

Planning Policy Context (Landscape and Visual)

## Planning Framework

### Emerging Policy in the Draft SE Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy)

- 1.1 Draft SE Plan \_ Policy BE7 : Management of the Historic Environment; seeks to ensure that the contribution that the historic environment makes to local distinctiveness is protected and enhanced where possible.

### Saved Policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016

- 1.2 The Berkshire Structure Plan was developed through a Joint Strategic Planning Unit which covers the six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the old system of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG), Structure Plans and Local Plans will be replaced with a new one, made up of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Until these new systems are in place, planning decisions must continue to be taken in accordance with the policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.3 General policies within the Structure Plan provide context for more detailed policies within each authorities local plan. Landscape is covered within Chapter 5 '*Environment*' through policies such as Policy EN1: Landscape which states that:

*'The distinctiveness of county and district-level Landscape Character Types and Areas will be maintained in line with the strategy option developed for each area.'*

- 1.4 This ensures that the qualities of the wide variety of natural and man-made landscapes within the area are protected.

### Local Planning Policy

- 1.5 The site at Reading University is located over two local authority areas including Reading and Wokingham Boroughs. A summary of policies which relate to the University campus are included below.

### Reading Borough Council Saved Polices of the Local Plan 1991-2006 (Adopted October 1998) and the Reading Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008)

#### *Relevant Policies*

- Policy KEY4: Areas of Development
- Policy NE6: Protecting Wildlife Habitats & Natural Features on or adjoining development sites

- Policy CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space
- Policy COM6: Reading University
- Policy CUD6: Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
- Policy CUD7: New Development in Conservation Area
- Policy CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
- Policy CS24: Car / Cycle Parking
- Policy CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

*Policy KEY4: Areas of Development*

- 1.6 This policy is used to protect open areas outside of the built up area from inappropriate development. The policy covers areas between the main built up area of Reading and the countryside and is applicable to the whole of the university campus site.

*Policy NE6: Protecting Wildlife Habitats & Natural Features on or adjoining development sites*

- 1.7 All development shall retain and protect wildlife habitats and natural features on or adjacent to the site during construction to ensure safe guard measures are in place to protect the natural environment.

*Policy CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space*

- 1.8 This policy seeks to ensure new development would not detract from the character or appearance of areas designated as a major landscape feature. The designation areas are ; - The Thames Valley, The Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows, The West Reading Wooded Ridgeline, The East Reading Wooded Ridgeline and The North Reading Dry Valleys.

*Policy COM6: Reading University*

- 1.9 This policy describes appropriate development to enable the University to develop and grow whilst protecting wildlife habitats and the historical landscape. The policy states that:

*'Reading University is recognised as a major local institution and as a strategically important educational establishment which will adapt and expand over the plan period. The council will, where appropriate, encourage development for university uses.*

*In assessing such proposals, the Council will have particular regard to the following:*

- *The historic landscape of the campus;*
- *Important wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors;*
- *Listed buildings and their setting;*
- *The amenity of residential properties nearby;*
- *Local traffic movements and the council's parking standards;*
- *The safety of those using the campus.'*

- 1.10 The supporting text for the policy notes that the Council recognises the need for the University to adapt and grow in response to new demands upon its services but acknowledges the importance of balancing these demands with those interests identified above. Most of the important wildlife habitats of the campus are located outside Reading Borough. However, the area as a whole provides a resource for wildlife, including links to other habitats. The Council, the University and Wokingham Borough Council have therefore drawn up development principles for the campus, in conjunction with Structure Plan and Local Plan policies, which will be used as the basis for development control.

*Policy CUD6 : Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas*

- 1.11 This policy seeks to ensure that the demolition of unlisted buildings will only be permitted if the structure is beyond repair, incapable of beneficial use or removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.
- 1.12 The university site is adjacent to a Conservation Area.

*Policy CUD7: New Development in Conservation Area*

- 1.13 This policy seeks to ensure new development should make contribution to the overall area by respecting or enhancing its architectural and visual quantities and achieving high standards of design.

*Policy CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans*

- 1.14 This policy seeks to ensure major development proposals commit to implementation measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities through agreed travel plans and safe circulation routes that encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport

*Policy CS24: Car / Cycle Parking*

- 1.15 This policy seeks to ensure maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements are applied in relation to accessibility of locations within the Borough

*Policy CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands*

- 1.16 This policy seeks to ensure that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands are protected from damage or removal and the Boroughs vegetation cover will be protected

Wokingham District Council Local Plan Mar 97 – Mar 06 (Policies saved beyond 28 Sept 2007)

*Relevant Policies:*

- WOS3: General Development Principles
- WCC3: The Central Berkshire Forest (outside the Green Belt)
- WNC5: Protection and Management of Wildlife Heritage Sites

- WBE4: Landscape and Planting
- WBE5: Trees and New Development
- WHE4: Historic Parks & Gardens: Conservation, Restoration & New Development
- WEM6: Whiteknights Park, University of Reading
- WEM7: University Related Research Developments at Whiteknights Park
- WT9: Development of a Cycleway Network

*WOS3: General Development Principles*

- 1.17 This policy seeks to ensure development will be appropriate in scale of activity and character to the area in which they are located and be integrated into their surrounding environment. There should be no detrimental impact upon important man-made, landscape and nature conservation feature.
- 1.18 Provisions for further landscape treatment where relevant to the type of development and or the protection of local amenity.
- 1.19 Be of high quality design that respects the local context by virtue of sitting, layout, massing, materials, colour and texture.

*WCC3: The Central Berkshire Forest (outside the Green Belt)*

- 1.20 The Central Berkshire Forest area covers part of the University site. This policy aims to protect and enhance individual trees and woodland within the area. Within this area, the Council aims to increase tree cover through the conservation of existing trees and the promotion of new tree planting to be secured in association with new development.

*WNC5: Protection and Management of Wildlife Heritage Sites*

- 1.21 New development proposals will need to take into account the impact on the nature conservation value of designated wildlife heritage sites. Where harm would occur, suitable compensation measures must be undertaken, generally where possible nature conservation interests will be protected, managed and enhanced.

*WBE4: Landscape and Planting*

- 1.22 New development shall be enhanced through the use of appropriate landscaping. Landscape schemes should respect local character and wherever possible retain and protect existing natural features. Tree and shrubs to comprise locally native species wherever possible.

*WBE5: Trees and New Development*

- 1.23 Trees and areas of woodland that are to be retained will be properly protected during the course of construction. Tree preservation orders will be applied and the loss or damage of trees protected by new or existing orders will be resisted.

*WHE4: Historic Parks & Gardens: Conservation, Restoration & New Development*

- 1.24 This policy seeks to ensure that development would not adversely affect the character and features, or historical context, or the setting of parks and gardens of special historical interest.
- 1.25 Whiteknights Park is recorded on the Berkshire sites and monuments record and is therefore covered by this policy. Effects in relation to cultural heritage are considered further in Chapter 7 of this ES.

*WEM6: Whiteknights, University of Reading*

- 1.26 This policy seeks to encourage development for university use and in assessing such schemes will have regard to the following matters:
- Historic landscape, open areas, listed buildings and their settings
  - Important wildlife habitats and corridors
  - Residential amenity
  - Local traffic movements, car parking standards and the safety needs of those using the campus, including persons with mobility or sensory impairments.

- 1.27 As discussed above, a Wildlife Heritage Site is present within the campus.

*WEM7: University related research developments at Whiteknights*

- 1.28 This policy seeks to ensure building proposals to be occupied by an organisation other than the university within Whiteknights is used purely for the purposes of research and development related to the work of the university and for no other business purpose.

*WT9: Development of a Cycleway Network*

- 1.29 This policy aims to reduce the use of the private car through the provision of safe, well lit, and signed cycle ways of adequate width within urban areas and to link all towns and major villages..
- 1.30 The cycleway network of the Borough includes a route which passes through Whiteknights Park. Development proposals which may affect the route will therefore be subject to this policy.
- 1.31 The Wokingham Core Strategy is currently being prepared and is not projected to be adopted until January 2009. The Core Strategy consultation document carries not weight in decision making terms.