

Public Document Pack



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To: Councillor Davies (Chair)
Councillors Emberson, Eden, Ennis, Gavin,
Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin, James,
Manghnani, McDonald, McGonigle,
Rowland, Stanford-Beale and R Williams

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6 November 2018

Your contact is: **Amy Bryan - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 14 NOVEMBER 2018

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on Wednesday, 14 November 2018 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>Page No</u>
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.		
2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 JULY 2018		5 - 10
3. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES		11 - 16
Community Safety Partnership - 26 April 2018		
4. PETITIONS		
Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		

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5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.

6. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES

To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been subject of Decision Book reports.

7. FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2018/19

**ALL
WARDS 17 - 62**

This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to review the Council's Food Service Plan 2018/19. The plan sets out how the Council undertakes its statutory duties to deliver safe food for Reading's residents. The report also sets out progress against an action plan agreed with the Food Standards Agency following their audit.

8. FIRE SAFETY IN TALL BUILDINGS

**ALL
WARDS 63 - 70**

This report updates the Committee on the Council's response following Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington on 14 June 2017. This includes action taken in relation to the Authority's own housing stock, other corporate buildings and schools, as well as wider work in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in respect of privately owned high rise residential blocks within the Borough boundaries.

9. 'READING, PLACE OF CULTURE' (GREAT PLACE SCHEME)

**ALL
WARDS 71 - 96**

This report updates the Committee on the progress in delivering year 1 activities as part of 'Reading, place of culture' funded through the Great Place Scheme.

10. WINTER PROVISION FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

**ALL
WARDS 97 - 100**

This report informs the Committee of the ongoing provisions and new interventions under the Ministry for Housing and Local Government Rough Sleeping Initiative for those sleeping rough in the Reading borough over the cold weather/winter period.

11. REDUCTION IN BED AND BREAKFAST USE

**ALL
WARDS 101 -
104**

This report informs the Committee of the measures the Housing Service has taken to bring about a reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast as emergency accommodation for homeless households.

12. UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS UPDATE

**ALL
WARDS**

**105 -
112**

This report informs the Committee of the action taken and planned to protect Reading Borough Council's land from unauthorised encampments. The report also notes the position in respect of the provision of transit or permanent pitches for travellers.

13. INSTALLATION OF FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO COUNCIL HOUSING PROPERTIES

**ALL
WARDS**

**113 -
116**

This report seeks approval for the award of a contract for the installation of fire sprinkler systems to circa 280 Council properties in flatted blocks.

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Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

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Present: Councillor Davies (Chair);
Councillors Eden, Emberson, Ennis, Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin, James,
Manghani, McDonald, McGonigle, Rowland, and R Williams.

Apologies: Councillors Gavin and Stanford-Beale.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Community Safety Partnership - 1 February 2018.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

3. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Councillor McGonigle	Trade Waste Bins Wokingham Road	Councillor James
Councillor McGonigle	Palmer Park Café	Councillor Hacker

The full text of the question and reply was made available on the Reading Borough Council website.

4. READING ON THAMES FESTIVAL 2018

Nigel Horton-Baker, Executive Director of Reading UK CIC, and Steph Weller, Producer of the Reading on Thames Festival, gave a presentation on the Reading on Thames Festival taking place between 6 and 16 September 2018.

The Reading on Thames Festival took its inspiration from Reading's waterways and set out to create a vibrant broad appeal arts and cultural festival programme set in venues and unusual outdoor spaces across Reading. The programme for 2018 included nationally-renowned performers and Reading-based arts groups working in collaboration to create a unique experience for audiences.

Steph talked about some of the headlines of the festival programme, which would include local, national and international partners working on music, literature, visual arts, film, theatre and walking trails and tours. The opening event would be GRRRL featuring Charlotte Adigéry - *In Place of War*, which would be held on Thursday 6 September 2018 in the Concert Hall at Reading Town Hall. The headline closing

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4 JULY 2018

event would be Cirque Bijou; A Circus Siorée, which would be held in Caversham Court Gardens on Saturday 15 September 2018.

Steph explained that outside of the events programme, the festival was working on community engagement and skills development and employment for local residents.

Resolved - That Steph Weller and Nigel Horton-Baker be thanked for their presentation.

5. HIDDEN ABBEY PROJECT UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that provided an update on the Hidden Abbey Project.

Further to Minute 96 of Policy Committee on 11 April 2016, the report provided an update on the Hidden Abbey Project ('the Project') which was set up in 2015 to discover the extent and nature of the below-ground evidence of the Royal Abbey founded in Reading by King Henry I in 1121 and where he and other members of his family were buried. The Project was contemporary with, but not part of, the Borough Council's successful *Reading Abbey Revealed (RAR)* Project, which would run until 2020 and achieved the conservation and re-opening of both the Abbey Gateway and the Abbey Ruins in April / June 2018; and the future plans of the Ministry of Justice to dispose of Reading Gaol which was founded on part of the historic Abbey Quarter. It also anticipated the 900th anniversary of the Abbey's foundation, in 2021.

Reading Borough Council was coordinating the project, in tandem with the RC Diocese of Portsmouth and the Ministry of Justice, as the principal public landowners in the Abbey Quarter site, together with the Friends of Reading Abbey, Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP), and Philippa Langley (PL) of Little Marilyn Productions Ltd (LMPL). It was being taken forward by a Steering Group on which all of the above bodies were represented. Reading Borough Council was the lead partner and commissioning body for works associated with the project, and would procure, enter into, client and pay the contracts for associated works, although it would not itself provide any funding directly.

A plan showing the site covered by the Project is at **Appendix A**. The focus of the first phase of the Project was on the Abbey church. The land on which this was located was now owned by three landowners and their interests were as follows:

Owner	Site	Reference to Plan
Reading Borough Council (RBC)	Forbury Gardens	Site C
	Abbey Ruins	Site D
RC Diocese of Portsmouth (DoP)	St James Church	Sites A and J2
	St James Presbytery	
	Forbury Nursery	
Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	Reading Gaol site	Site B1 and B2

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The Project commissioned a Ground-Penetrating radar (GRP) survey of the above sites in the summer of 2016, funded by the RC Diocese of Portsmouth. This was undertaken by Stratascan SUMO. The survey identified some interesting anomalous features in all three sites, which the Steering Group considered to be worthy of further exploration, including by keyhole archaeology. The Steering Group had agreed a provisional exploration brief, this was attached to the report at Appendix B.

Resolved -

That the position be noted, the exploration brief (Appendix B) be endorsed, and the Steering Group's decision to hold discussions on next steps with the University of Reading Archaeology Department, as set out in para. 4.4 of the report, be welcomed.

6. RE3 WASTE STRATEGY 2018-2020 AND THE WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR READING

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating the Committee on the re3 strategy 2018-2020, which had been endorsed and recommended by the Joint Waste Disposal Board, and to inform the Committee of the current work on the Reading Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015-2020. The re3 strategy 2018-2020 was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that the two principal aims of the re3 strategy were to reduce the net cost of waste and to recycle 50% by 2020.

The report stated that the Reading Waste Minimisation Strategy was currently being replaced with a Waste Action Plan for Reading, which would set out a clear path for the delivery of the high-level strategic objectives of the re3 Strategy and the specific service development priorities for Reading Borough Council, including the need to deliver substantial savings as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key objectives of the emerging Waste Action Plan would focus on reducing cost and would include:

- Introduction of weekly kerbside food waste collection;
- Steps to improve diversion of recyclable material from the residual bin to recycling;
- Reductions in the contamination of recyclable material with non-recyclable wastes, by way of a dedicated team of Waste Officers;
- Improved and sustained communications campaigns, including schools;
- Improved direct contact with residents, businesses and landlords;
- Further promotion of the Council's trade waste offer;
- Hard market testing of waste services.

The Waste Action Plan would set out the actions and milestones relating to each objective and performance against the objectives would be monitored regularly and reported to the Committee as appropriate.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the re3 Strategy 2018-2020, as recommended by the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on 27 April 2018, be noted;
- (2) That the outline objectives of the emerging Reading Waste Action Plan and the intention to develop a more detailed action plan to deliver the aims of the re3 Strategy, be noted.

7. EXTENSION OF MANDATORY LICENSING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY REGULATIONS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) due to come into force from 1st October 2018. This was the latest addition to a series of measures introduced by Government to tackle criminal landlords and improve standards in the sector. This was in addition to other measures that had been brought to the Committee on 14 March 2018 (Minute 26 refers) which included Civil Penalty Notices, protection from revenge evictions, banning orders, the Rogue Landlords database and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations.

The report stated that from 1 October 2018 the three storey criteria would be removed and all HMOs occupied by five or more people forming two or more households where facilities were shared would require a HMO licence. In relation to purpose built flats, if a flat was occupied by five or more people and it was in a block comprising of up to two flats this would be licensable but a purpose build flat occupied by five or more people in a block comprising three or more flats it would not need a licence. The introduction of minimum room size standards was also being introduced.

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 meant that from 1st April 2018 it had become illegal for landlords to rent out property unless it met the minimum energy efficiency rating of E. However, there were some exemptions, which were detailed in Appendix A.

The report set out the maximum fines detailed in the regulations and the Council's proposed fines. The proposal was to levy a lower fine in the first instance and then the full fine for any subsequent breaches at the point of a new tenancy. The proposed fines were:

Breach of the Regulations	Maximum financial penalty	RBC proposed fine (1 st Offence)
a) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for less than 3 months	£2,000	£1,000
b) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for 3 months or more	£4,000	£2,000
c) Landlord has included false or misleading information on the PRS Exemption Register	£1,000	£500
d) Landlord fails to comply with compliance notice (this is a request for information on measures undertaken at a property)	£2,000	£1,000

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
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Resolved -

- (1) That the scheme of delegations be amended and the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance be delegated authority to implement the scheme for the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and enforce the requirements of The Energy Efficient (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015;**
- (2) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to discharge the Council's duties and powers under the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018 and the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 along with subsequent Regulations and Orders as well as policies and procedures related to this legislation;**
- (3) That the proposed penalty fines detailed in the report be approved.**

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.48pm).

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Present:

Cllr Liz Terry (Chair)	Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods, RBC
Cllr Tony Page	Deputy Leader and Police & Crime Panel representative, RBC
Anthony Brain	Community Safety Manager, RBC
Carol Kelly	Chair, Berkshire Bench
Cath Marriott	Policy Development, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Chris Bloomfield	Neighbourhood Initiatives Manager, RBC
Emma Burroughs	Deputy Area Commander, Thames Valley Police
Geoff Davis	Head of Operations, Thames Valley CRC
Giles Allchurch	Youth Offending Service Manager, RBC
Rebecca Lindsay	
Sam Mortimore	Community Safety Advisor, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Sally Andersen	Contract and Project Manager - Public Health, RBC
Sarah Gee	Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods, RBC
Vicky Rhodes	Strategic Lead for Early Help, RBC
Simon Hill	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

Cllr Jan Gavin	Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families, RBC
Kathryn Warner	Communities Manager, PACT
Nicola Bell	Manager, RAHAB
Melanie Smith	Head of Berkshire, National Probation Service

1. MINUTES AND MATTER ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

2. DRUG MISUSE STRATEGIC GROUP

Emma Burroughs submitted an update report from the Drug Misuse Strategic Group.

The report noted that the visible effects of Class A drug misuse had increased in Reading and were now one of the main crime concerns. The impact on residents, businesses and visitors was one of the main calls for action/service response across both the police and local authority, with concerns mainly in the areas of drug litter, injecting in public and open drug dealing. The report explained the background to formation of the Strategic Group which would focus on reducing the demand through treatment, intervention, and tackling supply through targeting dealers and runners.

The report summarised the initiatives being discussed by the Group and the actions being taken, which included the following:

- Introducing conditional cautioning in relation to a number of offences, whereby a caution was given on the proviso that the arrestee undertook some form of related rehabilitative activity;
- Training and equipping police officers to deliver anti-overdose drug naloxone;

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP - 26 APRIL 2018

- Seizing more money from large criminal gangs, and reinvesting it in drug prevention programmes;
- 'Mainstreaming' police officers linking substance users to IRIS and formally tracking outcomes;
- Sustaining enforcement in respect of drug dealing in public places (Operation Encounter);
- Educational and awareness raising work with hotels and businesses to identify and prevent premises being used for dealing.

The Group had also led a response to consultation on the draft Drug & Alcohol Strategy and the comments made had been circulated with the agenda. Arising from discussion of the response was a proposal that the Group remit be widened to include alcohol and to have oversight of the Drug & Alcohol strategy for the CSP.

The meeting discussed the growing concern about issues relating to drug misuse, in particular visible drug dealing, and requested that there be more communication from the police (for example through groups such as the Safer Reading Forums) to provide the community with information on the actions being taken in response to the problem, and to help build community resilience.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the proposal for the Group to also cover alcohol misuse be endorsed.

3. CRIME RECORDING ASSESSMENT

Emma Burroughs gave an update on an assessment by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of the accuracy of crime recording in Thames Valley Police.

Emma reported that the assessment had issued an overall judgement of inadequate and found that approximately 35k crimes a year were potentially not being recorded properly by TVP, which equated to around 3k crimes a year in Reading. She outlined the actions that were being taken in response and gave examples of incidents that were dealt with appropriately but not necessarily recorded correctly.

The meeting noted that a lack of confidence in crime figures could possibly affect public perceptions, and might also make it more difficult to rely on the statistical data in carrying out the Community Safety strategic assessment. It was however acknowledged that this was mainly a process issue, and that the Assessment would rely as much on qualitative information as the crime statistics.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

4. CRIME PERFORMANCE REPORT

Anthony Brain submitted the crime performance report as at the end of February 2018.

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For all British Crime Survey Crimes there had been a small year-on-year increase of 2%, which was consistent with other CSPs in the most similar group. For burglary there had been a 14% year-on-year increase, and for violent crime a 10% year-on-year increase, which was consistent with the most similar group.

Anthony reported that there was concern at a decrease in the rate of outcomes, and the Chair suggested that this was reflected in public concern at an apparent lack of enforcement on some crime issues.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

5. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

Vicky Rhodes and Giles Allchurch submitted a report setting out the Youth Justice Plan which detailed how local Youth Justice Services were provided, funded and operated. The Plan was a requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act and had to be submitted to the Youth Justice Board, the government body that oversaw Youth Justice, in order to receive funding for 2018/19.

Giles explained that the Plan identified a number of emerging themes: Trauma Informed Practice, Education Training and Employment, Relationship Aggression, Risky Behaviours and First Time Entrants. These were drawn from National Plans and research as well as local organisations and partners, and would be the priorities for 2018/19. In addition Looked After Children and those with Speech Communication and Language Needs had been identified as groups requiring particular attention. The Plan also included information on performance against national and local performance indicators and summarised opportunities and challenges for 2018/19.

The meeting noted that in Reading there had been an increase in first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System in 2015 and 2016, against the downward regional and national trend. Giles explained that there had been some correlation with school exclusions and missing episodes during this period, but that it was difficult to further analyse this retrospectively, and that the rate had subsequently declined over 2017 in line with the national trend. Overall the nature of first time offences was not becoming more serious, but in Reading there was a greater proportion of aggression-related offences when compared to other areas.

AGREED:

That the Youth Justice Plan 2018/19 be noted and endorsed for submission to the Youth Justice Board.

6. DELIVERY GROUP ACTION PLANS

The Delivery Groups submitted their current actions plans, which set out progress against actions/tasks under the agreed priorities for each group.

a) Vulnerable Communities

Anthony Brain submitted the Action Plan which set out priorities for Hate Crime, Preventing Extremism and Counter Terrorism. He reported that there was still

concern at the low rate of successful outcomes relating to Hate Crime, and that a Case Monitoring group were examining individual incidents to try and understand the reasons for this.

An annual conference on counter terrorism for the Town Centre Business community had recently taken place with 80 attendees.

b) Modern Day Slavery and Adult Exploitation

Nicola Bell submitted the current Delivery Group Action Plan, which set out priorities under the themes of 'Pursue: Prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for Modern Slavery/Exploitation', 'Prevent: Preventing people from engaging in Modern Slavery/Exploitation', 'Protect: Strengthening safeguards against Modern Slavery/Exploitation by protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and increasing awareness of and resilience against this crime' and 'Prepare: Reducing the harm caused by Modern Slavery/Exploitation through improved victim identification and enhanced support'.

It was noted that the action to improve Criminal Justice Process and achieve an increase in effective prosecutions and setting baselines was rated red. According to the Plan discussion was needed at OPCC to determine how to establish a Thames Valley-wide approach, and it was asked whether these discussions had begun.

c) Domestic Abuse

Sarah Gee submitted the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-18: Action Plan. All actions were rated amber or green and there were no significant issues to report.

AGREED: That the Delivery Group Action Plans be received.

7. OPCC UPDATE

Cath Marriott reported on the implementation of new victim support services contract, with the Victims First service now being provided in-house. There would be a public launch of the service in the summer. Cath explained that there were no eligibility criteria or time limit for use of the service, and outlined the process for getting consent to contact and the impact of GDPR on procedures.

AGREED; That the update be noted.

8. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Anthony Brain noted that the current Community Safety Plan was in its final year, and that another Strategic Assessment had to be completed by March 2019. The meeting split into groups to carry out a workshop activity on initial scanning of issues for the assessment.

AGREED: That the outputs of the workshop inform the development of the draft Strategic Assessment.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

The meetings for 2018/19 would take place on:

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP - 26 APRIL 2018

Thursday 20 September 2018

Thursday 15 November 2018

Thursday 31 January 2019

Thursday 25 April 2019

All meetings at 9.30am.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and closed at 10.30 am)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOODS

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2018/19		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR HOSKIN	PORTFOLIO:	HEALTH, WELLBEING & LEISURE
SERVICE:	REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	JAMES CROSBIE	TEL:	0118 937 2424
JOB TITLE:	REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	James.Crosbie@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to review the Council's Food Service plan 2018/19. The plan sets out how the Council undertakes its statutory duties to deliver safe food for Reading's residents. The report also sets out progress against an action plan agreed with the Food Standards Agency following their audit.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Members review and agree the content of the Food Service Plan and action plan following the FSA Audit.
- 2.2 That the Food Service Plan is reviewed and agreed on an annual basis prior to the start of the subsequent financial year and published on the Council's website.

Appendices

- Food Service Plan 2018/19

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department responsible for protecting public health and consumers' wider interests in food. Part of their role is to ensure that local authorities comply with the 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities'. This agreement details:

- publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services should be published (i.e. the Food Service Plan).
- agreed feed and food law enforcement standards for local authorities
- enhanced monitoring data with greater focus on inspection outcomes and which provides more detailed information on local authority performance
- an audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice.

- 3.2 Through the Framework agreement, Codes of Practice and legislation, the Council's Food & Safety team delivers a range of preventative and enforcement

services to protect the public's health, raise consumer awareness and ensure food standards.

- 3.3 Reading has over 1400 premises producing, retailing or serving food. This figure varies annually, with a high degree of churn being experienced particularly in the takeaway market.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Food Standards Agency carried out an audit of the Council's Food & Safety team in November 2017. As part of the audit, the Council was required to produce an action plan to address areas where improvements could be made. This action plan is an appendix to the Food Service Plan attached to this report.

- 4.2 One of the recommendations published on the FSA's website arising from the report, was that the Council should take its Food Service Plan to Housing, Neighborhoods and Leisure Committee for scrutiny and the plan should be published on the Council's website. These recommendations were issued by the FSA to the Council in June 2018.

- 4.3 The Food Service plan operates on an annual review. This is due to the significant in year variations associated with churn of food businesses which means that the risk based inspection program cannot be forecast accurately more than a year in advance.

- 4.4 Trends indicate that there is an increasing demand on the Food & Safety team resulting from:

- consumer complaints
- requests from businesses for advice and
- increased food poisoning notifications.

- 4.5 Despite this and against a backdrop of staff shortages arising from a national shortage of competent officers, in 2017/18, the team delivered 100% of Category A-E food hygiene inspections (916 inspections). It was also able to deliver an inspection rate of 89% of all unrated premises (177 inspections) and 100% of those premises falling outside the standard rating scheme (126 inspections (e.g. festival traders)).

- 4.6 Food Standards inspections, which are non-statutory have been impacted by prioritising statutory functions and higher risk. This is an area where targeted action is plan for 2019/20.

5. Options Proposed

- 5.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Council must submit monitoring data annually to the FSA. This data is uploaded to a national database and reviewed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services prior to submission. These returns are submitted in April and are the basis on which the annual Food Service Plan is updated.

- 5.2 In order for the plan to be published at the beginning of the year, inspection targets will need to be forecast rather than using the actual data.

- 5.2 To provide scrutiny of the plan and inspection programme, it is proposed that a report is brought to HNL Committee annually and that the Committee signs off the plan for the year ahead.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 This report supports the following objectives in the corporate plan:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Keeping Reading's environment, clean, green and safe

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Not relevant to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Food Service plan is written in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework Agreement with the Food Standards Agency. It sets out how the authority will meet its statutory obligations.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Food Service plan sets out the service budget and resources required to deliver the Council's statutory services.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Food Standards Agency Audit November 2017

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Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Food Service Plan 2018-19

Drawn up in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement (April 2010)

1. FOOD SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The council has a statutory duty to enforce food law, overseen and audited by the Food Standards Agency. The council must produce a plan setting out how it will deliver its functions. This document aims to discharge the duty for Reading Borough Council and has been written in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement, which is based on statutory Codes of Practice.

It is the council's aim to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough.

- 1.2 Key to the way the service is delivered is consideration of the five principles of good regulation:

- Targeting, via risk based approach
- Proportionality
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Transparency

1.3 Objectives

To ensure that standards required by legislation are met and that preventative health measures are adopted and maintained by businesses.

To achieve the key aims, the following objectives have been adopted:

- To prevent unsafe food reaching the public through the application of mandatory duties and discretionary powers.
- To ensure food is correctly labelled and complies with appropriate compositional requirements.
- To direct resources to the highest risk food premises and activities and to improve standards by the effective use of the enforcement powers available.
- To ensure a consistent approach to food inspections by officers.
- To ensure that officers are qualified, adequately trained and competent.
- To highlight bad practice in food businesses.
- To ensure consumers are given information as to the hygiene conditions at food premises in the Borough through the use of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- To encourage and facilitate the training of food handlers and proprietors of food businesses.
- To encourage and facilitate the improvement of food safety and food standards by the use of a paid service for bespoke advice.

- To proactively respond to changes and proposals for improvement in UK and EU legislation.
- To promote the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme.
- To work with our partners including Public Health England.

1.4 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.4.1 The Council has a number of priorities which sit within the Corporate Plan 2018-21. The delivery of the Food Service plan links to the following priorities:

- ***Securing the economic success of Reading*** by:

Encouraging the adoption of good practice at all stages in the food production chain and

Providing guidance and advice to potential and existing food businesses

- ***Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children*** by:

Minimising the incidence of food poisoning and food borne illness

- ***Keeping Reading's environment, clean, green and safe*** by:

Ensuring that all food and drink offered for sale meets compositional and quality standards

Working with partner agencies to eliminate food fraud.

Preventing the use of prohibited substances or inappropriate substitution of ingredients in food products

Promoting high standards of hygiene in food businesses

Ensuring that all food and drink offered for sale is safe for human consumption.

Ensuring that all food businesses comply with relevant statutory requirements

Ensuring that all food businesses operate with the benefit of relevant licensing, approval and consent arrangements

Developing collaborative working arrangements to minimise the risks to health associated with the consumption of contaminated, poor quality or unsafe food and drink.

To achieve this aim, the Food Safety Team will:

- Inspect all food premises and businesses in accordance with the adopted risk assessment and re-inspection programmes

- Participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in order to enable members of the public to make informed choices about where they eat or purchase food
 - Initiate appropriate enforcement action to secure compliance with the relevant legal requirements
 - Prepare and implement sampling programmes for food that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed;
 - Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities relating to the enforcement of Food Safety legislation
 - Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities in relation to the control of spread of communicable disease and food poisoning.
- 1.4.2 The Council also recognises the risks associated with failing to deliver this plan and this is detailed in the Directorate's risk register.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Authority

2.1.1 Reading Borough Council was created as a unitary authority in April 1998 and figures from the last census indicate it has a population of 155,698. Unemployment (those claiming job seekers allowance) in the town is below the national average at 3.5%; 14% of the town has a main language other than English and the age group with the highest numbers is 25-34 years old.

The town centre is one of the largest in the South of England, attracting many shoppers and visitors to the area. Reading has a University as well as a college. Many of the small food businesses around the University do the bulk of their trade during term time.

2.1.2 Manufacturing industry has declined over the years and the area is now the centre of high technology within the Thames Valley. There are no large food manufacturers in the town.

2.1.3 There is excellent access to the road system via the M4 (East/West) and the nearby M3 and A34 (North/South). The Rail station has undergone a major upgrade and was re-opened in 2015 with 9 through platforms and 6 terminus platforms. In December 2019 the Elizabeth line run by Transport for London (TFL) will connect directly to Reading giving direct transport links to Central London and Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the East of London.

2.1.4 Businesses in Reading utilises its good transport links and close proximity to Heathrow Airport to transfer their raw ingredients and products. There are also UK distribution centres for Waitrose frozen products and Tesco ambient products within the town, further highlighting its excellent geographical location and communication links.

2.1.5 Reading is a market town, the market operating four days per week, and has a flourishing twice monthly Farmers' market where producers from the surrounding locality sell their own produce. There are also 2

weekly food markets as well as an annual chilli festival and specialist food festival.

- 2.1.6 The town hosts a number of festivals and cultural events which bring visitors and itinerant traders to the area. The most significant music festival is Reading Festival which is the 2nd largest festival in the UK after Glastonbury.

2.2 Organisational Structure

- 2.2.1 The Council has an approved constitution setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. A copy of the Council's constitution is available at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/constitution>

- 2.2.2 The Scheme of Delegations sets out who is responsible for making decisions, including the authority for the service of enforcement notice. A copy of the Scheme of Delegations is available at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3769/Delegations-Register/pdf/180720DelegationsRegister.pdf>

- 2.2.3 The Council operates a Committee Structure, with the Food & Safety Team reporting to the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure (HNL) Committee. The councillor with responsibility for Food & Safety is the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport.

- 2.2.4 The officer with lead responsibility for food matters and whose contact details have been notified to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is Lisa Richards, Licensing, Food & Safety Manager. Duncan Willby, Principal EHO in the section also shares the Lead food officer role.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

- 2.3.1 The Food & Safety Team deals with food safety, some aspects of food standards relating to caterers, infectious disease, special treatments, safety at sports grounds licensing and health and safety at work. Trading Standards has responsibility for activities such as food standards, fair trading, product safety, metrology, animal health, animal feed, petroleum and consumer advice.

- 2.3.2 Both the Food & Safety and Trading Standards teams are active leads in the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme. The Environmental Health Staff provide assured advice for Food Hygiene and Safety while the Trading Standards team provide advice on Food Standards.

- 2.3.3 The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager is responsible for managing the topic area of food within Regulatory Services. Approximately 50% of the Food & Safety Team is directed at official controls for food safety and approximately 20% of the Trading Standards Service is directed at food standards work.

- 2.3.4 The service is based at:

Regulatory Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Reading

RG1 2LU

Tel: Food Safety Enquiries 0118 937 3787

Food Standards Enquiries 03454 040506

E-mail: consumerprotection@reading.gov.uk

Website www.reading.gov.uk.

The office is open Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1700 hours. The emergency 'out of hours' telephone number is 0118 937 3737 where there is a duty officer available to deal with emergency only food matters as appropriate.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1 There are annual variations on demand based on a broad range of factors. The Borough has seen the overall number of businesses increase and there is a relatively high turnover, particularly in the takeaway sector. The table below details the number of food premises contained in each category:

Type of premises	Number of Premises
Primary Producer	0
Manufacturer/Packer	13
Food Importer/Exporter	4
Food Distributor/Transporter	17
Supermarket/Hypermarket	37
Small Retailer	236
Retailer Other	100
Restaurant, Café, Canteen	308
Hotel , Guest House	34
Pub, Club	118
Takeaway	168
Caring Establishment	159
Schools, Colleges	69
Mobile Unit	52
Restaurant, Caterer Other	99

Total	1414
-------	------

- 2.4.2 There are 5 businesses which have received approval under one or more of the product specific regulations namely fishery products, live bivalve molluscs, minced meat & meat preparations, milk products and cold store/rewrapping plant. This is broken down to: 1 meat, 2 fish, 1 bivalve molluscs and 2 cold store and rewrapping establishments. These premises are inspected in line with their risk rating. One establishment has fish and bivalve molluscs approval.
- 2.4.3 There are approximately 7 outdoor events per year, mainly during May to September, where Food & Safety staff and/or Trading Standards staff attend and carry out inspections including food inspections and food sampling. These events occur during weekdays and weekends.
- 2.4.4 The Borough is multi-cultural and contains a wide range of food premises managed and run by many diverse ethnic groups. Many retail premises target these populations and many registered home caterers prepare food dishes from their home countries. There are an increasing number of food brokers and the Council is endeavouring to identify them.
- 2.4.5 Many businesses operate outside office hours and in which case will be inspected during those periods.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

- 2.5.1 The Council has previously adopted the Enforcement Concordat, which has subsequently been updated to the Regulators Compliance Code. The Corporate Enforcement Policy is supplemented by specific food law enforcement policy that can be found in Appendix 1 of the Food Service Plan.
- 2.5.2 The Regulators' Code sets out the following main provisions:
- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow
 - Regulators should provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views
 - Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk
 - Regulators should share information about compliance and risk
 - Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply
 - Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Premises Inspections

- 3.1.1 The Council's policy is to inspect all food premises that are due for inspection based on the minimum frequency as set by in the Food Law Code of Practice. However resources will always be directed towards higher risk activities and this may result in some lower risk activities being delayed. The aim is to ensure compliance with the legal requirements covering the safe handling and production of food, the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food and of the materials or articles in contact with food.
- 3.1.2 As the designated food authority, the Council discharges its duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and EC 854/2004 by carrying out regular, primary food hygiene and food standards inspections of high risk premises.
- 3.1.3 The number of new premises that register with the Local Authority is approximately 4 per week or about 200 per year making a significant contribution to the number of new premises/ those that have changed ownership on the database.
- 3.1.4 The Food Law Code of Practice rating scheme is used for Food Safety as well as food Standards.
- 3.1.5 For Food hygiene, over 87% of premises are rated as 'broadly compliant'. This is when the hygiene, structure and confidence in management scores are less than or equal to 10, 10, 10. This number has steadily increased over the decade as non-broadly complaint premises are targeted. In the last 18 months, the broadly compliant figure has started to decline again with many more poor performing businesses being identified.
- 3.1.6 For Food Standards, over 58% of premises are rated as broadly compliant. This figure has been dropping as new catering premises have remained unrated in favour of inspecting import/exporters, small retailers and small home businesses setting up.
- 3.1.7 There are also a number of food hygiene and food standards inspections that have been given a non-inspectable risk (NIR) score. Examples of these premises include for food hygiene, importers based in the Borough where there is just an office and no storage or distribution of the product in the Borough (food broker). Also inspections that are carried out at outdoor events.
- 3.1.8 Category E food hygiene inspections and category C food standards inspections can be carried out via an alternative enforcement strategy or using an official control such as inspection, partial inspection or audit. Where the alternative enforcement strategy is chosen, a visit is made by a Regulatory Support Officer or newly qualified authorised officer who will complete the questionnaire with the business. Childminders are not inspected after their initial inspection and where possible are sent a questionnaire.

3.1.9 Officers will have due regard to the FSA guidelines on the importation of food when carrying out routine inspections, will consider traceability of food products and will be mindful of the implications of food fraud or unauthorised (in the EU) ingredients.

Food hygiene

3.1.10 The frequency of food hygiene inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the code of practice. Risk categories may change if food handling activities change, consumer complaints are received or other non-compliance is identified. The number of inspections due in 2018/19 is:

Category/ Frequency	Number of inspections Planned 2018/19	Number of broadly compliant premises due for inspection
A / at least every 6 months	14	0
B / at least every 1 year	45	17
C / at least every 18 months	157	133
D / at least every 2 years	255	250
E / Alternative Enforcement Strategy	74	74
Non Inspectable Risk (NIR)	37	-
Unrated ¹	240	-
Total	785	474

1 This number includes an estimate of new premises registering in year.

3.1.11 The service has made a commitment to target a proportion of its resource at those premises that score 0-2 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Improving these premises will reduce the number of high risk inspections required in year.

Food Standards – labelling and composition

3.1.12 The frequency of food standards inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the Code of Practice. The number of inspections due in 2018/19 are:

Category/ Frequency	Number of planned Inspections due 2018/19	Number of broadly compliant premises due
A / at least every 1 year	2	2
B / at least every 2 years	231	165
C / alternative enforcement strategy	472	445
Non-Inspectable Risk (NIR)	209	-
Unrated	264	-
Total	968	641

3.1.13 The following targets for food premises inspections due to be visited are:

Category A	100%
Category B/C	10%
Category Unrated	60%

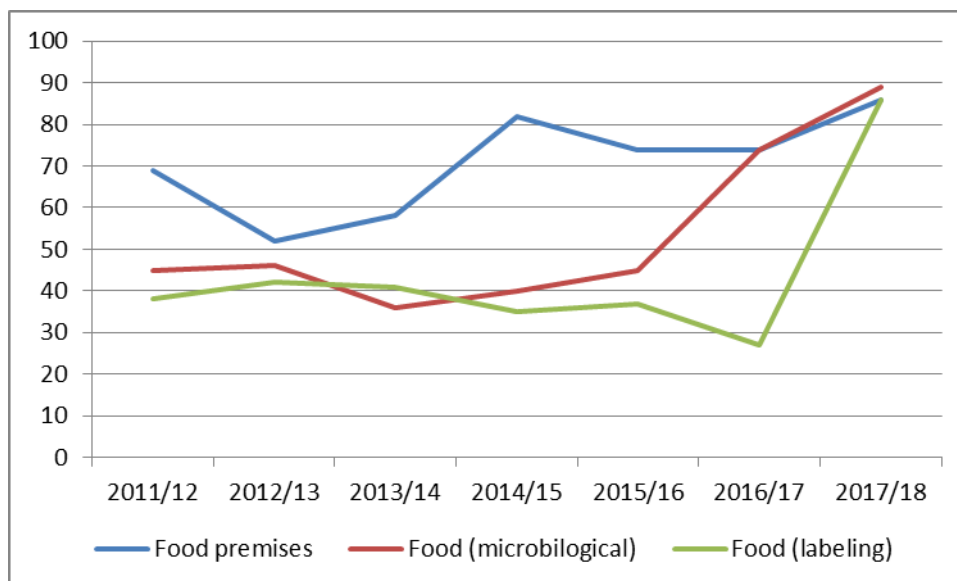
3.1.14 Consumer issues that are identified as warranting specific targeting are reflected in the annual or quarterly sampling programme. New legislative requirements are accommodated within the inspection programme and any specific action needed is appropriately assessed. Additional professional training needs are provided where appropriate.

3.1.15 As the Borough is predominantly urban there are no fertilizer feeding stuffs premises to visit. Retail surveillance of goods is conducted during routine inspection visits.

3.2 Food Complaints

3.2.1 There is a documented food complaint procedure. All food complaints are investigated in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, practical guidance and in house procedures. Complaints that are identified as posing an immediate risk to health are responded to within one day. Other food complaints are investigated and responded to within 5 working days. The Primary Authority/home authority principle is employed where the food is manufactured in another borough.

3.2.2 The graph below details the trends for food complaints received since 2011/2012:



3.2.3 Estimates for the coming year suggest the figures for food standards will remain constant whilst the number of microbiological food complaints has significantly increased.

3.3 Primary Authority Partnerships

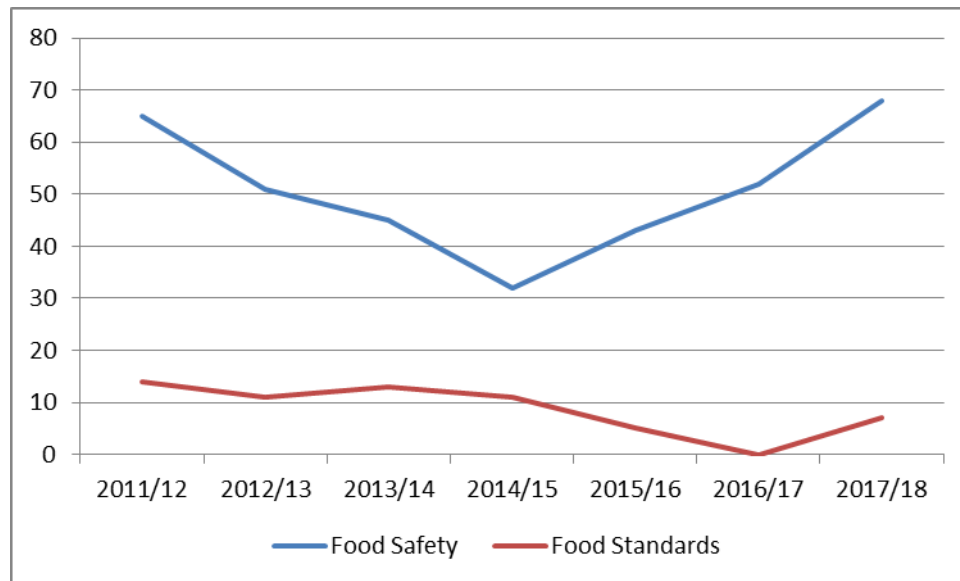
3.3.1 The Authority no longer offers a home authority partnership arrangement and has converted all partnerships to Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs). In addition the authority has taken new partnerships where it would have previously not qualified to be the home authority because the location of the businesses head office is not in the local authority area.

3.3.2 There are 26 partnerships predominantly in the hospitality industry of which 12 cover food hygiene and safety and 7 cover food standards. The most significant and active partnerships are with JD Wetherspoon, Greene King and Stonegate Pub Company.

3.3.3 Each partnership has a work plan and officers have regular meetings with the company to discuss enquiries from other councils and progress the work plan.

3.4 Advice to Business

- 3.4.1 The enforcement policy states that the Service will provide advice to businesses in the first instance to assist them in complying with the law and to help them maintain high standards of food safety or standards.
- 3.4.2 Businesses can contact the team, where they will be directed to advice leaflets and other information available on the website. If they food business operator requires further advice, a paid for service is offered.
- 3.4.3 The number of requests from businesses for advice on food and drink are detailed in the graph below:



3.5 Food and Feeding Stuffs Sampling

3.5.1 Food samples are taken in accordance with the authority's sampling procedure and the joint annual sampling plan. Sampling programmes have been developed and implemented to:

- Assess the microbiological quality of food produced and offered for sale;
- Determine the compositional standards and descriptive integrity of food.

3.5.2 The sampling plan reflects the following requirements:-

- (i) the procurement of samples taken during food hygiene and food standards inspections, taking into consideration the FSA guidelines for imported food and feed controls.
- (ii) specifically targeting foods produced and distributed nationally, from producers and manufacturers based in Reading.
- (iii) in response to consumer and business complaints regarding food standards and food hygiene, and

- (iv) the participation in agreed national, regionally co-ordinated and local sampling programmes and in particular projects concerning imported foods.
 - (v) the Rapid Alert System for Food & Feed (RASFF) annual and quarterly reports.
- 3.5.3 The plan may be changed from time to time during the year to reflect new or changes in legislation and other local or national issues of concern.
- 3.5.4 Food samples are procured in accordance with the Code of Practice and legislation as appropriate.
- 3.5.5 Samples for microbiological analysis are sent to the food examiner at:
Public Health England
Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton
Porton Down
Salisbury
SP4 0JG
Tel 01980 616766
- 3.5.6 In order to maintain best value for its analytical services the Authority has appointed the following Public Analysts;
- (i) Worcestershire Scientific Services
Unit 5
Berkeley Business Park
Wainwright Road
Worcester
WR4 9FA
Tel. 01905 765765
Email: scientificservices@worcestershire.gov.uk
 - (ii) Hampshire Scientific Services
Hyde Park Road
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO5 4LL
Tel. 023 9282 9501

Food Safety – Microbiological Sampling

- 3.5.7 Resources are allocated through Public Health England. Microbiological food sampling projects are co-ordinated within the sampling county liaison group. The PHE Porton laboratory carries out the analysis of the samples.
- 3.5.8 For 2018/19 the food sampling budget for microbiological analysis is £6,500.00 which is held on account by PHE.
- 3.5.9 The Food Safety service aims to take approximately 60 samples for microbiological analysis during 2018/19.
- 3.5.10 There are fewer than 20 private water supplies in Reading. Most are considered low risk. The private water supplies sampling officer will discuss sampling requirements with the Licensing, Food & Safety

Manager and the officer with special responsibility for sampling before this is carried out

Food Standards Quality and Compositional Sampling

3.5.11 The Trading Standards manages a coordinated annual sampling programme through Trading Standards South East Group (TSSE) and a local sampling programme. Any local sampling is shared with TSSE and other members of the group are invited to also take part in the sampling.

3.5.12 The total budget for food standards and feeding stuff sampling for the year 2018/19 is £9,000.

3.5.13 Local Sampling projects for 2017-2018 include meat adulteration and gluten free meal claims. The Council are also taking part in TSSE projects including allergens, coconut waters and food supplements.

3.6 Investigation of Outbreaks and Control of Food Related Illnesses and Infectious Diseases and Food Poisoning Outbreaks

3.6.1 The Service investigates all notifiable food poisoning incidents and outbreaks associated with food occurring in Reading. Officers will liaise with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) in the investigation of diseases or outbreaks and where it is necessary to exclude infected persons from work or children from school in accordance with the Berkshire Joint Infectious Disease Outbreak Control Plan (2013).

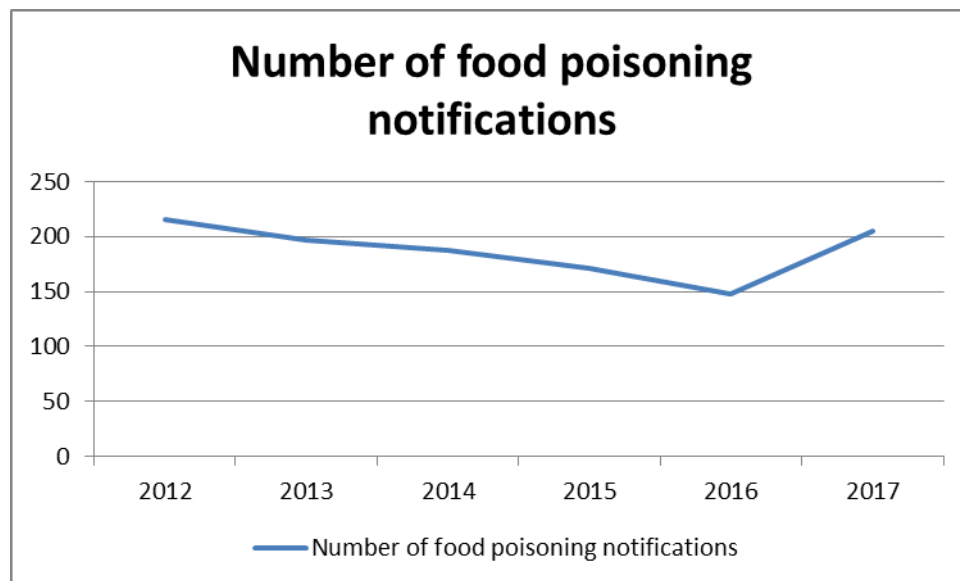
3.6.2 Investigations into infectious disease aim to:

- (i) Determine whether the infected person works with food or cares for others particularly if the others are a vulnerable group.
- (ii) Identify the source of infection
- (iii) Prevent spread or reoccurrence of the infection
- (iv) Take formal action in appropriate cases where breaches of food legislation have contributed to a food poisoning outbreak
- (v) Provide information to affected persons.

3.6.3 The target for response is as follows:

Food Poisoning outbreaks	100% in 1 day
Food Poisoning (cases)	80% in 1 day 100% in 2 days

3.6.4 Food Poisoning Notifications



3.6.5 The forecast projection for 2018/19 year end and there after is a further fall in numbers as cases are increasingly managed by Public Health England, Thames Valley (TVPHE) via a single case protocol arrangement. The Local Authority is only called upon for cases of lower risk food poisoning such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium*, *Giardia*, *Salmonella* and *Shigella* as well as to assist TVPHE in finding the source of other cases such as *Cryptosporidium*.

3.6.6 The number of outbreaks is projected to increase as genome typing of bacteria links cases nationwide, which previously had no common themes.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

3.7.1 All food safety incidents are dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and Practical guidance on food hazards and the procedure for food safety incidents. The team is committed to responding to appropriate notifications of food hazards and working with the FSA and food businesses to ensure that food is safe to eat.

3.7.2 The team will receive Food Alerts (FAFA), Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and allergy alerts via the FSA mailbox, which is sent to the food team email box and forwarded within 24 hours to competent officers. The Food Lead Officer or Senior Officer in charge will determine what action needs to be taken on the Food Alert. Generally such situations are dealt with through voluntary co-operation or surrender of the food.

Food Fraud

- 3.7.3 The Council is committed to detecting fraudulent activity. This includes various illegal acts committed for economic gain including false labelling, establishments operating illegally, illegal importation of foods and diversion of meat products into the animal feed chain via the bakery production.
- 3.7.4 Whistle-blower, anonymous complaints or partial information is taken seriously and collated or followed up.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 3.8.1 Arrangements are in place to ensure consistency with other organisations and by officers delegated to represent the Council. This is achieved through membership of local specialist groups.
- 3.8.2 The Regulatory Services Manager attends and participates in the Berkshire Environmental Health Managers Group. One of the Berkshire Managers has specialist responsibility for food safety and attends the Berkshire Food Safety Liaison Group once per year.
- 3.8.3 The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager attends and participates in the Berkshire/Oxfordshire Food Safety & Health and Safety Liaison Group that will meet 3-4 times per year. One of the members of this group aims to go to the food sampling group at least once per year to provide strategic direction.
- 3.8.4 The officer with specialist responsibility for sampling attends and participates in the Berkshire Food Sampling Groups.
- 3.8.5 The Trading Standards food specialist or lead food officer attends and participates in the Regional Food Focus Group of TSSE which meets 2 times per year.
- 3.8.6 The service has regular contact with professional bodies, the Chartered Institution of Environmental Health and the Trading Standards Institute as well as the national regulators Food Standards Agency and the Office of Product Safety and Standards.
- 3.8.7 For imported or exported foods, the team liaises with relevant port of entry local authorities where action is required as well as the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).
- 3.8.8 A representative for the team sits on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which covers all festivals and community events within the town and offers support or advice regarding food safety.

3.9 Food Promotion

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

- 3.9.1 The Authority has run and issued awards for good standards of hygiene in food premises since 1975. In 2011 the authority joined the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) run by the Food Standards Agency. The rating is given at the end of routine or partial inspections in the form of a window sticker including information about the scheme and how their rating is made up. The information is uploaded to the website approximately once every 4-6 weeks. Premises can request a revisit if they are not satisfied with their rating. On payment of a fee another full inspection will be carried out within 3 months.
- 3.9.2 Since 1999 the Food & Safety team has successfully run in collaboration with Festival Republic and Central Fusion, a separate Alfresco Award for the food traders at Reading Festival. In 2011 the award was expanded to encompass the principles of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and a new pink coloured sticker unique to Reading Festival was designed. Each year any traders achieving 5 rating will be given a unique Reading Festival wall sticker for the duration of the festival and nominated for one of three Al Fresco Awards (Bronze, Silver or Gold). All food traders are inspected at the festival. The costs of this work is funded by the festival organisers. The festival organisers and food service contractor take great interest in the total number of traders in each food rating category and traders who achieve two or less are scrutinised before being allowed to return to the festival in the following year. Al Fresco Award winners are given incentives to attend the following year's festival such as a free pitch at the next year event. Since 2016 the Council has also followed the inspection plan set out by Nationwide Caterers Association.

Food Hygiene Education

- 3.9.3 Staff deliver a Level 2 Food Safety in Catering Course on a one-day basis about 6 times per year. The same course is offered to companies, organisations or schools at their premises on request. Courses are also run for specific ethnic minority groups both in English and their own language

NIS Pathfinders Project

- 3.9.4 The FSA has asked the council to take part in a FSA funded project with one of their PA business partners (JD Wetherspoon) which considers a National inspection Strategy for businesses with a PA. PA officers will desktop score the business units based on the companies audit documentation for each unit and compare the scores given with those of inspecting officers. Over 100 units will be scored as part of the project.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The net budget for the Food & Safety and Trading Standards sections for 2018/19 is £650,300. This is the cost of providing all the functions of the team, including food safety and standards, safety at sports grounds licensing, health and safety at work, consumer advice, all trading standards functions and the Primary Authority Service.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

4.2.1 The Food & Safety team is currently staffed by 10.4 full time equivalent (FTE) officers. The team carry out the full spectrum of food hygiene, health and safety, Primary Authority Partnership and certain forms of licensing activities. Officers in the team are broadly multidisciplinary, however certain aspects of their role such as the inspection of high risk premises are restricted based on their competency and qualifications. For example, a Senior Technical Officer is not deemed competent to inspect Category A food premises and an Environmental Health Officer who has not reached specific competency criteria will not be able to prohibit a food premises from operating.

4.2.1 As part of the planning process for ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties, it must ensure that it has sufficient staffing capacity to deliver its inspection and enforcement programmes. Based on a percentage of each officer's time being spent on food hygiene activities only and including factors such as maternity, part time working hours, competencies etc, there are currently 3.35 FTE officers available against an estimated need of 5 FTE's. Unfortunately due to national shortages of qualified Environmental Health Officers, the Council has been unable to recruit to a vacant post in the team. In order to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duties, casual staff have been recruited. This has resulted in the Council being able to deliver its inspection programme, despite initial concerns in 2017/18 that it would fall short.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 One to one meetings are held for all officers approximately 6 times per year where professional and personal development is discussed and encouraged. Officers complete annual Training Needs Assessment's to ensure that training needs are identified and they are able to meet their 10 hours CPD as specified in the Food Law Code of Practice.

4.3.2 Due to changes in circumstances of our staff and greater part time working the Council has decided to invest in online training (ABC Food Law) for staff in order to ensure that they meet their CPD requirements.

4.3.3 Consistency training for use of the Food Hygiene risk rating scheme will be undertaken as part of the FSA national consistency exercise.

4.3.4 Courses will be undertaken according to officer specialisms, as the course becomes available and according to the officer training plans.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 The Council does not hold any external accreditation, however it conducts a rigorous monitoring procedure to ensure the national and local performance indicators it has set itself are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted to achieve best value.

The monitoring of the plan is conducted by:

- (i) Monthly monitoring of achievement of targets, actions and time taken by team managers or delegated officers.
- (ii) Submission of food hygiene and food standards statistical returns to the FSA
- (iii) Officers are provided with details of actions not responded to within the specified target times
- (iv) Monthly one to one meetings
- (v) Annual appraisals of staff
- (vi) Publication of annual performance achievements
- (vii) Checks of accuracy of improvement and prohibition notices served.
- (viii) Shadowing of staff to check consistency and accuracy of inspections.

6. REVIEW

6.1 The annual performance achievement is compared with the target set and any underachievement is explored and the appropriate action taken. The data below details the review of performance:

Number of Inspections

6.1.2 Food Safety

	Planned inspections 2017/18	Actual inspections
Premise Rating - A	24	24
Premise Rating - B	86	86
Premise Rating - C	232	232
Premise Rating - D	323	323
Premise Rating - E	251	251
Premise Rating - Unrated	199	177
Premise Rating - Outside	126	126
Totals	1241	1219

6.1.3 Food Standards

	Inspection ratings 17/18	Outstanding inspection ratings 17/18
Premise Rating - A	8	0
Premise Rating - B	112	124
Premise Rating - C	60	428
Premise Rating - Unrated	51	235
Premise Rating - Outside	4	2
Totals	235	789

The number of outstanding inspection ratings has been increasing over the last few years due to a number of factors including; it is a non-statutory activity; officer competency; other priorities being set to focus on issues such as food fraud. A project to increase the number of inspections is scheduled to start in 2019/20.

Formal Actions

6.1.4 During the period 2016 to 2018 the authority took the following enforcement action:

Enforcement Type	2016/17	2017/18
Voluntary closure	2	2
Seizure, detention & surrender of food	2	1
Suspension/revocation of approval or licence	0	0
Emergency prohibition notice	4	4
Prohibition order	0	2
Simple caution	0	0
Improvement notices	34	15

Remedial action & detention notices	0	0
Written warnings (Food Hygiene)	553	650
Written warnings (Food Standards)	72	30
Prosecutions concluded	0	1

Food Sampling

6.1.5

	Number of Food Hygiene Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results
2016/17	55	4
2017/18	63	22

Food Promotional Activities

6.1.6 During 2016, 150 primary food hygiene inspections were carried out over Reading Festival weekend. An increase of 20 businesses compared to the previous year. At the end of the visit there were the following:

Rating	No businesses 2018	of	No of Businesses 2017
5	101		100
4	16		15
3	4		11
2	1		2
1	0		0

The consistent high numbers of 5 rated premises reflects the visibility of the Reading Festival award scheme as well as the financial incentive and prestige of winning an Alfresco Award. The food inspections are

also carried out every year and financed by Festival Republic as a commitment to ongoing good hygiene practices.

6.2 Variations from the Service Plan

6.2.1 The following items were not met in the 2016/17 service plan.

- Some policies and procedures require updating.
- The number of unrated premises inspected for food standards was significantly lower than the target figure. The most significant number of businesses that have not been inspected for food standards are caterers. Caterers are inspected for food standards by Environmental Health staff and not all the staff that inspect unrated premises have the qualification or competence to inspect caterers. All of the unrated food retailers and manufacturers were inspected as these premises are inspected by Trading Standards staff.
- Food Sampling has remained lower than targeted.
- Internal monitoring of officers has not been fully carried out in accordance with the authority's protocols.
- Some competency matrices have not been fully completed or confirmed by the lead Food Officers.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

6.3.1 Following the FSA Audit in November 2017, an action plan was drafted to ensure that any areas of improvement were fully identified and plans put into place to deliver those improvements. The Action Plan is detailed in Appendix 2

APPENDIX 1

FOOD ENFORCEMENT POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Reading Borough Council, as a “food authority”, has a duty to enforce within its area the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 (the Act) (as amended), the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (FSHER 2013), a series of regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 being implemented into UK legislation and other associated legislation. The Council carries out this duty by employing suitably qualified staff who are authorised to enforce the requirements of the legislation listed above. In developing this enforcement procedure, the Council has had regard to the guidance in the Codes of Practice issued by The Food Standards Agency (FSA).
- 1.2 While the Corporate enforcement policy sets out the general approach to enforcement throughout the council, and recommends that specific procedures should be developed to enforce particular pieces of legislation, this Food Enforcement Policy outlines how council officers will enforce Food law.
- 1.3 The policy covers the following:
- (a) Policy Statement
 - (b) The Approach to Enforcement
 - (c) Practical Arrangements for Implementing the Policy
 - (d) Maintaining a High Quality Service
 - (e) Enforcement Procedure

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Council has made effective arrangements to enforce the Act, the FSHER 2013 and all associated regulations and codes of practice, with the aim of ensuring that all food and drink intended for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health and safety of consumers, and is packaged and marketed within labelling and compositional requirements.
- 2.2 Should a member of the public or business wish to seek advice or make a complaint under the provisions of the Act, the Council will provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service for the handling of the enquiry in accordance with the Council’s service standards.

3. THE APPROACH TO ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 The introduction of the FSHER 2013 formalises the requirement for enforcing authorities to ensure that operators of food businesses produce an effective documented management system for food that takes into account hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) when dealing with food issues.
- 3.2 This has resulted in increased demands on enforcement officers who have to assess the effectiveness of the documented system, and also on the operators of food businesses and food handlers who are now required to demonstrate their knowledge of how to prepare, store and present food in a safe manner so as not to pose a risk to health.

A wide variety of statutory and non-statutory guidance exists to assist in the interpretation and compliance of the law.

- 3.3 The Council carries out its duties on a risk rating basis and applies the law in a proportionate and transparent manner. To this end the Council will:
 - 3.3.1 Enforce and execute the provisions of the Act, the FSHER 2013 and associated Regulations.
 - 3.3.2 Register all food businesses as required by legislation.
 - 3.3.3 Inspect food premises with a frequency determined by an assessment of the potential risks guided by the Food Law Code of Practice issued by the FSA.
 - 3.3.4 Make consistent enforcement decisions in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 6 of this policy.
 - 3.3.5 Comply with official guidance issued by FSA and where applicable, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Health (DH).
 - 3.3.6 Liaise with the other food authorities in the area through the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food Liaison Group, and through the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Food Focus Group to ensure a consistent and agreed approach in dealing with food safety and food standards issues respectively.
 - 3.3.7 Participate in an inter authority auditing programme with other Local Authorities in the region for food safety and food standards.
 - 3.3.8 Liaise with the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton Food Sampling Group to agree a national, regional and local sampling programme of microbiological food sampling. Liaise with TSSE, Hampshire and Worcestershire laboratories to participate in regional and where available national food standards sampling programmes. The Council also shares its local sampling programmes with TSSE.
 - 3.3.9 Investigate all cases and outbreaks of food poisoning based on risk and the single case protocol which details which organisation (the Local Authority or Thames Valley Public Health England (TVPHE)) will investigate which each organism. Liaison with the Thames Valley Infectious Disease Group ensures a consistent approach when dealing with individual cases or outbreaks of food poisoning.
 - 3.3.10 Follow the principles of the Primary Authority (PA) scheme as set out in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.
 - 3.3.11 Where a business with an outlet in Reading has a PA in another area then the Authority will search the PA register for any additional information about the business, an inspection plan which directs the inspection, any PA advice given to the business which indicates that this area of the inspection has been approved by the PA. Feedback will be provided to the PA as it directs. Any business with a PA where enforcement is required will be carried out with the knowledge of the primary authority. Depending on the type of enforcement action an

enforcement notification will be made to the primary authority register.

- 3.3.12 Actively promote the PA scheme, engage new PA businesses, allocate officers to work with them who will create a work plan for each business to achieve their goals. The Authority will work with other enforcement authorities to ensure businesses are protected from inconsistent or unreasonable enforcement, provided with a critical friend and a communication bridge to other enforcement authorities. Where there is a local failure at the business or deviation from the agreed policy, the authority cannot defend the business against enforcement action.
- 3.3.13 Where there is no primary authority for food standards then the home authority principle is applied to complaints and enquiries where food does not originate in Reading.
- 3.3.14 Businesses based in Reading with no PA arrangements will be actively encouraged to have one and only a basic Home Authority service is provided where food is unsafe to stay on the market.
- 3.3.15 Ensure the continued development of all its enforcement officers and encourage officers to keep up to date on food safety and food standards issues.
- 3.3.16 Deal effectively and appropriately with all food incidents including food hazards and food fraud on a localised and non- localised scale to ensure the appropriate persons are notified of incident and the incident is reduced to a safe level.
- 3.3.17 Provide training and education to food businesses to help them comply with their legal requirements and ensure their food is safe.
- 3.3.18 Follow the brand standard guidance for the operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Issue a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) sticker to those businesses that fall within the scheme. Consider appeals of ratings, provide a mechanism for rerating on payment of a fee

4. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF THE POLICY

4.1 The Council carries out its duties in the following manner:

4.1.1 Pro-active Inspections

- (a) Pro-active inspections are carried out in the form of a rolling risk-based programme. At the beginning of each financial year, the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager will produce a report identifying those premises that are due for inspection during the year. The percentage of premises that are not broadly compliant at the beginning of the year and at three monthly intervals. Once the Authority has determined the extent of the relative risk and categorised the premises, inspections are made on the minimum frequency basis detailed in 3.1.10 of the food service plan for food hygiene and 3.1.15 of the food service plan for food standards.
- (b) Most food businesses serving open food or high risk food will be given a rating sticker at the end of the visit of between zero and 5 to

reflect the food hygiene at the premises based on the code of practice risk rating for hygiene, structure and confidence in management. This information is available on the web and also a sticker on the window /door. New businesses will be inspected and rated as usual. Unannounced re-ratings will be made within 3 months of payment of a fee.

- (c) Category A, B or not broadly compliant C food hygiene and category A or not broadly compliant category B food standards will be inspected using the existing system of inspection, partial inspection or audit approach. The parameters of the risk rating can be changed during an inspection, partial inspection or audit.
- (d) Category C food hygiene or category B food standards premises that are considered broadly compliant for food hygiene or food standards may, at every other inspection date have an intervention such as a verification or surveillance visit rather than a full inspection, partial inspection or audit. At the verification /surveillance visit premises can be moved on to show a new inspection date but the values of the parameters which make up the risk rating will remain unchanged. As a new Food Hygiene Rating assessment cannot be made on these visits, it is unlikely that verification/surveillance visits will be made as a proactive visit.
- (e) Category D food hygiene premises may receive an official control such as a full inspection, partial inspection, audit or verification/surveillance visit and on every other visit a non-official control such as education and advice. As the FHRS score cannot be changed or altered in the way it is made up as a result of a verification/surveillance or non-official control visit then it is unlikely that these forms of proactive inspection will be used unless the business does not fall within the FHRS scheme.
- (f) Category E food hygiene or category C food standards can be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy such as a self-assessment questionnaire. Where the business is still required to have a FHRS score an inspection will be carried out by an authorised officer. Where the business does not fall within the FHRS then a Regulatory Support Officer or a newly qualified authorised officer will visit the premises to assess if the type of food served at the business has changed and complete a low risk questionnaire with the business. Childminders are also not part of the FHRS scheme. These businesses are sent a low risk questionnaire. Any business that does not return its questionnaire is visited by a Regulatory Support Officer. Premises where large quantities of food are prepared or stored or high standards of food control are maintained may be subject to inspection or verification and surveillance visits to ensure the premises has not substantially changed.
- (g) Certain premises that produce meat, fish, dairy or egg based food for other businesses will be covered by the product specific establishment regulations in EC Regulation 853/2004 for food hygiene. These premises are inspected as dictated by the risk rating.

- (h) Food Brokers are inspected for traceability documentation of the food.

4.1.2 Reactive Inspections

Reactive Inspections of food businesses will be carried out following the receipt of a complaint, which could be regarding a food complaint, for example concerning contamination of a food, complaint about hygiene standards of a food premises or via the notification of a suspected food poisoning.

4.1.3 Food Incidents

There are 3 ways in which the FSA categorises food incidents. These are Food Alert For Action (FAFA) where immediate action will be taken on receipt of the notification; Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and Allergy Alerts where no action is required.

4.1.4 Sampling

Food sampling as agreed by FSA, PHE at Porton, TSSE Group and the Berkshire Food Sampling Group is carried out on a national, regional and local basis, focusing on the specific needs of Reading. Proprietors of those food businesses involved in the sampling programme are informed of the outcome and are required to take remedial action where laboratory analysis of samples show unsatisfactory levels of hygiene. Formal sampling as guided by the FSA Code of Practice will be restricted to occasions where formal action is anticipated.

4.1.5 Imported Food

- (a) As an inland authority for the sale of imported food, the authority could carry out inspection of the food as part of the food premises inspections.
- (b) Imported food may fail to have the correct documentation or labelling or the authorised officer may suspect the food is unfit for human consumption. In cases where there is insufficient documentation or labelling officers will make sufficient reasonable enquiries to ascertain correct documentation and labelling. Where an authorised is satisfied that the food is suspected of failing to meet the requirements of the food safety legislation, the food will be sampled.
- (c) Where sufficient documentation and labelling is produced to satisfy the requirements of the authorised officer the food will be released. Where there is insufficient documentation the action will be taken on a risk to public health based approach.
- (d) Where food fails to meet food safety requirements steps will be taken to ensure it does not re enter the food chain in its current state in the UK.

4.1.6 Education & Training

Officers actively encourage food handlers to participate in food hygiene training to expand their knowledge and understanding of food safety issues. All inspections involve some form of education/training, which is to be provided during on-site discussions concerning food preparation procedures and by offering advice and

information on matters requiring attention. We run regular training courses for food businesses in food hygiene. Additionally, where significant changes are made to food legislation the team will work with the Communications Team to update food businesses on legislative changes and local initiatives.

4.1.7 Enforcement Action

To ensure an effective, transparent and consistent approach to enforcement of food safety legislation, officers will follow the guidance in Section 6.

4.2 Enforcement in Council-owned food premises

Any contraventions of food law found at businesses that are owned and run by the Council will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Service and the Service Director who will be required to rectify the defect or deficiency within an agreed timescale where there is a significant breach or ongoing breaches of food law.

4.3 Who will implement the policy?

4.3.1 Responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager delegated through the Regulatory Services Manager under the authority of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services. Day to day activities are carried out by authorised officers. The Food Lead Officers are responsible for the planning, organisation and subsequent monitoring of all aspects of the policy. Inspections, sampling, investigations relating to food and training will be carried out by officers authorised under the Act and FSHER 2013 and as detailed in the FSA Code of Practice.

4.3.2 Trading Standards Officers, Environmental Health Officers and some Technical Officers in the Regulatory Services Department are authorised to deal with aspects of food legislation in accordance with the competency matrix and authorisation scheme of the Service.

5. MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the highest practicable standard of customer service is integrated into all aspects of service delivery within a reasonable cost. All staff will adopt a professional approach, and performance monitoring will be carried out to ensure compliance with agreed targets. The service will also be audited by peer authorities and by reviewing any complaints against the service that may be received.

5.1.1 Professionalism

- (a) The Council ensures that all authorised officers have access to appropriate professional training and other resources required in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and competence.
- (b) The Lead Food Officers (Licensing, Food & Safety Manger and Principal EHO (Food)) will monitor the performance of authorised officers.

5.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of the policy

- (a) The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food) will monitor the following aspects of the Policy:
- (i) Compliance with agreed targets for pro-active inspections
 - (ii) Compliance with agreed targets for reactive inspections/complaints
 - (iii) Compliance with agreed targets for written reports following inspections
 - (iv) The number of requests for service received year to year
 - (v) The number of food incidents received year to year
 - (vi) The number of sampling initiatives carried out year to year
 - (vii) The number of training courses and candidates run year to year
 - (viii) The results of course evaluation sheets from year to year
 - (ix) The results of inter-authority auditing
 - (x) The number and nature of complaints made against the service
 - (xi) The results of specific target monitoring i.e. Number of businesses that have implemented a documented food safety management system.
- (b) Specific actions to achieve these aims are detailed in the Food Service Plan.

6. ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE

6.1 Local authorities have a variety of options available to them when implementing food safety legislation. Action can be either informal (persuasive) or formal (compulsory). The various options available are detailed below.

6.2 Any general information, inspection plans, PA advice available on the PA register will be considered before any intervention in a business with a PA. Where formal action is considered because of ongoing local failures then a formal notification through the PA website will be made. In the majority of but not all of the cases, this will negate the need for formal enforcement action.

6.2 INFORMAL ACTION

Authorised officers may use informal procedures if they are satisfied that such procedures will secure compliance with the requirements of food safety legislation within a reasonable time scale.

6.2.1 No action

In certain circumstances contraventions may not warrant any action. This can be where the cost of compliance outweighs the benefit to public health. A decision to take no action must be recorded in writing and must take into account the public health implications of the contravention.

6.2.2 Verbal Advice

For minor breaches of the law we verbally advise the offender clearly identifying the contravention and including a deadline by which the action must be taken. This might be done when the authorised officer has confidence in the food business operator that the work would be carried out. Failure to comply would result in more severe enforcement action.

6.2.3 Written Warning and advice

- (a) During or on completion of an inspection the authorised officer will discuss as far as possible with the operator of the business, any problems that are identified and will explain what is necessary to rectify the problem.
- (b) After all visits to food businesses an inspection report form will be left with the person in charge of the business at the time of the visit. The inspection report form will detail the main findings and make a clear distinction between legal requirements and recommendations. The form will contain details of areas inspected, person seen at the premises, visiting authorised officer, their contact details, date/ time of the visit and clear contact details regarding an Officers manager to allow a food business operator to take a matter further if they are not happy with the response of an officer.
- (c) In certain circumstances and particularly if the food business operator was not present at the visit to the food premises and it is known that the food business operator is not based at this premises a letter or a copy of the inspection report form will be sent to his office. This is particularly appropriate where there are legal requirements that must be carried out and it is a multi site business.
- (d) Where a letter is sent out after the visit, the letter will detail the hazards identified by enforcement officers during their inspection and the remedial action required. A clear distinction will be made between matters that are legal requirements and those that are recommendations and the measures that are required to secure compliance with the legislation.
- (e) It will be clear from both the inspection report and any subsequent letter that the operator can approach the Section for additional advice/assistance should it be necessary.

6.2.4 Follow up visits

Where significant breaches of the legislation have been identified during a previous visit to the premises, a revisit will be carried out to monitor progress towards compliance. Wherever practicable, and in all cases where a formal notice has been served or prosecution instituted the revisit will be undertaken by the same officer who carried out the original inspection.

6.3 FORMAL ACTION

- 6.3.1 In deciding what enforcement action is necessary, an authorised officer will have regard to the nature and severity of the

contravention and the effects on public health. Regard will also be given to the food safety history of the business and attitude of the food business operator in complying with legislative requirements. Formal action will be instigated where informal action has failed to ensure that a food business operator has performed the duties imposed on them by relevant food safety legislation. A decision on what type of action to take may not necessarily be made at the time of the inspection.

6.3.2 Improvement Notices & Hygiene Improvement Notices

- (a) An authorised Officer may consider the use of an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice as appropriate in any of the following or combination of the following situations:
 - (i) where there is a history of non-compliance or delay in compliance of food safety legislation;
 - (ii) where formal action is proportionate to the risk to public health; or
 - (iii) where it is believed that for an informal approach is not likely to be effective.
- (b) A Hygiene Improvement Notice gives the food business operator on whom the notice is to be served a minimum of 14 days in which to make a representation in respect of works improvement required. An Improvement Notice sets no minimum time for compliance with the notice and is designed to be used with the Food Information Regulations 2014
- (c) An Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice will clearly detail which regulations have been contravened and what remedial action is necessary. Information will be sent explaining the recipient's right to appeal. The notice will specify the time within which compliance is required. The time allotted will be dependent on the nature of the problem, the public health risks involved and the availability of the solution.
- (d) An authorised officer serving an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice must be satisfied that they have adequate evidence to successfully prosecute for non-compliance should the situation arise.
- (e) The authorised officer will visit as soon as is reasonably practicable following expiry of the time allowed for compliance to check whether the contraventions of food safety legislation have been remedied. If they have not, an offence has been committed and the investigating officer shall prepare a report for the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services.
- (f) The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services will decide whether it is necessary and appropriate to instigate prosecution proceedings in respect of the food business operator subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied as to the available evidence.

6.3.3 Prohibition Procedures: Formal closure of a food premises using Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order

- (a) Authorised Officers may serve the above notices where there is an imminent risk to public health. The notice will either:
 - (i) prohibit the use of the entire premises or part of the premises;
 - (ii) prevent the use of certain equipment; or
 - (iii) prohibit a particular process or treatment
- (b) The notice and subsequent order will require immediate closure of the premises, or the cessation of a process or use of specific equipment.
- (c) Following the service of an Emergency Prohibition Notice (EPN) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice (HEPN) the local authority must within three days apply to a Magistrates' Court for an Emergency Prohibition Order (EPO) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) respectively. Where an order is not applied for the proprietor may claim compensation for loss of earnings arising as a result of the EPN or HEPN. The food business operator will have one complete day's notice of the Council's intention to make the application to the court. During the closure period frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.
- (d) The EPN, HEPN, EPO, HEPO and accompanying notes will contain the following information:
 - (i) The name of the business and its address;
 - (ii) The matters that are considered to pose an imminent risk;
 - (iii) Details as to how to request that the premises may be allowed to open following the service of the EPO or HEPO;
 - (iv) The circumstances that will entitle the Food Business Operator to compensation for any losses following the service of the Emergency Prohibition Notice or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice.
- (e) The Council will apply to the Court for its costs from the Food Business Operator in making the application and the work carried out beyond that of a normal inspection.
- (f) An authorised officer may serve a Notice seeking voluntary closure of the food business if the officer believes there is an imminent risk of injury to health as in the emergency prohibition procedures and he has confidence in the management of the business that they will not reopen until the imminent risk to health is removed. In these circumstances there is no opportunity for the business to seek compensation from the Council for loss of earnings as there is no need to apply to the court for confirmation of the notice in the form of an order.

- (g) The voluntary closure will be confirmed in writing and frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.

6.3.4 Closure of food business after prosecution & prohibiting the food business operator from managing it - Prohibition Order/ Hygiene Prohibition Order

- (a) If a food business operator is successfully prosecuted for breaches of relevant food law and satisfactory evidence is provided to the court that the business continues to pose a risk of injury to health, the food authority can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Prohibition Order. If successful, the food business operator and/or manager are prohibited from running a food business.
- (b) If a person is prohibited from managing a food business the information is circulated nationally via the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) to reduce the likelihood of that person setting up business in another area. If the Prohibition Order has been lifted the food authority will notify the CIEH as soon as is reasonably possible.

6.3.5 Inspection, Detention and Seizure of Suspect Food

- (a) Any food that fails to meet food safety requirements or has not been produced, processed or distributed in compliance with the hygiene regulations may be detained to allow further time for investigation or seized. When food has been detained or seized the food business operator will be provided with written notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- (b) The food will be presented to a JP as soon as possible but within two days, when a decision on further action will be made. This two day period may be extended if necessary to ensure that parties attend and be represented if they choose.
- (c) A food condemnation notification will be given to the person in charge of the food when the officer intends to have the food dealt with by a Justice of the Peace (JP).

6.3.6 Suspension/withdrawal of approval or conditional approval

- (a) Any premises that has received approval under EC Regulation 853/2004 by the Food & Safety Team is given an approval number based on the stem of RG followed by the next numerical value which is notified to the FSA.
- (b) The approval will be suspended or withdrawn if the business fails to comply with the relevant hygiene regulations.
- (c) The business may be given a conditional approval (including approval number) rather than full approval on the first inspection after application. The conditional approval allows the businesses to trade provided if it meets certain conditions within six months. In order to obtain conditional approval the business must meet the structural requirements and produces a commitment to implement the other issues specified in writing within six months of the granting of the

conditional approval. When all the requirements have been met an approval will be granted. If the requirements of the conditional approval are not met within six months of the granting of the conditional approval, the conditional approval for the business will be suspended or withdrawn.

- (d) The suspension, withdrawal of approval or conditional approval will be given in writing to the business and an appeals mechanism will be available to the business.

6.3.7 Remedial Action Notice

- (a) Authorised Environmental Health staff can serve a Remedial Action Notice on a food business operator that operates a food premises that is subject to approval. The notice will provide provision for prohibiting the use of equipment, any part of the establishment, the imposition of conditions upon, or prohibiting or reducing the rate of processing of the food. This Notice may be used in the following situations:
 - (i) When the rate of operation is detrimental to the ability of the business to comply with the regulations;
 - (ii) On a continuing serious breach of the hygiene regulations that gives rise to a risk to public health.

6.3.8 Prosecution

- (a) Food handlers and the owners of food businesses found to be contravening food safety and food standards legislation will be given reasonable opportunity to comply. However, in some situations the seriousness of the offence may be such that prosecution is appropriate. The following circumstances may result in prosecution proceedings being brought:
 - (i) The alleged offence involve a serious breach of the law such that public health, safety or wellbeing is or has been put at risk;
 - (ii) The alleged offence involves a failure to correct a serious potential risk potential risk to food after a reasonable opportunity to correct the matter;
 - (iii) The offence involves a failure to comply in full or part with the requirements of a statutory Notice;
 - (iv) There is a history of similar offences relating to risk to public health
- (b) In such cases, the Council will consider:
 - (i) The seriousness of the offence;
 - (ii) The previous history of compliance with relevant legislation;
 - (iii) The ability of the defendant to establish a due diligence defence;
 - (iv) The availability and capability of witnesses and the evidence available.

6.3.9 Deciding Whether to Prosecute

- (a) Not every contravention of the law should be prosecuted through the Courts. The Authority will weigh the seriousness of the offence (taking into account the harm done or the potential for harm arising from the offence) with other relevant factors, including the financial circumstances of the defendant, mitigating circumstances and other public interest criteria.
- (b) The Council will have regard to The Code for Crown Prosecutors issued under Section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 in deciding whether to prosecute in any particular case. Thus, before starting proceedings, the Head of Legal Services must be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of a conviction based on the evidence (that is, there must be sufficient admissible, substantial and reliable evidence to secure a conviction). In addition, the Council will balance, carefully and fairly, the various public interest criteria against the seriousness of the offence. These public interest criteria include:-
 - (i) the likely sentence (if convicted);
 - (ii) previous convictions and conduct of the defendant;
 - (iii) whether there are grounds for believing the offence is likely to be repeated;
 - (iv) the prevalence of the offence in the area;
 - (v) whether the offence was committed as a result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding;
 - (vi) any delay between the offence taking place and the date of trial;
 - (vii) the likely effect the prosecution will have on the defendant;
 - (viii) whether the defendant has put right the loss or harm caused.
- (c) The Council will have regard to the Regulators Code which came into force in 2014 and must be applied to food law. The enforcement approach must be reasonable, proportionate, risk based and consistent with good practice. It must consider the economic impact and minimise costs as well as encourage compliance.
- (d) If a number of offences have been committed and prosecution is deemed to be appropriate, then in selecting the offences for prosecution, regard will be had to the need to reflect the seriousness of the matter and to give the Court adequate sentencing powers to deal with the matter appropriately.

6.3.10 Simple Caution

- (a) A simple caution may be issued instead of a prosecution. The Council will have regard to the guidance contained in the Ministry of Justice circular Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders (November 2013) in deciding whether or not to offer alleged offenders the chance of a formal caution.

- (b) The following conditions should be fulfilled before a caution is administered:
 - (i) There must be evidence of the alleged offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction;
 - (ii) The alleged offender must admit the offence;
 - (iii) The alleged offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give an informed consent to being cautioned.
- (c) If there is insufficient evidence to consider taking a prosecution, then a simple caution must not be considered.
- (d) There is no legal obligation for a person to accept the offer of a simple caution and no pressure should be applied to the Food Business Operator to accept one. If the alleged offender refuses to accept a simple caution a prosecution will normally be pursued.

7. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This enforcement policy will be reviewed annually or when changes in legislation or centrally issued guidance makes this necessary.

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APPENDIX 3

Action Plan for Reading Borough Council

Audit date: 11 December 2017

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>Recommendation 1 - Service Planning</p> <p>[The Standard – 3.1 and 5.3]</p> <p>Include in the Service Delivery Plan an accurate and clear breakdown and comparison of the resources required to carry out the full range of statutory food law enforcement activities against a reasoned estimate of the resources available to the Service. This should identify any shortfall which may prevent delivery of all planned work and provide the corresponding strategy for delivering the service plan.</p> <p>[</p>	30/9/18	The service plan for 2018/19 will comply with the standard in that it will include the current resources and resources required.	
<p>[The Standard 3.2]</p> <p>Submit a documented Service Plan for approval to either the relevant member forum or, where approval and management of service plans has been delegated to senior officers, to the relevant senior officer.</p>	30/11/18	The 2018/19 service plan will be taken to committee to request that the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services be given delegated power to amend and approve the service plan. The plan will be taken to Nov 2018 Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee.	The service plan was taken to the Policy and Implementation Committee in 2001 where the head of Environmental Services was given delegated power to amend the plan

<p>Recommendation 2 - Overdue interventions [The Standard 7.1]</p> <p>The Authority should carry out intervention/inspections at a frequency which is not less than that specified by the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.</p>	31/3/18	All FH inspections due (category A-E and Unrated) will be carried out in 2018/19	On target to complete all Food Hygiene Inspections categories A-E and unrated by 31/3/18
<p>Recommendation 3 - Sufficient Authorised Officers [The Standard - 5.3]</p> <p>The Authority should ensure it has sufficient numbers of authorised officers to carry out all food hygiene law activities required by the Framework Agreement and Food Law Code of Practice.</p>	ongoing	Staffing and recruitment will be monitored closely and appropriate action will be taken when necessary to cover the shortfall.	The section has been granted permission by the LA to recruit a further 2 full time permanent staff for the Food & Safety team
<p>Recommendation 4 – Officer Authorisation [The Standard 5.3]</p> <p>Review officer authorisations ensure they are up to date, and ensure those officers whose duties would extend to exercising powers under other regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 and the Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations (TARP) 2011 are appropriately authorised in line with their competencies and the Codes of Practice.</p>	30/9/18	The service will review if additional authorisation will be given to contractors or casual staff.	The procedure for Officer authorisation has been completed and the service has sufficient authorised officers to comply with the legislative requirements. Casual and contractor officers do not have the full authorisation

<p>[The Standard 5.5]</p> <p>Records of the training, including certificates, of each authorised officer and appropriate support staff shall be maintained by the Authority in accordance with the FLCoP.</p>	30/9/18	The training records of each authorised officer will be individually checked.	There is a system for maintaining training records and certificates.
<p>Recommendation 5 – Updating Procedures [The Standard 4.1]</p> <p>The Authority shall ensure that all documented policies and procedures for each of the enforcement activities are reviewed and regular intervals, and whenever there are changes to legislation or centrally issued guidance.</p>	Dec 2018	All procedures will be updated by the date specified	Some procedures have been updated and a system of reviewing/ updating the procedures has been put in place
<p>Recommendation 6 – Internal monitoring [The Standard 19.1]</p> <p>Develop and implement a documented system of internal monitoring to ensure that it includes risk based arrangements for the monitoring of all relevant food law enforcement activities carried out by the Service at appropriate frequencies.</p>	Dec 2018	The existing internal monitoring procedure will be updated and monitored by the date specified	There is an existing internal monitoring procedure

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOODS

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	FIRE SAFETY IN TALL BUILDINGS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR JOHN ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ALL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Council's response following the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington on 14th June 2017. This includes action taken in relation to the Authority's own housing stock, other corporate buildings and schools, as well as wider work in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) in respect of privately owned high rise residential blocks within the Borough boundaries.
- 1.2 In summary the local authority has taken the following action post the Grenfell Tower incident:
- As previously reported, the council instructed Fireskills, an independent fire safety specialist to audit its tall buildings. The audit went further than Government's guidance and included buildings below 18 metres in height. As a result of the audit an action plan was drawn up that is being managed to ensure works can be completed. The council has also as necessary responded to the Government's latest guidance on issues such as fire doors.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RBFRS and the 6 Berkshire councils was signed, to enable a partnership approach to inspections and enforcement of all high rise .
 - As a result of the MOU, a building safety programme was implemented and joint work commenced in March 2018 between RBFRS and the council. This work involved joint fire safety inspections of 32 of the most high risk residential buildings over 18 metres. Inspections were completed by 1st August and work to meet fire safety standards was required where necessary.
 - Three high rise residential buildings have been identified with ACM cladding which failed the required fire safety standards. These buildings have had interim measures installed and monitored in accordance with the current Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance. The council and RBFRS are working with stakeholders of the buildings to support plans to remove, and in some cases replace, the cladding.
 - There is regular communication and sharing of information between the council and RBFRS, plus joint meetings with relevant stakeholders where required.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Members note the action taken and planned in respect of fire safety in tall buildings as detailed in this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

The Grenfell Tower Fire

- 3.1 Grenfell Tower was a 24-storey, 67m high residential tower block in North Kensington built in 1970. The concrete structure's top 22 storeys consisted of 127 flats. The block was managed by Kensington and Chelsea Tenants' Management Organisation.
- 3.2 A major fire seriously damaged the building on 14 June 2017. The fire burned for about 60 hours until finally extinguished. More than 200 firefighters and 40 fire engines from stations all over London were involved in efforts to control the fire. At least 80 people were confirmed or presumed dead, according to the Metropolitan Police Service. Demolition of the tower is scheduled to start towards the end of 2018.
- 3.3 The fire is under investigation and is the subject of a Public Inquiry which opened on 14th September 2017. The Inquiry suggests that external fire loading was partly responsible for the rapid fire spread. The ACM cladding of the building has become the main focus of concern. The incident has raised a wide range of questions about fire safety and regulation in relation to high rise residential buildings. Phase 1 of the Public Enquiry is due to cover the factual narrative of the events of the night of the fire which includes:
- the existing fire safety and prevention measures at Grenfell Tower;
 - where and how the fire started;
 - the development of the fire and smoke;
 - how the fire and smoke spread from its original seat to other parts of the building; and,
 - the chain of events before the decision was made that there was no further savable life in the building; and the evacuation of residents.
- 3.4 The cladding system which was fitted as part of an £8.4 million refurbishment completed in 2016 consisted of an Aluminium Composite Material which was effectively a sandwich of two sheets of aluminium foil covering a 3mm polyethylene core acting as a rain screen. The insulation was Celotex RS5000, which is an insulant that has subsequently been withdrawn from the market. This was all fixed to the original concrete façade of the building.
- 3.5 After Grenfell, seven large scale tests were undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to understand what combination of ACM and insulation may or may not be safe to use as part of a wall system in high rise buildings, in line with current Building Regulations guidance. These results confirmed which categories of ACM and insulation passed the BS8414 test and enabled MHCLG to provide urgent advice to building owners.
- 3.6 MHCLG has since set up its 'Building Safety Programme' to provide guidance to building owners, councils and local fire brigades. The advice which is being produced by an independent expert advisory panel covers more than issues associated with ACM. MHCLG is also providing advice to building owners about common non-ACM external wall systems, including ones using Metal Composite Materials, High Pressure Laminates or External Wall Insulation with a render or brick slip finish. Advice has been issued to local authorities who own large panel systems with a gas supply, following the gas explosion at Ledbury Estate tower blocks in 2017.
- 3.7 The fire at Grenfell Tower follows other significant incidents in social housing in recent years which have been widely reported in the Housing and national press:
- fire in Lakanal House, Camberwell on 3rd July 2009 (6 deaths)
 - fire at Shepherds Bush House on 18th October 2016 (no deaths)

There were marked similarities between the features of the Lakanal House fire and Grenfell Tower and nationally there remain calls for change, including to Building Regulations.

4. Current Position

RBC Housing stock

- 4.1 Following the review by FireSkills, officers have been working towards delivering the recommendations within the action plan. The key actions taken to date are:
 - 4.2.1 External and internal doors to each flat within high rise blocks are being inspected. To date, the majority of issues that have been identified are minor. Whilst good progress is being made with the inspections and rectification of any issues with doors, there still remain some issues in gaining entry to some tenants' flats to carry out the inspection. There is an agreed escalation process in place to ensure that essential health and safety works are completed in such circumstances and this will be followed (culminating in forced entry as a last resort).
 - 4.2.2 The design for the replacement of the 'break glass' fire alarm system for Coley high rise has been completed and the procurement method agreed. The new system is programmed to be installed in January 2019. The upgrade to the communal alarm systems for these blocks is an interim measure pending the installation of sprinkler systems.
 - 4.2.3 Fire alarms to communal areas will be installed in those blocks identified as higher risk in the FireSkills report. The majority of these will be installed as the alarms are upgraded within the flats, these are being worked through in risk order.
 - 4.2.4 A specification for higher risk flats which includes upgrading smoke detection and in some cases installing a sprinkler system within kitchens has been agreed. The work to upgrade the smoke detection system has now commenced, however, contractors continue to have access issues which causes delays to the programme. Once work to the high rise blocks has been completed, installation will be undertaken in the remaining stock based on a risk programme.
 - 4.2.5 The removal and replacement of cladding on Coley high rise is programmed to coincide with the replacement of windows in 3-5 years' time. The replacement is not related to any identified fire risk, but the outcome of the Hackitt review and any changes in Government policy may influence the materials used as part of the replacement works.
 - 4.2.6 In response to the latest guidance, the new build Council homes at Conwy Close, which are currently under construction, have benefitted from upgraded fire doors and each flat will be completed with a sprinkler system, with an Autoquench system fitted in buggy and bin stores.

Corporate Buildings and Schools

- 4.3 All fire risk assessments have been completed and any priority works have been completed.

Cross Tenure Residential Buildings

- 4.4 A County-wide Steering group was convened by RBFRS with representatives of the six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RBFRS and the six Unitary Authorities was signed this year with the purpose of strengthening the current draft Protocol for Fire Safety Enforcement and putting into place a joint plan of action with regards to the roles and responsibilities of each party.

- 4.5 A programme of joint work was agreed to facilitate sharing of learning, information and resources. A multi-disciplinary operational team comprising RBFRS and an Environmental Health officer from the Council was formed with the remit of holistically reviewing the safety of high rise residential blocks in Reading on a prioritised basis.
- 4.6 RBFRS built a risk profile for all high rise residential premises across Berkshire which informed prioritisation for inspections. By using these calculated risk profiles, 32 of the highest risk residential buildings over 18 metres in Reading were jointly inspected between March and August 2018. Joint letters were sent out to notify all residents prior to the inspections and to offer home fire safety checks by fire officers. In addition to the communal areas, at least 5% of flats were inspected for each residential high rise block. RBFRS and the council followed up separately on the issues found under their respective enforcement legislation - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Housing Act 2004.

The common deficiencies found in high rise blocks in Reading included:

- Compartmentation breaches
- Fire lifts not in operational use
- Fire doors in disrepair

- 4.7 All building owners are responsible for determining whether there is ACM on the outside of their high rise residential building. In Reading there are three residential buildings over 18 metres which have been identified to have ACM cladding which failed the required fire safety standard and is not of limited combustibility. The council and RBFRS are working with the relevant stakeholders of these buildings to ensure a long term remediation plan is established.

- **St. Lawrence House** (social housing accommodation). Interim measures are in place in accordance with the current MHCLG guidance dated 29 September 2017 and they are monitored by RBFRS. The Building Control application for the removal and replacement of the external cladding was approved on 13th September 2018. No Planning permission was required as the replacement material will have the same appearance. The work will take 20 weeks and has now commenced. On 16th May it was announced that all ACM cladding remedial works on buildings owned by Local Authority and Housing Associations would be funded by the Government.
- **Queen's Court** (student accommodation). The cladding is situated on the top two storeys of the building. The 'responsible person' has been asked to demonstrate that the fire protection system meets the requirements under Approved Document B Paragraph 12.5. The Freeholder enlisted specialist consultants who have undertaken an updated Fire Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA states the building is well managed and has in place effective mitigation measures to allow the continued safe use of the building until legislation/ government advises otherwise. MHCLG advised in September that stronger guidance would be released to assist authorities in managing any buildings which are partly clad. The council await further guidance before considering next steps.
- **Hanover House** (private residential accommodation). Interim measures are in place in accordance with the current MHCLG guidance and these are monitored regularly. RBFRS have served an Alterations Notice for closure of the car park located underneath the building as part of the interim measures. A Planning application to remove the cladding and reveal the original appearance of the building has been submitted to the council.

- 4.8 MHCLG's data reporting system, DELTA, is updated regularly by the council and there is frequent communication with staff from the Tower Casework Team at MHCLG.
- 4.9 The Corporate Fire Safety Working Group has regular meetings to discuss progress with the work on fire safety in high rise residential buildings.
- 4.10 The council and RBFRS have also met regularly throughout the year to discuss progress with the Building Safety Programme and the effectiveness of the MOU. There are 54 high rise residential buildings in Reading remaining to be inspected. The council and RBFRS are to discuss priorities and consider the next most high risk area to focus on. The scope of partnership work will depend on available resources, funds and capacity.

The Hackitt Review

- 4.11 An Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety was led by Dame Judith Hackitt and the final report was published on 17th May 2018. The purpose of the review was to make recommendations to ensure there is a sufficiently robust regulatory system for the future and that residents feel that the buildings they live in are safe and remain so. It examined building and fire safety regulations, related compliance and enforcement, with the focus on multi-occupancy high rise residential buildings. The report identified that the current system of building regulations and fire safety is not fit for purpose and that a culture change is required to support the delivery of buildings that are safe, both now and in the future.
- 4.12 Recommendations include:
- A new regulatory framework focused, in the first instance, on multi-occupancy higher risk residential buildings (HRRBs) that are 10 storeys or more in height;
 - Local Authority Building Control rebranded as 'Local Authority Building Standards'. This new body would have additional powers to issue 'stop' notices to builders, require changes to building work and work with an increased time limit for bringing prosecutions.
 - A new Joint Competent Authority (JCA) comprising Local Authority Building Standards, fire and rescue authorities and the Health and Safety Executive to oversee better management of safety risks in these buildings across their entire life cycle;
 - A mandatory incident reporting mechanism for duty holders with concerns about the safety of a HRRB.
 - A series of robust gateway points to strengthen regulatory oversight that will require duty holders to show to the JCA that their plans are detailed and robust; that their understanding and management of building safety is appropriate; and that they can properly account for the safety of the completed building in order to gain permission to move onto the next phase of work and, in due course, allow their building to be occupied;
 - A single, more streamlined, regulatory route to oversee building standards as part of the JCA to ensure that regulatory oversight of these buildings is independent from clients, designers and contractors and that enforcement can and does take place where it is necessary. Oversight of HRRBs will only be provided through Local Authority Building Standards as part of the JCA, with Approved Inspectors available to expand local authority capacity/expertise or to newly provide accredited verification and consultancy services to duty holders;
 - Desktop studies only to be undertaken by organisations accredited to run large-scale tests (e.g. The Building Research Establishment (BRE)) with the possibility of a complete ban of these studies in the future.
 - The Government, Building Regulations Advisory Committee and industry experts to re-write Approved Document B to improve consistency.

5. The Government's latest proposals

- 5.1 The Government will be bringing in a ban on all combustible materials on the outside of high rise residential buildings, hospitals, care homes and student accommodation. High rises, in the context of these plans, refers to buildings over 18 metres. The changes will be brought in through amendments to the Building Regulations, which are due later this year. The ban will be delivered through changes to building regulations and will limit materials available to products achieving a European Classification of A1 or A2. Currently, it is unclear whether any retrospective ban will apply.

6 Options Proposed

- 6.1 The Council and RBRFS officers have discussed how the Steering Group might, in future, prioritise checks on certain non-high rise residential properties such as care homes, sheltered accommodation and other specialist housing where the occupants may be more vulnerable and less mobile. Houses in Multiple Occupation are another accommodation type which, through the County-wide Steering group's joint work, could result in improved safety for residents. Scope of partnership work will depend on the nature of issues arising from high rise residential stock and the councils and RBRFS capacity.
- 6.2 Communications with stakeholders on the high rise residential buildings with ACM will continue. The priority will be to secure remediation of the cladding where required as quickly as possible.
- 6.3 The Council will keep updated with the latest Government guidance and take action where appropriate. This includes any new changes derived from recommendations in the final Hackitt review.
- 6.4 RBRFS plan to arrange a "good news story" to be released in the media detailing the joint work that has been undertaken on the building safety programme to date.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 7.1 This report supports the following objectives in the corporate plan:
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs
 - Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Not relevant to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are several important pieces of legislation which impact on fire safety within dwellings, principally:
- Building Regulations 2010 Part B.
 - Housing Act 2004.
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

In addition, the Local Government Association (LGA) published guidance in 2012 'Fire safety in purpose built blocks of flats'.

- 9.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) came into force in October 2006. It does not apply to individual flats but does apply to the common parts of flats

such as stairwells, a plant room or caretaker room, shared facilities and lobbies. Guidance on the FSO and its requirements has been issued in a series of guides. Blocks of flats are included, among many other types of residential premises, in the HM Government guide 'Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation' published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The FSO imposes duties on the 'responsible person' who has control of the premises - usually a company or organisation and usually the freeholder or landlord. Responsibilities also apply in respect of anyone who has a contract or responsibility for maintenance, repairs or for the safety of premises. The FSO is normally enforced by the fire and rescue authority.

- 9.3 The FSO requires that suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments (FRAs) are carried out - this forms the foundation for the fire safety measures required in a block of flats. The fire and rescue authority will review the FRA at the time they audit a building. Further detail is provided above in this report. An FRA will result in an action plan detailing managerial and physical measures with prioritisation commensurate with the risk. LGA guidance suggests that a low risk, low rise block might need an FRA to be completed every 4 years and reviewed every two years. For blocks with higher risk and over four storeys in height a new FRA every 3 years and an annual review would be more appropriate.
- 9.4 Material alterations to existing blocks of flats, including alterations to individual flats, are controlled under the Building Regulations 2010, and need to be approved by a building control body otherwise an offence is committed. Even if the block satisfied earlier legislation, proposed alterations must be considered in the light of the current Building Regulations; it is not sufficient to carry out alterations on the basis of the earlier legislation. In practice, any proposals to carry out alterations including to fire alarm systems, means of escape, smoke control arrangements and structural alterations, should be submitted to ensure compliance with regulations.
- 9.5 The Housing Act 2004 makes requirements regarding the condition of a broad spectrum of housing including both individual flats within a block and the common parts of a block. Local authorities are the enforcing authority for this legislation. Assessment of conditions is carried out using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) - where 'category 1' (more serious) hazards are identified the local authority has a duty to take some form of enforcement action. Under the Housing Act 2004, the housing authority must inspect properties if they become aware of significant fire hazards. Housing authorities have powers of entry for this purpose. The housing authority may make requirements for improvements in fire precautions. In the event of serious risk, the housing authority has the power to prohibit or take emergency remedial action.
- 9.6 There is overlap between the Housing Act and FSO. The Housing Act covers flats and common parts whilst the FSO covers common parts. The safety of common parts can sometimes rely on fire safety measures within flats which is an added complexity.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are a number of potential financial liabilities arising which are being factored into financial planning:
- a) Works which are advised as a result of external review or mandated through changing regulation to the Council's own housing/other residential stock. Capacity to fund additional safety works has been modelled within the Housing Revenue Account.
 - b) Resourcing joint work with RBFRS to review cross tenure residential high rise buildings and managing any regulatory actions arising.
- 10.2 In addition to the above, there is uncertainty in relation to the financial implications of any Fire Service or any council using relevant regulatory powers to secure the

removal and replacement of cladding (or undertake other critical fire safety works) through direct action where necessary and where the owner fails to take responsibility. This matter has been repeatedly raised with MHCLG.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707792/Building_a_Safer_Future_-_foreword_and_summary.pdf

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	'READING, PLACE OF CULTURE' (GREAT PLACE SCHEME)		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	SARAH HACKER	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	GRANT THORNTON	TEL:	0118 937 2416
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	E-MAIL:	grant.thornton@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on progress in delivering year 1 activities as part of 'Reading, place of culture' funded through the 'Great Place Scheme'. The Council learned in April 2017 that the bid it had submitted had been successful (one of only 16 grants awarded across England and the only urban area to receive a grant in the South-east region). The amount of grant awarded was £558,400 to deliver a range of programmes over three years linked to the objectives of the Great Place Scheme and complementing cultural activities and initiatives already underway in the Borough. The Council received formal 'permission to start' from the funders on the 12th December 2017 and this report summarises progress in delivering the programme against the 'approved purposes' agreed by the funders:

- Strategic partnership building
- Research and evaluation
- Cultural outreach and creating a platform for cultural commissioning
- Reading-on-Thames Festival
- Economic Development and business engagement.

These strands of the programme are intertwined with many connections between different elements but the above provides a useful framework for tracking and evidencing activities and impacts.

1.2 Appendix 1 - Narrative of the successful Great Place Bid.
Appendix 2 - Summary Presentation: Reading, Place of Culture Update - October 2018.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Committee notes the progress made to date on delivering 'Reading, Place of Culture' as set out in paragraph 4.1 and endorses the proposals to further develop the programme of work as set out in paragraph 4.2.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. The Culture and Heritage Strategy clearly sets out an aspirational vision for culture and heritage to play a key role in the town's future, enhancing the quality of life for residents and increasing the attractiveness of the town for visitors and investors. The Strategy envisages Reading's profile and reputation as a cultural destination being transformed over the coming years, building from a strong base of arts and heritage organisations and assets and catalysed by a Year of Culture in 2016. 'Reading, Place of Culture' is strongly aligned with and directly contributes to achieving the strategic ambition of the Culture and Heritage Strategy.
- 3.2 A new 2050 Vision was launched on the 18th October 2017 following an extensive period of development and consultation by the three lead organisations: Reading UK, Reading University and Barton Willmore. The Council has endorsed this Vision and, in its role as community leader, to work alongside other agencies and organisations to realise the Vision's ambitions. A thriving and renowned cultural offer is a key component of this vision.
- 3.3 The Economic Development Plan led by Reading UK, "Growing Opportunity", has the three key objectives of: raising Reading's profile; growing opportunities to strengthen the local economy; and employment for local people. The further development of arts, culture and digital economy to contribute to these objectives is at the heart of the plan.
- 3.4 The Great Place Scheme is a new joint funding initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England (HE). The aim of the Scheme is:

'To put arts, culture and heritage at the heart of the local vision for 12* places across England, making a step change in the contribution of culture in those areas and embedding them in the places' plans for the future. Four of these places will be rural. It will fund projects in areas where there is already a strong local partnership approach and a commitment to embed arts, culture and heritage as a core part of local plans, policies and strategies - cementing partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors'.

The stated ambition of this pilot programme is to support local areas to:

- Inspire a vision of how culture can change your place;
- Connect culture with new partners to help change places for the better;
- Incorporate a vision for culture into ambitions for your place;
- Build and share learning.

(* This is quoted from the original bidding guidance. At the end of the bidding process funding was sufficient to award grants to 16 places across England).

- 3.4 The Great Place Scheme provided a timely opportunity to build on significant development of cultural and heritage initiatives in the town including, for example, the Year of Culture 2016, the Abbey Revealed project and the emergence of three new National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs). The narrative of the successful bid attached at Appendix 1 more fully elucidates this context.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

Following the formal 'permission to start' from the funders significant progress has been made across all strands of the programme overseen by a Steering Group of the three core delivery partners leading on particular aspects of the programme:

Reading Borough Council - cultural outreach and commissioning, overall evaluation, partnership development, the accountable body and programme management;

Reading UK - the Reading-on-Thames Festival, economic development and business engagement;

Reading University - participatory research with communities to inform the development of the programme, including cultural commissioning and the Festival, leading on the work with the 'Whitley Researchers' and 'Young Researchers', supporting evaluation.

Early recruitment of the two key new posts of Cultural Development Officer and Festival Director was successfully completed and all the core partner organisations have committed staff and other resources to support implementation, including overall project and programme management.

Appendix 2 is a copy of a presentation given to funders at a progress update meeting last month (October) and usefully summarises significant progress made in year 1 of the programme. Whilst it would be impossible to detail every aspect of delivery in this short report, it is perhaps worth providing an overview against key strands of the programme and highlighting, in particular, how the programme is beginning to address the needs of Reading's more vulnerable communities.

Research and Evaluation

Set within the context of a national evaluation across all 16 Great Place Schemes, Reading has appointed evaluation consultants, developed a local framework and begun to embed this in all activities so that programme level evidence of impact can be identified. To supplement baseline data three student interns at the University have undertaken research on civic pride in Reading, carrying out over 260 face to face interviews. This work has also been augmented by a Festival survey of attendees.

The participatory research led by Reading University, initially in South Reading, working with the 'Whitley Researchers' and newly established 'Young Researchers' has included mapping health needs and cultural assets in South Reading and young people's well-being. Not only will this developing programme of work help create a 'cultural needs analysis', it also significantly supports the development as individuals of those involved and builds community networks. The funders are particularly interested in this area of work as a potential national exemplar.

Cultural Commissioning

Following extensive preparatory work, including widespread cross-sector engagement and workshops, three cultural commissions of £15k have been awarded. These involved a rigorous outcomes focused procurement process fully compliant with public sector Procurement Regulations so that both commissioners and cultural organisations could better understand the process and potential value of cultural commissioning. The commissions were particularly focused on engaging those less likely to access cultural opportunities and where engagement could have a significant positive impact on their well-being. The three successful organisations were as follows:

Reading Rep. - the theatre company will deliver a series of performing arts workshops, building to short performances, to boost self-esteem, provide confidence building and life-skills. They will target work with more disadvantaged communities including older people in care homes, adults with mental health illness or learning disabilities and disadvantaged young people.

Parents and Children Together (PACT) - an organisation supporting troubled families, will work through their Alana House project which supports women with multiple and complex needs. They will use photography to give marginalised and vulnerable women a voice, using shared experience to raise self-esteem and communication skills.

The Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Museum - will work with older people to combat loneliness and isolation. The museum partnership will offer reminiscence activities including old photos, film and artefacts as well as gardening and dance to promote positive health and wellbeing.

In addition to these a creative employment pilot has also been commissioned with Real Time Video successful with a proposal to increase work experience opportunities within the creative industries for young people. The young people involved will gain new skills, confidence and a chance to contribute practically to major creative projects in Reading, including the Reading-on-Thames Festival and the cultural commissioning programme.

All of the successful commissions have started and are committed to thorough evaluation and the pilot year will help inform how the cultural commissioning programme develops over the three year period. In addition, a Community Steering Group and an Ageing-well Partnership have recently been established to inform the development of and to contribute directly to the future development of the cultural commissioning programme and associated decision-making.

Reading-on-Thames Festival

The summary presentation at Appendix 2 provides a good overview of the 2018 Festival and how it has built on the pilot in the previous year with a high calibre programme involving more artists and cultural organisations (including 40% of the programme by Reading based organisations), 19 new commissions, with most events sold out and positive feedback from those attending. Interestingly over a fifth of attendees came from outside Berkshire and 3% from overseas.

Significant effort was expended in advance of the Festival to engage with potential community partners and to develop an outreach programme working with festival artists and organisations. Over 600 free tickets were donated to the community groups that were engaged and tickets were heavily discounted (50%) for those on low incomes. Evaluation of the Festival is yet to be fully completed but there is evidence that these initiatives enabled more disadvantaged local residents to experience the Festival than would otherwise have been the case and that the experience for many was positive and impactful. The full evaluation of this year's Festival will enable these initiatives to be extended in future years.

Economic Development and Business Engagement

Led by Reading UK this area of work is inextricably linked with the Festival and the work of the economic development company to promote Reading to businesses and inward investors. Over £24,000 of cash investment in the Festival by the private sector was secured with a range of 'in-kind' contributions including the use of both major shopping centres (Oracle and Broad Street Mall) as venues. In parallel, Reading UK delivered the 2018 Culture & Heritage Awards with business sponsorship and strong private-sector attendance. There has also been a strong focus on culture & heritage in business facing publications such as the 'Reading Relocation Guide'.

4.2 Options Proposed

The first year of the programme was always going to be challenging, particularly as activity has had to be delivered whilst engagement, consultation, needs analysis and evaluation frameworks progressed in parallel. However, as set out above and in appendix 2, significant progress has been made with a solid foundation for further developing the work over the next two years increasingly informed by evaluation feedback, strengthened partnership working and a better understanding of local needs and community aspirations. Progress will continue to be made across all of the 'approved purposes' that form inter-linked strands of the overall programme with action research and learning from best practice, both nationally and locally, embedded in delivery. A 'Cultural Commissioning Symposium' has already been arranged for the 29th November 9.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. at Reading Town Hall to share national and local best practice. The event will build a picture of how commissioners and cultural practitioners are working together to effect change and share how local research is shaping understanding of Reading's needs and priorities. This is one of a number of planned events to raise awareness and upskill local practitioners and services and will be complemented with a 'funding panel' event to look at different approaches to raising finance and a 'procurement surgery' in the New Year.

Across the programme the aim is to develop and deliver sustainable change and impact by the end of the three year period (accepting that this is a challenging outcome to achieve). For example, the approach for cultural commissioning in year two has already been further developed so that there is a greater emphasis on co-commissioning and the Great Place Scheme grant funding already secured will be match funded by other resources to build towards sustainability. The commissions for year two will focus on mental health and well-being, elderly care and long term conditions, and short breaks provision for young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

Similarly, long term sustainability and impact is the objective for the Reading-on-Thames Festival with the Director, Anna Doyle, re-appointed for year two and planning for 2019 is already underway. The intention is to build from this year's event and to further develop links with other aspects of the programme and local community engagement in both planning and delivery, building skills, confidence and providing work experience and employment opportunities. Whilst of course delivering a high quality and exciting programme. The work of Reading UK around business engagement and sponsorship will also continue to support the financing of the Festival alongside exploration of other funding streams.

The University is looking to further develop the participatory research with the Whitley and Young Researchers and has committed additional resources to support and accelerate this work through the second year of the programme. The value of this work potentially goes far beyond a traditional 'needs analysis' through enabling the local ownership of actions and 'solutions as well as connecting to other areas of the programme such as engagement with the Festival and the cultural commissioning strands of work. Whilst currently focused on South Reading the aspiration is to extend the approach to other areas of the town as the programme develops.

4.3 Other Options Considered

The award of grant is clearly tied to the 'Approved Purposes' and whilst there is a degree of flexibility to enable adjustments over the 3 year delivery period the grant can only be utilised in accordance with these 'Approved Purposes'.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

5.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. This strategy has an over-arching ambition that:

'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.'

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 There are specific requirements and guidelines for publicity for Great Place Scheme Projects and in particular the funders are keen that the public know how they have contributed towards putting arts, culture and heritage at the heart of 16 places across the country by playing National Lottery games.

6.2 Community engagement and information is at the heart of plans for delivering Reading's Great Place Scheme proposals. In particular the research and commissioning strands of the programme and Festival delivery will require extensive community involvement and incorporate community led research models. Much of this engagement and involvement is focused on more vulnerable or deprived groups and communities. More broadly, information, marketing and engagement are central to audience development across much of the cultural sector, including the many community based culture and heritage delivery organisations.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant with regard to the content of this report.

7.2 A particular focus of the proposals is to enable widespread access to cultural opportunities and to address the needs of more vulnerable groups through a programme of participatory research, cultural commissioning and festival outreach.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council will be required to comply with the Great Place Scheme 'Standard Terms of Grant'. These mirror those of the HLF with which the Council is familiar through its management of other HLF funded projects. There are no additional conditions in respect of the project beyond these standard terms.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Great Place Scheme bidding guidelines stipulated that a minimum of 10% of direct project costs should be provided by cash contributions from delivery partners. The Council and Reading UK have each committed to provide £30,000 over the life of the programme to meet this requirement. For the Council this amount can be contained within existing budget allocations for Economic & Cultural Development Services.

9.2 It is anticipated that over the course of the Scheme's implementation additional match-funding will be generated through business sponsorship and commissioning activity.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 GREAT PLACE SCHEME: Reading-on-Thames - HLF grant award letter 13th April 2017.
GREAT PLACE SCHEME: 'READING-ON-THAMES' - Report to Housing, Neighbourhoods and leisure Committee 5th July 2017.

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So why 'Reading-on-Thames'?

Reading has an emergent 'Place-shaping' 2050 Vision developed by a strong business led partnership and Reading University. The Council has endorsed the direction of travel and engaged as a partner but has not driven this visioning process, itself indicative of a wide stakeholder base with a real grasp of how culture can be pivotal to the town's future success. Based on wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and 'hands-on' workshops the vision is that by 2050 Reading will be renowned as:

1. 'A city of Rivers and Parks' Recognising how water has shaped much of Reading. Not just the River Thames, but the River Kennet, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Holy Brook that all weave their way through and under much of our city, defining and offering opportunity via their river banks and crossings. The City would celebrate Reading's waterways, opening them up to offer recreational spaces and animated parks.
2. 'A City of Festivals and Culture' Building on the success of the iconic Reading Festival to deliver arts and culture to people of all ages and ethnicities. We would look to facilitate community interaction and opportunity within Reading, weaving festivals back into and throughout the city, offering vibrant public gathering spaces and integrating and celebrating our city's heritage, bringing our city to life.
3. 'A Green Tech City' Evolving from the established technology focus of our city. It celebrates and encourages diversity through business incubation units, 'Ideas Factories' and a city centre University campus through which to exhibit and test cutting edge ideas, no matter what faculty they are emerging from.

This vision thus already embraces cultural excellence grounded in Reading's particular attributes as a place, its diverse multi-cultural demographic and its economic and business strengths. It is also fully aligned with the aspirational Culture and Heritage Strategy (developed through the Cultural Partnership) and both place culture firmly at the heart of the town's future, this being both continued economic success and delivering a better quality of life for all.

In this regard "culture" as referenced in this application is shorthand for the whole indivisible gamut of arts, culture and heritage, all intimately connected and related. For Reading this is grounded in the pivotal role of the medieval Reading Abbey and its patronage by Henry 1 in the development of the town and this growth being strongly associated with its waterways. The dissolution of the Abbey reminiscent of a complex history resonating through the ages with today's 'Abbey Quarter' a focus for the restoration of the Abbey Ruins and reconnecting the town with its illustrious past; bringing back Abbey Gate building (Grade 1 Listed) into use as an education centre, reflecting its one-time role in Jane Austen's schooling; the fully restored 'Green Flag' Forbury Gardens; and the exciting future possibilities of the adjacent vacant Listed Reading Prison, highlighting not only the strong Victorian heritage of the town and its growth but also the infamous association with Oscar Wilde; all of this juxtaposed with the modernity of the iconic 'Blade' office building. These connections and inter-relationships have already figured strongly in Reading's 'Year of Culture 2016' with an acclaimed new play based on the life of Henry 1; the phenomenally successful 'Inside' exhibition by

Artangel at Reading Prison; and a wide range of contemporary cultural events grounded in and celebrating Reading's personality and distinctiveness.

We are clearly not starting from a low base and context is vitally important to fully understand our Great Place proposals, how these complement, extend and deepen the impacts of current activities and why this is such a timely opportunity to really deliver "networked arts and heritage" in Reading.

Reading is a vibrant economically successful town at the heart of the Thames Valley and widely recognised as the sub-regional 'capital'. The town has a resident population of approximately 161,000 within tightly drawn boundaries. This resident population is richly diverse, with diversity increasing in younger age cohorts. Despite the Borough's small geographic size the town directly serves a wider catchment of approximately 400,000 people within a 20 minute drive time of the town centre who regularly come to the town centre for a range of activities. The population of the town continues to grow (9% in the last 10 years) and major housing developments in surrounding Boroughs will significantly increase the population in Reading's catchment over the next decades. Whilst focused on activity within the town, our Great Place proposals will benefit this much wider catchment and extend it.

Despite these many attributes of a thriving and successful town: high levels of employment; prosperity; a skilled well-educated workforce; and a high quality of life enjoyed by many people within Reading, there are significant numbers of residents who are struggling. Reading has many of the attributes of a London Borough with affluence sitting cheek by jowl with areas of significant deprivation. Across the Borough nearly 20% of children, and their families, live in poverty and 30% of Reading pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. Whilst the Borough has a young population overall, the frail and elderly are increasing and Reading has a relatively high proportion of vulnerable elderly. Building from existing activities, such as the established Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), the Great Place Scheme offers great potential to address these issues of inequality and to improve outcomes for local people.

The building blocks to achieve this are varied and significant, Reading as a 'cultural hub' has made a significant step-change over recent years epitomised by the '**Reading Year of Culture 2016**' and its role as a catalyst for a sustained programme to raise Reading's reputation and profile, delivering a range of benefits to local people and further bolstering economic success:

- A new aspirational **Culture and Heritage Strategy** and its vision that: 'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town';
- '**Reading International**': an ambitious three year visual arts programme led by the University's new Institute of Heritage & Creativity in partnership with Artangel, the Council and Reading UK CIC (the Council's arms-length economic development company), with funding from ACE's 'Ambition for Excellence' programme. The funding has supported **Artangel's 'Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison'** as the 'front-end' of this three year programme and it will culminate in a major exhibition in the re-opened Abbey Ruins in 2019. This offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform the visual arts in Reading, create a legacy for Reading Year of Culture 2016, deliver a high profile celebration for the reopening of Reading Abbey Ruins, and develop partnerships with local arts organisations, schools and

communities. This in turn will generate a culture of artistic ambition, community involvement and audience development in the region to support a legacy biennial Reading International 'festival';

- **The 'Abbey Revealed'** project funded by the Council and HLF: Of national significance the project involves the essential conservation programme to the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gateway (both Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed); associated branding, signage, interpretation; and a five year engagement programme of events and activities across the heritage site. Reading's Museum service is pivotal for the successful delivery of the project and a rejuvenated 'Abbey Quarter';
- HLF funded redevelopment of the University's **Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)**: The new museum aims to challenge perceptions about rural England by revealing the historical and contemporary relevance of country life to urban settlements and evolution over the ages. The new interactive galleries explore questions of identity, environment, technology, culture and health. As with the Abbey Revealed project there is an extensive engagement and activity programme extending into future years;
- A new **Institute of Heritage and Creativity** established by the University to focus on research, innovation, partnership engagement and Reading as a place. Pulling together expertise, capacity and commitment from across the University's many areas of relevant expertise to research and develop best practice, engage with other stakeholders, including local communities. Ultimately to bring the University 'off-campus' and impact more widely on Reading's future development and the well-being of its citizens;
- Ongoing **collaboration** across the Museum's sector and the potential, in particular, for the collaboration between Reading Museum, MERL and the Institute of Heritage and Creativity to become an exemplar for community engagement and interaction. The two Museums are currently jointly applying to ACE for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status.
- Refurbishment of **South Street Arts Centre**, a vibrant hub for original and eclectic work resonating across different generations and Reading's diverse communities. Extensive remodelling and refurbishment will consolidate the venue's national reputation for excellence, particularly for its contemporary theatre and music, and also enable an expanded outreach and educational programme. South Street is currently applying to ACE for NPO status;
- Developing a **Year of Culture legacy**, embedding culture and heritage as integral to the future success of the town and outcomes for its citizens. The Year of Culture has already delivered the engagement of national arts organisations in Reading; the development of new relationships between artists, arts groups, Reading businesses and stakeholders; the unlocking of new funding for the arts in Reading and new platforms and venues for artistic output in the town and an increase in the quantity and ambition of artistic output;
- **The Cultural Education Partnership (CEP)** with an agreed action plan to transform cultural opportunities for young people, especially those young people who otherwise might not have access to such opportunities. The CEP is acknowledged to be at the vanguard as an early adopter and has committed representation from key stakeholders, including Berkshire Maestros, the College, the University, schools and the Culture and Arts Network (CAN) of local delivery organisations.

- **The Cultural Partnership** has successfully overseen the development of the Culture and Heritage Strategy and the delivery of a Year of Culture, that itself emerged as a result of extensive consultation to develop this strategy. It is acknowledged that in the light of all the progress and developments referenced above, and not least the emergence of new key strategic partners, the Partnership needs to grow and evolve. The Cultural Partnership is already in the process of reviewing its membership and terms of reference in order to ensure that it can drive and add value to delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy. Taking forward the legacy of the Year of Culture, key initiatives as outlined above, and facilitating further activity and collaboration will be key objectives and fully integrated with our Great Place Scheme.

We are determined to build on this momentum with carefully considered complementary programmes of exceptional quality to create a fully networked permanent legacy, transforming cultural opportunities both for residents and visitors. This is why context is so important, we need to ensure that scarce resources are adding value, carefully targeted to broaden the reach and impact of cultural activity on outcomes for the town. Key areas identified for the Great Places Scheme to achieve this on the back of already strongly developed partnerships and initiatives are:

1. A new delivery board which embeds culture at a strategic level and creating new sustainable sub-groups for culture, such as 'Ageing Well' and supporting new delivery partnerships such as the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), Reading International and Junction Dance.
2. Using the momentum and success of 'Reading International' to build profile, reputation, partnerships and community engagement. This will include pulling together the research capability of the University, including the new Institute of Heritage and Creativity, in various fields to develop best practice geared to the needs of Reading and its people.
3. A community cultural outreach programme for targeted communities – connecting cultural organisations and partners such as public health, adult social care and education, creating a platform for mainstreaming cultural commissioning and helping to deliver key social outcomes.
4. Creating a new *Reading -on-Thames Festival* that will cement and celebrate Reading's unique identity and provide a platform for cultural excellence. The Festival will create a sustainable celebration of Reading's identity, enhancing a sense of place for residents and the attractiveness of Reading's cultural assets to visitors.
5. Build from the business engagement success of the Year of Culture to embed culture and heritage in economic development and business strategies.

Whilst it is difficult to fully convey or elucidate the complex and positive links between these strands of activity and existing initiatives, they are considered more fully below (with further detail in the Work Plan):

1. Strategic Partnership Building

The Cultural Partnership needs to evolve to reflect the many positive developments in Reading over recent years and to formalise delivery arrangements with a greater range of committed partners. Until recently key players such as the University, Reading UK CIC and their business stakeholders, the health and well-being sector (also reflected as a 'gap' in 3 below) and heritage focused organisations, including Reading Museum and MERL, have not

been directly represented. In addition new partnerships and networks have developed, not least through the impetus provided by the Year of Culture and the rapid development and support for the CEP. There is a need to ensure that relationships and delivery plans are effectively networked across this expanded range of activities and that there are strategic linkages that add value and drive progress and impact. The Cultural Partnership has already formally agreed to re-invent itself and our Great Place Scheme proposals include external support to assist in accelerating and embedding this process. It is currently envisaged that this new strategic 'Great Place Board' will provide overarching co-ordination and drive to deliver on the ambitions of the Culture & Heritage Strategy (and the Great Place Scheme itself) with a number of delivery focused 'sub-partnerships': CEP, Ageing-well, Skills & Economy, as well as separate implementation groups for key initiatives such as Reading International and the Abbey Quarter.

2. Research and Evaluation

The establishment of the Institute of Heritage and Creativity, with its strong existing links to Reading International, provides a real opportunity to focus on researching best practice, based on national experience and local needs, and ongoing evaluation to inform the iterative development of successful new initiatives and interventions. As well as the existing academic strengths across a range of faculties this will also involve the innovative 'Participation Lab' that utilises community representatives from Reading's more deprived communities to research local needs and to develop solutions to meet these. It is envisaged that this programme of research and evaluation will directly inform the development and delivery of strand 3 below over the course of the 'Scheme' and beyond.

3. Cultural Outreach and Commissioning

As outlined above, Reading has a challenging socio-economic demographic with complex patterns of inequality and deprivation. Reading has already engaged with the national 'Cultural Commissioning' initiative attending a number of workshops with senior officers, public health and commissioning leads attending. Whilst we have begun to broker conversations, for example with our social care and mental health services, cultural commissioning to deliver against key local priorities is weakly developed. In the context of the Great Place Scheme we believe that this is a key area to address, embedding cultural activities as a means of delivering against service priorities and improving outcomes for local people. The capacity of the research strand outlined above will be a key ingredient in facilitating this along with the already established willingness and goodwill of service providers to engage. Activities will also serve to embed other sectors and agencies in partnership and delivery structures.

4. Reading-on Thames Festival

We need to build on the ambition of the Year of Culture to continue to do new things and provide new opportunities for Reading's arts and cultural groups, supporting their increasingly ambitious plans and programmes. Our experience of the Year of Culture was that having a theme to respond to, however broadly and creatively, helped generate a focused and energetic response from across Reading's vibrant cultural sector, helping to build

networks and collaboration, as well as raising artistic quality and ambition. There is also strong evidence that free to access activities played a significant role in broadening engagement, especially with more disadvantaged communities. Led by Reading UK CIC, whose key role is to increase investment and grow the economy, the proposed Reading-on-Thames Festival would meet multiple objectives and assist in the ongoing development of a relationship with the town's business community. N.B. Delivery of this Festival in 2017 is subject to a parallel application to ACE for Grants for Arts funding on the basis that any decision on the Great Place Scheme application will be too late to enable delivery. The two separate applications are complementary but not interdependent.

5. Economic Development and Business Engagement

As reflected in the key role envisaged for Reading UK CIC in strengthened cultural partnership delivery, the potential contribution of culture to the future economic success of Reading is both widely acknowledged and embraced. The Year of Culture elicited a positive response from the business community with significant cash and in-kind contributions. We believe that the Great Place Scheme can help embed this win-win relationship as Reading continues to grow and prosper, creating new and sustainable funding platforms as well as enhancing inward investment, quality of life and visitor numbers. The existing strength of business leadership with regard to the 2050 visioning process is indicative of potential here for Reading to become a national exemplar.

We believe that our Great Place Scheme proposals will wrap around and add value to existing initiatives and activities that have already resulted in a step-change in the contribution of culture to the life of the town, its status as a cultural hub and the resilience and ambition of local cultural organisations. With the pivotal role of culture already acknowledged in visions and strategies for the future, the strands of activity we are proposing will accelerate progress, strengthen and extend relationships and significantly increase impact, especially on addressing key social and economic outcomes, and provide even greater scope for the involvement and growth of the sector. Truly networked arts and heritage.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Appendix 2

GPS-READING PLACE OF CULTURE UPDATE - OCTOBER 2018

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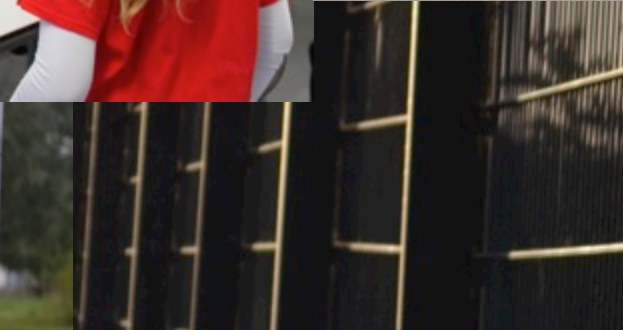
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION



1. Whitley Researchers
2. Young Researchers at JMA
3. Participatory Research:
 - Well being
 - Perceptions
 - and barriers of arts, culture and heritage in Reading, with impact on wellness and civic pride



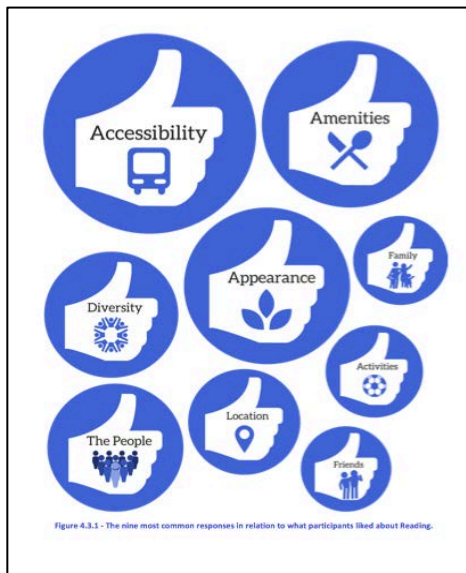
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION



INVESTIGATING PERCEPTIONS AND BARRIERS OF ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN READING, WITH IMPACT ON WELLNESS AND CIVIC PRIDE

236 face to face questionnaires (mini-interviews):

- Current perceptions
- Well being and cultural practices
- Barriers to engagement
- Place



Barrier (in order of importance)	% respondents affected
Time	33%
Money	29%
Find it difficult to hear about events	28%
Travel	14%
Nothing on that interests me	8%
Unable to access care for dependents	6%
Poor health (mental or physical)	6%

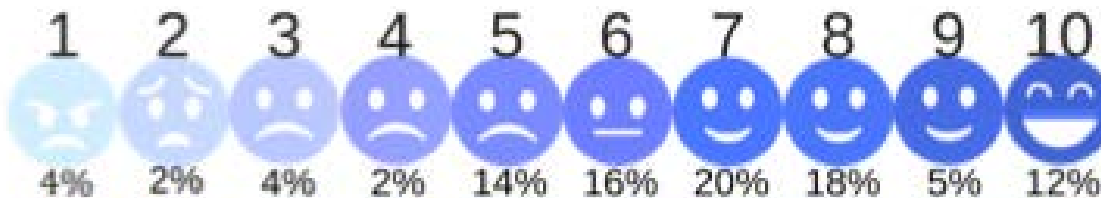
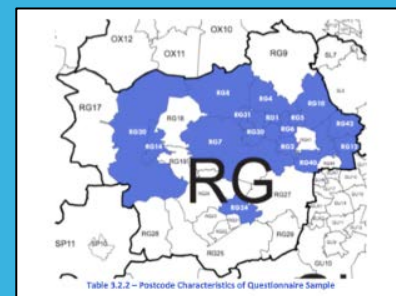


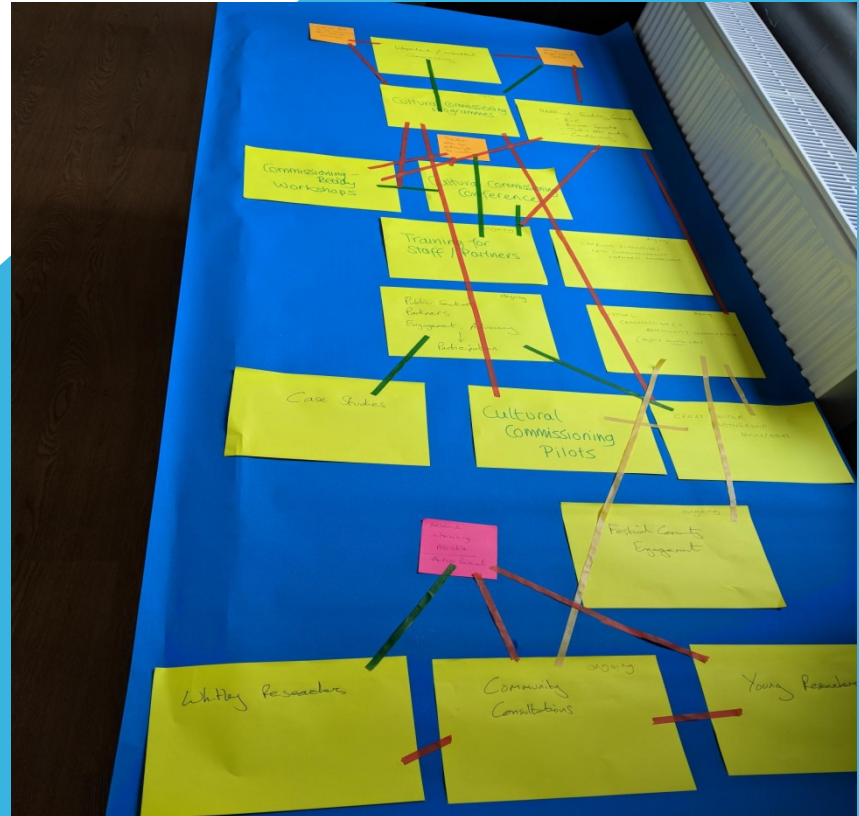
Figure 4.3.1 - A scale showing what % our participants rated how proud they were to live/be in Reading.



CULTURAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR TARGETED COMMUNITIES

Research and Consultations

- Over 200 individuals consulted
- Desk research
- Exploration of existing commissioning relationships
- Leading to good practice and priority building workshops
- Contributed to the writing of year 1 Cultural Commissioning Specification



CULTURAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR TARGETED COMMUNITIES



Cultural Commissioning Programme:

- Robust procurement process developed
- 11 applications
- 3 programmes commissioned
- Creative Employment pilot also commissioned
- Stories of Change completed and action research begins



READING-ON THAMES FESTIVAL

- 11 days: 6-16 September 2018 an increase of 37% from 2017
- 69 events, 24 different venues an increase of 176% from 2017
- Over 138 artists and cultural organisations took part an increase of 590% from 2017
- Most events sold out / full, with audience attending events = 8500+ an increase of 6.5% from 2017

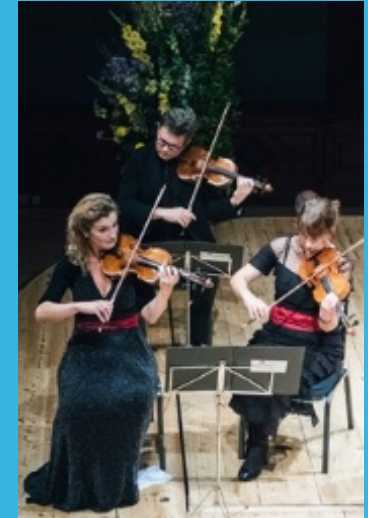


READING-ON THAMES FESTIVAL

- High Calibre programme with internationally acclaimed artists presenting in Reading for the first time including *Cirque Bijou*, *In Place of War*, *GRRL*, *Theodore Zeldin*, *London Short Film Festival*, *BFI London Film Festival Short film programme director*, *London Mozart Players*.
 - 19 new artistic commissions an increase of 72% from 2017



READING-ON THAMES FESTIVAL



- Over 40% of programme delivered by home grown organisations.
- Ticketing strategy provided heavily subsidised ticketing of 50% reductions for low income audiences.
- Over 600 free tickets provided for local community groups audiences.

READING-ON THAMES FESTIVAL



Reading UK Festival survey – data is in train with final evaluation due late October, key headlines:

- + 98% felt the festival represented a high-quality arts, culture and heritage added to Reading's reputation
- + 21% of audiences were visiting audiences from outside of Berkshire, including visitors from London, Oxford, Hampshire and international visitors representing 3% (Canada, Netherlands, Hungary, France.)
- + 64% new audiences/ had not visited or heard of the festival previously
- + 58% of local audiences felt proud to live in Reading with 87% of audiences believing festival increased pride in Reading.

READING-ON THAMES FESTIVAL



Reading community and cultural networks, and Stakeholder / partnership engagement

- New relationships developed with prestigious trusts and foundations and individuals including PRS Foundation and The High Sheriff of Berkshire;
- Reading Buses provided heavily subsidised transport to Cirque Bijou outdoor event
- Broad Street Mall provided in kind digital outdoor screen support



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT



- £24,000 private sector income
- High Sheriff network meeting
- Reading Relocation Guide
- Reading Economic Forum
- Local businesses - spaces in a new light as spaces open to arts and cultural events, e.g. The Oracle Riverside.



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIROMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	WINTER PROVISION FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JOHN ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING NEEDS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	VERENA HUTCHESON	TEL:	0118 937 4136
JOB TITLE:	HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING PATHWAYS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Verena.hutcheson@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the ongoing provisions and new interventions under the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) Rough Sleeping Initiative for those sleeping rough in the Reading borough over the cold weather/winter period.
- 1.2 Reading Borough Council implements a humanitarian response under best practice guidance from Homeless Link during times of cold and severe weather nationally recognised as Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) provision. SWEP operates alongside newly commissioned Homelessness Support Services which operate all year round and new Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) interventions which have been commissioned following an award of £316,500 for 2018/19 from the MHCLG and a provisional award of £335,000 for 2019/20 under the same initiative.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee to note winter provisions for those people sleeping rough in the Reading borough.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Homeless Link and the MHCLG advise that every Local Authority should have a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which is used when severe weather is forecast. They recommend that each area agrees a flexible process and humanitarian response for triggering and coordinating SWEP, based on empathy for people sleeping rough in severe weather, rather than sticking to a fixed approach. The protocol should be implemented (i.e. accommodation made available) on the first night of the forecast. Historically, the minimum SWEP response from Local Authorities was to open provision when there was a forecast of zero degrees, or below zero, for three consecutive nights. The three-night guideline was an attempt to define 'severe weather', but a

common sense approach is now widely adopted as standard practice, where SWEP triggers take into account weather warnings, near-freezing temperatures, rain, snow, wind chill, gales or heat. An adequate policy will ensure that your Local Authority can provide suitable accommodation quickly to prevent harm and death due to severe weather conditions, should the need arise.

3.2 In February 2017, Reading Borough Council began consultation with Members, partners and the public on recommissioning Homelessness Support Services for those who were rough sleeping, single/part of a couple and homeless and those households at risk of homelessness. From 1st September 2018, new services have been operational and include:

- A Rough Sleeper Outreach Service to engage with rough sleepers and support them into accommodation; as well as providing intensive support for Housing First clients¹
- Intensive and Engaging Support Services: Hub and accommodation; including emergency bed space provision and options for couples and dog owners
- Working Towards Independence accommodation: which includes 100 bed spaces within shared houses for those who require support attached to their housing before accessing independent rented accommodation
- A floating support service for tenancy sustainment, resettlement and homelessness prevention through early intervention

3.3 At the end of March 2018, MHCLG announced their plans under their Rough Sleeping Initiative and overall commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. Their new package of measures included:

- a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from, and funded by government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health to addiction
- a £30 million fund for 2018/19 with further funding agreed for 2019/2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough; the Rough Sleeping Team will work with these areas to support them to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets
- £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers across the country to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers.

Funds were awarded to successful local authorities at the end of June 2018. Reading was one of the successful local authorities. The local mobilisation period for interventions is intended to lead up to and have a significant impact on rough sleeping numbers by the MHCLG's mandatory autumn/winter annual Rough Sleeping Count/Estimate which takes place within all local authority areas between 1 October and 30 November each year.

¹ Housing First is an internationally evidence-based approach, which uses independent, stable housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/principles-housing-first>

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position

4.1.1 Since 2010 Reading has operated a SWEP when temperatures fall to zero degrees or lower for three consecutive nights according to the Met Office weather forecast. In accordance with best practice and advice from Homeless Link, Reading uses its discretion regarding 'feels like' temperatures, extreme weather (snow, rain, wind) and co-ordinating services/responses during heat waves to mirror responses from Public Health England. SWEP responses are funded as part of commissioned Homelessness Support Services, alongside voluntary sector partners, where the 20 additional bed spaces are provided by The Salvation Army and food, bedding and other provisions are provided by donations from The Salvation Army and Launchpad Reading.

For the past two years, Reading has featured in Homeless Link's best practice case examples report regarding its flexible approach to access and for those with dogs <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/SWEP%20case%20studies%202018.pdf>

4.1.2 The Council recommissioned Homelessness Support Services from 1st September 2018 with a focus on innovative and emergency responses including: continuation of the rough sleeper outreach service; 10 all-year round emergency, fold-out beds for those with or without a local connection for up to 14 days; 8 emergency and assessment bed spaces for up to 28 days; and continued funding of five Housing First placements which provide an unconditional offer of secure tenure and intensive support for complex rough sleepers for whom traditional interventions have been unsuccessful in enabling them to move from the streets.

4.1.3 FAITH Christian Group also operates emergency winter provision on a seven churches model basis in Reading throughout January and February called Bed for the Night (B4N). With extra funding from the RSI Unit, this has been extended into March 2018 and funding has been awarded for an all-night supervisor for the three month period. Additional resourcing within the St Mungo's Rough Sleeping Outreach Service will ensure immediate engagement with verified rough sleepers throughout FAITH's operational period to explore housing options with them and prevent a return to rough sleeping. The additional support resourcing has enabled FAITH and St Mungo's to include enabling those without a local connection to access B4N for the first time

4.1.4 RSI funds from MHCLG of £316,500 were awarded to Reading for 2018/19 to implement new interventions to reduce rough sleeping numbers in the borough. Provisionally a further £335,000 has been awarded to extend these interventions for a further year for 2019/20. Additional interventions to support rough sleepers this winter are as follows:

- A Rough Sleeping Interventions Co-ordinator to facilitate the initiative/interventions and develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy for the borough that will be closely linked to Reading's Homelessness Strategy
- Additional posts within the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service team that will double the team's capacity and enable more flexible and assertive work patterns and a focus on reconnecting rough sleepers
- 10 immediately available bed spaces, regardless of local connection, under a Housing Led model; these will be offered to people who are rough sleeping for up to six months (where required) whilst suitable housing options are explored and facilitated. Intensive support will be offered alongside these placements to enable throughput and consistency of availability

- Extension of FAITH Christian Group’s Bed for the Night emergency bed spaces provision as detailed in section 4.1.3.
- A funding pot dedicated to reconnecting rough sleepers to their area or country of origin including costs of travel for existing and new rough sleepers and being able to offer deposits and rent in advance to up to 10 individuals
- Additional move-on worker roles, managed by Launchpad Reading, to work intensively with a small group of individuals who are finding their move-on options particularly limited or difficult to increase throughput across all Homelessness Support Services.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 These responses, commissioned services and interventions contribute to the strategic aim *“To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all”* by ensuring that appropriate services and support are made available for rough sleepers and vulnerable homeless adults.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Partner, Service User and public consultation and engagement informed the recommissioning of the Council’s Homelessness Support Services.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The combined annual value of contracts for Homelessness Support Services commissioned by the Council is £1.25m. In addition, as detailed above, the Council has secured additional funding in 2018/19 (£316,500) and provisionally for 2019/20 (£335,000) through MHCLG’s Rough Sleeper Initiative programme. The latter funds are ring-fenced for specific, defined interventions agreed with the RSI Unit and are time limited.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIROMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	REDUCTION IN BED AND BREAKFAST USE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JOHN ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING NEEDS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE	TEL:	0118 937 2285
JOB TITLE:	HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the measures the Housing Service has taken to bring about a reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast as emergency accommodation for homeless households.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation in line with the Council's Homelessness Strategy objectives.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

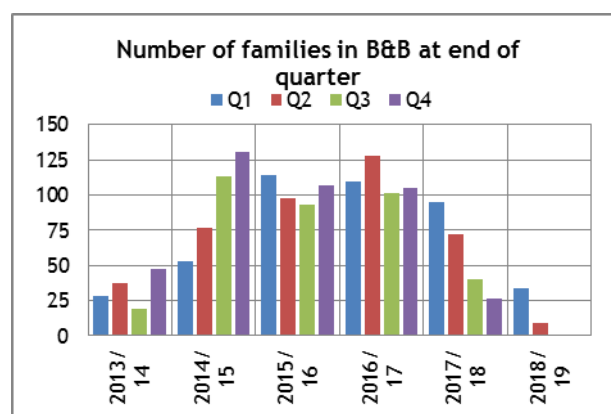
- 3.1 The Housing Act 1996 sets out the Council's responsibility to homeless households. Where the Council has reason to believe that a homeless household may have a priority need as determined by the legislation, then the Council has a responsibility to provide accommodation whilst it carries out further enquiries. If the Council determines that the household is homeless, in priority need, has a local connection and is not intentionally homeless then the Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation. This duty only ends if the Council provides an offer of accommodation through the Housing Register or through a suitable offer of private sector accommodation.
- 3.2 As of April this year the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 placed further statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness where a household is threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Where it is not possible to prevent homelessness then there is a duty to relieve homelessness by helping to secure accommodation. The responsibility to provide emergency accommodation for households who are in priority need still remains. Due to increasing levels of homelessness in the South East, like most local authorities Reading has had to rely on the use of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) establishments to meet this need.

3.3 The use of B&B for more than short periods is unsuitable, unsettling and disruptive for homeless households. Due to a shortage of affordable permanent accommodation, the use of temporary accommodation and B&B has grown in recent years. Reducing the use and length of stay in B&B has been a clear and driving focus for the Housing Service and the service has seen significant reductions in this use over the last 18 months.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The number of households in emergency B&B accommodation in Reading stood at 136 on 31st March 2017 but had fallen to 29 by 1st April 2018. There were 104 families in B&B in March 2017 mostly in shared accommodation but as at the end of October 2018 there were just 5 families in shared B& B accommodation.

4.2 The graph below illustrates the reduction in use of B&B in relation to families which has been a particular focus for the service.



4.2 The Housing Service has developed a proactive approach to prevention and early intervention, crucially doing as much upstream prevention work as possible and taking a holistic approach to solving homelessness issues. This includes linking households with services that may address other problems they face and which make it more difficult for them to find accommodation.

4.3 As well as working across teams and agencies the service has utilised a number of prevention tools including:

- A restructure of the service to provide a triage function to capture cases at risk of homelessness at the earliest point. Putting in place two teams of officers - one focused on single homeless people and one focused on families with both teams developing relevant specialisms that match the profile of clients coming into the service;
- Negotiating with landlords to retain/not to evict tenants and rectifying areas of contention;
- Building positive relationships with private sector landlords encouraging them to rehouse homeless households and
- Continuing to successfully procure properties for the Council's well-regarded Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS);
- Attendance at viewings of properties with clients to support them and persuade landlords to agree a letting;
- Payment of rent deposits, rent in advance and top ups to secure accommodation where required;
- Utilising Homes for Reading Ltd (the Council's Housing Company) properties where rent levels are affordable for homeless households;

- Working with Homefinder to accommodate households out of borough where households are happy to move out of area;
- Working with B&B landlords to move away from nightly paid accommodation and converting units into private sector accommodation through the RGS;
- Working across relevant Council teams to ensure a collaborative and targeted approach is taken to support families affected by welfare reforms;
- Making best use of partner accommodation supply and ensuring move-on e.g. refuge, safe houses, commissioned homelessness services, voluntary sector accommodation;
- Supporting clients to access supported accommodation or support packages which enable them to sustain their tenancies;
- Offering money advice and pre tenancy information sessions to better equip clients to manage their tenancies effectively.

4.4 In addition the Council has a programme of building new affordable housing. A new development of 57 Council homes at Conwy Close (including a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes) is on site and the first units should be available to let shortly this year. 28 innovative new modular temporary accommodation units at Lowfield Rd have been developed and were let early this calendar year to homeless families. 14 small sites are being progressed to deliver a further 100 units with plans for phase 3 of the programme in development.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1 The following case studies show the range of work officers are carrying out to prevent homelessness and to reduce the use of B&B accommodation.

Case Study A

5.2 Mrs Y is a pregnant single mother with one child. She was living in private rented sector accommodation and facing eviction from her landlord as she had built up a level of arrears totalling £8,000. Further investigations established the fact that Ms Y had failed to report relevant changes in circumstance which affected her benefit entitlement and the arrears had built up as a result of the termination of Housing Benefit payments. Mrs Y's landlord had served her with a notice requiring her to leave the accommodation on the basis of the rent arrears. Using their negotiation skills the officer working with Mrs Y was able to achieve a number of outcomes which culminated in Ms Y being able to remain in her home. The outcomes achieved were as follows:

- 25% of the arrears were paid off using the prevention fund and Ms Y agreed an affordable repayment plan to pay off the rest of the arrears
- In view of this the landlord agreed to put their property on the Rent Guarantee Scheme and to keep Mrs Y in her home
- As a result of the property being placed on the Rent Guarantee Scheme the landlord agreed an LHA level rent which made the property more affordable for Ms Y
- The officer ensured that all welfare benefit entitlements to the household were in payment
- The Housing Service will continue to monitor the situation to ensure Mrs Y sticks to her agreed payment plan.

Case Study B

5.3 Mr Z is a single male with mental health issues. He was recently released from prison and was subject to MAPP (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements). Mr Z became homeless following an initial placement and presented to the Council.

5.4 The Housing Service placed Mr Z in B&B accommodation as in immediate response to prevent him from rough sleeping and to reduce the risk of reoffending due to his

MAPPA status. The officer in Housing called a professionals meeting with the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) and Probation to discuss his case. The officer was able to demonstrate that Mr Z was not coping in managing to look after himself in B&B and as a result CMHT agreed to a support package which they then monitored to ensure it met his needs. Once Mr Z was stable and managing effectively with the support package, Housing undertook to find suitable alternative accommodation for Mr Z.

5.5 The outcomes achieved were as follows:

- The officer negotiated with CMHT to take responsibility for applying for Personal Independent Payment (PIP) which maximised Mr Z's income
- After contacting a number of Lettings Agents the officer found a one bedroom property which would suit Mr Z's needs
- The officer accompanied Mr Z on the viewing and persuaded the landlord to agree to the letting
- The landlord agreed to their property being placed within the Rent Guarantee Scheme which kept the rent at an affordable level for Mr Z
- Mr Z has now moved into the property and is managing effectively.

5.6 The Housing Service will continue to monitor Mr Z's progress and to work with the CMHT and Probation to make sure that he continues to receive the right level of support. A further multi-agency meeting will be set up to review the situation and feed back to MAPPA.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 Prevention of homelessness and reducing the use of B&B ensures access to decent housing and protects and enhances the lives of vulnerable adults and Children. It also promotes equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 No community engagement is required for this report

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 set out the Council's responsibilities to homeless households

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The use of B&B peaked in 2016/17 when the annual expenditure was £1.59m. Throughout 2017/18 and 2018/19 to date the reduction in the use of B&B has resulted in substantive savings to the local authority. A saving of £300k was delivered in 2017/18 and the Housing Service is on target to exceed the £600k saving agreed for this financial year with further savings agreed of £450k over the next two financial years. This totals £1.35m savings.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JAMES	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS
SERVICE:	HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES	WARDS:	BORROUGH WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	ANTHONY BRAIN	TEL:	0118 9373179
JOB TITLE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENABLEMENT MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<u>Anthony.Brain@reading.gov.uk</u>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report outlines the action taken and planned to protect Reading Borough Council's land from unauthorised encampments.
- 1.2 The report also notes the position in respect of the provision of transit or permanent pitches for travellers.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the action being taken to protect local authority land from unauthorised encampments.
- 2.2 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee approve the ongoing programme of works to protect those areas of Council land at risk of unauthorised encampments with physical measures, rather than changing the designation of highway land.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's response to unauthorised encampments on its land ensures that all working practices are consistent with Government guidance and comply with specific legislation, including the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

- 3.2 Unauthorised encampments are a civil matter and individual landowners have legal rights and remedies available. The Council and police have additional powers that supplement landowner remedies, but do not replace them.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Reading has a substantial number of authorised encampments when compared to other areas in the Thames Valley area. Between January 2018 and June 2018 only Milton Keynes had more encampments with 78 compared to 53 in Reading. Comparisons across Berkshire for the same period are as follows: West Berkshire 32, Winsor and Maidenhead 7, Slough 7 and Bracknell and Wokingham 3.
- 4.2 This high level of incursions and the close proximity of some encampments to settled communities has increased the levels of concerns and calls to both the local authority and the police. A weekly meeting between council officers and the police enable effective coordination of a joint and proportionate response to encampments, sharing of information and effective use of powers.

5. PROTECTION OF COUNCIL LAND

- 5.1 The Council has continued to review land that has or might be camped upon to identify how it might be protected. Between April 2017 and March 2018 the Council spent £104,000 on defending its most vulnerable sites. Managers from across Council services carried out a review of land and agreed with the Lead Member for Neighbourhood Services a process for prioritising work. This was based on:

- the number of previous encampments on the land
- assessment of community impact
- assessment of environmental impact
- assessment of financial impact

- 5.2 As a result defensive work was implemented on 13 locations across Reading by the end of March 2018.

- 5.3 Since April 2018, protection works have been completed at a number of other Council owned sites that have been repeatedly encamped including Portman Road, Walnut Way, Pottery Road, Bran Close, Landsdowne Rd/Portman Gardens, Coronation Square and Burford Court. Expenditure to date has totalled £28,800 this year. The current status of works is as follows:

- i. Portman Road - The site is secured with bunding installed along the Council's strip of land adjacent the carriageway.
- ii. Walnut Way - The final formation of the bunding will shortly be completed and sown with grass seed. The Council has been working with Tilehurst GLOBE who is interested in planting wildflower plugs into the bunds and then picking up the annual maintenance.
- iii. Bran Close planters - local residents have adopted these - they have painted them and are planting them and are looking to maintain the planting.

- iv. Pottery Road - construction of the bunds has been completed but this needs a minor modification to complete.
 - v. Lansdowne Road - the bunding and installation of bollards has been completed both to prevent incursion along the footpath to Park Lane and to the large green areas opposite.
- 5.4 The installation of soil bunds/mounds has been very successful in preventing further traveller incursions at a relatively small cost to the Council.
- 5.5 At the Council Meeting of 26th June 2018, Members resolved that officers are to carry out the following:
- All the necessary action to change the designation of the Highway land at Portman Road, which was used as part of the illegal traveller encampment, in order that any future incursions onto or abuses of the land could be dealt with promptly under this officer delegation and the powers available to the Thames Valley Police;*
- Investigate and assess the extent to which similar sites, to the one at Portman Road, exist within the Borough, which could be exploited for illegal encampments and prepare a comprehensive list of these potential sites, with a view to them being considered for re-designation as non-highway land;*
- Submit a report to the Policy Committee or Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee to seek a re-categorisation of the identified sites, where appropriate, subject to any necessary consultation processes and Equality Impact Assessments, with a view to minimising any potential future delays in dealing with unlawful traveller encampments or other abuses of the land at the identified sites.*
- 5.6 Officers initial investigations into changing the designation of highway land have identified a number of risks/issues and are summarised as follows:-
- i. The majority of grass verge areas contain utility apparatus and those service providers will object to the proposed 'Stopping Up', unless a "Wayleave" is granted to guarantee free access to their apparatus.
 - ii. Future new utility service installations in these areas would not be able to use the 'Stopped Up' land without paying for and entering into a licence agreement with the Council as the landowner. This will more than likely force them to divert their new apparatus into the carriageway, which will remain public highway. These new utility service installations will cause long term damage to the structural integrity of the road and cause traffic management disruption during installation and future maintenance work.
 - iii. Short term encampments will still take place.
- 5.7 In light of these potential issues, Officers suggest continuing with the successful programme of physical measures to protect Council owned sites rather than the recommendations contained within the motion.
- 5.8 Therefore, subject to the approval of this committee, officers will continue to proactively review and, on a prioritised basis, protect those areas of Council land at risk of unauthorised encampments with physical measures, rather than changing the designation of highway land.

6 Legal Powers Available

- 6.1 A local authority's procedure for dealing with unauthorised encampments must reflect the need to balance the rights of the settled community, land owners and the travelling community.
- 6.2 The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team coordinate action to remove any unauthorised encampment where individuals are trespassing on Council land. A visit usually takes place the very same day, or the next working day that the team are notified. The procedure followed involves proving ownership of the land, obtaining details of the encampment, assessing an encampment's effects on the local area, and then usually serving notices and summonses that will enable necessary authority to be obtained from the courts to order the travellers to leave the site. This Court process can be lengthy, however, and is not in the Council's hands. During an encampment the Council's ASB team liaises regularly with Thames Valley Police to share information. The Council and Police work in partnership in assessing options and determining the most appropriate route to securing the land.
- 6.3 Where there is evidence, the Council will request that the Police use their emergency powers under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. This power can be used on any land *except* the highway to remove identified individuals and/or their vehicles from land where certain criteria are met. The decision to use this power remains with the Police, not the Council. In a number of recent encampments the Police have used this power at the request of the Council, based on evidence from members of the public demonstrating the impact of the encampment on them or their businesses.
- 6.4 The Council's ASB Team liaise with the other departments across the Council to ensure that once vacated the site is clean and cleared as quickly as possible. This is normally carried out within hours of the site being vacated.
- 6.5 The Council has continued to review the legal powers available to ensure that we are dealing with encampments on our land as effectively as possible within the current legislative framework.
- 6.6 Officers have been gathering evidence in support of a new and potentially borough-wide injunction in respect of unauthorised encampments by named travellers - this approach has been pursued by a number of authorities where encampments by identified individuals have had significant and demonstrable impact on local communities. We have received comprehensive legal advice from a barrister who has acted for a number of other authorities in this matter. It is understood that it could take some months to obtain and collate the large body of evidence required across organisations to support the application and to complete the legal process to secure the injunction through the courts.
- 6.7 In some circumstances where there is a need to remove an encampment more quickly than is possible through the court (and either the encampment doesn't meet the requirements of S61-62; or the Police's assessment of the encampment is such that they do not believe there is a need to use their

emergency powers) then the authority will consider removal of the encampment under common law powers. This might include where there is serious anti-social behaviour or significant environmental impacts on the local community for instance. However, as set out above, the local authority's procedure for dealing with unauthorised encampments must demonstrate consistent decision making and actions that are ethical, proportionate, lawful, appropriate and necessary. Use of these powers is therefore expected to be the exception and not a default position.

7. PROVISION OF PITCHES FOR TRAVELLERS

- 7.1 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) concluding in 2017 identified accommodation needs for 10-17 permanent pitches and for a transit site to house 10 caravans for gypsies and travellers in Reading.
- 7.2 As identified in paragraph 4.1 Reading has an above average number of unauthorised encampments when compared to other areas across the Thames Valley. In 2017/18 there were 87 unauthorised encampments in Reading, most of which were on Council land. Having a transit caravan site could meet this element of need and reduce the number of unauthorised encampments. However, identifying a site has been challenging.
- 7.3 Further to this independent study, the Council undertook a thorough assessment of 80 possible sites across the borough. These were closely considered against a range of planning policy criteria. One potential transit site was identified on land at the junction of Cow Lane and Richfield Avenue but this option was dropped following strong objections from residents and Reading Festival organisers and the proposal to locate a new school on the site.
- 7.4 Notwithstanding the initial assessment and further report to Policy Committee in June 2018, this Council has committed to undertake a further review of its land holdings and other opportunities this autumn/winter in order to review potential sites and continues to raise the unmet need with adjoining Councils under the duty to co-operate agenda.

8 LEGAL

- 8.1 The Council has the follows legal powers available to it to remove those who trespass on its land:
 - Common law powers (rights to recover land)
 - Can be used by the landowner
 - Are used to regain possession of land
 - Does not require the involvement of the courts
 - Enforced by the landowner and or/private bailiffs where necessary
 - Does not provide any sanctions for the return of trespassers on to the land
 - Part 55 Civil Procedures Rules

- Can only be used by the landowner
- Are used to regain possession of land
- Require civil court procedure
- Possession is enforced by county court bailiffs, where necessary
- Do not provide any sanction for the return of trespassers onto the land
- Section 77-78 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Can only be used by a local authority
- Can be used on any land within the local authority's area, irrespective of ownership
- Are used to remove identified individuals from land
- Only require the involvement of the courts when Gypsies or Travellers do not leave when directed to do so
- Possession is enforced local authority officers or private bailiffs employed by the local authority
- The return of Gypsies or Travellers and or their vehicles to the location within three months carries a criminal sanction.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In 2017-18 the cost to the local authority in tackling unauthorised encampments:

Gating / Fencing: circa £104,000

Legal and Bailiff Costs: £36,447

Clean up Costs: The cost of clearing land following an encampment was around £36,000.

10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 10.1 Throughout an unauthorised encampment on Council land, officers engage with both those camping on the land and the local community. For those camping on the land officers:

- Issue on behalf of the landowner a notice advising those encamped of the fact that the encampment is unauthorised and that site should be vacated forthwith
- Establish the intention of the group including purpose of visit and length of stay
- Hand a code of conduct to each traveller and explain these to those who are unable to read. This will include advice and guidance on how Gypsies and Travellers can co-exist with the settled community
- Complete welfare enquiries in relation to health, education and social needs
- Provide relevant information and contact details for services to the those on the site if required
- Obtain information in respect of each traveller on site.

10.2 For the settled community and local businesses, Council officers hold a running contact sheet. This enables officers to update concerned residents and business owners throughout the eviction process. In addition a “Residents leaflet” has been developed jointly with the police. This provides information on how to report incidents that might be associated with encampment. It will also set out the process the council follows to evicted those camping on its land.

11. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

11.1 The process for dealing with unauthorised encampments takes account of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

12. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

12.1 Tackling unauthorised encampment contributes towards the following strategic aim:

1. Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	INSTALLATION OF FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO COUNCIL HOUSING PROPERTIES		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	PHIL MORRIS	TEL:	0118 9373047
JOB TITLE:	PRINCIPAL BUILDING SURVEYOR	E-MAIL:	philip.morris@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report seeks delegated authority for the award of a contract for the installation of fire sprinkler systems to circa 280 Council properties in flatted blocks.
- 1.2 The expected contract value will be approximately £700,000.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee provide delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing to award a contract for the installation of fire sprinkler systems in specified Council flatted blocks.

3. BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Despite the Council's high rise blocks differing in design to Grenfell Tower, the Council appointed an external qualified Fire Engineer to carry out a review of our fire safety practice and systems.

- 3.2 This review included undertaking 'Type 4' (intrusive) Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of a sample of flatted blocks, to include: high rise blocks; flat types where full height composite windows are positioned directly above each other to identify if this poses an additional risk; Wates 3 storey blocks given their interior room configuration requiring exit through a living space; and the Hexham Rd blocks which are undergoing sequential refurbishment (both 'before' and 'after'). The company, Fireskills, were also asked for a professional view on whether additional fire precautions were advised in any of the building types surveyed, to improve the fire safety standard in the context of recent incidents nationally and the learning from those.
- 3.3 Overall FireSkills noted that the Council's Housing Service has a 'forward facing and proactive fire safety strategy'. Whilst the Council is fully compliant with current legislation, FireSkills recommended that the Council could consider implementing a number of additional fire protection measures. This includes installation of sprinklers in some circumstances. For the Coley High Rise blocks sprinklers are being commissioned as part of wider works to replace the water systems to the blocks.
- 3.4 This contract will cover sprinkler installations in other blocks including to certain types of flats where tenants have to escape through a lounge and lobby (which a kitchen leads off of) in the event of a fire. In these blocks the Council has therefore determined to install additional detectors and a fire sprinkler in the kitchen to improve protection to the main escape route through the properties in the event of a fire.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Reading Borough Council's Housing Property Services manage the day to day repairs, planned maintenance and voids repair works to approximately 5,600 Council properties which are let throughout the borough. Elements of this work are contracted out through the use of contracts which are put in place to manage specialist types of work when there is no expertise within the in-house teams.
- 4.2 This work is of a specialist nature and Reading Borough Council through its Housing Property Services Team does not have the capability to deliver a project such as this in house.
- 4.3 Housing Property Services will work with Fusion 21 to access a specialist procurement framework to cover the design, installation and initial management and service of the fire sprinkler systems. All companies included within the allotted framework have been pre-vetted and can demonstrate exceptional value for money in terms of cost, quality and social value.

4.4 With all contractors being pre-selected the procurement and tender period can be reduced which will offer time savings to the project. From the initial framework a total of seven specialist pre-selected companies will be invited to tender.

4.4 The works are being tendered against a schedule of works and specification provided by Housing Property Services. The specification will ensure works conform to BS9251:2014. Tenderers will be invited to submit their costings against two fire suppression systems. The tender analysis will ensure the chosen system provides further value for money.

4.6 Contract duration will be 28 weeks for all blocks.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The contract will support the achievement of the Council's strategic aims of 'providing homes for those in most need' and 'remaining financially sustainable to deliver service priorities' by using a cost effective means of delivering improvements to the Council's Housing Stock.

5.2 The installation of the fire sprinkler systems will provide additional fire protection to the means of escape for all residents living within these properties.

5.3 The fire sprinkler systems will also provide additional protection by limiting and isolating damage to properties in the event of a fire.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 All residents will be informed of the installations of these systems and the additional safety benefits they will offer. The system cannot be isolated by residents.

6.2 Berkshire Fire & Rescue will be informed of the system installation and there will be additional isolation points for the Fire Authority to switch off the system in the event of a fire.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 There is no Equalities Impact Assessment required for this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The works are to be awarded under The JCT Intermediate Works with Contractor's Design contract.

7.2 A Fusion 21 Framework will be used to procure the works. An open tender option using our In-Tend system has been reviewed but this will not provide the pre-vetting and time saving options of the Fusion 21 Framework.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The value of expenditure is currently estimated on previous quotations obtained for similar sprinkler system works. The budget figure for the fire sprinkler systems is estimated at £700,000. Provision has been made in the Housing Revenue Account capital budgets to fund this work.

8.2 Ongoing maintenance and service costs will have to be provided each year. The estimated budget allowance is £50,000 and provision has been made in the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Business Plan.

8.3 It is intended as far as possible to ensure that the successful tenderers pay the living wage to all employees working on Reading Borough Council properties. Tenderers are advised that the Council's current Low Wage policy expects the payment of the Living Wage rate set independently by the Living Wage Foundation and updated annually in the first week of November each year.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Report to HNL Committee in March 2018 'An Update on Housing Fire Safety Considerations'.