

Retail Statement for Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading.

On behalf of Sorbon Estates.

Pegasus Ref: P18-1172

RO01_v1 Retail Statement



Document Management.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Retail Statement has been prepared on behalf of Sorbon Estates Ltd in support of a full planning application for the erection of a Class E gym at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading. This retail statement deals with matters relating to a sequential test and retail impact assessment in respect of the proposed main town centre use of a gym. This report should be read alongside the submitted Planning Statement.

Proposed development

- 1.2. The 0.158ha site is located within a surplus car parking area of the Reading Link Retail Park.
- 1.3. The proposals include the erection of a new Class E gym unit of approximately 1,780 sqm, split across ground floor (929.37 sqm) and mezzanine floor (850.37 sqm) levels.
- 1.4. The proposed unit will have dedicated access to the extensive parking provision currently available at the Reading Link Retail Park.

Report Structure

- 1.5. The report is structured as follows:
- Section 2: This section sets out the relevant National and Local Planning Policy Context
 - Sections 3 and 4: These sections set out the Sequential Test, including the methodology and assessment of potential alternative sites.
 - Section 5: This section sets out the impact of the proposed town centre use on the viability and vitality of other centres.
 - Section 6: This section summarises and concludes the previous sections

2. Retail Planning Policy

- 2.1. This section briefly summarises the key policy considerations in respect of the sequential test and impact assessments in relation to the proposed development.

NPPF

- 2.2. Chapter 7 of the NPPF sets out policies relating to town centres and main town centre uses. The glossary at Annex 2 confirms that main town centre uses include retail development, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including restaurants and health and fitness centres), offices and arts, culture, and tourism development.
- 2.3. Paragraph 87 requires proposals for main town centre uses to demonstrate accordance with the sequential test where they are located in an out-of-centre location and are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan (i.e. not allocated for such uses). In applying the sequential test, Paragraph 87 confirms that main town centre uses should be located in **town centres** then in edge of centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available (or not expected to become available within a 'reasonable period') should out of centre locations be considered.
- 2.4. Paragraph 90 requires the preparation of an impact assessment when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside **town centres** where they are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, considering the impact of the proposal on planned public and private investment in centres and on **town centre** vitality and viability. The NPPF glossary confirms that leisure uses include food and drink uses but not hotels which are considered as tourism uses.
- 2.5. Paragraph 91 confirms that where an application fails the sequential test or is likely to have a significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations set out at paragraph 89, it should be refused.

Local Policy Requirements

- 2.6. For the purposes of this application the Development Plan consists of the Reading Local Plan which was adopted in November 2019.
- 2.7. Of relevance to this proposal, Local Plan Policy RL5 requires '*proposals of greater than 1,000sqm of new or additional floor space to demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on existing centres*'.
- 2.8. The supporting text to this policy outlines that main town centre uses', including retail, leisure and offices, should generally be located in centres in the first instance. However, where development does take place elsewhere, it is important that it does not undermine the identified network of centres.
- 2.9. In addition, the supporting text to Policy RL5 states that an Impact assessment should be included with every relevant application above this threshold. Matters to be considered in an assessment are set out in national guidance, but the following impacts are particularly significant for Reading:

- Impacts on trade levels;
- Impacts on the prospect of investment in existing centres;
- Impacts on centres in areas of deprivation; and
- Cumulative impacts with other developments and proposals within the preceding five years.

2.10. The Reading Link Retail Park is located within the main settlement boundary of Reading, but outside Reading Town Centre or any other district or local centres.

2.11. The proposals are for a leisure use outside a town, district or local centres and propose more than 1,000 sqm of gross floor space. Therefore, in accordance with Local Plan Policy RL5, both a sequential test and retail impact assessment have been prepared in support of this application. These two assessments are outlined in turn below.

3. Sequential Test Parameters

- 3.1. As highlighted in the previous section, the proposed development includes main town centre uses in an out-of-centre location and therefore it is necessary to undertake a sequential assessment. This section sets out the methodology used for the assessment.

Relevant Planning History

- 3.2. The site has evolved in recent years, with a number of planning applications submitted on this site. The most relevant aspects of the planning history to this sequential test are summarised below, with further details provided in the submitted Design, Access and Planning statement.
- 3.3. With regards to the sequential test, the Applicant previously submitted an outline application on another part of the site for a proposed coffee shop drive-thru located in the north-eastern section. However, the Council refused the application in March 2019 under application reference 181860. It was refused for several reasons, one related to the fact that a Sequential Test was not submitted to accompany the application.
- 3.4. A sequential test accompanied a subsequent appeal (APP/E0345/W/19/3230766); although the appeal was dismissed by the Inspector in April 2020, they confirmed in their appeal decision that the reasons for refusal relating to the absence of a sequential test had been satisfactorily addressed by the Appellant as part of the appeal process.
- 3.5. A subsequent application for an outline application for the erection of a drive-thru coffee shop was granted in July 2021 (Ref: 201558), where the Council also accepted the implementation of the sequential test.
- 3.6. Given that the Council previously accepted the previous sequential test approach with the appeal and subsequent applications on the same retail park, the submitted sequential test updates the previous version whilst incorporating the specific requirements associated with the proposed gym use on this site.

The Application of the Sequential Test – Relevant Decisions and Case Law

- 3.7. Before moving on to consider the specific methodology for the sequential assessment, it is important to consider the significant and pertinent case law and Secretary of State decisions. These provide guidance and clarification on how the sequential test should be applied in respect of the need to demonstrate flexibility, the consideration of availability, and the requirement to consider the disaggregation of a proposed development.
- 3.8. The following table below provides a summary of relevant sequential test case law along with a brief summary of the practical outcome to this application:

Table 1: Relevant Case Law Summary table

Relevant Case Law	Practical Application
For a sequentially preferable site to be suitable, it must be <i>"suitable for the development proposed by the applicant."</i> The <i>"whole exercise is directed to what the developer is proposing, not some other proposal which the planning authority might seek to substitute for it which is for something less than that sought by the developer."</i> (Dundee, paras 24 and 3814) ¹ ;	A scheme should be assessed as proposed, with sequential sites assessed on their ability to provide for a comparable 'real world' proposal in which a developer would wish to operate
<i>"to refuse an out-of-centre planning consent on the ground that an admittedly smaller site is available within the town centre may be to take an entirely inappropriate business decision on behalf of the developer."</i> (Dundee, para 28). The application of the sequential test is <i>"for use in the real world in which developers wish to operate, not some artificial world in which they have no interest doing so."</i> (Dundee, para 38);	
For a site to be suitable, it would have to be a genuine "real world" alternative for the development. If the appeal were dismissed, would the developer build the development on the sequentially preferable site is the relevant question (Telford Forge appeal ref: APP/C3240/A/12/2172756, para 19).	
<i>"Had the Government intended to retain disaggregation as a requirement it would and should have explicitly stated this in the NPPF."</i> (Rushden Lakes, para 8.47). It is clear, then, that <i>"there is no requirement to disaggregate"</i> ² ;	There is also no mention of a requirement to disaggregate sites through a sequential test in the Adopted Local Plan. As such, the sequential test does not consider dividing the proposed
<i>"In carrying out the sequential test it is acknowledged that whilst Framework paragraph 24 [now paragraph 86] indicates that applicants should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, it does not require the Applicant to disaggregate the scheme. The sequential test seeks to see if the application, i.e.</i>	

¹ Tesco Stores Limited (Appellants) v Dundee City Council (Respondents) (Scotland) [2012] UKSC

² Confirmed in the Secretary of State decision letter for Rushden Lakes, para 16

what is proposed, can be accommodated on a town centre site or on sequentially preferable sites. There is nothing in the evidence before me to suggest that the Applicant has pitched the scale of the scheme so that would be impossible to identify a town centre site" (para 11.7 of Inspector's Report, Scotch Corner called-in application). The SoS specifically agreed with the Inspector at IR11.7 (para 11 of his decision letter).	development among a number of (sequentially preferable) sites.
The appellant's own commercial objectives are relevant to the question of suitability, even where these are site-specific (Telford Forge appeal ref: APP/C3240/A/12/2172756, para 16)	Commercial interests are relevant to the assessment of suitability.
"... "suitable" and "available" generally mean "suitable" and "available" for the broad type of development which is proposed in the application by approximate size, type, and range of goods. This incorporates the requirement for flexibility in NPPF, and excludes, generally, the identity and personal or corporate attitudes of an individual retailer. The area and sites covered by the sequential test search should not vary from Applicant to Applicant according to their identity, but from application to application based on their content." (paragraph 35, Aldergate v Mansfield District Council & Anor [2016] EWHC 1670 (Admin)).	Whilst the search area and identified sites should not differ between applicants, the results will be dependent on the specific details of a proposed development, i.e. size, proposed use etc.

Search Parameters

- 3.9. In accordance with Policy RL5, the following nearby centres have been identified as potential alternative locations for the proposed development:
- Reading Town Centre
 - Whitley Street Local Centre
 - Whitley District Centre
 - Wensley Road Local Centre
 - Basingstoke Road North Local Centre
 - Oxford Road West District Centre
- 3.10. In order to provide a degree of flexibility, alternative sites would need to accommodate a unit of around 1,780sqm, along with decent levels of parking provision in the immediate

surrounding area. In addition, the prospective tenant seeks to operate the Gym 24-hours a day and so accessible parking after typical business hours is essential.

- 3.11. Sites outlined in the catchment areas above have been identified where they are 40% greater or larger than the proposed unit of 1,780sqm, i.e., units between 1,067sqm and 2,490sqm. In addition, sites which are currently vacant and are between 0.09ha and 0.22ha (+/- 40% of 0.158 hectare) will also be included where there is potential for development. Smaller sites of below 1,067sqm or above 2,490sqm would not be viable for the prospective occupiers and whilst vacant development sites of over 0.22ha could be developed to accommodate smaller units, it is considered this would represent a poor and inefficient use of land.
- 3.12. To summarise, alternative sites which are in accordance with the following criteria have been included:
- Within the defined search areas
 - Between 1,067sqm (11,485sqft) and 2,490sqm (26,802sqft), or 0.09ha and 0.22ha for vacant sites
 - Sufficient dedicated parking available 24 hours a day

4. Assessment of Suitable Alternative Sites

- 4.1. Table 2 below contains the sites identified from searches conducted as per the criteria outlined in Section 3 above.
- 4.2. Sites were assessed using web-based platforms, including Estates Gazette, Rightmove, Completely Retail, and Zoopla. Consequently, it was considered that sites which are 'suitable', 'available' and 'viable' were robustly identified within the defined search area.
- 4.3. In addition, local commercial agents operating within the Reading area were approached for any further sites which could meet the needs of the occupier. Letters sent to agents can be found in Appendix 2, 3 and 4. No additional sites for consideration were returned from agents.
- 4.4. Comments have been made against the suitability or availability of each site. Sites which meet the criteria are highlighted in yellow and are assessed in more detail below.

Table 2: Sequential Test Summary Table

Site Name	Location (i.e. Town Centre or name of district centre etc.)	Site area (sqm or ha)	Comments
Former Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street	Oxford Road West	0.2ha	Potentially suitable, within size threshold.
Land at 362 Oxford Road	Oxford Road West	0.13ha	Potentially suitable, within size threshold
Land at Abattoirs Road	Town Centre	0.19ha	Potentially suitable, within size threshold.
Hardstanding opposite the Bell and Dragon, Kenavon Drive	Town Centre	0.6ha	Potentially suitable albeit greater than the required threshold
71-73 Caversham Road	Town Centre	0.15ha	Potentially suitable, within size threshold and accessible
Unit 1-4 Huntley Wharf	Town Centre	171sqm-1145sqm	Potentially suitable, within size threshold.
474 Oxford Road, Reading	Oxford Road West	126sqm	Not within the size parameters.
Unit 2 - 4 Meyer House Chatham Place	Town Centre	Unit A- 181sqm Unit B- 149sqm Unit C- 58sqm	Not within the size parameters.

Dukesbridge Chambers, Kings Road	Town Centre	0.3ha	Potentially suitable, within size threshold.
Various Units, Brunel Retail Park	Whitley District Centre	Unit 3a – 1,202 Unit 3b – 1,812 Unit 4 – 3,406	Some units within size parameters and is potentially suitable

Former Central Swimming Pool

- 4.5. The site is owned by Reading Borough Council and proposed for a comprehensive redevelopment through opportunity area CR14a in the Adopted Local Plan. The overarching ambition of the redevelopment is to restore swimming provision in this location whilst providing a wider mixed-use redevelopment.
- 4.6. A residential planning application has not yet been submitted, although permission was granted in October 2018 for the demolition of the swimming pool (Ref 181606). More recently, in May 2022, the Council launched a public consultation for the potential comprehensive redevelopment of the site. The indicative scheme comprises an old person's day centre, sheltered, general needs and supported living accommodation, creating 62 dwellings in low-rise flats and houses, as shown in Figure 1 below. Following the initial consultation process, there is no evidence on Reading Borough Council's planning portal of any subsequent application proposing the redevelopment of the site.



Figure 1: Reading Borough's Proposed Plans to Redevelop the Former Central Swimming Pool

- 4.7. Given that the surrounding area is predominately residential and the Council's current preference is for older people's accommodation to meet a critical need, therefore, the site is not available for the proposed gym.

Land at 362 Oxford Road (Oxford Road West Local Centre)

- 4.8. This site benefits from planning permission (Ref: 201391) for a mixed-use residential-led development with two commercial units on the ground floor of 157sqm. The site is currently subject to an appeal to amend the scheme slightly, retaining the commercial units at 157sqm but amending details of housing tenure (APP/EO345/W/22/3310834). Subsequent applications (Ref: 211047) have sought to amend the housing element of the project whilst retaining the commercial units at ground floor as approved – demonstrating the Applicant's continued interest in developing the site. However, this application was withdrawn in December 2021.
- 4.9. As outlined above, the consented or proposed commercial units do not meet the requirements of the gym operator at present. If the site was to be developed solely as a gym, this could prejudice the extant planning permission on this site and preclude residential development. The site is therefore not considered available or suitable for the gym.

Land at Abattoirs Road (Reading Town Centre)

- 4.10. The site is understood to be within the control of Reading Borough Council. An application (Ref: 211010) proposing residential development for rough sleepers for a period of up to 5 years following the demolition of the previous buildings was approved in September 2021.
- 4.11. The site is within a major opportunity area CR12a, which is outlined for a substantial redevelopment including mixed uses, residential and improvements to mass transit. Residential would appear to be better suited to this site, with a scheme continuing the pattern of development that fronts onto Caversham Road. There could also be the option to extend a residential use towards the western boundary of the site. Any piecemeal development by the prospective gym operator could prejudice this wider masterplan and opportunity site.
- 4.12. It is not considered that the site is currently suitable for the proposed gym.

Land opposite the Bell and Dragon, Kenavon Drive

- 4.13. The 0.6ha site could in theory, accommodate the proposed gym through the sub-division of this plot. However, the site falls within part of CR13c for a residential-led redevelopment. Therefore, given that the site is significantly larger than the parameter requirements and due to the proximity of other major residential schemes in the area, it is considered that residential is the most appropriate use of this land and proposing a gym could jeopardise the deliverability of this important strategic site.

71-73 Caversham Road (Reading Town Centre)

- 4.14. Following its identification in the 2019 survey, a planning application was submitted in November 2019 for a mixed-use building at the site, including 44 dwellings (Ref: 191792). However, this application was dismissed at appeal (APP/EO345/W/20/3263270). A subsequent application (Ref: 220922) is pending for the erection of a mixed-use building

comprising 29 residential units and a 297 sqm retail unit (Use Class E(a)). The application specifically refers to a Class E(a) use and does not mention possible alternative uses. Even if a gym use was considered at a later stage, the unit would be below the required threshold and therefore is not considered suitable.

- 4.15. Whilst not yet determined, it is apparent that the landowner clearly has other intentions for the site and would not be willing to consider a gym use at the proposed scale by the Applicant



Unit 1-4 Huntley Wharf (Reading Town Centre)

- 4.16. Huntley Wharf is a major mixed-use development site containing residential and commercial uses located in Reading's Town Centre.
- 4.17. The site contains 4no. Class E ground floor units comprise a convenience store, a nursery and two flexible retail uses. The local commercial agent, Haslam Chartered Surveyors, has been advertising these units on their website³. Table 3 below summarises details of the units (i.e. size and availability) based on information extracted from the website listing. The table shows that all the units are below the required size threshold and, in the case of units 1 and 2, are currently unavailable.

Table 3: Units 1-4 Huntley Wharf Summary Table (Source Haslam Chartered Surveyors)

Unit No.	Consented Use	Sqm	Availability
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³ <https://haslams.co.uk/find-a-property/properties/70466-units-1-4-huntley-wharf-reading>

Unit. – 1	Convenience Store (Class E)	370.03	Let
Unit. – 2	Nursery (Class E)	294.04	Let
Unit. – 3	Flexible Retail Unit (Class E)	309.92	Available
Unit. – 4	Flexible Retail Unit (Class E)	171.31	Available
Total		1,145.30	

- 4.18. None of the available units within Huntley Wharf meet the required size threshold and so are not considered suitable for the proposed gym.

Dukesbridge Chambers, Kings Road (Reading Town Centre)

- 4.19. Since the initial survey in 2019 planning permission has been granted at appeal for 25 dwellings (APP/E0345/W/21/327646). The development has now been completed, and the residential units are listed for sale. Therefore, the site is no longer an available alternative site.

Whitley District Centre – Brunel Retail Park (edge of centre)

- 4.20. The following considers the availability of units at Brunel Retail Park as an edge of centre site. Whilst it is located outside the defined district centre boundary and somewhat disconnected to the existing centre boundary, it does fall within 300m walking distance of the edge of Whitley District Centre and therefore could be considered to be an edge of centre location for the purposes of the sequential test.
- 4.21. The retail park is currently undergoing a period of significant change with proposals to redevelop at least part of the site for employment uses being progressed. Based on recent application submissions it is understood the following positions in respect of each unit.

Table 4 – Brunel Retail Park Units

Unit	Occupier	Floor Area ⁴	Notes
1	Halfords	1,042	
2	Pets at Home	935	
3a	Vacant	1,202	To be occupied by relocated B&M ⁵
3b	Vacant	1,812	
4	Vacant	3,406	

⁴ Including mezzanine floor

⁵ Planning permission ref. 220110

5	Vacant	931	To be occupied by Home Bargains ⁶
6a	Dreams	806	
6b	Vacant	459	To be redeveloped for employment uses
7	Vacant	937	
8	B&M	2,172	To be relocated and redeveloped for employment uses ⁷ .
9	Vacant	814	To be redeveloped for employment uses
10	Costa Coffee	94	

- 4.22. As can be seen in Table 4, there are a number of a vacant units within the site with a number falling with the sequential site search parameters and could therefore be considered suitable (Units 3a, 3b and Unit 4 (subject to subdivision)). However, confirmed occupiers for the units have been identified and the units are no longer being actively marketed. In terms of Units 6b-10, these are to be redevelopment for employment uses and are being made vacant for that purpose. As such, it is clear that the units within the site are not available to accommodate the proposed gym use and can be discounted on this basis.

Sites in other district centres

- 4.23. The majority of sites found through the sequential test were located within Reading Town Centre, with a few examples in Oxford Road West District Centre.
- 4.24. Sites identified in the Whitley Street Local Centre were too small to meet the requirements set out in the parameters of the search and as such, were unsuitable.
- 4.25. No sites which meet the criteria outlined in the sequential test were found in Whitley Street Local Centre, Whitley District Centre, Wensley Road Local Centre or Basingstoke Road North Local Centre.

⁶ Planning permission 220018 and advertisement consent 230037

⁷ Planning permission ref. 201853

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1. As highlighted in Section 2, as the proposals are for a leisure use and propose more than 1,000 sqm of gross floorspace there is a requirement to provide an impact assessment in accordance with Local Plan Policy RL5. As such the following provides an assessment on the likely impact of the proposed gym use on nearby defined centres.
- 5.2. Unlike retail floorspace, there is no standardised methodology or approach in considering the impact of leisure uses such as the proposed gym. This is highlighted by the PPG with the checklist at Paragraph O18 principally referring to retail uses including references to shopping patterns and turnover levels with reference to convenience and comparison (retail) expenditure. Given this, the following approach and matters are considered in turn in assessing the impact of the proposed gym use:
- Application proposals and market it will serve;
 - Overview of existing gym provision in local area and visitation patterns.
 - Overview of health/vitality and viability of nearby centres including their gym/leisure offer including;
 - Reading regional centre;
 - Whitley district centre;
 - Oxford Road West district centre;
 - Whitley street local centre;
 - Wensley Road local centre; and,
 - Basingstoke Road North local centre.
 - Capacity assessment for additional gym uses.
 - Trade diversion.
 - Overview of impact on vitality and viability of town centres.
 - Conclusions.

Application proposals and the market it will serve

- 5.3. The proposed gym unit will deliver 1,780 sqm of floorspace with the expectation it would be occupied by a national multiple low cost/affordable gym operator. In larger urban areas such as Reading, where existing comparable provision/offer already exists, such uses will generally serve a more localised catchment with the principal catchment generally being a 5-minute drivetime from the site. Whilst some members may come from further afield, the focus for members will be within this 5-minute drivetime catchment.

5.4. Given this, the focus of the impact test is those centres defined through Local Plan Policy RL1 within this principal 5-minute drivetime area. This includes the following centres:

- Reading regional centre;
- Whitley district centre;
- Oxford Road West district centre;
- Whitley street local centre;
- Wensley Road local centre; and,
- Basingstoke Road North local centre.

5.5. Whilst some of these centres are located just beyond a 5-minute drivetime of the site, or the majority of the centre boundary is located beyond it, these have been included in the assessment for robustness and noting that some members will be drawn from slightly beyond this principal catchment area.

Existing gym provision and visitation patterns

5.6. A key step in assessing the impact of any development is to have a proper understanding of similar or competing provision in the local area as well as how these existing facilities are used.

5.7. In terms of existing provision locally, the following Table 5, provides a summary of nearby gym provision including the travel distance from the application site and the size of the gym where available.

Table 5 – Existing larger gym provision

Gym	Size (Gym use only)	Distance from App Site	Within town centre
The Gym – Reading Central	894	1.6km	Reading regional centre
Buzz Gym – Kings Road	793	2.1km	Reading regional centre
Pure Gym – Caversham Road	1,502	2.2km	N/A – edge of Reading regional centre
Pure Gym – Basingstoke Road	1,508	1.8km	Whitley district centre
Nuffield Health – South Oak Way	2,273 ⁸	3.3km	N/A
South Reading Leisure Centre	–	3.1km	N/A
SportsPark – Reading University	–	3.4km	N/A
Rivermead Leisure Complex	–	3.2km	N/A

⁸ Figure for dry (leisure clubs) as provided through business rates information.

- 5.8. In addition to those gyms listed in Table 5, there are a number of smaller/independent gyms which provide small-scale gym facilities that are not comparable to the scale or offer of the proposed gym use. The Anytime Fitness gym that was located within Reading town centre at Chatham Place is understood to have closed in late 2022 and is therefore excluded from Table 5.
- 5.9. The Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment (April 2017) provides some details on visitation patterns for Gym uses within Reading, with data presented in the Household Survey (Q33) at Volume 3 of the study. It should be noted that the household survey question also covers leisure centres and swimming pools usage which differ from the proposed gym use. In addition, the responses cover geographic areas rather than specific destinations/gyms. However, this data is used as the only available data for gym usage in the local area.
- 5.10. The following Table 6 provides a summary of the household survey data for Zones 1, 2, 3 and 21 which are those zones that cover Reading and the surrounding area and also attract a significant number of gym/leisure centre visits to gym facilities in Reading; excluding those that said they don't know or that it varied.
- 5.11. Zones 1 and 2 principally cover the urban area of Reading split by east Reading and west Reading respectively. Zones 3 and 21 are included within the Table as whilst they cover the rural areas to the west of Reading, some gym visits are attracted to destinations in Reading as the closest such provision to large parts of these rural zones. Whilst a small amount of trade is drawn into Reading from Zones 4, 10, 12 and 15, this is much more limited and therefore for the purposes of presenting visitation patterns this is not included within Table 6.

Table 6 – Gym visitation patterns around Reading

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 21
Reading				
Lower Earley	43.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Reading town centre	13.7%	78.3%	58.8%	15.1%
Woodley	11.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Caversham	1.9%	5.9%	0.0%	3.2%
Tilehurst	0.0%	5.5%	8.5%	13.0%
Reading sub-total	71.0%	89.8%	67.3%	31.3%
Other outside Reading				
Other ⁹	5.0%	6.8%	16.1%	28.6%
Wokingham (in and out of centre)	12.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Winnersh	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Thatcham	0.0%	3.4%	10.2%	0.0%
Other Named destinations	4.9%	0.0%	6.4%	40.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

- 5.12. As can be seen in Table 6, the most popular destination was Reading town centre which will have undoubtedly covered those gyms identified earlier in this subsection within the town centre and on the edge of the town centre (Pure Gym, The Gym and Buzz Gym) all of which

⁹ Listed as 'other' in household survey – some of which may be destinations in Reading.

were trading at the time of the household survey. Whilst there are some smaller gyms/specialist facilities in the town centre, the vast majority of memberships/visits will be drawn to these three larger gyms.

- 5.13. Gyms within the Lower Earley area are the next most popular destination within Reading, particularly for those living in the west of the town with this expected to be drawn to the Loddon Valley Leisure Centre on Rushey Way. The Pure Gym at Whitley district centre was understood to have opened just before the household survey was published however Whitley was not identified as a destination through the household survey and as such it appears that this is captured within the Lower Earley figures given the proximity to Whitley.
- 5.14. We convert these market shares into assumed member numbers later in this Assessment.

Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres

- 5.15. The following considers the current vitality and viability of existing centres focusing on those closest to the application site. In considering this, and noting the principal 5-minute drivetime area.

Reading regional centre

- 5.16. The boundary of Reading regional centre (Central Core policy area) is located around 0.7 miles (travel distance) from the application site with the centre covering a wide area providing a mixed retail, leisure, commercial and employment offer. The centre attracts custom and provides services to those living and working within Reading as well as drawing trade from the surrounding rural area and nearby smaller towns and villages.
- 5.17. In the absence of any health check data presented in the Retail Study or through Annual Monitoring Reports, data in terms of the mix of uses has been sourced from Experian GOAD from a survey undertaken in September 2022. Data based upon the split of units by both unit count and floorspace is set out in Tables 7 and 8 as follows. These figures are all presented on the basis of the GOAD defined Reading central area; which may not fit with the defined Central Core policy area. However, it is reasonable to rely upon this GOAD data as a robust and recognized standard for such assessments as this also allows comparison with national averages.

Table 7 – Reading regional centre proportion of uses¹⁰

GOAD Category Use	Unit No.	Unit %	National Average (2023)
Comparison Retail	180	25.9%	26.9%
Convenience Retail	54	7.8%	9.3%
Retail Service	79	11.4%	15.8%
Leisure Service	218	31.3%	25.4%
Financial & Business Services	54	7.8%	8.7%
Vacant	111	16.0%	13.8%
Total	696	100%	100%

¹⁰ Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

- 5.18. As can be seen in Table 7; the town centre's comparison goods offer is line with national averages which highlights the scale and attraction of the centre. Leisure service representation is notably higher than national averages with this principally being down to higher numbers of restaurants and bars when compared with national averages highlighting the strong leisure offer of the centre. A vacancy rate of 16% of units is higher than national averages.

Table 8 – Reading regional centre floorspace¹¹

GOAD Category Use	Floorspace (m ²)	Floorspace %	National Average (2023)
Comparison Retail	77,741	39.0%	30.1%
Convenience Retail	8,919	4.5%	15.5%
Retail Service	7,887	4.0%	7.2%
Leisure Service	57,451	28.8%	26.3%
Financial & Business Services	10,870	5.4%	6.6%
Vacant	36,706	18.4%	13.8%
Total¹²	199,574	100%	100%

- 5.19. Table 8 provides floorspace data for Reading town centre which, as with the unit count data, highlights the significant comparison goods offer within the town centre and how this significantly exceeds national averages. This is unsurprising given the availability and amount of larger floorplate retail units within the centre. The level of vacant floorspace at 18.4% is significantly above the national average (13.8%) suggesting that a proportion of the vacancies in the centre are from larger units. However, this figure will have been significantly impacted by vacant ground floor of the former Debenhams unit at The Oracle Shopping Centre which is understood to be over 6,000sqm of vacant floorspace.
- 5.20. In terms of other relevant health check indicators, the centre has a strong mix of both national and independent retailers, with national operators principally being focused along Broad Street and within the shopping centres including Broad Street Mall and The Oracle with more independent retailers focused within Harris Arcade and along those streets leading off Broad Street. The centre also benefits from having a mixed offer including a strong evening offer with a good restaurant and leisure offer including concentrations of such uses around The Village (formerly Kings Walk shopping centre) and The Oracle.
- 5.21. Although specific footfall data/counts is not publicly available for the regional centre, the focus for footfall within the centre is undoubtedly the two main shopping centres and Broad Street given the variety and level of retail and leisure offer of these areas. Based on Centre for Cities data¹³ footfall within the centre has recovered and is now higher than that achieved before the Covid-19 pandemic for weekends although weekday footfall remains below pre-pandemic data, no doubt down to changing work patterns.

¹¹ Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

¹² Excludes Morrisons Petrol Filling Station as this falls outside those categories reported by Experian GOAD.

¹³ <https://www.centreforcities.org/data/high-streets-recovery-tracker/>

- 5.22. The environmental quality of the regional centre is generally good and has benefitted from investment over the years including the opening of The Oracle Shopping centre as well as public realm improvements.
- 5.23. In terms of the centre's gym offer, this is spread throughout the centre with the main provision being The Gym group facility at 3 St Mary's Butts and Buzz Gym on Kings Road to the eastern edge of the town centre. These are complimented by smaller facilities with class-based fitness facilities including specialist martial arts centres and fitness classes. Just within the defined Central Core policy area is the former Anytime Fitness gym at Chatham Place however this closed in late 2022 with the franchise owner entering administration.
- 5.24. Overall it is considered that Reading regional centre remains a vital and viable centre that provides a significant retail, leisure and service offer for local residents and the surrounding area. Although vacancy rates are above national averages, this is likely to be partly down to the sheer amount of retail floorspace provided for in the town centres and the decline in demand for such uses over the years which has been seen at a national level. This highlights a need for the centre to adapt to these changes.

Whitley district centre

- 5.25. Whitley district centre is located around 1 mile (travel distance) from the application site. This is a relatively large centre covering an area of around 7.4ha however the number of actual units/uses is relatively limited at just 23 with the centre largely dominated by car parking associated with the larger units including Morrisons, Aldi and the bingo hall. The centre is effectively split by Basingstoke Road with units to the east being more traditional small scale terraced commercial units, and the units to the west being larger floorplate units with extensive surface car parking serving each use.
- 5.26. In terms of the current make-up of uses, these are summarised in Table 9 which is calculated from desk-based research in the absence of any data in the Retail Study or through Annual Monitoring Reports.

Table 9 – Whitley District Centre Uses

GOAD Category Use	Unit No.	Unit %	National Average (2023)
Comparison Retail	4	18.2%	26.9%
Convenience Retail	3	13.6%	9.3%
Retail Service	5	22.7%	15.8%
Leisure Service	8	36.4%	25.4%
Financial & Business Services	1	4.5%	8.7%
Vacant	1	4.5%	13.8%
Total¹⁴	22	100%	100%

- 5.27. As can be seen in Table 9, despite its limited number of units the District Centre has a good mix of uses with a strong convenience retail offer in the form of Morrisons, Aldi and a newsagent complimented by service type uses. Whilst the proportion of units differs

¹⁴ Excludes Morrisons Petrol Filling Station as this falls outside those categories reported by Experian GOAD.

significantly from national averages for most uses, this is unsurprising given the limited number of units within the centre.

- 5.28. As can be seen in Table 9, only 1 small vacant unit was identified within the centre representing a very low vacancy rate of just 4.5%, significantly lower than the national average of 13.8%.
- 5.29. In terms of the centre's gym offer, the only such provision is the well-established Pure Gym located opposite the Aldi store. Whilst the occupation of this unit as a gym use will add to the centre vitality and viability, it clearly does not anchor the whole centre with this likely being the role of the Aldi and Morrisons stores which will attract a significantly greater number of visitors to the centre. Whilst the Gym provides an active use outside typical retail hours within the centre, it is not the only use that serves this function with the adjacent public house/restaurant and Bingo hall providing a similar function.
- 5.30. Overall it is clear that Whitley district centre is a vital and viable centre, something that is highlighted by the limited vacancy level and mix of national and independent operators currently occupying units within centre.

Oxford Road West district centre

- 5.31. Oxford Road West district centre is located around 1.3 miles (travel distance) from the application site although much of the centre falls well beyond that distance given the size and linear layout of the centre. The centre is located to the west of Reading town centre and stretches along Oxford Road between Little John's Lane and George Street and principally covers those units fronting onto Oxford Road.
- 5.32. There is no existing gym offer within the centre and whilst there is a small yoga studio and martial arts centre; these provide a significantly different offer to the proposed gym use. Given this lack of comparable provision it is clear that the proposed gym use will not divert any trade from the centre and therefore will not affect its ongoing vitality and viability. As such, there is no requirement to consider its current health or viability any further other than to note that the centre provides a varied and strong mix of uses anchored to the western end by a large Tesco store, and Lidl store centrally located.

Whitley Street local centre

- 5.33. Whitley Street local centre is a predominantly linear centre located around 1.1 miles (travel distance) from the application site. The centre is principally made up of small commercial units fronting onto Whitley Street.
- 5.34. As with Oxford Road West district centre, there is no gym provision or other comparable provision within the centre boundary and as such it is clear that the proposed gym use will not divert any trade from the centre meaning it will have no impact on the centre's future vitality and viability. As such, there is no requirement to consider its current vitality and viability further for the purposes of this impact assessment.

Wensley Road local centre

- 5.35. Wensley Road local centre is a very small centre located around 0.7 miles (travel distance) from the application site. The local centre includes a small parade of ground floor commercial units at its eastern end and then extending westwards to include a number of

residential buildings and the Coley Park Baptist Church and doctors surgery. With just 4 commercial/retail units in the centre it is unsurprising that there is no gym offer or comparable provision within the centre.

- 5.36. Given the lack of gym provision in the centre it is clear that the proposed gym use will not divert any trade from the centre meaning it will have no impact on the centre's future vitality and viability. As such, there is no requirement to consider its current vitality and viability further for the purposes of this impact assessment.

Basingstoke Road north local centre

- 5.37. Basingstoke Road north local centre is located around 1.3 miles (travel distance) from the application site and is made up of small ground floor commercial units located on the eastern side of Basingstoke Road. As with the other small local centres there is no gym offer or comparison provision within the local centre boundary.
- 5.38. Given the lack of gym provision in the centre it is clear that the proposed gym use will not divert any trade from the centre meaning it will have no impact on the centre's future vitality and viability. As such, there is no requirement to consider its current vitality and viability further for the purposes of this impact assessment.

Capacity for additional gym facilities

- 5.39. Whilst not a requirement for any impact assessment, it is useful to consider the potential capacity or need for additional gym facilities in the local area as this helps to provide an understanding of the potential impact on incumbent facilities.
- 5.40. Dealing first with population growth, the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment provides population estimates and projections over its study period through its technical appendices. Table 10 sets out the level of population growth allowed for in the retail study between the base year (2016) and 2026 for Zones 1 and 2 which cover the Reading urban area.

Table 10 – Reading Population Growth 2016–2026¹⁵

Zone	2016	2021	2026	Pop. Growth 2016–2026
1	123,046	127,208	130,988	7,942
2	105,914	108,352	110,769	4,855
Total	228,960	235,560	241,757	12,797

- 5.41. As can be seen in Table 10, just within the Reading Urban area zones the Retail Study envisaged significant population growth of almost 13,000 residents which could support the operation of new and existing gym facilities.
- 5.42. However, it is important to note that not all of these residents will want or be able to join a gym. As such, an allowance is made for varying participation rates in gym usage within this population increase. The following Table 11 allows for those participation rates for gyms identified through the responses to the household survey (Q25) carried out in support of

¹⁵ Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment 2016 – Table 1 Appendix 1.

the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment and as set out at Volume 3 of the Study.

Table 11 – Potential gym participation rates of growth in population

Zone	Pop. Growth 2016–2026	Participation Rates	Pop. Growth 2016–26 potential gym users
1	7,942	33.9%	2,692
2	4,855	28.5%	1,384
Total	12,797	–	4,076

5.43. As can be seen in Table 11; allowing for these participation rates, there is the potential additional population who would use a gym of 4,076 based on the population projections set out in the Retail Study.

5.44. To put this into context it is necessary to first consider average membership numbers for budget gyms similar to application proposals. Unfortunately there is relatively limited data on average membership numbers for gyms however the two largest operators in the country do provide both total membership numbers and number of gyms through their annual reports from which we can derive average membership numbers per Gym across their estate. Table 12 summarises this information.

Table 12 – Average membership numbers in budget gyms¹⁶

Operator	Gyms	Total Members	Average members per Gym
The Gym Group	7,942	718,000	3,554
Pure Gym	4,855	1,089,000	3,974
Average	12,797		3,764

5.45. As seen in Table 12 the average memberships for the two largest budget gym operators is around 3,750 members per gym facility. Comparing this with the population growth clearly highlights that solely through population growth there is a need for an additional gym provision in the local area before even allowing for population growth in the surrounding rural area, large areas of which look to destinations in Reading to meet their leisure needs.

5.46. Whilst it is acknowledged that there has been a new gym opening since 2016 in the form of Pure Gym at Sainsbury's in Calcot, there has also been a notable closure in the form of the Anytime Fitness at Chatham Place. As such, it is clear that there is a demonstrable capacity for additional gym provision which needs to be considered and balanced against any consideration of impact.

Trade diversion

5.47. Notwithstanding the identified capacity to support additional gym provision in the town, the following consider the potential impact of the proposed gym use at Reading Link Retail Park on existing defined town centres.

¹⁶ Data taken from Annual reports 2021 (covering to end December 2021)

- 5.48. Existing visitation patterns are already set out in the earlier subsection however it is a worthwhile exercise to consider how this translates to membership numbers using the population participation rates set out at Appendix 1 and Volume 3 of the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment, including allowing for all zones within the Study which use gym facilities in Reading. The detailed table setting this out is provided as Appendix 5 and is summarised in the following Table 13. This provides assumed membership numbers for gyms within broad locations (as identified in the Retail & Leisure Study) within Reading given that these are the gyms from which members are likely to be diverted from to the proposed Gym.

Table 13 – Reading gym membership numbers based on Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment

Gym Destination	Membership numbers
Reading	
Lower Earley	19,587
Reading town centre	44,997
Woodley	5,285
Caversham	2,914
Tilehurst	3,364
Reading sub-total	76,147
Other ¹⁷	7,678

- 5.49. Table 13 does not provide membership by individual gyms however it does highlight broad locations from which can be used to understand the existing gyms that this relates to. Whilst these figures do need to be treated with a degree of caution given relatively small sample size, they do serve to highlight the significant popularity of gyms within the town centre.
- 5.50. In terms of the town centre it is noted that at the time of the household survey there were only 3 main gyms operating in the centre, one of which has since closed (Anytime Fitness). It may be that 4 gyms were recorded within this dataset assuming that the Pure Gym at Caversham Road was included in the town centre list despite its location outside the defined centre boundary. Whilst there are some much smaller scale facilities which may attract some of these members, almost 45,000 members suggests at the very least that the existing gyms attract a significant number of members and are likely to be achieving well in excess of average number of members for such gyms identified in Table 12 earlier. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that these existing gyms within the town centre boundary are performing well and will be resilient to increased competition.
- 5.51. In terms of the other nearby 'in-centre' gym provision; the Pure Gym at Whitley District Centre, this isn't obviously identified in the household survey in the absence of Whitley being a named area. However, it is likely that this has been captured within the area referred to as Lower Earley as the closest named area to Whitley. It is expected that this also captures the large gym provision at South Reading Leisure Centre, Loddon Valley Leisure Centre and Nuffield Health at South Oak Way. Assuming this is the case, the circa 20,000

¹⁷ Other is as listed in the Retail & Leisure Study household survey and is included given this is likely to include some Reading based gyms noting the significant market share attracted to this 'other' category.

identified members would be split across these facilities and if done so on a proportionate basis would give the Pure Gym at Whitley district centre above average membership numbers when compared with its company benchmark set out in Table 12. Again, this suggests that the unit would be resilient to increased competition.

- 5.52. In terms of where members to the proposed Gym are likely to be diverted from, it is important to note that there are multiple reasons why customers choose to visit certain gyms which includes; the location of the facility and its convenience to a members home or place of work, preference for a specific operator, the proposed offer of the Gym and its facilities/classes and pricing.
- 5.53. Some of the proposed Gym's customers will be new gym members not currently members elsewhere having been attracted by the specific offer or location of the proposed Gym. Others will no doubt choose to switch from their current Gym. Noting the availability and popularity of existing gyms in the local area it is expected that the diversion of members will be relatively evenly dispersed across those nearby existing gyms identified at Table 5 Whilst more members may be diverted from some of the closer facilities, given the number of existing facilities there will not be a single gym from which a significant number of members are expected to be diverted from.
- 5.54. In terms of the identified nearby in-centre provision a limited number of members are expected to be diverted from the existing gyms in Reading town centre and the Pure Gym at Whitley district centre relative to their assumed current membership numbers. At the same time, any diversion of members from existing facilities has to be weighed against the capacity/demand created for gym provision through the assumed population growth, some of which will be attracted to the proposed development and existing gym facilities in Reading helping to offset some of this trade diversion.

Overview of impact on vitality and viability of town centres

- 5.55. The following sub-section considers the direct impact of the proposed development on defined town centres. As already highlighted, the majority of the nearby defined centres do not have any gym provision and therefore the introduction of a new gym will clearly have no impact on these centres future vitality and viability. Instead the focus must be on those defined centres with gym provision from which some trade may be diverted from.
- 5.56. Dealing first with Whitley district centre, as highlighted there may be some trade diverted from the existing Pure Gym within the district centre. However, this is expected to be a limited number relative to the membership numbers at the existing Pure Gym noting the dispersed trade diversion patterns and strength of membership numbers as suggested by the household survey prepared for the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment. As such, the impact on the Pure Gym will be very limited and will not amount to a significant adverse impact on the individual unit.
- 5.57. However, as case law has demonstrated, the impact test requires consideration of the overall impact on the vitality and viability of a centre rather than a particular sector or unit. In the case of Whitley district centre, whilst the Pure Gym contributes to the vitality of the centre, it is clearly not the main attractor or contributor to the success of the centre with this instead being provided by the anchor convenience stores of Aldi and Morrisons. As such, it is clear that the proposed Gym will not result in a significant adverse impact on Whitley district centre.

- 5.58. The only other nearby centre with gym provision is Reading regional centre. As highlighted previously, a limited amount of trade/members are expected to be diverted from the existing larger gym facilities within the town centre compared with their current membership numbers and popularity based on the data presented in the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment. Given their popularity and the dispersed nature of the trade diversion associated with the proposed Gym it is clear that the impact on these existing facilities will be very limited and will clearly not amount to a significant adverse impact.
- 5.59. However, as already highlighted the relevant impact test is focused upon the impact on the centre as a whole, rather than a particular sector. In this case, the gym offer of the centre forms a very small part of the town centres overall offer and attractiveness, with the focus instead being on other leisure and retail uses. In addition to this, the existing gym provision is dispersed across the centre meaning that it does not particularly support or anchor any part of the centre. As such, whilst the level of vacancies is high within the town centre, it is clear that the proposed gym use will not result in a significant adverse impact on the ongoing vitality and viability of the centre.

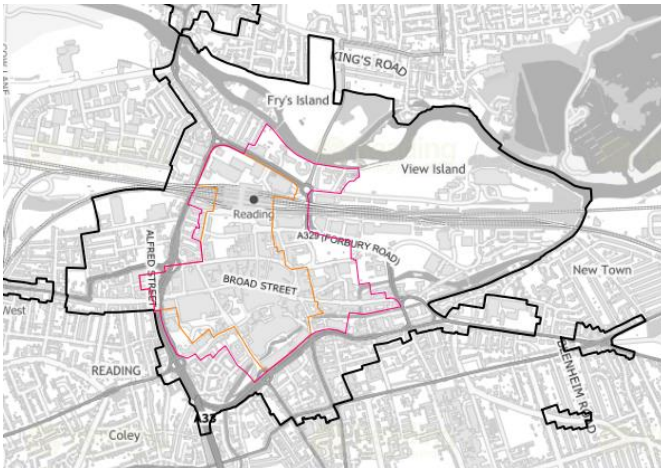
6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This assessment has considered the impact of the proposed gym in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy RL5 and the guidance contained in the PPG.
- 6.2. The sequential test has assessed potential alternative sites suitable for Class E Gymnasium which fit the following criteria:
- Within the defined search areas
 - Between 1,067sqm and 2,490sqm or 0.09ha and 0.22ha
 - Sufficient dedicated parking available 24 hours a day
- 6.3. The sites identified were sourced from a variety of means, including letters to commercial agents in the Reading Area and a search of web-based platforms. Overall, it is concluded that there are no alternative sites in sequentially preferable locations which are suitable, available and capable of viable occupation. As a result, the proposed erection of a gym at Reading Link Retail Park satisfies the sequential test outlined in Policy RL5.
- 6.4. A robust impact assessment highlighting the level and popularity of existing provision in the local area and the significant additional demand for gym facilities in Reading through the level of population growth set out in the Western Berkshire Retail & Commercial Leisure Assessment. Any impact on defined centres will be very limited and only upon existing larger gym facilities which are considered resilient to increased competition and do not form a significant part of existing centres overall vitality and viability. This assessments have therefore clearly demonstrated that the impact of the proposed gym on existing town centres will clearly not amount to a significant adverse impact in accordance with Local Plan Policy RL5 and NPPF Paragraphs 90/91.

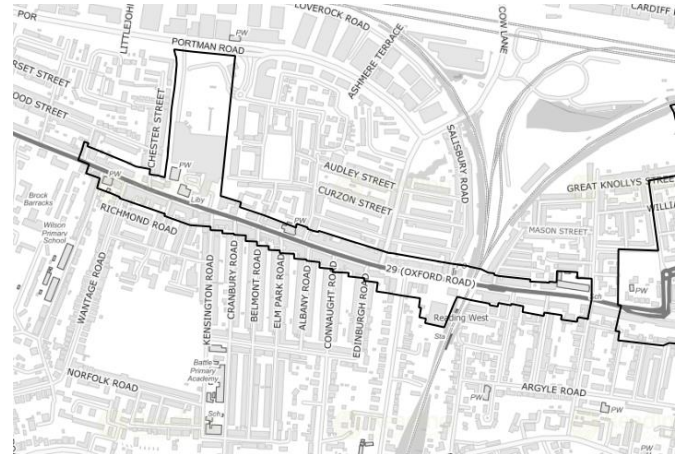


Appendix 1: Search Areas

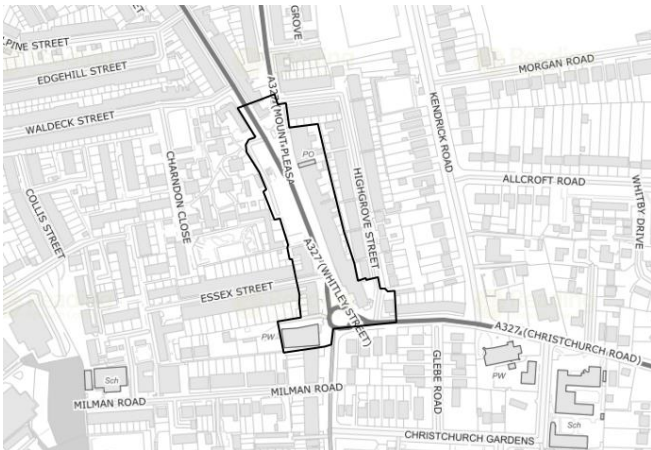
Extracts from Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policy Map:



Reading Centre



Oxford Road West Local Centre



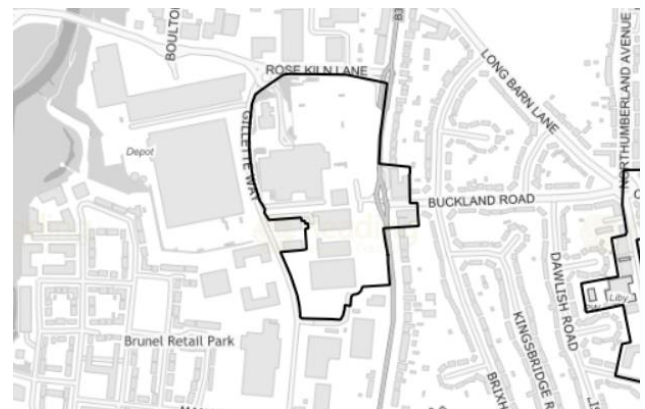
Whitley Street Local Centre



Wensley Road Local Centre



Basingstoke Road North Local Centre



Whitley District Centre

Suite 4, Pioneer House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9NL
T 01223 202100 E Cambridge@pegasusgroup.co.uk
Offices throughout the UK.

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Appendix 2: Letter to Haslams

P18-1172
24 February 2023



Haslams
County House
17 Friar Street
READING
RG1 1DB

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Potential alternative Class E sites which are on the market, either in or close to Reading Town Centre or designated local centres.

We are instructed by Sobron Estates in connection with a forthcoming planning application for the erection of a 1,780sqm Class E unit at Reading Link Retail Park. In support of this application, we are in the process of undertaking a Sequential Test.

We are enquiring as to whether local agents are aware of potential alternative sites / premises that are on the market.

Our area of search includes to the following:

- Reading Town Centre
- Whitley Street Local Centre
- Wensley Road Local Centre
- Basingstoke Road North Local Centre
- Oxford Road West District Centre

Given the nature of the use, and requirement for car parking it would be necessary for the site should be easily accessible to a major A or B road. The site would need to accommodate a unit of between 1,067sqm and 2,490sqm, or a vacant plot between 0.09ha and 0.22ha plus adequate parking spaces.

If you are aware of any available sites that would satisfy the above criteria, it would be helpful to receive details of them. Alternatively, if you are not aware of any suitable sites, we would appreciate confirmation of this.

If you have any queries or would like to know more, please do not hesitate to contact us at the details below.

Yours Sincerely,

Pegasus Group

Luke Willis

Planner

luke.willis@pegasusgroup.co.uk

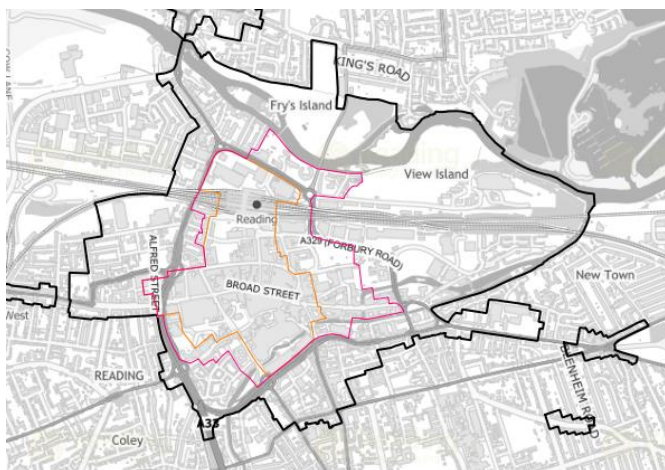
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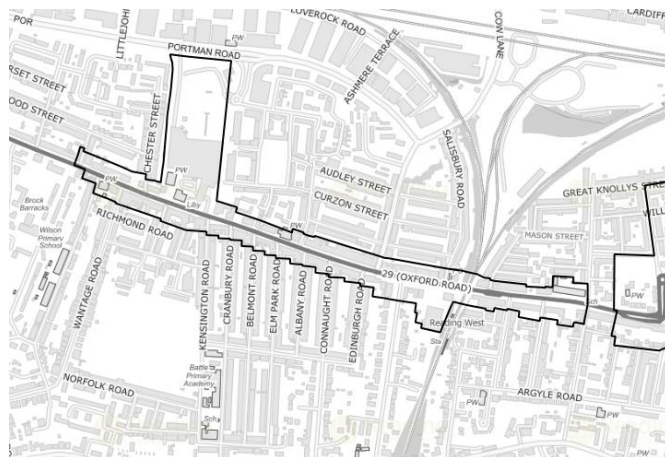
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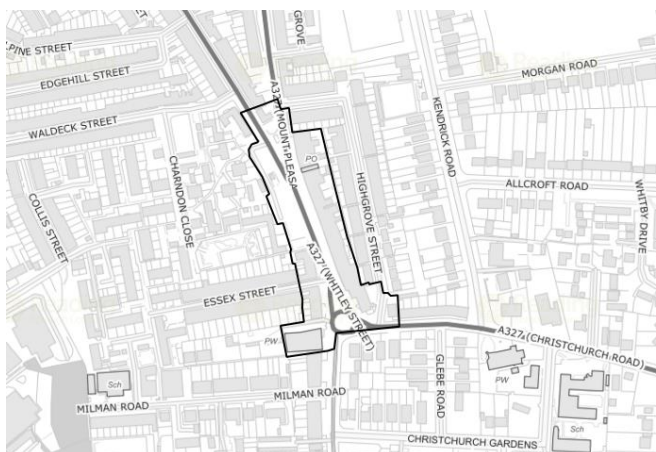
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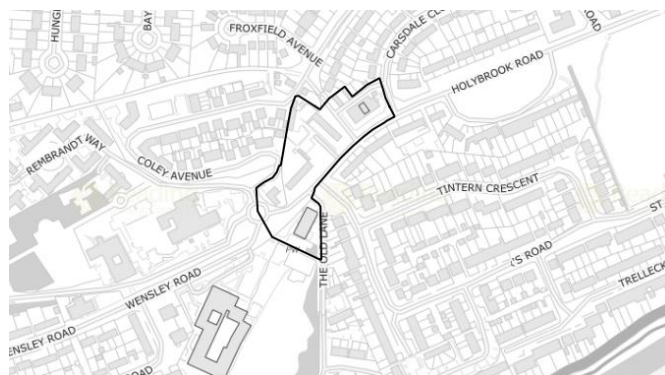
Reading Centre



Oxford Road West Local Centre



Whitley Street Local Centre



Wensley Road Local Centre



Basingstoke Road North Local Centre



Appendix 3: Letter to Hicks Baker

P18-1172
24 February 2023



HICKS BAKER
John Adams House
29 Castle Street
Reading
RG1 7SB

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Potential alternative Class E sites which are on the market, either in or close to Reading Town Centre or designated local centres.

We are instructed by Sobron Estates in connection with a forthcoming planning application for the erection of a 1,780sqm Class E unit at Reading Link Retail Park. In support of this application, we are in the process of undertaking a Sequential Test.

We are enquiring as to whether local agents are aware of potential alternative sites / premises that are on the market.

Our area of search includes to the following (shown indicatively on the attached map extracts):

- Reading Town Centre
- Whitley Street Local Centre
- Wensley Road Local Centre
- Basingstoke Road North Local Centre
- Oxford Road West District Centre

Given the nature of the use, and requirement for car parking it would be necessary for the site should be easily accessible to a major A or B road. The site would need to accommodate a unit of between 1,067sqm and 2,490sqm, or a vacant plot between 0.09ha and 0.22ha plus adequate parking spaces.

If you are aware of any available sites that would satisfy the above criteria, it would be helpful to receive details of them. Alternatively, if you are not aware of any suitable sites, we would appreciate confirmation of this.

If you have any queries or would like to know more, please do not hesitate to contact us at the details below.

Yours Sincerely,

Pegasus Group

Luke Willis

Planner

luke.willis@pegasusgroup.co.uk

Suite 4, Pioneer House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9NL
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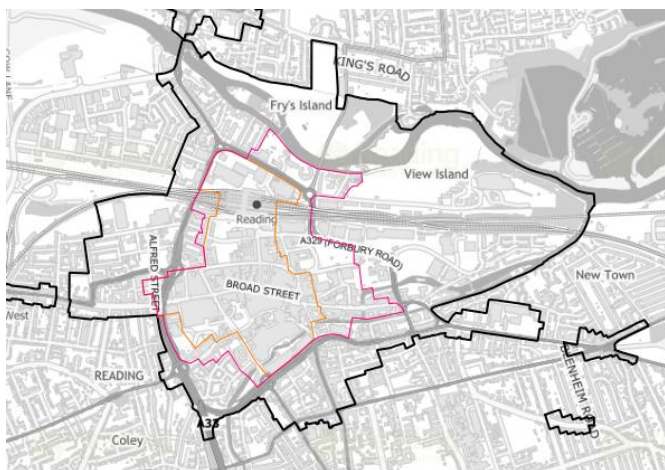
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Registered Office: Pegasus House, Querns Business Centre, Whitworth Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1RT

Expertly Done.

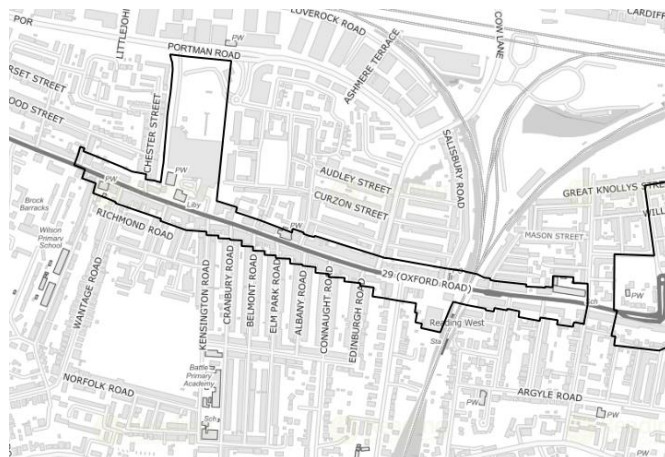
DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

  
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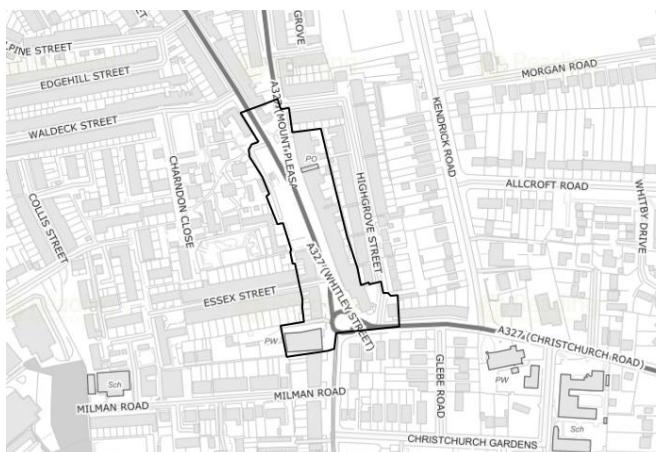
Extracts from **Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policy Map:**



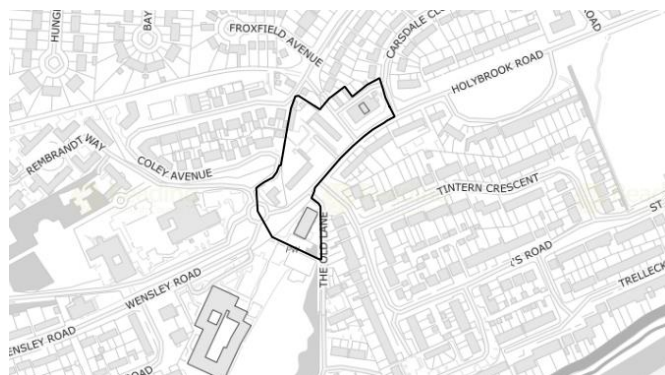
Reading Centre



Oxford Road West Local Centre



Whitley Street Local Centre



Wensley Road Local Centre



Basingstoke Road North Local Centre



Appendix 4: Letter to AH Lansley

P18-1172
24 February 2023



AH Lansley
111 Oxford Rd,
Reading
RG1 7UH

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Potential alternative Class E sites which are on the market, either in or close to Reading Town Centre or designated local centres.

We are instructed by Sobron Estates in connection with a forthcoming planning application for the erection of a 1,780sqm Class E unit at Reading Link Retail Park. In support of this application, we are in the process of undertaking a Sequential Test.

We are enquiring as to whether local agents are aware of potential alternative sites / premises that are on the market.

Our area of search includes to the following (shown indicatively on the attached map extracts):

- Reading Town Centre
- Whitley Street Local Centre
- Wensley Road Local Centre
- Basingstoke Road North Local Centre
- Oxford Road West District Centre

Given the nature of the use, and requirement for car parking it would be necessary for the site should be easily accessible to a major A or B road. The site would need to accommodate a unit of between 1,067sqm and 2,490sqm, or a vacant plot between 0.09ha and 0.22ha plus adequate parking spaces.

If you are aware of any available sites that would satisfy the above criteria, it would be helpful to receive details of them. Alternatively, if you are not aware of any suitable sites, we would appreciate confirmation of this.

If you have any queries or would like to know more, please do not hesitate to contact us at the details below.

Yours Sincerely,

Pegasus Group

Luke Willis
Planner
luke.willis@pegasusgroup.co.uk

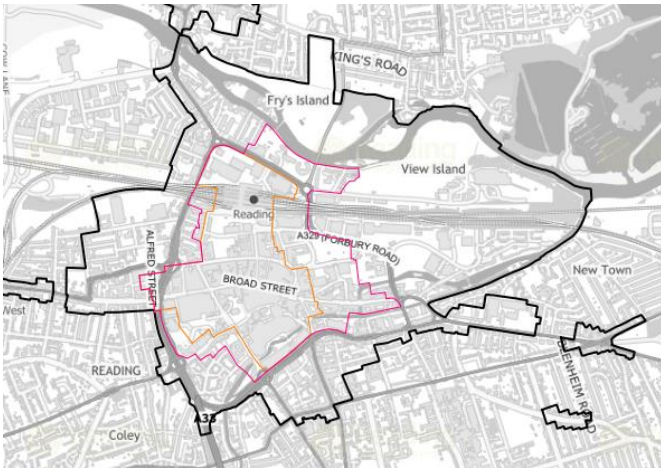
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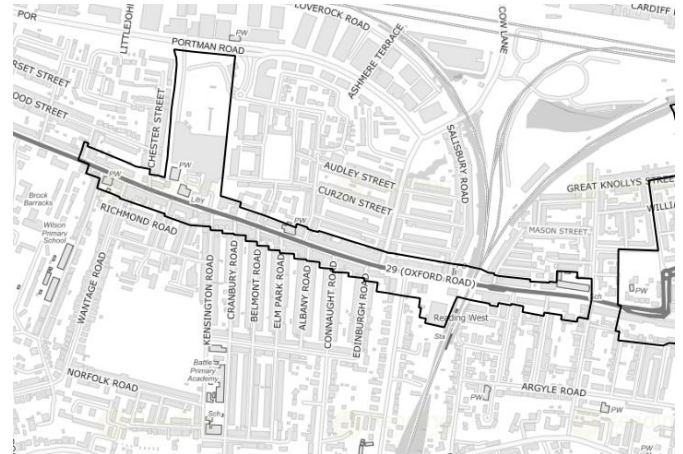
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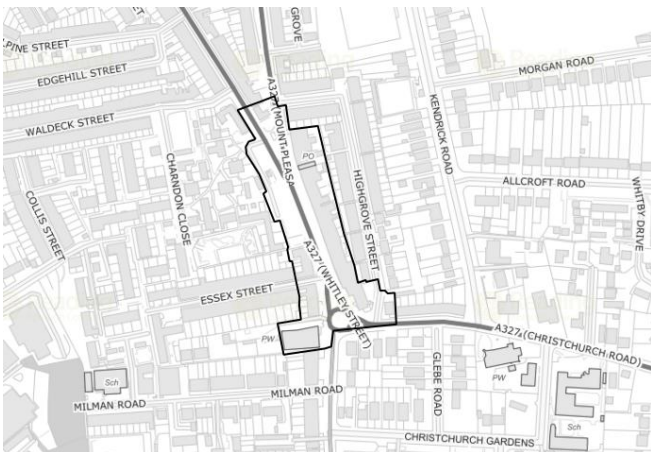
Extracts from Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policy Map:



Reading Centre



Oxford Road West Local Centre



Whitley Street Local Centre



Wensley Road Local Centre



Basingstoke Road North Local Centre



Appendix 5: Gym Market Share

Table 1 – Participation Rates

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 10	Zone 12	Zone 15	Zone 21
Participation Rates	33.9%	28.5%	33.4%	37.3%	35.2%	44.7%	20.0%	25.5%
Population @ 2026	130,988	110,769	30,195	46,066	99,309	72,914	55,144	23,069
Participating Population	44,405	31,569	10,085	17,183	34,957	32,593	11,029	5,883

Table 2 – Market Share and Membership Numbers

Destination	Market Share excluding don't know								Membership Numbers								Total
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 10	Zone 12	Zone 15	Zone 21	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 10	Zone 12	Zone 15	Zone 21	
Bracknell out of centre	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0	0	193	0	0	0	0	297	490
Didcot	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	764	764
Henley on Thames	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	858	0	0	0	0	0	0	408	1,266
Lower Earley	43.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	19,289	0	0	0	0	0	298	0	19,587
Maidenhead	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1,310	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,310
Newbury town centre	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	193	0	0	0	0	0	193
Newbury out of centre	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	185	185
Reading town centre	13.7%	78.3%	58.8%	5.1%	16.2%	1.4%	3.1%	15.1%	6,098	24,733	5,933	874	5,663	464	342	890	44,997
Thatcham	0.0%	3.4%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	1,064	1,030	0	0	0	0	0	2,094
Wallingford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	223	223
Winnersh	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2,981	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,981
Woking	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	257	0	0	0	0	0	257
Wokingham town centre	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1,310	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,310
Wokingham out of centre	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4,201	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,201
Woodley	11.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5,285	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,285
Other	5.0%	6.8%	16.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	2,213	2,161	1,620	0	0	0	0	1,684	7,678
Caversham	1.9%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	858	1,870	0	0	0	0	0	185	2,914
Goring on Thames	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	482	482
Tilehurst	0.0%	5.5%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	0	1,741	858	0	0	0	0	764	3,364

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Cambridge

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