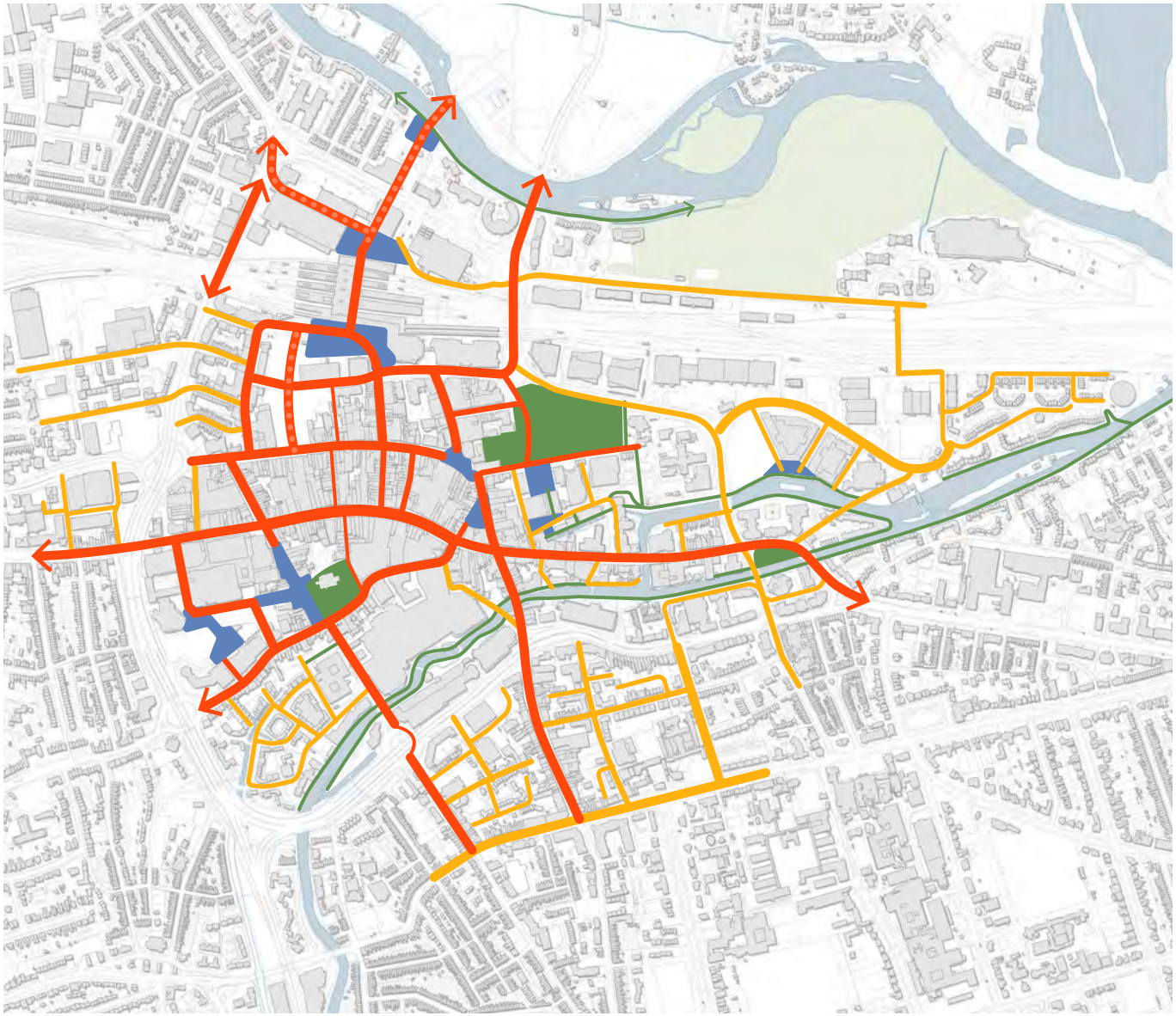
Reducing road and crossing widths makes places more comfortable, whilst naturally encouraging motorists to reduce speeds. In addition encouraging activation of spaces makes more inviting and usable places. These improvements have far ranging impacts on a sense of community and in turn encourage lingering and increased footfall, driving spending.

Spaces are created that allow opportunities for social gatherings; art, performance, meanwhile use and other key community engagements, that all form the important social glue to bring together a place and elevate it from something good, to something great.

5.3 Paving | General Principles

The existing paving in Reading town centre offers room for improvement. All paving should be of high quality, sustainable and suitable to withstand the function of the area.

Durability, lifespan, maintenance and visual appearance should all be considered when specifications are being determined. The town centre has a wealth of excellent heritage buildings and the majority of these are built in an attractive red brick. The existing paving around these heritage buildings is currently often laid in a red block paving which competes visually with the buildings. A refreshed paving strategy could not only complement, but really accentuate these important heritage assets. The appropriate and consistent use of DfT compliant tactile paving should be used throughout the town centre to aid visually impaired users in line with current guidance, with particular attention paid to segregated cycle-footways.



- **Primary streets** - Core town centre area including pedestrian streets, lanes, major axis and historical streets
- **Future primary streets** - Important new routes being created as part of development sites
- **Secondary streets** - Mostly residential streets and axis connecting to the town centre
- **Parks & Riverside Walks**- Foot and cycle paths along the river Kennet and canals as well as within green spaces and parks
- **Squares** - All pedestrian gateways, squares and spaces with a flexible use

5.3 Paving | Field Mix - Primary Streets

In key areas of the town centre, granite or similar natural stone paving should be introduced. Whilst these do come at a slightly higher price per unit, once consideration is given to the cost of laying and the greatly improved longevity of the material, in addition to the vastly improved visual quality, this is considered the most sustainable and suitable solution for the long term and should be applied to all primary streets within the town centre.

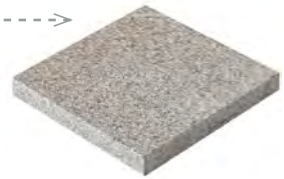
A mix of fine picked and flamed Granite using light grey, mid grey, pink and buff should be used. Recommended paving sizes are 150mm x 300mm and 300 x 400mm laid on a rigid concrete base. Paving units should be nominally 60mm thick relative to their usage and to optimise value.

Where natural stone is being used in vehicle areas, thicker setts should be used. The small unit slabs / setts allow ease of laying and will make achieving levels and tying in to thresholds and crossing points easier, without the need for triangular cuts, which should be avoided.

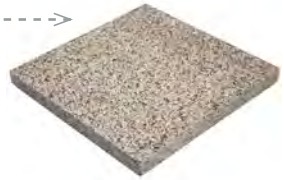
All paving falls are to be compliant with Building Regulations and universal design standards. Drainage units, manhole covers and other components in the paving should be flush with surrounding areas. They should be integrated within the design to avoid trip hazards. Paving infill covers are not required. However there should be a maximum 10mm gap around covers to adjacent paving.

As granite is mostly sourced from abroad, with necessary lead times, consideration should be given to ordering extra and setting aside a store of replacement paving units and setts, thus allowing repairs to be carried out in a timely manner with the right materials.

Finish - Fine picked
Colour - Light Grey
Material - Granite
% of mix - 40%

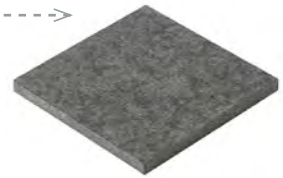


Finish - Fine picked
Colour - Pink
Material - Granite
% of mix - 15%



Finish - Fine picked
Colour - Buff
Material - Granite
% of mix - 15%

Finish - Fine picked
Colour - Dark Grey
Material - Granite
% of mix - 30%



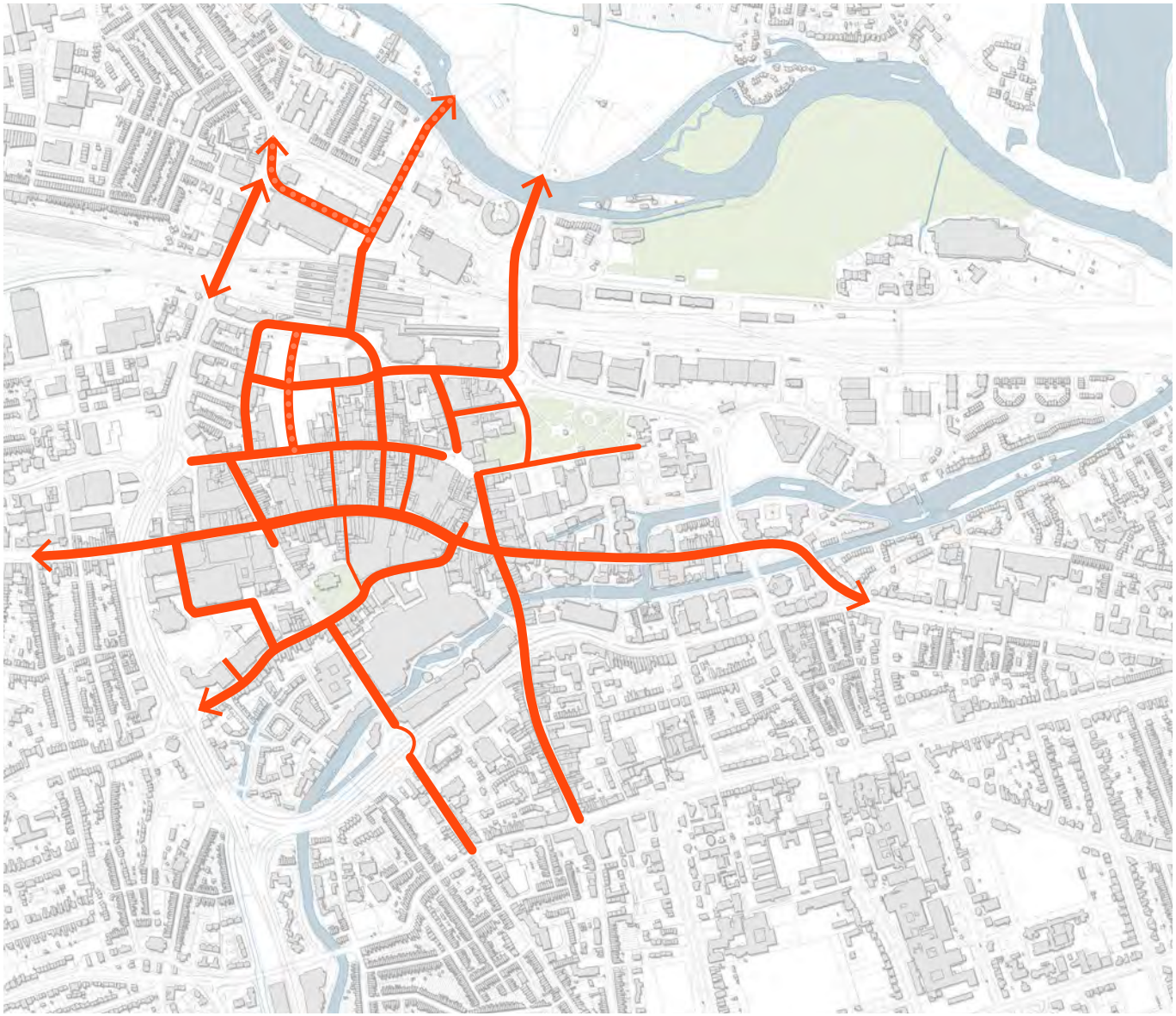
5.3 Paving | Typology 1 | Primary Streets

Reading should strive for a better quality of natural paving in key areas such as the primary streets. Introducing a granite field paving in a neutral pallet, in a mix of sizes and colours will elevate the town.

The paving should speak quietly, giving a high quality impression, whilst not competing with, or detracting from, the heritage façades. The proposed "field mix" should be used on all primary streets to provide a lighter, more neutral stone than what exists today. The choice of natural stone is made for the following reasons:

- Appropriate to the heritage of the area.
- Durability - when laid on a concrete base, it will achieve a long lifespan with minimal maintenance.
- Stone products appreciate in value with natural weathering.
- Depending on colour and source, the material cost difference to concrete/ pre manufactured products is minimal.
- If a subtle variation of colour and texture are used as suggested, the stone will age gracefully and stains or reinstated areas will be barely visible, aiding future maintenance.

There are sections of primary streets where heritage or natural stone paving is in place, for instance in the Abbey Quarter, these should be retained and enhanced.

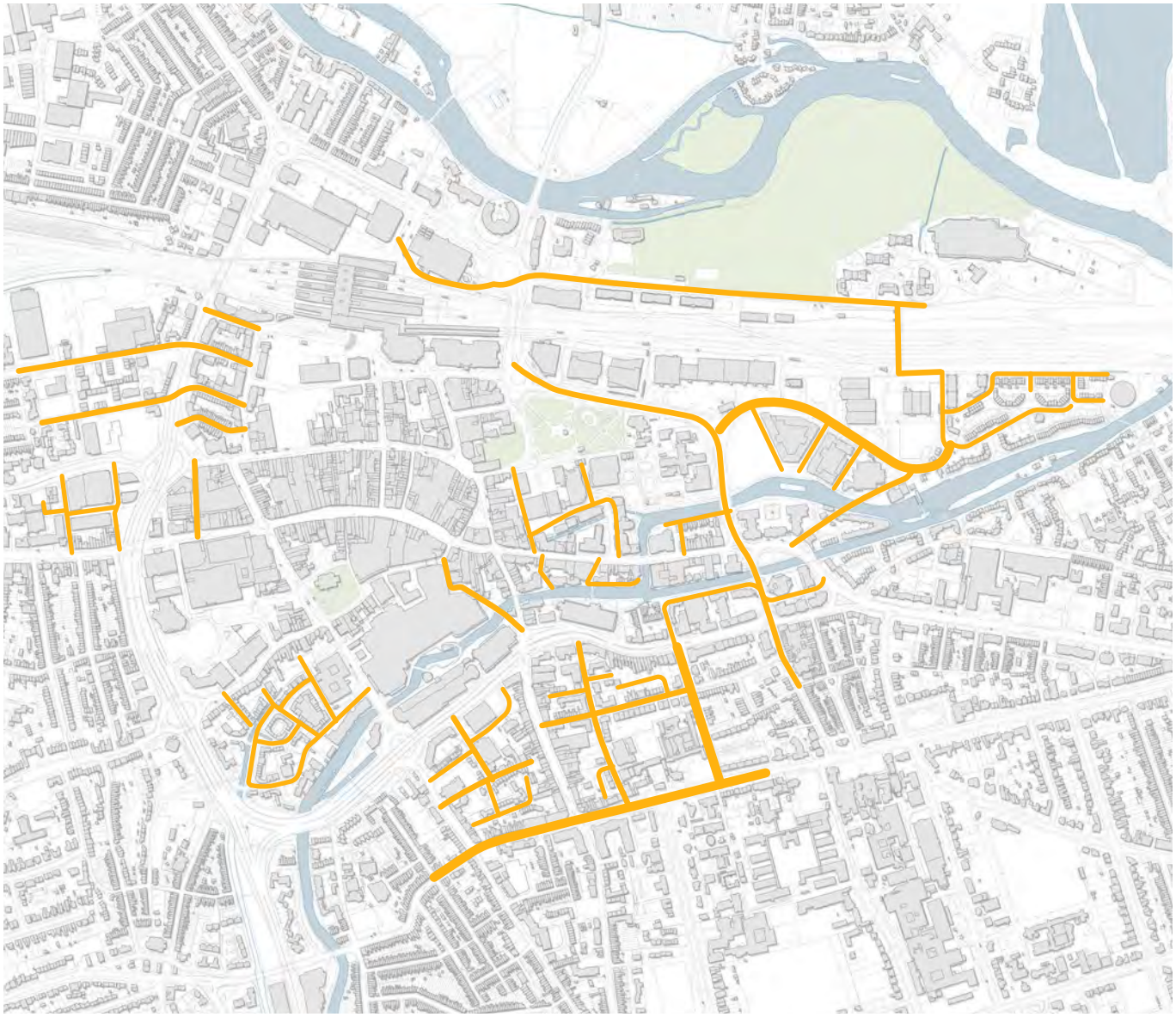


5.3 Paving | Typology 2 | Secondary Streets

Generally asphalt footpaths should be used on secondary streets. The exception is where streets are adjacent or within a heritage asset, where consideration should then be given to the use of appropriate stone setts and slabs.

Concrete slabs should be avoided as they give a piecemeal appearance and are prone to cracking from vehicle overrun/loading. They should be replaced with the single asphalt surface material, which will bring better visual coherence.

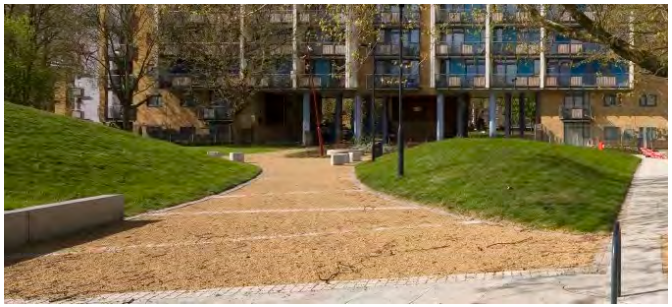
Where streets have new residential developments which are of a higher built density, consideration should be given to introducing a natural stone material to help lift the quality of the public realm. Asphalt wouldn't be appropriate in this scenario and a higher quality of paving should be introduced. Where appropriate, areas of permeable paving should be considered in these areas.



5.3 Paving | Typology 3 | Parks & Riverside Walks

Resin Bound gravel should be introduced in a neutral buff colour in areas such as on footpaths adjacent to the river and within parks.

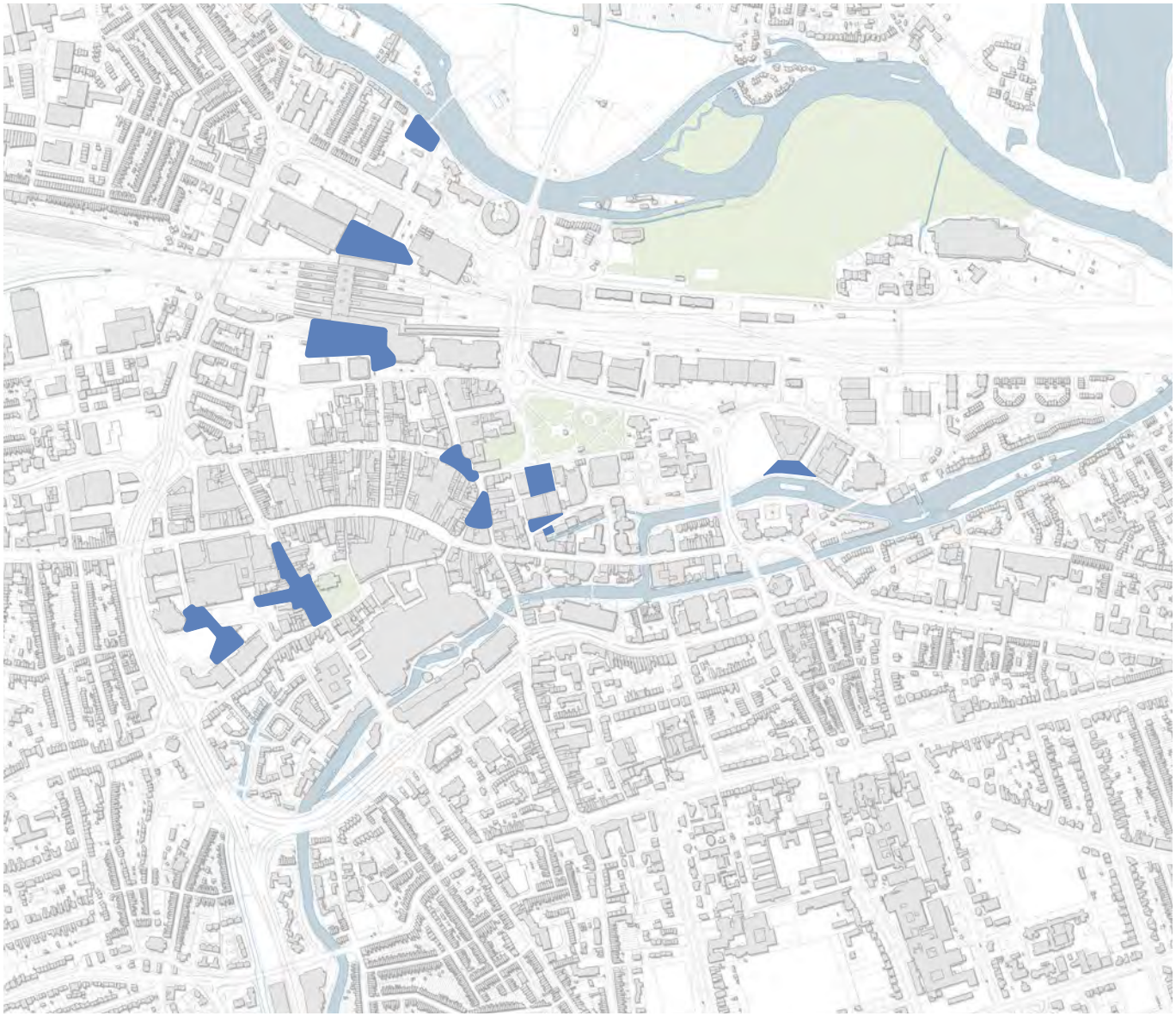
The use of the resin bound material will elevate these areas making them more inviting and improving wayfinding and legibility. A resin bound material is robust with no loose particles, making it appropriate for walking and cycling in an urban environment. Where appropriate this application should be fully permeable with a suitable corresponding sub base.



5.3 Paving | Typology 4 | Squares

A more contrasting paving typology in key areas such as squares should be introduced. This can be used to create a sense of place and arrival and highlight key event or community spaces.

These special areas should be carefully designed by Landscape Architects who can advise on the most appropriate mixture of paving and other elements to complement the setting. The design proposals should be based on the assessment of a variety of factors, including heritage enhancement, current and future uses and the council's aspirations for the space. Key spaces such as these add much opportunity for defined place making in the urban realm.



5.4 Vegetation

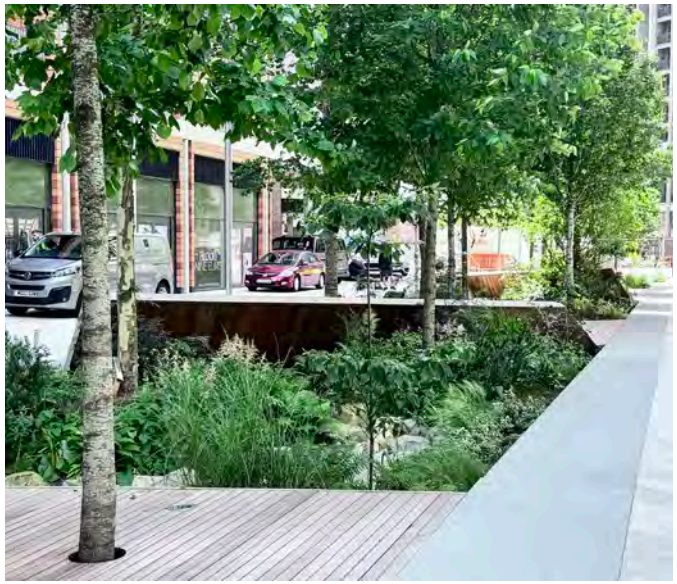
There are a number of types of vegetation that should be used within the public realm at Reading town centre. These include shrubs, ground cover, perennial planting, bulbs, lawns, tiered / hanging planters, verges and wild flower areas.

It i important to establish a robust and usable set of principles that can be rolled out across the town centre. Each of the following planting types presents its own scale, characteristics and benefits. With regards to trees the Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy should be referred to. The green links identified in the local plan also provide a context to location.

The key planting principles in this guide provide a rich, appropriate and comprehensive vegetation strategy for the town centre. Planting is one of the key ways to ensure sustainability.

Biodiversity and climate resilience must be prioritised. In this day and age of ever more extreme and changing weather, we are having to adapt and understand how we specify plants more carefully. This has fed directly into the recommended species. These are plants that require less maintenance, relatively low watering, offer pest resilience and that are attractive to valuable pollinators.

Where appropriate edible planting should be considered which will help lead to a greater public engagement and ownership of public spaces.



5.4 Vegetation | General Principles

The following principles should be applied:

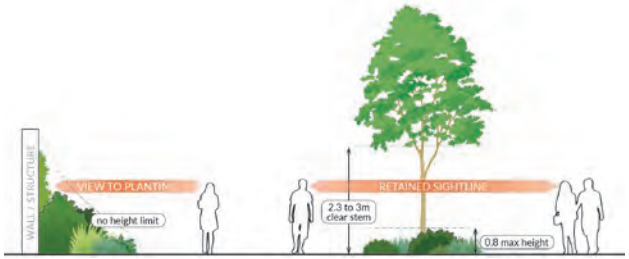
- **Right tree, right place, right tree pit** - Tree and Plant selection should always be carefully considered. Scale, climate, daylight, orientation, form, durability, sight lines, resilience and maintenance. These all play very important factors in a plants overall success. Large canopy species should also be considered where appropriate in accordance with the tree strategy. Consideration should also be given to the location of species where seasonal leaf drop may obstruct paths, particularly in areas used by those with additional access or mobility needs.

- **Native species -** Native or naturalised or non-native with wildlife value trees should be used. Native plant species should be supplemented with non native to provide further pollinators, biodiversity and visual amenity benefits.

- **Planting by design -** The location and layout of planting within the town centre should always be "designed into schemes" so the best opportunities for the introduction of planting and trees are identified and carried out in a planned fashion.

- **Visibility & sightlines -** The overall height of plants must be planned to avoid blocking views and creating safety issues. Plants should generally be less than 600mm high and trees should have a minimum clear stem of 2.3-3m, unless in a park or against a wall, except adjacent to heritage assets. CCTV viewing lines need to be considered when placing planting. Trees and planting in raised planting boxes should be avoided.

- **Green perception -** Mix of evergreen shrubs and perennial planting should always be used, introducing a variety of good performers that add greenery and structure all year round. Choose reliable performers that produce interest, colour and delight.



1 - Trees

2 - Multi-stem trees

3 - Shrubs

4 - Perennials & Bulbs

5 - Groundcover

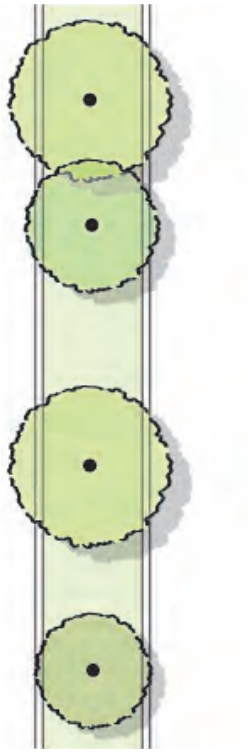
5.4 Vegetation | Types

Ground Cover

Ground Cover brings harmony and resilience. In certain location preferable to larger shrubs, so as not to block visibility across spaces. Ground cover is also encouraged around the base of street trees, where footpath widths permit, in the place of semi permeable bound surfaces. When used appropriately amongst shrubs and around trees, ground cover can also often reduce the need for weed control and when combined with appropriate mulch, can reduce the overall need for watering by reducing evaporation and drying of soil.

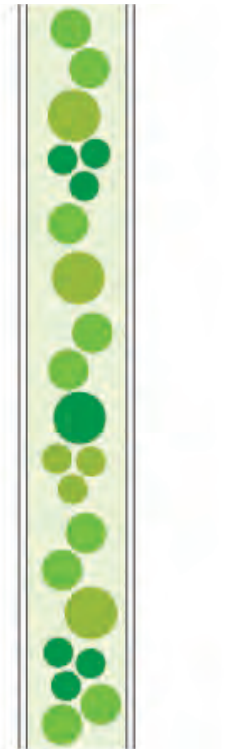
Bulbs

Bulb planting should be included as an additional, relatively low cost layer to new planting schemes. Bulbs that are hardy, resilient, good performers year on year should be chosen. Bulbs will also often perform well in areas that other plants may struggle, such as dry deep shade. Bulbs bring a real sense of delight early in the season with their emergence signalling the arrival of spring, often well before many other flowering perennials. They also take up very little space within the soil meaning that they can be under-planted below shrubs and perennials They are a really key asset to pollinators and are a key consideration in increasing biodiversity within urban areas.



1 - Trees

Trees to be typically planted at the centre of the planting bed. Randomly spaced to adapt to urban environment



2 - Shrubs

Shrubs to be planted at the centre of the planting bed to maximise the perception of green / vegetation

3 - Perennials & bulbs

Perennials and bulbs to be planting to the edge of the planting bed to create an inviting environment adjacent to footpaths

4 - Groundcover

Groundcover to be planted to the edge of the planting bed as a filler to maximise the perception of green / vegetation

Perennial planting

Perennials bring seasonal interest, promote biodiversity and soften hard spaces. Their use should always be considered along pedestrian streets and within developments, parks and more defined spaces. They should be planted in combination with bulbs, ground cover and shrubs. A density of 5 x 3L pots per m² in town centres and 2 x 3 litre per m² in parks and residential streets should be used. Low maintenance and native species mixes where appropriate should be specified. It is recommended to use a mix of 30% evergreen 70% perennial to ensure year round interest.

Grass

Grass areas in town centres add valuable interest and enable the softening of spaces for a minimal maintenance and cost. Grass areas are good family amenities and can also facilitate special events such as outdoor festivals, cinema, performances, etc. In some instances grass can be seeded, to keep installation costs low. In very high use areas, fibre reinforced turf may be appropriate to build in extra resilience. The soil build up below turf is a very important consideration, percolation / soil tests can be very useful to help allow the choice of the right grass specification. For example in heavy clay areas a turf resilient to damp may be required. Whereas in sandy areas, with very free draining soil a drought resilient turf may be more appropriate.

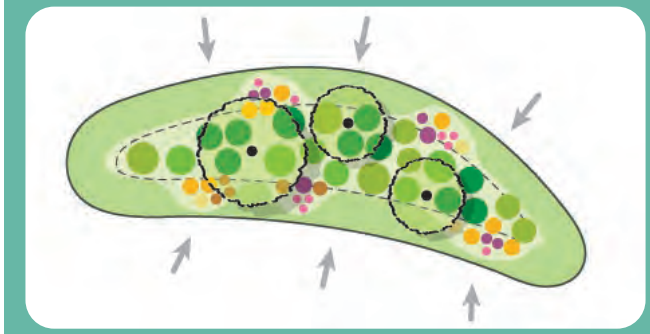
Shrub Planting

Shrub planting makes a good boundary and screening treatment and should be used to define front gardens, entrances and defensible areas, as well as within mixed borders in park settings and squares. Shrubs are the backbone of many urban planting schemes and should be located so not to hinder access, doorways or forecourt space for shops and businesses. Regular maintenance is essential for the shrub planting to retain its desired shape and height. Pest and climate resilient species are important considerations. Evergreen shrubs that provide year round interest and structure should be used.

A benefit of shrubs is their ability to deliver valuable scent and flowers, often early in the season, when perennials are yet to bloom. They can also be a very valuable early source of nectar for pollinators. Shrubs will bring a mixture of different leaf textures, overall size, flowers and scent. Shrubs should be introduced at a minimum size of 2-5 litre pots, at a spacing of 2-5 per m², This will need to be individually assessed dependent on setting and it is essential that a regular watering regime is undertake for a long period after planting, particularly during dry weather and in summer months. New planting should take place within planting seasons (November - March).

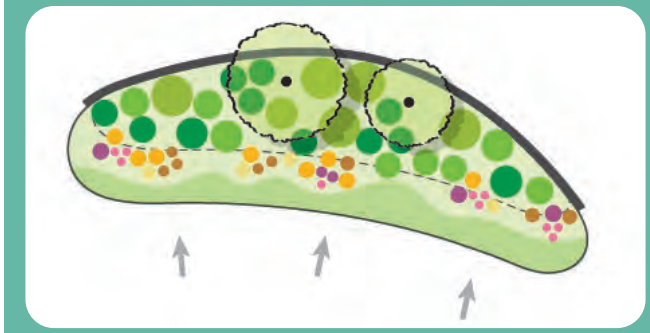
Scenario 01 - Free standing planting area

Planting can be seen from all sides. Lower species should be located around the perimeter of the planting bed, whilst larger shrubs and trees are in the centre. The typical planting style should be random / naturalistic to allow easy plant replacement.



Scenario 02 - Planting area along wall or boundary

Planting can only be seen from one side. Larger shrubs and trees should be planted at the back, with no height limit, whilst lower perennials and bulbs sit at the front.



5.4 Vegetation | Types

Wildflowers / Meadows

Natural wildflower and meadows should be introduced within park and verge settings as much as possible. Even small areas for wildlife can have much visual appeal, be very popular with the public and add tangibly, valuable, biodiversity assets for wildlife.

These areas do require some maintenance, with weeding, annual cutting, raking and re seeding, but if the right mix of annual and perennial seeds are introduced, these areas can perform well year on year. They can also reduce time and cost spent mowing lawns.

We would recommend that the wild flower mixes are carefully chosen. Generally wild flowers tend to thrive in less fertile soil so it is important to take into consideration the existing soil type. It is also important to survey existing grass areas to determine the species mix to help identify what will thrive in the area.

Some remediation may be required to achieve optimum soil / planting conditions. Where new wild flower areas are introduced, a wild flower specialist should be consulted to advise on exact soil specification and seed mixes.

Soil and percolation testing are advantageous. Other important things to be considered include the overall height of the mix and whether the wild flowers are annuals or perennials. A clear process should be followed to confirm and establish the right mix for each given site.

Hanging baskets / Tiered planters

Temporary displays, hanging baskets and window boxes need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. They can help soften the visual appearance to a street where there is no planting within the ground.

Where attached to buildings, such additions are acceptable provided that they are well maintained and appropriate to the building facade. Although it should be noted that they tend to have a high water/maintenance requirement, so aren't a very sustainable choice. If used they should be placed above shop sign level.

Hanging baskets should generally be avoided on columns and railings within spaces as they add to visual clutter and are costly and time consuming to water.

Stand-alone planters should also be avoided, where at all possible, as they add visual clutter to the streetscape. There may be a few exceptions, but overall designated planting areas should be designed into schemes, to give longevity, rather than stand alone planters added at a later date.

5.4 Vegetation | Types

5.4 Vegetation | Typical Species | Ground-cover, Shrubs & Bulbs

Ground-cover

The adjacent shows a selection of robust, yet attractive ground-cover plants that will provide a rich carpet of year round interest, complementing taller evergreen and perennial planting. A mixture of Evergreen species should be used, that ensures seasonal variety and adds the occasional element of surprise and delight.

Shrubs

It is vital to use a robust series of large shrubs and grasses. These will add valuable height and interest. In addition scent has been carefully considered with a number of the shrubs, including, for example, the Sarcococca Confusa, that provides welcome heavy scent early in the year, signalling the start of spring.

Bulbs

It is key to add a mixture of bulbs Some typical species are shown, it is important that bulbs are planted at the correct time of year, for the majority of the bulbs, this is autumn, but some are spring planted. Bulbs that come back each year should be used, rather than annuals, but still it is worth considering some succession planting/ dividing each year, thus ensuring that a good supply of colour and interest is ongoing.

Page 367

Ground-cover

Hedera helix 'Green Ripple'
Evergreen. H x W = 0.1m x 4m
Flowers: August - November

Vinca minor 'Gertrude Jekyll
Evergreen H x W = 0.1m x 0.5m
Flowers: April - Sept

Liriope muscari
Evergreen H x W = 0.3m x 0.45m
Flowers: August - November

Ajuga reptans Atropurpurea
Evergreen H x W = 0.15 x 1.0m
Flowers: April - June

Asarum europaeum
Evergreen H x W = 0.15m x 0.3m
Flowers: March - April

Shrubs

Skimmia × confusa 'Kew Green'
Evergreen H x W = 1.0m x 1.5m
Flowers: Feb to May

Sarcococca Confusa
Evergreen H x W = 2.0m x 1.0m
Flowers: Dec to March

Viburnum Tinus
Evergreen H x W = 3.0m x 3.0m
Flowers: Jan - April

Pittosporum Tobira
Evergreen H x W = 0.8 x 0.8m
Flowers: May to June

Pittosporum 'Tom Thumb
Evergreen H x W = 0.6m x 1.0m
Flowers: May to June

Bulbs

Mixed Crocus
Bulb
Flowers: Feb to May

Galanthus nivalis
Bulb
Flowers: Jan to March

Muscari Neglectum
Bulb
Flowers: March to April

Narcissus Pastoral
Bulb
Flowers: March to April

Allium Sphaerocephalon
Bulb
Flowers: July - Aug

Perennials

It is important to introduce a mix of native and ornamental species. The proposed species will provide valuable interest within borders. Using a mixture of evergreens and perennials to work alongside the other proposed planting and proposed ground-cover, bulbs and wildflowers is key.

It is important to ensure year-round interest, allowing for a mixture of colour, texture and scent that will provide excitement, delight and surprise throughout the year right through from January until December.

Plants that are relatively low maintenance and are good, reliable performers year on year are shown here.

Perennials

Hakonechloa Macra
Evergreen H x W = 0.4m x 0.35m
Flowers: March - April

Deschampsia cespitosa
Evergreen H x W = 0.75m x 0.75m

Pennisetum villosum
Perennial H x W = 0.6m x 0.6m

Echinacea Green Jewel
Perennial H x W = 0.5m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Sep

Echinacea Summer Cocktail
Perennial H x W = 0.5m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Sep

Anemone × Hybrida Jobert
Perennial H x W = 1.5m x 1.5m
Flowers: August - Oct

Verbena Bonariensis
Perennial H x W = 2.0m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Oct

Geranium sanguineum
Perennial H x W = 0.3 m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Oct

Perovskia 'Blue Spire'
Deciduous H x W = 1m x 1.2m
Flowers: Aug-Oct

Geum Totally Tangerine
Perennial H x W = 0.9m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Oct

Crocosmia Lucifer
Perennial H x W = 1.0 m x 0.5m
Flowers: July - Sep

Scabiosa Perfecta White Flutter
Perennial H x W = 0.9m x 0.5m
Flowers: June - Sep

Sanguisorba officionalis red thunder aponica
Perennial H x W = 1.2m x 0.6m
Flowers: June - Oct

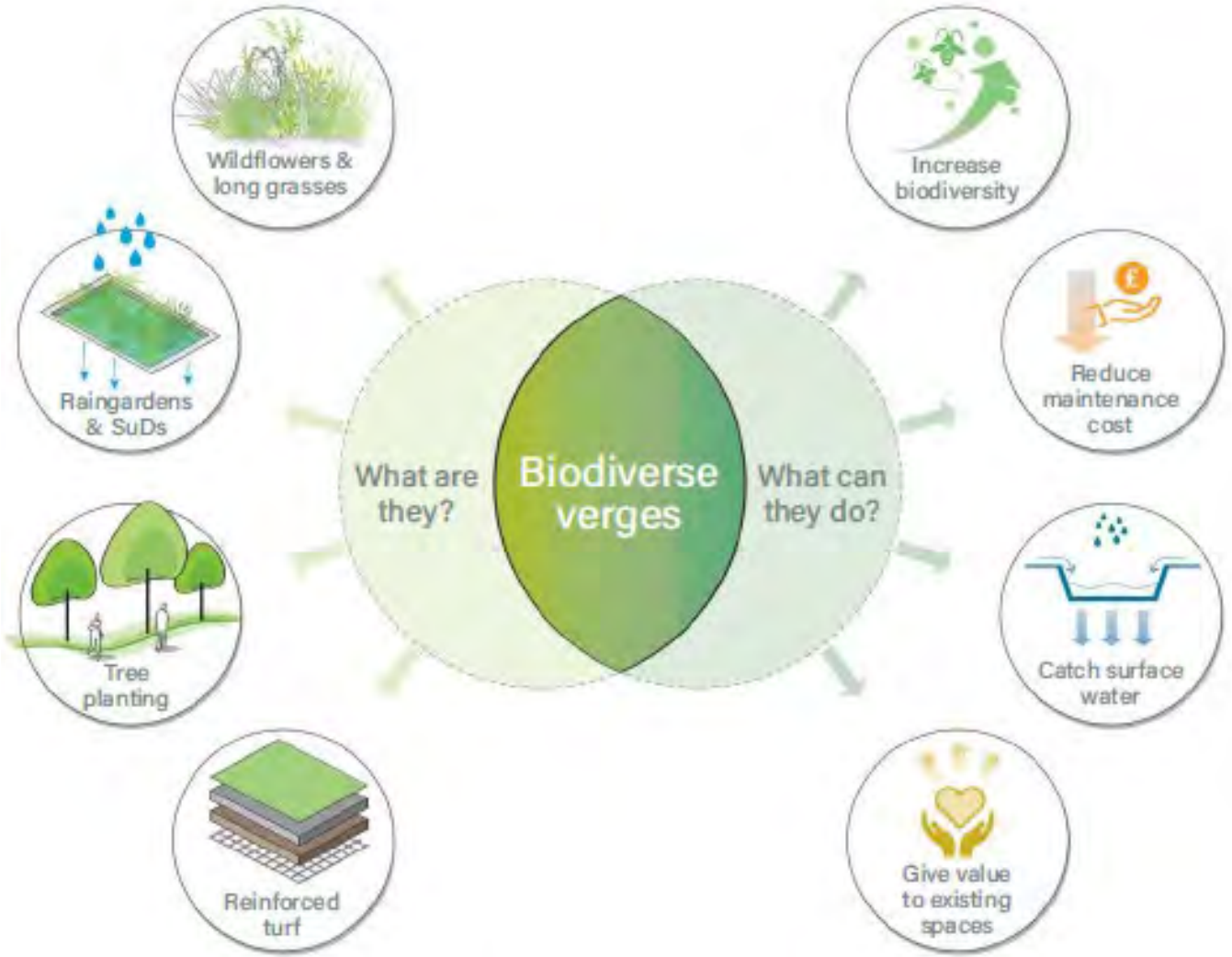
Astrantia Venice
Perennial H x W = 0.9m x 0.3m
Flowers: June -Sep

Astrantia Buckland
Perennial H x W = 0.9m x 0.3m
Flowers: June -Sep

5.4 Vegetation | Verges

Verges sit between the carriageway and the pedestrian footpath and offer a great opportunity for introducing vegetation and biodiversity; a place for nature and wildlife with added benefits.

Currently the majority of Reading's verges are generally monoculture grass or paved. The diagram to the right sets out what they could be and how they can contribute to a greener future.



Green Verges

The strategy is to reclaim verges, remove hard paving where possible and introduce trees and other planting combined with SuDS. Verges offer much opportunity to add interest and biodiversity and in many cases overall maintenance can be reduced, by replacing maintenance heavy cut grass in favour of wildflowers and more naturalised green edges to streets.

The current issues with the grass verges are their lack of biodiversity, their high mowing regime and maintenance cost and the poor state of some sections due to vehicular run over.

5.4 Vegetation | Verges

The following should be implemented:

- Tree planting: should be introduced along the central line of verges, where feasible to do so. The spacing between trees can be irregular to match the available space.
- Reinforced turf: Install sections of reinforced turf where vehicular run-over is likely to occur, typically at the entrance of driveways on residential streets.
- Meadow grass diversification: The aim is to transform verges to become species rich with a target of 50% to be achieved over a programmed duration. The minimum required verge width to implement is 1.2m. Where space allows a narrow mowed strip can be maintained directly adjacent to the carriageway.
- Rain gardens: Rain gardens that collect water runoff from the carriageway and footpaths should be introduced where appropriate. The minimum required verge width to implement rain gardens is 2-3m.

Even small areas of green infrastructure can contribute to improved streets. Trees and vegetation can occupy less than 10% of the hard surfacing, but still will contribute considerably in canopy cover, control water run off and increase biodiversity with all of the associated benefits.

Plants should be selected for their low growing, and spreading nature. These characteristics reduce the maintenance requirements as the average maximum height is 30cm and the spreading nature provides good ground cover to mitigate weeds. Plants for verges should be selected for their flowering and sensory values. Whether this is through touch, smell or sight, a pocket rain garden offers opportunity for both added biodiversity as well as visual enjoyment for all passers by.

All plant mixes should have a selection of evergreen and flowering species, variety should be provided to ensure seasonal interest and plants should be approved by the RHS for their pollinator values. It should be noted each planting mix should be reviewed on a site by site basis. It is important to manage expectations regarding flowering at all times, which could vary due to weather conditions and climate change. That is natural and an expected process as the vegetation will change over seasons.

5.5 Tree Planting

For successful tree planting, it is critically important to choose the right tree for the right place and correct installation is paramount.

There are a number of factors to consider, which include; competition for space beneath the streets with utilities, the proposed usage and character of the public realm, suitability for an urban environment, impacts on and connection with heritage assets above and below ground, visual characteristics, resilience and adaptability to climate change. Retention of existing trees, especially mature trees also needs to be carefully considered and conditions of trees continued to be monitored by RBC.

Planting

Appropriate installation is paramount for the success of tree planting. The size of the planted tree should be selected based on its location and the available maintenance - between Heavy Standard and Semi-mature. The necessary ground preparation must be undertaken, and access must be given to the young tree to an adequate type and volume of nutrient rich, moist, aerated and well drained growing substrate. Adequate above-ground protection should also be provided. Growing medium and volume are critical to the longevity and success of any tree or plant.

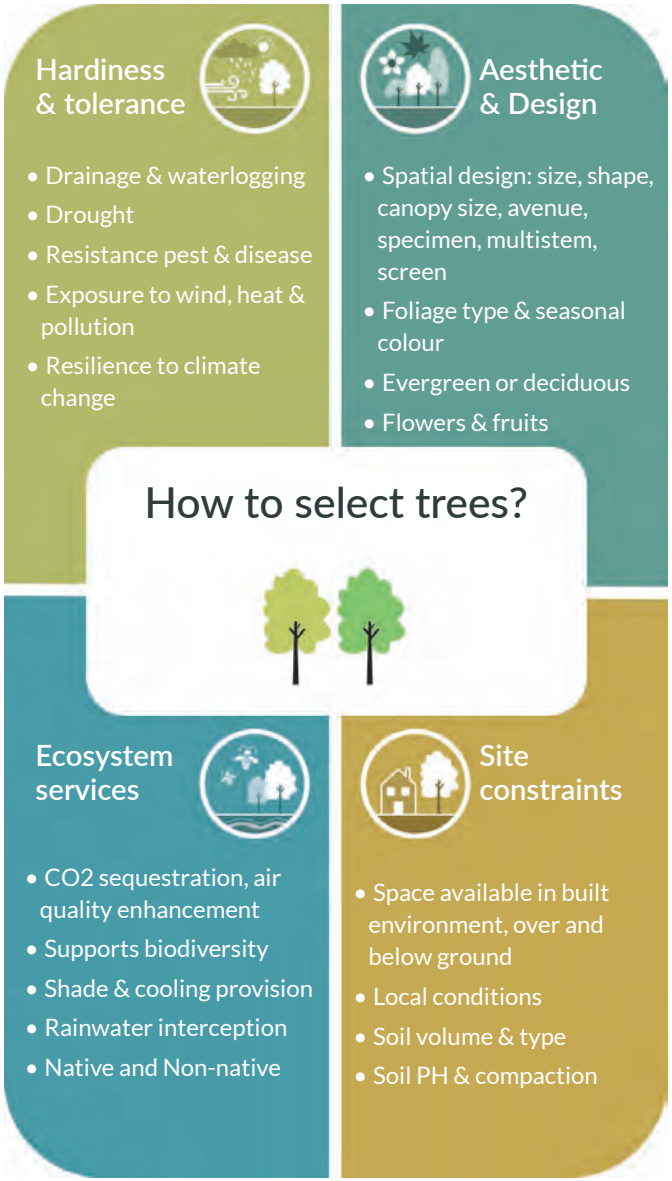
It is important to achieve the largest possible tree pit volume, however working around utilities can often be challenging and thus the target tree pit volume should be a minimum of 5-8m^3. Where this is not achievable root cells or urban tree soil should be considered, trees will thrive better if allowed better access to quality soil. All tree pits should have new, high quality soil specified, underground guying (where appropriate), aeration and irrigation points should also be included.

In urban street settings, where possible, trees should have open tree pits with soil and planting at the base, allowing for proper percolation of water. Where this is not achievable metal tree grilles or permeable resin bonded material may be acceptable, but should be assessed on a case by case basis. Tree pits should be detailed to avoid trip hazards and ensure accessibility for all users.

Excavation

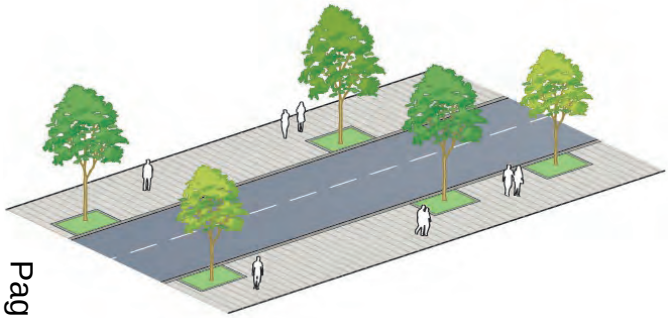
Typical pit excavation to be generally 750mm, however the excavation depth may need to be increased to install a drainage layer. This depends on percolation test results. The tree pit dimensions can be influenced by many factors such as tree species and soil and environment conditions. The build up of the base of the tree pit is also important to create a level base for the root-ball.

When utilities are in close proximity, install root barriers to protect adjacent utilities from future root growth. It is difficult to plant trees in straight lines to form traditional avenues in the modern street. Underground services makes this near impossible, so instead it can be more successful planting trees in naturalised clusters, based on results of surveys and trial holes. Introducing a mixture of species is important, whilst aiming for a gentler visual style, which ultimately becomes more appealing.

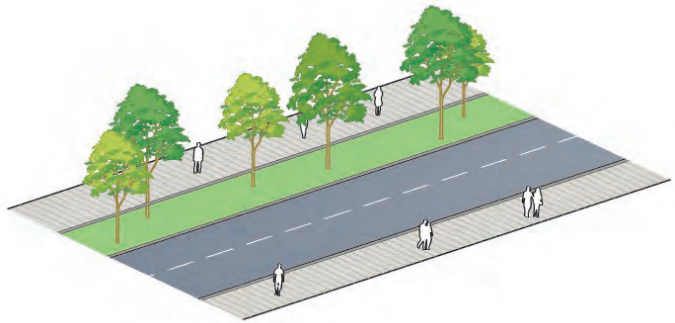


5.5 Tree Planting

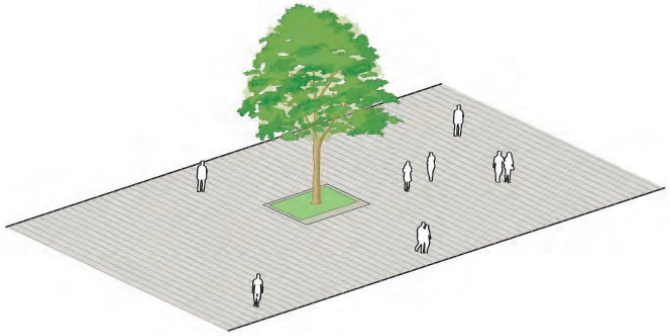
The diagrams below show typical options of how trees should be located within an urban environment. These scenarios can apply to streets with or without vehicular traffic, squares and spaces and any space where there is an opportunity to introduce trees.



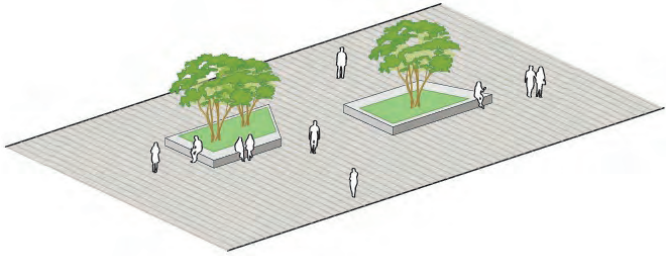
01 Along a street - Given the nature of street layout, utilities, access requirements and many other factors, trees do not need to be opposite or regularly spaced. Wherever possible, tree pits will have planting at their base.



02 In green verges - Where possible, trees should be planted in existing verges, or where verges are created by narrowing the carriageway. Regular spacing is not necessary to build in flexibility.



03 Stand alone specimen - Singular trees can be located on squares, spaces and other key location in the town centre to add interest, scale and vegetation proportionate to the space. Tree pits should always be flush to the street.



04 In raised planters - Smaller trees, such as multi-stems, can be placed in raised planters with integrated seating where space allows. This can be a good way to introduce trees where excavation possibilities are limited.

5.5 Tree Planting

Location and design

Carefully identify the right location for tree planting and then determine what attributes the selected tree must have. Overground and underground services, sight lines, interaction with road and foot-ways all needs careful consideration. Care should be taken not to mask views onto shop fronts, key buildings or significant sight lines to heritage assets. Physical protection in the form of a vertical metal tree guard should be considered where there is a risk of damage to the tree.

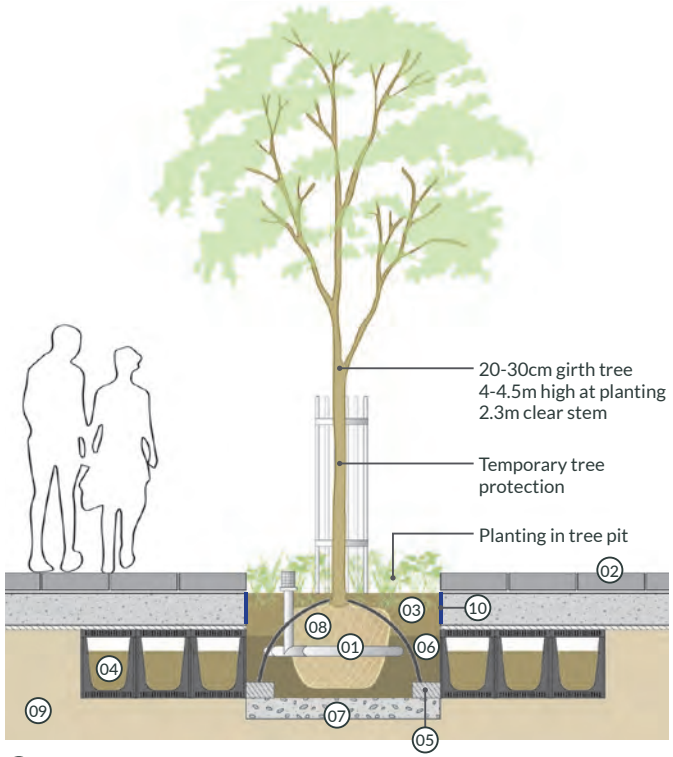
Post planting care

Once planted and secured in place, watering and weed control are essential. Formative pruning, often undertaken in nursery prior to dispatching the tree to site, should continue after planting.

Regular maintenance of both existing and new trees is paramount to their success, that includes crown lifting, pruning and removal of deadwood and regular arboricultural inspections.

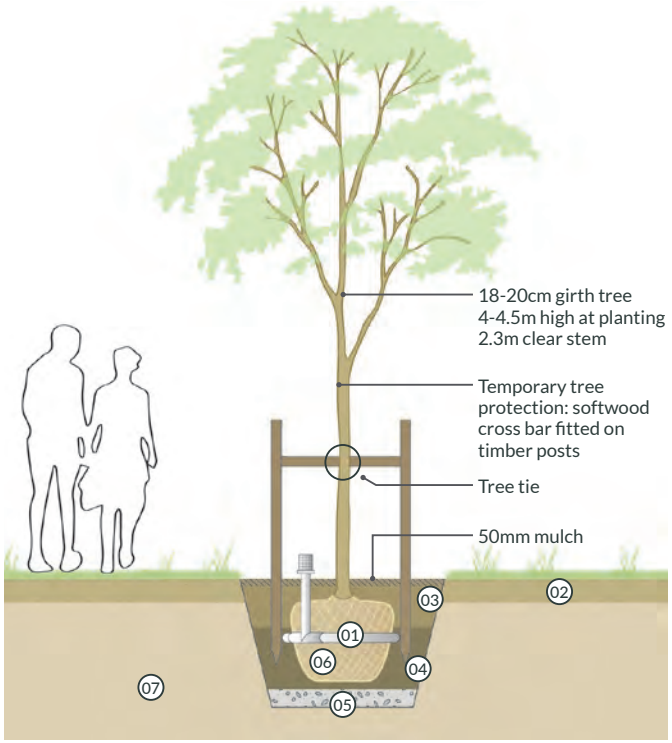
Where semi mature trees are planted within streets, underground guying should be used. When smaller trees are specified these should be secured with double stakes and ties. Where trees are planted within parkland settings overground stakes and a smaller size of tree is more suitable and economical.

Tree pit detail 1
Typical tree pit with root cell system



01 Irrigation and aeration system
02 Paved surfacing
03 300mm minimum clean topsoil
04 Tree root cell system
05 Underground anchoring system
06 450mm minimum clean subsoil
07 150mm drainage layer minimum
08 Tree root-ball
09 Existing ground
10 Root barrier if adjacent utilities

Tree pit detail 2
Typical tree pit in soft surfacing



01 Irrigation and aeration system
02 Existing topsoil
03 300mm minimum reused clean topsoil
04 450mm minimum reused clean subsoil
05 Drainage layer with geotextile to be laid upon depending on percolation test results
06 Tree root-ball
07 Existing ground

5.5 Tree Planting | Typical Species

When considering trees, placement is vital. A range of trees appropriate for street scenes should be used and these should be predominantly narrow with an upright habit.

The RBC Tree Strategy should be referred to prior to specifying any trees. The trees featured on this page are a selection of species that could be appropriate, but should not limit the selection. Diversification must be considered with regards to family, genus and species.

Feature trees, and those with large canopies, that will add visual interest and focal points and colour throughout the year should also be used. In addition multi-stems are a very important part of many schemes.

The growth nature of the trees, both above and below ground should also be considered when placing next to heritage assets.

UK suppliers with appropriate certifications should be used wherever possible, to ensure pests and diseases are reduced.

Further guidance and resources are available online to help with the tree species selection process. Such as Tree and Design Action Group (TDAG), Woodland Trust, RHS and Hilliers tree guides.

Street trees

Acer campestre Elegant

Carpinus betulus Frans Fontaine

Pyrus cal Chanticleer

Ilex Nellie

Feature trees

Acer Platinoides Crimson King

Liquidambar styraciflua

Ginkgo Biloba

Corylus-colurna

Multi-stem trees

Acer Ginalla

Corylus avellana Geant De Halle

Betula Pendula

Cercis-siliquastrum

Cercidiphyllum-Japonicum

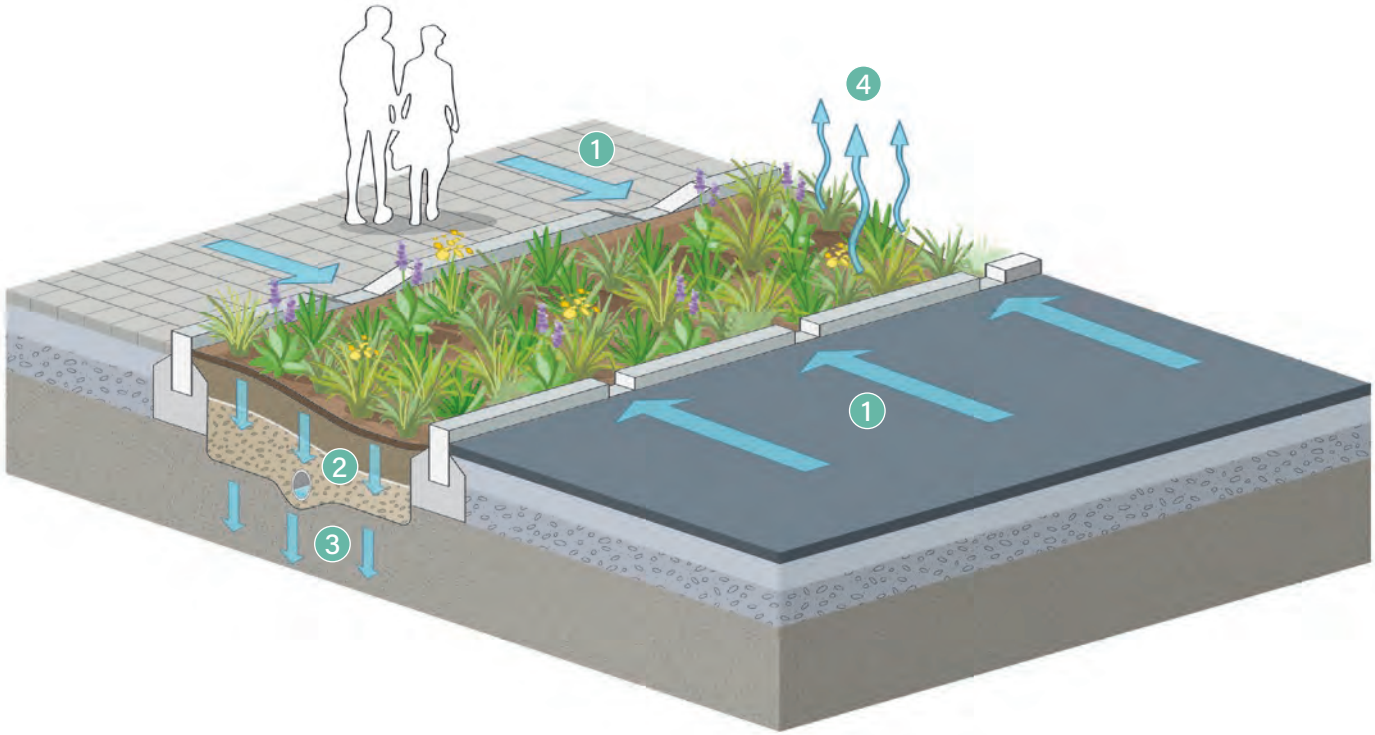
5.6 Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater and runoff from impervious areas such as roads, parking and walkways to be filtered, stored on site, and then percolate through the natural ground.

Rain gardens act as living sponges, they are a key element of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) which can play a large part in shaping new sustainable urban landscapes.

SuDS tree pit designs should also be considered where appropriate.

The adjacent diagram shows the principle of the rain garden. They aim to relieve the pressure on traditional gullies and drainage systems and at the same time rain water is cleansed and supports planting, that in turn supports biodiversity. Edges should be clearly defined for visually impaired users.



1. Rainwater runs off hard surfaces (road and footpath) into the rain garden. Notches in kerbline act as inlets and let the water flow in
2. Water filters through the soil and drainage/gravel layer. It is attenuated and temporarily stored in the rain garden.
3. Water infiltrates into the ground where ground conditions allow. Alternatively or as a complementary measure, the rain garden may have an overflow connected to the stormwater system.
4. Water evaporates into the air from the soil or plants.

Water capture

Pollutant reduction

Cost savings

Increased biodiversity

Flood risk reduction

Temperature reduction

Public space improvement

Water efficiency

Property value increase

Community engagement

5.6 Rain Gardens

The implementation of rain gardens in the town centre should be sought wherever practicable. General guideline when implementing rain gardens are:

- Ensure they are suitably located - along the lower side of the street or space, so rain water can enter along a length, rather than just at the lowest spot.
- Ensure the ground quality and condition allow efficient water storage on site, ground condition surveys are recommended.
- Ensure the storage capacity of the rain garden has been correctly assessed, the installation of an overflow system is recommended in urban environments. Efficient water storage on site, ground condition surveys are recommended.

Page 376

The planting mix includes a range of species to ensure year-round interest with ornamental grasses, herbaceous perennials and shrubs that will provide variation in structure, colour, evergreen cover and biodiversity benefits.

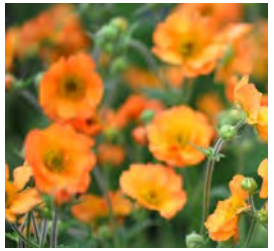
These should consider the likely moisture levels that the plants will be exposed to based on the design of the rain garden - the lower sections are moist, the higher sections typically dry. The species shown are typical plants suited to each zone.

Moist zones

Sarcococca hookeriana var. humilis

Carex Divulsa

Persicaria Bistorta affinis ‘Darjeeling Red


Geum Totally Tangerine

Euphorbia amygdaloides var. robbiae

Mesic zones

Nandina domestica Gulf Stream

Skimmia japonica Rubella

Molinia Overdam

Deschampsia Cespitosa Goldtau

Hebe rakaiensis

Dry zones

Hypericum x dummeri ‘Peter Dummer’

Spiraea japonica ‘Goldmound

bergenia silberlicht

alchemilla mollis

Liriope Muscari

5.7 Green Verges Along Carriageway

Green verges are an ever increasingly important part of a town centre's green infrastructure. They offer valuable rainwater attenuation, increase biodiversity and air quality, can include trees for shadowing and vastly improve the look and feel of streets.

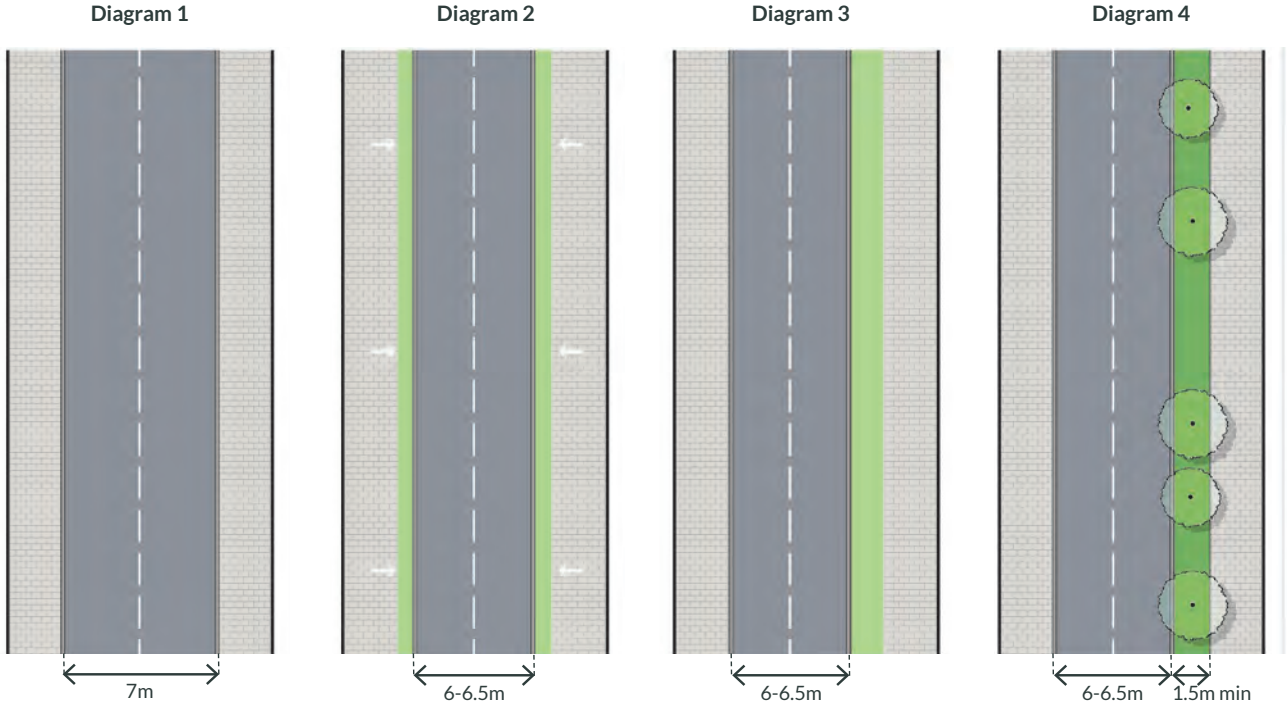
Diagram 1 - Shows an existing typical Reading street with an asphalt carriageway and predominantly hard paved footpaths.

Diagram 2 - Shows a reduced carriageway width of 6-6.5m to enable the introduction of green verges. Generally speaking, footpath width should be 2m as a minimum. Where appropriate and where space allows, a green verge can be introduced on both sides of the carriageway.

Diagram 3 - Shows reclaimed space grouped to one side of the carriageway to maximise its effectiveness and visual impact. Footfall and street type should be carefully assessed on a case by case basis before considering the introduction of the correct type of green verges.

Diagram 4 - Shows how the reclaimed space can be used to create green verges and introduce trees. Appropriate and regular breaks should be designed in the green verges to allow informal pedestrian movement and crossing where appropriate.

The greening of central islands, traffic islands and any other currently underused hard standing areas associated with roadways should also be considered. The opportunities to add green verges are likely to be greatest on more peripheral streets, and outside the core of the centre where there is already significant competition for highway space. The presence of utilities will also need to be carefully considered.



5.8 Parking and Integrated Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can be successfully integrated on most types of streets. Footway width, on-street parking provision and underground utilities should always be considered and understood to find the best suited way to integrate trees and planting. Greening will enhance the sense of place and achieve a tangible improvement in visual appeal, air quality, stormwater management and biodiversity.

On-street parking in the core of the centre should be avoided unless it is essential. These guidelines are therefore most likely to be applied on some of the more peripheral streets or in locations where parking is essential, e.g. for people with disabilities.

Diagram 1 - Shows an existing typical Reading street with continuous on-street parking both sides.

Diagram 2 - Illustrates trees set within the footpath. This scenario is suitable where on-street parking must be retained. Footpaths should ideally be 3m wide so that trees don't impact on pedestrian circulation. Trees do not need to be placed at regular internals, but can be located around underground utilities and sight lines in more naturalistic clusters, where appropriate.

Diagram 3 - Shows trees set on the edge of the footpath in green verges. Continuous on-street parking is retained. This can be a good option where there is light footfall with wide footpaths but where parking volume cannot be reduced.

Diagram 4 - Trees set in pockets of planting (min 2-2.4m) on a flexible strip with on-street parking. This is a good option where parking volume can be slightly reduced.

Diagram 5 - Trees are set in larger pockets of planting. This a good option where parking can be reduced and biodiversity and urban drainage prioritised.

Diagram 1

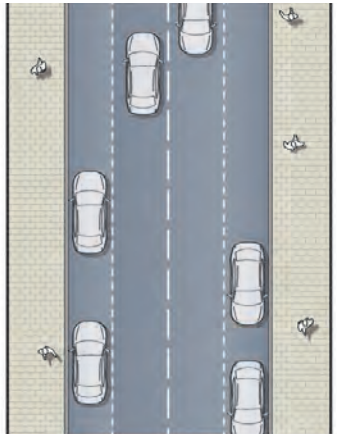


Diagram2

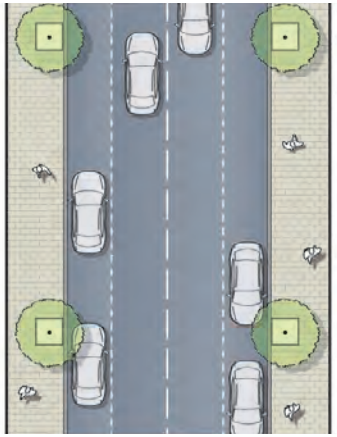


Diagram 3

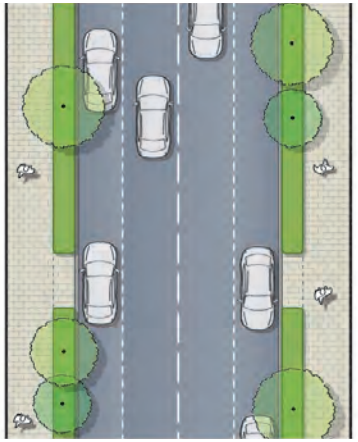


Diagram 4

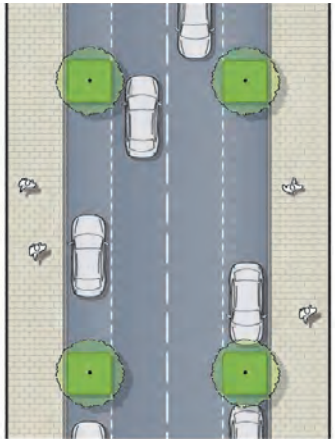
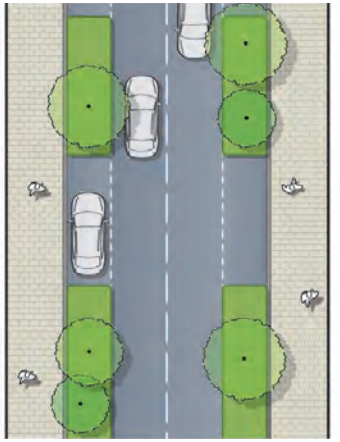


Diagram 5



5.9 Street Furniture

To achieve consistency across Reading Town Centre, street furniture and elements must be selected carefully and installed correctly. The furniture and elements used in the town centre are to create a coordinated palette of simple, elegant forms, using steel and timber as the primary materials. Furniture is to be robust, affordable and economical to maintain.

The general arrangement of elements within the public realm have a significant impact on the way spaces are perceived and used.

Page 379

- Street furniture must be positioned in a rational way to ensure easy pedestrian movement, create uncluttered spaces and respond to the function of the space.
- Excessive use of street furniture should be avoided and used only where it is needed.
- Street furniture should generally be set back a minimum of 600mm from the kerb face (900mm minimum for cycle stands) to prevent damage caused by vehicles.
- A minimum 2m wide footway clear zone must be maintained for unhindered pedestrian movement and avoids obstacles for the visually impaired.
- The positioning of street furniture should be consistent along the street and preferably throughout the town centre, so that obstructions can be more readily anticipated by people with visual impairments.
- Bollards, street lights, seating and signs are to be root mounted. Bins are to be free standing with an internal ballast.
- The colour of the steel components should be consistent and neutral. A dark grey RAL 7016 or similar should be used. Consideration should also be given to contrast and legibility to ensure elements are clearly visible to those with visual impairments.
- All timber components should be consistent and a light colour or preferably allowed to naturally age. The use of tropical hard woods should be avoided, instead Oak or treated plantation grown timber should be used. Recycled material alternatives could be considered if they achieve the same visual appearance and quality.
- In key spaces there is always an opportunity to do something contrasting and colourful, these need to be carefully considered and designed by a landscape architect.
- Existing heritage street furniture should be retained as appropriate.
- All other components of street furniture including feeder pillars should be placed in coordination with the street layout and painted in RAL 7016.
- Where required, protective measures should be integrated sensitively into the public realm and coordinated with the wider street furniture palette.

Seating

- Seating should be provided in places where people are likely to want to sit along the street, and in clusters where people congregate, such as squares. This includes a variety of spaces including; in the sun, in the shade, in groups, alone, close to activity or in a quiet area. They should also be placed at regular intervals for disabled or elderly people, along with considerations for visually impaired users.
- In spaces where people congregate, a range of seating should be provided to allow people to sit, perch or lounge. A mix of seats with backrests and armrests and flat benches should be designed into the space. In such areas the seating should be designed to deter rough sleeping.

Litter bins

- Litter bins should be located frequently in areas of high demand and adjacent to seating areas. It is recommended that bins are offset at a minimum of 2m from seats.
- As appropriate at specific locations there should be 2 bins - one in dark grey, RAL 7016, for general rubbish, the second in pale green, RAL 6021, for recycling, with provision for dog waste where required.

5.9 Street Furniture

- They should be robust with an inner metal liner, 100-120 litres in size. They should be neutral in design and avoid any markings or banding.

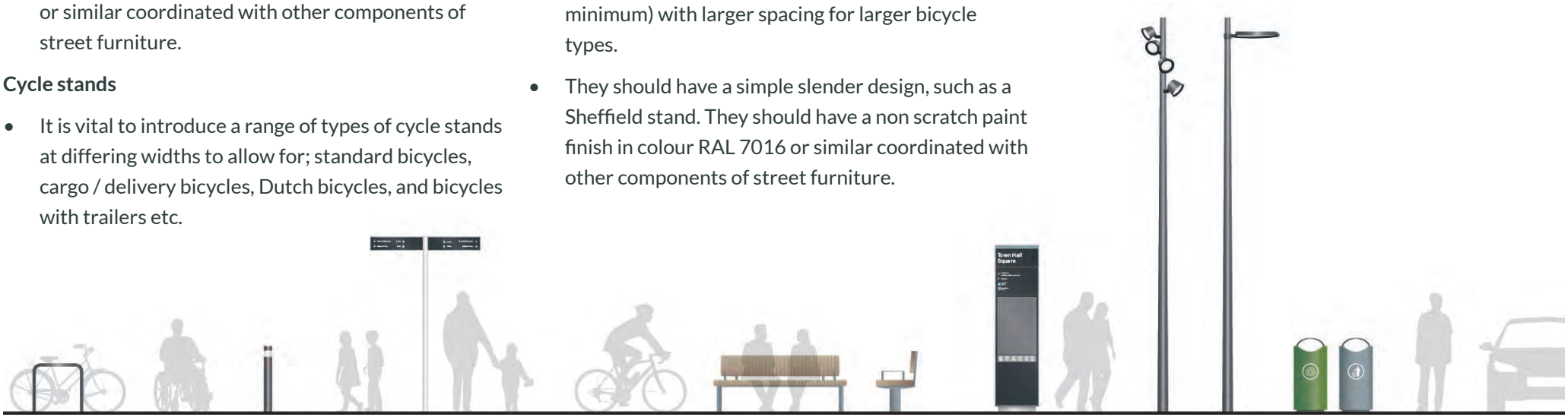
Bollards

- The use of bollards should be avoided wherever possible, and only used to direct traffic where there is no kerb upstand.
- Existing disparate bollards throughout the town centre should be removed in their majority, to avoid visual clutter.
- When the use of bollards cannot be avoided, they should be 1.1m high, slender and coordinated with the other pieces of street furniture. They should have a non scratch paint finish in colour RAL 7016 or similar coordinated with other components of street furniture.

Cycle stands

- It is vital to introduce a range of types of cycle stands at differing widths to allow for; standard bicycles, cargo / delivery bicycles, Dutch bicycles, and bicycles with trailers etc.
- Latest versions of London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) by TFL should be used to help guide installation decisions.
- Cycle stands should be located in groups at regular intervals along foot ways (maximum 50m intervals along High Streets), and a maximum of 50m from key destinations within the town centre such as public squares, shopping centres, supermarkets and popular pubs and cafés.
- Stands should be located where there is good lighting and natural/CCTV surveillance to prevent theft.
- The layout of stands should ensure that parked cycles will not obstruct the footway clear zone.
- Cycle stands should be set 1200mm apart (1000mm minimum) with larger spacing for larger bicycle types.
- They should have a simple slender design, such as a Sheffield stand. They should have a non scratch paint finish in colour RAL 7016 or similar coordinated with other components of street furniture.
- The number of stands provided within the town centre should correlate with demand: over-supply should be avoided as well as under-provision

These guiding principles should be considered carefully to ensure simplicity and consistency. Additional guidelines is given on way-finding, and lighting in this section.



5.10 Lighting | Objectives

Lighting is a vital component of any successful town centre and can greatly elevate a place by creating safe, inviting and enjoyable spaces.

Clever lighting strategies ensure that sense of place is not lost in the urban night by highlighting terminating vistas, key buildings and features, and providing a consistent level of lighting throughout the public realm, for users to be comfortable in their ability to navigate the town centre at night time. Such illumination techniques should also ensure that Reading's distinctive historic character and charm is maintained at dusk and night time.

Safe

Lighting must provide a safe environment for visitors to Reading town centre. This includes ensuring Lux levels are achieved, lights are well placed and spaced, high quality and robust fittings are used and lighting is regularly checked and maintained. Consideration must also be given for the needs of partially sighted users with regard to lighting types, including reducing glare.

Inviting

Places for people should be inviting. Techniques such as colour variation, adjusting colour temperature and layering of light, all create a rich, diverse, visual environment. Warm colours are generally encouraged for heritage and town centre environments. Lighting should always promote accessibility, highlighting level changes, and align with the Equality Act.

Enjoyable

The concept of joy within a town centre scheme is important to placemaking. Lighting encourages social interaction, benefits night time economy and makes memorable places. Colour, texture. Shadows, patterns, projections and feature lighting should all be integrated.

Lighting level

There are a range of different classifications based on the nature of the road and its usage by vehicles and pedestrians. Generally busy urban areas are designed to C2 - C4 when there is vehicle traffic and P2 when primarily pedestrian.

Each street needs to be assessed based on the guidance provided in the British Standards as there are many different types of streets within Reading.

This will ensure a safe environment during darkness. A warm white colour temperature of not more than 3000K should be used throughout. This could be reduced to 2700 in heritage areas and may need to be reduced further in areas where there are trees, bat activity and along waterways with biodiversity value.

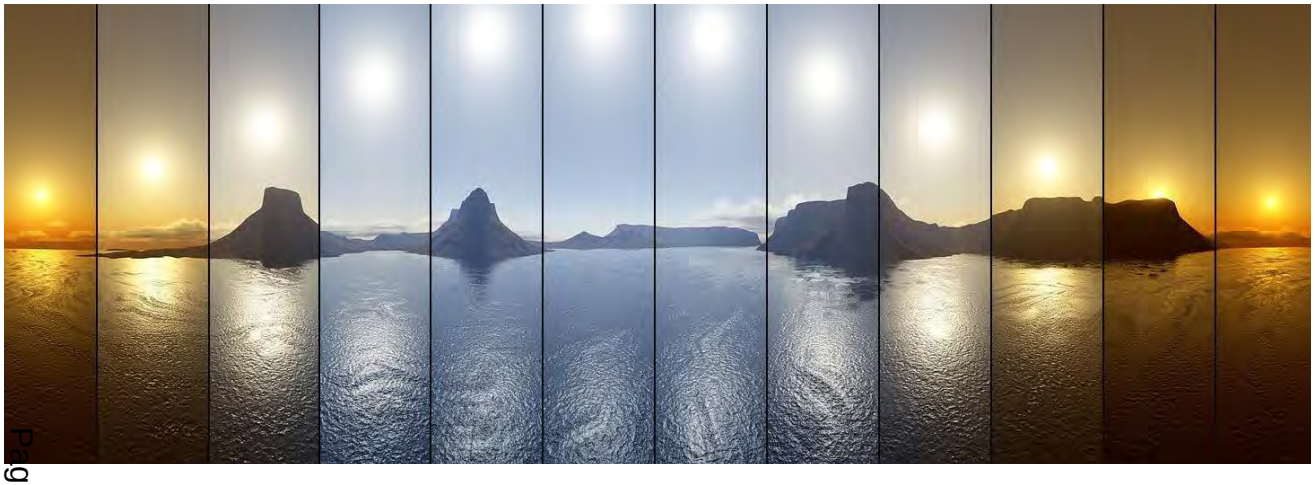
Light and visual pollution

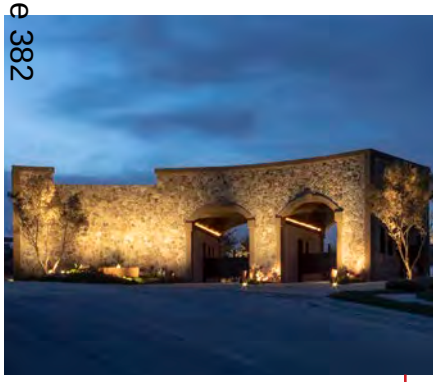
Care must be taken to position lights so as not to produce any light pollution and avoid over-lighting streets and spaces. Electrical feeder pillars should always be located at the edge of spaces or against buildings.

Consideration should be given to:

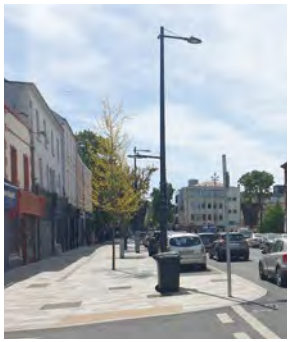
- Activities by bats and other environmental factors
- Use of controlled downward facing lights only
- Avoidance of in ground lights where people walk to aid visually impaired
- Integrating and supporting festive lighting through commando sockets
- Avoidance of disturbance to heritage assets
- Security and safety
- LED's must be used to minimise energy consumption
- CCTV and Wi-Fi inclusion
- In ground power units for markets and events spaces should be integrated with ample capacity for supplying larger scale events in the future

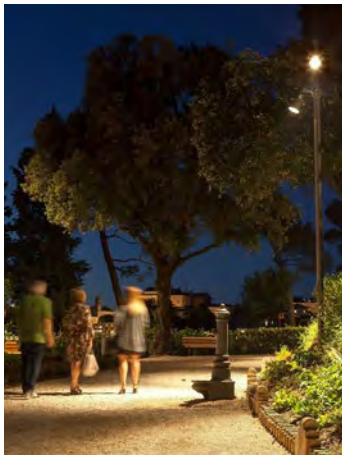
5.10 Lighting | Considerations





Colour temperature of white light has a profound effect on the feel of a space and should be considered at specification stage. Cooler lights are generally associated with daytime, alertness, efficiency. Warmer lights have a more relaxing, welcoming and intimate perception and are much better suited to leisure spaces at night.





5.10 Lighting Columns

Light columns should be simple, practical, elegant and adaptable. The more elegant and simple a column is, the more it will stand the test of time. A minimal design that becomes relatively invisible to the eye during the daytime should be used.

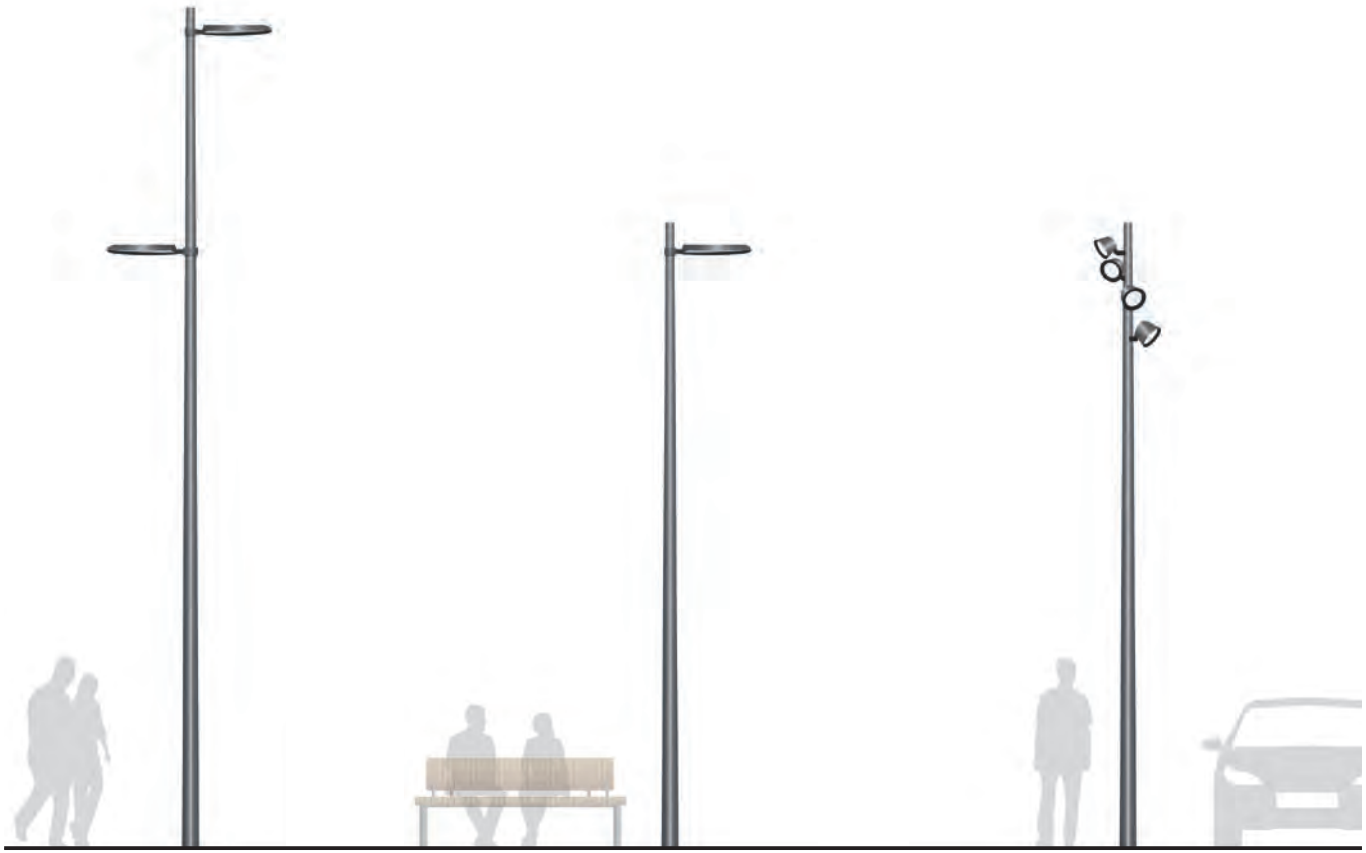
The illustrations to the right show a suitable style to be used, with a single or tapered width from the base and perpendicular light fittings. Heavy bases, stepped based and decorative tops of columns should be avoided. Consistency and simplicity are key to achieving a successful town centre lighting scheme.

Column 1 - Suitable for main vehicle streets and arterial roads; 8m high columns with 1 or 2 luminaires. On arterial roads consider brackets for banners to advertise events. Also consider Christmas lighting brackets on central streets.

Column 2 - Suitable for residential and pedestrian streets. 4-6m columns. Single pole with luminaire. Also consider Christmas lighting brackets on central streets.

Column 3 - 6m tapered or cylindrical column. With adjustable spotlights as required to best illuminate footpaths, spaces and heritage assets.

Key areas offer an opportunity to introduce individual and special lighting columns. Taller columns in varying materials and styles may be appropriate for squares, with capacity for projectors and more light fittings.



Typical Lighting Column 1
8m tapered or cylindrical column
1 or 2 single pole luminaires
Street lighting optics

Typical Lighting Column 2
4-6m tapered or cylindrical column
Single pole-top luminaire
Street lighting optics

Typical Lighting Column 3
6m tapered or cylindrical column
Adjustable spotlights
Wide / medium / narrow light distribution, as required for space / footpath / monument accent

5.10 Feature Lighting

Feature lighting should be an integral part of the design of schemes within the town centre creating a sense of delight in those visiting.

A number of different components should be introduced to highlight and maximise heritage assets, each considered on a case by case basis. Reading offers many opportunities for feature lighting of monuments, statues and characterful architecture. These improve the night time environment as well as the legibility and memorability of the town centre. Feature lighting should also elevate furniture and facilitate events spaces.

Feature lighting type 1 - Catenary lighting should be used to give a special feel to lanes and narrower town centre streets and frame event spaces.

Feature lighting type 2 - Non intrusive spotlights. To create a sense of arrival and highlight special squares and events spaces. Lighting of trees, key art, monuments and heritage façades should also be integral to new lighting schemes.

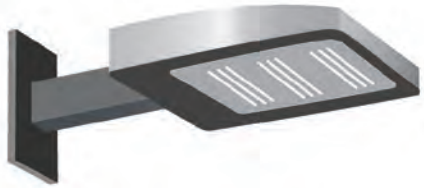
Feature lighting type 3 - In lanes, wall mounted lighting heads should be used instead of columns. Whilst these can require complex agreements, they greatly contribute to improving narrow spaces by de-cluttering and adding valuable circulation space.

Feature lighting type 4 - On squares and feature spaces, the introduction of recessed lighting to furniture should be considered. This adds ambience and enhancement to key spaces.

To achieve a considerate and proportionate lighting strategy, an appropriate balance should be sought between lighting accent and standard lighting levels.

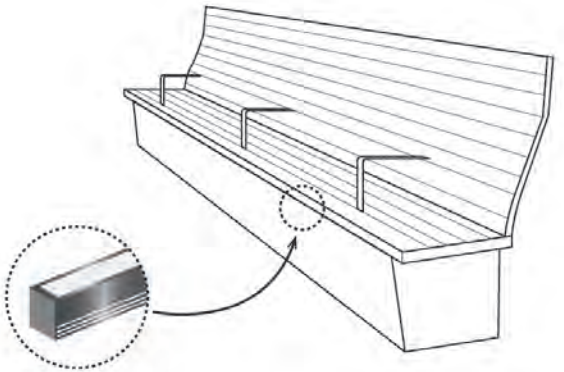
Lighting columns and features should be positioned in a considerate way, to avoid visual clutter and allow clear views to the town landmarks.

Feature Lighting Type 1
Catenary lighting



Feature Lighting Type 3
Wall mounted luminaire to narrow streets and lanes

Feature Lighting Type 2
Spotlights



Feature Lighting Type 4
Wall mounted luminaire to narrow streets and lanes

5.11 Play Provision

Play is key in elevating, enlivening and adding excitement to a town centre. Play has transformational qualities and creates memorable places for all the family. It can be a key contributor in making memories and enhancing peoples positive experience of an area.

The play provision within Reading's town centre should include a variety of play experiences. Traditional play equipment such as swings or climbing frames are essential to a comprehensive play strategy, but shouldn't be the only type of play offered. Where the context is suitable, natural play should be introduced. This can include tumbled logs, boulders, stepping stones or dry river beds. Spaces that induce play are also essential, and these can be located anywhere in the public realm, creating playful spaces that bring interest to the streetscape. These can be landforms, vertical poles, sculptures, art interventions, floor markings...

There are many aspects to consider when designing a play space and it is recommended that a qualified Landscape Architect is appointed to carry out the design proposals. The main considerations include location, safety, natural surveillance, style, materials, colour palette and possible theme of the chosen play equipment.

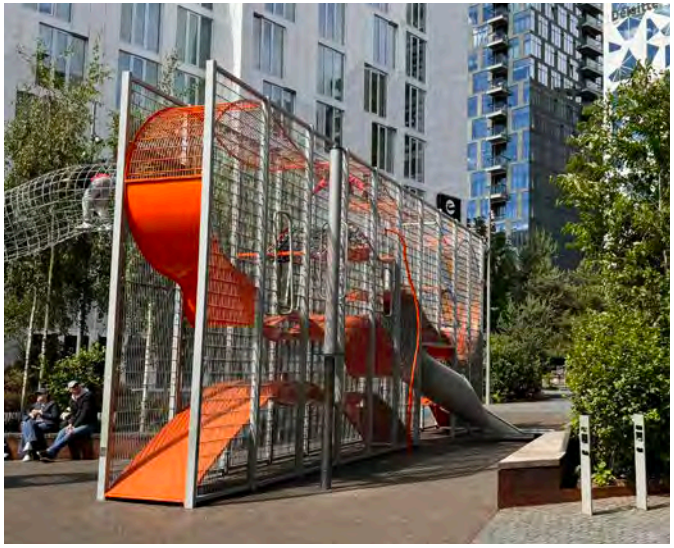
Different user groups with varying levels of physical, mental and visual ability should be considered, along with robustness, durability, sourcing and maintenance of the play equipment.

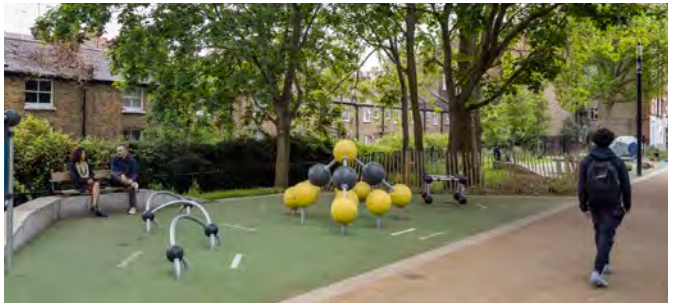
5.11 Play Provision

A successful play strategy should include formalised playgrounds within green spaces, along with pocket play spaces within high streets and squares and playful elements dotted within the streetscape. Play areas should spark a little joy in visitors of all ages and encourage engagement and activation.

- **Formalised place spaces -** Key areas for playgrounds should be identified and accessible, usable, safe and delightful. Play schemes should be designed in collaboration with experienced playground designers. Natural play and planting should be integrated with more formal play structures.
- **Pocket play spaces -** These can be small play areas that catch people by surprise and really add an element of excitement to spaces, causing people to pause, play and enjoy the town centre, in turn activating formally under utilised areas. These can be temporary or permanent.
- **Playful elements -** Consideration should also be given to rolling out a series of interlinked playful elements within the town centre. These could be items within a street scape or square that delight both adults and children alike.

Mixed use games areas should be integrated within or adjacent to play spaces where possible, to encourage sports activity and community engagement. In the same manner, recreational equipment for adults such as outdoor gym equipment, tennis table, teqball or chess tables can be located nearby play areas to create community hubs and promote time spent outdoors. The overall design of play spaces should allow easy access for parents and carers, as well as areas that include seating and shade for social recreation whilst the children play.





5.12 Wayfinding & Signage

Wayfinding and signage are a vital ingredient in an overall high quality public realm, ensuring visitors to the town centre can easily navigate the town centre, access information, locate amenities and key cultural and heritage buildings.

A consistent and clear set of way-finding principles should be set out to ensure the best user experience for visitors to Reading town centre.

Clarity - Users need information at certain points along a journey in order to effectively make decisions. This information can aid orientation, list services, give directions or confirm a location, and must always be communicated clearly and concisely.

Consistency - Signage should follow a consistent format. Although a variety of sign shapes and sizes is likely to be used, they should all follow the same rules when it comes to colour palette, typography, layout and messaging, to ensure a continuous visual language instantly recognisable from a distance.

Accessibility - one of the fundamentals of successful signage is a system that works for all users. Visitors with physical impairments or other health issues must be considered, incorporating Braille, tactile trails, audio assistance, step-free routes and the use of technology.

Three key types of signage within the public realm are important. These need to be well considered as part of an overall strategy in terms of their appearance, content and location, to help achieve a unified approach. This will have a considerable positive effect on complementing the public realm, by visually and physically de-cluttering spaces and enhancing the user experience.

Directional - As part of a city centre wide way-finding strategy. Directional signage should be a coordinated family of simple, elegant and unified forms including maps at key arrival points, monoliths at decision points and finger posts to aid orientation. We would highly recommend that a single family of related elements be designed for consistency and then rolled out across the town in a unified way.

Interpretational -Graphical signs or plaques should be positioned next to buildings and points of interest that have a historic, cultural or architectural importance. Key cultural organisations such as theatres, museums or local historical societies within the town may wish to contribute to a historic or cultural trail. This can be an opportunity to strengthen and deepen a sense of place within the town as well as engage the local community. The interpretation signs must be located not to block the view of the point of interest, instead located at a point which complements the setting as a whole.

Vehicular - Statutory road signs should be kept to a minimum and rationalised wherever possible to avoid clutter. An audit of existing vehicular signage often identifies a great opportunity for de-cluttering and rationalising, improving legibility.

5.12 Wayfinding & Signage

Signage should be coordinated wherever possible with light columns, bollards and street furniture. All signage should be durable and adaptable allowing maps and names to be updated as the town grows and changes over the years. Care should also be taken to ensure signage does not create a hazard for users.

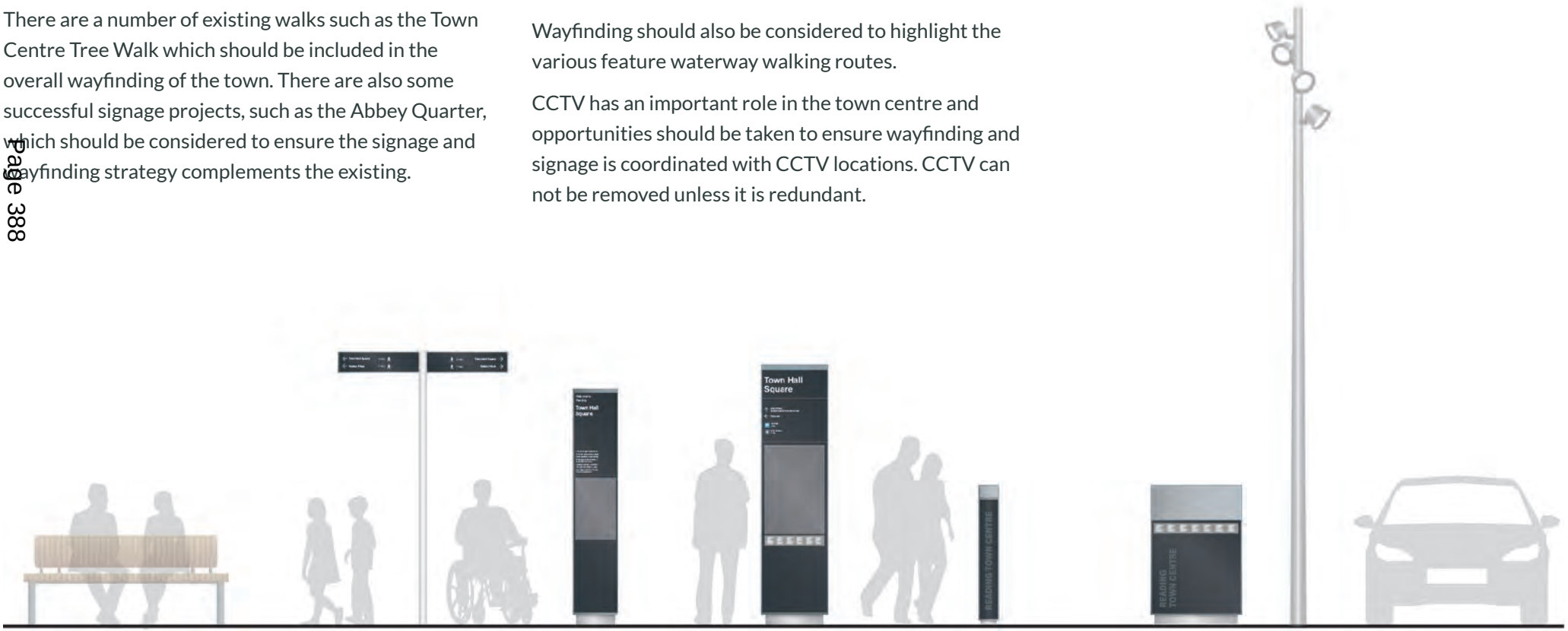
There are a number of existing walks such as the Town Centre Tree Walk which should be included in the overall wayfinding of the town. There are also some successful signage projects, such as the Abbey Quarter, which should be considered to ensure the signage and wayfinding strategy complements the existing.

Historic signage should be retained where possible, and street name signs within Conservation Areas should be green rather than black.

Audio and tactile wayfinding elements should be integrated into the town's signage strategy to improve independent navigation.

Wayfinding should also be considered to highlight the various feature waterway walking routes.

CCTV has an important role in the town centre and opportunities should be taken to ensure wayfinding and signage is coordinated with CCTV locations. CCTV can not be removed unless it is redundant.



Sign Type 1
Pedestrian Directional Finger Post

Sign Type 2
Minilith Destination Arrival

Sign Type 3
Monolith Directory Totem

Sign Type 4
Interpretation & Signage Sign

Sign Type 5
Interpretation & Signage Board

5.13 Public Art & Animation

Public art offers a fantastic opportunity to breathe life into Reading and elevate and engage the community. There are a number of ways in which public art can be introduced to Reading. These must respect the exiting heritage components and strategically place contemporary items.

Monuments

Current locations and surrounds to existing monuments should be reviewed to remove clutter and visual competition.

Murals

These should be encouraged on blank walls either as a temporary or permanent installation. These need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with a general rule of one mural visible from any vantage point, so as not to be overwhelming. The colour schemes should be considered relative to adjacent building facades.

Inlaid details can be incorporated within paving at entrances to the narrow lanes.

Contemporary art

New pieces could be commissioned as part of public realm enhancement projects. These can be objects within a space, integrated into the design of the street furniture, lighting, landscape, wayfinding and play to help create a sense of place and identity.

Art and performance can be used as a highly successful means to launch and celebrate newly completed public realm and events spaces. Collaboration with artists and the local community as part of the design of public realm schemes will provide identity and originality within the town.

A public realm arts program could include:

- Retaining a key person within the local authority to oversee all arts activities/commissioning in a coordinated way.
- Writing a detailed set of guidance that identifies opportunity areas and lays out a clear process for funding, commissioning, promoting and delivering a varied and rich arts program.
- Working with local artists, arts groups, museums, galleries, students and performers to engage the local community.
- A successful approach should include temporary arts such as performances, semi permanent installations as well as longer term installations such as sculptures.

Functional necessities such as public safety, access, maintenance and power supply should be considered as part of the strategy and the design of each piece.

5.14 Street Activation

Street activation can take a number of forms and can provide an attractive, coordinated and inviting external environment through enhanced public streets and spaces, which enable and encourage people to safely and comfortably dine, enjoy and spend time in the public realm, and allow businesses to flourish.

There are many ways in which this can take place, below are an initial suggestion which can become possible through a well organised public realm.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining should be actively encouraged, with forecourts for dining clearly identified and a set of clear design principles for table and barrier layouts laid out. Planters of various types can also be used to define areas and add vitality to streets where restaurants and cafés feature.

Markets and Street traders

Care needs to be taken on the position of any stalls so not to impede movement or views along the street. All regular traders should be positioned to help the animation of certain streets and in particular blank facades. Visiting stalls can be placed “as an event” within the main streets.

Planned & spontaneous events

Through the reorganisation of the public realm, including the position of street furniture, spaces can be created for events. These should be identified and managed to promote activities and events as often as possible. The town should consider an annual seasonal programme and identify how these help to animate the streets and spaces.

With all of these activities care will need to be taken to accommodate movements and street functions, such as servicing, delivery and emergency services vehicular access arrangements. Street activation should not introduce additional barriers to movement or access.

The combination of different street activation and animation will bring benefits to the town which include:

- **Enhanced placemaking and identity -** Creation of attractive and vibrant places to live, work, visit, spend time and invest in. Promotion of external additions facilitating a greater sense of identity for an area.
- **Additional footfall -** This will help retain a sustainable town centre including the promotion of walking and cycling, interventions that respond to current needs and are also adaptable.
- **Well-being & biophilic design -** Creation of relaxing spaces that promote public safety and mindfulness, where people are able to socialise safely and confidently, and feel connected to the natural environment.

5.15 Meanwhile Uses

Meanwhile use enables the creation of better places and the testing of ideas and coming together of communities, whilst a more long term development is established. Vibrant interim uses will benefit existing shops, as well as the wider town centre, through increased footfall, bringing life back to the high street and making better use of resources overall.

Meanwhile use greatly increases the level of awareness of an areas to prospective tenants or owners, particularly if it provides a home for an eye-catching landscape or play project and encourages legacy planning for an areas future. Meanwhile use also improves community engagement and increases the prospect of future landscape and commercial uses in adjacent residential units. These can take a wide number of forms including:

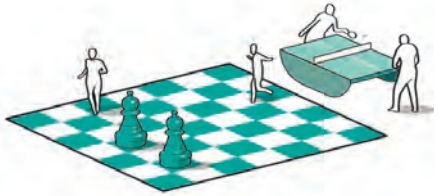
Activities:

- Art installations
- Sports spaces / events
- Food festivals / pop up restaurants / Markets
- Mini festivals and community get together's
- Performance spaces / outdoor cinema (raised stages should be accessible to wheelchair users)

Physical changes:

- Community gardens
- Temporary pocket parks / Nature gardens
- Temporary play areas / play streets (floor markings should avoid visual confusion for blind or cognitively impaired users)

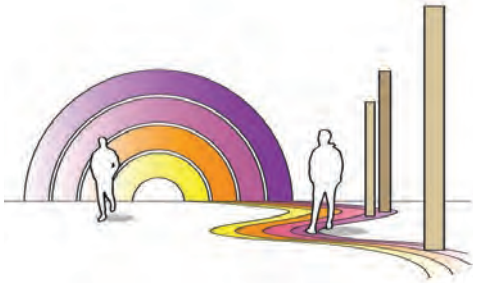
01
Performance & event space



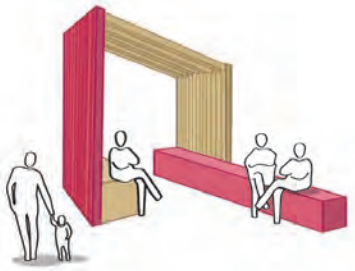
02
Multi-user games & community use

03
Outdoor dining

04
Green oasis & ephemeral garden



05
Art, floor markings & murals



06
Social seating & dwelling

5.15 Meanwhile Uses

One area that offers great potential for a meanwhile use is Queens Walk. The area is due to change in time as part of the larger development area of Minster Quarter Framework.

This area could be used as a pilot project to test different pop up activities which will help make it feel like a more inviting space, along with help the businesses which are currently in the area.

The sketch to the right is an example of what can be done on a low budget for a set design life.

01 Traders and stalls against blank facades

02 Murals / colour on the facades

03 Seating opportunities

04 Outdoor dining

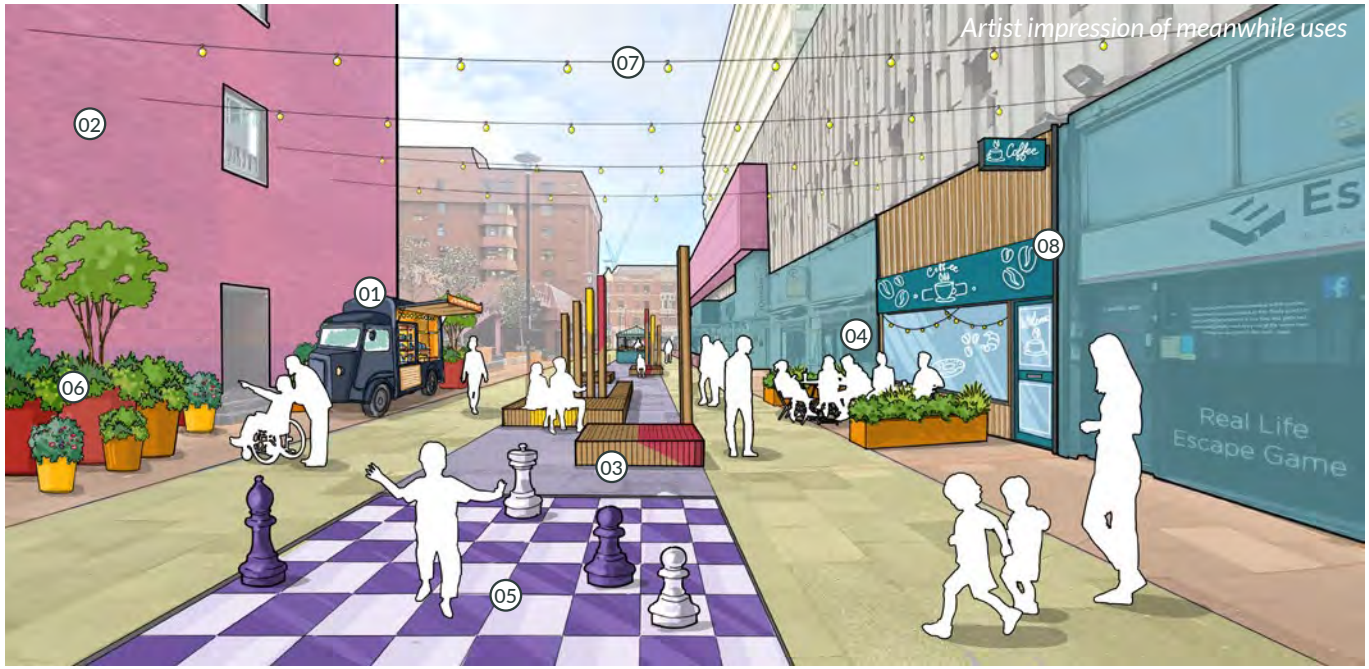
05 Integration of play element or community amenities such as oversize board games, table tennis, teqball or other

06 Planting in pots and vegetation to soften dead facades, blank walls and add seasonality and interest

07 Catenary lighting across the space to bring a human scale and ambient lighting at night time

08 Graphics and signage

Queens Walk - Existing



Artist impression of meanwhile uses

5.16 Hoarding & Construction Site

Reading has lots of proposed new developments in the town centre over the coming years, the building process and interface between the sites and the public realm are important to help maintain an animated town centre.

Construction sites can either have a detrimental effect on the visual appearance of a town centre, or can be key contributors to an overall sense of a positively developing town centre . They offer great benefits and artistic opportunities. It is recommended to develop a detailed hoarding strategy for the town centre which all construction sites need to follow.

A set of guidelines would include;

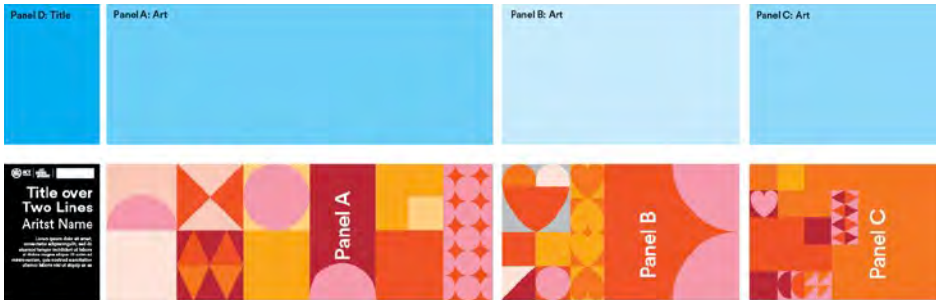
- Location, limitation and best practice guidelines for hoarding lines to avoid hidden corners, help businesses and contribute to the character and image of the town as a whole.
- A graphics template which would include options for the visual appearance of the hoarding to include imagery, information about the development, communications, marketing and necessary safety signage.

A hoarding strategy brings an opportunity to work with local artists, schools and art students to develop artistic wraps to showcase local talents. These types of projects can help provide a sense of a dynamic, community and caring image for the town and could greatly reduce the sense of frustration from locals at ongoing construction.

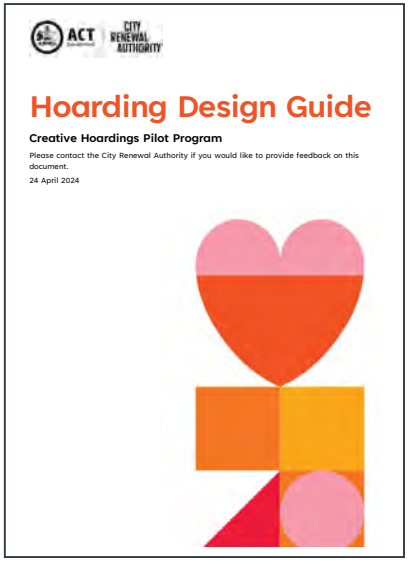
A part of the strategy could contain a section for when public realm projects are being undertaken. These are often more disruptive and change on a frequent basis. This part of the strategy could include:

- An agreed barrier style for public realm projects (generally these are not solid screens). These require tactile warnings to alert visually impaired users.
- A complementary graphic to the hoarding of development sites and a template of the visual appearance.
- Public relations and awareness before and during the scheme - keeping the public informed.
- Progress and programme - the public are always keen to know what is going on.
- Health & Safety information, along with contact details.
- Promotion for adjacent businesses who's visibility and access may be temporarily reduced.

Example of pre-designed hoardings made available to private developers
© Christchurch City Council



Hoarding Design Guide setting up the Creative Hoardings Pilot Program for ACT - 2024
© ACT City Renewal Authority



5.17 Maintenance | General Principles

The correct level of resources, funding provision, skills and equipment must be in place to maintain a high quality public realm as suggested in this strategy.

Maintenance and management of the public realm needs to consider the following:

- Responsibilities – who is responsible for maintaining and replacing particular elements in the public realm?
- Procedures, specification and schedules for carrying out maintenance – what documents establish maintenance routines, areas, time frames, etc?
- Management of public realm including events and activities – who is responsible for ensuring the smooth and coordinated running of the public realm?
- Funding for management and maintenance – what funding is available and is it sufficient?

Responsibilities

Given the change proposed in materials, green infrastructure and street components; and to ensure all groups are aware of what they are managing and maintaining; and that no items are overlooked, it would be advisable to establish an asset register. The register would be a detailed list of the assets, who owns them, who is responsible for the maintenance, who undertakes repairs, replacement, maintenance standards and frequency and who pays for it.

In order to ensure a coordinated and successful town centre it is suggested that existing collaborations are built upon between the Council and the BIDS team. There needs to be a clear structure for all street scene management which looks across all activities in the streets including:

- Street cleansing.
- Enforcement and licensing.
- Street market / retail management.
- Events programme and management.
- Promotion, marketing and publicity.
- Street furniture and way-finding.
- Informing the public - engaging and consultation.

This approach aims to ensure a successful relation between all parties and a vibrant town centre with a positive relationship with local businesses and to inspire those who make decisions to elevate the standards set by the public realm.

Funding

Changes have been proposed in this strategy to lift the quality of the public realm, the choices of components will be good quality and robust, however, they will still need ongoing funding to maintain them. An enhanced town centre brings more people, more footfall and more expectation for the upkeep of the area. This ultimately requires a heightened level of maintenance and management.

The level of funding required must be considered under the following headings taking into consideration the described components for the public realm:

- Management costs
- Annual labour
- Annual running costs
- Annual replacement cost
- Annual new equipment cost

5.17 Maintenance | Good Practice

When considering physical maintenance for the town centre, it is important to look at materiality. Detailed maintenance schedules should be carefully drawn up for each area, material and item and the corresponding teams appropriately trained.

Set out below are outline guides for the main components specified in this strategy.

Stone Paving

- Stone paving offers a high quality finish and very long lifespan, The maintenance team should have the appropriate training and equipment for re-laying any areas which are taken up. There also needs to be agreements in place with utility providers to ensure they reinstate any street openings.
- A stock of the specified stone at the appropriate sizes should be maintained. As there are no premises to allow for this stock the council should enter into an agreement with a stone supplied so that they can maintain the specified stone type as a stock item.
- Heavy stains should be regularly removed.
- Sealant will help to reduce staining on the surface of natural stone providing there is a regular cleaning regime. In this case it would be a light regular jet wash. It is important that jet washing is done in a sympathetic way, and only removing the surface dirt and stains, vigorous jet washing should be avoided.

Bins

- All bins should be regularly jet washed inside and out to maintain hygiene. And a detailed emptying schedule should be implemented taking into account busy periods and events.

Street Furniture and elements

- Should be regularly cleaned. Where timber Street furniture is in place, the team will need to be mindful to do a light jet wash rather than a deep jet wash to avoid removing sealant/varnish on the timber.
- All vertical surfaces should be regularly cleaned, eg where low seating walls are used the vertical faces should be regularly cleaned at the same time as adjacent paving.
- All legs of benches, poles and columns (including lighting) should also be regularly cleaned
- Any graffiti should be removed, including stickers, immediately and the maintenance should have touch up paint to cover up any marks in metal work.

Vegetation

- There needs to be a regular inspection of all vegetation types across the town centre. Weeds should be removed on a regular basis and mulch topped up to maintain a cared for appearance.
- Any dead or damaged plants should be removed and replaced as soon as possible. A review of why the plants have died and what is thriving in the area should take place to ensure the replacement will be successful.
- Each different type of vegetation will require a maintenance regime - typically this includes cutting back and pruning two times a year.
- For vegetation to thrive it needs to be watered and fed for at least the first two growing seasons. Watering bags for trees should be specified. Where contractors are commissioned to carry out planting, consider a 24 month maintenance package where regular maintenance and any replacements are carried out throughout that period (not at the end), so that at handover the council inherits established vegetation.
- Given our changing climatic conditions the council need to review the need for watering during dry months as part of the regular inspection. (This includes established planted areas).

COLE
STON
YARDS

06

Specific Examples

6.1 Introduction & Overview of Examples

6.2 St Mary's Butts

6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square

6.4 Queen Road & London Street Junction

6.5 Station Road

6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

6.1 Introduction & Overview of Examples

A number of areas have been determined that best demonstrate how the public realm can be enhanced following the guidelines set out in this strategy.

These areas should be viewed as examples of what can be achieved and the principles set out should also be applied to other corresponding and similar streets and spaces.

As shown on the adjacent plan there are 5 specific examples and 5 area guidelines illustrated within chapter 6 & 7.

The specific examples are also considered key areas where change will bring the best impact and value for Reading Town Centre.

The diagrams, plans and sketches should be considered as guidance and subject to a full design led process where surveys, studies, assessments, engagement and design development look to resolve the existing issues and aim to achieve the desired vision. They are provided to help illustrate the aspirations of the public realm strategy.

The area guidelines in chapter 7 clearly set out the existing issues and a process as set out above should seek to address these and meet the objectives and proposals of each type of area.

6.1 Introduction & Overview of Examples

Specific examples presented in Chapter 6

1 • St Mary's Butts

2 • Market Place & Town Hall Sq

3 • Queen Rd & London St Junction

4 • Station Road

5 • Green Space on River Kennet

Other Area Guidelines presented in Chapter 7

6 • Troopers Potts & IDR Junction

7 • Oxford Road

8 • Queen Victoria Street

9 • The Forbury

10 • Chain Street

6.2 St Mary's Butts

Existing Issues

St Mary's Butts is a historical thoroughfare that forms the interface between the core area of the town centre and Minster Quarter that will be subject to extensive regeneration in the coming years. St Mary's Butts has significant architectural heritage, a high footfall and a key green space with the church grounds. However, it is currently dominated by carriageway, deliveries, servicing, taxis and bus movement, including one of the town centre's busiest bus stop. It is cluttered and some areas of the public realm are worn out. The area generally lacks purpose and structure. The environment is also not conducive to safe, convenient or pleasurable cycling on what is an important north-south desire line.

(01) Narrow, congested or cluttered footpaths create an unpleasant place for people

(02) Wide carriageway enabling vehicle dominance and creating a challenging environment for people to move around

(03) Space used for poorly laid out market and street trading. Asphalt surfacing in state of disrepair

(04) Monument rendered invisible by car parking and clutter

(05) Clutter: bollards, signs, bins, redundant kerblines, kiosks

(06) Central island with surfacing in poor condition and used for motorcycle parking

(07) Lack of linkage with churchyard / poor interface

(08) Lack of 'sense of place' in front of Reading Minster, heritage not celebrated

(09) Large underused paved space with no purpose or structure

(10) Existing bus stops are in high demand resulting in pedestrian and bus congestion at peak times of the day

6.2 St Mary's Butts

Vision & Schematic Proposal

The key objective for St Mary's Butts is to create a positive and clutter free public space, where the architectural heritage is valued, where walking and cycling is enjoyable and vehicular movement is managed.

(01) Carriageway width reduced to 3.5m each way, 7m total width

(02) 2.3m wide areas for deliveries located in designated bays. Blue badge parking also needs to be considered.

(03) Regained public realm with opportunity for:

- Garden space with tree planting / vegetation
- Flexible open space for gathering / informal events
- Informal play / activity & animation
- Enhanced setting of Grade I listed Reading Minster
- A rationalised combination of all the above

(04) Designated pedestrian crossings

(05) Introduction of seating

(06) Celebration of heritage with a clean, attractive gateway with interpretation of the heritage assets

(07) Encourage the use of forecourts for outdoor dining and street activation

(08) Prime, pivotal new public space spreading both sides of the road and at the junction with Hosier St with key vistas, heritage becoming key focal points and positive interface with future development

(09) Carriageway moved to the west of Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain, allowing to regain pedestrian public realm to the east, interfacing with Reading Minster churchyard

(10) Buses to stop on road rather than in dedicated lanes

(11) Reorganised street market locations. The market's layout and stall dimensions should be amended to become a complementary feature to the new public realm layout.

6.2 St Mary's Butts

Illustrative Layout

The introduction of a coordinated palette of paving, furniture, lighting and planting will help enhance and celebrate St Mary's Butts as a historic and green space within the town centre. The newly reclaimed pedestrian spaces offer opportunities for street events and animation, the inclusion of street art and pocket play spaces, as well as outdoor dining. The space is more welcoming for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelers. As part of the enhancements, views to the various churches should be framed and celebrated through interpretation.

6.2 St Mary's Butts

Artist impression of Market Place

6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square

Existing Issues

Market Place and Town Hall Square are key historical and heritage spaces at the heart of the town centre. They lie close together and form a node of civic spaces at the interface between Friar St, Broad St and the Forbury Gardens. Both count with significant monuments and heritage buildings, the grade II listed Town Hall being the most prominent. Currently, the spaces lack linkage, legibility and structure, they are cluttered and don't offer much opportunities to dwell.

01 Narrow, congested and/or cluttered footpaths that result unpleasant for pedestrians

02 Lack of cycle link through Town Hall Square to connect Friar St to the Forbury

03 Further congestion on the footpath due to bus stops, negative road interface

04 Monuments rendered invisible by clutter, roads passing them by and lack of spatial structure around them

05 Street clutter on Market Place and Town Hall Square, bollards and chain, lack of rationale in the space layout

06 Different surfacing types and kerblines that give too much presence and importance to the carriageway. The square is fragmented and doesn't read as one, resulting in lots of underused space

07 Lack of linkage and visual connection between Market Place and Town Hall Square, when they should form a key pedestrian node at the heart of the Town Centre

08 Heritage facade onto the space not celebrated

09 Lack of sense of arrival onto Town Hall Square

10 Loading bay and bus stop facing one another, making the carriageway wide and dominant

6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square

Vision & Schematic Proposal

Decluttering, simplifying the layout and reducing vehicular dominance along Market Place will help reveal the heritage and architectural value of these two key spaces. The vision is to create attractive and usable spaces for people to sit, dwell, take in the view but also for events and markets and to celebrate these two spaces as civic destinations.

01 Create a sense of arrival, a positive gateway from Friar St to the West, Blagrave Street to the North and King St/Broad St to the South. Opportunity to introduce tree planting on Friar St.

02 Create a cycle link through Town Hall Square

03 Create a strong pedestrian link between the spaces, with a wide and comfortable footpath

04 Celebrate heritage monuments and listed buildings, creating focal points and removing clutter

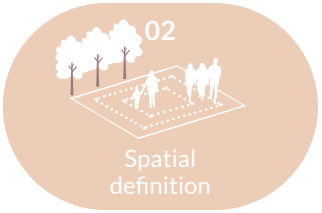
05 Create a central flexible open space on Town Hall Square and Market Place: clutter free, framed by new planting areas, existing trees and well located street furniture

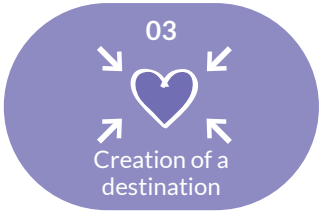
06 Introduce outdoor dining, street activation, planting and seating to assist businesses and encourage people to dwell, looking onto the flexible open space

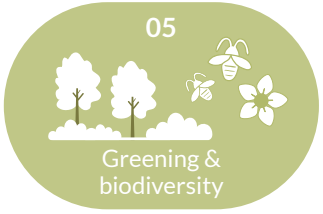
07 Unify the paving on Market Place to create a real pedestrian priority space with limited and controlled delivery access

08 Reduce the carriageway width to the minimum necessary for buses to safely move through the space at slow pace, e.g. 3.5m wide. Retain sufficient space for buses to pull in and stop. Footpath width is increased both sides of the street to enhance the link between the 2 spaces

09 New designated pedestrian crossing, creating comfortable and safe crossing points







6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square

Illustrative Layout

The introduction of natural stone, high quality and durable paving on both spaces and on the link between them will strengthen the sense of place and historical setting, whilst celebrating Reading's heritage. The complementary renewed and coordinated furniture, lighting, paving signage and planting palette will help deliver memorable and enjoyable spaces where people are happy to dwell, go out for dinner. The rationalised and simplified layout makes space for street animation and local events.

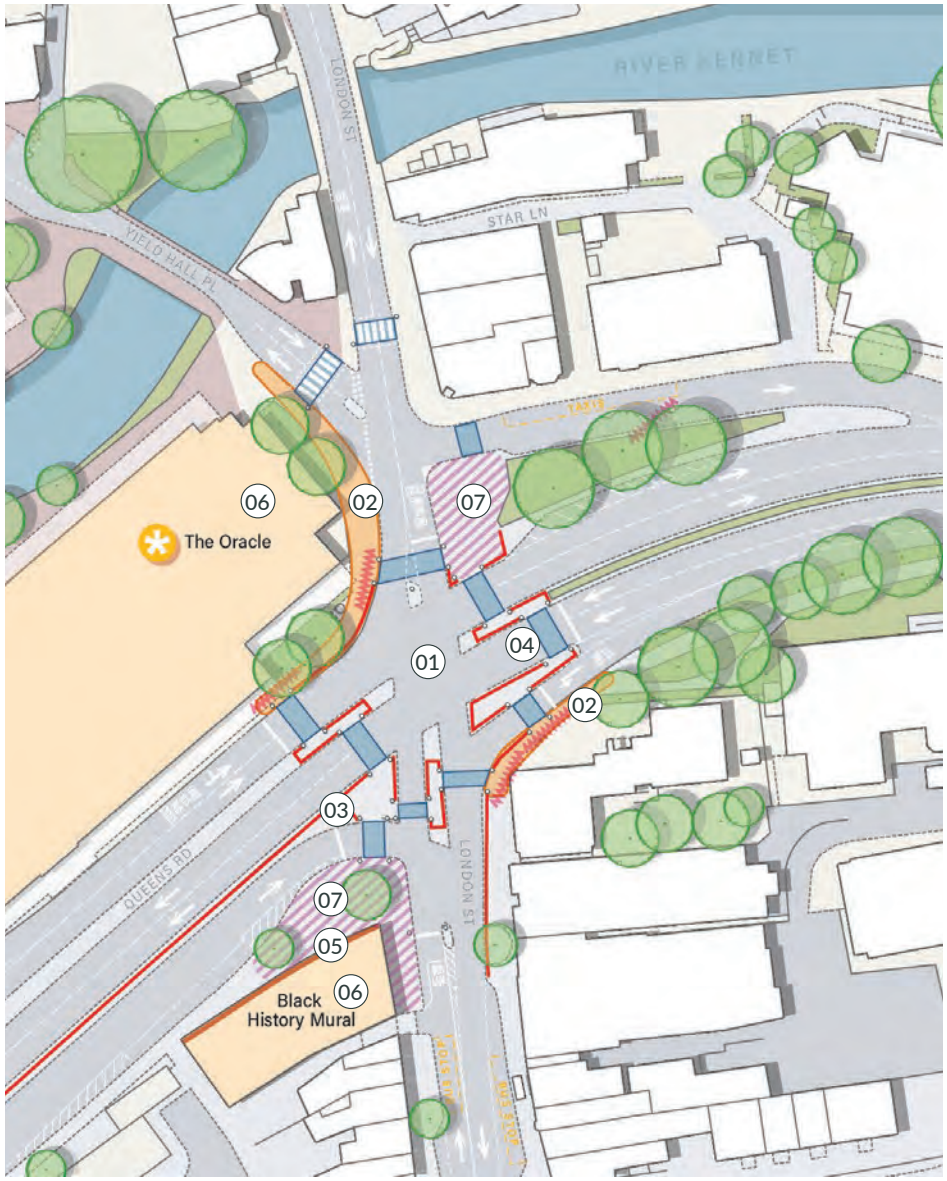
6.3 Market Place & Town Hall Square

Artist impression of Market Place

6.4 Queens Road & London Street Junction

Existing Issues

The junction between Queens Road and London Street is an important part of the IDR network, where major East-West and North-South axis meet. The North-South link along London St is an important one into the town centre that currently doesn't provide adequately for walking and cycling. This is a point where the severance of links generated by the IDR is felt strongly. The connection with the River Kennet is lost and this part of the town centre doesn't offer a positive or pleasant setting for future developments. This junction can be greatly improved for all users by rebalancing vehicular space.



01 Generally hostile, unpleasant environment due to the junction scale, difficulty to navigate as a pedestrian or cyclist, clutter, vehicular speed and dominance

02 Narrow footpaths that result unpleasant for pedestrians, North-South link severed by the roadway

03 Aesthetically unpleasant handrails, clutter that impedes natural pedestrian movement, inappropriate for a town centre

04 Multiple stage staggered crossings, low pedestrian comfort, long crossing distances forcing vulnerable pedestrians to cross in two goes

05 Lack of celebration of the Black History Mural and wider historic environment on London Street, very poor context

06 Unwelcoming environment for future developments both sides of Queens Road

07 Underused hard surfaced space, no purpose or structure

6.4 Queens Road & London Street Junction

Vision & Schematic Proposal

The key objective at this location is to strengthen the North-South link for walking and cycling to support sustainable and active travel from the south to the town centre and reduce the significant severance caused by the IDR to communities in this area.

01 Increase footpath width along the Oracle future redevelopment site to give more space to pedestrians

02 Carriageway reduced to one lane westbound on Queens road

03 Realign all pedestrian crossing to achieve 1 or 2 stages crossing points. Consider implementing sufficient green light time for vulnerable users to cross safely and comfortably.

04 Remove left turn lanes both sides of the junction, to reduce carriageway, increase footpaths width, give more space to pedestrians and public realm enhancement schemes, as well as shorten crossing distance. The vehicle movements at the junction (including turning left) are retained.

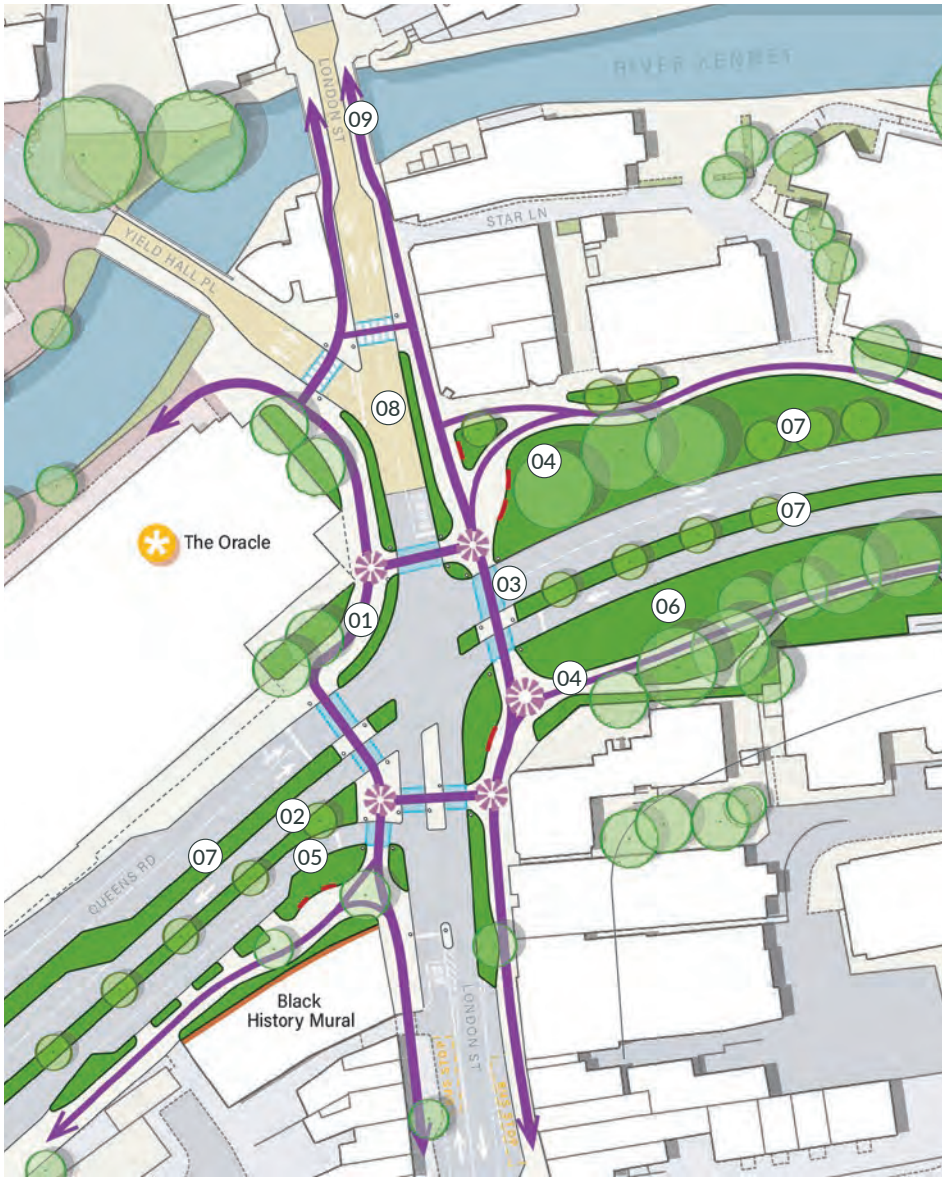
05 Tighten existing lane to gain valuable public realm space in front of the Black History Mural, including interpretation, whilst retaining the parking spaces

06 Introduce green verges along pedestrian footpaths and in central medians

07 Introduce tree planting in central median and verges where distance to carriageway allows to do so

08 Create a positive 'apron' across the carriageway using a different surfacing to celebrate the gateway into the town centre, slow vehicles down and increase pedestrian comfort, Enhance National Cycle Route 4 as it crosses from Star Lane to the Oracle Riverside

09 Reduce carriageway width to one lane on the bridge to give more space to pedestrians at this key gateway to the town centre

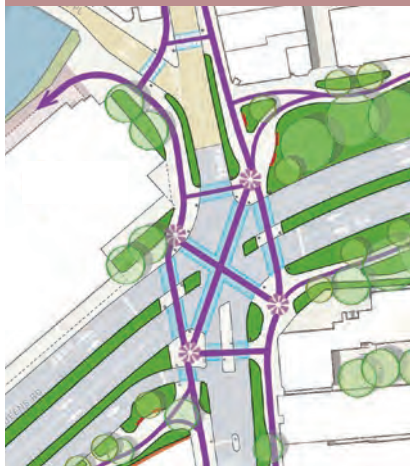


Variation 01

No westbound lane reduction, only left turn lanes are removed

Variation 01

'Super crossings' are created to allow direct pedestrian movement



6.4 Queens Road & London Street Junction

Illustrative Layout

Another significant goal of the proposal is to celebrate the river, historic setting and heritage assets, whilst establishing a public realm framework that will work together with the future developments in the area to deliver a greener and calmer environment for pedestrians. Improving road safety and access for all and reducing the impacts of vehicle noise and pollution are key measures that will participate to the creation of a positive gateway to the core area of the town centre.

01
Reduce crossing lengths

02
Enhance pedestrian movement

03
Greening & tree planting

04
Stitching spaces back together

05
Reduce vehicular dominance

Rain gardens on a busy road, London
© Meristem Design

6.4 Queens Road & London Street Junction

Artist impression of the junction

6.5 Station Road

Existing Issues

Station Road is an essential gateway linking the town centre to Reading Station, it is one of the most significant pedestrian links in Reading. It is currently cluttered, congested and dominated by buses, making it hard for people to navigate.

01 Narrow, congested and cluttered footways

02 Hostile and busy junctions

03 'Bus walls' create an intimidating place for people

Vision & Schematic Proposal

The main goal is to enhance the appearance and pedestrian comfort at this significant location by decluttering the footways, enhancing the crossings and introducing a new, robust and consistent paving palette that will unify the streetscape. Street art in the form of murals on blank facades and highly legible signage are also key to enhancing Station Road. Changes to existing bus operations, which will require further studies, would enable the scheme to reach its full potential.

01 New junction layout to the north and south of Station Rd that include a 4m wide one-way pinch point. This enhances the pedestrian crossing and comfort and slows vehicles down

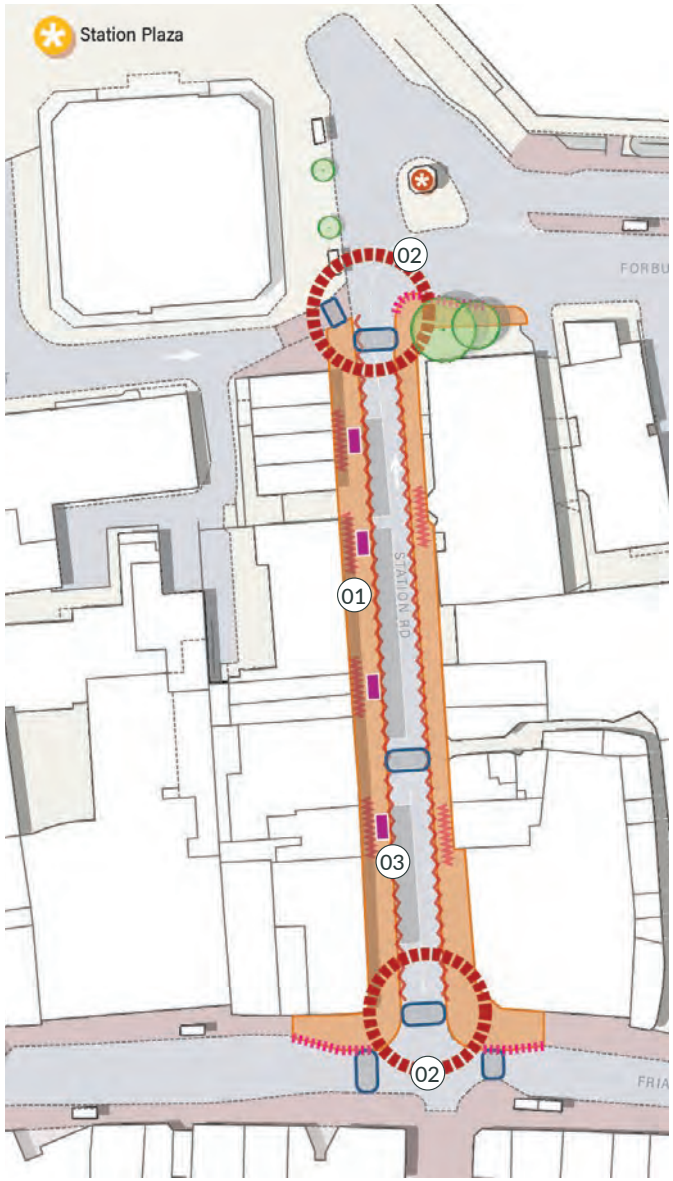
02 4m wide one-way lane also instated at the central crossing point to break down the continuous row of bus stops and enhance the crossing

03 Pocket spaces that give some breathing space to pedestrians in this area of high footfall

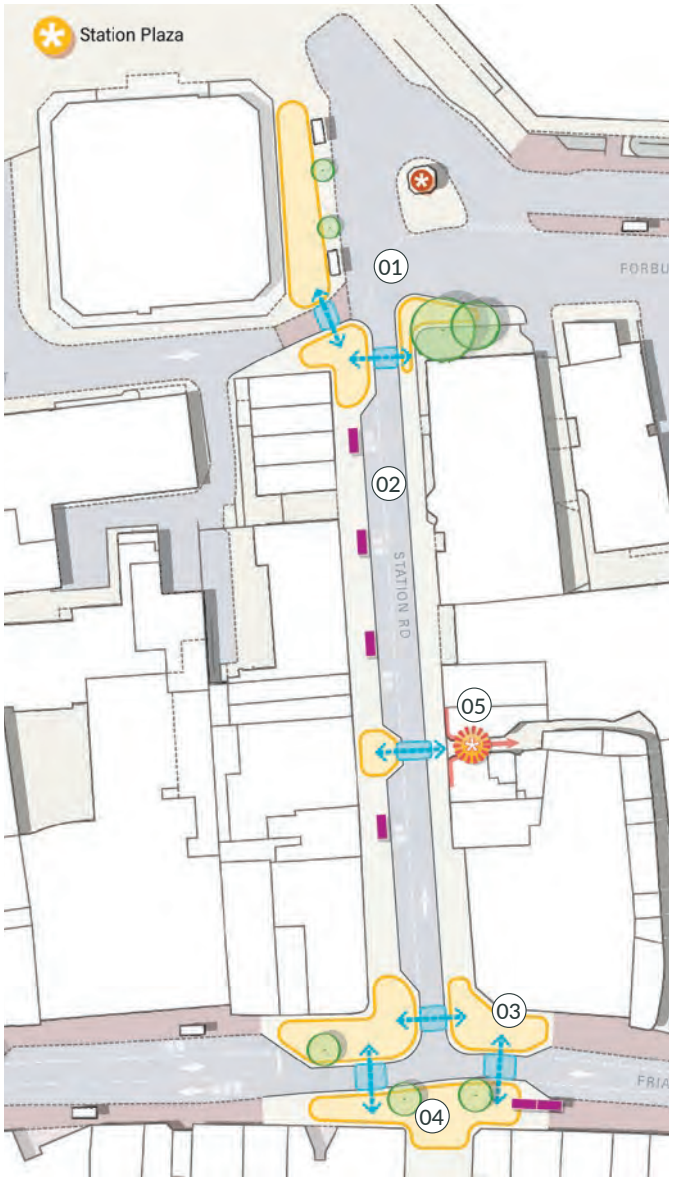
04 Opportunity to introduce street trees

05 Highlighted entrance into Grade II listed Harrie Arcade with enhanced pedestrian crossing and signage

Existing Issues

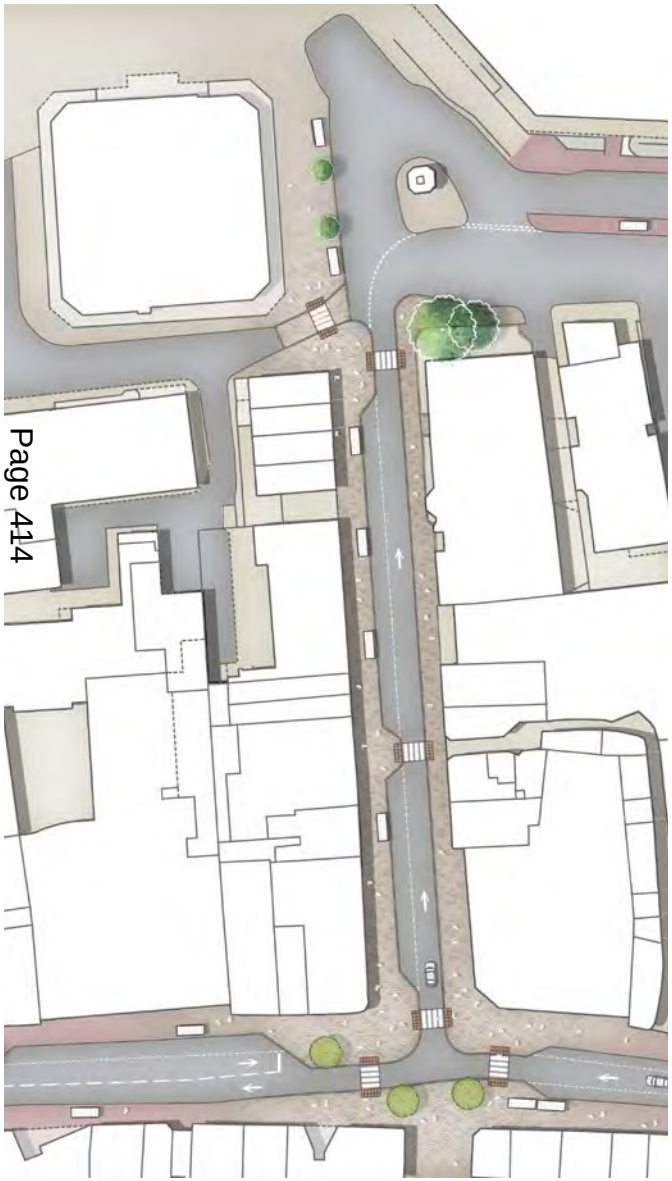


Vision & Schematic Proposal



6.5 Station Road

Illustrative Layout



01 Reduce crossing distances

02 Reduce bus dominance

03 Enhance public realm quality

04 Create a positive arrival

05 Introduce traffic calming

Before

Artist impression of Station Road

6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

Existing Issues

This open and green area on the River Kennet is a rare and valuable space in the town centre, that offers many opportunities. It currently has mature trees, a brook and great views to the river. Many people cycle and walk through this space as they commute, but the space itself is currently overgrown and underused. It offers no amenities to the community and very little opportunities to dwell.

01 3 different types of footpaths: pedestrian only, cycling only and shared. Lack of rationale.

02 Paths in poor condition, overgrown planting

03 Mature trees set in asphalt and in the middle of the pedestrian path, rendering it narrow / uncomfortable

04 Various types and abundant handrails creating clutter

05 Redundant kerblines and poor quality surfacing throughout

06 Overgrown and poorly maintained green areas, no purpose or amenity value

07 Overgrown and obstructing vegetation, no view to the brook, uninviting edge to the pedestrian footpath

08 Narrow footpath

6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

Vision & Schematic Proposal

The main objective is to create an attractive and usable amenity green space by the river, connected to the river walk. The proposal is an example of how the river walk can be enhanced, whilst integrating activities, walking and encouraging cycling. This new pocket park can offer much needed access to green space and play opportunities to the local community. There may also be an opportunity to promote new mooring facilities.

01 Simplified movement with a wide shared cycles / pedestrians path (orange) and a pedestrian only path (blue)

02 Strengthened arrival / orientation points with signage

03 Flexible pocket hardstand space with play opportunity, seating around the space and opportunity to have a coffee van or similar to encourage passive surveillance and ownership

04 Central amenity green space with lawn to sit down, dwell, have lunch and enjoy the river setting

05 Informal playful trail/paths through the green space

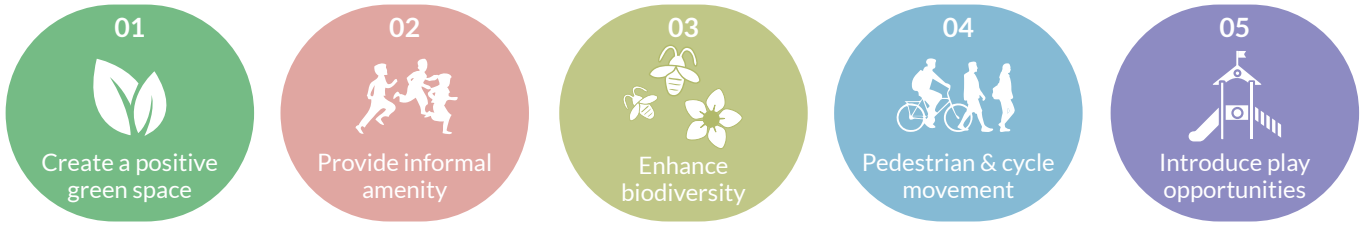
06 Meadow and boundary planting with no barrier and views to the brook

07 Planting with seating facing the space bordering secondary amenity lawns

08 Existing mature trees set in green areas with set back pedestrian path and seating below

09 Rationalised movement, removal of redundant handrails and extended planted area

10 Enhanced setting and visual access to the brook



6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

Illustrative Layout

The introduction of seating, informal play, possibly feature lighting will help deliver a quality recreational green space and encourage dwelling. Native and biodiverse planting beds will bring interest and seasonality to the space, whilst framing the open lawn. This approach could be extended to consolidate a larger quiet green park to the waters edges by including sections of the river walk to the North of the river.

6.6 Green Space on River Kennet

Artist impression of the pocket park

07

Other Area Guidelines

7.1 Trooper Potts Way & IDR Junction

7.2 Oxford Road

7.3 Queen Victoria Street

7.4 The Forbury

7.5 Chain Street

7.1 Troopers Potts Way & IDR Junction

Existing Condition & Issues

This junction is currently a key pedestrian and cycle route between Station Hill and the recreation grounds of Christchurch Meadows and the area of Caversham. This location is used as an example of the type of improvements which can be made, the IDR is generally wide and cars and buses speed along what feels and looks like an urban motorway. Coming from the station, the Thames is invisible. This space is hostile, uncomfortable and hard to navigate for pedestrians.

Objectives & Proposal

The proposal looks at using green infrastructure to soften the IDR and enhance the visual appearance. A robust planting palette should be used, introducing a mix of native and mostly evergreen species that will greatly enhance the biodiversity of the area. The green verges and medians, complemented with tree planting, can also accommodate rain gardens.

This proposal purposefully doesn't look at reducing the number of lanes on the IDR, but rather illustrates how the simple addition of green infrastructure can enhance the appearance of the IDR. For lane reduction and IDR modification, refer to Queens Rd and London St junction in the previous chapter.

01 Kerblines along the IDR and road widths remain the same.

02 Minimum 1.5m wide green verges and median are introduced. This is only possible without reducing the roadway widths because of the existing oversized and pedestrian footpaths.

03 Tree planting in small clusters is introduced.

7.2 Oxford Road

Existing Condition & Issues

Oxford Road is a main East-West artery, it is a bustling key axis bordered by many local businesses and community buildings. It crosses over the IDR and connects directly into Broad St, making it a key link into the town centre of Reading. It currently feels disconnected from the town centre and doesn't feel like a high street. It is traffic dominated, cluttered, lacks green infrastructure and doesn't offer a pleasant or comfortable setting for people to walk or cycle.

Objectives & Proposal

The proposal looks at a typical location which enhances the public realm, pedestrian and cycle link on Oxford Road, whilst introducing green infrastructure. This approach should be considered for most eastern section of Oxford St and IDR bridge, as well as everywhere the street width allows without impacting the bus services operation. The proposals do not interfere with the new bus lane that runs from Zinzan St to Prospect St, which should be retained.

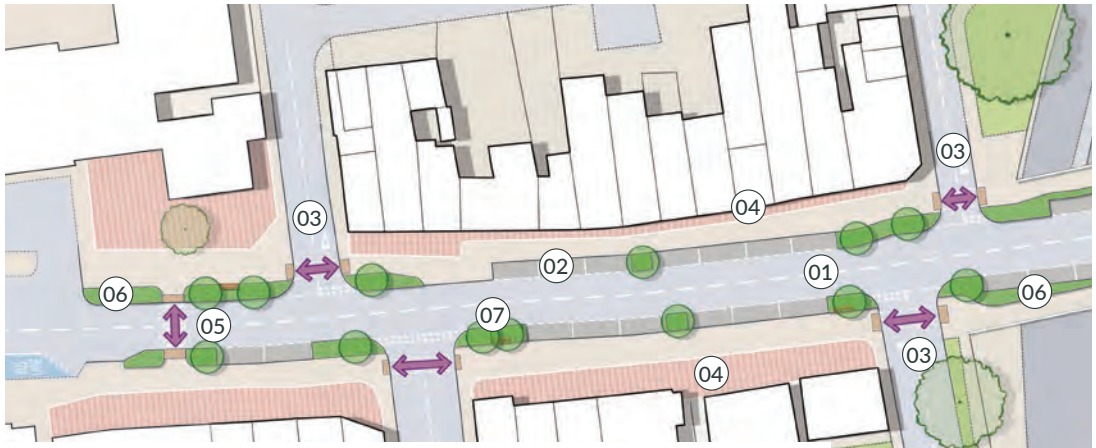
01 Reduced width and realigned carriageway to increase footpath widths where possible

02 Rationalised on-street parking or delivery bays to reduce the vehicular dominance whilst retaining a functional layout, consider the removal on parking from one side of the road

03 Tightened junctions between smaller perpendicular streets and Oxford Rd to reduce crossing distances and enhance pedestrian comfort

04 Retained forecourt areas for local businesses, community uses

Diagram of proposed layout



05 Formalised crossing facilities approximately every 100-150m

06 Introduction of planting beds between the carriageway and the pedestrian footpaths where road width allows, to break down long stretches of on-street parking and at junctions. These can be rain gardens when located at low points of the streetscape and include benches where appropriate

07 New tree planting

Existing photos

Artist impression of proposed layout

7.3 Queen Victoria Street

Existing Condition & Issues

Queen Victoria Street is an important and historical pedestrian street at the heart of the town core that connects the station, Station Rd and Friar St with Broad St. It is an important pedestrian link. It counts with impressive red brick heritage architecture and many businesses. The public realm doesn't adequately reflect the importance of this street: The red paving mutes the visual significance of the architecture, the street is cluttered, lacks structure and the businesses suffer from the detrimental effects of long-term scaffoldings.

Objectives & Proposal

The proposal look at simplifying the layout of the street, decluttering it and introducing a robust and simple natural stone paving palette to create a clean slate where the architecture, the users and businesses can start populate, animate and take ownership of the streetscape.

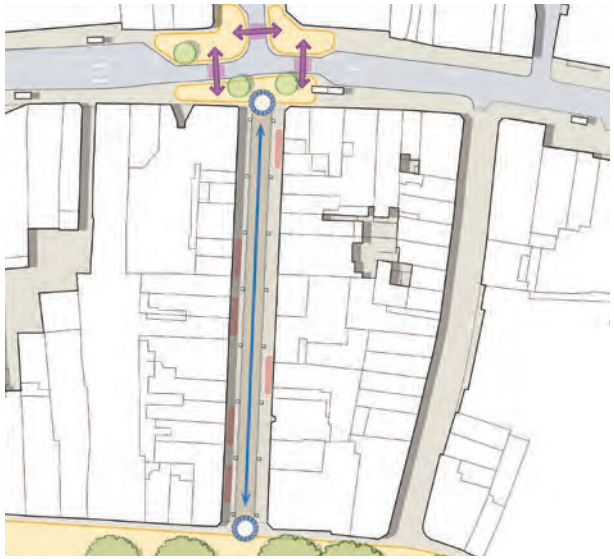
(01) Small standard paving units as described in the design manual

(02) Large standard paving as described in the design manual

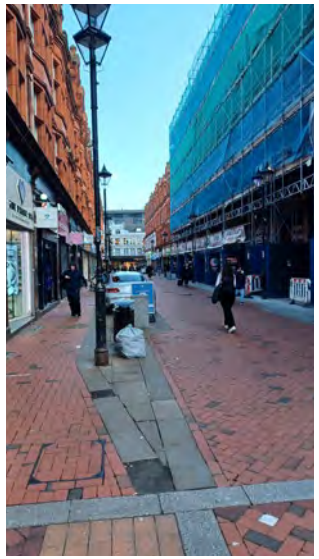
(03) Opportunity for outdoor dining and forecourt use, providing these do not exceed a 2m wide space against the shop front

- Introduction of a simple and robust natural stone paving palette that creates a setting that highlights the architecture rather than competing with it
- Decluttered and neat streetscape. The reinstatement of the cleaned grey granite square blocks can be considered if deemed necessary to control illegal parking / traffic

Diagram of proposed layout



Existing photos



Artist impression of proposed layout

7.4 The Forbury

Existing Condition & Issues

The section of the Forbury that runs between Town Hall Square and Forbury Gardens is an important pedestrian link to the Abbey Quarter. It presents a pleasant environment with the proximity St Laurence's Church and grounds. Currently, the public realm doesn't respond to the historical character of the architecture and prime location at the heart of the town centre. The paving and road surfacing are in poor state, the footpaths are cluttered with mismatched street furniture and the red brick colour doesn't complement the existing heritage.

Objectives & Proposal

The proposal looks at enhancing the visual appearance of the street through decluttering and the introduction of a new palette of natural stone paving. Valuable space is reclaimed to the carriageway and road infrastructure to include biodiverse planting beds and tree planting. Pedestrian crossings are realigned to allow fluid pedestrian movements. These improvements also provide an opportunity to improve pedestrian wayfinding towards the Abbey.

Page 424

01 Reduced width and realigned carriageway to introduce green verge

02 New shorter crossing points, some of which could be formalised zebra crossings

03 Underused traffic island transformed into a pocket gardens with a footpath directly aligned on the Forbury Gardens entrance

Diagram of proposed layout

Artist impression of proposed layout

Existing photos

Urban greening and rain gardens
© Meristem Design

7.5 Chain Street

Existing Condition & Issues

Chain Street is a pedestrian lane that runs North-South and connects Broad Street to the grounds of Reading Minster and St Mary's Butts. It is characterful, narrow bordered by a mix of local businesses, residential buildings and large retail units. It is well used by pedestrians as a cut through.

Objectives & Proposal

The proposal aims at building on the strengths and character of this lane to transform it into an attractive pedestrian link where public art and street animation create an enjoyable and memorable experience for the local communities and visitors alike. The building facades including heritage assets should be restored, revealed and celebrated.

01 Consistent, high quality natural stone paving throughout

02 Clear entry points highlighted by signage, murals / art interventions or bespoke feature paving elements

03 Introduction of murals on blank facades: can be part of a collaboration with local artists or art courses

04 Planting pots of varied sizes to animate the lane where the width allows. The pots should be placed in small random clusters and can be brightly coloured to bring further interest

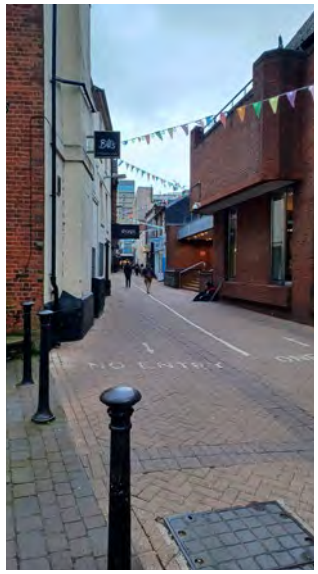
05 Catenary lighting or bunting to further animate the street

06 Decluttering: removal of obstacles, bollards and use of wall-mounted luminaires wherever possible on narrow streets

07 A-boards should be avoided where they impede pedestrian movement, The use of quality wall-mounted business signs and shop window animation should be encouraged

Diagram of proposed layout

Existing photos



Artist impression of proposed layout

08

Emerging Action Plan

8.1 Emerging Action Plan

The actions within the public realm strategy are intended to set out the next steps for enhancing the public realm in addition to considering the future ambitions of the town. Some of the proposed actions may be able to be progressed in the short term, others may take years to achieve. The public realm strategy is intended to have validity and relevance for up to 15 years. These actions are to be progressed collaboratively between the Council and developers. The proposed actions are as follows.

Physical public realm projects

01 Major Public Realm Enhancement Schemes

Key selected areas which will have a significant impact through enhancement and change. Within each, the first steps would be set out to enable these to proceed to a project, including undertaking surveys, understanding of funding requirements and other considerations. These include:

- St Mary's Butts
- Market Place & Town Hall Square
- Queen Road & London Street Junction
- Station Road & Friar Street Junction
- Queen Victoria Street
- Green Space on River Kennet

02 Public Realm Enhancement

Targeted interventions to existing streets and spaces which are additions or reorganisation of the existing.

- Oxford Road parking & green infrastructure
- Link to the Forbury Gardens
- Chain Street enhancements
- Others?

03 Pilot Project for Green Infrastructure

Following on from the feasibility study (action 05), identify a suitable street, a public space and a verge, and proceed with projects to introduce a variety of new green infrastructure types as pilot schemes.

04 Meanwhile Use Strategy and Pilot Project

Queens Walk has been identified as a good example of a street which will likely change in the future, however, will stay as existing for a number of years. Identify a fund and carry out a design for a meanwhile use project on this street.

8.1 Emerging Action Plan

Enabling Studies for Public Realm Projects

05 Feasibility Study for Green Infrastructure

Based on the principles set out in this guide, carry out surveys of potential areas and map out the integration, extent and nature of green infrastructure on streets.

06 Forecourt Use & Outdoor Dining Guidelines

Prepare a controlled set of guidelines which include spatial requirements, access, licencing and character for shops and businesses to benefit from the use of the space directly outside their building.

07 Detailed Specification for Paving

Given the recommended step change in paving materials in the core streets of Reading, produce a council approved specification for the use and application of materials in the town centre, to include materials and construction buildups relevant to their use and location.

08 Public Art Strategy Including Murals

Produce a public art strategy for the town centre which identifies locations for art, including murals on blank facades, as well as a clear and coordinated implementation and creation process.

09 Hoarding Design Guidelines

Given the quantum of new development in the town centre over the coming years, develop a coordinated visual guideline for the use, position and animation of hoardings.

10 Signage, Wayfinding & Interpretation Strategy

Building on the heritage of the town and recent interventions, produce a coordinated strategy to be implemented as the public realm is enhanced. This will include style, character, location and content.

11 Town Centre Private Car Access Review

Commencing with a rationalisation of access restrictions on signage, carry out a feasibility study to further reduce private car access in the town centre to assist public transport and the reduction of carriageway widths and vehicular space.

12 Kerbside Usage Review

Assess existing on-street usage, including public car parking, blue badge holders, loading, deliveries, bus stops and taxi bays. This review should include where existing on-street provisions could be relocated to suitable off street / adjoining street locations to provide more space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Preparing for the future

13 Union Street Masterplan, Redevelopment & Enhancement

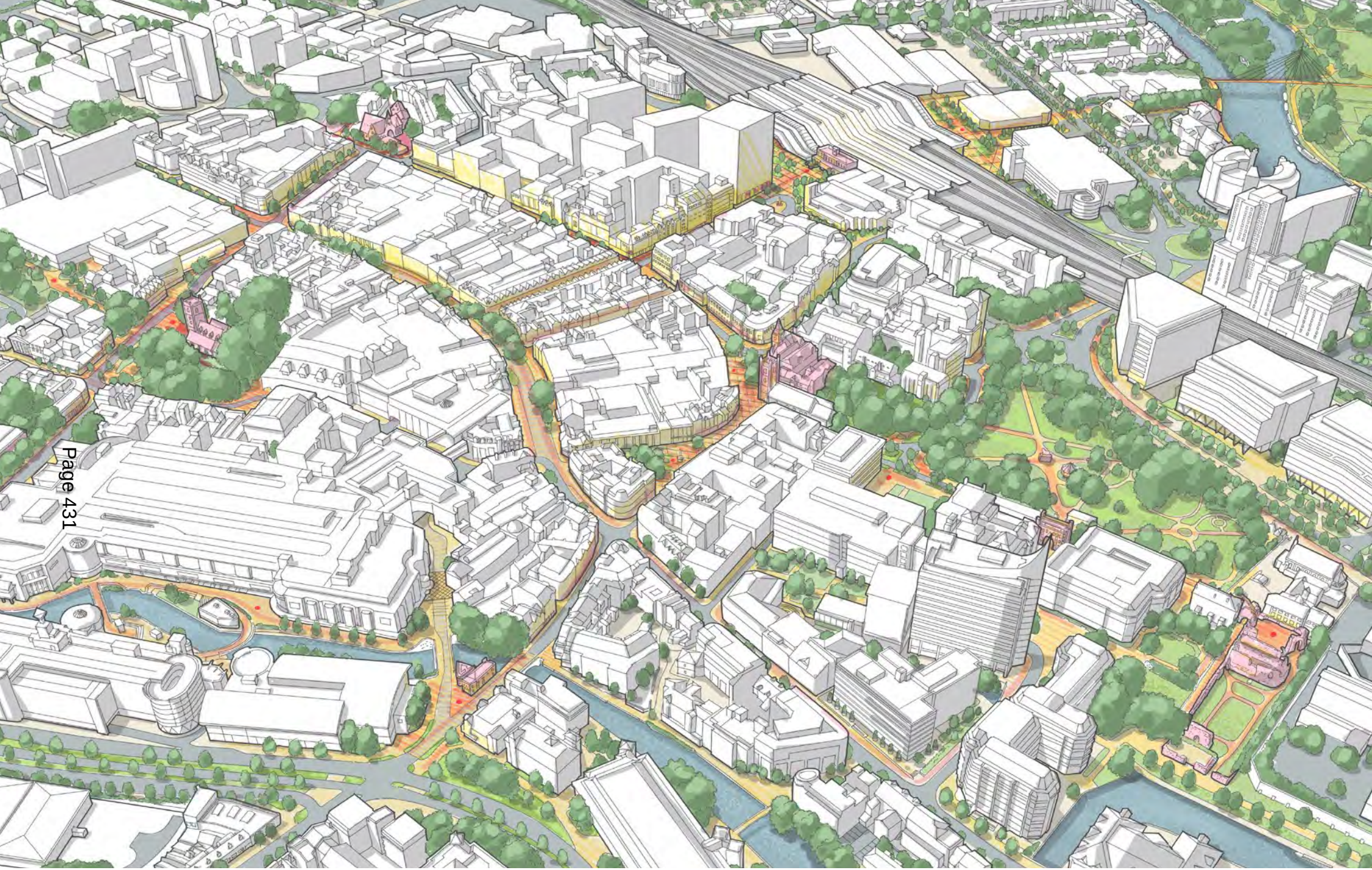
With the Station Hill project progressing at pace, it is envisaged that many people arriving into Reading from the train station may choose to use this route which then arrives at Friar Street with the most obvious connection to Broad Street via Union Street. This area needs significant attention to make it an attractive and pleasant part of the town centre. Its role in the town centre, land ownership and character all need to be carefully reconsidered.

14 Long Term Bus Movement Strategy

With continued growth and increased density of the town centre, carry out a feasibility study to review future solutions and improvements to the bus network including better use of the IDR and edge of town facilities.

15 Asset Register and Maintenance Regime

Re-visit all of the material components of the town centre, including the proposed palettes moving forward, and ensure ownership and maintenance of all are understood and accounted for.



BDP. urban flow movement people places dwg.

Reading Borough Council

This page is intentionally left blank