

Appendix: Socio-Economics

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KEY LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)¹

- A1.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2021. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- A1.2** At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. It articulates the Government's vision for how the planning system should operate, and identifies three interdependent roles for the planning system, to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- An economic role – ensuring that the right amount of land is available at the right time and place in order to support growth, innovation and improved productivity;
 - A social role – providing a sufficient number and range of homes, accessible services, and open space in a well-designed and safe built environment, to meet the needs of present and future generations and to support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and,
 - An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- A1.3** The policy framework set out within Chapter 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy' and Chapter 8 'Promoting healthy and safe communities' is of greatest relevance to this socio-economic assessment.

Planning Practice Guidance (2020)²

- A1.4** The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out technical guidance, which provides further detail on the policies, set out within the NPPF. The PPG highlights the need for local authorities to identify economic and housing needs in their areas in order to plan effectively.
- A1.5** It also recognises that good quality design is an integral part of ensuring that development responds in a practical and creative way to both the function and amenity of a place, as it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives. Good design is considered to have the potential to deliver a number of planning objectives including, but not limited to, safe, connected and efficient streets; crime prevention; security measures; access and inclusion; and cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Regional Planning Guidance

Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016)³

- A1.6** As a ceremonial county, the Royal County of Berkshire does not have jurisdiction over planning policy within the Borough of Reading. However, its districts do coordinate to provide research and guidance which is consistent across its unitary authorities. Such guidance includes The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- A1.7** The SHMA is an extensive assessment of the housing needs across Berkshire. The assessment outlines the current housing provision for the county, population trends and correlating projected for housing needs, and a suggested framework for meeting these needs within each of the districts, including Reading.

Local Planning Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)⁴

- A1.8** Reading's Local Plan is a concise, all-in-one plan setting out the vision, objectives and policies for development in the Borough from 2019 to 2036. It identifies the level and nature of development that should take place, the areas and sites where projects are expected to be accommodated, where development should be restricted, and policies outlining how planning applications will be decided. The Plan covers sustainable development, economic growth, blue and green infrastructure, housing demand and provision, waste minimisation,

safeguarding existing amenities and heritage assets, and environmental management and protection. The particular policies of relevance to this assessment are:

- Policy CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development;
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding amenity;
- Policy EN9: Provision of open space;
- Policy EN10: Access to open space;
- Policy EM1: Provision of employment;
- Policy EM2: Location of new employment;
- Policy EM3: Loss of employment land;
- Policy H1: Provision of housing;
- Policy H2: Density and mix;
- Policy H3: Affordable housing;
- Policy H4: Build to rent schemes;
- Policy H5: Standards for new housing;
- Policy H6: Accommodation for vulnerable people; and
- Policy H10: Private and communal outdoor spaces.

Housing Strategy for Reading 2020 - 2025 (2020)⁵

- A1.9** The Housing Strategy for Reading 2020 – 2025 outlines the Borough's aims for providing adequate housing in the first half of the 2020s. These include providing enough housing for a growing population, ensuring housing and neighbourhoods are of quality design, maintaining affordability, and supporting residents.

Reading Open Spaces Strategy (2007)⁶

- A1.10** The Reading Open Spaces Strategy provides an overview of existing green infrastructure within the Borough including publicly accessible open and play spaces. The audit also defines general guideline for the distribution and size of open spaces within urban areas, recommended travel distances to various types of open and play spaces, and quality specifications for facilities.

Reading Open Spaces Strategy Update Note 2018 (2018)⁷

- A1.11** The Reading Open Spaces Strategy Update Note 2018 outlines the continuing need for high quality open spaces that are clean, safe and well-maintained. It also confirms the 2007 Open Spaces Strategy as broadly suitable guidance for planning and assessment purposes.

Other Relevant Standards and Guidance

- A1.12** Standards and guidance which have informed this chapter include:
- The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) *Employment Density Guide*, 3rd edition (2015);
 - The HCA *Additionality Guide*, 4th Edition (2014);
 - The HCA's *Calculating Cost Per Job – Best Practice Note*, 3rd Edition (2015);
 - His Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) *Employment Income Manual* (2023);
 - The Department for Transport (DfT) *New home to school travel and transport guidance* (2014); and
 - The Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales' *Trading Places: The Supply and Allocation of School Places* (1996).

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

² MHCLG (Live Document). *Planning Practice Guidance* [online]. Available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk>.

³ Berkshire Authorities and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (2016). *Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment*.

⁴ RBC (2019). *Reading Borough Local Plan*.

⁵ RBC (2020). *Housing Strategy for Reading 2020-2025*.

⁶ RBC (2007). *Reading Open Spaces Strategy*.

⁷ RBC (2018). *Reading Open Spaces Strategy Update Note 2018*.