



Arts, Heritage and Sport Consultation 2014- 616 Responses

Introduction

The word culture means different things to people. It covers a wide variety of activities (for example sport, arts, plays), places (for examples, libraries, museums, theatres, built heritage, parks) values and beliefs that contribute to a sense of identity and wellbeing for everyone in our communities.

There are many benefits to developing a strategy. Culture is important in promoting a sense of national and local identity and pride. Participation in sport and providing children with the opportunity to play and have positive impacts on health

Background

The development and implementation of Reading's next Culture and Heritage Strategy is a key objective in the Cultural Partnerships Terms of Reference.

A Heritage Strategy for Reading has been developed as part of the next steps for the Abbey Quarter project and this will connect to the wider Culture & Heritage Strategy.

'Your Say: Arts, Heritage and Sport' will help to shape Reading's new Culture and Heritage Strategy. Responses will be used to inform the strategy and generate ideas on how sport and culture can play an even bigger role in promoting wellbeing and be an integral part of an even more vibrant and economically successful town.

Methodology

The consultation was launched on 9th June and ran until the 30th September. The consultation was available to view on the Council website and also via a hard copy in the form of a postcard. Respondents were asked to give their views in the following:

- As a local resident or visitor what does culture mean to you?
- How do you take part in the Arts?
- How do you take part in Heritage?
- How do you take part / enjoy sports?
- Why do you take part in cultural activities?
- What do you like about cultural life in Reading?
- What would you like to see more of?

Promotion

The online survey and hard copies were promoted in a number of ways including

- A press release for the consultation was published on the Council's website, and sent to local media.
- A link to the consultation was available on the front page of the Councils website
- The consultation appeared weekly in Reading Arts newsletter- Postcards were distributed to Reading venues including Libraries, Leisure Centres, the Hexagon, Museum, South Street



- Postcards were handed out at various events including Reading Arts week, Waterfest
- Postcards were also hand-out during the Jelly programme of engagement events throughout the summer (detailed engagement report attached)
- The link to the consultation was sent out to everybody on Abbey Quarter database

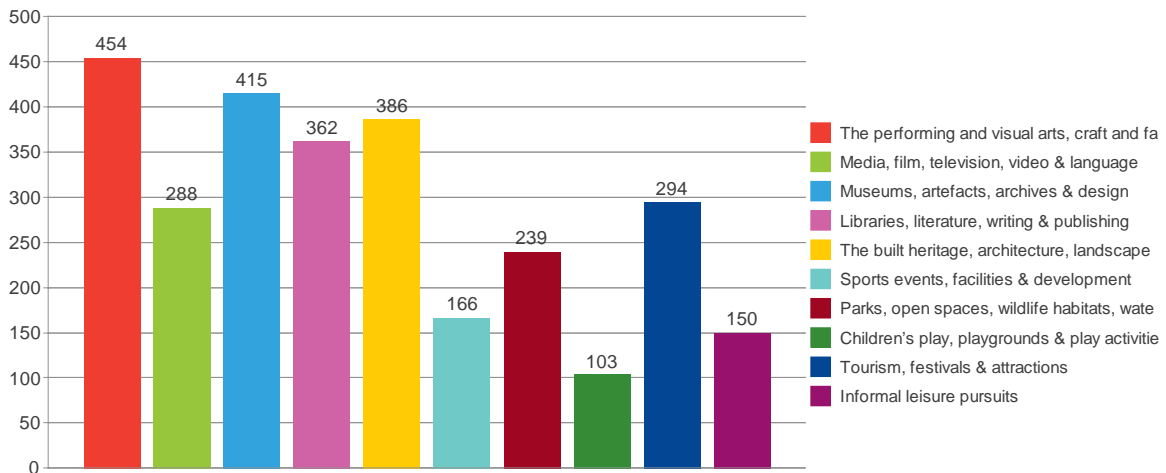
Summary of Responses

In total there were 616 responses to the Art, Heritage and Sport Consultation. Of these 507 were online consultation responses and 109 were hard copies. Responses to the questions below have been grouped thematically.

We Asked

1. As a local resident or visitor, please tell us what does Culture mean to you?

As a local resident or visitor, please tell us what does Culture mean to you? (Tick all that apply)





On this question respondents has the opportunity to provide other responses:

Question 1 Word Cloud Analysis

As a local resident or visitor, please tell us what does Culture mean to you? Anything else - please state below



You Said

Learning- Some people told us that culture was about learning and education maybe formally through courses and research or informally through new experiences. (37)

Diversity- A number of people said culture was understanding diversity y. For some respondents this meant the diversity of Reading and for other diversity is something that enriches people’s lives. (36)

Identity and Pride- Some respondents told us that for them culture meant the identity of an individual or shared identity and pride of a community or a place. (34)

History and Heritage- A number of respondent felt that culture was about history and heritage, some people mentioned historic architecture and local history. Others said that culture meant a sense of history. (32)

Values, Traditions and Beliefs- Some people felt that culture was a mixture of values and traditions; this could be faith, religious belief, shared or family traditions. (31)



Important part of life- Some people saw culture as an important part of life, and as something that adds and enriches people's lives. (22)

Social and Community Activities- Some people suggested that culture was community events or social activities. (20)

Bringing people together-Some respondents felt that culture was about social interaction and bringing people together. (19)

Music- Some people specifically mentioned that culture for them meant music. (15)

Interesting things to do- Culture for a small number means having interesting things to do or places to go, which are engaging. (14)

Food- A few people thought that culture also meant experiences through different foods. (9)

Self-expression and Representation-A few people thought that culture was self-expression and how people present themselves. (7)

Accessible- A few people thought that it was important to be able to access culture. (5)

Sport- A few people mentioned sport as culture. (3)

We Asked

2. How do you take part in the Arts? (e.g. visits to galleries, painting, concerts)

Question 2 Word Cloud Analysis

How do you take part in the Arts (eg visits to galleries, painting, concerts)





You Said

Enjoy Live Music- Lots of people shared the ways which they enjoy live music these included, concerts, gigs, festivals, recitals, local/community bands and national acts. Some people mentioned Reading Festival and the Forbury Bandstand as places they enjoy music. Some of the genres people enjoy were folk, classical, opera, choirs, jazz, pop and indie. (292)

Galleries and Exhibitions- Lots of respondents told us that they visit galleries, exhibitions and art trails. People also enjoy arts and sculptures indoors and in open spaces, temporary arts installations, art studio trails, visit art shows and art fairs. (277)

Watching Performing Arts- Many people enjoyed watching performing arts, the following were specifically mentioned: theatre, dance, stage shows, musicals, ballet and opera at both local and national theatres and venues and at an amateur or professional level. Many people mentioned local theatre groups such as Reading Rep Theatre and Reading Progress Theatre. (151)

Local Venues, Galleries and Museums- Many people told us about the local venues where they enjoyed the arts these included the Concert hall, the Hexagon, Progress Theatre, Palmer Park, South Street Arts Centre, RISC, Forbury Gardens Bandstand, The Global Café, The Rising Sun Arts Centre, Jelly, and Caversham Court. They also told us about the local galleries and museums they visit specifically the Lemon Grove, the Sir John Madejski Gallery, Open Hand Space at the Keep, Reading Museum and the Museum of English Rural Life. (109)

Art and Arts and Crafts- Many respondents produced and in some cases exhibit their own art and commissions, these include painting, drawings and illustrations, legal street art, photography, stained glass, film production, textiles, printmaking while others enjoy arts and crafts, and attend craft sessions. (81)

Local events- Many respondents shared a variety of local events they have attended where they have taken part in the Arts such as Reading Festival, Jelly events, Eat Reading Festival, Reading Arts Weeks, Whiteknights Art Trails, Reading Carnival, Caversham Festival, Reading Fringe, Open House Events, Whitley Arts Festival, Caversham Open Air Cinema, Forbury Bandstand Summer Season, Waterfest, Reading University Degree Show and WOMAD. (77)

Museums- Some respondents said they like to visit museums, historical sites and properties to take part in the arts. (68)

Cinema and Film- Some people enjoy the arts through film, including mainstream, independent and art house film. Some people mentioned Reading Film Theatre, Open Air Cinema like that at Caversham Court, independent cinemas, film festival events, live performance viewings and a few had produced their own films. (59)

Play Music or Sing- Some people actively enjoy music through playing or singing. Some of the ways people mentioned were singing in a choir such as Reading Lunchtime Choir,



Reading Chorale, Reading Bach Choir and Reading Minster other people played in bands and a few people mentioned specifically Beatroots Samba Band, Small Strings Ukulele Band and at Readipop. (56)

Literature and Libraries- A few people enjoyed the art through literature and libraries these included book groups, writing, poetry readings, literary festivals, writers groups, reading and use of libraries. (40)

Courses, Classes, Workshops and Talks- Some respondents attend or teach classes and workshops for all ages such as drama, life drawing, painting and craft workshops, dance classes, music courses, ceramics, flower arranging, pottery. Others either attend or give talks or lectures to others on the arts. (39)

Participate in performing arts- Some respondents shared that they also liked to participate in performing arts through many ways; local amateur dramatics, musical performing societies, production and direction, professional and amateur acting. Some of the groups mentioned were Beautiful Creatures Theatre Company, Progress Theatre, Reading Rep Theatre and Reading Between the Lines Theatre Company. (36)

London Galleries and Theatre - Some people specifically mentioned attending galleries in London or nationally and others told us that London better suited what they were looking for. These people mentioned in particular the National Gallery, TATE, the V & A and London theatres. (33)

Work or Volunteering- A few people said that they take part in Arts through their work, volunteering opportunities or helping with the organisation of events, exhibitions and performances. (33)

Comedy- Some respondents said they enjoyed comedy, in particular they mentioned South Street Arts Centre and the Hexagon as venues they have visited for comedy. (19)

Friends Groups and Membership- A few respondent told us about the Friend groups and memberships they had, these included Member of Reading Film Theatre, Reading Guild of Artists, Progress Theatre, the Georgian Society, Arts Fund, V & A, British Museum, Tate, Royal Academy, NADFAS, National Portrait Gallery, Sadler's Wells. (15)



We Asked

- 3. How do you take part in Heritage? (e.g visits to museums, historic attractions)

Question 3 Word Cloud Analysis

How do you take part in Heritage? (eg visits to museums, historic attractions)



You Said

Museums- Lots of respondents told us that they visit museums according to interest, with family and friends, while on holiday to learn about the places they visit, national or local museums, they also visit for special exhibitions. (301)

Reading Museum and Blakes Lock- Many people told us that they visited Reading Museum whether occasionally or regularly, they also attended events, activities and exhibitions, have visited themselves and with children(86)

Museum English Rural Life (MERL)- Some respondents told us about regular or occasional visits to MERL, they also visited to exhibitions and talks. (29)

Local Museums and Sites- Some people mentioned a range of other local museums that they visit and enjoy including Museum of Berkshire Aviation, the River and Rowing Museum, Berkshire Medical Museum, REME Museum of Technology, URE Museum of Greek Archaeology and Silchester Roman Town. (25)



London National/Museums and Attractions- Some people told us about national or London attractions that they visit, these included British Museums, Victoria and Albert, St Pauls, Cortauld, Pitt Rivers, National History Museum and the Tate Modern. (29)

Historical Attractions- A lot of respondents told us they take part in heritage by visiting a range historical attractions these included National Trust properties, archaeological sites, historical monuments historic gardens and landscapes, castles, houses, architectural sites, Open House Weekends, churches, digs and excavations. (270)

Local History- Many respondents had a particular and active interest in local history and learnt about it through visiting places of interest locally, appreciated local buildings and architecture. (67)

Events- many people told us about the heritage event and activities they have taken part in such as guided walks, talks, educational events, heritage trails, museum activities, lectures, Heritage Open Days, digs and excavations. (66)

Abbey Ruins and Forbury Gardens- Some people mentioned that they had visited the Abbey Ruins before they were closed or they had attended a tour since its closure, some mentioned that they would like to see them re-opened; other had attended events in the Forbury Gardens (51)

Memberships and Friends Groups- Some people told us that they were a member of a friends groups or interest group these included the National Trust, Reading Civic Society, Friends of Reading Museum, Friends of Reading Abbey, Berkshire Archaeology Research Group, Friends of British Museum, English Heritage, Historic Houses Association, Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, Reading History Society and the Art Fund. (48)

Volunteering or Work, Organising events- A small number of respondents told us that they take part in heritage through volunteering, work or by organising events. Some of the examples they gave were Heritage Open Days at Caversham Court and the Abbey Quarter, volunteering at MERL or Reading Museum or heritage attractions, working archives, working on heritage projects, as a trustee of museum, raising awareness for local history, written or published book on aspects of Reading's history, volunteering arts centres, organising exhibitions and events, leading walks and talks and heritage trails. (19)

Building Preservation- A few respondents told us that they had an interest in the preservation of heritage and heritage building techniques, they supported heritage preservations and found it important. (9)

Caversham Court Gardens - A few people have visited Caversham Court Gardens. (8)

Archives and Records Office- A small number of respondents use the archives and records office to take part in heritage. (5)

No heritage in Reading- A few people felt that there wasn't much heritage in Reading. (6)



We Asked:

4. How do you take part/enjoy Sports (eg participating in, watching, coaching)

Question 5 Word Cloud Analysis

How do you take part / enjoy in Sports (eg participating in, watching, coaching)



You Said:

Actively Participate- Lots of people told us a variety of ways in which they actively participated in sport or exercise; this could be formal and informal, on their own or as part of a team of group, with family and friends. (354)

Lots respondents told us how they took part in sport individually, though individual exercise and training or individuals sports. (201)

Many respondents told us about how they take part in sports as part of as a member a sports team or club or in a group sport or activity. (56)

The variety of sports that respondents told us they participated in or watched- Football, rowing, sailing, rugby, american football, water polo, basketball, running and running groups, table tennis, walking, cycling, netball, volleyball, tennis, hockey, boules, squash, rounders, rambling, cricket, badminton, swimming or synchronised swimming, gym/training, swimming, dance (zumba, tap dance, salsa), cycling, hiking, boxing, mountain biking, kickboxing, exercise classes, rock climbing, canoeing, golf, horse riding, power walking, ice skating, roller skating, aerobics, Nordic walking, pilates, Tai Chi, yoga,



fishing, triathlons, skiing, Chi Kiung, boot camps, scuba diving, snorkelling, aqua aerobics, fencing, gymnastics, circuit training and Tae kwon do.

Watch/ Support Sport- Many people watch a variety of sports either on TV or live, some those specifically mentioned are football, rugby, tennis. Some people also mentioned specific sporting events such as Wimbledon, the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games. (122)

Parks and Outdoor Spaces- Many respondents told us that they used local parks and outdoor spaces for participating in sport this included using playground spaces, running or walking in local parks and along canals and rivers, cycling and training. (47)

Local Sports Teams- Many respondents told us that they watched and in some cases held season tickets for some of the larger local teams including Reading FC, London Irish and Reading Rockets. (40)

Sports and Leisure Centres- Some people told us that they use local sport and leisure centres to participate in sport. This included swimming, using the gym or sports courts and exercise classes. Some of these had leisure centre or gym membership. (38)

Work or Volunteer- Some respondents participate in sport though their work or others volunteer through coaching for sports teams or organising sports events. (30)

Community Sport Events- Some people told us about community sports events that they participate in such as Reading Half Marathon, the Race for Life, fun runs, charity walks and Reading Park Run. (20)

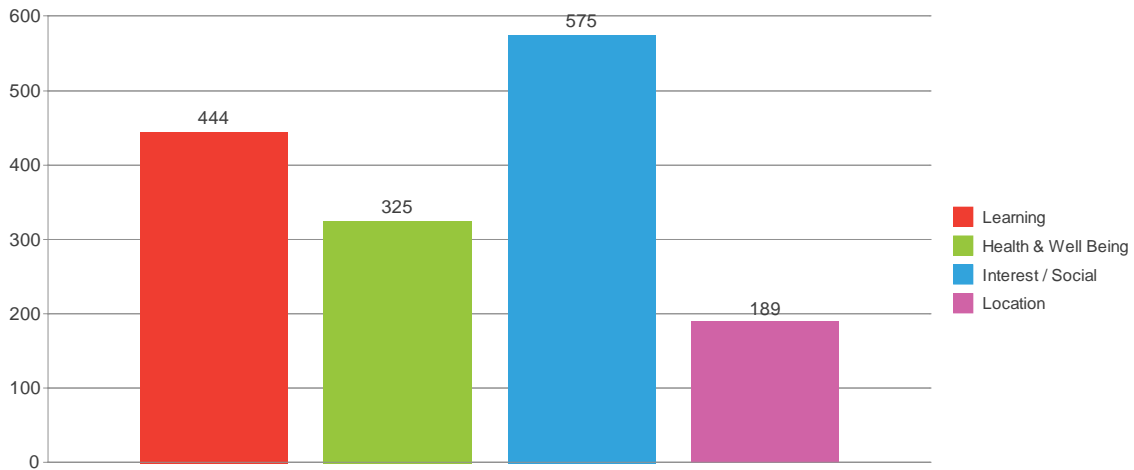
Do not participate regularly or at all- Some of the respondents told us that they don't take part in sports very much or at all. (78)



We Asked

5. Why do you take part in Cultural activities?

Why do you take part in Cultural activities?



On this question respondents had the opportunity to provide other responses.

Question 5 Word Cloud Analysis

Why do you take part in Cultural activities? - Other (Please Specify)





You Said

Enjoyment or Pleasure- Many people told us that they take part in cultural activities for enjoyment or pleasure. (32)

Self-expressions and Creativity- A few people said that they felt cultural activities allowed them to be creative and express themselves or to inspire them. Some said that cultural activities were an important part to their lives and well-being. (20)

Learning or Personal Development-Some respondents told us that they saw cultural activity as an opportunity to learn and for personal development. (16)

Personal or Professional Interest-A small number of people said that they take part in culture through personal or professional interest. (13)

To feel connected to where I live/to contribute- A few respondents said that cultural activities made them feel like they were connected or had contributed to the place they live. It also made them feel part of the community (10)

Spend Time with or Meet New People- A few people suggested that cultural activities were a good way to meet new people or spend time with similar people. Others take part in cultural activities in order to spend time with family and friends. (9)



We Asked

6. What do you like about cultural life in Reading?

Question 6 Word Cloud Analysis

What do you like about Cultural Life in Reading?



You Said

Variety & diversity - Many people commented on the variety, good quality and vibrancy in cultural programme and events and a range of international to community. Some people said that council events were complemented by voluntary sector events. (151)

Good venues and arts centres - Many responded that there are a number of venues and arts centres which host good quality events, shows, performances and music. Some commented on a good live music scene, with gigs and concerts. Some people specifically mentioned South Street, the Town Hall and Concert Hall and Sub89. Some said that there were different music venues to suit all types of acts which provide variety venues for music, comedy, film and theatre. (61)

Good museums and libraries- Many liked the good local museums such as MERL and Reading Museum which have a range of exhibitions and good provision of activities for children. Many thought that they were relevant and useful for visitors and residents to get to know the local history. Others commented on good libraries in Reading. (51)



Community events and community groups- voluntary sector. Many people said that there were good community events and community, charity and voluntary groups organising cultural events e.g .Jelly, the Rising Sun, RISC, WEA, Global Cafe Children's Festival, Reading Film Theatre, local civic, friends groups and history societies. Some people said that there was a range of good voluntary sector organisations and lots of volunteering. Some liked the grass roots organisations trying to promote the local arts scene and other said that the community making things happen for a more vibrant cultural life. (48)

Lots going on and opportunities to participate- Some people thought that Reading's cultural life has a lot to offer and there is a lot for people to participate in. This means that the cultural life appeals to many different people. (30)

Sense of community and inclusiveness- Some people said that the cultural life in Reading had a community focus, was informal, and provided an opportunity to meet and share with like-minded people. A few people said that the local flavour makes it inclusive; that Reading's cultural life improves society and brings people together. (26)

Good local events-Some respondents commented that there are good local events in Reading and a wide variety of events were mentioned such as the concert season, children's festival, comedy festival, Waterfest, Reading Carnival, Reading Fringe, Whitley Festival, speciality markets, Reading Festival, local theatres and art exhibitions. (25)

Accessible and well-priced: Some people said that cultural life in Reading was accessible and accommodating for all and that events have a good range of prices including free ones. (22)

Needs improvement- Some people did not think that cultural life in Reading was as good as other towns and it has room for improvement and Reading could learn from other areas. A few people suggested that it could be more inclusive and at the moment it is not co-ordinated enough. Some suggested there was the potential for more events less mainstream. (22)

Heritage-Some respondents like that Reading seemed to be beginning to appreciate its built heritage, they also like the mixtures of styles architecturally and that the town had key historic attractions and sites of interest. Some acknowledged the potential of the Abbey Quarter and liked tours that had been held. (15)

More publicity needed-Some people felt that cultural life is not promoted enough, and you have to be prepared to look for it. (12)

Good open spaces and events- A few respondents commented on the open spaces in Reading. Some people told us they enjoyed the parks in Reading and outdoor events which are held in parks, rivers and canals. Some people thought that outdoor events bring people together. (8)



Sports and Leisure Centres- a few people said that sports facilities are getting better and that there were plenty of opportunities for sport. (7)

Food- A few respondents told us that they like the variety of types of food on offer in Reading and the number of restaurants and food outlets, Eat Reading Live was also liked. (6)

RBC Support: A few people thought that cultural life was well supported, well-funded, the council seems to care about the arts and encourage it. (4)

Limited/lacks culture- Some thought that Reading had limited culture. (17)

We asked:

7. What would you like to see more of?

You Said:

Music and Theatre Events- Lots of responses wanted to see more live and open air music, plays, musicals, theatres show and comedy nights from both professional and amateur performers . High-profile and visiting theatre- Some people told us they wanted to see more high profile performers and bigger touring musicals, theatre and opera companies, touring opera companies. (110)

Better venues and arts spaces- Many people said they would like to see more or new arts venues and performance spaces in Reading which were mixed use, could be used by both amateurs and professionals, and could cater for all audiences' types and sizes. Other suggested that current venues such as the Hexagon were no longer suitable and needed improvements, there also need to be more opportunities for people to use council run arts venues. (66)

Better Publicity- Lots of respondents share a desire to see better publicity for cultural activity in Reading, many people highlighted that they often didn't know what was going on and found out too late due to a lack of publicity. Some discussed having a central advertising place either physical -such as events boards- or virtual- such as a website- to advertise everything that Reading has to offer. Other suggestions were listings in newspapers, promotions of events via the RBC twitter feed and integrated advertising to highlight and celebrate the cultural side of Reading. (52)

Heritage- Many people thought that there should be more publicity of Reading's heritage so that more people are made aware of it. Some people would like to see more access, signage and information in historic areas. As well as more events and activities including exhibition and heritage trails. (42)

Galleries and Exhibition- Many people realised the lack of a gallery and exhibition space in Reading and would like to see more. Respondents suggested more public displaying areas, exhibition and studio space for artists and more affordable spaces to hire. (35)



Public Events Programme- Some people pointed out that there is not a consistent events programme all year round, others wanted to see more large scale community events. (32)

Support and Funding- Some respondents told us that they would like to see more funding and support from RBC or others to help raise the profile and support for various work in Reading, the suggestions included; small live music venues, local arts communities and organisations, local businesses, local sport, museums, council run venues, Berkshire Record Office, cultural activity and young musicians. (30)

Green and Outdoor Spaces- Some respondents would like to see more outdoors events and more utilisation of outdoors spaces and Reading's two rivers. Suggestions included more trees and wildlife in open spaces, public art and installations in parks, stalls for arts and culture and more play streets. (28)

Opportunities to Participate- Some people felt that there needs to be opportunities for people to get involved and try new things in Reading across all age ranges. Some people suggested ways this would be possible though sample sessions, workshops and festivals at accessible locations offering a range of activities: acting, dancing, sport, art, literature. (26)

Sports and Leisure Facilities and Libraries- Some respondents commented on the sports and leisure facilities in Reading, people would like to see improved swimming pools and facilities, sport which is more affordable and more accessible to families, community sporting events and opportunities for parents and children exercising together. A few people mentioned that they wanted more investment in libraries. (20)

Art- Exhibitions and Events- Some people wanted to see more art in Reading through street art, further exhibitions and bigger exhibitions, further opportunities for local artists, touring exhibitions, community or student level art, studio trails and craft fairs. (19)

More affordable- There were many aspects of cultural life in Reading that respondents felt could be more affordable. Some of those mentioned were; affordable theatre/performance space, more affordable exhibition spaces, more free events, affordable prices at leisure centres and sports, more affordable ticket prices at venues and a membership scheme. (18)

Partnership Working & Co-ordination- Some respondents suggested that there needs to be more partnership working and better co-ordination and collaborative working across all agencies and organisations and groups, others would like to see community led arts and culture this could done through a large scale cultural event bringing together all aspects of culture. (18)

Market and Independent Shops- Some people would like to see more markets and independent shops selling local products. (15)

Cinema- A few people commented that they would like more, British, independent and art-house films and independent cinema in Reading. (12)



Built Heritage- A few people would like to see more importance placed on the preservation of Reading's built heritage, this could be through sympathetic building preservation, more support and better protection for protecting built heritage and more investment. (10)

Opportunities to Learn- A few respondents said that they would like more opportunities for learning in Reading, some of the way mentioned were adult education courses, activities and workshops which are more accessible. (9)

Variety and Celebration of Diversity- A few respondents wanted cultural life in Reading to have more variety and events to better reflect Reading's ethnic diversity (8)

Cycling- A few respondents would like better facilities for cyclists in Reading, suggestions included more dedicated cycling lanes and routes and a greater coverage for Readibikes. (8)

Reading Museum - A few people suggested some activities, events and exhibitions they would like to see at the Museum of Reading, ideas included; nationally recognised exhibitions at the museum, living museum activities, more special exhibitions and more displays of Reading's permanent collections. (7)

Next Steps

It is proposed this consultation report is available on the Councils website.

The draft strategy for consultation will be reported to the Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee for endorsement in March prior to publication on the Councils website.