

ET Planning

Client:

Premier Winter Wonderland Events

Winter Wonderland

Hills Meadow Car Park, George Street,
Caversham, Reading, RG10 0TG

Temporary erection of an ice rink, single marquee for skate hire/first aid, ancillary wooden chalets (trading/food), and a limited number of fairground rides and temporary boundary walling, heras-type fencing and event screening panels for a fixed period of 7th November – 3rd January 2027 in connection with Winter Wonderland

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a full planning application for the temporary erection of an ice rink, single marquee for skate hire/first aid, ancillary wooden chalets (trading/food), and a limited number of fairground rides and temporary boundary walling, heras-type fencing and event screening panels for a fixed period of 7th November 2026 – 3rd January 2027 in connection with Winter Wonderland at Hills Meadow Car Park, George Street, Caversham, Reading.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed. The application is accompanied by the following documents:
- Location Plan
 - Site/Block Plan
 - Plant Noise Assessment (November 2025)
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site is located within Hills Meadow, Caversham, Reading, where the temporary event “Winter Wonderland” has occurred for the past 4 years. This event occurs once a year over the winter period.
- 2.2 This forms part of the established Hills Meadow event area in Lower Caversham on the northern edge of the River Thames. The site comprises predominantly hardstanding car park land owned by Reading Borough Council and used for short term seasonal events, with the site surrounded by mature trees, public footpaths and the wider Hills Meadow Landscape setting.
- 2.3 The location is close to Reading Town Centre, with the River Thames bordered towards the south of the site. The site lies within Flood Zone 2 and partially within flood zone 3.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Application Ref PL/25/1225: Temporary erection of ice rink, marquee structure and ancillary side stalls in connection with Christmas festival, for a period of time not to be before 13 October 2025 and not to extend beyond 16 January 2026 for a period of 1 year. Approved with conditions 08/10/2025.
- 3.2 Application Ref PL/24/0898: Temporary erection of ice rink, marquee structure and ancillary side stalls in connection with Christmas festival, for a period of time not to be before 12 October 2024 and

not to extend beyond 19 January 2025 for a period of 1 year. Approved with conditions 09/10/2024.

- 3.3 Application Ref PL/23/1094: Temporary erection of ice rink, marquee structure and ancillary side stalls in connection with Christmas festival, for a period of time not to be before 15 October 2023 and not to extend beyond 21 January 2024. Approved 06/10/2023.
- 3.4 Application Ref PL/22/1171: Part retrospective temporary planning permission for erection of an ice rink, with marquee structure housing skate hire (and first aid) and ancillary side stalls in connection with holding a themed Christmas festival for a period of time not to be before 24 October 2021 and not extend beyond 16 January 2022 for a period of one year. Approved 27/10/2022.
- 3.5 Application Ref PL/21/1918: Part retrospective temporary planning permission for erection of an ice rink, with marquee structure housing skate hire (and first aid) and ancillary side stalls in connection with holding a themed Christmas festival for a period of time not to be before 24 October 2021 and not extend beyond 16 January 2022 for a period of one year. Approved 12/01/2022.
- 3.6 The planning history demonstrates that the Reading Winter Wonderland has been approved for the past 4 years. Within the committee report attached to **211918/FUL**, it was concluded that any future events at the site should be covered by a formal planning application, prior to the commencement of development.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The proposal relates to the temporary erection of an ice rink, with marquee accommodating skate hire (and first aid) and ancillary side stalls to facilitate a themed Christmas festival. The event will be set

up on 11 October 2026; the event will be open to the public from 7th November 2026 – 3rd January 2027; and the event will be taken down and the land restored by 20th January 2027.

4.2 For operating hours, these will be as follows:

- Monday to Friday – 15:00 to 22:00
- Saturday to Sunday – 11:00 to 22:00

4.3 From Saturday 12th December Winter Wonderland will operate every day from 11am-10pm. Meaning:

- Monday to Sunday – 11:00 to 22:00 (from 12/12)

4.4 Additionally, Christmas Day will have customised, limited operating hours:

- Christmas Day – 12:00 to 18:00

4.5 In terms of site layout, the central structure will comprise the 'Ice Rink' as the main attraction, which is approximately 30m × 15m. This will be accompanied by an ancillary marquee to accommodate skate hire and first aid.

4.6 With regards to rink capacity, this is capped at 118 skaters per 45-minute session, with a similar waiting cohort (site-wide peak capacity: approx. 500 patrons).

4.7 On the wider site, to complete the 'Christmas Market' aesthetic, ancillary wooden chalets will house individual food outlets and traders. Additionally, there will be several fairground rides.

4.8 The process of construction and de-rig will involve excavation or ground anchors. Structures are raised on limited bearing points (~4–6 per unit) and sit atop temporary track/protection (e.g., rola-trac

and carpet). To reiterate, all existing surfaces are protected and reinstated after de-rig.

- 4.9 An Event Management Plan was submitted to support approved application [ref: **PL/25/1225**], this has been replicated for the enclosed proposal and accompanies the submission documents.
- 4.10 The fencing work comprises solid closed-board/non-transparent heras-type panels and Heras fencing with event screening panels and banners/logos.
- 4.11 The rear and sides of the site will be formed of solid non-transparent panels to provide robust screening to the less public-facing parts of the event. The front, visitor facing sections will be formed of Heras fencing with decorative screening panels branded by Winter Wonderland. It is intended to provide a legible, attractive event frontage while preserving security and operational enclosure.
- 4.12 The panels will be standard temporary fencing standing at approximately 2m in height, supported by weighted feet or equivalent temporary supports. No posts will be dug into the ground and no permanent foundations are proposed.
- 4.13 Commencement of the fencing will occur during the build period between 11 October 2026 and removed from the site by 20 January 2027. The land will be restored to its previous condition on removal.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable

development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way” and “at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF comments that planning should “promote an effective use of land” in “meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”.

- 5.3 Paragraph 131 identifies that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”, whilst paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to “outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”
- 5.4 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.5 The relevant document to this proposal includes the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, which was adopted on 4 November 2019.
- 5.6 **Policy RL2** highlights that for cultural, leisure and retail development in Central Reading, this should seek to “*maintain and enhance the centres’ vitality and viability*”. In light of this, the enclosed proposal will increase the Town’s tourist appeal and enhance its cultural reputation, through providing an in-demand seasonal attraction that

is aptly suited to urban centres. Further to this, the site has approximately 50 employees and as such generates opportunities for locals and injects into Reading Town's economy.

- 5.7 Policy CR3 encourages imaginative uses of the public realm, particularly in city centre areas, and this is bolstered by Policy CR4 which pertains that "leisure, cultural and tourism uses that would attract a wide range of people into the centre will be encouraged". Due to the far-reaching appeal of 'Winter Wonderland' across all demographics, this hits the main points of both Policy CR3 and CR4. The fencing would ensure the influx of visitors and tourists attending the event would operate in a controlled manner, ensuring the enclosure of the site is maintained and progresses safely.
- 5.8 The principle of the development is supported by the fact that it has been approved on the same temporary basis for the past 4 years. There will be no permanent effects of the development, with full restoration of the ground on removal. As such, the principle of development is acceptable.
- 5.9 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** The site's location on an existing car park made up of flat, hardstanding ground creates a suitable surface for the erection of such fences. The proposal involves lightweight and temporary structures coupled with an organised layout that minimises any visual clutter.
- 5.10 The centralised location adjacent to the town centre effectively encourages the use of fencing, due to the existing urban form of the wider environment. Therefore, the proposal does not conflict with the prevailing character of the area. In any case, its temporary nature means that there would be no permanent impacts on the character of the area.

- 5.11 **Residential Amenity: Policy CC8** refers to safeguarding amenity, including impacts from noise and lighting on neighbouring uses.
- 5.12 The hours of operation are limited to daytime and evening (starting earliest at 10:00 and ending latest at 22:00). Moreover, the background music is tightly controlled, with any short live performances monitored to agreed limits. The Premises License secures this element, and a planning condition can be included to reflect its wording and parameters.
- 5.13 The lighting scheme will be intuitively designed to avoid glare/spill to neighbouring receptors and is switched off outside operating hours. Within the Event Management Plan, this covers complaint procedures and a rapid response protocol form. Overall, all noise on site will be carefully monitored and licensed, therefore, this is considered to be in accordance with **Policy CC8**.
- 5.14 An event management plan accompanies the application to ensure any potential noise and disturbance impacts are mitigated and properly managed.
- 5.15 **Noise:** A Plant Noise Assessment Report by Auricl Acoustic Consulting (dated 6 November 2025) was submitted to discharge condition 8 on the previous submission. To clarify, this was submitted in November 2025 and relates to the identical set-up and equipment, therefore, this report is still applicable to the proposed development.
- 5.16 The submitted report presents the results of a detailed environmental noise survey and an acoustic assessment of the proposed generator, a CES Power NEF4STM2A packaged generator. It confirms that:
- The predicted plant noise level at the nearest noise-sensitive properties (Kingfisher Place) is 45 dB LpA,

- This is below the applicable background noise levels of 51 dB LA90 (daytime) and 45 dB LA90 (night-time),
- The BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology has been applied in full, and
- The proposed plant complies with the requirements of Condition 8.

5.17 Accordingly, the report demonstrates that the proposed plant installation will not give rise to unacceptable noise emissions. Given that this was deemed acceptable for satisfying Condition 8 on the previous application and there is no material change to the plant set-up, this assessment demonstrates the acceptability of the development, regarding noise impacts.

5.18 **Trees and Landscaping:** No protected trees are on site or within close proximity to it.

5.19 In terms of landscaping, the proposed is situated within a fairly large area of hardstanding, meaning no change to the land will occur.

5.20 **Transport and Parking:** The site's highly accessible location demonstrated full compliance with Policy CC6, and therefore no highway alterations are necessary. The accompanying event management plan provides parking arrangements for operators, staff and coaches, as well as public transport arrangements and traffic management signs. This will ensure the safe running of the event.

5.21 The highways authority has previously confirmed that there are no transport objections to the granting of the temporary planning permission and that the site is in a very sustainable location, being 5 minutes from Reading Station and bus interchange; and a 10-minute walk from Central Reading. There is also a large public car park (Hills Meadow) adjacent to the site. The proposal would therefore not lead to adverse impacts on the highway network and is acceptable in highways terms.

- 5.22 **Drainage and SuDS: Policy EN18** (Flooding and SuDs) identifies that sites should reduce flood risk, incorporate sustainable drainage systems and provide safe access/egress. It is acknowledged that there are parts of the wider site that are located within Flood Zones 2/3. To clarify, the installation involves zero ground penetration, and all structures are both raised and reversible.
- 5.23 The public entrances and exits are positioned in higher areas and an agreed Flood Response Plan provides for controlled shutdown and safe egress, in the event that river levels rise.
- 5.24 In terms of surface water, this is controlled and drained to exiting gullies beneath temporary protection systems. Due to the temporary nature of the application and the mitigation as detailed, these flood risk management measures are proportionate and demonstrate compliance with **Policy EN18**.
- 5.25 **Ecology:** Due to the site's urban location, there are no known habitats or protected species in the vicinity. Further to this, the proposal is reversible, on a limited operational period and comprises mainly hardstanding, therefore, any impacts to the biodiversity network is negligible. Any temporary lighting scheme follows best practice, to ensure light spill to the river corridor is limited.
- 5.26 **Refuse storage:** Supporting details are enclosed regarding the on-site waste and refuse management arrangements, which form part of the operational management plan for the event. The key points are:
- Each night, all event waste is collected and stored in 2 x 1100-litre wheelie bins, which are then emptied into a Grundon mobile waste compactor located at the rear of the site (as shown on the attached site plan).
 - Once full, it is collected and transported to Grundon's recycling facility in accordance with the agreed waste management schedule.

- The compactor is a sealed, 100% leak-proof mobile unit.

5.27 The site-block plan clearly illustrates these policy compliant arrangements.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered that the fencing would not create adverse effects on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3 The proposals are time-limited, reversible and will be streamlined through an Event Management Plan (2026/2027) that amalgamates transport, amenity, flooding and environmental considerations. The proposal has been approved on numerous previous years.
- 6.4 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.



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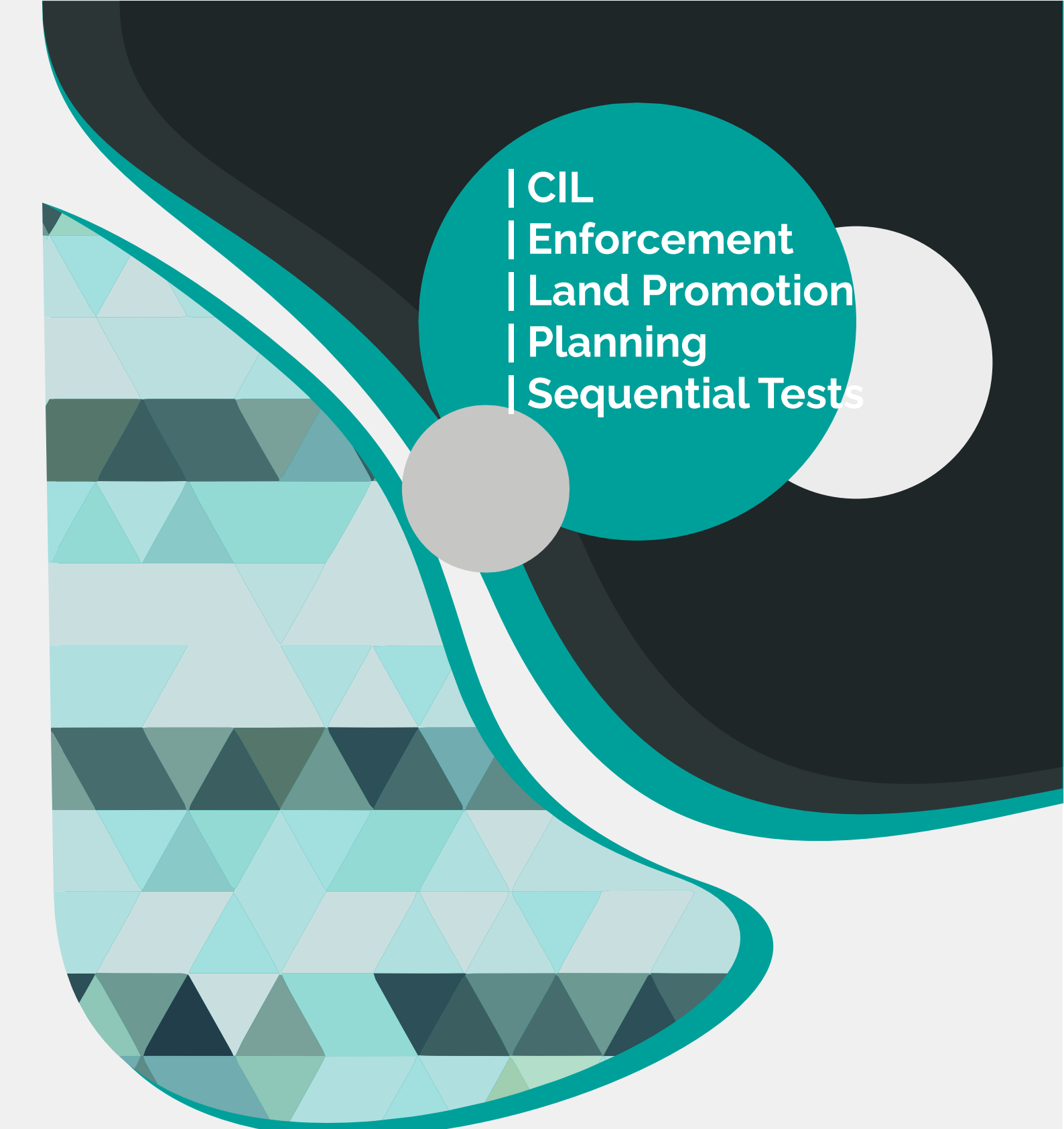


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