Kings Meadow View

Statement of Community Involvement

December 2025

abrdn

1. Introduction

Kings Meadow View is situated on the site of Forbury Retail Park, which is located to the north of Forbury Road and Kenavon Drive, adjacent to the railway line and bounded by the Forbury Place office development to the west. To the south of the site sits the Reading Gaol, south-west is the Forbury Gardens and south-east the new Huntley Wharf development. The proposals are identified for the western part of the retail park – occupied broadly by furniture stores, Homesense and a KFC.

Retail units and expansive parking areas currently occupy a very sustainable central site which is currently well connected through cycle and pedestrian routes. It is proposed that those connections can be improved upon and that the site is redeveloped to deliver up to 700 much needed new homes, fulfilling some of the 16,077 new homes Reading needs to deliver up to 2036 - all this in a highly sustainable location.

Reading Borough Council adopted its new Local Plan in November 2019, setting out how Reading will develop up to 2036. The Local Plan sets out the Council's objective over the plan period (2013-2036) to deliver an additional 689 homes each year, of which around 49% will be accommodated within central Reading. The site falls within Reading's East Side Major Opportunity Area, which seeks to provide a new community on the eastern fringes of the town centre. It forms part of a specific site allocation within Reading's Local Plan (CR13b), which seeks the redevelopment of Forbury Retail Park, and the neighbouring area, to provide a new residential community alongside additional retail,leisure and community uses.

The application is: Outline application with all matters reserved with the exception of access, for site redevelopment involving the demolition of all existing structures and a residential-led mixed use proposal for up to 700 residential units (Class C3) and up to 3,000 sqm (GEA) of commercial uses (Class E), together with various associated works including replacement pedestrian and vehicle access routes, open spaces, hard and soft landscaping and sewer works, partial basement excavation, up to 130 basement level car parking spaces, up to 53 separate car parking spaces for Class E uses, up to 600 cycle parking spaces and servicing facilities. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

This Statement of Community Involvement sets out the strategy undertaken for consulting the local community with regard to the proposals. It gives an overview of all consultation activity up until present, and engagement with the local community, politicians and groups will continue as the plans progress. It demonstrates that the applicant has actively engaged with the local community, in line with Reading Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement, prior to the submission of the planning application.

Planning application ref. 230822 was submitted on 8th June 2023 and confirmed as valid on 14th September 2023.

Consultation comments have been received and reviewed including requests for conditions as well as comments that requested amendments to the application. This application followed a detailed round of consultation.

A number of meetings have since been held with the case officer in relation to the design of the outline scheme. In the interests of responding to the consultation comments and discussion with Reading Borough Council a design review has been undertaken by the project team. This has led to a number of key changes which can be summarised as follows:

- *Reduction in maximum building heights adjacent to the railway and facing Kings Meadow;*
- *Improved variation in heights of the blocks;*
- *Reduction of block footprints, reorientation of the spaces within the development and increased sense enclosure;*
- *Reduction in the size of the basement car park and therefore removal of the podium to the east allowing seamless integration of the site with surrounding areas;*
- *Reduction in commercial floorspace;*

1. Introduction

On 3rd November 2025, Reading Borough Council formally confirmed that Outline Planning Application reference PL/23/0822 had been disposed of. In order to build upon the progress made in relation to the previous application and engagement with the Local Planning Authority, this application is submitted as a new Outline Planning Application.

The proposed amendments within this new Application remain broadly within the scope of the previous scheme's description of development, and again seeks all matters reserved, save for highway access.

2. Project team

abrdn

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abrdn is the new name for Aberdeen Standard Investments, which is bringing forward the proposals for the western part of Forbury Retail Park. abrdn is a trusted development partner and has a record of delivery across the commercial, residential, retail, leisure and development sectors.

Squire and Partners

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Squire and Partners is an architecture and design practice with experience spanning four decades, earning it an international reputation for architecture informed by the history and culture of where it is placed. Its award-winning portfolio, for some of the world's leading developers, includes masterplans, private and affordable residential, workspace, retail, education and public buildings.

Montagu Evans

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Montagu Evans is an independent property consultancy, owned and run by a group of partners that are leaders in their respective fields and who are committed to leaving a legacy of quality work that benefits clients, the built environment and society as a whole. Our work encompasses planning and development, property management, specialist valuations and transactions. Together we create inspiring places to live, work, communicate and connect. We care about legacy, partnerships and people. Advising clients with complex planning and development challenges.

Meeting Place

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Meeting Place was established in 2006 and is now one of the leading public relations companies specialising in consultation around planning issues. MPC has worked with a wide range of house builders, retailers, and commercial developers. MPC has extensive experience across England and Wales and is experienced in reaching out and positively engaging with local residents when it comes to planning applications.

3. Consultation requirements

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

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Community involvement is at the forefront of national planning policy and is noted in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (updated July 2021). The NPPF states that; *"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."* (para 4.39).

The NPPF goes on to highlight at Paragraph 40 that *"Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications."*

Paragraph 41 outlines that the Local Planning Authority should encourage other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage, noting that *"the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits."*

Reading Borough Council

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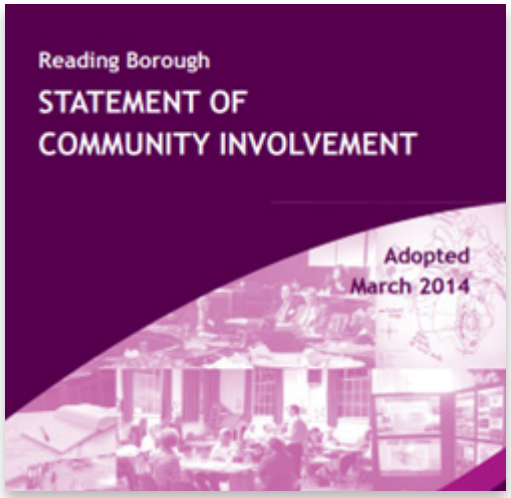
Reading Borough Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement in 2014 and the Council consulted with residents in 2019 to identify any policies that needed to be reconsidered. The document highlights the value of undertaking pre-application consultation. The SCI is not a prescriptive document, but it does include the following comments with reference to pre-application consultation:

"The Council agrees with the National Planning Policy's emphasis on engaging the community from the outset. It can result in an improved scheme which takes the needs of the existing community into account, and a better relationship between the developer and the community that carries through the application process and beyond. This is particularly the case for proposals that are sensitive or of a significant scale."

Therefore, in conjunction with developing the plans, abrdn undertook a detailed programme of community engagement, as outlined in this document.



3. Consultation requirements

3.1 Our response to the consultation requirements

To fulfil the requirements of the consultation, set out in local and national policy, we have sought to:

Involve residents and stakeholders

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We held an online public consultation event on 15th February, followed by an in person event on 16th of February, inviting local residents and business owners in the area around the site of the proposed development.

Engage with local representatives

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As part of the consultation, meetings were held with local ward members and officer at key points in the project starting from 2019. Representatives were also notified of and invited to our public consultation.

Engagement with officers and the Design Panel

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From the first meeting in December, 2019 the project team has been liaising with officers at Reading Borough Council through various iterations of the scheme including a presentation to the Design South East Panel. This engagement will continue up to submission of the application and beyond.

Engage online

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Through a dedicated project website launched in February 2022, we were able to display the proposals online. This gave further details of the proposals for those who were unable to attend the public events. The website, which was advertised in any written communication material, also featured a page to enter feedback electronically and provided a dedicated email address for queries from local residents.

Continue to engage

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By responding to resident's concerns or questions as they have raised them, we have sought to ensure that residents feel informed and engaged at all steps of the development process. This will be ongoing, with our team continuing to respond to residents on a rolling basis.

4. Engagement

This section details abdrn's programme of engagement. The programme was discussed with Reading Borough Council officers to ensure robustness.

Community newsletter

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A newsletter was distributed to 1,416 addresses in the area, explaining the scheme, its benefits and further information. Enclosed were feedback forms which enabled residents to provide their feedback and opinions on the scheme. A section was also available for residents to contribute more general comments. The newsletter was sent to 1,416 properties, the distribution area can be found on page eight.

The newsletter can be found in appendix 1.

Online presentation

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An online presentation was held where residents were able receive a detailed explanation of the proposed plans from our team, followed by a question and answer session. The event was held on Tuesday 15 February from 7.00pm - 8.00pm, attended by 27 people, with 21 subsequent views of the recording. In addition to members of the public, political stakeholders were also invited to the presentation.

Consultation event

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abrdn & MPC held a public consultation event where residents were able to meet the team and find out more about the project. This event took place at the Majestic Bel, Blakes Lock, Gas Works Road, Reading, RG1 3EQ on Wednesday 16th February between 3-7:30pm, attended by 26 people. The consultation event was open to members of the public and political stakeholders were also invited to the event.

Freepost

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A freepost address (Freepost, MPC CONSULTATION) has been established to allow local residents to contribute their views to the process easily. This address is prominent on all literature, ensuring that those who do not wish to fill out a card or attend an event are still able to express their opinions or concerns.

Project website

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To coincide with the public consultation, the Applicant created a dedicated project website at https://www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk. The website contains additional details about the location of the proposals, as well as a feedback form to gather views of interested parties, which which was collated by Meeting Place for analysis and response. There were more than 1,500 visitors to website.

The project website will remain live and can be accessed using the web address above.

A screenshot of the website is shown in Appendix 2 .

In addition to the above engagment opportunities, a project specific email address (info@ kingsdmeadowview.co.uk) and free phone telephone number (0800 148 8911) were also set up to allow stakeholders to contact the project team.

4. Engagement

4.1 Stakeholder meetings

Early meetings were sought with political and community representatives to provide an update and understand their initial feedback. We engaged the following:

Thames ward members (Reading Council)	Reading Neighbourhood Network	Berkshire Industrial Heritage Archaeology Group
Abbey ward members (Reading Council)	Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee	Reading Gaol Hug Society
Reading Civic Society	Friends of Reading Abbey	CADRA
Reading Neighbourhood Network	Berkshire Industrial Heritage Archaeology Group	CPRE Berkshire

4. Engagement

4.2 Community newsletter

A newsletter was distributed to 1,416 addresses in the area, explaining the scheme, its benefits and further information. The newsletters invited residents to an online webinar, an in-person consultation event and advertised the consultation website.

Enclosed was a feedback form which enabled residents to provide their feedback and opinions on the scheme. A section was also available for residents to contribute more general comments.

The newsletter distribution area, which can be viewed on to the right, was chosen to ensure that those living and working in close proximity to the site, where notified of the plans and invited the the consultation events.

The newsletter was sent to area shown:

4. Engagement

4.3 Project website

www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk

A dedicated project website, was launched in February 2022 to act as an online hub of information on what's proposed and to provide channels for feedback. More than 1,500 individual people have visited the website.

The website was launched to coincide with distribution of the community newsletter. It contained information on where the site was, what the plans were and what the new homes could look like.

The website also invited people to, and included a link to book for, the community webinar and the in-person consultation event. Freephone, email and freepost details were also available for people to contact the team.

The website was designed to be easy to navigate and engaging.

An online version of the feedback form enclosed with the newsletter was available on the website alongside an interactive map which gave people a different way to engage.

The site will remain live throughout the application process, including after submission and will be accessible to anyone who wishes to visit it.

4. Engagement

4.4 Community engagement events

abrdn hosted a hybrid consultation event in February 2022 which consisted of an online webinar and in-person consultation event. The events were advertised in the community newsletter and invites were also sent to key political and community stakeholders.

The webinar took place on Tuesday 15 February via Zoom. It consisted of a presentation by the project team, outlining what the plans were, before taking questions from attendees. Following the event, a recording of the webinar was uploaded to the project website to allow anyone who was not able to attend to view it. In total 27 people attended the event with a further 21 watching the uploaded version.

The public consultation event was held at Majestic Bel, Blakes Lock, Gas Works Road, Reading on Wednesday 16 February between 3.00pm – 7.30pm. The event gave members of the public an opportunity to view the plans for the site and leave any initial feedback that had. The event was attended by members of the project team, including planners and architects who were on hand to answer any questions attendees had. In total 26 people attended the in-person event.

The hybrid approach to the consultation events was to ensure it was accessible to as many members of the public as possible, catering for those who work at varying times of the day or have other commitments in the evening which might make it difficult to attend in person. Across the two events 74 people engaged with the consultation, including those who attended the webinar live, those who watching it in their own time following the event and those who attended the in-person consultation event.

4. Engagement

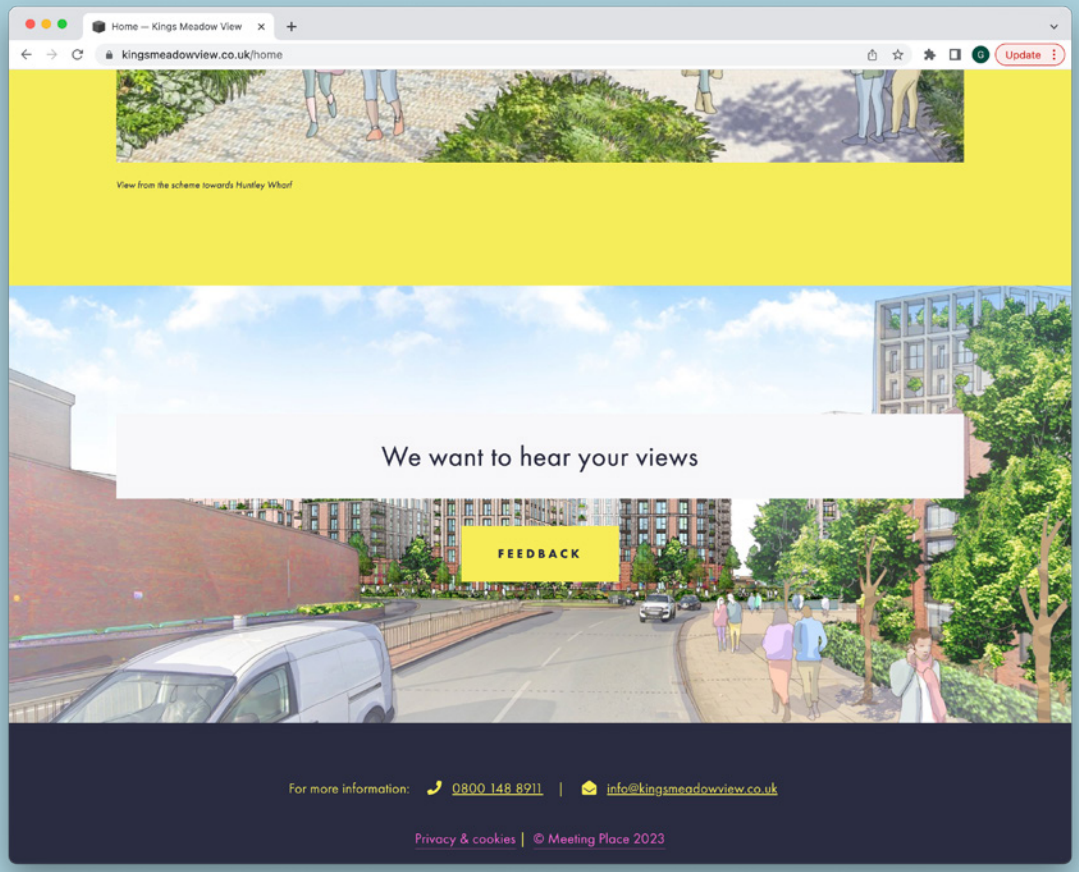
4.5 Contact details and remaining visible

Ensuring people were able to get in touch with the team to ask any questions and make any comments was vital. The freephone telephone number and freepost address, also provided an important opportunity for people unable to access the online channels to engage.

The number, 0800 148 8911, and email address, info@kingsmeadowview.co.uk were staffed between 9.00am and 5.30pm from Monday to Friday. Both were answered and managed by a member of the Meeting Place team. The Meeting Place freepost address was also managed by Meeting Place.

These contact details were promoted through all communications including the newsletter and website.

abrdn is committed to continued engagement with local residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process. The website will be updated and an additional newsletter sent to residents to advise them of an application submission, whilst all the contact methods listed will remain open.



5. Feedback

At each stage of engagement, residents were encouraged to give feedback on the plans. In total we received 49 pieces of feedback, which were broadly supportive of the plans.

5.1 Feedback summary

Attendees to the consultation events were broadly supportive of all the development options presented to them, with new landscaped public and private green spaces being the preferred option.

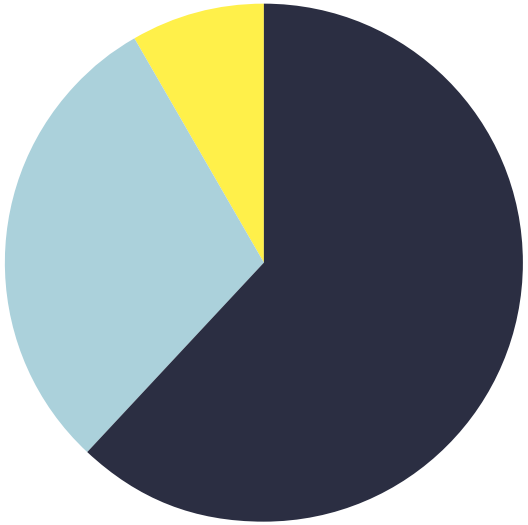
A mixture of housing and retail is also popular. Even with the least popular option, food retail, supporters still comfortably outweigh concerns.

Respondents also approve of measures to encourage cycling and of the cycling connectivity of the planned homes.

The below responses reflect the feedback we received when asking those who engaged with the consultation process.

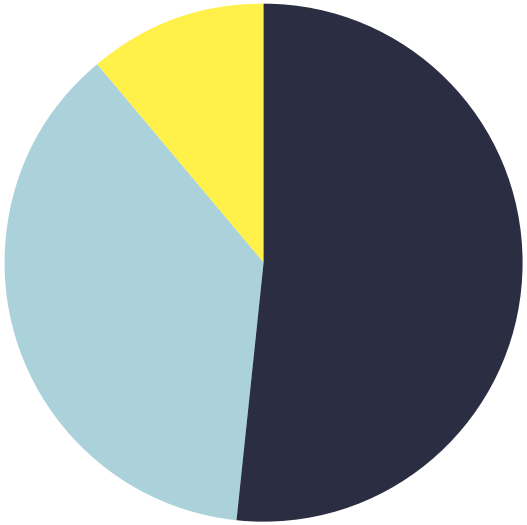
5. Feedback

5.2 Do you support a mixture of residential and retail uses on this site?



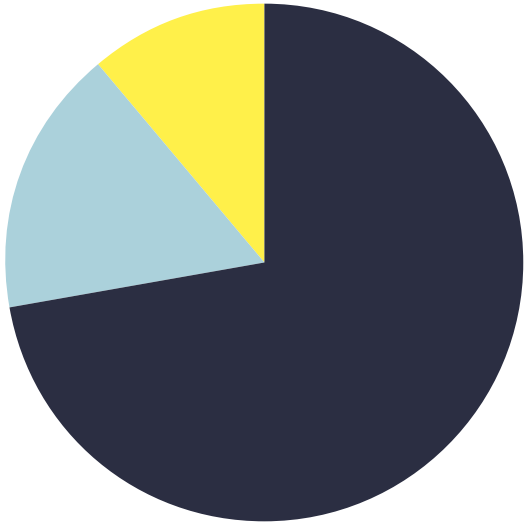
- 23 – Support
- 11 – Don't know
- 3 – Don't support

5.3 We're considering a new food retail store for local people as part of our plans.



- 14 – Support
- 10 – Don't know
- 3 – Don't support

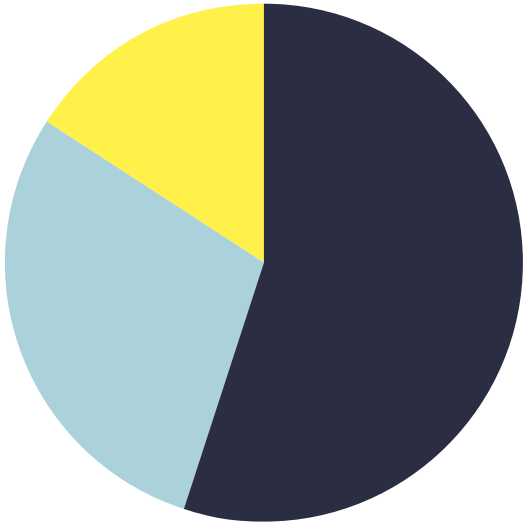
5.4 New landscaped public and private green spaces are proposed for the heart of this new community.



- 26 – Support
- 6 – Don't know
- 4 – Don't support

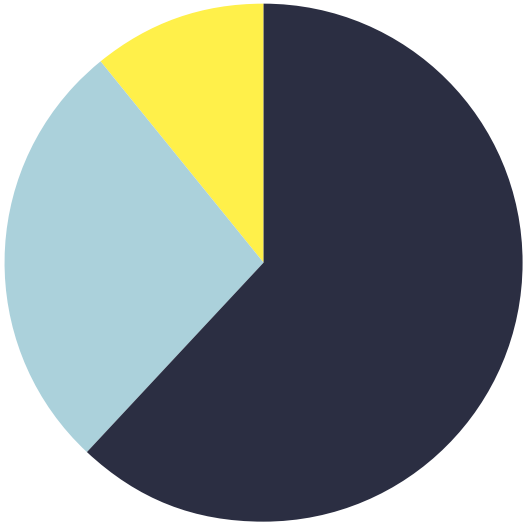
5. Feedback

5.5 Our plans for housing and retail spaces positively contribute towards reaching Reading's housing need.



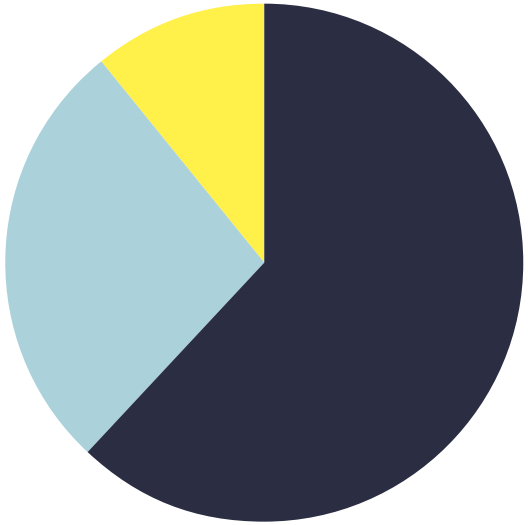
- 21 – Support
- 11 – Don't know
- 6 – Don't support

5.6 What do you think of redeveloping this brownfield site into a landscaped public gardens, housing and retail?



- 23 – Support
- 10 – Don't know
- 4 – Don't support

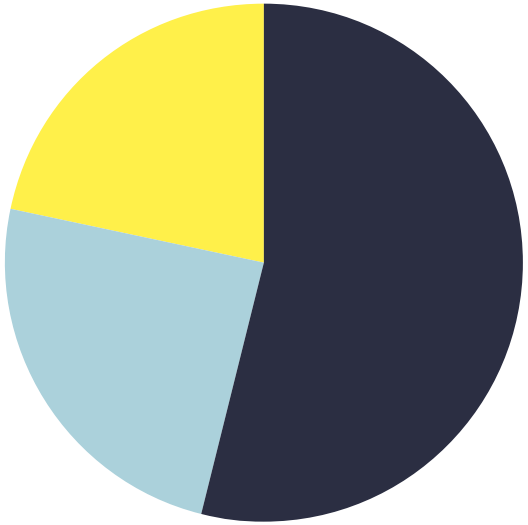
5.7 What do you think of our scheme promoting cycling and sustainable transport such as car clubs instead of individual car use?



- 23 – Support
- 10 – Don't know
- 4 – Don't support

5. Feedback

5.8 The scheme delivers a good level of connectivity into existing cycle routes and pedestrian routes?



- 20 – Support
- 9 – Don't know
- 8 – Don't support

In the comments however, respondents have raised areas they would like to see addressed about specific aspects of the plans. Infrastructure, traffic and height all appear in comments.

5. Feedback

5.9 Key issues

Verbatim feedback of the feedback forms can be found in Appendix 3, however a number of key themes identified during the consultation process are summarised below.

Height of buildings

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There are concerns about obstruction caused by tall buildings, however some verbal, feedback suggested that there be more variation in height. Some comments from councillors and other groups about design/materials, including the need for more visual interest on the Forbury Road frontage opposite the Reading Gaol.

- The high rise nature of these buildings are resulting in lack of sunlight and feeling of enclosed spaces.
- Height is a big concern so close to listed buildings and Abbey Quarter. Pedestrian crossings across Forbury Road will also be essential.
- Pity that they are tall blocks.

Congestion

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Air quality, noise and the obstruction of the flow of traffic are raised by a number of residents and were also reflected in questions at the public consultation event. Noise from the railway was also noted as a concern for those living in the scheme.

- The scheme is surrounded by a very busy main traffic artery for Reading and the main railway route. Concern will be noise and pollution putting off buyers for the apartments. How will this be managed to make the area one where people would like to live?
- Why housing in the most congested part of the town?
- There is too much traffic congestion in this area already.

Infrastructure

-

The need for additional public services to support a larger population is strongly felt, particularly school places and GP waiting times.

- What are the plans for additional strain on GP surgeries, schools both primary and secondary, the local hospital, the road and traffic?
- There needs to be more supported infrastructure built (education, health facilities etc).
- Too many flats not houses, lack of infrastructure to support the development, not enough doctors or dentists as it is never mind for at least another 900 people.
- Where is the infrastructure to support this housing.

5. Feedback

5.9 Key issues

Loss of retail space

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While some clearly value the present shops, it should also be noted that among those who do like new retail options cafes and workspaces are popular.

- No residential dwellings at all, keep the existing shops.
- I'm against turning the site into residential area (the town is crowded enough).
- No residential dwellings in any case, either keep existing shops or build sport facilities.
- Retail and smaller shops not housing.

Family homes

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Smaller flats seem to be more prevalent with suitable accommodation for larger families hard to find.

- Very disappointing that the scheme is mainly 1 and 2 bed flats which are already over provided. No opportunity for those looking to downsize into something larger than retirement flats and nothing for families which is the main need in Reading.
- Too many flats not houses, lack of infrastructure to support the development, not enough doctors or dentists as it is never mind for at least another 900 people.

Affordability

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The cost of homes in new developments is a perennial concern for residents.

- Houses and any new places should be affordable to the community.
- Agree that housing is needed but it needs to be affordable and have plenty of green space so that it isn't just suitable for transient accommodation.
- Housing looks smart, but more social and affordable housing needed.

5. Feedback

5.10 Other issues raised

In addition to the key issues raised above, a number of other topics were raised for us to consider. We have listened to these and acted upon them.

St James Church car parking – this was an issue that came up at the presentation and the event, with Father Christopher being in attendance and candidly discussing the situation. Whilst it was commented there was a covenant or formal arrangement, Father Christopher was not aware of this.

Creating a community – it was suggested that the Church could play a role in helping create a sense of community in the area, being the largest community organisation in close proximity to the scheme. Co working space was also suggested in the presentation.

Shared growing space – It was suggested in the discussion after the presentation that we would consider shared growing spaces for residents as part of the private garden element of the scheme.

Cycle and pedestrian connections – Cllr Page and Cllr Rowland raised the issue of cycle connections through the site to the Biscuit Tunnel, wanting to see a connection at the rear of the site.

Connections to Reading Gaol – the lack of connection / crossing point was discussed as a challenge by residents as well as the Friends of Reading Abbey. The listed Plummery Wall is the key issue with delivering a connection.

Historical merit – Friends of Reading Abbey have issued a detailed response regarding the proposals and their belief that there may be historical interest in the site (the Plummery Ditch in particular), despite it having been redeveloped.

Neighbouring sites – A representative from Viridis attended the event, who will be shortly promoting the neighbouring Kodak site for development. He mentioned the Aviva site (to the eastern part of the Forbury Retail Park) is not being progressed for development in the near future.

Parking – how the car parking for retail and residents works, amounts being provided, EV charging provision. Some interest in the Car Club.

Community Groups – Evelyn Williams, Chair of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee, has been in touch for more information and may like a meeting in the future. Richard Stainthorp mentioned that he had spoken with the Friends of Reading Abbey and they are broadly happy with the scheme. A representative of the Friends of Reading Abbey (John Painter) attended to talk through his detailed submission.

6. Response to key issues

In addition to the key issues raised above, a number of other topics were raised for us to consider. We have listened to these and acted upon them.

Housing mix

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abrdn's proposals for Forbury Retail Park include the delivery of up to 820 new homes to assist in meeting Reading's identified housing need. This comprises a mixture of units ranging from studio/one-bedroom to three-bedroom apartments.

Affordable houing

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The project team will continue discussion with RBC officers regarding affordable housing. Any provision of affordable housing will be subject to viability considerations.

Density

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The site has been allocated as part of the East Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy which indicates this location sits adjacent to the Tall Buildings Station Area Cluster. The East Side Major Opportunity Area is required to contribute to the creation of a coherent, attractive and sustainable cluster of buildings. It should also be noted that National Planning Policy dictates that Local Planning Authorities "should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes". It goes on to state that "local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land". Efficient use of land to deliver much needed new homes is an important driving factor as to why the redevelopment of this site, in this sustainable location is proposed at this density.

Parking

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abrdn understands the aspirations of Reading Borough Council to tackle the climate emergency, create car-free developments (or as close as appropriate) and promote sustainable travel in the town centre. As a result, abrdn wants to create a place that prioritises walking and cycling, and therefore will provide 860 sheltered cycle spaces exceeding policy requirement of 452 (0.5 spaces per studio-2 bed, 1 space per 3 bed – in keeping with policy) and restrict parking onsite to around 200 spaces (including 20 disabled and 18 car club spaces). The site is located within walking distance to the city centre and is close to local bus and train services.

Height

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The proposals would not be out of keeping with the surrounding area, given that the King's Point development (Vertu) stands at 17 storeys. Station Hill also has an 18 storey building and The Blade on Abbey Street is 14 storeys. The buildings will make best use of a large brownfield, sustainable site to help meet housing targets and introduce high quality architecture that complement the context of the site and the changes taking place across the opportunity area. With new office buildings to the west, the emerging development to the south and east of the site and the railway line to the north, we believe the approach taken to the heights across the buildings being proposed is appropriate for this location. Through discussion with officers and in response to Design Review Panel comments, the project team have already taken steps to reduce the height of the proposed buildings.

6. Response to key issues

Congestion

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The site is defined by Reading Borough Council as falling within their Central Reading Area. It is positioned within a 10 minute walk to Reading Station, the town centre and employment sites / new offices within the town centre and the development itself. It will be designed to cater for those who do not wish to own a car and prefer to use public transport / deliveries.

The aspiration for the site given its location within the Central Reading Area is to reduce the number of vehicles on site or visiting it, therefore a reduced number of car parking spaces will be proposed (currently 200+ spaces). We will also be seeking to include car club spaces on site as an additional measure to limit the number of private vehicles in this location. As part of the development, highway improvement schemes such as additional roundabout approach lanes, lining improvements, kerb radii alterations and possible traffic signals will all be reviewed as options to mitigate any potential impact of the development.

New bus services are being considered for Kenavon Drive by the council, as such the residents will benefit from this additional service on their doorstep.

Existing Retail Units

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The planning application is yet to be determined but subject to approval, the existing stores will have their leases converted to shorter terms and we understand they will look at similar spaces available in other retail parks within the Reading area.

Any changes to the existing retailers is unlikely to happen until 2024/2025 at the earlier giving existing employers and employees enough time to determine what alternative space they may wish to take up.

Food Store

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The precise end use of the ground floor commercial spaces being proposed are yet to be determined but it is clear that a food store or similar retail use is likely to be attractive in this location. This space is being designed flexibly should it be decided that a food store is the most appropriate use.

Infrastructure - Doctors

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Again, all ground floor uses are being flexibly designed to accommodate the most appropriate use in this location. Further dialogue can be had with the LPA and the community over whether a doctor's surgery is needed in the location. If an onsite surgery is not required, there would in any event be a certain level of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid to Reading Borough Council as a result of this development which could be put towards new health facilities and other infrastructure locally.

Infrastructure - Schools

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There are six state-funded primary schools within 2km travelling distance of the site, eight state-funded secondary schools within 4km and six privately funded schools within 4km. The proposal will attract significant CIL payment which will be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure and the growth as part of the Local Plan and therefore planned for by the service provider, Reading Borough Council. Contributions could help to mitigate any effect on educational provision within the borough.

7. Conclusion

Abrdn has undertaken a thorough programme of pre-application consultation in order to fully engage with the local community, including residents, local stakeholders and elected representatives.

A total of 49 responses were submitted and key themes from feedback included affordable housing, traffic/parking, and the availability of infrastructure including schools and health facilities. The feedback contained responses ranging from those who didn't want to see further homes built in the area to those who were happy with the plans and wanted new housing.

Consultation events were held both online and in person to lay out the plans for the site and answer any questions which arose. A dedicated project website for the scheme also enabled members of the local community to view the proposals and submit feedback throughout the design stage.

All aspects of the consultation were designed to encourage the local community to provide feedback to help shape the proposals in a meaningful way. The suggestions raised by residents in response to the public consultation have been carefully considered by abrdn to help evolve, wherever possible, the application. Engagement with the local community will continue following the submission of the planning application and abrdn looks forward to continuing discussions.

Appendix 1

Newsletter

KINGS MEADOW VIEW

Community Newsletter | February 2022

Abrdn is seeking to significantly regenerate the western part of Forbury Retail Park to accommodate a new residential community, close to the town centre. Building on the high quality design of the forthcoming development at Huntley Wharf, the scheme forms the next step in the development of the area to the east of Reading Town Centre and will provide up to 900 homes including affordable provision on site.

The scheme will provide over 50,000 sqft of high quality landscaped public space, equivalent to the size of a football field, along the entire length of the site, fronting Forbury Rd.

Prior to the submission of a planning application later this year, we would like to share our vision for the site. There's more information about our proposals inside or you can visit our website at www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk.

Find out more...
As part of our consultation, we're holding a virtual presentation as well as an in person event. At both events, you'll be able to find out more and ask questions of the team.

Zoom presentation
Tuesday 15th Feb, 7pm
To join us online please register at
www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk

In person drop in event
Wednesday 16th Feb
Bel and Dragon,
Blakes Lock
3pm - 7.30pm

We look forward to seeing you there.

THE SITE
FORBURY GARDENS
HUNTLEY WHARF

For more information: 0800 148 8911 | info@kingsmeadowview.co.uk | Freepost MPC CONSULTATION

Indicative view of proposed King's Meadow View, looking west towards Reading Gaol

What are we proposing?

Reading Borough Council has signalled that it would like to see more new homes in sustainable locations, close to the railway station and the town centre, supporting local shops, services and public transport without needing to use a car. This location is one of those sustainable locations.

Large scale retail units and expansive parking areas currently occupy a very sustainable central site. Redeveloping the site would deliver around 900 homes, and contribute to the 16,077 new homes Reading needs to deliver by 2036. Through planning policy, the scheme will also contribute towards public services, funding school spaces, healthcare and highway improvements.

The development would reprovide approximately 2000sqm of ground floor retail/flexible commercial space, suitable for a food store, alongside three smaller units for other businesses such as cafes and cycle hire.

Abrdn are seeking to deliver low carbon homes using sustainable methods, such as heating via air source heat pumps and providing electric vehicle charging, all ensuring the site is future proofed for greener living. The site is well connected and will provide improvements to the pedestrian and cycle routes, linking areas such as Huntley Wharf to the Town Centre to the west.

The scheme will be a green development, with 50% of the site used for high quality landscaped public and private spaces. 56,456 sqft will be for public use, in the manner of a new public park, with the remaining being residential communal courtyards, linear gardens and biodiversity roofs.

Indicative view of the proposed King's Meadow View landscaped public space, looking South towards Huntley Wharf

Appendix 1

Newsletter

The proposal has been designed by award winning architects, Squire and Partners.

The scale of the scheme is in keeping with the immediate surroundings and the forthcoming development at Huntley Wharf. The design incorporates brick work taking into account Reading's rich heritage in brick making, as well as being sensitive to the setting provided by Reading Gaol.

The current level change is being removed as part of the proposals, allowing the creation of a generous footpath along Forbury Road.

This landscaped area alongside the frontage is proposed with separated space for pedestrians and cyclists as well as places to sit and enjoy.

The footpath and cycle connections continue along Kenavon Drive and into the Huntley Wharf scheme and its riverside restaurants.

The proposals also provide shared green spaces for residents to use and relax in the scheme - complimenting the adjacent green space and play areas at Kings Meadow.

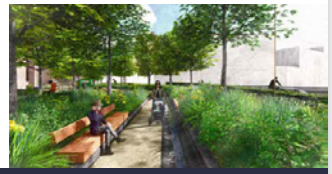
Aerial view of proposals and neighbouring development

Illustrative site layout

Key Benefits

- Up to 900 homes delivered ranging from studio/one-bedroom to three-bedroom apartments including affordable
- Over 50,000 high quality landscaped public space at front of the site along Forbury Road
- 18 Car Club spaces & 20% of parking spaces to have Electric Vehicle charging points
- A new sustainable use for this central Reading site
- Buildings in context with their surrounding of up to 11 storeys in height
- Up to 2,000sqm ground floor flexible use retail/cafe floorspace
- 50% of the site area landscaped with existing mature trees being retained
- Generous and well connected cycle and pedestrian paths through the site, linking the scheme to Reading's cycle network
- 800 cycle storage spaces, exceeding policy requirements
- 200 car parking spaces for residents with additional for the retail element
- Significantly improving ecology value and biodiversity from the current use
- Targeting a carbon neutral, highly sustainable and biodiverse development

Sketch of the Forbury Road frontage



View along the Forbury Road frontage

abrdn

About Abrdn

Abrdn is bringing forward the proposals for the Forbury Retail Park. Abrdn is a trusted development partner and has a record of delivery across the commercial, residential, retail, leisure and development sectors.

We want your views

To find out more and give us your feedback you can:

Visit our website
www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk

Call us on
0800 148 8911

Email us on
info@kingsmeadowview.co.uk

Complete the enclosed form

Appendix 2

Website

www.kingsmeadowview.co.uk

Appendix 3.1

Verbatim feedback

Do you have any views on our approach to design for the proposals?

- I'd love to see a community food growing garden included
- More cycle paths....
- What are the plans for additional strain on GP surgeries, schools both primary and secondary, the local hospital, the road and traffic?
- Also the high rise nature of these buildings are resulting in lack of sunlight and feeling of enclosed spaces
- Height is a big concern so close to listed buildings and Abbey Quarter. Pedestrian crossings across Forbury Road will also be essential.
- There needs to be more supported infrastructure built (education, health facilities etc)
- Pity that they are tall blocks.
- Why housing in the mist congested part of the town ?
- The town needs more doctors, dentists and schools. There is too much traffic congestion in this area already.
- The only people you are building flats are people who work but can't afford to live in London and rich people who buy the properties to rent out. A very large proportion of the Reading population do not want to live in a flat and can't afford the ridiculous prices that are charged for them.
- The scheme is surrounded by a very busy main traffic artery for Reading and the main railway route. Concern will be noise and pollution putting off buyers for the apartments. How will this be managed to make the area one where people would like to live?
- Reading town centre doesn't need these houses
- Houses and any new places should be affordable to the community
- I'm against turning the site into residential area (the town is crowded enough).
- Complete lack of infrastructure in the town to serve the expanding population, no more new houses needed in town centre and around the station.
- Existing scheme does not seem to create a neighbourhood or community. Looks like individual housing blocks. A dormitory village. More imagination needed
- Very disappointing that the scheme is mainly 1 and 2 bed flats which are already over provided. No opportunity for those looking to downsize into something larger than retirement flats and nothing for families which is the main need in Reading.
- No large grocery store within easy walking distance. Improved bus services would otherwise be needed, not mentioned.

Appendix 3.1

Verbatim feedback

Do you have any views on our approach to design for the proposals?

- Such a large site and an ambition to create a new residential community requires some distinctive architecture, and currently the designs could be from anywhere and are sadly instantly forgettable. Recognising the height limitations, perhaps green walls or some distinctive roofing, or even just improving the brickwork pattern would be a good first step. This development would garner significant further support if it recognised the ambition in the town to be something bigger - the local Verto and Blade buildings are distinctive, and the nearby Huntley wharf makes very good use of the space available to generate interest. I'd like this proposal to succeed, therefore hope the designs can become more distinctive and integral to the fabric of Reading as opposed to 'another set of towers'
- Secure bike parking for shoppers and visitors.
- Agree that housing is needed but it needs to be affordable and have plenty of green space so that it isn't just suitable for transient accommodation
- Too many flats not houses, lack of infrastructure to support the development, not enough doctors or dentists as it is never mind for at least another 900 people
- Where is the infrastructure to support this housing
- How will hospitals, drs, dentist and schools cope with an increased population in Reading, I agree more people will bring in more cash to the town, but the infrastructure will not cope.
- Housing looks smart, but more social and affordable housing needed
- Looks a great plan. In keeping with the area and sustainable
- I'm concerned that with all the new homes being built there will be even more pressure on health services. Already there are no dentists in Reading taking on new NHS patients. GPs are also over subscribed.
- I think it sounds great!

Appendix 3.2

Verbatim feedback

We are proposing some smaller spaces that could be used for community or business uses such as a cafe or workspace. What do you think?

- Cafe, community centre
- Flexible workspace with a cafe would be great
- Cafés with outside space....
- Community space usable by local community groups including St James church
- Public service infrastructure, such as nursery, doctor's surgery, school etc.
- Good idea
- Retail and smaller shops not housing
- The community needs Doctors, dentists and schools.
- Stop building ugly high rise flats !!!!! ..... which the people from Reading can't afford to buy even if we wanted to. Over recent years Reading has gone seriously down hill and by removing even more of our shops you are contributing to the demise of our town. If you remove the furniture shops currently there, where are people supposed to buy furniture from ?? Not everyone is able to shop online and I for one believe in supporting shops which provide employment.
- Good idea in principle but attracting business to this area could be challenging.
- No residential dwellings at all, keep the existing shops
- Workspace with charging units for laptops and mobiles for public as hybrid working is new normal. Affordable cafes too.
- Rather than building houses that our generation can't afford at the expense of jobs, consider looking at a smaller development which retains some of the retail and has office opportunities instead. It could work a lot better for the economy than building houses that are extortionately expensive and is driving the younger generation out of the market.
- I against turn the site into residential area (the town is crowded enough).
- no residential dwellings in any case, either keep existing shops or build sport facilities
- More than just a cafe, community facilities, healthcare, social, recreational spaces needed.
- Cafes with terrace in green space, space for gym/ yoga, newsagent style shop
- Independent retail shops. Secure bike parking for visitors.