Peter Sloman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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To: Councillor Hacker (Chair)
Councillors Dennis, Ayub, Barnett-Ward, Cresswell, Cross, Emberson, Kitchingham, Kretchmer, Lanzoni, McCann, McGonigle, O'Connell, Mpofu-Coles, Rowland, R Singh and Woodward

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21 June 2022

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

NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2022

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on Wednesday, 29 June 2022 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

		WARDS AFFECTED	Page No
1.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.		
2.	**MINUTES OF THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2022**		5 - 12
3.	**MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES** Minutes of the Community Safety Partnership meetings held on 22 February 2022 and 21 April 2022.		13 - 22
4.	**PETITIONS** Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		

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5.	**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS** Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		**23 - 36**
6.	**DECISION BOOK REFERENCES** To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been subject of Decision Book reports.		
7.	**EMPTY HOMES PRESENTATION** To receive a presentation on Empty Homes.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	
8.	**MUSEUM PARTNERSHIP READING NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATION BID FOR 2023-2026** A report providing an update on the Museums Partnership Reading and seeking authority to extend the partnership agreement with the University of Reading in the event of a successful funding bid.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**37 - 44**
9.	**READING ABBEY REVEALED PROJECT EVALUATION** A report highlighting the achievements and key successes of the Reading Abbey Revealed project since 2016.	**ABBEY**	**45 - 114**
10.	**LIBRARIES IMPROVEMENT FUND: CAPITAL SCHEME APPROVAL** A report advising Committee of the award of an Arts Council England (ACE) Libraries Improvement Fund grant of £62,000 for Tilehurst Library and requesting scheme approval.	**TILEHURST**	**115 - 118**
11.	**FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022-2023** This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2022-2023.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**119 - 224**
12.	**COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE** An update on Reading's Community Safety Partnership's workplan and proposed timeline for delivering the new Community Safety Strategy and Plan.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**225 - 230**
13.	**REMOVAL OF AGE CRITERIA FROM COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**231 - 236**

A report seeking approval to remove the age criteria from the Council's general needs housing stock (non-sheltered) and to replace the remaining age-designated properties with local lettings policies where appropriate.

14.	**RENT GUARANTEE SCHEME POLICY**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**237 - 372**

This report seeks approval for the updated Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy.

15.	**PRESENTATION ON ROAD SELECTION AND PROGRAMME OF WORKS**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	
16.	**WINTER MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT 2022-2025 (PLUS THREE-YEAR EXTENSION) TENDER AND CONTRACT AWARD**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**373 - 428**

To inform the Committee of the procurement process for the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2022-2025 and to seek authority to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer.

17.	**HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-2023**	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**429 - 454**

A report updating the Committee on the progress of year-3 of the £9M Highway Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23, informing the Committee of the Council's additional £8M five-year Highway Capital Investment Programme and £4M two-year Highway Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programme and seeking spend approval for these investments.

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HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
10 MARCH 2022

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

27. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

28. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

Community Safety Partnership – 11 November 2021.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

Questioner	Subject	Reply
Jennifer Leach	Reading Festival Waste	Cllr Barnett-Ward

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

30. READING FESTIVAL 2021

Further to Minute 21 of the meeting held on 11 March 2020, James Crosbie, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, introduced Noel Painting and Victoria Chapman of Festival Republic who gave a presentation on the 2021 Reading Festival. The presentation particularly focused on the issues of safeguarding, welfare and sustainability:

- Festival Republic had concentrated on providing a safe and secure festival and had introduced robust Covid-19 policies;
- Pre-event communications had included low carbon travel, a tent-buying guide and other sustainability measures that could be taken by festival-goers, all of which had been underpinned by the Take It Home message;
- Carbon emissions had levelled over recent festivals, although in part this could be attributed to the significant increase in capacity;
- The communications had made it clear that only tents which had been packed away and handed in could be re-used by charities;
- Food and beverage vendors had used only recyclable items included food packaging and cutlery. There had been a deposit on drinks cups, which led to six tonnes of cups being collected for reuse or recycling;
- Artists had supported and promoted sustainability during their sets;
- Peer to peer engagement had worked well to normalise sustainability among festival-goers;

- Safeguarding partner agencies had worked well together to provide a safe environment for festival-goers. There had been plenty of signage to the right areas and agencies to help attendees find the support they needed easily and quickly;
- The relatively short lead-in time before the festival had led to some issues with lack of appropriately trained staff;
- The intention was to build on the successes of the 2019 and 2021 festivals to deliver further sustainability measures and ensure the safety and well-being of all attendees.

The Committee discussed the presentation and took the opportunity to ask further questions of Festival Republic which covered the following areas:

- Front of House drug-testing could be introduced. There was a risk that it could lead individuals to have a false sense of security especially as most recent drug-related deaths at various festivals had been due to mixing drugs or mixing drugs and alcohol, although this could be covered by providing clear information and advice at the testing point;
- Festival Republic had set up a working group with the appropriate partner agencies to deal with the unlicensed and unregulated water taxis operating during the Festival, to further protect attendees as they travelled between sites;
- Festival Republic were continuing to investigate measures to encourage people not to abandon tents and other camping equipment when they left the site. As well as the Take Your Tent Home message they had been considering having initiatives such as people on the camp-sites helping to take tents down, competitions to pack away pop up tents in the fastest time and increased tent rental offers;
- Further measures aimed at reducing carbon emissions included a move to use more power from the grid to reduce reliance on generators, continuing to promote green travel as Reading had such good transport links, reducing the carbon footprint of the food served by vendors, use of accredited suppliers and targeted communications to festival-goers.

Resolved -

That Noel Painting and Victoria Chapman be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

31. READING RENT WITH CONFIDENCE SCHEME

Further to Minute 18 of the meeting held on 10 November 2021, James Crosbie, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, presented a short video which demonstrated the customer-facing side of the Council's new Rent with Confidence website.

The video showed the various stages that both tenants and landlords would go through to search available properties or to market their properties to prospective tenants. The aim was to encourage landlords to work with the Council to provide good quality accommodation to its tenants in the private rented sector and make it easier for the tenants to find a suitable and safe home. The video showed the steps that the Landlord

would need to go through and the information that they would need to provide before advertising their properties, and the checks that officers would undertake to verify the information.

The website also contained links to the various pages on the Council's website to help both tenants and landlords, including the Safety Shaun videos, the Rent Guarantee Scheme and to other agencies that could help tenants if they were struggling to pay rent, reducing the risk of eviction.

There would be a programme of communications when the scheme was launched later in 2022, and it was hoped that Councillors would direct their constituents to the scheme to assist residents in finding safe and suitable accommodation.

Resolved – That the presentation on progress of the Rent with Confidence website be noted.

32. READING, PLACE OF CULTURE EVALUATION REPORT

Further to Minute 20 of the meeting held on 10 March 2021, the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which informed the Committee of the successes of the Reading, Place of Culture project, sought agreement for the proposed Action Plan and authority for the Assistant Director for Culture, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, to incorporate the actions within existing or emerging delivery plans.

The report explained that Reading had been awarded £558,400 through the Great Places Scheme for delivery of outcomes from 2017 to 2021 of the Reading, Place of Culture project (RPoC). The project had aimed to foster a culture of collaboration across sectors – where caring for, and engaging, people would be achieved in partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and specifically targeted health and mental wellbeing and employment outcomes. The report set out the outcomes and successes of the five strands: Festivals, Cultural Commissioning Programme, Research, Culture and Business Engagement, and Reach and Engagement. Key outcomes had included:

- Developing strategic partnerships;
- Increasing arts, culture and heritage engagement;
- Increasing pride and perceptions of Reading's offer;
- Strengthening the arts, culture and heritage sector;
- Creating evidence, tools and models to show the value of culture;
- The benefits of cross-partner and cross-project working.

An action plan, which set out conclusions and recommended legacy action was included in Section 5 of the report. The actions would be incorporated into existing and new service plans as appropriate, to ensure that the legacy of the project was embedded into the Council's work going forward.

Sam Lloyd, Starting Point, attended the meeting and explained how Reading, Place of Culture had helped with the work of the organisation reaching young people facing disadvantage and delivering real world projects.

Resolved:

(1) That the successes of the Reading, Place of Culture project (Great Places Funding) be noted;

(2) That the action plan set out in section the report be agreed and the Assistant Director for Culture in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, be authorised to incorporate the actions within existing or emerging delivery plans.

33. LOW CARBON HOUSING ACTION PLANS

Further to Minute 9 of the meeting held on 6 July 2021, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking agreement for the Low Carbon Housing Action Plan for RBC housing and the Low Carbon Housing Action Plan for private sector housing, which were attached to the report as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

The report explained that the Council had a role to play in leading by example, demonstrating to other property owners in social and private sectors how emissions from housing could be reduced, especially as it owned approximately 10% of the housing stock in Reading. Making these improvements could also stimulate local supply chains and skills. The Council's influence over, and the resources it had available to devote to, improvement of its own housing were significantly greater than it could devote to the private sector, and this was reflected in the relative scope of the Action Plans. The report added that funding a programme of the scale required remained the key challenge but by combining the Council's resources with grant funding, officers could begin to scale up existing efforts. The report noted that Reading's climate emergency declaration had made it clear that additional powers and resources would be needed from Government to enable the achievement of net zero by 2030, and private sector retrofit remained one of the key policy areas where this was still the case.

Resolved: That the Low Carbon Housing Action Plan for RBC Housing and the Low Carbon Housing Action Plan for Private Sector Housing be noted and endorsed.

34. HOUSING UPDATE AND PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK 2022-23

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which highlighted key achievements of the Housing Service 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 - Works to Housing Stock 22/23 Housing Revenue Account (HRA);
Appendix 2 – Works to Housing Stock 22/23 General Fund;
Appendix 3 – Works to Housing Stock by Ward 22/23.

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

- No homeless children had to spend Christmas in shared Bed and Breakfast and no homeless families had been placed in shared Bed and Breakfast accommodation for the 4th year running;
- A new campaign to prevent homelessness had been launched 'Click Before You Evict' to encourage landlords to engage with the service rather than evicting their tenants;
- The Housing Service had won the Council's Team Award in the Team Reading People's Choice Awards in National Customer Services Week for the wholesale response to rough sleeping during the pandemic;
- Delivery of 40 modular homes for people with a history of rough sleeping incorporating 24/7 intensive support on site provided by the Council's commissioned service provider, St Mungos;
- A new Housing Allocations Scheme had been adopted for implementation later in the year;
- Provision of continued support and debt advice to our tenants had helped to maintain top quartile rent collection levels of over 97.7 % despite increasing financial pressures due to the pandemic;
- Installation of the Council's first domestic air source heat pumps: 40 had been installed in properties in Granville Road Southcote;
- The refurbishment of 12 properties in Kentwood to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency, including the installation of new external wall insulation and render, triple glazed windows and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery systems;
- The Local Authority New Build Programme had delivered 22 new homes and a Community Centre, all built to the Council's standards for low carbon homes. There were also a further 272 homes in the pipeline to complete over the next 4 years;
- The service had won Homebuilder of the Year (16,000 or under) in the National UK Housing Awards.

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. Appendices 1 and 2 set out details of the works to be carried out and the associated costs for the Council's HRA stock and the General Fund Housing Stock respectively for 2022-23. Appendix 3 gave a breakdown of the programmes of work by ward.

Resolved:

(1) That the key achievements of the Housing Service in the past financial year and the planned programme of works to Council Housing stock for 2022/23 be noted;

(2) That the Assistant Director of Housing & Communities, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to: (a) tender; and (b) enter into all necessary contracts for individual schemes within the 2022/23 work programme as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report subject to sufficient funding being available in the approved Budget to meet the cost of the schemes.

35. ALLOTMENTS SELF-MANAGEMENT PLAN

Further to Minute 24 of the meeting held on 10 November 2021, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on the progress towards establishing self-management as an option for managing the Council's 20 allotment sites. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A: Allotment Action Plan 2022;
Appendix B: Allotment Self-Management Plan and Case Studies.

The report explained that project implementation had increased since the temporary appointment of an Allotment Project Officer in October 2021. Progress and further action would be split into three Plans: Self-Management, Site Maintenance, and Tenancy Management. These Plans overlapped and were inter-related but had been split to provide a clearer picture to specific stakeholders of activity that was relevant to them.

The report added that to date 14 of the Council's 20 allotment sites were currently engaging with the self-management programme and the Allotment Project Officer would working with the remaining six during Spring 2022.

The report also explained the activities that would count as acts of self-management that each site was either currently carrying out or was expressing interest in doing. The first steps a site group must take would be to collate its own tenant contact list and enhance their on-site communication, then appoint a Council Liaison Rep through whom communication would flow. Appendix B to the report also set out three case studies from Goddards Farm, Scours Lane and Newcastle Road, which were sites that were advancing well.

Resolved: That the progress of the Allotments Action Plan and Allotments Self-Management Plan, and the further work required to develop greater levels of self-management across all Council allotment sites be noted.

36. REWILDING AND THE WILDFLOWER PLAN. INCREASING BIODIVERSITY ON HIGHWAY VERGES AND OTHER PUBLIC LAND

Further to Minute 8 of the meeting held on 15 December 2020, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which gave details

of the Rewilding project results to date, the operational changes that had been necessary to achieve the results and set out the recommended next steps contained in the draft updated Wildflower Plan which was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The report explained that following recommendations in the Wildflower Plan, these changes had been made in 2021

- Some sites had been sown with locally sourced wildflowers and cut only at the end of the season to allow establishment;
- Additional marginal rewilding (changing the mowing regime around parks boundaries and margins) had been trialled at 12 locations in parks, adding around 2ha (5%) to the current area, 41 hectares, of conservation grassland already managed by the Council;
- The Council had agreed to work with business partners to create enhanced-flowering, wild-looking commercial centre schemes that would raise the profile of the rewilding initiatives and contribute to refocusing perceptions of Reading as a 'green/wild town'.

The report also explained that an assessment of the Year 2 programme was included in the revised Wildflower Plan attached in the Appendix. However, monitoring carried out over the course of the year indicated that there was public support for marginal rewilding in parks and that there was no noticeable improvement in species diversity from sowing wildflower seed on poorer sites. It was too early to assess the effectiveness of the BID-funded 'enhanced' schemes in Reading, because the flower-rich turf had only been laid in the autumn and would be assessed over the extended flowering season from spring to autumn 2022. The planned change from an annual cut-and-collect to a three-times-a-season cut-and-collect on those sites with less diversity of flora had not taken place because of difficulty in securing the right machinery and a bid had been made to purchase small cut-and-collect mowing equipment to enable this to start in 2022. A further result of the rewilding project had been the spontaneous involvement of residents in the creation of local wild areas

The appended Wildflower Plan recommended the continuation of the current programme on highways verges and in parks. The Plan also included looking at the margins of allotments sites for future rewilding, as not only did allotments sites offer potential for biodiversity enhancement, but there were clear synergies between habitat for pollinators and the presence of pollinators for growing fruit and vegetables.

Resolved:

(1) That the progress of the Re-wilding experimental project in 2021 be noted;

(2) That the recommendations set out in the Wildflower Plan be endorsed.

(The meeting opened at 6.32pm and closed at 9.17pm).

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COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP – 3 FEBRUARY 2022

Present:

Steve Raffield	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
Sally Andersen	
Frances Martin	Executive Director etc, RBC
Carly Dagg	Reading Magistrates
Jaqueline Markie	Reading Magistrates?
Zelda Wolfle	Assistant Director of Housing & Communities, RBC
Catherine Marriott	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Vicky Rhodes	Director of Early Help, Brighter Futures for Children
Sarah Gardner	Community Safety Partnership, RBC
Joanna Slotwinska	Housing Needs, RBC
Umi Abdulmutwalib	Community & Enablement Team, RBC
Joanne Anderson	Neighbourhood Initiatives Team Manager, RBC
Giles Allchurch	Youth Offender Service, BFfC
Becky Pollard	Consultant, RBC
Kathryn Warner	PACT
Julie Quarmby	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

Seona Douglas	Executive Director of Social Care and Health, RBC
Deborah Glassbrook	Director of Children's Services Brighter Futures for Children
Lynne Mason	Locality Team, RBC
Natausha Van Vliet	PACT
Donna Gray	Safeguarding Children, Brighter Futures for Children
Andrew Penrith	Thames Valley Police
Tracey Daszkiewicz	RBC

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND – PROPOSALS FOR BIDS TO THE OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Further to Minute 2 of the meeting held on 11 November 2021, Jo Middlemass, RBC, gave a presentation on the effects of the reduction in the Community Safety Fund allocation from the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for the period 2022-2015. The presentation covered:

- The risks to services including Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Community Safety, Drugs & Alcohol Services and to the non-statutory Youth Offending Services and Young Persons Substance Misuse Team as a result of the cuts;
- Proposals for bids to be submitted to the Community Safety Fund: these included reduced rate bids for ASB and adult Drugs & Alcohol and new bids for Rise Up and PHSE on drugs and alcohol in educational settings.

- The CSP to consider whether to buy into analytical support provided by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- A further review of the CSP budget in November 2022 once the new Community Safety Plan had been drawn up.

CSP discussed the presentation and felt that as there was currently insufficient information regarding the analytical support available from the OPCC, it would be helpful to speak to the other Berkshire Unitary Authorities before reaching a decision on whether to buy in.

AGREED:

(1) That the bids for funding be agreed;

(2) That further consideration be given to buying-in to the analytical support offered by the OPCC;

(3) That an update report on funding be submitted to the November 2022 meeting of the CSP.

3. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT UPDATE AND PROPOSED TIME LINE

Jo Middlemass gave a presentation updating the Group on the progress of the CSP Strategic Assessment and Community Safety Plan, and the Serious Violence (SV) Strategic Assessment which would feed into it, together with the timelines for both.

Community Safety Plan Strategic Assessment & Proposed Timeline			**Serious Violence (SV) Strategic Assessment & Proposed Timeline**	
1 April 2022	Draft Strategic Assessment - review		1 April 2022	Initial draft SV Strategic Assessment
1 May 2022	First draft Community Safety Plan		1 May 2022	First draft SV Strategic Assessment
1 June 2022	Feedback from consultation		11 May 2022	Draft to SV Steering Group
			16 May 2022	Draft out for consultation
1 July 2022	Final draft Community Safety Plan		1 July 2022	Final SV Plan
14 July 2022 (tentative date)	Plan agreed by Community Safety Partnership		14 July 2022 (tentative date)	Agreed by Community Safety Partnership as part of Community Safety Plan
1 August 2022	Publish Community Safety Plan		1 August 2022	Publish as part of Community Safety Plan

The Group noted the timelines and suggested that the final Community Safety Plan should include data and analysis around health figures and make reference to the cuts in funding. Jo Middlemass would include a needs assessment around drugs and alcohol and ensure that the

funding related risks were addressed in the documents. Jo Middlemass also confirmed that she was trying to identify the right NHS contact to ensure that all partners were represented on the CSP.

AGREED:

(1) That the timetables be noted;

(2) Jo Middlemass and Steve Raffield to produce a comprehensive document setting out the risks to service delivery due to the reduction in Community Safety Funding.

4. COMMUNITY SAFETY SURVEY 2021 - RESULTS

Jo Anderson gave a presentation on the results of the Community Safety Survey 2021 which covered the following areas:

- The two-yearly Survey ran from25 October 2021 to 3 December 2021;
- The top five Reading-wide priorities were drugs, parking issues, motorbike and vehicle nuisance, fly-tipping and burglary;
- There had been an increase in the perception of the level of crime with 49% of responders stating that it was high;
- The overall increase in crime was 4%, with the largest increase being in drug-related crime;
- Responders also felt that Anti-Social behaviour had increased, with key concerns being litter, drugs and motorbike and vehicle nuisance/noise;
- Additional questions and responses for CAP identified the two main areas of concern as vandalism and graffiti and youths hanging around public spaces;
- Next steps, including ensuring that reports were dealt with by the appropriate team and asking the Safer Neighbourhood Forums to decide their priorities over the next two years.

Jo Anderson also reported on the demographic of the people who had responded and confirmed that efforts would be made to encourage a wider demographic to engage in future surveys, and that it might be possible to cross reference this data with the responses to the latest annual resident's survey. The Group also felt that more could be done to communicate with residents and communities to enable them to report community safety incidents to the right department in the first instance and to publicise success stories and positive outcomes from the reports (you say, we do).

AGREED: **T**hat the results of the Survey be noted.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Steve Raffield reported that he was keen to ensure that the CSP had the right membership, worked to an appropriate Community Safety Plan, had effective delivery groups and followed best practice. He had therefore invited Cath Marriott (OPCC) to carry out a review of the Partnership.

AGREED: **T**hat the Cath Marriott carry out an informal review of the Community Safety Partnership.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings for 2021/22 would take place on:
21 April 2022

Julie Quarmby to circulate draft dates for 2022/23.
All meetings start at 9.30am, venue to be confirmed.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and closed at 10.45am)

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP – 21 APRIL 2022

Present:

Steve Raffield	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
Deborah Glassbrook	Director of Children's Services Brighter Futures for Children
Clare Muir	Policy & Voluntary Sector Manager, RBC
Catherine Marriott	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Sarah Gardner	Community Safety Partnership, RBC
Joanne Anderson	Neighbourhood Initiatives Team Manager, RBC
Becky Pollard	Public Health Consultant, RBC
Andrew Penrith	Thames Valley Police
Kathryn Warner	PACT
Michael Popham	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

Seona Douglas	Executive Director of Social Care and Health, RBC
Frances Martin	Executive Director etc, RBC
Lynne Mason	Locality Team, RBC
Natausha Van Vliet	PACT
Zelda Wolfle	Assistant Director of Housing & Communities, RBC
Vicky Rhodes	Director of Early Help, Brighter Futures for Children
Donna Gray	Safeguarding Children, Brighter Futures for Children
Tracey Daszkiewicz	Director of Public Health, RBC
Gina Carpenter	Service Manager (Early Help, CATs), BFfC
Zoe Hanim	Reading Channel Panel, RBC

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

2. PREVENT UPDATE

Further to Minute 6 of the meeting held on 11 November 2021, Clare Muir, Policy & Voluntary Sector Manager, presented a report providing 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. The local risks and key messages identified in the Counter Terrorism local profile for 2021 produced by the Counter Terrorism Police South - East had been shared in confidential format with Thames Valley Prevent Boards, but this was not yet available in a format for sharing more widely. This information would be shared with the Partners when it became available.

The report stated that since March 2021, there had been a requirement to submit an annual assurance statement. This year's assessment had been submitted following consultation with Channel Panel members and tested local Channel delivery against five key areas of control as follows: Legal Requirements under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015; Strategic Governance; Chairing Skills and Core Competencies; Panel Function and Form; and Data

Protection. All the control areas had been rated 'Green' accept Chairing skills, which was rated as 'Amber' due to the need to appoint a Deputy Chair for the Panel and complete training requirements.

The CSP was advised that Prevent Advisers had been appointed to areas without specific Prevent funding, which included Reading, in recognition that no areas could be free of the threat of terrorism. The report also provided information on training; Counter Terrorism Local Profile; national threat level; and national and local Prevent data for 2020/21.

The meeting discussed the link between vulnerability and radicalisation and in particular the likelihood of people with autism being drawn into extreme behaviour. It was suggested that the Prevent agenda should be linked to development of the Autism Strategy to improve knowledge and understanding in this area.

AGREED:

(1) That the recent developments for the delivery of Prevent and the statutory Channel Process be noted;

(2) That the latest information and data about Prevent be noted;

(3) That the local risks and key messages identified in the Counter Terrorism local profile for 2021 produced by the Counter Terrorism Police South-East be shared with the Partners when it became available;

(4) That the Channel Panel Chair and the Policy & Voluntary Sector Manager be encouraged to liaise with BFfC representatives in relation to the work being carried out to produce the Berkshire Autism Strategy, which would be relevant to the Prevent agenda and the statutory Channel Process.

3. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT – EMERGING HEADLINES

Jo Middlemass gave a presentation on the emerging headlines from the Strategic Assessment of crime and anti-social behaviour in Reading. Overall crime had decreased, which could be attributed to restrictions related to the coronavirus lockdown periods. Violence against the person was now the highest volume crime type in Reading, following significant reductions in occurrences of acquisitive crime. Despite the overall fall in crime rates, public order and drugs offences had increased during the period of the coronavirus pandemic. In terms of place, Reading town centre remained the top location for recorded crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Detection rates in Reading were disappointing at just 27%, although this may not be particularly low in comparison with other areas, and a significant proportion of crimes were closed with 'No Further Action'. While offenders were more likely to be male, there were higher proportions of female suspects in Shoplifting, Theft, Non-Domestic Violence, and increasingly Vehicle Theft. In terms of age profiling, there had been an increase in suspected offenders aged 13-21 and the 19-23 age group was increasing again following a temporary reduction during covid-19. Knife crime was increasing, against the trend, and predominantly affected young males, with minority ethnic groups disproportionately represented as both victims and suspects. Domestic violence continued to increase and cause considerable concern. Anti-social behaviour continued to decrease, with neighbour disputes and vehicle-related disturbances featuring most frequently. Hate crime remained relatively constant over the past 3 years with 80% recorded as crimes, Transgender, Black, and White British victims were most likely to experience violence. Road safety and water safety were also of concern and would benefit from a formal partnership response to minimise risk to life.

The Business Improvement District TownSafe Radio Scheme and associated DISC system had logged an increase in reported incidents in the town centre. Violence and drug or alcohol related ASB reported to the DISC system had decreased, while begging related ASB had increased contributing to 96% of reported town centre ASB incidents. Street pastors provided support for the night-time economy looking after people who were vulnerable to becoming victims of crime or involved in crime as well as supporting the sex workers that operated in Reading town centre alongside Rahab.

Fear of crime was continuing to increase from 23% to 49%, in line with the perception that crime had increased from 34% to 50%, despite little change in the proportion of respondents reporting to be victims of crime. There was a suggestion that more communication about the action being taken to tackle crime could alleviate some of this fear of crime and more transparency in the work of the CSP could also assist this aim.

Brighter Futures had identified a strong correlation between young people at risk of Criminal Exploitation and special educational needs and disabilities, single parent households, school exclusions. The information being collected for the Strategic Assessment and the preparation of the Strategy and Delivery Plan could assist the Prevent agenda (see Minute 2 above). Young people of Mixed Black Caribbean and White dual heritage were over-represented in fixed term school exclusions and in the cohort identified as at risk of exploitation by Brighter Futures when compared with the entire pupil population. There was potential work to be explored with schools following a therapeutic approach to manage behaviour, which appeared to be successful in reducing the number of fixed-terms and permanent exclusions.

AGREED:

(1) That the initial findings of the Strategic Assessment be noted;

(2) That further information be sought on the following headlines:

- Comparison with detection rates in Reading compared with other local areas;
- Clarification of the nature of crime and ASB being perpetrated by offenders from outside the Reading Borough area;
- Deeper dive into violence against women and girls;

(3) That the initial draft Strategic Assessment be circulated to members for comment; and Jo Middlemass be authorised to convene a small group of Partners to review the draft paper and determine whether there were any gaps;

(4) That Deborah Glassbrook be authorised to nominate education representatives to join the CSP membership, which could include the Director of Education and a School representative;

(5) That a meeting of the CSP be convened in early June 2022 to approve the Strategy and Delivery Plan based on the findings of the Strategic Assessment and Jo Middlemass, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to select a suitable date to hold the meeting;

(6) That Partners be encouraged to respond promptly to requests for information in relation to the Strategic Assessment to avoid delays to producing the CSP's Strategy and Delivery Plan;

(7) That the following items related to the Strategic Assessment be considered for inclusion on the next scheduled CSP meeting on 13 July 2022:

- Thames Valley Police and Crime Plan Update;
- Update from the Serious Violence Group.

4. SAFER STREETS

Jo Middlemass gave a presentation on the schemes that had been funded through Safer Streets 2 (SS2) and the preparation to bid for Safer Streets 4 (SS4) funding. The presentation highlighted the successes of the SS2, which included the Coley Participatory Budget; the Town Safe Radio Scheme; improved CCTV and lighting; crime prevention training; burglary packs for victims of burglary and those living nearby; and Love Your Neighbourhood events.

In relation to SS4, the bids would run across 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, but funds could not be transferred between financial years. The delivery deadline for successful schemes was 30 September 2023. PCCs were allowed four prioritised bids per region and could delegate any of their bids to Local Authorities. The maximum bid amount was £750k over entire delivery period or for up to £500k in 2022/23, which must be spent by 31 March 2023. Bidders could also bid for up to £250k to spend between April & September 2023. The bid would be dependent on identifying 50% of match funding. The bids would need to target Neighbourhood Crimes, ASB, Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) in public places, Improving feelings of Safety from VAWG or ASB or a combination of these types of offences and issues. Proposals must set out interventions intended to prevent the primary crime and issue types outlined, with the aim of showing some impact within the delivery timeline.

The Partnership was advised that the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had approved Reading's expression of interest to submit a bid for SS4 Funding, which would focus on Town Centre areas, particularly in relation to night-time economy, Violence Against Women and Girls and ASB. At this stage, it was anticipated that the bid would include proposals for a centralised safe hub, which would accommodate the First Stop provision and be utilised as a multi-agency hub during the day, which could be used for crime prevention initiatives. There would be focus on designing out crime, particularly improving safety of routes out of town centre and CCTV. The crime prevention training that was delivered as part of SS2 would be consolidated with more emphasis on use of ASB powers, including ASB Training and developing an ASB Schools Project.

AGREED:

(1) That the Safer Streets 4 bid would need to be submitted to the Home Office in May 2022 and the successful bids would be announced in June 2022 be noted;

(2) That the Project Group established by Jo Middlemass, in consultation with the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, be authorised to submit the bid to the Home Office by the May 2022 deadline;

(3) That the membership of the Project Group be expanded to include representatives from Education (Deborah Glassbrook to identify suitable nominees) and the Voluntary Sector to assist with the preparation of the bid.

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND 2022 BIDS UPDATE

Jo Middlemass reported that the latest round of Community Safety Fund Bids were being prepared for consideration by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Informal Review of the Community Safety Partnership

Further to Minute 5 of the previous meeting held on 3 February 2022, the Partnership discussed the informal review of the Partnership, which the Chair had asked Cath Marriott of the OPCC to carry out.

Health & Wellbeing Board – Strategic Assessment Presentation

Becky Pollard asked whether it would be possible for a presentation on the Strategic Assessment and Delivery Plan to be given to the Health & Wellbeing Board. The Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board was keen to coordinate the Health & Wellbeing Strategy with the findings of the Strategic Assessment.

Meeting Arrangements

The Partners were asked for their views regarding the future arrangements for meetings and whether they would prefer to continue meeting online, return to in person meetings or have hybrid meetings. Alternatively, the Partnership could use a variety of formats depending on the business of the meetings.

AGREED:

(1) That the informal review of the Community Safety Partnership be carried out by Cath Marriott (OPCC) in the early summer 2022, to avoid detracting from the work to prepare the Strategic Assessment and Safer Streets 4 bid;

(2) That Jo Middlemass and Steve Raffield give a presentation to a future meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Board on the Strategic Assessment and Delivery Plan;

(3) That any comments/ views about preferences for how meetings should be held in the future be submitted to Jo Middlemass.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings for 2022/23 would take place on:
13 July 2022
15 September 2022
10 November 2022
2 February 2023
20 April 2023

There would also be an extra meeting in the first week of June 2022 to agree the Strategic Assessment Delivery Plan.

All meetings start at 9.30am, venue to be confirmed.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and closed at 11.06am)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE **29 JUNE 2022**

QUESTION NO. 1

Caroline Langdon to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Littering and Fines

a) I would like to ask the Committee if they would urgently consider charging £100 for throwing litter including fag ends on the pavements, streets and shopping precincts as in Witham, Essex and Halifax and possibly other towns.
b) I would ask them to look at the state of the cobbled areas where fag ends are lodged in the cracks. Would they look at the seating areas whether in town at bus stops or in the parks where people throw fag ends, spit, vomit (I've witnessed all of these) and have these areas cleansed and disinfected not just swept outside the seating. May I draw their attention to the shocking state of the bus stops.

REPLY by Councillor Hacker:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

I would like to thank Ms Langdon for the question.

a) Reading Borough Council has a team of Recycling and Enforcement Officers who investigate waste offences such as littering, unauthorised disposal of waste (fly-tipping) and duty of care for businesses as well encouraging and advising residents and businesses on how to recycle more effectively.

   Investigations of waste offences may result in enforcement action being taken which can include a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, or prosecution. The Council's fine for litter offences is £80, and for fly tipping offences £400, which can reduce to £200 if paid within 10 days.

   Littering fines are often used for small scale fly-tipping offences, such as takeaway boxes or carrier bags, where evidence is found within the rubbish. Currently, the Council's operating policy does not include patrolling litter control officers issuing on the spot fines for small litter items, including cigarette debris.

   However, Officers are constantly aware of the potential for behaviour change and the impact of this on the Town Centre environment. To this end, Officers regularly review and adapt their approach to ensure that it effectively delivers the enforcement of littering offences within the Town Centre.

As the new Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety I'm committed to investigating the possibility of introducing Litter Control Officers who would have the warrant to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering within the Town Centre and other areas throughout the Borough where littering is a constant problem. The nature of this type of enforcement is confrontational with Officers required to trained to minimise the escalation of angry conversation, wear stab protection vests and equipped with body cameras and urgency contact with the police.

Due to the nature of this type of enforcement, most Councils who adopt a high-profile Litter Control Team, employ specialist enforcement contractors with delegated powers to issue FPN's for littering offences.

The Council's Love Clean Reading website is a well-used application, enabling residents to report fly tipping, littering, graffiti etc. There is the opportunity to upload photographs together with monitoring the status of the report, the action being taken and completion of the report by items being removed. With a daily regime of cleansing within the town centre, small items are generally immediately litter picked or swept away.

b) The Council's Street Cleansing team provide a comprehensive schedule, operating seven days a week, undertaking regular street cleansing, sweeping and litter picking to keep streets clean and safe.

High footfall areas, like Reading Town Centre, are rotationally cleaned 14.5 hrs per day from 05.30am to 19.30pm, seven days per week, 364 days per year, the only exception being Christmas Day. The cleaning operation utilises a combination of different processes and methods such as mechanical sweeping, hand sweeping, litter picking and power washing services.

Regarding streets with cobbled areas, these are mechanically swept using either a driver operated compact sweeping machine or a self-propelled applied sweeper, both of which have suction facilities to remove items to an internal hopper for later disposal. This methodology has proven to be the most effective way of removing small items such as cigarette debris, litter and leaves.

Stock photographs of Compact and Applied Sweepers

In addition to the mechanical sweeping, Reading Town Centre has permanent manual street cleansing operatives to perform detailed cleansing and sweeping together with reactionary capabilities to unpredictably issue that need immediate attention.

Working in partnership with Reading's Central Business Improvement District (BID), Street Cleansing provide a regular shop doorway washing service for businesses within the main shopping streets and a weekly trade cardboard collection and recycling service.

The Street Cleansing service also provides a dedicated graffiti removal team for 3.5 hours per day Monday to Friday, complete with a fully equipped vehicle with a high-pressure washer and environmentally friendly graffiti removal products. The Graffiti team clean known and agreed sites of all graffiti and fly posting as well as any racist or offensive graffiti from private property.

The Graffiti team wash litterbins, seating areas and council owned bus stops within the town centre on average eight times a year. They also provide an emergency response for any spillages that occur.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2022

QUESTION NO. 2

Caroline Langdon to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Fast Food Litter

a) I would like to ask the Committee how the council and the Environment as a whole are going to cope with the amount of litter now produced post Covid 19 where many businesses now use it as an excuse not to provide crockery, employ washer uppers, presumably pay water bills. We already had several Greggs providing litter as well as McDonalds, Subway and Itsu, now from the Broad St Mall down to the Oracle.

b) Have the committee noticed the number of businesses that have sprung up producing litter whether in or out namely Food Court, Taco Bell, Jollibee, Chopstick, a Tortilla shop, a chip kiosk and new coffee kiosk. Wendy's have moved into a bank corner of Friar St and Station Rd.

REPLY by Councillor Hacker:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

I would like to thank Ms Langdon for her question.

a) Our recovering economy is seeing a buoyant resurgence of new businesses and fast-food establishments that see the successful economic possibilities here in Reading and we can all be grateful for the fact that we do not suffer from a lack of interested businesses in Reading.

   However, as with all businesses, those operating within the Town Centre are required to maintain a trade waste agreement with a recognised and legal waste company to dispose of their waste and recycling. Reading Borough Council has its own trade waste operations, with many of the non-national shops and outlets in the centre of Reading subscribing to the Council's service.

   To ensure compliance to the law, Reading Borough Council have a team of Recycling and Enforcement Officers who regularly visit premises in the Town Centre checking that trade waste agreements are valid and in date, under the duty of care for businesses. They also encourage and advise residents and businesses on how to recycle more effectively. The team also investigate waste offences such as littering, unauthorised disposal of waste (fly-tipping).

Investigations may result in enforcement action being taken which may include a fixed penalty notice being issued, or prosecution.

From the photographic evidence provided with the question, it would appear the bags of waste and cardboard are trade waste placed out for collection by businesses operating in the town centre are of concern. The team regularly attend Reading town centre to undertake trade waste duty of care inspections to ensure that all businesses have a trade waste agreement in place and are complying with it.

A trade waste agreement will provide the business with either a trade bin collection or authorised trade waste sacks, which are common in areas where there is no space to store bins off the public highway.

Any businesses found to have insufficient waste disposal facilities in place may be issued with a fixed penalty notice. Any waste deposited on the public highway outside of an authorised waste receptacle (a bin or a sack) may be investigated as fly-tipping, and where possible enforcement action would be taken.

The Council's Street Cleansing team provide a comprehensive schedule, operating seven days a week, undertaking regular street cleansing, sweeping and litter picking to keep streets clean and safe.

High footfall areas, like Reading Town Centre, are rotationally cleaned 14.5 hrs per day from 05.30am to 19.30pm, seven days per week, 364 days per year, the only exception being Christmas Day.

Reading Town Centre has permanent manual street cleansing operatives to perform detailed cleansing, litter bin emptying and sweeping together with being present to reaction to unpredictable events of litter or cleansing that needs immediate attention.

The Council's Love Clean Reading app assists us greatly and is a well-used application by residents, enabling residents to report fly tipping, littering, graffiti etc. There is the opportunity to upload photographs together with monitoring the status of the report, the action being taken and completion of the report by items being removed.

Photographs supplied with Question

b) Reading Council are keen to take a broad perspective and bring different interests together in the recovery of the "High Street and retail centres".

A number of responsible food outlets that are new to the town, have commercial waste contracts with the Council's own Trade Waste Service.

Recycling and Enforcement Officers regularly visit businesses in the Town Centre. For example, they have recently undertaken work with a newly established fast-food business (that I shall not name) to ensure their compliance with the waste regulations. The establishment was advised on the correct presentation and collection of their waste, which has been embraced and is working well. This level of one-on-one work is part of our Enforcement Teams on-going work. We will continue to monitor and look at ways to improve standards as we are able in the future with retailers if they present significant issues to the StreetScene environment.

In addition, consideration may be given to the possibility of introducing "Time Banding" within the Town Centre to restrict the times businesses and residents can place waste and recycling out for collection. Typically, this would restrict the collection times to when the Town Centre is less busy for example 18:00pm – 08:00am, preventing accumulations of bags of waste and recycling when the Town Centre has its highest footfall.

Should "Time Banding" be a policy the Council wish to incorporate a public notice process will be necessary to allow representation from businesses and residents. Enforcement of the regulation is by the Environment Protection Act 1990 under Section 47, which is in the process of being adopted and applied by the Council's Environmental Enforcement team in order to help us to effectively deal with the issues of our buoyant business economy of which you have raised your concerns about this evening.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2022

QUESTION NO. 3

Caroline Langdon to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Begging

Why is there so much begging allowed in the town centre? Around the station, as I wrote to Cllr Jason Brock, there were 4 outside the railway station pestering people.

Then are all down station road including bedding and rubbish left in the entrance of the empty bank. The police and community officers don't do anything about it. Do you know they say they pick up £100 per day according to police and community officers. There is one active young lady with glasses permanently seated with cup/bowl in front of her in Broad St moves from outside Cafe Nero to other places.

Why do you not do anything about this? I have tried to help one young lady called NAME REDACTED in a terrible state offering her phone numbers etc. She is in the worst state but not the worst offender for begging.

REPLY by Councillor Hacker:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

I would like to thank Ms. Langdon for her timely question.

The increase in begging in the Town Centre is acknowledged and previous partnership processes that have been in place are to be reviewed and updated to ensure a consistent partnership approach is taken to tackle this evident and ongoing issue.

Many people who choose to beg in Reading will already have accommodation with support open to them; either here or in a neighbouring borough. It's highly likely that those accommodated and begging are doing so to obtain funds that supplement possible substance misuse problems. This is one of the reasons therefore, that we do not encourage the public to give them cash.

Since the pandemic the Council have commissioned new supported housing projects to provide a longer-term home to people sleeping rough. Whilst living in these environments they receive support with destructive behavioural issues, such as drug and alcohol use, that can contribute to the reasons why people beg. Reading Borough Council commissions a Rough Sleeping Outreach Service run by St Mungo's. That team is accompanied by Reading's Drug and Alcohol Service, Change

Grow Live. Their drug and alcohol outreach team along with the St Mungo's team attend town centre hotspot areas, such as Station Road and Broad Street, at various times of the morning and evening throughout the week. They continually offer support to encourage a lifestyle away from the streets. Sadly, not everyone accepts their support and we find that certain persons continually present on the street sleeping rough and begging.

I accept your concern and those of residents about the situation but there are constructive ways the public can help. To support our assertive outreach effort, the Council encourage members of the public to identify and report abandoned bedding, and any associated rubbish, via the Love Clean Reading App. If the public have concerns about someone sleeping rough, this can also be reported via www.streetlink.org.uk. This will be directed to Reading's outreach teams who will visit that site to offer support. Finally, we also encourage the public to download and use our Reportable App to report begging, especially when it is persistent, worrisome or aggressive. These reports go straight to our Council's ASB Team who liaise with the Thames Valley Police to deal with particularly hostile and aggressive cases of begging.

Officers from Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council have initiated discussions to review the current processes in place to tackle aggressive begging in Reading and as a result have agreed to set up a partnership task and finish group in early July, which will carry out a problem-solving exercise to understand the severity of the issues, review previous processes that were followed to tackle begging. That group will review their effectiveness and formulate a partnership action plan, which will set out a programme of activity to engage, intervene and where necessary, take enforcement action against individuals who continue to persistently beg aggressively. The action plan will be jointly produced by Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council. It will involve input from key partners who can provide support to those individuals involved in begging, including St Mungos and Change Grow Live along with other key partners who operate within the Town Centre, including Reading's Business Improvement District and British Transport Police, who will be able to provide support with evidence capturing.

Officers from Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council acknowledge the urgency of this escalating issue and once actions have been set by the task and finish group, they will be enacted immediately and communicated to the public.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2022

QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor Cresswell to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Waterloo Meadows Refurbishment Update

Can the Lead Councillor give an update on the plans and progress of the refurbishment of the play area at Waterloo Meadows?

REPLY by Councillor Hacker:

I invite Councillor Barnett-Ward, the Lead Councillor Leisure & Culture, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Leisure & Culture:

I would like to thank Councillor Cresswell for his question.

Prior to the recent elections, Katesgrove Labour Councillors worked with officers to plan and cost out a transformation of the Waterloo Meadows playground area facilities. £95,000 was allocated in 2021/22 and a further £200,000 in 2022/23 for this work from the local CIL funding pot. Together these amounts will allow both the refurbishment of the ballcourt and the full replacement of the children's playground equipment over the upcoming 22/23 CIL delivery period.To date, the ball court renovation work is nearly complete. There has been a delay in resurfacing it, as contractors have experienced some issues accessing the road entrance because of residents' parking on the access route. This has now been resolved, and completion is scheduled for early July.

The refurbishment of the Children's Centre and associated landscape plans needed to be considered prior to commencing the design aspect of play area. Plans for the new entrance to the Centre intruded on the playground location. A revised access route to the community centre hall has been agreed so that there are no future access issues for users of both the play area and the community centre.

A new location for the new zipwire has been agreed and the installation will commence the end of July.

It will now be possible to make progress with planning the new playground and the community's input will be sought to help shape the design of that site. As we do with all our playground upgrades, we will also consult with our Accessible Play Task and Finish Group, to ensure accessible enjoyment for children of all abilities and for carers that may also have accessibility issues.

Through this large investment in the ball court, the community centre renovation and the future re-designing of the play area, the area will be rejuvenated and

provide years of safe, attractive, and accessible activities for young people and their families in the local area.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2022

QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor McCann to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

University Good Neighbours Plan

I was pleased to hear that the university is working on a plan to help new Second Year students be good neighbours. Can the Lead Councillor tell me how the council can support this initiative, especially when it comes to tackling waste issues?

REPLY by Councillor Hacker:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

I would like to thank Councillor McCann for her question.

Firstly, I would like acknowledge the positive contributions that the University of Reading's approximately 5000 off-campus students make to our town, the vast majority of whom add a positive vibrancy to Reading and are good neighbours within our communities. Indeed, many ultimately make Reading their home after they leave University. However, I sense Cllr McCann is alluding to the work being done to ensure all off- campus students are aware of how to be good neighbours and how we work proactively with the University to work with the small segment of students that do cause problems and challenging issues within the community.

As I understand Cllr McCann is already aware, the Council's Recycling and Enforcement team have been working closely with the University for many years. We are delighted that with an increase from the University in Community Liaison work, over the past couple of years, that relationship has led to more positive interaction and co-working to engage and work with the off-campus community. Last autumn, in a first joint exercise, University officials, students, Council officers and Councillors engaged in a door -knocking effort, speaking with new students', and passing out Moving-in packets with tips on being good neighbours, and how to dispose of waste responsibly. Most recently, this exercise was repeated as students prepare to leave for the summer in a 4-day engagement exercise with Council officers and the University that saw 800 Moving Out packets delivered to 26 streets where students live within the Reading community. In both packs it included information about how to dispose of waste correctly including how to deal with bulky waste removal, rubbish and recycling was distributed. There will be, as has been done over the past number of years, an additional rubbish pick-up in student areas by the Council paid for by the University to handle extra moving-out rubbish.

Throughout the year, the Council's Recycling and Enforcement team continues to work closely with the University and will be supporting in the delivery of Moving-in information packs again this September. The Council will look to have a stand at the Freshers Fayre (as they did last year), as well as having a presence at the Sustainability Fayre to help provide information in the first few weeks of students moving in. Our Recycling and Enforcement team carry out initiatives to tackle issues with contaminated recycling, and overflowing bins throughout the year working with the University's Community Outreach Manager and team. That relationship is strong and we continue to work with the University to refine the manner in which off-campus students are supported and where need be, dealt with through direct engagement and where necessary through disciplinary action within the University as warranted. As part of our on-going work with the student population living off the main campus, our Team have door knocked residents, provided information on the door-step, and contacted landlords and HMO license holders where required to ensure that rubbish and recycling issues are dealt with where there is a lack of cooperation with rubbish and recycling collection. Our officers feedback to the University any relevant information, and a joined-up approach in tackling the issues is carried out.

Our Recycling and Enforcement team also have a representative on the steering group that the Student Union has recently formed. At these meetings there are discussions on multiple topics, including waste. I am delighted to have a particularly positive relationship with the new Student Union President, Sheldon Allen, who initiated a lot of this positive co-working last year with the September walk-about.

We believe greatly in a positive and joined up approach with the University when tackling issues such as waste, and there is no doubt that we will continue to support and work proactively with the University to encourage all off- campus residents to be good neighbours.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29 JUNE 2022**		
TITLE:	**MUSEUMS PARTNERSHIP READING NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATION BID FOR 2023-2026**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**CLLR BARNETT-WARD**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**LEISURE AND CULTURE**
SERVICE:	**CULTURE**	**WARDS:**	**BOROUGHWIDE**
LEAD OFFICER:	**Matthew Williams Simon Smith**	**TEL:**	**0118 9373683**
JOB TITLE:	**Museum Manager Libraries & Museum Manager**	**E-MAIL:**	**Matthew.williams@reading.gov.uk Simon.smith@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Museums Partnership Reading and to seek agreement to delegate authority to extend the partnership agreement with the University of Reading in the event of a successful funding bid. The Museums Partnership Reading is a strategic partnership between Reading Museum and the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) which is part of the Arts Council England National Portfolio 2018-2023. The two museums work together to provide cultural opportunities for Reading's diverse communities.

1.2 The report focuses on the application submitted by the MPR on 18th May 2022 to Arts Council England's 2023-26 Investment Programme seeking a further three years investment from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2026 from the National Portfolio Organisations programme.

1.3 A National Portfolio Organisation is defined by Arts Council England as an organisation that receives direct investment from the organisation in order to help support and realise delivery of Arts Council England outcomes based on the ACE Strategy 'Let's Create'. This portfolio is refreshed every few years, the portfolio for 2018-22 invested £1.6bn into 828 organisations, including 3 in Reading for the first time (Museums Partnership Reading, CultureMix and Readipop).

2. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

That the Committee:

2.1 Notes the successful track record of the Museums Partnership Reading (Reading Museum and the Museum of English Rural Life) to date.

2.2 Agrees to the Council extending its partnership with the University of Reading until 2026 to continue the Museums Partnership Reading as a National Portfolio Organisation if Arts Council England offers NPO funding for 2023 to 2026.

2.3 Authorises the Executive Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Leisure & Culture, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to extend the partnership agreement with the University of Reading for the Museums Partnership Reading.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Reading Museum has Full Accreditation status from Arts Council England. 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 Arts Council England 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 which is part of the Arts Council England National Portfolio 2018-2023. The current Museums Partnership Reading Business Plan 2022-23 embeds the outcomes and investment principles of ACE's 2020-2030 strategy 'Let's Create' and was submitted to ACE in February 2022.

3.2 A Forward Plan is an accreditation requirement to demonstrate effective forward planning approved by the governing body. The Reading Museum Forward Plan 2020-2025 was adopted at the Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee on 6 July 2021, and includes an action for the MPR to seek ACE investment from the 2023-2026 NPO programme. A Collections Policy is another requirement for accreditation, this was adopted via Decision Book on 27 April 2022.

3.3 The Arts Council England Investment Programme provides regular funding to National Portfolio Organisations that help realise its strategy, 'Let's Create'. National Portfolio Organisations deliver the ACE strategy by delivering on one or more of its outcomes, along with embedding its Investment Principles in their work.

The Let's Create outcomes are –

- Creative People
- Cultural Communities
- A Creative and Cultural Country

The investment principles are-

- Ambition and Quality
- Dynamism
- Inclusivity and Relevance
- Environmental Responsibility

These principles, in turn, align with the Council's ambitions around Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 This report seeks the Committee's approval for the Council to extend its partnership with the University of Reading until 2026 to continue the Museums Partnership

Reading as a National Portfolio Organisations if Arts Council England offers it funding for 2023 to 2026.

4.2 Until 2018 Reading had no NPOs. In 2018 three National Portfolio Organisations were awarded across four Reading organisations – Culture Mix, Readipop and Museums Partnership Reading. Given the competitiveness for National Portfolio Organisation status and funding this was a major achievement for the town's cultural sector.

4.3 Museums Partnership Reading is a strategic partnership between Reading's two leading museums, Reading Museum, and the University's Museum of English Rural Life which is part of the ACE National Portfolio 2018-2023. The two museums have developed a strong partnership and track record based on collaborative programming, sharing skills and resources and maximising community and digital engagement. It has grown out of a decades long working relationship that aims to place The MERL and Reading Museum, as MPR, at the heart of Reading's place-making agenda, engaging with and delivering high quality engagement and access to collections for its young people and diverse communities. The Museums Partnership Reading's current approved Business Plan for 2022-23 gives priority to refreshing and re-setting in light of Arts Council England's new 'Let's Create' Strategy and Outcomes and Investment Principles.

4.4 Since 2018 Museums Partnership Reading has developed a wide range of projects and programmes and been agile in responding to the challenges created by the pandemic of reaching audiences. Key areas of work have been collections, digital, partnerships/placemaking, volunteering, and children and young people.

4.5 Collection projects at both museums have improved collection care and access, with the Reading Museum store move in 2020 being a key achievement with the assistance and expertise of Museums Partnership Reading staff. The partnership has delivered high quality exhibitions celebrating the diversity of the Museums Partnership Reading's collections that have been enjoyed by almost 150,000 people (19/20 to 21/22) including:

- 'Ladybird Books - How it works'
- 'From Rubens to Sickert – the study of drawing'
- '1971 Reading Festival - For the first time'
- and this year's Biscuit Town programme celebrating 200 years of Huntley & Palmers.

These exhibitions reach existing and new audiences; the Museums Partnership Reading visitor survey for 1971 Reading Festival found that 23% had not been to Reading Museum before, 37% said 1971 made them feel proud of Reading, 32% said they were curious to find out more; and 17% said it made them want to go to a festival!

4.6 The Museums Partnership Reading's experience of digital and a focus on agile working meant it was able respond quickly to Covid with high quality online content. Staff, volunteers and partners have created innovative digital content on the museums' websites and social media based on the MPR collections and Reading's heritage including blogs, online exhibitions, and over 6000 objects added to online catalogues. 2021-22 was a record-breaking year for MPR's digital platforms, with the websites surpassing one million pageviews. This included significant year-on-year increases of 26.77% at The MERL and an incredible 122.05% at Reading Museum.

4.7 Museums Partnership Reading partnerships have assisted and delivered programme for Reading Abbey Revealed, Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone, Thriving Communities, and Cultural Commissioning for the Reading Great Place scheme. MPR has worked with Reading UK CIC to form the Reading Tourism Group, promote the

museums though the Great West Way and Tourism South East, and promote Reading Biscuit Town, celebrating 200 years of Reading's biscuit heritage in 2022.

4.8 Volunteer management has been integrated across both museums, achieving the Investing in Volunteers national standard in 2019. In 2020 the Museums Partnership Reading launched a new online volunteering platform 'Better Impact' especially aimed at engaging volunteers from a younger and more diverse background, including offering more online volunteering opportunities. In 2021/22 MPR had 162 volunteers who contributed 4,970 hours of time, 45% of new volunteers identified as ethnically diverse, and 27% of active volunteers were aged between 15 –24.

4.9 The Museums Partnership Reading Youth Strategy has delivered new learning resources and sessions for The MERL, teacher's conference and literacy INSET days at Reading Museum, and during the pandemic created a new Virtual Schools Session. These sessions have been incredibly successful engaging with 3,664 children and young people, even reaching an international audience in Canada and Kenya. Between 19/20 and 20/21 there were 19,010 participants in MPR's formal learning sessions. Young people from the Museums Partnership Reading Youth Panel, No. 5 and Reading College have participated and co-produced activities, displays and a Youth Manifesto film. Museums Partnership Reading is also trialling 'Museums, My Way', a new series of sessions for neurodiverse visitors to explore the museums in a safe environment, developed in partnership with Autism Berkshire.

4.10 Museums Partnership Reading is seeking a further three years investment from the Arts Council England Investment Programme, which will invest in National Portfolio Organisations that help realise its strategy, Let's Create. A key benefit of this status, over and above the reputation and kudos it provides, is multi-year core funding. The current investment period being applied for is from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. Applicants will be informed whether Arts Councio England will be making them a conditional offer of funding by the end of October 2022.

4.11 As an existing National Portfolio Organisation (2018-2023) Arts Council England provided Museums Partnership Reading with a planning figure of £254,599 per year, which is the maximum amount that Museums Partnership Reading can apply for per year and is based on the current funding level, so represents 'standstill funding'. This represents £763,797 over three years for 2023-2026.

4.12 The Museums Partnership Reading application for 2023-2026 is led by The MERL in an equal partnership with Reading Museum. As the consortium's lead organisation, The MERL, is the responsible for the submission of the application on 18th May 2022, and if successful the University of Reading will be accountable for the grant award and governance. An extension of the current formal partnership agreement with Reading Borough Council (RBC) as a consortium partner will be required if the application is successful.

4.13 The University has delegated formal oversight and governance of MPR to the Committee for Museums Partnership Reading. This Committee is subject to the University's governance and legal policies and is constituted as a Committee of the University of Reading. This fulfils Arts Council England guidance on the importance of good governance and the new Arts Council England strategy, Let's Create. RBC will be represented on this Committee by the Museum Manager and one other RBC representative (tbc).

4.14 Arts Council England has asked applicants to identify up to three Outcome Elements (out of 18) for which they will deliver up to nine activities in 2023-24. The Museums Partnership Reading application focuses on:

A) Creative People — Supporting people at all stages of their lives to design, develop and increase their participation in high-quality creative activities

J) Cultural Communities — Working with communities to better understand and respond to their needs and interests, resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings

K) Cultural Communities — Working collaboratively through place-based partnerships to: Support and involve communities in high-quality culture; Improve creative and cultural education for children and young people; Improve health and wellbeing through creative and cultural activity; Build skills and capacity in the cultural sector and grow its economic impact

4.15 In its application the Museums Partnership Reading has outlined nine core activities in 2023-24:

- Activity 1 – 'We Are Open' will reimage how people explore and engage with collection stories through digital methods including VR. At Reading Museum this will build on trials in the 3D scanning of objects such as tins from the Huntley & Palmers Collection and online access.

- Activity 2 – 'Untold' will push the boundaries of interpretation & engagement by discovering and sharing hidden stories through co-curation of our collections to hear different voices and perspectives. At Reading Museum we will build on work exploring the diversity of Roman Britain using the Silchester Collection, and uncovering climate change stories in our natural history collections.

- Activity 3 – 'Green Screen' will champion and advocate for environmental responsibility through a creative residency commission at both museums for participatory film maker(s) connecting with Reading families, communities, and volunteers with our collections.

- Activity 4 – 'Museums, My Way' will widen access for neurodiverse audiences and diverse communities by the development & delivery of a supported visits programme. This extends the model that the MPR is currently evaluating at both museums in partnership with Berkshire Autism.

- Activity 5 – 'Museums on Wheels' will create participatory opportunities beyond the museums. Focused activity in Reading communities with high levels of deprivation, including working at Southcote/Whitley Libraries. This evolves this successful outreach model that was developed for the Reading Abbey Revealed project.

- Activity 6 – 'Reading's History and Cultural Curriculum' will plan and develop an inclusive curriculum with local schools, focused on Reading's own stories of migration and cultural change, through the development of the Museums' participatory sessions. This build on the development of Black History resources and virtual sessions in 2020-21.

- Activity 7 – 'Sanctuary' - will work with Reading partners using the Cities of Sanctuary as a model to connect asylum seekers, refugees and other new arrivals to Reading with participation in culture and heritage opportunities.

- Activity 8 – 'Sow Seeds' will develop an outdoor based programme aimed at men (particularly younger men for improving mental health) as an under-represented group within museums using The MERL garden and the Abbey Quarter.

- Activity 9 – 'Pathways' will create a programme to develop creative industries skills and employability for young people from underrepresented communities in Reading, through partnerships including Widening Participation to higher education.

4.16 Further to the nine core activities outlined above, there is an additional Activity 10 to extended Museums Partnership Reading's successful model of partnership to develop some of the activities with cultural partners in Slough. Slough is one of Arts Council England's Priority Places and this activity would be part of an Additional Funding Request over and above the Arts Council England planning figure for Museums Partnership Reading. The request would provide extra capacity for the Museums Partnership Reading to help partners in Slough deliver cultural activity in Slough. This Additional Funding Request does not affect the assessment of the MPR's core funding application for its work in Reading.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading 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 2022-23*- 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 Museums Partnership Reading is an established strategic partnership that places The MERL and Reading Museum at the heart of the town's place-making agenda engaging with and delivering high quality engagement and access to collections for the town's diverse and thriving communities. It is a key partner delivering engagement activities as part of the Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone. The Museums Partnership Reading programme also promotes environmental awareness through the museums' collections and services as part of its work with local communities and users especially schools, families, and young people. It works closely with Reading UK CIC and the Reading Tourism Group to provide and promote events and activities that attract visitors to Reading, for example last year's 1971 Reading Festival exhibition and this year's Biscuit Town 200 initiative.

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 Reading Museum makes a positive contribution to Reading's ability to respond to the Climate Emergency and achieve a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. Reading 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. 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). 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.

6.3 The Museums Partnership Reading is required to embed Environmental Responsibility in its work as one of ACE's four Investment Principles. The MPR's current business plan (2022-23) includes the delivery a creative environmental campaign drawing on the collections of both museums and focused on improving Reading as a place to live, and the development and deliver environment focused schools' resources and an outdoor learning offer.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Reading Museum's formally adopted Forward Plan (Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee, 6 July 2021) and Access Policy (Decision Book Issue 603, 24 June 2020) give local people and key stakeholders, including Arts Council England, 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 Reading Museum regularly evaluates its services and consults with users following its Access Policy and Forward Plan. As part of Museums Partnership Reading, 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, teacher's panel etc.), co-production 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. The MPR is also committed to embedding Arts Council England's Inclusivity and Relevance Investment Principles in its business plan that is submitted to ACE annually.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 The decision to continue the Museums Partnership Reading 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 MPR is committed actively engaging with Reading's diverse local communities and is also embedding ACE's Inclusivity and Relevance Investment Principles into its current and future plans. Reading Museum has 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 and MPR regularly consult and evaluate their services, projects and programmes, and has never received any indication or feedback that any of their policies or plans discriminates against any groups. Both the MPR and Reading Museum are 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 continue the Museums Partnership Reading.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In the event of a successful funding bid, Arts Council England's offer of National Portfolio Organisation funding for 2023 to 2026 for the Museums Partnership Reading will be made to the University of Reading as the consortium's lead organisation, and will be subject to ACE's standard terms and conditions for grant.

9.2 As the lead organisation, the University of Reading will be accountable to Arts Council England for the Museums Partnership Reading's governance, including having in place a partnership agreement with the Council for the Museums Partnership Reading.

9.3 The University of Reading has delegated formal oversight and governance of the MPR to the Committee for the Museums Partnership Reading**.** This Committee is subject to the University of Reading's governance and legal policies and is constituted as a Committee of the University of Reading.

9.4 It will be necessary to review the partnership agreement for the Museums Partnership Reading with the University of Reading.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 If the bid for funding is successful, all activities will be met from the Arts Council England programme funding. There is no requirement for match funding from RBC and all programme expenditure is covered by the National Portfolio Organisation funding. If the application was not successful, the Museums Partnership Reading will consult with ACE to see if other funding programmes are available to support any of the proposed activities. The Museums Partnership Reading would then need to review its plans and staffing before the end of the current National Portfolio Organisation funding cycle in March 2023.

10.2 As the consortium's lead organisation, the University of Reading will be accountable to Arts Council England for the financial management of the grant award.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are none

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29 JUNE 2022**		
TITLE:	**READING ABBEY REVEALED PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**COUNCILLOR BARNETT-WARD**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**CULTURE AND LEISURE**
SERVICE:	**CULTURE**	**WARDS:**	**ABBEY (WITH BOROUGHWIDE IMPLICATIONS)**
LEAD OFFICER:	**CHRISTELLE BEAUPOUX**	**TEL:**	**0118 9374097**
JOB TITLE:	**CULTURE & HERITAGE PROJECTS MANAGER**	**E-MAIL:**	**Christelle.beaupoux@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the achievements and key successes of this award-winning, transformational project since the start of its delivery phase in 2016. Over the past eight years the project team, volunteers, and partners have worked closely and flexibly with stakeholders and the funders, to develop, and to successfully deliver this major heritage and culture placemaking project.

1.2 The Reading Abbey Revealed project and the creation of the Abbey Quarter is Reading's most ambitious heritage project for a decade. The Reading Abbey Quarter was created to bring together the unique, cultural heritage that exists within the former grounds of Reading Abbey. through interpretation, wayfinding, conservation, and community engagement. Notably the Quarter includes, Reading Museum, the Town Hall, Reading Gaol, St. James' Church, St Laurence's Church, the Forbury Gardens, and the remains of Reading Abbey. The Abbey Ruins and Gateway are both Grade I listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

1.3 The creation of the Abbey Quarter has transformed the precinct of Reading's royal abbey into a unique historical and cultural destination at the heart of Reading's cultural renaissance. The conservation project has been a catalyst for positive change, putting this internationally important monastic and royal heritage firmly on the map. This project has an impact beyond the Abbey' Quarter across Reading's wider community, galvanising a step-change in the town's attitude to its distinctive past and providing a sense of place, ongoing community engagement, cohesion and pride for its diverse and expanding population. The full Reading Abbey Revealed project evaluation report can be found in **Appendix 1**

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Committee:

2.1 Notes the successes of the Reading Abbey Revealed placemaking project set out in the project evaluation report.

2.2 Agrees to the next steps for the Abbey Quarter vision and plans, set out in paragraph 4.7 to ensure the legacy of the Reading Abbey Revealed project.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Further to Minute 86 of Policy Committee on 17 February 2014, in December 2015 the Council received confirmation that its stage 2 application to the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) for a grant of £1.7775 million towards the £3.154 million 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project was successful. The delivery of the project comprised:

- Implementation of conservation works to restore the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gateway (both part of a Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed), thereby safeguarding their future and enabling public access to be restored;
- Comprehensive interpretation and signage across the whole Abbey Quarter, including Reading Museum, and associated branding; and
- A linked five year programme of community engagement, educational events and activities across the heritage site.

3.2 Further to the Policy Committee on the 18th January 2016 agreeing to commit the funds to deliver the project, an update presentation of the progress to HNL committee on the 16 November 2016 and on 15 November 2017, this report focuses on summarising the key achievements of this major conservation and cultural project that ended in December 2021.

4. THE PROJECT EVALUTION SUMMARY

4.1 The project evaluation report has been written by specialist consultants and is based on:

- extensive evaluation data and visitor feedback collected by the project team
- three project review meetings with staff members in 2018, 2019, and 2021
- meetings with individual staff
- volunteer surveys collected by the project team
- group discussions with volunteers
- meetings with, and feedback from, community stakeholders.

4.2 The aims of the project were to conserve this scheduled site and to create a new historic quarter drawing together and interpreting the former grounds of Reading Abbey as a single unified heritage site - the Abbey Quarter, while ensuring the wider community engagement and active participation through cultural activities. The significance and success of the Abbey Quarter site has been recognised through prestigious national awards, including:

- Royal Town Planning Institute 2018 South East Award for Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture (where the judges said they were particularly impressed by the extent that Reading's heritage is seen as a catalyst for positive change and that the Abbey Quarter is at the heart of the town's cultural renaissance)

- Shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Chartered surveyors Awards South East 2019 in the 'Building Conservation' category

- Two awards at Reading Cultural Awards 2019 – for 'Celebrating Reading's heritage' and 'Partnership in the Arts' categories

- Highly Commended at the 2020 Civic Trust AABC Conservation Awards

- Won the Planning Awards 2020 for the 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking'. The judges were particularly impressed with Reading's 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.

- Green Flag Awards for the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins October 2021. Both received special heritage awards

4.3. The project has grown awareness of, and pride in, the importance of Reading's history. 2021 marked the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Abbey and a large celebratory community event tied in with Water Fest was held in Forbury Gardens in June 2021. At the Abbey 900 Water Fest event, 74% of people surveyed agreed that the project had helped to increase their pride in Reading. The extensive network of interpretation panels, which are located throughout the town centre and their accompanying wayfinding system are very distinctive, usable, and well-branded, and have contributed to a growing sense of awareness and pride in the Abbey Quarter area and Reading's history.

4.4 Public engagement at the early stages of the project got people excited about the Abbey Ruins, the Abbey Quarter vision and Reading's wider heritage. The project has strengthened links between Reading Council departments and has confirmed the support from all elected members and key stakeholders for the protection and conservation of Reading's major heritage site.

4.5 Thanks to the experience and reputation of the team, the project attracted a further £1.7 million of additional external investment into the area for the delivery of cultural and heritage projects. This includes the Abbey Refectory wall restoration (2017-2018) £200,000 funding from Historic England; the Reading Place of Culture (2017 to 2021) £754,920 project with £558,400 from NLHF, Arts Council England and Historic England; and the Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone (2020 to 2024) £1.6m project with a £806,500 funding from Historic England to revitalise the historic buildings in the centre of Reading. The Abbey Quarter events and activity funding (2020-2021), with a £80,000 grant from NLHF and Historic England through their Cultural Recovery Fund programme. Arts Council England project grant of £15,000 to support specific cultural activities for the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey at Water Fest on the 19 June 2021.

4.6. The figures below highlight the key successes of the project from July 2016 to December 2021 in terms of community outreach, learning, wider participation, volunteering opportunity, skill development, training, and employability:

- A total of 350,429 people engaged in *Reading Abbey Revealed* activities
- 45,320 people attended events in the Abbey Ruins and the Forbury Gardens.
- 20,698 people participated in the Abbey/Museum on Wheels outreach programme
- 131 individual volunteers were trained to support *Reading Abbey Revealed,* undertaking research, writing digital content, acting as heritage custodians, leading and supporting tours, acting as costumed interpreters, sewing costumes, helping at events, schools' sessions, outreach, and gardening
- 4,327 school and university students, teachers, young people, and adult learners have attended schools' sessions, INSET training, Take-over days, Arts Awards, Youth Panel, and workshops
- 219 Victorian Schoolroom sessions were held for 6,137 children and 803 adults – despite 18 months of Covid lockdown restrictions, delivered by Reading Museum
- Since autumn 2020, 43 virtual Victorian Schoolroom sessions engaged 1,165 children and 59 adults
- 4 new resources for schools (on abbey history, music, creative writing & dance)
- 6 paid interns employed and trained that went on good paid position in other organisations.

4.7 The next steps of the legacy of this project:

- To ensure that the key learnings and recommendations of this project are disseminated for good practice to colleagues and the wider heritage and placemaking sector.
- To continue to work with conservation specialists to ensure the Scheduled site is protected and preserved for the future, through the production and delivery of a new Conservation and Management Plan.
- To work with the specialist consultants Bowles Green to finalise the outline Business and Marketing Plan to sustainably optimise potential income generation and increased promotion and awareness of the Abbey Quarter heritage site.
- To work closely with finance partners and colleagues to explore the Abbey Quarter management and ongoing conservation plan is integrated in the Council's S106 funding programme.
- To work closely with internal and external partners to develop the public activities programme, promote the site, and investigate tourism opportunities
- To work closely with funding bodies to investigate future funding opportunities to work towards the financial and environmental sustainability of this heritage site
- To ensure the Abbey Quarter continues to integrate with current projects such as the High Street Heritage Action Zone and the large scale developments in the town centre area.
- To ensure the vision for the Reading Gaol site is integrated with the wider Abbey Quarter vision and interpretation
- To ensure that the Abbey Quarter and its sustainability is part of the wider emerging Cultural and Council strategies and plans

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The Reading Abbey Revealed and the Abbey Quarter contribute to the Corporate Plan themes, for example:

Healthy environment

- The conservation of the Abbey Ruins has protected and improved this important Scheduled site, making this major green space in the heart of Reading, accessible for residents and visitors to freely enjoy.

Thriving Communities

- Abbey on Wheels has been both a highlight and a model for outreach for the project. Now Museum on Wheels, it is continuing to reach new audiences in various locations such as local festivals, libraries and community centres, to get people excited about Reading's heritage. It has also introduced the Abbey and museums to new partner organisations to reach more under-represented audiences. Good examples of partnership working, includes the storytelling project with Brighter Futures for Children and looked after children on a creative writing to produce a children's book about Reading Abbey in May 2019.The work with the Youth Panel, that the team set up in 2018 to engage young people in activities, programmes and projects at the Abbey Ruins and to involve them in decision making. As part of the Abbey 900 celebrations in 2021, the project team worked with the local organisation, No. 5 Young People who support young people with their mental health, where seven Young Ambassadors devised and led two activities for local people to take part in on the day, inspired by both the history of the Abbey and the need to create a greater awareness of mental health.

- In 2020 Reading Museum worked closely with three schools to organise schools' workshops to prepare pupils for a collaborative Diwali and Odissi Dance

performance, which took place and was filmed in the Abbey Ruins, see https://youtu.be/BaW2Jy_4J4o.

Inclusive economy

- The project has initiated a new collaboration with Reading UK CIC, through the Reading Tourism Group which is now promoting the Abbey Quarter as a key part of their destination offer. The Abbey Quarter is also an Ambassador of the 'Great West Way' initiative, 125-mile touring route between London and Bristol. These has both raised the profile of Abbey Quarter further and encourage even more partnership working between regional venues.

5.3 The Reading Abbey Revealed project has developed the Abbey Quarter which contributes to realising the following strategic plans for Reading's culture and heritage:

5.3.1 **The 2050 Vision:** an ambitious description of what Reading can be:
a smart and sustainable city,
a green tech city,
a city of rivers and parks,
a city of culture and diversity Reading's rich heritage and strong cultural base becomes a fundamental part of the city's make-up. Reading in 2050 is a cultural destination in its own right as well as providing a great lifestyle for our current and future communities.

5.3.2 **Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy** (2015-2030): 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.

5.3.3 **Reading Local Plan** (2019-2036): support the aspirations for Reading as a dynamic, inclusive community of the 21st Century including heritage. Relevant policies include enhancement of conservation areas (EN3), new development in a historic context (EN6) and The Abbey Quarter (CR15). In the pre-amble at para 4.2.2 states:
'Protecting Reading's heritage assets contributes to a sense of place,and doing so can contribute to other important planning goals. Investment in heritage and culture, in turn, generates more spending in the local economy. For example, previous investment in publicly owned heritage assets within the Abbey Quarter, like the Forbury Gardens and Simeon Monument, has created an attractive environment for high-quality commercial investment including Forbury Square and Forbury Hotel. A vibrant historic environment also contributes to town centre vitality, sustainable transport, residential development, good design and the natural environment. Heritage assets can be a positive force for regeneration. New development can be beneficial to heritage assets through providing or encouraging new uses or better revealing their significance'.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the keys successes of the evaluation report of this major Reading Abbey Revealed conservation project which has no climate or negative environmental implications. The project's positive impact is to ensure the ongoing conservation of the Scheduled Abbey site, including innovative techniques such as soft capping on the Ruins that adapt and protect this nationally important heritage from the impacts of climate change. The project also looks holistically at the Abbey Quarter with the Forbury Gardens to develop and maintain an attractive green space in the built-up town centre for everyone to enjoy as mentioned in the Local Plan.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 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".

7.2 The success of the project has been grounded in extensive public consultation and support throughout the development stage to the delivery of the project over a period of seven years. Building on the consultation for the Activity Plan (where over 1,150 people responded to an online consultation survey), a series of events and open days, hard hat conservation tours, accessible talks, community outreach through Abbey on Wheels (now Museum on Wheels), interpretation testing and positive publicity all created an early groundswell of local support for the conservation and re-opening of the Abbey Ruins.

7.3 Staff and volunteers undertook extensive public consultation - testing interpretation panels, themes, imagery and text with 103 members of the public and school groups. Staff gathered feedback on panel size, text size, colours and contrast, the balance of text and images, and usability of the map and trail. Care was also taken to ensure that the interpretation of a Christian building was as accessible as possible to people of other faiths and none.

7.4 In 2021 as part of the Reading Abbey 900th anniversary celebrations, a public online consultation campaign was launched inviting residents to choose from six potential sculptures, based on figures from the Abbey's illustrious post-dissolution past to carve a new head-stop on the Abbey Gateway. The choice of Abbot Hugh Faringdon was unequivocal with 361 votes out of a total 867. Comments from voters choosing Hugh Faringdon stated their choice would contribute to 'righting the wrongs of the past' and that the last Abbot of Reading needed 'recognition'.

7.5 Festivals, events, and volunteer-led tours will continue to engage visitors with the heritage of the Abbey Ruins into the future, as will the continuing Museum on Wheels outreach programme – a real legacy of *Reading Abbey Revealed*.

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 The project's clear objectives through activity and interpretation has demonstrated a proactive approach to being inclusive, providing opportunities for enjoyment, learning and participation for all residents and visitors regardless of ethnic origin, social background or financial means. The project has raised the profile of Reading's historic centre, providing a powerful symbol of civic pride and identity for the town. Improved and more accessible site and interpretation have enabled anyone who wishes to, to enjoy and understand the important and multi-layered heritage of the Abbey Quarter. This report has no 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 the Armed Forces community.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There is no legal implication arising from this report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No financial implications arise from this report. Future project developments in the Abbey Quarter site would be subject to existing budgets, capital and revenue business cases and funding approval. In the event of future project developments in the Abbey Quarter being subject to procurement these will be considered at the time in line with the Councils contract procedure rules and relevant procurement legislation and any future grants will be considered at the time in line with any relevant legislation in respect of grants.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are none.

Reading Abbey Revealed
Evaluation Report

December 2021

Reading Twilight Trail 2020

Prepared by
Alis Templeton and Alison Porter

Contents

Executive summary

1. Introduction and methodology

2. Outcomes for heritage

2.1 Heritage will be in better condition
2.2 Heritage will be identified and better explained
2.3 Heritage will be better managed

3. Outcomes for people

3.1 People will have had an enjoyable experience and learned about heritage
3.2 People will have developed skills
3.3 People will have volunteered time

4. Outcomes for communities

4.1 More and a wider range of people will be involved with heritage
4.2 Your organisation will be more resilient
4.3 The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit

5. Project impacts and learning points

6. Recommendations and opportunities

Executive Summary

First conceived by Reading Museum (RM) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) in 2010, *Reading Abbey Revealed* secured a £1.77m grant in December 2015 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). This was match-funded by the Council with £1.37m.

The historically significant and much-loved Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gateway have now been conserved and re-opened to the public in June 2018 after almost ten years of closure.

The Abbey Ruins

With the pioneering use of innovative conservation techniques such as sedum planting to cap the walls and hot-mixed lime mortar to stabilise the walls, the project has rescued the Abbey Ruins for the people of Reading. Now made safe, secure and sustainable, the Ruins are open to the public once again and home to an exciting programme of open air events including theatre, cinema, music and community activity.

Reading now has a new historic quarter, the Abbey Quarter, which draws together and interprets the former grounds of Reading Abbey - the Ruins, Abbey Gateway, Reading Museum and Town Hall, Forbury Gardens and surrounding streets - as a single unified heritage site with a comprehensive interpretation scheme for the first time. An average of 687,700 per month walked through the Abbey Quarter area in 2021.

Reading Abbey Revealed in numbers

- A total of 350,429 people have been engaged in *Reading Abbey Revealed* since July 2016 – from the new *Story of Reading* gallery at Reading Museum and schools workshops in the Abbey Gateway to online visits to the Abbey Quarter website and a packed events and outreach programme.

- 45,320 people have attended a high quality and high impact programme of events in the Abbey Quarter. From the re-opening festival and onsite performances inspired by Reading's history in June 2018 to the recent Abbey 900, local people have enjoyed a range of free and exciting events celebrating Reading and its history.

- Local people are discovering more about Reading, Reading Abbey and its fascinating history - evaluation shows that 80% of talks, tours and events attenders said that they learned something new about the history of Reading and Reading Abbey.

- 4,327 school and university students, teachers, young people and adult learners have attended schools sessions (including a new Reading Abbey inspired 'Royals in Reading' workshop), INSET training, Take-Over days, Arts Awards, Youth Panel and conservation day-schools and workshops.

- 219 Victorian Schoolroom sessions have been held for 6,137 children and 803 adults – despite 18 months of Covid lockdown restrictions. The popular Victorian Schoolroom programme has been successfully relocated from the Museum to the restored Abbey Gateway, adding an atmospheric and experiential space for the sessions.

- 58 virtual workshops were offered during the 2020-21 academic year, with 1,766 pupils participating. Since autumn 2020, 43 virtual Victorian Schoolroom sessions have engaged 1,165 children and 59 adults. As a consequence of Covid restrictions, the Learning team took the opportunity to gain new skills and to adapt their offer to develop online 'virtual' workshops to continue the museum's unique offer for schools and subsequently extend their reach.

- Through consultation and input from local teachers and specialists, 4 new resources have been written and produced for schools to enable teachers to prepare and follow up sessions and to use on-site and off-site. They cover a range of topics from local and national history linked to the Royals in Reading to creative writing, dance and music.

- 20,698 people from across Reading have participated in Abbey on Wheels (now Museum on Wheels), the project's pop up display and virtual reality experience which took the Abbey Ruins out to festivals, libraries and community centres.

- 131 individual volunteers have been trained to support *Reading Abbey Revealed,* undertaking research, writing digital content, as heritage custodians, leading and supporting tours, acting as costumed interpreters, sewing costumes, helping at events, schools' sessions, outreach and gardening. 40 volunteers are actively involved on a regular basis and have continued to be engaged during Covid-19 restrictions. Since 2019 the Museums Partnership Reading joint working between Reading Museum and MERL has enabled shared management, training, organisation and record keeping processes.

- 6 paid interns have been employed, creating a successful model for internships and providing a positive starting point for young people embarking on their careers.

School visit to the Abbey Ruins

Engaging local people with their heritage

The success of the project has been grounded in extensive public consultation and support. Building on the consultation for the Activity Plan (where over 1,000 people responded to an online consultation survey), a series of events and Open Days, hard hat conservation tours, accessible talks, community outreach through Abbey on Wheels (now Museum on Wheels), interpretation testing and positive publicity all created an early groundswell of local support for the conservation and re-opening of the Abbey Ruins.

This led to high attendance at the opening and subsequent events – despite Covid-19 lockdowns - with a growing awareness of, and pride in, the importance of Reading's history. At the recent Abbey 900 celebration, 74% of people surveyed agreed that the event had helped to increase their pride in Reading.

Festivals, activities and events will continue to engage visitors with the heritage of the Abbey Ruins into the future, as will the continuing Museum on Wheels outreach programme – a real legacy of *Reading Abbey Revealed*.

Heritage at the heart of Reading

The growing sense of civic pride is reflected in the additional heritage impact that *Reading Abbey Revealed* has generated - the term 'Abbey Quarter' has been widely adopted by the town, similarly branded interpretation and signage has been rolled out around the town centre and the Abbey Quarter is now central to Reading's heritage tourist offer. It is an Ambassador for the 'Great West Way' initiative and in 2019 businesses voted to create a new Abbey Quarter Business Improvement District (BID) 2019 - 2024.

The impact of the Abbey Quarter scheme has been recognised through a number of prestigious awards such as the Royal Town Planning Institute 2018 South East Award for Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture and Planning Awards 2020 for the 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking'.

This vision for the Abbey Quarter has been achieved through close working with partners such as the University of Reading and RBC departments and services such as highways, transport, parks and Reading Arts, as well as through strong cross party support.

Crucially to its success, *Reading Abbey Revealed* has been delivered by a strong and dedicated staff team with vision and commitment. New staff dedicated to the project also made a huge difference to what the team were able to deliver. The expertise of the team has been recognised in further successful funding applications.

The NLHF grant has acted as a catalyst for further funding and the team have attracted a further £1.7 million of additional grants from organisations such as the NLHF, Historic England and Arts Council England through Reading Place of Culture, the Cultural Recovery Fund and Emergency Heritage at Risk funds.

As a result of all this, the Abbey Ruins, Abbey Quarter and Reading Museum now sit firmly at the heart of Reading's cultural offer. Through conservation, interpretation and community collaboration, this ambitious project has reinvented the site and precinct of Reading Abbey as the town's main heritage destination.

Reading Abbey Revealed has given Reading a sense of place and pride – the town is more than 'just a shopping centre' but a place of heritage and culture.

Night in the Ruins

1. Introduction and methodology

Reading Abbey Revealed was conceived by Reading Museum (RM) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) in 2010. After two failed bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), *Reading Abbey Revealed* received Round 1 funding in 2014 before securing a £1.77m grant in December 2015. This was then match-funded by the Council with £1.37m.

The main aims of *Reading Abbey Revealed* were to conserve the remains of the nationally important Reading Abbey so that they, and the Abbey Gate, could be re-opened to the public, and to:

- improve the signage, interpretation and conservation of Reading Abbey Ruins, the Abbey Gate and the wider Abbey Quarter

- provide new life-long learning opportunities that will maximise the potential of the Ruins as an atmospheric outdoor learning space, and ensure the Gate and Ruins are evocative and enjoyable spaces within the heart of town

- revive Reading's Abbey Quarter, the historic heart of the town, giving people a powerful symbol of civic pride and identity

- reach wider audiences and involve local communities, ensuring that previously under-represented groups have the opportunity to be involved through a programme of new activities.

Reading Abbey Ruins are owned and managed by Reading Borough Council.

In parallel with this project the team have also received funding for other projects, such as over £500,000 from the Great Place Scheme for *Reading Place of Culture,* £237,500 funding from Arts Council England for *#DigiRDG: Town and Country,* over £800,000 from Historic England from the High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund, £80,000 from NLHF through the Cultural Recovery Fund and £15,000 from Arts Council England to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey - all of which illustrate how the success of *Reading Abbey Revealed* has led to further funding.

Reading Museum has also been part of a four year National Portfolio Organisation – Museums Partnership Reading (MPR) with the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) since April 2018, supported by Arts Council England (ACE).

As this project started up in 2016 the planned project outcomes align with the relevant NLHF strategic priorities at that time.

Evaluation methodology

Alis Templeton and Alison Porter were appointed in May 2016 to evaluate *Reading Abbey Revealed*. This report is based on:

- extensive evaluation data and visitor feedback collected by the project team
- three project review meetings with staff members in 2018, 2019 and 2021
- meetings with individual staff
- volunteer surveys collected by the project team

- two group discussions with volunteers
- meetings with, and feedback from, community stakeholders.

Impact of Covid-19

As with all heritage organisations, the impact of Covid-19 inevitably stopped many face to face activities, prevented public access and also meant that staff worked in various different ways. Volunteering opportunities in public facing roles were halted for extended periods of time.

As *Reading Abbey Revealed* was in full delivery at the time of lockdown, some approaches had to be modified, some postponed and timescales for delivery lengthened. The programme was extended with NLHF agreement, enabling some staff appointments to be extended in tandem. For example, the Abbey Learning Officer's contract was extended by six months.

New ways of working were developed within the team, such as more online visitor facing activity. This led to more engagement with some audiences (e.g. through the Youth Panel) and provided greater reach to other audiences (e.g. online sessions for schools). Staff also received additional training to support new online working.

Bloom Britain award judges visiting the Abbey Quarter in 2019

2. Outcomes for heritage

2.1 Heritage will be in better condition

Conserving and re-opening the Abbey Ruins

One of the most significant outcomes of *Reading Abbey Revealed* has been to successfully conserve the remains of the much-loved Abbey Ruins and to re-open them to the public. Closed since 2009 because of falling stones and safety concerns, the Abbey Ruins had been suffering from a destructive combination of 1980s hard capping repair work, invasive plants and water damage.

Following the closure in 2009, RBC continued to monitor the stone loss and surveyed the condition of the Ruins using specialist 3D scanning technology to inform a repair plan and schedule. Working with Historic England, they trialled different repair techniques including using sedum planting to cap the walls and hot-mixed lime mortar to re-point the stones and to restore fallen flint.

Soft capping the Abbey Ruins

The use of hot-mixed lime mortar was particularly innovative and a return to a technique from when the Abbey was first built 900 years ago. The project shared its learning from this through a series of workshops for conservation professionals.

Conservation of the Ruins started in February 2017 using these techniques and continued through to opening, with minor delays to the programme due to cold weather.

The newly stabilised Ruins were re-opened to the public in June 2018 to great excitement and acclaim and now play host to a wide range of activities and events for different audiences (see section 3.1).

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* project team and Reading Museum's long term supportive relationship with Historic England (HE) has contributed to the success of the conservation side of *Reading Abbey Revealed*. Historic England encouraged the trialling and use of different conservation and repair methods and they funded an additional £250,000 for unexpected conservation work on the Refectory wall.

HE has also offered a grant to St James Church to conserve parts of the Ruins not in RBC ownership.

Conserving the Abbey Gateway

Like the Abbey Ruins, the Grade I listed Abbey Gateway overlooking the Forbury Gardens had been impacted by water damage over the years. Caused by inaccessible faults in the original 1861 pipework and damage from invasive plants, *Reading Abbey Revealed* allowed the roof and pipework to be repaired and made accessible for maintenance. The stonework has also been restored and asbestos removed.

Following the conservation and repair work and some reconfiguration inside, the Gateway opened in September 2018 as a learning space for schools, including the popular Victorian Schoolroom sessions, and hosted family activities like a Santa's Grotto during the school holidays. The Abbey Gateway is also a feature on the Abbey Quarter tours and available for separate private tours. The Gateway has a personal connection for one volunteer:

> *I went to the Abbey School – that gave me a clue that there was an Abbey in Reading, we also had the Gateway on our badge – but volunteering here has opened up so much more for me – and it is more interesting the longer I volunteer.*
>
> Volunteer

As part of the Abbey 900 celebrations in 2021, a newly carved head of the last Abbot of Reading Abbey, Hugh Faringdon, was carved by Cliveden Conservation to replace one of the incomplete head-stops that decorate the outside of the Abbey Gateway. The figure of Hugh Faringdon was chosen through a public vote, beating five other short listed candidates.

Hugh Faringdon new headstop carving on the Abbey Gateway

Sharing conservation learning - Hot-Mixed Lime Days

Six Hot-Mixed Lime Days were held in 2017 and 2018 to share knowledge about using hot-mixed lime in historic conservation work and to showcase the conservation work at the Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gateway.

These days were highly successful with 131 people from differing backgrounds and professions attending. The list includes building surveyors, conservation architects, conservation officers, engineers (who deal with conservation and heritage works), and project managers.

Participant feedback demonstrates the impact of these specialist learning opportunities.

> *Thank you so much for organising the course it was excellent I was really impressed with both the talk and the site. I learnt so much and will certainly be specifying hot lime mortars rather than NHL (natural hydraulic lime) as I did not realise the NHL performed more like a cement mortar nor that the hydraulic limes needed to be kept wet for so long.*
>
> Project Engineer (Structures), Hampshire County Council

> *Thank you again very much for setting up the hot lime mix training day at Reading Abbey. It was a huge eye opener, and great fun, too. My colleague Chris and I certainly felt we gained information not many people have at the moment, and felt witnessing developments at the forefront of conservation techniques – despite the fact the hot mixed lime tradition goes back thousands of years. We accordingly eulogized about the CPD yesterday with our colleagues in the office, and now they are interested in hot mixed lime.*
>
> Senior Architect, Thomas Ford & Partners

Workshops inspired by heritage skills also formed part of the adult workshop programme (see section 3.1).

2.2 Heritage will be identified and better explained

Interpreting the Abbey Ruins and Abbey Quarter

Another important outcome of *Reading Abbey Revealed* has been the creation and interpretation of the Abbey Quarter area. The Abbey Quarter includes Reading Museum and Town Hall, the Forbury Gardens, Abbey Gateway and Abbey Ruins, as well as the surrounding streets, and brings together the cultural heritage within the former grounds of Reading Abbey into a single unified site for the first time.

The Abbey Quarter is supported by a new suite of interpretation telling the history of the site, including 27 information boards in the Abbey Quarter, 24 directional signs around the town centre, a series of trails, a new exhibition in Reading Museum (The Story of Reading) and a dedicated website with a history of the Abbey, interactive map, visitor information and events listings[1].

The new interpretation panels in the Abbey Quarter were designed by Equal Studio and include a model which shows what the Abbey looked like at its greatest extent.

[1] www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk

This was informed by archaeological surveys taken in the lead up to the conservation work.

Staff and volunteers undertook extensive public consultation - testing interpretation panels, themes, imagery and text with 103 members of the public and school groups. Staff gathered feedback on panel size, text size, colours and contrast, the balance of text and images, and usability of the map and trail. Care was also taken to ensure that the interpretation of a Christian building was as accessible as possible to people of other faiths and none.

New interpretation panels around the Abbey Quarter

Consultation took place outside in the Abbey Quarter and in the temporary exhibition on Reading Abbey in the Museum, as well as outside Reading Minster church to get feedback on the newly installed prototype panel. Short tours of the exhibition by staff and volunteers were used to gather feedback, which then fed into the final interpretation. It was an ambitious programme that took time to organise, but was worth it in retrospect as visitor feedback has been so positive (see section 3.1 for more about this).

A challenge for the interpretation came towards the end of the first phase. Because the Ruins are a Scheduled Monument and any interpretation within the Ruins needed to be approved by Historic England, there were differences of opinion and compromises with some elements of the interpretation panel content aimed at children. However overall the content was approved and installed in time for the opening.

The extensive network of interpretation panels and their accompanying wayfinding system are very distinctive, usable and well-branded and have contributed to a growing sense of awareness and pride in the Abbey Quarter area and Reading's history (there is more about this in section 4.3). Although it took some time to get them signed off by the Transport and Highways division of RBC, the *Reading Abbey Revealed* team have received positive feedback from residents, businesses and colleagues within Reading Borough Council. Highways have since contracted Equal

Studios to continue the scheme around Reading Station so there is continuity with the Abbey Quarter.

> *The wayfinding scheme has worked well and we've received a lot of good feedback. It was worth investing all that time, thought and consultation at the start on interpretation, wayfinding and branding. It took time but it was well worth it.*
>
> Project and Performance Manager

Twenty four additional signs have been added at various other sites around Reading, including at Reading station, where links to the Abbey Quarter and other aspects of local heritage are highlighted.

> *I was waiting for my daughter at the station the other day and was very surprised to see myself on a sign there, dressed as a monk….the story of the Abbey and links to the heritage of Reading start there.*
>
> Volunteer

The Friends of Reading Museum initially took responsibility for caring for and cleaning the Abbey Quarter interpretation and orientation panels, and a new team of volunteers are continuing this role.

> *The signs need to be looked after, we don't want them looking shabby how you see in some places.*
>
> Volunteer

> *We developed a new role of heritage custodian to take care and clean the signs. It needed to be worked out fully to get it right – thinking about how often to clean, the materials and where to store them etc.*
>
> Volunteer Co-ordinator

The new *Story of Reading Gallery* opened at Reading Museum in February 2018 and includes the history of the Abbey, alongside new research and interpretation. It acts as a starting point and hub for people visiting the Abbey Quarter area.

There is also a new Abbey Quarter website with an interactive map which allows visitors to explore the history of the site for themselves[2]. Visitors can also visit the website, which is optimised for mobile use, through QR codes on the outside interpretation panels.

During lockdown periods, one volunteer also researched and wrote blogs to add to the website and contribute to the wider understanding of the history of Reading Abbey. This volunteer is now continuing with other time periods in Reading's history with a series on post-war Reading.

> [A volunteer] *wrote an interesting blog about the archaeological evidence behind the Abbey and hidden waterways.*
>
> Volunteer Co-ordinator

> *I have a massive research resource….I like to be involved. The Abbey work has been an absolute joy and it links with my writing and other skills.*
>
> Volunteer

[2] https://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/explore/explore-abbey

2.3 Heritage will be better managed

Three new staff were appointed to support *Reading Abbey Revealed*:

- The Abbey Volunteer Co-ordinator (part time for 23 months) was appointed January 2017.

- The Abbey Community Engagement Officer (part time, then full time from August 2017 for 23 months) was appointed January 2017.

- Abbey Learning Officer (full time for 23 months) was appointed in January 2018.

The Abbey Community Engagement Officer left in July 2018 to pursue another post. In her feedback she was pleased by what she had been able to achieve, but was concerned that additional project management duties had cut into her time to deliver the Activity Plan. She also felt that her role should have been planned as a full time post from the outset.

> *I began on a part time contract. Realistically this should have been planned as a full time post, regardless of the additional tasks that I picked up. This is the same for the other project roles (one of which was changed to be full time from the beginning).*
>
> Abbey Community Engagement Officer

To respond to the workload and concerns of the Abbey Community Engagement Officer, the position was extended to full time from August 2017. The Abbey Learning Officer was also appointed as a full time post from the start of the contract. This has had an impact on the size and scale of what the project team has been able to successfully deliver. Additionally, the Abbey Learning Officer felt that her role could have started a little earlier to ensure that activities were developed and ready to run as soon as feasible.

Similarly, changes within the existing staff team, such as a new Learning Assistant, have also helped to ensure that the Reading Abbey programme is fully integrated with other museum programming and activities.

Reading Abbey Revealed also benefitted from RBC recruitment decisions. For example, when the Project Manager went on maternity leave, she was covered by an experienced contract manager, without whom the project would have struggled.

In addition to this, when the Abbey Volunteer Co-ordinator's role was completed, Reading Museum and the MERL combined resources to manage the volunteer teams and established Museums Partnership Reading (MPR). There is shared co-ordination, training and timetabling, and a volunteers' website.

3. Outcomes for people

3.1 People will have had an enjoyable experience and learned about heritage

An exciting range of different activities aimed at engaging people with their heritage has been programmed over the five years of the project. These include talks and tours in the lead up to the re-opening, the re-opening celebration itself and an ongoing programme of schools workshops, outreach activities, tours, family activities and special events.

Although dampened by the Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020, the Abbey Ruins remained open as an outdoor space for people to enjoy during the lockdowns.

Highlights from the public activity programme and visitor response to them are included in this chapter.

Pre-opening - tours and talks

During the first phase of the project, from April to September 2017, the Abbey Community Engagement Officer ran conservation / hard hat tours to introduce visitors to the site and the conservation project. Visitors learned about the history of Reading Abbey and the conservation works being undertaken to preserve it. There were also two corporate tours for local Reading companies Boyes Turner and Barton Willmore.

The nine tours were attended by 141 people, with 110 people completing short evaluation forms. Of these,

- 100% of visitors rated the event overall as good or excellent, with 85% rating it as excellent.
- 100% rated their enjoyment as good or excellent, with 85.5% rating it as excellent.
- 96% (106 people) agreed that they would recommend a conservation tour to someone else.
- 97% (107 people) said that they learnt something new about conservation.
- 88% (97 people) said that they learnt something new about Reading Abbey.
- 79% (87 people) said that they learnt something new about the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project.

The Community Engagement Officer responded to some of the issues that came up in visitor evaluation. For example, in some of the early tours visitors requested online booking so booking through Eventbrite was introduced in later events.

The positive visitor ratings are reflected in the comments received from visitors. People particularly enjoyed the hot-lime mortar demonstrations and learning about the history and conservation of Reading Abbey.

Very interesting visit - great to see the Abbey receiving the care and attention it deserves. Looking forward to seeing it opened again.

I absolutely loved the visit and the enthusiasm of the Project Officer was just great too. Fascinating to understand the evolution of the conservation techniques being used and that part of the Abbey will continue as an ongoing 'live' experiment in conservation techniques. As someone who lived in Reading for 40 years, I've always loved the Abbey Ruins and am SO PLEASED to see it now being promoted as part of the wider 'Abbey Quarter' project.

The lime mortar demonstration was really cool. Also seeing people working on it.

Visitor comments, conservation tours

Reading Abbey Quarter tour

In the lead up to the re-opening, the project programmed another eight accessible talks focusing exclusively on the history of Reading Abbey. A total of 371 people attended the talks, with most selling out. Subjects covered by the talks included Reading Abbey Gatehouse in Context, Introducing Jane Austen, Matilda the Empress, Blood and Bones: The Veneration of Relics at Reading Abbey and Science and Magic in the Monastery. Guest blogs were also written to allow a wider audience to learn more on these topics from experts[3]. There are still ad hoc talks about the Abbey complementing the wider Museum programming e.g. there is a talk about Jane Austen on Jane Austen Day.

In her written feedback, the Community Engagement Officer noted that the accessible approach worked – speakers used non-academic language and where possible used slides and images.

[3] www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/reading-abbey

Overall visitors enjoyed the talks programme. Out of a total of 119 evaluation forms completed:

- 92.4% rated the event overall as good or excellent, with 60.5% rating it as excellent.

- 90.7% rated their enjoyment as good or excellent, with 58.8% rating it as excellent.

- 80.7% of visitors (or 96 people) would recommend the talks to someone else.

- 73.9% of visitors (or 88 people) said that they learned something new about Reading Abbey.

- 40.8% (or 40 visitors) said that they learned about *Reading Abbey Revealed*.

Joy's talk was informative, detailed and highly enjoyable - thank you, Joy. A short introduction about the Reading Abbey Quarter project was interesting too: as a local resident (of 30 years). I applaud all efforts made to put Reading on the historical and cultural map. Thank you!

Visitor comment, Introducing Jane Austen talk

Very interesting talk and illustrations and slides too. Explained quite a few terms that I have come across but never really understood before. I learned a lot now about how really clever the monks were besides praying and copying and illustrating texts.

Visitor comment, Science and Magic in the Monastery talk

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* team also offered 14 free tours of the Abbey Ruins on Heritage Open Day and Water Fest in 2017 to around 135 people. These were a particularly successful way of engaging local people in the project.

On Heritage Open Day 56 people completed evaluation forms for their tours, showing that:

- 98% of visitors rated the event overall as good or excellent, with 71% rating it as excellent.

- 95% rated their enjoyment as good or excellent, with 76% rating it as excellent.

- 100% (56 people) agreed that they would recommend the tour to someone else.

- 80.3% (45 people) said that they learnt something new about conservation.

- 98.2% (55 people) said that they learnt something new about Reading Abbey.

- 100% (56 people) said that they learnt something new about the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project.

Visitor feedback focused on the knowledge and enthusiasm of the guides and how much visitors learned about the history of Reading.

The tour leader was really enthusiastic about the project and knowledgeable about the buildings. It was really good to understand what conservation work is taking place.

Michael's delivery was enthusiastic and amusing with little snippets and stories that brought the tour to life. We have lived in Reading for over 40 years but found out a whole load more about more about the Abbey Quarter than we expected to. We found the tour fascinating.

It was great to go on a free tour to find more out about the Abbey. I've lived in Reading for 10 years and didn't know a lot about what was told. I didn't realise how big or important the Abbey was or how important Reading was at the time.

Heritage Open Day visitor comments

Down at the Abbey music concert

Re-opening in 2018 – festivals and performances

The Abbey Ruins opened with a huge celebration in July 2018 with an estimated 18,000 attending a re-launch festival across the Abbey Quarter.

The festival included Civil War re-enactments in the Forbury Gardens, an archery activity, music performances, costumed interpretation, demonstrations and tours. It was combined with the annual Water Fest which meant that the project team enjoyed support from the RBC events team, as well as increased profile from the wider festival.

Feedback on the re-opening was overwhelmingly positive:

> *On behalf of the Friends of Reading Abbey, may I congratulate you and your colleagues on a hugely successful day, the culmination of an immense amount of work. There was a really good atmosphere, and such a lot of positive interest and enthusiasm. We are really delighted at what has been achieved.*
>
> Chairman, Friends of Reading Abbey

> *Atmosphere was brilliant - real sense of excitement and pride in the site. I was born in Reading and grew up knowing the history of the Abbey but realise how few people were as lucky as me! It was great to see young people discovering the Abbey's history for the first time.*
>
> Reading resident

> *At the end of the day I got chatting with a mum and her 13 year old son, while we were looking at one the panels in the ruins. And the boy said "if I could time travel I'd go back in time and visit the Abbey!" I asked him which year he would go back to and he said the day the Abbey opened in 1164! You could see the event had really captured his imagination.*
>
> Volunteer feedback

> *@rdgabbey fond memories of playing here as a small child and strolling through the gardens after school as a teenager. Nearly 60 years on, its great to be able to enjoy the #abbeyruins again. Congratulations to the restoration team.*

> *I thought this was such a wonderful day and brought so much life back to a wonderful and historic part of Reading more of this please!*
>
> Visitor feedback from social media

The re-opening also featured *In Ruins*, an immersive promenade theatre performance through the Abbey Quarter celebrating the re-opening of the Abbey Ruins. Ten audience members at a time walked through the Abbey Quarter experiencing scenes from the Abbey's history. It was produced by Sitelines and South Street Arts in partnership with a number of different local arts organisations and groups. There were 400 paid tickets sold, with another estimated 400 unpaid attendances (onlookers enjoying the Abbey Quarter).

Both audience and participants responded very positively to the production, saying that it was an exciting and immersive way of learning about the history of the Abbey Quarter.

Such a wonderful way to learn about Reading's history and the Abbey. Marvellous performances. Loved it! Moving choral accompaniment.

Reading in the Civil War. This part of Reading's history was completely new to me, very interesting and VERY well presented in the Site Lines production.

Audience comments

Seventeen community participants in the performance completed evaluation forms. All 17 said that they had learnt something new from their involvement:

More feeling of what a monk's life must have been like.

We researched the daily practices of the Benedictine monks to incorporate into the performance. We explored various events that would have taken place and decided upon the celebrations and rituals surrounding the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

I learnt what a typical day as a school girl then was like.

Community participant feedback

Participants also described how enjoyable and rewarding it was to be involved:

Really excellent to be in the Abbey Ruins and to learn to sing plainchant. It was exciting and fun to perform in. I enjoyed learning about the Abbey and working with professional actors.

The faces of the audience as the battle came towards them were unforgettable.

It was so fun to be able to perform to the public so close up. It was a really amazing experience and I enjoyed it very much.

Community participant feedback

Asked if there was anything they would have improved, the participants mentioned more rehearsal time, improved security (they had nowhere secure to leave their belongings) and better organisation (there was a double booking for one performance at the Chapter House).

On Saturday 8 September 2018, the Abbey Ruins hosted *Night in the Ruins*, an evening of live music and illuminations to celebrate the end of the summer season of reopening events. Organised by Reading Council in partnership with the Are You Listening? Festival and Reading Fringe Festival, *Night in the Ruins'* designer Stuart Melrose took inspiration from the Abbey Ruins to create a light installation. The event sold out in three weeks and was attended by 400 people. Again, feedback was very positive:

It was an amazing event in itself - excellent use of the ruins to project images etc. I was very pleased to be able to attend as I missed out on buying a ticket… Everyone was hugely positive about it in general and I received praise on how helpful I and other volunteers had been.

Steward, Night in the Ruins

Awesome evening of music and light show at Abbey Ruins. A little rain couldn't dampen the spirits #NightInTheRuins #rdguk

Last night the @RdgAbbey was brought alive again with music, light and celebration. Really proud to be there! #NightInTheRuins #rdguk

Twitter comments

The Ruins re-opened - casual visits, tours and costumed interpretation

The Abbey Ruins are free to visit and open daily from dawn to dusk. Although the new interpretation panels, website, family trails and Story of Reading exhibition at the Museum share the history of the site with self-guided visitors, the Museum also offers Reading Abbey Quarter tours for adults and families, alongside private group tours. Led by volunteer guides, the popular 90 minute tours started off twice a month in 2019 and have been running every Saturday during summer 2021.

Guided tours of Reading Abbey

Feedback collected from evaluation postcards completed by 120 Abbey Quarter visitors shows that:

- 96.6% of visitors rated their experience as good or excellent, with 68% saying that it was excellent.

- 75.6% of visitors agreed that they had learnt something new on their visit.

When asked what they had learnt, 89 people gave more detailed responses. Almost all of these related to learning new historical facts about Reading and Reading Abbey.

The size of the Abbey before it was destroyed.

I didn't realise the Abbey Gateway was used as part of a school that Jane Austen attended.

The word fart was first written down at the Abbey.

Lots of aspects of the Abbey life from the information boards. Nice to be able to visualise how the Abbey would have looked, sounded and even smelled nearly 900 years ago.

Visitor comments

The postcards also asked what people liked about their visit. Many people visiting the Abbey Quarter mentioned the new interpretation panels. There was also a sense of pride amongst many visitors.

The interpretation/information boards in the Abbey ruins give a good mixture of history/information/context.

I liked the way in which the ruins have been restored and made visitor friendly.

It made me feel very proud to see the Abbey open, full of people enjoying their heritage and all the events. Putting the information in Broad Street and around Reading is an excellent idea to help us escape the idea that Reading is only here for shopping or its station.

Wonderful to see the ruins open to the public again and pride being taken about Reading's history. The Abbey Quarter area is now a proper focal point for the town centre.

Visitor comments

A number of visitors suggested improvements such as re-orienting some of the interpretation panels and creating an Abbey Quarter app (although the panels do have QR codes linking to a map on the website which is designed and optimised for mobile use).

I found some of the new signage boards in the Abbey Ruins confusing as they were always aligned north/south which wasn't necessarily the direction where the board was sited so it wasn't always easy to determine exactly where I was on the map.

Perhaps have a downloadable abbey app that acts as a tour guide (pod cast). What would be amazing would be images of the Abbey while it was standing placed into the modern surroundings to give a sense of scale. Perhaps this could be done from various points using a QR code? Don't know how feasible this is.

How possible would it be to acquire funding to make a Reading Abbey download app for smart phones? For most visually impaired people wanting to go alone it's currently inaccessible.

Visitor comments

Following feedback from visitors, the general Reading Abbey Quarter Tours now include a visit to the Abbey Gateway as standard. A new additional premium tour focuses on the Gateway itself and takes people to the rooftop where they can see the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins.

Tours have also been popular with local companies such as Network Rail, as well as organisations like U3A. Staff and volunteers have noticed an increased pride in the

local area from local businesses in particular, and an increased interest in walking tours linked to wellbeing activities.

> *People, like local office workers, now visualise a bigger space for the Abbey.*
>
> *I think that visitors are genuinely surprised – they thought Reading was one of those places you go through to get somewhere else.*
>
> Volunteer comments

The team were originally offering costumed tours for families, but these didn't book as well as hoped and volunteers were demoralised by low turnouts. A decision was made to focus on using costumed interpretation of characters like King Henry I, Jane Austen, an Abbey Garden Monk and medieval laundress at the bigger events like Water Fest, Jane Austen Day and Forbury Fiesta, and as part of schools programming such as Take Over Day.

Family learning at the Abbey Ruins

Summer events, family activities and Abbey 900

Large-scale events, like Water Fest, have long taken pride of place in the Reading cultural calendar, but are now augmented by activities celebrating the entire Abbey Quarter.

> *That worked well - the combined event with the Water Fest – that drew a lot of people's attention to the Abbey. People were wanting to walk along canal side and wander further afield – so this helped people see the wider spaces around the Abbey.*
>
> Volunteer

Summer events over the years of *Reading Abbey Revealed* have included Saturday craft/making workshops like stone carving, basket weaving, medieval tile making, and leather embroidery in the Ruins as well as larger events such as a Photography Day and Teddy Bears Picnic in the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins. Some participant comments from a stone carving workshop include:

> *Professional, efficient, friendly tutor and staff. Good balance of tuition, demonstration and own work.*
>
> *Well organised, fun event, where you get to try something different.*
>
> Feedback from workshop participants

To celebrate the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Reading Abbey in 2021, Reading Borough Council programmed a season of activity, culminating at a celebration event at Water Fest on Saturday 19th June.

As with all events during the Covid-19 pandemic, Water Fest was delivered in a stringently Covid compliant way. Workshop and interactive activities were booked in advance and numbers were limited. Safety measures necessitated a ticketed system of 4,000 people capacity and staggered arrival times. A range of online activities also complemented the live event. This event leveraged an additional £15,000 grant from Arts Council England.

Events included 'Brothers', South Street Arts' new piece of site-specific theatre from their award winning SITELINES programme which took inspiration from the Abbey's rich history, previews of Rabble Theatre's play 'The Last Abbot' about Hugh Faringdon, storytelling, children's activities, living history and historical re-enactments, talks and tours about the history of the Abbey, music and dance performances, medieval blacksmith demonstrations (which were also filmed and shared online) and a mindfulness trail around the Abbey Ruins.

Performance of Rabble Theatre's play 'The Last Abbot' about Hugh Faringdon

The newly carved head of the last Abbot of Reading Abbey, Hugh Faringdon, designed to replace one of the incomplete head-stops that decorate the outside of the Abbey Gateway was also unveiled.

The day was supported by 47 volunteers recruited through Reading Voluntary Action, as well as the existing volunteer team. One volunteer commented:

> *From my own childhood the Abbey has had a sort of spiritual significance… there is something about it and its history… I was really sad when it was closed off to the public. Recently there was a light show there and me and my old schoolfriend went… it was a very magical thing - I hope there will be more [events]*
>
> Volunteer

Abbey volunteers for Abbey 900 /Water Fest 2021

Evaluation feedback was collected from 68 visitors and 33 volunteers on the day, but because of a technical error only 78 people were able to complete the ratings questions. However, from this it is clear that both visitors and volunteers enjoyed themselves, learnt something new about their heritage, felt pride in Reading and felt an increased sense of wellbeing:

- 88.5% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they had a good time, with 62.8% strongly agreeing.

- 71.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned something new about the heritage and history of Reading Abbey, with 21.8% strongly agreeing.

- 76.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the activity they attended had a positive effect on their wellbeing, with 29.5% strongly agreeing.

As can be seen in table 1, a total of 328,420 people attended Abbey 900 in 2021.

Table 1: Participants and audience numbers for Abbey 900

Participant and audience type	Numbers
Artists and creatives, or specialists	161
Participants	218
Audience (live)	4,000
Audience (broadcast, online, in writing)	324,041
Total	**328,420**

As part of the Abbey 900 celebrations, Reading Museum worked with local organisation, No. 5 Young People who support young people with their mental health. Inspired by both the history of the Abbey and the need to create a greater awareness of mental health, No.5's seven Young Ambassadors devised and led two activities for local people to take part in on the day – a drawing activity where people were asked to be still, to notice and draw the history that was around them and a mindfulness exercise where small groups of five people enjoyed a five minute session where they were asked to 'step back in time 900 years ago' and to 'relax in the past'. Both activities aimed to make both the heritage of the site and mindfulness fun and accessible to children, young people and adults.

The Young Ambassador's drawing activity at Abbey 900

Although no formal feedback was collected specifically from the Young Ambassadors' sessions they observed that people who participated enjoyed being given time to sit, feel calm and to notice the history around them. This was particularly welcome as many felt anxious as they emerged from a long Covid-19 enforced lockdown.

As well as learning about the history of Reading Abbey, the Young Ambassadors themselves learned new skills through their involvement in Abbey 900, including team work, engaging with the public and being confident enough to try new things out.

For some of the younger Young Ambassadors working with the Museum gave them their first experience of being in a professional environment and learning skills such as time keeping, listening and being responsible and respectful. This learning has been facilitated by staff at Reading Museum who remained open, flexible and encouraging throughout the project.

> *The Young Ambassadors are proud of what they've achieved. They've learned about Reading's history, but they also feel more ownership of the museum. Reading Museum has trusted them and given them confidence in their decisions, skills and abilities. It's given them a sense of pride that they can deliver a successful project.*
>
> Operations and Relationships Manager, No 5 Young People

Music in Ruins, summer 2021

Schools programme

A wide range of programming and resources for schools and teachers has been developed as part of the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project. These have included a number of 'one-off' activities to celebrate various stages in the restoration project, but others have been developed to embed in the on-going resources and programming for schools. These are outlined below.

New schools' programme

After the opening of the Abbey Gateway in July 2018, the learning team launched the new schools' programme in September to largely positive response. This comprised a new workshop 'Royals in Reading' specifically about the Reading Abbey story, and the Victorian Schoolroom sessions were relocated to the Abbey Gateway.

In 2018 the pilot 'Royals in Reading' schools workshops attracted 172 pupils (6 groups) from year 3 to year 7. In the feedback, teachers all commented that visiting the Abbey had enhanced the visit '*Definitely! 'Wow' they said as they entered.*' The workshops were slightly revised following teachers' suggestions such as including more background vocabulary, artefacts, images and information (for younger pupils). Four teachers really enjoyed the session and would recommend it. Pre-visit information was also sent out and one teacher commented '*Rhea was great. The info sent through prior to the visit was excellent.*' This has now become a feature of the schools' programme and an online virtual version is also available.

The decision to relocate the Victorian Schoolroom to the Abbey Gateway also had implications for the project team. As the move wasn't in the original plans, the staff had to adjust quickly to a change of location and, initially, some unexpected logistical issues.

> *There have been a series of small logistical challenges, like getting the children from the museum to the Gateway….session leaders are getting used to it.*
>
> Learning Officer

The Learning team planned the operations for the new Victorian School room, and it has quickly become a clear asset for the schools' offer. In the first school term alone they hosted 44 sessions there with 1,229 children (both key stage 1 and 2) and 192 adults. Despite the closure of the Schoolroom between March 2020 and September 2021 due to Covid restrictions, between Sept 2018 – October 2021 there were approx. 219 Victorian School room sessions for 6137 children and 803 adults.[4]

The space seems to add to the drama of activities. One volunteer noticed:

> *I've seen children leaving the Victorian school in the Abbey Gateway – they are buzzing about their experience and that is a big positive. Maybe we could get a kid's tour of the Abbey going too?*
>
> Volunteer

[4] Additionally 15 family sessions for 264 children and 80 adults have been held in the School room, which is also used for other activities such as tours, meetings and family events.

The new space and programme has been received very positively by teachers who had visited before and could compare the two locations.

> *It was a lovely location with plenty of space.*
>
> *More space enabled us to deal with nervous children or children with extra needs better.* The Disraeli School
>
> *More space to accommodate induction and classroom experience.*
>
> *Very effective space: windows, high ceiling room added to the experience.*
>
> *It made it more special going to a different location.*
>
> Comments from teachers

The Learning team have effectively addressed the initial logistical issues highlighted during the piloting stage by preparing risk assessments, offering pre-visits for teachers, producing a visual map and photographs of the Abbey Gateway that teachers can see in advance and running activities which engage pupils while they are waiting for the toilets.

> [There were] *no problems. Staff were always at hand to walk us between buildings. Road crossing handled well.*
>
> *Very Good. Escorted both times and very helpful* [staff].
>
> Comments from teachers

Making explicit links to local history has been important for teachers. The Learning team have been surprised that the outdoor session was booking so well in the autumn months (prior to lockdown). Most interest has been generated by teachers of key stage 2 and year 7.

In response to lockdown and the inevitable restrictions to onsite visits, the team have been required to adapt and make changes to their programmes to continue to engage schools.

> *There's been a massive amount of new learning that's happened in the last year – for ourselves as well as young people. We've started to offer online workshops for children and we've learned a lot about the process and how to do it, as well as how best to communicate with teachers.*
>
> Learning Officer

They have developed the programme and added virtual online sessions[5], including the Royals in Reading session[6]. 58 of these virtual workshops have been offered during the 2020-21 academic year, with 1,766 pupils participating.

Additionally, the 43 virtual Victorian Schoolroom sessions started in 2020 reached 1165 children and 59 adults. Teachers gave feedback about these Victorian Childhood virtual sessions:

[5] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/schools/virtual-sessions
[6] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/schools/local-history-royals-reading-abbey-virtual-session

A very informative session, delivered well and very willing to stop and answer the children's questions. The mini-films were great.

The boys loved the videos and have been full of all the facts they have learnt. It was great having a written activity as well.

Comments from teachers

Victorian school session in the Abbey Gateway

Take Over Days

Schools' activities such as the conservation workshops culminating in the Take Over Day with St John's School in 2017 were also successful pilots for getting schools involved in conservation on the site from an early stage in the project.

We had a workshop with the Master Mason at the Ruins, showing the children what we were doing and it was a beautiful experience for the children. It was the first encounter between a school and the conservation project, and very important and positive for us.

Learning Officer

This first Take Over Day involved 60 Year 6 children, who had been following the conservation project for six months, then reporting their findings in the form of a 'virtual tour' to a VIP group, including the Mayor of Reading, at a special event at the Museum[7].

The children were able to develop their higher-level research skills - gathering information from a range of sources.

Comment from teachers

[7] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/virtual-tour-takeover-day-2018

Following the success of the previous Take Over Day, the learning team followed the same model and worked with two different schools over a number of weeks to develop and test downloadable music resources which had been produced with a music education specialist. Costumed interpreters worked with the children on site visits to inspire and inform them. An INSET day with teachers also fed into this, and the new resources were available for the Take Over Day in November 2019. Both schools delivered a performance attended by an audience of 50 parents and museum guests. A blog of the event and social media posts were made to share the activity[8]. The pupils were awarded Discover Arts Awards as part of this project.

Dancers at Diwali in the Ruins

In 2020 Reading Museum worked closely with the MERL and three schools to organise schools' workshops to prepare pupils for a collaborative Diwali and Odissi Dance performance, which was planned to take place using the Abbey Ruins as the location for Take Over Day.

Each school was taught a different scene to tell the story of Diwali. This performance was re-located due to Covid-19 restrictions, nevertheless, the individual dance performances took place, were filmed and available online as part of the Reading Love Culture 2020. A separate performance by Kala the Arts in the Dormitory of the Abbey was also filmed. As in previous projects, the workshops were also supported by an INSET session to inform and prepare teachers.

> *Thank you for the lovely workshops* [led by Kala the Arts] *in September. The girls really loved learning this style of dance as we don't do much of it on the curriculum...it was also lovely to see the performance from Geoffrey Field, my class were very complimentary.*
>
> Comment from teachers

[8] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/sounds-reading-abbey-takeover-day-2019

The Project Manager noted that 't*his collaboration has been incredibly successful, showing the dedication of all involved to create a legacy of community and cultural collaboration'.*

INSET

Teacher INSETs have been offered throughout the duration of the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project, focussing on different topics as new materials or workshops became available, as well as other aspects of provision for schools. 204 people have attended thirteen INSET sessions and 17 teacher visits for 23 people during the project. INSET sessions also double up as an opportunity to consult teachers about their views on the proposed programmes and resources and are used to inform the heritage team.

For example, in 2018 three INSET sessions were held. The first focussed on the history of the Abbey Quarter and provided an opportunity to consult teachers about the kinds of resources and sessions that would support them in teaching the curriculum. This introductory INSET attracted fifteen teachers and three teachers who gave feedback described it as 'good' in regards to the content of the session.

Teachers made several suggestions on the topics of resources and sessions that could be developed to support *Reading Abbey Revealed* such as music through the ages e.g. medieval and modern including different instruments and composers, and also wide aspects of geography i.e. human, physical and economic. The 'Royals in Reading' school session INSET in May 2018 attracted four teachers, all of whom found the session overall, the content and the activities 'good' or 'excellent'.

Other INSET sessions in 2019 have included 'Music Inspired by Reading Abbey' and a literacy/creative writing INSET day attended by fifteen teachers. The teachers who attended also agreed to test out and feedback on new resources produced. One teacher offered their specialist help with music:

> *To look at the musical representation of your monk's rap as music notation; and rhythm patterns are needed to be taught properly and in the correct time - as the new music curriculum expectations are that the children do understand note values and time signatures especially in KS2. If you would like any help with this I am more than happy to look at it with you.*

Teachers also really valued the practical nature of the activities.

In 2020 a Diwali and Odissi Dance INSET session for fifteen teachers was held jointly with Kala the Arts and MERL. Downloadable Diwali resources were made available, drawing on the Museum's collections. Participants' comments included:

> *The session was a good pace and enabled us to try the dance moves with instructions. Having access to the supporting resources will be really useful and allow me to take the ideas back into the classroom.*
>
> *Thanks for a really fun and practical session. Learning about the Tabla tradition was fascinating. I found the dances difficult to keep up with, so hopefully the recording will break some of the movements down for the children. Resources look great, I am looking forward to using them to help me plan for next term.*

I found it enjoyable. It was really nice to learn from such knowledgeable people and I loved that it was interactive.

Really lovely to see a cross cultural celebration using the resources from the museums.

Comments from teachers

In 2021 an INSET session shared the 900th anniversary developments, online resources and the 'Royals in Reading' virtual sessions with teachers.

Other work with schools

A number of other initiatives during the project have provided opportunities to forge links with new audiences.

Science and history detectives and ArtLab

Prior to the Covid-19 restrictions, outreach into schools worked well, with 13 volunteer university students going into 10 schools to run 'Detective Box' workshops about the Abbey. The ArtLab project, run in collaboration with students from the University of Reading, also involved a training session for students to prepare them for their roles. The local connection and museum involvement was important:

Sited at the museum and the local area it enabled us to think about how others (session leader, teachers, peers) present activities and articulate ideas. It was particularly enjoyable to go into the working depths of the museum to the box room and handle the objects, thinking about their living context, and politics of conservation methods.

ArtLab student volunteer, University of Reading

This experience also raised the possibility for the Museum staff of having '*more conversation with students about their experience and ideas about sensory experiences, when teaching and learning with objects and collections*', to enable students to deepen their understanding.

Linked to this, boxes with resources including manuscripts, paints, minerals, architecture and building materials have been developed, including a mini-brick version of the Abbey.

Arts Awards

Six looked after children achieved Arts Awards in 2018. The sessions involved workshops based around the Abbey Ruins and working with digital technology to create animations and 3D maps. The RBC group organiser was initially apprehensive about the appropriateness of the session:

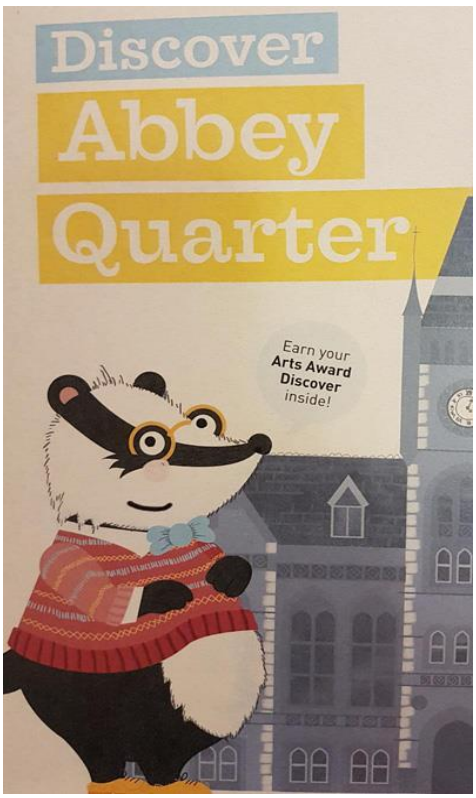
The project exceeded my expectations, I was apprehensive about the project being a bit too educational and feeling like they were on a school trip however this was not the case. The children had fun which was the main outcome and the learning became a by-product.

RBC group organiser

The group organiser also commented that the attitude of the staff helped to make the day and make the young people feel welcome.

This led to further involvement with other looked after children and a project to co-produce a book and achieve a Discover Arts Award (see section 4.1).

The Museum, Abbey Ruins and Abbey Quarter are part of the Arts Awards scheme and children can work towards an Arts Award using three Discover trails. For example, other Arts Awards work has taken place with local Year 6 pupils as part of transition activities as they move from primary to secondary schools.



Arts Award Discover trail for the Abbey Quarter

During the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project a total of 260 young people have been involved in Arts Awards.

Resources

A comprehensive range of four additional downloadable resources has been produced and is available on the Reading Museums website[9], including Creative Writing, Dance and Music resources. A wide range of pre- and post-visit resources have also been produced to support onsite and online versions of the 'Royals in Reading' workshop, ensuring the session is integrated into the curriculum.

Marketing

The learning team have access to the 'dotmailer' system and there is a dedicated teachers' mailing sign up list on the website.

[9] www.readingmuseum.org.uk/schools/information-for-teachers/teacher-resources

Other initiatives

Phoenix College and RISC also worked together over four sessions to build a medieval herb garden outside the Abbey Gateway. The garden was used to trial an informal learning session with the Young Archaeologists Club (YAC), working closely with the University of Reading.

Here the group leader felt that children were able to see the ruins and '*create a perfect picture of how the Abbey could have been'*. They also *'especially liked the hands on activity, creating the toothpaste from herbs'*.

Other subsequent activity with YAC has included ink making and manuscripts and stained glass window painting.

3.2 People will have developed skills

Staff training and learning

During the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project staff have been trained as required to fulfil aspects of the activities, including the Abbey Learning Officer who was trained to deliver and assess Arts Awards.

The Digi-Reading programme trained the museum team on how to use social media and how to promote the project through blogs and Facebook Live. Staff, volunteers and guest lecturers have contributed a range of popular blog posts.

Staff learnt new skills as part of the Covid-19 shift to more online delivery of the learning and events programme. The learning team were trained to use filming and recording equipment, editing techniques and editing software. This will enable them to update and refresh online resources on an on-going basis.

> *The positive impact of Covid is that the learning team have embraced blended learning*
>
> Learning Officer

Reading Abbey Revealed has also facilitated new partnerships and networks which Museum staff have learned from.

> *I think the project has provided a lot of people in the core team with opportunities to network. And as we all know, it's the networks that actually gradually provide the opportunities. Networking is a really important learning activity, as well as a way of developing support.*
>
> Marketing and Learning Officer

The core Museum staff have also benefited simply through having new people join their team.

> *I think it's great that whenever you have new people coming in, even on these relatively temporary roles like the interns, they bring new skills and experience with them. And we've had some great staff and interns. I've personally learned a lot from working with colleagues.*
>
> Museum Manager

Interns

Internships (or paid placements) have been a particularly successful part of the project. The six paid interns recruited as part of the Activity Plan have provided invaluable support - the archaeology intern, for example, undertook research and cataloguing which fed into the interpretation, and was nominated for a Robert Hogan Award, and the community engagement intern supported the initial Abbey on Wheels project.

The programme has also led interns into employment. The social media intern was later appointed as the Community Engagement Officer and the archaeology intern took a post at the Foreign Office. Staff members put this success down to careful recruitment and support of interns. The HR department, however, has had some difficulties understanding the role of paid placements and that the project was looking to recruit someone who could benefit from and grow in the role and who might be new to working in museums and heritage, rather someone with exactly matching experience and skills.

> *Everyone who has done an internship has gone on to employment. While they've been here, they've been doing real work so they can build their CV... The recruitment process was important too. We weren't looking for another member of staff; we were looking for someone who had the abilities but needed that step up and that support.*
>
> Museum Manager

The experience of using different recruitment criteria for the paid placements has led to a wider consideration of recruitment policies. As part of their new Access Policy and Plan, the example, the Museum is actively looking at how to widen access to all of their roles.

> *We've started to look at some new ways of working in terms of our recruitment process, not just internship type roles, but for our main roles. We are aware that there are quite often cases where someone may come from a diverse background or have a disability, and is excluded from the shortlisting because they haven't quite made it in terms of their skills and experience, but they may still be a very good candidate.*
>
> Marketing and Learning Officer

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* interns were very positive about their roles, their exposure to Reading's heritage and the skills they developed in a relatively short space of time:

> *This internship has given me invaluable experience working in a museum/heritage environment. My job role allowed me to develop existing skills in digital engagement where I felt I was a valued member of the team.*
>
> *I got to do things that I hadn't done before such as helping with the recruitment of volunteers. I enjoyed time in the galleries and have learnt a lot about the history of my hometown and feel a renewed sense of interest and pride in it.*
>
> *It developed my leadership skills and made me a better communicator. On*

two separate occasions, I supervised volunteers as they located, measured and photographed objects to assist with the project. My approach to this was much more communicative, organised and productive on the second occasion; the results were correspondingly better (the volunteers were more focused in their tasks, and we achieved everything I wanted to).

I developed my knowledge of archaeology. Now I know what 'beakhead voussoirs' and tegulae are! More practically, I have some understanding of excavation, reporting and deposition processes; of context numbers, special finds numbers and stratigraphy.

Feedback from *Reading Abbey Revealed* interns

The interns found the staff team very supportive and were also appreciative of being part of the wider project team:

My bosses were excellent. Angela and Stuart struck the perfect balance of allowing me to manage my time independently and being there to answer my questions when necessary. They focused on my personal and professional development, allocating me a wide range of tasks which would equip me with skills for my future career, and regularly giving me feedback on my work.

This has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience with wonderful supportive colleagues and the work had been rewarding and pushed me just enough out of my comfort zone to be challenging and stimulating. It was an amazing privilege to be a part of the Abbey re-opening and I will remember the buzz and excitement of the opening event for many years to come!

Feedback from *Reading Abbey Revealed* interns

The internship model was successful and two further interns were planned – one to work with the collections team and the other to support marketing for the Abbey 900 celebrations in 2021. However, Covid-19 prevented this from happening and the budget was redirected to extending the Learning Officer post instead.

3.3 People will have volunteered time

By the end of 2019 the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project had well exceeded its volunteer target, attracting more than double the projected number of volunteers. At the current time more than 175 volunteers are listed as active in the Museums Partnership Reading (between Reading Museum and the MERL).

In addition to supporting the programme through a wide range of roles - from tour guiding, research, costumed interpretation, working with schools to gardening, stewarding and sewing costumes - volunteers have provided fresh blood and new ideas.

The Volunteers' Co-ordinator reports there has been a small increase in the diversity of volunteers, particularly in terms of attracting men (particularly to tour guiding), but more could still be done in this area. The Co-ordinator also works with the MERL and is looking to create new roles which appeal to a wider range of volunteers[10]. A volunteer recruitment and platform has been introduced. Since the

[10] https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/4e1ce1b0-421b-491d-b698-5414273ac4ef/1

project started a number of new roles has been introduced – such as a heritage custodian - and other volunteers have been conducting research and writing posts for online platforms and exhibitions.

131 separate individuals have volunteered at least once with Abbey-related activities since the RAR project began. Since the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions began in March 2020, 56 people volunteered for nine Abbey-related activities on 118 occasions, donating 549 hours. Additionally volunteers have continued to develop their knowledge and skills during lockdowns, for example, in January and June 2021, 47 volunteers joined two volunteer-led Zoom talks about the Abbey; an additional engagement of 74 hours.

The current number of active volunteers remains at 40, and they will continue to sustain the following Abbey-related activities:

- Abbey Quarter tour guide and sweeper
- Museum on Wheels stall at community events
- Heritage Custodian
- Costumed Interpreter and Wardrobe Assistant
- Event steward/ shop stall/ runner
- Digital content

Throughout the project volunteers have reported high levels of satisfaction. The entire volunteer team was awarded a certificate of appreciation at the Reading Volunteer Awards in June 2018, and the MPR has gained Investors in Volunteers status.

During the annual volunteer survey in 2018, 20 volunteers responded. Six had worked specifically as tour guides, six on Reading Abbey events and three on the Abbey interpretation. Other roles include family events, visitor welcome and donations, sewing and research and collections work. Thirteen of these volunteers had been recruited less than two years ago and four had volunteered for over four years. When asked about their motivations for volunteering, 11 wanted to gain new skills, nine volunteers wanted to share their skills, seven to improve their CV, six to socialise and 14 wanted to 'help a cause you love'.

When asked what they enjoy most about volunteering, volunteers were keen to learn new skills, to find out more about Reading's history and to be involved with the wider team:

> *Gaining experience of working within a museum setting and being able to contribute to the success of the public programme for the RAR Project.*
>
> *Researching different aspects connected with the Abbey project and taking tours in the Abbey Quarter, working with staff and volunteers.*
>
> *Developing the skills needed to be a good tour guide, learning about Reading's history and being part of a dedicated and enthusiastic team.*
>
> Volunteers

When asked about what was least enjoyable, assorted comments were made, including the cold in the archaeology store and the 'clanky computer which wastes a lot of time'. For tour guide volunteers, the occasional lack of visitors was a factor. When asked for improvements, volunteers suggested that it would be useful to be kept up to date with changes in the museum so that they can inform visitors.

In the 2021 Museums Partnership Reading annual volunteer survey, 33 of the volunteers who responded had been involved with *Reading Abbey Revealed*, fulfilling a wider range of roles than the survey in 2018, including new roles developed through the project. Nine were Abbey Quarter tour guides or sweepers; seven in the sewing group; five supported events; four each of costumed interpreter, heritage custodian and outreach with Abbey or Museum on wheels; one each of community engagement volunteer, wardrobe assistant, research and gardening[11]. Four volunteers had been involved less that 12 months; seven between 2-3 years; six between 3-4 years, five between 5-10 years and one 10-15 years. Volunteers were recruited through a range of routes such as adverts on Reading Museum and MERL websites, Twitter, through Reading Voluntary Action, word of mouth, University of Reading careers event, or through events or during visits to the museum.

Volunteers selected from a range of suggested motivations for volunteering: interest in the subject/project, 22 people; giving back something to the community (e.g. applying existing skills; working with children), 12 people; socialising/ making new friends, 8 people; finding a hobby on retirement, 8 people; to do something completely different, 7 people; love working in this field, 7 people; gaining new skills, 6 people; gaining confidence, 3 people; work experience/placement/DoE, 1 person.

These responses were mirrored in the volunteer focus group discussion, where volunteers also said wanted to give something to society, wanted to be sociable, to carry on learning and, for those after retirement, be engaged and active:

> *I got into volunteering here by accident – when I retired I missed work and looked to volunteer locally and the museum were the only people that came back to me. The social aspect of volunteering became important too and I became more and more interested in the history… I wanted to know more… I'm an avid junkie for information. It also allows me to give something back as I've had rather a charmed life – so volunteering fulfils a lot of things for me.*
>
> *I come from a science background but have always been interested in history – particularly the Abbey history and Reading. I also like presenting – I have a background in working with students, so I am quite used to it, and thirdly I like to give back something – I have really benefitted in my life so want to give to others.*
>
> Volunteers

Additional questions were added to the annual survey particularly to explore wellbeing. Volunteers were given a range of statements to respond to:

[11] The responses will not all add up to 33 - some questions allowed multiple responses and some volunteers did not respond to all questions.

- GIVE: 31 people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I feel that my volunteering with Museums Partnership Reading makes a worthwhile contribution to society

- KEEP LEARNING: 29 people agreed or strongly agred with the statement: I have learned new things through volunteering

- CONNECTION: 28 people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I enjoy meeting other/ new people when volunteering

- TAKE NOTICE: 9 people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I enjoy engaging with local heritage when I volunteer with Museums Partnership Reading

- BE ACTIVE: 10 people agreed or strongly agreed, but 6 disagreed with the statement: I have increased the amount physical activity I do through volunteering[12]

The importance of wellbeing and staying connected during lockdown has been an important aspect for volunteers. The Volunteer Co-ordinator and other staff have arranged online sessions and kept the team engaged through active work, such as costume making, or research.

> *The sewing volunteers have been working on an Oscar Wilde panel during lockdown, using the Oh Beautiful World artwork[13] as inspiration. The ladies have all commented that the virtual catch ups and the planning of this panel have been a real lifeline in the pandemic as many of them were isolated.*
>
> Learning Officer

When asked about any new skills that they had developed, 21 volunteers added a comment which included research skills; presentation and communication skills – such as engaging with different audiences and conveying information; deepening understanding of Reading's heritage; better understanding of how a museum works; team working; identifying plants; and sewing techniques and historical costumes. Other comments included:

> *Learning about the costumes in collections. Making different costumes.*
>
> *Learning embroidery stitches. Helping to make display panels.*
>
> *Communication skills have improved and the understanding of the ins and outs of working in a museum.*
>
> *Skills related to engaging with the public; learning and listening skills; learning new information quickly and utilising that information.*
>
> *Working as part of a team, meeting and greeting visitors when assisting costumed interpreter.*

[12] This is the only place that anyone disagreed. This coincides with lockdown restrictions due to Covid-19. Consequently, this will be an important area to monitor as opportunities for more on-site and outdoor volunteering increase in the coming months.
[13] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/online-exhibitions/oh-beautiful-world

Greater appreciation of the history of Reading.

Volunteers

Volunteers have received a variety of training throughout the duration of the project, including tour guiding, costumed interpretation, presentation skills, evaluation, and supervising interns, alongside updates and information sharing on the project. In addition to more structured training, volunteers have been shadowing each other or working together.

> *I am yet to carry out any surveys during my time in both museums as a welcome visitor volunteer, but shadowing other volunteers has been incredibly helpful and has certainly shown me the basics.*
>
> Volunteer

The survey asked about any training gaps. Four volunteers made suggestions; two proposed first aid, other suggestions were health and safety training in the Museum and Abbey Quarter; visitor surveys and inputting volunteer hours. One volunteer also suggested that volunteers could have better branded clothing.

Volunteers in the focus groups were also keen to continue their roles and learn more about the history of Reading.

Tour guides have a 'sweeper' or assistant to support them during sessions. This peer support has added to volunteers understanding of the historic content and the tour format, and 'sweepers' often also wish to conduct tours:

> *I am a sheepdog for Abbey Tours [*laughs*]- trying to learn enough so I can become an actual tour guide!*
>
> Volunteer

The costumed interpretation team has been a highlight for many people. The volunteers animate the Abbey Ruins site and also engage and inform visitors. They have taken part in sessions with schools and young people as well as during special events such as Water Fest. The care with recruitment, training, their costumes and the roles the volunteers portray gives the volunteers great pride and pleasure:

> *I'm still amazed by the quality of the training and the effort that went into it. I had to apply as if for a job, had an interview, two auditions. My costume was made for me and I had 14 (!) different parts of my body measured to get it correct to fit me. We had a day's training with the leading providers of heritage interpretation in the country.*
>
> Volunteer

Volunteer costumed interpreters

The roles continue to develop and volunteers carry on deepening their own knowledge of their characters. They also find that visitors respond very positively. Several characters are 'down to earth' such as a medieval laundry-woman.

> *One thing that is lovely is when visitors can relate to what you are saying - not modern high-tech stuff - they can relate to their own experience (with washing)…and make links between then and now… and what happens in other parts of the world*
>
> Volunteer

Volunteers enjoy meeting visitors and engaging them in different ways.

> *For me I've always been fascinated, almost addicted, by history and also really enjoy breaking down complex pieces of history and interpreting them so people can understand what was going on. People might have heard the term 'dissolution' but not understand what it means in practice.*
>
> Volunteer

However, the volunteers also learn from visitors, and many enjoy that interaction and have time to listen to visitors '*in a way that staff don't have time to*'. They recounted stories from visitors that had added to their own understanding:

> *We had one tour from a care home - and an amazing lady who remembered the bomb going off outside the museum (which we knew about) but what we didn't know is there was a hat shop nearby and she told us that there were hats spread everywhere.*
>
> *On one Abbey Gateway tour we had a big group with several children…they were from a church and they told us that the Gateway had been used as their church years before - some of the young adults had been baptised*

there and were showing their own children. They said they often had to clear up after Saturday night discos held there before the service.

The Museums Partnership Reading with the MERL to recruit, manage and train volunteers appears to be working well. Feedback from volunteers has been positive so far, and during closure periods and lockdowns, online activities were encouraged. Volunteers can sign up for sessions and check the planner, and the system automatically records their volunteering hours. This seems to be well received by some volunteers:

> *There is an app where you can sign up for slots to volunteer and can see your timetable and what works for you and know what's happening in advance.*
>
> *That has been very useful and made a big difference and it records the time you do – so you don't have to add that in yourself.*
>
> Volunteers

A folder with information about the Reading Museum and Abbey Ruins and volunteering opportunities is made available at the weekly citizenship ceremonies.

Volunteers made a number of suggestions for consideration:

- Winter research projects for volunteers to provide content for resources, exhibitions or to generate content behind QR codes.
- Dressing up opportunities for children e.g. to support the costumed interpreters to stop people stealing the washing when the laundress is working.
- A children's Abbey tour linked with the schools workshop on site.
- Volunteer only special tours for peer learning opportunities and personal development.
- Wider information about the museums and events programmes to enable volunteers to inform visitors.
- On St James's day in July undertake a pilgrimage to St Anne's shrine in Caversham, and develop other links with the Pilgrimage Trust.
- Take part in films for the website and schools programme.

4. Outcomes for communities

4.1 More and a wider range of people will be involved with heritage

Engagement numbers

Throughout the period of the project, a total of 350,429 people have been engaged with *Reading Abbey Revealed* related activities.

Table 2: Visitor figures, July 2016 – October 2021

Large-scale events in the Abbey Quarter (e.g. the re-opening festival, In Ruins performances, Abbey 900)	45,320
Formal learning (e.g. schools sessions, teachers INSET/CPD, Take Over Days etc.)	3,040
Informal learning (talks, tours, adult workshops, family activities)	4,327
Abbey on Wheels / Museum outreach	20,698
Visits to *The Story of Reading* exhibition[14]	206,033
Online visits to Abbey Quarter website	70,880
Volunteers supporting the Activity Plan	131
Total	**350,429**

The project has also had a wide reach on online and on social media:

- The *Reading Abbey Revealed* Facebook page has grown from 793 followers in September 2016 to 1,719 in September 2021.
- The Twitter feed has grown from 419 followers in September 2016 to 2,681 in September 2021.

These numbers do not reflect informal engagement with Abbey Ruins – people who casually read the interpretation panels as they walk around the Abbey Quarter or residents wandering though the Ruins on a lunch break.

However, RBC has been collecting monthly estimates of footfall in the Abbey Quarter based on mobile phone data. As can be seen in table 3 below, these suggest that an average of 548,333 people walked through the Abbey Quarter each month in 2020, rising to 687,700 in 2021.

[14] Based on visitors to Reading Museum from February 2018 when *The Story of Reading* exhibition opened

Table 3: Abbey Quarter monthly footfall, January 2020 – October 2021

Abbey Quarter monthly footfall	2020	2021	% increase from 2020 to 2021
January	1,203,000	261,000	-78.30%
February	1,092,000	339,000	-68.96%
March	676,000	538,000	-20.41%
April	122,000	612,000	401.64%[15]
May	176,000	729,000	314.20%
June	214,000	667,000	211.68%
July	384,000	789,000	105.47%
August	515,000	866,000	68.16%
Sept	625,000	939,000	50.24%
October	650,000	1,137,000	74.92%
November	424,000	977,000	130.42%
December	499,000		
Total	**6,580,000**	**6,877,000**	

Visitor demographics

Evaluation data collected throughout the project provides a snapshot of who has been engaging with *Reading Abbey Revealed*. The data shows that activities such as booked talks and tours[16] are most likely to appeal to audiences who are female, over 56 and White British. Large-scale events such as Abbey 900 attract a wider audience, with people from more diverse ethnic backgrounds and younger age groups attending.

It is important to note too that these numbers do not include outreach work such as Abbey on Wheels, the storytelling project with Brighter Futures for Children or the Youth Panel (all covered later in this chapter) which specifically target under-represented audiences.

The following tables summarise the key demographic data from evaluation collected during the project.

[15] Start of Covid lockdown in 2020

[16] Based on feedback forms from the conservation tours, Heritage Open Days, talks programme and evaluation postcards collected at tours, Museum and Abbey Quarter visits.

Table 4: Gender of visitors (percentage and absolute number)

	Conservation tours	Accessible talks	Heritage Open Days	Tours and visitors to the Ruins	Abbey 900
Female	47.3% (52)	78.2% (93)	55.4% (31)	59.7% (71)	73.5% (50)
Male	32.7% (36)	20.2% (24)	44.6% (25)	39.5% (47)	25.0% (17)
No reply	20.0% (22)	1.7% (2)	0.0% (0%)	0.8% (1)	1.5% (1)

Base: Conservation tours – 110; Accessible talks - 119; Heritage Open Days – 56; Evaluation postcards- 111; Reading 900 - 68

Table 5: Age profile of visitors (percentage and absolute number)

	Conservation tours	Accessible talks	Heritage Open Days	Tours and visitors to the Ruins *	Abbey 900
16 – 25	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (2)
26 – 35	9.1% (10)	1.7% (2)	1.8% (1)	5.4% (6)	2.9% (2)
36 – 45	11.8% (13)	2.5% (3)	8.9% (5)	14.3% (17)	22.1% (15)
46 – 55	20.0% (22)	9.2% (11)	14.3% (8)	24.4% (29)	25.0% (17)
56 – 65	21.8% (24)	27.7% (33)	39.3% (22)	26.9% (32)	27.9% (19)
66+	17.3% (19)	57.1% (68)	32.1% (18)	28.6% (34)	19.1% (13)
No reply	19.0% (21)	1.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)

Base: Conservation tours – 110; Accessible talks - 119; Heritage Open Days – 56; Evaluation postcards- 119; Reading 900 - 68
* The age bands vary slightly in the evaluation postcards e.g. 26- 24, 25 – 34, 35 – 44, 45 - 54, 55 – 64, 65 – 74, 75+

Table 6: Ethnicity of visitors (percentage and absolute number)

	Conservation tours	Accessible talks	Heritage Open Days	Tours and visitors to the Ruins	Abbey 900
White British	73.6% (81)	94.1% (112)	80.4% (45)	83.1% (99)	61.8% (42)
White Irish	1.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	5.4% (3)	4.2% (5)	0.0% (0)
White Other	3.6% (4)	2.5% (3)	7.1% (4)	6.7% (8)	10.3% (7)
Mixed	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.5% (1)
Black or Back British	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.7% (10)
Asian or Asian British	1.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	7.4% (5)
Chinese	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)
No Reply	18.2% (20)	3.4% (4)	1.8% (1)	5.0% (6)	4.4% (3)

Base: Conservation tours – 110; Accessible talks - 119; Heritage Open Days – 56; Evaluation postcards- 119; Reading 900 - 68

Although these demographics do not necessarily reflect the wider range of audiences which have engaged with the project through the schools programme and outreach work, museum staff are conscious that there is still more work to do in reaching a wider audience.

The success of outreach work like Abbey on Wheels was hindered by the Covid-19 outbreak, but feedback from public events like the re-opening festival and Abbey

900 suggest that the Abbey Ruins and wider Abbey Quarter are much more welcoming and accessible to non-traditional heritage audiences.

> *Making sure that we reach hard to reach audiences is still an area of challenge for us, but I do think that it's changing. The Abbey Quarter is a less threatening environment for people. It's easier to invite families and people from different parts of Reading into the Abbey area, rather than into the museum, because they feel less intimidated it.*
>
> Marketing and Learning Officer

The Museum team have been undertaking extensive work researching and updating their Access Policy and Plan so that it focuses more on intellectual access and understanding and addressing the barriers that different audiences experience. A number of other projects that have taken place through the grant period, for example programming around Windrush Day with partners such as Barbados Museum and Historical Society, Reading's Caribbean Association Group and the Alliance for Racial Cohesion and Equality, have informed the new policy and approaches.

Volunteer demographics

The Reading Abbey Revealed volunteers are part of the wider team of Museums Partnership Reading (MPR). In an annual review of the MRP volunteers 111 individuals were included. 75 identified as female including trans women; 32 male including trans men; 2 non-binary (e.g. androgyne; 1 person preferred not to say and 1 was unknown).

Eight volunteers were 19 years old or below; 21 were 20-34 years old; 10 were 35-49; 22 were 50-64 years old; 48 were 65-74 years old and 2 preferred not to say.

86 identified as White British; 2 as White Irish; 4 as any other White; 2 as Indian; 1 as Chinese; 1 as other mixed ethnicity; 1 any other ethnicity and 4 people preferred not to say.

Website and social media

Reading Abbey Revealed has had a significant impact online and on social media.

A website dedicated to the Abbey Quarter[17] was launched in November 2018. It includes information about the history of the Ruins, an interactive map of the Abbey Quarter, event and 'what's on' listings, visitor information and details about school sessions. Since November 2018, the website has been visited 70,880 times, with the pages being viewed on 176,679 different occasions. Website statistics show that 9.6% of page views are of the 'what's on' page; 8.8% the 'visit' page; and 7.8% of the history of the Abbey Quarter page.

On Twitter, Reading Abbey has 2,681 followers. Since November 2018, Reading Abbey Quarter tweets have been seen just over half a million times (534,012 impressions). This increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, with tweets being seen 350,824 times (65% of the total impressions since November 2018) as the museum used social media to share the Abbey with audiences during the lockdown.

[17] www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk

Reading Abbey also enjoyed some high profile shares from other organisations through the Reading Museum Twitter account, with several threads receiving hundreds of likes[18]. An online exhibition on the Reading Museum website *'From Music to Magic: Reading Abbey's most famous manuscript'* received particular support across social media and was shared by the British Library to their social feeds.

On Facebook, Reading Abbey Quarter has 1,719 followers and since November 2018, posts have reached an audience of 33,188 people. Facebook's analytics show that the Abbey is reaching a wide audience from around the region – whilst 48.7% of users are in Reading, many more are in the surrounding area (2.7% Wokingham; 2.6% Tilehurst; 2.3% Woodley; 2.2% London; 1.9% Earley; 1.5% Newbury).

Since March 2020, Facebook posts have reached 27,165 people (81.9% of the total), again, showing the success the project has had in sustaining audience engagement over the final years of the project.

Abbey on Wheels

The Abbey on Wheels[19], a portable pop up display about the Abbey Quarter's history and the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project, was a real highlight of the project, reaching new audiences and getting people excited about the Ruins in the lead up to their re-opening. Because it was so successful in engaging non-visitors with Ruins, the Museum subsequently extended and is still continuing the programme as Museum on Wheels[20].

The original Abbey on Wheels display included object handling based on loan boxes, virtual reality headsets showing 360 degree photographs taken during the conservation and a tile decorating activity, with images of real Abbey tiles printed out as inspiration. Leaflets about the medieval history of geographical areas of Reading were produced instead of the fixed panels suggested by the Activity Plan as these were easier to transport and more accessible to visitors to read at busy community venues.

In the lead up to the re-opening of the Ruins, Abbey on Wheels toured 8 community venues and 11 community festivals, including Forbury Fiesta, South Reading Churches Fun Day, East Reading Festival, Central Library Rhymetime and Whitley Wood Over 50s Social Club over the past two years. A total of 16,938 people engaged with Abbey on Wheels through 2017/18.

[18] https://twitter.com/readingmuseum/status/1405879377863315460
https://twitter.com/britishlibrary/status/1407389969606397955
https://twitter.com/readingmuseum/status/1404740232076009472
[19] www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/rolling-around-reading-abbey-on-wheels
[20] www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/museum-on-wheels-year-on-road

Tiles created by Abbey on Wheels participants in 2018

Evaluation which took place throughout the project in 2017/18 showed that 98% of respondents to the survey had an enjoyable experience, with 88% saying they had a very enjoyable experience. People said they had learnt something interesting about heritage during their time with Abbey on Wheels. A visual recording exercise using comment cards and sticky fabric recorded feedback to the question 'have you learnt anything interesting today?' Comments included:

> *People think Reading is just shopping and stuff. It's amazing!*
>
> *Have lived in Reading all my life and only just found out that Queen Elizabeth the 1st had a place behind the Abbey Gate.*
>
> *Never realised how big the Abbey was in its day!*
>
> *Charlotte loved decorating her tile and is looking forward to visiting the Abbey Ruins soon.*
>
> Comments from Abbey on Wheels visitors

The Abbey Ruins Virtual Reality (VR) experience was initially trialled as part of #DigiRDG – a collaborative project between Reading Museum and the MERL. It was particularly successful in engaging with a wide range of people, especially teenagers and young people, who might otherwise have thought the Ruins were not for them. For people who didn't have the ability to travel to the Abbey Ruins it was also invaluable as they felt included.

> *I found it really nice just talking to different people. There were the usual people, but then you'd get a whole gang of teenage boys who would see the VR and go 'what's that? that's really cool'. There is no way that I'd be having a conversation about Reading Abbey with these kids without the technology.*
>
> Museum Manager

At a 2018 trip to the weekly Age UK coffee morning for older and vulnerable adults for example, volunteers gave a talk about the history of the Abbey, facilitated object handing and using the virtual reality headsets, encouraged reminiscing about visiting the Ruins before they closed. The visit was so popular with Age UK users and so easy to organise, that the Museum on Wheels returned in 2019 for a second visit.

> *Everyone loved hearing about the history of the Ruins, but the virtual reality was particularly popular. We all loved being able to see the Ruins and to see the views. Hearing about the Abbey Ruins encouraged lots of nostalgia and reminiscing about visiting when people were younger.*
>
> Pop-in Coordinator, Age UK Reading

A team of eight volunteers supported Abbey on Wheels over summer 2018, with volunteer hours totalling 84. Figures for 2017 totalled 30. Abbey on Wheels also enabled Museum staff to get more involved in community outreach, with many Museum staff involved in supporting the project.

The evaluation report by Community Engagement Intern Alison Afzal noted the key successes of Abbey on Wheels during its first phase:

> *The most successful aspect of the Abbey on Wheels project was that it allowed Museum staff and volunteers to go out to communities and speak to local residents about the Abbey Quarter project and the history of Reading. It broke down the barriers that may stop residents from travelling into town and visiting the museum to find out this information in the traditional way (e.g. cost, health and mobility etc.).*
>
> *The Abbey being closed for nearly 10 years meant that people were not allowed to access the site. Talking to long term Reading residents, the Abbey had almost slipped from memory hidden away behind office blocks. Some more recent Reading residents, including many children had no idea it even existed. It also allowed community groups who don't have the funds to be a part of the loan box scheme to have an object handling session at their community groups/venues. It provided a free activity taking the pressure off their volunteers and funds. It was a really good way of promoting events and encouraging new and repeat visits to the museum and Abbey Quarter.*
>
> *Reading Abbey Revealed* intern

Abbey on Wheels was so successful in engaging people outside of the Museum walls that it expanded as part of the MPR in 2019 to become Museum on Wheels and to include new local history subjects such as Huntley and Palmers, Reading at War and Insects. With additional funding from the Earley Charity, Museum on Wheels visited another 16 venues in 2019, reaching 6,403 people.

Museum on Wheels was put on hold during the 2020 Covid-19 restrictions, but is now starting to attend local events again such as Abbey 900, Forbury Fiesta and Waterway Wellbeing Day. Once again, appearing at events like these reminded Reading residents that, post Covid-19 lockdowns, the Museum and Abbey are here and open to them.

A particular success of Museum on Wheels is that in addition to bringing the Abbey Ruins and the museum collections to people who might not usually visit, it has

strengthened the museum's relationships with local community organisations such as Age UK, the Indian Community Centre, the Globe Luncheon Club and PACT (Parents and Children Together) – all of whom work with people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and/ or have low incomes. This is further helping the Museum to improve access to under-represented audiences and has fed into the new Access Policy and Plan.

Museum on Wheels is now largely supported by volunteers (who are all trained in how to deliver object handling, craft activities and VR headset demos), but still needs staff to co-ordinate and manage the sessions. This has proved challenging at times and Museum on Wheels can be difficult to deliver within the limited resources of the Museum learning team.

However, the programme has worked so well as an outreach tool that the Museum want to obtain funding for it as a permanent strand of their National Portfolio partnership with the MERL.

> *We still recognise there we have to go out to people. It isn't all about coming to us, we still need that outreach. Taking Museum on Wheels out to different locations, to different community groups is important and we want to continue that.*
>
> Museum Manager

The success of Museum on Wheels is also illustrated in two museum blog posts about the programme.[21]

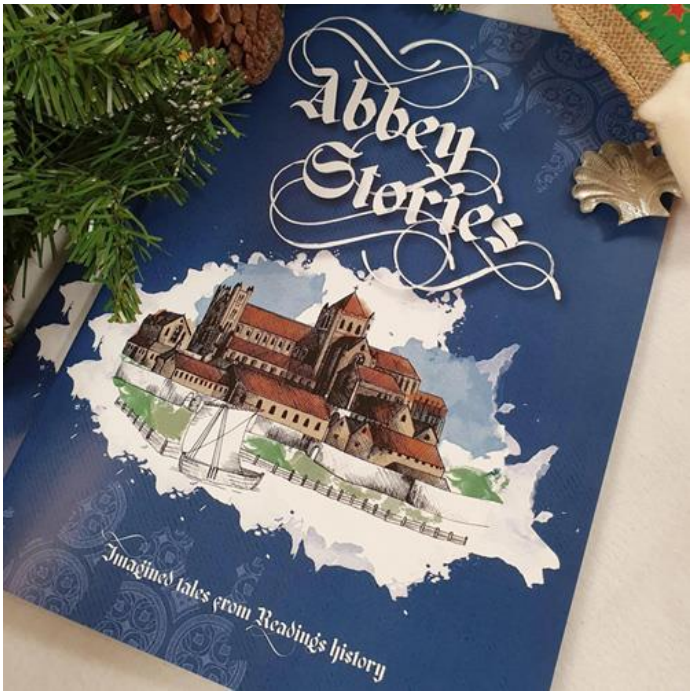
Working with looked after children - Stories of Reading Abbey

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* team partnered with local children's services organisation, Brighter Futures for Children, on a creative writing project to produce a children's book about Reading Abbey in May 2019.

A group of 10 looked after children, aged 6 -12 years old, were invited to spend a day visiting the Abbey, meeting volunteer costumed characters, learning about its history and devising their own characters and stories about the people who might have lived there. Local storyteller, Cath Edwards, then drew from the children's work to create four imagined stories from Reading's history.

The illustrated stories were published as *Abbey Stories* in December 2019 and are for sale in Reading Museum's shop. The children were presented with a copy of the book and a Discover Arts Award at a celebration event attended by the Lead Councillor for Children's Services.

[21] www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/rolling-around-reading-abbey-on-wheels
www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/museum-on-wheels-year-on-road



Abbey Stories, written by Cath Edwards with local children

The Participation Officer from Brighter Futures for Children admits she was sceptical about the project at first, but '*the children loved it, they were 100% engaged*'. The museum team put a lot of effort into making the children feel welcome and bringing the Abbey alive. The workshop was held in the school holidays and importantly, '*did not feel like 'learning''*.

An important outcome of the project for Brighter Futures for Children was that is created a safe space for children in care to come together, to learn about where they live and to generate happy memories. This is particularly important for looked after children who may not have had many opportunities to create positive childhood memories to look back on.

> *Spending time together was very special for the children. It allowed them to be themselves and to have a lovely, memorable day. And they have a high quality book as a permanent reminder of their visit. The children were so proud of Abbey Stories - and their carers too.*
>
> Participation Officer, Brighter Futures for Children

One volunteer costumed interpreter commented about the project:

> *One session I did was Matilda the Empress – it was a special session with looked after children. That was really worthwhile engaging with the children. They asked us questions, completed their work-books and when the whole thing was finished they were presented with a book. I thought that was brilliant whoever thought of that.*
>
> Volunteer

Working with young people – the Youth Panel

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* project team set up a Youth Panel in 2018 to engage young people in activities, programmes and projects at the Abbey Ruins and to involve them in decision making.

The panel initially attracted interest from university students rather than secondary school students and wasn't as successful as hoped. However, the team learnt from this experience, particularly young people's motivations and attendance patterns, and relaunched the panel in June 2020 in partnership with the MERL specifically aiming at 14 – 19 year olds. Working with partners like No. 5 Young People and local schools the panel is now reaching an average of five to ten members each month.

Museum staff learned that many young people are motivated by gaining practical work experience for their CV. They wanted to learn marketing and digital skills linked to heritage and to participate in activities that would give them skills and confidence to apply for university and jobs. As a result of this, the Museum created opportunities for the panel to contribute to events and exhibitions such as Abbey 900, the Festival 50 exhibition and Virtual Takeover Day where they posted facts, information and images about Reading history.

Feedback from the Youth Panel illustrates how successful the relaunched panel has been, with members reporting learning new skills, increased confidence and connection to their local community.

> *For me, the Youth Panel was an opportunity to gain some much needed confidence by surrounding myself with new people who also shared the same love for history. After a few meetings and sharing ideas with one another, I could already feel myself growing more assured and more willing to give my thoughts. The Youth Panel is a safe place to give opinions and be listened to. The 900th anniversary of Reading Abbey provided the chance to learn about integral parts of the history of Reading that are not talked about as often as they should be. That is the wonderful thing about the Youth Panel, I am finding out things about where I live that I did not know anything about!*
>
> *The museum Youth Panel, for me, has been a great way to develop my skills while getting involved with the local community and learning more about Reading's history, which is absolutely fascinating. My favourite thing which I have had the opportunity to do as part of the Youth Panel is to help in the Museum on Wheels at the Abbey 900 celebration, in which we told visitors about the history of Reading Abbey and were able to see all the different stalls as we took photos for social media. Through the Youth Panel I have developed skills in working collaboratively, social media (doing the takeover is a great example of this) and communication.*
>
> Youth Panel members

An unexpected impact of the Covid-19 restrictions is that the Youth Panel has flourished through using online technology. The Abbey Learning Officer notes that this has made it easier for young people to participate:

> *We learned a great deal in timing and the use of online conferencing options. It's been an easy way for many people to have access to our*

meetings, consultations and sessions which can sometimes be impeded by travel… As a way to overcome the initial worry about coming to a new place and meeting new people for the first time I think that online formats can certainly help ease social anxiety in young people which we can certainly use in the future.

Abbey Learning Officer

Based on the success of the past 18 months, the Museum plans to continue to offer a blended approach of online and face-to-face meetings with the Youth Panel and to develop activities and programmes that support their needs with heritage and their future careers.

4.2 Your organisation will be more resilient

Partnerships

The Museum has worked in partnership with the University of Reading throughout *Reading Abbey Revealed*. Starting off with research support for the new interpretation in the Museum and Abbey Ruins, the partnership has since grown stronger through joint activities such as talks, exhibitions and schools work. Most recently, the Museum worked with Professor Anne Lawrence-Mathers, Professor of Medieval History at the University, on an online exhibition about the medieval song 'Sumer is icumen in', which was discovered in a manuscript from Reading Abbey.[22]

The University of Reading and Reading Museum also successfully applied for funding for a PhD studentship on the history of the Abbey to start in 2021. Titled *Reading Abbey: Connecting Archaeology, Heritage Management and Placemaking*, the PhD is jointly supervised by Reading Museum, Berkshire Archaeology and the University of Reading's archaeology department. It will explore the archaeological history of the Abbey and how it can be used to improve the interpretation and management of the site. The PhD illustrates both the strength of the partnership with the University and how *Reading Abbey Revealed* has kick started a new round of interest and research into the history of the Abbey.

The shared volunteer team between the MERL and Reading Museum is an invaluable resource with over 175 volunteers currently registered. This provides opportunities for joint timetabling and sharing resources and training events. Volunteers can also access opportunities to work between locations – enabling them to widen their understanding of Reading's heritage and to share their skills.

Increased financial resilience

The conservation and re-opening of the Abbey Ruins though *Reading Abbey Revealed* has also contributed to greater financial resilience. The Abbey Ruins are available for commercial and private hire – bringing in much-needed additional revenue to cover their ongoing maintenance and sustainability. Commercial events in the Forbury Gardens and Ruins have included a Twilight Trail (2020), performances by Rabble Theatre and Progress Theatre (2019 and 2021), Summer Cinema Screen, Blue Collar food Festival, Down at Abbey Festival (2019 and 2021) and the Children's Festival (2019 and 2021).

[22] https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/explore/online-exhibitions/reading-abbey-most-famous-manuscript

As part of a grant from the Cultural Recovery Fund, Reading Borough Council has commissioned a Business and Marketing Plan for the Abbey Quarter. This will explore how the area can be better marketed and used to generate income to cover its upkeep. This will help to make the Ruins as sustainable as possible over the long term.

A new Abbey Quarter Business Improvement District was established in 2019 which also brings investment into the Quarter.

4.3 The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit

A raised profile for heritage

Another success of the project has been the establishment of the 'Abbey Quarter' area and its growing profile with local people, organisations and businesses. The re-opened Abbey Ruins, well-branded interpretation and signage and vibrant onsite activity programme have firmly placed the Abbey Quarter on the cultural map of Reading.

With this, there has been a wider recognition that heritage can be a successful economic driver for Reading. The new Abbey Quarter Business Improvement District (BID), for example, was established and the Abbey Quarter and its heritage is now included in Reading Borough Council's local plan. The museum also partnered with Network Rail in 2020 to promote the 180th anniversary of Reading Station with a series of interpretative 'Welcome to the Abbey Quarter' panels further raising the heritage profile of the area.

> *There was no such thing as the Abbey Quarter before this project, but now people call it that naturally. There is a Business Improvement District for the Abbey Quarter; it's referred to by the press as the Abbey Quarter. It's got this excitement now. Before no one had made that connection that the area was anything more than the Ruins, but now it's bringing together that entire amazing heritage in one package.*
>
> Museum Manager

In collaboration with Reading UK CIC, the Reading Tourism Group is also now promoting the Abbey Quarter as a key part of their destination offer. The Abbey Quarter is an Ambassador of the 'Great West Way' initiative, a new 125-mile touring route between London and Bristol[23]. These will both raise the profile of Reading Museum and Abbey Ruins further and encourage even more partnership working between regional venues.

Reading Gaol's future as a cultural site has been enhanced by the success of the Abbey Ruins project. The Museum has supported Theatre & Arts Reading and RBC in their bid to open the Gaol as an arts hub to protect and share the heritage, and Reading Borough Council considers the Gaol site as part of the wider cultural plans for the Abbey Quarter.

The success of the Abbey Ruins project has been recognised through various awards, including:

[23] www.greatwestway.co.uk

- Royal Town Planning Institute 2018 South East Award for Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture (where the judges said they were particularly impressed by the extent that Reading's heritage is seen as a catalyst for positive change and that the Abbey Quarter is at the heart of the town's cultural renaissance)

- Shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Chartered surveyors Awards South East 2019 in the 'Building Conservation' category

- Two awards at Reading Cultural Awards 2019 – for 'Celebrating Reading's heritage' and 'Partnership in the Arts' categories

- Highly Commended at the 2020 Civic Trust AABC Conservation Awards

- Won the Planning Awards 2020 for the 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking'.

- Green Flag Awards for Forbury and Abbey Ruins October 2021. Both received special heritage awards.

Support and increased profile within Reading Borough Council

The success of *Reading Abbey Revealed* is also a result of collaboration with a wide range of other RBC services that have all supported the vision for the Abbey Quarter.

For example, collaboration with the Highways and Transport teams meant that the project was able to implement a comprehensive and user-friendly interpretation signage scheme in both the Abbey Quarter and parts of the wider town centre. The Parks team helped with the design of the landscaping of Reading Abbey, ensuring that it complements Forbury Gardens and can be maintained over the long term. The development, promotion and delivery of the new events on the site that have made it more accessible to the community are thanks to collaboration with the events, communication and Reading Arts teams. The aims and objectives of the project and the Abbey Quarter vision have all-party political support on RBC – ensuring that Reading's heritage is at the heart of the community.

This collaboration between council services and external key partners is the model being used for the current Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme. This is a heritage-led regeneration initiative lead by Historic England, working with local councils and communities to create economic growth and improve the quality of life in our historic high streets. The initiative provides physical interventions to buildings, including repair, reinstating lost historic features and supporting the conversion of historic buildings for new uses, and improvement to the public realm including wayfinding schemes. The Reading HSHAZ scheme brings together activities and projects that will support the growth and development of three conservation areas: Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road, St Mary's Butts/Castle Street, and Market Place/London Street (partly within the Abbey Quarter). The Reading HSHAZ is a £1.6m programme running between 2020 and 2024.

The Mayor of Reading's office has been supportive of the work and actively involved and giving support at various stages of the project, such as meeting children in the first schools Take Over Day.

Young people meet the Mayor of Reading

Most recently, in 2021, the Mayor conducted a tour of the Abbey Ruins which was filmed by a volunteer and is currently available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0nEUBl9wzA

Pride in Reading's history

Since it's reopening in 2018, after almost ten years closure, the Abbey Ruins has become a key location for cultural events, bringing pride and an increased sense of identity to local people.

Alongside the new interpretation and signage, events and activities run as part of the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project such as the re-opening festival, *In Ruins,* Abbey 900, tours and family activities have all collectively raised the profile of Reading's heritage and given people a sense of pride in the town.

Feedback from people[24] attending Abbey 900 evidences this sense of community identity and pride:

- 65.4% agreed or strongly agreed that the activity they attended reflected the diversity, culture and heritage of Reading, with 21.8% strongly agreeing.

- 66.7% agreed or strongly agreed that Abbey 900 brought Reading communities together, with 28.2% strongly agreeing.

- 74.4% agreed or strongly agreed that Abbey 900 helped to increase their pride in Reading, with 26.9% strongly agreeing (75.3% lived in the borough of Reading and 32.7% lived in wider Berkshire).

The growing profile of the Abbey Ruins is also illustrated by the increased numbers of external cultural organisations using the space, some of which draw from the history of the site itself. Rabble Theatre, for example, have written four plays

[24] Based on feedback questionnaires from 78 people attending Abbey 900

inspired by Reading history, with 'The Last Abbot', about Abbey monk Hugh Faringdon recently being performed at the Abbey Ruins to sell-out audiences and positive reviews from publications such as *The Guardian*[25]. The success of 'The Last Abbot' highlights the growing pride Reading has in the Abbey and in its history – something which has largely been facilitated by *Reading Abbey Revealed*.

> *It was a really brilliant idea that The Last Abbot was staged in the ruins – it pulled in more people to the site. It was the right location for the play, with strong links to the story and people could also explore the Abbey site.*
>
> Volunteer

> *There's been a new confidence in using Reading's heritage to tell Reading stories that might not have been there ten years ago. We've seen it growing across the cultural sector in Reading, not just in 'heritage'.*
>
> Museum Manager

Tapping into increased pride in Reading's history and financial resilience, Reading Museum has commissioned more Reading themed items for the museum shop in recent years. They have worked, for example, with local artists to create shop lines celebrating local heroes like Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde, as well as the Reading lion in Forbury Gardens.

Rabble Theatre Company perform The Last Abbot in the Abbey Ruins

Attracting further funding

The *Reading Abbey Revealed* project has given Reading Museum experience and credibility in developing, managing and promoting a successful and ambitious cultural project, and of Reading as a cultural and heritage destination.

As a result of the project, Reading's culture and heritage team has developed a strong relationship and level of trust with major national funding organisations

[25] www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/jun/18/the-last-abbot-of-reading-review-abbey-ruins

such as NLHF, Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England (HE) over the past ten years. The staff who delivered the project are seen as a safe pair of hands who can enthusiastically and creatively deliver high quality projects and Reading is now on the map as a place to invest in culture and heritage.

The reputation and experience of the team has translated into a range of successful funding applications for further cultural and heritage projects in Reading, including:

- Refectory wall restoration: 2017-2018, £200,000 funding from Historic England
- Reading Place of Culture: 2017 to 2021, a £754,920 project with a £558,400 from NLHF, Arts Council England and Historic England.
- Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone: 2020 to 2024, a £1.6m project with a £836,500 funding from Historic England to revitalise the historic buildings in the centre of Reading.
- Abbey Quarter events and activity funding: 2020-2021, with a £80,000 grant funding from NLHF and Historic England through their Cultural Recovery Fund programme.
- Arts Council England project grant of £15,000 to support specific cultural activities for the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey at Water Fest on the 19 June 2021.

These projects equate to a total of external funding of over £1.71 million in addition to the £1.77 million from NLHF for *Reading Abbey Revealed*.

Summer Screen at the Abbey Ruins

5. Project impacts and learning points

There have been many project highlights and successes, but also learning points, since *Reading Abbey Revealed* kicked off:

- The Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gateway have been successfully conserved using innovative conservation techniques such as sedum planting to cap the walls and hot-mixed lime mortar to stabilise the Abbey walls. The much-loved Ruins are now safely open to the public after almost ten years of closure.

- By expanding the project beyond the remaining ruins to include the original Reading Abbey footprint, *Reading Abbey Revealed* has created a new historic destination in Reading - the Abbey Quarter. New integrated interpretation and branding across the historic site has led to an increased sense of place and put heritage firmly on the map in Reading. This is exemplified by the growing footfall and range of cultural activity taking place in the Quarter, the creation of the Abbey Quarter Business Improvement District, as well as success in numerous historic and town planning awards.

- Public consultation and support has been crucial to the success of the project. Open Days, hard hat conservation tours, accessible talks, extensive interpretation testing and positive publicity created an early groundswell of local support for the conservation and re-opening of the Abbey Ruins. This built on the wide spread consultation for the NLHF Activity Plan (over 1,000 people responded to an online consultation survey) and has continued through outreach projects such as Abbey on Wheels.

- The re-opening of the Abbey Ruins in June 2018 was a great success, raising the profile of the site and the Abbey Quarter and attracting around 18,000 people. Successes include recruiting 36 new stewards to help, and positive feedback from stakeholders, volunteers and visitors.

- The Abbey on Wheels has been both a highlight and a model for outreach for the museum. Now Museum on Wheels, it is continuing to reach new audiences and to get people excited about Reading's history. It has also introduced the Museum to new organisations who they can partner with to reach more under-represented audiences.

- Visitor evaluation shows that the activity programme has successfully engaged people in their heritage. Visitors attending talks, tours, events such as Abbey 900 (attended by 324,041 people) have constantly rated their experience positively and 80% agreed that they had learned more about the history of Reading Abbey.[26]

- The schools programme has developed a new workshop 'Royals in Reading' which draws directly on the rich local and national history associated with the Abbey Ruins to provide a sense of place and time. A comprehensive set of downloadable written resources accompany the workshop. Additionally other resources have been produced for schools including creative writing, dance and music. The latter exploring the importance of music in Reading Abbey.

[26] Based on 483 feedback forms from visitors to *Reading Abbey Revealed* talks, tours, events and Abbey 900.

- Relocating the Victorian Schoolroom to the Abbey Gateway has added a new sense of drama and history to the workshop session and has been well received by schools. The Gateway has also been used for a range of other events and programming.

- In response to the pandemic, the learning team have embraced blended learning approaches and have further developed their workshop sessions to make virtual workshops available to schools, consequently increasing their potential reach.

- A strong and dedicated staff team with vision and commitment has been key to the success of *Reading Abbey Revealed*. New staff dedicated to the project, such as the Volunteer Co-ordinator, Abbey Learning Officer and Abbey Community Engagement Officer, have also made a huge difference to what the team were able to deliver. The expertise of the team has been recognised in further successful funding applications.

- The volunteer team target of 35 has been well exceeded, with 131 volunteers now having contributed to the project. New volunteer roles have been added to the offer, such as Heritage Custodian. The volunteer team have remained engaged during the lockdown period and are keen to continue being involved. The new Reading Museums Partnership has provided a bigger pool of volunteers to engage with, and additionally a wider range of volunteering opportunities for the volunteers to select from.

- The new short-term internship model has been very successful, with all interns going into employment, including one as the Community Engagement Officer for the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project. The new model has fed into a re-examination of the recruitment process for museum staff so that it is more accessible to people from different backgrounds.

- Partnerships and support from Reading Borough Council, the University of Reading and the Friends have been important to maintaining the momentum of the project. The Museum also enjoyed a good relationship with the NLHF, Arts Council England and Historic England.

- Working with the same consultants for the interpretation and activity plan and evaluation has provided continuity on a difficult and complex project.

- Procurement processes have been complicated and a steep learning curve. Similarly, working with other departments at RBC such as Transport and Highways has been time consuming and challenging, but has ultimately paid off as the wayfinding system has been extended into other parts of Reading town centre.

6. Recommendations and opportunities

The evaluation process has thrown up a number of recommendations and opportunities to take forward over the next few years and beyond.

- Maintaining the site will be an ongoing challenge and the team have a sustainable long term Maintenance Plan to ensure that the Abbey Ruins don't fall into disrepair again. It will be important to remind both wider stakeholders and visitors that the Ruins are not just 'fixed' but will require ongoing care and conservation.

- A dedicated team of volunteers have been recruited and they are keen to remain active and involved in quieter 'winter' periods and also other times such as lockdowns or restricted opening. A further programme of social activities, information sharing sessions and other practical volunteering roles could be programmed to cover these periods.

- More research and work could be done on how to make the public programme sustainable e.g. what is a sensible and sustainable level of talks, tours and family activities related to the Abbey to run?

- Maintaining the links with the University of Reading will ensure that volunteering, ArtsLab, young archaeologists and other widening participation activities continue to reach new audiences and engage younger people.

- The Reading Abbey resources are already closely integrated into the learning programme. Ensuring that blended learning opportunities continue to be made available for schools enable teachers to remain engaged and make use of the Reading Abbey resources for their teaching. Online versions offer the added benefit of reaching new audiences further afield.

- Museum on Wheels has proved to be a very successful way of reaching people who don't usually engage with heritage, particularly in its use of VR, object handling and arts and craft activities. The programme should continue into the future, with the Museum sharing its learning with the wider heritage sector.

- Although Museum on Wheels has made great strides forward in reaching new and different audiences, evaluation suggests that many of the museum-focused activities still tend to attract an older, White audience. The Museum needs to build on the success of events like the opening festival, Water Fest and Abbey 900 and to use the Abbey Ruins to attract and welcome non-traditional heritage audiences. Reading Museum's new Access Policy and Plan will help to do this.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29 JUNE 2022**		
TITLE:	**LIBRARIES IMPROVEMENT FUND : CAPITAL SCHEME APPROVAL**		
LEAD COUNCILLORS:	**CLLR BARNETT-WARD**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**LEISURE AND CULTURE**
SERVICE:	**CULTURE**	**WARDS:**	**ALL**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SIMON SMITH**	**TEL:**	**07894 600 498**
JOB TITLE:	**READING LIBRARIES AND MUSEUM MANAGER**	**E-MAIL:**	Simon.smith@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 an Arts Council England (ACE) Libraries Improvement Fund grant of £62,000 for Tilehurst Library and to request scheme approval in order to proceed with the project.

1.2 In 2021, Arts Council England announced a £5m Libraries Improvement Fund, requesting bids focused on capital investment into library buildings, using a two stage bidding process. The final bid was submitted in September 2021. In February 2022 the Council was notified that it had been successful with its bid for works at Tilehurst Library, and awarded £62,000.

1.3 Arts Council England provided the Council with a limited window within which to accept the grant, and the Council accepted the grant within the grant offer acceptance period.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Tilehurst Library Project be approved and that the scheme would be funded by Arts Council England Improvement Fund grant of £62,000 be noted;

2.2 That it be noted that the Director of Finance would be exercising his delegated authority to accept the external funding of £62,000 from the Arts Council England Improvement Fund and allocate the funding to the Tilehurst Library Project.

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. A bid was submitted to the ACE Libraries Improvement Fund and was approved at phase 1, allowing a phase 2 bid to be submitted. This bid was submitted in September 2021.

3.2 One of the aims of the Libraries Improvement Fund was to invest in buildings to support wider use and support digital inclusion.

3.3 The bid, therefore, focused on Tilehurst library to:

- improve the ability of the building to be hired
- investigate facilitating use of the building outside of staffed hours by investing in door controls, CCTV and associated equipment
- provide digital device lending on site
- facilitate digital device lending to homes

3.4 These aims fit in with the Library Strategic Principles, which were consulted on and adopted at Committee in November 2021. These principles themselves align with the Council's Corporate Plan and other relevant strategies.

3.5 This package of works represents a significant investment into Tilehurst library. The work includes:

- Upgrade of the building to be able to operate in a self-service way ('open+').
- Upgrade of the building to remove keys and provide digital access to facilitate innovative hire and safe locking down of space
- Provision of self service IT lockers for the community to loan devices, to be used on site or remotely, based on the system available at Southcote Library.

3.6 By enabling opening at a wider range of times than at present, we can accommodate more people locally using the library. The open+ operation is not suitable for unaccompanied children, but would be suitable for adults and older teenagers who need a space to work or study.

3.7 The outcomes we would are looking to achieve include:

- Greater use of the library building as a library and as a venue for hire through open+
- The library to become the key community space in Tilehurst, used by a variety of partners
- A more connected community, with a high level of digital device lending and associated support through partner organisations in an area of identified digital exclusion.
- A better quality environment, that provides more services and is open for longer for people to use.

3.8 Current Position:

3.9 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 reviewed and accepted by the Council. The funding needs to be

spent by 31 March 2023.

3.10 The timeline for delivery of the project includes:

- engagement with library users and local residents during Summer 2022
- works anticipated to start in Autumn 2022
- works completed in early 2023.

3.11 In order to draw down the ACE grant funding, the Council has submitted 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.

3.12 Other Options Considered

3.13 The Council could have chosen not to accept the grant. This would mean that the improvements to the building outlined in the bid would not be delivered.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 The acceptance of the grant 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. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report. The works do not have
an environmental or carbon impact and are about reconfiguring how some spaces work.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 No public consultation has been carried out on the proposal to apply for or accept the Arts Council England funding. However, the proposed changes will be available to library users and feedback sought prior to installation.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of itsfunctions, 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 protectedcharacteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristicand persons who do not share it.

7.2 There are no equality implications as a result of this decision.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 ACE's offer of funding is made available to all recipients, pursuant to ACE's standard terms and conditions for grant

8.2 These terms and conditions have been reviewed by RBC Legal and considered acceptable.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no match funding requirements. The service will invest some additional money into furniture and fittings as well as a cost effective space refresh to be introduced at the same time and this will be funded from existing budgets. Any ongoing revenue costs of the improvements will be small (<£1k) and be met by existing service budgets. Acceptance of Capital grants and scheme approval under the constitution is devolved to the Director of Finance and this was given.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are none

DRAFT

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29 JUNE2022**		
TITLE:	**FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022-2023**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**CLLR McEWAN**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**EDUCATION & PUBLIC HEALTH**
SERVICE:	**REGULATORY SERVICES**	**WARDS:**	**ALL**
LEAD OFFICER:	**KATIE HEATH**	**TEL:**	**0118 937 2254**
JOB TITLE:	**Acting PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER – FOOD & SAFETY**	**E-MAIL:**	**Katie.heath@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2022-2023. This Plan has been drawn up in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities.

1.2 The Food Service Plan typically covers a one-year period and should be updated annually. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic no plan was required or submitted for 2020-2021 and no plan was completed for 2021-22. Due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic on services, the backlog of work created by suspended services and resourcing difficulties, the Food Service Plan submitted now covers the period April 2022 through to March 2023 detailing the work plans of the Food & Safety Team which remains in line with the FSA recovery plan.

1.3 Appendix 1 - Food Service Plan 2022-2023

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 ***That Members note the content of the Food Service Plan for 2022-2023 at Appendix 1***

3. POLICY CONTEXT

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

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

3.2 The Framework agreement recognises that all Food officers should be correctly authorised and a documented procedure must be in place for the authorisation of officers based on qualifications, competence and in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.

3.3 Food Officers carry out inspections of food premises, undertake food sampling, investigate complaints about food premises including infectious diseases or food poisoning cases. Environmental Health Officers consider the hygiene of food premises (including operating the Food Hygiene rating Scheme) and ensure that food is microbiologically fit and safe for consumption while Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers consider food standards. Food Standards includes ensuring food is described accurately and not in a misleading manner as well as ensuring food is not chemically contaminated.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

4.1.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Council must submit monitoring data to the Food Standards Agency, this is normally carried out annually through the LAEMS return however in line with the FSA Recovery Plan these have been replaced with intermittent in-year 'temperature check' surveys.

4.1.2 Substantive content of the monitoring data, typically provided to the FSA annually, will still be collated and is used to form the basis of the Food Service plan and review of the previous year's performance. It also informs the forthcoming targets and Key Performance Indicators. Across the period 2021-2023 the Food Service Plan aligns with the requirements of the FSA Recovery Plan in order to address the backlog of inspections created during the pandemic and to prioritise limited resources to high-risk work activities.

4.1.3 Following changes to staffing, a decline in available resources to the Food and Safety Team and the impacts of Covid-19 this Food Service Plan includes incomplete data on previous year's performance in some areas. The forthcoming year, 2022-23 will see further impacts by Covid-19 as the backlog

of work created in the pandemic, alongside resourcing impacting on the performance of the team.

4.2 Options Proposed

4.2.1 The Food Service Plan 2022/23sets out that within the Borough there are over 1600 premises producing, retailing or serving food, this is an increase of 13% on the number of premises since the previous plan. The plan details the performance of the food service during previous years (2019-2022) and future performance plan for 2022/23.

4.2.2 Overall the Food Service achieved 89% of the total number of Food Hygiene Inspections due in 2019/20 and 17% of the Food Standards Inspections due in 2019/20. Proactive inspections in both categories were suspended on 16th March 2020.

4.2.3 The Recovery Plan breaks required activities down into stages with a focus on resuming and continuing higher risk activities and official controls with specified intervention timescales above lower risk activities. Local Authorities are required to advise the FSA where it will not be possible to achieve the required work activities within the phase.

4.2.4 The Council has been liaising with the FSA and has advised that it will be unable to fully meet the requirements of phase 2 of the recovery plan due to ongoing recruitment challenges. The Council will be unable to meet the required number of inspections relating to newly registered (unrated) premises but continues to progress through higher risk A and B rated premises in line with corporate targets.

4.2.5 The team are continuing work to address resourcing issues and have placed several recruitment adverts throughout 2020-22. The Service continues to seek alternative means to bolster resourcing and is looking to recruit apprentices from September 2022.

4.2.6 Throughout 2022-23 Food Service KPIs will align with the FSA Recovery Plan with a primary focus on achieving A, B, and unrated inspections for food hygiene and A and unrated inspections for Food Standards. In addition, the Food & Safety Team plan identified and will prioritise the following key pieces of work which align with the Councils corporate objectives;

- Ensuring that all officers are appropriately and correctly authorised to carry out their remit of work;
- Ensuring that all officers are appropriately qualified, trained which documented competency in line with Food Law Code of Practice;
- Ensuring that the service works to correct and up to date standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and to work within the parameters of the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance;
- Fully resume a food hygiene and standards sampling programme to support interventions carried out within Reading's premises and ensure that the food sold is safe to eat and not misleading to the consumer whilst supporting wider national programmes to achieve this across England;
- Increasing awareness and up take of our paid advice service for food hygiene and standards within our local community and Reading based businesses,

including resuming our food hygiene training courses which are available to local residents and businesses;
- Improving digital access to our Food Service through our webpages and enabling interaction through social media platforms;
- Resetting the way special treatment premises licences are issued to ensure that premises meet the required standards set by Reading's byelaw prior to trading;

4.3 Other Options Considered

4.3.1 In order to prioritise and deliver the Food Service Plan and in response to the resourcing issues within the service, compounded by the national shortage of qualified officers a review of the Primary Authority Partnership Service has been carried out. The Council has been part of the Primary Authority Partnership service since it commenced in 2011 however the resource position of the Food Service has changed substantially during this time. As identified within the Food Service Plan we are currently operating with just over 50% FTE's in post and have a substantial backlog of work to prioritise arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Primary Authority Partnership places a focus on paid work with national businesses that sit outside our borough, this disadvantages the service provided to local businesses and residents and does not align with the corporate objectives. Following this review the Environmental Health (food hygiene) element of the PAP will be stood down, however the Trading Standards support will continue (Food Standards).

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The Food Service Plan 2022-23 with the Council's vision 'To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success' at its core. The Service Plan supports and aligns with the following corporate objectives and the Food & Safety Team Plan has prioritised work activities around these objectives:

Healthy Environment	Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain
Thriving Community	Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene and safety practices at all stages of the food production chain Contributing to statutory consultation on new and existing food businesses

	Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses including operation of food hygiene training courses. Supporting food hygiene and safety at Reading Festival and other local events. Issue of Export Health Certificates and endorsements for local businesses.
Inclusive Economy	Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses and providing access to affordable food hygiene training courses. Providing a paid advice service for complex and bespoke business needs. Responding to complaints and service requests within our statutory response times. Developing our social media and web presence to ensure our services are accessible to all.

5.3 Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan are available on the website and include information on the projects which will deliver these priorities.

5.4 The Food Service Plan 2022-23 contributes to the TEAM Reading values:

Together	The Food Service Plan outlines how the Food Service works with external and internal partners to deliver its statutory duties. This plan incorporates a wider team plan with a focus on strengthening the competence of the service to deliver the Food Service Plan to the best of its ability.
Efficiency	The Food Service Plan incorporates a wider Team Plan which outlines the key work requirements of the team and details the work required to best deliver the Food Service Plan.
Ambitious	The Food Service Plan, which incorporates a wider Team Plan strives to maximise the amount and breadth of work covered by the team, prioritising work to make a difference within Reading's local community with a focus on Reading businesses and residents.
Make a Difference	The Food Service Plan outlines the work undertaken by the Council to support and improve the health and wellbeing of its residents by monitoring the food hygiene and food standards conditions of local establishments used by Reading's residents. Where current conditions are found to be less than broadly compliant the food service works with businesses to improve these conditions, ensure the business is legally compliant and will utilise enforcement powers where necessary.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the Food Service Plan 2022-23 or its implementation. Consideration has been given to the potential implications that could arise from this plan and there are no additional points outside of general Council working practice.

6.2 Implementation of this plan requires food inspections to be carried out. The Food Service have access to pooled bus passes and a large number of premises are based within Reading Town Centre where inspections can be carried out by foot. In general, use of public transport and travel by foot or bicycle is encouraged over the use of personal or pool vehicles. Interventions are recorded on paper which requires a copy to be left at the premises at the time of the intervention. The Food Service supports the wider request for mobile working solutions which will reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 There is no requirement to consult the community on the Food Service Plan.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Not required. Agreement to and implementation of the Food Service Plan 2022-23 does not 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.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Food Service plan is written in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework Agreement with the FSA. No delegation is required to implement the recommendations of this report or the Food Service Plan. The plan sets out how the authority will meet its statutory obligations.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

10.2 The revenue implications arising from running the service are set out below:

	2021/22 £000	**2022/23 £000**	**2023/24 £000**
Employee costs (see note1)	522	457	472
Other running costs	39	39	39
Capital financings costs			
Expenditure	561	496	511
Income from:			
Fees and charges (see note2)	-24	-24	-24
Grant funding			
(specify)			
Other income	-68	-2	-2
Total Income	-92	-26	-26

Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	461	470	485

10.3 There are no capital implications arising from implementation of the Food Service Plan or operation of the Food Service.

10.4 Value for Money (VFM)

The Food Service Plan 2022-23 outlines statutory work required to be undertaken by the Council. The Food & safety Team Plan, forming appendix 5 of the Plan, details additional non-statutory work which is required in order to deliver a fit for purpose service. As part of this revenue generating activities, including expanding our paid advice service for local businesses, have been including within priority work.

10.5 Risk Assessment.

A risk assessment was submitted with the Business Case proposal for discontinuing the Primary Authority Partnership service.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 *Appendix 1 – Food Service Plan 2022-23 includes all key documents within its appendices. In addition the following background papers are relevant to the Food Service Plan:*

Food Law Code of Practice Food and Feed Codes of Practice | Food Standards Agency
Food Law Code of Practice Guidance Food and Feed Codes of Practice | Food Standards Agency

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

Food Service Plan 2022-23

1. FOOD SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 The council has a statutory duty to enforce food law, overseen and audited by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The council must produce a plan setting out how it will deliver its functions. This document aims to discharge the duty for Reading Borough Council and has been written in accordance with the FSA Framework Agreement (Amendment 5), which is based on statutory Codes of Practice.

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

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

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

1.3 **Objectives**

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

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

- To prevent unsafe food reaching the public through the application of mandatory duties and discretionary powers.
- To ensure food is correctly labelled and complies with appropriate compositional requirements.
- To direct resources to the highest risk food premises and activities and to improve standards by the effective use of the enforcement powers available. Following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, resources will be targeted in line with the FSA's Recovery Plan (as amendment), focussing initially on unrated and newly registered businesses that have had no previous interventions.
- To ensure a consistent approach to food inspections by officers.
- To ensure that officers are qualified, adequately trained and competent.
- To highlight bad practice in food businesses.
- To ensure consumers are given information as to the hygiene conditions at food premises in the Borough through the use of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- To encourage and facilitate the training of food handlers and proprietors of food businesses.

- To encourage and facilitate the improvement of food safety and food standards by the use of a paid service for bespoke advice.
- To proactively respond to changes and proposals for improvement in UK legislation.
- To work with our partners including the UK Health Security Agency.

1.4 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.4.1 The Council has a number of priorities which sit within the Corporate Plan 2021/22. The delivery of the Food Service plan links to the following priorities:

Priority	How will we work toward this?
Healthy Environment	Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain
Thriving Community	Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene and safety practices at all stages of the food production chain Contributing to statutory consultation on new and existing food businesses Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses including operation of food hygiene training courses. Supporting food hygiene and safety at Reading Festival and other local events. Issue of Export Health Certificates and endorsements for local businesses.

Inclusive Economy	Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses and providing access to affordable food hygiene training courses. Providing a paid advice service for complex and bespoke business needs. Responding to complaints and service requests within our statutory response times. Developing our social media and web presence to ensure our services are accessible to all.

To achieve this aim, the Food & Safety Team and Trading Standards Team will:

- Inspect food premises and businesses in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and FSA's Recovery Plan (as amended) relating to the impact of Covid-19.
- Participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in order to enable members of the public to make informed choices about where they eat or purchase food
- Initiate appropriate enforcement action to secure compliance with the relevant legal requirements
- Prepare, participate and implement national, regional and local sampling programmes for food that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed;
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities relating to the enforcement of Food Safety legislation
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities in relation to the control of spread of communicable disease and food poisoning.

1.4.2 The following KPIs are in place for the Food & Safety team for 22-23:

- 100% of Food Hygiene Premises rated A due before 31 March 23 to be completed
- 90% of Food Hygiene Premises rated B due before 31 March 23 to be completed
- 75% of new registrations (those awaiting inspection) to be completed before 31 March 23
- 100% of Food Standards Premises rated A due before 31 March 23 to be completed.

N.B. these targets are remaining under constant review during the period 21-23 due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resourcing issues.

1.4.3 The Council also recognises the risks associated with failing to deliver this plan and this is detailed in the Directorate's risk register. A local risk register can be found within Appendix 5, the Food & Safety Team Work Plan for April 2022 – March 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Authority

2.1.1 Reading Borough Council was created as a unitary authority in April 1998 and currently has a population of 161,780. Unemployment (those claiming job seekers allowance) as of January 2021 stands at 6.4% within the town, higher than the national average of 5%. 77 languages are spoken across Reading. Reading is classed as the 3rd most unequal city in terms of wealth and 5 of our neighbourhoods are within the 10% most deprived in the country.

Reading is an urban authority and the town centre is one of the largest in the South of England, attracting many shoppers and visitors to the area. Regeneration to local areas, e.g. Bracknell present new challenges to Reading in addition to the impacts of the pandemic. Between February 2020 and February 2021 the footfall in Reading had declined by 66.4%. Reading is a University and college town, with many of the small food businesses around the University do the bulk of their trade during term time.

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

2.1.3 There is excellent access to the road system via the M4 (East/West) and the nearby M3 and A34 (North/South). Reading train station continues to provide excellent transport links to the town and in December 2019 the Elizabeth line began development (between Reading and London Paddington) placing Reading on the TFL underground map. Works are underway to create a new train station at Green Park, improve commuter access to business in that area.

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

2.1.5 Reading is a market town, the market operating four days per week, and has a flourishing twice monthly Farmers' market where producers from the surrounding locality sell their own produce. There are also 2 weekly food markets as well as an annual chilli festival and specialist food festival.

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

2.2 Organisational Structure

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

Constitution of the Council May 2018 (reading.gov.uk)

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

200210-Delegations-Register.pdf (reading.gov.uk)

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

2.2.4 Appendix 1 sets out the Team structure of Public Protection. Public Protection sits under the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection within the Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services.

2.3.5 The officer with lead responsibility for food matters (and whose contact details have been notified to the FSA) is Katie Heath, Acting Principal Environmental Health Officer, Food & Safety, supported by Matthew Golledge, Public Protection Manager.

2.3.6 Provisions have been made for the outsourcing of public services including the analysis of food and water samples for composition and microbiology. Please see section 3.5 below.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

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

2.3.2 Up until June 2022 both the Food & Safety and Trading Standards teams have been active leads in the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme. Environmental Health Staff have been providing assured advice for Food Hygiene and Health & Safety matters while the Trading Standards team provide advice on Food Standards. Reading Borough Council currently work with 11 businesses across Environmental Health and Trading Standards with further partners in Trading Standards only. Following a review of our Primary Authority Service in Autumn 2021, due to resourcing challenges a business case was put forward and subsequently approved to remove Environmental Health functions from our Primary Authority Services. This is currently being implemented and will be in full effect by June 2022.

2.3.3 The Principal Environmental Health Officer – Food & Safety is responsible for managing the topic area of food within Public Protection. Approximately 50% of the Food & Safety Team is directed at official controls for food safety and approximately 16% of the Trading Standards

Service is directed at food standards work (including work allocated through Primary Authority).

2.3.4 The Food & Safety Team are currently experiencing significant recruitment challenges with only 56% posts filled. Repeated attempts at recruitment have been made however these have not proved successful. It has not been possible to recruit our previous casual workers and the team has only secured one contractor for a three-month contract. This is a slight increase on the number of posts that were in post throughout 21-22 which stood at 46%

2.3.5 The service is based at:

Public Protection
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Reading
RG1 2LU

Tel: Food Safety Enquiries 0118 937 3787
Food Standards Enquiries 03454 040506 (c/o Citizens Advice Bureau

E-mail: consumer.protection@reading.gov.uk

Website www.reading.gov.uk.

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

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

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

Type of premises	Number of Premises
Primary Producer	0
Manufacturer/Packer	13
Food Importer/Exporter	7
Food Distributor/Transporter	28
Supermarket/Hypermarket	42
Small Retailer	233
Retailer Other	90

Restaurant, Café, Canteen	301
Hotel, Guest House	35
Pub, Club	119
Takeaway	185
Caring Establishment	142
Schools, Colleges	70
Mobile Unit	92
Restaurant, Caterer Other	278
Total	**1635**

2.4.2 There are currently 7 businesses which have received approval (including conditional approval) under one or more of the product specific regulations. These premises handle a combination of namely fishery products, minced meat & meat preparations, meat products and cold store/rewrapping activities. These premises are inspected in line with their risk rating.

2.4.3 There are number of outdoor events per year, mainly during May to September, where Food & Safety staff and/or Trading Standards staff attend and carry out inspections including food inspections and food sampling. These events occur during weekdays and weekends. Attendance at these events is determined by risk and the number of food traders likely to be present. Particular attention is paid to events where food businesses that are due an intervention or yet to have been inspected.

2.4.4 Reading Borough Council works in collaboration with Festival Republic at Reading Festival annually. During this period Food & Safety and Trading Standards attend site and conduct food hygiene and safety inspections in addition to other safety checks. Throughout the festival weekend the Food & Safety team will typically carry out approximately 150 inspections.

2.4.5 The Borough is multi-cultural and contains a wide range of food premises managed and run by many diverse ethnic groups. Many retail premises specifically cater for these populations and many registered home caterers prepare food dishes from their home countries. There are an increasing number of food brokers and the Council is endeavouring to identify them.

2.4.6 Many businesses operate outside office hours and in which case will be inspected during those periods.

2.4.7 The service has seen a rise in businesses that trade online as part of a High Street model. There is also a trend for customers to order food online from/via Facebook, Amazon, Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Just Eat

and have it delivered to their house thus the customer has no idea where the food is produced or where the wrapped food is stored.

The service has also seen a rise in businesses trading as 'Dark Kitchens', where a single premises/business trades as multiple business on line. This way of trading has an impact on consumer information and raised questions about listings on the food hygiene rating scheme and requirement for businesses to register.

2.5 Regulation Policy

2.5.1 The Council has previously adopted the Enforcement Concordat, which has subsequently been updated to the Regulators Compliance Code. The Corporate Enforcement Policy is attached as Appendix 2. This policy is supplemented by a specific food law enforcement policy that can be found in Appendix 3.

2.5.2 The Regulators' Code sets out the following main provisions:

- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow
- Regulators should provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views
- Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk
- Regulators should share information about compliance and risk
- Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply
- Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Premises Inspections

3.1.1 The Council's general policy is to inspect all food premises that are due for inspection based on the minimum frequency as set by in the Food Law Code of Practice. However, resources will always be directed towards higher risk activities and this may result in some lower risk activities being delayed. The aim is to ensure compliance with the legal requirements covering the safe handling and production of food, the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food and of the materials or articles in contact with food.

3.1.2 As a result of Covid-19 our inspection services were substantially interrupted throughout the period March 2020 to May 2021, resulting in a backlog of premises awaiting inspection. We have also seen an increase in the number of domestic registered food premises during this period. The Council is implementing the FSA's Recovery Plan in order to prioritise work, focussing on unrated and newly registered premises, premises subject to ongoing enforcement action, reactive work and those presenting the highest risk.

3.1.3 As the designated food authority, the Council discharges its duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and Regulation 2017/625 (retained) by carrying out regular, primary food hygiene and food standards inspections of high-risk premises.

3.1.4 The number of new premises that register with the Local Authority is approximately 230 per year making a significant contribution to the number of new premises/ those that have changed ownership on the database.

3.1.5 The current profile of premises within Reading can be seen at point 2.4.1 above.

3.1.6 The Food Law Code of Practice rating scheme is used for Food Safety as well as food Standards.

3.1.7 For Food hygiene, 97% of premises are currently rated as 'broadly compliant'. A premises is 'broadly compliant if none of the individual scores for hygiene, structure or confidence in management exceed 10. However, inspections which have taken place more recently indicate a decline in standards following the pandemic. The Council estimates that approximately 40% of premises will not be broadly compliant and will require follow up revisits or enforcement action.

3.1.8 For Food Standards, 88% of premises are rated as broadly compliant. Premises are considered to be 'broadly compliant;' where an individual score for current compliance or confidence in management does not exceed 10. This figure is expected to increase as we progress through the backlog of food standards inspections which was in place prior to the delays introduced by the pandemic.

3.1.9 The following targets for food premises inspections due to be visited in 2022-23 are:

	Food Hygiene	Food Standards
Category A	100%	100%

Category B	90%	N/A
Category C	N/A	N/A
Category D	N/A	-
Category E	N/A	-
Category Unrated	75%	N/A

3.1.10 There are also a number of food hygiene and food standards inspections that have been given a non-inspectable risk (NIR) score. Examples of these premises include for food hygiene, importers based in the Borough where there is just an office and no storage or distribution of the product in the Borough (food broker) and inspections that are carried out at outdoor events where the trader is registered outside of the Borough.

3.1.11 Category E food hygiene inspections and category C food standards inspections can be carried out via an alternative enforcement strategy or using an official control such as inspection, partial inspection or audit. Where the alternative enforcement strategy is chosen, a visit is made by a Regulatory Support Officer or newly qualified authorised officer who will complete a questionnaire with the business.

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

3.1.13 The resource requirements for allocated work is detailed in section 4 below.

Food hygiene

3.1.14 The frequency of food hygiene inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the code of practice. Risk categories may change if food handling activities change, consumer complaints are received or other non-compliance is identified. The number of inspections due in 2022/23, including those overdue from previous years is:

Category/ Frequency	**Number of inspections Due 2022/23**
A / at least every 6 months	3
B / at least every 1 year	29
C / at least every 18 months	266

D / at least every 2 years	533
E / Alternative Enforcement Strategy	367
Outside the Programme	36
Unrated[1]	212
Total	**1,410**

[1] This number excludes new premises that will register within the year.

Food Standards – labelling and composition

3.1.15 The frequency of food standards inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the Code of Practice. The number of inspections due in 2022/23 are:

Category/ Frequency	Number of Inspections due 2021/22
A / at least every 1 year	3
B / at least every 2 years	281
C / alternative enforcement strategy	422
Outside the Programme	250
Unrated[1]	370
Total	**1,326**

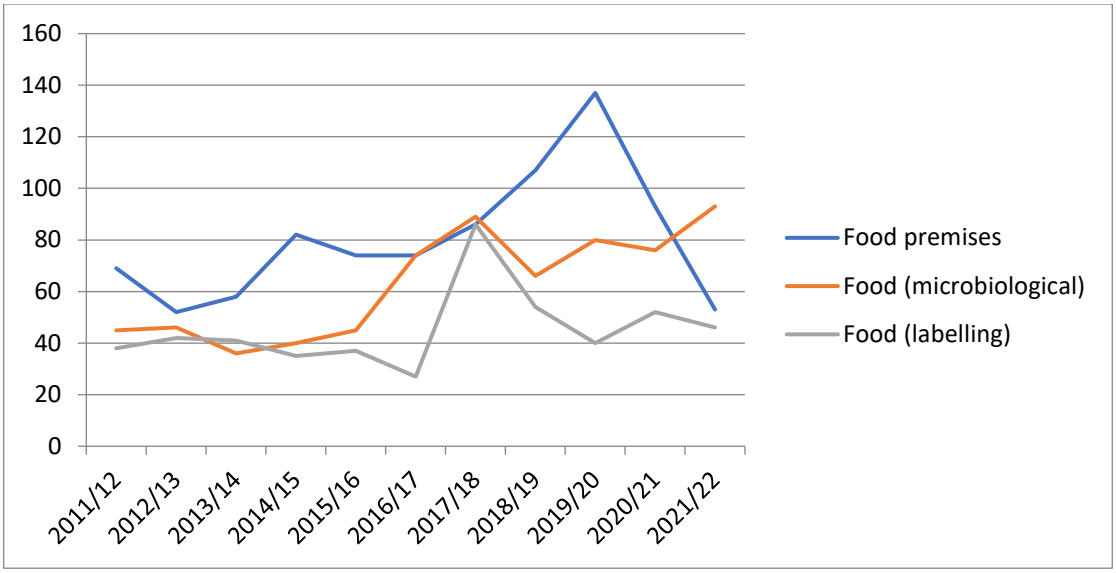
[1]This number excludes new premises that will register within the year

3.2 Food Complaints

3.2.1 There is a documented food complaint procedure. All food complaints are investigated in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, practical guidance and in-house procedures. Complaints that are identified as posing an immediate risk to health are responded to within one day. Other food complaints are investigated and responded to

within 5 working days. The Primary Authority/home authority principle is employed where the food is manufactured in another borough.

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



3.2.3 Estimates for this year suggest the figures for microbiological food will remain broadly constant, labelling complaints are likely to go up whilst the number of complaints about food premises rather than food will return to the pre-pandemic level or higher as people return to eating out and premises re-open. Industry shortages in staffing are also likely to have an impact on the number of food premises complaints received.

3.3 Primary Authority Partnerships

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

3.3.2 There are 20 partnerships predominantly in the hospitality industry of which 11 cover food hygiene and safety and food standards. The most significant and active partnerships are with JD Wetherspoon, Greene King and the WSH Group.

3.3.3 No new partnerships were taken on in 2021/22, following a change in ownership our partnership with Stonegate Pub Co Limited was terminated at their request.

3.3.4 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic work with the specialist Sushi PA working group has not progressed.

3.3.5 Under normal working circumstances each partnership has a work plan and officers have regular meetings with the company to discuss enquiries from other councils and progress the work plan. Due to the

Covid-19 pandemic the requested work from partners has been interrupted and the Council has amended its approach to partners accordingly.

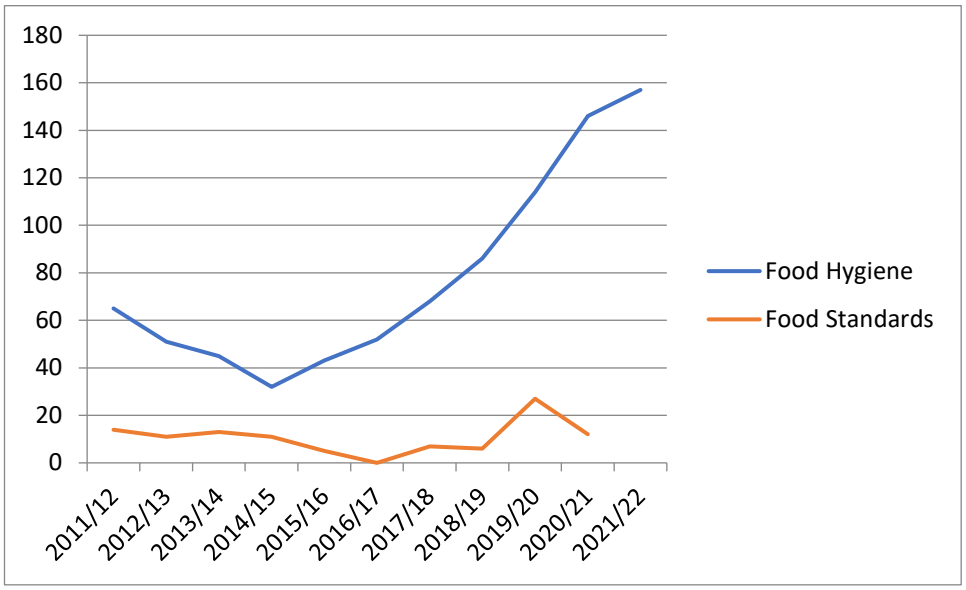
3.3.6 The Covid-19 pandemic has created additional work pressures within the team and a substantial backlog of food hygiene and food standards inspections now exists. Additionally, the Food & Safety Team have suffered loss of resources through members of staff leaving and has been unable to recruit to posts. Primary Authority Partnership does not align with the Council's Corporate objectives and there is a national shortage of qualified officers. A review has been carried out regarding the Council's ability to continue to deliver the Primary Authority Partnership alongside its statutory duties and a recommendation has been made to remove this function from the Food & Safety Team. This has been approved and will be removed by the end of June 22.

3.4 Advice to Business

3.4.1 The enforcement policy states that the Service will provide advice to businesses in the first instance to assist them in complying with the law and to help them maintain high standards of food safety or standards.

3.4.2 Businesses can contact the Food & Safety Team, where they will be directed to advice leaflets and other information available on the website. If the food business operator requires further advice, a paid for service is offered.

3.4.3 The number of service requests from businesses for advice on food and drink are detailed in the graph below. A substantial amount of business advice is provided during routine interventions and is not accounted for within these numbers:



3.4.4 It is anticipated that the number of requests for food hygiene advise will continue to increase and that those for food standards will also increase following the change to the requirements of the Food Information Regulations 2014 due to Natasha's Law, the introduction of out of home calorie labelling and promotion of our paid advice services.

3.5 Food Sampling

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

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

3.5.2 The sampling plan reflects the following requirements:

(i) the procurement of samples taken during food hygiene and food standards inspections, taking into consideration the FSA guidelines for imported food and feed controls.

(ii) specifically targeting foods produced and distributed nationally, from producers and manufacturers based in Reading.

(iii) in response to consumer and business complaints regarding food standards and food hygiene, and

(iv) the participation in agreed national, regionally co-ordinated and local sampling programmes and in particular projects concerning imported foods.

(v) the Rapid Alert System for Food & Feed (RASFF) annual and quarterly reports.

3.5.3 The plan may be changed from time to time during the year to reflect new or changes in legislation and other local or national issues of concern.

3.5.4 Food samples are procured in accordance with the Code of Practice and legislation as appropriate.

3.5.5 Samples for microbiological analysis are sent to the food examiner at:

Public Health England
Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton
Porton Down
Salisbury
SP4 0JG
Tel 01980 616766

3.5.6 **Samples for chemical and compositional analysis are sent to the Public Analyst at:**

Hampshire Scientific Services

Hyde Park Road
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO5 4LL
Tel. 023 9282 9501

Food Safety – Microbiological Sampling

3.5.7 Resources are allocated through Public Health England. Microbiological food sampling projects are co-ordinated within the sampling county liaison group. The PHE Porton laboratory carries out the analysis of the samples.

3.5.8 For 2022/23 the food sampling budget for microbiological analysis is £6,422.00 which is held on account by PHE.

3.5.9 No target for microbiological analysis has been set this year due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Samples will be selected for analysis on a risk basis dependent on resourcing. Where resources permit we will continue to contribute to national and local sampling programmes.

3.5.10 There are 12 private water supplies in Reading. Most are considered low risk. Two of the boreholes are boreholes that supply a large quantity of people. Sampling is carried out by their commercial owners whilst the other 10 boreholes are for single dwellings.

Food Standards Quality and Compositional Sampling

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

3.5.12 The total budget for food standards and feeding stuff sampling for the year 22-23 is £11,000. The Council has an ESPO framework agreement for public analyst and testing services and £44,000.00 for a four-year period commencing in 2019 was awarded to the Council for sampling through the public analyst.

3.5.13 In 2021/22 the Council bid through TSSE to undertake sampling of Sweets and soft drinks from the USA for presence of colours and preservatives and snacks, cereals and bakery products from India, Belgium and France for the presence of undeclared milk and egg. The Council will also participate in campaigns ran by the Public Analyst and will bid to participate in relevant sampling programmes and campaigns throughout 23-23, including Operation Opson.

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

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

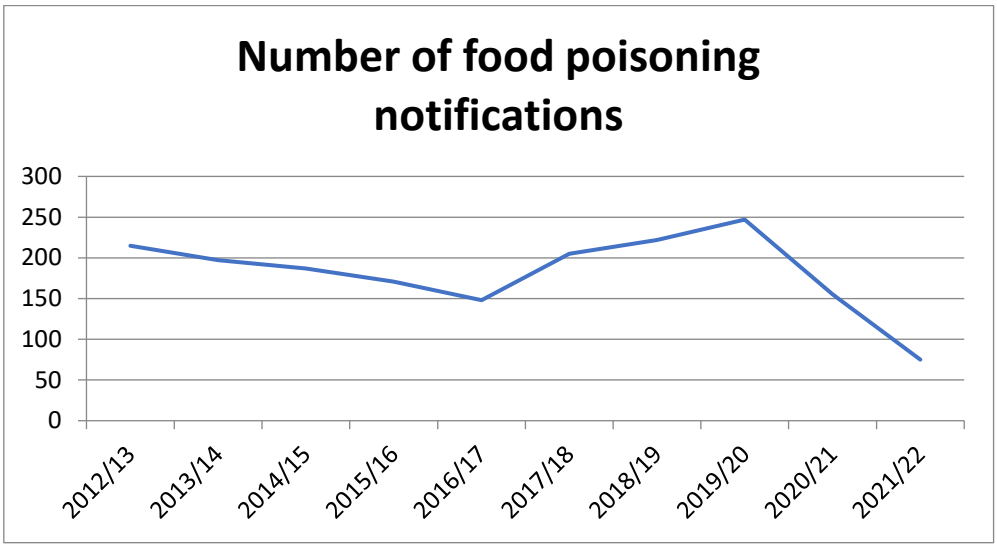
3.6.2 Investigations into infectious disease aim to:

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

3.6.3 The target for response is as follows:

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

3.6.4 The annual number of food poisoning notifications are detailed below:



3.6.5 It is anticipated that the number of notifications for 2022/23 will increase as people continue to return to socialising, events and dining outside of the home. The Local Authority is only called upon for cases of lower risk food poisoning such as Bacillus cereus, Clostridium, Giardia, Salmonella and Shigella as well as to assist TVPHE in finding the source of other cases such as Cryptosporidium, however further changes may be brought about by the creation of UKHSA (previously PHE) and other agencies.

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

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

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

3.7.2 The team will receive Food Alerts (FAFA), Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and allergy alerts via an automated daily or weekly digest email alert. The Lead Food Officer or Senior Officer in charge will determine what action needs to be taken on the Food Alert. Generally, such situations are dealt with through voluntary co-operation or surrender of the food.

Food Fraud

3.7.3 The Council is committed to detecting fraudulent activity. This includes various illegal acts committed for economic gain including false labelling, establishments operating illegally, illegal importation of foods and diversion of meat products into the animal feed chain via the bakery production.

3.7.4 Whistle-blower, anonymous complaints or partial information is taken seriously and collated or followed up.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

3.8.1 Arrangements are in place to ensure consistency with other organisations and by officers delegated to represent the Council. This is achieved through membership of local specialist groups.

3.8.2 The Public Protection Manager attends and participates in the Berkshire Environmental Health Managers Group. One of the Berkshire Managers has specialist responsibility for food safety and attends the Berkshire Food Safety Liaison Group once per year.

3.8.3 A Senior EHO or Lead Food Officer will attend and participate in the Berkshire/Oxfordshire Food Safety & Health and Safety Liaison Group (BOFSLiG) that will meet 3 times per year. One of the members of this group aims to go to the food sampling group at least once per year to provide strategic direction.

3.8.4 The officer with specialist responsibility for sampling attends and participates in the Berkshire Food Sampling Group.

3.8.5 The Trading Standards food specialist or lead food officer attends and participates in the Regional Food Focus Group of TSSE which meets 2 times per year.

3.8.6 The service has regular contact with professional bodies, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Trading Standards Institute as well as the national regulators FSA and OPSS and will participate in relevant forums as they are available

3.8.7 For imported or exported foods, the team liaises with relevant port of entry local authorities where action is required as well as the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).

3.8.8 A representative for the Food & Safety Team sits on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which covers all festivals and community events within the town and offers support or advice regarding food safety.

3.8.9 Officers within the team liaise with Planning and Building Control services as a statutory consultee for Food & Safety matters, providing advice to the teams and applicants regarding food safety matters accordingly.

3.9 Food Promotion/ Projects

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

3.9.1 The Authority has run and issued awards for good standards of hygiene in food premises since 1975. In 2011 the authority joined the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) run by the FSA. The rating is given at the end of routine or partial inspections in the form of a window/wall sticker including information about the scheme and how their rating is made up. The information is uploaded to the website approximately once every 2 weeks. Premises can request a revisit if they are not satisfied with their rating or lodge an appeal with the Lead

Food Officer. On payment of a fee another full inspection will be carried out within 3 months.

3.9.2 Since 1999 the Food & Safety team has successfully run in collaboration with Festival Republic and Central Fusion, a separate Alfresco Award for the food traders at Reading Festival. In 2011 the award was expanded to encompass the principles of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and a sticker unique to Reading Festival was designed. Each year any traders achieving 5 rating will be given a unique Reading Festival wall sticker for the duration of the festival and nominated for one of three Al Fresco Awards (Bronze, Silver or Gold). All food traders are inspected at the festival. The cost of this work is funded by the festival organisers. The festival organisers and food service contractor take great interest in the total number of traders in each food rating category and traders who achieve two or less are scrutinised before being allowed to return to the festival in the following year. Al Fresco Award winners are given incentives to attend the following year's festival such as a free pitch at the next year event.

Food Hygiene Education

3.9.3 Under normal circumstances staff deliver a Level 2 Food Safety in Catering Course on a one-day basis about 6 times per year. The same course is offered to companies, organisations or schools at their premises on request. Courses are also run for specific ethnic minority groups both in English and their own language. This was cancelled during the pandemic but service will resume this year.

Natasha's Law

3.9.4 On 1st October 2021 an amendment to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into force in England requiring an increase in provision of consumer information regarding allergens. This is a result of Natasha's Law following the death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse in 2016 after she consumed a baguette from a national sandwich chain which contained sesame. PPDS foods are now required to be labelled with the name, ingredients list and allergens where products are made on site. In order to support businesses with this change social media communications were issued and will be included within our ongoing programme for social medial communications as part of a new initiative to increase the awareness of our team and its work locally. Advice is provided directly to food businesses during interventions and we will continue to provide this whilst we progress through our backlog of inspections. Following the implementation of requirements for businesses to provided allergen information on the 14 specified allergens in 2015 we anticipate that a substantial proportion of smaller businesses will still be unaware of this new requirement and require further support or enforcement action to comply.

Food Export Certification

3.9.5 Since the UK exited the EU on 30 December 2020 we have seen an uptake in requests for Export Health Certificates. Prior to this we consulted with all food businesses in the borough to ascertain the likelihood of service demand. Those being received have been from companies who were not previously known exporters. As businesses adapt to new trading restrictions and processes we anticipate that we will receive occasional requests for Export Health Certificates or

Endorsements to the EU and other third countries. Senior officers are authorised with APHA to issue Certificates for fishery products.

Out of Home Calorie Labelling

3.9.6 From 6 April 2022 it became mandatory under The Calorie Labelling (Out of Home) Regulations 2021 for certain food businesses to provide information on the calorie content of prepared food products. This applies to large scale businesses (>250 employees) and includes franchises and 3rd party delivery platforms. When undertaking interventions it will be required that these consider whether calorie information is available, whether it is clearly displayed, how the information was calculated and that it is available on other sale platforms. Following the enforcement policy, where non-compliance is notified improvement notice may be required.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The budget for Food & Safety in 2022/23 is £516,300.00 (gross) / £490,200.00 (net). This excludes some Food Standards inspection and complaint work which falls under the Trading Standards budget but does provide for Food Standards Sampling. The Food & Safety budget also covers the provision of other, non-food related work, including safety at sports grounds licensing, special treatments licensing and health and safety enforcement. Financial provision for legal action as part of our enforcement policy is provided centrally and is not included in the above budget.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

4.2.1 The Food & Safety team has an allocation of 11.01 FTE (including management), the number of persons currently in post is 6.16 FTE, this includes Food Standards services obtained from the Trading Standards Team. A full review and restructure of services, including Public Protection is underway with final implementation scheduled for July 22. The team carry out the full spectrum of food hygiene, food standards, infectious disease, health and safety, special treatments, Primary Authority Partnership and certain forms of licensing activities. Officers in the team are broadly multidisciplinary, however certain aspects of their role such as the inspection of high-risk premises are restricted based on their competency and qualifications. For example, an Environmental Health Officer who has not reached specific competency criteria will not be able to prohibit a food premises from operating. This allocation does not include Business Support functions and those officers allocated to carry out that work. There is currently approximately 1FTE allocated to this work which includes process food business registrations, inputting and allocating service requests and inputting food hygiene inspections on our data management system.

4.2.1 As part of the planning process for ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties, it must ensure that it has sufficient staffing capacity to deliver its inspection and enforcement programmes. Based on a percentage of each officer's time being spent on food hygiene activities only and including factors such as maternity, part time working hours, competencies etc, there are currently 4 FTE officers available against an estimated need of 9.45FTE for food hygiene and a further 1.43 FTE

against an estimated additional need of 2.34FTE for food standards. Please see APPENDIX 5 for further detail on the Food & Safety Teams work priorities and resource requirements. Unfortunately, due to national shortages of qualified Environmental Health Officers, the Council has difficulties recruiting to vacant posts in the team. The Council have also been unable to recruit casual officers or sufficient contractors to assist with the delivery of statutory functions. The Council was unable to deliver its inspection programme in 2021/22 and did not fully meet the requirements of the FSA's Recovery plan priorities. At present it is anticipated that this will remain the same for 2022/23.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 One to one meetings are held for all officers approximately 6-8 times per year where professional and personal development is discussed and encouraged. Officers are requested to complete annual Training Needs Assessment's to ensure that training needs are identified and they are able to meet their 10 hours CPD as specified in the Food Law Code of Practice.

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

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

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

4.3.5 Newly appointed staff are subject to a Council wide probation scheme and must complete a practical training log within the Team before they are deemed competent and authorised accordingly.

4.3.6 Following the change to the Food Law Code of Practice the Council has identified that it needs to undertake a review of its staff competency requirements in food hygiene and standards. This item is included within the Teams priority work for this year. The new competency framework has yet to be applied to newly appointed or existing staff due to resource limitations.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND INTERNAL MONITORING

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

The monitoring of the plan is conducted by:

(i) Regular (minimum bi-monthly) monitoring of achievement of targets, actions and time taken by team managers or delegated officers.

(ii) Submission of food hygiene and food standards statistical returns to the FSA

(iii) Officers are provided with details of actions not responded to within the specified target times

(iv) Regular one to one meetings

(v) Annual appraisals of staff

(vi) Publication of annual performance achievements

(vii) Checks of accuracy of improvement and prohibition notices served.

(viii) Shadowing of staff to check consistency and accuracy of inspections.

5.2 An internal audit of the framework for robust and timely food hygiene inspections was carried out in 2019. Following this audit a number of actions were identified and have since been implemented. Remaining items regarding QA monitoring and the timescale for inspection of newly registered premises remain outstanding. Please see APPENDIX 4 for more detail.

5.3 As part of its wider commitment to customer service the Council is taking part in a council wide customer excellence programme to review and streamline its services and to ensure that they are accessible to all.

6. REVIEW

6.1 The annual performance achievement is compared with the target set and any underachievement is explored and the appropriate action taken. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic no Food Service Plan was produced in 2020/21 or 2021/22 and targets for food interventions were not fully met. The Council is still recovering from the impact of Covid-19 on its services and interventions, as required by the Code of Practice, will continue to be impacted throughout the period 22-23. The data below details the performance that was achieved in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, due to the reporting system it is not possible at this time to ascertain the percentage achieved of the overall interventions due.

Number of Inspections

6.1.2 **Food Hygiene**

	Achieved inspections 2019-20	% Of inspections achieved 2019-20	Achieved Inspections 2020-21	Achieved inspections 2021-22	% Of inspections achieved 2021-22
Premise Rating - A	4		2	2	100%
Premise Rating - B	63		9	28	88%
Premise Rating – C	233		38	48	
Premise Rating - D	311		51	63	
Premise Rating - E	111		48	5	
Premise Rating - Unrated	Unable to report[1]		Unable to report[1]	124	
Premise Rating - Outside	152		N/A	128	
Total proactive interventions	**874**	**89%**	**148**	**398**	

Number of revisits	173		7	39[2]	
Total Interventions	**1,047**		**155**	**437**	

[1] Due to our reporting system it has not been possible to distinguish the initial risk rating of these premises therefore the number of 'unrated' premises which have been inspected within year cannot be confirmed. As of 10/01/2022 available data indicates that of the above 102 inspections were conducted at previously unrated (newly registered) premises.
[2] This includes revisits carried out at premises outside the scope, i.e. Reading Festival.

6.1.3 **Food Standards**

	Achieved inspections 2019-20	% Of inspections achieved 2019-20	Achieved inspections 2020-21	Achieved inspections YTD 2021-22	% Of inspections achieved 2021-22
Premise Rating - A			12	4	100%
Premise Rating - B			48	75	
Premise Rating - C			14	60	
Premise Rating - Unrated	241[3]		Unable to report	111	
Premise Rating - Outside				19	
Total proactive interventions	**241**	**17%**	**74**	**250**	
Number of revisits	22		1	7	
Totals	**263**		**75**	**257**	

Formal Actions

6.1.4 During the period 2018 to 2021 the authority took the following enforcement action:

Enforcement Type	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22 (YTD)**
Voluntary closure	2	0	1	1
Seizure, detention & surrender of food	1	2	0	1
Suspension/revocation of approval or licence	0	0	0	1
Emergency prohibition notice	2	3	0	0
Prohibition order	1	3	0	0

Simple caution	0	0	0	0
No of premises where Improvement notices served	16	11	0	2
No of Hygiene Improvement notices served	30	21	0	8
No of FIR Improvement notices served	0	1	0	0
Remedial action & detention notices	0	1	0	0
Written warnings (Food Hygiene)	655	910	129	381
Written warnings (Food Standards)	32	75	35	104
Prosecutions concluded	1	1	0	0

Food Sampling

6.1.5 The following shows the number of samples hygiene and compositional taken and unsatisfactory.

	Number of Food Hygiene Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results	Number of Food Standards Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results
2017/18	63	22	46	19
2018/19	65	23	23	13
2019/20	29	8	30	20
2020/21	42	3	14	4
2021/22	11	0	29	7[1]

[1] N.B. Not all results have been received to date.

Food Promotional Activities

6.1.6 The number of inspections carried out at Reading Festival in 2021 have been included in the table above at para 6.1.2. 132 Premises inspections were conducted for food hygiene including all premises trading within the inspection site. A further 12 contravention revisits were carried out during the festival period.

Food Hygiene Training Courses

6.1.7 The following Level 2 Training Courses have been ran since 2018

	Number of Courses	Number of Students
2018/19	4	64
2019/20	6	56
2020/21	0 (Covid)	N/A
2021/22	0 (Covid)	N/A

6.2 Variations from the Service Plan

6.2.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic no service plan was set for 2020-21 or 2021-22 and a number of resources were allocated to carry out work associated with Covid-19. The following items were not met from the 2019/20 service plan and remain outstanding:

- The Council did not meet its inspections targets to carry out 100% of Food Hygiene Inspections A-D, 80% E and Unrated or 100% Food Standards Inspections A, 50% B, 10% C and 60% Unrated. However, due to changes in resourcing it has also not been possible to identify the number of inspections carried out in comparison to their initial risk rating in order to accurately report against these targets. This is a noted area of improvement.
- The Council did not run a Street Compliance Project
- The Council did not commence a project to review and address issues that have been noted regarding the non-registration of food businesses that have been identified as trading through online platforms such as Amazon, Facebook, Deliveroo.
- There has been a continued reduction in the number of food samples conducted despite service plan aims to increase this activity.
- Internal monitoring of officers has not been fully carried out in accordance with the authority's protocols and was identified as an area of action following the internal audit, please see point 6.3 below.
- A number of policies and procedures require updating.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

6.3.1 An internal audit was carried out in 2019. The Action Plan can be found in Appendix 4. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued changes to resourcing these actions remain partially or wholly outstanding.

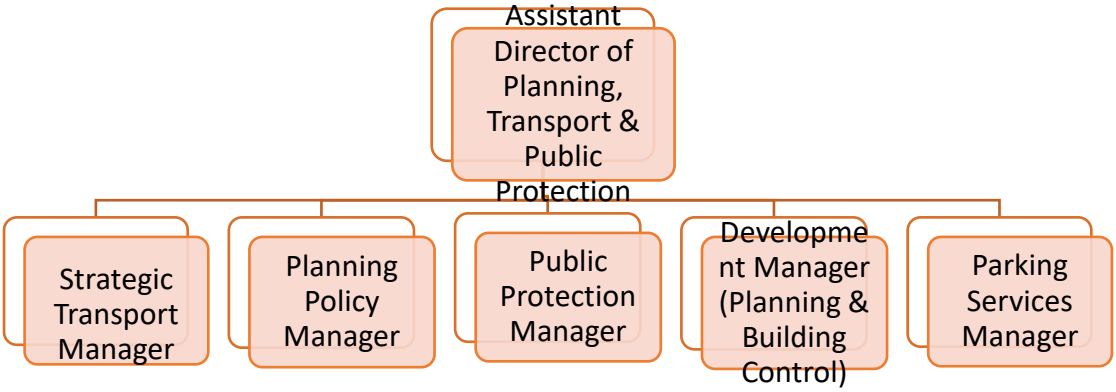
6.3.2 Further training is required in order to allow accurate reporting of interventions against targets.

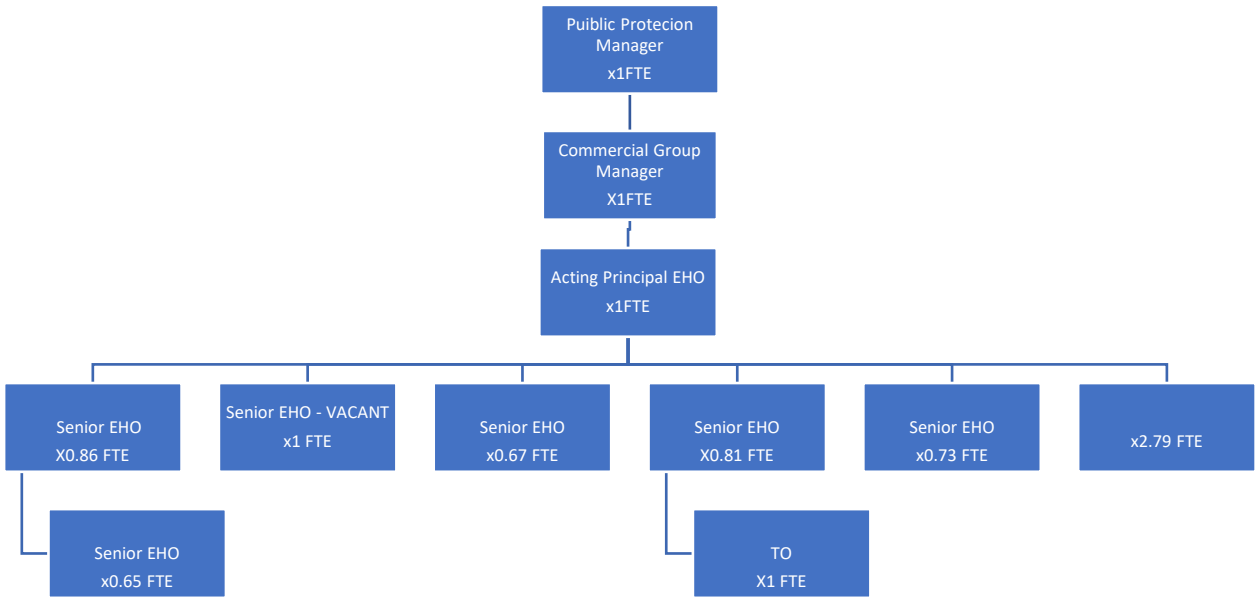
7.0 Approval

7.1 This plan, including its appendices, has been agreed by the Public Protection Manager and Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

Appendix 1

Public Protection Structure Chart





APPENDIX 2

Corporate Enforcement Policy

Reading Borough Council
Corporate Enforcement Policy

Contents:

Section	Subject	Page No
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Status of the Enforcement Policy	3
3.0	Scope and meaning of Enforcement	3
4.0	Need for an Enforcement Policy	3
5.0	Legal Provisions	4
6.0	General Principles	4
7.0	Expectations of Business	5
8.0	Obstruction of Officers and Powers of Entry	5
9.0	Appointment of Officers & Identification	6
10.0	Shared Enforcement Role	6
11.0	Provision for Interests of Consumers and Businesses	6
12.0	Choice of Appropriate Enforcement	7
13.0	Who Decides on Enforcement Action	8
14.0	Monitoring of Policy	8
15.0	Appeals, Complaints and Comments	8

Reading Borough Council

CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the economic interests and health and safety of the public, businesses and the environment. This Policy sets out what businesses and individuals being regulated by the Council can expect from Enforcement Officers.

1.2 This Policy commits the Council to good enforcement policies and procedures.

2.0 STATUS OF THE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

2.1 The Corporate Enforcement Policy was first approved by the Cabinet of Reading Borough on 20th March 2006, and was revised in 2009. The current version of the Policy is effective from February 2012.

2.2 In addition to this Corporate Policy, some individual Service Areas may have specific Enforcement Policies relevant to their work.

3.0 SCOPE AND MEANING OF ENFORCEMENT

3.1 This Policy applies to all the legislation enforced by officers of the Council.

3.2 Enforcement includes any action taken by officers aimed at ensuring that individuals or businesses comply with the law. This is not limited to formal enforcement action such as prosecution; it also includes, for example, the inspection of premises for the purpose of checking compliance with Acts of Parliament or Regulations.

4.0 NEED FOR AN ENFORCEMENT POLICY

4.1 **A clear enforcement policy ensures that:**

(a) all those who live and work in Reading are able to have a clear understanding of the Corporate Policy covering the Council's enforcement functions.

(b) all statutory notices issued by the Council are checked by an experienced officer for appropriateness, legal validity, content and technical information;

(c) any information given to a business, landlord or individual, whether written or verbal, clearly identifies those requirements which are mandatory and those which are advisory;

(d) any enforcement action is proportionate to the risks involved; and

(e) officers follow a consistent approach to enforcement.

5.0 LEGAL PROVISIONS

5.1 The following legislation and guidance will be taken into account in the enforcement activities of the Council:

a) The Enforcement Concordat (adopted by the Council on 14 March 2000)
b) Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
c) Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008
d) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
e) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
f) Criminal Proceedings and Investigation Act 1996
g) Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004
h) Human Rights Act 1998
i) Local Government Acts
j) Race Relations Act 1976 and Equality Act 2010
k) Crime and Disorder Act 1998
l) Other relevant Acts e.g. Public Health Acts, Housing Acts, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 etc.
m) The Code for Crown Prosecutors
n) Home Office Guidance on use of simple cautioning
o) Local Service Plans
p) Guidance from the Local Better Regulation Office
q) Regulators' Compliance Code

Any other relevant Governmental Guidance or professional advice

6.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

6.1 Each case is unique and must be considered on its own merits. However, there are general principles that apply to the way each case must be approached. These are outlined in this Policy, and are based on the Enforcement Concordat, which was adopted by the Council on 14th March 2000. The Concordat is a voluntary Code of Practice developed by the Government in

partnership with local authorities and representatives of consumer and business interests.

The Enforcement Concordat contains the following principles:

(a) **Standards**: set clear standards for the level of service and performance which the public and businesses can expect to receive;
(b) **Openness**: provide information and advice in plain language on the legislation and rules the Council applies, and disseminate this as widely as possible;
(c) **Helpfulness**: actively work with businesses and individuals, especially small and medium sized businesses, to advise on and assist with compliance; and provide an opportunity for discussion and for compliance before formal enforcement action is taken
(d) **Complaints about the Council's enforcement service**: provide well publicised, effective and timely complaints procedures which are easily accessible to businesses, the public and community groups;
(e) **Proportionality**: minimise the costs of compliance for businesses by ensuring any enforcement action required is proportionate to the risks; prosecute when appropriate
(f) **Consistency**: carry out our duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

6.2 In addition to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat, the Council is required to carry out its regulatory activities relating to trading standards, environmental health and licensing in a way which is consistent, transparent, accountable, proportionate and targeted, in accordance with the Principles of Better Regulation.
These principles underpin how Reading Borough Council's regulatory services work with businesses. The Council sees businesses - whether compliant or not - as its customers, and builds appropriate relationships. Any advice and support given to customers is authoritative and accessible, focussing on the needs of specific business sectors.

6.3 The Council will also have regard, where appropriate, to the priority regulatory outcomes published by the Local Better Regulation Office, which is a statutory body set up in 2008 to improve enforcement and regulatory activity in certain sectors. It has a statutory duty to specify matters to which local authorities must give priority when allocating resources, and is responsible for publishing priority regulatory outcomes, which assist local authorities in focussing their enforcement activities.

6.4 The Council is also under a duty to have regard to the Regulators' Compliance Code, which again applies to trading standards, environmental health and licensing, and which is largely based on the Principles of Better Regulation. The Code applies when determining general policy or setting standards, but not to individual cases.

6.5 The Council also operates the Primary Authority scheme and will have regard to guidance issued by the Local Better Regulation Office in carrying out enforcement activity within the scope of the scheme.

6.6 Further details of the Principles of Better Regulation, the Regulators' Compliance Code, the Primary Authority scheme and priority regulatory outcomes can be found in the relevant Departmental Enforcement Policies.

6.7 The Code, the priority regulatory outcomes, the primary authority scheme and the Principles of Better Regulation do not apply to enforcement activity relating to planning, listed buildings, advertisements, protected trees or building control.

7.0 EXPECTATIONS OF BUSINESS

7.1 In their own interests, and in order to avoid the need for enforcement action, businesses are expected:

- to be proactive in seeking advice
- to be open in disclosing information to the Council when required
- to be cooperative and willing to discuss problems

8.0 OBSTRUCTION OF OFFICERS AND OFFICERS' POWERS OF ENTRY

8.1 Enforcement Officers have a wide variety of duties, many of which need them to act as investigators similar to Tax Inspectors, Revenue and Customs officers and police officers. To enable them to act effectively, the law has given strong powers of entry, seizure and inspection. If individuals or companies obstruct officers or do not provide the requested information, the law also imposes punishments. Officers rarely have to use these powers, but for them to be effective the Council will continue to uphold and support them.

8.2 Officers will use their powers of entry only when necessary to effect an inspection of the premises or in the process of an investigation. The Council will **always** actively support officers acting in good faith, including prosecuting those individuals who obstruct or assault officers during investigations or inspections.

8.3 When the legislation allows, an officer may examine premises and articles, take photographs, remove articles, take samples or require information and may in some instances be accompanied by other persons. In appropriate cases an officer may seek a warrant from a Magistrates' court to gain entry into premises.

8.4 An officer will be expected to explain both the justification and the legal basis for the above actions upon demand.

9.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND IDENTIFICATION

9.1 All enforcement officers are required to carry identification in the form of an "Authority to Enter" card bearing their photograph. If an officer does not show his/her card, he or she may be asked to show it by anyone who is

requested to allow entry. If no card is produced, entry may be legitimately refused. If a member of the public has any doubt about the officer's identity, he/she may telephone the Council on 0118 937 3737 to confirm this.

10.0 SHARED ENFORCEMENT ROLE

10.1 Enforcement officers investigating breaches of the law must consider whether there is a shared or wider enforcement role. In some instances Council Officers from one Section work closely with officers of other Sections, or the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Health and Safety Executive, the medical profession and others. Officers will respect confidentiality so far as it is appropriate to do so, and will not divulge any information which is not relevant to the case in question. However, the Council has a duty to inform certain government bodies of statutory notifications, for example, reporting certain accidents or occupational diseases to the Health & Safety Executive, or notices of intended prosecutions to the Office of Fair Trading.

10.2 If another agency or authority is the enforcing authority for a particular activity, officers will inform them of any contraventions they observe during the performance of their duties; for example, officers must consult the Fire Authority before serving a statutory notice to provide or improve means of escape in a house in multiple occupation. When appropriate, enforcement issues are referred to other agencies. For example:

Health and Safety Executive
Emergency Services
Thames Water
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Other Local Authorities
The Environment Agency, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and other Government Departments and Agencies

10.3 Confidentiality, data-protection and information-sharing are covered in detail in separate Council policies with reference to the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

11.0 PROVISION FOR INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

11.1 This enforcement policy has taken into account the interests of consumers and businesses in Reading. Visits to businesses sometimes occur out of normal working hours to cope with their extended operating hours. Similarly, many residents are only available in the evenings and visits are often arranged for mutual convenience. Where possible, interpreters and translators will

accompany officers where business persons, consumers and residents are unable to communicate in English.

12.0 CHOICE OF APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

12.1 Compliance should normally be achieved through informal action such as letters or giving advice. Where this does not result in compliance, or in more serious instances, formal enforcement action will be considered, e.g. issuing a statutory notice, offering a formal caution, or prosecution. The Code for Crown Prosecutors will be taken into account, among other factors, in deciding whether a caution or prosecution is appropriate.

12.2

(a) Informal action includes:

(i) Educational Courses
(ii) Giving Advice
(iii) Visits to Check
(iv) Warning Letters
(vi) Consideration Notices
(vii) Undertakings

(b) Formal Action includes:

(i) Notice of Intention
(ii) Works Notices
(iii) Abatement Notices
(iv) Improvement Notices
(v) Works in default
(vi) Prohibition Notices
(vii) Control orders
(viii) Closing Orders
(ix) Seizure and Detention
(x) Simple Cautions
(xi) Enforcement Notices and other Notices under the Town and Country Planning Acts
(xii) Injunction
(xii) Revocation of licence
(xiii) Fixed Penalty Notices
(xiv) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Contracts
(xiv) Prosecution

12.3 More information on different types of enforcement action can be found within each Service's enforcement Policy where appropriate.

13.0 WHO DECIDES WHAT ENFORCEMENT ACTION IS TAKEN?

13.1 For less serious infringements of the law, decisions about the most appropriate course of action may be made by the enforcement officer(s). Decisions are based upon professional judgment, legal guidelines, statutory codes of practice and priorities set by the Council and/or Central Government.

13.2 For more serious offences (where the nature of the offence points towards prosecution, simple caution and/or seizure), decisions about enforcement, may be taken by Enforcement / Investigating Officer(s)and/or senior managers from the relevant Section, and the Head of Legal Services where appropriate.

14.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

14.1 All officers are required to adhere to this policy. Managers, including Team Leaders, are required to monitor the implementation of the policy by enforcement officers and make any necessary suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Any variance from the policy should be reported to the appropriate Service Manager who will ensure that it is addressed in the Service Plan, and that the necessary training is given to the officer(s) concerned.

14.2 This Policy will be reviewed when there is any significant change in legislation or other circumstances which affect its effectiveness and validity.

15.0 APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS

15.1 The Council has published its Corporate Appeals and Complaints Procedures, which can be found on the Council's web-site: www.reading.gov.uk, where copies of this Policy are also available. In addition, most legislation that we enforce has an in-built appeals procedure whenever formal enforcement action is taken. These procedures will be explained as appropriate. Complaints may also be made to the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk).

15.2 In addition to the corporate complaints procedure any person can take up their complaint with the Service Manager or Service Director in the first instance, should they so wish. Paper copies of this Policy may also be obtained from the relevant Service Director, and comments on the Policy should also be made to the Director. Copies will be made available on request in Braille, large type or in languages other than English where this is a reasonable requirement.

APPENDIX 3

FOOD ENFORCEMENT POLICY

CONTENTS

Chapter	Subject	Page
1	Introduction	27
2	Policy Statement	27
3	The Approach to Enforcement	27
4	Practical Implementation of the Policy	29
5	Maintaining a High Quality Service	32
6	Enforcement Procedure	33
7	Review of the Policy	40

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reading Borough Council, as a "food authority", has a duty to enforce within its area the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 (the Act) (as amended), the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (FSHER 2013), a series of regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 being implemented into UK legislation and other associated legislation. The Council carries out this duty by employing suitably qualified staff who are authorised to enforce the requirements of the legislation listed above. In developing this enforcement procedure, the Council has had regard to the guidance in the Codes of Practice issued by The Food Standards Agency (FSA).

1.2 While the Corporate enforcement policy sets out the general approach to enforcement throughout the council, and recommends that specific procedures should be developed to enforce particular pieces of legislation, this Food Enforcement Policy outlines how council officers will enforce Food law.

1.3 The policy covers the following:

(a) Policy Statement

(b) The Approach to Enforcement

(c) Practical Arrangements for Implementing the Policy

(d) Maintaining a High Quality Service

(e) Enforcement Procedure

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 The Council has made effective arrangements to enforce the Act, the FSHER 2013 and all associated regulations and codes of practice, with the aim of ensuring that all food and drink intended for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health and safety of consumers, and is packaged and marketed within labelling and compositional requirements.

2.2 Should a member of the public or business wish to seek advice or make a complaint under the provisions of the Act, the Council will provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service for the handling of the enquiry in accordance with the Council's service standards.

3. THE APPROACH TO ENFORCEMENT

3.1 The introduction of the FSHER 2013 formalises the requirement for enforcing authorities to ensure that operators of food businesses produce an effective documented management system for food that takes into account hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) when dealing with food issues.

3.2 This has resulted in increased demands on enforcement officers who have to assess the effectiveness of the documented system, and also on the operators of food businesses and food handlers who are now required to demonstrate their knowledge of how to prepare, store and present food in a safe manner so as not to pose a risk to health. A wide variety of statutory and non-statutory guidance exists to assist in the interpretation and compliance of the law.

3.3 The Council carries out its duties on a risk rating basis and applies the law in a proportionate and transparent manner. To this end the Council will:

3.3.1 Enforce and execute the provisions of the Act, the FSHER 2013 and associated Regulations.

3.3.2 Register all food businesses as required by legislation.

3.3.3 Inspect food premises with a frequency determined by an assessment of the potential risks guided by the Food Law Code of Practice issued by the FSA.

3.3.4 Make consistent enforcement decisions in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 6 of this policy.

3.3.5 Comply with official guidance issued by FSA and where applicable, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Health (DH).

3.3.6 Liaise with the other food authorities in the area through the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food Liaison Group, and through the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Food Focus Group to ensure a consistent and agreed approach in dealing with food safety and food standards issues respectively.

3.3.7 Participate in an inter authority auditing programme with other Local Authorities in the region for food safety and food standards.

3.3.8 Liaise with the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton Food Sampling Group to agree a national, regional and local sampling programme of microbiological food sampling. Liaise with TSSE, Hampshire and Worcestershire laboratories to participate in regional and where available national food standards sampling programmes. The Council also shares its local sampling programmes with TSSE.

3.3.9 Investigate all cases and outbreaks of food poisoning based on risk and the single case protocol which details which organisation (the Local Authority or Thames Valley Public Health England (TVPHE)) will investigate which each organism. Liaison with the Thames Valley Infectious Disease Group ensures a consistent approach when dealing with individual cases or outbreaks of food poisoning.

3.3.10 Follow the principles of the Primary Authority (PA) scheme as set out tin the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.

3.3.11 Where a business with an outlet in Reading has a PA in another area then the Authority will search the PA register for any additional information about the business, an inspection plan which directs the inspection, any PA advice given to the business which indicates that this area of the inspection has been approved by the PA. Feedback will be provided to the PA as it directs. Any business with a PA where enforcement is required will be carried out with the knowledge of the primary authority. Depending on the type of enforcement action an enforcement notification will be made to the primary authority register.

3.3.12 Actively promote the PA scheme, engage new PA businesses, allocate officers to work with them who will create a work plan for each

business to achieve their goals. The Authority will work with other enforcement authorities to ensure businesses are protected from inconsistent or unreasonable enforcement, provided with a critical friend and a communication bridge to other enforcement authorities. Where there is a local failure at the business or deviation from the agreed policy, the authority cannot defend the business against enforcement action.

3.3.13 Where there is no primary authority for food standards then the home authority principle is applied to complaints and enquiries where food does not originate in Reading.

3.3.14 Businesses based in Reading with no PA arrangements will be actively encouraged to have one and only a basic Home Authority service is provided where food is unsafe to stay on the market.

3.3.15 Ensure the continued development of all its enforcement officers and encourage officers to keep up to date on food safety and food standards issues.

3.3.16 Deal effectively and appropriately with all food incidents including food hazards and food fraud on a localised and non- localised scale to ensure the appropriate persons are notified of incident and the incident is reduced to a safe level.

3.3.17 Provide training and education to food businesses to help them comply with their legal requirements and ensure their food is safe.

3.3.18 Follow the brand standard guidance for the operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Issue a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) sticker to those businesses that fall within the scheme. Consider appeals of ratings, provide a mechanism for rerating on payment of a fee

4. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF THE POLICY

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

4.1.1 Pro-active Inspections

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

(b) Most food businesses serving open food or high risk food will be given a rating sticker at the end of the visit of between zero and 5 to reflect the food hygiene at the premises based on the code of practice risk rating for hygiene, structure and confidence in management. This information is available on the web and also a sticker on the window /door. New businesses will be inspected and rated as usual. Unannounced re-ratings will be made within 3 months of payment of a fee.

(c) Category A, B or not broadly compliant C food hygiene and category A or not broadly compliant category B food standards will be inspected using the existing system of inspection, partial inspection or audit approach. The parameters of the risk rating can be changed during an inspection, partial inspection or audit.

(d) Category C food hygiene or category B food standards premises that are considered broadly compliant for food hygiene or food standards may, at every other inspection date have an intervention such as a verification or surveillance visit rather than a full inspection, partial inspection or audit. At the verification /surveillance visit premises can be moved on to show a new inspection date but the values of the parameters which make up the risk rating will remain unchanged. As a new Food Hygiene Rating assessment cannot be made on these visits, it is unlikely that verification/surveillance visits will be made as a proactive visit.

(e) Category D food hygiene premises may receive an official control such as a full inspection, partial inspection, audit or verification/surveillance visit and on every other visit a non-official control such as education and advice. As the FHRS score cannot be changed or altered in the way it is made up as a result of a verification/surveillance or non-official control visit then it is unlikely that these forms of proactive inspection will be used unless the business does not fall within the FHRS scheme.

(f) Category E food hygiene or category C food standards can be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy such as a self-assessment questionnaire. Where the business is still required to have a FHRS score an inspection will be carried out by an authorised officer. Where the business does not fall within the FHRS then a Regulatory Support Officer or a newly qualified authorised officer will visit the premises to assess if the type of food served at the business has changed and complete a low risk questionnaire with the business. Childminders are also not part of the FHRS scheme. These businesses are sent a low risk questionnaire. Any business that does not return its questionnaire is visited by a Regulatory Support Officer. Premises where large quantities of food are prepared or stored or high standards of food control are maintained may be subject to inspection or verification and surveillance visits to ensure the premises has not substantially changed.

(g) Certain premises that produce meat, fish, dairy or egg based food for other businesses will be covered by the product specific establishment regulations in EC Regulation 853/2004 for food hygiene. These premises are inspected as dictated by the risk rating.

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

4.1.2 Reactive Inspections

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

4.1.3 Food Incidents

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

4.1.4 Sampling

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

4.1.5 Imported Food

(a) As an inland authority for the sale of imported food, the authority could carry out inspection of the food as part of the food premises inspections.

(b) Imported food may fail to have the correct documentation or labelling or the authorised officer may suspect the food is unfit for human consumption. In cases where there is insufficient documentation or labelling officers will make sufficient reasonable enquiries to ascertain correct documentation and labelling. Where an authorised is satisfied that the food is suspected of failing to meet the requirements of the food safety legislation, the food will be sampled.

(c) Where sufficient documentation and labelling is produced to satisfy the requirements of the authorised officer the food will be released. Where there is insufficient documentation the action will be taken on a risk to public health based approach.

(d) Where food fails to meet food safety requirements steps will be taken to ensure it does not re enter the food chain in its current state in the UK.

4.1.6 Education & Training

Officers actively encourage food handlers to participate in food hygiene training to expand their knowledge and understanding of food safety issues. All inspections involve some form of education/training, which is to be provided during on-site discussions concerning food preparation procedures and by offering advice and information on matters requiring attention. We run regular training courses for food businesses in food hygiene. Additionally, where significant changes are made to food legislation the team will work with the Communications Team to update food businesses on legislative changes and local initiatives.

4.1.7 Enforcement Action

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

4.2 Enforcement in Council-owned food premises

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

4.3 Who will implement the policy?

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

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

5. MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

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

5.1.1 Professionalism

(a) The Council ensures that all authorised officers have access to appropriate professional training and other resources required in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and competence.

(b) The Lead Food Officers (Licensing, Food & Safety Manger and Principal EHO (Food)) will monitor the performance of authorised officers.

5.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of the policy

(a) The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food) will monitor the following aspects of the Policy:

(i) Compliance with agreed targets for pro-active inspections

(ii) Compliance with agreed targets for reactive inspections/complaints

(iii) Compliance with agreed targets for written reports following inspections

(iv) The number of requests for service received year to year

(v) The number of food incidents received year to year

(vi) The number of sampling initiatives carried out year to year

(vii) The number of training courses and candidates run year to year

(viii) The results of course evaluation sheets from year to year

(ix) The results of inter-authority auditing

(x) The number and nature of complaints made against the service

(xi) The results of specific target monitoring i.e. Number of businesses that have implemented a documented food safety management system.

(b) Specific actions to achieve these aims are detailed in the Food Service Plan.

6. ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE

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

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

6.2 INFORMAL ACTION

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

6.2.1 No action

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

6.2.2 Verbal Advice

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

6.2.3 Written Warning and advice

(a) During or on completion of an inspection the authorised officer will discuss as far as possible with the operator of the business, any problems that are identified and will explain what is necessary to rectify the problem.

(b) After all visits to food businesses an inspection report form will be left with the person in charge of the business at the time of the visit. The inspection report form will detail the main findings and make a clear distinction between legal requirements and recommendations. The

form will contain details of areas inspected, person seen at the premises, visiting authorised officer, their contact details, date/ time of the visit and clear contact details regarding an Officers manager to allow a food business operator to take a matter further if they are not happy with the response of an officer.

(c) In certain circumstances and particularly if the food business operator was not present at the visit to the food premises and it is known that the food business operator is not based at this premises a letter or a copy of the inspection report form will be sent to his office. This is particularly appropriate where there are legal requirements that must be carried out and it is a multi site business.

(d) Where a letter is sent out after the visit, the letter will detail the hazards identified by enforcement officers during their inspection and the remedial action required. A clear distinction will be made between matters that are legal requirements and those that are recommendations and the measures that are required to secure compliance with the legislation.

(e) It will be clear from both the inspection report and any subsequent letter that the operator can approach the Section for additional advice/assistance should it be necessary.

6.2.4 Follow up visits

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

6.3 FORMAL ACTION

6.3.1 In deciding what enforcement action is necessary, an authorised officer will have regard to the nature and severity of the contravention and the effects on public health. Regard will also be given to the food safety history of the business and attitude of the food business operator in complying with legislative requirements. Formal action will be instigated where informal action has failed to ensure that a food business operator has performed the duties imposed on them by relevant food safety legislation. A decision on what type of action to take may not necessarily be made at the time of the inspection.

6.3.2 Improvement Notices & Hygiene Improvement Notices

(a) An authorised Officer may consider the use of an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice as appropriate in any of the following or combination of the following situations:

(i) where there is a history of non-compliance or delay in compliance of food safety legislation;

(ii) where formal action is proportionate to the risk to public health; or

(iii) where it is believed that for an informal approach is not likely to be effective.

(b) A Hygiene Improvement Notice gives the food business operator on whom the notice is to be served a minimum of 14 days in which to make a representation in respect of works improvement required. An Improvement Notice sets no minimum time for compliance with the notice and is designed to be used with the Food Information Regulations 2014

(c) An Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice will clearly detail which regulations have been contravened and what remedial action is necessary. Information will be sent explaining the recipient's right to appeal. The notice will specify the time within which compliance is required. The time allotted will be dependent on the nature of the problem, the public health risks involved and the availability of the solution.

(d) An authorised officer serving an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice must be satisfied that they have adequate evidence to successfully prosecute for non-compliance should the situation arise.

(e) The authorised officer will visit as soon as is reasonably practicable following expiry of the time allowed for compliance to check whether the contraventions of food safety legislation have been remedied. If they have not, an offence has been committed and the investigating officer shall prepare a report for the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services.

(f) The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services will decide whether it is necessary and appropriate to instigate prosecution proceedings in respect of the food business operator subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied as to the available evidence.

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

(a) Authorised Officers may serve the above notices where there is an imminent risk to public health. The notice will either:

(i) prohibit the use of the entire premises or part of the premises;

(ii) prevent the use of certain equipment; or

(iii) prohibit a particular process or treatment

(b) The notice and subsequent order will require immediate closure of the premises, or the cessation of a process or use of specific equipment.

(c) Following the service of an Emergency Prohibition Notice (EPN) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice (HEPN) the local authority must within three days apply to a Magistrates' Court for an Emergency Prohibition Order (EPO) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) respectively. Where an order is not applied for the proprietor may claim compensation for loss of earnings arising as a result of the EPN or HEPN. The food business operator will have one complete day's notice of the Council's intention to make the application to the court. During the closure period frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.

(d) The EPN, HEPN, EPO, HEPO and accompanying notes will contain the following information:

(i) The name of the business and its address;

(ii) The matters that are considered to pose an imminent risk;

(iii) Details as to how to request that the premises may be allowed to open following the service of the EPO or HEPO;

(iv) The circumstances that will entitle the Food Business Operator to compensation for any losses following the service of the Emergency Prohibition Notice or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice.

(e) The Council will apply to the Court for its costs from the Food Business Operator in making the application and the work carried out beyond that of a normal inspection.

(f) An authorised officer may serve a Notice seeking voluntary closure of the food business if the officer believes there is an imminent risk of injury to health as in the emergency prohibition procedures and he has confidence in the management of the business that they will not reopen until the imminent risk to health is removed. In these circumstances there is no opportunity for the business to seek compensation from the Council for loss of earnings as there is no need to apply to the court for confirmation of the notice in the form of an order.

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

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

(a) If a food business operator is successfully prosecuted for breaches of relevant food law and satisfactory evidence is provided to the court that the business continues to pose a risk of injury to health, the food authority can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Prohibition Order. If successful, the food business operator and/or manager are prohibited from running a food business.

(b) If a person is prohibited from managing a food business the information is circulated nationally via the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) to reduce the likelihood of that person setting up business in another area. If the Prohibition Order has been lifted the food authority will notify the CIEH as soon as is reasonably possible.

6.3.5 Inspection, Detention and Seizure of Suspect Food

(a) Any food that fails to meet food safety requirements or has not been produced, processed or distributed in compliance with the hygiene regulations may be detained to allow further time for investigation or seized. When food has been detained or seized the food business operator will be provided with written notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

(b) The food will be presented to a JP as soon as possible but within two days, when a decision on further action will be made. This two day

period may be extended if necessary to ensure that parties attend and be represented if they choose.

(c) A food condemnation notification will be given to the person in charge of the food when the officer intends to have the food dealt with by a Justice of the Peace (JP).

6.3.6 Suspension/withdrawal of approval or conditional approval

(a) Any premises that has received approval under EC Regulation 853/2004 by the Food & Safety Team is given an approval number based on the stem of RG followed by the next numerical value which is notified to the FSA.

(b) The approval will be suspended or withdrawn if the business fails to comply with the relevant hygiene regulations.

(c) The business may be given a conditional approval (including approval number) rather than full approval on the first inspection after application. The conditional approval allows the businesses to trade provided if it meets certain conditions within six months. In order to obtain conditional approval the business must meet the structural requirements and produces a commitment to implement the other issues specified in writing within six months of the granting of the conditional approval. When all the requirements have been met an approval will be granted. If the requirements of the conditional approval are not met within six months of the granting of the conditional approval, the conditional approval for the business will be suspended or withdrawn.

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

6.3.7 Remedial Action Notice

(a) Authorised Environmental Health staff can serve a Remedial Action Notice on a food business operator that operates a food premises that is subject to approval. The notice will provide provision for prohibiting the use of equipment, any part of the establishment, the imposition of conditions upon, or prohibiting or reducing the rate of processing of the food. This Notice may be used in the following situations:

(i) When the rate of operation is detrimental to the ability of the business to comply with the regulations;

(ii) On a continuing serious breach of the hygiene regulations that gives rise to a risk to public health.

6.3.8 Prosecution

(a) Food handlers and the owners of food businesses found to be contravening food safety and food standards legislation will be given reasonable opportunity to comply. However, in some situations the seriousness of the offence may be such that prosecution is appropriate. The following circumstances may result in prosecution proceedings being brought:

(i) The alleged offence involve a serious breach of the law such that public health, safety or wellbeing is or has been put at risk;

(ii) The alleged offence involves a failure to correct a serious potential risk potential risk to food after a reasonable opportunity to correct the matter;

(iii) The offence involves a failure to comply in full or part with the requirements of a statutory Notice;

(iv) There is a history of similar offences relating to risk to public health

(b) In such cases, the Council will consider:

(i) The seriousness of the offence;

(ii) The previous history of compliance with relevant legislation;

(iii) The ability of the defendant to establish a due diligence defence;

(iv) The availability and capability of witnesses and the evidence available.

6.3.9 Deciding Whether to Prosecute

(a) Not every contravention of the law should be prosecuted through the Courts. The Authority will weigh the seriousness of the offence (taking into account the harm done or the potential for harm arising from the offence) with other relevant factors, including the financial circumstances of the defendant, mitigating circumstances and other public interest criteria.

(b) The Council will have regard to The Code for Crown Prosecutors issued under Section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 in deciding whether to prosecute in any particular case. Thus, before starting proceedings, the Head of Legal Services must be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of a conviction based on the evidence (that is, there must be sufficient admissible, substantial and reliable evidence to secure a conviction). In addition, the Council will balance, carefully and fairly, the various public interest criteria against the seriousness of the offence. These public interest criteria include:-

(i) the likely sentence (if convicted);

(ii) previous convictions and conduct of the defendant;

(iii) whether there are grounds for believing the offence is likely to be repeated;

(iv) the prevalence of the offence in the area;

(v) whether the offence was committed as a result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding;

(vi) any delay between the offence taking place and the date of trial;

(vii) the likely effect the prosecution will have on the defendant;

(viii) whether the defendant has put right the loss or harm caused.

(c) The Council will have regard to the Regulators Code which came into force in 2014 and must be applied to food law. The enforcement approach must be reasonable, proportionate, risk based and consistent with good practice. It must consider the economic impact and minimise costs as well as encourage compliance.

(d) If a number of offences have been committed and prosecution is deemed to be appropriate, then in selecting the offences for prosecution, regard will be had to the need to reflect the seriousness of the matter and to give the Court adequate sentencing powers to deal with the matter appropriately.

6.3.10 Simple Caution

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

(b) The following conditions should be fulfilled before a caution is administered:

(i) There must be evidence of the alleged offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction;

(ii) The alleged offender must admit the offence;

(iii) The alleged offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give an informed consent to being cautioned.

(c) If there is insufficient evidence to consider taking a prosecution, then a simple caution must not be considered.

(d) There is no legal obligation for a person to accept the offer of a simple caution and no pressure should be applied to the Food Business Operator to accept one. If the alleged offender refuses to accept a simple caution a prosecution will normally be pursued.

7. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

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

Appendix 4
Internal Audit Action Plan

Ref	Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response	Responsible Officer(s)	Target Date
1	Without effective document control, the service might not be able to provide the necessary information to deal with queries and confidently report on accurate information.	The service should : 1) include a procedure for changes to risk ratings in the Food Premise Inspections policy detailing the sign off process which should be evidenced on the completed inspection documentation. 2) Ensure Business Support officers complete a check of accuracy on each document to ensure information being entered into Civica is correct and reflects the inspection and is authorised by way of signature on the report itself.	**Priority 3**	1) There will be a procedure for document control which will include the changes in risk rating and the evidence for the change in risk rating. There will be a system of proper recording on the database. 2. A sample of the work of Business Support Officers will be audited on a quarterly basis by the Principal EHO and the work of the enforcement officers will be checked at 121s.	Aoife Gallagher & Lisa Richards	31st December 2019
2	Not completing initial inspections within the 28 day timeframe may cause potential increased risk to consumer protection and the reputation of the Authority due to possible changes in the type and nature of business operation and the food safety management controls in place	The Food and Safety Team should carry out interventions at all food hygiene establishments in the area, at a frequency which is not less than that determined under the intervention rating scheme set out in the FLCoP.	Priority 2	The performance of officers is closely monitored to ensure that high risk inspections are carried out within their due date. Any high risk businesses will also be added to this category to ensure that they are inspected within this timeframe. Under the current team working conditions it will not be possible to fully comply with this target and a target of 75% of the unrated businesses(specifically high risk businesses) are to be inspected within the 28 days.	Aoife Gallagher & Lisa Richards	On-going

3	Where regular monitoring is not undertaken, there is a risk that the data reported and used to plan interventions may not be accurate and not compliant with the FLCoP minimum frequency intervention guidelines.	In order to improve the monitoring of food premise data it is recommended that a quarterly report is devised and used for monitoring and performance monitoring purposes. It is suggested that this report can be reviewed to assess performance levels.	Priority 3	A quarterly report will be run by the Principal EHO and 10% of all inspections in that quarter will be used for monitoring and performance monitoring. This process will be documented within the updated internal monitoring procedure.	Aoife Gallagher & Lisa Richards	31st December 2019
4	There is a risk of non-compliance to food law if control activates and procedures are not used to verify the effectiveness of official controls in place.	The service should : 1) Revise the Internal Monitoring procedure to ensure it is fit for purpose and reviewed annually 2) Ensure all internal monitoring activities are carried as described in the Internal Monitoring Procedure.	Priority 2	The internal monitoring procedure will be updated, all managers and staff within the team will be made aware of the changes. Thereafter all internal monitoring procedures will then be carried out in accordance with the updated procedure.	Aoife Gallagher & Lisa Richards	31st December 2019
5	Failure to have a clear policy and guidance for staff increases the risk that Officers are not able to properly protect themselves or the council from accusations of not acting properly or fairly which could result in action being taken against or reputational damage to the Council.	The service should ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Staff Code of Conduct to declare any financial and non-financial interests. The service may wish to remind all staff on an annual basis of this requirement.	Priority 3	We will use the corporate staff code of conduct form when recruitment takes place. We will then link this form to the annual appraisal so that it is reviewed annually in case there are changes in circumstances within that year.	Aoife Gallagher & Lisa Richards	On-going

APPENDIX 5

Food & Safety Work Plan Apr 2022 – Mar 2023

This Work plan identifies the work streams currently undertake by the Food & Safety Team which sits within Public Protection. This work plan covers both annual recurring work (A) and individual, one off projects (O) that fall within the remit of the Food & Safety team and have been identified as action required. In collating this plan consideration has been given to present and emerging risks including arising from known legislative changes. It does not account for future legislative changes that have not been published at this time. This work plan covers the period April 2022 through to March 2023 and takes into account the FSA Recovery plan in service delivery. Work streams have been identified as Statutory (S) or Non-statutory (NS).
Work streams have been RAG rated according to priority with Red considered highest priority.
The FSA recovery plan can be found in Appendix 6 of the Food Service Plan 22-23

S / NS	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
S	**Food Hygiene Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2023. Premises inspected in accordance with FSA Guidance on Service return No of premises due/overdue inspection for this year = 1410**	*Requirement of Food Law COP.* *Service Plan Priority / Target*	*Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food. Education of local businesses*	*In line with FSA guidance priority inspections up to 31/03/23 are - Unrated, Cat A, Cat B (overdue) High Risk Cat C/D Overdue.* *Due to Covid targets will remain under review.* *Aim:* *100% A premises*	PEHO – Management of inspection lists, monitoring of inspection and consultation with officers - 20 Days **(0.08 FTE)** Inspections (avg 3 hours incl officer administration) = 4677	Induction training of new officers in line with Food Law COP. All officers to maintain Food CPD through ABC online training and available courses	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	New registered premises per year = c. 230			*90% B Premises 50% Unrated premises inspected*	Hours **(2.9 FTE)**							
S	**Food Hygiene Revisits and subsequent enforcement of non-compliant premises.** Approximately 40% of premises are being found to be non-compliant. Estimate 656 premises. Ongoing non-compliance will require issue of formal notices and potentially lead to prosecution.	*Food Law COP*	*Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.*	*Increase in FHRS at re-rate or next inspection. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with. Premises revisited on time in accordance with notice expiry date. Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.*	PEHO – Consultation /Review of notices – 5 days **(0.02 FTE)** Inspecting Officers (1 day per premises avg) = 4750 Hours **(2.8 FTE)**	Induction training of new officers in line with Food Law COP. All officers to maintain Food CPD through ABC online training and available courses	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
S	**Ongoing Enforcement including issue of notices.** Resulting from ongoing or immediate non-compliance where a risk to public health and safety is presented. Approx 55 per annum	*Food Law COP*	*Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.*	*Increase in FHRS at re-rate or next inspection. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with. Premises revisited on time in accordance with notice expiry date. Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.*	Officers (incl review by second officer) 1.5 Days per Notice/Premises **0.36 FTE**	All officers to maintain Food CPD through ABC online training and available courses. Introduction and shadowing for new officers prior to authorisation. Refresher training for existing	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**
S	**Approval of Premises Process applications for new approval activities. Inspect and review**	*Food Law COP*	*Approval activities authorised and published. Food products accurate*	*Applications and inspections carried out within SOP timeframe. Full approval awarded after*	Average 2 new premises a year (min 5 days for each new premises) Inspection to existing	Induction training of new officers in line with Food Law COP. All officers to maintain	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	existing approved premises.		*ly labelled and traceable.*	*max 6 months or removed.*	premises (6) at 1 day each. Total 16 days / 44.5 Hours **(0.03 FTE)**	Food CPD through ABC online training and available courses						
S	**Food Hygiene Re-Rating visits (FHRS) for premises not overdue/due inspection** Avg 30 requests received per year	*FHRS Brand Standard*	*Increase in FHRS and improved compliance with FH requirements. Increased consumer confidence in premises*	*All inspections carried out within 3 months.* *Applications for premises that are overdue/due inspection will be refunded to business.*	0.5 days per premises (pre & post admin, inspection and liaison with business) 15 officer Days = 111.3 Hours **(0.07 FTE)**	Review of updated Brand Standard	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**
S	**Respond to FHRS Appeals** Estimate 10 per annum	*FHRS Brand Standard*	*Appeals handled in accordance with Brand Standard*	*Appeals responded to within timeframe. Appeals resolved without*	PEHO – 1 day per appeal (10 days) Officer time - 0.5 day per appeal (5 days) =	Familiarisation with updated Brand Standard.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
			. Maintain confidence in Food Hygiene Inspections	*moving to Corporate Complaint.*	111.3 Hours **(0.07 FTE)**							
S	**Food Standards Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2023.** No of due and overdue inspections = 1326 New registered premises per annum approx. 230	*Food Law COP.* *Service Plan Priority / Target*	*Premises subject to standards requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe, correctly labelled food which does not mislead the consumer.*	*In line with FSA guidance priority inspections up to 31/03/23 are - Unrated, Cat A,* *Due to Covid targets will remain under review.* *Aim:* *100% A premises*	EH/TS Officers - 1.5 hours per inspection (including officer administration) Total officer hours - 2334 Hours **(1.38 FTE)**	Training to all officers in new PPDS and calorie labelling requirements. Training for all unauthorised /new officers in Food Standards inspections	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
			Education of local businesses									
S	**Food Standard Revisits.** Estimate 30% of premises required revisits following decline in standards and new legislation. Approx. 467	*Food Law COP*	*Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve the level of information provided to consumers and ensure they can make an informed choice.*	*Increase in compliance and confidence in management at next inspection. Revisits carried out in line with contravention deadline. Notices reassessed for compliant within identified timescale. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with.*	(EH/TS) 0.5 days per inspections. = 1456 Hours **(0.86 FTE)**	Training to all officers in FIRIN Notices	01/4/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
				Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.								
S	**Food, Water & Environmental Sampling (Microbiology)** Average 150 samples per annum.	*Food Law COP Sampling Plan Local/National sampling programme*	*Ensuring food offered for sale is microbiologically safe and does not present a risk to health. Reduction in incidence of food borne illness.*	*Unsatisfactory samples followed up with further intervention and re-sampling where necessary.*	S/EHO's – 25 days preparation and sampling = 185.5 Hours SEHO – Quarterly Meetings attended. (0.5 days) = 14.84 Hours PEHO – Allocation and monitoring (3 days) = 22.26 Hours Total = 222.6 Hours **(0.13 FTE)**	Practical training and authorisation for new officers. All officers to undertake sampling to maintain competence	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / NS	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
S	**Food Standards Sampling** Estimate 50 samples per annum	*Food Law COP Sampling Plan Local/National sampling programme*	*Ensuring food offered for sale is correctly labelled, safe and does not mislead the consumer. Reduction in food complaints and referrals.*	*Unsatisfactory samples followed up with further intervention and re-sampling where necessary.*	SCPO – 20 days preparation and sampling = 148.4 Hours PEHO – 2 days monitoring = 14.84 Hours Total = 163 Hours **(0.1 FTE)**	Practical training and authorisation for new officers. All officers to undertake sampling to maintain competence	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO PTSO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**
NS	**National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Administration**	*Discretionary function to take part in scheme. All LA's in England participate. Expectation of*	*Enabling consumer to assess food hygiene and safety. Provide consumer confiden*	*Premises details uploaded to FHRS website fortnightly. Display of correct premises information*	Business Support – Fortnightly submission of ratings 24 days per annum PEHO – 5 days per annum housekeepin	New Business support staff trained in data maintenance and upload. Officers refreshed on data maintenance and recording	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO Business Support Manager	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		Customers.	*ce in Reading businesses*		g. = 37 Hours **(0.02 FTE)**							
S	**Annual FSA Return (LAEMS) Temperature check returns**	*Food Law COP*	*Transparent Food Hygiene and Standards performance.*	*LAEMS Return or equivalent accurately completed within time limit*	PEHO - Housekeeping & reporting (10 days) = 74 Hours **(0.04 FTE)** Business Support - 5 days	Training on Civica App and LAEMS required for PEHO and Business Support	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**
S	**Drafting, Implementation and maintenance of Policies and Procedures, plus ongoing annual review.** Following update and reissue of the new COP in March 2021 a full	Food Law COP requires each LA to have written policies and procedures in place for the following: • Approval • Food Business	Enabling staff to efficiently, fairly and transparently conduct their role and respond to service requests and	Documented procedures in line with Food Law COP.	PEHO/SEHO - 5 days per procedure, plus additional days for sub-procedures, e.g. enforcement. Estimate 777 Hours **(0.45 FTE)**	Officer familiarisation with new areas of work.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	review and update of all documented procedures must be carried out including drafting and implementation of those not previously in place.	Establishment Database • Food Incidents and Alerts • Authorisation • Control Verification • Corporate Complaints • Food Complaints • Sampling • Equipment • Official food controls and other activities	complaints. Provision of good customer service.									

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		• Enforcement • Control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease • Information • Registration • Conflict of Interest • Sampling Policy • Enforcement Policy • Complaints Policy • Contingency Plan										

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
S	**Annual review and inspection of Cooling Towers for the prevention and control of Legionella spp.** 3 premises Development, maintenance and implementation of SOPs	Statutory duty under HSWA1974	Inspected, managed and maintained cooling towers reducing the likelihood of legionnaires disease.	All cooling towers registered and inspected. Cooling Towers risk rated 'A' inspected annually.	Officers - Inspections (including shadowing) 9 days PEHO/SEHO - SOPs, training & authorisation 5 days **0.06 FTE**	Training of new, unauthorised officers in the risks and controls relating to Legionella. Shadowed/shadowing inspections. Refresher training for existing staff.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**
	Inspection and certification of registering special treatment premises. New registrations Operator and/or	Local Govt Miscellaneous Provisions Act	Compliant premises. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	Mobile and domestic premises inspected and compliant prior to certificate being issues. Backlog of commercial premises awaiting	Inspecting officers - 2 hours per premises. **0.13 FTE**	Training of new officers in special treatment inspection including shadowed visits.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	premises) per year = Approx. 30 Backlog of existing premises = 81			inspection removed.								
S	**Special Treatment Revisits.** Approx 20% of premises are found to be non-compliant requiring further attention and enforcement action.	Local Govt Miscellaneous Provisions Act Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974	Compliant premises. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	Revisits carried out within timeframe. Legal notices complied with in accordance	1 day per premises. **0.1 FTE**	Training and refreshment of authorised and new officers in appropriate notices	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**
NS	**Review of Special Treatment certification and inspection regime. Removal of tacit consent**	Certification is currently issued without inspection of premises. Certification is	Improved compliance in premises, reduction of revisits and	New system implemented. All newly registered premises receive inspection within timeframe prior to	PEHO/SEHO – Research, drafting and implementation of new procedures. Committee Review. Training officers	Officers and Business Support trained in new system once implemented.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**O**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		timely and costly to remove once issued. Businesses should be assessed for compliance before certification to ensure risk to public health is minimised	further enforcement action. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	registration certificate being issued.	(incl. Business Support). Estimate 15 days (111 Hours) **(0.07 FTE)**							
S	**Investigation of Infectious diseases and outbreaks including: Food borne illness & Legionnaire's disease.**	National and Local Policy	Reduced incidence of infectious disease and outbreaks including food borne illness	Cases investigated in line with internal SOPs and Thames Valley single case protocol. Outbreaks investigated in line with National Guidance.	S/EHO – 0.5 days per case/outbreak = 810 Hours **(0.48 FTE)**	New officers trained in internal and local SOPs. ABC training available to all officers.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	(Excl. Covid 19) **Estimate 250 cases per year**			Service requests responded to within internal standards.								
S	**Statutory H&S return to HSE**	National Enforcer requirement for the compilation of statistics and interventions with poor performing authorities	Contribute to national enforcement statistics. Inform and develop future interventions and national policy	Return completed accurately and by deadline.	PEHO Housekeeping and return (3 days **(0.01 FTE)**	Training in Civica App (or alternative) to compile relevant data reports.	01/04/22	31/03/22	PHO	R	**Healthy Environment**	**A**
S	**Sports Ground Safety - Complete SGSA Audit**	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Annual audit completed within timeframe. Actions addressed and completed within timeframe.	Service Manager – 0.5 days PEHO – 3 days Total – **0.02 FTE**	Familiarisation of new staff with relevant SOPs.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
S	**Sports Ground Safety Inspection programme**	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Min. 3 during match inspections carried out following risk assessment process. Inspection reports provided within SOP timeframe and enforcement action taken accordingly.	Service Manager - 1.5 day PEHO - 6 days SEHO - 6 days Inspection, pre & post admin. Total 100.17 Hours **(0.06 FTE)**	Familiarisation of new staff with relevant SOPs. Shadowed visits to be completed. New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports Ground training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**
S	**Annual review and issue of Safety Certificate for Reading FC**	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Annual issue of Safety Certificate. Annual review of updated Operations Manual.	PEHO/SEHO 5 days Each = 74 Hours **(0.04 FTE)**	New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports Ground training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**
S	**Complete Review of Reading FC Operations Manual**	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Review of Operations Manual completed with written report of	PEHO/SEHO 121 Hours (17 days) for first review	New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports Ground training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**O**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		and associated legislation		review issued to Reading FC. Follow up action taken in accordance with time frame.	Follow up reviews and amendments - 7.5 days. Total 24.5 days = **0.1 FTE**							
S	**Review of Operations Manual and Issue of new Safety Certificate for Palmer Park Regulated Stand** Plus initial engagement and sent up of SAG meetings	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Established SAG Meeting schedule Clear and consistent lines of communication. Issue of new Safety Certificate.	PEHO/SEHO 121 Hours (17 days) for first review Follow up reviews and amendments - 7.5 days. SAGs - 20 hours per annum. Engagement 2 days Total = **0.13 FTE**	New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports Ground training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A/O**
S	**SAG attendance Reading FC**	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports	Structurally safe and well managed	Quarterly meetings carried out	PEHO - attendance, pre and post admin incl.	New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	sports ground	with wide attendance. TOR in place. Meetings Minuted and actions taken within timeframe.	action review and minutes. Est. 37 Hours per annum **(0.02 FTE)**	Ground training. Safety Advisory Group Training for allocated officers.					Inclusive Economy	
S	**Drafting, implementation and maintenance of SOPs for Sports Ground Safety**	Requirement of SGSA and sports ground safety regulation. Identified requirement of annual SGSA audit	Improved performance at annual SGSA audit. Officer consistency will improve customer service	Documented procedures for sports ground safety work.	PEHO/SEHO – Est. 20 days (research, drafting, implementation, review). **0.09 FTE**	New staff to undertake LCB Safety at Sports Ground training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A/O**
S	**Review and respond to Licensing consultations concerning premises licences,**	Statutory consultee	Safer Events	Representation at and contribution to Safety Advisory Group Meetings	PEHO/SEHO – attendance at monthly SAG – 6 days, incl. preparation. 18 days	Safety Advisory Group Training for allocated officers.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	events and street trading. Including attendance at SAG. Approx 100 consults per annum			Proactive review of Event documentation Liaison with Event operators and objection to events where deemed necessary.	All officers - review and respond to consultations (1 hour each) Total = 233.6 Hours **(0.14 FTE)**							
NS	**Undertake review of FH role in licensing consultations and align team, including draft and implementation of new SOPs**	Current procedure does not align with licensing objectives. Inconsistent approach to license reviews.	Improved customer service through officer consistency. Contribution to Public Safety.	New SOP implemented Database actions reflect new SOP	PEHO - 10 days. **(0.04 FTE)**	Familiarisation of all staff on new SOPs	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**O**
S	**Review and respond to consultations from planning, building control.**	Statutory Consultee. Current procedures do not allow for	Active contribution to consultations. Collaboration	New SOP implemented Database actions reflect new SOP Referral of relevant	PEHO - 5 days S/EHO - Review & Response to consultation	Familiarisation of all staff on new SOPs	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**O/A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Including liaison with departments, draft and implementation of new procedures.	a consistent or collaborative approach. Safe and compliant premises	with neighbouring teams to ensure safe and compliant premises.	premises through to Planning, Building Control Consultation on Planning and building control consultations.	s. Referral of non-compliant premises. Est. 50 per annum at 2 hours each. Total **0.08 FTE**							
S	**Imported Food (Official Controls)**	Food Law COP	Food products offered for sale will be legally compliant, properly labelled and safe to eat.	Service requests actioned within timeframe. Targetted sampling	Resourcing for individual cases included in inspections & SRs above. PEHO/SEHO – Draft and implementation of Procedures – included above.	Familiarisation of all staff on new SOPs. Training of new and existing officers on notices	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**
S	**Feed** Inspection of Feed Premises. Approx. 37 premises.	Feed Law Code of Practice	Safety and security in the food chain.	Feed premises inspected. Revisits and enforcement action for non-	RBC currently have no authorised officers available to	2 x Officers to receive bespoke training in Animal Feed Hygiene and	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	**Healthy Environment**	**O/A**

S / NS	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
			Compliant feed premises.	compliant premises.	undertake this work. Estimate 0.5 days per premises (Total 137 Hours) **0.2 FTE**	HACCP and complete competency assessment once COP updated						
NS	**Food Hygiene Training Courses.**	Improve knowledge and skills of local businesses to increase compliance with food hygiene legislation, improve FHRS score and improve local public safety	Accessible learning opportunities to local businesses, Improved food hygiene knowledge and FHRS scores. Reduction in non-compliant premises	Minimum 4 Food Hygiene Courses (Internal/External) to be carried out per year. 75% candidates successfully passed Exam.	Training officers – 1.5 days per course. SEHO – 5 days per annum to review and maintain training materials and training centre. **0.05 FTE** Business Support – 4 hours per course	New officers shadow/shadowed delivery of training course.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
					administration.							
S	**Reactive food & Safety work (service requests) (excl. Infectious disease/accidents, including Covid-19)** • Dirty food premises • Microbiological, chemical & labelling • Allergens • Health, safety & Welfare • Business advice • Covid-19	Food Law COP and FSA guidance on service return. HSWA/EAR	Ensure food on sale is safe to eat, produced hygienically, correctly labelled and does not mislead the consumer. Ensure premises are safe to work in and visit.	90% Service requests responded to within service response time.	All officers - 1 hour per SR on average. 1263 Hours **(0.74 FTE)**	Familiarisation of new officers with SOPs New officers shadow/shadowed visits to complex complaints.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Thriving Community Inclusive Economy Services Building Relationships	**A**

S / NS	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Approximately 1263 per annum.											
NS	**Paid advice visits - Food Hygiene.** Approx 10 requests per year.	Improve food hygiene compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Improved hygiene standards and compliance at first and subsequent inspection.	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after first formal inspection	S/EHO – 0.5 days per premises (incl. correspondence and preparation) **0.02 FTE**	N/A	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**
NS	**Food Standards and bespoke labelling advice (paid)** Approximately 1 request per annum	Improve food standard compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to	Improved standards and compliance of labelling and consumer	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after	SCPO – 1 day per annum **0 FTE**	N/A	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		local businesses Income generation	information. Reduction in further interventions.	next inspection. Premises subject to paid advice will require less enforcement action.								
NS	**Improve Food Hygiene & Health & Safety presence on RBC website and social media**	Modernise and improve communications with customer. Enhance transparency and accessibility of service.	Improved communications to and accessibility of service to customers. Reduction in service requests and enquiries. Improved compliance of	Develop H&S page on RBC webpage. Improve complaints service for customers. FSA complaints page removed. Publication of cooling tower register. Food Team posts on corporate Facebook/Twitter Feeds regarding food hygiene & Safety.	PEHO – initiation, review and implementation – 3 days SEHO/SCPO – 10 days **0.06 FTE**	Nominated officer(s) require familiarisation with corporate standards for publications and website	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
			food businesses.									
S	**Ensure all officers appropriately authorised and competent.** Full review of all staff competency required under new COP and new training scheme to be implemented	Food Law COP.	Service wide review of officer authorisations and delegations Review of officer competencies and skills in line with FSA new competency framework	Competent/authorised/ skilled and knowledgeable staff	PEHO – 10 days Officers – 5 days per officer (x8) **0.22 FTE**	PEHO review of new COP standards PEHO to attend FSA webinar(s) regarding new competency requirements.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	**N/A Legal requirement**	**O / A**
S	**Authorisation and Delegations Review**	Food Law COP / HSWA	Review the delegations	Delegations register is up to date	PEHO – 10 days	N/A	01/04/22	31/03/23	Matthew Golledge	R	**N/A - Legal Requirement**	**O**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	including implementation of new authorisation system for staff	Delegations Register. Service Plan Priority	register and ensure officer authorisations are up to date - as part of the corporate review of the constitution and delegations register	There are clear lines of delegated authority for officers to have the necessary powers and authority	SEHO – 10 days **0.09 FTE**							
N S	**Administration of PAPs - invoicing Updating and management of PAP register**	Service Plan Priority / Target	Cost recovery Transparency of PAP management and published advice	Invoices issued within timeframe. PAP register maintained up to date. Display of correct personnel. Enquiries and enforcement requests	PAP Officers/ PEHO – 5 days per annum Business Support – 20 days per annum **0.03 FTE**	N/A	01/04/22	30/06/22	PEHO Business Support Manager	G	N/A	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
				responded to within timeframe.								
NS	**Servicing of PAPs - Annual work plan, meetings, response to queries & enforcement, review of policies/procedures, issue of assured advice, review and update of published out of date advice** **15 PAPs for FH/FS/H&S** **Issue of PAP export Certificates**	Service Plan Priority / Target of £66,000 per annum [75% EH / 25% TS]. Projected target of £33,000.00 in 22-23	Well managed PAP service compliant with statutory guidance	Level of service aligns with requirement of statutory guidance. PAP advice up to date and reviewed within timeframe. Enquiries and enforcement actions responded to within timeframe.	75% Food & Safety PAP officers = 651 Hours per year (0.4 FTE/0.1 per quarter). Team consultation has identified this is not an accurate reflection of the time spent on PAP work including uncharged research, team meetings. It is therefore estimated that approx. **0.25 FTE** is	Inexperienced officers to complete OPSS training and familiarisation. Officer handovers for PAP changes	01/04/22	30/06/22	PEHO/ PTSO	G	N/A	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
					more accurate.							
N S	**Reading Festival - Delivery of Alfresco Award, H&S monitoring & inspection, SAG Meetings and preparation. Review of Alfresco Award and future festival delivery.**	Service Target	Safeguarding RBC residents and visitors	100% of festival food premises inspected and scored under Alfresco rating. Gold, Silver & Bronze nominees made. Non-compliant traders revisited and referred to home authority. Food Team attendance at SAG Meetings prior to and during event. H&S hazards referred to Licensing	PEHO – 10 days (incl. SAG, team meetings, admin, preparation) Officers – 63 onsite days. 5 days H&S document review Training - Officers – 10 days **0.38 FTE**	Event Safety training across Food & Safety & Licensing Teams. Nominated officers to received training in Safety Advisory Groups. Annual food hygiene consistency exercise. Pyrotechnic training.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**
N S	**Undertake SR review, including**	Service requests require	Resources directed	Service requests responded to	PEHO 1 day SEHO 2 days	N/A	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**O**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	response time, and implement triage system.	prioritisation to ensure that these are effectively dealt with in line with available resources.	to highest public health risk. Improve efficiency.	in accordance with public health risk presented. Increase in service requests responded to within timeframe.	Officers – 10 hours **0.02 FTE**						Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	
NS	**Issue of Export certificates, including development of SOPs and administration of authorisation.** Estimate <5 per annum	Chargeable service. Support of local businesses and neighbouring LAs	Export certificates issued for local businesses for fishery and limited animal products following EU Exit.	Zero rejection of export certificates at EU border.	PEHO/SEHO/ Officers – 20 days **0.09 FTE**	Review of available COP and guidance documentation. Participation in online webinars Completion of Certifying officer course Shadowing/shadowed inspections for each officer	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community Inclusive Economy	**A**
S	**Covid Response - response to**	Coronavirus regulation	Ensure that	Businesses are supported to ensure they	PEHO – Meetings	Ongoing training and familiarisatio	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	service complaints, proactive inspections and provision of business advice in line with Covid restrictions. Revisits to non-compliant premises. Attendance at internal & external meetings. Ongoing learning needs due to rapid changes in legislation.	Service Plan Priority	businesses and facilities are covid secure to support a safe return to 'normal Respond to outbreaks in line with the management control plan	are compliant with covid restrictions. Effective action is taken for non-compliance. Covid infections and outbreaks are kept to a minimum. Breaking chains of transmission and preventing and containing outbreaks	(169 Hours annually) Officers (incl. PEHO) Inspections (2 hours), revisits (3 hours) consultation (hour per week) – Est. 454 per annum Training and competency (1 hour per week/per officer) – 312 Hours Total **0.6 FTE**	n for ALL officers at all changes of legislation and guidance					Thriving Community	
S	Development, Implementation and Maintenance of Health	Health and Safety has taken a backseat for more	Competent, knowledgeable and	Documented and implemented SOPs. Staff training records.	Review, development and implementation of SOPs and	Training & Development needs assessment. Refresher training for	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**O/A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	and Safety SOPs. Training and development of staff in Health and Safety	than a decade. Control measures required to be implemented by businesses during the pandemic have identified gaps in business knowledge and skills and required more focused work in health and safety.	confident staff. Improved business compliance with health and safety legislation, safer work places.	Staff authorisation.	additional materials as required. PEHO/Lead SEHO – 25 days each. SEHOs – Training, development and review of new SOPs. Shadowed visits. 10 days each Total estimate 90 days **0.4 FTE**	all staff in all areas of H&S commencing with priority matters including: LPG Electrical Safety Asbestos Accident investigation Special Treatments						
S	Food Service Plan	Food Law Code of Practice	Plan to demonstrate how the council	Plan drafted and agreed through committee.	Review of previous years performance.	Further training in Civica (or replacement) to run	01/04/22	30/06/22	Katie Heath	R	Healthy Environment	**A**

S / NS	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		Service Plan priority	will deliver its functions to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough		Target setting for upcoming year and assessment of resources. PEHO – 10 days **0.045 FTE per annum**	appropriate reports.						
NS	Proactive project targeting unregistered	Existing and increasing problem.	Few complaints about unregist	Online monitoring of Reading based premises	Project lead to identify current trading	RIPA Training/Refresher for all officers.	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	A	Healthy Environment Thriving Community	**O**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	online food businesses; Requirement to registered, provision of FH/FS advice, follow up enforcement action.	Active consideration being given by FSA ABC programme. Public Health Issue.	ered food businesses. Increased confidence in hygiene and safety of online food traders.	operating as food businesses would should reduced number of unregistered premises.	premises in Reading. RIPA authorisation. Allocation of premises. 5 days. Team members – engagement, intervention and enforcement of identified premises. Estimate: 1 day per premises. Conservative estimate of 50 premises = 50 days **0.025 FTE**						Inclusive Economy	
S	Respond to FOI Request	Statutory function - Freedom of Informati	Customer service Legally compliant Council	FOI responded to and closed within 20 days	Estimate 20 per annum. 1 day per FOI (avg) = 20 days	All Senior officers require training and familiarisatio	01/04/22	31/03/23	PEHO	R	**Inclusive Economy**	**A**

S / N S	Action, *[what are going to change deliver or improve]*	Reason	Outcome *[what difference will this make]*	Success Measures *[how will know we have delivered]*	Resources	Training Needs	Start	Finish	Lead	Service Plan Priority (RAG)	Corporate Plan Priority	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
		on Act 2000			**0.09 FTE**	n with the updated corporate system.						

Required Resource	Available Resource
Total Resource Required: 14.64FTE	Expected in post resource 22/23: 5.66 (Food Hygiene) 0.5 (Food Standards) Total allocated resource 22/23 (incl Food Standards): 11.01 FTE

Risk Log

The following risks have been identified against the delivery of this work plan:

	Risk	Likely Impact
1.	Vacant posts	There are a number of vacant posts within the team that have not been successfully recruited to throughout the year. Vacant posts place a greater demand on existing staff to undertake the allocated work and with absent resources the work plan will not be delivered.
2.	National Shortage of EHOs	Unable to attract and recruit qualified and competent staff to existing or future vacancies. Unable to locate qualified/competent agency personnel
3.	Removal of Casual officer pay per inspection scheme	Unable to attract and recruit qualified and competent officers to undertake food hygiene inspections in a casual capacity due to reduction in income. May impact retention of existing staff who were attracted by ability to undertake additional overtime inspections Reduction in support from existing officers from other EH teams due to reduction in income.
4.	Covid 19 Control Measures	Inspections were periodically suspended in 20/21 due to the pandemic. A delay to inspections restarting in 21/22 occurred whilst approval to proceed was awaited.

		Further ongoing impact to inspections is incurred due to requirements for social distancing, self-isolation and vulnerabilities of domestic food businesses. Staff are required to wear PPE which makes some communication more difficult and staff are required to reduce their time on site or in enclosed spaces where possible. National requirements to self-isolate have required staff (as positive persons or close contacts) to self-isolate at home which will reduce the number of visits/inspections that can be carried out.
5.	Reallocation of staff to Covid-19 work	Reallocation of staff to Covid-19 work since March 20 has reduced the amount of general food and safety work carried out. A reduction in food & safety work has negatively impacted the experience and confidence of staff resulting in less familiarity that will need to be rebuilt. This will require an increase in training time and time required to refamiliarize staff with SOPs.
6.	Part-Time Staff	The Food & safety team comprises predominantly part time staff, this has led to a loss of FTE within the team and has reduced the amount of out of hours working, e.g. to inspect evening businesses and undertake sports ground safety work, that can be achieved. The Council's current overtime payment policy also acts as a barrier to attracting part time staff to carry out out of hours work.
7.	Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs)	The team have 15 PAPs which it is required to service and maintain on a cost recovery basis. A loss in staffed posts and a gradual increase in the amount of PAPs over recent years has required a greater number of officers to participate in PAP work to maintain a level of service. The team are currently unable to meet the requirements of the PAP statutory guidance to provide a full service for each PAP and has not been able to keep PAP advice up to date. Work carried out on PAPs reduces the available resource to conduct statutory work listed in this workplan however due to PAP agreements being in place and the expected service delivery on PAPs this work has often had to take priority over statutory functions.

Appendix 6
FSA Recovery Plan

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE: This information is for feed and food enforcement authorities use only. It should not be shared beyond its intended recipients.

COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan: guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 2023/24

Local authorities should also refer to the COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Q&A.

Introduction

1. This Recovery Plan sets out the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 2023/24. The associated COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Q&A supplements the Recovery Plan.

2. The guidance and advice aim to ensure that during the period of recovery from the impact of COVID-19, local authority resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food. It also aims to safeguard the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

3. The Recovery Plan provides a framework for re-starting the delivery system in line with the Food Law Codes of Practice (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland) for new food establishments and for high-risk and/or non-compliant establishments while providing flexibility for lower risk establishments. This should be implemented alongside delivery of:

   - official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that support trade and enable export
   - reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
   - sampling, and
   - ongoing proactive surveillance.

Important notes

4. All local authorities are expected to have regard to the guidance and advice in this Recovery Plan. This will apply from 1 July 2021 at which time it will supersede the guidance and advice provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that applies to 30 June 2021.

5. We recognise and acknowledge that local authorities will be starting from different positions in terms of the impact that COVID-19 has had to date, the challenges they will face during the recovery period and the resources that they have available.

6. Local authorities should, where they can, move at a faster pace in realigning with the intervention frequencies and other provisions set out in the Food Law Codes of Practice.

7. Where local authorities are unable to deliver in line with the recovery plan, they should alert us by emailing us so that we can explore together what support we might provide. Please contact us in:
   - England at LAengagement@food.gov.uk
   - Wales at lasupportwales@food.gov.uk
   - Northern Ireland at executive.support@food.gov.uk

8. We will be keeping our guidance and advice under close review and will amend and update it as necessary in response to changes in the COVID-19 situation.

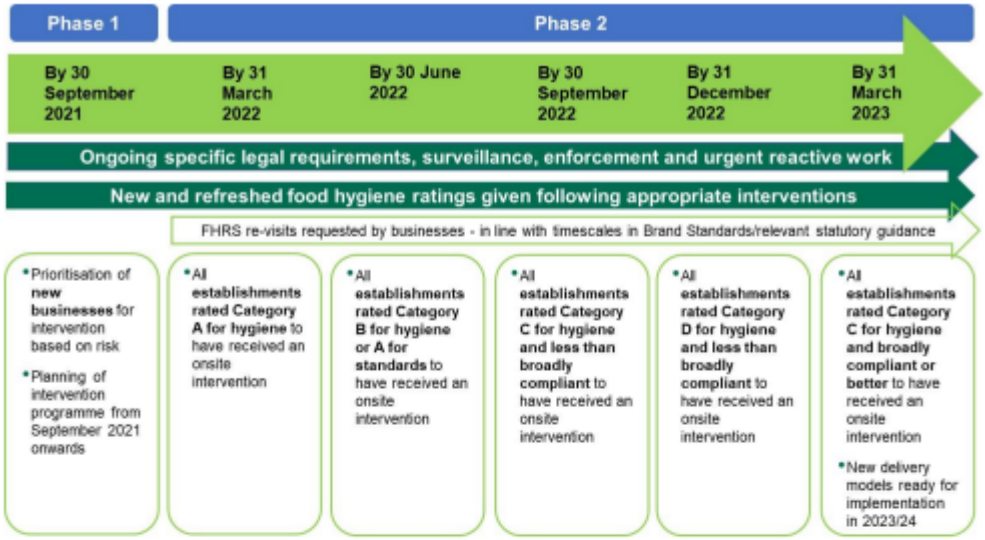
Recovery Plan timeline

9. There are two phases to the Recovery Plan:
   - Phase 1 - 1 July to 30 September 2021
   - Phase 2 – 1 October 2021 to 2023/24.

10. In essence, Phase 2 will continue until a new food standards delivery model and a revised food hygiene intervention rating scheme are in place. The new delivery model for food standards is being piloted in England and Northern Ireland until the end of December 2021. Subject to the findings of an evaluation of the pilot and stakeholder consultation, it is anticipated that the new model will be rolled out nationally from April 2023. Work to review and revise the food hygiene intervention rating scheme is planned to commence shortly with a view to implementation in 2023/24.

11. An outline of the recovery plan is provided at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Outline of the Recovery Plan



Notes

The key milestone dates within the Recovery Plan for higher risk establishments are shown.

For lower risk establishments not shown in the figure, local authorities have the flexibility to defer planned interventions and only undertake intervention where information/intelligence suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed.

In the case of food standards, the impact on the business of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale - that apply from 1 October 2021 - should also be taken into account.

Principles common to Phase 1 and Phase 2

12. Some important principles underpin both Phase 1 and Phase 2:

- when intelligence suggests risks have increased (irrespective of the risk category) local authorities should undertake interventions to assess and address those risks
- when an onsite intervention is undertaken, local authorities should programme subsequent interventions in line with the Codes of Practice
- local authorities should give new food hygiene ratings where appropriate interventions are undertaken and the establishment falls within scope of the FHRS
- where non-compliance is found at any intervention, local authorities should take appropriate action to secure compliance including formal enforcement action where necessary
- remote assessment may be used in certain circumstances – this includes to facilitate the targeting of what to focus attention on at a subsequent onsite visit, to help inform the need for onsite intervention at lower risk premises where an intelligence/information based approach is being used and, in England, in certain limited cases for FHRS requested re-visits.

Phase 1 (1 July to 30 September 2021)

13. In Phase 1, local authorities are expected to deliver the following:

- official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that are undertaken to support trade and enable export
- reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
- sampling in accordance with the local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow-up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
- ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to: identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities, or Food Business Operator (FBO)
- for 'new businesses', consideration of registration information and intelligence with appropriate onsite interventions carried out where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection
- for 'new businesses' where consideration of registration information and intelligence indicates low risk, initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance taking account of the flexibilities provided
- planning for resumption of planned intervention programmes for high-risk category and non-compliant establishments in Phase 2.

Phase 2 (1 October 2021 to 2023/24)

14. In Phase 2, local authorities are expected to deliver the following:

- official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that are undertaken to support trade and enable export
- reactive work including, enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
- sampling in accordance with the local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow-up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
- ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to: identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities or FBO
- for 'new businesses', consideration of registration information and intelligence with appropriate onsite interventions carried out where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection

- for 'new businesses' where consideration of registration information and intelligence indicates lower risk, initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance taking account of the flexibilities provided
- implementing planned intervention programmes for high-risk category and non-compliant establishments in accordance with the timeline in Table 2
- implementing an intelligence/information based approach for lower risk category establishments
- responding to FHRS requested re-visits in line with the timelines specified in the FHRS Brand Standard for England or the statutory guidance in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Table 1 - Sector specific official controls and official controls that must be undertaken to support trade and enable export

Activity	Requirements
Import controls at points of entry	Official controls in accordance with relevant legislation taking account of agreed temporary contingency measures to be taken at Border Control Posts (BCPs) during Covid-19.
Shellfish	Shellfish and water sampling from harvesting areas.
Granting of approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004	Granting of approvals in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Food Law Code of Practice. 'Distance communication' can be used in exceptional circumstances prior to physical visits to minimise time onsite.
Fishing vessels	Registration and inspection of fishing vessels remains extremely important to enable export certification requirements for fish to be fulfilled.

Table 2 – Detailed timeline for Phase 2 of the recovery plan (1 October 2021 to 2023/24)

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Food/feed import controls at points of entry	Ongoing	In accordance with relevant legislative requirements
Official control monitoring relating to shellfish harvesting areas	Ongoing	In accordance with relevant legislative requirements
Conditional and full approval visits	Ongoing	In accordance with relevant legislative requirements
Inspection of fishing vessels	Ongoing	In accordance with separately issued FSA advice

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify: - open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses - change of operation, activities or FBO	Ongoing	Consideration of registration information and intelligence on the food business establishment identified through surveillance Undertake appropriate onsite interventions where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection
New food business establishments where consideration of registration information/intelligence indicates low risk	Ongoing	Initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Management of food incidents and hazards (including outbreaks of foodborne illness)	Ongoing	In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Investigation and management of complaints	Ongoing	In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Enforcement action in case of non-compliance	Ongoing	In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice and the local authority's enforcement policy
FHRS requested re-visits	Ongoing	Wales and Northern Ireland - in accordance with the legislative requirements England – within three months of request if a charge is made and within six months if no charge but with use of remote assessment in place of onsite visit in limited circumstances on a trial basis
Sampling	Ongoing	In line with local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
Category A for hygiene	Over the period to 31 March 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice.

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Category B for hygiene	Over the period to 30 June 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category A for standards	Over the period to 30 June 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category C for hygiene – less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	Over the period to 30 September 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category D for hygiene – less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	Over the period to 31 December 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category C for hygiene – broadly complaint or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	Over the period to 31 March 2023	For establishments with two consecutive food hygiene ratings of 5 (or equivalent standards if outside the scope of FHRS) one intervention may be missed and then the establishment put back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Codes of Practice (so the due intervention date would be moved forward by 18 months) For other establishments – those with hygiene ratings of 3 or 4 (or equivalent if outside the scope of FHRS) - should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Codes of Practice
Category D for hygiene – broadly complaint or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Category E for hygiene	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed
Category B for standards	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed or because of the impact on the establishment of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale
Category C for standards	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed or because of the impact on the establishment of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CLIMATE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

What You Need to Do:

The spreadsheet on the next tab has been designed to help you consider the climate change implications of a new project, proposal or recommendation.
All Committee Reports, Project Business Cases and budget bid proposals require a climate impact assessment.

When rating the climate change impacts of your project/ proposal, there are two key issues to consider:
1. Impact on carbon emissions - will the project/ proposal:

* **Reduce** the overall amount of energy being used/waste being produced/transport emissions?	**No**
* **Increase** the overall amount of energy being used/waste being produced/transport emissions?	**No**
*** Have no effect** on the amount of energy being used/waste being produced/transport emissions?	**Yes**

2. Impact on resilience to the effects of climate change - will the project/ proposal:

* **Increase** the ability of Reading, residents and/or RBC to withstand the effects of climate change?	**No**
* **Reduce** the ability of Reading, residents and/or RBC to withstand the effects of climate change?	**No**
*** Have no effect** on the ability of Reading, residents and/or RBC to withstand the effects of climate change?	**Yes**

The tool requires you to consider these issues with reference to **8 different criteria** e.g.: Energy Use; Waste Generation; Exposure to Heat Waves; Flooding, etc.
Not all of these criteria will necessarily be relevant to your project/ proposal. Where a specific criteria is not relevant to your project/ proposal, assign a 'Nil' rating.

Where you identify either a positive or a negative impact, you are required to assess whether this impact will be **High, Medium or Low**.
There is some guidance on the next tab to help you distinguish between High, Medium and Low impacts.

Results:

Once you have applied a rating to each of the 8 assessment criteria, **you decide the overall rating your project/proposal should have**.
If your project has negative as well as positive impacts, you decide what the overall rating should be by weighing the positive and negative impacts, but you must explain how the overall rating given to your project/proposal has been derived.
It is also compulsory to highlight any negative environmental impacts your project may have, which may have been 'masked' by the overall rating.
You may do this in the commentary box below your rating.

Tips:

1. Concentrate on the most significant issues - there is the potential to consider the appraisal in a very detailed way. This should be avoided at this stage.
2. Where you have identified a negative impact, think about how you are going to manage or mitigate this impact and explain this in your report.

If you require assistance in completing the Climate Impact Assessment tab, please contact the Head of Climate Strategy (peter.moore@reading.gov.uk x4275) or the Sustainability Team Manager (ben.burfoot@reading.gov.uk x2232)
Once you have completed the Climate Impact Assessment tab, please email the completed spreadsheet to climateassessment@reading.gov.uk.

APPENDIX RS-3

Project / Proposal Name or Reference:	Date:	Your Name:
Food Service Plan 2022-23	04-May-22	Katie Heath

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT:	CONSIDERATIONS *See guidance below on determining whether negative or positive impacts are High, Medium or Low*	IMPACT? *Use drop down list*	GUIDANCE IF NEGATIVE/NIL RATING HAS BEEN AWARDED	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
1	ENERGY USE	* More energy will be consumed or emissions generated (by RBC or others) = Negative Impact * No extra energy use is involved or any additional energy use will be met from renewable sources = Nil Impact * Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy sources will replace existing fossil fuel energy = Positive Impact	Nil	**Consider:** ▫ Energy efficiency measures ▫ Renewable energy ▫ Reducing demand for energy	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, more energy will be consumed or emissions generated than there currently is.
2	WASTE GENERATION	* More waste will be generated (by RBC or others) = Negative Impact * No waste will be generated = Nil Impact * Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased = Positive Impact	Nil	**Consider**: ▫ Re-usable/recycled goods ▫ Recycling facilities ▫ Reducing/reusing resources	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, more waste will be generated than there currently is.
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	* RBC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods/people more often/further = Negative Impact * No extra transport will be necessary = Nil Impact * The need to travel, the use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced = Positive Impact	Nil	**Consider:** ▫ Use of public transport ▫ Reducing need to travel or transport goods ▫ Alternative fuels/electric vehicles/walking and cycling	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, there will be any increase or decrease in the use of transport.

2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

	HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE ABILITY OF READING TO WITHSTAND:	CONSIDERATIONS *See guidance below on determining whether negative or positive impacts are High, Medium or Low*	IMPACT? *Use drop down list*	GUIDANCE IF NEGATIVE/NIL RATING HAS BEEN AWARDED	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
4	HEATWAVES	* Increased exposure of vulnerable people and/or infrastructure to heat stress = Negative Impact * No increase in exposure to heat stress = Nil Impact * Reduced exposure of vulnerable people and/or infrastructure to heat stress = Positive Impact	Nil	Greater need for cooling, ventilation, shading and hydration methods	N/A
5	DROUGHT	* Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact * Levels of water use will not be changed = Nil Impact * Provision made for water management, water resources will be protected = Positive Impact	Nil	Greater need for water management and perhaps reserve supplies	N/A
6	FLOODING	* Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk = Negative Impact * Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected = Nil Impact * Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk = Positive Impact	Nil	Consider flood defence mechanisms or alternative arrangements (business continuity)	N/A
7	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	* Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact * No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds = Nil Impact * Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced = Positive Impact	Nil	Greater need for stabilisation measures, robust structures resilient to high winds	N/A
8	DISRUPTION TO SUPPLY CHAINS	* Exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services is increased = Negative Impact * No change in exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services = Nil Impact * Exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services is reduced = Positive Impact	Nil	Source key goods and services locally as it reduces exposure to supply chain disruption and boosts the local economy	N/A. The following have been considered: https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA3-Briefing-Agriculture-and-Food.pdf, https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/climate-change-and-food-safety. It is acknowledged that Climate change proposes a substantial threat to the UK's food supply chain and safety of food (incl. Global

Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?: ***Net Nil***

This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation given below.

Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

Low Impact (L)	* No publicity
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
	* No impact on service or corporate performance
	* No impact on capital assets; or relates to minor capital assets (minor works)
Medium Impact (M)	* Local publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
	* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
	* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; waste generation, transport use) by more than c.10%
	* Relates to medium-sized capital assets (individual buildings or small projects)
High Impact (H)	* National publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
	* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
	* Affects corporate performance (e.g.: energy; waste; transport use) by more than c.10%
	* Relates to major capital assets (larger buildings and infrastructure projects)

In the box below please summarise any relevant policy context, explain how the overall rating has been derived, highlight significant impacts (positive and negative) and explain actions being taken to mitigate negatives and increase positives. This text can be replicated in the 'Environment and Climate Impacts' section of your Committee Report, though please note you may need to supplement this climate impact

There are no specific environmental or climate implications to this plan. Payments made to the Council are accepted electronically. Where accepted by the Food Business Operator subsequent correspondence with businesses, following inspection, will be supplied electronically. Applications for new business registrations are encouraged and accepted electronically.
Horizon scanning will be carried out under the Food Service Plan to monitor areas of notable concern including increase in food poisoning incidences due to transmission of bacteria and food related viruses. Participation in national, regional and local sampling to monitor and identify emerging food safety concerns are included within this Plan.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee (via Committees Briefing)**		
DATE:	**29 June 2022**		
TITLE:	**Community Safety Partnership Update**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**Cllr Karen Rowland**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**Environmental Services and Community Safety**
SERVICE:	**Housing & Communities**	**WARDS:**	**Boroughwide**
LEAD OFFICER:	**Jo Middlemass**	**TEL:**	**0118 937 3177**
JOB TITLE:	**Community Partnerships Service Manager**	**E-MAIL:**	**Joanne.middlemass@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out an update in relation to the workplan of Reading's Community Safety Partnership. The report also sets out a proposed timeline for delivering its new three-year Community Safety Strategy and Plan.

1.2 Reading's Community Safety Partnership was established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which set out a statutory requirement for key responsible authorities, including local authorities, to work together to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and minimise re-offending in local areas. Each Community Safety Partnership must carry out regular strategic assessments to understand its local issues relating to crime and disorder and in turn, develop a strategy to set out how it will tackle those identified issues. In addition to this, Community Safety Partnerships are required to share strategies with Police and Crime Commissioners and review the strategies on an annual basis.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee note the progress of the workplan of the Community Safety Partnership and the intention to produce a new Community Safety Strategy for endorsement by the Committee in November.

2.2 That the lead member for Environmental Services and Community Safety is given delegated authority to approve consultation questions which will be posed when the public consultation is conducted in respect of the CSP & Serious Violence Strategies.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Reading's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is driven by an Executive Group, which is chaired by Reading's Local Police Area (LPA) Commander, with the deputy chair being the Council's portfolio holder for Community Safety. The 'Responsible Authorities' who form part of the Partnership are:

- Reading Borough Council
- Thames Valley Police
- National Probation Service
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group

However, Reading's Community Safety Partnership has welcomed a wider range of partners in recent years and is continuing to develop improved links with other boards and partnerships operating in Reading, including the One Reading Partnership, Youth Justice Board, Health and Well Being Board and Prevent Management Group.

3.2 The main responsibilities for Community Safety Partnerships are to:

- Have a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership
- Regularly engage and consult with communities on their priorities and work to achieve them
- Set up a process for information sharing
- Analyse data including crime data and patterns to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment
- Produce a three-year rolling partnership strategy/plan and monitor progress
- Produce a strategy for reducing re-offending
- Commission Domestic Homicide Reviews as required

3.3 Reading currently has an Executive Group that oversees the work of the CSP and the delivery of its responsibilities. In 2021 in view of a number of issues on the horizon the Chair of the CSP (the then LPA Commander of Thames Valley Police) and the Executive Group agreed an internal review of what work was required to put the partnership on a solid footing for the next few years. The approaching issues included:

- The Thames Valley's Police and Crime Commissioner announcement of the intention to reduce the Community Safety Fund allocation to Reading (this has now been confirmed and it will be reduced by half over a tapered 3 year period).
- The incoming legislation in relation to the Serious Violence Duty
- The approaching end of the current Community Safety Strategy which had had limited time to move forward due to the impact of the pandemic. The priorities for the strategy were - Adult Exploitation and Modern Slavery, Violent Crime and Serious ASB & Class A Drug misuse including County Lines.
- A need for the partnership to be more effective in terms of customer engagement and communications.
- Rising concerns from residents about crime

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Following the internal review the following workplan was put in place:

Action	Timescale
Resetting of Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group	Complete
Review of Governance of workstreams reporting into the CSP	Complete
Commissioning of a comprehensive strategic assessment of need, to include a focus on serious violence to ensure it complies with the new Serious Violence Duty	Complete

Re-establishing capacity for performance information and data for scrutiny of the CSP	Complete
Development of a new Community Safety Strategy/Plan with clear priorities to ensure limited funding for the CSP is appropriately targeted	Underway to complete by October
Development of a Serious Violence Plan	Underway to complete by October
Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms	October
Peer Review to ensure that the CSP operates to the best of its ability and takes note of good practice	October
Improving the communications of the CSP to provide information and reassurance to residents on the work that is being undertaken to tackle crime.	Ongoing

4.2 Much of this work is now complete or underway and although there has been a change in LPA Commander since this work commenced, they are fully supportive of the workplan. It is intended that a new Community Safety Strategy and Plan will be in place from November this year following a consultation exercise on the priorities and subject to agreement and endorsement by Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee. The priorities set out in the strategy will be based on the needs in the area as gleaned from the strategic assessment.

4.3 Timeline for delivery of the strategy is as follows:

- Draft Strategy agreed by the CSP – July 22
- Public Consultation on the priorities in the draft strategy – July/August 22
- Finalised Strategy agreed by CSP – September 22
- Finalised strategy for adoption to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee – November 22

4.4 Although a new strategy is currently being developed the normal police activity and partnership working in the town continues to tackle crime and disorder especially in the area of serious violence examples include:

- The setting up of a new serious violence group, a partnership between the police, Reading Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children and the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit to deliver the Serious Violence Plan and oversee actions to tackle serious violence in the town. This is chaired by the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in RBC.
- Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, Starting Point & Royal Berkshire Hospital Navigator Scheme - The Navigator Programme started in 2021 and aims to stop the cycle of violence and the strain this puts on the NHS. This is done by working with those aged 13-24 who attend A&E for violence related injuries and/ or risk-taking behaviour. The Navigators are able to have conversations with these young people, within A&E, who are often more reachable at that time. The Navigators will then also signpost the young people on to relevant community groups or organisations and offer mentoring to help the young people access assistance to achieve change.

- Installation of knife bins - Waitrose Car Park, Caversham; Cintra Park; Coley Park Community Centre; Kensington Park; Orts Road; Tilehurst Triangle. The bins are managed by RBC Environmental Services and the knives are disposed of appropriately
- Thames Valley Police participation in the national Operation Sceptre knife crime weeks, which take place twice a year. Activities include increase in pro-active policing, targeting places where knife crime occurs; raising public awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife; encouraging anyone who has or knows someone who may carry a knife to dispose of it safely in a knife amnesty bin.
- Home Office Safer Streets 2 funding to tackle neighbourhood crimes in parts of Abbey, Battle and Coley wards in 2021/22 by the designing out of crime.

4.5 Resourcing for the CSP is becoming more limited. The main financial input into the CSP, through Reading Borough Council, has been through the Community Safety Fund, which is allocated through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). In 2013/14, funding previously allocated to Local Authorities by the Home Office & other government depts to help deliver crime & disorder work was transferred to Police & Crime Commissioners, along with responsibility for delivering these services.

4.6 During 2014 and 2015, the OPCC worked with the Police & Crime Panel to develop a needs-based formula, which was approved, however, the phased transition was not fully implemented. The new formula has now been introduced with a phased transition period over the next 3 years. The implications for Reading are that the funding received will have reduced by just over 50% by the end of the financial year of 2025 and bids will have to be submitted, setting out how the funding will be utilised and be linked to supporting the outcomes set out in Thames Valley's Police and Criminal Justice Plan.

4.7 The reduction in funding over the next 3 years has required the CSP to review how the funding will be allocated moving forward. The CSP agreed to allow the previous percentage allocations to continue for 2022/23, however, a process has been built in to the CSP Terms of Reference to allow the CSP Executive Group to consider how it will bid on funding for forthcoming financial years. Funding for the next 3 years is set at:

2022/23: £373,411
2023/24: £293,694
2024/25: £213,977

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure that proposals contained in reports support the Council's vision and Corporate Plan priorities:

Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2 This area of work will contribute towards the Thriving Neighbourhoods priority, with a focus on reducing crime and to create safer communities and neighbourhoods for residents of Reading.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Whilst the CSP continues to face unprecedented challenges and further obligations placed upon it, there is a desire amongst the partnership to improve Reading's approach to tackling crime and disorder. Underpinning all of this work is a renewed focus on partnership working and communication, ensuring that all other partnership strategies and plans that feature an element of tackling crime and disorder are reflected in the new wider Community Safety Strategy. In addition, that all resources are effectively utilised, with the 'Responsible Authorities' working more collaboratively with communities and those partners who work with and in those communities to develop and deliver long term solutions to ensure Reading remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report but will feature as part of the new strategy.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, set out a statutory requirement for key responsible authorities, including local authorities, to work together to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and minimise re-offending in local areas.

9.2 Further to the statutory obligations placed upon Community Safety Partnerships, on 28 April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act received Royal Assent, with the legislation setting out a wide-ranging package of measures intended to prevent and tackle crime and disorder. The Serious Violence Duty is a key part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence. The legislation creates a new duty on local authorities, chief officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities. Chief Officers of Police will be required to ensure they work alongside other specified authorities under the duty to share data and intelligence, formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problem and then produce a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. In addition, section 6(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which sets out the strategies Community Safety Partnerships must formulate and implement, has been amended to explicitly include serious violence.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Reading's Community Safety Partnership has had oversight of the Community Safety Fund allocation that is facilitated through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley. In terms of how the Community Safety Partnership operates, it continues to function on limited resources, with Reading Borough Council providing the administration and co-ordination of the Executive Group and co-ordination of its strategic assessments, strategies and plans.

10.5 The reduction in funding over the next 3 years will require changes to the Community Safety Partnership budgets within Reading Borough Council, however no additional funding will be requested at this time and the expenditure will be tailored to meet the amount of funding available

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee**		
DATE:	**29 June 2022**		
TITLE:	**Removal of Age Criteria from Council Housing Stock**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**Cllr Emberson**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**Housing**
SERVICE:	**Housing Needs**	**WARDS:**	**All**
LEAD OFFICER:	**Sarah Hennessy**	**TEL:**	**01189 372930**
JOB TITLE:	**Assistant Housing Needs Manager**	**E-MAIL:**	**Sarah.hennessy@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates on the position agreed in In March 2018 at Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee to remove the age criteria from the Council's general needs housing stock (non-sheltered) and seeks approval to replace the remaining aged designated properties with local lettings policies where appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee approve the removal of age criteria from the remaining age designated general needs housing stock (non-sheltered) and replace with local lettings policies where it is appropriate to do so.

2.2 Where local lettings policies are required to replace age criteria, they will be developed in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing and Ward Councillors

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Distinct from sheltered housing, the Council has set age designations on a number of its general needs properties. Nearly 1,000 general needs homes (predominantly in blocks of one bedroom flats and studios), covering 65 separate addresses/roads, historically had such restrictions; about a third were reserved for people aged over 50 and the majority of the rest for over 60s. It is important to note that most of the properties did not make up entire roads but were only a small proportion of properties in these areas.

3.2 These designations were set over twenty years ago and were not formally documented at the time. Officers consider it most likely that they had been introduced as an attempt to address problems with neighbour disputes (for example because of noise or lifestyle differences) between older tenants and newer, younger tenants.

3.3 Whilst the Council recognises that incompatibilities may still arise between different tenants, practice has developed so that segregating residents in general needs properties solely based on age is not considered a practical or effective way of addressing these. It can unfairly discriminate against younger tenants seeking an affordable place to live and introduce tenants who although they qualify by age have

no priority for housing or due to historical issues are not compatible with the tenants already in residence. The Council has effective services in place to support tenants and address any issues or neighbourhood disputes, but these are better managed if this is taken into account at the point when an allocation is made to an appropriate property.

3.4 Age restrictions have a significant inadvertent impact on the way Council properties are allocated where age designations do not match the most pressing demand pressures, many are allocated to applicants assessed as having no priority for housing.

3.5 In March 2018 Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee noted and approved the recommendations in the report Housing Services for Older People. HNL Committee 14 March 2018 Item 13 (reading.gov.uk) One of the recommendations approved was to: *Remove the age criteria that are attached to some Council homes and amend the Allocations Scheme, introducing options designed to promote sustainable communities whilst maintaining a fair system of allocating new tenancies.*

3.6 The principle to be applied was to replace age-designations with local lettings policies, making properties available to those in most need and to amend the Council's Allocations Scheme to substitute ad hoc 'sensitive lettings' with the following broader principles:

- Where specific properties are especially suited for people who are frail or have limited mobility (for example, level access or with adapted facilities) they should be let on the basis of need for this type of accommodation. Whilst this is likely to be predominantly older, frailer, people it will not exclude younger applicants with an accessibility need.
- Where blocks of homes have been designated as for over 60s/50s and properties have been consistently let to over 60s/50s, replace the age restriction with a local lettings policy reducing the risk of incompatibility with new tenants.
- Where blocks of flats already have a number of tenants of all ages despite the age-designation and this has not resulted in any housing management concerns, remove the age designation.

3.7 A large proportion have been let in this way with over 80% of the age designated blocks already having people aged below the designation living in them. Properties have eventually been let to younger tenants who present no management issues where no one of the specified age has expressed an interest when the property was advertised. Tenancy successions, and tenants who live together with younger partners have contributed to this number. In addition, where properties have been sold through the right to buy the Council has no influence over the age of the occupants in these homes.

3.8 There has been less use however of local lettings policies to replace age criteria. Local lettings policies as set out the Council's Allocations Scheme offer the facility to apply local letting criteria and restrict lettings for example to prevent issues of anti-social behaviour or other such behaviour or introduce age criteria should it be required.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal is to complete the removal of age criteria for all general needs properties and for those areas that require interventions to build a more balanced and sustainable community, implement local lettings policies. This will allow properties to be available for those most in need whilst protecting those that are most vulnerable. The local lettings policies will include criteria that is specific to the issues in a local area by ensuring that suitable letting is carried out in a more targeted way, focusing on the specific needs of individuals and communities.

4.2 Where there is a need to actively promote community cohesion and sustainability within neighbourhoods through tenancy allocation decisions. Additional terms, for example checking for any incidents of antisocial behaviour, can be added and subsequently reviewed where appropriate. With a changing demographic, age alone is not an indication as to whether a tenant will be the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance. This approach allows for flexibility to introduce local lettings policies should issues or concerns arise in other blocks not previously age designated in order to protect older people within our communities.

4.3 The Allocations Scheme was reviewed and approved by Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in November 2021. The new Scheme has broadened the scope of local lettings policies in order to help better manage concerns within communities.

4.4 Where local lettings policies are required to replace age criteria, they will be developed specific to the needs of individual blocks and will take into account the views of the Lead Councillor for Housing and Ward Members.

4.5 Local lettings policies will be regularly reviewed, normally annually, to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and to determine whether they are still required.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2 The proposal supports Thriving Communities. The information detailed in this report sets out the principal of making best use of the Council's housing stock whilst ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected and that our communities are sustainable.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There will be no environmental and climate implications as a result of this proposal

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 The Allocations Scheme review consulted on broadening the use of local letting policies to support sustainable communities. Whilst there is no requirement to consult with residents on this change to our working practice, the Council did consult on the changes being proposed to the Allocations Scheme, under the general theme of building sustainable communities and broadening the use of local lettings policies.

7.2 Where local lettings policies are required to replace age criteria, they will be developed in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing and Ward Councillors

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed regarding the decision to remove the age criteria from the Councils general needs housing stock, as approved in March 2018 at Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee. It was determined that the removal of the age criteria would have no negative impact on any group and assumed the implementation of individual local lettings policies which are kept under review enable more equitable housing allocations than the blanket age criteria allows.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council has the legal power to change its practices and policies in this way and the proposal is acceptable.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this proposal. Currently there is a risk of rent loss due to the hard to let nature of age restricted accommodation and this proposal will reduce those risks.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee Report March 2018: Housing Services for Older People HNL Committee 14 March 2018 Item 13 (reading.gov.uk)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee**		
DATE:	**29 JUNE 2022**		
TITLE:	**RENT GUARANTEE SCHEME POLICY**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**COUNCILLOR ELLIE EMBERSON**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**HOUSING**
SERVICE:	**HOUSING NEEDS**	**WARDS:**	**BOROUGHWIDE**
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS) has been in operation as a homelessness prevention tool since 2015, when it was launched as an enhanced and additional offer to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS). The Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy sets out the way in which the Scheme operates, covering responsibilities to landlords and tenants, the approach taken to facilitate tenancies and the way in which guaranteed rent levels are set.

The Policy has been updated to reflect current Rent Guarantee Scheme practice, which has been amended to reflect legislation that has come into effect in recent years, and to clarify how the Letting Income (the sum of guaranteed rent paid to landlords on a monthly basis) is calculated and set annually.

1.2 Appendix 1: Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy (May 2022)

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note and approve the updated Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Whilst Reading's economic success has been attractive to employers, it brings with it the challenges of a competitive housing market and Reading is facing significant housing pressure across all tenures, with house prices amongst the highest outside of London. Demand for affordable housing in Reading remains high and continues to outstrip supply. The number of households approaching the Council in need of assistance with housing remains high.

3.2 Factors impacting on homelessness in Reading have been detailed in previous reports and include a limited pipeline of new build affordable housing, reducing social housing stock through Right to Buy (RTB) sales, high land prices, and a reducing supply of affordable private rented sector housing.

3.3 Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 was published in 2020 and continues to develop the priorities set in the previous Homelessness Strategy from 2016:

- **Priority 1 - Intervening early to prevent and reduce homelessness in Reading**
- **Priority 2 - Supporting people who are vulnerable to recurring homelessness**
- **Priority 3 - Increasing access to decent, suitable accommodation**

3.4 The Rent Guarantee Scheme was launched in October 2015 in order to offer greater incentive to landlords in letting their properties through Reading Borough Council. The Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS) continues to run alongside it, and is largely used for properties located outside the Reading Borough boundaries. The RGS has proved popular among landlords and for the most part the RGS has addressed the decline in the number of private rented tenancy signups previously seen year on year.

3.4.1 The Rent Guarantee Scheme Letting Income rates have historically been set at the Local Housing Allowance levels. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are used to calculate the maximum amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) that a household can receive. LHA rates are set annually by the Valuation Office Agency, and are based on private market rents being paid by tenants in the broad rental market area. The LHA rates are capped at the 30th percentile point of local private market rents and, until April 2020, were also restricted to the level of the previous year's LHA. In April 2020 the LHA rates were set at the 30th percentile point, and there has been no change in the rates in either 2021 or 2022.

3.4.2 Current practice in setting the Rent Guarantee Scheme Letting Income involves consideration of competing factors: the Scheme aims to maximise attractiveness to landlords while mitigating impact on tenant affordability, acknowledging that the Benefit Cap impacts the amount of benefit actually received by many of the Scheme's tenants, regardless of the applicable LHA rate.

3.4.3 The updated Policy confirms current practice that the Letting Income cannot exceed current LHA rates but will be determined for each property size by taking into account these competing factors as well as issues of current supply and demand.

3.4.4 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced the Prevention Duty (to prevent homelessness) , for eligible households threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and the Relief Duty (to relieve homelessness if it has occurred), for eligible households who are homeless. Since the implementation of the Act, the Rent Guarantee Scheme may also be considered for households who are not owed a duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (those with a priority need for homelessness assistance), with an offer of a tenancy on the Scheme bringing a Prevention or Relief Duty to an end.

3.4.5 The Tenant Fees Act 2019 limited the amount a landlord could request as a tenancy deposit to the equivalent of five weeks' rent. The RGS continues to offer landlords a guaranteed deposit of the equivalent of six weeks' rent, to maximise market advantage. Since the legislation came into effect in 2020, RGS tenants are expected to make deposit savings to the value of five weeks' rent only. In every case, the cost of a deposit claim which exceeds the amount a tenant has saved will be borne by the Scheme, and the council will seek to recover that cost from the tenant. However, where a deposit claim exceeds the value of five weeks' rent, the portion of that claim which exceeds the value will not be considered to be a debt owed by the tenant.

3.4.6 Further legislative change relating to the Private Rented Sector, which will impact the operation of the Rent Guarantee Scheme, is expected in the near future. It is anticipated therefore that the Policy will require further review within the next 3 years, although this may need to be brought forward once we have had an opportunity to consider the content and implications of any legislation passed.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 It is proposed that the updated Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy is approved to reflect current practice including clarifications in relation to the:

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Tenant Fees Act 2019
- Clarified practice regarding setting the Letting Income

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2.1 The Rent Guarantee Scheme continues to contribute to the creation and maintenance of **Thriving Communities** by prioritising the needs of the most marginalised groups and the most vulnerable adults and children in our communities. It does this as the main homelessness prevention tool used by the Housing Needs service to prevent and alleviate homelessness within the Borough. It achieves this aim by facilitating the creation of safe, affordable and sustainable private sector tenancies for households on low incomes who are threatened with homelessness.

5.3 Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan are available on the website and include information on the projects which will deliver these priorities.

5.4 The Rent Guarantee Scheme contributes to the TEAM Reading values by:

Together – working in partnership with private sector landlords to facilitate safe, affordable and sustainable tenancies

Efficiency – minimising expenditure on Emergency and Temporary Accommodation for individuals to whom Reading owes a homelessness duty and recycling funds wherever possible

Ambitious – driving up and maintaining standards of private sector accommodation and good practice among landlords

Make a Difference – preventing and alleviating homelessness

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this decision; neither the incorporated new legislation nor the clarification of how the Letting Income is set have any impact on environmental or climate issues.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 There is no requirement in legislation or in guidance to consult with local representatives on the introduction or updating of the Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy. However, in line with good practice, regular landlord feedback and consultation on matters affecting tenancies is achieved by holding an annual Landlord Evening. Feedback exercises are completed with landlords and tenants during every tenancy. Results are monitored quarterly and used to inform any proposed changes in practice.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not applicable for this report as there is no change in practice as a result of this Policy update.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Housing Act 1996 sets out a Local Authority's responsibilities in respect of homeless households who approach the Local Authority for assistance.

9.2 A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household.

9.3 The Localism Act 2011 enabled Local Authorities to fully discharge the main homelessness duty owed to homeless applicants by making them a suitable offer of private rented accommodation or 'Private Rented Sector Offer' – this offer of accommodation may be made via the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

9.4 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced the Prevention Duty, for eligible households threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and the Relief Duty, for eligible households who are homeless. Both duties may be brought to an end by an offer of accommodation made via the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the updated Policy confirms current practice.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025

Appendix 1

DRAFT

Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy

(Deposit Guarantee Scheme)

May 2022

www.reading.gov.uk

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY CONTEXT 4
2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION 4
3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 5
4. POLICY AIMS 5
5. PROCEDURE OVERVIEW 6
6. PROCEDURE CONTENT 6

6.1 Application Process 6
6.2 Eligibility for the Rent Guarantee Scheme 6
6.3 Definition of Local Connection 7
6.4 Referencing Procedure 7
6.5 Applicants currently living in Hostels 7
6.6 Council or Housing Association Tenants 8
6.7 Applicants who are less than 18 years of age 8
6.8 People who are not eligible for the Rent Guarantee Scheme 9
6.8.1 Applicants who are ineligible due to immigration status 9
6.8.2 Applicants with a history of anti-social behaviour and/or rent arrears 9
6.8.3 Former Deposit Guarantee Scheme or Rent Guarantee Scheme Tenants 9
6.9 Purpose of the Rent Guarantee Scheme Acceptance Criteria 10
6.10 Notification for ineligible/refused Applicants 10
6.11 Cancellation policy for non-respondent applicants 10
6.12 Determining the size of property for which an applicant is eligible 10
6.12.1 Who can be considered as part of the household? 10
6.12.2 Circumstances in which joint tenancies can be created 11
6.12.3 How many bedrooms is an applicant eligible for? 11
6.13 The Rent Guarantee Scheme Workshop 12
6.14 Property Procurement 12
6.14.1 Property Inspection Criteria 12
6.14.2 Properties which will not be accepted on the scheme 13
6.14.3 Landlords who will not be accepted by the Scheme 13
6.14.4 Properties which are surplus to RGS requirements 14
6.15 Viewing Process 14
6.15.1 Applicants who fail to attend viewings 15
6.15.2 Applicants who turn properties down 15
6.16 Signing up to a Tenancy 15
6.17 Tenancy Sustainment 16
6.17.1 Money Advice 16
6.17.2 Rolling Programme Visits 16
6.17.3 Setting the Rent Guarantee Scheme Letting Income Rates 17
6.18 Financial Procedure 18
6.18.1 Tenant Deposit Contributions 18
6.18.2 Deposit Protection 19
6.18.3 Rent Payment 19
6.18.4 Landlord Claims 20
6.18.5 Duration of Rent Guarantee Scheme Support 21

6.19 Moves within the Rent Guarantee Scheme 21
6.20 Requests to Review a Decision 21
6.21 Service Standards 22

7. APPENDICES 23

Appendix 1: Rent Guarantee Scheme Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement 23
Appendix 2: Guaranteed Rent Agreement 35
Appendix 3: Rent Collection Agreement 66
Appendix 5: Statutory Overcrowding 75
Appendix 6: Rolling Programme Visit Form 77
Appendix 7: Property Inspection Forms 81
Appendix 8 – Fair Wear and Tear Guidelines 128

1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY CONTEXT

Almost a third of Reading's residents live in private sector rented accommodation.[1] High demand for rental accommodation is coupled with the relative shortage of social rented property in Reading. A vital part of Reading Borough Council's Housing Strategy is enabling households threatened with homelessness to access accommodation in the private rented sector.

Reading Borough Council initially developed the Deposit Guarantee Scheme to make private sector renting more accessible for people threatened with homelessness. The Deposit Guarantee Scheme was for many years the main homelessness prevention option utilised by Housing Needs teams. However, increase in demand and decrease in property supply made it necessary to review the way in which the Scheme operated, in order to maximise the availability of suitable property. The outcome of this review was the introduction of a new landlord offer: the Rent Guarantee Scheme. This new Scheme commenced in 2015 and is administered by the Deposit Guarantee Scheme team. The purpose of this Policy is to outline the Rent Guarantee Scheme process.

The 1996 and 2002 Homelessness Acts establish groups regarded as having priority need who, when threatened with homelessness, all local authorities have a statutory duty to house.

The 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act introduced the Prevention and Relief duties to households threatened with homelessness, extending the period during which prevention of homelessness might take place, requiring the completion of a Personalised Housing Plan in every case and increasing the Local Authority's responsibilities to prevent homelessness for a greater range of people. This sharpened the focus on exploring and facilitating a range of housing options for every eligible household.

Both the Prevention Duty, for eligible households threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and the Relief Duty, for eligible households who are homeless, may be brought to an end by an offer of accommodation made via the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This document makes reference to the following legislation: -

- Housing Act 1996, Part VI and VII as amended
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Tenant Fees Act 2019
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (c49) and 1999 (c33) and 2002. Race Relations Act 1976 (S71) (amendment) Act 2000,

[1] Reading Borough Council *2012 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey*: 28% of Reading's households live within the private rented sector, up from 20% in 2006.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Inserted by DDA 2005) S.49A and Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Section 19).
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 (in particular regulations 5 and *)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

As a Local Authority we have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. In accordance with Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000) Reading Borough Council will promote equality of opportunity. The authority will not unlawfully discriminate on racial grounds.

In line with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005), we will promote equality between disabled persons and other persons, eliminate unlawful discrimination and have due regard to taking account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Under the terms of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007, Reading Borough Council will promote equality on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Our aim is to continue to maintain equality and ensure that we facilitate the creation of private tenancies in a non-discriminatory way, based on meeting housing need. We also anticipate that the transparency of this policy will not allow any customers to be treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, age or faith.

Reading Borough Council Housing Needs Teams will treat all applications for housing in a sensitive and supportive manner.

4. POLICY AIMS

The Rent Guarantee Scheme has six main aims:

1. To prevent homelessness and placements in emergency or Temporary Accommodation
2. To meet the housing needs of all groups across all tenures
3. To ensure a supply of appropriate, good quality, affordable private rented property for people threatened with homelessness, making it a realistic housing choice and an alternative option to social rented housing
4. To create sustainable tenancies and successful relationships with landlords and letting agents to the extent that the scheme perpetuates itself
5. To make the best use of available funds and recycle wherever possible
6. To make the best use of the private rented accommodation we have available to us

5. PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS) enables people in receipt of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (housing element), and without the means to fund their own tenancy deposits, to access private rented accommodation. While the Tenancy Agreement remains between the Landlord and the Tenant, the Scheme acts as managing agent; paying rent, to the landlord monthly in advance. Tenants are required to pay their rent direct to the Scheme. The Scheme sponsors tenants for a sum equivalent to six weeks' rent as a tenancy deposit, against which the landlord can claim, at the end of the tenancy, in the event of loss or damage to the property beyond fair wear and tear. The Scheme operates a tenant savings scheme to which tenants are expected to contribute regularly, until they have saved a sum equivalent to five weeks' rent as a tenancy deposit[i].[2]

6. PROCEDURE CONTENT

6.1 Application Process

All RGS applications will be made as a result of a Housing Advice assessment, as an action agreed in the individual's Personalised Housing Plan. Homelessness Prevention Officers will determine an individual's eligibility for the scheme according to the Rent Guarantee Scheme eligibility criteria. An application form will be completed and supporting paperwork and references will be requested. In addition, a Common Assessment Form and Risk Assessment will be requested, as appropriate, when the application indicates that the applicant is working with a supporting agency e.g. Probation.

6.2 Eligibility for the Rent Guarantee Scheme

Reading Borough Council will consider any person who is owed a duty by the Council under section 193 of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to be eligible for the Rent Guarantee Scheme, that is persons who are: -

- Found to be homeless
- Eligible (having recourse to public funds)
- In priority need
- Not homeless intentionally and
- With a local connection.

Applicants or their partners must be over 16 years of age (applicants who are aged 16 and 17 years of age will require a trustee in order to sign up to a tenancy – see section 6.7 below).

[2] RGS tenants were expected to save a sum equivalent to six weeks' rent, as their tenancy deposit, until the introduction of the 2019 Tenant Fees Act, which limited the amount a landlord could request as a tenancy deposit to the equivalent of five weeks' rent. The RGS decided to continue to offer landlords a deposit guarantee of the equivalent of six weeks' rent, to maximise market advantage, but limited the expectation of tenant savings to a maximum of the equivalent of five weeks' rent in accordance with the spirit of the legislation.

Since the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act, the Rent Guarantee Scheme may also be considered for households who are not owed a duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, with an offer of a tenancy on the Scheme bringing a Prevention or Relief Duty to an end.

To be eligible for the Rent Guarantee Scheme, applicants must: -

- Be homeless or threatened with homelessness **and**
- Be receiving benefits or on a low income and eligible to receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (housing costs) **and**
- Have a local connection to Reading Borough **and**
- have no other way of finding the deposit

6.3 Definition of Local Connection

Applicants have a local connection if they have: -

- lived in Reading for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years **or**
- permanent employment in Reading **or**
- close family who have lived in Reading for over five years (i.e. parents, brothers, sisters or non-dependent children)

Some applicants may not meet the local connection criteria, but could still be considered for the RGS due to individual circumstances, for example where an applicant is fleeing violence and cannot return to their former area.

6.4 Referencing Procedure

Acceptance on the Rent Guarantee Scheme is generally subject to satisfactory references. These references will be sought from the applicant's two most recent sources of settled accommodation, preferably private landlords or letting agencies. Where a former landlord refuses to provide a reference, this will be treated as an unsatisfactory reference.

If the applicant has not lived in the private rented sector before, character references may be sought from employers. Where no appropriate referee is available, Reading Borough Council will carry out their own enquiries into an applicant's previous behaviour, including speaking to other Council departments, other local authorities, Registered Social Landlords or agencies working with the applicant. In the case of 16/17 year olds coming straight from a parental home, a reference will be sought from their school or college along with a reference from Connexions.

6.5 Applicants currently living in Hostels

The RGS operates slightly different acceptance criteria for applicants who are currently living in a supported hostel environment. In addition to the usual requirements: -

- Application will be made and discussed via the Move On Panel
- A reference will be requested from the hostel
- Risk assessments will be completed

- A Common Assessment Form will be requested where necessary
- The applicant should have been supported for 6 months in the hostel before making a RGS application
- The applicant will be expected to engage with relevant support services

6.6 Council or Housing Association Tenants

The RGS will, in some circumstances, consider Council or Housing Association tenants for accommodation within the scheme. The purpose of this is to offer another option for families facing severe overcrowding in their current property, where finding larger accommodation through the Housing Register is likely to take a very long time. This approach will only be aimed at those households requiring at least a 4 bedroom property.

To be eligible, applicants must: -

- Have a clear rent account and have done for the last 6 months.
- Be the subject of no Anti-Social Behaviour complaints within the last 6 months
- Provide a satisfactory reference from their Housing Officer regarding the condition of their current property and their behaviour as tenant
- Sign up to and engage with the Housing Support service
- Be entitled to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (housing element)or if employed be able to demonstrate they can meet the rental payments on a monthly basis
- Be statutorily overcrowded as defined by Part X of the Housing Act 1985 (see Appendix 5)
- Be entitled to 4 bedrooms or more according to the Housing Benefit Standard (see Appendix 4)

Each applicant will need to be assessed for Housing Benefit/Universal Credit and will be asked to provide a trial calculation. If the applicant is accepted for the scheme they will be informed in writing. Once this is received then they will be expected to surrender their current tenancy on the date of signup to a RGS property.

Reading Borough Council will provide information for overcrowded tenants regarding this option and will advise every individual who wishes to apply for the RGS to seek independent legal advice before moving via the Scheme.

6.7 Applicants who are less than 18 years of age

Individuals who are less than 18 years old cannot hold a tenancy in their own right, but can be the beneficiary of a tenancy. In order to sign 16 and 17 year olds up to RGS properties, they will need a trustee to effectively hold the tenancy on their behalf. This trustee could be a friend, a family member or a professional person. A Deed of Trust is attached to the tenancy agreement, which ceases to operate once the beneficiary reaches the age of 18.

Financial losses incurred by the Scheme are the responsibility of the Trustee while the Beneficiary is under 18. If the tenancy ends once the Beneficiary has reached the age of 18, debts incurred before they reached the age of 18 remain the responsibility of the Trustee, while debts incurred once the Beneficiary reached the age of 18 are the responsibility of the Beneficiary.

16 and 17 year old tenants are automatically referred for, and are required to engage with, Floating Support or other appropriate support services.

6.8 People who are not eligible for the Rent Guarantee Scheme

6.8.1 Applicants who are ineligible due to immigration status

People who are not eligible to appear on the Housing Register, according to the Homelessness Act 2002 and also defined in the Allocations Policy[3], are also ineligible for the Rent Guarantee Scheme. This includes: -

a) People who are subject to Immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (c49) unless he or she is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
b) People who are excluded from entitlement to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit by section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (c33) (exclusion from benefits).
c) Other classes of persons from abroad who are ineligible for an allocation of accommodation, as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State.
d) Applicants who are not deemed to be habitually resident in the CTA (Common Travel Area) or EEA (European Economic Area).

6.8.2 Applicants with a history of anti-social behaviour and/or rent arrears

A person may be ineligible for the RGS by reason of their behaviour in previous accommodation. This includes applicants who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, and who in the circumstances **at the time of the application**, are considered to be unsuitable to be tenants through the RGS by reason of that behaviour. The unacceptable behaviour may have been carried out by the applicant or a member of their household. Each case will be considered individually and the RGS does not operate a blanket exclusion.

Applicants with unresolved rent arrears, whether these are owed to a private landlord, a local authority or any Registered Social Landlord, are usually ineligible for the RGS unless they have made an arrangement to pay off the arrears and have kept to that arrangement for a minimum period of 6 months. There may be exceptions made on a case by case basis, taking onto account the reasons that the arrears accrued and the circumstances in which the household needs to move.

6.8.3 Former Deposit Guarantee Scheme or Rent Guarantee Scheme Tenants

Applicants who have been accepted on the Deposit Guarantee Scheme or Rent Guarantee Scheme previously, and have not kept up rent or deposit repayments, caused a claim against the Scheme or failed to engage with the support offered ill not be re-accepted onto the Scheme.

[3] Reading Borough Council (2022) *Allocations Scheme*

Each case will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of all relevant circumstances, including the reasons for, and history of the rent arrears or misconduct.

6.9 Purpose of the Rent Guarantee Scheme Acceptance Criteria

The RGS acceptance criteria are designed to minimise two main risks: -

- A financial claim being made to Reading Borough Council at the end of the tenancy
- A landlord's properties being damaged, or landlords being left with rent arrears, which may cause them to withdraw their properties from the scheme

The RGS criteria will be regularly reviewed according to emerging good practice drivers from government and impending legislation.

6.10 Notification for ineligible/refused Applicants

Applicants who are not eligible for the RGS will be notified of the decision and reasons in writing within 5 working days of the decision being reached. They have the right to request a review of this decision within 21 days of the date of the notification letter. A Senior Officer will complete the review of the original decision.

6.11 Cancellation policy for non-respondent applicants

RGS applicants who have not brought in supporting paperwork or supplied references 4 weeks after making their initial application may have their application closed. If after 3 months there has been no further contact or information received, the application may be cancelled. The applicant will be informed in writing. They are entitled to reapply to the RGS but they will have to restart the application process.

6.12 Determining the size of property for which an applicant is eligible

6.12.1 Who can be considered as part of the household?

The RGS will decide whether a person is normally resident as a member of the family. As a guide, the following will be considered to form part of the household: -

- Dependent children including:
    - children coming out of Social Services care
    - children who have been adopted/fostered, the tenant having care and control of children (sleeping in the home for 4 or more nights a week)

- Dependent relatives - where a relative of a tenant has had to join the tenant to receive care and there are no other housing options for the family i.e. that the relative owns their own property, or occupies a property large enough to accommodate the family. In this case the term 'relative' applies to partners,

parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces including step relations and half relations.

- Carers - where the tenant can demonstrate that they are now in need of a live-in carer (i.e. 4 nights a week or more). However, the size of accommodation that the applicant will be eligible for is dependent on whether the carer is eligible to receive Housing Benefit in order to help pay the rent.

- Partners – where the tenant is now living in a permanent relationship and can prove that they have done so for the last 12 months.

As a general rule, individuals can only be considered part of an applicant's household if Housing Benefit/Universal Credit policy requires an allowance to be made for that individual when the amount of benefit an applicant is entitled to is calculated.

6.12.2 Circumstances in which joint tenancies can be created

Where household members have long term commitments to the home, for example, when adults share accommodation as partners, applicants will be eligible to create a joint tenancy. Applicants will be made aware of the legal and financial implications and obligations of joint tenancies. Where a joint tenancy is refused the applicant/s will be given reasons why.

Applicants who wish to be housed with friends or non-dependent siblings will not be able to create a joint tenancy.

6.12.3 How many bedrooms is an applicant eligible for?

See Appendix 4 for the RGS policy regarding bedroom allocation, which is identical to the policy applied by Housing Benefit/Universal Credit.

Applicants can be considered for smaller sized accommodation than that specified under the policy, as long as this does not result in statutory overcrowding.[4] The RGS will consult with applicants needing property sizes which are in short supply, in order to consider this option.

An applicant (and partner) who is pregnant may be eligible for a two-bedroom property but not earlier than three months before the expected date of delivery. This eligibility is dependent on the pregnant applicant receiving a Discretionary Housing Payment to top up the Housing Benefit entitlement.

Pregnant applicants, and those with one child who is less than one year old, may be offered a one-bedroom property.

Single parents sharing childcare responsibilities for less than half of every week will not usually be offered accommodation of the above size standards. The size of accommodation offered will depend on how much Housing Benefit they are eligible to receive.

[4] See Appendix 5 for a definition of statutory overcrowding.

It is important to note that the final decision regarding how much housing-related benefit an applicant will receive rests with the relevant awarding authority, not the Rent Guarantee Scheme. The RGS will not sign any applicant up to a property where they cannot afford the rent.

6.13 The Rent Guarantee Scheme Workshop

All accepted RGS applicants will be invited to attend the RGS Workshop. The Workshop consists of two separate sections, with the first part introducing applicants to how the Scheme works, and providing advice about looking for and viewing private rented property. The second part introduces applicants to basic money management principles including priority bills and budgeting, and discusses benefit applications.

Attendance at the Workshop will be recorded and may be an action requiring completion on the applicant's Personalised Housing Plan. Workshops may be run at different times of the day to accommodate working households.

6.14 Property Procurement

The RGS Procurement Officers will identify the amounts and sizes of property required, by analysing applicants' needs, on a quarterly basis. Procurement of the amounts and sizes of property that are most appropriate for clients on the Rent Guarantee Scheme waiting list will be prioritised.

In addition to properties identified by the RGS Procurement Officers, RGS applicants are encouraged to look for properties that would be suitable and affordable for their household and pass the details to the Procurement Team.

6.14.1 Property Inspection Criteria

The RGS Procurement Officers will inspect every property offered to the scheme in order to check that it meets basic health and safety standards. The RGS sets standards which all properties must meet in order to be accepted onto the Scheme, which can be found as part of the Guaranteed Rent Agreement in Appendix 2. These standards take into account, and exceed, the requirements of the Suitability of Accommodation Order, in association with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Procurement Officers will consider Fire, Gas, Electrical, Furniture Safety and Energy Performance legislation when carrying out their inspections, and will request certification as appropriate. In addition, they will take into account the requirements for the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, Planning and Building Control requirements and the standards set by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Where in doubt, the procurement officers will request joint visits to be carried out with representatives from Environmental Health or Building Control Teams before properties are accepted onto the Scheme.

The Procurement Officers will complete an inspection form while at the property, and the landlord or the landlord's representative is required to check the form and sign the

last page to demonstrate that they understand and accept the terms of the scheme. See Appendix 7 for inspection forms relating to different kinds of property.

Landlords will be informed in writing regarding necessary repairs and any documentation required before a property can be accepted onto the Scheme.

Once a property is ready to let, the Procurement Officers will carry out a video inventory which will be held by Reading Borough Council and used to determine the outcome of any claims against the deposit at the end of the tenancy.

6.14.2 Properties which will not be accepted on the scheme

Properties will not be accepted where: -

- The rent requested is higher than the RGS Letting Income rate for that bedroom size
- Planning Permission, where appropriate, has not been granted
- The property constitutes a licensable House in Multiple Occupation but no licence has been granted
- A valid Gas Safety Certificate, where appropriate, cannot be produced
- A valid Energy Performance Certificate cannot be produced
- A valid Electrical Safety Certificate cannot be produced
- The property does not have fixed heating in all habitable rooms
- The property fails to meet the basic health and safety standards set by the Scheme
- The property is likely to constitute a Level 1 Hazard according to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- The landlord is unavailable to attend viewings and/or a signup meeting and has no proxy/agency arranged to carry out these tasks

6.14.3 Landlords who will not be accepted by the Scheme

Landlords are expected to abide by a Code of Conduct specified in the Guaranteed Rent Agreement (Appendix 2). Under exceptional circumstances the RGS may choose not to accept certain properties due to the landlord or letting agent behaviours.

Landlords and agents will not be accepted where: -

- There is a history of illegal eviction or other illegal practices with any former or current tenants, or where there is an ongoing court case regarding the same
- The landlord or agent owes Reading Borough Council money
- There is a history of non-compliance with any Reading Borough Council department, particularly including Environmental Health, Planning and Planning Enforcement and Building Control
- There is a history of inappropriate treatment of tenants or Reading Borough Council staff
- The landlord has been prosecuted for a criminal offence arising from their conduct as a landlord
- The landlord has defrauded the local authority.

- The landlord has been refused a House in Multiple Occupation licence because he/she is not deemed a fit and proper person to hold such a licence in accordance with the Housing Act 2004.

Landlords and letting agents are entitled to request a review of the decision not to accept their properties onto the Scheme. In the event that a landlord is not able to join the Scheme then they will be informed of this decision in writing. Landlords can request a review of this decision by a Senior Officer.

6.14.4 Properties which are surplus to RGS requirements

Property which is offered by landlords but found to be surplus to the Scheme's current requirements will be made available to the Homelessness Prevention Team for the prevention of homelessness.

6.15 Viewing Process

Properties which the Procurement Officers consider to be ready for viewings will be passed to the Lettings Officers. Viewings will be arranged according to the needs of accepted applicants on the RGS waiting list. Applicants will not necessarily be sent for viewings in order of their date of acceptance onto the Scheme – how long they wait for a viewing of accommodation depends on the type, size and location of property that they are looking for, and whether they have a firm date that they need to leave their current accommodation. The Rent Guarantee Scheme's first priority is to prevent homelessness.

The Lettings Officers will send accepted applicants to view properties which meet their needs in terms of bedroom size. The RGS cannot guarantee viewings of particular types of property or properties located in specific areas of Reading. While properties are inspected to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and basic health and safety standards, the Scheme does not investigate parking issues and cannot guarantee that properties will be available where a tenant is permitted to keep pets. Applicants are required to view each property carefully and make sure it meets their individual requirements before signing up to a tenancy.

A landlord will be offered a choice of tenants where this is possible, if required. Individual applicants may be sent at the landlord's or Scheme's request. Viewings will be arranged to take place as a block booking, or staggered appointments. The landlord or landlord's representative is always required to attend the viewings, and a representative of the RGS may also attend at the landlord's request.

A landlord is not obliged to accept any tenant sent to view their property by the RGS. Should a landlord not be willing to take on any tenants offered in a first round of viewings, more viewings may be arranged at the discretion of the RGS.

The Lettings Officers will seek feedback from the landlord after the viewings; the successful applicant will be notified and a signup will be arranged.

6.15.1 Applicants who fail to attend viewings

Applicants are expected to attend viewings which have been arranged. The Lettings Officers will record incidences where individuals fail to attend viewings. During the next contact they will be asked why they did not attend the last viewing and the reason will be noted. This information will be made available to other Housing Needs teams who may be dealing with the applicant's rehousing.

On the second missed viewing, if no acceptable reason has been given, or the applicant is not contactable, a letter is sent to the applicant explaining that non-attendance of RGS viewings will affect their chances of assistance in the future.

If the applicant continues to fail to attend viewings without good reason, they may be removed from the waiting list and a letter will be sent confirming this. The applicant is entitled to reapply to the Scheme but their non-attendance of viewings will be taken into account.

6.15.2 Applicants who turn properties down

Applicants who are accepted by a landlord after a property viewing are expected to sign up to a tenancy in that property. Where an applicant has been offered an RGS property as a Private Sector Offer[5], refusal to sign up may result in the ending of any housing duty owed by the Local Authority. Applicants may request a Suitability Review of the property offered, in accordance with the Suitability of Accommodation Order associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This review will be carried out by the Homelessness Prevention Team, who may request supporting evidence from the property inspection process carried out by RGS. The RGS is intended to prevent homelessness and it is unlikely that an offer will be found to be unsuitable for reasons such as type of property, location within Reading, lack of parking and lack of permission for pets.

6.16 Signing up to a Tenancy

The Lettings Officers will liaise between landlord and tenant to arrange a signup date. Signups will usually take place at the Civic Centre by arrangement with landlord and tenant.

At the signup, the Lettings Officers will complete the Guaranteed Rent Agreement[6], the Rent Collection Agreement[7]and the relevant Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Application Form. They will also witness the signing of the Tenancy Agreement between landlord and tenant. A standard Tenancy Agreement can be supplied by the RGS.[8] If a

[5] Please see the Private Rented Sector Offer Policy (2017) for details regarding when this type of offer will be made.
[6] The Guaranteed Rent Agreement constitutes the arrangements for the payment of rent and guaranteed deposit between the landlord and Reading Borough Council and can be found in Appendix 2
[7] The Rent Collection Agreement constitutes the arrangements for the payment of rent and savings and can be found in Appendix 3
[8] Please see Appendix 1 for the RGS Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement

landlord wishes to use their own Tenancy Agreement, this will be reviewed by the RGS prior to the signup date to ensure that it complies with all relevant legislation.

The RGS cannot participate in tenancies where the keys to the property are handed to the applicant, or the tenancy agreement is signed before the signup meeting has taken place.

6.17 Tenancy Sustainment

6.17.1 Money Advice

At the signup, an appointment is booked for the tenant to attend a Money Advice appointment with the RGS Money Advisor. This may take place in person or over the phone. The purpose of this appointment is to check that all relevant benefits have been applied for and to ensure that rent and deposit payments are set up. Work may be carried to help households to budget, understand which are their priority bills and manage existing debts.

6.17.2 Rolling Programme Visits

The RGS carries out a rolling programme of tenancy sustainment visits and contacts during the tenancy. After around 8 weeks, a Home Visit is carried out. Further visits may be carried out at regular intervals depending on how the tenancy progresses, and feedback will be provided to the landlord as necessary. Rolling Programme Visit forms can be found in Appendix 6. Some visits may be carried out over the phone depending on the circumstances of the tenancy.

The purpose of the Rolling Programme visit is to: -

- Check that the tenant has moved into the property
- Check that the Housing Benefit/Universal Credit claim is progressing
- Check that the tenant has organised the payment of rent, their deposit instalments and any bills due, and check that these payments are ongoing
- Check that the only residents in the property are those who were accepted on the RGS scheme, unless changes to the household have been agreed and an appropriate benefits claim has been made
- Check that the tenant is keeping the property in a good state of repair
- Check that essential maintenance of the property is being carried out by the landlord
- Establish whether the tenant needs additional support sustaining their tenancy or managing their affairs by carrying out a Support Assessment where necessary and referring the tenant to the Access Panel for the allocation of floating support as required.

Tenants will be contacted at any point during the tenancy should there be issues to discuss or causes for concern. Ad hoc visits may be carried out. Towards the planned end

of a tenancy, the Procurement Officers may carry out pre-void inspections to help the tenant and landlord prepare for the closing inventory.

When a tenancy comes to an end, a Procurement Officer will carry out a closing video inventory of the property when the tenant leaves, and will liaise with the landlord regarding any deposit claim which may be made under the Guaranteed Rent Agreement.

6.17.3 Setting the Rent Guarantee Scheme Letting Income Rates

Under the Guaranteed Rent Agreement, the Council undertakes to pay the Letting Income rate appropriate for the property directly to the landlord, in advance, for the duration of the agreed term. The Letting Income rates are reviewed annually and cannot exceed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. In setting the Letting Income rates each year, the RGS aims to strike a balance between maximising the amount of properties offered to the Scheme, by offering a rate which is attractive to landlords, and maximising affordability for tenants. This balance takes into account tenants who are affected by the Benefit Cap, and where gaps in affordability are identified, tenants are supported to gain exemption from the Cap by finding employment or by other means. Individual households may be supported financially via Discretionary Housing Payments or other available funding while this work is carried out. The same rate will apply across all properties of equivalent size, taking into account current issues of demand and supply.[9]

Under the Rent Collection Agreement, the tenant will pay all monies received in respect of their Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (housing element) entitlement to the RGS and will top this amount up to reach the total Letting Income rate as required. When Letting Income rates are reassessed (each 1st April), payment made to the landlord under the agreement will vary accordingly. Outside this variation, no rent increases can be considered.

The RGS team will liaise closely with the Income Recovery Team for the purpose of keeping track of tenants who fall into rent arrears and arranging Direct Payments under the Housing Benefit Safeguard Scheme[10] as necessary. The RGS team will facilitate application for direct payment of the housing element of Universal Credit under an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) where this is deemed necessary due to the vulnerability, past tenancy history or debt history of the tenant.[11]

[9] Letting Income rates are set for each of the following property sizes: HMO room, Studio apartment, One bedroom property, Two bedroom property, Three bedroom property, Four bedroom property.

[10] The Safeguard Scheme, operated by Housing Benefit, enables applicants to apply for their rent payments to be made directly to their landlords, in the event of their being an evidenced reason why they are unable to manage their own finances successfully. It is intended to help vulnerable tenants sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. Since April 2011 when Local Housing Allowance began to be calculated on the 30th percentile, direct payments are permitted in all cases where the landlord has lowered the rent to make the property affordable to a tenant in receipt of Housing Benefit. In practice this means that all RGS tenancies, where tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit, are eligible for direct payments.

[11] For tenants in receipt of Universal Credit, the Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) scheme will pay the housing element of a tenant's entitlement directly to their landlord. Application for this scheme will be made by the Rent Guarantee Scheme on behalf of tenants for whom this service would be appropriate, or in cases where tenants have accrued rent arrears.

The Prevention Fund[12] will be used where necessary to prevent loss of tenancy (i.e. in the case of a tenant being sent to prison for more than 13 weeks, but less than 6 months, the Prevention Fund may be used to bridge any gap in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit payments).

Discretionary Housing Payments[13] will be sought to secure appropriate accommodation for pregnant clients and to prevent loss of tenancy for clients whose people whose circumstances have changed unavoidably, while the RGS looks to move them to a more appropriate property.

Two Homes Benefit[14] will be used to prevent rent arrears in cases where a tenant, in receipt of Housing Benefit, is offered a Council or Housing Association property and is therefore unable to give four weeks' notice at their current property. It may also be used in exceptional circumstances where a tenant is experiencing severe overcrowding and a larger property becomes available under the Scheme at short notice.

6.18 Financial Procedure

6.18.1 Tenant Deposit Contributions

Rent Guarantee Scheme tenants are required to make regular savings according to a payment plan established at the beginning of their tenancy. Tenants are required to save a sum equal to five weeks' rent within three years.

At the end of a RGS tenancy, if a valid claim is made against the Guaranteed Deposit, the claim amount will be deducted from the tenant's savings. Any remaining balance will be returned to the tenant. A landlord is not permitted to claim in excess of the guaranteed amount, which is the equivalent of six weeks' rent.

If the claim amount exceeds the amount that the tenant has saved, the balance constitutes a debt between the tenant and the RGS. The tenant is expected to pay back this debt and will be pursued until it is cleared. However, the tenant will not be held responsible for the part of a claim which exceeds the equivalent five weeks' rent.[15]

If a tenant holds debts with RBC relating to emergency accommodation charges, rent arrears, recharges, former RGS claims or debts owed to the Housing Benefit or Council Tax departments, their deposit savings will be used to pay off these debts before any remaining balance is returned to them.

[12] The Prevention Fund, held by Housing Needs, is used to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies in the private sector where a tenant's financial obligation does not fall within the scope of Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or Discretionary Housing Payments.

[13] Discretionary Housing Payments, operated by Housing Benefit, can be used as a strictly short term (less than 6 months) measure for topping up Housing Benefit payments in situations where a tenant has experienced, or will shortly be experiencing, a change of circumstances which affects their Housing Benefit entitlement and their housing need.

[14] Two Homes Benefit, operated by the Housing Benefit team, can pay up to four weeks additional rent as an overlap between tenancies where a tenant is unable to give proper notice at the property they are leaving. This is the only circumstance in which Housing Benefit can pay rent for one claimant at two properties simultaneously. This benefit is not available for tenants in receipt of Universal Credit.

[15] Tenancy deposits are limited to the equivalent of five weeks' rent by the 2019 Tenant Fees Act. The Rent Guarantee Scheme continues to offer the equivalent of six weeks' rent to landlords as a deposit guarantee, to maximise market advantage, at the Scheme's expense.

6.18.2 Deposit Protection

From 6th April 2007, landlords are obliged to protect a tenancy deposit in one of the Government-approved Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes. RGS landlords do not receive a cash deposit, but instead benefit from a deposit guarantee under the Guaranteed Rent Agreement. The RGS receive tenant deposit contributions during the course of the tenancy as described above.

At the beginning of each RGS tenancy, the RGS team protect each household's deposit, to the value of five weeks' rent, with the insurance-based Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme MyDeposits. The cost of this protection is borne by the Scheme. At the tenancy signup, the Prescribed Information is given to the tenant. This provides details as to how their deposit is protected and what to do at the end of the tenancy if they have concerns regarding any deposit claim which may be made (see 6.17.4). At the end of the tenancy, the RGS Team unprotect the deposit according to MyDeposits process.

If a tenant has concerns regarding a deposit claim which has been made, and these concerns remain unresolved despite requesting a review of the decision, they have recourse to adjudication provided by MyDeposits. The RGS will provide evidence regarding the total amount the tenant has saved towards their deposit, and send that amount to MyDeposits on request. The RGS will abide by MyDeposits decision regarding allocation of the saved sum. If the tenant has not made any savings towards their deposit during the course of the tenancy, this adjudication is not available as the deposit protection requirement does not apply.

6.18.3 Rent Payment

Tenants

Rent Guarantee Scheme tenants are required to pay monies equivalent to their full rent, monthly in arrears, to Reading Borough Council. Some or all of this payment will be comprised of their Housing Benefit or Universal Credit entitlement. Rent payments are due on the last day of each calendar month.

Where tenants fall into rent arrears, they will be pursued by the Income Recovery Team. Money advice and support will be offered to all tenants who fall into rent arrears. The Income Recovery Team will follow their protocol for collecting unpaid rent. When this is complete and arrears are still unpaid, recommendation will be made to the Tenant Services Manager and the Housing Needs Manager that the landlord be required to serve the tenant with a Notice under Section 21 of the Housing Act 2004. In accordance with the Guaranteed Rent Agreement, the landlord has five working days in which to serve this Notice, which will be served on the tenant by the Income Recovery Team.

The Income Recovery and Rent Guarantee Scheme teams will continue to work with the tenant to resolve the arrears. On the expiry of the Notice, recommendation may be made to the landlord that he or she should progress to seeking possession of the property. At any point up until the execution of a Bailiff's Warrant, the tenant may settle their account in full to avoid eviction.

Eviction from a Rent Guarantee Scheme property brings both the Rent Collection Agreement and the Guaranteed Rent Agreement to an end, and triggers the one week void payment of rent to the landlord.

Landlords

The Rent Guarantee Scheme will pay the rent, as specified in the Guaranteed Rent Agreement, to the landlord in advance for the duration of the Agreement. The payment will usually be made on the first day of each month. Where a tenancy begins mid-month, the first payment will be made in arrears as soon as is practicably possible. Payment in advance will commence from the first of the next calendar month.

Where a landlord sells a Rent Guarantee Scheme property, with the intent that the tenant remains in the property, or passes management of a property to an agent or representative, they must give the Rent Guarantee Scheme as much notice as possible in order that Agreements can be amended or renewed as necessary. Rent payment will be transferred to a new owner or agent from the first day of the next calendar month after the change or sale has taken place. Any rent owed by the previous owner or manager to the new must be resolved between the two parties without the participation of the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

6.18.4 Landlord Claims

At the end of a tenancy, landlords are entitled to make a claim against the tenancy deposit in the event of loss or damage to their property in excess of fair wear and tear. The deposit does not cover the communal areas of shared properties or flats, or garages.

In accordance with the Guaranteed Rent Agreement, landlords have 20 working days following the end of a tenancy in which to notify the Rent Guarantee Scheme that they wish to make a claim. In the case of loss or damage, the landlord is required to notify the Scheme that a claim will be made, and in due course to provide receipts for works carried out or goods replaced. The Scheme acknowledges that receipts may not be available within the 20 working day period.

Each claim will be individually considered by the RGS Senior Procurement Officer or Team Leader, who will use the closing video inventory, where appropriate, as verification of the claim. The claim will be viewed in the light of the Wear and Tear guidelines published by the Scheme (see Appendix 8).

The maximum amount which can be claimed is the value of six weeks' rent as specified in the Guaranteed Rent Agreement signed at the beginning of the tenancy.

Regular analysis of claims made through the Scheme will be carried out and policies reviewed to minimise this expenditure.

Former Rent Guarantee Scheme tenants who owe the Scheme money as a result of a deposit claim will be pursued through the Reading Borough Council debtors' system.

6.18.5 Duration of Rent Guarantee Scheme Support

Support from the Scheme for both landlord and tenant lasts for the duration of the tenancy.

6.19 Moves within the Rent Guarantee Scheme

The RGS team will assist tenants to move from one private rented sector property to another when a change of circumstances has caused the current property to become unsuitable. For example: -

- The amount of bedrooms required has decreased
- The amount of bedrooms required has increased to the extent that the family are severely overcrowded as outlined in Appendix 5.
- The property is in significant disrepair which is not as a result of the tenant's actions
- A member of the family has developed medical problems which are exacerbated in the current property
- In cases of domestic violence

The RGS will not assist moves for tenants who: -

- Have caused disrepair in their current property which is likely to result in a claim against the scheme
- Are not saving regularly to pay back their deposit
- Are in rent arrears
- Have deliberately overcrowded themselves
- Want to move to another area of the Borough
- Have received a poor reference from their current landlord as the result of inappropriate behaviour during their tenancy.

The Rent Guarantee Scheme will not assist moves within the Scheme for social reasons unless there are extreme circumstances or a police recommendation with supporting evidence. Attention will be focussed on assisting moves where doing so will free up accommodation which is in high demand. The Rent Guarantee Scheme will only facilitate moves based on housing need.

6.20 Requests to Review a Decision

Individuals have the right to request a review of decisions reached by the RGS. Tenants may request a review of a decision to remove them from the Scheme and against claim decisions. Landlords may request a review of a decision not to use them or one of their

properties on the Scheme, and against claim decisions. All requests for a review must be made in writing within 14 days of the date the individual is notified of the relevant decision (as evidenced by an email or letter date). Requests for a review should be addressed to the Rent Guarantee Scheme Team Leader.

All review requests will be answered in writing within 14 days of receipt. Following a review decision, customers may use Reading Borough Council's Complaints Process if they wish to pursue the matter. However, review decisions made in accordance with RGS policy, which has been ratified by elected members, may have no further right to consideration.

6.21 Service Standards

All Rent Guarantee Scheme processes will be subject to published Housing Needs service level standards. Housing Needs aim to: -

1. Answer letters within 5 working days
2. Answer phones within 5 rings
3. Respond to complaints within 14 days
4. Respond to requests for a review of a decision within 14 days
5. Reach Homelessness decisions within 33 days
6. Process all Rent Guarantee Scheme applications within 33 days
7. Visit all households placed in Temporary Accommodation within 7 days
8. Visit all clients in Temporary Accommodation on a quarterly basis
9. Complete a Support Assessment with all clients placed in Temporary Accommodation
10. Complete all support paperwork within 7 days
11. Input all client details from drop-in appointments onto the system within 24 hours
12. Respect every individual's right to confidentiality
13. Treat every individual fairly and with respect

Rent Guarantee Scheme performance will be measured and monitored according to local Performance Indicators.

7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Rent Guarantee Scheme Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement

ASSURED SHORTHOLD TENANCY AGREEMENT

This is an agreement for letting a dwelling on a fixed term assured shorthold tenancy under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended)

For the Premises at: - ******

1. **Date on which the agreement is made: *****

2. **The people involved:**

   The Landlord: ****

   Address: *****

   The Tenant(s): ****

   (In the case of joint tenants, the term 'tenant' applies to each of them and the names of all joint tenants should be written above. Each tenant individually has the full responsibilities and rights set out or implied in this agreement).

   The obligations and liabilities of the parties under this agreement are joint and several.

3. **The term of the tenancy:**

   Beginning on: ******

   Ending on: **********

   Tenancy fixed term lasting a period of: Twelve months

4. **The rent: £**** per calendar month**
   Full details about the way in which rent is to be paid are contained in the Rent Collection Agreement (made between the Tenant and Reading Borough Council) and the Guaranteed Rent Agreement (made between the Landlord and Reading Borough Council). These agreements govern the way in which rent is to be paid for as long as those agreements continue. If this Tenancy Agreement lasts for longer than those other agreements, then Landlord and Tenant must make their own arrangements for the payment and collection of rent.

5. **The Guaranteed Deposit:** This is an amount of money agreed by Reading Borough Council, to the value of six weeks' rent, which may be claimed against by a Landlord at the end of a tenancy. You agree that Reading Borough Council may provide a guaranteed deposit to cover damages (beyond fair wear and tear) or rent arrears for

this tenancy. In accordance with the Tenant Fees Act 2019, the Tenant will be expected to save incrementally towards a maximum of five weeks' rent. These savings will be held by Reading Borough Council and protected by tenancy deposit protection scheme My Deposits. In the event that the Landlord wishes to make a claim against the guaranteed deposit, all Tenants will be informed and the details provided.

6. There will be three copies of this agreement after you have signed it, one for the landlord to keep, one for Reading Borough Council (known as the 'counterparts') and the other for you to keep (known as the 'original').

7. **Important – by signing this agreement, you agree that you have read and accept the full conditions of your tenancy.**

8. The clauses in this agreement set out all parties' responsibilities under this agreement.

9. By law, you must keep to the terms in this tenancy agreement once you and we have signed and dated both parts of the agreement

10. Landlord's signature:

11. Print Name:

By signing this agreement you also confirm you have received a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate*, the Government's "How to rent" leaflet, prescribed information and the Energy Performance Certificate (*if applicable).

12. Tenant's signature:

13. Print Name:

14. Tenant's signature:

15. Print Name:

16. Date:

General Clauses

17. Housing Act 1988

This agreement is for an assured shorthold tenancy as defined in Section 19A of the Housing Act 1988 as amended by the Housing Act 1996. Sections 8 and 21 of this Act sets out the conditions under which we can take the property back.

18. Our address for serving notices

Section 48 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 says we must give you an address

where you can serve a notice (or notices) on us if you need to in relation to this agreement.

Address: *******

Serving notices properly

If either we or you serve a notice under this agreement, we will treat it as being served properly if it is delivered by hand or sent by recorded or registered delivery or by first class post. We will assume it has been received two working days after the date it was posted. However, if it is delivered by hand before 5pm, it will be treated as being served on the next working day. If a notice is not served properly it will not be valid.

Tenant Responsibilities

19. Rent – to pay rent as set out in Clause 4

20. Not to withhold your rent or any other amounts due under this agreement unless agreed beforehand in writing with the Landlord and for specified reasons only.

21. To register with the council tax department or any other relevant office of the local authority to pay council tax for the term of the tenancy.

22. You must register (in your name, and where appropriate) with gas, electricity, water, internet provider and phone companies (and sewerage companies, where this applies) and pay all charges for these services for the term of the tenancy. When your tenancy ends, you must arrange for the utility companies to take final meter readings for these services but do not ask the companies to cut the supply off.

23. You must not install any coin operated, prepaid card or key operated meters at the premises, or change gas, electricity or water suppliers without first getting the landlord's permission in writing.

24. You must pay the TV licence, cable television or satellite television charges (if you have any of these) for the term of the tenancy.

25. You must repay our reasonable legal and other costs if we take any action against you for not paying any amounts you owe or if you do not meet any of your other responsibilities listed in this agreement.

26. You must clean, or have cleaned, all the windows you can reasonably reach on the premises (inside and out) regularly and within the last 14 days of the end of the tenancy.

27. You must, as soon as possible, replace and pay for, all broken glass if the breakage was your fault, a member of your households fault, or a visitor's fault.

28. You must replace all fuses, bulbs and fluorescent tubes when you need to and make sure that all light bulbs and fluorescent tubes work at the end of the tenancy.

29. You must keep the inside of the premises and all fixtures and fittings in good and clean condition (this does not include reasonable wear and tear).

30. You are responsible for unblocking and keeping all gutters, sewers, drains, toilet bowls, cisterns, basins, baths, showers, water pipes and ducts (and other fittings you have reasonable access to) free from blockages.

31. You must use an appropriately qualified contractor to carry out any of your responsibilities to repair or maintain the premises. This particularly applies to clauses 31, 33 and 35, if the repair and maintenance might need specialist equipment for safety reasons.

32. You must tell us as soon as possible and in writing about any repairs or faults we are responsible for. You may be legally responsible for any loss or costs which are as a result of a repair or fault you do not tell us about.

33. During the tenancy, as long as we give you at least one working day's notice (except in an emergency), you must allow us or our employees into the premises for one or more of the following purposes:

    - inspect the condition of the premises;
    - carry out repairs or alterations to the premises or the premises next door;
    - during the last two months of the tenancy show the premises to possible new tenants or someone who wants to buy the premises;
    - carry out any other reasonable activity, including selling the premises, building work or raising a mortgage on the premises;
    - carry out our legal responsibilities as the landlord.

34. If after an inspection under clause 34 above we serve a notice of disrepair on you, you must carry out the work shown in the notice within one month of us serving the notice on you. If you do not do the work within that month we may enter the premises and carry out the work for you and then charge you the cost of the work.

35. You must keep to the regulations for managing the shared areas of any building you live in with other people. Where applicable, we have attached a copy of the common regulations to this agreement.

36. You must not overload the electrical circuits by using inappropriate multi-socket electrical adaptors or extension cables when connecting appliances to the mains.

37. You must regularly test any smoke alarms (which use batteries) fitted in the premises and replace any battery in an alarm which you find is not working. You must pay the relevant costs if you need a contractor to carry out this work for you. You must let us know as soon as possible if the alarm does not work after you fit a new battery.

38. You must take reasonable care to heat and ventilate the premises to help prevent condensation. If there is condensation, you must wipe it down and clean any surfaces when necessary to prevent mould building up or damage to the premises and its fixtures and fittings.

39. You must remove all rubbish from the premises by putting it in black bin bags in the appropriate dustbin or any large waste container provided outside and put it out to be collected on the relevant days.

40. If you rent a specific car parking space or garage as part of this tenancy, you must only park in that space and not store, keep or park any boat, caravan or commercial vehicle on it or on any shared car park.

41. If you have a garden, you must keep it clean and tidy, including cutting the grass and lawns regularly, and not dig up or cut down any trees, shrubs, or bushes unless you have our permission in writing first. You must also keep the patio areas (if you have any), paths, garden areas, lawns, flowerbeds, shrubs or bushes and borders (if you have any) as tidy and free of weeds as they were at the start of the tenancy.

42. We do not provide any cover under any insurance policy arranged by us for damage to your personal belongings or valuables. Nor do we provide cover for claims against you from other parties for damage to property or personal injury that results from something you have or have not done (we call this negligence). You should arrange insurance for these risks yourself.

43. During the last two months of the tenancy, you must allow us to display a ‘for sale’ or ‘to let’ board or notice on the premises if necessary.

44. How you can use the premises:

- You must not use the premises or the building for anything illegal or immoral.
- You must not use the premises or the building for any registered trade or business.

- You must only use the premises as your and your dependants' home
- You must not change or install any locks on any doors or windows at the premises or the building, or have any extra keys cut for any locks without our permission in writing. If you lose the keys to the premises or the building, you must pay us any costs to supply and fit replacement locks.
- You must not change the inside or outside of the premises in any way apart from decorating the inside of the premises to a good standard in a colour we approve in writing before you carry out the work.
- You must not damage the premises or the building, or allow anyone else to damage them. You must advise us of any damage to the premises or the building within 5 working days so that we can make repairs.
- You must not do anything to the electrical, lighting, hot water or heating installations or fixtures or any of the kitchen units and appliances or sanitary fittings or any other fixtures and fittings. You must not remove these items from the premises or the building.
- You must not transfer this tenancy to anyone else or take in lodgers, sublet, give up or share any part of the premises without our permission. If you wish to do any of the above you must first get our permission in writing. If we give you permission you must pay all the costs involved for preparing any documents relating to the tenancy change. You will continue to be responsible for all your responsibilities in this agreement until a new agreement has been signed which details the tenancy change.

45. You must not leave the premises empty for any continuous period of more than 14 days, without telling us first. If you plan to leave the premises empty for more than 28 days, you must leave a key with us in case there is an emergency where we may need to get into the premises.

46. You must not do anything at the premises or the building (including playing any radio, television or musical instrument) which causes a nuisance to or annoys us or your neighbours or which might reasonably be considered to be antisocial behaviour. In particular, you must not play any music which can be heard outside the premises between 11.00pm and 8.30am.

47. You and anyone visiting your premises must not harass anyone for any reason so that anyone in the building is offended and cannot live there peacefully.

48. You must not place any sign, poster, or item of clothing on the premises which can be seen from the outside, without the prior agreement of the Landlord.

49. You must not fix any aerial or satellite dish on the premises or the building, or install cable television or telephone cables without first getting our permission in writing. If we give you our permission you must pay all the costs involved (including removing an aerial or dish at the end of the tenancy) and the reasonable costs of making good

any damage or redecorating, if necessary.

50. You must not keep any animals, reptiles, insects, rodents or birds at the premises without first getting our permission in writing. If we do give our permission we may ask you to pay an additional amount towards the deposit to cover any possible damage the animal or pet may cause.

51. You must not remove the furniture, equipment and belongings shown in the inventory from the premises without getting our permission in writing first.

52. You must not block any shared passageways, hallways and staircases, or keep any bicycle, pushchair or other item in any shared area of the premises or building without first getting our permission in writing. You must also not hang any clothes or other items on the outside of the premises or in any shared garden unless we give you our permission in writing.

53. You cannot make any claim against us for any compensation for any loss or damage caused as a result of the washing machine or the tumble dryer (if you have one) breaking down and damaging your belongings.

54. You cannot make any claim against us for any compensation for any loss or inconvenience you suffer if the fridge or freezer (if you have either or both of these) breaks down and causes your food to thaw or become unfit to eat.

55. You cannot make any claim against us for compensation if:
    - a lift in the building cannot be used or breaks down;
    - you or someone else has an accident caused by a lift; or
    - the lift stops working and we are not responsible for putting it right.

56. Unless it is covered by insurance, you cannot claim against us for compensation for:
    - any damage our agents, workmen or other staff cause;
    - a fault in any pipes, staircase or anything in the premises or building;
    - anything which any caretaker in the building does or does not do;
    - any inconvenience you suffer when we carry out work to the premises or the building (including work to premises next door or buildings we own nearby), such as decorating or carrying out repairs or alterations; or any effect that the lift has on your TV or other electrical equipment.

57. You must give us copies of any notices, documents, proceedings or letters which relate to the premises as soon as you receive them.

58. During the tenancy you must take reasonable measures to keep the premises free of

vermin (for example, rats), fleas or parasites. If the premises become infested because of something you have or have not done, you will have to pay the appropriate costs of putting this right and cleaning any parts of the premises which are affected.

59. Just before or immediately after the tenancy ends, you must give us your new address so that we can contact you to ensure all bills have been paid.

60. You must arrange and pay for the premises to be cleaned to a good standard at the end of the tenancy. This may include washing cleaning any carpets shown in the inventory (if they have been marked during the tenancy). Or, you must pay a fair amount towards the cost of the cleaning.

61. You must repair any damage to the premises or to our furniture and fittings (including replacing them, if necessary) if you, a member of your household or one of your visitors caused the damage. You must pay us any cost we have to pay to repair any damage or replace any furniture and fittings if you fail to replace or repair anything under this clause.

62. You must repair any wall or other surfaces on which you have hung photographs, pictures, posters and so on.

63. You must leave all our furniture and fittings (as shown in the inventory) in a good, clean condition (apart from reasonable wear and tear) in the same rooms as they were in when you moved in.

64. You must pay the cost of redecorating any rooms or part of the premises which you decorated or changed without our written permission.

65. You must arrange for any electricity, gas, water, internet provider and phone meters to be read immediately before the end of the tenancy and pay any outstanding amounts you owe the companies who provide these services (including cable TV) up to and including the day the tenancy ends.

66. You must arrange to return any television or other equipment or appliance you have hired or rented to the company you rented it from.

67. You must give the premises back to us at the end of the tenancy with vacant possession and return the keys of the premises to the place or person we have agreed with you.

68. You must remove your personal belongings and any rubbish and leave the premises and our furniture, fixtures and fittings in good condition. You also agree that if you leave any personal belongings in the premises at the end of the tenancy we can choose to either:

    - Remove any of your belongings you leave in the premises after the end of the tenancy, or
    - Charge you rent at the rate set out in this agreement until you remove your personal belongings and hand back all the keys to the premises and the building.

69. You must pay to us any extra costs we have to pay if we cannot check the inventory until you have removed your personal belongings

Landlord / Agent Responsibilities

70. We will make sure the premises are in a clean and tidy condition before your tenancy starts and make sure all appliances are in good condition and working properly.

71. We will take reasonable steps to make sure the gas and electrical appliances, and other similar mechanical appliances in the premises for which we are responsible, work properly. We will repair them at the start of and during the tenancy, as long as the repairs are needed as a result of reasonable wear and tear.

72. Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by Section 116 of the Housing Act 1988 applies to this agreement. This means that we are responsible for repairing and maintaining the installations in the premises which supply water, gas and electricity, and any sanitary ware (basins, sinks, baths, toilet bowls, cisterns, showers and so on), but not other fixtures, fittings and appliances for using water, gas or electricity. We will repair and maintain the installations in the premises for general heating, cooking and heating water. We will take account of the age, character and life of the premises and the area they are in to decide what level of repair we need to carry out.

73. We will not have to repair:

    - anything which you are responsible for repairing;
    - the premises if they are totally destroyed or damaged by a storm or flood; or
    - anything which you are entitled to remove from the premises.

74. We will allow you to quietly enjoy the tenancy. This means you can live in your home without any interruption from us or others on our behalf other than as permitted under this agreement as long as you have paid the rent and carried out your responsibilities as set out in this agreement.

75. We will keep the premises and our contents (if any) insured for any amounts we feel appropriate. We will insure the premises against fire and other risks normally covered by a comprehensive household insurance policy and any other risks we consider necessary.

76. If the insurers consider that you cannot live in the premises because of damage to them or the building by any insured risk and the damage is not your fault, or they have not been damaged as a result of something you have or have not done (we call this negligence), you will not have to pay any rent until you can live in the premises again. Or, you may give us written notice to end the tenancy immediately. If you end the tenancy we will pay you any rent you have paid to us for any period after the end of the tenancy.

77. We will not pay you any compensation if you cannot live in the premises and we have told you that you do not have to pay us rent until you can live in the premises again.

78. If you cannot live in or use part of the premises you will not have to pay a percentage of the rent until the whole premises are fit to live in again.

79. If we cannot agree on a percentage to pay under clause 80 above, we may use arbitration to sort the matter out (under arbitration an independent professional will settle any dispute between us), as long as you and we agree and agree to share the cost of arbitration. This clause does not affect either our or your right to take a dispute to the courts in the usual way.

Inventory and Property Condition

80. We will be responsible for arranging an inventory and description of the condition of the premises at the beginning and end of the tenancy.

81. If you do not check and sign the inventory within 7 days of the date of this agreement, we will assume that you agree to the inventory and description of the condition of the premises as being a true and full record of the condition of the premises at the time you moved into the property.

82. At the end of the tenancy we will arrange for a closing inventory to be completed. If you do not keep an appointment to complete and check the closing inventory you must accept what we find when we check the inventory.

83. We will accept a Deposit Guarantee to the value of **£***** provided by Reading Borough Council on your behalf.

Ending the Tenancy

84. The Protection from Eviction Act 1977 (as amended) protects you from us ending your tenancy immediately. It says we must get a court order to repossess (take back) the premises if you break the tenancy and you have failed to put right or sort out the problem in a reasonable time.

85. If you are not sure about your rights or you need more information to help you understand this clause, you should get advice from a solicitor or your local Citizens Advice.

86. Any action we take to repossess the premises will not restrict or limit any other legal rights we may have.

87. You must give us at least one month's notice in writing when you want to end the tenancy. You will still be legally responsible for paying the rent and for all other responsibilities under this agreement until the notice ends and you have moved out of the premises. The notice cannot expire within the first six months of the tenancy.

88. The Landlord may bring the tenancy to an end at any time before the last date of the tenancy set out in clause 3, by giving at least two months' written notice. The notice cannot expire within the first six months of the tenancy.

Regulations for the shared areas of the building if you live in a flat

89. You must not do the following:

- You must not block any cisterns, waste or soil pipes or rubbish chutes in the building (if there are any) and you must keep them free from rubbish.
- You must not allow any rubbish to build up in the premises or the building and you must put all rubbish in the bins or other proper rubbish containers (you must provide these). You must not pour any oil, grease or other substance down any drain or pipe in or around the premises which might be dangerous or damage the drainage system.
- You must not hang clothes or other items outside the premises; and
- You must not place any pot, flowerpot, window box or any container of any kind on any window sill or concrete or stone ledge of the premises or the building.
- You must not throw rubbish out of any window of the premises or shake any mat out of the windows.
- You must not keep or bring any bird, dog or other animal into the premises or into the building without first getting our permission in writing. If we do give permission we still have the right to change our decision later.

- You must not use or allow anyone to use any lift to carry goods or more people than the weight or number allowed, as shown in the lift.
- You must not bring or keep on the premises anything which is or may become, in our opinion, unclean or unsightly.
- You must not park cars in any yard, garden or driveway of the building.
- No smoking within the premises.

90. Between 11.00pm and 8.30am you must not:
    - play or use any piano, sound system, radio, loudspeaker or mechanical or other musical instrument;
    - use any equipment or machinery of any kind (such as a vacuum cleaner);
    - sing loudly; or
    - make any other noise which could annoy any of your neighbours, or be heard outside the premises.

Appendix 2: Guaranteed Rent Agreement

DATED ***

C/O & LL

- and -

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GUARANTEED RENT AGREEMENT FOR THE PROPERTY AT

***tenancy address**

M Graham
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU

Ref: Legal/US

THIS AGREEMENT is made on ********

PARTIES

(1) **C/O & LL** ("the Landlord");

and

(2) **READING BOROUGH COUNCIL** of Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU ("the Council").

1. INTRODUCTION

A. The Council wishes to have access to residential properties in order to provide settled accommodation in the private rented sector for those approaching Reading Borough Council in housing need.

3 B. The Council intends to guarantee rent in respect of the properties of the Landlord that are the subject of this Agreement on the terms set out in this Agreement.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms have the following meanings:

"Agreement"	This agreement between the parties comprising these terms and conditions and the Schedules and any other documents (or parts thereof) specified by the Council;
"Commencement Date"	****;
"Confidential Information"	Includes: (a) Information that ought to be considered as confidential (however it is conveyed and in whatever way it is stored), which includes without limitation any information the disclosure of which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person, trade secrets, intellectual property rights and know-how of either party; (b) Personal data and sensitive personal data within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 1998; and (c) Commercially sensitive information;

"Deposit Guarantee"	Means the deposit guaranteed by the Council in accordance with Clause 10 which shall not exceed the sum equivalent to six (6) weeks Letting Income;
"DPA"	Means the Data Protection Act 1998, as amended;
"FOIA"	Means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under the Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner in relation to such legislation;
"Guaranteed Rent Scheme"	Means the guaranteed rent scheme operated by the Council with participating Landlords and Tenants;
"Information"	All information in whatever form given to, produced, originating from or acquired by the Landlord or the Council for the purposes of this Agreement;
"Letting Income"	Means an amount equivalent to the monthly Rent payable by the Tenant to the Landlord under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement which shall be no greater than the Tenant's LHA;
"LHA"	Means the Local Housing Allowance which is the maximum amount permissible by the relevant statutory authority by way of benefit payment with regard to the Tenant's occupation of the Property in accordance with housing benefit regulations, as amended from time to time;
"Notices"	Means a notice served on the Tenant pursuant to section 8 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended) in relation to any statutory ground therein or pursuant to section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended);
'Notice of Abandonment'	Means a notice of abandonment served by the Landlord upon the Tenant pursuant to Clause 6.5.2 of this Agreement;
"Property"	Means the property at ********** identified by the Landlord as suitable accommodation for the Tenant which meets and shall continue to meet the standards set out by the Council in this Agreement;
"Request for Information"	Shall have the meaning set out in the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 as relevant (where the meaning set out for the term

	"request" shall apply);
“Rent”	Means the aggregate rent reserved, exclusive of any service charges or other charges or expenses, payable by the Tenant to the Landlord for the Property which shall be no greater than the Tenant’s LHA;
“Rent Collection Agreement”	Means the agreement for the collection of Rent for the Property between the Council and the Tenant in substantially the form of the draft which is annexed at Schedule 2;
“Schedule”	Means a schedule to these terms and conditions;
“Services”	Means the services described in Schedule 1;
“Tenancy Agreement”	Means a tenancy agreement provided by the Council for acceptance by the Landlord in accordance with Clause 5.2 which is annexed in Schedule 3;
“Tenant”	Means a tenant occupying the Property under a Tenancy Agreement with the Landlord;
“Void Letting Income”	Means the void letting income payable by the Council to the Landlord in accordance with Clause 9;
“Working Days”	Means a day (other than a Saturday or Sunday) on which banks are open for domestic business in the City of London.

3. INTERPRETATION

3.1 In this Agreement:

(a) References to the singular shall include the plural and vice versa;

(b) References to any gender shall include all genders;

(c) Reference to any statute or statutory instrument shall include any amendment, re-enactment, modification or replacement thereof;

(d) Reference to the Landlord's or the Council's consent or notice means the Landlord's or the Council's prior written consent or written notice;

(e) Headings are for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of this Agreement;

(f) References to clauses are, unless otherwise provided, references to clauses of this Agreement and references to paragraphs are references to paragraphs in the same Schedule in which such reference appears;

3.2 In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between these terms and any Schedule, these terms and conditions shall take precedence to the extent of the conflict or inconsistency.

4. DURATION

4.1 This Agreement shall take effect from the Commencement Date.

4.2 This Agreement shall continue until terminated:

4.2.1 on not less than two (2) months' written notice by either Party PROVIDED THAT no such notice may be served during the first four (4) months of this Agreement; or

4.2.2 in accordance with the provisions of Clause 18.

4.3 Where the Council does so terminate the Agreement under Clause 4.2.1 above no remuneration, compensation or other payment shall be payable or owed by the Council except for the sums accruing pursuant to the payment provision hereunder for Services completed to the date of termination.

5. THE SERVICE

5.1 Where following an assessment of housing need, the Council has identified a person as being in need of settled accommodation, the Council shall notify the Landlord that it wishes it to nominate that person to the Landlord for the provision of the Property pursuant to this Agreement.

5.2 If the Landlord shall accept the nomination of such person, it shall enter into a Tenancy Agreement as proposed by the Council for letting the Property to such person during the period of this Agreement.

5.3 The Council shall only recommend to the Landlord Tenancy Agreements with a fixed period of twelve (12) months or less.

5.4 The Council shall collect the Rent for the Property from the Tenant in accordance with the Rent Collection Agreement at Schedule 2 of this Agreement.

5.5 The Council shall provide the Services:

5.5.1 In accordance with this Agreement, including without limitation any performance standards that may be set out in Schedule 1;

5.5.2 In accordance with all relevant laws; and

5.5.3 With the degree of skill, care and diligence that could reasonably be expected of a careful and attentive provider of services similar to the Services.

6. THE LANDLORD'S OBLIGATIONS

6.1 The Landlord will let the Property to the Tenant under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and will comply with its obligations thereunder and in particular will provide the following services and adopt the quality standards set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Agreement for the period of the Tenancy Agreement:

6.2 The aggregate Rent shall be no greater than the LHA throughout the term of the Agreement.

6.3 **Repairs**

6.3.1 The Landlord shall be responsible for managing and carrying out all necessary repairs to the Property, including but not limited to the exterior and/or structure of the Property;

6.4 **Notices and court proceedings**

6.4.1 **Notices under Section 8 or 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended)**

6.4.1.1 Where the Council instructs the Landlord to serve a Notice on the Tenant in relation to the Tenancy Agreement the Landlord shall do so at its own costs within 5 (five) Working Days' of the date of notification by the Council.

6.4.1.2 If the Landlord fails to serve Notice within the timescale specified at Clause 6.4.1.1 above then the Council shall have the power to:

(a) suspend payment of the Letting Income until such time as the Notice is served by the Landlord on the Tenant; and

(b) if the Notice is not served by the Landlord on the Tenant within 14 Working Days' of the date of notification in accordance with Clause 6.4.1.1 above the Council shall have the power to terminate the Contract as a whole by giving the Landlord not less than 1 (one) month's notice in writing.

Where the Council does so terminate the Agreement under this Clause 6.4.1 the Landlord shall only be entitled to sums accruing pursuant to the payment provision hereunder to the date of termination.

6.5.1. Where the Landlord serves Notice on the Tenant pursuant to Clause 6.4.1 it shall at its own costs within 5 (five) Working Days' of the date of expiry of the Notice issue proceedings at court to recover possession of the Property. Upon obtaining a possession order from the court the Landlord shall at its own cost apply for a warrant of possession within 5 (five) Working Days' of the date fixed for possession.

6.5.2 **Notice of Abandonment**

6.5.2.1 In circumstances where it appears to either the Council or the Landlord that the Tenant has abandoned the Property, the Landlord shall, having made proper enquiries and taken such independent legal advice as he considers necessary, attach a Notice of Abandonment to the front of the Property.

6.5.2.2 On expiry of the Notice of Abandonment, where the Landlord believes, and has reasonable cause to believe that the Tenant has ceased to reside at the Property, the Landlord shall take possession of the Property and notify the Council accordingly. The Council shall not be liable to the Landlord for any loss or damages arising out of any claim for harassment or illegal eviction made by the Tenant or any excluded occupier.

6.5.2.3 The Council shall have the power to terminate the Contract as a whole by giving to the Landlord not less than 1 (one) month's notice in writing where the Council, acting reasonably, is satisfied that the Tenant has abandoned the Property. Where the Council does so terminate the Agreement under this Clause 6.5.2.3 the Landlord shall only be entitled to sums accruing pursuant to the payment provision hereunder to the date of termination.

6.5.3 The Landlord shall at all times give the Council prior written notice of any decision to serve Notice and/or issue possession proceedings in respect of the Tenancy Agreement and shall indemnify the Council against all liability for loss or damage to the Property or breach of statutory duty or for all actions, costs, expenses (including legal expenses on an indemnity basis), claims, charges, losses, proceedings and demands which may arise in relation to the Tenancy Agreement.

6.6 **Compliance**

6.6.1 The Landlord represents and warrants that its performance of its obligations under this Agreement and the Tenancy Agreement will not constitute a breach of any law or obligation applicable to it.

6.6.2 The Landlord shall not engage in any illegal or immoral activity or purpose or allow the Tenant to do so. Where the Landlord reasonably suspects that the Tenant or persons in occupation of the Property are engaging in any illegal or immoral activity or purpose, the Landlord shall bring such activity to the immediate attention of the Council and take appropriate action against the Tenant under the Tenancy Agreement.

6.6.3 The Landlord shall not engage in fraudulent activity in connection with the Agreement. If the Landlord engages in fraud in relation to the Agreement or any other contract with the Council, the Council may terminate the Agreement forthwith and recover from the Landlord the amount of any loss suffered by the Council resulting from the termination.

6.6.4 The Landlord warrants and represents that all written statements and representations made by the Landlord to join the Guaranteed Rent Scheme, including any documents submitted, remain true and accurate at all times except to the extent that the Landlord has otherwise disclosed to the Council in writing prior to the date of this Agreement.

6.6.5 The Landlord shall have a continuing obligation to notify the Council of any changes in his or her circumstances, including but not limited to criminal convictions and bankruptcy.

6.6.6 The Landlord shall comply with all disabled access regulations.

6.7 **Tenant safety**

6.7.1 The Landlord shall be responsible for ensuring the safety of gas supply at the Property, annual safety inspections of gas appliances situated within the Property and the repair of gas appliances situated within the Property.

6.7.2 The Landlord shall be responsible for ensuring that any electrical equipment at the Property is safely installed and maintained; any such equipment shall be inspected and tested by a competent person at regular intervals, including annual PAT testing of electrical appliances (or its statutory equivalent).

6.7.3 The Landlord shall carry out a fire risk assessment at the Property prior to the commencement of the Tenancy Agreement; such assessment shall be carried out by a competent fire safety professional.

6.7.4 The Landlord shall be responsible for legionella testing and compliance with all other health and safety legislation.

6.7.5 The Landlord may choose to instruct the Council to carry out the tasks referred to at Clauses 6.7.1 to 6.7.4 inclusive. Any such services may be provided by the Council at its sole discretion subject to additional cost to be agreed with the Landlord.

6.7.6 Copies of all safety certificates shall be made available by the Landlord to the Council for inspection free of charge as soon as practicable after receipt of a request and in any event within five (5) Working Days' of receiving a request from the Council.

7. MONITORING AND COMPLAINTS

7.1 The Council shall monitor its performance and shall, if requested, provide a written report of the outcome of such monitoring to the Landlord six (6) months after the Commencement Date and at intervals of six (6) months thereafter.

7.2 The Landlord shall be entitled at its own expense to carry out its own monitoring of the Council's performance PROVIDED THAT such monitoring does not unduly interfere with, obstruct or otherwise adversely affect the Council's ability to provide the Services.

7.3 The Council shall deal with any complaints received from the Landlord (or any third party) regarding the Services in accordance with the Council's published complaints procedure. The Council shall keep a record of complaints received and of the actions taken by it to investigate and remedy each such complaint. Such records shall be made available for inspection by the Landlord at all reasonable times.

8. PAYMENT

8.1 The Council shall pay the Letting Income in advance on a monthly basis starting on the Commencement Date during the term of the Agreement:

The Letting Income means the sum of ***£*******.

8.2 The Council shall pay the Landlord the amount due within thirty (30) days.

8.3 Payments to the Landlord will be made by the BACS system and the Landlord shall provide the Council with relevant bank account details prior to the commencement of this Agreement.

8.4 For the avoidance of doubt, no other letting related fee, expenses or charges shall be payable by the Council to the Landlord notwithstanding the content of any Tenancy Agreement concluded between the Landlord and the Tenant.

8.5 The form of each Tenancy Agreement is a matter for the Landlord with all responsibilities and liabilities thereunder resting solely with the Landlord and Tenant respectively. Under no circumstances shall the Council be liable to the Landlord for any breach or breaches of the Tenancy Agreement by the Tenant or to the Tenant for any breach or breaches of the Tenancy Agreement by the Landlord.

8.6 The Letting Income shall be reviewed annually. Any change to the Letting Income shall take effect on the 1st April each year and shall be no greater than the LHA for the Tenant. For the avoidance of doubt, under no circumstances shall the Letting Income be greater than the LHA throughout the duration of the Agreement.

8.7 If the Council is late in making the Letting Income payment then the Council must pay the Landlord interest on the amount of any such late payment (unless the sum is in

dispute between the parties). The interest will be calculated on a daily basis, from the date when the payment should have been made to the date when payment is actually made. The interest rate that will apply will be the base rate of Lloyds Bank from time to time, plus two (2) percent per annum. The parties agree the interest rate described herein provides the Landlord with a substantial remedy pursuant to sections 8 and 9 of the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998.

9. VOID LETTING INCOME

9.1 The Council will pay to the Landlord weekly in arrears the Void Letting Income for a maximum of one (1) week, or lesser period on a pro-rata basis should the Property become occupied within the one (1) week period, upon the Landlord recovering possession of the Property following expiry or determination of the Tenancy Agreement in respect of which the Void Letting Income is being paid. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council shall be required to pay Void Letting Income for a maximum period of one (1) week during which there is, in relation to any part of the Property previously subject to a tenancy, no Tenancy Agreement.

10. DEPOSIT GUARANTEE

10.1 The Council will give to the Landlord a Deposit Guarantee as security against loss or damage to the Property excluding fair wear and tear and rent lawfully due only which shall not exceed a sum equivalent to six (6) weeks' Letting Income.

10.2 In the event that the Landlord seeks to recover monies from the Council under Clause 10.1 above, it shall provide the Council with all supporting evidence and any other documentation reasonably requested by the Council within 20 (twenty) days of the Closing Inventory. If there is a dispute between the parties as to the Deposit Guarantee, including but not limited to the amount payable by the Council to the Landlord, the dispute shall be resolved through the dispute resolution procedure detailed at Clause 23.

11. NON-RESIDENT LANDLORDS

11.1 The Landlord represents and warrants that at the date of this Agreement his or her usual place of abode is in the United Kingdom for the purposes of the Taxes Management Act 1970 and the Income and Corporation Tax Act 1980, as amended, or any other legislation or rule of law for the time being in force (the '**Tax Acts**').

11.2 The Landlord shall immediately inform the Council if the Landlord's residential status becomes "non-UK resident" and provide to the Council at the same time the Landlord's HMRC self-assessment number. On receipt of this information no further action shall be required of the Council in relation to compliance with HMRC requirements and no charges shall be made by the Council.

11.3 Following notification by the Landlord pursuant to Clause 11.2 above, if the Landlord fails to provide the Landlord's HMRC self-assessment reference number to the Council then the Council shall make arrangements for the payment of standard rate income tax to the HMRC and deduct such sums from the monthly Letting Income payments due from the Council to the Landlord under this Agreement.

11.4 The Landlord agrees to indemnify and keep the Council indemnified on a continuing basis against any liability, including any interest, penalties or costs incurred, which is levied, demanded or assessed on the Council at any time in respect of the Landlord's failure to account for United Kingdom tax relating to the rental income.

12. INDEMNITY AND INSURANCE

12.1 Subject to Clause 12.3(e) the Council shall be liable for and indemnify the Landlord against all costs, damages and expenses incurred or suffered by the Landlord as a consequence of any breach by the Council of this Agreement.

12.2 The Landlord shall be liable for and indemnify the Council against all costs, damages and expenses incurred or suffered by the Council as a consequence of any breach by the Landlord of this Agreement.

12.3 Notwithstanding Clauses 12.1 and 12.2 above:

(a) Neither party shall be liable for any costs, damages or expenses incurred or suffered by the other to the extent that such costs, damages or expenses were incurred, suffered, caused or contributed to by any act, omission or breach by that other party (or that other party's personnel or agents); and/or

(b) Neither party shall be liable to the other for any special, indirect or consequential loss; and/or

(c) Neither party shall be liable to the other for loss of profit, loss of business, loss of revenue, loss of or damage to goodwill or loss of savings (whether anticipated or otherwise; and/or

(d) Each party shall take reasonable steps to mitigate any costs, damages and expenses for which the other may be liable pursuant to or in connection with this Agreement;

(e) The Council's maximum aggregate liability to the Landlord under or in connection with this Agreement shall be limited to the greater of £1,000 or the Letting Income due to be paid by the Council to the Landlord in the month immediately preceding the occurrence of the default. The said limit to the Council's liability shall apply irrespective of whether the cause of action giving rise to the liability or claim is founded in contract, tort (including negligence) or otherwise;

(f) Nothing in Clause 12.3 shall operate to exclude or limit either party's liability for death or personal injury caused by its negligence or that of its staff, fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation by it or that of its staff, or any other matter which, by law, may not be excluded or limited.

(g) The Landlord's liability under the indemnity in Clause 14 shall be unlimited.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

13.1 The Landlord and the Council undertake to treat all Confidential Information obtained in connection with this Agreement as confidential. Neither party may disclose such information to any third party without the other's prior written consent except to the extent that such information:

(a) Is or becomes public knowledge (otherwise than by breach of this Clause 13);

(b) Is already in the possession of the third party at the time of disclosure (otherwise than by breach of this Clause 13);

(c) Needs to be disclosed in order to facilitate the orderly performance of this Agreement; or

(d) Needs to be disclosed in order to comply with any law, Court of competent jurisdiction or governmental or regulatory authority.

13.2 Each party shall take such measures as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the Confidential Information is properly stored and protected from destruction, theft, loss or unauthorised use or alteration.

13.3 Each Party acknowledges to the other that nothing in this Clause 13 shall fetter or affect the parties' respective obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

14. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

14.1 Each party shall comply with its obligations, whether as a data controller, data processor or otherwise, under the DPA 1998 as and when applicable to this Agreement and, in particular, when processing personal data.

14.2 Neither party shall place the other party in breach of its obligations under the DPA 1998 either knowingly or where they should have reasonably known.

14.3 The Landlord will indemnify the Council and keep the Council indemnified against any and all damages, losses, liabilities, claims, actions, costs, deductions, fines and expenses arising as a result of any breach by it of its obligations set out in Clauses 14.1 or 14.2 above.

15. PUBLICITY AND MEDIA

15.1 The Landlord shall not make any press announcements or publicise the Agreement or any part thereof in any way, except with the prior approval of the Council.

15.2 The Landlord shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the observance of the provisions of Clause 15.1 above.

15.3 The provisions of this Clause shall apply during the continuance of the Agreement and indefinitely after its expiry or termination.

16. PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION

16.1 The Landlord shall take all reasonable steps to prevent any fraudulent activity in connection with the receipt of monies from the Council. The Landlord shall notify the Council immediately if it has reason to suspect that any fraud has occurred or is occurring or is likely to occur.

16.2 The Council may terminate this Agreement and recover all of its loss if the Landlord, its employees or anyone acting on the Landlord's behalf do any of the following things:

(a) offer, give or agree to give to anyone any inducement or reward in respect of this or any other Council contract (even if the Landlord does not know what has been done); or

(b) commit an offence under the Bribery Act 2010; or

(c) commit any fraud in connection with this or any other Council contract whether alone or in conjunction with Council Members, contractors or employees.

17. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

17.1 The Landlord must use reasonable endeavours to make sure that it complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other statutory obligations as regards discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, cultural or ethnic origin, marital status, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

18. TERMINATION

18.1 Without prejudice to any other right or remedy the Council may terminate this Agreement by serving notice in writing on the Landlord with immediate effect, on the occurrence of the following:

18.1.1 the Landlord is in material breach of any obligation under the Agreement which is not capable of remedy;

18.1.2 the Landlord repeatedly breaches any of the terms and conditions of the Agreement in such a manner as to reasonably justify the opinion that its conduct is inconsistent with it having the intention or ability to give effect to the terms and conditions of the Agreement;

18.1.3 the Landlord is in material breach of this Agreement and has not remedied such breach, if capable of remedy, following service of a notice by the Council on the Landlord stating the material breach and giving a reasonable period (not less than thirty (30) Working Days') in which the said breach must be remedied;

18.1.4 the Landlord terminates the Tenancy Agreement or otherwise takes up occupation of the Property following the departure of the Tenant for any reason whatsoever, including but not limited to surrender or abandonment;

18.1.5 the Landlord commits a breach of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, as amended;

18.1.6 the Landlord breaches any of the provisions of Clauses 6.6.2 (immoral activity), 6.6.3 (fraud), 6.6.4 (false information), 6.7 (Tenant Safety) and 16 (Prevention of Corruption);

18.1.7 On the death of the Tenant.

18.2 The Landlord may terminate this Agreement by serving at least thirty (30) Working Days' notice in writing on the Council if the Council is in material breach of this Agreement and has not remedied such breach, if capable of remedy, following service of a notice by the Landlord on the Council stating the material breach and giving a reasonable period (not less than sixty (60) Working Days') in which the said breach must be remedied.

18.3 Termination or expiry of the Agreement shall be without prejudice to the rights of either party accrued prior to termination or expiry and shall not affect the continuing rights of the parties under this Clause and Clauses 11 (Non-resident Landlords), 12 (Indemnity and Insurance), 13 (Confidentiality), 14 (Protection of Personal Data), 15 (Publicity and Media), 16 (Prevention of Corruption), 20 (Freedom of Information), and 25 (Governing Law).

19. PERFORMANCE INTERRUPTION

19.1 Neither party shall be liable to the other party under this Agreement to the extent that it is unable to perform its obligations by reason of any act or matter which, notwithstanding the reasonable diligence and foresight of the affected party, is beyond the control of that party (a "Performance Interruption Event"), provided that the party affected shall use all reasonable endeavours to minimise the effect of the Performance Interruption Event and to resume performance of its obligations as soon as practicable.

19.2 The party wishing to claim relief under this Clause 19 shall give written notice of the Performance Interruption Event to the other party as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming aware of it. Such notice shall contain all relevant information relating to the Performance Interruption Event including the nature and effect of the Performance Interruption Event, the actions being taken (or to be taken) to minimise the effect of the Performance Interruption Event and an estimate of the duration of the Performance Interruption Event.

19.3 The parties shall consult together and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise the effect of the Performance Interruption Event and to mitigate the costs arising there from. Each party shall take all steps necessary and consistent with good industry practice to minimise the effect of the Performance Interruption Event on the provision of the Services.

19.4 Where a Performance Interruption Event has a material effect on the provision of the Services for a period longer than sixty (60) Working Days', either party may by serving at least sixty (60) Working Days' notice in writing terminate this Agreement, so long as the Performance Interruption Event is still continuing on expiry of such notice. If such Performance Interruption Event ceases prior to expiry of such notice then the notice shall lapse.

20. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

20.1 The Landlord acknowledges that the Council is subject to the requirements of the FOIA and the Environmental Information Regulations 2000 and shall assist and cooperate with the Council (at the Landlord's expense) to enable the Council to comply with these Information disclosure requirements.

20.2 The Landlord shall:

(a) transfer the Request for Information to the Council as soon as practicable after receipt and in any event within two (2) Working Days' of receiving a Request for Information;

(b) provide the Council with a copy of all Information in its possession or power in the form that the Council requires within five (5) Working Days' (or such other period as the Council may specify) of the Council requesting that Information; and

(c) provide all necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the Council to enable the Council to respond to a Request for Information within the time for compliance set out in section 10 of the FOIA or regulation 5 of the Environmental Information Regulations.

20.3 The Landlord acknowledges that the Council may, acting in accordance with the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Code of Practice on the Discharge of Functions of Public Authorities under Part I of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, be obliged under the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations to disclose Information:

(a) without consulting with the Landlord, or

(b) following consultation with the Landlord and having taken its views into account.

20.4 Notwithstanding any other provision in the Agreement, the Council shall be responsible for determining in its absolute discretion whether any information relating to the Landlord or the Services is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the FOIA and/or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

21. TRANSPARENCY

21.1 The parties acknowledge that, except for any information which is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA, the content of this Agreement is not Confidential Information. The Council shall be responsible for determining in its absolute discretion whether any of the content of the Agreement is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA.

21.2 Notwithstanding any other term of this Agreement, the Landlord hereby gives its consent for the Council to publish the Agreement in part or in its entirety, (but with any information which is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA redacted) including from time to time agreed changes to the Agreement, to the general public.

22. GENERAL

22.1 Entire Agreement

This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties in relation to its subject matter and supersedes all previous agreements and understanding between the parties. Each party acknowledges and confirms that it does not enter into this Agreement in reliance on any representation, warranty or statement not expressly set out or referred to in this Agreement PROVIDED THAT such acknowledgement and confirmation shall not apply to any representation, warranty or statement made fraudulently or to any provision of this Agreement which was induced by fraud, for which the remedies available shall be all those available under the law governing this Agreement.

22.2 Agency

Neither party is and shall not in any circumstances hold itself out as being the agent or representative for the other for any purpose other than those expressly conferred by this Agreement or otherwise expressly agreed by the parties in writing.

22.3 No Legal Partnership

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as establishing or implying a formal legal partnership or joint venture between the Landlord and the Council.

22.4 Invalidity

The invalidity of any provisions of this Agreement shall not affect the validity of its remaining provisions and this Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid provision has been omitted.

22.5 Compliance with Legislation

Each party shall in all matters arising from or in relation to the performance of this Agreement conform to all EC treaties, directives and other subordinate legislation and with all Acts of Parliament and with all orders, regulations and by-laws made with statutory authority by any Government Departments or other Authorities.

22.6 Variations

No variation to this Agreement shall have effect unless agreed in writing and signed by each party.

22.7 Waiver

No delay by or omission of either party in exercising any right, power, or remedy under this Agreement shall operate to impair such right, power, or remedy or be construed as a waiver of any breach of this Agreement. Any single or partial exercise of any such

right, power, or remedy shall not preclude any other or further exercise thereof or the exercise of any other right, or remedy.

22.8 Third Party Rights

The parties acknowledge that for the purposes of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999, this Agreement is intended and agreed to be for the benefit solely of the parties and is not intended to and does not create or confer any right or benefit enforceable by any third party.

22.9 Notices

22.9.1 Except as otherwise expressly provided within the Agreement, no notice or other communication from one party to the other shall have any validity under the Agreement unless made in writing by or on behalf of the party concerned.

22.9.2 Any notice to be served upon by either party shall be valid and effective only if it is delivered by hand, email (confirmed by letter within 24 hours of the email being sent), facsimile transmission (confirmed by letter within 24 hours of the facsimile transmission being sent) or sent by recorded delivery post to the other party's principal place of business.

22.10 For the purposes of Clause 22.9.2, the address of each party shall be:

(a) For the Council:

For the attention of: Rent Guarantee Scheme

Reading Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
Berkshire,
RG1 2LU

Email: rgs@reading.gov.uk

(b) For the Landlord:

For the attention of: LL**********

LL address*******

Email: LL**********

22.11 Either Party may change its address for service by serving a notice in accordance with this Clause.

22.12 **Assignment and Subcontracting**

The Council shall not sub-contract, assign or otherwise part with any of its rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Landlord, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

23. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

23.1 Any dispute or difference between the Landlord and the Council as to the construction of this Agreement or arising out of or connected with this Agreement or the provision of the Services shall be dealt with in accordance with the dispute resolution procedure set out in this Clause 23.

23.2 Each party shall be under a general obligation to use all reasonable endeavours to negotiate in good faith and to settle amicably any such dispute or difference.

23.3 **Stage 1** - Negotiation between the parties
Neither party shall refer any dispute or difference to Stage 2 unless they have first taken reasonable steps to notify and discuss the dispute or difference with the other party and to resolve it amicably.

23.4 **Stage 2** - Internal Dispute Resolution
Where a dispute or difference is not resolved at Stage 1, either party may refer such dispute to a nominated Director of the Landlord and the Council's Head of Service for

Housing who shall meet at the earliest practicable date to discuss and endeavour to resolve the dispute or difference.

23.5 **Stage 3** – Mediation

23.5.1 If within five (5) Working Days' of the meeting referred to in Clause 23.4 the participants at that meeting are unable to resolve the dispute, then the parties shall attempt to settle it by mediation. The procedure for mediation and consequential provisions relating to mediation are as follows:

(a) a neutral adviser or mediator ("the Mediator") shall be chosen by agreement between the Parties or, if they are unable to agree within a reasonable period of time, then either Party may apply to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution ("CEDR") to appoint a Mediator.

(b) If the parties fail to reach agreement in the structured negotiations within 60 Working Days' of the Mediator being appointed, or such longer period as may be agreed by the parties, then any dispute or difference between them may be referred to the Courts.

24. REMEDIES CUMULATIVE

24.1 Except as expressly provided by the Agreement, all remedies available to either party for breach of the Agreement (whether under the Agreement, statute or common law) are cumulative and may be exercised concurrently or separately, and the exercise of one remedy shall not be deemed an election of such remedy to the exclusion of any or all other remedies.

25. GOVERNING LAW

25.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with English law and the English courts shall have jurisdiction with regard to all matters arising therefrom.

26. COUNTERPARTS

26.1 This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which when executed and delivered shall constitute an original but all counterparts shall together constitute one and the same instrument.

27. RIGHT TO RENT

27.1 Sections 20-37 of the Immigration Act 2014 require private landlords to check the immigration status of adult occupiers with a 'residential tenancy agreement'. For tenancies with a start date on or after 1st February 2016, the landlord must carry out checks on all persons (aged 18 or over) living in the property as their main home, even if not named on the tenancy agreement.

27.2 There are some exemptions to this requirement, including where the accommodation is arranged by a local authority which is acting in response to a statutory duty owed to an

individual, or which is exercising a relevant power with the intention of providing accommodation to a person who is homeless, or who is threatened with homelessness. **This includes any property let via the Rent Guarantee Scheme.** The tenancy associated with this Guaranteed Rent Agreement is therefore exempt from Right to Rent legislation and this agreement may be produced by the Landlord to demonstrate this exemption.

SIGNED by the parties on the date that first appears in this Agreement.

Signed for and on behalf of

[ ]

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Official Title _____

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Official Title _____

Signed for and on behalf of
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Official Title _____

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Official Title _____

SCHEDULE 1

THE SERVICES

Core Services

The Council intends to carry out, where appropriate, the following Core Services:

1. Letting Services:

   - Identify tenants and carry out reference checks
   - Arrange viewings
   - Arrange and attend a sign-up appointment
   - Complete a basic Health and Safety Inspection of each property
   - Carry out a video inventory and complete an Opening Inventory report at the start of each tenancy
   - Arrange a Closing Inspection appointment, carry out a video inventory and complete a Closing Inventory report at the end of each tenancy
   - Assist tenant in completing tenancy documentation including Housing Benefit forms

2. Tenancy Services:

   - Provide a Guaranteed Rent
   - Provide a Guaranteed Deposit as security against loss or damage to the Property excluding fair wear and tear and rent lawfully due. Fair wear and tear is defined in Appendix 3.
   - Visit each property during the tenancy
   - Provide additional advice and support for tenants and landlords as required
   - Facilitate processing of Housing Benefit claims

APPENDIX 1

Property standards

Properties must:

- Meet decent standards of Health & Safety.
- Have a secure banister rails on stairs without large gaps between railings.
- Have a valid Gas Safety Certificate (if applicable).
- Have a Carbon Monoxide Tester/Alarm in the room in which the boiler is located.
- Have safety glass in doors or windows where glass is at a low level.
- Have a minimum of two smoke alarms – in a house there must be one at the top and one at the bottom of the stairs. In a flat there must be one in the hallway and a heat detector in the kitchen.
- Have adequate heating and hot water facilities.
    - We do not take on properties without fixed heating
    - Some older properties with Storage Heaters and without double glazing or insulation may not meet HHSRS standards
    - Storage Heaters should ideally have a fan element, so that heat can always be obtained at the touch of a button rather than waiting for the storage cells to charge up overnight.
- Have adequate extraction in the kitchen and bathroom – this can be either an extractor fan or openable window.
- Have independent utility meters with any thermostats controllable from inside the property. (Rooms in shared houses may share these facilities).
- Have sufficient electrical sockets in working order
    - Electrical installations (sockets, light fittings, visible wiring) should be visually safe
    - All sockets must be secured to the wall and socket plates intact
    - Overhead lights should not have dangling wires
    - There should be no exposed wiring
- Have a Fire Safety Label attached to any soft furnishings (mattresses, upholstered chairs, sofas etc.) supplied.
    - If furnishings do not have a label, but the landlord can prove that they were manufactured after 1988 (by means of a receipt) then they can remain in the property
- Not have polystyrene ceiling tiles in a kitchen or living areas which are open to kitchens.
- Have openable windows with locks and limiters where appropriate.
- Have adequate floor coverings.
- Not have any damp or mould evident.

This list is intended to give landlords a basic overview of the condition the property needs to be in before we carry out the initial inspection.

Landlord's Responsibilities

1. Repairs

The Landlord is responsible for ensuring that all necessary repairs to the property are completed in a timely fashion. By law, the landlord is always responsible for repairs to:

- the structure and exterior of the dwelling
- basins, sinks, baths and other sanitary installations in the dwelling
- heating and hot water installations
- gas installations and appliances provided with the tenancy
- electrical systems and appliances provided with the tenancy

2. Energy Performance Certificate

An Energy Performance Certificate is required by law for all properties and a copy must be provided free of charge to the prospective tenant prior to letting. The Landlord will provide the Council with a valid certificate prior to letting.

3. Health and Safety

- **Gas Safety & Use Regulations.** Under these regulations it is the Landlord's responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances and the fixed installation are maintained in good order and checked for safety at least every 12 months in accordance with the regulations. The Landlord must provide the Council with a valid certificate before the beginning of a tenancy and, on the expiry of that certificate, provide the Council with a new certificate annually on request.

- **Smoke/Fire Alarms.** The Landlord must ensure that the smoke or fire alarms installed are sufficient for the property.

- **Electrical Safety.** There is a general duty on landlords to ensure the safety of the occupants of any residential property. The Landlord must provide a valid electrical certificate prior to the beginning of a tenancy where this is required.

- **Furniture and Furnishings Safety.** Any furniture installed in the Property by the Landlord must comply with Furniture and Fire Safety Regulations in force. The Landlord warrants that he/she is fully aware of the regulations in force and that all furniture that is currently in the Property or is installed at a future date complies with the Regulations.

4. Landlord Code of Conduct

Landlords are required to abide by the Landlord Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 2.

5. Consents

The Landlord warrants that consent from mortgagees to letting the Property has been obtained.

The Landlord warrants that the insurance company has been informed that the Property is or will be let and they have extended the insurance policy to cover the letting of the Property.

The Landlord warrants, where relevant, that consent from the freeholder under the terms of the lease has been obtained.

APPENDIX 2

Landlord Code of Conduct

Creating the Tenancy

- The tenancy agreement will contain the Landlord's contact address in the UK for the service of notices.
- The landlord will make every effort to assist the tenant with the understanding of their tenancy agreement, referring them if necessary to an independent body for further advice.
- The landlord will inform the tenant in writing of any additional charges, utility bills, ground rent or maintenance charges that the tenant will be required to pay during the tenancy, stating where possible the amounts for each and the frequency and method of payment.
- The landlord will provide the tenant, at the beginning of the tenancy, with a telephone number or other means of contacting the landlord or their agent in an emergency. The landlord will also provide alternative emergency contact details for times when s/he is due to be away or otherwise unavailable.

Maintaining the Tenancy

- The Landlord will abide by relevant landlord/tenant law, including racial equality and disability legislation, in the management of their lettings businesses.
- Tenants will be treated with appropriate courtesy and respect and will not be deliberately misled.
- The landlord will act in a fair, honest and reasonable way in all their dealings with the tenant and will not, as far as is reasonable, disclose personal tenant information to other parties without their consent.
- The landlord will inform the tenant of any change of manager or landlord contact details.
- All disrepair in the property for which the landlord is responsible will be attended to promptly, with minimum disturbance to the tenant. Wherever possible urgent repairs will be dealt with within 3 Working Days' and less urgent repairs as soon as practicable.
- The landlord will respect the tenant's right to peaceful and quiet enjoyment of the property and will, emergencies excepted, ensure the tenant is given reasonable notice of at least 24 hours when access to the property is required by the landlord or agent.
- The landlord will provide the tenant with accommodation that complies with legal requirements (including, but not limited to, the provision of furniture, gas and electrical supply and appliances and their service/maintenance and repair and local authority occupancy standards – see other sections of the Landlord Pack for details).
- The landlord will ensure that suitable Buildings and Contents insurance cover is obtained for the property.
- The landlord will keep clear and informative rent accounts for each tenant, showing details and dates of rent due, rent paid and the balance.

Ending the Tenancy

- Before proceedings for breach of tenancy are commenced, the tenant will be notified of any breach of the tenancy agreement that is to be used as a basis for legal proceedings against the tenant.

The landlord will not refuse a tenant a reference for the purposes of securing a new tenancy, without good cause.

APPENDIX 3

Defining 'Fair Wear and Tear'

Legal Definition

A tenancy deposit is not like an insurance policy, which may offer 'full replacement value' or 'new for old' on items which are lost or damaged. The law states that a tenant cannot be held responsible for 'reasonable use of the premises…and the ordinary operation of natural forces (i.e. the passage of time)'.

While this definition is open to a wide variation of interpretations, there are two established legal tenets which may be used for guidance:

1) A landlord is not permitted to use the deposit for 'betterment'.

This means that a landlord cannot expect, for example, to replace old with new, or charge for items which were soiled at the start of the tenancy to be cleaned at the end of it.

2) A landlord is not entitled to charge a tenant the full cost of having part of the property, or any fixture 'put back to the condition it was at the start of the tenancy'.

This means that a landlord is only allowed to charge a tenant **a proportion of the full cost** of replacing or fixing an item, depending on a variety of factors.

Fair Wear and Tear makes allowances for:

1) **The original age, quality and condition of the item at the start of the tenancy**
2) **The average useful lifespan to value ratio of the item (also known as 'depreciation')**
3) **The reasonable expected usage of the item**
4) **The number and type of occupants in the property**
5) **The length of the tenant's occupancy**

Where an item is damaged, but the damage does not justify full replacement at the tenant's expense, a claim can still be made for loss of aesthetic value. An example of this would be a carpet that has been damaged by burn marks or spillages, where these are not so severe that the carpet is ruined. The amount of claim which can be allowed is normally in the region of £25-£50 per mark. If the landlord wishes to replace the item then they can do so, but the tenant cannot be charged for more than compensation for the marks.

Stipulations made in Tenancy Agreements

Many tenancy agreements confirm the level of cleaning required at the end of the tenancy. For example, if a carpet was freshly steam cleaned at the beginning of the tenancy, and the contract stipulates that it must be cleaned at the end of the tenancy, then the landlord is

able to make a charge on the tenancy deposit if steam cleaning has not been carried out. Tenancy agreements also commonly require the dry cleaning of soft furnishings such as curtains. This type of cleaning is accepted by the tenant when they sign the tenancy agreement and should be anticipated as a charge if they do not complete it.

Deciding what is 'fair wear and tear' and what is chargeable damage

There is clearly some room for individual opinion within the guidelines provided here, and this is for the landlord, the tenant and the Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS) officer to negotiate at the Closing Inventory. For this reason, it is very important that all parties are in attendance when a tenancy is formally ended. The vast majority of tenancies end with the landlord, the tenant and the RGS satisfied that the principles of fair wear and tear have been fairly applied and where each party agrees with the amount of deposit, if any, which has been claimed.

In the few cases where agreement cannot be reached, the RGS officer will have the final say regarding items which can be claimed for, and how much, and items which constitute fair wear and tear. Both landlord and tenant have recourse to the request for review procedure should they remain unwilling to abide by the decision made.

Some examples of fair wear and tear vs. chargeable damage

Item	Fair Wear and Tear	Chargeable Damage
Painted walls	Scuffs, fingermarks	Multiple nail or pin holes, chips or dents. Repainted a different colour without authorization.
Wallpapered walls	Minor scuffs, fading caused by sunlight	Tears, dents
Curtains/nets/blinds	Discolouration and fading caused by sunlight	Burns, stains, tears, broken mechanism
Carpet	Fading caused by sunlight	Burns, stains, tears
Laminate Flooring*	Nicks, minor dents and surface scuffs, loose trim	Drag marks, deep scratches or scrapes, stains, burns, missing trim
White Goods	Discolouration due to sunlight, fading of printing due to cleaning, limescale	Damage caused by misuse, missing shelves or turntables
Kitchen Units and Worktops	Light scratches, fading/watermarks around taps, loose handles, misalignment of drawers and cupboard doors	Burn marks, 'lifting' of laminate due to water damage, missing handles or hinges
Tiled floors and walls	Minor scuffs and loose whole tiles	Chipped, broken or missing tiles
Windows	Condensation between panes, broken sash cords	Broken or cracked glass, bent hinges
Showers	Wear of electrical	Broken or missing shower

	components (average lifespan of electric shower = 4 years)	head or hose
Electric sockets	Loose screws, scuffs	Broken socket covers

*Laminate flooring comes in several different qualities. Some kinds are not suitable for use in areas of heavy traffic i.e hallways. Some kinds are not suitable for use in areas where contact with water is inevitable i.e. bathrooms and kitchens. Damage caused by normal use of inappropriate flooring should not be charged to the tenant i.e. 'lifting' at joints due to water penetration in bathrooms, or wear through the top surface of the laminate in hallways.

Examples of life expectancy for floor coverings**

Carpet

	Ordinary Quality	**Superior Quality**
Family Occupancy	5 years	10 years
Single/couple occupancy	7 years	12 years

Laminate Flooring

	Ordinary Quality	**Superior Quality**
Family Occupancy	5 years	10 years
Single/couple occupancy	7 years	12 years

Examples of life expectancy for wall surfaces

Painted Walls

	Non-smokers	**Smokers**
Family Occupancy	3 years	2 years
Single/couple occupancy	5 years	3 years

Wallpapered Walls

	Non-Smokers	**Smokers**
Family Occupancy	3 years	3 years
Single/couple occupancy	5 years	3 years

Examples of life expectancy for White Goods

Washing machine	**3-5 years**
Cookers, Ovens and Hobs	**4-6 years**
Refrigerators	**5-8 years**
Dishwashers	**3-5 years**

**** Figures used are comparable to Government-backed Tenancy Deposit Scheme, representing the industry standard used by RICS, MoD and TDS Adjudicators.**

3) The reasonable expected usage of the item

The landlord must make allowances for normal living and the effect this will have a on a property over time, especially in long tenancies.

4) The number and type of occupants in the property

Tenants with children and pets, and tenants who smoke, will put additional strain on a property during the tenancy. Assuming that children, pets and smoking are permitted by the tenancy agreement, 'fair wear and tear' must take into account a reasonable amount of extra wear to the property caused by the normal everyday life of these tenants. This wear can still be considered to be 'fair' and therefore a deposit claim may not be appropriate.

5) The length of the tenant's occupancy

How long the tenancy has lasted obviously makes a difference to the depreciation calculation. A carpet which might be expected to last five years, and which was already two years old at the beginning of a three year tenancy, may not be claimed for even if the tenants have caused severe damage to it. This is because it could reasonably be expected that the carpet should be replaced after five years.

SCHEDULE 2 – Rent Collection Agreement (see Appendix 3)

SCHEDULE 3 – Tenancy Agreement (see Appendix 1)

Appendix 3: Rent Collection Agreement

RENT COLLECTION AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made on

BETWEEN

(1) READING BOROUGH COUNCIL of Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU ("the Council");

and

(2) of ("the Tenant").

1. IN THIS AGREEMENT:

1.1 "Closing Inventory Inspection" means the inspection of the Property carried out by the Landlord, Council and Tenant on or after the Tenancy Termination Date.

1.2 "Deposit Guarantee Sum" means the sum of equivalent to a maximum of six (6) weeks' Rent guaranteed by the Council to the Landlord under the Guaranteed Rent Agreement.

1.3 "Deposit Guarantee Tenant Contribution" means the total sum of payable by the Tenant in *weekly / fortnightly / monthly* instalments of £_____ in accordance with Annex 2 towards the Deposit Guarantee Sum.

1.4 "Guaranteed Rent Agreement" means the guaranteed rent agreement for the Services between the Council and the Landlord in respect of the Tenancy Agreement.

1.5 "Inspection Report" means the report describing the condition of the interior of the Property and all items of furniture therein completed by the Council prior to or on the Tenancy Commencement Date.

1.6 "Landlord" means of .

1.7 "Property" means .

1.8 "Services" means the services described at Clause 2.1 below.

1.9 "Rent" means the rent reserved, excluding service charges and all other charges, payable under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement from time to time, which is detailed in the Tenancy.

1.10 "Tenancy Agreement" means the agreement granted by the Landlord to the Tenant and attached to this Agreement marked Annex 1.

1.11 "Tenancy Commencement Date" means the date of the commencement of the Tenancy Agreement.

1.12 "Tenancy Termination Date" means the date on which the Tenancy Agreement is ended whether by notice or execution of possession order or possession of the Property by the Landlord following abandonment or surrender.

1.13 "Video Inventory" means the visual recording of the Property and any contents therein made by the Council prior to or on the Tenancy Commencement Date.

2. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

2.1 The Council has entered into the Guaranteed Rent Agreement with the Landlord for the provision of the following:

2.1.1 rent collection services;

2.1.2 deposit guarantee; and

2.1.3 such other services as agreed by the parties from time to time.

2.2 The Tenant wishes the Council to supply the Services to the Landlord in respect of the Property which the Tenant lets from the Landlord under the Tenancy Agreement.

2.3 The Council has agreed to include the Property let by the Tenant from the Landlord in the provision of the Services to the Landlord and the parties have agreed to contract with each other in accordance with the terms and conditions set below.

3. TERM

3.1 The Agreement shall begin on the Tenancy Commencement Date and shall end on the Tenancy Termination Date, unless it is otherwise brought to an end earlier in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

4. TENANT'S OBLIGATIONS

4.1 The Tenant shall comply with the following:

4.1.1 To pay the Rent to the Council each month on the date agreed by the parties.

4.1.2 To pay the Deposit Guarantee Tenant Contribution to the Council in accordance with Annex 2.

4.1.3 Payment under Clauses 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 above shall be made by the Tenant in accordance with one of the payment methods described in Annex 3.

4.1.4 The Tenant shall make all payments due to the Council without any deduction whether by way of set-off, counterclaim, discount or abatement or otherwise unless the Tenant has a valid court order requiring an amount equal to such deduction to be paid by the Tenant to the Council.

4.1.5 To comply with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. Under no circumstances shall the Council be liable to the Landlord for the Tenant's failure to comply with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

4.1.6 To allow the Landlord and/or Council staff reasonable access to the Property to carry out visits, inspections, routine and emergency repairs.

4.1.7 To engage with support services as agreed in a support assessment carried out at the beginning of the Tenancy Agreement.

4.1.8 To give the Council's Housing Service authority to check with any department of the Council or the Department for Works and Pensions or any other agency for the Tenant's forwarding address. This is for debt recovery purpose.

4.1.9 To notify the Council immediately of the date on which the Tenancy Agreement ends, or if the Tenant wishes to leave the Property at any time before the end of the Tenancy Agreement to notify the Council of this.

4.1.10 To notify the Council upon serving any notice or being served with any notice in relation to the Tenancy Agreement and/or the Property.

4.1.11 To meet with the Landlord and the Council at the Property at the end of the Tenancy Agreement in order to carry out the Closing Inventory Inspection. The Closing Inventory Inspection shall be carried out within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of the Tenancy Agreement or as soon as possible thereafter.

4.1.12 At the end of the Tenancy Agreement to leave the Property in a clean and tidy state, except for fair wear and tear.

4.1.13 To notify the Council of any change of circumstances, including but not limited to persons joining or leaving the household and changes in employment status or arrangements.

4.1.14 Not to use the Property for any illegal or immoral act or purposes.

4.2 The Tenant agrees and acknowledges that the Council is not liable for damage to the Property during the term of the Agreement. The Tenant shall be responsible for maintaining and keeping the Property in accordance with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

4.3 The Tenant shall reimburse the Council in full and on demand for any payment made by the Council to the Landlord for loss or damage to the Property (other than deterioration resulting from normal wear and tear) which is not covered by the Deposit Guarantee Tenant Contribution paid by the Tenant to the Council. This Clause 4.3 shall survive expiry of this Agreement.

4.4 The Tenant agrees and acknowledges that the Council's role is limited to the provision of the Services to the Landlord referred to at Clause 2 of this Agreement.

4.5 The Tenancy Agreement is a matter between the Landlord and the Tenant with all responsibilities and liabilities including payment of Rent thereunder resting solely with the Landlord and Tenant

respectively. Under no circumstance shall the Council be liable to the Tenant for any breaches of the Tenancy Agreement by the Landlord or vice versa.

5. COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS

5.1 The Council shall comply with the following:

5.1.1 collect and pay the Rent received from the Tenant to the Landlord in accordance with the terms of the Guaranteed Rent Agreement;

5.1.2 provide the Landlord with the Deposit Guarantee Sum in accordance with the terms of the Guaranteed Rent Agreement;

5.1.3 collect the Deposit Guarantee Tenant Contribution from the Tenant in accordance with Annex 3;

5.1.4 register the deposit with the appropriate deposit scheme at the Tenancy Commencement Date;

5.1.5 reimburse the balance of the Deposit Guarantee Tenant Contribution to the Tenant after deducting any Deposit Guarantee Sum paid by the Council to the Landlord and rent arrears;

5.1.6 provide such other services as agreed between the Landlord and the Council, from time to time.

6. TERMINATION

6.1 The Council may terminate the Agreement by notice to the Tenant with immediate effect where:

6.1.1 the Tenant is in breach of any obligation under this Agreement which is capable of being remedied, and that breach is not remedied within 30 days of the Tenant receiving notice specifying the breach and requiring it be remedied;

6.1.2 the Tenancy Agreement is terminated by either the Tenant or the Landlord;

6.1.3 the Tenant surrenders the Property;

6.1.4 the Tenant is in breach of the Tenancy Agreement;

6.1.5 On termination of the Guaranteed Rent Agreement by the Council or the Landlord;

6.2 Termination of the Agreement shall be without prejudice to the rights of either party accrued prior to termination and shall not affect the continuing rights of the parties under Clauses 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.5, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1.5, 7.1, 11 and 13.

7. THIRD PARTIES

7.1 For the purposes of the Contract (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 this Agreement is not intended to, and does not give any person who is not a party to it any right to enforce any of its provisions.

8. COMPLAINTS

8.1 The Tenant shall have the right to complain under the Council's Complaints Procedure by writing to Housing & Community Care, Reading Borough Council, Freepost, Licence No. RG30, PO Box 2624 Reading, Berkshire RG1 7WB or by email complaints@reading.gov.uk.

9. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

9.1 The Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the Tenant and the Council relating to the subject matter of this Agreement, save as may be expressly referred to in herein, and supersedes all prior representations, writings and negotiations or understandings.

10. NOTICES

10.1 Any notice which is to be given by either Party to the other shall be given by letter (sent by hand, first class post, recorded delivery or special delivery), or electronic mail (confirmed in either case by letter). Such letters shall be addressed to the other party in the manner referred to in Clause 10.2.

10.2 For the purposes of Clause 10.1, the address of each party shall be:

(a) For the Council:

For the attention of: Rent Guarantee Scheme

Reading Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
Berkshire,
RG1 2LU

Email: rgs@reading.gov.uk

(b) For the Tenant:

To the address at the front of this Agreement.

10.3 Either party may change its address for service by serving a notice in accordance with this Clause on the other party.

11. THIRD PARTY RIGHTS

11.1 A person who is not a party to the Agreement shall have no right to enforce any of its provisions which, expressly or by implication, confer a benefit on him, without the prior written agreement of the Parties.

12. VARIATION

12.1 The Agreement cannot be varied except in writing signed by a duly authorised representative of both the parties.

13. GOVERNING LAW

13.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English Law.

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Date _____

Signed for and on behalf of
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Name in Print _____

Date _____

ANNEX 1 – TENANCY AGREEMENT

(see Appendix 1)

ANNEX 2 – DEPOSIT GUARANTEE TENANT CONTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

Deposit charge total	**£**				
Date first payment due by		**Amount**	**£**	**Way to pay**	
Payments thereafter due		**Amount**	**£**	**weekly / fortnightly / monthly**	
Way to pay	**Standing Order / Payment Card / Online / Phone / App / Civic**				
Signature	**(Tenant 1)**		**(Tenant 2)**		

This Tenant Contribution Schedule shall be completed by the parties and shall take effect on the Tenancy Commencement Date, and may be varied subject to the Council's prior written consent. Any variation will be recorded by the parties by way of any updated Tenant Contribution Schedule which will form part of this Agreement.

ANNEX 3 – PAYMENT METHODS

Tenants can make their Rent and Deposit Contribution Payments via a range of methods:

Direct Debit (not available for deposit payments)
A Direct Debit allows us to ask your bank to transfer payment directly to us from your account.

Standing Order
Send or take your completed Standing Order Form to your bank.

Payment Card
Use your payment card to pay in cash at any shop displaying the PayPoint logo or at any Post Office.

Online
Pay only using a debit or credit card – go to www.reading.gov.uk/payments.

Automated Telephone Payment (available 24/7)
Use your debit card or credit card to pay by phone.

Allpay App (UK registered smartphones only)
Download the free Allpay App or register online at www.allpayment.net/text/login.aspx.

At the Civic Offices
Pay by card or in cash at a payment machine in reception.

Detailed information about each option and how and when you will receive your Payment Cards is provided by the Rent Guarantee Scheme on the Tenancy Commencement Date.

Appendix 4: Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Bedroom Standard

Size of accommodation required:

Applicant and partner	1 bedroom

(A single applicant under 35 years old will be eligible for a room in a shared house. A single applicant over 35 years old will be eligible for a self-contained studio flat or a one bedroom property)

Each person requiring a separate bedroom for medical reasons.	1 bedroom
Each adult, or couple, over 18 years	1 bedroom
Up to 2 children of either sex under 10 years	1 bedroom
Up to 2 children of opposite sexes over 10 years each	2 bedrooms
Up to 2 children of the same sex under 16 years	1 bedroom

Appendix 5: Statutory Overcrowding

Housing Act 1985 (Excerpt)
Part X - Definition of Overcrowding

324 A dwelling is overcrowded for the purposes of this Part when the number of persons sleeping in the dwelling is such as to contravene:

Definition of overcrowding
(a) the standard specified in section 325 (the room standard), or
(b) the standard specified in section 326 (the space standard).

*325 (1)*The room standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling and the number of rooms available as sleeping accommodation is such that two persons of opposite sexes who are not living together as husband and wife must sleep in the same room.

The room standard
*(2)*For this purpose –
(a) children under the age of one shall be left out of account, and
(b) a room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality as a bedroom or as a living room.

326 (1) The space standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a dwelling is in excess of the permitted number, having regard to the number and floor area of the rooms of the dwelling available as sleeping accommodation.

The space standard
(2) For this purpose -
(a) no account shall be taken of a child under the age of one and a child aged one or over but under ten shall be reckoned as one-half of a unit, and
(b) a room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a living room or as a bedroom.
(3) The permitted number of persons in relation to a dwelling is whichever is the less of -
(a) the number specified in Table I in relation to the number of rooms in the dwelling available as sleeping accommodation, and
(b) the aggregate for all such rooms in the dwelling of the numbers specified in column 2 of Table II in relation to each room of the floor area specified in column 1.
No account shall be taken for the purposes of either Table of a room having a floor area of less than 50 square feet.

TABLE I

Number of rooms	Number of persons
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7
5 or more	2 for each room

TABLE II

Floor area of room	Number of persons
110 sq. ft. or more	2
90 sq. ft. or more but less than 110 sq. ft.	1
70 sq. ft. or more but less than 90 sq. ft.	1
50 sq. ft. or more but less than 70 sq. ft.	½

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe the manner in which the floor area of a room is to be ascertained for the purposes of this section. In addition, the regulations may provide for the exclusion from computation, or the bringing into computation at a reduced figure, of floor space in a part of the room that is of less than a specified height not exceeding eight feet.
(5) Regulations under subsection (4) shall be made by statutory instrument that shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
(6) A certificate of the local housing authority stating the number and floor areas of the rooms in a dwelling, and that the floor areas have been ascertained in the prescribed manner, is prima facie evidence for the purposes of legal proceedings of the facts stated in it.

Appendix 6: Rolling Programme Visit Form

HNDVISIT REF: **OFFICIAL**

Rent Ref:

BOOKED: Deposit Ref:

PROPERTY ADDRESS **POSTCODE**	
TENANT/S	
RENT LEVEL/HOUSEHOLD COMP.	£
C.O.T	
LANDLORD / LL CONTACT	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL	
ALT CONTACTS:	
DATE OF INSPECTION	
OFFICER	

By signing this visit form, you consent to allowing Reading Borough Council to discuss your case with any and all alternate contacts listed above. If you wish to change your alternative contacts at any time, please let your Housing Officer know.

FIRE SAFETY	*Tested*		Comments/Action
Smoke Alarms	**YES**	**NO**	
Co2 Alarm	**YES**	**NO**	

HALL	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

LOUNGE/LIVING ROOM	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

DINING ROOM	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

KITCHEN	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				
Kitchen units				
Worktops				

STAIRS/ LANDING	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				

BEDROOM 1	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

BEDROOM 2	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

BEDROOM 3	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

BEDROOM 4	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action
Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				

BATHROOM	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	Comments/Action

Walls/ceiling				
Floor covering				
Doors				
Bath/ Shower				
WC				
Washbasin				

OTHER PROPERTY NOTES / REPAIR ISSUES
Is the property tidy? Yes / No Discuss condensation with tenant/s Yes/No Repairs needed? Reported to Landlord? EH visit needed?
Moving On
Gave "Thinking Of Moving On" document Yes / No HWL COA done Yes / No Homechoice Form Yes / No

Utility bills
Gas Electric Water TV Licence
Council Tax
Issued CTAX "What If I Don't Pay On Time" sheet Yes / No CTAX Ref:
Rent/ Housing Benefit/ Details of rent arrears
Gentle/Severe HB/Rent warning
Deposit
Total Deposit: £ DATE OF NEXT PAYMENT: PAYMENT AGREED: WEEKLY / FORTNIGHTLY / MONTHLY Gentle/Severe deposit warning

Money Advice/Support (e.g. support worker, family worker, social worker)
Money Advice Offered Yes Support Offered Yes Interested in Money Advice No Interested in Support No Already being supported by (Name & Agency):
Other notes (e.g Translator needed/ Substance misuse/ Nuisance/ ASB issues)
Issued "Welfare Changes" information sheet Incheck verified Yes / No Benefit Cap leaflet issued Yes / No Notes -

Tenant did 8 week questionnaire Yes / No	
SIGNED TENANT 1:	**DATE:**
SIGNED TENANT 2:	**DATE:**

Appendix 7: Property Inspection Forms

HNDPROP Ref _____ Prop F3

RGS Address of property				
Property Type				
Level Access	**Yes**		**No**	
Floor Level				
Leasehold	**Yes**		**No**	

Landlord/Agent	
Telephone	
Email address	
Address	
How did they hear of scheme?	

Date of opening inspection		**Video Date**		
Carried out by				
Parties present at inspection	**Landlord**		**Agency representative**	

Heating Type	**Gas**		**Electricity Storage Heaters**		**Electricity Wall Mounted**		
Location of Boiler							
Location of Carbon Monoxide Alarm							
Location of smoke alarms							
Location of Water tank							
Location of Gas meter*		**Key Meter**		**Key**		**Debt**	
Location of Electric meter*		**Key Meter**		**Key**		**Debt**	

Location of Stop Cock	
Age of Carpets	
Age of Decoration	

*** If above a shop/ business, double check that the property has its own separate utility supplies.**

Viewing Arrangements	
Available From	

To Be Checked:

Planning	
EICR	
Gas Safety Certificate	
EPC	
Repairs Needed	
Is rent going to someone other than landlord/agent listed on front page? (if yes need their details)	

Brief overview of condition of property	

Hallway

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Smoke Alarms						
Cupboard Space						
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)						

Lounge/Living Room

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture (list any furniture including description & condition)						**Fire Safety Label**

Additional Items	

Dining Room

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					

Furniture (list any furniture including description & condition)		**Fire Safety Label**	
Additional Items			

Kitchen

Item			**Condition**			**Description/ Comments/ action required**
			Good	**Fair**	**Poor**	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	**Lino**					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
	Carpet					
Windows	**Single Glazed**					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Sockets ( )
Kitchen Units						
Worktops						
Sink*						*** Check Under Sink**
Oven	**Gas**					

	Electric								
Hob	**Gas**								
	Electric								
Extractor									
Fire Safety									
Fridge/Freezer									
Washing machine				**Tumble dryer**			**Dishwasher**		
Additional items (list any furniture including description & condition)									

Stairs and landing

Item			**Condition**			**Description/ Comments/ action required**
			Good	**Fair**	**Poor**	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					

Electrics				Plug Sockets ( )	
Smoke Alarm	**Yes**		**No**		
Bannister					
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)					

Bedroom 1 **Front Middle □ Rear** **Double Single**

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					

Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )	
Heating	Radiator						
	Electric storage						
	* Electric wall mounted						
Furniture	**Bed**						
	Mattress						
	Wardrobe						
	Drawers						
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)							

Bedroom 2 **Front** ☐ **Middle** **Rear** X **Double** X **Single** ☐

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					

Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )	
Heating	Radiator						
	Electric storage						
	* Electric wall mounted						
Furniture	**Bed**					**Fire Safety Label**	
	Mattress						
	Wardrobe						
	Drawers						
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)							

Bedroom 3 Front □ Middle □ Rear □ Double □ Single □

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					

	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	**Bed**					
	Mattress					**Fire Safety Label**
	Wardrobe					
	Drawers					
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)						

Bedroom 4 **Front** ☐ **Middle** ☐ **Rear** ☐ **Double** ☐ **Single** ☐

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					

	Double Glazed							
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )		
Heating	Radiator							
	Electric storage							
	* Electric wall mounted							
Furniture	**Bed**							
	Mattress						**Fire Safety Label**	
	Wardrobe							
	Drawers							
Additional Items (list any furniture including description & condition)								

Bathroom 1

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Lino					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					

Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Extractor/ Ventilation						
Bath						
Shower						
Basin						
WC						
Additional (list any extras e.g mirrors, cupboards etc)						

Bathroom 2

Item			Condition			Description/ Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Lino					
	Tiled					

	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Extractor/ Ventilation						
Bath						
Shower						
Basin						
WC						
Additional (list any extras e.g. mirrors, cupboards etc)						

It is illegal to let a property without supplying a valid gas safety certificate. Certificates must be provided to Reading Borough Council.

All properties must have a valid Energy Performance Certificate which again must be provided to Reading Borough Council.

Landlords / Lettings Agents must not supply tenants with keys to the property, or sign a tenancy agreement, before the Guaranteed Rent Agreement or Deposit Guarantee Agreement is signed.

Landlords / Letting Agents must be available to attend a sign up meeting arranged by RBC.

Please note that rent is paid directly to the Landlord in advance for RGS and in arrears for DGS.

Reading Borough Council reserves the right not to allow a sign up to continue if:

a) Recommended repairs/ works have not been completed in the property
b) A valid gas safety certificate has not been received
c) A valid Energy Performance Certificate has not been received
d) It has not been possible to verify that Planning / Building Control consents have been obtained for the property.

Open Inventory

I confirm that the opening schedule of condition is a true reflection of the state of the property.
I acknowledge that in order for this property to be accepted onto the Rent Guarantee Scheme, it is necessary to carry out the work stipulated above.
I understand that if the work is not done, the property will not be accepted onto the Rent Guarantee Scheme. Please tick □

Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

All smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms have been tested today via the test button by an Officer of Reading Borough Council and the alarm sound was heard.

Reading Borough Council	Signed:
	Print Name:
	Date:

Note to Tenant

PLEASE CHECK THIS INVENTORY THOROUGHLY AND RETURN IT TO THE COUNCIL IF YOU THINK WE SHOULD MAKE ANY CHANGES WITHIN 7 DAYS OF THE SIGN UP.

Please check this inventory through when you move in to the property. This inventory records the condition of the property when you moved in. It will be used when you move out to check if there is any damage to the property beyond fair wear and tear.

If you wish to make any changes they must be marked on the Inventory and returned to the Council within 7 days of you signing up to the property.

If we do not hear from you within 7 days we will assume that that you agree with the Inventory.

If the landlord makes a claim at the end of the tenancy for something that you noticed was damaged when you moved in, but you did not make sure this was noted on the inventory, you will have no evidence to dispute the claim.

Landlord/ Letting Agent	Signed: Print Name:	**Date**	
Reading Borough Council	Signed Signed: Print name Print Name:	**Date**	

Rent Guarantee Scheme
Landlord/ Supplier Information

Please fill out the below form as directed and attach evidence of proof of bank details for supplier set up.

Supplier Name(s):	
Address Line 1:	
Address Line 2:	
Address Line 3:	
Town or City:	
County:	
Postcode:	
Country:	
Main Contact Number (No Spaces):	
Main Contact email:	
Remittance email:	
Name of Bank:	
Is Bank UK or International?	
Account number (8 digits):	
Sort Code	-- --
Please attach proof of Bank details in PDF/JPEG format. (This can be a bank statement with transactions blanked out Please note this MUST include same bank details as supplied above)	

By completing this form, you are confirming that the above information is correct, and will update the Rent Guarantee Scheme if any of the above information changes.

HNDPROP Ref Prop F3

Initial Inspection for HMOs

RGS **Address of property**	
Licensed? ***3 or more storeys with 5 or more occupants.**	
License Displayed?	

Landlord/Agent	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Address	

Date of inspection				
Carried out by				
Video Date				
Parties present at inspection	**Landlord**		**Agency representative**	

Heating Type *	**Gas**		**Electricity Storage Heaters**		**Electricity Wall Mounted**		
Location of Boiler							
Location(s) of Carbon Monoxide Alarm(s)							
Location of Water tank							
Location of Gas meter		**Key Meter**		**Key**		**Debt**	
Location of Electric meter		**Key Meter**		**Key**		**Debt**	
Water Meter/Stop Cock							

*The above should be located in common parts of the house. If not, should be a separate meter for each letting. **OR** Landlord to pay utility bills and recharge tenants in the rent.

Viewing Arrangements	
Available From	

To Be Checked:

Any EHO concerns Ie. Damp/mould/fire safety/overcrowding/ cold/heat/security…	
Gas Safety Certificate	
EICR	
Repairs Needed	

General Notes (i.e. Lift, parking arrangements, outside areas, sufficient waste disposal)	

Communal Hallway – Not to be videoed

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Front Door * **(All final exit doors should open without the use of a key)**						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings *	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						
Heating	Radiator					
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Full fire alarm system with central control panel (for 3 storeys or more) Lacors guidance suggests this for fewer storeys			**Fire extinguisher (where applicable – should be wall hung)**			
Hard Wired Smoke Alarms						

Emergency Lighting	Yes		No		
Hallway clear from obstruction	Yes		No		
Additional Items					

Communal Lounge/Living Room – Not to be videoed

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Doors						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	Yes					
	No					
Hard wired smoke alarm			Yes		No	
Additional Items						

Communal Dining Room – Not to be videoed

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Doors						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(Negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	**Yes**					**Furniture Safety Labels**
	No					
Hard wired smoke alarm (not needed if dining room is in kitchen area)			Yes		No	
Additional Items						

Communal Kitchen – Not to be videoed (if in room, ensure enough space and worktop)

Item			Condition			Comments/ action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Fire Door						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Lino					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
	Carpet					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Sockets ( )
Kitchen Units						
Worktops						
Sink*						* Check Under Sink
Oven *	Gas					* One cooker for every 3 persons (addition of microwave for 3+)
	Electric					
Hob	Gas					
	Electric					
Extractor						

Fridge		Freezer		Microwave	
Washing machine		Tumble dryer		Dishwasher	

Heat detector	**Yes**		**No**	
Fire Extinguisher	**Yes**		**No**	**Powder** (type is appropriate for kitchens)
Fire Blanket	**Yes**		**No**	
Additional items				

Communal Stairs and landing – not to be videoed

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Doors						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings *	Carpet					*ensure these are safe
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Bannister						
Full fire alarm system with central control panel (for 3 storeys or more) Lacors guidance suggests this for fewer storeys			**Fire extinguisher (where applicable – should be wall hung)**			
Hard Wired Smoke Alarms						

Emergency Lighting	Yes		No		
Hallway clear from obstruction	Yes		No		

Additional Items	

Bedroom 1 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Fire Door						
Hard wired smoke alarm						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	**Bed**					
	Mattress					
	Wardrobe					

Fire Safety Label	

	Drawers				
	Chair				
	Bedside table				
Additional Items					

Bedroom 2 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			Condition			Comments/action required		
			Good	Fair	Poor			
Fire Door								
Hard wired smoke alarm								
Walls/Ceiling								
Floor Coverings	Carpet							
	Tiled							
	Laminate							
Windows	Single Glazed							
	Double Glazed							
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )		
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)		
	Electric storage							
	* Electric wall mounted							
Furniture	**Bed**						**Fire Safety Label**	
	Mattress							

	Wardrobe				
	Drawers				
	Chair				
	Bedside table				
Additional Items					

Bedroom 3 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			**Condition**			**Comments/action required**
			Good	**Fair**	**Poor**	
Fire Door						
Hard wired smoke alarm						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	**Bed**				**Fire Safety Label**	

	Mattress				
	Wardrobe				
	Drawers				
	Chair				
	Bedside table				
Additional Items					

Bedroom 4 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			**Condition**			**Comments/action required**
			Good	**Fair**	**Poor**	
Fire Door						
Hard wired smoke alarm						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					

Furniture	**Bed**			**Fire Safety Label**	
	Mattress				
	Wardrobe				
	Drawers				
	Chair				
	Bedside table				
Additional Items					

Bedroom 5 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Fire Door						
Hard wired smoke alarm						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					

	* Electric wall mounted							
Furniture	**Bed**					**Fire Safety Label**		
	Mattress							
	Wardrobe							
	Drawers							
	Chair							
	Bedside table							
Additional Items								

Bedroom 6 ( ) Age of Carpet Age of Decoration

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Fire Door						
Hard wired smoke alarm						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						Plug Sockets ( )
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Furniture	**Bed**					**Fire Safety Label**
	Mattress					
	Wardrobe					
	Drawers					
	Chair					
	Bedside table					
Additional Items						

Communal Bathroom 1 – not to be videoed

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Doors						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Extractor/ Ventilation						
Bath						
Shower						
Basin						
WC						

Additional (mirrors, cupboards etc)	

Communal Bathroom 2 – not to be videoed (HMOs with 6-10 persons must have 2 bathrooms containing bath/shower & 2 separate WCs with wash hand basins)

Item			Condition			Comments/action required
			Good	Fair	Poor	
Doors						
Walls/Ceiling						
Floor Coverings	Carpet					
	Tiled					
	Laminate					
Windows	Single Glazed					
	Double Glazed					
Electrics/Lights						
Heating	Radiator					*(negotiate rent reduction)
	Electric storage					
	* Electric wall mounted					
Extractor/ Ventilation						
Bath						
Shower						

Basin	
WC	
Additional (mirrors, cupboards etc)	

I confirm that as the manager of this property, I understand my obligations. These include (but are not exhaustive):

- The manager must ensure that means of escape from fire such as the escape route should be kept free from obstruction and maintained in good order and repair.
- Fire fighting equipment, fire alarm systems and emergency lighting systems (where applicable), are to be maintained and in good working order.
- Gas and electrical supplies and installations should be maintained in good working order and in constant supply.
- Fixed electrical installation must be inspected and tested at least every 5 years by a qualified and competent electrician and a certificate to be obtained, which may be requested for by the Council.
- Any portable appliance should be PAT tested annually or at a change of tenancy by a competent electrician.

It is illegal to let a property without supplying a valid gas safety certificate. Certificates must be provided to Reading Borough Council.

Landlords / Lettings Agents must not supply tenants with keys to the property, or sign a tenancy agreement, before the Guaranteed Rent Agreement or Deposit Guarantee Agreement is signed.

Landlords/ Letting Agents must be available to attend a sign up meeting arranged by RBC.

For Rooms in shared houses, Reading Borough Council will only guarantee the deposit for the Room. Communal areas are not covered under the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

Please note that rent is paid directly to the Landlord in advance for RGS and in arrears for DGS.

Reading Borough Council reserves the right not to allow a sign up to continue if:

e) Recommended repairs/ works have not been completed in the property
f) A valid gas safety certificate has not been received

I confirm that the opening schedule of condition is a true reflection of the state of the property and is a visual inspection only.
I acknowledge that in order for this property to be accepted onto the Rent Guarantee Scheme, it is necessary to carry out the work stipulated above. Failing this, I understand that the property will not be accepted onto the Rent Guarantee Scheme.

Reading Borough Council	Signed:	**Date**	

	Print Name:		

Landlord/ Letting Agent	Signed:	**Date**	
	Print Name:		

Rent Guarantee Scheme - Landlord/ Supplier Information

For audit purposes, we need you to confirm your bank details in writing. Please complete this form to ensure that we have your correct contact details and also the correct bank details for paying you the rent. Please note that we cannot accept bank details from a third party.

Please print the form, complete it and sign it before returning it to Rent Guarantee Scheme, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU.

Landlord Information

Name of Company, Letting Agent or full Landlord name (including title and first name):	
Registered Company Number: (if applicable)	
Postal address:	
Home phone number:	
Mobile phone number:	
Email address (payment information will be sent via email):	

Bank Details (Rent will be paid into this account)

Name of Bank:	
Name account is in:	
Sort Code:	
Account Number:	

Financial History- Deposit Protection

Have you, your company, partnership or trading entity, its directors, partners and/or owners ever been:

Convicted of (or do you have a hearing pending for) money laundering, fraud or any other financial crime?	**YES NO**
Refused membership of any other tenancy deposit protection scheme whether insurance-based or custodial?	**YES NO**
Refused a licence to operate a private rented property as required under the Housing Act 2004?	**YES NO**

I confirm that the above information is correct, and I will update the Rent Guarantee Scheme if any of the above information changes.

Signed: Date:

HNDCLAIM

Rent Guarantee Scheme
Closing Inventory Form

Inspection Details			
Address	RG		
Rent	£	**Deposit Paid**	£
Start of Tenancy Date	/ /	**End of Tenancy Date**	/ /
Present at closing	Landlord / Agent	Tenant / Joint Tenant	
Notice given by	Landlord / Agent	Tenant / Joint Tenant	

Landlord/Agent Contact Details	
Name	
Address	
Office Telephone	
Mobile Number	
Email Address	

Tenant/s Contact Details	
Name	
Telephone	
Email Address	
Forwarding Address	

Hallway	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Additional Items				

Lounge/Living Room	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Additional Items				

Dining Room	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Additional Items				

Kitchen	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Kitchen units				
Worktops				
Sink				
Oven				
Hob				
Extractor				
Fridge/Freezer				
Washing machine				
Additional Items				

Stairs and landing	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Additional Items				

Bedroom 1	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required	Front / Middle / Rear	Double / Single
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings						
Windows						
Electrics						
Bed						
Mattress						
Wardrobe						
Drawers						
Additional Items						

Bedroom 2	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required	Front / Middle / Rear	Double / Single
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings						
Windows						
Electrics						
Bed						
Mattress						
Wardrobe						
Drawers						
Additional Items						

Bedroom 3	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required	Front / Middle / Rear	Double / Single
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings						
Windows						
Electrics						
Bed						
Mattress						
Wardrobe						
Drawers						
Additional Items						

Bedroom 4	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required	Front / Middle / Rear	Double / Single
Walls/Ceiling						
Doors						
Floor Coverings						
Windows						
Electrics						
Bed						
Mattress						
Wardrobe						
Drawers						
Additional Items						

Bathroom 1	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Bath				
Shower				
Basin				
WC				
Additional Items				

Bathroom 2	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments / Action required
Walls/Ceiling				
Doors				
Floor Coverings				
Windows				
Electrics				
Bath				
Shower				
Basin				
WC				
Additional Items				

Claims to be made / General comments

Re-let property through scheme		
Yes / No	**Reason if No**	

Please provide all supporting claim documents (for example invoices and rent statements) within the 20 days of this closing inventory, or the claim will be invalid. This is also written in the Reading Borough Council Rent Guarantee Agreement under section 5.3.

I agree there is no claim to be made. Please tick ☐

I understand as a landlord / agent I have <u>20 days</u> to submit the claim. Please tick ☐

Landlord/Agent	Signed: Print Name:	**Date**	/ /

Tenant/s	Signed: Print Name:	**Date**	/ /

Reading Borough Council	Signed:	**Date**	/ /
	Print Name:		

Appendix 8 – Fair Wear and Tear Guidelines

Defining 'Fair Wear and Tear'

Background

As stated in the Rent Guarantee Scheme Policy and associated documents, the Guaranteed Deposit is held against loss or damage to a property beyond fair wear and tear.

Legal Definition

A tenancy deposit is not like an insurance policy, which may offer 'full replacement value' or 'new for old' on items which are lost or damaged. The law states that a tenant cannot be held responsible for 'reasonable use of the premises…and the ordinary operation of natural forces (i.e. the passage of time)'.

While this definition is open to a wide variation in interpretation, there are two established legal tenets which may be used for guidance:

1) A landlord is not permitted to use the deposit for 'betterment'.

> This means that a landlord cannot expect to replace old with new, or charge for items which were soiled at the start of the tenancy to be cleaned at the end of it.

2) A landlord is not entitled to charge a tenant the full cost of having part of the property, or any fixture 'put back to the condition it was at the start of the tenancy'.

> This means that a landlord is only allowed to charge a tenant **a proportion of the full cost** of replacing or fixing an item, depending on a variety of factors.

Fair Wear and Tear makes allowances for:

1) The original age, quality and condition of the item

Landlords are not permitted to replace old with new at a tenant's expense. For example, a landlord may not charge the full cost of replacing a carpet which was not brand new at the beginning of the tenancy, even if the carpet is now in an unusable condition.

2) Depreciation

In the case of a carpet which was not brand new at the start of the tenancy, and which has been left in a unusable condition by the tenants, the amount chargeable by the landlord towards the cost of replacement depends on calculating depreciation.

For example, a £500 carpet in a family property might be expected to last for five years. Tenants moved in when the carpet was brand new, and lived in the property for two years. When they left, the carpet was so damaged that it had to be replaced. They were required to pay £300 from their deposit towards the cost of the carpet, which was calculated as follows:

a Cost of similar replacement carpet: £500
b Anticipated life of carpet: 5 years
c Depreciation of carpet per year: a / b = £100 per year
d Duration of tenancy: 2 years
e Total payable for ruined carpet: c x (b - d) = £300

Examples of life expectancy for floor coverings

Carpet

	Ordinary Quality	**Superior Quality**
Family Occupancy	5 years	10 years
Single/couple occupancy	7 years	12 years

Laminate Flooring

	Ordinary Quality	**Superior Quality**
Family Occupancy	5 years	10 years
Single/couple occupancy	7 years	12 years

Examples of life expectancy for wall surfaces

Painted Walls

	Non-smokers	**Smokers**
Family Occupancy	3 years	2 years
Single/couple occupancy	5 years	3 years

Wallpapered Walls

	Non-Smokers	**Smokers**

Family Occupancy	3 years	3 years
Single/couple occupancy	5 years	3 years

Rent Guarantee Scheme policy on life expectancy

These examples are provided as industry standards. For ease of understanding and application, the Rent Guarantee Scheme applies a life expectancy of **5 years** for all items and does not discriminate between properties tenanted by smokers and non-smokers. This corresponds with industry best practice in line with standards applied by government-approved Tenancy Deposit protection Schemes.

3) The reasonable expected usage of the item

The landlord must make allowances for normal living and the effect this will have a on a property over time, especially in long tenancies.

4) The number and type of occupants in the property

Tenants with children and pets, and tenants who smoke, will put additional strain on a property during the tenancy. Assuming that children, pets and smoking are permitted by the tenancy agreement, 'fair wear and tear' must take into account a reasonable amount of extra wear to the property caused by the normal everyday life of these tenants. This wear can still be considered to be 'fair' and therefore a deposit claim may not be appropriate.

The length of the tenant's occupancy

How long the tenancy has lasted obviously makes a difference to the depreciation calculation. A carpet which might be expected to last five years, and which was already two years old at the beginning of a three year tenancy, may not be claimed for even if the tenants have caused severe damage to it. This is because it could reasonably be expected that the carpet should be replaced after five years.

Stipulations made in Tenancy Agreements

Many tenancy agreements confirm the level of cleaning required at the end of the tenancy. For example, if a carpet was freshly steam cleaned at the beginning of the tenancy, and the contract stipulates that it must be cleaned at the end of the tenancy, then the landlord is able to make a charge on the tenancy deposit if steam cleaning has not been carried out. Tenancy agreements also commonly require the dry cleaning of soft furnishings such as curtains. This type of cleaning is accepted by the tenant when they sign the tenancy agreement and should be anticipated as a charge of they do not complete it.

Deciding what is 'fair wear and tear' and what is chargeable damage on the Rent Guarantee Scheme

There is clearly some room for individual opinion within the guidelines provided here, and this is for the landlord, the tenant and the Rent Guarantee Scheme officer to negotiate at the Closing Inventory. For this reason, it is very important that all parties are in attendance when a tenancy is formally ended. The vast majority of tenancies end with the landlord, the tenant and the RGS satisfied that the principles of fair wear and tear have been fairly applied and where each party agrees with the amount of deposit, if any, which has been claimed.

In the few cases where agreement cannot be reached, the Rent Guarantee Scheme officer will have the final say regarding items which can be claimed for, and how much, and items which constitute fair wear and tear. Both landlord and tenant may request a review should they remain unwilling to abide by the decision made.

Some examples of fair wear and tear vs. chargeable damage

Item	Fair Wear and Tear	Chargeable Damage
Painted walls	Scuffs, fingermarks	Multiple nail or pin holes, chips or dents. Repainted a different colour without authorization.
Wallpapered walls	Minor scuffs, fading caused by sunlight	Tears, dents
Curtains/nets/blinds	Discolouration and fading caused by sunlight	Burns, stains, tears, broken mechanism
Carpet	Fading caused by sunlight	Burns, stains, tears
Laminate Flooring*	Nicks, minor dents and surface scuffs, loose trim	Drag marks, deep scratches or scrapes, stains, burns, missing trim
White Goods	Discolouration due to	Damage caused by

	sunlight, fading of printing due to cleaning, limescale	misuse, missing shelves or turntables
Kitchen Units and Worktops	Light scratches, fading/watermarks around taps, loose handles, misalignment of drawers and cupboard doors	Burn marks, 'lifting' of laminate due to water damage, missing handles or hinges
Tiled floors and walls	Minor scuffs and loose whole tiles	Chipped, broken or missing tiles
Windows	Condensation between panes, broken sash cords	Broken or cracked glass, bent hinges
Showers	Wear of electrical components (average lifespan of electric shower = 4 years)	Broken or missing shower head or hose
Electric sockets	Loose screws, scuffs	Broken socket covers

*Laminate flooring comes in several different qualities. Some kinds are not suitable for use in areas of heavy traffic i.e hallways. Some kinds are not suitable for use in areas where contact with water is inevitable i.e. bathrooms and kitchens. Damage caused by normal use of inappropriate flooring should not be charged to the tenant i.e. 'lifting' at joints due to water penetration in bathrooms, or wear through the top surface of the laminate in hallways.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29th JUNE 2022**	**AGENDA ITEM:**	
TITLE:	**WINTER MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT 2022-2025 (PLUS 3-YEAR EXTENSION) TENDER & CONTRACT AWARD**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**COUNCILLOR KAREN ROWLAND**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & COMMUNITY SAFETY**
SERVICE:	**ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMERCIAL SERVICES**	**WARDS:**	**BOROUGHWIDE**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SAM SHEAN**	**TEL:**	**0118 9372138**
JOB TITLE:	**HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC SERVICES MANAGER**	**E-MAIL:**	**sam.shean@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee of the procurement process for the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2022-2025 with a possible 3-year extension based on performance and to seek delegated authority to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer after the tendering process in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

1.2 Appendix 1: Winter Service Plan

1.3 Appendix 2: Financial Implications Report

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Committee grant approval to tender the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2022-2025 with a possible 3-year extension, subject to performance, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

2.2 That the Committee grants delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the Winter Maintenance Service Programme, as per section 4 of this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-2025 sets out the Council's priorities for Reading and provides direction for staff in delivering services to meet the needs of the communities within the Borough whilst working to a budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed at Council in February 2022.

3.2 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the maintenance of a secure and safe highway and strategic road network in order to keep vital services moving, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst accommodating the significant levels of planned economic growth.

3.3 The aim of the Winter Service is to provide a service to reduce, as far as possible, the effects of adverse weather on the public highway during the winter period.

3.4 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service. Our Local Transport Plan outlines investments in walking and cycling initiatives, public transport, and electric vehicle infrastructure that will make it easier for residents to make healthy choices, and feel the benefits of clean, green neighbourhoods.

3.5 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway and to provide conditions that are as safe as reasonably practical having regards to financial constraints and our statutory duties.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Reading Borough Council aim to provide a winter maintenance service to reduce so far as is reasonably practicable the effects of frost, ice and snow and other severe winter conditions on the public highway. The Council aim to provide travelling conditions as safe as reasonably practicable having regard to the road hierarchy, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – Code of Practice' October 2016, as well as the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 (Clause 1A) and Section 150.

4.2 The winter maintenance service is provided by the Council for 26 weeks of the year, starting on 1st October each year and ending on 31st March.

4.3 Reading Borough Council is currently included within a Joint Berkshire Local Authorities 'Forecasting Service' contract being provided by 'Vaisala / MeteoGroup DNT'.

4.4 The current term Winter Maintenance has come to the end of its term and the Council now need to re-tender the contract in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Procurement

4.5 The total estimated value of the contract is approximately £750k over the first 3-years (36 months), at the rate of approximately £250k per year and

potentially up to an additional £750k should the contract be extended for the subsequent 3-year duration.

4.6 In accordance with the Public Procurement Rules the Council will publish on the Find a Tender service which replaces the Official Journal of European Union (OJEU) contract notice portal and in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, will be advertised on the Councils electronic tendering portal, as well as via 'Contracts Finder'.

4.7 As this is a statutory Service, the Council will be required to tender and award the Winter Maintenance Service Term Contract in advance of the winter season.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2 The Winter Maintenance Term Contract **2022-2025** will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2022 – 2025 objectives of:

- Healthy environment - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Inclusive economy – Enabling the infrastructure to continue to support the economy
- Thriving Communities - Remaining financially sustainable and to ensure everyone has an equal chance to use the public highway

5.3 TEAM Reading values:

Together – Collaborative working approach between the Council, consultant, contractors and the public
Efficiency – Continue to explore efficiency savings within the contract
Ambitious – Investing into the public highway
Make a Difference – Providing a safe inclusive public highway network for all users

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting in February 2019 and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions. To this end, Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. All relevant construction contracts will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.

6.2 Tenders for any subsequent contracts that are necessary will be invited to submit Environmental Implications proposals which will form part of the quality element of the tender evaluation. A social value quality submission will also be required to be submitted with tenders and evaluation.

6.3 Tenders also needed to include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within tender returns. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials, lower temperature bitumen's, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, use of electric vehicles and plant, move to renewable energy, as well as how they will achieve their own carbon reduction targets.

6.4 The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 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".

7.2 The public can report accumulations of snow and ice on the public highway and strategic network and all requests for additional grit bins and roads to consider for gritting will be brought to Committee for consideration and approval should they meet the assessment criteria.

7.3 This report will be available on the Council's website following Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee approval processes.

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 The Winter Maintenance Service programme 2022/2023 consists of maintaining the Council's existing public highway network in a safe condition. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time and all users will have a safe & efficient public highway network. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer.

9.2 The tender process is being undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the principles of the Open Process as defined by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations"). It is intended to enter into a contract based upon a 60% quality and 40% price tender contract return.

9.3 The Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 (Clause 1A) and Section 150 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The cost of the Winter Maintenance Service Term Contract 2022-2025 of up to £1.5M will be met from the Highways & Traffic Service fully funded Highway Revenue Budget.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

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WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2021 – 2022

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October 2021

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Policy Statement	4
3.	Client/Consultant/Contractor Relationship	5
4.	Decision Making	7
5.	Rostering of Supervisory and Operational Staff	9
6.	Road Hierarchy	10
7.	Footways and Cycleways	12
8.	Salting Operation and Salt	13
9.	Snow Clearance	14
10.	Grit Bins	15
11.	Plant and Vehicles	17
12.	Operational Communications	18
13.	Weather Forecasts	19
14.	Thermal Mapping and Ice Prediction	23
15.	Media Communications	24
16.	List of Appendices	25

- Appendix A: Primary and Secondary Salting Routes 26
- Appendix B: Guidance Notes for Duty Officers 31
- Appendix C: Call Out Guidelines 32
- Appendix D: Sample Decision Sheet 33
- Appendix E: Footways - Snow Clearing/Pre-salting 34
- Appendix F: Call Out Facilities 36
- Appendix G: Grit Bin Locations 37
- Appendix H: Location of structures to receive 'double pre-salt' salting . 39
- Appendix I: Winter Service Cross Boundary Arrangements 40
- Appendix J: Plan showing salting network, salting routes and locations of grit bins 41
- Appendix K: Circulation List 42
- Appendix L: References 44

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2021 - 2022

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document has been produced in association with the documents "Well Maintained Highways" Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Published July 2005, revised 2009, 2010 & 2011) and "Lessons learned from the severe weather February 2009" report (revised 2010 & 2011), 'Quarmby Report' December 2010 and the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – Code of Practice' October 2016, to describe the Council's proposals for dealing with ice/snow deposits on the highway network over the winter period. It details information regarding the winter service, such as the roles and responsibilities of Reading Borough Council and the joint arrangement with Wokingham Borough Council, its Consultant Volker Highways (Wokingham Highways Alliance) and Winter Maintenance Contractor J H Cresswell and Sons Ltd.

1.2 Roads forming the Primary and Secondary precautionary salting networks are shown in Appendix A. These are the most heavily used strategic roads in the Borough, including the main bus routes and routes to the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

1.3 A winter service will be provided by the Council for 26 weeks of the year, starting on 1st October 2021 and ending on 31st March 2022. The formal winter service with Wokingham Borough Council and their Consultant, Volker Highways, commences on the 1st November 2021. However, as agreed at the pre-winter season meeting, Volker Highways provides an informal weather data monitoring service from the 1st October 2021. Should salting action be required during October, Reading Borough Council will be advised and the Winter Maintenance Contractor, J H Cresswell and Sons Ltd, will be instructed accordingly. Although the formal winter service ends on 31st March 2022, a similar arrangement will be in place to extend the weather data monitoring service to the end of April 2022 if unfavourable conditions persist.

1.4 Precautionary salting of the Primary network (refer to 1.12) and snow clearance on the Primary routes will be carried out based on information received from the weather forecasting service. The Secondary precautionary salting network (refer to 1.13) will only be salted and/or cleared of snow during particularly severe and prolonged hazardous winter weather conditions. The decision to instigate such action will be taken by the Winter Duty Officer based on information received from the weather forecasting service at the time. The primary precautionary salting network is risk assessed and comprises of principal roads, including main bus routes and routes to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Likewise, the secondary precautionary salting network is risk assessed and comprises of the remaining bus route network and roads linking strategic routes.

1.5 Where the Council has been made aware of water being deposited on the highway as the result of an unforeseen incident, for example fire, road traffic accident, burst water main etc, salt shall be applied, during freezing conditions, to reduce

as far as possible the effects of frost, ice and other severe winter weather conditions on the highway.

1.6 Where water is being deposited on the highway from a watermain and Thames Water is aware of the problem, they will begin to salt the area affected until the issue has been resolved. Thames Water will continue to salt any visible leaks of their own plant whether or not the leak is on a Council salting network. Thames Water provides the Council with a list of known leak sites to be salted by their own contractor.

1.7 Spreading of a proprietary material/grit/salt on Town Centre footways, as detailed in Appendix E, will be carried out based on forecast information received from the weather forecasting service at the time. The decision to spread a proprietary material/grit/salt in the town centre is made and carried out by the Council.

1.8 For Primary and Secondary precautionary salting routes, response and treatment times are 1 hour and 3 hours respectively. This means that the Contractor must commence salting within 1 hour of receiving the winter gritting decision/ instruction and complete all of the salting routes within 3 hours of leaving their depot.

1.9 As the Highway Authority, Reading Borough Council has a legal duty under Section 41 (Clause 1A) and Section 150 of the Highways Act 1980 to remove accumulations of snow, if causing a highway to become obstructed. Roads will therefore be cleared of snow in descending order of priority commencing with the First Priority network as described in Section 9 of this document.

1.10 In accordance with the recommendations of the "Lessons learned from the Severe Weather February 2009" report, the Council has introduced a Contingency Salting Network to cover the prolonged periods and heavy accumulations of snow and national salt shortages as described in 6.8.

1.11 Salt spread rates, where possible, will be adjusted to meet the directives set out as described in the "Quarmby Audit" report and adopted by Highways Authorities in December 2010.

1.12 The Primary precautionary salting network is approximately 118.8 km in length, represents approximately 30% of the total road network and comprises principal roads, including main bus routes and routes to the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

1.13 The Secondary precautionary salting network is approximately 42.02 km, represents approximately 11% of the total road network and is comprised of, the remaining bus route network and roads linking strategic routes.

1.14 There are currently 47 grit bins provided at locations throughout the Borough for public use. The grit bins are maintained by the Contractor and are detailed in Appendix G. The provision of grit bins on the Borough's public highway network has been reviewed and risk assessed. A grit bin has to achieve a minimum score of 60 points, using the Council's approved grit bin risk assessment pro-forma, to qualify; 47 grit bins continue to meet these criteria. The grit bins are repaired and

replenished throughout the winter period as necessary. At the end of the winter, all grit bins are collected, cleaned and stored away during the summer months.

1.15 All cross-boundary primary and secondary precautionary salting routes correspond with neighbouring authorities precautionary salting routes, refer to paragraph 6.7.

1.16 The treatment of the M4 motorway and the on/off 4 slip roads at Junction 11 is the responsibility of Highways England and their agent. The Junction 11/A33 gyratory, A33 carriageway and bus lanes within the Borough boundary are included within the Council's Primary Salting Network.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

Reading Borough Council aim to provide a winter maintenance service to reduce so far as is reasonably practicable the effects of frost, ice and snow and other severe winter conditions on the public highway. The Council aim to provide travelling conditions as safe as reasonably practicable having regard to the road hierarchy detailed in Section 6 of this document, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – Code of Practice' October 2016, as well as the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 (Clause 1A) and Section 150.

3 CLIENT/CONSULTANT/CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP

3.1 The Winter Maintenance Contract (2016/17-2021/22) specifies the Winter Service operations to be carried out within the Borough. The term contractor is J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd.

3.2 Innovative ideas proposed by the Client, Consultant, Contractor or DfT that provide improvements in quality of service and/or cost benefits will be adopted during the course of the winter season. An example would be adjusting salt spread rates during prolonged cold periods to maximise coverage and maintain adequate stock levels.

3.3 The following table indicates how the principal Winter Service responsibilities between Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and its Consultant and the Contractor are split.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
Preparation of Winter Service Plan	Reading Borough Council
Road hierarchy priorities	Reading Borough Council
Salt purchase & storage	Contractor – J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd
Route mapping for precautionary salting network	Contractor – J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd
Route mapping for snow Clearance	Reading Borough Council / Contractor – J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd
Vehicles/plant and Accreditation	Owned and routinely maintained by Contractor
Winter Service Manager/ Decision making	Wokingham Borough Council (Volker Highways)
Day-to-day operations	Mainly Contractor - J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd with central co-ordination by Reading Borough Council/Wokingham Borough Council (Volker Highways) staff
Manning levels	As defined in the Winter Maintenance Contract (2016/17-2021/22).
Performance monitoring	Wokingham Borough Council (Volker Highways)/Reading Borough Council

ACTIVITY (CONT'D)	RESPONSIBILITY (CONT'D)
Opening of Emergency Operations Centre and Emergency Planning Room	Reading Borough Council
Approval to commence Operations in extreme Snow conditions	Reading Borough Council
Weather Forecasting Service	Vaisala / MeteoGroup DNT

3.4 The Contractor will provide the Council with a list of any wet spots identified during each salting run, for the Council to investigate further. The Contractor will also provide the Council with a list of roads that have not been salted and the reason why e.g. road works/traffic management.

4 DECISION MAKING

4.1 Decision making is the responsibility of the Consultant's (Volker Highways) appropriate Duty Officer **(except in the cases detailed in paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12)**. Each 24 hour period, during the winter service period, the Duty Officer will be on standby.

The Duty Officer also has a specific responsibility for liaising directly with the MeteoGroup duty forecaster and for disseminating information as described in Section 15.

4.2 The Duty Officer is responsible for receiving and taking the appropriate action on information relating to the winter service within the Borough. Using the forecast data provided, the Duty Officer will make his/her decision regarding precautionary salting as appropriate. To assist with this process, call out guidance notes are as detailed in Appendices B and C. The Winter Service Manager will also be available to give advice to the Duty Officer when required.

4.3 At approximately midday the Duty Officer logs on to MeteoGroup web page and inspects the rolling 36 hour forecast, graphs and appropriate maps. It is likely that the decision will be made at this time. If it is not possible to make a decision at midday the contractor is advised at this time that he is to wait for a decision following the evening update.

4.4 At approximately 1800 hours the Duty Officer logs on to MeteoGroup web page and inspects the forecast graph and text for any updated information. The forecast graph continues to have actual road surface temperatures plotted every hour for a rolling 36 hour period. This information can be obtained at any time by the Duty Officer by logging on to the web page. If a decision still cannot be made it may be necessary for the Duty Officer to consult the weather forecaster.

4.5 It is the responsibility of each Duty Officer to record all action taken on the justification forms and file for future reference.

4.6 The Duty Officer's decision is recorded on a decision sheet as shown in Appendix D, which is disseminated and filed for future reference.

4.7 When snow is forecast the snow clearance strategy is to be controlled by the Council in consultation with Volker Highways. In times of prolonged severe weather staff from the Council will liaise directly with the contractor in order to direct operations in the most effective way possible.

4.8 The Contractor is contacted via email and mobile phones, which are manned 24 hours per day. The daily decision sheets are emailed to the contractor by Volker Highways to confirm the instruction.

4.9 The daily decision sheets are provided by Volker Highways to the Council, electronically. The decisions are also disseminated within the Council and placed on the appropriate social media platform to inform the public.

4.10 Appropriate training is provided regularly for all Duty Officers, particularly with regard to technological improvements in forecasting techniques and the ice prediction system.

4.11 Where one of the emergency services contacts the Council requesting a one off gritting following either a road traffic accident, a fire resulting in localised excess water or a water leak, Streetcare Services will instruct during normal working hours or, if out of hours, The Answering Service (TAS) will instruct accordingly.

4.12 The Town Centre footway / pavement areas, listed in Appendix E, are treated by the Council's Streetcare Services. The decision whether to treat these is taken by Streetcare Services as outlined in Section 7.

5 ROSTERING OF SUPERVISORY AND OPERATIONAL STAFF

5.1 Wokingham Borough Council has employed Volker Highways to act as Highways and Transportation Consultant's whose role is to act as the Winter Service Manager. As part of the above agreement Reading Borough Council have a joint arrangement for Volker Highways to provide a winter decision making service.

5.2 The Consultant's team of Duty Officers is rostered to be on standby for the winter period, which is generally November to March inclusive. However, as agreed at the pre-winter season meeting, Volker Highways will be providing an informal weather data monitoring service/Duty Officer standby arrangement from the 1st October 2021 with a similar arrangement in place extended through to the end of April 2022 if unfavourable weather conditions persist.

5.3 A Winter Service Duty Officer is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week during his/her duty period. During normal office hours all Winter Service enquiries from members of the public should be directed to the Streetcare Services – Highways Maintenance & Asset Management Team at Reading Borough Council, disseminated, and where the policy applies, information forwarded onto the Consultant's (Volker Highways).

5.4 Outside normal office hours, enquiries should be directed to the call out facility listed in Appendix F. (Officers' home telephone numbers will not be released to members of the public).

5.5 To continually improve the service, all public requests for salting and grit bins will be logged by the Council and forwarded to the Streetcare Services – Highways Maintenance & Asset Management Team for assessment at the end of the winter season. Only in circumstances where emergency services make a request for salting will the Council's Winter Maintenance Contractor be mobilised before an assessment is completed. Further information concerning weather forecasts and the decision making process are provided in Sections 4 and 13.

5.6 Rosters of all of the Contractor's staff involved in winter service operations are requested and made available by 1st October 2021.

5.7 All operators of salt spreading equipment are in possession of The City and Guilds Institute (scheme 6159) 'Winter Maintenance Operators Qualification' and all gritting plant conforms to current Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) Quality Assurance certification and accreditation. The Winter Maintenance Contractor provides the gritting vehicle calibration certificates to the Council in advance of the winter season.

5.8 Prior to the commencement of the winter period, each Duty Officer is provided with an information pack, which includes details of all appropriate telephone / mobile contacts, together with any additional information that may be appropriate.

6 ROAD HIERARCHY

6.1 The Primary precautionary salting network comprises all Category 1 and Category 2 roads and some heavily trafficked Category 3 roads which are defined as follows:

Category 1: The most important roads in the Borough in terms of volume of traffic carried, the proportion of heavy goods vehicles and their strategic function as principal links.

Category 2: The main distributor roads carrying significant volumes of traffic and public transport services. These are important thoroughfares distributing traffic from the strategic routes to residential and commercial areas.

Category 3: All other roads being roads providing local access within and between residential and commercial areas.

The total length of the Council's Primary Salting Network is approximately 118.8 km which represents approximately 30% of the highway network (excluding the motorway) within the Borough area.

6.2 The Secondary precautionary salting network is approximately 42.02 km in length and represents approximately 11% of the highway network. It is comprised of the remaining bus route network and roads linking strategic routes, which become hazardous if left untreated during prolonged periods of particularly severe weather conditions.

6.3 The Primary precautionary salting network is broken down into 4 individual salting routes. Each route is efficiently designed in order to comply with the maximum treatment time of 3 hours. The Primary precautionary salting routes to be treated by the Contractor are detailed in Appendix A.

6.4 The Secondary precautionary salting network is broken down into 4 salting routes. The Secondary salting routes to be treated by the Contractor are detailed in Appendix A.

6.5 The snow clearance routes comprise of 3 priority groups.

First — All of the Category 1 network which are all the A Class roads in the Borough.

Second — All of the Category 2 network which includes all of the B Class roads and some of the heavier trafficked C Class roads.

Third — The remaining C class roads.

Snow clearance shall commence with the 'first priority' network and only when this has been cleared shall resources cascade to the 'second priority' followed by the 'third priority' networks.

Roads will therefore be cleared of snow in descending order of priority until such time as the 'first priority' network is clear. Only when this is clear shall resources cascade to the 'second priority' followed by the 'third priority' networks (see Section 9).

6.6 Performance of the Contractor in relation to response and treatment times is monitored to ensure satisfactory service delivery and contract compliance, where appropriate.

6.7 By agreement no cross Borough boundary salting and snow clearance will take place between Reading Borough Council and adjoining Unitary Authorities or vice versa, (refer to Appendix I).

6.8 In accordance with the recommendations of the "Lessons learned from the Severe Weather February 2009" report, the Council will introduce a Contingency Salting Network to cover any prolonged periods and heavy accumulations of snow and national salt shortages. The length of network to be treated will be determined based on the Council's salt stocks, the national salt stock situation and the anticipated period of severe weather.

6.9 The "Quarmby report" from 2010 gives guidance on efficient spread rates for preserving salt stocks. This is used when determining the rate at which salt is spread over the public highway during different weather conditions and salt levels.

6.10 The treatment of the M4 motorway and the on/off entry and exit slip roads at Junction 11 is the responsibility of the Highways England and their agent. The M4 Junction 11/A33 gyratory, A33 carriageway and bus lanes within the Borough boundary are included within the Council's Primary Salting Network.

7 FOOTWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS

7.1 The Council does not precautionary salt any of its footway network, however if snow is predicted to lay for a prolonged period then the Town Centre area, as detailed in Appendix E, will be treated with a proprietary material/grit/salt to prevent snow and ice forming. The footways listed in Appendix E are treated with a proprietary material/grit/salt as they have a high pedestrian footfall.

7.2 The decision to treat the footways listed in Appendix E is taken by the Council's Streetcare Services. This work is also directly carried out by Streetcare Services.

7.3 Streetcare Services usually require approximately 3 hours notice to prepare the equipment, product and staff for the works. Once the spreading of a proprietary material/grit/salt has started it takes approximately 1.5 hours to cover the route.

7.4 The Council has 2 hand operated snow ploughs which will be deployed on town centre footways, over Reading and Caversham Bridges and over the Christchurch Bridge, in the event of heavy accumulations of snow. On completion of these locations a decision will be made on cascading down to other high footfall areas based on a dynamic risk assessment reflecting conditions prevailing at the time.

7.5 Cyclists can continue to cycle in winter but are advised to dress appropriately, use mudguards and lights, consider tyres (the wider the better) and commuting by bicycle can be comfortable and efficient. It is important to make a safety assessment particularly during periods of prolonged hazardous conditions, (refer to Council's Snow Plan). The Council does not precautionary grit / salt shared footways and remote cycleways when frost, ice or prolonged hazardous conditions are forecast, with the exception of shared carriageway / cycleway routes on the primary and secondary salting network. Being part of the carriageway, shared carriageway/cycleway routes on the primary and secondary precautionary salting route networks will be salted by default in accordance with the Winter Service Plan.

Should individuals make the decision to cycle during hazardous winter conditions the Council recommend that they take the necessary precautionary measures for the prevailing conditions.

8 SALTING OPERATIONS AND SALT

Response time

8.1 Throughout the winter service period the Contractor must start salting within 1 hour of receiving the instruction from the Duty Officer or at the time specified.

8.2 Each primary precautionary salting route is designed so that treatment can be completed in a maximum of 3 hours from the time of leaving the depot.

8.3 Salt complying with BS3247 shall be supplied by the Contractor and stored at Aldermaston. It is a contractual requirement that appropriate salt stockpiles are in place by 1st October each year.

	Minimum Quantity	**Minimum Quantity**	**Minimum Quantity**	**Minimum Quantity**
Quantity	1st October (100%)	31st December (100%)	28th February (100%)	31st March (100%)
Salt Total	900 tonnes	900 tonnes	900 tonnes	900 tonnes

8.4 All of the salt stock is stored in the open at Aldermaston, covered by proprietary sheeting.

8.5 Salt shall normally be applied in accordance with the "Quarmby Report" unless there are severe prolonged periods of snow or low national salt stocks. In such situations an appropriate spread rate will be implemented by the Contractor as agreed by the Council in consultation with the Consultant, Volker Highways, the Contractor and the salt supplier.

8.6 Bridge decks are given a double precautionary salting as the surface temperatures get much colder than those of regular roads. The bridges that are given a double precautionary salt are listed in Appendix H.

Motorways

8.7 The treatment of the M4 motorway and the on/off slip roads at Junction 11 is the responsibility of the Highways England and their agent. The M4 Junction 11/A33 gyratory, A33 carriageway and bus lanes within the Borough boundary are included within the Council's Primary Salting Network.

9 SNOW CLEARANCE

9.1 When conditions are such that snow clearance becomes necessary, an instruction will be given by the Duty Officer to the Contractor to commence the snow clearance operation. It is essential that snow ploughs are fitted without delay.

9.2 During prolonged severe weather when snow clearance becomes necessary, the Emergency Planning Officer will implement the Council's Snow Plan and open the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) which will be staffed until conditions abate. During this time, all incoming calls relating to winter service operations will be directed by the EOC. Responsibility for instructing the Contractor will be passed from Volker Highways Duty Officer to the appropriate Council Officer.

9.3 The Council provides snow clearance routes for the Contractor to treat in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Snow Plan. The highway (carriageway) network is cleared in descending order of priority, concentrating on the clearance of the first priority network followed by other priority networks in accordance with the agreed policy. Certain highway (footway) areas in the Town Centre that are block paved will be treated using a proprietary material/grit/salt, these are shown in Appendix E.

The snow clearance route priorities are:

First	A33, A329 (including IDR), A4, A4074, A4155, A327.
Second	B3270, B480, B3031.
Third	All other remaining roads.

9.4 Following snow clearance operations, the routes will be inspected for damage. Details of the damage will be passed to Streetcare Services for preparation of estimates and damage repair.

9.5 In the case of prolonged periods and heavy accumulations of snow and/or a national salt shortage, the Council will implement a Contingency Salting Network. The network will be designed to deliver a risk based contingency service in line with the UK Road Groups Report "Lessons from the Severe Weather February 2009" report and new Code of Practice.

Motorways

9.6 The treatment of the M4 motorway and the on/off slip roads at Junction 11 is the responsibility of the Highways England and their agent. The M4 Junction 11/A33 gyratory, A33 carriageway and bus lanes within the Borough boundary are included within the Council's Primary Salting Network.

10 GRIT BINS

10.1 Grit bins are provided on the Borough's public highway network but only where they have achieved a minimum score of 60 out of a total of 85 points as previously assessed, using the grit bin risk assessment pro-forma (Appendix G refers). The grit bins are repaired and replenished throughout the winter period as necessary. At the end of the winter, all grit bins are collected, cleaned and stored away during the summer months.

Grit bin requests are evaluated on a risk-based scoring system using the following criteria:

- Not on roads already on the gritting network or nearby grit bin
- Gradient greater than 10%
- Severe bends not including junctions
- Close proximity to and falling towards a heavily trafficked main road
- Number of premises for which the road is only access
- Traffic density at peak times
- Roads with high vehicle usage and a gradient of 10% or more
- Shaded carriageways with a minimum gradient of 10%
- Side road leading onto a main road
- Known problem with water and/or frost hollows
- Access available from carriageway for filling

(To qualify, a grit bin requires a minimum score of 60 out of a total of 85 points).

10.2 Requested locations for grit bins on the public highway will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis before the start of the winter season. Any new requests will be required to achieve a minimum score of 60 out of a total of 85 points to qualify. (Grit bin locations which have been assessed previously will not be reassessed).

10.3 For non-public highway areas, stakeholders and other Council Directorates/Teams are advised to purchase their own grit bins and salt stocks, as well as to make their own arrangements to spread the salt, prior to the winter season. Stakeholders and Council Directorates/Teams can choose to contact Streetcare Services for a quote to supply grit bin(s) and/or salt. The stakeholder / Council Directorate/Team will need to make their own arrangements for salt spreading as appropriate.

10.4 The Council will support community groups & individuals who express an interest to fund the installation of additional grit bins and take on the maintenance liability by way of an appropriate Highway Licence.

It should be noted that Streetcare services and its Winter Maintenance Contractor/Consultant will give priority to delivering the winter service for the Borough's public highway network.

11 PLANT AND VEHICLES

11.1 The Council's Winter Maintenance Contractor owns and maintains all the equipment used for Winter Service operations with the exception of the footway ploughs and proprietary material hand-spreaders (Refer to 11.8).

11.2 Prior to the operational winter service period the Contractor will carry out a 'dry' run of each precautionary salting route, attach/remove snow ploughs to/from each vehicle and carry out calibration test to the equipment.

11.3 To be effective, salt must be spread evenly and at rates to suit prevailing weather conditions. Excessive salt spreading is undesirable on both environmental and economic grounds. To this end, it is essential that the spreading equipment is calibrated annually in accordance with BS 1622 and the controls marked accordingly for spreads of $8g/m^2$ for normal pre-salting and $11g/m^2$, $15g/m^2$ $20g/m^2$ and $40g/m^2$ for more severe conditions in line with recommendations outlined in the Quarmby Report December 2010.

11.4 All winter service vehicle drivers are issued with mobile phones for communication.

11.5 All of the Contractor's staff are qualified to City and Guilds Local Government Management Board 6157 now superseded by City and Guilds 6159 for salting and snow clearance operations.

11.6 Details of all routes including maps are kept in each vehicle.

11.7 A small, towable salt spreader is used on narrow roads where the larger winter service vehicles cannot manoeuvre or travel along due to road widths, parked vehicles etc.

11.8 The Council own two hand operated footway snow ploughs and several proprietary material hand-spreaders to reduce the effects and lower the risk of snow and ice accumulations in the Town Centre block-paved areas (refer to Appendix E).

12 OPERATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

12.1 All winter service vehicle drivers are in contact with the Contractor's depot via mobile phones in order that instructions can be passed and current information relayed back directly from the vehicles.

12.2 The Contractor is required to provide the Council with a list of the contact details that are to be used by 1st October 2021.

12.3 The Contractor is required to provide the Council with a copy of the Daily Winter Service Action report after each salting run. This records details of each vehicle, driver, route number, start time, finish time, rate of spread and any other remarks.

12.4 In emergency situations when mobile phone networks are not available, the Council and Volker Highways have the use of airwave radios for communication purposes.

13 WEATHER FORECASTS

During the winter period, the Council will use the 'Roadmaster' forecasting service provided by MeteoGroup, from their UK HQ in Victoria, London. The information received each day includes the following:

(i) detailed rolling 36 hour forecast
(ii) evening update forecast
(iii) site specific temperature graphs (three sites)
(iv) early morning summary and preliminary forecast
(iv) 2 - 10 day forecast

The 36 hour forecast is received at approximately midday each day. The main features of this forecast are as follows:

(i) Readiness Colour
This is based on the traffic light system of colours; green, amber or red. The definitions are:

Green	No hazard expected.
Amber	RSTs below zero but road dry
	RST between 0 and +1C (inclusive)
	RST > +1C and < +2C with low confidence Red
Red	RSTs below zero with a hazard.

(i) Hazards
This section includes the hazards causing the red or amber readiness colours as well as other weather hazards such as heavy rain, high winds or fog, which could accompany a green readiness colour. A qualifying time will be given for all hazards.

(iii) Minimum temperatures
Minimum air and road temperatures for urban and rural areas are provided.

(iv) Confidence statements

This consists of high, moderate or low confidence for each of the hazards described above, together with a qualifying statement. For example: low confidence regarding extent of showers this evening but high regarding road temperatures falling below zero.

(v) 36 hour weather summary

This is a general summary of the forecast for a rolling 36 hour period.

At approximately 1800 hours each evening, a forecast update is issued by MeteoGroup and can be viewed by the Duty Officer at home on a portable laptop computer. "If further information is required, the Duty Officer can make use of the 24 hour consultancy service provided by MeteoGroup – 0845 603 0563"

Example of a typical 24 hour summary forecast is shown overleaf on Pages 21 & 22.

24 HOUR SUMMARY FORECAST FOR Berkshire
FORECAST FOR MONDAY 11/10/2010 12:00 TO TUESDAY 12/10/2010 12:00

Headline	RSTS ABOVE ZERO
Confidence	HIGH

General Synopsis
This afternoon, it will be dry and bright with long periods of sunshine. Tonight, dry with the chance of some clearer breaks at first, but mist and low cloud will become extensive. Tomorrow morning, dry but with cloudy skies. RSTs above zero throughout the period.

Hazards and temperatures (Example)

	Berkshire	
Readiness Colour	GREEN	
Hoar Frost	N	HIGH
Ice	N	HIGH
Snow	N	HIGH
Snow Level (m)	N/A	
Drifting	N	HIGH
Heavy Rain	N	HIGH
Fog	N	HIGH
Freezing Rain	N	HIGH
Minimum Air Temp	7.5	
Bridgedeck min temp	9.0	
Urban Min RST	10.0	
Urban RST period < 0	N	
Min RST	9.0	
RST period < 0	N	

Snow Summary
None

Wind Table (Example)

	Mon 11/10 12-18				Mon 11/10 18-00				Tue 12/10 00-06				Tue 12/10 06-12			
Domains	Dir	Avg mph	Exp Gust mph	Ext Gust mph	Dir	Avg mph	Exp Gust mph	Ext Gust mph	Dir	Avg mph	Exp Gust mph	Ext Gust mph	Dir	Avg mph	Exp Gust mph	Ext Gust mph
Berkshire County Wide	NE	13	28	31	NE	11	22	25	NE	9	20	23	NE	9	20	24

MeteoGroup UK.	
Forecaster	
Produced at	11-10-2010 10:38:39 BST
Issued at	11-10-2010 12:31:12 BST
Telephone	0845 603 0563
Fax	020 7963 7579
Visit RoadCast at www.roadcast.co.uk	

14 THERMAL MAPPING AND ICE PREDICTION

Reading Roads

14.1 Vaisala Ltd has undertaken thermal mapping across Berkshire, a technique for measuring and analysing the thermal characteristics of road surfaces. It is normally carried out under three different weather conditions, one of which is the extreme condition or night when skies are clear and winds light. The other weather conditions are known as intermediate and damped. Under extreme conditions, the maximum variation in road surface temperature is produced, this, together with the coldest absolute temperatures, leads to potentially hazardous road conditions. Under such conditions it is most important to be able to accurately predict road surface temperatures.

14.2 The information yielded from thermal mapping is used in conjunction with site specific forecasts to predict accurately the minimum temperature of road surfaces across the road network. This allows accurate decisions to be made not only about whether to salt or not but whether to salt only those roads that require treatment.

14.3 Thermal mapping has been used to produce data, which allows the pre-salting routes to be analysed objectively and to ensure the optimum location of road surface and atmospheric condition sensors.

14.4 Annual calibration checks on sensors are undertaken by the equipment supplier(s).

14.5 Every hour, information from these sensors is fed automatically into the Central Processing Unit at Vaisala's offices in Birmingham. The parameters recorded are, air temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind speed and direction, road surface condition (wet or dry) and depth temperature. Forecasts are produced by MeteoGroup based on this information. These forecasts when used in conjunction with the thermal mapping data forms one of the most sophisticated ice prediction systems in the U.K.

14.6 West Berkshire Council acts as lead authority on behalf of the Berkshire Unitary Authorities in respect of the co-ordination and procurement of contracts with Vaisala and MeteoGroup Ltd. The formulation of this alliance between the authorities is known as the Berkshire Consortium.

14.7 All six members of the Berkshire Consortium (consisting of the six Unitary Local Authorities within the former Berkshire County Council administrative area) have access to the ice detection equipment described above.

14.8 The Berkshire Consortium own weather stations situated within Berkshire and have a contract with Vaisala Ltd. Once the data is in a usable format it is passed on to MeteoGroup who will make the weather predictions. The nearest weather station for Reading is on the A329 Oxford Road (located outside Battle Library).

15 MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

15.1 Liaison with the news media, particularly the local radio stations, The Breeze, BBC Radio Berkshire and Heart FM is of the utmost importance and will be maintained during periods of severe snowfall. This is to notify the public of any driving advice or road closures etc that will affect their journeys or safety. This contact will normally be directly with the Council's Press Office who will be fed information from Streetcare Services.

15.2 It is also desirable that communications with the local Police force is maintained. To this end, whenever an instruction to salt is issued by Volker Highways, a copy of the decision sheet will be emailed to the Thames Valley Police Headquarters at Kidlington who will then distribute the notification accordingly. Additional information will also be provided as appropriate to the motoring organisations during periods of snow clearance when it is essential that the travelling public are advised of current road conditions and cleared routes.

15.3 Information on winter gritting / salting and guidance on safer driving this winter on Reading roads together with a plan showing the roads that will be treated is published on the Council's website.

15.4 Information on the current policy and precautionary salting plans is available on the Council's website.

15.5 The 'Winter Service Plan 2021/2022' Committee Report, presented to the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee, is available on the Council's website. This Report includes details on the review process carried out following the 2020/2021 winter season and updates to this Winter Service Plan for the 2021/2022 winter season.

16 LIST OF APPENDICES

Page

Appendix A: Primary and Secondary Precautionary Salting Routes 26

Appendix B: Guidance Notes for Duty Officers 31

Appendix C: Call Out Guidelines..... 32

Appendix D: Sample Decision Sheet..... 33

Appendix E: Footways - Snow Clearance/Pre-salting 34

Appendix F: Call Out Facilities 36

Appendix G: Grit Bin Locations 37

Appendix H: Location of structures to receive a 'double pre-salt' salting..... 39

Appendix I: Winter service cross boundary arrangements 40

Appendix J: Plan showing salting network/routes and locations of grit bins..... 41

Appendix K: Circulation List 42

Appendix L: References 44

SUMMARY OF ROADS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PRECAUTIONARY SALTING NETWORK

TABLE 1 – COUNCIL'S PRIMARY SALTING NETWORK

ROAD NAME	SECTION
A33	ALL – INC MRT BUS LANES / BYPASS - SOUTH OAK WAY R/BOUT
ALEXANDRA ROAD	PART - UPPER REDLANDS ROAD TO ADDINGTON ROAD
ADDINGTON ROAD	PART - REDLANDS ROAD TO CRAVEN ROAD
B3270	ALL
BAGNALL WAY	ALL
BASINGSTOKE ROAD	ALL
BATH ROAD	ALL
BEDFORD ROAD	PART - OXFORD ROAD TO CHATHAM STREET
BERESFORD ROAD	ALL
BERKELEY AVENUE	ALL
BLAGRAVE STREET	ALL
BRIANTS AVENUE	ALL
BRIDGE STREET, CAVERSHAM	ALL
BRIDGE STREET, READING	ALL
BUCKINGHAM DRIVE	ALL
BURGHFIELD ROAD	ALL
CASTLE HILL	ALL
CASTLE STREET	ALL
CAVERSHAM PARK ROAD	ALL
CAVERSHAM ROAD	ALL
CHAPEL HILL	ALL
CHATHAM STREET	ALL
CHEAPSIDE	ALL
CHRISTCHURCH GARDENS	PART - NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE TO BASINGSTOKE ROAD
CHRISTCHURCH ROAD	ALL
CHURCH ROAD, CAVERSHAM	ALL
CHURCH STREET, CAVERSHAM	ALL
CITY ROAD	ALL
CORWEN ROAD	ALL
COW LANE	ALL
CRAVEN ROAD	ALL
CRESSINGHAM ROAD	ALL
CROWN STREET	ALL
DEE ROAD	ALL
DONKIN HILL	ALL
DUKE STREET	ALL
DWYER ROAD	ALL
ELDON ROAD	ALL
ELM ROAD	ALL
EVESHAM ROAD	PART - SOUTHDOWN ROAD TO BUCKINGHAM DRIVE
FORBURY ROAD	ALL
FRIAR STREET	ALL
GEORGE STREET, CAVERSHAM	ALL

SUMMARY OF ROADS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PRECAUTIONARY SALTING NETWORK

TABLE 1 - COUNCIL'S PRIMARY SALTING NETWORK CONT'D…

ROAD NAME	SECTION
GILLETTE WAY	ALL
GOSBROOK ROAD	PART - PROSPECT STREET TO BRIANTS AVENUE
GREAT KNOLLYS STREET	PART - CAVERSHAM ROAD TO NORTH STREET
GREYFRIARS ROAD	ALL
GROVELANDS ROAD	ALL
GUN STREET	ALL
GWEAL AVENUE	ALL
HARTLAND ROAD	ALL
HEMDEAN ROAD	PART - CHURCH STREET TO OAKLEY ROAD
HENLEY ROAD	ALL
HIGH STREET	ALL
HILDENS DRIVE	ALL
HOLYBROOK ROAD	ALL
HONEY END LANE	ALL
IDR INNER RELIEF ROAD	ALL
KENDRICK ROAD	ALL
KENTWOOD HILL	ALL
KING STREET	ALL
KING'S ROAD, READING	ALL
LIEBENROOD ROAD	ALL
LINDISFARNE WAY	ALL
LONDON ROAD	ALL
LONDON STREET	ALL
LOWER ELMSTONE DRIVE	ALL
LOWER HENLEY ROAD	ALL
LOWFIELD ROAD	ALL
MANOR FARM ROAD	PART – GWEAL AVE TO GILLETTE WAY
MARKET PLACE	ALL
MAYFAIR	ALL
MILL LANE	ALL
MINSTER STREET	ALL
MOUNT PLEASANT	ALL
NORCOT ROAD	ALL
NORTH STREET, READING	ALL
NORTHERN WAY	ALL
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE	ALL
OVERDOWN ROAD	ALL
OXFORD ROAD	ALL
PARK LANE	ALL
PELL STREET	ALL
PEPPARD ROAD	EXCLUDING LOOP LOWFIELD ROAD TO BUCKINGHAM DRIVE
PEPPER LANE	ALL
PIERCES HILL	ALL

SUMMARY OF ROADS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PRECAUTIONARY SALTING NETWORK

TABLE 1 - COUNCIL'S PRIMARY SALTING NETWORK CONT'D…

ROAD NAME	SECTION
PORTMAN ROAD	ALL
PRIEST HILL	ALL
PROSPECT STREET, CAVERSHAM	ALL
QUEEN'S ROAD, READING	ALL
READING BRIDGE	ALL
REDLANDS ROAD	ALL
RICHFIELD AVENUE	ALL
ROSE KILN LANE	ALL
ROTHERFIELD WAY	ALL
SOUTHDOWN ROAD	PART - ROTHERFIELD WAY TO EVESHAM ROAD
RUSSELL STREET	ALL
SCHOOL ROAD	ALL
SHEPHERDS LANE	PART - UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD TO WOODCOTE WAY
SHINFIELD ROAD	ALL
SIDMOUTH STREET	PART – LONDON ROAD TO QUEEN'S ROAD
SILVER STREET	ALL
SOUTHAMPTON STREET	ALL
SOUTHCOTE LANE	ALL
ST MARYS BUTTS	ALL
ST PETERS HILL	ALL
ST SAVIOURS ROAD	PART - BERKELEY AVENUE TO HOLYBROOK ROAD
STANSHAWE ROAD	ALL
STATION HILL	ALL
STATION ROAD	ALL
THE FORBURY	PART - VALPY STREET TO MARKET PLACE
THE MEADWAY	ALL
THE TRIANGLE	PART - ST MICHAELS ROAD TO WALNUT WAY
TILEHURST ROAD	ALL
TROOPER POTTS WAY	ALL
TUDOR ROAD	ALL
UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD	ALL
VALPY STREET	ALL
VASTERN ROAD	ALL
WATER ROAD	ALL
WATLINGTON STREET	PART - QUEEN'S ROAD TO KING'S ROAD
WELDALE STREET	PART - CAVERSHAM ROAD TO NORTH STREET
WENSLEY ROAD	PART - HOLYBROOK ROAD TO HOSPITAL ROUNDABOUT
WEST STREET	ALL
WHITLEY STREET	ALL
WHITLEY WOOD LANE	ALL
WHITLEY WOOD ROAD	ALL
WIGMORE LANE	ALL
WOKINGHAM ROAD	ALL
WOODCOTE ROAD	ALL
WOODCOTE WAY	ALL

SUMMARY OF ROADS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PRECAUTIONARY SALTING NETWORK

TABLE 2 – COUNCIL'S SECONDARY SALTING NETWORK

ROAD NAME	SECTION
ACRE ROAD	ALL
ADDINGTON ROAD	PART - CRAVEN ROAD TO ERLEIGH ROAD
ALBERT ROAD	ALL
ALL HALLOWS ROAD	ALL
ALPINE STREET	ALL
AMERSHAM ROAD	ALL
ARMOUR HILL	ALL
ARMOUR ROAD	ALL
ASHAMPSTEAD ROAD	ALL
BEECH ROAD	ALL
BENNET ROAD	ALL
BERKSHIRE DRIVE	ALL
BLAGDON ROAD	ALL
BLENHEIM ROAD (CAVERSHAM)	ALL
BUCKLAND ROAD	ALL
CHURCH END LANE	ALL
CIRCUIT LANE	PART – SOUTHCOTE LANE TO SILCHESTER ROAD
COCKNEY HILL	ALL
COLEY AVENUE	ALL
CONISBORO AVENUE	PART - ALBERT ROAD TO UPLANDS ROAD
CONNAUGHT ROAD	PART - TILEHURST ROAD TO PRINCE OF WALES AVENUE
CORBRIDGE ROAD	ALL
COURTENAY DRIVE	ALL
CRANBURY ROAD	PART - TILEHURST ROAD TO PRINCE OF WALES AVENUE
CRESCENT ROAD	ALL
EASTERN AVENUE	PART – CRESCENT ROAD TO WHITEKNIGHTS ROAD
ELGAR ROAD	ALL
ELGAR ROAD SOUTH	ALL
ELMHURST ROAD	ALL
ELMSTONE DRIVE	ALL
ERLEIGH ROAD	ALL
EVESHAM ROAD	PART - SOUTHDOWN ROAD TO GROVE ROAD
GOSBROOK ROAD	PART – BRIANTS AVENUE TO STAR LANE
GROVE ROAD	ALL
HEXHAM ROAD	PART - NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE TO CORBRIDGE ROAD
HIGHMOOR ROAD	PART - ALBERT ROAD TO WOODCOTE ROAD
HOGARTH AVENUE	ALL
HUNTERS CHASE	ALL
IMPERIAL WAY	ALL
ISLAND ROAD	ALL

SUMMARY OF ROADS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PRECAUTIONARY SALTING NETWORK

TABLE 2 – COUNCIL'S SECONDARY SALTING NETWORK CONT'D…

ROAD NAME	SECTION
KENAVON DRIVE	ALL
KENSINGTON ROAD	PART - TILEHURST ROAD TO PRINCE OF WALES AVENUE
KIDMORE END ROAD	ALL
KIDMORE ROAD	ALL
KILN ROAD	PART - CAVERSHAM PARK ROAD TO MARCHWOOD AVENUE
KINGS MEADOW ROAD	PART - VASTERN ROAD TO NAPIER ROAD
LINDEN ROAD	ALL
MICKLANDS ROAD	ALL
NEW LANE HILL	PART - HOGARTH AVENUE TO THE MEADWAY
NAPIER ROAD	ALL
NEWCASTLE ROAD	PART - NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE TO CORBRIDGE ROAD
NORTHBROOK ROAD	ALL
OAKLEY ROAD	ALL
OAK TREE ROAD	ALL
OLD HONEY END LANE	ALL
PROSPECT STREET, READING	ALL
RICHMOND ROAD (CAVERSHAM)	ALL
SHEPHERDS LANE	PART - WOODCOTE WAY TO KIDMORE ROAD
SILCHESTER ROAD	PART - CIRCUIT LANE TO FAIRCROSS ROAD
SPEY ROAD	ALL
ST. ANNE'S ROAD	ALL
ST. MICHAEL'S ROAD	ALL
STAR ROAD	ALL
SURLEY ROW	PART - ROTHERFIELD WAY TO ST. BARNABAS ROAD
SWALLOWFIELD DRIVE	ALL
TAY ROAD	PART - DEE ROAD TO SPEY ROAD
TREDEGAR ROAD	ALL
THE MOUNT, CAVERSHAM	PART - ALBERT ROAD TO PRIEST HILL
UPLANDS ROAD	ALL
USK ROAD	ALL
WAVERLEY ROAD	ALL
WENSLEY ROAD	PART - HOSPITAL ROUNDABOUT TO END/LOOP
WESTERN ELMS AVENUE	ALL
WESTWOOD ROAD	ALL
WESTWOOD GLEN	ALL
WHITEKNIGHTS ROAD	ALL
WILSON ROAD	ALL
WOLSELEY STREET	ALL

WINTER SERVICE 2020/2021

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DUTY OFFICERS

1. FORECAST INFORMATION

(i) At approximately midday log on to MeteoGroup web page and inspect rolling 36 hour forecast, graphs and appropriate maps. It is likely that your decision will be made at this time. If it is not possible to make a decision at midday the contractor must be advised at this time that he is to wait for a decision following the evening update.

(ii) At approximately 1800 hours log on to MeteoGroup web page and inspect forecast graph and text for any updated information. The forecast graph will continue to have actual road surface temperatures plotted every hour for a rolling 36 hour period. This information can be obtained at any time by logging on to the web page. If a decision still cannot be made it may be necessary to consult the weather forecaster.

(iii) It is the responsibility of each Duty Officer to record all action taken on the justification forms and file for future reference.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

(i) If the Duty Officer needs to communicate with the Duty Manager, then contact should initially be made by mobile phone.

(ii) The Duty Officer and the Duty Manager should keep each other aware of their movements if they are likely to be unable answer the mobile phone for any length of time.

(iii) The Duty Officer will also be responsible for sending a fax/email message to the Police, local radio stations and neighbouring authorities informing them of the decision made concerning precautionary salting.

3. ROLE OF THE DUTY MANAGER

The Duty Manager will be available to give advice to the Duty Officer when required.

WINTER SERVICE CALL OUT GUIDELINES

FORECAST ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Road Surface Dry
2. Wet patches due to seepage etc.
3. Road surface wet but may dry
4. Road surface wet
5. Road surface dry but may become wet

FORECAST WEATHER

A. Road Surface Temperature (RST) above freezing
   (i) + 4°C or above
   (ii) above 0°C, below +4°C

B. RST at or below 0°C
   (i) 0°C to -3°C
   (ii) below -3°C

C. B(i) or B(ii) with rain beforehand

D. Hoar Frost.

E. Freezing fog

F. Freezing rain

G. Snow
   (i) light falls up to 30mm
   (ii) falls over 30mm

RECOMMENDED ACTION

a) No precautionary salting.
b) Partial salt: wet patches, major structures, high ground etc.
c) Inspection at a time to enable any necessary action to be taken before conditions become critical.
d) Full pre-salt to be completed before onset of freezing conditions.
e) Full pre-salt after rain has finished.
f) Salting crews to remain in Depot awaiting instructions.
g) Road conditions to be monitored by Duty Officer using ice prediction system.

ROAD CONDITIONS	**FORECAST**									
	A (i)	**A (ii)**	**B (i)**	**B (ii)**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G (i)**	**G (ii)**
1	a	a	a	b		d	d		d	df
2	a	g	b	b		d	d		d	df
3	a	g	c	bc		d	d		d	df
4	a	g	d	d	e	d	d	df	d	df
5	a	g	g	b	e	d	d		d	df
DUTY OFFICER TO DETERMINE TIMING OF SALTING RUNS AND RATES OF SPREAD DEPENDING ON FORECAST DETAILS										

THE ABOVE TABLE IS FOR GUIDANCE ONLY

DUTY FORECASTER SHOULD BE CONSULTED AS NECESSARY.

SAMPLE DECISION SHEET

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Reading BOROUGH COUNCIL

WINTER SERVICE DECISION SHEET 2013/14 - Ref 201314/089

Date Decision made: Wednesday 19th December 2013 Time Decision made: 12.46hrs

Winter Duty Officer: Contact No.

	Wokingham Borough Council Network		Reading Borough Council Network	
Routes	**Time Action Required**	**Spread Rate Required**	**Time Action Required**	**Spread Rate Required**
Primary Routes	21:00	7gm/2	21:00	10gm/2
Secondary Routes	**N/A**	No Action	**N/A**	No Action
Third Tier	**N/A**	No Action	**N/A**	No Action
Footways/Cycletracks	**N/A**	No Action	**N/A**	No Action

Readiness Colour Alert	Green	Amber	Red
			-1.5

COMMENTS :

Action required for both Wokingham and Reading BC areas

EXTRACT FROM 24HR WEATHER FORECAST:

Sunny spells this afternoon. This evening, cloud will increase with a band of showers spreading from the west - some of them heavy. These showers should move away to the east by approximately 2000-2100 to leave it dry with largely clear skies through the remainder of the night. RSTs dropping quite quickly after the showers, falling below zero with ice. Tomorrow, it will be bright and breezy.

APPENDIX E

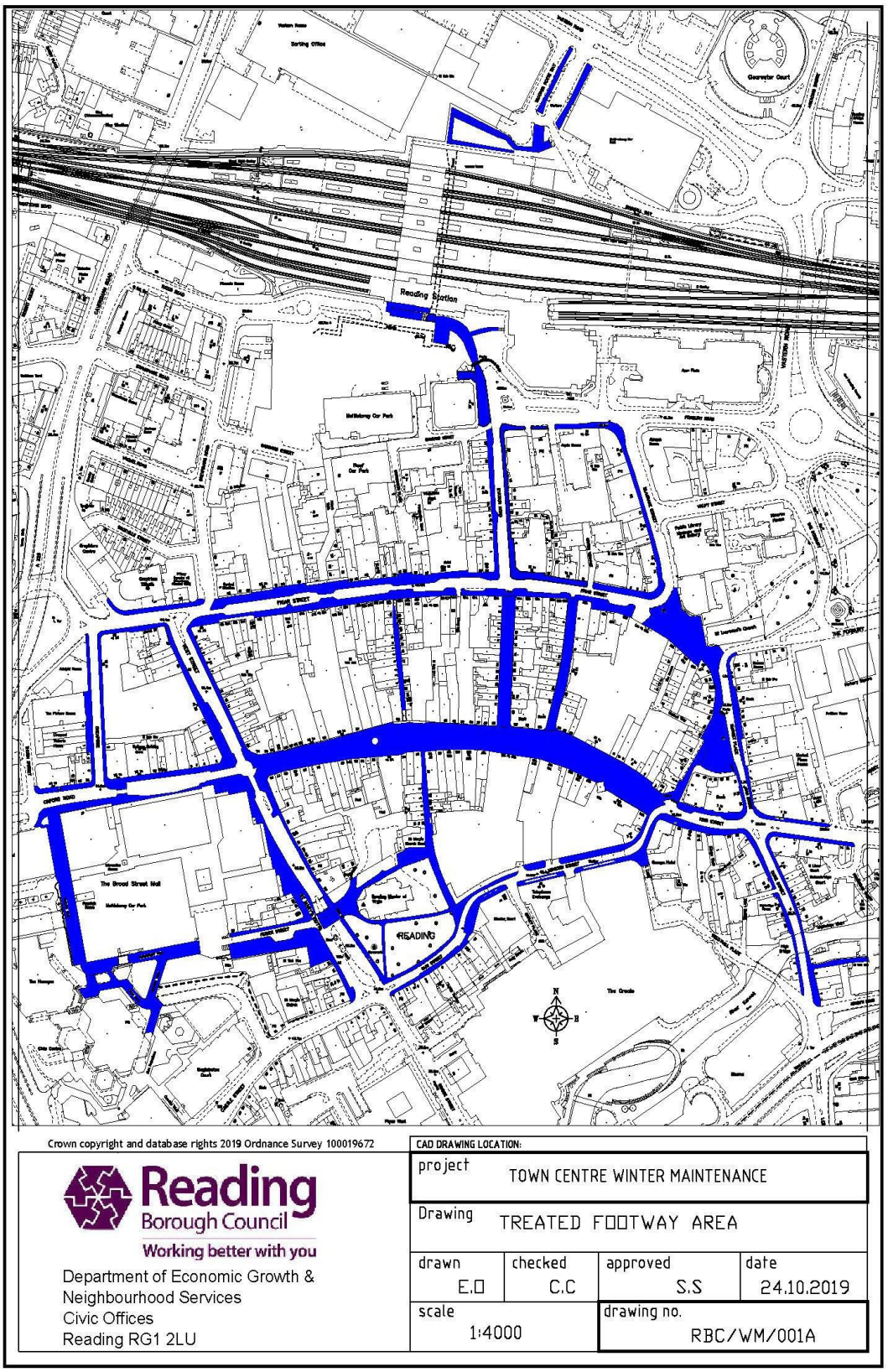
FOOTWAYS - SNOW CLEARING/ PRE-SALTING

READING TOWN CENTRE BLOCK PAVED AREAS (TREATMENT WITH PROPRIETARY MATERIAL/SALT/GRIT) AS SHOWN ON DRAWING NO. RBC/WM/001A INCLUDED IN THIS APPENDIX.

STREET NAME	SECTION
Broad Street	All
Butter Market	All
Chain Street	All
Cheapside	All
Cross Street	All
Duke Street	King Street to Star Lane
Dusseldorf Way	All
Friar Street	Part – Block Paved Areas only
Gun Street	All
Hosier Street	All
King Street/Kings Road	Part - Minster Street to Abbey Square
Minster Street	All
Market Place	All
Queen Victoria Street	All
Queen's Walk	All
Reading Station	Part – Defined pedestrian route swathe on public highway from Station Road to Station Hill (Taxi Rank shelter) via pedestrian ramp and continuing to pedestrian underpass (south side). Also from pedestrian underpass (north side) to Trooper Potts Way (bus shelters).
St Mary's Butts	All
Station Road	All
Union Street	All
West Street	All

FOOTWAYS - SNOW CLEARING/ PRE-SALTING CONT'D…

DRAWING NO. RBC/WM/001A – TREATED FOOTWAY AREAS



APPENDIX F

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CALL OUT FACILITIES

OUTSIDE OFFICE HOURS

Call 0118 937 3787 (*Calls are charged*)

GRIT BIN LOCATIONS

AREA	ROAD	LOCATION	BINS
North	Blenheim Road, Caversham	Facing junction with Oakley Road	1
North	Brill Close	Top of Close. Outside No. 25	1
North	Crawshay Drive	Junction with Kidmore End Road. Adjacent to Street Nameplate	1
North	Eliot Close	Junction with Grove Hill	1
North	Fallowfield Close	End of wooden fence part way down Close	1
North	Glenrhondda	Near No. 14	1
North	Gravel Hill	Opposite Numbers 31 & 33 near Merthyr Vale junction.	1
North	Grove Hill	Mid way. Against high wall	1
North	Hemdean Road	Near Badgers Rise	1
North	Highdown Hill Road	Junction with Soane End (Private Drive)	1
North	Horse Close	On island near No. 26	1
North	Hunters Chase	Adjacent to lamp column No. 12	1
North	Keston Close	Junction with Donegal Close. (Right hand side)	1
North	Luscombe Close	Back against picket fence line. Right hand side	1
North	Picton Way	Junction mid-way up hill. Adjacent to Street Nameplate	1
North	Ruskin	On bend	1
North	Russet Glade	Mid-way at brow of hill	1
North	Scott Close	Adjacent to lamp column. Against brick wall	1
North	Sheriden Avenue	Outside No. 2 at junction with Hemdean Road	1
North	Surley Row	Junction with Sheep Walk	1
North	Tredegar Road	By railings	1
North	Tredegar Road	Junction with Glenrhondda	1
North	Tymawr	Opposite No. 21 (Off Hunters Chase)	1
North	Upper Warren Avenue	Near junction with St Peters Avenue	1
West	Brooksby Road	Junction with Juniper Way. Outside No. 110 in grass verge	1
West	Calder Close	On corner of junction	1
West	Carlisle Road	Junction with A329	1
West	Dudley Close	Near junction with Armour Hill	1
West	Dulnan Close	Near Elderly Persons flats	1
West	Elsley Road	Junction with Oxford Road. In grass verge at end of footway	1
West	Oak Tree Road	Opposite Numbers 49 & 51	1
West	Little Oaks Drive	At junction with Oaks View	1

West	Pottery Road	Near junction with Dresden Way	1
West	Rissington Close	By lamp post outside No. 5	1
West	Rodway Road	At corner of Derwent Avenue	1
West	Romany Lane	Junction Romany Close	1
West	Sandgate Avenue	Near junction with Grasmere Avenue	1
West	Taff Way	Near junction with Dee Road	1
West	Thurso Close	Dee Road Estate. In grass verge opposite block of flats	1
West	Ullswater Drive	Junction with Elsley Road	1
South	Alpine Street/Elgar Road	Back against gable wall of No. 25 Elgar Road	1
South	Barnsdale Road	Opposite Windermere Road junction in grass verge	1
South	Birdhill Avenue	Junction with Cressingham Road	1
South	Blagdon Road	i) 1no. near Cherry Grove junction. ii) 1no. opposite Bankside Close. Both i) & ii) secured to single steel posts	2
South	Brybur Close	Junction with Winton Road	1
South	Ennerdale Road	Corner Northcourt Avenue	1

(All of the above grit bins have achieved a score of at least 60 out of a total of 85 points to qualify).

LOCATION OF STRUCTURES TO RECEIVE 'DOUBLE PRE-SALT' SALTING

ROAD NO	LOCATION	STRUCTURE
A329	Watlington Street	River Kennet Overbridge
A329	King's Road	River Kennet Overbridge
A329	Watlington Street Northbound	Kennet Canal Overbridge
A329	Watlington Street Southbound	Kennet Canal Overbridge
A329	IDR Eastbound	Mill Lane Flyover
A329	IDR Westbound	Mill Lane Flyover
A329	Chatham Street Eastbound	IDR Overbridge
A329	Chatham Street Westbound	IDR Overbridge
A329	Castle Hill Eastbound	IDR Overbridge
A329	Castle Hill Westbound	IDR Overbridge
A33	A33 Northbound	River Kennet Overbridge
A33	A33 Southbound	River Kennet Overbridge
A33	A33 Northbound	Foundry Brook Overbridge
A33	A33 Southbound	Foundry Brook Overbridge
A33	M4 Junction 11 West	Motorway Overbridge
A33	M4 Junction 11 East	Motorway Overbridge
A4	Berkeley Avenue	A33 Relief Road Overbridge
A4	Bath Road	Rail Overbridge
A4155	Bridge Street Caversham	River Thames Overbridge
B3345	George Street Caversham	River Thames Overbridge

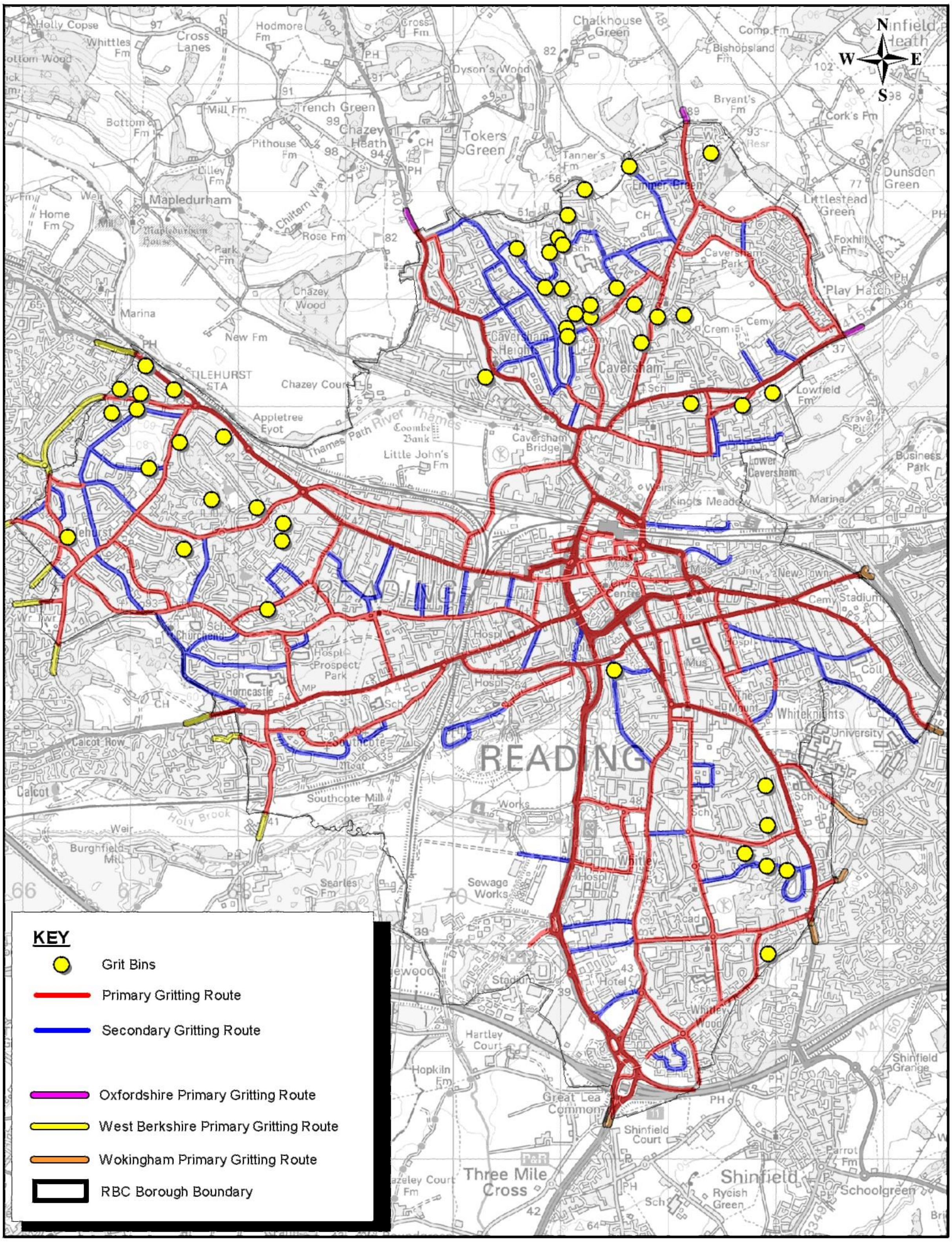
WINTER SERVICE CROSS BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS

The cross boundary arrangements have been reviewed and risk assessed.

Reading Borough Council will salt up to a point beyond the Borough boundary where it is safe for the gritter vehicle to turn around. With agreement, the neighbouring Councils are similarly working to ensure that all of the cross boundary highway network is treated.

This does not constitute any form of agreement or responsibility for the treatment of the highway network outside the Borough boundary, it is merely to ensure full coverage of the Council's salting network.

PLAN SHOWING SALTING NETWORK/ROUTES AND LOCATION OF GRIT BINS



Title: **Winter Salting Routes 2020/2021.**

Drg.No.:

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

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Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

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CIRCULATION LIST

1 Adjoining Highway Authorities

1.1 Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
PO Box 153
Wokingham
RG40 1WL
0118 9746000

1.2 West Berkshire District Council
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD
01635 551111

1.3 Oxfordshire County Council
Director of Environmental and Economy
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford OX1 1NE
01865 815700

2 Emergency Services

2.1 Thames Valley Police
Police Headquarters
Kidlington
Oxford
OX5 2NX

2.2 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Newsham Court
Pincents Kiln
Calcot
Reading
RG31 7SD
0118 945 2888

2.3 Royal Berkshire Ambulance NH Trust
44 Finchampstead Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 2NN
0118 936 5500

CIRCULATION LIST CONT'D.

3 Highways England's Agents

EM Highway Services Ltd.
Rosalind House
Jays Close
Viables Business Park
Basingstoke
Hampshire. RG22 4BS

4 Media Organisations

4.1 BBC Radio Berkshire
550 Thames Valley Park Drive
Reading. RG6 1PT
radio.berkshire.news@bbc.co.uk

4.2 Heart FM
PO Box 2020
Reading
Berkshire. RG31 7FG
thamesvalley.news@heart.co.uk

4.3 The Breeze (Radio Station)
Suite 2
Paddington House
Festival Place
Basingstoke. RG21 7LJ
tvnews@celador.co.uk

5 Motoring Organisations

5.1 RAC
Public Affairs Dept
114 Rochester Row
London

5.2 Automobile Association
Fanum House
52 London Road
Twickenham
Middlesex

6 Councillors Suite

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading. RG1 2LU

APPENDIX L

REFERENCES

- Highways Act 1980.
- Highways Winter Maintenance, ICE 2000.
- Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management 2005 (revised 2009, 2010 & 2011).
- Lessons from the Severe Weather February 2009.
- The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter Interim Report July 2010.
- Quarmby Audit Report December 2010 (revised 2011).
- Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice - October 2016.
- Winter Service Plan 2021/2022 - Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Report - 16th November 2021.

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APPENDIX 2:

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - REVENUE BUDGET AND RISK ASSESSMENT

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

1. Revenue Implications

	2021/22 £000	**2022/23 £000**	**2023/24 £000**
Employee costs (see note1) Other running costs Capital financings costs	0 247 0	0 252 0	0 257 0
Expenditure	247	252	257
Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	247	252	257

2. Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	**2021/22 £000**	**2022/23 £000**	**2023/24 £000**
Proposed Capital Expenditure	0	0	0
Funded by Grant (specify) Section 106 (specify) Other services Capital Receipts/Borrowing	NA	NA	NA
Total Funding	0	0	0

3. Value for Money (VFM)

This is a statutory service. The intention is to retender the Winter Maintenance Service during 2021/2022 and appoint a contractor before the start of the 2022/2023 winter season.

Benchmarking: An exercise was carried out to compare existing winter service rates with an adjacent Local Authority and found that there was an 8% access fee and the rates were not as competitive as we have in place.

4. Risk Assessment.

Each year the amount of precautionary salting runs are unknown and will be directly affected by the weather during the winter season. There is an on-going risk that during severe winter

seasons additional precautionary salting runs will exceed the budget. It is noted that over the last 3 winter seasons, the service has remained within budget.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**29th JUNE 2022**	**AGENDA ITEM:**	
TITLE:	**HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/2023**		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	**COUNCILLOR KAREN ROWLAND**	**PORTFOLIO:**	**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & COMMUNITY SAFETY**
SERVICE:	**ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMERCIAL SERVICES**	**WARDS:**	**BOROUGH WIDE**
LEAD OFFICER:	**SAM SHEAN**	**TEL:**	**0118 937 2138**
JOB TITLE:	**HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC SERVICES MANAGER**	**E-MAIL:**	**sam.shean@reading.gov.uk**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of year-3 (2022/23) of the 3-year **£9M** Highway Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23**.**

1.2 To inform the Committee of the Council's additional **£8M** 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital Investment Programme and to give spend approval for this investment.

1.3 To inform the Committee of the Council's additional **£4M** 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Highway Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programme and to give spend approval for this investment.

1.4 Appendix 1: **£9M** Residential Roads 3- Year Investment Programme Update

Appendix 2: Financial Implications Report **£8M** 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital and **£4M** 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Highway Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programmes.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Committee notes the progress of the £9M Residential Roads & Pavements Investment Year-3 Programme 2022/2023.

2.2 That the committee grants spend approval for the Council's £8M additional 5-Year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Capital Investment in Residential Roads & Pavements Maintenance Programme.

2.3 That the committee grants spend approval for the Council's £4M additional 2-Year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Capital Investment in Bridges & Structures Maintenance Programme.

2.4 That the Committee gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the proposed Capital Highways & Traffic Services Programme, as per section 4 of this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-2025 sets out the Council's priorities for Reading and provides direction for staff in delivering services to meet the needs of the communities within the Borough whilst working to a budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed at Council in February 2022.

3.2 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the delivery of new transport & highway infrastructure in order to manage levels of congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst accommodating the significant levels of planned economic growth.

3.3 The Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for Reading to 2026. Consultation on a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) was undertaken from 4th May to 30th August 2020. The new strategy is being developed to help achieve wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, the Climate Emergency and improved air quality. The LTP will be heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, including enhanced cycling and walking routes to improve air quality. The new strategy is being aligned with other Council strategies including the Local Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

3.4 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

3.5 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.

3.6 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

4. THE PROPOSAL

BACKGROUND

- **£9M COUNCIL FUNDED 3-YEAR (2020/21-2022/23) RESIDENTIAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
- **ADDITIONAL £8M COUNCIL FUNDED 5-YEAR (2022/23-2026/27) RESIDENTIAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
- **ADDITIONAL £4M COUNCIL FUNDED 2-YEAR (2022/23-2023/24) BRIDGES AND STRUCTURES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

4.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is informed by and supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities including its

commitment to address the climate change emergency and seeks to ensure that the Council is "fit for the future", with sound finances that allow the Council's future funding challenges and spending pressures to be met in as sustainable a way as possible.

4.2 The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council's finances are sustainable in both the short (one year) and medium term (three years). The Strategy is also informed by the Council's Vision: "to ensure that Reading realises its potential – and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success", as well as its Corporate Plan priorities:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs
- Protecting and enhancing the life outcomes of vulnerable adults and children

4.3 The Strategy builds on work over the previous 3-4 years to stabilise the Council's financial position and build reserves back to a more robust level and seeks to facilitate vital investment in core infrastructure to drive efficiency improvements, facilitate service redesign and thereby manage pressures within demand led services. This invest to save approach provides for a robust financial position going forward and enables vital and valued services can continue to be delivered.

4.4 As part of MTFS an ambitious capital investment programme is being delivered with the Council investing **£9M** (over 3-years from 2020/21 to 2022/23) Capital and an additional **£ 8M** (over 5-years from 2022/23 to 2026/27) in Reading's local residential road and pavement network. This welcomed investment is over and above the annual Local Transport Block Funding settlement from the (DfT) for highway maintenance work to improve the condition of local residential roads and pavements and reverse a deteriorating highway network.

4.5 In additional to the Council's investment in Reading's local residential road and pavement network, the Council is investing a further **£ 4M** in Reading's bridges & structures to address 'very poor' and 'poor' structural assets to improve their condition and reverse these deteriorating Council structural assets over a 2-year period (2022/23 to 2023/24).

4.6 The Council has and will continue to actively bid for appropriate external funding including Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all its highway & traffic assets.

THE PROPOSAL

PROPOSED PROGRAMME - Highways Maintenance Proposal 2022/2023

4.7 The Council carried out a further Residents' Survey with its Citizen Panel in December 2021 as part of the Council's on-going conversation with residents. The aim of the survey was to gather information to inform customer service delivery in a number of ways. More specifically, the survey asks about residents' views of their neighbourhoods and of Council services, which has helped the Council to understand what residents really value in their local areas

and services, in order to make decisions on budgets and services that reflect those values.

4.8 83% of respondents (compared with 77% in 2020) said that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Respondents were asked what they thought needed improving and the number one consensus 38% (compared with 47% in 2020) said that the condition of roads & pavements needed improving.

4.9 The Council also partake in the annual National Highways & Transport Satisfaction surveys and the 2021 outcome is showing some encouraging signs of resident's satisfaction levels improving with Reading coming 3rd best performing Council with 11 indicators coming out top.

4.10 The Council continues to listen to the residents of Reading and the £9M Capital Investment over 3 years (2020/21 to 2022/23) and a further **£8M** Capital Investment in Residential Roads & Pavements over a 5-year period (2022/23 to 2026/27) will accelerate the resurfacing programmes and reverse the deteriorating condition of our highway asset in Reading's local residential roads and pavements. The Council is also funding **£4M** Capital Investment in 'poor' & 'very poor' Bridges & Structures to reverse the decline of these assets.

4.11 The Council is investing a further **£12M** in the next 5-years (2022/23 to 2026/27) in improving Residential Roads and Pavements, and Bridges & Structures, which is over and above the committed **£3,75M** (year-3 of the £9M) investment in Residential Roads & Pavements, as set out in the table below:

Project	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Residential Roads Surfacing (Y3 £9M)	£3,075,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Pavement Resurfacing (Y3 £9M)	£ 675,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Existing Committed Capital Funding	£ 3,750,000				
Project	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Residential Roads Surfacing (Y1 £8M)	£2,000,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000
Pavement Resurfacing (Y1 £8M)	£0	£ 250,000	£ 250,000	£ 250,000	£ 250,000
Bridges /Structures (Y1 £4M)	£1,500,000	£2,500,000	£0	£0	£0
New Capital Investment	£3,500,000	£4,000,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000

Residential Roads Surfacing Investment: 2022/2023

4.12 Financed by the **£ 3.75M** Year-3 of the Council's £9M 3-year investment (2020/21 to 2022/23)

4.13 For category 3 roads (residential and other distributor roads) there is generally no skid or condition information available therefore priorities have to be established as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. The common types of deterioration are, for example, the number of potholes, rutting, the amount of patching and cracking.

4.14 A visual assessment of the road surface condition for minor roads is therefore carried out annually using the Council's agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the carriageway condition against various criteria. Those roads with the highest scores are then subjected to a further engineering assessment and those which, again, score highly through this process as well as being considered appropriate, are recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year's minor roads surfacing programme, subject to budget availability.

4.15 Based on the above a list of schemes was prepared and recommended for action in 2022/2023. The list also shows the **516** road schemes have been delivered by the £9M 3-year investment programme so far, including Micro Asphalt, Hot Rolled Asphalt and concrete road surfacing.

4.16 In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration outside of the scope of normal maintenance work, the programme of works would be reviewed and if necessary, a reallocation of funding within the budgets would be made to undertake higher priority carriageway schemes.

4.17 Due to the size of the extensive investment programme, the Council will continue to engage Statutory Undertakers / Utility companies early to reduce the risk of newly resurfaced roads being dug up and also ensure that other planned major transport schemes are considered within the multi-year programme. It is noted that City Fibre is also rolling out an extensive super-fast broadband programme, however, the majority of their installations are within the pavements and verges, some unavoidable clashes have occurred.

4.18 A number of cycle routes are included within the programme where they are located on residential roads.

It should be noted that a number of local cycle routes are on classified main roads. Funding for those roads will come from the Department for Transport's capital funding award, rather than out of the Council's £9M 3-year capital investment programme. The annual highway maintenance programme will consider improvements to routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which will be available for public consultation as part of our transport strategy consultation next month.

Residential Pavements Resurfacing Investment: 2022/2023

4.19 Financed by the **£9M** 3-year Council funded Residential Roads & Pavement investment programme (year-3 **£675,000** 2022/23)

4.20 Potential pavement resurfacing schemes are identified as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. An assessment of the pavement surface is carried out on a rolling programme using the Council's agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the pavement condition against various criteria; those pavements with the highest scores, as well as being considered appropriate, are then recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year's pavement maintenance programme, subject to budget availability.

4.21 It is proposed to split the focus of the Council's Capital Investment pavement programme between a combination of resurfacing and/or reconstructing damaged pavements/stretches of pavements and surfacing with a slurry sealing or equivalent product, as this cost-effective process which provides a new 'veneer' thin overlain surface seals and ultimately extends the life of pavements, and which will accelerate the Pavement surfacing programme considerably. Both solutions will be delivered by the Council's in-house Highway Works Team.

4.22 As in the £9M the Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council is offering residents discounted vehicle crossings in residential roads where pavement works are being carried out, provided they are requested in advance and satisfy the Council's Vehicle Crossing Policy.

4.23 As in the £9M Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council will look to include highway trees where appropriate taking into account underground services and sight line visibility/safety requirements, to support the Council's carbon reduction and bio-diversity ambitions.

4.24 As in the £9M Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council will look to install pedestrian dropped crossings at road junctions on the pavements being resurfaced to improve accessibility for all users of the public highway. The Council recognises that Reading is an old established town with historically older roads that were built at a time when accessibility was not considered during the design process. The pavement programme is an ideal opportunity to address this matter.

Summary Table of the £9M investment installations to date:

Item	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23*
Number of Residential Roads Resurfaced (Micro)	63	187	199*
Number of Residential Roads Resurfaced (HRA)	16	42	tba
Number of Residential Concrete Roads Resurfaced (Miles Macadam)	1	3	5*
Area of Road Resurfaced (Micro)	98,335m2	677,510m2	284,000m2*
Area of Road Resurfaced (HRA)	70,387m2	100,293m2	tba
Area of Concrete Roads Resurfaced (Miles Macadam)	6,200m2	29,000m2	45,395m2*
Number of Pavements Reconstructed	17	19	6*
Number of Discounted Vehicle Crossings	16	15	2*

Number of Pedestrian Dropped Kerb Crossings	12	28	5*
Number of Trees Installed	18	55	100*+ tba

- * Denotes to date

Other Carriageway Maintenance Works

4.25 Financed by the **£8M** 5-year Council funded Residential Roads & Pavement investment programme (2022/23 to 2026/27) Year-1 **£2M** (2022/23)

4.26 It is recognised that there are roads which repeatedly do not meet the appropriate criteria for inclusion within the major carriageway resurfacing or residential roads surfacing programmes but would benefit from other maintenance treatment(s) to extend the life of these assets. Examples of such maintenance works are explained in more detail below:

- Following a SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) survey, where a carriageway surface appears, overall, to be in a good condition but would benefit from a surface rejuvenation to improve/restore skid resistance, extending the life of the road. This process would prove to be a cost-effective treatment, when compared with full scale resurfacing, enabling more roads to be treated.

- There are a number of concrete roads across the Borough which have previously been overlain with a thin flexible surfacing course. Over time this surfacing has locally worn away leaving a 'scabbed' surface. Typically, these areas do not meet the Council's current defect investigatory level to trigger repairs and as long as the underlying concrete slabs are in a stable condition, they are unlikely to increase in depth. Although such deterioration is aesthetically not pleasing, if the underlying concrete slabs are in reasonable condition, such roads do not score/rank as high as other roads for programmed maintenance work. Nevertheless, these roads would benefit from an appropriate treatment whereby the existing surfacing is either rejuvenated or replaced to not only improve the running surface but to also seal and protect the underlying concrete slabs, in turn, extending the life expectancy of these roads. The full length of Southcote Lane, The Meadway, Cressingham Road, a section of Northumberland Avenue, Newcastle Road, Corbridge Road, Hexham Road, Northcourt Avenue and Dawlish Road have successfully been treated/resurfaced during the 2021/222 and 2022/23 Financial Year's to date using a proprietary product/process.

- There are also examples of localised carriageway deterioration where the surfacing and/or sub-structure show signs of wear and tear in specific areas but not extensive enough to justify full-scale maintenance work to the complete carriageway area. In these situations, substantially sized patching, whether in the form of a surfacing only repair, a surfacing and base course repair or perhaps a greater depth full reconstruction repair, can rectify the issue locally and help to extend the overall life expectancy of the complete road.

4.27 The Council's £9M 3-year capital investment and additional £8M 5- year capital investment has enabled the Highways Team to develop a programme for future years to address these 'other' carriageway maintenance works.

Bridges & Structures 2022/2023

4.28 Financed by the **£ 4M** 2-year Council funded Bridges & Structures investment programme (2022/23 to 2023/24) Year-1 **£1.5M** (2022/23)

4.29 The Council has maintenance responsibility for around 80 bridges and 300 other structures. Each structure is inspected in line with the Code of Practice for Highway Structures. This welcomed additional Council investment will address the 'very poor' and 'poor' condition structures and extend the life of these structural assets. This investment is over and above the DfT annual award which together will assist in tackling the backlog in structural maintenance.

4.30 The Council approved an additional £ 7.2M Capital funding to address the IDR Bridge Bearings and Berkeley Avenue Strengthening schemes, however, as this scheme is the Council's strongest Bridges & Structures case to attract DfT funding, it is proposed to delay the scheme by a further year to allow a funding bid to be made when the opportunity becomes available. Spend approval and scheme update will be brought back to this committee at that time.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2 The Highways Programmes will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2022/2023 objectives of:

- Healthy environment - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Inclusive economy – Enabling the infrastructure to continue to support the economy
- Thriving Communities - Remaining financially sustainable and to ensure everyone has an equal chance to use the public highway

5.3 TEAM Reading values:

Together – Collaborative working approach between the Council, consultant, contractors and the public
Efficiency – Continue to explore efficiency savings within the contract
Ambitious – Investing into the public highway assets
Make a Difference – Providing a safe inclusive public highway network for all users

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting in February 2019 and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions. To this end, Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite

Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. All relevant construction contracts will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.

6.2 Tenders for any subsequent contracts that are necessary will be invited to submit Environmental Implications proposals which will form part of the quality element of the tender evaluation. A social value quality submission will also be required to be submitted with tenders and evaluation.

6.3 Tenders also needed to include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within tender returns. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials, lower temperature bitumen's, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, use of electric vehicles and plant, move to renewable energy, as well as how they will achieve their own carbon reduction targets.

6.4 The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 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".

7.2 The public can report highway defects to the Council, including roads & , structurers asset condition concerns, which are assessed and included within the annual review of the highway assets that inform the 'Annual Status Option Reports' (ASOR) with the proposed high priority schemes brought to Committee for consideration and approval should they meet the assessment criteria.

7.3 This report will be available on the Council's website following Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee approval processes.

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 The Highways Maintenance programme 2022/2023 consists of improvement work to the Council's existing public highway network and will be making improvements to existing highway assets. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time and all users will have a safe & efficient public highway. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway.

9.2 The Borough Council, as Traffic Authority, has a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage the Council's network to ensure a safe and efficient network.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Highways & Traffic Services programme 2022/2023 will be fully funded by the Highways & Traffic Services Capital Budgets:

- Year-3 of the Council's £9M 3-year (2019/20 to 2022/23) Capital Residential Roads & Pavement Investment of £3.75M.
- Year-1 of the Council's £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2024/25) additional Capital Residential Roads & Pavement Investment of £2M.
- Year-1 of the Council's £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Capital Bridges & Structures Investment of £1.5M.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are none.

RESIDENTIAL ROADS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

YEAR-1 (2020-21)

MICRO ASPHALT ROAD SURFACING – 63 ROADS SURFACED

ROAD	WARD
Lynmouth Road	ABBEY
Newport Road	ABBEY
Prince's Street	ABBEY
Sackville Street	ABBEY
Sun Street	ABBEY/PARK
Alma Street	BATTLE
Belmont Road	BATTLE
Cambridge Street	BATTLE
Cannon Street	BATTLE
Dorset Street	BATTLE
Elm Lodge Avenue	BATTLE
Sherwood Street	BATTLE
Falkland Road	CAVERSHAM
Hemdean Hill	CAVERSHAM
Hemdean Rise	CAVERSHAM
Paddock Road	CAVERSHAM
Piggott's Road	CAVERSHAM
The Slopes	CAVERSHAM
Wolsey Road	CAVERSHAM
Barnsdale Road	CHURCH
Hollydale Close	CHURCH
Poplar Gardens	CHURCH
Wentworth Avenue	CHURCH
Clent Road	KATESGROVE
Edgehill Street	KATESGROVE
Cranborne Gardens	Kentwood
Hartslock Way	Kentwood
Honiton Road	KENTWOOD
Modbury Gardens	KENTWOOD
Torrington Road	KENTWOOD
Upper Warren Avenue	MAPLEDURHAM
Baker Street	MINSTER
Boston Avenue	MINSTER
Brownlow Road	MINSTER
Brunswick Street	MINSTER
Castle Crescent	MINSTER
Westcote Road	MINSTER
Taff Way	NORCOT

New Lane Hill	Norcot / Southcote / Tilehurst
Waverley Road	NORCOT/BATTLE
Grange Avenue	PARK
Manchester Road	PARK
Norris Road	PARK
Pitcroft Avenue	PARK
Saint Edward's Road	PARK
Cavendish Road	PEPPARD
Eric Avenue	PEPPARD
Eric Avenue	PEPPARD
Chiltern Road	PEPPARD/THAMES
Addington Road	REDLANDS
Canterbury Road	REDLANDS
Denmark Road	REDLANDS
Circuit Lane	SOUTHCOTE
Haldane Road	THAMES
Newlands Avenue	THAMES
Newlands Avenue	THAMES
Peppard Road	THAMES
Peppard Road	THAMES
Corwen Road	Tilehurst
Crescent Road	Tilehurst
Elmstone Drive	Tilehurst
Chagford Road	WHITLEY
Swallowfield Drive	WHITLEY

RESIDENTIAL ROADS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

YEAR 2 (2021/22)

MICRO ASPHALT ROAD SURFACING – 277 ROADS SURFACED

ROAD	WARD
Carey Street	Abbey
Kings Meadow Road	Abbey
Ross Road	Abbey
Baker Street	Abbey
Addison Road	Abbey
Great Knollys Street	Abbey
George Street	Abbey
Orts Road	Abbey
Argyle Road	Battle
Argyle Street	Battle
Brunswick Hill	Battle
Catherine Street	Battle

Chester Street, Reading	Battle
Connaught Road	Battle
Curzon Street	Battle
Deepdene Close	Battle
Fulmead Road	Battle
Gloucester Road	Battle
Kensington Road	Battle
Norfolk Road	Battle
Ormsby Street	Battle
Thornton Mews	Battle
Gower Street	Battle
Hart Street	Battle
Lorne Street	Battle
Little Street	Battle
Valentia Road	Battle
Audley Street	Battle
Connaught Close	Battle
Rutland Road	Battle
Kent Road	Battle
Suffolk Road	Battle
Lancing Close	Battle
Wantage Road	Battle/Norcot
Anglefield Road	Caversham
Champion Road	Caversham
Chester Street, Caversham	Caversham
Coldicutt Street	Caversham
Cromwell Road	Caversham
Donegal Close	Caversham
Eccles Close	Caversham
Forge Close	Caversham
Hampden Road	Caversham
Harley Road	Caversham
Heron Island	Caversham
Ian Mikardo Way	Caversham
Keston Close	Caversham
Knighton Close	Caversham
Luscombe Close	Caversham
Mill Road	Caversham
Nelson Road	Caversham
North Street, Caversham	Caversham
Oxford Street	Caversham
Peel Close	Caversham
Queen Street	Caversham

Short Street, Caversham	Caversham
St Johns Road	Caversham
Talbot Close	Caversham
Washington Road	Caversham
Queens Road Caversham	Caversham
Kings Road Caversham	Caversham
South View Avenue	Caversham
Clifton Park Road	Caversham
Richmond Road, Caversham (Albert Road to Woodcote Road)	Caversham
The Mount	Caversham/Thames
Blagdon Road	Church
Linden Road	Church
Rushden Drive	Church
Salcombe Road	Church
Seaton Gardens	Church
Staverton Road	Church
Tamarisk Avenue	Church
Totnes Road	Church
Wheatley Close	Church
Willow Gardens	Church
Windermere Road	Church
Foxhays Road	Church
Hawkchurch Road	Church
Alpine Street	Katesgrove
Arkwright Road	Katesgrove
Dale Road	Katesgrove
Elgar Road	Katesgrove
Francis Street	Katesgrove
Home Farm Close	Katesgrove
Milman Road	Katesgrove
Spring Gardens	Katesgrove
East Street	Katesgrove
Bourne Avenue	Katesgrove
Short Street	Katesgrove
West Hill	Katesgrove
Glebe Road	Katesgrove
Hagley Road	Katesgrove
Highgrove Street	Katesgrove
Newark Street	Katesgrove
Rowley Road	Katesgrove
Shenstone Road	Katesgrove

Upper Crown Street	Katesgrove
South Street, Reading (London st to Sidmouth St)	Katesgrove
Chesterman Street	Katesgrove
Larissa Close	Kentwood
Kinson Road	Kentwood
Brooksby Road	Kentwood
Chepstow Road	Kentwood
Pottery Road	Kentwood
Rockbourne Gardens	Kentwood
Ullswater Drive	Kentwood
Bramshaw Road	Kentwood
Coalport Way	Kentwood
Forest Hill	Kentwood
Grasmere Avenue	Kentwood
Oakham Close	Kentwood
Rydal Avenue	Kentwood
Weald Rise	Kentwood
Shepherds Lane	Mapledurham
Hilltop Road	Mapledurham
Wincroft Road	Mapledurham
Fernbrook Road	Mapledurham
Queensborough Drive	Mapledurham
Silverthorne Drive	Mapledurham
Highmoor Road	Mapledurham / Thames
Conisboro Avenue	Mapledurham/Thames
Portway Close	Minster
Berkeley Avenue (Service road from 89 - 119)	Minster
Benyon Court	Minster
Epsom Court	Minster
Garnet Street	Minster
Lower Brook Street	Minster
Marlborough Court	Minster
St Saviours Road	Minster
Carsdale Close	Minster
Downshire Square	Minster
Upavon Drive	Minster

Wolseley Street	Minster
Brook Street West	Minster
Coley Park Road	Minster
Froxfield Avenue	Minster
Kimberley Close	Minster
Lima Court	Minster
Littlecote Drive	Minster
Lower Field Road	Minster
Maitland Road	Minster
Maldon Close	Minster
Mansfield Road	Minster
Tintern Crescent	Minster
Trelleck Road	Minster
Garnet Hill	Minster
Usk Road	Norcot
Links Drive	Norcot
Mowbray Drive	Norcot
Shaftesbury Road	Norcot
St Georges Terrace	Norcot
Tern Close	Norcot
Fairsted Close	Norcot
Wykeham Road	Park
Culver Road	Park
Amity Road	Park
College Road	Park
Coventry Road	Park
Norton Road	Park
Amity Street	Park
Crawshay Drive	Peppard
Buckingham Drive (service road in front of 51 - 87)	Peppard
Buckingham Drive (service road jun Marshland Sq to 49)	Peppard
Emmer Green Court	Peppard
Woods Road	Peppard
Bramber Mews	Peppard
Chestnut Avenue	Peppard
Corfe Mews	Peppard
Dacre Avenue	Peppard
Dunster Close	Peppard

Earlsfield Close	Peppard
Fraser Avenue	Peppard
Greenleas Avenue	Peppard
Pinetree Court	Peppard
Rosehill Park	Peppard
Yarnton Close	Peppard
Abingdon Drive	Peppard
Birchwood Close	Peppard
Devon Drive	Peppard
Elstow Avenue	Peppard
Marshland Square	Peppard
Aldeburgh Close	Peppard
Barnard Close	Peppard
Bellingham Walk	Peppard
Burcombe Way	Peppard
Chalgrove Way	Peppard
Copse Avenue	Peppard
Courtenay Drive	Peppard
Knights Way	Peppard
Littlestead Close	Peppard
Lowfield Green	Peppard
Micklands Road	Peppard
Spinney Close	Peppard
Carisbrooke Close	Peppard
St Barnabas Road	Peppard/Thames
Alexandra Road	Redlands
Granby Gardens	Redlands
Hatherley Road	Redlands
Erleigh Road (Craven Road to Alexandra Road)	Redlands
Hexham Road	Redlands
Junction Road	Redlands
Kearsley Road	Southcote
Pentland Close	Southcote
Southcote Farm Lane	Southcote
Norman Road	Thames
Scholars Close	Thames
Moss Close	Thames
Onslow Gardens	Thames
Raglan Gardens	Thames
Valentine Crescent	Thames
Eliot Close	Thames
Picton Way	Thames
St Andrews Road	Thames
Cawsam Gardens	Thames

Briar Close	Thames
Buxton Avenue	Thames
Cedarwood Crescent	Thames
Ellesmere Close	Thames
Kildare Gardens	Thames
Lady Jane Court	Thames
Matlock Road	Thames
Oakley Road (Albert Road to Kidmore Road)	Thames
Penn Close	Thames
The Ridgeway	Thames
Harrogate Road	Thames
Surley Row	Thames/ Peppard
St Peters Avenue	Thames/Mapledurham
Neath Gardens	Tilehurst
Recreation Road	Tilehurst
Holland Road	Tilehurst
Delaney Close	Tilehurst
Berkshire Drive	Tilehurst
Chieveley Close	Tilehurst
Felton Way	Tilehurst
Hazelwood Close	Tilehurst
Green Acre Mount	Tilehurst
Elvaston Way	Tilehurst/Norcot
Ashby Court	Whitley
Ashmore Road	Whitley
Blandford Road	Whitley
Brixham Road	Whitley
Chudleigh Gardens	Whitley
Cooper Close	Whitley
Denbury Gardens	Whitley
Durham Close	Whitley
Heatherden Close	Whitley
Kingsbridge Road	Whitley
Lamerton Road	Whitley
Lulworth Road	Whitley
Meavy Gardens	Whitley
Merton Road North	Whitley
Merton Road South	Whitley
Moreleigh Close	Whitley
Mortimer Close	Whitley
Newlyn Gardens	Whitley
Rossington Place	Whitley

Salford Close	Whitley
Sheldon Gardens	Whitley
Shirley Avenue	Whitley
Spencer Road	Whitley
Stockton Road	Whitley
Stratton Gardens	Whitley
Village Close	Whitley
Woodman Close	Whitley
Woodside Way	Whitley
Wrenswood Close	Whitley
Yelverton Road	Whitley
Padstow Gardens	Whitley
Callington Road	Whitley
Corinne Close	Whitley
Helston Gardens	Whitley
Kingston Gardens	Whitley
Landrake Crescent	Whitley
Merrivale Gardens	Whitley
Redruth Gardens	Whitley
Thurlestone Gardens	Whitley
Whitstone Gardens	Whitley

RESIDENTIAL ROADS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

YEAR – 3 2022/23)

MICRO ASPHALT ROAD SURFACING – 109 ROADS SURFACED

ROAD	WARD
Old Barn Close	Peppard
Ashburton Road	Church
Galsworthy Drive	Peppard
Goodrich Close	Peppard
Hertford Close	Peppard
Montpelier Drive	Peppard
Pendennis Avenue	Peppard
Tenby Avenue	Peppard
Cholmeley Place	Park
Eynsford Close	Peppard
Farleigh Mews	Peppard
Farnham Drive	Peppard
Framlingham Drive	Peppard
Hadleigh Rise	Peppard
Holyrood Close	Peppard
Lincoln Road	Katesgrove
Mount Street	Katesgrove

Ulster Close	Peppard
Uppingham Gardens	Peppard
Waybrook Crescent	Park
Blackwater Close	Peppard
Gifford Close	Peppard
Harlech Avenue	Peppard
Ibstone Avenue	Peppard
Illingworth Avenue	Peppard
Lomond Avenue	Peppard
Netley Close	Peppard
Queensway	Peppard
Ragley Mews	Peppard
Rowallan Close	Peppard
Thetford Mews	Peppard
Tofrek Terrace	Norcot
Twin Oaks	Peppard
Valley Close	Thames
Venetia Close	Peppard
Warwick Road	Redlands
Whitby Green	Peppard
Bourton Close	Tilehurst
Woodberry Close	Thames
Aldenham Close	Peppard
All Hallows Road	Peppard
Amherst Road	Park
Blenheim Gardens	Redlands
Chatsworth Close	Peppard
Cintra Avenue	Redlands
Dovedale Close	Thames
Fallowfield Close	Peppard
Foxhill Road	Redlands
Gayhurst Close	Peppard
Highbridge Close	Peppard
Ilchester Mews	Peppard
Jordan Close	Peppard
Kendal Avenue	Peppard
Kirkham Close	Peppard
Kelso Mews	Peppard
Newcastle Road (cul-de-sac)	Redlands
Launceston Avenue	Peppard
Liverpool Road	Park
Parkside Road	Minster/Southcote
Longhurst Close	Thames
Mallory Avenue	Peppard
Melford Green	Peppard

Morecambe Avenue	Thames
Normanstead Road	Tilehurst
Northbrook Road	Peppard
Odiham Avenue	Peppard
Orwell Close	Thames
Osterley Drive	Peppard
Portland Gardens	Tilehurst
Tyler Close	Thames
St Davids Close	Thames
Stanhope Road	Redlands / Church
Stirling Close	Peppard
The Ridings	Peppard
Uplands Road	Thames
Windrush Way	Norcot
Cholmeley Road	Park
Dumbarton Way	Peppard
Brill Close	Thames
Combe Road	Norcot
Wilwyne Close	Thames
Hawthorne Road	Peppard
Woodcote Way	Mapledurham
Radstock Road	Park
Bishops Road	Park
Brighton Road	Park
Palmer Park Avenue	Park
Graveney Drive	Caversham Heights
Heroes Walk	Whitley
St Elizabeth Close	Whitley
Harness Close	Whitley
Lexington Grove	Whitley
Sampage Close	Whitley
Sandleford Close	Whitley
Creswell Close	Whitley
Hilary Close	Whitley
Basingstoke Road Service Road	Whitley
Stoneham Close	Norcot
Broomfield Road	Kentwood
Armour Hill	Kentwood
Holybrook Crescent	Southcote

Elm Park Road	Battle
Gordon Place	Battle
Calder Close	Tilehurst
Winchester Road	Katesgrove
Surrey Road	Katesgrove
South Street	Katesgrove / Redlands
Waterloo Road	Katesgrove
Modbury Gardens	Church

RESIDENTIAL ROADS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

HRA RESURFACING 2021 – 15 ROADS SURFACED

ROAD	WARD
Whiteknights Road	Park
Kentwood Hill	Kentwood
Whitley Street	Katesgrove
Beresford Road	Battle
Little Johns Lane	Battle
Vicarage Road	Katesgrove/Redlands
Eaton Place	Abbey
Hemdean Road (Oakley Rd to Sheridan Ave)	Caversham/Thames
Liebenrood Road	Southcote
Scours Lane	Kentwood
Trafford Road	Abbey
St Annes Road	Caversham
Upton Road	Norcot
George Street, Reading	Abbey/Battle
Christchurch Gardens	Katesgrove/Redlands

RESIDENTIAL ROADS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

KIELOCK SURFACE DRESSING – 2 ROADS PROGRAMMED TO BE SURFACED ON 16TH JUNE 2022

Road	Ward
Albert Road	Thames
Erleigh Road (Alexandra Road to Addington Road)	Caversham

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APPENDIX 2:

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS – HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CAPITAL INVESTMENT

£ 8M ROADS & PAVEMENT INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2026/27
£ 4M HIGHWAYBRIDGES & STRUCTURES CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2023/24

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:

1. Revenue Implications:

	2022/23 £000	**2023/24 £000**	**2024/25 £000**	**2025/26 £000**	**2026/27 £000**
Employee costs (see note1) Other running costs (On-going Maint.) Capital financings costs	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cost (+)/saving (-)	0	0	0	0	0

2. Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	**2021/22 £000**	**2022/23 £000**	**2023/24 £000**	**2025/26 £000**	**2026/27 £000**
Proposed Capital Expenditure: Residential Roads Bridges & Structures	 2,000 1,500	 1,500 2,500	 1,500 0	 1,500 0	 1,500 0
Funded by Grant (specify) Section 106 (specify) Other services Capital Receipts/Borrowing	 3,500	 3,000	 1,500	 1,500	 1,500
Total Funding	3,500	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,500

3. Value for Money (VFM)

This is a statutory service provision.

The tender will be advertised in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and included a 60/40 split between tender price and quality.

The size of the capital programmes delivered to date have clearly demonstrated that very competitive tenders were received, and the overall rates achieved has been considerably

lower than in previous contract years, showing a 15% decrease in like for like costs resulting in more work to be delivered by the contract.

4. Risk Assessment.

The Council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the public highway. The investment programme will reduce the risk to the Council and the public for decades to come. The on-going maintenance costs will be absorbed within existing revenue budgets for highway maintenance.

Method statements will be agreed with winning contractors to ensure delivery and to minimise disruption that may be caused by the on-going Covid Pandemic.

Supply chain for products risk will be mitigated by the contractor buying large volumes & stockpiling materials based on the size of the capital programmes.

Increasing fuel costs is and will remain a risk pressure which will need to be manage throughout the programmes.