

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS PLAN

The Employment Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD) was adopted in April 2013 to provide further detail and expand on policies within Reading's Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document. Those policies will be replaced by the Reading Borough Local Plan (LP) in November 2019. LP Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure states that:

"Employment development should provide mitigation measures in line with its impacts on the demand for housing (including affordable housing), labour and skills and on the transport network."

The policy gives high priority to employment, skills and training development initiatives, which will be typically secured through an Employment Skills Plan (ESP).

Consistent with the SPD, this ESP sets out proposed measures that are fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed.

Appendix 3 of the SPD provides an employment density guide based on different use classes. As set out elsewhere in the planning submission, it is proposed to subdivide and part change the use of the existing House of Fraser (HOF) department store. The schedule below shows indicative jobs for the existing HOF and proposed scheme, based on the Appendix 3 densities.

	Use Class	Area per FTE (m ²)	Total Floor Area	FTE's
Existing				
Hof/Yo Sushi/Café Nero	A1	19	12,187	641
Proposed				
R22	A1/A3/A4	18 ⁽¹⁾	1,510	84
R25	D2	65 ⁽²⁾	1,719	25
R24	D2	65	2,594	40
R23	A1/A3	18 ⁽¹⁾	210	12
L43	A1	19	1,389	73
U48	A1	19	3,274	172
			Total:	406

⁽¹⁾ A1 High Street used as highest FTE of A Classes.

⁽²⁾ D2 Amusement and Entertainment Centres uses as highest FTE in D Class.

We acknowledge that Appendix 3 is only a guide and that the level of jobs generated is largely dependent on the nature of an operator irrespective of their use class. Our experience at The Oracle, for example, is that Apple has a much higher employment density than Goldsmiths Jewellery (both Class A1). What the above does demonstrate, however, is that (during the end user phase) the proposal will not be a significant employment generator. The jobs created by the new mixed leisure and retail offer will be broadly like-for-like to those existing within HOF.

As you will be aware, The Oracle is already a significant employer in Reading. Andy Briggs, the General Manager of The Oracle is on the Board of Directors of the Reading UK Community Interest Company (Reading UK CIC). The Reading UK CIC is a private sector led partnership with the public sector, set up (in part) to enhance opportunities for all in Reading.

In liaison with Andy Briggs and the Reading UK CIC, the following measures will be put in place for end-user employment:

- Upon completion of the lease for each unit, Hammerson's Community Manager will engage with the retailer/leisure operator to understand their recruitment needs, current/future vacancies and processes.
- Details of vacancies will be included within the job page of The Oracle Centre website (see www.theoracle.com/jobs) which is an active, well-used platform for recruitment.
- If there is a sufficient level of employment opportunities, The Oracle will host a recruitment fair.

The number of apprenticeships generated and training will be determined by the individual retailer/leisure operator.

An Employment Skills Plan is also sought by the SPD for major commercial applications of 1,000m² or more. Although it is acknowledged that technically the application falls within this category, no new floorspace is proposed and the actual construction phase is limited to the elevation changes and internal reconfiguration of floorplates, escalators, etc. Much of the 'construction phase' will be the individual fit-out of units undertaken by the tenant retailers/leisure operators.

Against that context, the following construction phase measures are proposed:

- Net Positive is Hammerson's sustainability vision to create retail destinations that deliver net positive impacts economically, socially and environmentally. Hammerson has a strong record of working in collaboration with contractors, tenants and key stakeholders to maximise employment opportunities for local people, including within Reading.
- Contractor Procurement Process – The Hammerson supplier survey is an online questionnaire that gathers key information on potential suppliers' approaches to sustainability and ensures they are signed up to the Hammerson Supplier Code of Conduct, which includes important issues such as requirements on bribery, corruption and modern slavery. All contractors tendering will be subject to completing the Hammerson supplier survey and need to receive a sufficient score to be awarded a contract.
- On-Site Construction Employment – Upon contract award, Hammerson's Community Manager will coordinate an initial meeting with the contractor, Department for Work & Pensions and Reading Borough Council. The meeting will identify any future on-site construction employment, training apprentice opportunities during the construction period. In addition, the contractor will be required to provide details of all proposed community engagement activity such as school/college visits, site tours, work experience placements, etc. The contractor and Hammerson will agree a data collection and reporting method for all employment and community engagement activity.