



25 JAN 2022

Council Calls on Developers to Build the Homes Which Reading Needs

- *Reading surpasses its target for new homes in the borough but Council Leader calls on developers to meet the demand for family homes in the town*
- *43% of new homes built in Reading over the last three years were one bedroom*
- *Reading needs more than 50% of its new homes to be family-sized homes of three or more bedrooms.*

READING Borough Council is calling on developers to increase the number of new family homes being built in Reading to meet local demand.

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authority areas - show a total of 2,080 new homes have been built in Reading over the last three years (2018 -2021). This was against a target of 1,598 new homes. (see [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-deliver](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2021-measurement)

[test-2021-measurement](#)). This differs from the Council's own higher targets as set out in its Local Plan.

But the Council remains concerned about the number of new homes being built by developers which are small one bedroom flats and therefore unsuitable for families. The Council's own figures show that 43% of new homes over the last three years have been one bedroom. Meanwhile, Reading needs more than 50% of its new homes to be family-sized homes of three or more bedrooms. This demand is not being met by developers.

Whilst the Council is making good progress on building its own new local authority housing, Reading is also falling short of its needs for affordable housing of more than 400 homes per year. The Council is additionally calling on developers to do more to help to meet these needs.



Jason Brock, Reading Borough Council Leader, said:

"Whilst we of course welcome the fact that Reading continues to surpass its housing targets, if you scratch below the surface you very quickly find the new homes being built are not necessarily the homes that Reading most needs.

"There will always be demand for small one-bedroom flats in a major employment hub like Reading, but the biggest demand we have is for family homes. Some people will fixate on traditional houses in that description but it also includes larger flats, which are completely suitable for family living and a great option for families living in flats."

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house building programme – the largest in a generation – is focused on provision of family homes, but we do not have the ability to fully compensate for the market failure to deliver what is needed.

“The Council calls on developers to do the right thing for Reading by building the homes the town needs.”

The Housing Delivery Test measurement is an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of relevant plan-making authorities. Following the national lockdown in March 2020, the Government reflected this disruption to local authority planning services and the construction sector by reducing the ‘homes required’ in the year 2019 to 2020 by a month and in the year 2020- 2021 year by four months.

While figures published in the Government’s Housing Delivery Test have shown that 51 of the 320 local planning authorities tracked by the Government failed to deliver at least 75% of the homes needed in their area over the past three years, Reading delivered 130% of its target.

Where Councils fail to build at least 75% their target for new homes, they become subject to the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. That means proposed developments should be granted planning permission unless their adverse impacts "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh their benefits, and this can mean that an authority's planning policies are considered out of date. The Council’s three-year performance means this does not apply in Reading.



Tony Page, Reading Borough Council’s Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, said:

“For a number of years the trend by developers has been to submit applications for small developments in Reading.”

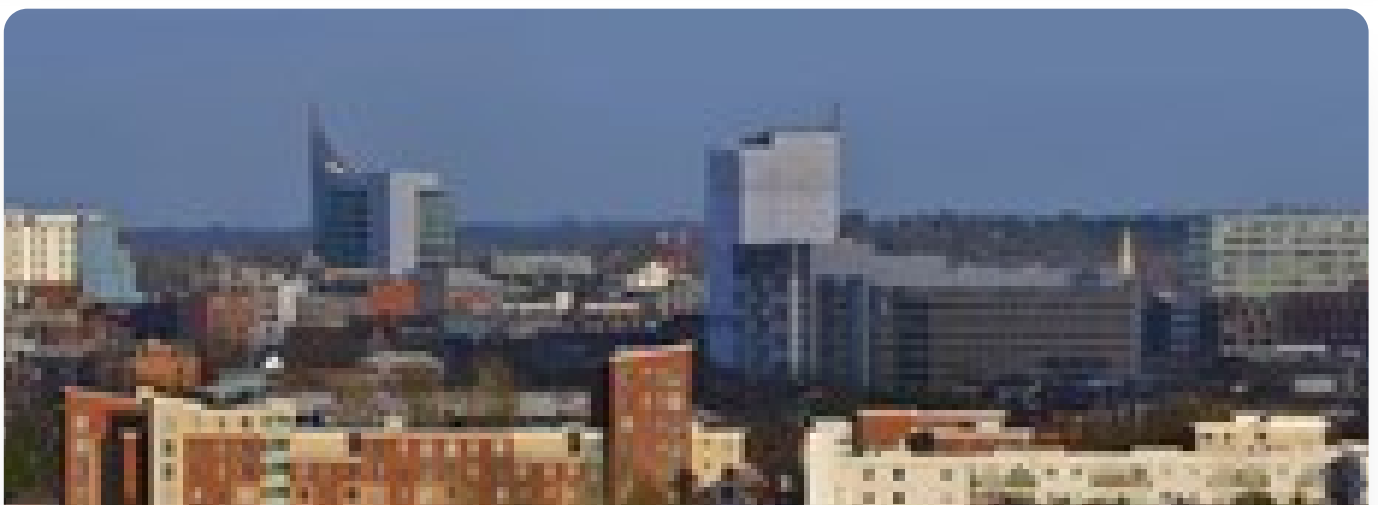
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"The Council, of course, is not in control of the type of applications we receive from developers and under planning laws good planning reasons are required for refusal. We do know however that these developments are extremely profitable for them. I very much hope to see more applications for family homes coming forward in the years to come, which is what Reading desperately requires."

"It also remains essential that local authorities maintain a fundamental level of control over developments in their town. These latest housing figures show we maintain that control to an extent, although we know the widespread use of permitted development rights (allowing changes of use from offices to residential without full planning approvals) in Reading have cost us a lot with the loss of more than 500 affordable homes since 2013, almost £2 million in off-site contributions, around £1.5 million towards local infrastructure, such as education, housing and leisure, and a further loss of over £1 million in planning fees."



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Jason Brock

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