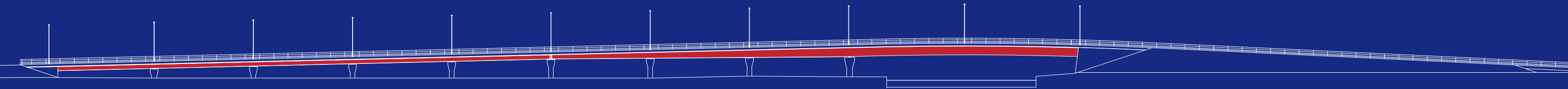


Reading Borough Council, Highways and Transport Department

East Reading Mass Rapid Transit Scheme Design and Access Statement



June 2017



in association with

Doyle

Doyle Design LLP

Project Ref: 132.1MRT

Rev: 03(MD)

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Reading Borough Council, Highways and Transport Department

East Reading Mass Rapid Transit

Design and Access Statement

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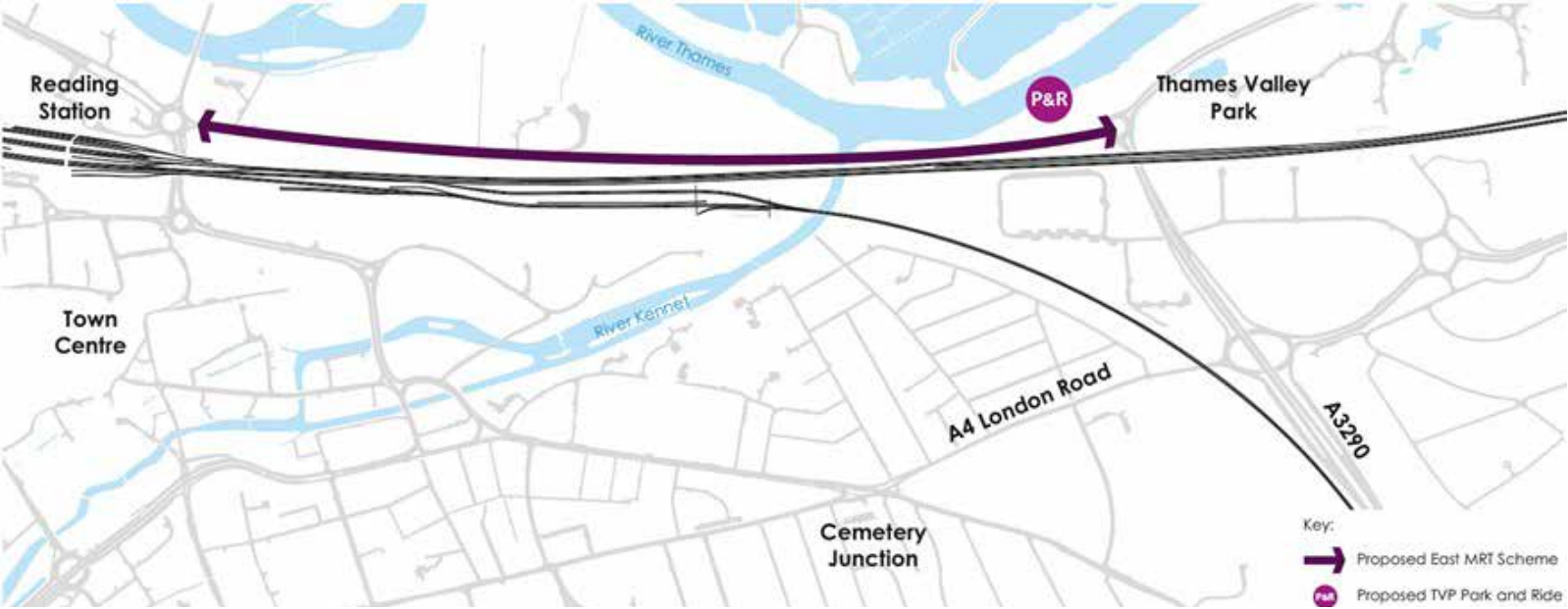


Figure 1. Transport context

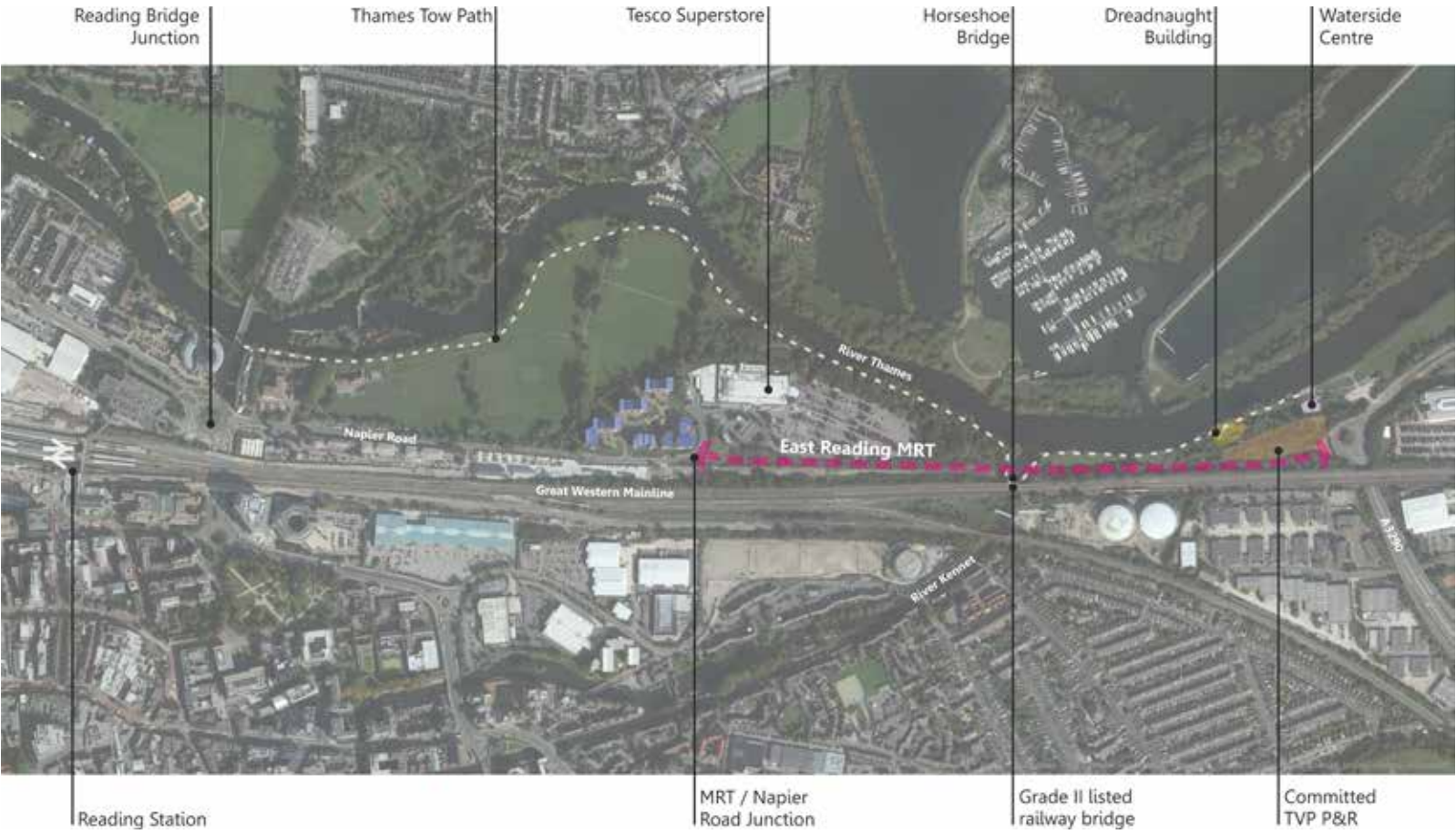


Figure 2. Urban context

1 Executive Summary

Background

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Doyle Town Planning and Urban Design (Doyle) on behalf of Reading Borough Council (RBC).
- 1.2 The DAS supports a full planning application for a proposed new public transport route, footpath and cycle way. The application is submitted on behalf of Reading Borough Council, Highways and Transport Department. Reading Borough Council (RBC), Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) are promoting the scheme.
- 1.3 The Statement has been produced in order that the local planning authority and the wider community may understand the analysis that has led to the development of the proposed new route and bridge.

Proposal

- 1.4 East Reading Mass Rapid Transit scheme is a segregated fast-track public transport, pedestrian and cycle route.
- 1.5 The route of the MRT scheme links the A3290 at Thames Valley Park, beside a proposed new Park & Ride facility, to Napier Road, Reading town centre and the railway station.
- 1.6 The route extends along the southern bank of the River Thames and north of the Great Western Railway Line. The route crosses the mouth of the River Kennet and then travels along Napier Road into to Central Reading.
- 1.7 The new public transport route will travel from new bridge will be located at the mouth of the River Kennet where it joins the Thames, immediately to the north of the main Great Western Railway line bridge across the Kennet.

- 1.8 Permission is sought for:
- "Construction of a segregated fast-track public transport, pedestrian and cycle bridge and viaduct, comprising concrete bridge structure with a river span of 59.5m and a land span of 316m, supported by concrete columns, steel beams and reinforced soil embankment, together with new footpath links and existing footpath alterations, replacement supermarket car parking provision, junction improvements and landscaping"*
- 1.9 The proposed development comprises:
- creation of a new route for public transport only, including cycle path and footway between Napier Road and the A3290 at Thames Valley Park proposed Thames Valley Park and Ride;
 - the erection of a new bridge over the River Kennet;
 - formation of a new T-junction with Napier Road;
 - connection to the proposed Thames Valley Park & Ride;
 - development of new and improved footpath links to Tesco and the towpath; and
 - associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Purpose	Assessment
1.10 The A4 corridor in east Reading linking the town centre and the A3290 is suffering from significant levels of congestion, particularly in the peak periods. This congestion is forecast to increase with the projected level of growth in Reading and Wokingham Borough.	1.18 The proposals have been informed by current national and local planning policy, and by discussions and negotiations with Reading Borough Council (RBC), Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), other key stakeholders including landowners, and the wider community.
1.11 This scheme is a vital element of a wider strategy to develop and to encourage sustainable transport, active travel, in order to and support planned growth.	1.19 The proposals respond to the constraints of the site and surrounding area. The location and alignment of the bridge has been decided after a rigorous option appraisal process that took into account environmental, aesthetic and amenity impacts. That process, and the various background studies, are summarised in this DAS.
1.12 The new route will enhance accessibility and support the continued, sustainable growth of the boroughs of Reading and Wokingham and the wider area.	
1.13 The new route will make it more attractive to travel by bus, bicycle or to walk. Offering more sustainable travel choices will reduce private car trips and thereby ease forecast congestion and air quality on the existing highway network.	1.20 A range of landscaping measures form part of the scheme to complement the bridge and manage, enhance and protect environmental features affected by the scheme. This includes new riverside planting and wetland areas and new tree planting.
1.14 The new route will help to tackle highway network congestion, particularly on the A4 London Road corridor, which acts as a barrier to growth.	Funding
1.15 The route will connect people to jobs in the area and in Reading town centre, and improve access to Reading railway station with its regional and national connections.	1.21 The majority of funding for the scheme has been allocated by central Government from the Local Growth Fund, with local contributions from the private sector funded through planning contributions and local investment.
Policy	1.22 Funding has been allocated for Phase 1 and Phase 2 East MRT by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnerships (TVBLEP) from the Local Growth Fund, for the period 2015/16-2020/21.
1.16 This scheme is a long established element of RBC's strategy to deliver sustainable economic growth and housing for Reading and Wokingham Boroughs. It is included in RBC's Corporate Plan, Core Strategy and Local Transport Plan.	1.23 Funding from the Local Growth Fund is provided specifically for strategic transport projects and cannot be used for any other purpose.
1.17 The scheme is also identified in WBC's Core Strategy, Managing Development Delivery, Local Plan, and Local Transport Plan; and TVB LEP's Strategic Economic Plan.	

Environment

1.24 The Planning Authority has confirmed that the proposed development falls within Schedules 1 or 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. An Environmental Statement is therefore required to accompany this planning application.

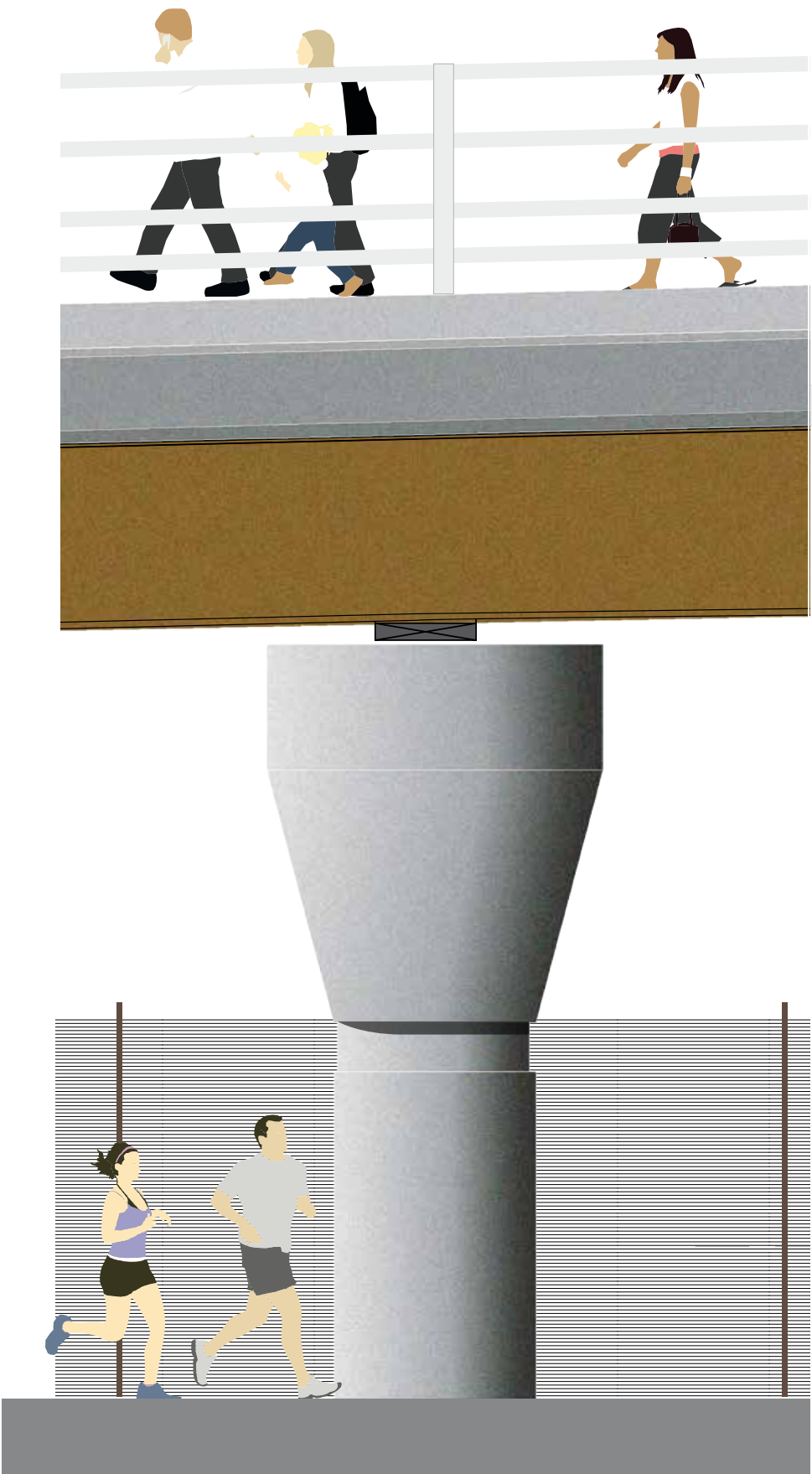


Figure 3. Elevation of the proposed viaduct

2 Introduction and background

Introduction		Structure of this Statement			Guidance		Promoters				
2.1	This Statement has been prepared by Doyle Town Planning and Urban Design in conjunction with Peter Brett Associates (PBA) and Reading Borough Council (RBC). The Statement is in support of a full planning application for a proposed new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Thames at Reading. The application is submitted on behalf of Reading Borough Council, Highways and Transport Department.	2.5	The Design and Access Statement comprises the following sections.	2.14	Chapter 11 considers the history and current arrangement of bridges across the River Kennet in the vicinity of the proposed route and how this has influenced the development of the proposals.	2.22	This Statement addresses the requirements of Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which stipulates that a statement covering design concepts and principles, and access issues, should be submitted with an application for planning permission.	2.26	The project is being promoted by Reading Borough Council, Highways and Transport Department (RBC), working with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) and Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA). The public-sector led project has been allocated funding by TVB LEP from the Local Growth Fund.		
		2.6	Chapter 2 (this chapter) provides a general introduction and summarises the contents of the DAS.	2.15		Chapter 12 summarises the main components of the route from east to west.				2.23	Guidance regarding the preparation of the DAS is provided in the form of Department for Communities and Local Government document entitled ‘Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation’ and the CABE publication entitled ‘Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them.
		2.7	Chapter 3 sets out the transport context and Chapter 4 summarises relevant planning policy on design.	2.16		Chapter 13 through to 17 describes the selected route and its key components including the bridge abutments, supporting columns.					
2.2		The Statement has been produced for the benefit of the local planning authority and the wider community, to better understand the analysis that has led to the development of the proposed new bridge.	2.8	Chapter 5 describes the process of design review undertaken as part of the project development.	2.17	Chapter 18 describes the proposed materials and detailing and the design process leading to their adoption.			2.27	Description of development is as follows.	
2.3	The Statement illustrates the design process that has led to the development of the proposed new route and bridge and then explains the underlying design principles, concepts and details of the proposal in a structured way.		2.9	Chapter 6, ‘Site description’, describes the existing physical characteristics and environmental context for the proposed development	2.18	Chapters 19 look at movement, particularly pedestrian and cycle connections. Whilst Chapter 20 sets out the proposed approach to the design of the public realm.				<i>“Construction of a segregated fast-track public transport, pedestrian and cycle bridge and viaduct, comprising concrete bridge structure with a river span of 59.5m and a land span of 316m, supported by concrete columns, steel beams and reinforced soil embankment, together with new footpath links and existing footpath alterations, replacement supermarket car parking provision, junction improvements and landscaping..”</i>	
		2.10	Chapter 7 summarises the project aims and objectives against which the proposals should be tested.	2.19	Chapter 21 summarises the approach to landscape design that is set out more fully in the sperate Landscape Strategy documents and plans submitted with the planning application and the Environmental Statement.	2.24	The proposed bridge will be funded through allocated funding from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP). Funding has been allocated for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 East MRT from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) through the devolved Local Growth Fund, for the period 2015/15 to 2020/21.				
		2.11	Chapter 8 describes the initial ‘higher level’ appraisal of options that determined the general route alignment and the transport modes that it would accommodate.								
	Scope										
2.4	This Statement provides: - A summary of the application proposals; - A description of the site and the surrounding area; - A description of the proposals including details of use, layout/alignment, scale and appearance. - A description of the design process through the identification and appraisal of options through to the selection of final scheme.	2.12	Chapter 9 sets out the main constraints and potential impacts of the development and describes how the application scheme and the supporting information have sought to address these issues.	2.20	Chapter 22 describes the approach to lighting in this sensitive setting.	2.25	The majority of funding for the scheme has been allocated by central Government from the Local Growth Fund, with local contributions from the private sector funded through planning contributions and local investment. Funding from the Local Growth Fund is provided specifically for strategic transport projects and cannot be used for any other purpose. Private sector contributions will also be sought.	2.28	The proposed development comprises: - creation of a new route for public transport only, including cycle path and footway between Napier Road and the A3290 at Thames Valley Park proposed Thames Valley Park and Ride; - the erection of a new bridge over the River Kennet; - formation of a new T-junction with Napier Road; - connection to the proposed Thames Valley Park & Ride; - development of new and improved footpath links to Tesco and the towpath; and - associated infrastructure and landscaping.		
		2.13	Chapter 10. sets out the design parameters that have guided design development including key dimensions such as the width of the deck, span, the height above the river level, and the dimensions and arrangement of approach ramps.	2.21	Chapter 23 summarises some main points of the construction strategy that is described more fully in the Transport Statement submitted with the application.						



Figure 4. Project sponsors

Application Documents:

Consultation Statement (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);

Design and Access Statement (prepared by Doyle Town Planning and Urban Design);

Environmental Statement: Volume 1 Main Report, comprising the following assessment chapters:

- Socio-economics (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Transport & Access (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Air Quality (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Hydrology and the Water Environment (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Ground Conditions (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Landscape & Visual inc. Lighting (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Ecology (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Archaeology and Heritage (prepared by Orion Heritage);

Environmental Statement: Volume 2 Appendices, including:

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Phase 1 Ground Conditions Assessments (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Phase 2 Ground Conditions Assessments (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Tree Survey (prepared by Treework Environmental Practice);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (prepared by Treework Environmental Practice);
- Lighting Assessment (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (prepared by Orion Heritage);
- Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Landscape and Ecology Strategy (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Planning Statement (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Sustainability Statement (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Topographical Survey (prepared by MK Surveys);
- Transport Statement (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);
- Utilities Statement (prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP);

Application drawings

28791/2009/CIV/002 A – Site Location Plan (1:1500 @ A1);

8791/2009/CIV/001 – Existing Site Layout (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/003 A – Proposed Site Block Plan Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/016 A – Proposed Site Block Plan Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/004 A – General Arrangement Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/005 A – General Arrangement Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/015 A – Proposed Site Context Including Proposed Park and Ride Development Phase 1A (1:1500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/020 – Proposed Site Context Including Proposed Park and Ride Development Phase 1B (1:1500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/006 – Proposed Longitudinal Section and Typical Cross Section;

28791/2009/CIV/007 A – Proposed Carriageway Contours Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/017 A – Proposed Carriageway Contours Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/013 – Proposed Cross Sections (Sheet 1 of 2) (1:250 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/014 – Proposed Cross Sections (Sheet 2 of 2) (1:250 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/008 A – Proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/018 A – Proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/009 A – Proposed Utility Diversions Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/019 – Proposed Utility Diversions Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/011 – Proposed Street Lighting Layout Phase 1A (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2009/CIV/012 – Proposed Street Lighting Layout Phase 1B (1:500 @ A1);

28791/2003/SK110 P03 – Bridge and Viaduct General Arrangement;

- Structural Plan (1:500);
- Structural Elevation Looking South (1:500);

28791/2003/SK121 P02 – Bridge and Viaduct East Approach;

- Elevation Looking South (1:500);
- Detail at Movement Joint Pier 4 (1:25);
- Typical Deck Cross-Section at Piers (1:50);
- Typical Deck Cross-Section (1:50);

28791/2003/SK122 P02 – Bridge and Viaduct West Approach

- Elevation Looking South on Western Approach (1:200);
- Elevation on Western Approach South Wall (1:50);
- Illustrative Section 02-02 Through Western Approach (1:50);
- Section 01-01 (1:50);

28791/2003/SK123 P02 – Bridge and Viaduct Main Span

- Alternative Main Span Elevation (1:200);
- Typical Section Through Weathering Steel Girders (1:50);
- Typical Section Through Weathering Steel Girders at Piers (1:50);
- Indicative Section Through Main Span at Cross-Bracing Locations (1:50)

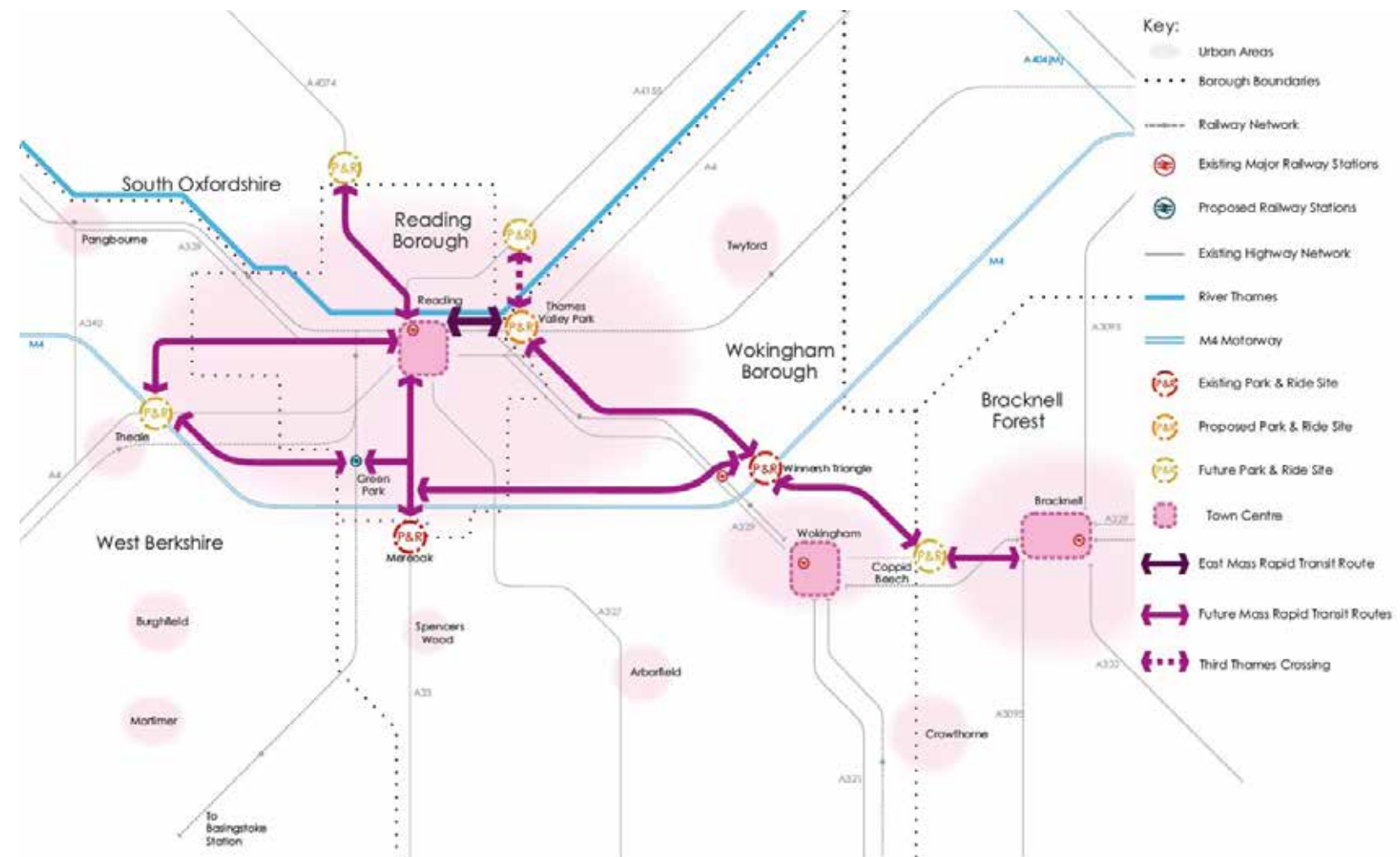


Figure 5. Transport strategy diagram

3 Transport context

Planned future growth

- 3.1 Reading is the fastest growing urban area in the UK. It is also the most congested urban area outside London.
- 3.2 Significant growth is planned in both Reading and Wokingham Boroughs that will increase travel demand into and out of Reading town centre for work and for other journeys.
- 3.3 Most vehicle journeys into and out of Reading town centre are channelled along the four main corridors to the north, south, east and west.
- 3.4 Observations demonstrate that the eastern corridor has reached capacity. This will seriously restrict economic growth.
- 3.5 Future economic growth is therefore highly dependent upon enhanced connectivity, transport capacity upgrades and the development of more sustainable travel patterns.

The London Road Corridor

- 3.6 The A4 London Road is the main strategic route for vehicles travelling to and from Reading Town Centre to the east and the link to M4 junction 10. The corridor supports approximately 75,000 people movements per day between key destinations including Thames Valley Park and Reading town centre.
- 3.7 The road comprises two narrow lanes for traffic travelling towards central Reading and a single narrow lane exiting towards the A3290. The A4/A329 Cemetery Junction is a particular pinch point along the route. The road is heavily constrained and suffers with significant congestion, particularly during the peak periods. The queues can reach 300 – 550 vehicles exiting Reading in the peak periods and between 60 – 200 vehicles entering Reading in the peak periods. Journey times range from 7 to 24 minutes east bound, depending upon the time of day.
- 3.8 For Westbound, the journey times range from 10 to 24 minutes. This shows there are currently significant variations in journey time due to congestion, which will severely limit the potential for future growth on the corridor.

Public transport

- 3.9 Public transport services are well used in east Reading and the commuter shuttle bus services are full in the peak periods.
- 3.10 There is existing bus priority between Watlington Street gyratory and Cemetery Junction, however services suffer delays in the town centre and between Cemetery Junction and the A3290.

Mass rapid transit

- 3.11 The East Reading Mass Rapid Transit Scheme will form part of a longer term MRT network for the Thames Valley and well as being capable of operating as a standalone MRT route.
- 3.12 The scheme will also link to a planned Third Thames Crossing and a Park and Ride facility north of the River Thames.

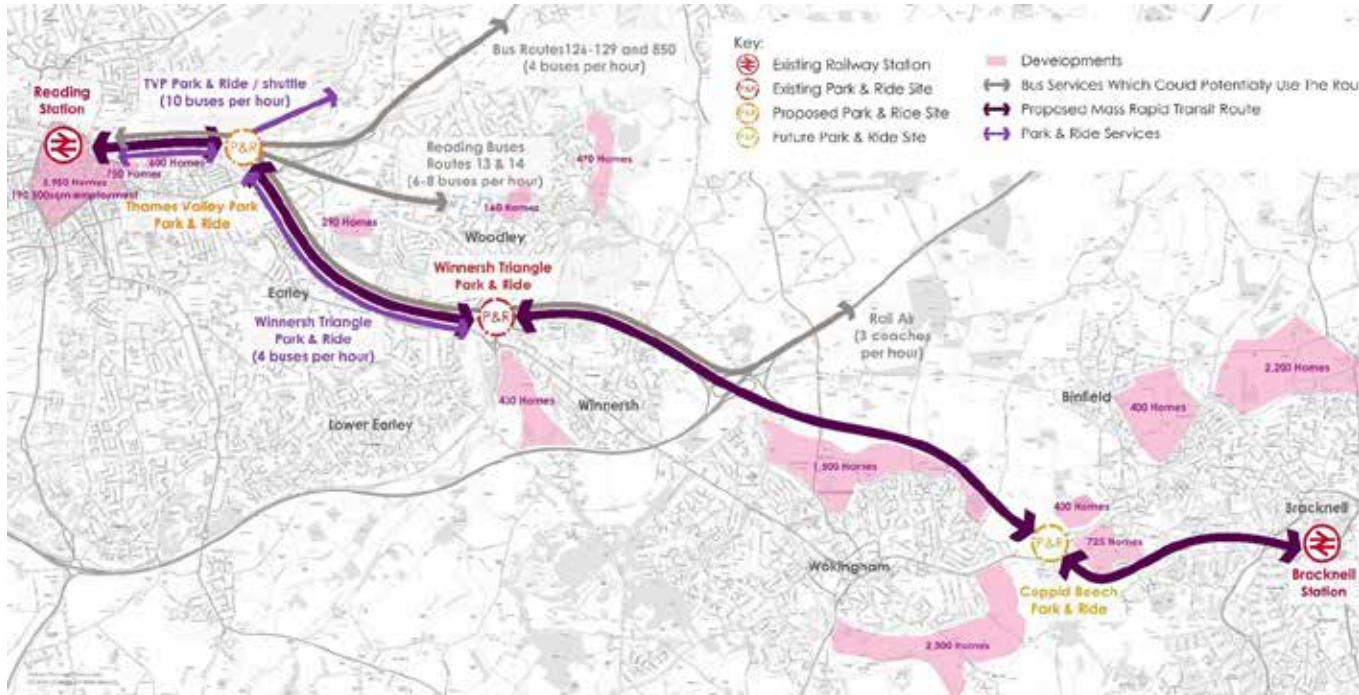


Figure 7. Eastern Corridor diagram



Figure 6. Traffic congestion at Cemetery Junction

Park and Ride

- 3.13 The proposed Thames Valley Park Park & Ride (TVP P&R) scheme (Wokingham planning ref: 161596) was approved on 10th November 2016 and includes provision of 277 car parking spaces. The proposed TVP P&R is planned to be served by the TVP commuter bus service only. The proposed hours of operation are expected to be between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday only, no services will operate at the TVP P&R at the weekend. The TVP P&R will be served by ten buses per hour during peak periods and four buses per hour during off peak periods.

Strategic networks

- 3.14 This eastern section will form part of a longer term MRT network for the Thames Valley or operate as a standalone MRT route. The link also provides future opportunity to link to a Third Thames Crossing to provide MRT to a P&R north of the River Thames.
- 3.15 Reading is planned to benefit from significant investment in the following strategic networks:
- Crossrail, which is planned to start running in 2018 and is reported to be generating the most homes of all the new rail lines.
 - The Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH) will provide direct access to Heathrow Airport from Reading and is planned to be completed in 2021.

- HS2, which should be completed in the next decade, will reduce journey times from London to Birmingham to 49 minutes, making it easier to commute from Britain's second city to the capital. London's rail commuter network will then encompass Brighton, in the south, Southend, in the east, Reading, in the west, and Birmingham, to the north.
 - M4 Junctions 3-12: Smart Motorway.
- 3.16 The East MRT scheme will improve accessibility to these strategic transport networks, allowing residents from existing and planned development living to the east of Reading to reach the rail services and Reading town centre, or visitors arriving from the motorway to use the P&R at TVP or Winnersh into Reading town centre.

Cycling and walking

- 3.17 The A4 London Road does not provide adequate pedestrian and cycle facilities between and on the boundary of Reading and Wokingham Boroughs. The towpath along the south bank of the River Thames provides a cycling route however; there are stretches where cyclists are required to dismount, as access rights are on foot only.
- 3.18 The natural surveillance and surfacing on the towpath are poor, it is narrow in places with a stepped bridge, and is shared by pedestrians.



Figure 8. The Design Review Panel meeting in June, 2017.

4 Design Policy

National Planning Policy Framework				Wokingham Development Plan Core Strategy		Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (adopted February 2014)		
4.1	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and outlines how these are expected to be applied to both plan-making and decision-making.	4.6	There are a number of other design -related policies: - Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design; - Policy CS2: Waste minimisation; - Policy CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity; - Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm; - Policy CS8: Waterspaces; - Policy CS28: Loss of open space; - Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment; - Policy CS35: Flooding; - Policy CS36: Biodiversity and Geology; - Policy CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space; - Policy CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands.	- DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change - DM4: Safeguarding Amenity - DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters - DM17: Green Network - DM18: Tree Planting - SA14: Cycle Routes - SA16: Public and Strategic Open Space - SA17: Major Landscape Features	4.11	WBC adopted its Core Strategy in January 2010 and it sets out the Council’s vision for how the borough will develop up to 2026.	4.15	WBC adopted its Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan in February 2014. The MDD supplements the Core Strategy and includes more detailed policies for development within the borough. The key design policies are: - Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping - Policy CC06: Noise - Policy CC09: Development and Flood Risk - Policy CC10: Sustainable Drainage - Policy TB21: Landscape Character - Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development - Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets - Policy TB25: Archaeology
4.2	Paragraphs 56 -66 deal with Requiring Good Design.				4.12	Policy CS3 of the WBC Core Strategy sets out a number of principles for new development to ensure high quality design. This includes the need to ensure that proposals are of an appropriate scale, activity, mass, layout, built form, height to the site and surrounding area.		
RBC Core Strategy (January 2008)					4.13	Other relevant policies include - CP1: Sustainable Development; - CP3: General Principles for development; - CP9: Scale and location of development proposals; - CP7: Biodiversity; - CP10: Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network; - CP11: Proposals outside the development limits (including countryside);		
4.3	RBC adopted the Core Strategy in January 2008, with alterations to the Core Strategy document made on 27th January 2015. This version of the Core Strategy forms the most up to date version of the Core Strategy							
4.4	These are described more fully in Chapter 6 of the Planning Statement submitted with the application.			4.8	The East MRT route is designated within the RCAAP as a preferred route for the MRT corridor. The key AAP policies which are relevant to the determination of this planning application are			
4.5	Policy CS7 of the RBC Core Strategy requires that all development is of a high design quality and that it maintains and enhances the area within which it is located. Specifically, and of relevance to this proposal, Policy CS7 refers to: - Layout; - Landscape; - Height and massing; and, - Architectural detail and materials.			4.9	Policy RC5 Design in the Centre; and			
				4.10	Policy RC14: Public Realm (RC14d Kings Meadow and Coal Woodland).	4.14	A number of WBC supplementary planning documents are also relevant to the proposed development, comprising: - WBC Borough Design Guide SPD (Adopted May 2012). - WBC Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Adopted May 2010).	
		4.7	RBC adopted the Sites and Detailed Policies Document in October 2012, with alterations subsequently made in January 2015. The document provides detailed policies and identifies the specific development sites and designations necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. The key design policies are:	RCAAP				
				RBC SPD Sustainable Construction and Design SPD (adopted July 2011).				



5 Design review

Design South-East

5.1	An independent review of the design of the proposed development was undertaken by a panel of architects at Design South-East (DSE).	Proposals should consider incorporating leisure and tourism improvements.	The river mouth is a gateway to the town and should be celebrated	Queried whether the land beneath the viaduct could be activated or closed-off	Use of sustainable materials should be maximised
5.2	Following submission of the project for design review on 4th May 2017, a review was held with DSE on 6th June 2017. The review was attended by members of the project team and planning officers of RBC and WBC, and comprised a site visit, presentation and discussions with panel members.	5.6 The scheme incorporates improvements and enhancements to the towpath set out in chapter 10 of this document, Public Realm and Landscape. The design exercise undertaken should be fully explained.	5.9 Chapter 11, Bridges and Crossings, demonstrates how the approach to the new bridge has been developed in the context of the six crossings of the lower reaches of the Kennet. Proposals should consider impacts on the listed railway bridge as well as the horseshoe bridge	5.12 The parts of the land beneath the viaduct that are likely to receive light and rainfall have been planted whilst those areas in deeper shadow will be fenced in, to deter antisocial behaviour. See Chapter 19, Public Realm and Landscape.	5.15 Please see chapter 18, Colours, Materials and Finishes, and also the Sustainability Chapter of the Environmental Statement. Landscape strategy should take a proactive approach
5.3	A formal response from DSE, summarising the feedback provided at the review meeting, was received on 16th June 2017.	5.7 A detailed design rationale is set out in this document along with the various options considered that led to proposed scheme. A utilitarian design approach is acceptable however the appearance of the structure needs to be more attractive and elegant.	5.10 The new bridge has been designed to both complement and open views to and through the railway bridge. The proposed bridge height should be reviewed	5.13 The proposed approach does not prevent the future activation of the land beneath the viaduct for riverside leisure use. Design should fully consider the interfaces with adjacent land uses	5.16 Chapter 19, Public Realm and Landscape, details the approach to landscape design. This outlines the parallel approaches of mitigating the impact of the structure overall, so that it partly receded into the riverside landscape, whilst also celebrating the new bridge structure. Recommend further ongoing engagement with key stakeholder groups and statutory consultees.
5.4	The overall principle of the scheme was accepted by the Panel and their comments therefore related to further design development and providing further details of the design processes involved.	5.8 The scheme has been further developed and refined in order to incorporate the twin goals of creating a simple but elegant structure. See particularly chapters 13 through to 18 of this document on the form of the bridge and viaduct, abutments, columns and materials.	5.11 Chapter 10, Parameters, sets out the various determinants and influences on bridge height, whilst Chapter 13, Bridge form options, details the various options considered.	5.14 The interfaces between the proposed Park and Ride, the Dreadnought, Tesco have been carefully considered, with Further details outlined in Chapter 19, Public Realm and Landscape.	5.17 Details of community and stakeholder engagement are summarised in the Planning Statement submitted with the application. Further engagement will be undertaken during the planning application process.
5.5	The Panel's comments are summarised below, followed by the project team's response.				



Figure 9. View from the River Thames looking south towards the site with the railway beyond



Figure 10. Urban Context (Google Earth)

6 Site description

Site

6.1 Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road, Reading, to the south of the River Thames and north of the Great Western Main Line Railway.

Route corridor

- 6.2 The route of the East MRT scheme is proposed to link the A3290 at Thames Valley Park, from a proposed new Park & Ride facility, to Napier Road, Reading town centre and the railway station
- 6.3 The route extends from the A3290 and A4 along the southern bank of the River Thames north of the Great Western Railway Line, across the mouth of the River Kennet connecting to central Reading via Napier Road.
- 6.4 To the east of the application site lies Thames Valley Park. The Wokingham Waterside Canoe & Kayak Centre and former Dreadnought public house and boat sheds lie to the north and east. Gas works and gas holders and Sutton Business Park estates fill the land between branches of the railway to the south.
- 6.5 The Thames and Kennet Marina lies beyond the north banks of the Thames.
- 6.6 To the east, is a Tesco store and extensive car park with petrol filling station. There is a wide woodland strip between the store and car park and the riverbank.
- 6.7 To the south west, are redeveloped areas along Kenavon Drive.

Character

- 6.8 The area is characterised by contrasting urban forms. It is both an area of dense, semi-natural planting and waterside open spaces alongside an industrial landscape of railways, industrial sheds, electricity pylons and gas works.
- 6.9 The thick vegetation within and surrounding the Site helps to create a sense of relative isolation with only limited views into, across and out from the area. Views are typically disrupted to the south by railway infrastructure, large electricity pylons and glimpses beyond the railway to an infrastructure of the large gas cylinders.

Dreadnought Public House

- 6.10 The Dreadnought is a two storey 18th century brick built former public house with slate roof. It was formerly a clubhouse and boat storage facilities for the University boat club.
- 6.11 Permission to create tearooms , toilet blocks and accommodation including demolition of some out buildings and sheds and conversion of some to guest accommodation has now lapsed.

Levels

- 6.12 The land is generally low-lying and close to the level of the river. It it rises slightly to the west. The ground and river banks west of the Kennet are generally higher than the east.
- 6.13 The Site is surrounded to the north by the flat landscape of Reading Marina and the River Thames.

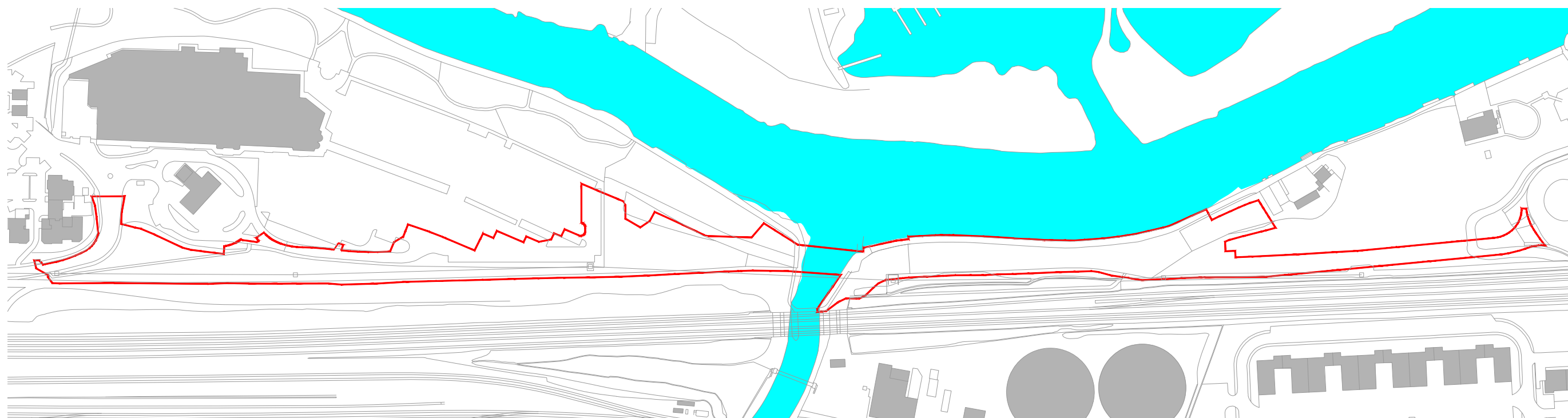


Figure 11. Application site boundary (red line plan')

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Park and Ride

- 6.14 Full planning permission has been granted for the development of a Park and Ride facility at the eastern end of the Site that will provide approximately 277 vehicular spaces, motorcycle parking with associated vehicular access and landscaping.
- 6.15 The application site is a 1.35 ha parcel of land accessed from the A3290 roundabout at Broken Brow. It adjoins the roundabout to the east, the Great Western mainline railway embankment to the south, Wokingham Waterside Centre to the east and the former Dreadnaught public house and the Thames Path and River Thames beyond to the north. The site is largely scrubland.
- 6.16 The scheme is accessed via a vehicular access from Broken Brow roundabout running parallel to the railway line, which provides access to a hard-surfaced car park. There will be an area for buses to pick up and drop off. Landscaping is proposed around the edges and within the site.

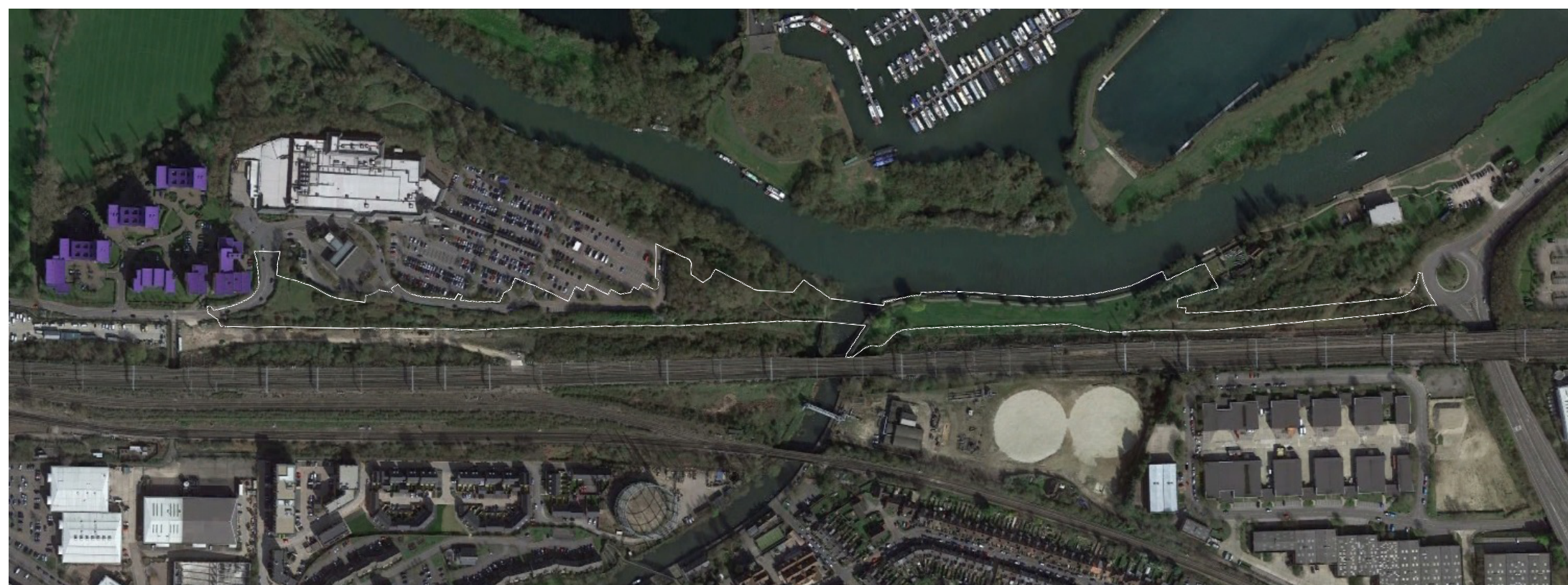


Figure 12. Application site boundary overlaid on aerial photograph (Google Earth)