

To: Councillor Davies (Chair)
Councillors Debs Absalom, Barnett-Ward,
Emberson, Hacker, Hoskin, Leng,
Manghnani, McGonigle, Mitchell, Mpofu-
Coles, O'Connell, Rowland, Rynn, R Singh,
Sokale and J Williams

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28 June 2021

Your contact is: Julie Quarmby - Committee Services (julie.quarmby@reading.gov.uk)

NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 6 JULY 2021

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on Tuesday, 6 July 2021 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

<u>WARDS</u>	<u>Page No</u>
<u>AFFECTED</u>	

ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION IN CLOSED SESSION

1. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following will be moved by the Chair:

"That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act"

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

3. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME PHASE 4 - SPEND APPROVAL

7 - 16

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PUBLIC SESSION

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.

5. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2021 **17 - 22**

6. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES **23 - 28**

Minutes of the Community Safety Partnership – 22 April 2021.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME PHASE 4 - SPEND APPROVAL **29 - 38**

This report provides an update on the current Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme, seeks spend approval for £1.4m to start delivery of the next phase of the programme during the financial year 21/22 and sets out an intention to request spend and budget approval for additional funding to continue the delivery of Phase 4 of the Local Authority New Build and Acquisitions Programme.

11. GLYPHOSATE - UPDATE ON ITS USE AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES **39 - 48**

This report updates members on the current use of Glyphosate as a means of weed control in Reading, the regulatory and legal status of Glyphosate use and alternatives to Glyphosate.

12.	HOUSEHOLD WASTE - UPDATE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KERBSIDE FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE AND THE CHANGE TO 140L RESIDUAL WASTE BINS.	49 - 58
	This report provides an update on the main roll out of the kerbside food waste collection service and the change to 140 litre residual waste bins and reports on the current recycling rate.	
13.	RBC APPROACH TO DELIVERING LOW CARBON HOUSING	59 - 76
	This report presenting “Low Carbon Homes - Key Issues and Challenges” which summarises current activity and shapes the future development of Reading’s approach to ensuring that housing in Reading makes the fullest possible contribution to the objective of a ‘net zero carbon Reading by 2030’, in line with Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and the Council’s Housing Strategy.	
14.	THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (ENGLAND) REGULATION 2020	77 - 140
	This report sets out the provisions of The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 (“the ESS Regulations”) which came into force on 1 June 2020 and the Tenants Fees Act 2019 which came into force on 1 June 2019 for new tenancies and was subsequently extended to cover all tenancies from 1 st June 2020. The report also seeks delegations to authorise officers to carry out these functions.	
15.	READING LIBRARIES: FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION	141 - 168
	This report outlines the proposed strategic themes to guide the future direction of the Council’s library service, upon which consultation with the public will take place.	
16.	ACCEPTANCE OF CULTURE RECOVERY AND HERITAGE GRANTS	169 - 174
	The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the award of a round two Arts Council England (ACE) culture recovery fund and leisure recovery fund, totalling £527,000.	
17.	READING'S CULTURE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE	175 - 242
	A report updating the Committee on the achievements of Reading’s Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) 2016-2019, sharing the CEP’s 2020-2024 Draft Strategy and Action Plan, and setting out the key areas of priority.	
18.	READING MUSEUM FORWARD PLAN	243 - 270

A report seeking approval for the Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025 (Appendix 1).

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 10 MARCH 2021

Present: Councillor Davies (Chair);
Councillors Barnett-Ward, Carnell, Ennis, Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin,
James, Leng, Lovelock, McGonigle, Rowland, R Singh and R Williams.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 15 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

12. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

Community Safety Partnership - 12 November 2020.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

13. PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 36

No petitions had been submitted.

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

No questions had been submitted.

15. HOUSING UPDATE AND PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK 2021/2022

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which highlighted key achievements of the Housing Service over the over the past financial year and set out the work programme for the Council's housing stock for the next financial year. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix 1: Wards where programmes of work had been carried out in 20/21;
Appendix 2: Wards that were included in the programme for 21/22.

The report stated that over the past year, the achievements of the Service had included:

- Everyone In - the provision of accommodation and food for people rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping during the first lockdown;
- The provision of additional accommodation for people who had previously been sleeping rough, plus a successful bid to MHCLG for £2.279m for the provision of 24-hour support to assist with rebuilding the lives of these vulnerable individuals;
- Maintaining the position where no homeless families were placed in shared Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
- Continued support and debt advice to tenants;
- Development and adoption of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategies which set out the Council's vision and priorities for the next five years;

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- Works to provide additional accommodation via both conversions and new build;
- Start on site for the community centre as part of the Dee Park Regeneration;
- Refurbishment of properties including replacement of heating, water, windows and replacement and installation of fire alarm and sprinkler systems.

The report also updated the Committee on the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which had been carried out during April and May 2020, which found that although satisfaction levels were still generally high, there had been a reduction in some areas.

The report explained that Housing Property Services had a responsibility to ensure that the housing stock was well maintained in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard and that Council homes were safe and healthy places to live, including the improvement of the thermal efficiency of its stock in line with the Council's Climate Change ambitions ensuring homes could be heated efficiently and cost effectively, thus reducing their carbon footprint and reducing fuel poverty. The service also worked to improve the wider environment on housing estates to meet the needs and aspirations of both the Council and the tenants. Tables 1 and 2 attached to the report set out details of the works to be carried out and the associated costs.

Resolved -

- (1) That the key achievements of the Housing Service in the past financial year and the planned programme of works to Council stock for 2021/22 be noted;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Housing & Communities in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised to tender for and enter into all necessary contracts for individual schemes within the 21/22 work programme as set out in Tables 1 and 2 of the report, subject to sufficient funding being available in the approved Budget to meet the cost of the schemes.

16. ALLOCATIONS SCHEME CONSULTATION

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which set out the intention to review Reading Borough Council's Allocation Scheme, the proposed changes and the timetable for delivery and requested authorisation to consult on the proposals and details. The consultation summary and questions were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that it was proposed that a public consultation be carried out on key policy decisions that supported the delivery of the themes of the Housing Strategy, within the following areas:

- **Sustainable Communities:** There were several mechanisms that were proposed to support this including improved tenant mobility, an improved offer for Key Workers and tenant behaviour sanctions;
- **Clear and Fair Allocations Scheme:** The proposals included a reduction in the number of bands for simplicity and a separate register for adapted homes.

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The report also set out the proposed timetable for the consultation which would run from 15 March 2021 to 10 May 2021. It was proposed that a report on the consultation results and draft Allocations Scheme would then be submitted for approval during July or August 2021.

Resolved -

That a public consultation, which took views of residents, customers and partners, to inform a review of the Reading Borough Council's Housing Allocations Scheme be approved.

17. ROUGH SLEEPING UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which provided a summary of responses and outcomes since the introduction of the Government's 'Everyone In' approach with regards to supporting those rough sleeping, or at risk of rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council's Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan for Reading was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that 264 individuals had been placed into emergency accommodation under 'Everyone In' between March - August 2020. Those placed had either been rough sleeping (verified bedded down) or had been assessed by homelessness teams as being at risk of rough sleeping. The report gave an update on progress that had been made in finding permanent accommodation for those individuals, and for others who had been identified as homeless from September 2020 onwards.

The report also explained that future plans focused on the delivery of accommodation and interventions including:

- Provision of additional accommodation in two locations, one of which would be female-only and would provide accommodation and support to women with multiple or complex needs. Both accommodation projects would have 24-hour intensive support provision to help the residents to rebuild their lives;
- Provision of targeted substance misuse support from 2021 - 2023 via a dedicated team within Reading's drug and alcohol support service (CGL) to target those sleeping rough/at risk of sleeping rough with substance dependence;

Resolved:

That the actions taken during the Covid-19 pandemic for those found sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping in the Borough and the current plans to sustain the reduction in rough sleeping moving forward be noted.

18. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which sought approval of the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which had not been refreshed since 2014. The draft Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

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The report explained that the Policy introduced a new procedure that the Anti-Social Behaviour Team would follow that had been designed to make the team's case management procedure more efficient and only tackle those cases in which genuine, significant and/or persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB) was occurring. The policy also set out the types of issues that were associated with clash of lifestyles and not considered to be ASB. The report also explained that the Policy did not include dealing with environmental ASB and noise nuisance outside of RBC Housing jurisdiction.

The new policy set out how the Anti-Social Behaviour Team would deal with ASB in Reading by:

- Taking effective action to deal with severe and/or persistent anti-social behaviour;
- Encouraging residents to report anti-social behaviour by promoting a victim focussed service;
- Setting realistic expectations in relation to what types of ASB the Team could deal with and the actions available to the Team;
- Providing support and advice to victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Ensuring a partnership approach was taken to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Resolved:

That the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy be approved.

19. READING'S CULTURE AND HERITAGE STRATEGY UPDATE AND PRIORITIES FOR 2021-22

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that gave an update on the achievements of Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, outlined the council's Culture Service response to the covid19 pandemic and set out the key areas of priority for 2021-22. The report noted in particular that the Culture Service had gained national recognition, having featured in the Local Government Association's case studies for good council practice in response to Covid-19.

The report explained that the cultural teams had changed the way they provided services through a variety of digital platforms offering much needed fun, educational, health and wellbeing content and advice remotely to the heart of the community. Reading Culture Live had been created to provide a platform for local cultural organisations to have a digital venue whilst everything was closed. This had proved very successful and officers were looking at how it could be further developed and used in the future. The report also gave an update on the services provided by Reading Museum, Libraries, the Hexagon, 21 South Street and Berkshire Records Office as well as the recently created Heritage Action Zones.

The report further explained that, due to the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the cultural sector, officers proposed that a single-year plan of priorities be put forward based around the following key priorities:

Strategic Priority One: Enhance identity - being Reading/Made in Reading;
Strategic Priority Two: Increase Opportunities through working together;

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Strategic Priority Three: Celebrate.

Resolved:

- (1) That the achievements of Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030 delivered to date and the council's Culture Service response to Covid-19 be noted;**
- (2) That the key areas of priority 2021-22 be agreed.**

20. READING PLACE OF CULTURE YEAR 3 EVALUATION

Further to Minute 23 of the meeting held on 11 March 2020, the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on the achievements from the third and final year of the Reading, Place of Culture project including the profound and ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the project and set out some indicative legacy plans.

The report explained that the project had continued to deliver against the three strands of activity and presented a summary of achievements that included:

- Age UK Berkshire and The Museum of English Rural Life had delivered a storytelling and reminiscence project for older people at risk of loneliness and social isolation to improve wellbeing.
- Alana House, Rahab and Reading Rep had delivered theatre for women at risk to enhance communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Sport In Mind and Junction Dance had worked to use dance in the treatment, management and prevention of mental illness.
- Rosetta Life dance, music and spoken word project for long term conditions such as living with the effects of stroke, dementia or Parkinson's.
- Reading Rep, Jelly and other partners had delivered theatre for young people with SEND to develop confidence and independence, develop skills and decrease social isolation.
- Mustard Tree, Real Time and Cranbury College had delivered a creative employment project based around film for young people with SEND to build confidence and key skills.
- The Research programme, led by the University of Reading was an active research partnership between Whitley Community Development Association and local residents.
- Reading Culture Live (RCL) had been developed and delivered within eight weeks of the first national lockdown and had been designed to be a sister site to What's On Reading.
- The Reading Festivals' Group was a partnership organisation, representing 17 Reading based festivals, which aimed to create synergies in terms of best practice, sustainability, funding and support networks.
- The Culture and Business Engagement Strand, led by Reading UK, had commissioned a report to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on Reading's cultural sector.

The report also set out at paragraph 5 the draft legacy plan from Reading, Place of Culture which would be discussed and agreed with funders and subject to further

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consultation with partners and the wider ACH sector. The aim of the legacy plan was to continue to champion the role of culture in delivering against health and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes and engage marginalised or hard-to-reach communities in arts, culture and/or heritage programmes. The main areas included:

- The Cultural Commissioning Programme
- The Research Programme
- Supporting the Sector Post-Covid 19
- Partnership

Resolved:

- (1) That the achievements of the Reading, Place of Culture project delivered to date be noted;
- (2) That the legacy plans as set out in paragraph 5 of the report be agreed

(The meeting opened at 6.31pm and closed at 7.55pm).

Agenda Item 6

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP - 22 APRIL 2021

Present:

Nick John	Thames Valley Police (Chair)
Cllr Jason Brock	Leader, RBC
Cllr Tony Page	Deputy Leader, RBC
Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward	Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods and Communities
Cllr Raj Singh	Observer, RBC
Jo Middlemass	Community Safety and Enablement Manager, RBC
Kelly Reed	Thames Valley Police, Victim Reduction Unit (VRU)
Trip Pannu	Thames Valley Police, Victim Reduction Unit (VRU)
Zelda Wolfe	Assistant Director of Housing & Communities, RBC
Catherine Marriott	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Kirsten Carr	Consultant, Brighter Futures for Children
Vicky Rhodes	Director of Early Help, Brighter Futures for Children
Clare Muir	Policy & Voluntary Sector Manager, Reading Borough Council
Meradin Peachey	Director of Public Health, Berkshire West
Jeanie Herbert	PACT
Sally Andersen	Senior Wellbeing Commissioning Manager for Drugs & Alcohol, RBC
Matt Lo	Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, RBC
Melanie Smith	Probation Service
Julie Quarmby	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

David Munday	Consultant in Public Health, RBC
Nicola Bell	Manager, Willow Project
Lou Everatt	Thames Valley CRC
Giles Allchurch	Brighter Futures for Children
Deborah Glassbrook	Director of Children's Services Brighter Futures for Children
Chris Juden	Reading Magistrates
Donna Gray	Safeguarding Children, Brighter Futures for Children
Lynne Mason	Quality & Monitoring Officer, RBC

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Jo Middlemass, RBC, submitted draft updated Terms of Reference and Responsibilities for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Executive Group, which had not been updated since 2015. Jo explained that the updated Terms of Reference were more specific to the Executive Group and that she had also drawn up a structure chart to clarify the way the different groups and sub-groups related to each other. The Group discussed the draft terms of Reference and suggested amendments including:

- The minutes were to continue to be submitted to the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee for information;
- Comments had been received from members who were unable to attend;
- It might be better to have a three-yearly Community Safety Plan, which would be reviewed annually;

- Progress on KPIs and crime statistics to be reported via the CSP Performance Group, which would be reinstated;
- There was a long gap between this meeting and the next. Jo Middlemass was trying to set up an additional meeting during June or July 2021.

AGREED:

- (1) Jo Middlemass to amend the Terms of Reference as discussed;
- (2) Julie Quarmby to circulate the amended Terms of Reference and the Structure Chart with the minutes;
- (3) Jo Middlemass to liaise with the Chair, Councillors and Committee Services with regard to setting up an additional meeting during June or July 2021.

3. ATTENDEES AND MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Nick John reported that attendance at future meetings would consist of the core members, with representatives of other agencies being invited to attend as and when required. This would ensure that the Executive Group carried out its decision-making functions

AGREED: That the position be noted.

4. FUNDING

Jo Middlemass reported that, following the election of a new Police & Crime Commissioner in May 2021, it was likely that there would be changes to the way that Community Safety Partnerships would be funded from the next financial year. Catherine Marriott, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner added that she would be contacting all of the Thames Valley Community Safety Partnerships as she had further information on funding. The Partnership noted that there was a risk that funding could be reduced, and mitigations measures would need to be put in place.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

5. CSP PLAN UPDATE AND DELIVERY GROUP UPDATES

Jo Middlemass reported that the CSP Plan was being updated and would be submitted to the next CSP meeting. She added that the Delivery Group Chairs would be reporting to the Performance Group, with highlight reports being submitted to the Executive Group.

Sally Andersen reported that the Council had been awarded £327k public health funding for work focusing on crime and drug-related deaths. She would submit further information to the next meeting of the Executive Group. Zelda Wolfle suggested that the Performance Group could also look at producing a list of possible future projects that could be brought forward as and when funding streams became available, given that there was often a very short turnaround time for such bids.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That Jo Middlemass set up a meeting with Delivery Group Chairs to discuss their roles within the Performance Group.

6. PREVENT UPDATE

Clare Muir, Policy & Voluntary Sector Manager, RBC, submitted a report which provided an update on the implementation of the Prevent duty in Reading, including key developments in the delivery of Prevent and the statutory Channel Process. The report also set out the latest available national and regional data about Prevent and the local risks identified in the Counter Terrorism local profile produced by the Counter Terrorism Police South East.

The report explained that under the Prevent Duty the local authority was required to co-ordinate a multi-agency Prevent partnership. The Reading Prevent Management Group (PMG) was created in March 2015 under the strategic oversight and scrutiny of the CSP and involved active and regular contact between health, education services, police, probation and local authority Prevent leads, who acted as single points of contact. The local authority was also required to chair a statutory Channel Panel, which was multi-agency and linked to the local Safeguarding Board as required. It met monthly to consider cases of individuals assessed as being vulnerable to radicalisation and referred by Counter Terrorism Policing for an early intervention and support. This was a voluntary process which requires the consent of the individual to be supported. The work of this panel was distinct from managing individuals who pose a terrorism risk and require management by the police.

The report also set out the latest national Prevent and Channel developments which included:

- Changes to how meeting and sessions were operated due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- New Channel Duty Guidance and the need to provide an annual assurance statement, which had been completed by 31 March 2021;
- The introduction of Police-Led Partnerships to manage individuals for whom Prevent relevant issues had been identified, but who were not suitable for Channel;
- Changes to Channel case management, moving the co-ordination of Channel cases from the Police to local authorities;
- New training courses for Channel Chairs and members;
- The annual update of the Counter Terrorism Local Profile in September 2020, which led to updates in the Prevent Action Plan, communications and training plans;
- Update on national data for 2019/2020 showed an increase of 10% on the previous year, with most referrals coming from the Police of the Education Sector.

Claire Muir added that it was difficult to give data on a local basis, as there were restrictions in place due to data protection legislation, plus the numbers involved were small and there was a risk that individuals might be identified.

AGREED:

- (1) That recent developments for the delivery of Prevent and the statutory Channel Process be noted;
- (2) That the latest information and data about Prevent and the risks identified by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile be noted.

7. YOUNG ADVISORS GROUP

Kelly Reed and Trip Pannu (VRU) gave a presentation on the Young Advisors Group initiative that had been trialled by the Mayor of London's Office, and which could be used in Reading to engage young people. They explained that the initiative involved a diverse group of young people aged 16 to 24 who would engage with local agencies when youth input was required for a 12 month period. The young people would be identified from target groups and supported

through the application process. In return they would be paid a living wage and receive training, and also gain experience and confidence which would help them in the future.

Trip Pannu explained that the scheme in London had had several successes including engaging with young people around Black Lives Matter, policing of young people and stop and search, and improvements in local open spaces to make them less attractive to drug dealers. Trip added that the VRU had spoken to partners and businesses who had been generally supportive of the initiative.

The Group discussed the presentation and raised the following points:

- Funding sources for the project;
- A Panel would need to be set up to steer the initiative;
- Any initiative would have to be set up carefully, with appropriate governance and oversight, as failure of the project would be worse than not doing it at all in terms of building relationships with young people;
- It would be helpful to find out what issues young people were concerned about now, then formalise those involved into a Youth Advisor Group.
- More information on total costs, funding, ensuring appropriate representation on the Group and governance.

AGREED:

- (1) That the presentation be noted;
- (2) That Kelly Reed report to the next meeting of the CSP with greater detail on how a Young Advisors Group could be operated in Reading.

8. ROUGH SLEEPERS OUTREACH PROJECT

Sally Andersen, Senior Wellbeing Commissioning Manager for Drugs & Alcohol, RBC gave a presentation updating the Group on the Rough Sleepers Outreach Project. The presentation covered the following areas:

- The Rough Sleepers Drug & Alcohol Treatment Grant 2021-21;
- The Outreach Team;
- Context, including funding and proposals;
- Purpose of the Funding (continuity of care, access and engagement and resilient and sustainable models of care;
- Outreach Team objectives;
- Staff Structure;
- Model (service user pathway);
- Themes and Project Deliverables.

The Group discussed the presentation and noted that outcomes should be measured in the longer-term, not just a point of entry. The project plan would need to clarify the links into the work being carried out by the Street Population Group, including begging, street drinking and open-air drug taking.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That quarterly update reports be submitted to the Executive Group.

9. ONE READING CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSON'S PARTNERSHIP EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Vicky Rhodes and Kirsten Carr, Brighter Futures for Children, gave a presentation on the Early Help Strategy 2021-2023. The presentation covered the following areas:

- What had been achieved to date with the One Reading Partnership trauma informed approach;
- Improved outcomes for victims;
- The principles behind the strategy;
- Data and needs analysis;
- Priority areas for 2021-23, including Under 5s, Young Persons and Adolescent Risk and a consistent approach to mental health and emotional well-being.
- Links to other strategies.

Kirsten Carr explained that the key priorities for the Young Persons and Adolescent Risk strategy covered the prevention of sexual exploitation, missing young people, youth knife crime and serious youth violence. She added that the One Reading Adolescent Risk Strategic Group had been set up to oversee the governance in these areas. There were clear links with the Serious Violence Strategy Group and the two bodies would work closely to reduce duplication and improve outcomes.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

10. OPCC UPDATE

AGREED: That Catherine Marriot, OPCC, circulate a written update to the Executive Group.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

Future meetings for 2020/21 would take place on:

16 September 2021

11 November 2021

3 February 2021

21 April 2022

All meetings start at 9.30am, venue to be confirmed. Jo Middlemass would liaise with Committee Services to check whether a meeting could be added in June or July 2021.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and closed at 12.02 pm)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME PHASE 4 - SPEND APPROVAL		
LEAD COUNCILLOR	CLLR EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO :	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING COMMUNITIES	& WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	SARAH TAPLISS	TEL:	0118 9373203
JOB TITLE:	STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICE MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Sarah.tapliss@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 Officers have continued to review opportunities to bring forward the development of new Council homes in order to increase the supply of affordable housing and maximise the use of Right to Buy (RTB) 1 for 1 replacement receipts, S106 receipts and Government Grant.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the current Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme which has to date delivered 174 local authority homes, with schemes in progress to deliver another 307 homes by 2024. The report also details proposals and funding arrangements for the next phase of the programme (phase 4).
- 1.3 The report seeks spend approval for a budget of £1.4m to start delivery of the next phase of the programme during the financial year 21/22, funded through a combination of HRA borrowing; Right to Buy receipts; S106 receipts and Homes England Grant where appropriate. It is also states that the existing Capital Programme will be reprofiled with £1.4m moving from 23/24 to 21/22.
- 1.4 The report also sets out an intention to request spend and budget approval for an additional £30.6m to continue the delivery of Phase 4 of the Local Authority New Build and Acquisitions Programme from 22/23, as part of the budget approval within the 22/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy process.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 2.1** That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee approve the spend of up to £1.4m on phase 4 during the financial year 21/22, noting the required reprofiling of the budget currently within the existing Capital Programme for Phase 4 of the LANB programme (£1.4m) from 23/24 to 21/22 (will form part of the Budget Monitoring Outturn Report due to go to July Policy Committee)
- 2.2** That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee notes the intention to request spend and budget approval for an additional £30.6m to continue the delivery of Phase 4 of the Local Authority New Build and Acquisitions Programme from 22/23, in parallel to the budget approval within the 22/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy process.
- 2.3** That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the Leader of the Council, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to agree which sites are suitable to progress within the spend approval and restrictions set out in this report.
- 2.4** That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the Leader of the Council, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to: (a) tender; and (b) enter into contracts in connection with the Phase 4 LANB programme with the winning bidders in respect of multi-disciplinary/consultancy services and works to deliver the housing schemes, as set out in this report.
- 2.5** That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, to approve the purchase of existing properties from the open market for the purpose of providing affordable housing, with a maximum limit of £500,000 per single unit.

3. POLICY CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

Local Authority New Build (LANB) Programme

- 3.1** To date the Council's new build and acquisitions housing programme has delivered 174 new Council owned homes with a capital spend of £32.2m This also includes the acquisition of several existing properties.
- 3.2** In addition spend approval is in place for a further 307 new homes and these are

in progress to be completed in the next 4 years, with an expected capital spend of c£80.2m. These schemes are detailed below. This includes a mixed approach to delivery by making use of small pieces of HRA land and ex garage sites, as well as larger sites.

Development	Number of homes	Type of units	Estimated Completion
5 x Conversions of unused space in existing Council blocks	9	9 x 1 bed flats	Summer 2021
George Street	4	2 x 1 bed flat 2 x 2 bed flat	Summer 2021
Cattle Market - Temporary Modular Units	40	40 x 1 bed homes	Summer 2021
Lyndhurst Road	18	8 x 1 bed flats 10 x 2 bed flats Replacement community space	Winter 2021
Camelford Close	1	1 x 4 bed house	Spring 2022
Circuit Lane	1	1 x 2 bed house	Spring 2022
Foxhays Road	3	3 x 2 bed house	Spring 2022
5 Ian Mikardo	1	1 x 3 bed house	Spring 2022
Wentworth Avenue	2	2 x 2 bed house	Spring 2022
North Street	37	17 x 1 bed flats 19 x 2 bed flats 1 x 3 bed flat	Summer 2022
Arthur Hill	15	15 x 2 bed flats (key worker housing)	Autumn 2022
Wensley Road	46	8 x 1 bed flats 10 x 2 bed flats 26 x 3 bed houses 2 x 4 bed houses	Winter 2022
Battle Street	Circa 94	TBC	2024
Hexham Road	Circa 36	TBC	2024
Total	307		

- 3.3 As shown in the above table, 40 modular units are under construction at the Cattle Market. These will be used for temporary accommodation as part of the wider package of initiatives to meet the continued need for housing and support for individuals who were previously street homeless and now housed as part of the Council's response to the pandemic. All other homes will be used as permanent accommodation, with a small number aimed at specialist groups with additional needs or keyworkers.

Right to Buy Receipts

- 3.4 In 2012, new arrangements were introduced regarding the use of RTB receipts. The Council elected to enter into an agreement with central Government to retain a proportion of any RTB receipt in order to develop replacement affordable housing within the administrative area. This means that an element of each RTB receipt has to be used to fund the development of additional affordable homes - often referred to as 'RTB 1 for 1 replacement'. In early 2021 the Government issued refreshed guidance improving the flexibility as to how these receipts can be used, but there continues to be a number of constraints on how these can be spent:

- receipts can only fund up to 40% of development or acquisition costs;
- receipts can only fund rented properties (to be used for permanent or temporary accommodation);
- receipts can't apply where there is other public subsidy and cannot fund the acquisition of public land;
- receipts cannot be transferred to a company wholly owned by a local authority as this was seen by Government as an attempt by some LAs to circumvent the RTB requirement - this has been appealed to no avail;
- receipts must be spent within 5 years of receipt or repaid with a punitive rate of interest charged if this is not achieved;
- RTB receipts cannot be combined with S106 receipts or Government Grant.

- 3.5 RTB receipts can be passed to Registered Providers (RPs) to fund 40% of a housing development (where there is no other HCA funding being provided) or retained to fund local authority new build schemes.

Section 106 Affordable Housing Contributions

- 3.7 Under current planning policy all new housing developments, which require planning permission, are expected to contribute to the delivery of new affordable housing provision to meet local need. This requirement is subject to the development being viable. Developments of nine or fewer units require a commuted sum to be paid. For developments proposing ten units or more the Council's planning policy requires, in the first instance, for the affordable homes to be provided 'on site' and to be 30% of any development. Where there are exceptional reasons, the provision of surrogate sites or a commuted sum may be considered. On-site contributions or commuted sums are secured via a Section 106 agreement. In relation to commuted sums, receipts paid by the developer are then held by the Council and have to be used to help deliver Affordable

Housing within the Borough. This would be through the funding of RBC new build housing or grant funding to a Registered Provider. The use of S106 receipts cannot be combined with the RTB receipts outlined above and therefore need to be allocated to separate developments.

- 3.8 RBC has been very successful in negotiating onsite delivery of affordable housing contributions, however, in some cases financial contributions have been accepted and are required from smaller scale developments.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Budget Available

- 4.1 At the end March 2021, the Council had £3.65m of unspent RTB receipts. Additional RTB receipts are received by the Council each quarter and, although RTB sales are slightly reducing, the average total receipt per quarter is £320k. It is anticipated that this figure will broadly continue and, if retained, these receipts will result in an additional £1.28m of receipts per year, totalling an extra £3.84m by the end of the financial year 23/24. Combined with existing receipts this would result in a total of £7.49m RTB receipts being available.
- 4.2 Of the anticipated £7.49m, £2.09m of the receipts are currently allocated to schemes within the existing phases of the LANB programme, with £5.4m remaining to fund schemes within phase 4. These receipts have staggered deadlines for when they will need to be spent, up to March 2026.
- 4.3 In addition c.£1.56m of unallocated S016 receipts (received) are also available for affordable housing development, and c.£1.4m is expected to be received before 2024. A total of £2.96m.
- 4.4 This equates to the availability of £8.36m in subsidy available for phase 4 of the Local Authority New Build Programme.
- 4.5 The final option in terms of funding for Affordable Housing is the available grant from Homes England. The budget for two of the Council's existing schemes (North Street and Wensley Road) includes Homes England funding to the total of £6.3m, and a new programme was launched at the start of 2021. This provides the Council with further opportunity to bid for additional grant to support the delivery of new homes.

5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 It is proposed that a further total spend approval of £1.4m is agreed for continuation of the LANB programme in the financial year 21/22, and that spend approval and budget approval is requested for a further £30.6m as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy process to enable the delivery of Phase 4.
- 5.2 It is also recommended that Committee note the required reprofiling of the

budget currently within the existing Capital Programme for Phase 4 of the LANB programme (£1.4m) from 23/24 to this financial year, enabling the feasibility and design work to start for the sites within phase 4. This change will also be reflected in the July 2021 Budget Monitoring Outturn report to Policy Committee.

- 5.3 The profiling and budget approval, and additional spend approval for a further £30.6 to deliver the schemes will be included as part of the 22/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) process, due to be completed in early 2022.
- 5.4 The progression of each site and allocation of funds to a particular development will depend on the viability and projected costs of each scheme and cannot be confirmed until a detailed development plan has been produced. This means that there may be a possibility that not all sites on the short list will be developed at this time. These decisions will be agreed at the Local Authority New Build Programme Board, with regular updates provided to the Corporate Management team and the Members via the Land and Property Development Board and Lead Member Briefings.
- 5.5 It is also proposed that a small programme of property acquisitions often within existing Council owned (HRA) flatted blocks, will continue.
- 5.6 The total budget, once approved, will be funded via a combination of sources as broken down below:

Funding	Amount
RTB receipts	£5.4m
S106 receipts	£2.96m
HRA borrowing	£23.64m

- 5.7 Where appropriate Homes England funding will be applied for to supplement the budget enabling the spend approval requested, however this is unconfirmed at this time.
- 5.8 Strict rules and limitations on how funding can be combined mean that there will be three sub-groups to this phase of the LANB programme:
 - RTB + HRA borrowing funded units
 - S106 + HRA borrowing funded units
 - Homes England Grant + HRA borrowing funded units (Homes England Funding can be combined with S106 grant if required).
- 5.9 A financial appraisal of each development or purchase will be completed and only schemes that are expected to be cost neutral or provide a positive return to the HRA will be progressed to construction. This means that rental income will cover borrowing costs (interest costs), management and maintenance costs.
- 5.10 In order to expedite the process of delivering viable sites through to completion, it is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of

Housing and Communities in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the leader of the Council, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to agree which sites to progress within the spend approvals and restrictions set out above. It would be the intention to engage with relevant ward members as part of this process.

- 5.11 It is also recommended that delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the Leader of the Council, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to tender for and enter into contracts with the winning bidders in respect of multi-disciplinary/consultancy services and works to deliver the schemes, subject to the further spend approval and budget being approved.
- 5.12 It is also recommended that delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Director of Finance, to continue to approve the purchase of existing properties from the open market limited to a maximum purchase price of £500k.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 In supporting the delivery of sustainable affordable homes in the town, this proposal supports all three of the council's Corporate Plan priorities:
- Healthy environment
 - Thriving communities
 - Inclusive economy
- 5.2 This proposal will deliver a significant increase in affordable, sustainable homes for families in Reading. This helps support the following of the Council's Strategic Aims:
- To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley
 - To establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit
 - To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all
- 5.3 As stated above the design criteria of the Council's development programme ensures that safe and sustainable homes are provided for those most in need.
- 5.4 The Local Plan for Reading, adopted in 2019, indicate that Reading requires 406 new affordable homes per annum to meet the assessed need. The proposed delivery of phase 4 of the LANB programme, with sites being 100% affordable (rented) and where possible larger family sized homes, significantly supports

that Council's ambition to deliver the required levels of Affordable Housing to meet the assessed need.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 On the 26th of February 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to act to accelerate a carbon neutral Reading to 2030. Reading Climate Change Partnership's Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and the new RBC corporate Carbon Plan 2020-25 was adopted in November 2020. The Council will therefore seek to ensure the scheme delivers on this commitment by developing designs that maximise all sustainability options.
- 6.2 The Council's existing approach for Local Authority New Build homes is to seek to ensure that where possible schemes are built to Passivhaus principles. The application of a fabric first approach of Passivhaus reduces greenhouse gas emissions and delivers significant long-term energy savings to the tenants. The low running costs and higher quality building mean that costs are significantly reduced over the life of the building for the occupiers.
- 6.3 The use of sustainable materials plays an important role in the design. This, combined with the high quality of building physics achieved through insulation, thermal bridge-free design and airtightness ensures that the sustainable benefits of Passivhaus principles will last.
- 6.4 In addition to the above, the Council is committed to delivering sites that offer a sustainable location for residents in terms of access to employment, schools, and other local services via good public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks. While seeking to encourage and support sustainable travel, where possible the scheme will provide charging points for electric vehicles.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Individual schemes will have their own consultation and engagement plan, which will support the statutory consultation required as part of the planning process.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has powers under section 9 and 17 of the Housing Act 1985 to provide housing accommodation and to acquire land and housing for the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985.
- 8.2 A local authority can allocate land held for specific purposes under different statutory powers - i.e. under section 122 Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972)

or section 19(1) of the Housing Act 1985 (HA) Part II.

- 8.3 Proposals to deliver new council homes would need to obtain planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any other necessary consents.
- 8.4 Works contracts worth £4,733,252 (Works Threshold) or more must be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union or after 11pm on 31 December 2020 following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union via the UK's e-notification service Find a Tender and then tendered or be procured via a framework agreement which itself has already been advertised in OJEU or Find a Tender (as applicable) and undergone a tender process. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) do not require an OJEU or Find a Tender (as applicable) advertised tendering process in the case of below Works Threshold contracts. Such contracts must be awarded in line with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 8.5 It will be necessary to enter into contracts with the successful contractors.
- 8.6 Any legal encumbrances for sites will need to be identified at an early stage and any issues that could impede or prevent development be highlighted and where possible resolved as each individual site is progressed.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The capital budget approved by the council in February 2021 included £1.4m in 2023/24 for the new build programme. This paper proposes that this is brought forward into 2021/22 to meet the early costs of a phase 4 of the new build programme. The full capital costs of phase 4 are not currently included in the capital budget. In the next few months is intended that a case will be made as part of the council's budget setting process for 2022/23 and beyond, for an estimated £30.6m to be considered for inclusion in the capital budget for phase 4.
- 9.2 The case for capital investment in to each individual site will examine the impact on the HRA 30 year business plan, and only projects that are neutral or have a positive impact on the financial performance of the HRA will be pursued.
- 9.3 In the event that capital expenditure does not ultimately lead to the creation of a capital asset, then costs incurred will fall to revenue, where they are currently unbudgeted.
- 9.4 These financial implications were reviewed by Mark Jones, strategic business partner, on 8/6/21.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Policy Committee report July 2017

10.2 Policy Committee Report July 2015.

10.3 HNL report November 2015

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	GLYPHOSATE - UPDATE ON ITS USE AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	ADELE BARNETT-WARD	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	ANDREW EDWARDS	TEL:	0118 937 3468
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Andrew.edwards@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Glyphosate is a non-selective, non-residual translocated herbicide which kills actively growing plants but will not stop new weeds from growing. It is widely available under the trade name 'Round-up' and is licensed for use until December 2022.
- 1.2 As well as its widespread use in agriculture it is commonly used by Local Authorities to control all types of weeds as it provides a cost effective and efficient means of control and helps the Council to comply with its statutory duty to "keep specified land clear of litter and refuse".
- 1.3 There are however, serious concerns about the potential harmful effects of glyphosate on human health, particularly its potential as a carcinogen. As a result; a growing number of local authorities are reviewing or have stopped its use altogether in favour of alternative methods of weed control.
- 1.4 This report updates members on:
 1. The current use of Glyphosate as a means of weed control in Reading.
 2. The regulatory and legal status of Glyphosate use.
 3. Benchmarking with other UK local authorities.
 4. Alternatives to Glyphosate.
 5. Financial implications
 6. Recommended Action.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Glyphosate use is continued in order to control weed growth but that its use is minimised to the level we are able to find acceptable substitutes.**
- 2.2 That alternative methods of weed control are trialled in the 2022 growing season with a view to reducing Glyphosate use and creating an integrated weed control strategy.**
- 2.3 That a report on the results of the trial are brought back to the Committee in November 2022 with a set of recommended actions.**
- 2.4 That a trial Community opt-out scheme from Glyphosate application is prepared and expressions of interest sought.**

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In February 2018 the Council declared a climate emergency, and, together with partners from all sectors (public, business, voluntary, education), has been working on a range of initiatives and policies to attempt to address this.**
- 3.2. In November 2020 the Reading Climate Change Partnerships' Reading Climate Emergency Strategy (RCES) was adopted by the Council. Within the 'Nature' theme of the strategy is a wide-ranging requirement to improve the urban environment and its bio-diversity.**
- 3.3 Earlier in the year, the Council consulted on the Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan is focused on promoting natural solutions to climate challenges, such as improving habitats to help wildlife and people adapt to the impacts of climate change. It sets out priority objectives and actions for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within Reading one of which is the reduction in the use of Glyphosate.**
- 3.4 The use of Glyphosate is currently legal in the UK and is an approved active substance on the EU pesticides database until 15th December 2022. It is not clear whether further approval for its use as an herbicide will be granted or whether the UK will be subject to EU law in 2022.**

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The current use of Glyphosate and the need for weed control.

- 4.1.1 Weed control is an important element of the maintenance of the public realm for the following reasons:**
 - weed growth causes damage to infrastructure, exploiting joints or areas of damage in particular, channels, kerblines, and pot holes resulting in higher maintenance and resurfacing costs.
 - Lack of, or poor weed control creates a perception of neglect and environmental degradation in the built environment.

- Uncontrolled weed growth generates complaints from residents.
 - It is also essential in the control of notifiable invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed which cause structural damage if not treated.
- 4.1.2 The total area of the Borough is just over 4000 Ha with 400 km of roads and a further 1100 km of footpaths and estate alleyways together with associated parking areas, drying areas etc. (but excluding private access alleyways). The grass verges and housing estate grassed areas have a total of 125 km of margins, approximately 10,000 trees, and a large number of miscellaneous obstructions. Glyphosate is currently used to control weed growth on the majority of these land types including in public parks.
- 4.1.3 Application is carried out on the basis of applying the minimum amount of Glyphosate required to effect control. Application is weather dependant and as such is usually carried out between March and October when temperatures are high enough for active weed growth. Glyphosate will kill all plants it touches in sufficient volume and as such, application is controlled to prevent damage to non-target plants by use of a controlled droplet application. Application is carried out under the requirements of the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.
- 4.1.4 Applications to the highway are carried out from quad bikes which provide the optimum coverage whilst being able to access restricted areas such as footways on terraced streets. As part of the spraying process a 150 mm (max) ‘mowing’ margin is created around all obstructions on grassed areas such as trees, bollards, utility apparatus, lamp columns and sign poles etc. These mowing margins are designed to protect vulnerable items from damage by the grass cutting machines and help speed up the grass cutting service.
- 4.1.5 The frequency of application varies in different situations. There are currently 4 applications per annum to all highway areas and in other areas this varies from 2 to 4 applications a year. The herbicide is diluted from a concentrated form and applied using a controlled droplet technique which reduces spray drift and helps adhesion to leaves. The combined amount of Glyphosate used in routine weed sprays and ad-hoc treatments per year is 63kg in 525l of controlled droplet carrier solution. The estimated cost of the application to all land types of Glyphosate is £60k pa.
- 4.1.6 As detailed in the report to the committee in November 2020 rewilding of large highway verges and some parks grass areas has now been established to increase biodiversity through more diverse habitats following a trial in 2020. Whilst the Council is committed to expanding rewilded areas, there remains a need to control weed species in certain areas by the use of herbicides or suitable alternatives.

4.2 The regulatory and legal status of Glyphosate use.

- 4.2.1 In March 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) report re-evaluated the herbicide Glyphosate, as classification group 2A, being “probably carcinogenic to humans” (WHO, 2015). The evidence in humans came mostly from studies carried out on agricultural workers (Hortweek, 2015). However, a subsequent peer-review of the IARC assessment in September 2016 concluded that Glyphosate is “unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans”

(Williams, et al., 2016). Other national and international organisations such as Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, FAO, and US environmental Protection Agency, EPA, have following the IARC report re-evaluated glyphosate status and found it unlikely to be carcinogenic (Appelby, 2016).

- 4.2.2 Prior to EU re-licensing of Glyphosate in July 2016, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) also reviewed Glyphosate's toxicological profile finding it "unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans" (EFSA, 2015). The licence was renewed for 18 months awaiting European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) evaluation. In March 2017 ECHA's Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) "concluded that the available scientific evidence did not meet the criteria to classify Glyphosate as a carcinogen, as a mutagen or as toxic for reproduction" (ECHA, 2017).
- 4.2.3 The use of Glyphosate is currently legal in the UK and it is an approved active substance on the EU pesticides database until 15th December 2022. It is not clear whether further approval for its use as a herbicide will be granted or whether the UK will be subject to EU law in 2022. Local Authorities cannot be criminally prosecuted for using this product, but they must abide by the restrictions placed on them (storage, risk assessment etc.) by the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.
- 4.2.4 Recent United States court rulings against Monsanto, the manufacturer of the world's leading Glyphosate based herbicides, Roundup, has led to the awarding of millions of dollars of compensation to plaintiffs who claim to have contracted cancer as a result of prolonged use of Glyphosate based products. There are a further 18,400 lawsuits proceeding through the US courts and this has led many users to reconsider the safety of Glyphosate and the possibility of court cases against them. These concerns have led to a number of UK local authorities joining a growing group of organisations and countries which have banned the use of Glyphosate and Glyphosate based products.
- 4.2.5 Since the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) risk analysis dictating glyphosate as not carcinogenic, the debate between industry and campaigners is still ongoing. For example, the Crop Protection Association states the following: "Glyphosate is, and always has been safe. This ruling is another reminder this debate has never really been about safety, it has been hijacked and politicised to force a wider debate on modern agriculture. It's right that we're having that debate, but it's wrong to use health scares to get there." (Appleby, 2017). ...and one of the campaign organisations, Greenpeace, states the following: "ECHA has gone to great lengths to sweep all evidence that glyphosate can cause cancer under the carpet. The data vastly exceeds what's legally necessary for the EU to ban glyphosate, but ECHA has looked the other way" (Neslen, 2017).
- 4.2.6 There are opposing camps in relation to the safe use of Glyphosate: those who see it as a cheap effective, readily available herbicide essential to grounds maintenance services and global agriculture and those who see it as a potentially dangerous, carcinogenic substance whose use should be banned.

It can be difficult for the policy makers to decide a course of action with this divergence of views. However, the legal requirement for weed control on

public areas, public perception and protection does require weed control to be carried out.

Whilst Glyphosate currently remains an approved pesticide in the EU, in light of the successful prosecutions around the world and the growing concerns about Glyphosate it is prudent to consider the scale of Glyphosate use, the likely risks arising from its use, the potential to limit the reliance on the use of Glyphosate products and the ability to find a suitable alternative product to prepare for the future.

Local authorities should also consider the possibility that future civil claims could be made against them by persons exposed to Glyphosate based herbicides.

4.3 Benchmarking with other UK local authorities.

A number of Local Authorities have banned the use of Glyphosate based products and accepted the increased revenue costs associated with the use of alternatives.

Bristol - Recognised the concerns about Glyphosate use and instigated a trial of alternative weed control methods in relation to public perception and efficacy of alternative control measures.

London Borough of Hammersmith and Chelsea have banned Glyphosate use in public areas. It was the first council in London to halt the use of potentially harmful sprays in parks and open spaces. Spraying of Glyphosate stopped in June 2016 and moved to a hot water and manual removal based system. Reasons for introducing non-chemical spraying was to create a bio diversity as well as protecting London's habitat against any long-term chemical effect containing glyphosate.

Croydon, Lewes, Trafford, Glastonbury, Vale of Glamorgan and Wadebridge have banned the use of Glyphosate in public areas. Lewisham is trialling Foamstream which is a herbicide free system which uses heat and a biodegradable foam to kill weeds, in its parks in response for calls to ban Glyphosate use.

Hampshire County Council is looking into alternatives, as have Wirral and Richmond who have recently commenced trials of alternative solutions. Glastonbury has moved to the Foamstream system for removing weeds in its open spaces.

4.4 Alternatives to Glyphosate.

There are a number of alternatives to the use of synthetic herbicides such as Glyphosate. They are listed below and more details and their pro's and con's are shown in Appendix 1. Methods such as these have been trialled or are currently used by other Local Authorities used but they are all more expensive than Glyphosate.

- Thermal: (Flame, hot water, steam, hot water and steam)
- Acetic acid, or vinegar
- Fatty acids - Pelargonic acid

- Essential oils
- Manual - hand and machine removal of weeds
- Flazasulphuron

4.5 Financial implications.

The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) advise that use of alternatives to Glyphosate will add to revenue costs for weed control. Bristol Waste Company, who carry out weed treatment in Bristol, estimated that one Glyphosate treatment cost £60k, whilst Acetic Acid cost £216k and Hot Foam cost £391k per treatment.

Table 1 below shows the existing highways and non-highways weed control budgets.

	Cost application per (000's)	No of applications/year	Annual budget (000's)
Highways Herbicide treatment	£10	4	£40
Non Highways treatments	£5	4	£20
Current spend pa			£60

Table 1

	Estimated Cost per application (000's)	Estimated No of applications/year	Potential Annual budget (000's)
Thermal treatment	£30	3-6	£90 - £180
Manual treatment	£65	4	£260

Table 2

Table 2 shows the potential cost of 2 alternative treatments as a means of showing the potential budget growth required if non-herbicide treatments are used. This is provided only as a means of indicating the scale of revenue investment required. Final costings will not be available until trials have been carried out but it is clear that alternative methods will have a significant future revenue implication.

4.6. Recommended Action

Local Authorities should take the opportunity, whilst the use of Glyphosate remains lawful, to identify the most cost-effective solution for an integrated weed control strategy using potential alternative products and approaches to ensure the financial implications of not using Glyphosate can be appropriately managed if possible. A trial of these alternatives was planned for the 2020 growing season but the Covid 19 pandemic forced its postponement. The pandemic also halted forward action of a full-scale trial this year in 2021. It is proposed to review whether the proposed methodology is still appropriate or whether an alternative would be more effective.

4.6.1 That Glyphosate is used for the next growing season.

- 4.6.2 The Council commits to a series of weed control trials in the 2022 growing season with the aim of identifying the most effective alternative methodology and approach to Glyphosate use and the potential cost implications associated with an integrated weed control strategy for the different areas and land types managed by the Council.

The trials should include the use of:

1. Hot water and steam and manual removal.
2. Manual removal only.
3. Acetic acid spray.
4. Fatty acid (Pelargonic Acid) spray.
5. Foamstream.

The trial areas will be chosen to cover a range of street types and Parks. The areas treated with Glyphosate as part of the regular treatment cycle will form the control. The trials will be used to measure the following:

- How effective are the proposed alternatives compared to glyphosate as an herbicide?
- How is the public responding to visual changes in parks and streets?
- What are the costs of alternative weed control?
- Will further reduction on herbicide application effect infrastructure?
- How and where can herbicide use be reduced without damage to infrastructure or increasing public concern?
- When can a date be identified for stopping the use of Glyphosate for weed control other than for invasive weeds species such as Japanese Knotweed in Reading?

A detailed trial proposal will be brought to the November meeting and the trial results will be presented in late 2022.

4.7 Alternatives being used in Parks

The Parks and Open Spaces department have reduced the amount of Glyphosate used in Parks gradually over a number of years and have recently carried out weed control under fences around Children's Play Grounds using gas powered flame guns. The flames killed the top growth and the sites are being monitored to determine the frequency of re-treatment. It is estimated that the cost of gas would be £60-100 per day and the carbon footprint of such an operation needs to be assessed.

4.8 Community volunteers - Manchester Community Opt-out.

Manchester City Council created this initiative in response to a rising number of complaints from residents who were concerned about the potential adverse health effects of Glyphosate, which is used as the primary means of weed control in the city. The scheme operates as follows:

- Streets or areas can opt-out of the highways Glyphosate spray regime on the understanding that residents control weeds on the highway.
- The street cleansing service continues as normal.
- The Council retains the right to clear weeds should they become an issue.

- If issues or complaints are received Manchester sends a Highways inspector to check the site and decide on a course of action.
- Manchester carry out an annual inspection using Highways inspectors and then residents who have opted out are contacted to see if they want to continue. If there is no contact they remain opted -in which means weeds are left uncleared by the Council. This strategy has meant that only committed groups opt-out.

Officers from Manchester report that:

- they have not received any formal complaints in 3 years
- generally groups take responsibility for their area and everyone in the group is aware what they have taken on.
- Committed groups are doing a better job than the chemical would.
- lots of opt outs are just small areas outside a house etc. which are not onerous and are easily maintained.
- If overgrowth happens manual methods of removal are employed rather than using Glyphosate.

It is recommended that a proposal to introduce a similar scheme on a trial basis in a limited number of areas. This will allow an estimate of the resource required to run and administer the scheme and its long term viability before a decision is made to roll out the scheme boroughwide.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The proposals contained in this report are in line with the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Promoting health, education, wellbeing and culture
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

5.2 In addition, the Council has adopted a Strategic Framework (March 2020) which sets out the Council's key priorities including:

- To keep social care services running for the children and adults who need them;
- To support vulnerable and isolated people during the crisis;
- To support business and the economy, which will secure the long-term recovery of Reading.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Once the trial area is agreed information will be distributed to all properties informing them of the intended action and how to feed back their views.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The Council has reviewed the scope of the project as outlined within this report and considers that the proposals have no direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Application of herbicides is carried out under the requirements of the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Please see section 5 above.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The reduction in use of synthetic herbicides and pesticides will reduce the possibility of run-off and pollution of ground water and water courses.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	HOUSEHOLD WASTE - UPDATE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KERBSIDE FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE AND THE CHANGE TO 140L RESIDUAL WASTE BINS.		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	ADELE BARNETT-WARD	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	ANDREW EDWARDS	TEL:	0118 937 3468
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Andrew.edwards@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide an update on the main roll out of the kerbside food waste collection service and the change to 140 litre residual waste bins.
- 1.2 To report that the recycling rate for April in Reading was 52% compared to 32% in April 2020.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the progress to date of Phase 1 of the project is noted.
- 2.2 That the proposed Phase 2 roll out timetable is noted.
- 2.3 That a further update, including the results of the Phase 2 roll out is brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The EU Waste Framework Directive sets a recycling and re-use target of 50% for waste materials from households to be achieved by 2020. This target has become UK law and it is anticipated that it will remain in place post-Brexit. The Government has committed to achieving 65% recycling and re-use of municipal waste by 2035.
- 3.2 Policy Committee (26th September 2019) received a report setting out a way forward for the Household Waste service to achieve the ambition to increase recycling and reduce the cost of waste. The Committee resolved to introduce a combined new waste service of alternate weekly collections with 140l residual bins and a weekly food waste collection. The original timetable, agreed by Policy Committee, (as shown in Section 4.1) set out a go live date for a full roll out in October 2020 following an early adopter phase in June 2020.
- 3.3 The Covid 19 outbreak in March 2020 and the first lockdown resulted in staff absences of up to 20%, the redeployment of staff to other essential operations such as food parcel delivery and the temporary suspension of some waste services in line with the waste service continuity plan and Government guidance: Guidance on prioritising waste collection services during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic - GOV.UK .
- 3.4 This uncertainty about staffing levels, the availability of waste bin delivery contractors and raw materials resulted in a review of the practicality of delivering the project as originally planned, which concluded that a delay was necessary to make the roll out a success. This review was presented to Policy Committee in July 2020 and it was resolved that the early adopter phase of the project should go ahead from October 1st, 2020 with the main roll out in February 2021 rather than being delayed for up to 12 months.
- 3.5 The 11.5% increase in recycling rate from the then prevailing 34% to 45% was predicted to achieve an estimated annual saving of £342k originally profiled, £171k in 2020/21 and the remainder in 2021/22. This was based on a successful early adopters' pilot in June and the full roll out of the service from October 2020. This saving includes the up-front capital costs of £1.5m to purchase new smaller 140 litre bins and the additional revenue costs of the new drivers and loading staff required to support the programme. The delay to the roll out caused by the Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in the re-profiling of this saving with £142k being achieved in 20/21 and the remainder of £342k in 21/22. This reprofiled saving has been factored into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 21/22.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Project Timetable

The original, pre-pandemic and revised project timetables are shown below:

- Early adopter areas service (3,000 properties) to begin 1st July 2020.
- Phase 1 service to 59,000 properties to begin 5th October 2020.
- Phase 2 service to 14,000 high- and low-rise flats to begin in July 2021.

Revised project timetable:

- Early adopter areas service (3,000 properties) began on 1st October 2020. Complete.
- Phase 1 service to 59,000 properties began on 1st February 2021. Complete.
- Phase 2 service to 14,000 high- and low-rise flats to be split into 2 further phases. Phase 2a between July and December 2021. Phase 2b starts in June 2022 until completion. See section 4.7 for further details.

4.2 Governance

A Member Task and Finish cross party working group was established to ensure appropriate engagement throughout the process and to enable clear oversight and input to the early adopters' phase and the subsequent main roll out programme. The Group first met in October 2019 and has met regularly until April 2021 when Phase 1 completed. Meetings with Ward Members will be arranged as necessary during Phase 2 and the Task and Finish Group will reconvene later in 2021 for review purposes.

4.3 Communications

The project has been supported by a comprehensive communications campaign under the banner 'Let's Wise Up to Waste'. Consultation was carried out via a citizen's panel in May 2020 and a survey of early adopters in December 2020 informed the main roll out.

The service changes have been publicised via a broad range of media including the residents' newsletter, Council website, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and YouTube), direct residents' e-mails, digital media and direct mailing of leaflets and letters, on-bus screens, the new collection calendar as well as 59,000 leaflets in food waste bins, flyers and bin hangers. Content and support have also been provided by the Re3 Communications and Marketing Officer, throughout.

A series of short 'how to' food waste videos were produced as well as a food waste explanatory animation and a short film which featured an early adopter who became an advocate for the scheme.

Further information about the communications campaign can be found in Appendix 1.

Officers will be working on an ongoing communications campaign to promote food waste collection in the coming months, as well as promoting the Love Food Hate Waste campaign.

A communications plan, which is specific to the high-rise flats included in the Phase 2 food waste roll-out, is currently being developed and will use the same type of channels as that used for Phase 1.

4.4 Early Adopters

As part of the preparation for the roll out of the food waste and 140l bin project it was felt prudent to establish the new service in five early adopter areas with the following aims:

- Increase the understanding and aims of the project
- To reduce the levels of contamination that may occur
- Understand any barriers that may prevent participation in the project
- Inform on the most effective communication channels in time for the main roll out

Four of the geographical areas selected for the roll out were chosen as they contained a cross section of the different demographic areas in Reading and included various types of residential properties where waste collection is challenging and recycling contamination levels are higher. The types of properties included:

- Low Level flats
- Student Accommodation
- Houses of Multiple Occupancy
- Homes which had service-related issues i.e. presentation of bins in back alleys or communal car parks, etc.

A comparator area, comprised mainly of residential properties occupied by single households which were regarded as more straight forward to collect from, was also included to act as a control.

The early adopter initiative which encompassed over 3,000 households ran for 17 weeks and provided useful operational and communications insights which helped inform the main roll out of the project in February 2021.

The tonnage of food waste collected from the early adopter properties averaged 2.31 kg/household/week and exceeded the initial target set of 1kg/hh/wk. and average participation rates of 78% were achieved.

4.5 Main Roll Out

4.5.1 Food Waste

As planned, 56,000 food waste bins, caddies, liners and leaflets were delivered between 4th and 29th January and a mop-up service was provided to deliver any bins which had been inadvertently missed. The five new food waste collection rounds began on Monday 1st February as planned and since then the rounds have continued to successfully bed in as crews and residents become familiar with the new service.

Table 1 below shows the tonnages of food waste collected per week during the first 4 months of collections from 59,000 properties (3,000 Early Adopter & 56,000 Main Roll Out).

Month	Food waste collected (tonnes)	Food waste collected per household per week (kg/hh/wk)	Recycling rate
February	554	2.34	46%
March	692	2.93	53%
April	686	2.90	52%
May	620	2.62	TBA
Total	2,552	Average 2.70	

Table 1

Appendix 2 gives more details of the food waste collections.

As shown in Table 1 on average 2.70 kg of food waste was collected per household per week for the first 4 months of the new service compared to the target of 1.4kg/hh/wk. Tonnages are far higher than predicted. Other Authorities have seen a gradual reduction as residents recognise the need to reduce the amount of food they discard. However, the service is confident that the revised food waste collection target of 1.4kg/hh/wk, used to support revised savings targets as part of the agreed Medium-Term Financial Strategy, will be achievable going forward. Covid 19 related lockdowns and disruption to working patterns may have influenced the tonnages but it is an encouraging start to the new service which seems to be valued by residents. Data is still being collated but initial estimates put the current participation rate for food waste at around 80% and a further communications plan will be put in place to engage with those who do not currently use the food waste service as well as how to reduce food waste.

The recycling rate for April was 52% compared to 46% in February. This means that the Council has achieved the 2020 target of 50% recycling in Q1 of 2021 and exceeded the project target of 44% set in the 26th September 2019 Policy Committee report. This compares to a third quarter 2020/21 recycling rate of 33%.

One of the main aims of the new service was to reduce the environmental impact of food waste by removing it from landfill. Rotting food produces the harmful greenhouse gas methane, which is 84 times more polluting than CO₂. In the first 4 months of the new service 2,552 tonnes of food were diverted from landfill to an anaerobic digester which generates electricity and agricultural fertiliser. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to a Carbon Neutral Reading by 2030, the wider climate change agenda and is a direct, tangible response to the Climate Emergency declaration of 2019.

4.5.2 Round changes - Domestic and Recycling Waste

A notable feature of the extended lockdown periods has been an increase in the volumes of recyclable materials, particularly cardboard being presented by residents at the kerbside. This is due to the increase in home working, on-line shopping and home deliveries and is likely to continue until the lockdowns are lifted in June. Waste patterns will continue to change as the likely increase in home working becomes established, and the rounds will be continually monitored and adjustments made whilst avoiding collection day changes for residents.

The swap out of the 240l residual waste bins for the new 140l bins began as scheduled on the 1st February and was completed within the planned 10-week timetable. The Service has received 2474 requests for additional waste capacity since 1st February, of which 1686 were approved and have agreed to issue 1727 additional recycling bins in accordance with the Council's Waste Collection Service Standard policy.

In general, the swap out and replacement of residual bins has gone according to plan however, there have been some minor issues with bins being removed ahead of time before the replacement has been delivered as well as with 240l bins being removed when they should have been left, for example for clinical waste reasons. The waste operations team is monitoring and resolving issues quickly as they arise and some disruption was inevitable in a project of this size and complexity.

The introduction of food waste collections and the change to 140l bins is a fundamental change to the waste collection service and accordingly an increase in the number of complaints and service enquiries was anticipated. The table below shows the number of complaints received from January to May 2021 and Table 3 gives a comparison to numbers received prior to the introduction of the new service.

Whilst the numbers were expected to rise; it is recognised that the number of repeat contacts received was too high and that additional resource was required to deal with this increased volume. This learning will be applied to the Phase 2 roll-out and extra resources will be available to deal with the complaints in a timely manner.

Month	January	February	March	April	May
Themes					
Communications	5	5	9	17	4
Quality of Service	1	1	6	9	5
Staff Conduct	2	8	4	8	10
Reduced bin size	1	1	3	4	3
Missed collection	5	37	38	34	26
Extra Capacity appeal	1	2	7	13	4
Assisted collection	2	1	7	1	1

issue					
FPN issue	1	0	0	1	0
Calendar/pay issue	0	3	0	1	0
Bin delivery issue	0	7	12	10	12
Total Number of complaints	18	65	86	98	65

Table 2

Monthly complaints pre-Early adopters food waste main roll out (the old service).

Month	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020
Complaints	3	23	9	22

Table 3

4.6 The Recycling and Enforcement Team

The team's focus shifted for the duration of the main roll out away from their routine enforcement work to dealing with requests for additional waste capacity, additional recycling bins and ensuring residents have food waste bins, caddies and liners. Now the roll out is complete and the service issues resolved the team will continue to:

- Contact and support residents who are struggling to put the right material in the right bin by card, letter and phone and liaising with landlords and managing agents.
- Environmental enforcement including deployment of mobile CCTV cameras
- Monitor the presentation of food waste bins and 140l bins.
- Resume working with the Re3 partnership to help residents reduce contamination in collected recycling.
- Promote the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign to reduce the mount of food waste being recycled.

Social distancing advice has meant that the team has not been able to carry out face to face interactions with customers in the normal way and have been using alternative contact methods such as e mail, Teams, Zoom and phone to make contact. However, as the restrictions lift the team will return to more normal working methods whilst still observing government guidance.

4.7 Phase 2 timetable.

The final phase of the project is to roll out the introduction of a food waste collection service to the remaining 14,000 households living in high and low-rise flats in the borough.

Individual internal caddies and caddy liners will still be provided to each household, however, rather than an external caddy per household, the required number of 240 litre communal food waste bins will be provided instead in the bin storage areas. Each of the block of flats will have the

capacity needed for communal residual and recycling waste bins reassessed during this roll out.

The communication plan used in the earlier phase will be adapted to reflect the changes in the roll out to the residents of the high and low-rise flats. The Recycling & Enforcement officers will be utilised to support closely the residents throughout the roll out phase.

Phase 2 will be split into 2 further phases:

Phase 2a between July and December 2021.

Phase 2b starts in June 2022 and will run until completion.

This timetable has been designed after considering the lessons learnt during the early adopter and main roll out phases of the service changes. The new service, whilst running well, is still being consolidated by the waste team and this timetable gives space for this to be completed whilst beginning the Phase 2 roll out. The gap between Phases 2 a and b has been included to allow the team to review the Phase 2a roll out methodology, settle in the Phase 2 a roll out and make changes for Phase 2b if necessary.

The gap between Phase 2a and 2b rollouts also acknowledges the increased challenges posed in collecting food waste from low and high rise flats and this will allow Officers time to focus on providing additional support in these areas and enhanced communications to ensure this phase of the roll out is successful.

- 4.8 There have been a number of learning outcomes from the early adopter and main roll-out which will be applied in phase 2 of the project. They are primarily operational relating to control of bin delivery crews, delivery of additional capacity and access to bin stores. However, there are improvements needed in complaint handling and turn-around times, the management of staff resources, both manual and managerial and the targeting of specific communications for blocks of flats.

4.8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.8.1 The proposal agreed at Policy Committee in September 2019 introduced a new food waste collection service, at the same time as replacing the current 240l residual wheeled bins with smaller 140l ones. It was predicted to achieve an increase in recycling estimated from the current 34% to 45%. In addition, it would reduce the amount of waste to landfill, and achieve a net revenue saving estimated at £233k per annum (taking into account the cost of borrowing. Excluding the cost of borrowing, the savings are £171k pa in the first part year and then £342k in a full year.).
- 4.8.2 As part of the Council's capital programme for 2020/21, which was agreed by Full Council at the end of February, £1.489m of capital expenditure budget was agreed to fund the new caddies and replacement residual waste bins. Despite the delaying of the project, the majority of the planned capital

expenditure will still be incurred in financial year 2020/21 as orders have already being placed with the suppliers and production has started.

- 4.8.3 The Medium-term Financial Strategy had £171k of savings expected in 2020/21 and a further £342k in 2021/22. In 20/21 a saving of £138k was achieved against a target of £142k, due to the delay caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and that in 2021/22 the full saving of £342k will be fully delivered.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The proposals contained in this report are in line with the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Promoting health, education, wellbeing and culture
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

- 5.2 In addition, the Council has adopted a Strategic Framework (March 2020) which sets out the Council's key priorities including:

- To keep social care services running for the children and adults who need them;
- To support vulnerable and isolated people during the crisis;
- To support business and the economy, which will secure the long-term recovery of Reading.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 A full communications plan accompanied the project roll out. Customer surveys were carried out in May 2020 with the Citizens Panel and with the early adopter customers in November 2020. Consultation advice has been sought from the appropriate teams.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 The Council has reviewed the scope of the project as outlined within this report and considers that the proposals have no direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has duties under various UK and EU legislation to deliver waste collection and disposal services, principally the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the revised EU waste framework directive 2008.

Consultation advice has also been sought from the Corporate Legal team, and they have advised that there is no Statutory Duty to consult regarding the proposals.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Please see section 5 above.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The separate collection of food waste at the kerbside and its treatment by anaerobic digestion will benefit the climate by reducing the amount of methane gas (a powerful greenhouse gas) emitted from landfill sites.

- 10.2 Food waste is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions globally. Significant investment in sustainable collection and disposal is therefore vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Household Waste The Way Forward: Policy 21 April 2021

Household Waste -The Way Forward - Policy Committee report (September 2019)

Household Waste - The Way Forward (Covid 19) - Policy Committee report (July 2020)

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT BY DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021		
TITLE:	RBC APPROACH TO DELIVERING LOW CARBON HOUSING		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	DEGNS	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE PETER MOORE	TEL:	0118 937 2285 (x72285)
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING & COMMUNITIES HEAD OF CLIMATE STRATEGY	E-MAIL:	zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk peter.moore@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents a paper - “Low Carbon Homes - Key Issues and Challenges” to summarise current activity and shape the future development of Reading’s approach to ensuring that housing in Reading makes the fullest possible contribution to the objective of a ‘net zero carbon Reading by 2030’, in line with Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and the Council’s Housing Strategy. The paper summarises activity underway and proposals to reduce emissions from Reading’s Council housing stock; highlights the scale and nature of the challenges associated with meeting the ‘net zero by 2030’ target for housing; proposes development of two Low Carbon Housing Action Plans (one for RBC housing stock and one for the private sector) as part of our response to these challenges, to be brought back to HNL Committee by March 2022.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the significance of housing in delivering the ambition of a net zero carbon Reading by 2030, and the significant challenges associated with delivering this ambition set out in the paper at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Notes the need to realign priorities and resources in the short and medium term to more effectively address the challenge of housing retrofit in Reading, and the steps being taken in this regard as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. Supports the proposed development of Low Carbon Action Plans for (i) RBC housing stock and (ii) private sector housing as proposed in Appendix 1, to be brought back to HNL Committee by March 2022.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Current Position:

- 3.1.1 Reducing emissions from the housing sector has been identified as a key strategic priority in meeting both national and local 'net zero' ambitions (see section 1 of Appendix 1). Most housing in Reading does not meet the standards required to support this ambition, although RBC's own housing performs significantly better than the national average (see section 2 of Appendix 1).
- 3.1.2 Local policies are in place to ensure that new housing does not add unduly to Reading's 'carbon footprint', and RBC is leading by example with high standards in its own new housing designs (see section 3.1 of Appendix 1). However, the challenges of retrofitting Reading's existing housing stock (both RBC housing and non-RBC housing) are significant and currently beyond local means to resource (see section 3.2 of Appendix 1). Fuel poverty remains a key concern (see section 3.3 of Appendix 1), as does uncertainty around government funding streams (see section 3.4 of Appendix 1), though the economic opportunities associated with housing retrofit are significant (see section 3.5 of Appendix 1).
- 3.1.3 The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and the Council's Housing Strategy set out the high-level commitment to develop a housing retrofit programme at scale across Reading, but more detailed action plans are now needed, for both RBC housing and private sector housing, to take this forward. The scale and level of ambition within these will in part be determined by the Council's appetite for and ability to put additional resource into this area.

3.2 Options Proposed

- 3.2.1 A number of initiatives are already underway which are moving Reading in the right direction. The challenge is to increase the scale and impact of these initiatives in line with the 'net zero by 2030' ambition to develop a more comprehensive housing retrofit programme for the Borough. Development of Low Carbon Housing Action Plans for both RBC housing stock and for the private sector are therefore proposed to supplement the Council's Housing Strategy 2020-25 and provide a more detailed road map for the Council's activity in this important policy area. Funding a programme of the scale required remains the key challenge but by combining our own resources with grant funding and offset income collected under the Local Plan 'Zero Carbon Homes' policy, for which housing retrofit has been identified as a priority, we can begin to scale up existing efforts.

3.3 Other Options Considered

- 3.3.1 The Housing Strategy makes a strong commitment to the headline aims and actions set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 but does not elaborate on these, hence the need for specific action plans. The alternative would be to not produce these action plans, but this would be unlikely to provide the necessary clarity and direction for the Council's efforts to reduce emissions from housing in Reading.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 The recommendations in this report align with Corporate Plan priorities as follows:

- **Healthy Environment:** reducing emissions from housing is an essential element in delivering corporate plan commitments to a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.
- **Thriving Communities:** good quality, affordable and sustainable housing is an integral part of a thriving community, and the report illustrates how action in this area can contribute to this aim.
- **Inclusive Economy:** there are significant economic opportunities arising from the activity required to reduce emissions from the housing sector in Reading which are outlined in the report.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). The aspirations set out in the Declaration were reflected in the development of the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, and further reinforced in the Council's Housing Strategy adopted last year. There are no direct environmental and climate implications arising from the recommendations in this report, though the paper makes clear the significance of housing in terms of the contribution it makes to Reading's 'carbon footprint' and sets out some of the steps needed to address this. Development of a larger scale retrofit programme for Reading would make a significant contribution to climate goals as well as representing a significant economic opportunity.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way". The Housing Strategy and the Climate Emergency Strategy were both the subject of consultation. The outcomes of these consultations have informed this Report and would similarly inform the development of the proposed Low Carbon Housing Action Plans.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 It is not considered that the decision will have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief and therefore no Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is relevant to the decision. That said, efforts to address fuel poverty, which are described in the report, should generally have positive equalities impacts given the relationship between fuel poverty, disadvantage and some groups with protected characteristics.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report though the report highlights the significant financial implications of tackling carbon emissions from the housing sector if the Council's ambition for a 'net zero carbon Reading by 2030' is to be achieved.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- RBC Housing Strategy 2020-25
- Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25

APPENDIX 1: LOW CARBON HOUSING - KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

1. POLICY CONTEXT

Key points:

- *Housing retrofit is a central plank of the Government's strategy to deliver net zero by 2050*
- *A massive switch from fossil fuels (gas and oil) to electrical heating will be required to take advantage of increasingly low carbon grid energy*
- *Domestic energy efficiency (to reduce energy demand) must go hand in hand with renewable electricity (to decarbonise heating)*
- *The resources being made available to achieve this nationally and locally, whilst significant, do not yet align with the net zero ambition*
- *Domestic energy use accounts for c.40% of Reading's carbon footprint*
- *The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy commits to the goal of a 'net zero Reading by 2030 and identifies (i) housing retrofit and (iii) building new homes to zero carbon standards as key priorities*
- *RBC's Housing Strategy aligns with the Climate Emergency Strategy and development of Low Carbon Housing Action Plans for RBC housing stock and for private sector stock are now proposed to take forward these aspirations*

1.1 National policy context

In June 2019, Parliament enshrined in law a target committing the UK to reduce emissions by at least 100% below 1990 levels in 2050. This was recently augmented by a new target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035. The body established to advise the Government on meeting these targets, the Climate Change Committee (CCC), has said that to meet them, the UK's housing stock needs to be nearly completely decarbonised by 2050 via the process commonly known as retrofit - a combination of energy efficiency measures to reduce energy demand, and renewable energy technologies to decarbonise the remaining energy which is used.

The CCC has pointed out that low-carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps cannot be deployed cost-effectively unless buildings are properly insulated and repeatedly advised that energy efficiency needs to be addressed immediately if the UK is to meet its statutory Carbon Budgets.

The energy performance of buildings is currently assessed by an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with buildings graded on a scale of 'A' (most efficient) to 'G' (least efficient), based on two measures: a fuel cost-based energy performance rating and a rating relating to CO₂ emissions. To work towards net zero by 2050, the CCC recommended that all buildings achieve EPC 'C' over the next 10 to 15 years. The latest Government data has indicated that 16 million homes in England (two thirds of the total) and nearly 19 million homes across the UK, have EPC ratings of 'D' or worse.

The Government's ambitions on energy efficiency therefore tend to be framed in terms of the aspiration for homes in England to achieve EPC Band 'C' by 2035 as a stepping stone towards the net zero by 2050 target. Many commentators, however, have argued this will be insufficiently ambitious, and sector experts have pointed out the strategic importance of housing retrofit in that, unlike net zero aspirations in

other policy areas like aviation, it is achievable with existing technologies. Delivery in this sector would therefore reduce the risk to the overall target from failure to do so in other sectors, and investment in it therefore represents a ‘safer bet’.

Housing retrofit, and the role of local authorities in supporting its delivery, is, as such, already a high priority in meeting the Government’s net zero ambitions and is likely to become more so as the challenges of meeting this target in other policy areas become more apparent. At the same time, the significant costs of retrofitting the nation’s ageing housing stock remain a major challenge, particularly in the light of the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst Government has announced several significant funding streams to support housing retrofit, it is widely accepted that these are not yet on a scale compatible with the net zero ambition.

1.2 Local policy context

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in February 2019, the Council contributed to the development of the Reading Climate Change Partnership’s Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and Policy Committee endorsed the Strategy at its meeting in November 2020. The Strategy explained that Reading produces over 500 kilo-tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually with around 40% of this arising from domestic sources (heating, lighting and appliances). The Borough’s emissions fell by about 46% between 2005 and 2018 (the latest year for which data is available), with the decarbonisation of grid electricity being a major factor in this.

The carbon footprint of a typical household is primarily derived from gas and electricity. Domestic gas has increased in proportion from 19% of Reading’s carbon footprint in 2005 to 28% in 2018. Domestic electricity, by contrast has reduced in proportion to the town’s carbon footprint from 16% to 12% in the same period. The reason for this is that electricity has become ‘greener’ due to less fossil fuel being used in the national generation mix. Gas on the other hand is a largely unchanged fossil fuel and whilst there has been a reduction in its use and a small amount of biomethane has been added, it is not getting appreciably cleaner.

The Climate Emergency Strategy therefore defined the following as a key priority on the pathway to net zero:

‘Housing (retrofitting and building new homes and other buildings to low/zero carbon standards): we need to reduce energy use in domestic properties via ‘deep retrofit’ of existing property and ensure that new property is constructed to net zero standards’ (Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, November 2020, p14).

The Strategy elaborates on this with a number of high levels actions in which RBC is identified as a delivery partner as follows:

- Energy reduction through a housing retrofit programme for Reading
- Changing behaviours that save energy
- Reducing fuel poverty
- Publish new housing strategy to incorporate retrofit

This last action was completed in 2020 when the new Housing Strategy was completed, reinforcing RBC’s commitment to Climate Strategy objectives in this area. The complexity of the issues is such though that more detailed Low Carbon

Housing Action Plans (for RBC housing stock and for the private sector) are now considered necessary to map out a detailed way forward.

2. ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF HOUSING STOCK IN READING

Key points:

- *The national average energy efficiency rating for housing is Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating 65 (out of 100) equivalent to EPC band 'D'*
- *The national average SAP rating for social housing is 69*
- *RBC's own housing stock performs significantly better than the national average with an average SAP rating of 74 (equivalent to EPC band 'C')*

2.1 Introduction

There are over 70,000 houses in Reading¹ with about 55% of these in owner-occupation, 26% privately rented, 6% social rented housing and 3% other.

2.2 Energy efficiency in private sector housing in Reading

Much of Reading's housing stock is ageing and requires significant investment to reach zero carbon standards. EPC data for Reading Borough shows that there are a large number of EPC 'D' rated properties (39%) and around 19% of properties are 'E' or below.



The Housing Act 2004 states that 'a local authority must keep the housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them.' Reading Borough Council is in the process of completing an updated Private Sector Stock Condition Survey to fulfil this obligation and, once published, this will enable the Council and wider partners to better understand the energy efficiency rating of dwellings in the Borough to inform the proposed Low Carbon Housing Action Plans referred to in 1.2 above and other interventions.

2.3 Energy efficiency in RBC Housing

¹ Berkshire Observatory, 2020

RBC's housing stock (HRA stock plus PFI stock and HfR properties) amounts to some 7,056 properties. Substantial capital investment has been undertaken over recent years to improve the energy efficiency of RBC housing with the installation of 'A' rated boilers, improved loft insulation, draught proofing, replacement windows and various solutions for improving wall insulation. As a result of this investment, RBC's current stock has an average SAP rating of 74 (better than the national averages of 65 for all housing, and 69 for social housing) which equates to EPC band 'C' (compared to a national average of band 'D').

3. KEY ISSUES IN ACHIEVING NET ZERO FROM THE HOUSING SECTOR

There are five related key issues in meeting the net zero ambition in the context of housing policy:

- Building new housing to net zero standards (RBC housing and private housing)
- Retro-fitting existing housing to net zero standards (RBC housing and private housing)
- Tackling fuel poverty and ensuring that the transition to net zero is achieved without disproportionate costs falling on those least able to bear them
- Availability of Government funding
- The economic imperative and opportunities associated with housing retrofit

These are discussed in more detail below.

3.1 Building new housing to net zero standards

Key points:

- *There are plans to build c.7,000 new homes in Reading over the next decade - the carbon impact of these should be limited as long as Local Plan policies on Zero Carbon Homes are applied rigorously*
- *New RBC housing stock is already being constructed to Passivhaus principles in line with the net zero ambition, setting an example for others to follow*

The planning policy context for Zero Carbon Homes in Reading

The Reading Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, includes a pioneering 'Zero Carbon Homes' policy which creates a strong platform to ensure that new housing in Reading aligns with the 'net zero by 2030' objective. This policy requires that all major developments of greater than 10 dwellings meet a 'zero carbon' standard defined as a minimum requirement of 35% below the regulated standard (Part L of the nationally-determined Building Regulations). Where this standard cannot be met via on-site measures, the policy provides for a payment to be made at a rate of £60 per tonne per year for a lifetime of 30 years, to be used to generate carbon savings elsewhere, thus 'offsetting' the residual emissions of the development.

The Council has previously agreed that the priority for allocation of any funding raised under the carbon offset policy should be housing retrofit. It will be important for a retrofit programme not to depend entirely on this income stream, however, as (i) it is likely to decrease over time as developers respond to the signal it sends to deliver zero carbon homes on-site (ii) in the event that national standards are raised to the level which now apply in Reading, the offset mechanism will be undermined and no longer necessary, at which point the income stream could disappear.

However, the income could be pivotal over the next few years, during which time it is expected to peak, in adding scale to Borough-wide retrofit efforts.

It is too early to judge how effective the Zero Carbon Homes policy will be in practice, but it does mean Reading is well placed to insist on high standards in all new housing development which align with the Council's net zero ambitions, as long as we are successful in ensuring compliance with the policy and are supported by, for example, the Planning Inspectorate, should cases be taken to appeal.

RBC commitment to low carbon design in its own housing stock

RBC has set an excellent example for new housing in the Borough by adopting high standards in its own developments, exemplified by the principles adopted for the Wensley Road development in Coley, namely:

- All dwellings designed to Passivhaus standards, achieving space heating consumption of less than 15 kWh/m²/a (a key requirement for Passivhaus design)
- A communal wet distribution heating network for space heating and hot water provision to dwellings, supplied from a central air source heat pump (ASHP);
- Individual ASHPs serving space heating and hot water to each townhouse;
- Solar PV panels on house and apartment block rooftops for renewable electricity;
- The intention to achieve the zero-carbon homes policy via on-site measures rather than relying on carbon offsetting payments to reduce emissions to zero.

The Council has also acknowledged that refurbishment rather than replacement of existing, good quality homes provides an opportunity to make vast savings in terms of embodied carbon of new construction materials. This is particularly true for a large, well-constructed residential development such as the existing homes in Wensley Road, where it is viable to improve the buildings fabric to meet and exceed modern standards. The proposed refurbishment of the existing homes (currently subject to planning approval) is intended to address resource efficiency, environmental protection and to facilitate and encourage sustainable behaviours for residents. The key elements can be summarised as:

- A fabric first approach to the building envelope, aspiring to achieve Enerphit standards for thermal performance, combined with the installation of Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems to improve internal air quality and ventilation
- Supporting active travel through increased provision of safe, secure and easily accessible cycle storage, combined with improved connections to the green travel network provided as part of Phase 1 works
- Encouraging and supporting residents to improve recycling habits by providing new user-friendly refuse, recycling and food waste facilities
- Providing enhanced external landscape with increased biodiversity value, creating a key link with existing rich natural habitats in the surrounding area
- Making effective use of resources by re-using materials on-site where possible, reducing waste and specifying materials with low embodied carbon, minimising waste and reducing material transportation
- An holistic approach to improving the environment for existing residents leading to a positive impact on mental health and personal wellbeing.

If all housing developers were to follow the Council's example, the challenges associated with ensuring that new housing does not add to emissions from the housing sector would be greatly reduced.

3.2 Retro-fitting existing housing to net zero standards

Key points:

- *Modelling suggests that the majority of Reading's houses would need to be brought up to an EPC 'B' rating by 2030 to align with 'net zero' ambition.*
- *Reading has over 70,000 houses, many of them ageing and in need of retrofit. The cost of this will vary but has been estimated at an average cost of £30,000 per house, equating to c£2 billion for the Borough as a whole*
- *RBC can be proud of its record of investment and innovation in domestic energy efficiency and retrofit in its own housing stock, with numerous projects now taking this forward*
- *The cost of further improving RBC's own housing stock to net zero standards would, however, be very significant - estimated at an additional £21m per year to 2030 on top of the existing total annual maintenance budget of £16m*
- *In addition to cost, significant logistical and technical challenges need to be overcome to retrofit RBC housing at the scale required.*

While it is vitally important that zero carbon homes policies are applied to new development, doing so in reality only takes the 'sting' out of growth in emissions which would otherwise occur from the housing sector as a whole. The great majority of emissions from the housing sector will continue to arise from the existing homes in Reading, most of which are in need of some form of retrofit to bring them up to 'net zero' standards. This section describes the key issues facing both RBC housing and non-RBC housing in this context.

Non-RBC housing

Many houses in Reading have already installed basic energy efficiency measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, but a large number of properties are Victorian and built before the building standards required cavity walls. These properties are regarded as 'hard to treat' requiring solid wall insulation, either externally or internally. The historic character of the area also becomes a major consideration as there is a risk of substantially changing the character of properties that are externally clad with insulation. There are many other challenges associated with historic properties such as the air handling and windows and doors. For this reason, care is required in the approach taken.

Other post-war housing includes construction types which are not easily insulated, and many properties will require bespoke wall insulation solutions which would be expensive to install, meaning that the payback would be over a long period making it unattractive to home owners without subsidy. Housing built in the 1960s onwards will typically have cavity wall insulation and many of these will have already been filled - but finding those that are not and also where loft insulation top ups are required remains a priority. The addition of further low carbon heating and renewable technologies could bring this type of property to a reasonably high level of efficiency. Modern homes tend to have an EPC of 'B' and may benefit from renewable energy installations and in many cases may move to heat pump technologies from gas.

In order to achieve the aim of net zero carbon, modelling suggests that the majority of Reading's houses would need to be brought up to an EPC 'B' rating by 2030. The

Minimum Energy Efficiency (Standards) Regulations (known as MEES) require rented homes to reach EPC band 'C' by 2030 'where practical, cost-effective and affordable'. The private rental sector in Reading represents 26% of the total and, assuming compliance is achieved, that proportion of the properties in Reading should reach band 'C' by 2030, but additional investment would be required for them to reach band 'B' which is necessary to align with the net zero by 2030 target. Local authorities have a potential role in enforcing compliance with MEES but there are significant challenges around the number of exemptions from the Regulations and resource requirements associated with enforcement. There are, as yet, no statutory requirements for improvement in the energy efficiency of existing owner-occupied homes which make up 55% of the total in Reading.

With an estimated cost of 'deep retrofit' of some £30,000 to bring each property up to EPC band 'B', this clearly represents a huge logistical and financial challenge both locally and national - a potential cost of c.£2 billion for Reading Borough area alone.

RBC housing

The Council is using its own housing stock to lead by example in terms of the general standard of its properties and has a good track record of investment in energy efficiency as summarised in 2.3 above. A number of actions have already been taken in the housing retrofit area as part of the Council's response to the climate emergency declaration, as a result of which:

- All RBC housing refurbishment projects have a key goal of being as energy efficient as possible, cutting our carbon footprint and reducing waste
- Alternative forms of heating are being investigated and tested with a view to replacement of the existing gas central heating programme, including trials of alternative technologies
- The cost:benefit equation for installing Triple Glazed windows in place of the existing double-glazing programme, including prospective trial installations, is being reviewed
- Loft information data is being reviewed with a view to targeting the remaining properties which have less than 300mm
- Electrically heated properties which have cavity walls are being reviewed with a view to establishing the effectiveness of the insulation - any that is not up to current standards will be stripped and renewed using grant funding where possible
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) is being examined and installed as an alternative to extract fans
- A programme of upgrading insulation to Cross Wall properties is continuing
- Increased use of solar panels on the existing stock is being investigated to supplement the 457 Council homes which were equipped with solar in 2014-15

In addition, in terms of the wider supply chain, the Council is:

- Encouraging trades to recycle, specifically using scrap metal bins when stripping out old fittings and heating systems
- Working with suppliers to reduce single use plastic products and ensure that materials supplied meet low carbon standards
- Encouraging suppliers and contractors to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon usage through increased weighting of these elements within specifications and tender evaluation

- Working with trades to reduce the number of trips to and from stores and therefore reduce fuel usage
- Encouraging tenants to purchase energy from renewable generators

The Council has also been taking advantage of the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Programme to supplement our existing plans. The Council has secured up to £805,000 of LAD funding to install measures on its own and private housing stock. Scheme delivery is in phases with the first phase concluding this summer and the second phase then beginning and concluding at the end of the year. A third phase is being planned and further rounds are expected to follow.

A project developed under the LAD programme has enabled installation of external wall insulation as part of a whole house retrofit into 12 properties in the Norcot area of Reading. Under the LAD scheme the Council is required to work with private sector householders in the same area to install external wall insulation and other measures.

The council is also installing Air Source Heat Pumps into some of its housing blocks to begin the move away from gas powered central heating. Work has started in the first block of forty flats and a second block is being planned. A further stage of the project will work with landlords of Houses of Multiple Occupation and home owners to install a range of measures, utilising LAD funding wherever possible.

We are learning from these projects as we go but feedback from residents has been very positive. Scaling these pilot projects up will, however, be the main challenge: while RBC housing stock is relatively energy efficient compared to the national average, the investment required to bring it up to a standard compatible with the 'net zero by 2030' target would still be very significant. In broad terms it is estimated that a total investment of c£210m would be required to achieve the maximum potential carbon reduction currently available for RBC's housing stock. While there will no doubt be further opportunities to attract grant, at present properties rated as EPC 'C' or higher are not eligible for grant funding which reduces the Council's ability to benefit from them as most RBC properties are already in this category.

Approximately £60m is already built in to the 30-year Asset Management Plan as expenditure up until 2030 (e.g. for window replacements or central heating upgrades already identified as required prior to 2030 which will now be carried out to enhanced energy efficiency standards). This still means, however, that meeting the 'net zero by 2030' target for RBC housing stock would require an additional investment of £21m per year over and above the £16m total annual budget currently identified for the entire maintenance and refurbishment budget.

In addition to cost, retrofitting RBC's housing stock raises several other challenges:

- Simply changing from gas central heating to air source or ground source heat pumps could increase heating costs as gas is still substantially cheaper for space heating - this highlights the importance of deploying energy efficiency measures in combination with renewable heat sources
- Operating costs of heat pumps can be significantly reduced by improving insulation, improving air tightness, providing Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery and from off-setting running costs with solar PV - however, some properties may be difficult to improve or equip with these technologies

- The scale of acceleration of the programme that would be required to achieve net zero by 2030 would present major logistical and capacity challenges
- The widespread use of key meters in social housing is problematic in that the energy providers tend to charge more for this facility, and as key meters will not necessarily work effectively with some of the most energy efficient systems
- Communal heating systems for some blocks may be required which would require the Council to be registered as an energy supplier, creating an increased need to manage energy usage centrally and recharge tenants individually
- The new build program may involve substantial demolition and redevelopment of end of life stock, creating a need to ensure that investment is not being made on stock that will ultimately be demolished

3.3 Fuel poverty and energy efficiency

Key points:

- ***10.3% of households in Reading live in 'fuel poverty' - a typical proportion for an urban unitary authority but higher than the average for Berkshire***
- ***The Council has taken advantage of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding and operated a Winter Watch scheme to help c.250 people per annum in fuel poverty***
- ***Officers have explored the potential for an ECO Flex scheme for Reading, but this is not recommended as the scheme focuses on gas boiler replacements (thereby locking in dependence on fossil fuels) and ends in March 2022***

The condition, age and design of houses affects how easy they are to heat and thereby their energy efficiency. Homes with poor energy efficiency are more expensive to heat and therefore it is more likely that householders with low incomes will suffer from 'fuel poverty'. The latest data (2019) showing the number of homes that are in fuel poverty in Reading is 10.3%. Whilst this is typical of other similar urban unitary authorities, it is considerably higher than the average for Berkshire.

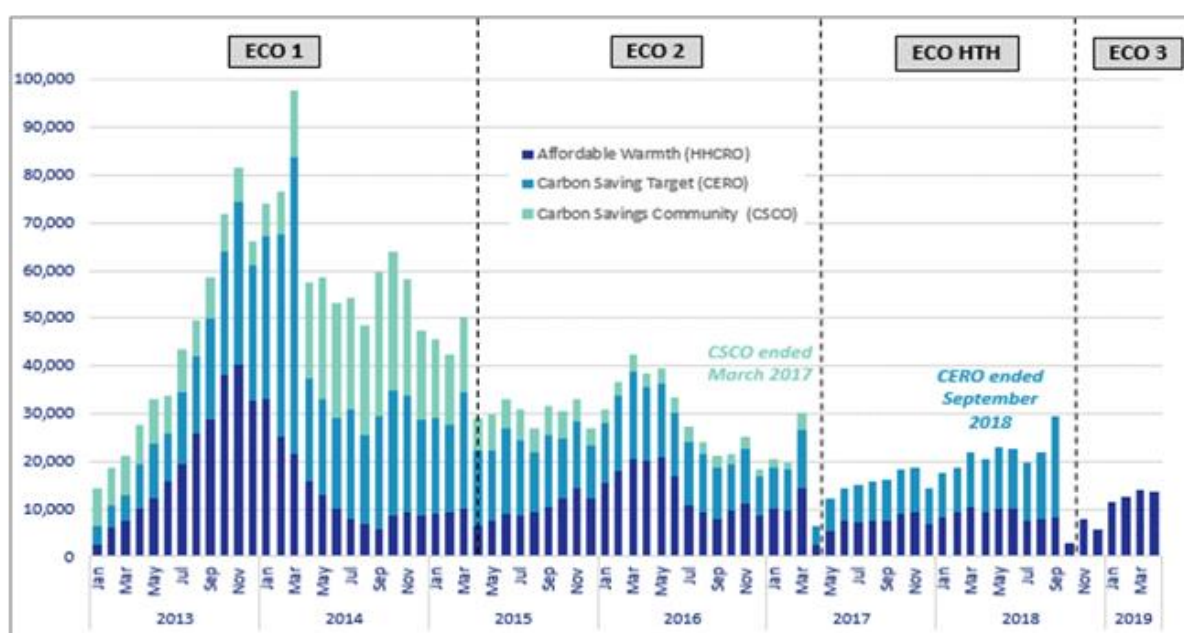
RBC has in some years run a fuel poverty programme called Winter Watch. An officer is available to visit householders who are struggling to heat their homes to help them to secure cheaper energy and improve their properties, comfort and health. The scheme has helped c250 people per year. Various Government funding streams have supported upgrading of household insulation and other energy efficiency measures. Previous schemes have focussed on lower cost options such as cavity wall and loft insulation. After the failure of the Government's Green Deal in 2015, which was intended to provide around 10% of the cost of measures with the remaining 90% coming from householders through forward financing the measures against the energy savings, the focus has moved more towards directing funding to tackle fuel poverty.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme was introduced to ensure that energy companies paid through an obligation to reduce the consumption of energy in UK housing. Now in its third iteration (ECO3), the scheme has been refined to focus more on fuel poverty and is orientated more around boiler replacements with minimal support for external wall insulation. The number of measures supported nationally has dropped considerably over the years since the scheme was introduced. ECO3 continues until March 2022 and is focused fully on low income and vulnerable households.

ECO3 funding is awarded using a calculation which varies depending on the house type, measure etc. The funding allocations are likely to fully cover measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation and to make a substantial contribution to the cost of gas boiler replacement. The contribution to solid wall insulation however is minimal considering that the high costs of this work and fuel poor households are unlikely to be able to access the capital finance to invest in these measures. This means that the scheme has been relatively ineffective in this regard, albeit there is an obligation on energy providers to collectively deliver 17,000 such measures nationally. This number is relatively insignificant in meeting the challenge of ‘hard to treat’ homes which require solid wall insulation.

The graph below shows how the successive changes to the ECO scheme have affected the uptake of measures². This suggests that the biggest opportunities for accessing ECO funding were to be had during the early part of the last decade.

ECO measures installed, by obligation, by month, up to end to end March 2019



A flexible approach to identifying eligible households was introduced in April 2017. Under ECO3 energy suppliers are able to meet up to 25% of their obligation under a sub-section of the scheme called ECO Flex (also known as LA Flex). This requires Local Authorities to develop and operate a scheme to deploy funding provided via the ECO3 mechanism.

Whilst RBC has utilised ECO funding to provide measures under the Winter Watch programme, RBC has not to date developed an ECO Flex scheme. Officers began exploring the potential for an ECO Flex scheme for Reading in 2020 but with the many other competing pressures facing officers over the last 12 months, were unable to make significant progress with this. The Council did, however, continue with its own energy efficiency programmes and gave priority to developing housing retrofit programmes including Green Homes Grant scheme which delivers similar objectives to ECO Flex and which offers a significant level of central government funding focused on addressing fuel poverty and carbon emissions in tandem.

² Parliament UK.

The ECO Flex scheme has a significant focus on gas boiler upgrades and the current phase is in any case due to conclude in 31st March 2022. Officers' conclusion is therefore that our efforts would be better focused at this point on alternative fuel poverty reduction measures which better align with our climate emergency aims (i.e. electrification of domestic heating accompanied by other energy saving measures) rather than developing an ECO Flex scheme which is in the process of winding down, and which potentially extends the dependence of beneficiary properties on fossil fuels. We would, however, retain the option of developing a scheme for future phases of ECO, subject to the terms of those future phases.

3.4 Availability of Government funding

The Climate Emergency Declaration made by the Council in February 2019 made clear that the ambition of a net zero carbon Reading by 2030 could not be achieved without significant changes in Government policy and funding streams.

The Government has made a number of funding streams available to stimulate housing retrofit including the Green Homes Grant which was targeted at homeowners. This £1.5bn scheme was launched in October 2020 and consisted of a voucher scheme offering £5,000 - £10,000 per householder to install low carbon measures. At the same time the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme referred to above in section 3.2 was launched.

Other funding streams include the Home Upgrade Grant, the first phase of which has already been allocated with further rounds will follow. This funding stream is directed at rural areas that are 'off gas' and where oil fuel is typically used and so is not applicable to Reading. A Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund first round is also underway, and a second round is due to open in the autumn offering £160m to social housing providers for projects to 2023 which include deeper retrofit.

The Green Homes Grant voucher scheme was seen as a key plank in the strategy to promote housing retrofit. Unfortunately, due to low uptake and supply chain and registration issues, the voucher scheme was scrapped recently, leading to significant uncertainty among homeowners and the industry. This exemplifies an historic trend of considerable uncertainty around 'green' funding streams from governments of all complexions which adds to the challenge of developing retrofit programmes at local authority level. We can, however, look to other local authorities for best practice which could be applied to Reading, and this will be a key activity to inform development of the proposed Low Carbon Housing Action Plans.

3.5 The economic imperative and opportunities associated with housing retrofit

Key points:

- *Reading residents spend £90m p.a. on energy but subsidy is needed to persuade homeowners to invest in retrofit*
- *The burgeoning market for retrofit represents a significant economic opportunity for 'Reading plc' to deliver inclusive growth and 'green recovery'*
- *There are significant gaps in skills and capacity which need to be addressed - but these could represent an opportunity for RBC commercial services if we build our own skills and capacity to deliver retrofit at scale.*

The residents of Reading spend in the region of £90m per annum on energy. Energy efficiency works have been estimated to require up to £2bn of investment for Reading to become zero carbon by 2030. If property owners were able to make a ten-

year return on investment that could lever up to £900m of investment over the next decade. This represents a significant market opportunity. The challenge is that due in part to the low cost of gas, paybacks for many properties are longer than ten years. For this reason, it is important that the Council seek to secure and distribute grant funding, especially to those who could not otherwise afford to invest and for situations where properties are hard to treat. This emphasises the importance of substantial and consistent national funding streams being made available to deliver both national and local ‘net zero’ ambitions.

A scaling up of domestic retrofit would present significant economic opportunities for the Borough. Local installation companies and low carbon and environmental goods and services companies could grow in the local area creating many jobs with a variety of skill levels, contributing to a ‘green recovery’ from the coronavirus pandemic in line with the aspirations in Reading UK’s economic renewal and recovery strategy, ‘Powered by People’.

There is also potential for the Council’s own commercial services to develop a market share to ensure high quality local services and job creation. Council housing maintenance staff are in the process of learning new skills and capabilities as the pilot projects described in 3.2 above develop. Currently there are major skills gaps within the construction sector and questions about the ability of the industry to deliver retrofit at the scale required, even if the funding were available. If Council staff can become proficient in these skills then this could represent a significant commercial advantage as the market for retrofit develops, providing an income stream to the Council to potentially scale up retrofit programmes.

4. DEVELOPING READING’S APPROACH TO LOW CARBON HOUSING

The analysis in sections 2 and 3 above sets out the scale of the challenge facing Reading in scaling up housing retrofit efforts. Development of Low Carbon Housing Action Plans (for RBC stock and for the private sector respectively) to complement Climate and Housing Strategies would help set out a more detailed road map to achieving this. Officers have begun work on this with a focus on RBC housing stock, but it will include details of how the existing maintenance and upgrade programme is reducing emissions as well as future plans to move away from gas towards electrification of heating, generate more renewable energy and adopt innovative energy saving technologies and designs.

5. SUMMARY AND KEY QUESTIONS

Figure 1 attempts to summarise visually the challenge of getting all housing in Reading to the standard necessary to align with the ‘net zero by 2030’ ambition. Each box in this four-box model is broadly proportionate in size to the number of properties at stake (existing or new houses planned to 2030), thus illustrating the scale of the challenge. Each box is also RAG-rated (green = easier, red = harder) based on two key parameters - the degree of control in the hands of RBC and the cost implications relative to currently available resources, thus illustrating the degree of difficulty anticipated in tackling the number of houses represented by each box.

Figure 1: scale of the challenge of achieving ‘net zero by 2030’ in the housing sector

RBC housing	Within RBC control; cost implications currently beyond RBC's means	Within RBC control
Non-RBC housing	Not within RBC's control; subject to some RBC regulatory influence; cost implications currently beyond local means	Within RBC's influence as Local Planning Authority (but control not total)

Figure 1 suggests that:

- Delivering new RBC housing to zero carbon standards is both within the Council's control and means - we are well on the way to achieving this already with our new housing developments and building the cost implications into existing project budgets via good sustainable design and construction practice
- Retrofitting all existing RBC housing to zero carbon standards, whilst within the Council's control, is currently beyond the Council's means, and even with a substantial increase in investment in this area we are likely to need to access alternative funding streams to bridge the gap
- Delivering new non-RBC housing to zero carbon standards should be possible as it is within the Council's influence as local planning authority, though this assumes that developers will comply with our Zero Carbon Homes policies, that planning decisions will apply them robustly and that the Planning Inspectorate/Secretary of State will support them in the event of appeals.
- Retrofitting existing non-RBC housing to zero carbon standards represents the biggest challenge, both in terms of scale and degree of difficulty, particularly in view of the recent closure of the Green Homes Grant to new applicants and uncertainty about what may or may not replace it.

The key questions to be addressed are the Council's ability to (i) increase investment in retrofit for RBC housing stock (ii) development of a programme which practically supports retrofit in the private sector, both of which will be necessary if the 'net zero by 2030' ambition is to be realised. The proposed Low Carbon Housing Action Plans will help in setting out a road map and determine the best way of meeting these challenges.

May 2021

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (ENGLAND) REGULATION 2020		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ELLIE EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	YASMIN AHMAD	TEL:	0118 9372466
JOB TITLE:	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING TEAM MANAGER	E-MAIL:	yasmin.ahmad@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the provisions of The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 ("the ESS Regulations") which came into force on 1st June 2020 and the Tenants Fees Act 2019 which came into force on 1st June 2019 for new tenancies and was subsequently extended to cover all tenancies from 1st June 2020
- 1.2 These measures alongside the existing enforcement powers the Council has will assist in tackling criminal landlords and agents and will contribute to improving housing standards in the private rented sector.
- 1.3 This report seeks delegations to authorise officers to carry out these functions.
- 1.4 The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy has been updated to reflect these new enforcement powers and the charging process for financial penalties

Appendix 1 - Housing Standards Enforcement Policy

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Assistant Director of Finance be given delegated authority, to enforce the requirements of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 and the Tenants Fee Act 2019.
- 2.2 That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services, be authorised to discharge the Council's duties and powers under the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England)

Regulations 2020 and the Tenants Fee Act 2019 along with subsequent Regulations and Orders as well as policies and procedures relating to both pieces of legislation.

- 2.3 That the revenue arising from financial penalties issued under the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 (schedule 2) and the Tenants Fees Act 2019 (Schedule 3) be reinvested into the Regulatory Services - Private Sector Housing Team.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Private rented accommodation provides a flexible and accessible housing solution for many residents. The Council recognises the valuable contribution the sector makes to providing decent and safe homes for many tenants. There are however, a minority of landlords and agents who provide poorly managed, substandard and unsafe homes, often to the most vulnerable in society. In some areas with high densities of private rented accommodation, there can be a direct impact on neighbourhood cohesion.
- 3.2 The Regulatory Services Private Sector Housing Team receives over 1,000+ service requests relating to housing enforcement matters each year. This drives the way in which the service is delivered leading to a more reactive approach rather than proactive or programmed inspection of the private rented stock. Currently only mandatory licensed properties are on a programmed inspection approach, meaning that they are inspected based on risk.
- 3.3 Regulatory compliance includes information, advice, inspection, warnings, enforcement and prosecutions. Officers' work also includes partnering with Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue as part of their risk-based inspection programme, liaison with the University of Reading, in respect of accommodation occupied by students, and the inspection and compliance of B&Bs used by the Council as emergency temporary accommodation as required.
- 3.4 The Council has a statutory duty to enforce housing standards in the private sector and more specifically in the private rented sector. The Housing Standards Enforcement Policy details these powers.
- 3.5 Over the remainder of this financial year and next year Officers will be visiting 84 agents across the Borough to ensure compliance with the Tenants Fees Act 2019. However, most of the work carried out by Officers is as a result of complaints received from tenants and there are currently several investigations on going which may result in enforcement action
- 3.6 With reference to the ESS Regulations we have received 51 enquiries since April 2021 and for 31 of these cases we have received the relevant Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) and no further action was required. With the remaining 21 in the case of approximately 16 the EICR found some remedial work was needed and landlords/agents have arranged for these to be undertaken, the remainder require further investigation by Officers and enforcement action if deemed appropriate

- 3.7 **The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020**
- 3.8 To further improve standards in the private rented sector, the Government passed the ESS Regulations, which came into force on 1st June 2020. They applied to new tenancies in the private sector from 1st July 2020 and to all tenancies in the private sector from 1st April 2021.
- 3.8 When introducing the decision to pass legislation in relation to electrical safety in rental properties, the then Housing and Homelessness Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:
- “Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in their own home. While measures are already in place to crack down on the small minority of landlords who rent out unsafe properties, we need to do more to protect tenants.*
- These new measures will reduce the risk of faulty electrical equipment, giving people peace of mind and helping to keep them safe in their homes.”*
- 3.6 The ESS Regulations place several duties on private sector landlords in that landlords must have every fixed electrical installation inspected and tested by a properly qualified person at least every 5 years. The Electricians must meet the relevant standards and landlords must give tenants proof of this.
- 3.7 If a landlord fails to comply with their duties, the local authority must serve a remedial notice requiring the landlord to take the specified remedial action within 28 days. If the landlord fails to comply with a remedial notice the local authority can, with the permission of the tenant, undertake the specified action themselves.
- 3.8 In cases where a test report states urgent remedial action is required, the ESS Regulations provide the local authority with a power to undertake that emergency remedial action. Notice of the action taken must be served upon the landlord within seven days of the commencement of works. At least 48 hours’ notice must be provided to tenants before the remedial action begins.
- 3.9 Where a landlord fails to comply with a duty under the ESS Regulations, the local authority has a power under Regulation 11 to impose a financial penalty of up to £30,000. The local authority can also seek to recover the costs incurred from the undertaking of remedial action.
- 3.10 The ESS Regulations allow landlords to appeal to the First Tier Tribunal.
- 3.11 To ensure fairness, the Government has indicated that action should not be taken where landlords can demonstrate they have attempted to comply with their duties but have been frustrated by the actions of their tenant (for example, by refusing access). Further the Local Authority must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a breach has occurred before beginning the process of imposing a financial penalty can begin.

- 3.12 The ESS Regulations repealed a power under the 2006 HMO management regulations that required landlords of HMOs to arrange for testing of electrical installations and to produce a test report to the Local Authority on request. The ESS Regulations now extend this power to both HMOs and privately rented properties occupied by single households
- 3.13 **Tenants Fee Act 2019**
- 3.14 The Tenants Fees Act 2019 (TFA) came into force on 1st June 2019 for any new tenancies and was then extended to cover all tenancies from 1st June 2020
- 3.15 The TFA prohibits the charging of fees in respect of a tenancy other than those which are specifically permitted in accordance with schedule 1 of the TFA which include:
- Rent
 - Limiting Tenancy Deposits to 5 weeks rent
 - Limiting holding Deposits to 1 weeks rent
 - Default payments
 - Payment for variation or assignment of a tenancy
 - Payment on termination of a tenancy
 - Payment of Council Tax, Utilities, TV Licence, Communication Services
- 3.16 The TFA 2019 provides that Enforcement Authorities may impose financial penalties of up to £30,000 depending on the breach as follows
- a) In respect of a Prohibited Payments under SS 1&2 of the TFA 2019 a financial penalty of not exceeding £5,000 for a first breach
 - b) Under s12 of the TFA 2019 a second or subsequent breach within 5 years of the previous breach provides for a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000 and there is power to prosecute in the Magistrates Court where an unlimited fine may be imposed
- 3.17 In line with the ESS Regulations detailed above the Local Authority must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a breach has occurred before the process of imposing a financial penalty can begin
- 3.19 in the case of both the ESS Regulations and the TFA on receiving a Notice of Intent to impose a financial penalty the landlord/Agent can make representation to the Local Authority which must consider such representation and either confirm, vary, or withdraw the notice and inform the landlord/agent of the outcome. If the outcome is to confirm or vary the notice the landlord/agent has the right to appeal to the First Tier Tribunal which will involve a hearing of the Council's decision to impose a penalty. The Tribunal has the power to confirm, vary (increase or decrease) or cancel the financial penalty imposed by the Council. The Tribunal can also dismiss the appeal if it concludes the appeal is frivolous, is an abuse of process or vexatious, or that it has no reasonable prospect of success.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position

- 4.2 The Council has a variety of enforcement powers and the ESS Regulations along with the TFA will add to the toolkit for tackling criminal landlords and agents and contribute to improving housing standards in the private rented sector.

4.3 Option Proposed

ESS Regulations

- 4.4 Approval is sought to implement the powers set out in the ESS Regulations as detailed in this report and in the updated Housing Standards Enforcement Policy (pages 46 to 48 attached as Appendix 1)
- 4.5 The Government has also indicated the maximum penalty of £30,000 should be reserved for the worst cases. This is the same maximum penalty as can be issued as a financial penalty under section 249A of the Housing Act 2004, Officers therefore seek approval to adopt the existing policy for determining the size of a financial penalty under section 249A of the Housing Act 2004 for financial penalties under the ESS Regulations. (pages 46 to 48 attached as Appendix 1).
- 4.6 Paragraph 7 to Schedule 2 of the ESS Regulations sets out how the proceeds of financial penalties under these regulations can be further invested by the local authority. While this paragraph allows for proceeds to be used for housing law enforcement more generally, it specifically refers to the following functions: -
- On-going enforcement of the ESS Regulations.
 - Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004.
 - Part 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

These functions are currently carried out by the Private Sector Housing Team within Regulatory Services. Officers therefore seek approval for proceeds from financial penalties under the ESS Regulations to be reinvested into the Private Sector Housing Team.

4.7 Tenants Fees Act 2019

- 4.8 Approval is sought to implement the powers set out in the TFA 2019 as detailed in this report and in the updated Housing Standards Enforcement Policy (pages 32 to 42)
- 4.9 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (“MHCLG”) has published the following document; **Tenant Fees Act 2019: Statutory Guidance for enforcement authorities.**
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819633/TFA_Statutory_Enforcement_Guidance_190722.pdf
- 4.10 Local Authorities must have regard to this guidance in relation to enforcing the TFA 2019. This statutory guidance recommends certain factors that an

enforcement authority should consider when deciding on the level of financial penalties under the TFA 2019 and further recommends that enforcement authorities develop and document their own Policy on determining the appropriate level of financial penalty in a case. The Council will consider the following factors as part of its decision-making process:

- a. The history of compliance/non-compliance
 - b. The severity of the breach
 - c. Deliberate concealment of the activity and/or evidence
 - d. Knowingly or recklessly supplying false or misleading evidence
 - e. The intent of the landlord/agent, individual and/or corporate body
 - f. The attitude of the landlord/agent
 - g. The deterrent effect of a prosecution on the landlord/agent and others
 - h. The extent of financial gain as a result of the breach
- 4.11 The financial penalty fee matrix is detailed on pages 36 to 37 of the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and the Council will consider any aggravating and mitigating circumstances. This matrix covers fines for Prohibited Payments under SS 1&2 of the TFA 2019, s83(3) of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, Redress Scheme for Letting Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc), England) Order 2014, Regulations 4(1) & (2) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirements to belong to a Scheme etc) Regulations 2019
- 4.12 There are two tables one for a first breach and a second table covering a second or subsequent breach within 5 years
- 4.13 Schedule 3 of the TFA 2019 states that where an enforcement authority imposes a financial penalty under this Act, it may apply the proceeds towards meeting the costs and expenses (whether administrative or legal) incurred in, or associated with, carrying out any of its enforcement functions under this Act or otherwise in relation to the private rented sector.
- 4.14 These functions are currently carried out by the Private Sector Housing Team within Regulatory Services. Officers therefore seek approval for proceeds from financial penalties under the TFA to be reinvested into the Private Sector Housing Team.
- 5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS
- 5.1 In relation to the Council's Corporate Plan the following themes are appropriate
- 5.2 *"Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe"* - working with landlords and agents to address poor property conditions that attracts crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.3 *"Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs"* by ensuring homes in the private rented sector are of a good quality and meet health and safety standards.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The service impact on the Climate Change Strategy is minor, though ensuring properties are kept in a good and safe condition and any improvements are carried out in line with Approved Document L1B, Building Regulations 2010 thus private rented accommodation become more energy efficient, warmer and cheaper to keep warm.

7.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Neither the TFA or The ESS Regulations require any consultation prior to introducing the powers detailed in the report.
- 7.2 Publicity will be carried out through press releases and newsletters in line with the introduction of these powers.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: -
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 *These powers will improve housing conditions and tackle criminal landlords and agents.*

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 ("the ESS Regulations")
- 9.2 These regulations came into force on 1st June 2020 and place several duties on landlords as summaries on the Government website as follows: -
- *Ensure national standards for electrical safety are met. These are set out in the [18th edition of the 'Wiring Regulations'](#), which are published as British Standard 7671.*
 - *Ensure the electrical installations in their rented properties are inspected and tested by a qualified and competent person at an interval of at least every 5 years.*
 - *Obtain a report from the person conducting the inspection and test which gives the results and sets a date for the next inspection and test.*
 - *Supply a copy of this report to the existing tenant within 28 days of the inspection and test.*
 - *Supply a copy of this report to a new tenant before they occupy the premises.*
 - *Supply a copy of this report to any prospective tenant within 28 days of receiving a request for the report.*

- *Supply the local authority with a copy of this report within 7 days of receiving a request for a copy.*
 - *Retain a copy of the report to give to the inspector and tester who will undertake the next inspection and test.*
 - *Where the report shows that remedial or further investigative work is necessary, complete this work within 28 days or any shorter period if specified as necessary in the report.*
 - *Supply written confirmation of the completion of the remedial works from the electrician to the tenant and the local authority within 28 days of completion of the works.*
- 9.3 Regulation 11 of the ESS Regulations allows for a financial penalty of up to £30,000 to be imposed on a landlord for a failure to comply with their duties under these regulations.
- 9.4 Where a local authority intends to impose a financial penalty it must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a breach has occurred. It must first issue a notice of intent upon the landlord. This must contain the following information:
- (a) the amount of the proposed financial penalty;
 - (b) the reasons for proposing to impose the penalty; and
 - (c) information about the right to make representations.
- 9.5 If a landlord does not agree with a penalty charge notice, they can make a written request to the local authority for it to be reviewed. On receiving a request for a review, the authority must consider any representations made by the landlord, decide whether to confirm, vary or withdraw the notice, and serve a notice of its decision. If the Council decides to confirm or vary the penalty charge notice, it must inform the landlord it can appeal to the First Tier Tribunal.
- 9.6 The ESS Regulations allow landlords to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal against the following:
- The service of a remedial notice.
 - The taking of urgent remedial action by the local authority.
 - The imposition of a financial penalty.
 - The recovery of costs relating to the taking of remedial action.
- 9.7 Where the landlord or agent fails to pay the civil penalty, the local authority should refer the case to the County Court for an Order of that Court and if necessary, use the County Courts Bailiffs to enforce the order and recover the debt.
- 9.8 If a landlord receives a Civil Penalty that can be considered when considering if the landlord is a 'fit and proper' person to be the licence holder of an HMO or any other property subject to licensing.
- 9.9 Paragraph 7 to Schedule 2 of the ESS Regulations sets out how the proceeds of financial penalties under these regulations can be further invested by the local authority. While this paragraph allows for proceeds to be used for housing law enforcement more generally, it specifically refers to the following functions: -

- On-going enforcement of the ESS Regulations.
- Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Part 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

9.10 Tenants Fees Act 2019

9.11 The Tenant Fees Act 2019 (TFA) prohibits the charging of fees in respect of a tenancy other than those which are specifically permitted and amends other legislation as follows:

- a) in respect of the duty of letting agents to publicise fees etc under Section 87 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015
- b) in relation to the duty placed on enforcement authorities to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (“the SoS”) relating to the enforcement of an order under s83(1) of 84(1) as per Section 85 of the Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- c) in respect of the duty to enforce being subject to Section 26 of the TFA 2019 under Article 7 of the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014
- d) in relation to the meaning of ‘Lead Enforcement Authority’; under Section 135 of the (enforcement of client money protection scheme regulations) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016
- e) in respect of the LEA as an alternative to the SoS where the SoS is not the LEA under Article 7 of the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014

9.12 The TFA 2019 provides that enforcement authorities may impose financial penalties of up to £30,000 depending on the breach as follows:

- a) In respect of Prohibited Payments under SS 1& 2 of the TFA 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000 for a first breach.
- b) Under s 12 of the TFA 2019 a second or subsequent breach within 5 years of the previous breach provides for a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000.00 and there is power to prosecute in the Magistrates Court where an unlimited fine may be imposed.

The Council will determine what is the most appropriate and effective sanction, whether it is appropriate to impose a financial penalty or prosecute in any relevant case having due regard to the RBC Enforcement Policy.

9.13 Additionally the TFA 2019 amends the legislation referred to in paragraph 8.11 above and which separately provide that penalties may be imposed as follows:

- a. In respect of a failure of Letting Agents to publicise their fees as required by s83(3) of the CRA 2015 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.
- b. In respect of a failure by any person engaged in Letting Agency or Property Management work who fails to hold membership of a Redress Scheme as required by Article 3 Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014 (in respect of Lettings Agency work) or Article 5 (in respect of property

management work) to a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000. Note that it is not enough to simply register for redress - the correct category of membership must be obtained depending on the work carried out.

c. In respect of a failure by a property agent who holds client money to belong to an approved or designated Client Money Protection (“CMP”) Scheme as required by Regulation 3 of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019, a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000.00.

d. In respect of a failure to obtain a certificate confirming membership or display that certificate as required or publish a copy of that certificate on the relevant website (where one exists) or produce a copy of the certificate free of charge to any person reasonably requiring it as required by Regulation 4(1) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.

e. In respect of a failure by a property agent to notify any client within 14 days of a change in the details of an underwriter to the CMP scheme or that the membership of the CMP scheme has been revoked as required by Regulation 4(2) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.

9.14 Where a local authority intends to impose a financial penalty it must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a breach has occurred. It must first issue a notice of intent upon the landlord. This must contain the following information:

- (a) the amount of the proposed financial penalty;
- (b) the reasons for proposing to impose the penalty; and
- (c) information about the right to make representations.

9.15 If a landlord does not agree with a penalty charge notice, they can make a written request to the local authority for it to be reviewed. On receiving a request for a review, the authority must consider any representations made by the landlord, decide whether to confirm, vary or withdraw the notice, and serve a notice of its decision. If the Council decides to confirm or vary the penalty charge notice, it must inform the landlord it can appeal to the First Tier Tribunal.

9.16 An appeal to the First Tier Property Tribunal which will involve a hearing of the Council’s decision to impose the penalty. The Tribunal has the power to confirm, vary (increase or reduce) or cancel the civil penalty imposed by the Council. The Tribunal can also dismiss an appeal if it concludes the appeal is frivolous, is an abuse of process or vexatious, or that it has no reasonable prospect of success.

9.17 Where an enforcement authority imposes a financial penalty under the Tenants Fees Act, it may apply the proceeds towards meeting the costs and expenses (whether administrative or legal) incurred in, or associated with, carrying out any of its enforcement functions under this Act or otherwise in relation to the private rented sector.

- 9.18 Any proceeds of a financial penalty imposed under this Act which are not applied in accordance with paragraph 10 must be paid to the Secretary of State.

In paragraph 10, “enforcement functions in relation to the private rented sector” means enforcement functions relating to—

- (a) residential premises in England that are let, or intended to be let, under a tenancy,
- (b) the common parts of such premises,
- (c) the activities of a landlord under a tenancy of residential premises in England,
- (d) the activities of a person carrying on English letting agency work within the meaning of section 54 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in relation to such premises, or
- (e) the activities of a person carrying on English property management work within the meaning of section 55 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in relation to such premises.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As noted above, both the ESS Regulations and the TFA advise that any income derived from financial penalties can be retained within the service area to enhance the statutory function in relation to enforcement action in the private rented sector.

- 10.2 An estimate of income has been detailed in the table below, however it is important to recognise the purpose of enforcement is to create change and reduce the number of criminal landlords/agents in the Borough. As with any new scheme it is difficult to anticipate what the outcomes will be, and this will be reviewed once the scheme has been fully implemented. Any income derived from the fines will be reinvested in enforcement work to improve the sector.

- 10.3 The financial implications arising from this report are set out below:

See note below	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Employee costs Other running costs	Within existing resources	Within existing resources	Within existing resources
Expenditure			
Income from:			
Financial Penalties			
ESS Regulations	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Tenants Fees Act	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Total Income:	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000

10.4 Risk Assessment

10.5 The key risk from the adoption of these powers will be landlords/agents appealing to the First Tier Tribunal. The risk can be mitigated by ensuring Officers work with colleagues in legal services on potential appeal cases. All cases are required to be up to the criminal standard and robust enough to be presented at Tribunal should this occur. As this is a new area for all local authorities, training will be provided to Officers around best practice and consistency with other councils. Procedures will be updated, and fines reviewed considering decisions made by the First Tier Tribunal.

10.6 An additional risk will be landlords/agents not paying the fines which will result in legal action having to be taken to recover the debt which can take the form of a County Court judgement, a charging order or an enforced sale. This will require specialist support from legal services and debt recovery team.

Background Papers

Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2021

The Tenants Fees Act

Housing Standards Enforcement Policy including Houses in Multiple Occupation.



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1. Introduction

The Council aims to ensure that private rented sector accommodation meets a minimum decent standard to protect the health and safety of tenants. The availability of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) lettings is particularly important in order to sustain affordable housing.

This policy sets out the way Reading Borough Council implements the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 in relation to HMO licensing and health and safety hazards. It also outlines how the Council intends to use the discretionary powers in the Housing Act and related legislation to ensure fair and equitable enforcement.

2. The Wider Picture

This policy is written in the context of the Council's Corporate Objectives including:

- Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs.
- To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children.
- To keep Reading's environment clean, green and safe.

According to the 2012 House Condition Survey 28.5% of households live in the Private Rented Sector with 10% of the properties being classified as HMOs.

The 2012 House Conditions Survey showed that private sector house conditions have improved since the previous survey in 2006 with a reduction in non-decent homes from 20,500 to 12,200 dwellings with 10% presenting a Category 1 hazard. Housing conditions are poorer in the private rented sector than that in any other type of tenure in the borough. The Council will continue to implement measures to ensure homes are decent and enforcement of the Housing Act 2004 will support this.

3. Partnership working

The Private Sector Housing Team will ensure that partnership links are developed and maintained. Partners assist in ensuring consistent and targeted enforcement. Internally we work with a range of teams including our Housing Advice Service and Adult Social Care. External partners include the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), Brighter Futures for Children, the University of Reading, Thames Valley University, Thames Valley Police, the Primary Care Trust and members of the National Residential Landlords Association.

4. Housing enforcement legislation

Housing Act 2004

The Housing Act 2004 ('the Act') outlines the way the Council regulates standards in private rented housing. The Act replaced the Housing Act 1985 fitness standard with a system of assessing the hazards affecting occupiers. It also introduced mandatory licensing of certain houses in multiple occupation from April 2006, with an extension of mandatory licensing coming into force from 1st October 2018.

The Housing Act 2004 imposes certain general obligations on the Council, including:

- A duty to arrange for inspections to be carried out to determine whether any hazards exist in dwellings and their severity.
- To take appropriate enforcement action to protect residents from serious hazards.
- To implement an HMO licensing regime and to process applications for HMO licensing.

Part 1 of the Act describes the actions the Council must take in relation to reports of hazards in residential properties. These actions include:

- carrying out assessments using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (“HHSRS”) to determine whether any category 1 or category 2 hazards exist.
- Taking the appropriate enforcement action to protect residents from harm.

Mandatory HMO licensing is detailed in Part 2 of the Act and places an obligation on all local authorities to set up a scheme to licence those HMOs that fall within the scope of mandatory licensing.

The aim of HMO licensing is to ensure the poorest and highest risk properties in the private rental market meet the legal standards and are properly managed.

HMOs currently covered by mandatory licensing are those where there are five or more occupiers forming two or more households. Social housing and HMOs owned by the police, health authorities, universities and some other listed organisations are exempt.

Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 (“the HMO Management Regulations”)

Many HMOs in Reading will not be licensable under the mandatory scheme. These include certain houses containing self-contained flats and smaller HMOs. These HMOs are regulated by the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 and the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

The HMO Management Regulations require any person managing an HMO to undertake works and to put in place procedures to ensure the HMO remains a safe and healthy environment for residents.

There is a corresponding set of regulations for buildings known as section 257 HMOs, which are the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Housing Act 2004 was amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to create a range of new powers and tools to support the enforcement of housing law. The options created include:

- The power to impose civil penalties up to a maximum of £30,000 for certain offences.
- The extension of Rent Repayment Orders (“RROs”) to cover a wider range of offences.
- The issuing of Banning Orders against the worst offenders; and
- The creation of a database of rogue landlords and agents.

Housing Act 1985 (as amended)

Where category 1 hazards exist, the Housing Act 1985 may be used to declare clearance areas or to make demolition orders.

In addition to carrying out the requirements of the Housing Acts, the Council has a duty to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance, defective sanitary appliances and drainage and other related matters.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

This legislation enables the service of a requisition for information notice that requires the recipient to disclose their interest in a particular property and that of any other person who they believe may have an interest.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

This enables the service of notices to deal with infestations of rats or mice. It also allows the service of notices to enforce the removal of articles (such as food) or harborage that may encourage rat or mouse activity.

Public Health Act 1961

Sections 16 to 18 of this legislation give the Council powers to deal with blocked drains in an emergency.

Public Health Act 1936

The Council has several powers and duties under this act:

- Section 45 - provides for the service of a notice to repair and/or cleanse a defective water closet that is in such condition as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
- Section 50 - provides the Council with a power to deal with overflowing/leaking cesspools.
- Section 83 - places duties on the Council to deal with premises that are filthy, unwholesome and/or verminous.

Building Act 1984

The Council has several powers and duties under this act:

- Section 59 - provides powers to deal with defective drainage including gutters and down pipes.
- Section 64 - provides a duty to serve a notice requiring the provision of water closets in a dwelling where insufficient facilities exist; and
- Section 63 covers water closets, drains and soil pipes improperly constructed or repaired and in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

- Section 76 - affords a quicker response to dealing with premises that are prejudicial to health or a nuisance than is afforded through the use of Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Section 79 - covers ruinous or dilapidated buildings and neglected sites.

Environmental Protection Act 1990

Part 3 allows the Council to take enforcement action in relation to premises that are in such condition as to be prejudicial to health.

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015

These regulations introduced the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard, so 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 are some exemptions.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms (England) Regulations 2015

These regulations impose duties on landlords of residential properties in England to ensure properties have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms fitted. Failure to fit these will result in the Council issuing a Penalty Charge of up to a maximum of £5,000.

Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020

These regulations place a duty of landlords of resident properties in England to ensure properties are electrically safe and to ensure electrical installations are inspected and tested by a competent person at least once every five years. Failure to comply will result in the Council issuing a Penalty Charge of up to £30,000.

Tenant Fees Act 2019

This makes it an offence for landlords or agents to require tenants in the private rented sector in England, or any persons acting on behalf of a tenant or guaranteeing the rent,

to make certain payments in connection with a tenancy. Failure to comply will result in the Council issuing a Financial Penalty of up to £5000 for a first offence and anything up to £30000 for a second or further offences.

The information in the following pages sets out the enforcement policies the Council's Private Sector Housing team will apply.

Fair and Consistent Enforcement

This enforcement policy helps to promote an efficient and effective approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement and aims to improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens. This is in accordance with the Regulator's Compliance Code. In certain instances, we may conclude that a provision in the Code is either not relevant or is outweighed by another provision. We will ensure that a decision to depart from the Code will be properly reasoned, based on material evidence and documented. The current 'Corporate Enforcement Policy' is available at:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/council/policies-finance-and-legal-information/strategies-plans-and-policies/>

Investigations

Investigations may be initiated upon:

- receipt of a service request by a customer (including via elected representatives).
- receipt of a referral from a partner agency.
- receipt of a complaint from a Justice of the Peace.
- a licence application;
- other intelligence where an assessment of risk indicates a property is sub-standard.

In the case of a service request from a tenant about conditions, we normally expect the tenant to have informed the landlord of the problem and allowed time for remedial action before contacting the service for assistance.

Formal enforcement options

We believe that enforcement alone is unlikely to have much effect on improving standards. However, where landlords do not co-operate, and there are inadequate safeguards for occupiers, enforcement action will be taken.

Enforcement action may be taken:

- Where there has been non-compliance with a statutory notice.
- Where a contravention of the Act or Regulations has been identified.
- Where a risk assessment identifies a risk to an occupant or potential occupant.

Before taking formal action, where the Council can make contact using reasonable effort, officers will usually discuss why they intend to take a particular course of action with the landlord and tenant. This may not be possible in all cases, such as where an officer identifies an urgent or imminent risk to an occupant or potential occupant.

Where a landlord has not complied with a legal notice, the Council may either prosecute or consider issuing a civil penalty where this option is available. The Council may also choose to carry out the work in the owner's default, reclaiming the full costs associated with this. Formal court proceedings will normally be completed before works in default are performed, unless the Service Manager considers that there is an urgent need for the works to be carried out to protect the health and safety of the tenant.

Empty and Owner-Occupied Homes

The Council will use its powers in line with the Empty Homes Strategy. The strategy can be found at: www.reading.gov.uk/emptyhomes

Other than in exceptional cases, the Council expects owner-occupiers, including long leaseholders, to take their own action to remedy problems of disrepair or nuisance. Owner-occupiers are in a stronger position to invoke their lease or their statutory rights, whereas short-term tenants of private landlords put themselves at the risk of losing their homes as a result of invoking their rights. Grants, loans and other forms of assistance are available to some owner-occupiers for repairs, heating improvements and security works as outlined in the Council's Private Sector Renewal Policy.

The Council also has the power to make a compulsory purchase order to acquire property for housing purposes. This action is only taken where all other means of bringing a property back to use have been explored and the financial implications are fully understood.

The majority of enforcement work is carried out in dwellings owned by private landlords. As the Council enforces the above statutes, the Council has no powers to deal with Council-owned dwellings.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System and Enforcement Regime

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System ("HHSRS") is the method prescribed for determining whether a hazard exists in residential properties.

The HHSRS involves the assessment of 29 potential hazards and scoring of their severity to decide whether improvements are needed.

Under Part 1 of the Act, the Council's enforcement options include:

- Serving an improvement notice requiring remedial action to be carried out within a certain time.
- Making a prohibition order that places restrictions on the use of a residential premises; and
- Serving a hazard awareness notice that, while not requiring remedial action to be carried, formally brings the existence of the hazard to the attention of the responsible person.

If more serious hazards (known as category 1 hazards) are found, the Council has a duty to take the most appropriate form of enforcement action. If less serious hazards (known as category 2 hazards) are found, the Council has a discretionary power to require action.

In cases where there is a category 1 hazard and an imminent risk of serious harm exists, the Council also has the following options available:

- To carry out emergency remedial action to deal with the hazard. The costs of the work are recoverable from the responsible person; and
- To make an emergency prohibition order that places immediate restrictions on the use of a residential premise.

Where a fire hazard is identified in an HMO or the common parts of buildings containing flats, the Council will consult the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on works required before taking enforcement action.

An Improvement Notice will normally be the most appropriate remedy for most hazards; repair or renewal is generally cost-effective because of the high value of property in Reading. A Prohibition Order, however, may sometimes be required on part of or all of a dwelling, for example where there is inadequate natural lighting or there is no fire escape from the top floor. In certain circumstances, the Council may serve suspended

notices, which may come into action at a future time or be triggered when a set of specified circumstances arises.

In some circumstances where an imminent risk of serious harm to occupiers exists, it is not appropriate to serve an Improvement Notice or to make a Prohibition Order, as these take at least four weeks to come into force. In such circumstances, the Council will consider undertaking emergency remedial action or, in extreme cases, making an Emergency Prohibition Order to immediately place restrictions on the occupancy of the premises in question.

Section 9 of the Act provides for guidance to be given to local authorities on the exercising of their powers of inspection, assessment and enforcement. The Council will have regard to any statutory guidance issued under this section.

Policy - Category 2 hazards

The Council will only deal with category 2 hazards in exceptional circumstances. The Council has discretionary powers to deal with category 2 hazards. It is not necessary or appropriate for us to deal with them in all circumstances. The Council will however take relevant action to reduce the hazard(s) to an acceptable risk. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, and may take into account:

- the vulnerability of the current occupants.
- the nature of the risk.
- the number of risks found.

Policy - Improvement notices

Where an Improvement Notice is served, the Council will require sufficient works to abate the hazard for five years. The law prescribes that the minimum works must abate

the hazard. The Council will require works of a reasonable duration to prevent recurrence. The Council considers five years to be reasonable.

Policy - Charges for enforcement

The Housing Act 2004 does not set a maximum charge for enforcement. The Act provides a power to the Council to charge for certain enforcement activities, which are outlined below:

- serving an improvement notice.
- making a prohibition order.
- serving a hazard awareness notice.
- taking emergency remedial action.
- making an emergency prohibition order.
- making a demolition order.
- reviewing a suspended improvement notice or prohibition order.

The Council will charge based on the amount of work undertaken by officers in performing their enforcement functions.

Appeals

A landlord may appeal to the First Tier Property Tribunal in certain cases, such as:

- where it is believed a legal notice has been served on them incorrectly.
- where they believed that works were over specified.
- where it is believed that a licence has been refused without adequate justification.

Appeals are made to the First Tier Property Tribunal, which is an independent body.

The function of the Tribunal is to consider the appeal and it may rule in favour of accepting the appeal, dismiss the appeal, or vary the requirements of a notice or order.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

A House In Multiple Occupation ‘HMO’ is a building occupied by more than two persons forming more than one household. This includes houses containing bedsits, hostels and shared houses. The Housing Act 2004 generally defines households as families, including single persons and cohabiting couples and means that shared houses will almost always be HMOs. Reading has over 3,500 HMOs of which around 1,200 are currently licensed.

The Council believes it is the responsibility of HMO managers to comply with the HMO management regulations. Where there has been a breach of the HMO management regulations, the Council will normally allow an opportunity for remedial action to be completed. In all cases, however, the Council will consider whether prosecution or the issuing of a civil penalty is proportionate, even in cases of first time offences.

HMO Licensing Policies

HMO Licensing

The aim of HMO licensing is to ensure this sector of properties in the private rental market meet the legal standards and are properly managed.

HMOs currently covered by mandatory licensing are those where there are five or more occupiers forming two or more households. Social housing and HMOs owned by the police, health authorities, universities and some other listed organisations are exempt.

Temporary Exemption Notices (“TENs”)

The Council may serve a Temporary Exemption Notice (“TEN”) where a landlord is, or shortly will be, taking steps to make an HMO non-licensable. A TEN will be served where an owner of a licensable HMO states in writing that they are taking steps to make an

HMO non-licensable, that the HMO will not be licensable within three months, and they provide appropriate evidence.

A TEN can only be granted for a maximum period of three months. A second three-month TEN can be served in exceptional circumstances. Where a licensable HMO is not licensed, the landlord cannot evict an occupier under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 until a valid HMO Licence or exemption application is received.

The Council does not wish these notices to be used routinely, and therefore a second notice will only be acceptable in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances agreed by the service manager.

Encouraging Applications

The Council will encourage landlords to apply for licences using a variety of methods. The Council will:

- publicise the need to licence HMOs and provide information on licensing and management
- involve landlords and letting agents through information sessions.
- liaise with The University of Reading and Reading College.
- provide discounts to landlords currently accredited through the National Residential Landlord Association and the Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme
- provide a system for applications to be made online.
- set up a voicemail system for enquiries.
- where resources permit, offer a service assisting applicants with completion of forms and measuring rooms, (additional charges will be made to enable the Council to resource this, as set out in the fees and charges scheme.
- send letters warning of prosecution

Fees for licence applications

The Council will charge a differentiated fee structure based on the level of work the Council is required to undertake. Lower rates apply where landlords are part of a landlord accreditation scheme. The fees will be set to cover the Council's costs of licensing HMOs and are likely to be comparable to fees being charged by other authorities. There is no cap on fees, but the Council must be able to justify its charges. The discounts aim to reward the more responsible landlords by offering discounts for accredited membership of certain schemes. Fees will be reviewed periodically, and any increases will be publicised on the Council's website and in writing to landlords.

The Council may grant a licence where it is satisfied:

- the house is reasonably suitable for occupation as an HMO.
- the management arrangements are satisfactory.
- the proposed licence holder and manager are fit and proper persons.
- the proposed licence holder is the most appropriate person to hold the licence.

A member of the Private Sector Housing Team will usually visit before licensing an HMO, to assess compliance with the licensing requirements and the number of people the HMO should be licensed for.

The Council is required to assess whether the proposed licence holder, any proposed manager and any person associated with them or formerly associated with them are fit and proper people to hold a licence or manage an HMO. In reaching its decision the Council must have regard, amongst other things, to evidence showing that the person:

- has no unspent convictions relating to offences involving fraud, dishonesty, violence or drugs, or sexual offences.

- has no unspent convictions relating to unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, race, or disability.
- has no unspent convictions relating to housing or landlord and tenant law.
- has no unspent convictions for breaches of planning, compulsory purchase, environmental protection or other legislation enforced by local authorities.
- has not been refused a HMO licence, been convicted of breaching the conditions of a licence or have acted otherwise than in accordance with the approved code of practice under S197 of the act within the last five years.
- has not been in control of a property subject to an Interim Management Order (“IMO”) or Final Management Order (“FMO”) or had work in default carried out by a local authority.

Each application will be judged on its own merits, and proposed licence holders will be given the opportunity to make a self-declaration of fitness. We will consult the rogue landlord database and others. Where consultation or previous history indicates that this self-declaration is insufficient, further investigation may be required. Licences will be valid for five years in most cases and will specify the maximum number of occupiers or households. The occupancy number will depend on the number and size of rooms and the kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Officers aim to issue draft licences within 12 weeks of a full application. However, during periods where there are high numbers of applications received, processing of licence applications will take longer.

Where there is no prospect of an HMO being licensed, the Act requires that the Council use its interim management powers. This enables the Council to take over the management of an HMO and become responsible for running the property and collecting rent for up to a year. In extreme cases this can be extended to five years, with the Council also having the power to grant tenancies. The Council will put into place a mechanism to ensure the most appropriate management of such properties.

- If the Council finds that there has been a change of circumstances in an HMO since it was licensed, it has the power to vary the licence. If there is a serious breach or there are repeated breaches of the licence conditions or the licence holder or managers are no longer deemed to be fit and proper persons, the licence can be revoked and the licence holder may be liable for prosecution. The licence can also be revoked if the property is no longer a licensable HMO or if the condition of the property means it would not be licensable were an application to be made at a later time. The Council has the power to set up additional local area HMO licensing schemes, to enable those HMOs considered to be poorly managed to be licensed.

Management Arrangements

The Council will expect the licensee to have satisfactory arrangements and funding in place for the management of the HMO. Satisfactory arrangements for management will include:

- a reliable contact for tenants to report defects, including in emergencies, who will arrange for repairs to be carried out within a reasonable period.
- where the manager of the HMO is not the owner, the manager must have the authority to fund urgent repairs, when the owner's approval cannot be obtained.
- arrangements in place for periodic inspections to identify where repair or maintenance is needed

Where a landlord fails to demonstrate adequate management arrangements, or has previous history indicative of poor management, the Council may limit the duration of a licence to less than 5 years.

Any steps to reduce the term of the licence below the standard 5 years will be fully justified by the officer issuing the licence.

HMO standards

The Council will determine the number of people an HMO is licensed for in accordance with compliance with the relevant adopted standards and national guidance detailing

room sizes and kitchen and bathroom facilities. Applications will need to include dimensions of rooms and details of the kitchen and bathroom facilities to enable assessment of the number of occupiers permitted in the licence.

The Council will determine the suitability of occupation of a licensable HMO based on the property's current rather than future suitability. Suitability will be based on the licence application and inspection of the accommodation.

The following mandatory conditions must be applied to all licences:

- to provide copies of gas safety certificates annually where gas appliances are present.
- to keep electrical installations; appliances and furniture safe.
- to keep smoke alarms in working order.
- to provide tenants with a written tenancy agreement.

The licence holder must deal with all Category 1 hazards within the time frame specified by the Council. If they do not, then the Council is expected to use their enforcement powers to improve the property.

Discretionary licence conditions

The Council also has discretion to impose other conditions.

In addition to the mandatory licensing conditions set out above, the Council will apply certain discretionary conditions where relevant to all licences. These will include:

- The licence holder of the property must hold a management folder which contains information on the management procedures in place for the property. The folder should include the following, as applicable:
 - a) Contact details.
 - b) Fire risk assessment(s).
 - c) Test log(s).

- d) Annual test reports/safety certificates.
- e) Energy Performance Certificate.
- f) Details of any HMO management training that has been completed.
- g) Complaints procedure. This folder may be in a digital format.
- to provide copies of reports of fire detection, alarm system and emergency lighting to the council on request.
- the name, address and telephone number for licensee or manager is to be displayed in the common parts of the HMO.
- a copy of a valid gas safety certificate to be displayed in the common parts.
- a copy of the front page of the licence to be displayed in the common parts.
- that tenancy agreements must set out how owners or managers intend to deal with antisocial behaviour from tenants or visitors; and
- that any anti-social behaviour arising in the HMO is dealt with under the terms of any tenancy agreement.

The Council may apply other conditions to individual licences with respect to the use, management and occupation of the HMO, where appropriate, and may seek evidence of compliance with conditions at any time. Licences may also be time-limited based on the proposed licence holder's history of management, compliance and fit and proper person status.

A draft licence must be served on all relevant persons, allowing at least fourteen days for representations before granting the actual licence.

Where a licence holder breaches the condition of a licence, in cases where long timescales have been specified (e.g. installation of amenities or wash hand basins), the Council will instigate formal enforcement proceedings. Licence holders are responsible for complying with the conditions of their licence. Adequate timescales for completion of works will be given.

Appeals against licensing decisions can be brought to the First-tier Tribunal - Property Chamber (Residential Property), including refusals to grant a licence, licence conditions that have been imposed and the maximum number of permitted occupiers. Where a landlord fails to licence an HMO or breaches any of the conditions without reasonable excuse, they will commit a criminal offence.

Policy - Bed and Breakfast Hotels

The Council will declare bed and breakfast hotels as HMOs where 25% of the total number of sleeping rooms are regularly occupied for 30 days or more by persons in receipt of Housing Benefit, or who are paying a weekly or monthly rent, as opposed to overnight charges. The Council believes that where this accommodation is used as a main residence, the same standards as for other HMOs should be met. People who use a hotel as a main residence are likely to be either homeless, placed there by a local authority, or their home will be in another country.

Policy - Discretionary licensing schemes

The Council will review the need for additional and selective licensing scheme in accordance with the Council's Corporate Plan. The mandatory scheme aims to tackle the highest risk properties and this will require significant resources. It is therefore intended to keep under review the need for further discretionary schemes and put into place a system for the collation of evidence to support any such scheme.

Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Civil Penalties

The Housing Act 2004 was amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to create a range of new powers and tools to support the enforcement of housing law.

Section 126 and Schedule 9 allow financial penalties to be imposed as an alternative to prosecutions. Schedule 9 amends the Housing Act 2004 and details the specified offences for which financial penalties can be imposed, as follows:

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice (section 30).
- Failure to licence or be licensed in respect of HMOs (section 72).
- Failure to comply with licensing under Part 3 of the Act (section 95) - this relates to selective licensing which we do not operate in Reading.
- Failure to comply with an overcrowding notice (section 139).
- Failure to comply with Management Regulations in respect of a House in Multiple Occupation (section 234).

The power to issue a civil penalty is an alternative to prosecution; if a civil penalty is issued, the Council cannot initiate a prosecution for the same offences. The decision on whether to prosecute or issue a civil penalty will be decided on a case-by-case basis, but the general principle will be that prosecution will be reserved for cases where the maximum £30,000 penalty is considered to be insufficient to address the offending behaviour. When issuing a civil penalty, the Council is required to prove its case beyond all reasonable doubt, as is the case in criminal trials.

Where both an Agent and Landlord can be prosecuted for failing to obtain a licence for a licensable HMO or any other offence, then a civil penalty can be imposed on both as an alternative to prosecutions. The amount of the civil penalty may differ depending on the individual circumstances of the case. Where a person has received two civil penalties under this legislation in any 12 month period, irrespective of the locality to which the offences were committed, the Council will consider making an entry on the national database of rogue landlords and property agents.

Through the use of civil penalties (and rent repayment orders), the Council will seek to prevent criminal landlords from profiting from poor and illegal practices. It will also demonstrate the Council's on-going commitment to ensuring it is these criminal

landlords who pay for the cost of housing enforcement, rather than the many responsible landlords who provide housing in the borough. As the Council is allowed to retain the income received from civil penalties this will be reinvested into carrying out further enforcement work in order to continue improving the private rented sector.

Determining Civil Penalties

Civil penalties issued by the Council will be made up of two parts:

- The punitive fine; and
- The investigative costs.

Punitive fine

The Government has indicated through its statutory guidance that the following factors should be considered when determining a civil penalty:

- The severity of the offence.
- The culpability and track record of the offender.
- The harm caused to the tenant.
- The punishment of the offender.
- Whether it will deter the offender from repeating the offence.
- Whether it will deter others from committing the offence.
- Whether it will remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the offence.

To promote consistency of enforcement, the Council has determined starting points from which punitive fines will be determined. These are set out in the table below:

Type of Landlord	Offence category	Starting point		
		Major Impact	Medium impact	Low Impact
1 -2 properties	Deliberate	£5,000	£3,500	£2,000
	Negligent	£2,500	£1,750	£1,000
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200
3-5 properties	Deliberate	£10,000	£5,000	£2,500
	Negligent	£5,000	£2,500	£1,250
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200
6+ properties	Deliberate	£20,000	£16,000	£10,000
	Negligent	£10,000	£8,000	£5,000
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200

Determining the punitive fine - culpability

The first factor for determining the penalty to be levied is culpability of the offender.

The Council has determined three levels of offending behaviour:-

- **Deliberate** - this is where there has been an intentional breach by a landlord or other relevant person. For example, if a landlord knew they had an obligation to licence a property but the evidence shows they deliberately set out not to licence, or if a person managing an HMO makes clear they have no intention of complying with the management regulations.
- **Negligent** - this is where the offending behaviour is not considered deliberate, but where the offender has failed to comply with a duty about which they should have known or have failed to take reasonable care in ensuring hazards will not arise. Examples may include a professional landlord or property agent failing to licence an HMO or to comply with the HMO management regulations, but the evidence is not sufficient to show a deliberate failure to comply.
- **Low culpability** - The offence committed has some fault on the part of the landlord or property agent but there are other circumstances, for damage caused

by tenant negligence, or where a landlord has clearly been failed by a third party.

Determining the punitive fine - impact

The second factor for determining the penalty to be levied is the potential for the offending behaviour to cause harm. The Council has determined three levels of harm:-

- **Major impact** - these are defects that pose a danger to life or could result in serious life-changing injuries (such as permanent paralysis or the loss of a limb). Examples include serious fire hazards, the possibility of exposure to carbon monoxide, risk of explosion or structural collapse and exposure to asbestos or radiation. If the powers set out for levying a civil penalty are considered inadequate, a prosecution will always be considered. These may also include failings of property management that could result in a major impact on neighbours or the local community.
- **Medium impact** - these are defects that have or may require an occupier to seek medical attention from an A and E department, a GP or a walk-in clinic. Examples include exposure to damp or mouldy conditions, risk of electric shock or a risk of a fall that could result in bone fractures. These may also include failings of property management that could result in a major impact on immediate neighbours.
- **Minor impact** - these are defects that pose little or no direct risk to occupiers. Examples may include defects to décor or cleanliness in an HMO. The Council will normally have allowed an opportunity for informal compliance prior to taking formal enforcement action, which will have been ignored. These may also include failings of property management that could result in a minor impact on occupiers.

Determining the punitive fine - financial means

This factor has been decided upon to help the Council meet its requirement to consider the financial means of the offender. Three levels have been set:-

- **6+ properties** - this level is aimed at landlords or managers who are in control of a large portfolio of rental properties.
- **3 - 5 properties** - this level is aimed at landlords or managers who are in control of a medium size portfolio of rental properties.
- **1 - 2 properties** - this level is aimed at landlords or managers who are in control of a small portfolio of rental properties.

In consideration of the level of the fine the Council has also to take into account any assets and income of the landlord or agent, not just rental income. Consideration will therefore be given to any other financial information that the Council has access to when the punitive fine is determined.

Determining the punitive fine - aggravating and mitigating factors

The above factors are used in conjunction with the following table to determine a starting point for each of the offences. The Council will also consider aggravating and mitigating factors when determining a penalty. The Council will expect to see evidence from offenders before mitigation is applied. When accounting for aggravating factors, the penalty for the offence shall not exceed the starting point of the next category of offence on the table of starting points. For example, an offence committed by a landlord with 1-2 properties that was deemed to be low culpability but major impact will have a starting point of £500. An increase of this fine based on aggravating factors shall not exceed £2,500, which is the next band up.

Aggravating factors may include-

- The offender has committed similar offences within the past 12 months.
- The offending behaviour resulted in actual harm to occupiers or to the local neighbourhood.
- There was a failure to respond to warnings or concerns expressed by others about the offender's behaviour.
- There was a high level of profit from the offending behaviour.
- There was an attempt to conceal or dispose of evidence.
- The offending behaviour was motivated by hostility towards a minority group, or a member or members of it.
- The residents were especially vulnerable.

Mitigating factors may include:

- The offender has made a full admission of guilt at the earliest opportunity and has cooperated fully with the investigation. This will normally result in a one-third reduction of the punitive fine. Cooperation short of a full admission will attract a smaller discount.
- Age or infirmity of the offender (if relevant to the offending behaviour and if not already considered when deciding the category of offence).
- Mental illness or disability of the offender (if relevant to the offending behaviour and if not already considered when deciding the category of offence).
- Where a large fine would cause exceptional hardship.

Determining the punitive fine - totality

The Council will also apply the principle of totality to any penalty, that is, a final consideration will be given as to whether the calculated punitive fine is just and proportionate in all the circumstances of the case.

Investigative costs

The Council believes the offender should bear the cost of investigations, rather than good landlords or local tax payers. To reflect this, any penalty issued shall include the Council's investigative costs. These costs include the time spent by the Council in investigating the offence and preparing the case bundle and civil penalty notices. It is important to note this part of the civil penalty total does not include any costs associated with any appeal. These will be charged separately.

The Council will also apply the principle that the costs to be charged shall not exceed the punitive part of the civil penalty.

Representations

Upon receipt of a notice of the Council's intent to issue a financial penalty, the offender has a period in which they can make representations about the Council's intention.

The law does not specify what these representations should be, but the Council offers the following guidelines:

- The decision to impose a financial penalty was based on an error of fact. For example, a penalty issued for the failure to comply with a licence condition would be incorrect if there is evidence to show there had been compliance. Please note the Council will expect to see evidence of the error of fact. The Council may also carry out additional investigations before making a decision.
- The decision was wrong in law. A recipient can make a representation if they believe the penalty has been issued because the Council has misunderstood the law. We will expect to see an explanation of why the recipient thinks the decision was wrong in law.
- The amount of the financial penalty is unreasonable. We will expect an explanation as to why the penalty is unreasonable based on the above guidance.

- The decision was unreasonable for any other reason. Please note that it will not be sufficient to simply complain that the penalty is unfair without any supporting reasons.

Appeals against civil penalties

A person who has been served with a civil penalty has the right to appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) which will involve a hearing of the Council's decision to impose the penalty. The Tribunal has the power to confirm, reduce or to quash the civil penalty imposed by the Council. The Tribunal can also dismiss an appeal if it concludes the appeal is frivolous, is an abuse of process or vexatious, or that it has no reasonable prospect of success.

The Council intends to defend its decision to issue civil penalties which will involve not only officer time but also specialist legal support. As a result the Council will seek to recover its legal costs in the event it is required to defend its decision at the Tribunal.

Supplementary Enforcement options under the Housing Act 2004

Rent Repayment Orders

Rent Repayment Orders were introduced as part of the Housing Act 2004 to recover Housing Benefit/Universal Credit that was paid to landlords convicted of running unlicensed properties. The Housing and Planning Act places a new obligation on local authorities to consider seeking a Rent Repayment Order following conviction for certain offences; and increases the number of offences this relates to. The offences include:

- Using violence for securing entry.
- Eviction or harassment of occupiers.
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice.
- Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order.
- Failure to licence or be licensed in respect of a HMO.
- Failure to licence or be licensed in respect of a Selective Licensing Scheme; or

- Breach of a Banning Order.

Where a landlord is convicted the Council intends to make an application to The First Tier Property Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order. The Council intends to use its powers under the Act to seek Rent Repayment Orders for repayment of up to twelve months' housing benefit/Universal Credit for the period since the landlord was required to licence the HMO. In respect of private tenants, in cases where the council prosecutes the landlord for failure to licence the HMO, the Council will advise tenants on how to obtain a Rent Repayment Order.

Banning Orders and the Rogue Landlord Database

On 6 April 2018, new measures come into force under the Housing and planning Act 2016:

- Banning orders for the most serious offenders;
- A database of rogue landlords and property agents against whom a banning order has been made, which may also include persons convicted of a banning order offence or who have received two or more financial penalties.

A banning order is an order by the First-tier Tribunal that bans a landlord from:

- Letting housing in England;
- Engaging in English letting agency work;
- Engaging in English property management work

A person who received a banning order must also be placed on the rogue landlord database. There additional discretionary powers to place other persons on the rogue landlord database who has:

- been convicted of a banning order offence that was committed at a time when the person was a residential landlord or property agent; and/or

- received two or more financial penalties in respect of a banning order offence within a period of 12 months committed at a time when the person was a residential landlord or a property agent.

Statutory guidance issued by MCLG sets out criteria for determining whether to place a person on the rogue landlord database and prior notification must be given.

Interim and Final Management Orders

Management Orders enable the Council, or a partner, to take over the management of a residential property and become responsible for running the property and collecting rent for up to a year. In extreme cases this can be extended as a Final Management Order, with the Council having powers to grant tenancies. The Residential Property Tribunal will be responsible for authorising any such order.

The Council will only use these powers in exceptional circumstances. Where there is no prospect of a HMO being licensed, the Act requires the Council to make an Interim Management Order.

Supplementary regulations with financial penalty options

Tenant Fees Act 2019

The Tenant Fees Act 2019 prohibits the charging of fees in respect of a tenancy other than those which are specifically permitted and amends other legislation as follows:

- a. in respect of the duty of letting agents to publicise fees etc under Section 87 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015
- b. in relation to the duty placed on enforcement authorities to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (“the SoS”) relating to the enforcement of an order under s83(1) of 84(1) as per Section 85 of the Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Act 2013

c. in respect of the duty to enforce being subject to Section 26 of the TFA 2019 under Article 7 of the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014

d. in relation to the meaning of ‘Lead Enforcement Authority’; under Section 135 of the (enforcement of client money protection scheme regulations) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016

e. in respect of the LEA as an alternative to the SoS where the SoS is not the LEA under Article 7 of the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014

The Tenant Fees Act provides that enforcement authorities may impose financial penalties of up to £30,000 depending on the breach as follows:

a. In respect of Prohibited Payments under SS 1& 2 of the TFA 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000 for a first breach.

b. Under s 12 of the TFA 2019 a second or subsequent breach within 5 years of the previous breach provides for a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000.00 and there is power to prosecute in the Magistrates Court where an unlimited fine may be imposed.

Additionally the Tenant Fees Act amends further legislation which separately provide that penalties may be imposed as follows:

i In respect of a failure of Letting Agents to publicise their fees as required by s83(3) of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.

ii. In respect of a failure by any person engaged in Letting Agency or Property Management work who fails to hold membership of a Redress Scheme as required by Article 3 Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014 (in respect of Lettings Agency work) or Article 5 (in respect of property management work) to a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000. Note that it is not sufficient to simply register for redress - the correct category of membership must be obtained depending on the work carried out.

iii. In respect of a failure by a property agent who holds client money to belong to an approved or designated Client Money Protection (“CMP”) Scheme as required by Regulation 3 of the Client Money Protection

Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019, a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000.00.

iv. In respect of a failure to obtain a certificate confirming membership or display that certificate as required or publish a copy of that certificate on the relevant website (where one exists) or produce a copy of the certificate free of charge to any person reasonably requiring it as required by Regulation 4(1) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.

v. In respect of a failure by a property agent to notify any client within 14 days of a change in the details of an underwriter to the CMP scheme or that the membership of the CMP scheme has been revoked as required by Regulation 4(2) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019 a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.00.

The Council will determine what is the most appropriate and effective sanction, whether it is appropriate to impose a financial penalty or prosecute in any relevant case having due regard to the Corporate Enforcement Policy and MCLG guidance 'Tenant Fees Act 2019: Statutory Guidance for enforcement authorities.'

Determining the level of the financial penalty

In accordance with the provisions of the TFA 2019 the level of financial penalties is to be determined by the Council. Although the statutory guidance recommends factors which may be taken into account it does not go into any significant level of detail in this regard. Each of those factors will be considered as a part of the Council's decision making process and they are:

- a. The history of compliance/non-compliance
- b. The severity of the breach
- c. Deliberate concealment of the activity and/or evidence
- d. Knowingly or recklessly supplying false or misleading evidence
- e. The intent of the landlord/agent, individual and/or corporate body
- f. The attitude of the landlord/agent
- g. The deterrent effect of a prosecution on the landlord/agent and others
- h. The extent of financial gain as a result of the breach

The Council will finalise the appropriate level of penalty so that it reflects the seriousness of the offence and the Council must take into account the financial circumstances of the Landlord or Agent if representations are made by the Landlord or Agent following the issue of a Notice of Intent.

The level of financial penalty should reflect the extent to which the conduct fell below the required standard. The financial penalty should meet, in a fair and proportionate way, the objectives of punishment, deterrence and the removal of gain derived through the commission of the breach; it should not be cheaper to breach than to take the appropriate precautions and a fundamental principle involved is that there should be no financial gain to the perpetrator from the commission of the breaches.

If issuing a financial penalty for more than one breach, or where the offender has already been issued with a financial penalty, The Council will consider whether the total penalties are just and proportionate to the offending behaviour.

Civil Penalty Notice Fee Matrix

The table below provides guidance on the level of the financial penalty most likely to be appropriate.

In consideration of the level of the penalty the Council has to take into account any assets and income of the landlord or agent, not just rental income.

To provide some clarity for both officers and landlords/agents the asset assessment has been based on the number of properties either being managed or owned by the landlord or agent. The officer time will be charged in addition to the fees detailed in the table and these will be based on the time the officer has spent investigating the offence/s.

In setting the final penalty the Council will take into account aggravating and mitigating circumstances

Guidance on the level of fines for Prohibited Payments under SS 1& 2 of the TFA 2019, s83(3) of the CRA 2015, Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014, Regulation 4(1) & (2) of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019

Type of Landlord/Agent	Category of Offence	Starting Point for level one - Major Impact	Starting Point for level two - Serious Impact	Starting Point for level three - Minor Impact
Landlord/Agent with 1-2 properties	Deliberate	£3,500	£3,250	£3,000
	Negligent	£3,000	£2,750	£2,500
	Low Culpability	£2,500	£2,250	£2,000
Landlord/Agent with 3-10 properties	Deliberate	£4,250	£4,000	£3,750
	Negligent	£3,750	£3,500	£3,250
	Low Culpability	£3,250	£3,000	£2,750
Landlord/Agent with 11+ properties	Deliberate	£5,000	£4,750	£4,500
	Negligent	£4,500	£4,250	£4,000
	Low Culpability	£4,000	£3,750	£3,500

Guidance on the level of fines for s 12 of the TFA 2019 a second or subsequent breach within 5 years, and Regulation 3 of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019

Type of Landlord/Agent	Category of Offence	Starting Point for level one - Major Impact	Starting Point for level two - Serious Impact	Starting Point for level three - Minor Impact
Landlord/Agent with 1-2 properties	Deliberate	£15,000	£12,250	£10,000
	Negligent	£5,000	£3,500	£2,000
	Low Culpability	£2,500	£1,750	£1,000

Landlord/Agent with 3-10 properties	Deliberate	£20,000	£17,500	£15,000
	Negligent	£10,000	£7,500	£5,000
	Low Culpability	£5,000	£3,750	£2,500
Landlord/Agent with 11+ properties	Deliberate	£25,000	£22,500	£20,000
	Negligent	£15,000	£12,500	£10,000
	Low Culpability	£10,000	£7,500	£5,000

Determining the Offence category - Culpability

Deliberate - An intentional breach by a landlord or property agent or flagrant disregard for the law.

Negligent - The failure of the landlord or letting agent to take reasonable care to put in place and enforce proper systems for avoiding the offence.

Low or no culpability - The offence committed has some fault on the part of the landlord or property agent but there are other circumstances

- significant efforts were made to address the risk although they were inadequate on the relevant occasion
- there was no warning/circumstance indicating a risk
- failings were minor and occurred as an isolated incident

Determining the level of the fine - Severity

Level One - Major Impact

- Serious adverse effect(s) on individual(s) and/or having a widespread impact due to the nature and/or scale of the Landlord's or Agent's business
- High risk of an adverse effect on individual(s) - including where persons are vulnerable.

Level Two - Serious Impact

- Adverse effect on individual(s)
- Medium risk of an adverse effect on individual(s) or low risk of serious adverse effect.
- Tenants and/or legitimate landlords or agents substantially undermined by the conduct.
- The Council's work as a regulator is inhibited
- Tenant or prospective tenant misled

Level Three - Minor Impact

- Low risk of an adverse effect on actual or prospective tenants.
- Public misled but little or no risk of actual adverse effect on individual(s)

We will define harm widely and victims may suffer financial loss, damage to health or psychological distress (especially vulnerable cases). There are gradations of harm within all of these categories.

The nature of harm will depend on personal characteristics and circumstances of the victim and the assessment of harm will be an effective and important way of taking into consideration the impact of a particular crime on the victim.

In some cases no actual harm may have resulted and we will be concerned with assessing the relative dangerousness of the offender's conduct; it will consider the likelihood of harm occurring and the gravity of the harm that could have resulted.

A person who has been served with a financial penalty has the right to appeal to the First Tier Property Tribunal which will involve a hearing of the Council's decision to impose the penalty. The Tribunal has the power to confirm, vary (increase or reduce) or cancel the civil penalty imposed by the Council. The Tribunal can also dismiss an appeal if it concludes the appeal is frivolous, is an abuse of process or vexatious, or that it has no reasonable prospect of success.

Obtaining financial information

The statutory guidance advises that local authorities should use their powers under Schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 to, as far as possible, make an assessment of a Landlord's or Agent's assets and any income (not just rental or fee income) they receive when determining an appropriate penalty. The

Council will use such lawful means as are at its disposal to identify where assets might be found.

In setting a financial penalty, the Council may conclude that the Landlord or Agent is able to pay any financial penalty imposed unless the Council has obtained, or the Landlord or Agent has supplied, any financial information to the contrary.

The subject of a Final Notice, or a Notice of Intent where the subject does not challenge it, will be expected to disclose to the Council such data relevant to his/her financial position to facilitate an assessment of what that person can reasonably afford to pay.

Where the Council is not satisfied that it has been given sufficient reliable information, the Council will be entitled to draw reasonable inferences as to the person's means from evidence it has received, or obtained through its own enquiries, and from all the circumstances of the case which may include the inference that the person can pay any financial penalty.

Context

Below is a list of some, but not all factual elements that provide the context of the breach and factors relating to the Landlord or Agent. The Council will identify whether any combination of these, or other relevant factors, should result in an upward or downward adjustment from the starting point. In particular, relevant recent convictions are likely to result in a substantial upward adjustment.

In some cases, having considered these factors, it may be appropriate to move outside the identified category range which will not exceed the statutory maximum permitted in any case.

Factors increasing seriousness

Aggravating factors:

- Previous breaches of legislation

Previous convictions, having regard to:

- the nature of the offence to which the conviction relates and its relevance to the current breach; and,
- the time that has elapsed since the conviction:

Other aggravating factors may include:

- Motivated by financial gain.
- Deliberate concealment of illegal nature of activity.
- Established evidence of wider/community impact.
- Obstruction of the investigation.
- Record of poor compliance.
- Refusal of advice or training or to become a member of an accreditation scheme.

Factors reducing seriousness or reflecting personal mitigation:

- No previous or no relevant/recent breaches.
- No previous convictions or no relevant/recent convictions.
- Steps voluntarily taken to remedy problem.
- High level of co-operation with the investigation, beyond that which will always be expected.
- Good record of relationship with tenants.
- Self-reporting, co-operation and acceptance of responsibility.
- Good character and/or exemplary conduct.
- Mental disorder or learning disability, where linked to the commission of the breach.
- Serious medical conditions requiring urgent, intensive or long-term treatment and supported by medical evidence.

The Council will consider any factors which indicate that a reduction in the penalty is appropriate and in so doing will have regard to the following factors relating to the wider impacts of the financial penalty on innocent third parties; such as (but not limited to):

- The impact of the financial penalty on the Landlord or Agent's ability to comply with the law or make restitution where appropriate.
- The impact of the financial penalty on employment of staff, service users, customers and the local economy.

The following factors will be considered in setting the level of reduction. When deciding on any reduction in a financial penalty, consideration will be given to:

- The stage in the investigation or thereafter when the offender accepted liability
- The circumstances in which they admitted liability.

- The degree of co-operation with the investigation.

The maximum level of reduction in a penalty for an admission of liability will be one-third. In some circumstances there will be a reduced or no level of discount. This may occur for example where the evidence of the breach is overwhelming or there is a pattern of breaching conduct.

Any reduction should not result in a penalty which is less than the amount of gain from the commission of the breach itself.

Issue Notice of Intent

The Council will issue a Notice of Intent within 6 months of the enforcement authority having sufficient evidence that the Landlord or Agent has breached the TFA 2019. If the breach is ongoing the 6-month deadline continues until the breach ceases. A Notice of Intent can be served spontaneously.

While there are slight variations in the Statutory requirements according to which breach is being addressed a Notice of Intent will typically contain the date of the Notice, the amount of the proposed penalty, the reason for imposing the penalty and how the recipient can make representations concerning the penalty.

Consideration of representations and review of financial penalty where appropriate

The Council shall review the penalty and, if necessary, adjust the initial amount and represented in the Notice of Intent, to ensure that it fulfils the general principles set out in this policy.

Any quantifiable economic benefit(s) derived from the breach, including through avoided costs or operating savings, should normally be added to the total financial penalty arrived at. Where this is not readily available, the Council may draw on information available from enforcing authorities and others about the general costs of operating within the law. Whether the penalty will have the effect of putting the offender out of business will be relevant but in some serious cases this might be an acceptable outcome.

Totality of breaching conduct

Where the offender is issued with more than one financial penalty, the Council should consider the following guidance from the definitive guideline on Offences Taken into Consideration and Totality which appears to the Council to be an appropriate reference and guide.

As the total financial penalty is inevitably cumulative the Council should determine the financial penalty for each individual breach based on the seriousness of the breach and taking into account the circumstances of the case

including the financial circumstances of the Landlord or Agent as far as they are known, or appear, to the Council.

The Council shall add up the financial penalties for each offence and consider if they are just and proportionate. If the aggregate total is not just and proportionate the Council shall consider how to reach a just and proportionate total financial penalty. Where separate financial penalties are passed, the Council must take care to ensure that there is no double-counting.

Recording the decision

The officer making a decision about a financial penalty will record their decision giving reasons for coming to the amount of financial penalty that will be imposed.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms (England) Regulations 2015

Background

The regulations require Local Authorities to prepare and publish a Statement of Principles which it proposes to follow in determining the amount of a penalty charge.

This Statement details the principles that Reading Borough Council (the Council) will apply when requiring a landlord (this includes agents) to pay a financial penalty for breach of the regulations.

The Requirements under the Regulations

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms (England) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) require landlords who let properties under a tenancy to provide and undertake the following:

1. A smoke alarm is fitted to each storey of a property where a room is wholly or partly used as living accommodation.
2. A carbon monoxide alarm is fitted in any room of the property which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance.

3. Checks are made either by the landlord or on behalf of the landlord at the start of each new tenancy to ensure the alarms required are in proper working order.

For the purposes of the legislation, living accommodation is a room that is used for the primary purposes of living, or is a room in which a person spends a significant amount of time, and a bathroom or lavatory is classed within this definition. A tenancy begins on the day, under the terms of the tenancy, when a tenant is able to take possession of the property.

Enforcement

In the circumstances where the Council has reasonable grounds to believe that:

1. The smoke or carbon monoxide alarms required by the regulations have either not been fitted or there are insufficient numbers; or
2. The smoke or carbon monoxide alarms were not in proper working order at the start of the tenancy or licence;

The Council will within 21 days serve on the landlord (this includes agents if they are the immediate landlord) a Remedial Notice detailing the action to be taken to comply with the Regulations.

If the Council is satisfied that the landlord has not complied with the Remedial Notice within the 28 days given to do so, then the landlord may be served with a Penalty Charge by means of a Penalty Charge Notice and the Council will undertake the remedial work with the consent of the occupier.

The Penalty Charge

A penalty charge must be set at a level that is proportionate to the risk posed by non-compliance with the requirements of the Regulations and which will deter non-compliance. It should also eliminate any gain or benefit from non-compliance of the

Regulations and cover the costs incurred by the Council in administering and implementing the legislation.

Reading Borough Council will impose a penalty charge of £2,500 for a first offence and any subsequent offences will be levied at £5,000 which is the maximum amount that can be imposed under these Regulations. These fines are considered proportionate for non-compliance with the Remedial Notice for the following reasons:-

- Fire and Carbon Monoxide are two of the 29 hazards prescribed by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and often result in death and serious injury without the appropriate early warning measures in place such as smoke and carbon monoxide alarms;
- The penalties detailed in this Statement of Principles reflects the seriousness of matter and are at a level to deter non-compliance;
- The provision of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms does not place an excessive burden on a landlord. The cost of the alarms is low and in many cases they can be self-installed without the need for a professional contractor. The impact on occupiers, damage to property and financial costs resulting from a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning event far out-weighs the cost of installing alarms.
- The landlord will have been given ample opportunity with the issue of the Remedial Notice to carry out the necessary works and it is only a failure on their part to do so that will result in a Penalty Charge being issued.

On issuing the Penalty Charge the Landlord has 30 days from the date the Penalty Charge is issued to pay the fine imposed.

Appeals in relation to the Penalty Charge Notice

The landlord has a right to seek a review of the penalty charge notice by writing to the Council (details on the Notice) within 28 days of the Notice being issued.

On consideration of any representation and evidence, the penalty charge notice can be confirmed, varied or withdrawn. This decision is confirmed by issuing a decision notice on the landlord. If varied or confirmed, the notice shall state a further appeal can be made to a First Tier Property Tribunal and details given.

The Council intends to defend its decision to issue a penalty charge which will not only involve officer time but also specialist legal support. As a result the Council will seek to recover its legal costs in the event it should be required to defend its decision at the Tribunal.

Recovery of Penalty Charge

The Council may recover the penalty charge as laid out in the regulations. Due to costs incurred by the Council, any penalty charge notice shall be pursued for payment.

Review of Statement

This Statement of Principles shall be reviewed and amended to reflect any change in legislation, corporate policy or official guidance. Any amendment shall be in line with meeting the requirements of the legislation and in the public interest.

Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rent Sector (England) Regulations 2020

The requirements under the regulations

These regulations require landlords who let properties on specified tenancies to undertake the following:

2. To generally ensure the electrical safety standard is met.
3. To ensure the electrical installation within properties is tested by a competent person at intervals at no more than five years.
4. To ensure this testing set out in 2. above is carried out before the commencement of a new specified tenancy.
5. To obtain a test report from the competent person who carried out the testing specified in 2. above.
6. To ensure all necessary remedial work and further investigation indicated as necessary on the test report is carried out within 28 days or sooner if indicated by the test report.
7. To provide a copy of the report to tenants within 28 days of the testing being carried out and within seven days of receiving a request from the Council.

For the purposes of the legislation, a specified tenancy is one relating to residential premises in England which:

- a) grants one or more persons the right to occupy all or part of the premises as their only or main residence;
- b) provides for payment of rent (whether or not a market rent); and
- c) is not a tenancy of a description specified in Schedule 1 to the regulations;

Enforcement

In circumstances where the Council has reasonable grounds to believe there has been a failure by a landlord to comply with the requirements set out above, it will serve a Remedial Notice on the landlord within 21 days, requiring work to be carried out.

If the Council is satisfied that the landlord has not complied with the Remedial Notice within the 28 days given to do so then the Landlord may be served with a financial penalty and the Council may undertake the remedial work with the consent of the occupier.

The regulations grant the Council a power to take urgent remedial action where necessary. The decision to take urgent remedial action or to take remedial action following breach of a Remedial Notice will be determined on a case by case basis. The Council will seek to recover costs of remedial action taken.

The Penalty Charge

A Penalty Charge may be of such amount as the Council determines and shall not exceed £30,000.

To promote consistency of enforcement, the Council has determined starting points from which punitive fines will be determined. These are set out in the table below:

Type of Landlord	Offence category	Starting point		
		Major Impact	Medium impact	Low Impact
1 -2 properties	Deliberate	£5,000	£3,500	£2,000
	Negligent	£2,500	£1,750	£1,000
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200
3-5 properties	Deliberate	£10,000	£5,000	£2,500
	Negligent	£5,000	£2,500	£1,250
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200
6+ properties	Deliberate	£20,000	£16,000	£10,000
	Negligent	£10,000	£8,000	£5,000
	Low culpability	£500	£400	£200

The principles set out in above for the determination of a financial penalty under the Housing And Planning Act shall be applied to the determination of a Penalty Charge under these regulations.

Appeals in relation to the Penalty Charge Notice

The landlord has a right to seek a review of the penalty charge notice by writing to the Council within 28 days of the Notice being issued.

On consideration of any representation and evidence, the penalty charge can be confirmed, varied or withdrawn. This decision is confirmed by issuing a final notice on the landlord. If varied or confirmed, the notice shall state a further appeal can be made to a First Tier Property Tribunal and details given.

The Council intends to defend its decision to issue a penalty charge which will not only involve officer time but also specialist legal support. As a result, the Council will seek to recover its legal costs in the event it should be required to defend its decision at the Tribunal.

Recovery of Penalty Charge

The Council may recover the penalty charge as laid out in the regulations. Due to costs incurred by the Council, any penalty charge notice shall be pursued for payment.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 meant that from 1 st April 2018 it had become illegal for landlords to rent out property unless it met the minimum energy efficiency rating of E. However, there are some exemptions. The landlord will need to provide evidence of why they have been unable to meet the standard and to register an exemption. In most cases the exemption will last 5 years after which time the landlord must again try to improve the EPC rating of the property to the minimum rating of E.

The MHCLG has set up The National PRS Exemptions Register which is a digital service which allows landlords or agents acting on behalf of landlords to centrally register valid exemptions from the minimum energy efficiency requirements. The exemptions are detailed below

1. Where a recommended measure is not a ‘relevant energy efficiency improvement’ because the cost of purchasing and installing it cannot be wholly financed at a cost to the landlord of under £2,500.
2. Where the landlord has made all the ‘relevant Energy Efficiency improvements’ that can be made or where none can be made and the property remains below the minimum standard.
3. Wall Insulation exemption - applies where it is not possible to fit cavity wall insulation or internal or external insulation. In this circumstance the landlord will need to obtain a report from a specialist such as an architect, chartered surveyor or chartered engineer. This expert advice must be uploaded to the register.
4. In some circumstances it may not be possible to get third party consent for example from the local authority, mortgage lender or tenants. In these circumstances the ‘no consent’ exemption may apply and again the landlord will need to provide evidence through uploading correspondence/documentation to the register demonstrating consent was sought but not gained.

5. Where a landlord has obtained a report from a surveyor registered with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors that states that specific energy efficiency measures will reduce the market value of the property by more than 5%.

6. New landlord exemption - this applies when someone has had to become a landlord suddenly in which case an exemption of 6 months is allowed. At the end of this time either the property needs to have been brought up to a minimum EPC E standard or an exemption registered if applicable.

Where a landlord has let out a sub-standard property in breach of the regulations the local authority can impose a financial penalty up to a maximum of £5,000. It is important to note that this maximum amount of £5,000 applies per property and per breach of the Regulations. This means that if after having previously been fined up to £5,000 for failing to comply with the regulations, a landlord lets the property on a new tenancy without bringing it up to a minimum EPC E standard the Council can again levy financial penalties up to £5,000 in relation to the new tenancy. The policy is 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 table below sets out the Council's adopted fines.

Breach of the Regulations	Fine (1st Offence)
A) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for less than 3 months	£1,000
B) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for 3 months or more	£2,000
C) Landlord has included false or misleading information on the PRS Exemption Register	£500
D) Landlord fails to comply with compliance notice (this is a request for information on measures undertaken at a property)	£1,000

A local authority may not impose a financial penalty under both paragraphs (a) and (b) above in relation to the same breach of the Regulations. However, they may impose a financial penalty under either paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), together with financial

penalties under paragraphs (c) and (d), in relation to the same breach. Where penalties are imposed under more than one of these paragraphs, the total amount of the financial penalty may not be more than £5,000. The proposal is to levy a lower fine in the first instance and then full fine for any subsequent breaches at the point of a new tenancy. The rationale behind having a lower fine for the first offence than the maximum is to reduce the risk of appeals. Tribunals have held in the application of similar penalties that the fine should be proportionate.

Guidance issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) notes that an EPC is not required for HMOs which have not been subject to a sale in the past ten years, or which have not been let as a single rental in the past ten years.

Through the provision of energy efficiency measures such as heating and insulation, benefits are provided to tenants in terms of affordability and comfort but also reduces the risk of issues such as damp and mould in winter months. Excess cold is one of the key complaints the Council receive which can lead to enforcement action for landlords to provide adequate heating and thermal comfort under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which is described elsewhere in this policy.

Complaints

The Council has an established corporate complaints procedure for dealing with matters other than an appeal (see appeals above). All Council offices have copies of a leaflet explaining how to make a complaint. A complaint should be linked to the Council's systems and procedures and may be about delay, lack of response, discourtesy or any item that leaves cause for dissatisfaction with the Council's conduct.

Many of the enforcement actions covered in this policy are subject to an appeals process through the courts and tribunal service.

Policy Revision

Minor changes to policy delivery may be required from time to time. The Assistant Director of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services has delegated authority to make changes, which do not affect the broad thrust of policy direction. This will enable changes to policy delivery to be accommodated and best practice to be included without a formal re-adoption process.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	READING LIBRARIES: FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE AND LEISURE
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	DONNA PENTELOW SIMON SMITH	TEL:	0118 937 3422 0118 937 5970
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CULTURE; LIBRARY SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	donna.pentelow@reading.gov.uk simon.smith@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed strategic themes to guide the future direction of the Council's library service, upon which consultation with the public will take place.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Reading's library service has undergone substantial change since the Council implemented the last Library Services strategy in 2015/16. Significantly, the overall library service budget was reduced by around £600,000 or 40% of the said budget following two large sets of changes in 2017/18 and 2018/19, which

- * reduced opening hours at all sites
- * reduced staffing at all sites, supported by self service
- * did not involve the closure of any libraries
- * moved two libraries into hub buildings.

- 2.2 Additional income has been generated by Reading's libraries to reduce budget pressures through activities such as rental of space and a visa verification service. This additional income has avoided the need to make further savings since 2018.

- 2.2 Officers have reviewed the library service, informed by the data held by the service with a particular focus on maximising the benefits to Reading, and in light of the new Corporate plan, in order to produce the strategic themes.

- 2.3 The proposed key strategic priorities are as follows, and there is further background at Section 5 and Appendix 1.

- Supporting recovery from Covid-19
- Helping Children and Young People
- Improving Digital Inclusion

- Supporting improvement in Health, Wellbeing and Literacy
 - Providing access to quality cultural experiences
- 2.4 The review and proposed strategic priorities have been informed by:
- Patterns of library use across opening hours and where the busy periods are
 - Use as a percentage of population in different areas of Reading
 - How this use maps to areas of deprivation
 - Similarities and differences in profiles of the ages of those using the service
 - Where ICT users within libraries are coming from
- 2.5 The Strategy aims to ensure that the library service is forward looking, innovative and provides an excellent experience for everyone, as well as contributing as much as possible to the overall corporate priorities for Reading.
- 2.6 The proposed consultation is on the strategic themes, rather than any specific proposals. The consultation would also inform any potential changes to Central Library, as well as informing future delivery of the service.
- 2.7 This report includes Appendices as follows:
- Appendix 1 : Proposed Strategic Themes for Reading Libraries, 2022-27
- Appendix 2 : Summary background data underlying strategy
- Appendix 3 : Equality Impact Assessment relating to home service change

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 That Committee agrees to consult on the proposed strategic themes as set out in Appendix 1 in order to inform the Library Strategy and future service offer, including at any reconfigured Reading Central Library and Home Visiting Service, as set out in sections 6 and 7 of this report.
- 3.3 That Committee endorses the consultation approach and a 6 week consultation to commence during August 2021, subject to a further report to Committee in November 2021 setting out the outcome of the consultation exercise together with the a proposed Library Strategy 2022-27, informed by such consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

Service Context

- 4.1 Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act the Council is obliged to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all individuals who live, work or study within the borough. Reading Borough Council currently delivers this through a central library; 6 local branch libraries across the borough; a toy library ; a growing offer of e-resources; a mobile library and home visiting service for the elderly and those unable to leave home. The service offers a comprehensive range of services over and above the legal requirements specified in the 1964 Act.
- 4.2 The library service is open to all, but with a focus on targeting resources to improve outcomes for different groups or communities and meeting the Council's wider strategic priorities.

- 4.3 Since the initial lockdown closure in March 2020 due to Covid-19, the library service has obviously looked and felt quite different. However, since July 2020 and throughout all subsequent lockdowns, a form of physical library offer has been available to Reading's library users. From mid-May 2021 to date, all libraries have offered a limited service with reduced opening hours. Libraries were designated essential services for reasons of supporting access to digital services and for the impact access to books has on education and wellbeing and therefore a service has continued to be maintained.

Libraries have reached new audiences:

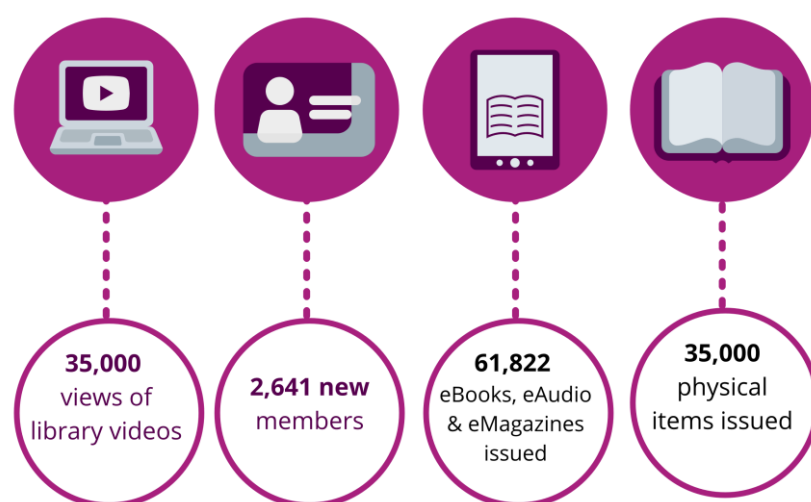
- Over 2,500 new members have joined since March 2020.
- Social media engagement went up by 1,000% in some cases, and increased from one post a day to around ten.
- Our story, rhymetime, craft and local history videos have been viewed over 35,000 times.
- These videos remain available, subject to publishers' copyright, via Reading Council YouTube/Facebook and the new streaming site, Reading Culture Live.

An expanded and improved digital experience:

- Online library resources improved and expanded.
- Issues of e-resources between April-September 2020 are three times what they were for the same period last year and have stayed at the new high level, with 61,822 items issued during 2020/21.
- The E-resources library is now the second busiest library in Reading when comparing to physical issues at library sites pre-March 2020.

Still providing a greatly valued face-to-face service:

- Face to face library services were maintained as essential services through the November 2020 and Spring 2021 lockdowns.
- 600 people per week accessing our libraries in person, borrowing 35,000 items.
- 45% of all books we loan are children's books.
- The home visiting service is supporting c.400 of the most vulnerable people in Reading and has been operating since July 2020, having been suspended during the first lockdown in March 2020.
- Around 90% of branch library use is from within the immediate library catchment - valued local services.
- Libraries remained open during autumn 2020 and spring 2021 lockdowns.



Library Service Strategy - the need:

- 4.4 As part of the first phase of substantial change in 2015/16, the library service developed the 2015/16 Strategy - the time that has now passed since the development and implementation of the 2015/16 Strategy and the subsequent changes to the Library budget mean that it is now a timely moment to review this document.
- 4.5 Whilst many of the reasons given by residents and library users previously for valuing the library service are likely to remain, a new library strategy will set out what we can achieve in the next few years.
- 4.6 In previous library service consultation exercises in 2015, 2016 and 2018, customers highlighted the importance of libraries in:
- Providing local and free access to a wide range of books.
 - Supporting educational development - including the development of literacy, language and IT skills.
 - Supporting communities and fostering social interaction - especially between young children, their guardians and older people.
 - Providing access to IT and thereby tackling digital exclusion (with 12% of respondents previously reporting that they are reliant on libraries for their access to the internet).
 - Providing a safe space for vulnerable groups.
- 4.7 It is too early to tell what the long-term impact of Covid-19 may be on the library service's offer of shared space, books, resources and equipment. However, the library service, by virtue of being rooted in local communities, is ideally placed to respond locally to the changed world following Covid-19.
- 4.8 A renewed library strategy is therefore essential in order to prioritise limited resource, to make the biggest difference to residents, to provide a driver for the service and to attempt to increase the resilience the service has, all in compliance with the Council's legal obligations as set out in the 1964 Act - see Section 11.

5. DRAFT LIBRARY STRATEGY 2022-27

- 5.1 The Council's aim is to ensure provision of a comprehensive, modern, affordable and efficient service for Reading which reflects local needs and makes the best use of

resources. Legally, under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, a local authority must provide a library service and this service must be 'comprehensive and efficient'.

- 5.2 We have examined the year 2019/20 in detail, looking at every recorded transaction to get a detailed picture of how the service was being used and by who. We used 2019/20 as a full year without any changes to library opening hours, other than building works, and prior to Covid-19. We did have some library closures during this year for building works but this has not materially altered patterns of use. Over one million transactions took place within the library service during the year.
- 5.3 We wanted to see how well used the library was in different areas, when we were being used, who our users were, what they were borrowing and how ICT provision was being used.
- 5.4 By examining the data and overlaying geographical and other data we have been able to highlight some areas for further focus and these form the basis of the overall strategy.
- 5.5 Our core areas of focus have been:
 - * patterns of library use across opening hours and where the busy periods are
 - * use as a percentage of population in different areas of Reading
 - * how this use maps to areas of deprivation
 - * similarities and differences in profiles of the ages of those using the service
 - * where ICT users within libraries are coming from
- 5.6 The data is presented at Appendix 2 and has informed the proposed strategic themes for the library service to focus on. Should the strategic themes be adopted, following the outcome of the consultation process, officers will bring forward a library strategy and delivery plan to show how we will deliver against the priorities.
- 5.7 Usage patterns for previous years remain very relevant, and have also been factored in, however it is the detailed data review of 2019/20 that has driven the drafting of the strategic themes.
- 5.8 Whilst usage in 2020/21 was clearly very different, we will continue to reflect on any changes in usage as services progressively return in 2021/22 and learn from other authorities who have started a fuller reopening programme earlier.

6. READING CENTRAL LIBRARY

- 6.1 Reading Central Library was built by Berkshire County Library Service as the County Library Headquarters and opened in 1985.
- 6.2 The building has never undergone full refurbishment and many parts of the building are, after 35 years, either end of life or very tired.
- 6.3 The library does not currently provide an attractive environment for customers, despite the ongoing best efforts of library staff and piecemeal changes over the years. There have been many changes made which have all taken a toll on the building, and the building is no longer a flagship central library that meets the Council's aspirations for its customers. The building is one of the busiest Council buildings in Reading, welcoming over 200,000 visitors a year (pre-Covid 19), providing services over 3 floors, with partner organisations based in the building, and generating a high level of income through rental and transactional services totalling over £300,000 per year.

- 6.4 There are issues in and around the building with antisocial behaviour which any proposed change should seek to address, as well as a need to configure and secure spaces within the building, better provision for those working and studying, better lighting, a better layout and a reconfiguration of staff space.
- 6.5 The building therefore either needs a full refurbishment and reconfiguring to make best use of space, or the library will need to relocate, as the current situation is not sustainable or desirable. Either option is likely to require a substantial capital investment, for which there is provision in the current capital budget:

Capital programme	2021/22	2022/23
Central Library	£920,000	£230,000

- 6.6 The chance to refurbish Reading Central Library or create a new central library in Reading has not happened since 1985, and as part of the consultation on the strategic themes, it is also proposed we consult residents and customers on what they would like to see in the town's flagship library, to better inform decision-making as we look how this space could be configured.
- 6.7 The consultation will not include any potential locations, these will be determined by part of an overall Council asset and estates review. Anything arising from this review would be brought forward to councillors.
- 6.8 Any changes to Central Library will be informed by and help deliver the net zero carbon plan and energy reductions required by Reading Borough Council. This will reduce ongoing costs, improve efficiency and reduce energy requirements. Works would be informed by a decarbonisation feasibility study.

7. HOME LIBRARY SERVICE

- 7.1 As part of an initial assessment of how the home visiting service has run under lockdown, is further proposed that we would consult on the vehicles used by the home visiting service.
- 7.2 The home service delivers library stock to those unable to visit a library building.
- 7.3 Due to Covid-19, the entire home service ceased between March and July 2020 and restarted in August 2020.
- 7.4 The majority of customers prior to Covid-19 were visited at their own homes by staff or volunteers in a delivery vehicle and this continues and would continue to be the case.
- 7.5 A larger vehicle, which provided 5 public stops with the ability for customers to board and choose books, as well as visits to sheltered housing complexes, has not been provided since March 2020, due to being replaced by a smaller vehicle. Those customers who previously used this element of service have been offered and provided with direct delivery to doors.
- 7.6 We would seek views on removing the larger vehicle from service and offering all services on this 'direct to home from staff and volunteer' model, which has been running successfully since August 2020.
- 7.7 All customers currently having visits from the home service would still be visited, and any library item or a selection of items could be provided to these customers.

- 7.8 Subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, if we changed entirely to this model, there would be a small £5,000 net saving in fleet costs and we would look to move to electric vehicles as part of the change.
- 7.9 Any decision if required relating to this change would come forward to committee in November.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 8.1 The Strategic themes directly contribute towards the achievement of the following Corporate Plan priorities

Healthy Environment

- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Services provided in local communities, with associated environmental benefits

Thriving Communities

- Tackling inequalities
- Dealing with effects of pandemic

Inclusive Economy

- Building on Cultural Heritage
- Creating skills, education and training opportunities

- 8.2 The corporate plan also highlights the need for Reading to be 'Developing our library network to provide innovative local services in person and online' - the Strategy will support this work

- 8.3 The corporate plan can be viewed here:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/council/policies-finance-and-legal-information/corporate-plan/council-corporate-plan-2021-to-2022/>

- 8.4 The Strategic themes have been informed by

Customer Experience Strategy

'Every interaction will be a positive experience - better, faster, simpler'

Libraries are one of the busiest face to face Reading Borough Council services.

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s9963/Customer%20Experience%20Strategy.pdf>

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

'Health and wellbeing is about the whole person - giving physical, emotional and social aspects equal attention. It is about improving the way people feel and function today and increasing their chances of longer and healthier lives'

By providing resources, activities and information, and a listening ear, libraries promote, support and help with mental and physical wellbeing, loneliness and other support.

https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2017-2020_final.pdf

Culture and Heritage Strategy

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.

By providing spaces for artists and performers across Reading and providing inspirational culture in community venues, we can engage people in stories and storytelling in all forms.

<https://images.reading.gov.uk/2020/01/Culture-and-Heritage-Strategy.pdf>

- 8.5 In addition, any changes to buildings would be done with environmental and carbon reduction principles, in line with further notes at Section 13 below.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the consultation takes place during August and September. . The aims of the consultation would be to

- Establish the level of support for the principles that will underpin the new Library Strategy and see if it was felt we were focusing on the right areas
- Get feedback over any potential areas for Central library change to focus on
- Get feedback over the future direction of the home delivery service.

- 9.2 The consultation would utilise the Council's consultation hub, and would also use the following ways to generate feedback, some of which we would run ourselves and some with a consultation partner.

- Contacting library members by email
- Highlighting in Library/Council social media feeds
- Posting information directly on the library website
- Paper forms to also be made available and picked up/posted on request.
- Online/in person drop ins
- Highlighting to all relevant groups in order to obtain feedback and raise awareness
- Some targeted work in areas close to libraries with non-library members.
- Direct engagement with home library service members

- 9.3 The consultation will encompass a brief questionnaire as well as targeted exercises.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10.2 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.3 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 10.4 As we are consulting on strategic direction and possible provision of service in a refurbished/relocated library, there are currently no concrete proposals in this area requiring an equalities impact assessment. However, were this to change, it will be necessary to consider the equalities impact of any final recommendation once arrived at following consultation.
- 10.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been done for the consultation on possible changes to the home visiting service and this is included at Appendix 3. To note that any change would come back to committee for approval with a further EIA.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all persons’ in the area that want to make use of it (section 7), taking into account local needs and resources. Further, local councils must:
- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the Library Service (section 7(2)(b))
 - lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b))
 - keep adequate stocks for borrowing/reference ‘sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children’
- 11.2 It is the statutory duty of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to superintend, and promote the improvement of, the public Library Service provided by local authorities in England and secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred on them as library authorities. The Secretary of State has a statutory power to intervene when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service (section 10). He/she will only intervene after careful consideration of local authorities’ compliance with the terms of the 1964 Act. This power to intervene has been utilised on only one occasion since 1964, with a public inquiry on the Wirral in 2009.

- 11.3 In October 2014, the Secretary of State, following receipt of a complaint in regards to Sheffield Library Service, issued a 'minded to' letter in October 2014, and in March 2015 issued a final decision letter. The decision letters cited the following observations of Ouseley J in *Bailey v London Borough of Brent* [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin):

A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.

- 11.4 The letters also noted the view that:
- a wide range of approaches are open to the local authority when deciding how to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
 - the Secretary of State does not seek to proscribe how local authorities discharge their primary duty.
- 11.5 In determining whether to order an inquiry, the Secretary of State gives consideration to a number of factors, including:
- whether there is any serious doubt or uncertainty as to whether the local authority is (or may cease to be) complying with its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
 - whether the local authority appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way
 - whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the local authority's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community
 - whether the local authority appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals
 - whether the local authority has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals
 - whether the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy
 - the advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives
 - whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered
- 11.6 The Secretary of State also noted that, as confirmed by the High Court in *R (Green) v Gloucestershire City Council* [2011] EWHC 2687 (Admin):

The availability of resources is highly material to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service. The section 7 duty cannot be exempt or divorced from resource issues and cannot in law escape the reductions which have been rendered inevitable in the light of the financial crisis engulfing the country.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There is no saving or increase in expenditure directly arising from this consultation.
- 12.2 The cost of engaging an external provider to run the consultation would be picked up by existing library and culture service budgets.
- 12.3 Subject to a strategy being ultimately adopted, there may be changes to the revenue and capital budgets required, but these would be subject to future decisions by the council.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 13.2 The proposed strategic principles or any strategy arising would not directly contribute to changes in this area.
- 13.3 Any environmental or climate related issues arising as part of works to Central Library would be fully considered and would contribute to the net zero aim by 2030. Should any works progress with Central Library then further opportunities would be taken to improve the energy efficiency of the building, which currently rates C-E on an Energy Performance Certificate scale. Overall any review of library buildings will include environmental improvements, in line with ongoing work on building efficiency and carbon reduction.
- 13.4 The possible change to the home library service could mean removal of an older vehicle and the use of smaller, more efficient vehicles to visit customers. As we move to an electric fleet, this will more than offset the increased number of journeys made by the smaller vehicles.

APPENDIX ONE

DRAFT LIBRARY STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES 2022-27

The proposed principles underlying a future strategy are

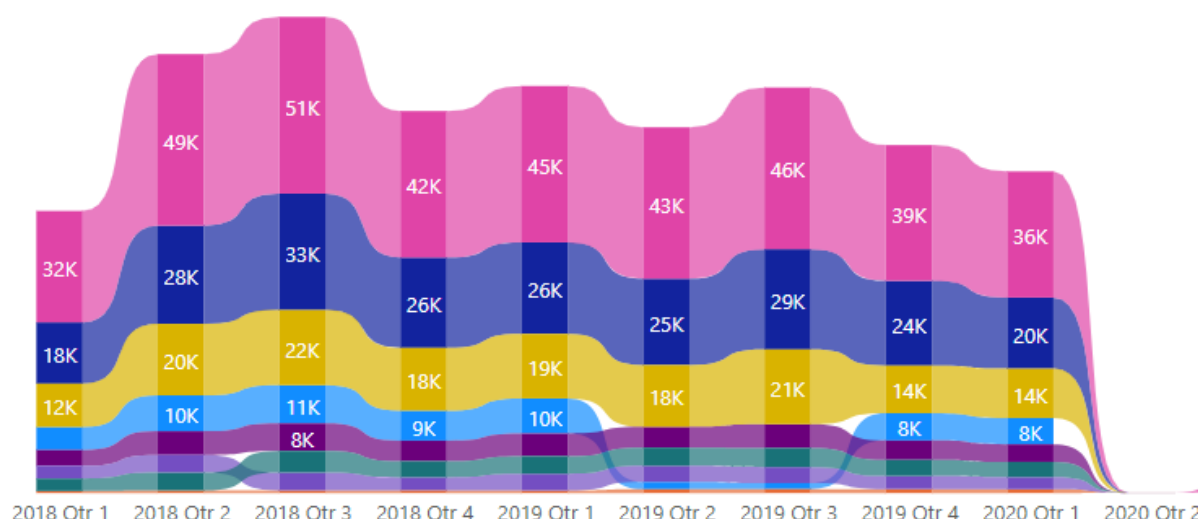
- **Supporting recovery from Covid-19**
Being a trusted, open space in local communities
Linking to wider community projects to support residents
Providing a quality service, when people need it
- **Helping Children and Young People**
Providing access to inspiring, relevant collections and spaces
Encouraging reading for pleasure
Supporting early speech and language
- **Improving Digital Inclusion**
Providing free fixed PC and wifi use in communities
Encouraging those without access to use the library
Providing an easy to use online service
- **Supporting improvement in Health, Wellbeing and Literacy**
Contributing to levelling up agendas through library usage and promotion
Helping to reduce inequality and improve mental and physical health outcomes
Encouraging reading in all forms at all ages
- **Providing access to quality cultural experiences**
Working with cultural organisations locally and regionally
Providing a platform for culture rooted in local communities
Encouraging participation in activities

APPENDIX TWO UNDERLYING DATA SUMMARY

Chart A - Breakdown of issues by year,quarter and location,2018-2020

Issues by Year, Quarter and Location

Location ● Battle ● Caversham ● Mobile ● Palmer ● Reading Central ● Southcote ● Tilehurst ● Web ● Whitley



This shows absolute numbers of loans across a time period, broken down by site. To note that Battle was closed for building works in part of 2019, and that Q1 in this chart is Jan-Mar.

Table 1 - Breakdown of loans per hour of opening

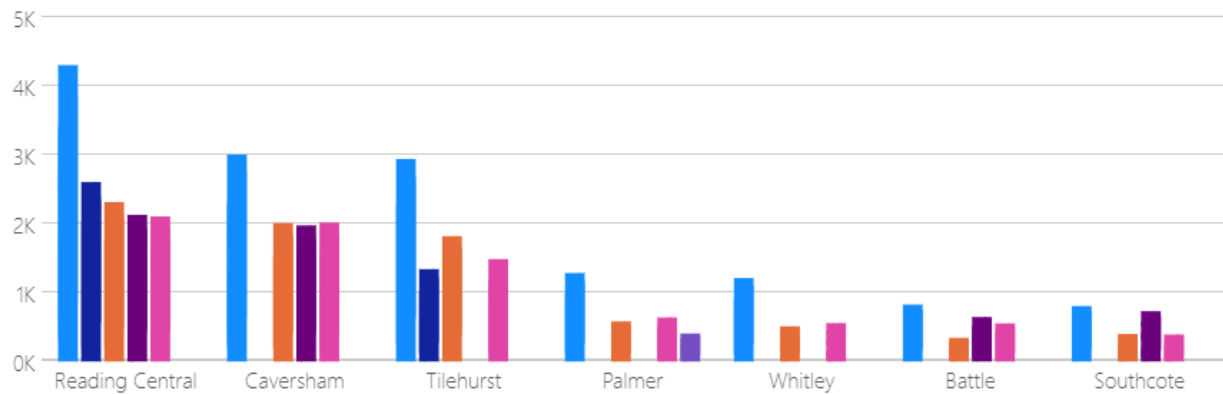
	2018/19	2019/20
Central	46.58	50.02
Caversham	39.78	41.43
Tilehurst	36.38	36.54
Battle	18.49	18.92
Palmer Park	14.21	13.52
Southcote	13.05	9.82
Whitley	13.70	12.64

This indicates that as hours reduced, usage did reduce but not as quickly at many sites, making some hours of opening busier than they were before. The data takes account of days of closure in 2018/19 for library moves at Southcote and Whitley, and any closures for building works in 2019/20

Chart B - Number of loans per number of opening hours in a day (2019/20)

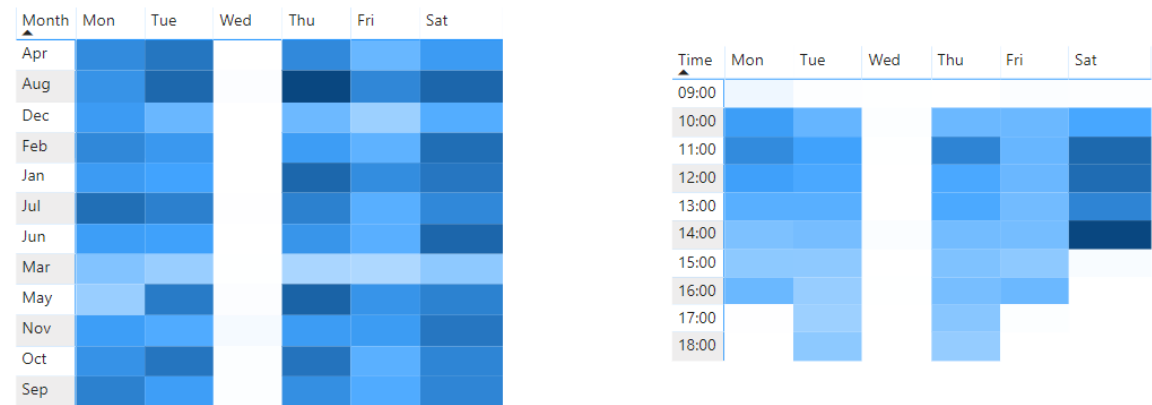
Number of Loans Per Number of Opening Hours in a Day (19/20)

Week_Day: Sat Mon Thu Fri Tue Wed



This shows the cumulative borrowing through the year split by opening hours and site, to show the busiest days. The process was to total all the loans across the year, then to check which day of the week items were loaned to get a total for (eg) Monday loans, then divide by opening hours on that day. This illustrates peak days at each site more clearly and shows the importance of Saturdays.

Chart C Central library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods



These and subsequent charts D-I are a breakdown with darker colours indicating busier periods, both by day and month, and then by hour of the day, to pick up where sites are busiest and allow comparisons. White space indicates closure.

This further shows the busiest times are generally Saturdays.

Chart D Caversham library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

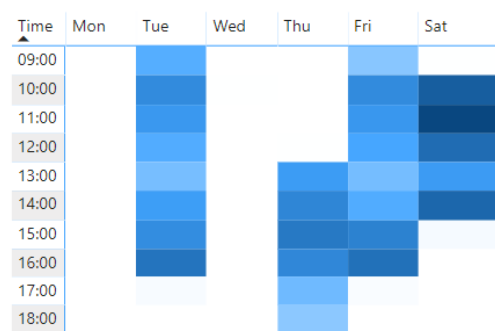
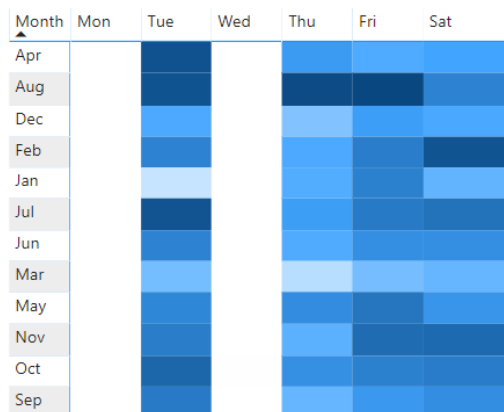


Chart E Tilehurst library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

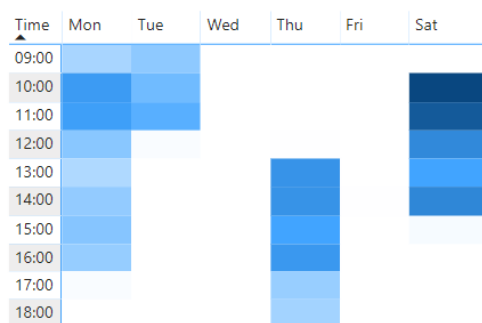
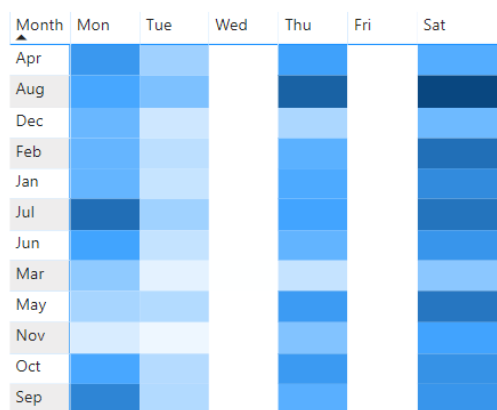


Chart F Battle library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

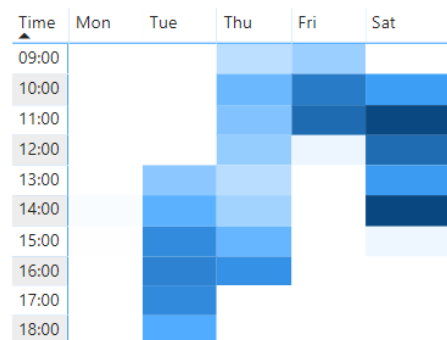
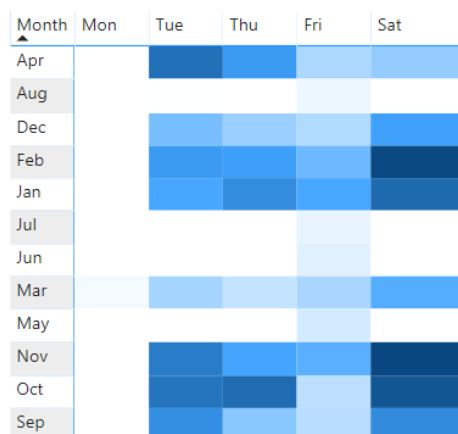


Chart G Palmer Park library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

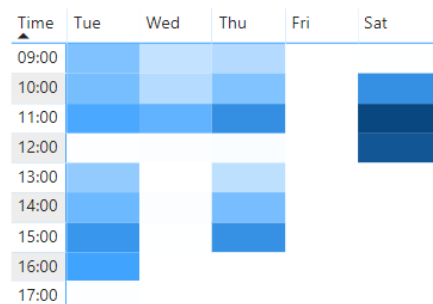
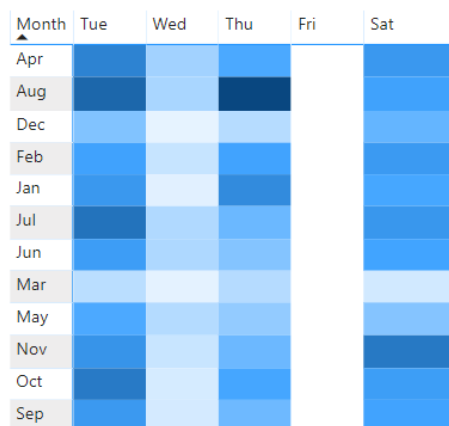


Chart H Southcote library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

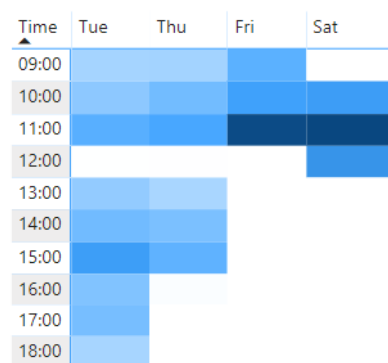
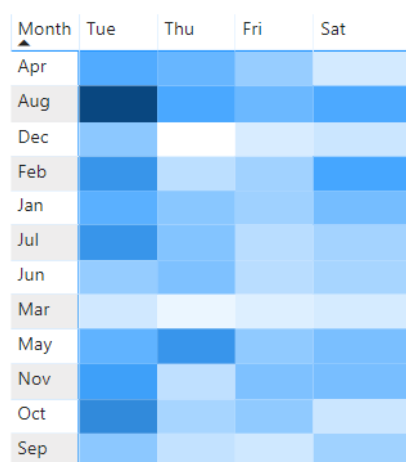


Chart I Central library breakdown of business - split by month and day (left) and time period in days (right) - darker colours indicate busier periods

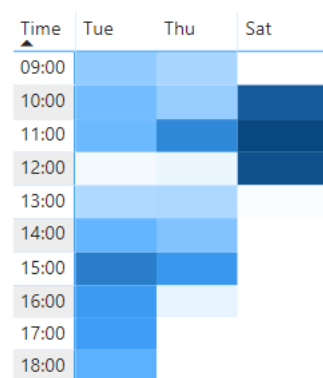
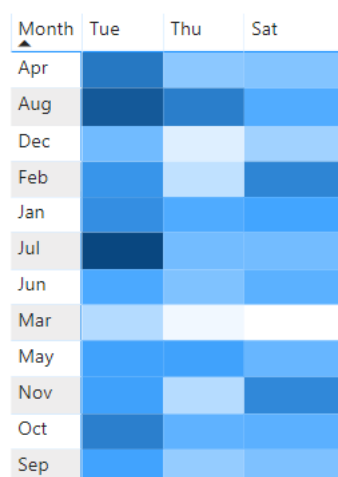
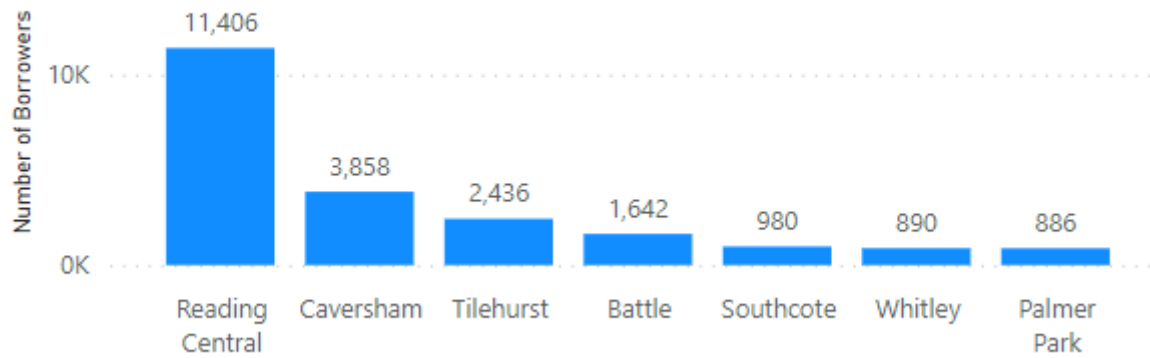


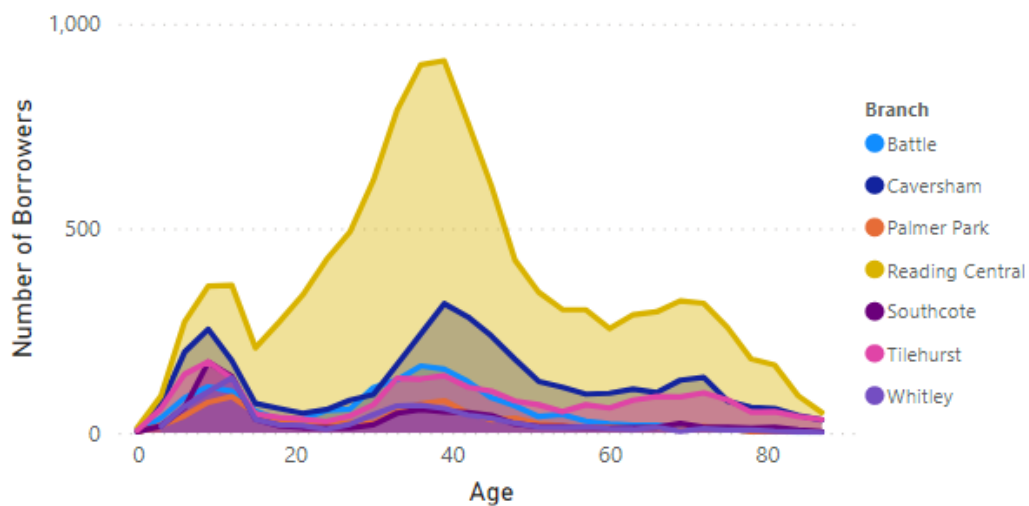
Chart J - Number of unique borrowers by branch (all) 19/20

Number of Borrowers by Branch



This chart is a count of unique cards used at each site over the course of a year. Cards can be used at more than one site.

Chart K - number of unique borrowers by age at each library including Reading



This chart shows an age breakdown for each site of those using the library for borrowing across the year. The chart below is the same information with Central library removed to allow easier comparison. It can be seen that whilst there is a broadly similar pattern of peaks with children and 35-45 year-old adults, the extent to which there is a third peak of older adults using varies.

Chart L - unique number of borrowers by age at each library excluding Reading

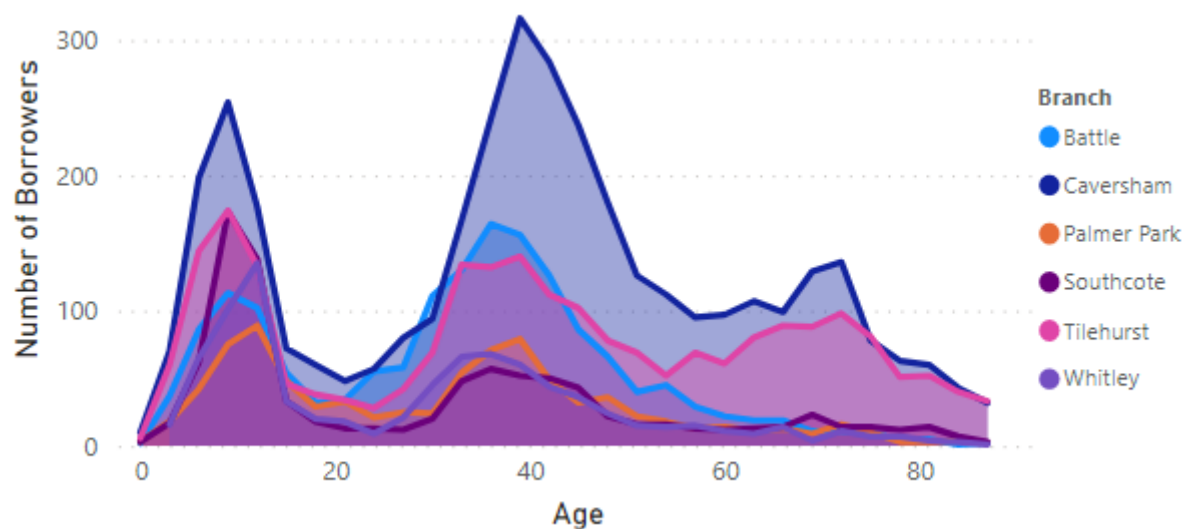
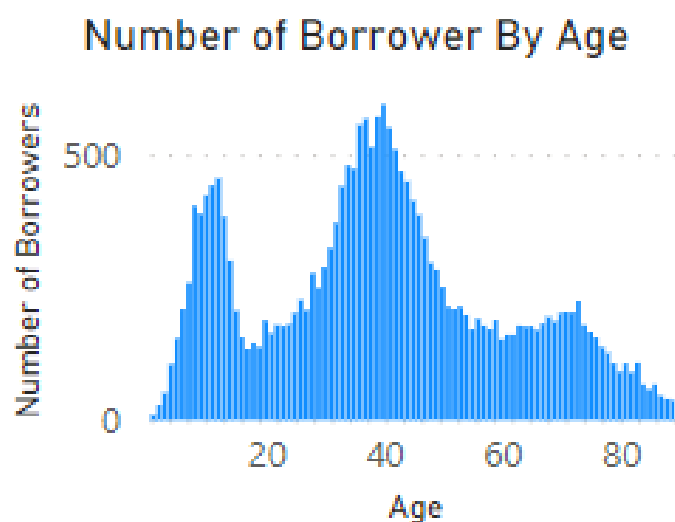
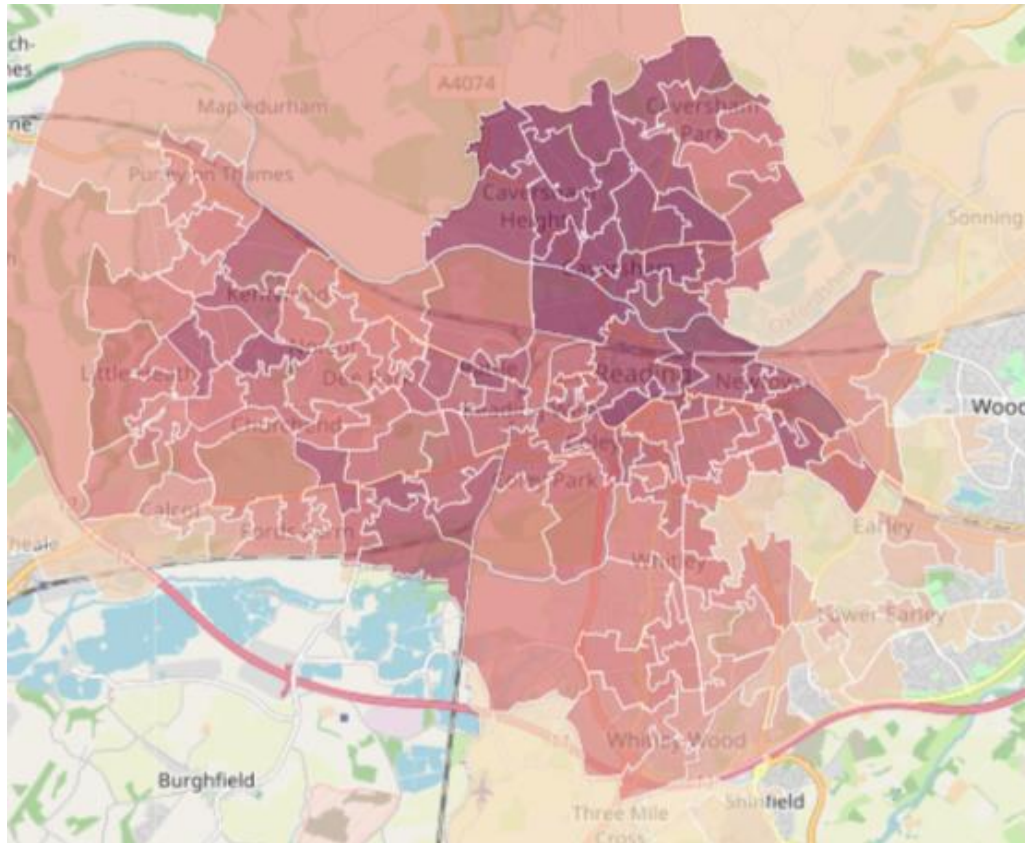


Chart M - overall number of borrowers in service by age



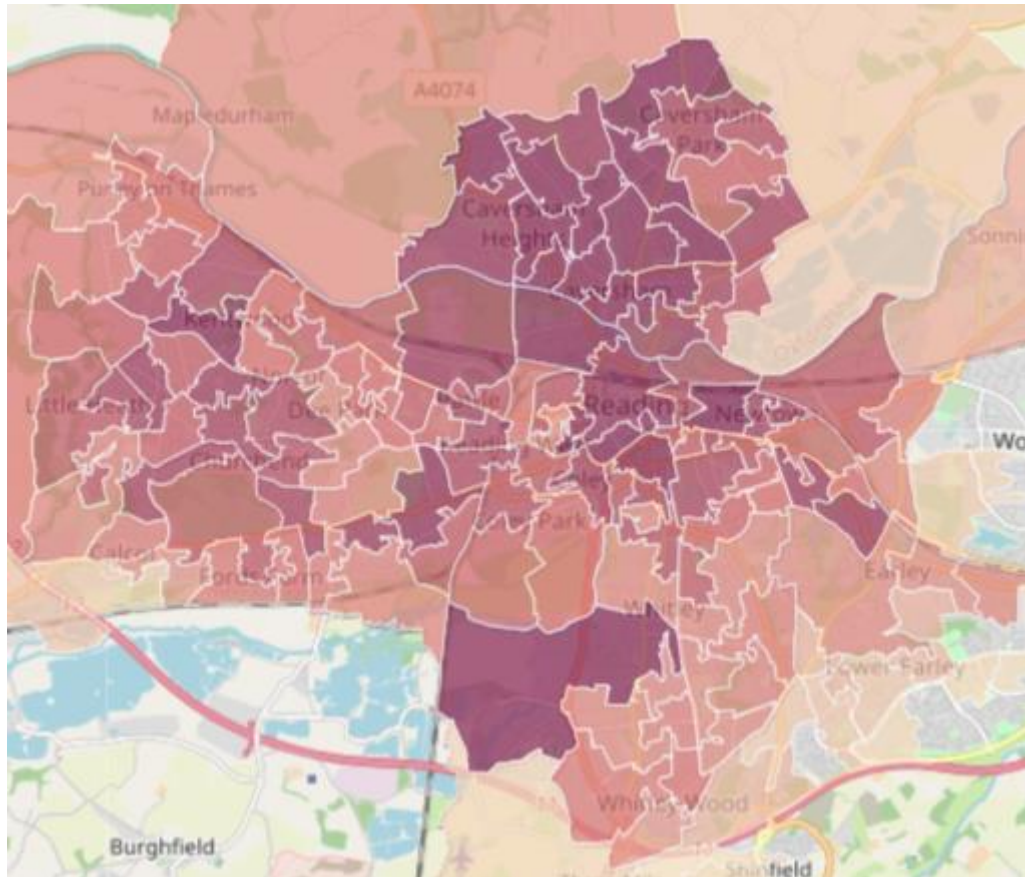
This is a breakdown for the whole service showing the number of people using the service in each year of age. This peak around 40 is matched with ICT use.

Map Z **Reading Borough by local area - dark colours indicate a higher percentage of borrowers per population in that area**



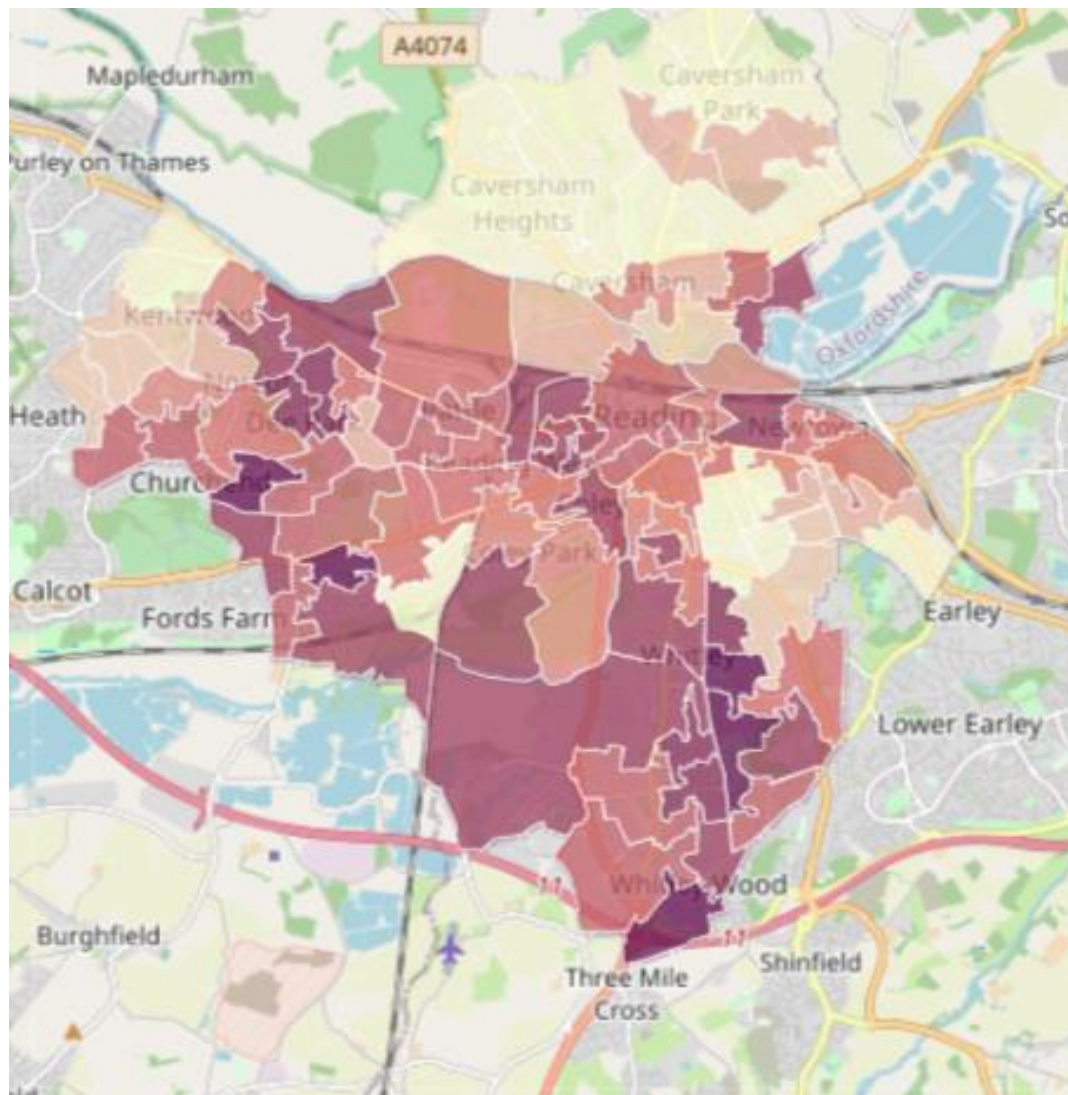
This map takes each Local Super Output Area (LSOA) small part of Reading and compares number of active users of the library with the population of that area. Darker areas indicate a greater number of active library users in that area as a proportion of the population. This map shows heavier use in Caversham and less use in South Reading, for example

Map Y **Reading Borough by local area - dark colours indicate a higher absolute number of transactions assigned to borrowers living in that area**



This map takes each Local Super Output Area (LSOA) small part of Reading and shows absolute numbers of users in each area, rather than relative to population. Darker areas indicate a greater number of active library users in that area. This map shows heavier use in Caversham and some other pockets in South, East and West.

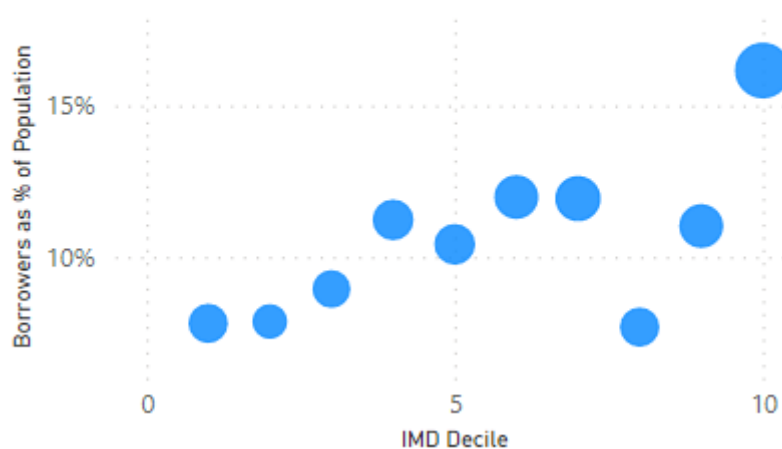
Map X **Areas of Reading based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation - darker colours mean higher levels of deprivation**



This map shows areas of Reading with darker areas indicating higher levels of deprivation.

Chart N

Borrowers as % of Population and Loans_Per_Population
by IMD Decile



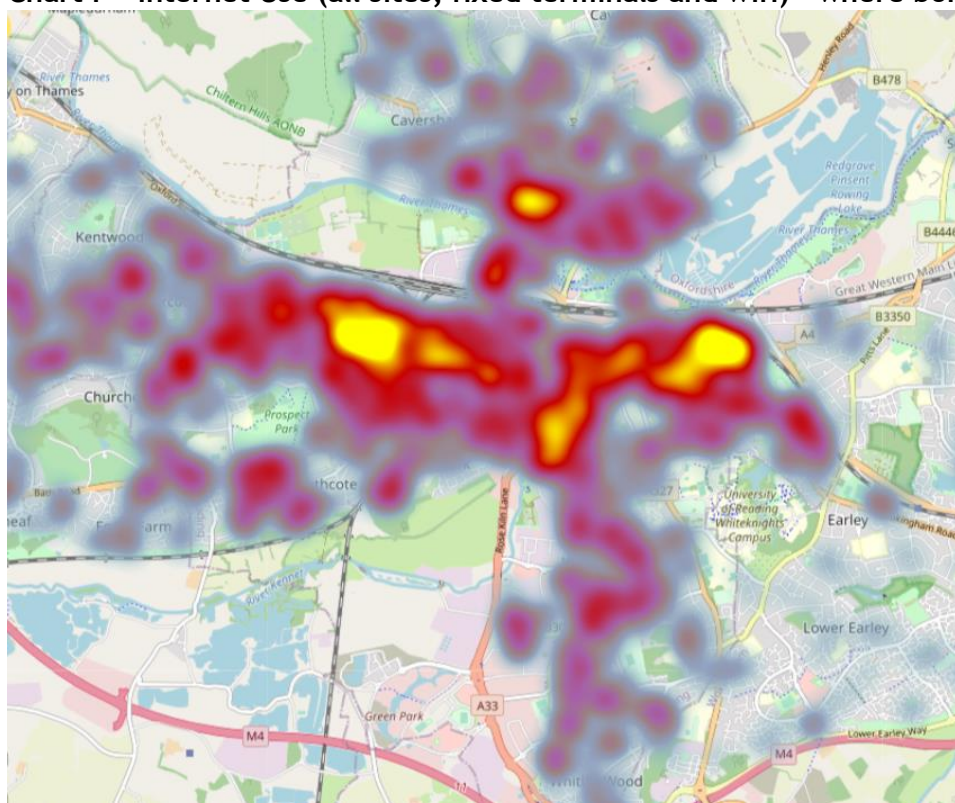
By looking in each area's placing by decile of deprivation, and then looking at the numbers of borrowers as a proportion of population, it is clear from this chart (and the following one for health), that people are more likely to be borrowers in less deprived areas.

Chart O

Borrowers as % of Population and by Health Deprivation and Disability Decile (10 - least deprived)



Chart P - Internet Use (all sites, fixed terminals and wifi) - where borrowers come from



Whilst Reading Central has a far higher number of terminals and space to use wifi, the area where users of ICT in libraries come from is very heavily centred around a zone from Palmer Park to Norcot.

APPENDIX THREE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR POSSIBLE CHANGE TO HOME SERVICE

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

For advice on this document please contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email Claire.Muir@reading.gov.uk.

Please contact the Project Management Office at pmo@reading.gov.uk for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Directorate: DEGNS

Service: Library Home Service

Name: Simon Smith

Job Title: Library Services Manager

Date of assessment 12 May 2021

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
0.1	Initial	SS	12/5/21	

Scope your proposal

- What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Examine removal of 'large mobile' vehicle from home library service provision - this would

a) remove 5 public stops made by the 'large mobile'

The alternative provided would be direct delivery of items to customers at home, by staff or volunteers using small vehicles.

- **Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

Customers will get service delivered directly to door.

- **What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

Removal of a space that is currently provided to a cohort of users, however space inside the vehicle is very limited - the change would mean that customers unable to leave home other than to get onto the vehicle would still be served in a way that the majority of service users currently are.

- **Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Customers

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

- Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.

Yes

- Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.

No

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel. Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable. This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[Consultation manager form - Reading Borough Council Dash](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Library customers	Consultation - all contacted and talked through	Summer 2021

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

- Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes
-

The proposal would remove the ability to browse stock on board a vehicle that takes a selection of library stock around the Borough and replace it with providing a smaller selection of books direct to the user.

If a user is unable to visit a physical library, this proposal would remove this element of direct choice.

By working with the customer, and knowing the customer, a tailored selection of stock could be provided for the customer to select from.

The customer can request any item or collection of items from the overall library stock.

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on age
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes
-

The proposal would remove the ability to browse stock on board a vehicle that takes a selection of library stock around the Borough and replace it with providing a smaller selection of books direct to the user.

If a user is unable to visit a physical library, this proposal would remove this element of direct choice.

By working with the customer, and knowing the customer, a tailored selection of stock could be provided for the customer to select from.

The customer can request any item or collection of items from the overall library stock.

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief
 - Is there a negative impact? No
-

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

(Delete numbers below which don't apply)

1. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale

There would be a consultation on this change to inform decision making, where any customers affected would be consulted and have the alternative set out for them. This consultation is due for Summer 2021 and would inform final decision making. No customer would miss out on a service as a result of this change. The proposed alternative has had to be running since Covid-19 started as the previous model of service could not be provided.

We are not currently able to reintroduce the service under current restrictions

- How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?
-

Ongoing contact and feedback from customers.

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021		
TITLE:	ACCEPTANCE OF CULTURE RECOVERY AND HERITAGE GRANTS		
LEAD COUNCILLORS:	CLLR KAREN ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	DONNA PENTELOW	TEL:	07921 941 075
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR CULTURE	E-MAIL:	donna.pentelow@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the award of a round two Arts Council England (ACE) culture recovery fund and leisure recovery fund, totalling £527,000.
- 1.2 In January 2021, Arts Council England announced a second round of Culture Recovery Funding to provide grants to support cultural organisations as they transition back to a viable and sustainable operating model during April-June 2021. A bid for up to £487,000 was submitted to round two of the culture recovery fund to support the reopening of The Hexagon, South Street and Reading Museum. In March the Council was notified that it had been successful with its bid for the full amount.
- 1.3 In June 2020, the council submitted an Expression of Interest to Historic England for a grant to their Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund to repairs some of the grade II listed chest tombs in St Laurence's Churchyard, in November we were informed that we were invited to submit a round two application and in January 2021 the council was notified that it had been successful with its bid of £25,000.
- 1.4 In February 2021 the Council submitted an application to Arts Council England under the project grant funding, for £15,000 to support specific artistic and cultural activities to the celebrate the 900th anniversary at Water fest. in May 2021 the council was informed it had been successful with its bid.
- 1.5 The organisations provided the Council with limited windows within which to accept the grants, and the Council accepted the grants within the grant offer acceptance period.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Committee notes the successful applications and acceptance of Arts Council England's culture recovery fund grant of £487,000, Historic England's Covid-19

Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund grant of £25,000 and Arts Council England's project grant fund of £15,000 by the Executive Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth.

- 2.2 That the Executive Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation, be authorised to allocate the grant funding of £487,000 from the Arts Council England's culture recovery fund to support The Hexagon, South Street and Reading Museum as they transition back to a viable and sustainable operating model.
- 2.3 That the Executive Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation, be authorised to allocate the grant fund of £25,000 from Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund for the repairs and conservation of six of the listed chest tombs within St Laurence's Churchyard.
- 2.4 That the Executive Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation be authorised to allocate the grant fund of £15,000 from Arts Council England's project grant funding to support agreed specific cultural activities for the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey at Water Fest on the 19 June 2021.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 External funding is an important source of income to the Council, but funding conditions need to be carefully considered prior to entering into funding agreements, to ensure that: (i) They are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Council; (ii) The necessary procedures are in place to meet funding conditions and reporting requirements; and (iii) Appropriate budget provision is available if 'match funding' is required.
- 3.2 In March 2020 when the country moved into lockdown The Hexagon, South Street and Reading Museum were forced to close among many other businesses and venues. The Hexagon reopened for public performances in October 2020. As of 5 November 2020, all three venues are closed again under current lockdown restrictions. To mitigate these losses, staff were furloughed where applicable or redeployed and the Council has also been able to claim some of the lost income from central government a part of the scheme to compensate local authorities for irrecoverable income losses from sales, fees and charges. The scheme enables authorities to recover 75p in every £1 of budgeted income lost due to COVID-19 restrictions this financial year once the authority has absorbed 5% of those losses themselves.
- 3.3 In January 2021 Arts Council England announced a second round of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) designed to support cultural organisations as they transition back to a viable and sustainable operating model during April-June 2021.
- 3.4 A bid was submitted to the ACE CRF covering the costs associated with The Hexagon, South Street and Reading Museum. The bid outlined the costs, activity and investment required to re-open the venues to the public when the roadmap allowed. The bid

included costs relating to salaries, utilities, marketing and professional fees relating to supporting the venues while closed and preparing the venues to re-open to the public.

- 3.5 The bid also outlined the financial procedures in place including a financially robust review of accounts and ongoing finances, and dedicated finance and accountancy support.
- 3.6 St Laurence's Churchyard, is no longer in use for burials and is managed by Reading Borough Council as public amenity space with a well-used path connecting the Town Hall Square with Forbury Gardens and the wider Abbey Quarter. However, eighteenth and nineteenth century listed chest tombs which are at varying degrees of dilapidation, including subsidence, are at risk of losing stone panels, erosion, frost damage, broken slabs, plant growth, accelerating water damage and the risk of vandalism. Covid 19 crisis has seen an increase of vandalism of heritage structures, including these churchyard tombs. The reduction of grounds maintenance, due to necessary prioritisation during the various lockdowns, has also exacerbated plant growth on these listed structures, accelerating their degradation.
- 3.7 In summer 2020 Historic England released a Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund, the council submitted an Expression of Interest in October 2020 and subsequently a second-round application in November 2020, that was successful in January 2021. This grant will help to fulfil another element of the on-going Abbey Quarter project and vision, further enhancing the rich heritage of the town on a key pedestrian route which connects the railway station, the historic high street and Reading Museum with the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins. This conservation work will help with the provision of much needed, well kept open spaces for Reading's residents and visitors to enjoy, further reinforcing the sense of pride and belonging that Reading's diverse community has for its heritage.
- 3.8 2021 is an incredibly auspicious year for Reading, celebrating 900 years since Reading Abbey, one of Europe's largest royal monasteries, was founded by King Henry I of England. The flagship celebration one day event for this landmark year will be Reading Water Fest in June. Reading's largest free outdoor town centre festival will feature an exciting mix of arts, culture and heritage, through live and digital performances, activities and workshops. This accessible day event will take place within the Abbey Ruins and along the River Kennet, celebrating the Abbey's rich 900 year history and its environmental and heritage connections with Reading's waterways.
- 3.9 In March 2021, we submitted an application to ACE to support key artistic activities of this celebration event and our bid was successful. The bid includes a light installation focusing on the Abbey's atmospheric historic space. Creating a bespoke piece on lighting that will link to the 900th anniversary of the Abbey which will be displayed on Chestnut Walk during the evening of the event. The Abbey's dormitory will host 4 unique artist-led workshops and life drawing sessions, co-designed with Jelly, Reading's leading visual arts organisation, and will be themed on the Abbey's textures, colour, sounds and images. The grant will enable to curate a new floating stage with local organisations such as local NPO, CultureMix. They will present a performance from RASPO, an award-winning steel band that has performed at WOMAD, Glastonbury, and the Notting Hill Carnival. This will be a new approach for the festival increasing opportunities for programming across the site using non-traditional staging to help connect the performers to this unique environment and the diverse communities.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

The conditions of the ACE grant required the Council to accept the respective grant funding agreements within two weeks of them being awarded to it. These conditions were accepted by the Council.

- 4.2 In order to draw down the ACE and HE grant funding, the Council needs to submit a claim form, and confirm its participation in a programme evaluation. The Council also needs an activity report and income and expenditure account for the final payment.

Other Options Considered

- 4.6 The Council could have chosen not to accept the grants. The implications of this would be continued pressure on the 2021/22 revenue budget due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions limiting revenue generating activity at both the Council's art venues.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The acceptance of the grants supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:

1. Healthy Environment
2. Thriving Communities
3. Inclusive Economy

The Council is committed to investing in the culture and heritage of the town, including helping cultural venues recover after the pandemic.

- 5.2 The Hexagon and South Street generate £4.5M in revenue and both venues support a wider ecosystem of SMEs and freelance workers to produce and stage performances, delivering an arts programme to over 200,000 people a year. The Hexagon is the largest theatre in Reading, and the local region, connecting with audiences from a wide geographical range. The venue presents a busy mixed programme that attracts audiences from the local community and provides a wide range of community uses. With over 250 events a year the venue is popular on the national touring circuit. There are no other similar venues in Reading, and it provides a crucial cultural and economic driver for the night time economy, enabling Reading to achieve Purple Flag status and supporting the hospitality sector in central Reading. South Street is the only professional arts centre in Reading and the only one to regularly present high-quality touring theatre programmes. South Street has a national reputation for its high quality, small-scale, contemporary performing arts programme and is a vital part of the UK's touring ecology. It is unique in Reading, offering audiences access to high quality, nationally acclaimed work & has a long history of programming early work from artists that have gone on to receive national recognition.

- 5.3 Reading Museum works with its local partners to provide cultural opportunities to underserved groups, particularly through the ACE supported Museums Partnership Reading's youth strategy and volunteering scheme. The Museum's learning and engagement team reach large numbers of young people. Up to 20,000 children visit each year and another 50,000 use our loans boxes a year. Its 'Museum on Wheels' outreach project attended 16 community venues in 2019 and reached over 6,400 people. The Museum is also a founder member of Reading's well-respected Cultural Educational Partnership co-ordinating cultural opportunities for young people.

- 5.4 Reading's communities see Reading Museum as the 'go to place' to explore and present their histories. The team works with a wide range of local groups to co-produce programmes that tell stories from Caribbean carnival to football, from Asian architecture to climate change, both within the museum and in the community, as well as online. Examples this year include the nationally acclaimed Windrush Day project and a school's Diwali dance project, both of which were adapted to virtual cultural offers due to the pandemic.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 There are no environmental and climate implications resulting from these recommendations.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 No public consultation has been carried out on the proposal to apply or accept the Arts Council England funding or Historic England funding. However, Reading Museum, Hexagon and South Street theatres have customer feedback and evaluation embedded as part of their operations and use this to inform future service delivery.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 There are no equality implications as a result of this decision. Accepting the grant has enabled Reading Museum, in particular, to continue to carry out its work with underserved and diverse communities in Reading, including those protected by the Act.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 ACE's offer of funding under the Arts Council England's Recovery Grants programme is made available to all recipients, including local authorities, pursuant to ACE's standard terms and conditions for grant dated July 2020.
- 9.2 These standard forms of grant require that all grant funding must be used by the Council to deliver the activities set out in its application for funding (the "Plan"/ "Recovery Plan") as agreed respectively by ACE and HE. Any activities/services documented in the Plan/Recovery Plan cannot be unilaterally reduced or changed by the Council without ACE's or HE's prior written consent.

- 9.5 The ACE standard forms of grant include a “pay restraint” conditions as required by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Confirmation has been requested and received by the Council from ACE that any pay restraint condition referenced in the standard forms of grant will not be enforced against a local authority where it is not legally possible for that local authority to implement such a pay restraint condition.
- 9.4 As the grant comes from public funds the Council is required to carry out a Subsidy Control analysis. The Council has carried out this analysis and is satisfied that the support provided through ACE and Historic England grants is compliant with Subsidy Controls.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 These grants will provide financial support for a range of important cultural services, and will help the council manage budget uncertainty as facilities re-open in 2021/22. The Heritage at Risk Response grant will require match funding of £3,000 from the council which will come from the archaeology budget.
- 10.2 These financial implications were reviewed by Mark Jones, strategic business partner on 28/5/21.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Arts Council England, Culture Recovery Fund: Grants.
Historic England: Grant

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021		
TITLE:	READING'S CULTURE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR KAREN ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	ZSUZSI LINDSAY	TEL:	07773193215
JOB TITLE:	CULTURE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER	E-MAIL:	Zsuzsi.Lindsay@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the committee on the achievements of Reading's Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) 2016-2019, share the CEP's 2020-2024 Draft Strategy and Action Plan, and set out the key areas of priority.
- 1.2 The *Draft Cultural Education Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2024* is included in Appendix 1

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 Note the Cultural Education Partnership achievements to date
- 2.2 Note the draft Action Plan and Strategy for 2020-2024
- 2.3 Delegate to the Assistant Director for Culture in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation to finalise the Action Plan

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reading's Cultural Education Partnership is a partnership made up of local cultural organisations, including NPOs, key strategic partners and supported by Artswork, an Arts Council appointed organisation, and the Culture Development Officer. It was set up in 2016 to allow every child and young person in Reading to have the opportunity to aspire, achieve and participate in high quality arts and culture, and to develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure to maintain such engagement. The work of the CEP focuses on children and young people aged 0-19 and on vulnerable young people up to the age of 25. The achievements against targets set in the 2016-2019 action plan are summarised below. The updated strategy and action plan has been delayed by a change in facilitators, Covid 19 and the launch of the new Arts Council England *Let's Create* strategy. The proposed draft CEP Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2024 key aims and objectives are summarised below for information.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS OF READING'S CULTURAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP 2016 - 2019

- Reading Cultural Education Partnership set a target of supporting 750 children and young people to gain accreditation in an Arts Award by August 2019. However, the partnership far exceeded that target to support 1444 Arts Awards.
- Arts Award is a range of unique qualifications that supports anyone aged up to 25 to grow as artists and arts leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world through taking challenges in an art form - from fashion to digital art, pottery to poetry.
- Direct benefits of undertaking Arts Award included A-Level achievements, successful university entry and development of professional skills for life, such as leadership and an improved aptitude for entrepreneurship.
- The more varied the arts provision, and the more it permeates the education of the individual student, the more skills are acquired to succeed at university and [sustain employment as an adult](#).¹
- Artswork the SE Bridge organisation for Arts Council England confirmed the following Arts Award data for Reading.

Discover	Explore	Bronze	Silver	TOTAL
1277	99	25	43	1444

- The CEP focused delivery on areas of deprivation as identified in the 2011 Census. The partnership reached 265,532 children and young people and engaged with 94% of the schools within Reading. 17 (26% of schools in Reading) of those schools have registered for Artsmark and 10 now regularly engage with a Schools' Connect programme run by Jelly.
- The CEP strategy and action plan has allowed local arts and culture organisations to leverage £97,700 of funding to help deliver against targets and continue to fund their work with children and young people.
- The CEP facilitates partnership working and collaboration in a competitive landscape. Through dialogues and visibility of each other's work they are able to avoid flooding the market with similar offerings or trying to engage the same school. This structure also allows for best practice sharing opportunities.
- The partnership offers a good range of options for children and young people, with gaps identified in digital arts and literature.
- The structure of partnership has been a success for those who engage with it. Further definition around this structure has been included in the updated strategy and action plan to allow for further development of the partnership.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 Current Position

The updated CEP strategy and action plan has been delayed by a change in facilitators, Covid 19 and the newly launched Arts Council Let's Create strategy. The proposed draft CEP Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2024 key aims and objectives are summarised below for information:

5.1.1 Core Objective of the CEP

To develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure that enables opportunities for every child and young person in Reading to aspire, achieve, influence and participate in quality arts and culture.

Overall Strategic Aims

¹ [Value of the Arts | Arts Award](#)

- Champion youth voice to empower more children and young people to be able to engage with and shape culture in Reading, particularly focusing on the global majority and those voices from our most deprived areas within our community
- Develop cultural communities by ensuring there are clear development pathways for children and young people in cultural activities and careers
- Contribute to the wider cultural sector by strengthening the CEP through clear aims and objectives and making it financially sustainable

5.1.2 Key Actions to Achieve Strategic Aims

- Sustain the 95% engagement level of schools and improve the level of engagement by children and young people in the arts and cultural offer
- Increase the number of young people undertaking training, and achieving skills and appropriate accreditation, making them ready to seek employment in the cultural sector, or to use creative skills in their chosen employment field
- Improve strategic coordination to apply for further funding
- Collection of standardised data to:
 - Identify gaps in engagement specifically in areas of deprivation.
 - Improve inclusion and diversity of programmes and representation on the CEP
 - Underpin mental health and wellbeing outcomes
- Restructure the CEP to ensure maximum benefit for the Cultural Organisations and the community it serves
- Create a social inclusion and diversity strategy

5.2 Other Options Considered

A consultation process had been undertaken at the end of 2019, in order to set the strategy for 2020 to 2024. This was developed with cultural sector partner organisations. The strategy had reached the final draft stage just before the lockdown. It was not considered feasible to push on with the strategy as it was, due to the changes brought about by and during the pandemic. In addition, because the Arts Council Let's Create strategy had not yet been published it had not been incorporated. It was due to these factors that the partnership decided that they needed to revisit the strategy, to ensure that it reflected the changing landscape of cultural education and the needs that had arisen as a result of the pandemic, specifically around social inclusion and wellbeing.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The CEP Action Plan and Strategy for 2020-2024 supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:
1. Healthy Environment
 2. Thriving Communities
 3. Inclusive Economy
- 6.2 It also contributes to the *Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030*, and the *Reading 2050 Vision*, particularly theme of 'a city of culture and diversity'.
- 6.3 Reading Powered By People 2020-22 economic recovery strategy was adopted by the Council in September 2020. Centred around three objectives Inclusive Reading; Smart Reading; and Destination Reading the role of culture features strongly in supporting Health and Well-being in the work place; reinventing vulnerable sectors hit hardest by covid19 and the town centre economy; and Reading, as an arts heritage and cultural destination. It also underpins the employment skills ambitions within the strategy.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). There are no direct environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

8 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 8.1 The key priorities have been developed with formal engagement with the partners represented on the Cultural Education Partnership, young people who engage with key partners and through an online survey.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 9.2 There are no equality implications as a result of this decision. It is imperative, that in planning for the recovery we look to protect the most vulnerable and marginalised in our society. The achievements of the strategy to date and in particular the cultural commissions and Reading Culture Live have sought to engage and work with vulnerable and marginalised groups. The arts, culture and heritage sector has a strong track record in delivering positive outcomes around health and wellbeing, and employment skills with targeted priority groups.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications as part of this decision.

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no financial implications as part of this decision. The Action Plan will be delivered by each of the cultural organisations named against each of the actions. These actions will be funded by the budgets held by each individual organisation and not Reading Borough Council.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

CEP Draft Action Plan and Strategy
CEP Draft Evaluation of Strategy 2016-2019

Reading Cultural Education Partnership Strategy 2020-24



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Strategy for 2020-24

1. Demographics
2. Reading CEP membership
3. Overarching Aim and Values
4. Goals and Objectives for 2020-2024
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Appendix 1 Terms of Reference

Context

Arts Council England Strategy 2020-2030

In January 2020, Arts Council England published their strategy: Let's Create

The strategy outlines 3 main objectives:

1. **Creative people:** Every person can develop and express creativity throughout their lives;
2. **Cultural communities:** A collaborative approach to culture helps villages, towns and cities across the country to thrive;
3. **A creative & cultural country:** England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

To achieve these the Arts Council will be steered by our four Investment Principles:

1. **Ambition & Quality:** Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work.
2. **Inclusivity & Relevance:** England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce.
3. **Dynamism:** Cultural organisations can thrive and are better able to respond to the challenges of the next decade.
4. **Environmental Responsibility:** Cultural organisations lead the way in their approach to the climate emergency.

Demographics

Based on the latest ONS mid-year estimates and the 2011 Census -

- The population of Reading is 161,825 living within 16 Wards
- There are 31,000 children aged 0-14 and 9,480 young people aged 15-19
- The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population of Reading is 33% of the total population, however this is higher amongst younger age groups, especially younger children where 49% of 0-4 year olds are BME
- Reading has the third highest proportion of ethnic minority groups in the South East (excluding London) after Slough and Oxford
- Reading ranks 146th most deprived out of 326 LAs (129th in 2010)
- But 10 Lower Super Output Areas(LSOAs)* in the worst 20% nationally, 2 within the most deprived 10% This compares with 12 LSOAs in the most deprived 20% in 2010, but with none in the most deprived 10%. This suggests that while overall relative deprivation has decreased, it has actually increased in certain small areas - predominantly in the south, with four areas in the west and one in the north. These areas are within the wards of Caversham, Church, Norcot, Redlands, Southcote and Whitley
- In general terms, Reading tends to score better than the national average for most health measures, although this hides problems amongst particular communities. One of the most significant health-related statistics is that life expectancy is 7.8 years lower for men and 6.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Reading than in the least deprived areas. (Source: Public Health England Health Profile 2017)

*areas of approx. 1,000 - 3,000 people

Overarching Aim and Values

The overarching aim for the Reading CEP has been adjusted from the previous strategy to emphasise young people's empowerment in decision making. The objectives will build on the successes already achieved by focussing down on specific areas that can be further developed. Three core values have also been developed, to drive the focus for the next four years.

To develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure that enables opportunities for every child and young person in Reading to aspire, achieve, influence and participate in quality arts and culture

Definition: the work of the CEP focuses on children and young people aged 0-19 and on vulnerable young people up to the age of 25.

Definition of Culture

The following statement was drawn up as a result of comments from the consulted young people's groups:

Children and young people see 'Culture' as a way of life, contributing towards their wellbeing and values. Digital culture is an important part of their everyday connection with culture and helps to break down barriers to access and challenge social norms. As well as being about involvement with arts and heritage, young people see culture as something that they shape themselves and is interactive, not static.

Values

There are 3 underpinning values to the overarching aim for 2020-2024, which aim to focus the partnership on an approach to delivering the objectives. The values identified are:

1. **Champion the Youth Voice** - Placing the needs of children and young people at the heart of everything we do and giving them a voice to address what is important to them;
2. **Be Brave** - Going beyond our usual practice and being more innovative in order to meet the needs of children and young people;
3. **Adapt to a changing landscape** - Align and adapt to the changing cultural and social landscape to deliver the Reading CEP aims for the next 4 years.

Goals and Objectives for 2020-2024

In order to adapt to the changing cultural landscape, we have aligned our objectives with those in the Arts Council England's new Strategy: Let's Create . We have extended the Reading CEP strategy life span to 4 years in order to achieve an ambitious plan.

There are 3 main goals for Reading CEP, each with identified objectives:

1. CHAMPION THE YOUTH VOICE AND EMPOWER MORE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH AND SHAPE CULTURE IN READING

Schools and young voice:

- continue to work in schools, supporting curriculum delivery in schools and contributing towards Cultural Capital and physical and emotional well-being. Build a commitment of sustainability in schools, driving more schools to register for Artsmark

Data and evidence:

- collect data in a standardised way so that gaps in engagement can be identified and targeted. Identify 3 key questions that the CEP want to answer and devise methods to collect data on these. Headings for data collection to consider are: User Data, Engagement Data, Feedback Data, Outcomes Data and Impact Data
- collect evidence of the benefits of cultural activity for children and young people, and use this evidence to raise awareness beyond the CEP
- collect evidence on the quality of cultural activity provision for children and young people. Use the Arts Council's Quality Metrics and Quality Principles
- collect evidence on the representation and climate education content of cultural programmes delivered in schools.

Connecting beyond schools

- Connect with community hubs to develop cultural opportunities beyond school, engaging more with diverse communities and families e.g. parent and toddler groups, faith groups etc.
- Connect with the non-cultural sector e.g. Youth Offending Service, Children in Care, SEND, PRUs, Travelling Community, health and wellbeing
- Prioritise work targeted at specific cohorts of children and young people e.g. Early Years

2. DEVELOP CULTURAL COMMUNITIES BY ENSURING THERE ARE CLEAR PATHWAYS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND CAREERS

Work experience:

- Support organisations in the CEP to actively promote work experience for young people in their organisations + a support mechanism for young people with additional needs etc. to take part in work experience

Champions

- set up a network of workplace champions

Coordinated offer

- make sure there is a diverse offer for children and young people by co-ordinating the offer across partners and working together to tackle any gaps in offer; focus on developing digital arts and expanding the literature offer

Data and evidence

- Collect data on progression of individuals through Arts Award Bronze, Silver, Gold, and communicate better the progression routes of Arts Award

Representation

- Ensure that the CEP is representative of the community that it wishes to serve and engage with

3. CONTRIBUTE TO THE WIDER CULTURAL SECTOR BY DEVELOPING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CEP AND CLARIFYING ITS FUNCTIONS

CEP Membership

- Develop a commitment contract for membership of the CEP e.g. commit to minimum attendance

Communication and Advocacy

- Develop a communication and advocacy plan: to raise the profile of the CEP, be transparent about its work and make use of the existing What's On website to post plans, updates and meeting minutes. Develop a logo for inclusion on partners sites/literature and a CEP website.

Resources

- Identify funding to enable targeted projects to be delivered by the Task and Finish Groups

Action Plan

Core Group, Task and Finish Groups and Network Meetings

The existing Sub Groups were reviewed, and re-defined as Task and Finish Groups in order to align with the new objectives.

The working of the CEP and its groups has been re-defined in order to maintain transparency of its membership and clarity of its structure and group roles.

The following is the structure for the Reading CEP groups:

1. Core Strategic Group

The role of the group is to drive forward the strategy. The group will meet 3 times a year. Members on the group will be representatives from the Task and Finish Groups.

The Core Strategic Group will have a Chair with a 2 year term. Chair candidates will be put forward by the core strategic group for election. Members of the Networking CEP group will also be invited to vote for the chair. Development of organisations to sit on this group is a core aim of the CEP to ensure that it remains representative of the community it serves, this means the membership of these groups will be reviewed every two years.

2. Task/Working and Finish Groups

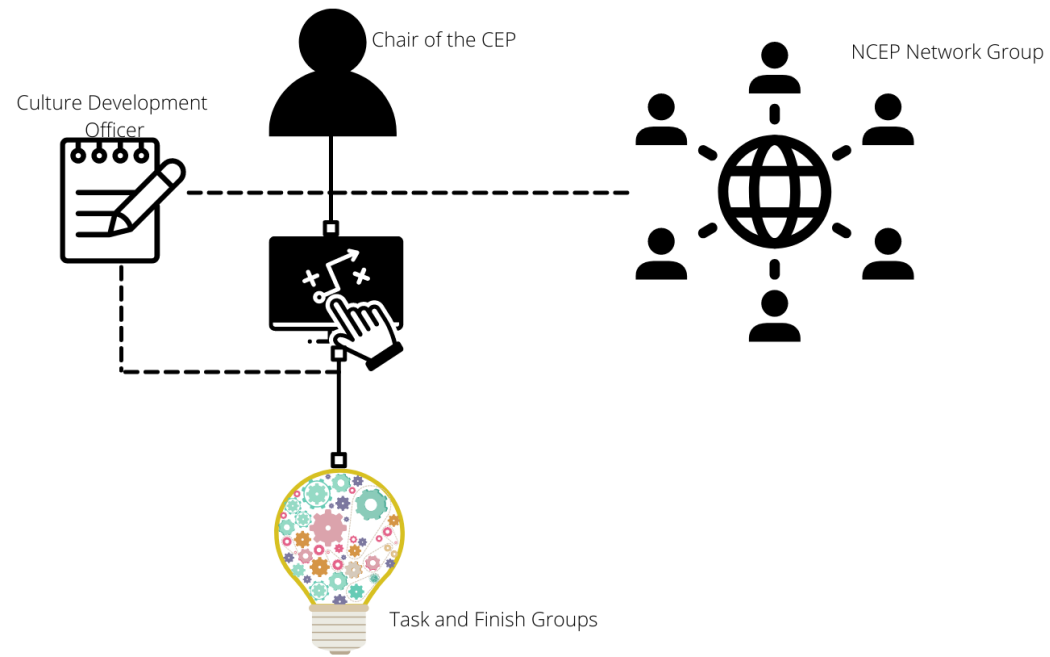
Three Task and Finish group will replace the Sub Groups. The Task and Finish Groups will be responsible for delivering specific, time limited projects from the Action Plan. But may change depending on the need and focus of action

Initially, the Groups will be:

1. **Youth engagement & supporting preparation for Creative Employment**
2. **Schools engagement and progress of Arts Awards and Artsmark**
3. **Data collection, management and sharing.**

3. Network Meetings

There will be two Network Meetings held per year, in order to share learning, network and broaden awareness of the work of the CEP widely and to the non-cultural sector. The Network Meetings will include opportunities for feedback from the Young People's CEP Group. This group will be chaired by the Core Strategic Group Chair and will be facilitated by a member of the culture or education sector. This structure will be reviewed to ensure that the group remains as open and transparent as possible.



AIMS

- 1. CHAMPION THE YOUTH VOICE TO EMPOWER MORE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH AND SHAPE CULTURE IN READING**
- 2. DEVELOP CULTURAL COMMUNITIES BY ENSURING THERE ARE CLEAR DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND CAREERS**
- 3. CONTRIBUTE TO THE WIDER CULTURAL SECTOR BY STRENGTHENING THE CEP THROUGH CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AND MAKING IT FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE**

OBJECTIVES 2022-27	ANNUAL TARGETS	AIM	Delivery Partner
1. Sustain and improve the level of engagement by children and young people in the arts and cultural offer of CEP members	<p>Maintain levels of engagement in the arts by schools and colleges.</p> <p>95% of school with at least 1 engagement with arts/culture per year</p> <p>Increase engagement of the schools that engage once to:</p> <p>Multiple engagements with arts orgs. (Minimum 3) target increase of 15% yoy</p> <p>Engagement with multiple arts events and activities (minimum 3) target increase of 15% yoy</p>	1	The Rock Academy Reading Rep Jelly
2. Increase the number of young people undertaking training, and	Map the current offer for children and young people across all art forms and identify gaps and lower	2	Reading Rep

<p>achieving skills and appropriate accreditation, making them ready to seek employment in the cultural sector, or to use creative skills in their chosen employment field**</p>	<p>engagement to target, by 2021.</p> <p>Identify existing programmes</p> <p>Set targets for work placements, skills training (eg AA gold), apprenticeships etc based on planned activity.</p> <p>Set targets for NEETs.</p> <p>Set targets for areas of Reading where cultural engagement is low as identified by the mapping.</p> <p>Develop a workplace champions scheme</p>		<p>Readipop</p> <p>CultureMix</p>
<p>3. Every year 1,000 children and young people in Reading will have engaged in Arts Award with at least 500 achieving accreditation at one or more levels.</p>	<p>Note: collect estimate numbers from all partners at all levels per year. Identify AA progression routes.</p> <p>Collect data on progression of individuals through Arts Award Bronze, Silver, Gold, and communicate better the progression routes of Arts Award</p> <p>Devise a centralised data collection method for Arts Awards by 2022, enabling the CEP to collate data from all partners delivering Arts Awards.</p> <p>Create a 'heat map' of engagement – where children who are engaging are from and target those with low engagement.</p>	<p>1, 2</p>	<p>Reading Rep</p> <p>Jelly</p> <p>Mustard Tree</p> <p>Readipop</p> <p>CultureMix</p>

4. The percentage of Schools and colleges in Reading with Artsmark status will be greater than the national average.	<p>Sustain level at 20 schools.</p> <p>25 - 30% of schools to be Artsmark (above nat average)</p> <p>Improve Artsmark levels</p>	1,3	<p>Reading Rep</p> <p>Jelly</p> <p>Readipop</p> <p>CultureMix</p>
5. The CEP will become sustainable. Partner organisations will actively participate, in collaboration, to deliver the CEP Action Plan	<p>Define sustainability and what that looks like to members.</p> <p>Develop membership attributes and sign up all CEP members to the agreed vision by 2021.</p> <p>Develop a communication and advocacy plan by 2021.</p> <p>Begin posting CEP meeting minutes and updates and the strategic plan executive summary on to the What's On website in 2021 and update every 3 months.</p> <p>Review plan every 3 years.</p>	3	<p>Reading Rep</p> <p>Readipop</p>
6. Improve strategic coordination - Collect data in a standardised way so that gaps in engagement, cultural programme and representation in the CEP can be identified and targeted. Identify 3 key questions that the CEP want to answer and devise methods to	<p>Identify 3 key questions by 2021.</p> <p>Ensure that youth voice is weaved in to data collection; what do they want; what do they feel most affected by; etc.</p> <p>Create data collection tools for the 3 questions by 2021.</p>	3	<p>Reading Rep</p> <p>Jelly</p> <p>Readipop</p> <p>CultureMix</p>

collect data on these	<p>Sign up every CEP member to collect the data starting at the beginning of 2021.</p> <p>Collate data at the end of each year.</p> <p>Collate data on social issues and climate change cultural offering by CEP partners. Ensure evaluation data is collected, relating to outcomes around understanding and action.</p>		
7. Share good practice - Collect evidence of the benefits of cultural activity for children and young people, decide how to use this evidence to raise awareness beyond the CEP	<p>Research and collate evidence already available by 2022, specifically focusing on the Let's Create Investment principles</p> <p>Publish a plan for using the evidence to advocate for cultural activity for children and young people by mid-2022.</p> <p>Action the plan starting mid 2022 through to 2024.</p>	3	Reading Rep
8. Improve Community engagement - Evidence the cultural opportunities beyond school - engaging more with diverse communities and families e.g. parent and toddler groups,	<p>Collect baseline data on diversity and ensure that current census data is incorporated into a high level diversity and social inclusion strategy for the CEP.</p> <p>Identify existing programmes – early years, SEND, SEMH, PRUs, YOS,</p>	1,2,3	Dance Reading Reading Rep CultureMix

<p>faith groups, youth etc.</p>	<p>Identify strategic support needs and priorities around NEETs and CYP 'at risk' and form an action plan</p> <p>Expand the CEP networking group to draw in partners to help deliver action plan</p>		
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Appendices

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference

Reading Cultural Education Partnership

Terms of Reference

2020-2024

Reading Cultural Education Partnership

Terms of Reference

2020-2024

Purpose

The Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) members' main purpose is to drive forward the aim of the partnership which is:

- To develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure that enables opportunities for every child and young person in Reading to aspire, achieve, influence and participate in quality arts and culture.

Definition of audience

The work of the CEP focuses on children and young people aged 0-19 and on vulnerable young people up to the age of 25.

Definition of culture

Children and young people see 'Culture' as a way of life, contributing towards their wellbeing and values, as well as being about involvement with arts and heritage. Digital culture is an important part of their everyday connection with culture.

The members will also champion the values of the Partnership. The values for 2020-2024 are the following:

- 1. Champion the Youth Voice** - placing the needs of children and young people at the heart of everything we do and giving them a voice to address what is important to them;
- 2. Be Brave** - going beyond our usual practice and being more innovative in order to meet the needs of children and young people;
- 3. Adapt to a changing landscape** – align and adapt to the changing cultural and social landscape to deliver the Reading CEP aims for the next 4 years.

Outcomes

All partners work together with the aim to achieve the following:

- Provide more high quality cultural activity for children and young people
- Ensure art and culture is strategically positioned to influence senior level decision making
- Increase the profile of art and culture for children and young people and advocate its benefits
- Support the development of CEP strategy, action plan and working groups
- Build strong working relationships with the non-cultural sector

- Ensure the culture sector learn and grow and share best practice

Membership of Core Strategic Group

The members of the Cultural Education Partnership Core Strategic and Delivery Group will be drawn from the Task Groups membership will include:

Chair (2 year term)

Artswork

Reading Borough Council – Facilitator of CEP

Task Group 1 Rep

Task Group 2 Rep

Task Group 3 Rep

Task Group 1 Youth engagement & supporting preparation for Creative Employment This group will meet four times a year and will work toward a shared vision of providing a pathway into creative employment for young people.

Task Group 2 Schools engagement and progress of Arts Awards and Artsmark

This group will meet four times a year and will work together to increase the number of Arts Award achieved and schools that gain Artsmark status.

Task Group 3 Data collection, management and sharing.

This group will meet four times a year and be the voice/influence for the Cultural Education Partnership's planning

To ensure development opportunities for the wider cultural sector there will also be networking meetings that will ensure transparency around routes to access the core strategic group.

Cultural Education Partnership – Network Meetings

These meetings will be held twice a year. It will provide the platform for engagement with non-cultural sector, networking, sharing best practice, engage children and young people's voice and feedback to the core group.

Due to the organic nature of change in the culture sector, roles may change and the partnership must respond to such changes. For example NPO's re-applying in 2022.

Accountability

Governance- Reading's Cultural Education Partnership is a formalised partnership brought together under this Terms of Reference document.

Working methods

- Work collaboratively towards the outcomes agreed
- Ensure to champion its vision and values

- Support the delivery of the Cultural Education Partnership strategy and action plan
- Listen to and act upon the voice of children and young people
- Understand and participate in the strategic commitment and community engagement tools required to be successful
- Ensure long-term commitment to the partnership's aim 2020-2024
- Identify how your organisation will support/contribute towards delivering strategic plan
- Work to ACE quality framework

Organisation

- The partnership will have a chair with a two year term
- Reading Borough Council will be the lead facilitator of the Cultural Education Partnership. They will commit to arrange quarterly (or termly) meetings with an agreed agenda and complete minutes.
- Reading Borough Council will also contract manage any Partnership Investment Funds on behalf of the Cultural Education Partnership with a 15% management fee.
- Reading Borough Council will provide strategic culture support
- Reading Borough Council will advocate the role of the Cultural Education Partnership

Decision Making

Everyone has a voice in the partnership. The chair will make the overall executive decisions. Artsworld will influence and challenge any strategic decision making and ensure any contracts they hold with the partnership are fully delivered.

Review and Monitoring

The Cultural Education Partnership will complete an annual review on the targets set. All members will be accountable for ensuring they input to the agreed data analysis. As outlined in data collection agreements

Changes

This is intended to be a working document and as changes are made it will be circulated around to the partnership members.

Changes will be made by agreement with a minimum of 5 CEP members.

Reading Cultural Education Partnership Evaluation

Evaluation of 2016-19 CEP Strategy



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Contents

2. Context
3. Review of previous strategy
 - Survey
 - Results of objectives
 - Results of consultation

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Appendix 2 SWOT analysis

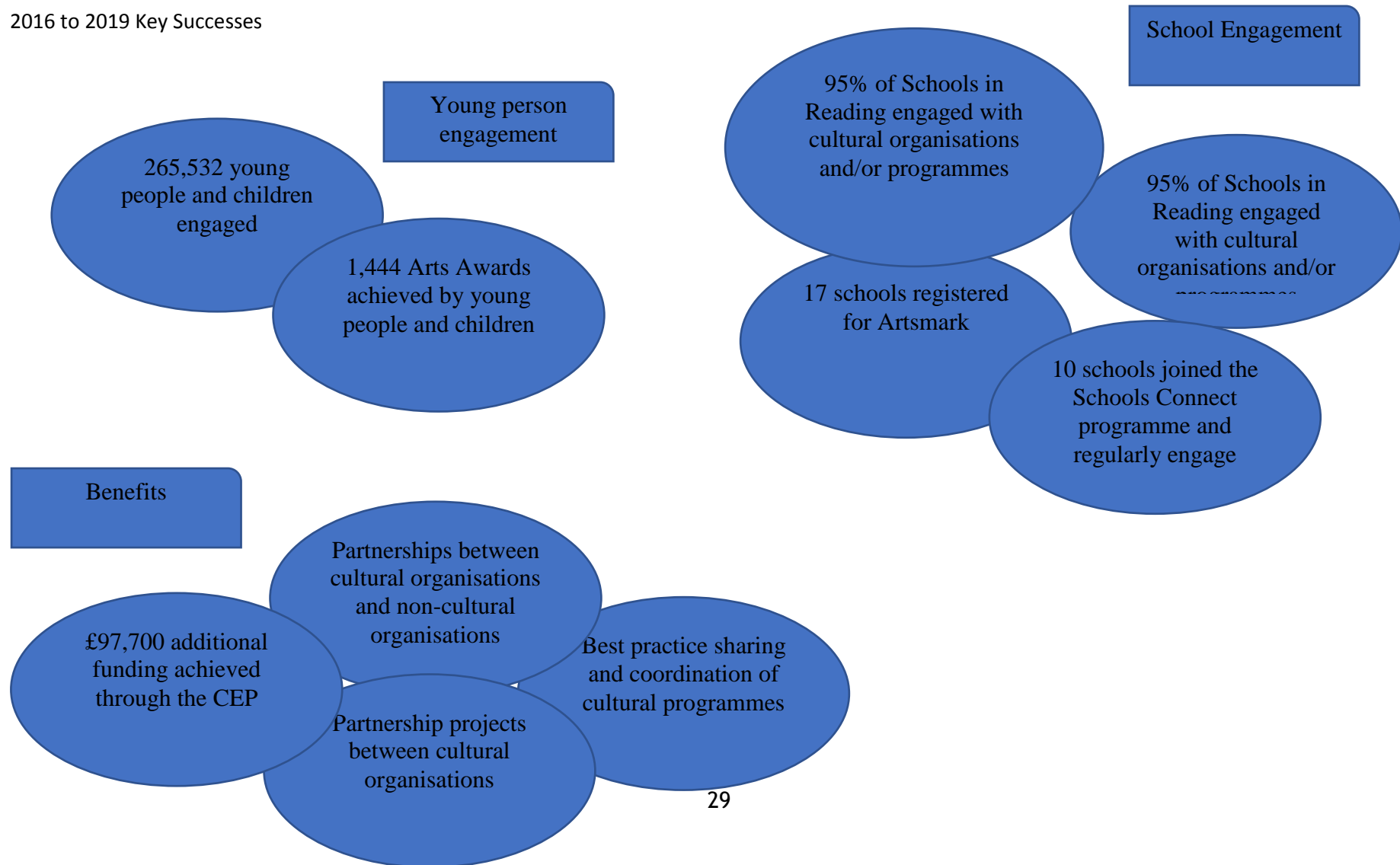
Appendix 3 Arts Award and Artsmark statistics

Appendix 4 Survey data

Appendix 5 Consultation workshop feedback

Executive Summary

2016 to 2019 Key Successes



Evaluation of 2016-19

Context

Reading CEP Strategy 2016-19

The previous strategy outlined the following overarching aim and objectives:

Overarching Aim:

To allow every child and young person in Reading to have the opportunity to aspire, achieve and participate in high quality arts and culture, and to develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure to maintain such engagement.

Definition: the work of the CEP focuses on children and young people aged 0-19 and on vulnerable young people up to the age of 25.

Objectives:

- By August 2019 5,000 children and young people who were previously unlikely to engage with or participate in arts and culture will have engaged with and participated in an activity*
- Over the term of the CEP Action Plan 1,500 young people will have undertaken training, and achieved skills and appropriate accreditation, making them ready to seek employment in the cultural sector, or to use creative skills in their chosen employment field**
- Between September 2016 and August 2019 1,500 children and young people in Reading will have engaged in Arts Award with at least 750 achieving accreditation at one or more levels
- Over the term of the CEP Action Plan 30 schools and colleges in Reading will have gained Artsmark status
- Between September 2016 and August 2019 20+ partner organisations will actively participate, in collaboration, in delivering the CEP Action Plan
- By August 2019 a further 3 Year CEP Action Plan will have been developed and resources secured to maintain a sustainable infrastructure for comprehensive ongoing arts and cultural engagement and participation from Reading's children and young people

* By targeting activity in areas of deprivation this objective can be focused and evaluated

**Meaning that young people from Reading will have achieved relevant accreditation through arts related degree programmes, BTEC Arts programmes, Silver or Gold Arts Awards, Level 5 or above Music Grades, specific and recognised theatre and dance awards, or equivalents

Review of 2016-2019 strategy

A consultation process was undertaken to evaluate the impact of the previous 3 years' strategy and progress against its objectives.

The consultation consisted of:

1. An initial meeting with CEP partner members
2. A SWOT analysis
3. A survey of Reading CEP partner members
4. Telephone interviews with Reading CEP partner members
5. A series of Lego® Serious Play® workshops led by Steve Christmas (Brick Creative) for partner members and groups of children and young people

The full gathered information from the consultation are included in the Appendices.

4.1 Summary from survey responses and telephone interviews:

Feedback from the survey and interviews found that there had been significant levels of engagement in culture of children and young people as a result of the CEP. Responses also indicated a number of successes in meeting the objectives, with some key areas that could be developed further.

Significant Level of Engagement

- A good range of artforms is offered to children and young people, with only a few gaps in provision for digital arts and literature workshops;
- A good range of schools are engaged with: 95% of Reading schools engaged with cultural activity with CEP partners over the last 3 years;
- Reading Borough Council was key to the success of keeping momentum with the CEP;
- That there has been significant increase in numbers of children and young people engaging with culture and with Arts Award: between January 2016 and November 2018, 1,444 Arts Awards were achieved in Reading, with 1,355 (94%) being achieved through CEP partnerships (*Source*: Artsworld figures, see Appendix 3)
- There is evidence of significant increase in collaborative working across the CEP partners, allowing leverage for increased resources and funding of projects. (For details of partnerships and investment, see Appendix 3)

Meeting the Objectives

- The CEP has been very successful in increasing engagement with Arts Award and there is good progress towards increasing registration for Artsworld: 17 schools registered to work towards Artsworld, which is 26% of Reading schools (Artsworld figures).
- There is further work to do in increasing young people's readiness for employment and reaching children and young people with barriers to participation;
- The CEP has been successful in increasing collaboration between partners;
- Some success has been achieved in securing resources, in particular capacity building programmes that could provide good practice to build on in the future.

The survey sought feedback from members of the Reading CEP on ‘what next’ for the partnership. The findings uncovered an appetite to explore ways for the Partnership to:

1. **Champion the Youth Voice** - placing the needs of children and young people at the heart of everything we do and giving them a voice to address what is important to them;
2. **Be More Brave** - going beyond our usual practice and being more innovative in order to meet the needs of children and young people;
3. **Adapt to a changing landscape** - what will the national and local cultural landscape look like in 3 years’ time? What can the Reading CEP achieve within this landscape?

4.2 Results of consultation Lego® Serious Play® workshops

Following the survey, key themes to consider were drawn out and these formed the basis of the next stage of consultation, the Lego® Serious Play® Workshops, facilitated by the Steve Christmas (Brick Creative). The consultation sessions were also informed by the new draft Ten Year Strategy produced by Arts Council England, in order to ensure that the strategy was relevant to the wider cultural landscape.

3 questions were identified for the consultation group to consider:

1. **Creative people:** What will the cultural landscape of Reading look like 3 years from now that enables **ALL** children and young people to develop & express creativity throughout their lives?
2. **Cultural communities:** 3 years from now, how will culture and creativity have a broader impact on children and young people?
3. **A creative and cultural country:** What does an innovative and collaborative CEP look like 3 years from now?

Attendees at the workshop then used Lego® to work together on building their vision, and from this they were able to articulate how they had explored the questions and were then able to identify a number of objectives for each of the three themes.

The main themes and discussions identified in this area were:

1. **Creative people:** What will the cultural landscape of Reading look like 3 years from now that enables **ALL** children and young people to develop & express creativity throughout their lives?
 - **Key objective:** The CEP must empower young people to advocate to other young people and to be involved in shaping the work of the CEP.
2. **Cultural communities:** 3 years from now, how will culture and creativity have a broader impact on children and young people?
 - **Key objective:** The CEP should work towards ensuring a gateway to two paths for children and young people: - careers in culture, with a clear pathway; character development/transferable skills by taking part in culture.
3. **A creative and cultural country:** What does an innovative and collaborative CEP look like 3 years from now?
 - **Key objective:** To widen representation on the CEP, clarify its governance and have clear roles defined between its strategic function and project delivery.

The full range of responses are given in Appendix 5.

4.3 Workshops with young people

Three Serious Play® workshops using Lego® were facilitated for young people by Steve Christmas (Brick Creative).

Young people's groups consulted with were:

- Brighter Futures
- Youth Parliament
- Aspire2 : pupils in 4 primary schools in year 5/ 6

As part of this workshop, young people were asked ***What does Culture mean to you?*** Their views of culture indicated the following:

- Children and young people see 'Culture' as a way of life as well as arts and heritage
- Religion plays a part in their view of culture
- Digital culture is becoming more prevalent within children and young people's view of 'culture'
- Reflections on their feedback include: *the CEP is an opportunity to offer broader opportunities for young people than the restricted offer at school*
- *Cultural activities can bridge gaps between people / overcome prejudice. Should be more than White British/American culture.*
- *Digital technology helps break down barriers to access, levels access regardless of social class or background*
- *Challenge social norms - digital technology also has a part to play in this*

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Reading Cultural Education Partnership

Terms of Reference

2016-2019

Purpose and role of the group:

The purpose of the group is to drive forward a shared vision in providing high quality arts and cultural experiences for children and young people¹ in Reading; ensuring them the opportunity to aspire, achieve and participate.

Outcomes

As partners working together the aim is to achieve the following:

- Ensure art and culture is strategically positioned to influence senior level decision making
- Increase the profile of art and culture for children and young people and advocate its benefits
- Ensure the Culture and Heritage Strategy, children and young people targets are developed and implemented
- Create and implement a cultural education infrastructure to provide sustainable access to a diverse range of communities and cultural activities, complementing the ACE creative case for diversity
- Collaboratively work with Reading CAN to provide access to artist, cultural organisations, best practice and workforce development
- Support the ongoing art and culture activities for children and young people and develop new initiatives where identified.

The Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) is responsible for commissioning any financial resource which will

actively contribute to the agreed outcomes. It is also responsible for identifying and generating revenue to

support outcomes.

Membership

Reading Borough Council

- Chair of Arts and Heritage Forum (Chair)
- Mayor
- Head of Culture and Economic Development
- Head of Education Services
- Children Services- cross sector representation x3 (e.g. youth service, children centres)
- Library Service Manager
- Reading Museum Manager

- Culture Development Officer

Community Engagement

- 1 leading representative of Reading CAN
- 1 representative from the Local Strategic Partnership
- 1 representative Cultural Partnership (Arts)
- 1 local artist

Education Engagement

- 1 representative from School Governors
- 2 head teachers (primary and secondary)
- 1 representative of further education (Reading College)
- 1 representative from Higher Education (University of Reading)
- 1 representative Music Education Hub

1 Aged 0-19 and up to 25 for children and young people with a disability

Core Strategic Partners

- 1 representative from Artsworld
- 1 representative for the Reading Youth Cabinet
- 1 representative from the Health and Wellbeing Board

Other Partners

- 1 representative Police and Crime Commissioners
- 1 representative Housing Association
- 1 representative Thames Valley LEP
- 1 representative Business and Skills- UK CIC

Each role will be reviewed on an annual basis. The purpose of this is to ensure that the partnership represents the communities changing views, bring new perspectives and innovation to the partnership.

Membership of the partnership will be by invite only.

Accountability:

Governance- Readings CEP is a formal partnership brought together under this Terms of Reference document.

Working methods:

CEP members agree to:

- Work collaboratively towards the outcomes agreed
- Use an Outcomes Framework to plan project activity delivered individually and in partnership
- Share project ideas and learning with the CEP members at partnership meetings or within Reading CAN to inform the development of the Outcomes Framework and the shared expertise of the group
- CEP members understand that there needs to be a long term commitment and collaboration in order to ensure sustainability and longevity

Organisation

The venue for meetings will be held in Reading.

Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis

Decision Making

The partnership will be asked for decisions and recommendations on a range of cultural opportunities in

Reading for children and young people. When voting the majority carry's the vote, if the vote is tied the

chair has the deciding vote. In the event that a board member is unable to attend their substitute can

attend to vote on their behalf or they can vote in advance of the meeting by sending their vote through to

the chair.

Review

The CEP will review its outcomes, membership and activity on an annual basis.

Changes

This is intended to be a working document and as changes are made it will be circulated to the partnership.

Appendix 2

SWOT analysis

Provided below is a subjective SWOT Analysis that summarises some of our initial discussions. This document will be built on throughout the evaluation and incorporate policies and strategy documentation and feedback from the online surveys and interviews. It is subjective, because much is open to interpretation. Where appropriate, strengths and aligned weaknesses have been identified together.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
The effectiveness of RBC coordinating the partnership and championing its role.	There is a perceived overreliance on the RBC Cultural Development Officer to coordinate partners and keep momentum.
There are examples of where partners have pulled together to apply for funding e.g. the libraries funding.	There are a range of funding opportunities available, but currently there isn't resource to develop a response from the partnership.
New partnerships and collaborations have been brokered as a result of the CEP	The partnership now needs to focus on pathways and journeys through accreditation, other skills opportunities or progression between partners or other initiatives.
Artswork – CEP has generated 3 large-scale £50k project grants and smaller grants at £4k and £5k to support delivery.	The partnership needs more data to understand the 'drop-off' rate of Arts Awards and to understand why this is happening.
Arts Awards 'objective' and sub-group– the partnership had clear tangible targets around this and effectively implemented a plan to drive activity. Numbers and awareness have increased as a result.	The partnership hasn't done an analysis of the key strengths, skills and experiences of the partners to ensure partner roles and contributions are most effective.
There are a range of community, statutory and cultural partners that sit on the CEP and are committed to achieving the overarching objectives, each bringing their own strengths.	The partnership hasn't collected data that shows which schools are currently engaging with cultural activity. It doesn't know where there are gaps to target activity.
Where there are tangible projects, CEP partners work well together e.g. signposting the reading challenge.	The partnership hasn't engaged with or lobbied the careers services to raise awareness about creative industry professions.
The CEP has a strong internal brand, which organisations are keen to be a part of and do ask about it.	The partnership does not have a dedicated external website or branding.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
A new ACE strategy (currently undergoing consultation) outlines a greater focus on individual creativity, creative industries, etc.	Arts is continually overlooked in comparison to other STEM subjects. There is need for more lobbying.
Data sharing – the partners on the CEP gather a range of data that when pulled together could provide valuable evidence for the Partnership’s case for support	Youth voice continues to be underrepresented on the partnership. It is easy to get this wrong.
CEP evaluations are being carried out across the UK, and so there is an opportunity to learn from others and implement successful and proven ideas increase connections between partners e.g. ‘cultural passports’	CEP does not realise the funding it needs to keep momentum and deliver the projects it needs to as part of a new strategic plan.
Community and family-based approaches have not been explored by the partnership as yet. Approaches used by programmes such as Creative People and Places can help to inform approaches.	The CEP doesn’t connect to the strategic groups and committees it needs to in order to affect change in cultural education.
Approaches to engage vulnerable young people up to age 25 have not been fully explored by the partnership as yet.	
A better understanding of CEP partners’ strengths, resource and key skills can bring new ways of working.	
A strong brand and web presence could bring increased audiences to the partnership’s work with cultural education.	
The legacy of Great Places should feed into CEP	
Key audiences such as teacher networks and schools’ improvement teams are untapped potential resources	
Digital/tech funding initiatives currently being developed and funded by the LEP	
Shared measurement approaches and pooled evaluation tools to collect data can help provide clarity of progress against key objectives and outcomes	

Appendix 3

Arts Award and Artsmark statistics

Reading Cultural Education Partnership started in January 2016. It aims to allow every child and young person in Reading to have the opportunity to aspire, achieve and participate in high quality arts and culture.

(Definition: the work of the CEP focuses on children and young people aged 0-19 and vulnerable young people up to the age of 25).

Reading Cultural Education Partnership set a target of supporting **750** children and young people to gain accreditation in an Arts Award by August 2019.

Arts Award is a range of unique qualifications that supports anyone aged up to 25 to grow as artists and arts leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world through taking challenges in an art form - from fashion to digital art, pottery to poetry.

Artswork the SE Bridge organisation for Arts Council England confirmed the following Arts Award data for Reading.

Discover	Explore	Bronze	Silver	TOTAL
1277	99	25	43	1444

(January 2016 - November 2018)

The Cultural Education Partnership can take account for **1355** of these qualifications via partnership working and various financial investments. Organisation and delivery breakdown is as follows;

Number of Arts Award	Organisation
823	Readipop
436	Jelly in partnership with The Museum of Rural Life, Reading library Service and The Rock Academy
63	Reading Rep in partnership with Reading College
6	Reading Museum

Appendix 4

Survey responses

The responses to the above generated the following evaluation of the work of the CEP from 2016-2019:

Evaluating the Reading Cultural Education Partnership

Responses to the online survey

Collated Monday, October 21, 2019

Q1: Name of organisation.

7 organisations responded to the survey:

Reading Rep

Jelly

Reading Museum

Dance Reading

CultureMix Arts Ltd

Readipop

The Rock Academy Foundation

Qu 2: How many young people (aged 0-19 or vulnerable young people up to the age of 25) have you engaged in the last three years (between September 2016 to August 2019)?
Answers demonstrated large numbers of engagement, however some organisations were able to report exact figures whereas others did not collect this data.

Thousands;

3,000 plus;

for 16-17 total was 87231 (includes loans and visits) for 17-18 it was 76504, for 18-19 it was 88382 and for Q 1 of this year it is 3706. this includes both our outreach with loan boxes and our school visits, and more recently we have tracked family workshops too. We don't always track the upper age groups although we are getting better at tracking those.;

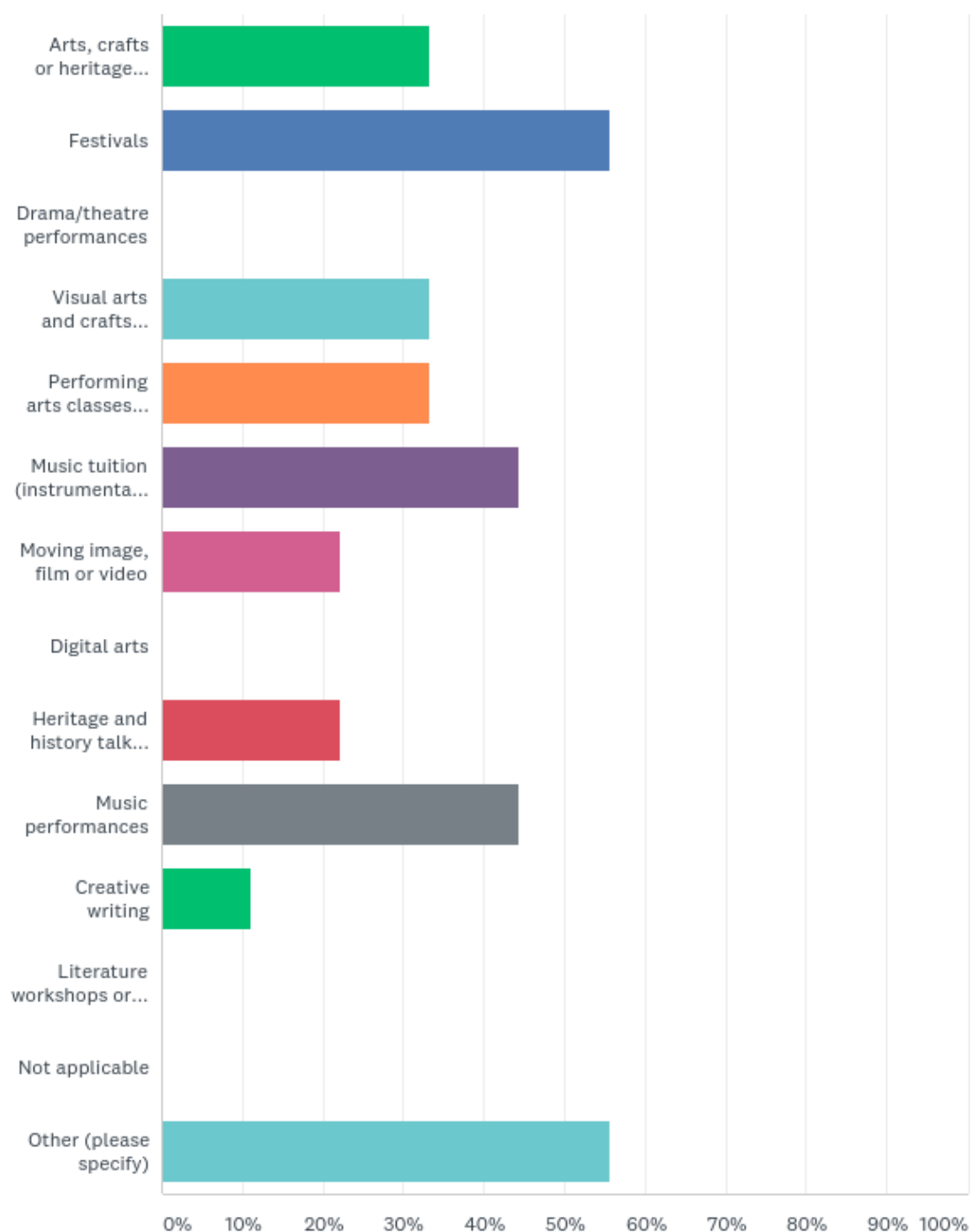
Directly - approx 300, Indirectly - thousands;

6,325;

3,640;

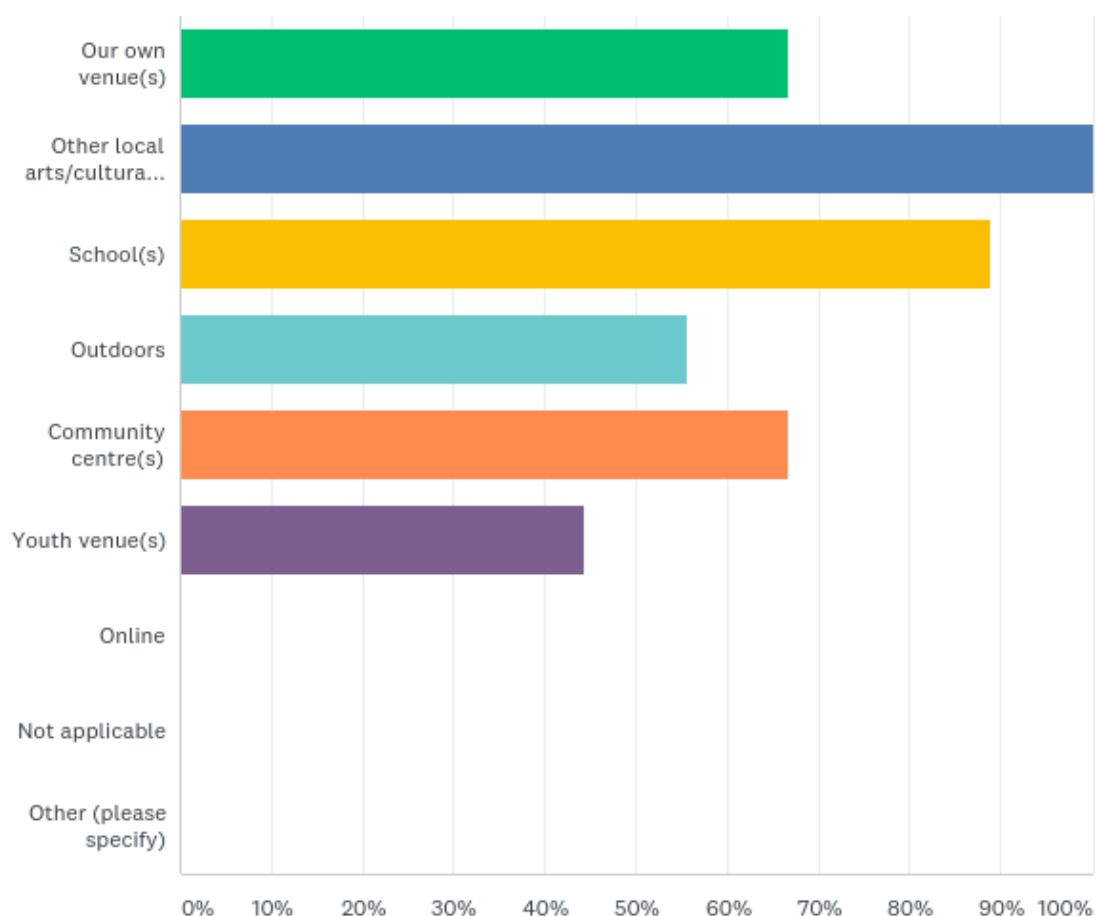
100-200 young people across all of our activities.

Q3: If applicable to your organisation, please tell us about the range of cultural activities you deliver for young people (tick all that apply)



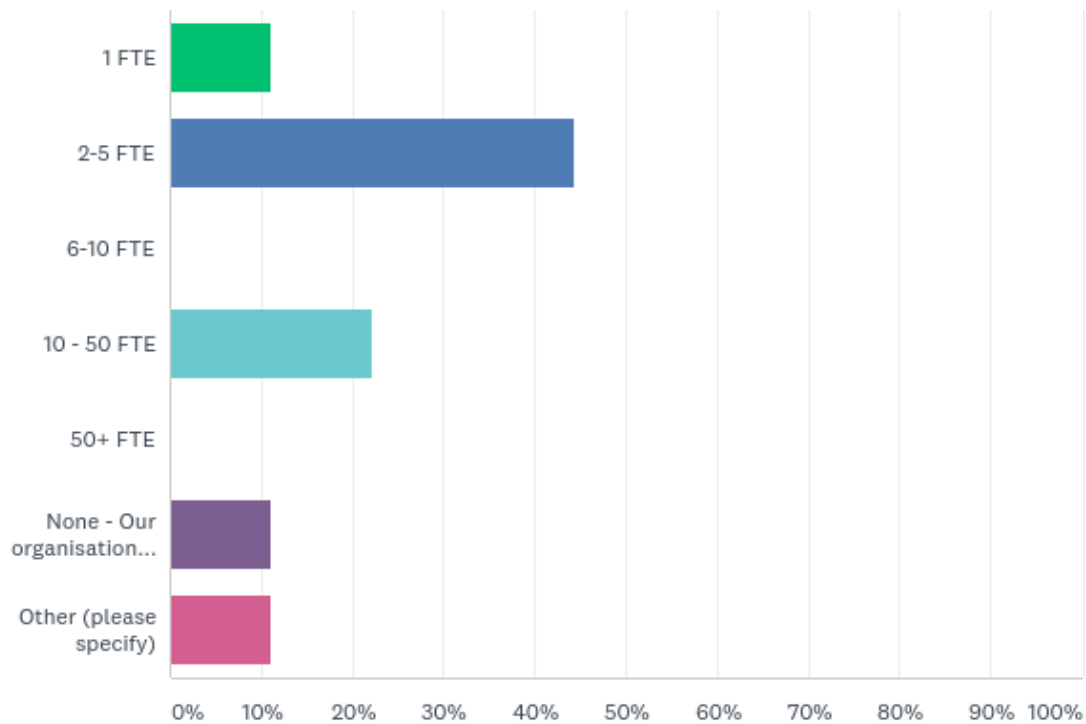
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Arts, crafts or heritage exhibitions	33.33%	3
Festivals	55.56%	5
Drama/theatre performances	0.00%	0
Visual arts and crafts classes or workshops	33.33%	3
Performing arts classes or workshops	33.33%	3
Music tuition (instrumental or vocal)	44.44%	4
Moving image, film or video	22.22%	2
Digital arts	0.00%	0
Heritage and history talks or workshops	22.22%	2
Music performances	44.44%	4
Creative writing	11.11%	1
Literature workshops or talks	0.00%	0
Not applicable	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	55.56%	5
Total Respondents: 9		

Q4: If applicable, where do you deliver cultural activities/work with young people? (tick all that apply)



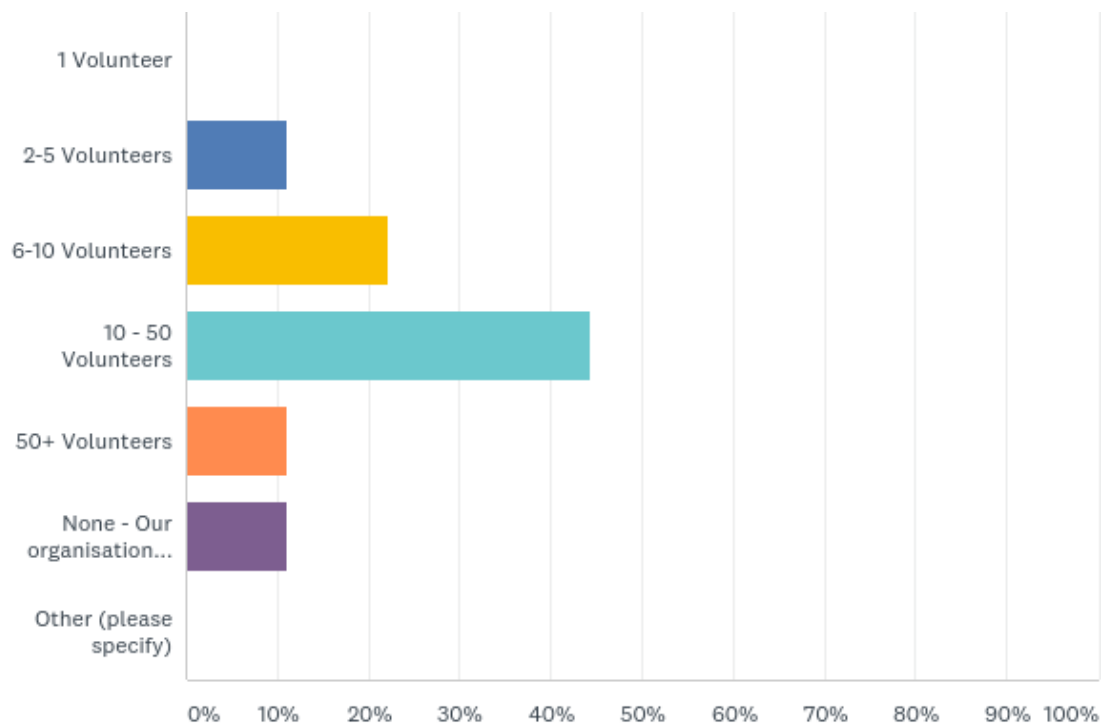
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Our own venue(s)	66.67%	6
Other local arts/cultural/heritage venue (s)	100.00%	9
School(s)	88.89%	8
Outdoors	55.56%	5
Community centre(s)	66.67%	6
Youth venue(s)	44.44%	4
Online	0.00%	0
Not applicable	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 9		

Q5: How many people do you employ (FTE)?



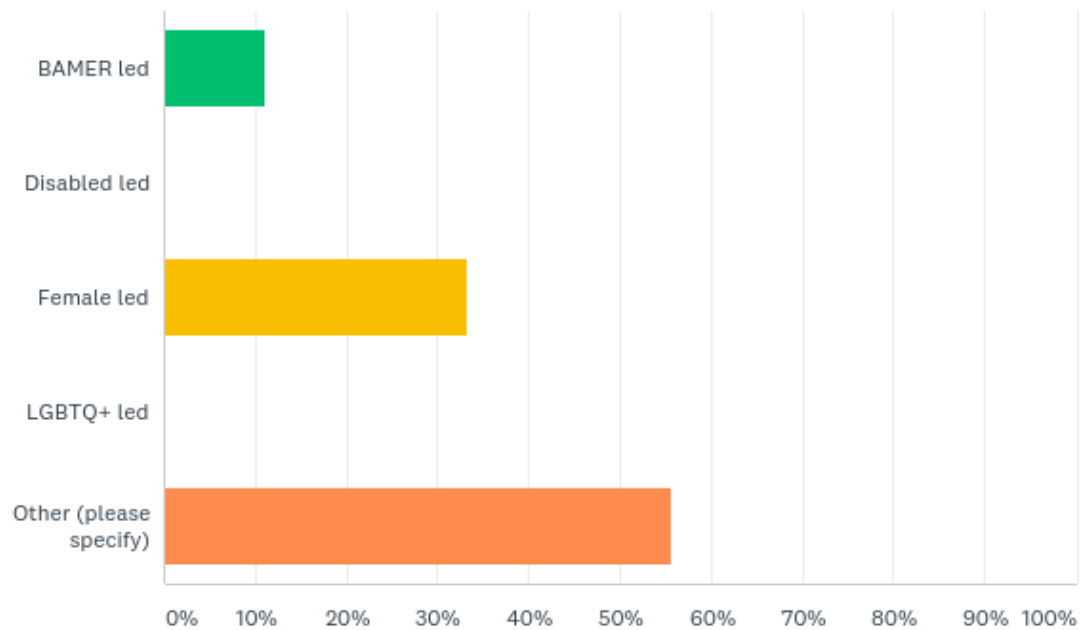
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 FTE	11.11%	1
2-5 FTE	44.44%	4
6-10 FTE	0.00%	0
10 - 50 FTE	22.22%	2
50+ FTE	0.00%	0
None - Our organisations is run entirely by volunteers	11.11%	1
Other (please specify)	11.11%	1
TOTAL		9

Q6: How many volunteers support your organisation?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 Volunteer	0.00%	0
2-5 Volunteers	11.11%	1
6-10 Volunteers	22.22%	2
10 - 50 Volunteers	44.44%	4
50+ Volunteers	11.11%	1
None - Our organisations does not have any volunteers	11.11%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		9

Q7: Do you consider your organisation to be ‘diverse led’? i.e. more than 50% of your management are from a BAMER background, disabled, female or are LGBTQ+



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
BAMER led	11.11%	1
Disabled led	0.00%	0
Female led	33.33%	3
LGBTQ+ led	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	55.56%	5
TOTAL		9

Q8: How are you funded?

	APPROXIMATELY 0-25% OF OUR FUNDING IS FROM THIS SOURCE	APPROX. 26-50% OF OUR FUNDING IS FROM THIS SOURCE	APPROX. 51-75% OF OUR FUNDING IS FROM THIS SOURCE	APPROX. 76%-99% OF OUR FUNDING IS FROM THIS SOURCE	THIS IS OUR ONLY SOURCE OF INCOME	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Heritage Lottery Funding	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 2	4	1.00
Arts Council England	50.00% 4	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	1.63
BFI/Film Hub South East	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	2	0.00
Community Fund e.g. Awards for All, Reaching Communities	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	2	0.00
Other Lottery Funding	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2	1.00
Reading Borough Council	60.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	2.20
Other Local Authority	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2	1.00
Other Statutory Grant Funding	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2	1.00
Trusts & Foundations	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.33
Individual donations	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	1.00
Membership income	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	1.00
Earned income – (e.g. tickets, café, retail, contracts for services)	40.00% 2	60.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	1.60
Contract income (e.g. commissioned projects by NHS)	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	1.00
Other (please specify below)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	4.00

Q9: Please tell us which Primary Schools you have engaged with in Reading between September 2016 and August 2019? Primary schools listed below are presented in alphabetical order.

	SOME ENGAGEMENT. ENGAGEMENT IS AD HOC AND IS USUALLY ONE-OFF	GOOD ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR DELIVERY OF ONE-OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS PER YEAR	WE HAVE NOT ENGAGED WITH THIS SCHOOL AT ALL/SINCE 2016	STRONG ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR ONE OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS AND MULTI-SESSION PROJECTS PER YEAR	TOTAL
Alfred Sutton Primary School	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	60.00% 3	5
All Saints Infant School	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
All Saints Junior School	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
Battle Primary Academy	60.00% 3	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	5
Caversham Park Primary School	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3
Caversham Primary School	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4
Christ the King Catholic Primary School	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
Churchend Primary Academy	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
Civitas Academy	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3
Coley Primary School and Nursery	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3
Emmer Green Primary School	50.00% 2	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4
English Martyrs Catholic Primary School	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
E P Collier Primary School and Nursery	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4
Geoffrey Field Infant School	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
Geoffrey Field Junior School	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	3
The Heights Primary School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
The Hill Primary School	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
Katesgrove Primary School	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4
Manor Primary School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1

	SOME ENGAGEMENT. IS AD HOC AND IS USUALLY ONE- OFF	GOOD ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR DELIVERY OF ONE-OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS PER YEAR	WE HAVE NOT ENGAGED WITH THIS SCHOOL AT ALL/SINCE 2016	STRONG ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR ONE OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS AND MULTI-SESSION PROJECTS PER YEAR	TOTAL
Meadow Park Academy	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3
Micklands Primary School	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
Moorlands Primary School	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0
New Christ Church (Church of England) Primary School	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
New Town Primary School	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3
Oxford Road Community Primary School	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 2	4
The Palmer Academy	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
Park Lane Primary School	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4
Ranikhet Primary School	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
Redlands Primary School	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	6
The Ridgeway Primary School	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
Southcote Primary School	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
St John's (Church of England) Primary School	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2
St Martin's Catholic Primary School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
St Mary and All Saints (Church of England) Primary School	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
St Michael's Primary School	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2
Thameside Primary School	40.00% 2	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	5
Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4
Wilson Primary School	50.00% 2	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4

Q10: Please tell us which Secondary Schools you have engaged with in Reading between September 2016 and August 2019? Secondary schools listed below are presented in alphabetical order.

	SOME ENGAGEMENT. ENGAGEMENT IS AD HOC AND IS USUALLY ONE- OFF	GOOD ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR DELIVERY OF ONE-OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS PER YEAR	STRONG ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR ONE OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS AND MULTI-SESSION PROJECTS PER YEAR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	2.00
John Madejski Academy	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	2.00
Kendrick School	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	3.00
Maiden Erlegh in Reading	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Prospect School	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2	3.00
Reading Girls' School	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2	3.00
Reading School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	2.00
UTC Reading	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	4.00
The Wren School	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00

Q11: Please tell us which Special Schools you have engaged with in Reading between September 2016 and August 2019? Special schools listed below are presented in alphabetical order.

	SOME ENGAGEMENT. ENGAGEMENT IS AD HOC AND IS USUALLY ONE-OFF	GOOD ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR DELIVERY OF ONE-OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS PER YEAR	STRONG ENGAGEMENT. REGULAR ONE OFF WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS AND MULTI-SESSION PROJECTS PER YEAR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The Avenue School	75.00% 3	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	2.25
The Holybrook School	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Thames Valley School	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Brookfields Special School	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	2.00

Q12 Consider the overarching aim of the Reading CEP between 2016 and 2019: To allow every child and young person in Reading to have the opportunity to aspire, achieve and participate in high quality arts and culture, and to develop a collaborative, sustainable infrastructure to maintain such engagement. What, in your view, have been the key successes for the partnership in terms of achieving the overarching aim?

KEY SUCCESS 1

1 Arts Award scheme has been very successful - positive results and the number of young people. We got funding through the CEP was able to get the bronze or silver Arts Award and we organised celebration. Now on the arts award board. Put in touch with ArtsWork and brokering

2 Building up the offer of Arts Award in primaries with Artwork. After their pilot project, Jelly now offer this as standard to primary schools they work with. Discover level. Encourage active participation of 10 hours each, more than one engagement with each child.

3 Better recording of engagement by organisations

4 The partnership has supported arts organisations to work with more schools, reaching more children and young people

5 Increasing Arts Award participations

6 Increasing the number of Reading schools we work with and the depth and quality of the work completed with the young people at these schools

KEY SUCCESS 2

1 Individually, we have got to know other organisations and we are having conversations with other organisations. Work in partnership. We work closely with Jelly on Christmas show. Cultural commission bid - through the CEP we have been as a result of the partnership.

2 Funding - new Schools connect programme working with 10 schools to form a network of excellence working towards ArtMark status. Will be working in schools over 2 years to embed the arts in all areas of education and providing CPD for teachers. Encouraging critical thinking.

3 Starting to be more organised in terms of a joined up approach to our offer across the town

4 The CEP fosters collaborative working, in a competitive landscape.

5 Improving dialogue between organisations

6 More collaboration, especially between smaller organisations

KEY SUCCESS 3

1 Sub groups are useful to bring in non-arts sector into the meetings - youth organisations can attend these and understand the offer.

2 working together to make sure we offer high quality offer to children in our area

3 the CEP has provided a framework that enable engagement to be understood by schools, there is the perception that there is 'something in it for them'

4 Providing an agreed strategy for organisations to support which assists with finding funding

5 The large number of young people who have gain an Arts Award through working with a Reading arts organisation

Q13 What have been the key challenges faced by the partnership in terms of achieving the overarching aim?

KEY CHALLENGE 1

1 Time is an issue - using the meetings for useful dates. Be more strategic. Many arts organisation is small and people are attending in their time.

2 not sure. Jelly have only seen positive things come from CEP

3 finding ways of recording data that match - we all use different ways of recording as we have different funders to please!

4 Arts landscape in Reading is highly competitive and there is a lot of silo working. This really needs to be overcome in order for arts orgs to navigate challenging financial times

5 Artsmark take up

6 Securing funding to ensure that projects can continue

KEY CHALLENGE 2

1 Arts Award was so successful that the market is so saturated.

2 sharing our 'customers' we all need to do our own thing, and yet find ways to share the best outcomes and support each other

3 The CEP is led fantastically well by Kayleigh Hodges, but without that energy behind it, it would lose momentum. This isn't a sign of lack of sustainability, just the reality of large and diverse partnerships such as this.

4 Schools engagement with the CEP

5 Securing meetings with some schools to discuss project/collaboration opportunities

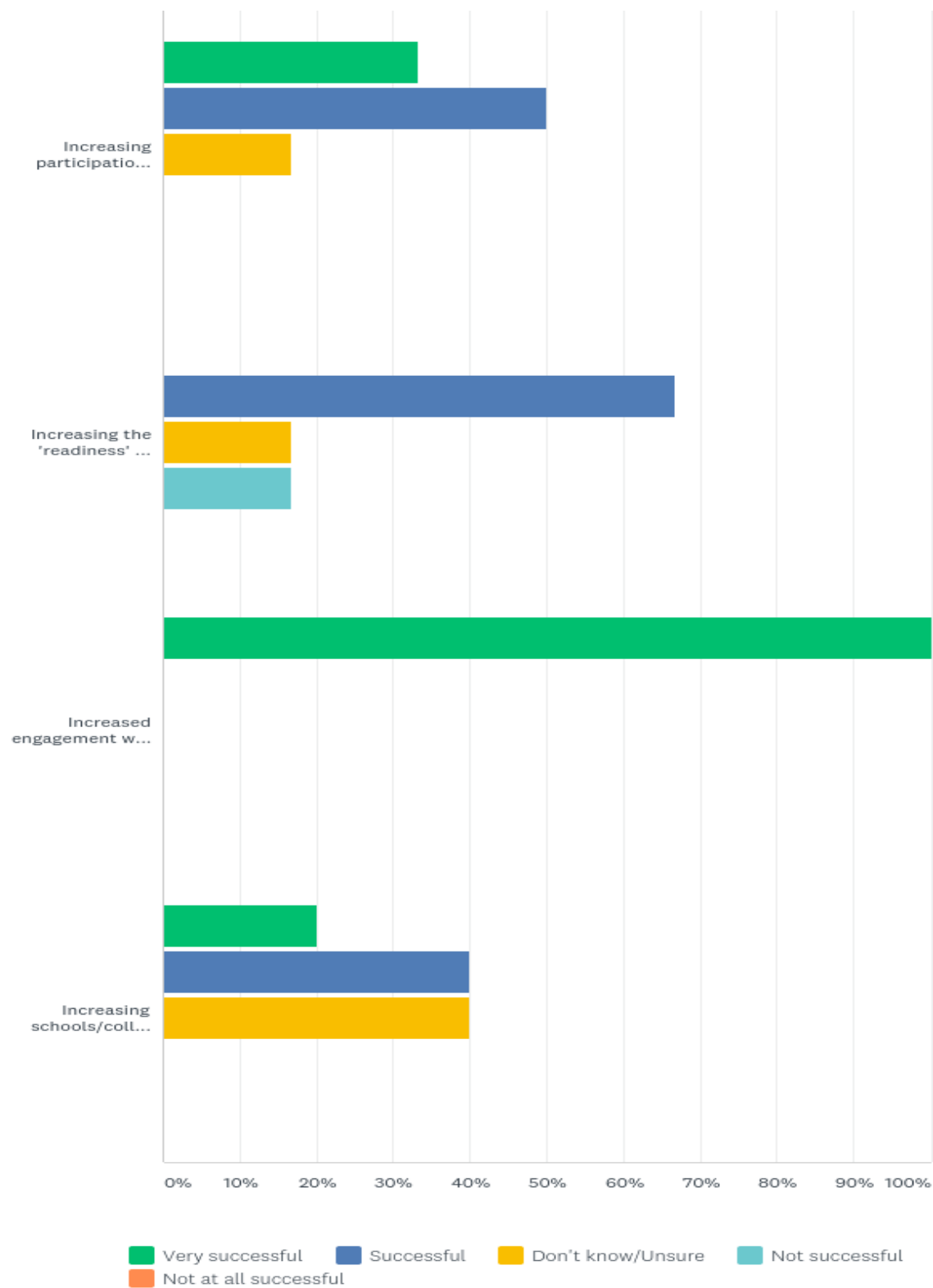
KEY CHALLENGE 3

1 Don't know how easy it is to become a part of the CEP - Is it actively looking for organisations and is it a closed shop.

2 Next steps - ensuring everyone is working towards strategic goals for Reading and its children and young people as a whole, rather than simply finding ways to progress their own organisations

3 Youth engagement

Q14: How successful do you perceive the partnership has been in meeting its delivery objectives:



	VERY SUCCESSFUL	SUCCESSFUL	DON'T KNOW/UNSURE	NOT SUCCESSFUL	NOT AT ALL SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Increasing participation of children and young people 'unlikely to engage with or participate' in arts and culture	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.83
Increasing the 'readiness' for young people to engage in creative employment	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6	2.50
Increased engagement with Arts Award	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
Increasing schools/colleges engagement with Arts Mark	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	2.20

Q15 Please share up to three cultural developments for children and young people that you would like to see in Reading in the next 3 years. These might include your own development plans, art form or heritage specific, Big Ideas, or broader aspirations relating to participation or engagement, and may relate to facilities, resources or activity.

DEVELOPMENT 1

1 Tackle the issue of arts subjects in schools. Want to see more collaborations between art forms and pull resources.

2 Have a rolling project of Schools Connect. After these 10 schools, work with another 10 schools etc. Schools sharing learning, sitting on the CEP. Thus, Reading becomes a centre of excellence for creative work in Primaries (then on to Secondaries). Take education away from the formulaic and back to playing/creativity.

3 A chance for all young people to hear about the amazing history of their town

4 I'd like to see the roll out of Arts Award/Mark and training to dance schools and teachers

5 Increase youth engagement

6 A focused summer programme with activities that cover many creative disciplines. Some great work was completed by the RVA this summer, it would be great if we could continue and expand on this

DEVELOPMENT 2

1 Strategic level - bigger voice in campaigning around promoting arts in schools.

2 Increase pride in Reading as a creative place. Make creative reading known more widely than the small sector that currently knows and celebrates it. Be more visible.

3 support for schools to enable them to find out what is on offer in the town

4 A small, focussed strategy group, with a mandate for improving arts delivery in schools

5 Increased support for young people who are NEET or experiencing poor mental health

6 The Rock Academy would like to secure more funding to both work with community centres and also fund young people to take part in our band experience and instrumental tuition programmes.

DEVELOPMENT 3

1 Help young people to use the arts as a platform to have their voice heard - arts is a great way to find that what

2 A cohesive CPD programme for teachers in cross-form arts, from a partnership of organisations, working together to upskill teachers.

3 Increased employment/development opportunities.

4 A varied after school programme, with support from mentors, etc. Some work has been started by the RVA on this, it would be great if this could be taken forward.

Q16 Please share up to three changes that you feel are needed to enable or facilitate the developments you have identified

ITEM 1

1 Collaboration - encourage collaboration in the delivery. Holistic arts projects. More celebration in bringing groups together.

2 Funding for Schools Connect to become rolling. The resource is there in terms of participatory artists, just need funding.

3 we need an arts/heritage schools officer in the town who can coordinate and support the schools and the CEP organisations to get the best out of what we have on offer!

4 A small, strategy group would be beneficial to support the needs of the larger group and subgroups

5 Increase youth provision and staff able to support youth engagement in Reading.

6 Access to larger funding sources to support multi-year multi-discipline activities

ITEM 2

1 Campaigning - CEP is connected to the Council with the relationship to the schools. It might be easier to get in to schools - engage with headteachers. Help us to understand more about the teachers. Brokering conversations and promote.

2 Make creative reading more visible - a Time Out publication, or flagship centre. An Incubator to allow creativity to thrive and be visible, places and spaces with high profile. Suggested like Arnolfini in Bristol.

3 More platforms for sharing the learning from the CEP, in terms of partnership working, what works what doesn't, what are the benefits, how to support orgs in working in partnerships more effectively

4 Better engagement by CAMHS, Police, YOS, and RBC Education.

ITEM 3

1 Working with Brighter Future for Children and Youth Services. Connected to decisions.

2 More platforms to celebrate existing work, that would encourage teachers and others working with children and young people to engage with organisations who are part of CEP.

3 Maintain levels of schools' engagement but provide more creative/musical progression routes for children

Q17 Briefly (in a couple of paragraphs) tell us about your organisation's strengths, skills, experience and knowledge that you bring to the Cultural Education Partnership

RESPONSES

1 Our skills are that we work directly in schools (at the coal face!) delivering work so we understand the challenges that teachers face and how we can support them. We bring that knowledge of how we can work with schools and therefore communication. Plus, we have good artists and we work with emerging artists to elevate them to work in Reading.

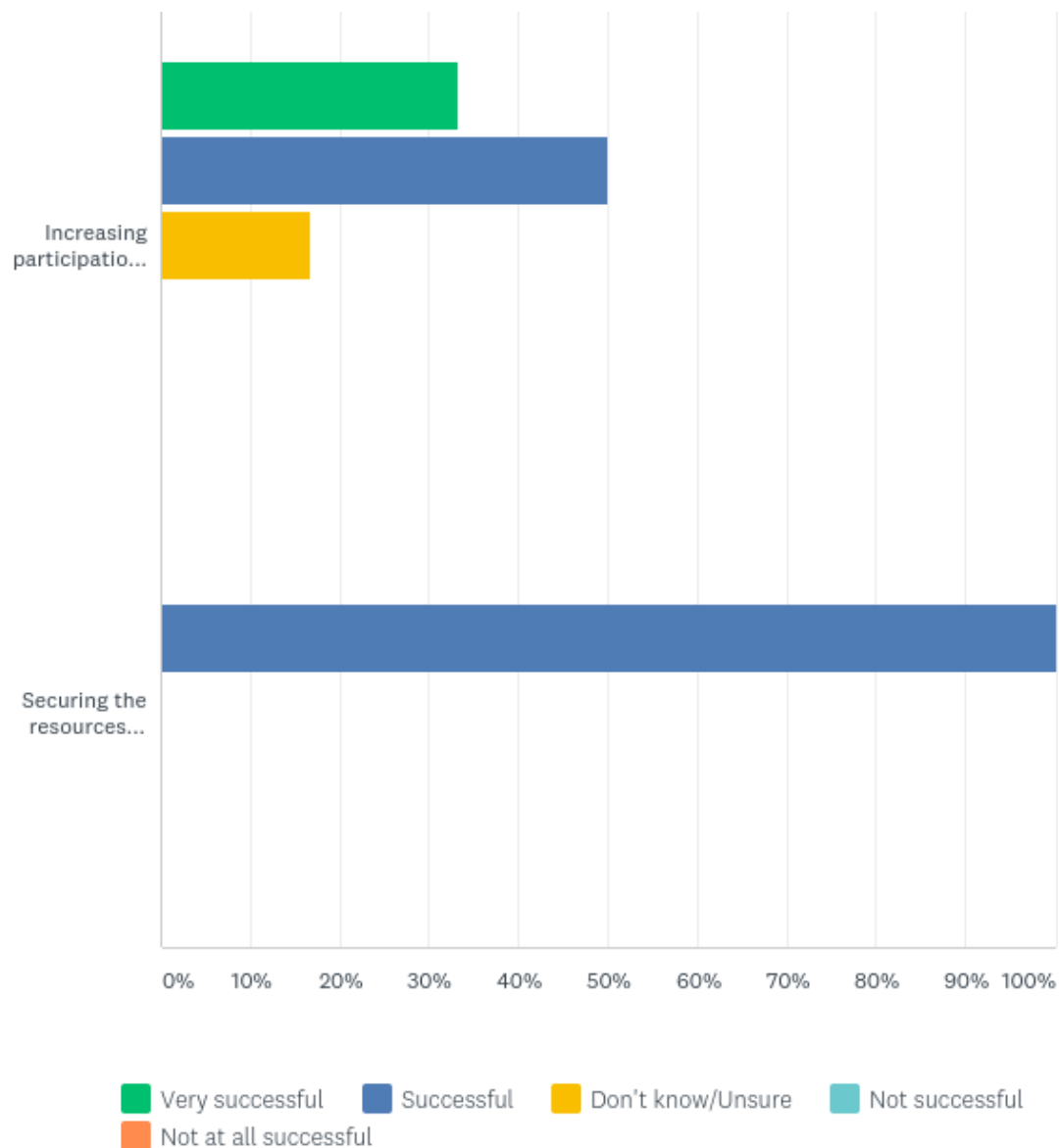
2 We are skilled in delivering heritage/history workshops/sessions for children from KS1-KS3. We are working in partnership with the MERL to help to expand that offer and to engage with young people in a broader context. we will be working on our new Youth Manifesto soon. We have many people here who have years of experience and a vast array of knowledge!

3 We are an umbrella organisation. Whilst we do deliver work directly with young people as part of our festival work, mentoring programme and support for young and emerging artists, our strengths lie in supporting the over 150 dance schools who all work with children and young people across Reading, both within and beyond schools. We spend extensive time listening to the sector and shape our activities to meet their needs. We have particular experience in supporting and mentoring young dancers, providing them with support and guidance to continue their work, develop skills, find collaborators and create platforms to showcase work. Our directors all work with schools and young people in other capacities as well as within Dance Reading, and so bring a diverse experience of arts work in schools and informal education settings. Our membership is broad and diverse and gives us an extensive picture of the current state of dance in schools and settings across Reading and beyond

4 Readipop is one of Reading's NPOs with over 20 experience of delivering projects with children and young people. See Readipop.co.uk

5 The Rock Academy delivers high quality music/music technology-focused activities in the Reading area. Our Band Experience allows young people to work with experienced coaches to write new original material and perform it at regular concerts and community events. Our instrumental tuition (in both private and school settings) enables young people to develop on their chosen instrument and take grades in order to celebrate their progress. Our community work is varied and focuses on music performance and music technology. Our focused offer means that we are able to produce high quality work, and this is evident in our end-of-term shows, videos and recordings. We are very able collaborators and can adapt our offer to suit a particular group, project or community setting. Our head of academy also has extensive experience of the further education sector and is an experienced Arts Award advisor at all levels.

Q18: How successful do you perceive the partnership has been in meeting its other objectives:



	VERY SUCCESSFUL	SUCCESSFUL	DON'T KNOW/UNSURE	NOT SUCCESSFUL	NOT AT ALL SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Increasing participation of and collaboration with partners to deliver the CEP Action Plan between 2016 and 2019	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.83
Securing the resources (financial and in-kind) to maintain a sustainable CEP infrastructure for ongoing arts and cultural engagement/participation	0.00% 0	100.00% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	2.00

Summary Evaluation drawn from survey responses:

Objectives from 2016-19:	
By August 2019 5,000 children and young people who were previously unlikely to engage with or participate in arts and culture will have engaged with and participated in an activity*	Thousands of children and young people are engaged with by partner organisations, however there is no data to identify if they were those unlikely to engage in activity previously. The majority of schools and colleges in Reading were engaged with, with only 4 schools that had had no engagement in the last 3 years, so it is likely that these children and young people are being reached.
Over the term of the CEP Action Plan 1,500 young people will have undertaken training, and achieved skills and appropriate accreditation, making them ready to seek employment in the cultural sector, or to use creative skills in their chosen employment field**	This data has not been collected. There is some evidence of work experience provided for young people by cultural organisations in Reading.
Between September 2016 and August 2019 1,500 children and young people in Reading will have engaged in Arts Award with at least 750 achieving accreditation at one or more levels	Survey respondents say that Arts Award at Discover level has had large take up, however there are no figures for this.
Over the term of the CEP Action Plan 30 schools and colleges in Reading will have gained Artsmark status	15 Schools have registered to work towards Artsmark, including those working through the Schools Connect programme. This represents 23% of schools in Reading.
Between September 2016 and August 2019 20+ partner organisations will actively participate, in collaboration, in delivering the CEP Action Plan	A number of partner organisations have actively collaborated. In terms of Artswork investment into Reading CEP: 9k transition funds 2018, 10k start up funding 2015; Total of £81k Partnership Investment over 2 applications leveraging in £97,700.
By August 2019 a further 3 Year CEP Action Plan will have been developed and resources secured to maintain a sustainable infrastructure for comprehensive ongoing arts and cultural engagement and participation from Reading's children and young people	In development

* By targeting activity in areas of deprivation this objective can be focused and evaluated

**Meaning that young people from Reading will have achieved relevant accreditation through arts related degree programmes, BTEC Arts programmes, Silver or Gold Arts Awards, Level 5 or above Music Grades, specific and recognised theatre and dance awards, or equivalents

Results of consultation Lego® Serious Play® workshops

Following the survey, key themes to consider were drawn out and these formed the basis of the next stage of consultation, the Lego® Serious Play® Workshops. The consultation sessions were also informed by the new Ten-Year Strategy produced by Arts Council England, in order to ensure that the strategy was relevant to the wider cultural landscape.

3 questions were identified for the consultation group to consider:

1. **Creative people:** What will the cultural landscape of Reading look like 3 years from now that enables **ALL** children and young people to develop & express creativity throughout their lives?
2. **Cultural communities:** 3 years from now, how will culture and creativity have a broader impact on children and young people?
3. **A creative and cultural country:** What does an innovative and collaborative CEP look like 3 years from now?

Attendees at the workshop then used Lego® to work together on building their vision, and from this they were able to articulate how they had explored the questions and were then able to identify a number of objectives for each of the three themes.

Attendees at the Lego® Serious Play® Strategic Plan Workshop:

Culture Development RBC

Rock Academy

Connect Reading

Reading Museum RBC

Reading Fringe Festival

Dance Reading

Artswork

CP

RBC Library

RBC Children Care

Berkshire Maestros

Aspire2

Reading Rep

RBC Project Manager

1. **Creative people:** What will the cultural landscape of Reading look like 3 years from now that enables **ALL** children and young people to develop & express creativity throughout their lives?

- Gatekeepers or blocks to young people accessing culture: bureaucracy, fear of the unknown, plus poverty and deprivation
 - Must empower young people to advocate to other young people
 - Allowing young people to work with organisations to shape their own direction
 - Give young people more opportunities to experience diverse culture
 - A need to take care of culture for the future / environmental concern
 - Target early years through parents: at primary age, home environment is a bigger influence than school
 - NEET pilot projects
 - Work in partnership with organisations already working with hard to reach, not just within cultural sector
- 2. Cultural communities:** 3 years from now, how will culture and creativity have a broader impact on children and young people?
- A gateway to two paths: - careers in culture, with a clear path; character development/transferable skills by taking part in culture
 - The pathway has links to corporate world
 - Arts Award throughout; Art Award needs to be communicated as a series of stepping stones
 - Arts Award able to be achieved through other routes outside of school
 - Gateway starts at early years and the pathway goes through to successful employment
- 3. A creative and cultural country:** What does an innovative and collaborative CEP look like 3 years from now?
- CEP branching out to more organisations, and schools' part of the CEP
 - Governance above the CEP - needs the flag waving
 - Needs to be a shared role to steer the CEP
 - Clear operational roles and strategic roles
 - young people are the face of the CEP and advocating for it
 - The steering is formed of a diverse group of people representing the community
 - Widen representation on the CEP, and have clear roles between strategic function and project delivery

[YP Lego workshops feedback] available in a separate PowerPoint doc.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JULY 2021		
TITLE:	READING MUSEUM FORWARD PLAN		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR KAREN ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MATTHEW WILLIAMS	TEL:	0118 9373683
JOB TITLE:	MUSEUM MANAGER	E-MAIL:	matthew.williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025 (Appendix 1) from the Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee.
- 1.2 The regular review of the Forward Plan is both good practice and a key requirement of the Museum Accreditation Scheme, under which Reading Museum has Full Accreditation status (Accredited No. 978) from the Arts Council England (ACE). Museums participating in the Scheme must demonstrate effective forward planning approved by their governing body.
- 1.3 Museums in the Scheme are periodically invited to provide evidence that they continue to comply with the Accreditation Standard through a returns process. Adoption of the Forward Plan and its submission with the return is a key piece of evidence required by the Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Approves the Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025 including the service's statement of purpose and key aims set out in Appendix 1 attached.
- 2.2 Agrees the adoption of The Forward Plan by Reading Museum to ensure it meets with the Accreditation standard for UK museums and that it is submitted with the Museum's next Accreditation return; and
- 2.3 Notes the achievements that the Museum has delivered to date.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Reading Museum has Full Accreditation status from ACE. This forms part of the nationally agreed Museum Accreditation Scheme - the UK Standard for museums and galleries. Accreditation is often an essential criterion for grant giving bodies including ACE and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is a requirement for all museums in ACE's National Portfolio to have Accreditation. Reading Museum is part of the Museums Partnership Reading (MPR) which is part of the ACE National Portfolio 2018-2023.

3.2 Accredited museums must demonstrate effective forward planning through a Forward Plan which must include or cover the following:

- the museum's statement of purpose
- the period the plan covers
- its key aims or objectives
- how it will achieve its aims
- what is needed to achieve these aims
- a review date

The Accreditation standard requires that the Forward Plan, statement of purpose and key aims are approved by the Museum's governing body.

3.3 Museums participating in the Scheme are periodically invited to provide evidence that they continue to comply with the Accreditation Standard through a returns process. Approval of the Forward Plan and its submission with the return is a key piece of evidence required by the Scheme.

3.4 The Coronavirus pandemic struck just as Reading Museum was preparing this Forward Plan to replace the previous 2016-2020 plan. The Museum closed on 17 March 2020. Within weeks of lockdown the Museum Team created a digital workflow, moving planned public programmes onto the Museum's website and social media. The Museum finally reopened on 6 September for pre-booked visits within a Covid-safe environment. Preparation of the Forward Plan continued, with consideration of the impacts and opportunities created by the pandemic. This includes the extension of ACE National Portfolio Organisation funding through the Museums Partnership Reading (MPR) by a further year until March 2023 (subject to ACE approval of 2022-23 MPR Business Plan).

3.5 The Forward Plan is also supported by and linked to the MPR Youth Strategy 2019-2022 and the MPR's annual Business Plans. These MPR plans support the outcomes and investment principles of ACE's 2020-2030 strategy 'Let's Create'. The MPR Board, steering group and staff updated the 2021-22 MPR Business Plan to fully embed the ACE outcomes and investment principles and is doing the same for the 2022-23 Business Plan that will be shortly submitted to ACE.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee approves the Reading Museum Forward Plan to ensure it continues to meet with the Accreditation standard for UK museums.

4.2 The full version of the Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 1. The Forward Plan includes a section on key achievements from the previous plan, in part to provide contextual information on the ability to deliver high quality services and positive outcomes. Key achievements for over the last plan period have included:

- Reading Museum was awarded Full Accreditation status in October 2017
- In April 2018 Reading Museum and The MERL, as Museums Partnership Reading (MPR), were awarded £1.25m from ACE National Portfolio 2018-2023
- Over 20,000 people attended the reopening of Reading Abbey Quarter in June 2018 after successful delivery of the £3.15m Reading Abbey Revealed project - conservation, interpretation and community engagement led by the museum team and supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Historic England
- September 2018 marked the successful move and reopening of the popular Victorian Schoolroom at the restored Abbey Gateway, over 15,000 school children visited the Museum in 2018/19
- Investing in Volunteers status was re-awarded in February 2019
- Museum on Wheels - our hands-on outreach programme reached 22,608 people across the Borough in 2018-9. Supported by NLHF and The Earley Charity
- Official opening of the final part of the new Story of Reading Gallery and Welcome Gallery in May 2019, followed by the new Museum Shop in August 2019
- Awarded 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking' for the Reading Abbey Revealed project- Planning Awards 2020. The judges were particularly impressed with the use of community participation in consultations to ensure a broad spectrum of people could participate and enjoy a new 'sense of place' within the Abbey Quarter
- The online exhibition *Enigma of Arrival: The Politics and Poetics of Caribbean Migration to Britain*, partnership with Barbados Museum and the University of the West Indies launched June 2020. This critically acclaimed project featured in ACE's national round-up, and received a virtual visit from the Faith Minister, Lord Greenhalgh (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)
- Voted 'Best Family Museum' by users of the Little Ankle Biters website for Berks, Bucks and Oxon in July 2020

- 4.3 The next iteration of the Forward Plan has been set within the context and priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan with key themes as follows:

Museum priorities	<i>Link to RBC corporate priorities</i>
1. Work in partnership, particularly with Museum Partnership Reading, to actively engage Reading's diverse communities with our collections and services	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
2. Provide learning and training opportunities that inspire children, young people and teachers	Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
3. Champion pride in Reading's heritage through promotion of the Abbey Quarter and improved access to our collections, especially at our new offsite store and digitally	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
4. Maximise opportunities to generate environmentally sustainable income and fundraising by working with partners and RBC colleagues	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy

This Forward Plan is supported by the following approved service policies:

- Access Policy
- Collection Development Policy
- Collection Management Policy
- Environmental Policy

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Museum cares for an important public collection and unique cultural resource, which through its use and interpretation contributes to the delivery of the strategic priorities within the *Corporate Plan 2021-22*- Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy. It particularly contributes towards the Council's strategic aim to establish Reading as a Learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit. It also contributes to the *Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030*, and the *Reading 2050 Vision*, particularly the theme 'a city of culture and diversity'.
- 5.2 The Forward Plan provides the Museum with a framework to plan effectively within available resources. It includes the Museum's Statement of Purpose and Aims:
- 'Reading Museum champions our town's unique identity. We play a leading part in Reading's transformation as a cultural community and a place of culture by:
1. actively engaging with diverse local communities and partners locally and nationally
 2. providing opportunities for high quality object-based learning and creativity
 3. caring for our collections and Reading Abbey, and encouraging physical and digital access to them
 4. providing enterprising and sustainable income opportunities'
- 5.3 The Museum has a strategic role in delivering both the Abbey Quarter and the Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone projects.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The adoption of the Forward Plan makes a positive contribution to the Council's ability to respond to the Climate Emergency and achieve a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. The Museum has an Environmental Policy (another Accreditation Scheme requirement, Decision Book issue 542 refers) that assists with delivering its environmental objectives such as promoting the responsible and efficient use of energy and water in our buildings, reducing the consumption of raw materials and the production of waste in our operations, encouraging the use of environmentally sound and sustainable resources, and promoting environmental awareness as part of our work with local communities and our users.
- 6.3 The positive contribution of the Plan to the climate emergency also supports the Museum's other priorities such as better access to the collection, or new learning and training activities. For example, the relocation of the Museum's off-site store improves the care and access of the collection, while also reducing environmental impacts through a more energy efficient and smaller footprint building (that is also better adapted

to deal with the impacts of climate change). While the Museum's new programme of virtual school sessions are accessible to more schools across the UK but have the positive contribution of reducing the need for travel by local schools.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Plan gives local people and key stakeholders, including ACE, a clear and transparent understanding of the Museum's planning framework for delivering its key aims and objectives. Through its Access Policy and Plan the Museum has a clear commitment to making its collections, buildings and services accessible, by removing as many physical, intellectual or cultural barriers to access as practicable, within the limits of legal, budgetary and planning considerations. Within available resources the Museum is committed to an audience-first focus, developing a programme of activities and events that are designed to involve, educate and engage groups from a wide range of backgrounds and all parts of Reading's diverse community.
- 7.2 The Museum regularly evaluates its services and consults with users following its Access Policy and Plan. As part of MPR, we use Audience Finder to evaluate the visitors and groups that we have worked with directly, we also consult through other evaluation methods. We involve our communities in the running of the Museum through consultative groups (youth panel, access group etc.) and community steering groups for partnership projects and initiatives (for example the Reading Windrush Group, Heritage Action Zone). The Museum knows there are barriers to engagement, and there are opportunities for museums and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee representatives to come together to find and develop cultural opportunities. Through its Access Policy and Plan the Museum is committed to actively engaging with Reading's diverse local communities.
- 7.3 The Forward Plan was written following a process of reviewing our previous plans and consultation with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, and feedback from our customers and visitors. Significant input was received during the Local Government Association's Cultural Services Peer Challenge (2017), Reading Town Hall Business Strategy (2018-19), Mutual Ventures Cultural Services Options Appraisal (2019) and the Museums Partnership Reading annual business planning process (2020 and 2021).
- 7.3 The Plan, once adopted, will be available on the Museum's website at www.readingmuseum.org.uk

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The decision to adopt this policy does not have a differential impact on: racial groups, gender, people with disabilities, people of a particular sexual orientation, people due to their age, or people due to their religious belief. The Forward Plan has been developed within the framework of several existing policies, including the Museum's Access Policy (Decision Book issue 603 refers), and addresses and promotes equality of services/opportunity to all sectors of the community. The Museum regularly consults and evaluates its services and projects and has never received any indication or feedback that any of its policies or plans discriminates against any groups. The

Museum is positive about being inclusive to all sections of the community. Being free to visit, our museums are open to all residents and visitors. They provide opportunities for enjoyment and learning for all regardless of ethnic origin, social background or financial means.

- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision to the adoption of this Plan.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 All activities in the Plan will be met from existing budgets.
- 10.2 The Plan provides a clear and transparent framework that ensures resources are targeted and focused towards corporate priorities.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 There are none.

Draft Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Draft Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025

1.0 Introduction

Reading Museum is part of Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Cultural Service, operating from the Town Hall within Reading's historic Abbey Quarter in the town centre. The Museum has been providing original opportunities for enjoyment, creativity and learning since 1883. It has Full Museum Accreditation status from the Arts Council England (ACE) and has achieved the Investing in Volunteers award. In 2019-20 over 100,000 people including 20,000 students visited the Museum. Many more use its outreach and online services.

The Museum has a strategic partnership with the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) called Museums Partnership Reading (MPR), which is part of the ACE National Portfolio 2018-2023. The two museums work together to provide cultural opportunities for Reading's young people and diverse communities, through schools, volunteering, outreach, digital engagement and exhibitions.

Innovative engagement with collections and services through learning, community and volunteering programmes is integral to Reading Museum's DNA. In 1911 it was one of the first museums to provide a loans service for schools, offering a unique opportunity for children to handle real artefacts.

The collection of over 490,000 artefacts includes objects discovered at the Roman town at Silchester, a unique Victorian copy of the Bayeux Tapestry, an art collection including works by important artists of national and international standing such as Stanley Spencer, Alan Caiger-Smith and Helen Cammock, Romanesque carvings from Reading Abbey and the Huntley & Palmers Collection relating to the famous Reading biscuit company. Today the museum focuses on collecting linked with Reading, its people and environment, and proudly celebrates our town and its diverse history.

The Museum has ten galleries displaying a fascinating range of objects from its collections as well as the Sir John Madejski Art Gallery which hosts a programme of temporary exhibitions. The landmark Town Hall, conceived by our Victorian forefathers as a cultural, educational and civic complex, offers versatile spaces for conferencing, banqueting, concerts, weddings and events. The Concert Hall is an important venue for classical music and comedy events. In 2018 and 2019 two major capital projects were completed, firstly the conservation and interpretation of the Abbey Quarter, and secondly the creation of new facilities at the Town Hall including museum galleries, shop, reception and café.

The Riverside Museum at Blake's Lock tells the history of Reading's rivers and hosts community art exhibitions in the summer. The Museum team actively builds relationships with communities and organisations in Reading to offer a range of services that contribute to the region's cultural life. Since 2004 the Museum has managed Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advice service for Windsor and Maidenhead, Reading, Bracknell Forest, Slough and Wokingham councils. The Berkshire Archaeology team also looks after the management of the Abbey Ruins in the Abbey Quarter. The recently restored Abbey Gateway, a Grade I listed building, is home to the Museum's popular Victorian Schoolroom experience.

2.0 Strategic context

The Borough of Reading is home to 161,780 people while around 370,000 live in the wider urban area around Reading, making it the largest conurbation in the Thames Valley. It is the third most diverse area in the South East and has some of the most affluent and most deprived neighbourhoods in the Thames Valley.

The *Reading 2050 Vision*¹ is an ambitious description of what Reading can be, with three themes central to Reading's long-term success as a smart and sustainable city: a green tech city, a city of culture and diversity, and a city of rivers and parks. The 2050 Vision sees Reading as *'an internationally recognised and economically successful city region. Where low carbon living is the norm and the built environment, technology and innovation have combined to create a dynamic, smart and sustainable city with a high quality of life and equal opportunities for all.'*

Reading's *Cultural and Heritage Strategy* (2015-2030) gives this cultural vision for Reading:

'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 Museum is part of RBC's Cultural Service within the Directorate for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services. The directorate is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the strategic framework for Reading's culture and heritage. The Museum is delivering a key part of this vision through its work, partnerships and strategic role in the Abbey Quarter and High Street Heritage Action Zone.

This Forward Plan supports RBC's Corporate Plan (2021-2022) priorities:

1. Healthy environment
2. Thriving communities
3. Inclusive economy

The MPR Youth Strategy 2019-2022 has been planned within the policy landscape of both Reading Borough Council and the University of Reading and aligns with Arts Council England's vision. The Youth Strategy's vision is that 'Every child and young person in Reading will benefit from the MPR through opportunities to: See, touch and understand the relevance of museum collections to their lives; participate in high quality age appropriate learning activities; enjoy safe and welcoming museum spaces and make their own creative contributions'.

¹ <https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050>

3.0 Adapting to Coronavirus (Covid-19) in 2020/21

The pandemic struck just as the Museum was preparing this Forward Plan and reviewing several aligned policies and plans. The Museum closed on 17 March 2020, reopening on 6 September 2020. ACE announced that National Portfolio funding through the MPR would be extended by a further year until March 2023.

Within weeks of lockdown the Museum team created a digital workflow, moving planned public programmes onto the Museum's website and social media. The digital work was co-ordinated across the MPR by our ACE-funded Digital Editor. The MPR's experience of digital and its focus on agile working has been vital in achieving this transformation. These are some of the key developments in 2020:

- In June the Museum was the first national recipient of the Contemporary Art Society's Rapid Response Fund, commissioning artist Eleanor Lakelin to create an artwork made of felled wood from Chestnut Walk. It takes its title *Oh beautiful world!* from the words Oscar Wilde uttered on leaving Reading Gaol.
- Our new Access Policy was approved by Decision Book in June 2020.
- The online exhibition *Enigma of Arrival: The Politics and Poetics of Caribbean Migration to Britain*, a partnership with Barbados Museum and the University of the West Indies, was critically acclaimed, featuring in ACE's national round-up. It received a last-minute virtual visit from the Faith Minister, Lord Greenhalgh (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) hosted by the Mayor of Reading. It was part of Windrush Day 2020, a partnership project including Reading's Caribbean Associations Group, the Alliance for Community Cohesion and Racial Equality, AGE UK Berkshire, Globe Church Community and Reading Museum.
- The Museum was voted 'Best family museum' by users of the Little Ankle Biters website for Berks, Bucks and Oxon on 4 July 2020 (a recognition of our strong physical and virtual family offer).
- Since the start of the crisis the Museum team created new digital content to increase and deepen community engagement. By May 2020 resources had been viewed or downloaded over 50,000 times, representing a 206% increase from before the lockdown. Social media engagement similarly increased by 258% from before the lockdown. There has been lots of user feedback and appreciation, especially for the VE Day hub, online Animal exhibition, Windrush hub and the Archaeology Festival. By early September we had had over 3.2 million views on social media and 120,000 website visits since lockdown started.
- We reopened the online Museum shop in September and launched new virtual school sessions in October, both of which can operate even if the Museum is closed in future lockdowns.
- In October Reading Arts and Venues (including Reading Museum) received £989,374 from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, showing how valued the culture and heritage sectors are in Reading and acknowledging their importance within our community.
- The Museum reopened on 6 September for pre-booked visits within a Covid-safe environment. October half term was fully booked. We closed again from 5 November until 3 December, and then from 18 December 2020.

The future is still uncertain, but this Plan has been an opportunity to take stock, refocus, adapt our work and to align with *Powered by People*, Reading's new economic recovery strategy, developed by Reading UK and adopted by RBC. This

Forward Plan particularly supports section 3.0 - Destination Reading - a great place to work, live and do business.

4.0 Our Statement of Purpose and Aims

Reading Museum champions our town's unique identity. We play a leading part in Reading's transformation as a cultural community and a place of culture by:

1. actively engaging with diverse local communities and partners locally and nationally
2. providing opportunities for high quality object-based learning and creativity
3. caring for our collections and Reading Abbey, and encouraging physical and digital access to them
4. providing enterprising and sustainable income opportunities

4.1 Our Priorities 2020-2025

Museum priorities	<i>Link to proposed RBC corporate priorities</i>
1. Work in partnership, particularly with Museum Partnership Reading, to actively engage Reading's diverse communities with our collections and services	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
2. Provide learning and training opportunities that inspire children, young people and teachers	Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
3. Champion pride in Reading's heritage through promotion of the Abbey Quarter and improved access to our collections, especially at our new offsite store and digitally	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy
4. Maximise opportunities to generate environmentally sustainable income and fundraising by working with partners and RBC colleagues	Healthy environment; Thriving communities; Inclusive economy

This Forward Plan is supported by the following service policies and plans:

- Access Policy and Action Plan
- Collection Development Policy
- Collection Management Policy and Action Plan
- Environmental Policy and Action Plan

This Plan is also supported by Museums Partnership Reading's annual business plans and MPR Youth Strategy 2019-2022. These MPR plans support the outcomes and investment principles of ACE's 2020-2030 strategy 'Let's Create'.

Acknowledgements

The achievements of our previous plan (see appendix A) were thanks to our committed team of staff and volunteers, Reading Borough Council colleagues, and the support of our partners, especially the Cultural Education Partnership, Friends of Reading Abbey, Friends of Reading Museum (FoRM), The MERL, Reading Foundation for Art, and the University of Reading.

Our project and development work has been supported by generous grants from Arts Council England (ACE), The Art Fund, Contemporary Art Society, The Earley Charity, FoRM, The Happy Museum, Historic England, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

Consultation and Review

This Plan was written following a process of reviewing our previous plans and consultation with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, and feedback from our customers and visitors. Significant input was received during the Local Government Association's Cultural Services Peer Challenge (2017), Reading Town Hall Business Strategy (2018-19), Mutual Ventures Cultural Services Options Appraisal (2019) and the MPR annual business planning process. It replaces the previous Forward Plan 2016-2020.

The Museum regularly evaluates its services and consults with users following the Access Policy and Plan. As part of MPR, we use Audience Finder to evaluate the visitors and groups that we have worked with directly, we also consult through other evaluation methods. We involve our communities in the running of the Museum through consultative groups (youth panel, access group etc.) and community steering groups for partnership projects and initiatives (for example the Reading Windrush Group, Heritage Action Zone). We know there are barriers to engagement, and there are opportunities for museums and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee representatives to come together to find and develop cultural opportunities. Through its Access Policy and Plan the Museum is committed to actively engaging with Reading's diverse local communities.

The regular review of the Forward Plan is both good practice and a key requirement of the Museum Accreditation Scheme - The UK Standard for museums and galleries, under which Reading Museum has Full Accreditation status (Accredited Museum No. 978) from the Arts Council England (ACE). Museums participating in the Scheme must demonstrate effective forward planning approved by their governing body.

The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Museum Manager. The work of staff and public consultation is ongoing and will feed into and inform these reviews and the development and delivery of our priorities. The next Forward Plan will be developed in 2024-2025 and approved by the Council.

5.0 The Action Plan

1 - Work in partnership to actively engage Reading's diverse communities with our collections and services

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ²	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
1.1 Access Plan ³ , implements the approved Access Policy (1.9), includes audience development, and takes an audience-first focus to develop a programme of activities, events, exhibitions and digital access for Reading's diverse community (see 1.2 and 1.8 Accreditation requirement)	1. Implement access plan activities for each identified audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (see 1.2 MPR Youth strategy) • Families • Adults • Older people • Schools and Higher Education/FE • Community groups (esp. under-represented groups) expand the use of consultative groups and community steering groups for specific projects. 	Access workgroup vs	collection & learning team members MPR staff e.g. de, vc volunteers	Staff time Budgets and grant funding	Current core budgets e.g. exhibition, activities and sessions. MPR programme budget. Charges. Grant funding.	Ongoing Review in 2024 (incl. access assessment) Ongoing	Plan delivered - a Measure of Success is identified for each activity with the Access action pan	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

² Abbreviations of roles listed are listed after the end of this action plan table

³ Reading Museum Access Plan 2020-2025

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ²	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
and 3.2 for Collection Development)	2. Continue to collect customer feedback esp. Audience Finder survey and act on comments			Staff and volunteer time	Core and MPR budgets		Evaluation Policy implemented; comments inform services and customer satisfaction performance indicators	
1.2 Museums Partnership Reading (MPR). NPO Consortium with Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), UoR (also see 1.1, 1.5, 2.4)	1. Deliver MPR business plans for years 3, 4 and 5 including Youth Strategy 2020-2023. 2. Reapply for next NPO funding round (2023+)	mm	MPR project board, steering group, and staff	Staff time	ACE	Until 2023 (current NPO funding ends 2023) Submit NPO application to ACE 2021/22	Meet Business Plan targets and ACE grant requirement Submission of NPO application	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.3 Friends of Reading Museum (FoRM) and Friends of Reading Abbey (FoRA)	Maintain good working relationship with our independent Friends organisations, agree joint projects and fundraising support (see 4.6)	mm	Friends committees/trustees	Staff time	n/a	Ongoing	At least two review meetings a year Agree joint projects and fundraising targets	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.4 Reading Foundation for Art (RFfA)	Continue to work in partnership with the RFfA following their	ec	RFfA trustees	Staff time	RFfA	Nov 2020 - Nov 2025	Collecting follows the agreed	3 Inclusive economy

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ²	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	Collection Development Strategy 2020 - 2025						Strategy in collaboration with the museum	
1.5 British Museum Archaeological Resource Centre (BM ARC), UoR Science Park	Explore MPR partnership with BM ARC for development of a joint learning and community engagement programme	mm	MPR staff	Staff time	MPR budget BM	2020-2024	Agree programme plan before ARC opening in 2023	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.6 2021 anniversaries including Abbey 900, Festival 50 and RFC 150	Contribute to partnership and programme of 2021 anniversary events	mm	cc, ec, vs, lo Reading UK CIC RBC events team UoR events team RAR project manager	Staff time Project budgets Grant funding	MPR budget (Festival 50) RAR and 900 budgets	2020-2021	Deliver and promote 1971 Festival exhibition and youth programme Deliver and promote 900 th anniversary headstop on Abbey Gateway Recruit PHD Studentship (see 3.1)	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.7 Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) (see 4.4)	Support the three project strands: • Physical interventions	mm	HSHAZ team Lo MPR staff Cultural Consortium partners	Staff time Grant funding for community work	HSHAZ (Historic England)	Pilot project Sept 2020 - March 2021	Project aims achieved within time and budget	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ²	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement Cultural programme 					Delivery - April 2021- March 2024		
1.8 Museum Accreditation standard for service (see 1.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)	Retain Full Accreditation status from the ACE	mm	museum team	Staff time	n/a	Accreditation Return invite due March 2022	Return submitted to ACE and Accreditation retained	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.9 Access Policy ⁴	Policy regularly reviewed, updated and implemented (Accreditation requirement see 1.8)	vs	Access workgroup	Staff time	n/a	Review 2025	Policy reviewed, approved and implemented	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.10 Staff development and well-being	Staff training and development needs identified through regular 1 to1s, team meetings and appraisals. Yearly training plan completed for RBC Learning and development team	vs	Line managers RBC learning and development team	Staff time	Training budget	Annually review	Staff have skills and knowledge as identified in appraisals	3 Inclusive economy
1.11 Increased collaboration	Collaboration between our	ad, gm, mm	Museum, libraries and theatres teams	Staff time	n/a	Ongoing	Increased collaboration	1 Healthy environment

⁴ Reading Museum Access Policy 2020-2025

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ²	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
between RBC cultural services	museums, libraries and theatres through programming, marketing and operations (see 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 3.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6)						building on current joint services and initiatives (also see individual actions listed)	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

2 - Provide learning and training opportunities that inspire children, young people and teachers

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
2.1 Schools hands-on learning service (session and loan boxes) (also see 1.1, 1.5, 1.7, 3.1)	1. Develop new Virtual sessions (response to Covid and reduce travel) 2. Re-introduce session at museum after pandemic 3. Maintain delivery of service to core Reading area schools 4. Marketing strategy revised for sessions incl. new virtual offer	lo	ba Casual session leaders as required	Staff time, training and materials	MPR budget	2020-21	New session created, marketed and booked	1 Healthy environment
			Volunteers			2021-22	Sessions reintroduced	2 Thriving communities
						ongoing		3 Inclusive economy
		lm	de, Reading Arts marketing team			ongoing	Number of school bookings and maintain income	
2.2 Teacher CPD (also see 1.1)	Provide teacher INSETs that promote museum services (including virtual training developed during Covid)	lm	lo	Staff time and materials	Charges to schools MPR Budget (conferences)	Ongoing	Number of bookings	3 Inclusive economy
2.3 Reminiscence Loans provision (also see 1.1)	1. Maintain delivery of Memory Box service 2. Continue to provide reminiscence training for staff	lm	mobile library team	Staff time and materials	Charges to users	Ongoing	Number of bookings and income maintained	1 Healthy environment
			gallery staff hours as required					2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	or care homes, social services-including virtual training developed during Covid (more accessible and reduced travel)							
2.4 Volunteering (see 1.1, 1.2)	1. Regular review of policy and action plan 2. Retain Investing in Volunteer (IiV) status for MPR	vc	MPR staff collection & learning team Reading Voluntary Action FoRM and FORA	Staff time IiV application and assessment	Current budgets/ MPR budget	Review Policy 2022 Reapply IiV 2021/22	Policy updated and implemented Retained IiV	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
2.5 Children and vulnerable adult protection	Service protection policy implemented and regularly reviewed ⁵	lo	lm, vs	Staff time	Staff training	Review 2023	Policy regularly reviewed and updated; staff trained and aware	2 Thriving communities
2.6 Reading Cultural Education	Contribute to CEP delivery plan and attend quarterly meetings	lm	RBC Culture Development Officer	Staff time	Artswork	2020-2024 (current CEP strategy)	Museum contributing Partnership's	2 Thriving communities

⁵ Reading Museum Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy 2019-2023

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
Partnership (CEP)							to delivery outcomes	3 Inclusive economy

3 - Champion pride in Reading's heritage through Abbey Quarter and improved access to our collections

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
3.1 Abbey Quarter: • Deliver Reading Abbey Revealed (RAR) project (also see 1.1 and 4.3) • Ensure benefits of RAR project continue and site is well maintained • Work with new Reading Prison owners to continue to enhance AQ (see 4.4) • Reading Abbey Collaborative Doctoral Award - to support understanding and management of archaeological resource	Implement conservation, activity and interpretation plans	mm	RAR project manager Museum and project staff	RAR budget	National Lottery Heritage Fund (£1.77m) RBC section 106 (£1.4m)	complete and evaluate RAR project by winter 2022	Final evaluation report and grant drawdown submitted to NLHF	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
	Ensure ongoing management plan implemented	mm, pa	Maintenance contractor		Site venue hire income Berkshire Archaeology Ruins maintenance budget	Ongoing	Annual maintenance completed	
	Extend site interpretation, wayfinding and activities	mm	RAR project manager RBC planning			Ongoing	Interpretation and public access extended	
	UoR partnership application to Arts and Humanities Research Council, joint supervision of successful PhD student	mm	pa UoR (lead partner)		Arts and Humanities Research Council	CDA starts Oct 2021. Ends June 2024	Student recruited Research published and promoted	

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
3.2 Collection Development policy focuses on Reading - sense of identity and the needs of learners ⁶ (see 1.8 and 1.9)	1. Policy reviewed, following Accreditation guidance, and implemented 2. Only collect within available resources (including staff time)	cm	acquisition group	Staff time Staff time Storage capacity Purchase grants required for some acquisitions	n/a Purchase grants - Art Fund, RfFA, CAS	Review Policy in 2021 ongoing	Policy reviewed and implemented Collecting within policy criteria	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
3.3 Collection Management policy and plans ⁷ (see 1.8)	Ensure Collection Policies and Plans are reviewed and implemented	cm	curators, ca, co volunteers (store teams)	Core collection budget (e.g. for licences, materials)	n/a	Policy Review 2022 Plan Review 2025 Plan delivery - ongoing	Collection plans are systematically reviewed, and progress monitored annually	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
3.4 Collection storage provision (also see 1.1 and 1.8)	Complete off-site collection store relocation (delayed by Covid)	cm	curators, ca, co property services	Staff time Removal contractor	RBC capital budget	Complete move by spring 2021 Review move and store access 2021	Move completed and collection accessible to staff and users	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities

⁶ Reading Museum Collection Development Policy 2016-2021

⁷ Reading Museum Collection Management Policy 2017-2022

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
							Old store is vacated and available for disposal	3 Inclusive economy
3.5 Collection Access - improving visitor experience and digital access	Deliver gallery and digital projects within Access Plan (see 3.1) including Silchester Gallery upgrade and increasing online collections access	mm	curators, ca, co, vs, lo, de	Staff time Volunteers Museum and collection online websites	project funding	ongoing	Individual projects delivered project plans time and budgets	2 Thriving communities
	Bayeux Tapestry website content moved to more accessible museum website	de	mm	Grant funding Staff time Project budget	Silchester Gallery - NLHF bid and match funding RAR project	2021-2024 2020-2021	Content moved; URLs redirected; SEO optimised; launched	3 Inclusive economy

4 - Maximise opportunities to generate environmentally sustainable income and fundraising by working with partners and RBC colleagues

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
4.1 Maximise museum shop income	Annually review of retail plan (stock, lines, pricing, suppliers) Develop online shop offer (including click +collect) and social media promotion	vs	mm, dvs, de vs team	Staff time	Core budget	Annually (March) ongoing	New lines, with increased turnover and profit Increasing online sales	3 Inclusive economy
4.2 Maximise hands-on learning income (see 2.1)	Maintain income from schools by adapting products and charges to meet customer needs and to respond to changing economic environment (e.g. Covid)	lm	lo, ba	Staff time	marketing budget (Reading Arts)	ongoing	Deliver school income targets	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
4.3 Maximise Abbey Quarter income	Ensure hire of Abbey Ruins for events and filming to provide income for site maintenance (see 3.1) and provide vibrant seasonal programming	Leisure & Recreation events team	RAR project manager Reading UK CIC RBC comms and events	Staff time Grant funding	Venue hire fees NLHF recovery fund	Ongoing 2020-2021	Fully booked for summer season with cultural, music and food events	3 Inclusive economy
4.4 Improved signage and marketing initiatives	1. Pedestrian signage - Abbey Quarter/HSHAZ (see 1.7 and 3.1) extended to Station Hill /Prison	mm	RBC planning HSHAZ project manager	Staff time Developer contributions	NLHF; S106	2021-2025	Signage delivered on time and budget to approved plans	3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	site/Minster Quarter 2. Great West Way/Reading Tourism Group - linked to Powered by People strategy 3. See 2.1 hands-on learning and 4.1 shop	lm/vs	MPR staff, Reading UK CIC	Staff time		ongoing	Museum participates in partnership tourism initiatives	
4.5 Fundraising strategy	1. Fundraising strategy created for cultural services (incl. museum) 2. Museum explore use of Crowdfunder with FoRM as part of Covid recovery - see 1.3 3. External funding applications for programmes and projects - see 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5 4. Continue to encourage visitor donations	Reading Arts mm mm vs	mm, lm FoRM de, lm museum team - depending on project gallery staff and volunteers	Staff time Staff time Staff time		Plan 2020-21 Implement 2021-24 2020-21 2020-2025 ongoing	Strategy created and implemented Crowdfunding campaign launched and reviewed Applications submitted Donations increase per visitor	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
4.6 Website operating system upgrade	Move website to Drupal 8/9 from 7 - to ensure secure and reliable online	Reading Arts	de, museum team	Staff time	Marketing budget	2021-22	Successful upgrade without	3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	platform to support services and income generation						service disruption	
4.7 Environmental policy ⁸ and plan	1. Policy regularly reviewed and updated - linked to ACE Let's Create and Reading's climate strategy 2. Action Plan reviewed and updated	mm vs	MPR	Staff time Staff time	n/a	Review by Sept 2022 (end of current policy) 2021/22	Policy updated Plan reviewed and implemented - feed into policy update	1 Healthy environment

Abbreviations:

ACE - Arts Council England
FoRM - Friends of Reading Museum
FORA - Friends of Reading Abbey
MERL - Museum of English Rural Life

MPR - Museums Partnership Reading
NLHF - National Lottery Heritage Fund
NPO - National Portfolio Organisation (ACE)
RAR - Reading Abbey Revealed project
RFfA - Reading Foundation for Art
UoR - University of Reading

ad- Assistant Director of Culture

ba - bookings administrator
ca - collections assistant
cc - community engagement curator
co - MPR collection officer
cm - collection management curator
de - MPR digital editor
ec - exhibitions & partnerships curator
gm - museum and town hall general manager
lo - learning officer
lm - MPR learning and marketing officer
mm - museum manager
pa - principal archaeologist
vs - visitor services officer
vc - MPR volunteer co-ordinator

⁸ Reading Museum Environmental policy statement 2017-2022

Appendix A Previous Plan Key Achievements

This current plan replaces 2016-2020 plan. These are just some of our achievements over the past five years:

- 2016-17 The MERL and Reading Museum awarded £237,500 for a digital engagement project - #digiRDG - bringing collections and communities together, improving social media, websites and creating our popular blog
- We were one of only four UK art galleries invited to join the Children and the Arts Trust Great's Art Quest 2016 involving Reading schools
- October 2017 - Museum awarded Full Accreditation status by Arts Council England
- April 2018 - The MERL and Reading Museum strategic partnership, Museums Partnership Reading, awarded £1.25m from Arts Council England National Portfolio 2018-2023
- Over 20,000 people attended reopening of Reading Abbey Quarter in June 2018 after successful delivery of £3.15m Reading Abbey Revealed project - conservation, interpretation and community engagement led by museum team and supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England
- September 2018 - successfully moving and reopening of our popular Victorian Schoolroom at the restored Abbey Gateway
- Museums Partnership Reading (MPR) created a three-year Youth Strategy in 2019 linked to Reading Cultural Education Partnership strategy
- Investing in Volunteers re-awarded - February 2019
- Museum on Wheels - our hands-on outreach programme reached 22,608 people across the Borough in 2018-9. Supported by NLHF and The Earley Charity
- Official opening of the final part of the new Story of Reading Gallery and Welcome Gallery in May 2019, followed by the new Museum Shop in August 2019
- 'Highly Commended' at 2020 National Civic Trust AABC Conservation Awards - 6 March 2020. One of Europe's most prestigious awards, one of only 8 successful shortlisted projects, also shortlisted as a South East Regional Finalist in Nov 2019
- 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking' for Reading Abbey Revealed project- Planning Awards 2020 - 8 September 2020. The judges were particularly impressed with our use of community participation in consultations to ensure a broad spectrum of people could participate and enjoy a new 'sense of place' within the Abbey Quarter
- The online exhibition *Enigma of Arrival: The Politics and Poetics of Caribbean Migration to Britain*, partnership with Barbados Museum and the University of the West Indies launched June 2020 - critically acclaimed project featuring in ACE's national round-up, and receiving virtual visit from the Faith Minister, Lord Greenhalgh (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)
- 'Best Family Museum' - voted by users of the Little Ankle Biters website for Berks, Bucks and Oxon - 4 July 2020
- Throughout 2020 completed preparation for major collection move to new energy efficient store, delayed by Covid in March but to be completed in 2021.