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## Reading's Local Plan update

Following the examination process, the independent planning inspector submitted her final report on 24th September 2019.

Subject to a number of identified modifications (contained in the main modifications appendix) this found the Local Plan to be sound and legally compliant.

## Reading Local Plan — KEG's comments

The Reading Local Plan covering the period to 2036 has now been finalised by the Planning Inspector and is expected to be approved by the Council in November 2019.

The only area of land included in the plan that is significant to Emmer Green is part of Reading Golf Club. In particular, it is an area of 3.75 hectares (9.25 acres) that is at present occupied by the clubhouse, the car park and approximately 50% of the fairways of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes. The plan acknowledges that this area could accommodate between 90 and 130 houses, a public open-space, a healthcare facility and a car park. The plan also states that a legal agreement will be necessary to ensure that the golf function is retained and development will not take place until a replacement clubhouse is provided and vehicular access from suitable roads is in place. The 3.75 hectare site is planned to be delivered in the latter part of the plan period from 2026 onwards.

The Local Plan also:-

- Identifies a shortfall of just 230 homes for Reading until 2036, a number which is so small as to not need any large-scale developments in Emmer Green
- Notes the lack of healthcare in the Caversham and Emmer Green area
- Confirms that suitable roads should be used to access the area to be retained for golf
- Requires that the traffic impact on Tanners Lane should be mitigated

**BUT . . .** Reading Golf Club have made it clear that that the Plan does not affect their decision to relocate to Caversham Heath and have confirmed that they intend to vacate the whole of the Club land sometime between 31 October 2020 and 31 March 2021. They have given no indication of the plan for developing the course and have stated that this is a matter for the developers appointed by the Club.

In their submission to the Government Inspector in July it was made clear by the Club that, having changed developers from Wates to Fairfax, the Club has significant less upfront money available and they would no longer be able to implement a family friendly golf area on the remaining land within Reading. This is despite the fact that it was only 12 months ago that the Golf Club put forward a 'family golf offer' to the Government Inspector in their response to the draft Local Plan.

The Golf Club have indicated that it is their intention to continue with a 9 hole facility on the land within South Oxfordshire but of course this would only be a short term facility until planning permission is sought for the whole of that land. This is something that Fairfax can be expected to do over the next five to ten years.

Quite how the golf course will be secured after the relocation remains a mystery. Obviously, all boundaries and access points of the remaining land within Reading and SODC will need to be completely secured to protect against unauthorised access and occupation but there is a serious risk that, unless adequate measures are taken, unauthorised occupation will inevitably take place.

## Emmer Green is under threat from Developers and our environment and community is at risk!

- Increasing pollution that is already above acceptable levels
- Traffic congestion reaching gridlock
- Schools and Doctors' surgeries unable to cope
- Destroying green spaces and impacting on our health
- Disappearing leisure facilities that cannot be replaced
- Construction traffic on local roads for years to come

## CA1b final wording and Inspector's comments

Continue to Page 2 to read CA1b final wording and Inspector's comments plus links to the full documents on Reading Borough Council's website . . .

## With your help we can stop this now

KEG is determined to keep up the fight against developers who profit at the expense of the local community and loss of the surrounding countryside

Should you no longer wish to receive emails from KEG please send an email to [hello@keepemmergreen.com](mailto:hello@keepemmergreen.com) with the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject line

## Reading's Local Plan wording

The wording in the plan, following the Main Modifications required by the Inspector, relating to the Golf Club land is as follows:-

Development for residential and replacement clubhouse, subject to the future provision of golf on the remainder of the Golf Club site, which fulfils an important sports and leisure function for Reading, being secured. On-site facilities should be provided to mitigate impacts on community infrastructure, including for healthcare. On-site public open space will be provided.

Development should:

- Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;
- Provide a green link across the site from Kidmore End Road to the remainder of the golf course, rich in plant species and habitat opportunities;
- Ensure that vehicular access is provided from suitable roads to the area to be retained for golf;
- Take measures to mitigate impacts on the highway network, particularly on Kidmore End Road and Tanners Lane;
- Include all parking requirements within the site to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets;
- Take account of potential archaeological significance; and
- Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.

Site size: 3.75 ha 90-130 dwellings, community provision including healthcare and replacement clubhouse.

The plan also states that:-

Residential development on the part of the Reading Golf Club site is dependent on ensuring the future use of the remaining land for golf, in line with the need to protect important sports and leisure facilities set out in Policy RL6. Development will need to be careful to ensure that vehicular access from suitable roads continues to be provided to the remaining golf uses to ensure that they remain operable. A legal agreement will be necessary to ensure that the golf function is retained, and development for residential will not take place until a replacement clubhouse is provided and vehicular access from suitable roads is in place.

## Inspector's comments

In her report on the examination of the plan the Inspector makes the following comments in relation to the Golf Club land:

Policy CA1b (Part of Reading Golf Club, Kidmore End Road) is allocated for residential development and a replacement clubhouse. A large part of the golf course is located within South Oxfordshire. Although the Golf Club indicated that the golf facilities may be located elsewhere, discussions with South Oxfordshire are still on-going in terms of retaining a 9-hole golf course. For the residential development to be justified, Main Modification 59 is necessary to secure the provision of golf on the remainder of the golf club site. Consequential changes are also necessary to the supporting text. This includes a legal agreement which would be necessary in planning terms to ensure the golf offer is secured, provide suitable access, and the clubhouse before residential development.

The requirement for a replacement clubhouse is necessary to help ensure the relationship with the remaining land and site CA1b is retained, and for it to be consistent with Policy RL6 (Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses) of the LP. However, it would not be justified to specify the size of the clubhouse, it would depend on the nature of any future planning application. The policy therefore allows flexibility for it to be accommodated at an appropriate location and format within the site. To be effective, the criteria does not need to specify that this would be a permanent facility.

Taking account of the identified lack of healthcare in the area, to be effective the Main Modification also refers to the need include healthcare provision as part of the scheme. The type of healthcare provision and the amount of open space do not need to be specified as this would be assessed in line with other policies in the LP at the time of any planning application. The Main Modification also confirms that suitable roads should be used to access the area to be retained for golf, that traffic impacts on Tanners Lane should also be mitigated. These would also be determined in accordance with any planning application and LP policies including TR1 and TR3. The wording of bullet (4) does not limit consideration of traffic implications to Kidmore End Road and Tanners Lane. However, it is necessary to specify that parking requirements should be met on site to avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets.

This site is planned to be delivered in the latter part of the plan period from 2026 onwards, this is necessary to be consistent with the strategy for Caversham and Emmer Green and the wider Spatial Strategy. Subject to the Main Modification, the allocation of residential development at site CA1b is justified.

Click below for links to full documents on RBC's website:

[Final Inspectors Report 24092019.pdf](#)

[Main Modifications Appendix 24092019.pdf](#)