

03 December 2025



Reading
Borough Council

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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT - UPDATE
Ward	Thames Ward
Planning Application Reference:	PL/25/1191 Full planning permission
Site Address:	Land at Meadow Road, Reading
Proposed Development	Full planning application for the demolition of existing and construction of employment units for flexible uses within E(g)(ii) and (iii), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Meadow Road and Milford Road, parking and landscaping. Departure from the Development Plan - the following application does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated
Applicant	CBRE Investment Management
Report author	Catrin Davies
Deadline:	25/11/2025
Recommendation	<p><u>Refuse</u> planning permission for the reasons in the main Agenda report, with the following alterations:</p> <p>2. It has not been demonstrated that there are not reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding as such it has not been proven a site with a lower risk of flooding cannot accommodate the proposal. The proposal has not demonstrated it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding or reduce flood risk both on- and off-site. The proposal has not demonstrated adequate safe access and egress. The proposal has not incorporated a suitable SuDS scheme which is 'landscape-led' and connects into the on-site green networks as such the proposal has failed to demonstrated that it has adequately adapted to the impacts of climate change. The proposal has therefore failed to demonstrate that it will not increase flood risk, contrary to Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), and paragraphs</p>

	<p>170, 173-5, and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p> <p>3. Due to the proposal's layout which offers no suitable separation distance or suitable buffer to the site edges, combined with the significant scale, mass and bulk of the proposed building, the proposal is considered to be visually dominant and overbearing on neighbouring properties, harming the outlooks to these houses and their gardens. In addition, the application has failed to demonstrate the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm from noise, vehicle movements and artificial lighting to the amenities of neighbouring residential properties and gardens. The applicant has also failed to demonstrate the proposal would not result in harm overshadowing or loss of light to the existing playground. The development is therefore considered to have a detrimental impact on the living environment of surrounding existing residential properties, contrary to policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and paragraphs 187 and 198 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p> <p>6. The development has not been designed to achieve the BREEAM 'Excellent' standard (or an equivalent) for the entirety of the development. Further, the design of the development does not take suitable opportunities to design for resilience to climate change, including through solar shading, landscaping and water run-off. Accordingly, the development fails to produce a design which is appropriate in terms of responsible energy use, design/layout and use of natural resources. The proposal has also failed to provide adequate and well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting. The proposal is contrary to policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) and CC5 (Waste minimisation and storage) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), the Council's SPD, 'Sustainable Design and Construction' (2019) and paragraphs 161 and 166 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p>
Informatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Plans considered and refused Positive and proactive requirement A s106 legal agreement for securing an employment and skills plan and the necessary works to the Public Highway under s278 of the Highways Act would otherwise have been required if approving planning permission

Additional Comments Received

Environment Agency

The previous use of the proposed development site presents a high risk of contamination that could be mobilised during site works and construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is located upon a Principal Aquifer and secondary aquifer A which is shallow and has can be impacted by surface water. Requesting additional information via pre-commencement conditions.

RBC Waste Services

Object- due to lack of consideration of waste disposal from the site. There is no reference to bin storage space on the plan nor is there a refuse strategy with supporting waste disposal plans for occupants of the site.

Southern Gas Networks

Based on the information received to date, it is not anticipated that the diversion of SGN's gas apparatus will be required.

Additional information

The applicant submitted additional information to the officer on the 26/11/2025 for the avoidance of doubt this information has not been taken into consideration by officers.

Appraisal

1.Land Use Principles

1.1 The proposal has a total employment floor space of 4,293 sq.m. This consists of Building 1-3 659 sq.m, Building 4-7 828 sq.m, Building 8-9-1050 sq.m and Building 10-11- 1756 sq.m. The GIA for both existing buildings totals to 4,683 sqm as such there would be a loss of employment floorspace of 850 sq.m but not a loss of employment land within the Core Employment Area as such is not contrary to policy EN3.

1.2 As stated within the main agenda report, the proposal would result in new employment floorspace with a mix of unit sizes and uses with the inclusions of smaller units, which is a benefit of the scheme. The applicant's Economic Statement states that the proposal could create 60 net additional employment opportunities and around 30 full time jobs however these figures are indicative as it would depend on the future uses, users and types of business which occupy the units. Nevertheless, the proposal would generate jobs and have wider economic benefits for the borough.

1.3 For the avoidance of doubt weight has been afforded to the economic and employment benefits of the proposal as stated within the submitted Planning Statement and Economic Statement. However, what these reports have failed to address is the proposal results in a non-conforming use on an allocated housing site and the additional harm of not providing housing (including affordable housing) on the allocated housing site or through other off-site mitigation. At the moment, the current

Local Plan achieves its planned need for employment floorspace but falls short in terms of delivering housing (dwellings). The applicant argument for why the scheme should be approved relies on paragraph 127 of the NPPF which states that decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land, as explained with the main agenda report, but the applicant has had no regard to the housing need of the borough. The main agenda has explained why the LPA believe the site is reasonable available and based on the evidence available to the LPA there is not currently an unmet employment need (whereas there is an unmet housing need).

1.4 Further to paragraph 6.18 of the main agenda report which discusses the applicant's fallback position. While it is acknowledged the existing site is within employment use the exact uses have not been established or indeed if these are even lawful. Please note that there is an existing coach service operating at the site and it has not been demonstrated this falls within a purely B8 use and that this operation is lawful. The site appears to be a mix of commercial, industrial and storage. However, it's not clear how these uses are distributed across the site, or if the site is one planning unit or several. All of these are considerations when assessing any potential 'fall back' position. The applicant has referenced a 'fall back' position but this argument hasn't been fully developed to a stage where it can be awarded weight within the planning balance. While the site is within employment use this does not mean that a proposed employment use is acceptable which is what the applicant is implying. Please note that should the site be intensified, this could be a material change of use in its own right and would require planning permission.

2. Flooding

2.1 Further to paragraph 6.22 of the main agenda report (PL/25/1191), to clarify, the Exception test is not required for this application. This is because the Flood risk vulnerability classification has not changed.

2.2 In relation to paragraph 6.23 of the main agenda report the National Standards for sustainable drainage systems was updated on 30th July 2025. Application PL/25/1191 was submitted 22nd August 2025 therefore it was submitted after the update took place, and the application should have taken these requirements into account.

2.3 Paragraph 6.24 of the main agenda report discusses localised flooding further to this Paragraph 49 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of National PPG (Planning Practice Guidance) states that "Where flood storage from any source of flooding is to be lost as a result of development, on-site level-for-level compensatory storage, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development, should be provided". The applicant's FRA states that, "Using a hydraulic modelling software, the attenuation required for units 1-9 is approximately 361m³, whilst attenuation for units 10-11 is approximately 105m³ in a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event. The attenuation storage is provided via: Cellular storage crates/Permeable paving". The information is considered insufficient to demonstrate that the site has acceptable flood compensation and level for level and the attenuation stated is achievable further information is required to demonstrate its acceptability. Furthermore, the submitted FRA has also not demonstrated an acceptable safe access and egress route which is a requirement of Paragraph 181 of the NPPF. As

set out in the updated Recommendation box above, this has been included within the refusal reasons.

3. Neighbouring Amenities

3.1 Further to paragraph 6.34 of the main agenda report the submitted daylight/sunlight assessment has not taken into consideration the playground located on Denbeigh Place. The playground is located to the north of proposed units 4-7 and is located adjacent to the boundary of the application site. Appendix 4 of the daylight/sunlight report lists the gardens and open spaces taken into consideration, but the playground is not listed. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposed units would not adversely impact the amount of light the playground receives which could result in harm to the users of the park, the refusal reasons have been updated to reflect this harm (amended refusal reason above). It is acknowledged that the playground is currently impacted in terms of light and overshadowing by the existing built development, however this proposal would perpetuate this poor relationship.

3.2 Further to paragraph 6.64 within the main agenda report which deals with the altered access at Meadow Road, while the altered access of Meadow Road may be acceptable in highway safety terms this would continue to attract unnecessary commercial vehicles into a residential area. Adjacent to the access lies Cox Terrace and Wyman Terrace, where the properties along these streets would be impacted by the noise and headlights from the vehicles entering the site having a degree of impact on their amenities. The fact remains this proposal would continue a non-confirming land use within this area which does result in harm to neighbouring amenities.

4. Sustainability

4.1 Policy CC5 states "Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting". The applicant's planning statement states that "appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure more sustainable approaches to waste management....[these] measures will be agreed with the occupiers of the proposed development, prior to occupation". This approach is considered insufficient, and the LPA needs to be certain that an adequate waste strategy is incorporated into the scheme prior to determination. It is considered that these matters are important consideration in the design and layout of a scheme to ensure these are dealt with sufficiently. Matters such as, where each unit would store their waste, where it would be collected from and if there is adequate space for the required separation of recyclables from non-recyclables remain unknown. In addition, should waste storage be located externally then it is not considered the proposed site plan can support this without significant alterations which would inevitably reduce the amount of soft landscaping proposed. Furthermore, the submitted swept path analysis has not demonstrated a refuse collection vehicle can access the site and successfully retrieve the waste from its collection point. These matters can not be dealt with via a condition as the LPA need a degree of certainty

that waste can be successfully and sustainable managed on the site prior to determination. As shown above this has been included within the refusal reasons.

5. Highways

5.1 Further to paragraph 6.68 of the main agenda, Policy TR4 states that, "Developments will be expected to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities". The Planning Statement indicates that the proposal includes 24 cycle spaces however these are not shown on the proposed site plan as to where these are to be located or indeed if they have been incorporated into the scheme. Once again if these have not been incorporated into the scheme then it is not considered they can be implemented without detriment to the soft landscaping scheme proposed.