

CADRA Summary

Reading Borough Council

Partial Update of the Local Plan



Full Council on 15 October 2024 considered the revised draft of the partial update to the Local Plan:

- revised draft of the LP Partial Update is at [LocalPlanPartialUpdate-Appx1-small.pdf](#)
- Policies Map at [LocalPlanPartialUpdate-Appx2-small.pdf](#)
- list of submissions and responses (Appendix 3) at [LocalPlanPartialUpdate-Appx3.pdf](#)

A 6-week final public consultation on the draft Partial Update and the Policies Map in November-December will follow, before submission to the Secretary of State. This summary predates that consultation **but please see important update notes at the end since the launch of the consultation on 6 November 2024.**

CADRA has reviewed issues which might impact Caversham and in particular Emmer Green and extracted the following:

1. The Report to the Council summarises the outcomes of the consultation which ended in January and the key changes now made to the draft Partial Update. Additional sites put forward for development include "Remainder of Reading Golf Club, west of Kidmore End Road (out of Borough)", which has **not** been included in the revised draft Partial Update. "**Hemdean House School**, Hemdean Road (continued education/ community use or 22-34 dwellings)" has been included.
2. Para 4.2: Policy EN7 (Green Space and Public Open Spaces) continues to include Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Woods, Emmer Green Pond and Emmer Green Recreation Ground and Allotments as protected from development (no change).
3. With slight changes of wording, paras 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 still say that "Caversham and Emmer Green have relatively little scope for additional development compared to some other areas of Reading, as virtually the whole area is covered by residential areas with some public open space" and "There is not scope to accommodate any substantial proportion of the non-residential development needs". The target remains 700 homes, between 2023 and 2041.

4. Para 8.2.5 changes the wording in relation to the Thames crossing from working with neighbouring authorities on proposals for additional capacity to "to work up proposals for cross-Thames travel, although any additional crossing capacity would be likely to be largely within neighbouring authorities." The previous reference to a Henley Road park and ride site has now become "The Council continues to explore opportunities for new park and ride mobility hub sites within neighbouring authorities to help alleviate some of the issues identified."
5. There are no significant changes relating to Caversham Park.
6. In Appendix 3 to the Report, it is interesting to see what developers were proposing for Emmer Green and why the Council rejected their proposals:
 - Gladman (pp. 6-7) proposed that under the Duty to Cooperate RBC and SODC should be working together on the housing supply north of Reading. RBC responded: "No change needed. The Council is aware of its responsibilities under the duty to co-operate and has been fulfilling these as regards South Oxfordshire.... As set out in the Local Plan Partial Update, the Council does not consider that it has unmet housing needs, but nonetheless the Councils have co-operated on any potential unmet needs, including a formal duty to co-operate request."
 - Similarly, Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of Fairfax (pp. 21-22) proposed that SODC should contribute to meeting Reading's housing needs and that a further part of the Golf Course was the solution: "The Site affords an inherently sustainable location in providing for housing opportunity and choice as it is within walking and cycling distance of the facilities in and adjoining the Emmer Green District Centre." RBC responded: "The relationship with parts of South Oxfordshire is recognised and Reading continues to fulfil the duty to co-operate with SODC.... The Local Plan Partial Update does not give rise to unmet needs.... It is not considered appropriate for the Local Plan to endorse specific development sites outside its boundaries unless this development is part of a joined-up strategy with its neighbours...."
 - Reading Climate Action Network (p. 143) referred to the lack of grid capacity impacting on development of new homes "bearing in mind the recent experience at the golf course development in Emmer Green where insufficient capacity was available – but only because of inadequate planning." RBC

responded in part: "The Council is well aware of insufficient grid capacity and is working closely with SSE to ensure a smooth transition to net zero locally."

- Under comments on allocated sites, Woolf Bond (p. 276) noted that

"Whilst the allocation at the former Golf Club (CA1b) has planning permission for redevelopment, which has commenced, an allocation is required of the northern part of the site (lying within Reading Borough) to ensure the plan does not hinder development of the surplus parts south of Cucumber Wood within South Oxfordshire District." RBC responded: "No change proposed. In order to be deliverable, an allocation should be consistent with plans of adjoining authorities, and no such allocation is included within the South and Vale plan."

- In 3 further submissions (pp. 276-278) Woolf Bond again made the case for including further parts of the former golf course. RBC's responses included: "...the Council does not propose to endorse particular development in adjoining authorities unless it is a part of a joint approach with those authorities. This land is not identified within the South and Vale Local Plan, and it is not considered appropriate for the Local Plan Partial Update to endorse it."

- Savills on behalf of Beechcroft Developments (pp. 279-281) proposed that there should be further residential development on Caversham Park. RBC responded: "No change proposed. The development at Caversham Park now has a resolution to grant permission subject to S106. This was achieved by careful weighing of considerations for this important asset in line with the policy. Updating the policy is not considered to be necessary...."

Please note updates

1. This summary was completed 25 October 2024, before the launch on 6 November 2024 of the six-week consultation ending 18 December 2024. [Local Plan Partial Update - Reading Borough Council](#). The focus of the consultation is whether the plan is legally compliant, fulfils the duty to co-operate and meets the 'tests of soundness', as set out in [paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#).

2. The consultation for The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Draft Local Plan 2041 was published for consultation ending on 12 November.
https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/policy-and-programmes/jlp_publication_stage/
3. In the paper on the duty to cooperate [Duty to Co-operate Statement November 2024 \(reading.gov.uk\)](#), RBC wrote to neighbouring authorities to understand whether there would be scope to accommodate any unmet needs that would arise should the Partial Update be based on the standard methodology to assess housing numbers (ie a higher number). But that it is: *important to note that Reading's position is that its Partial Update will meet its housing needs in full, and that it does not intend that there will be unmet needs that neighbouring authorities need to accommodate.*

In response, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse wrote to RBC that: *We would also observe that both South and Vale's current adopted plan spatial strategies and the emerging spatial strategy in the Joint Local Plan do not envisage significant growth near to Reading. This is because the area near to Reading has a number of physical, infrastructure and landscapes constraints in particular.*

And that: *work on the Joint Local Plan has not made any provision for meeting unmet needs from Reading as discussions had been on the basis of Reading meeting its own needs, and there should be a joint exploration of alternatives before any such provision would be made. South and Vale already engage with Oxford City Council around their unmet need.*