

Reading Museum Forward Plan 2025-2030



Adopted on at Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 11 March
2025 (agenda item 13)



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Reading Museum Forward Plan 2025-2030

1.0 Introduction

Reading Museum is part of Reading Borough Council's (RBC) culture service, operating from the Town Hall within Reading's historic Abbey Quarter in the town centre. The Museum has been providing opportunities for enjoyment, creativity and learning since 1883. It has Full Museum Accreditation from the Arts Council England (ACE). In 2023-24 over 130,000 people visited the service including over 18,000 students. Many more use its outreach and online services, with over 3 million web page visits.

Since 2018 the Museum has been in a strategic partnership with the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) called Museums Partnership Reading (MPR), which is part of the ACE National Portfolio 2023-2027. The two museums work together to provide cultural opportunities for Reading's young people and diverse communities, through schools, volunteering, outreach, digital engagement, and exhibitions, securing both Investing in Volunteer and Museum of Sanctuary awards.

Innovative engagement with collections and services through learning, community and volunteering programmes is integral to Reading Museum's DNA. In 1911 it was one of the first museums to provide a loans service for schools, offering a unique opportunity for children to handle real artefacts, and today the Museum is one of the largest providers of formal museum learning experiences in southern England. The restored Abbey Gateway, a Grade I listed building, is home to the Museum's popular Victorian Schoolroom experience.

The collection of almost 500,000 objects covering art, archaeology, natural history, social history and world cultures, including finds discovered at the Roman town at Silchester, a unique Victorian copy of the Bayeux Tapestry, an art collection including works by important artists of national and international standing such as Stanley Spencer, Alan Caiger-Smith and Helen Cammock, Romanesque carvings from Reading Abbey and the Huntley & Palmers Collection relating to the famous Reading biscuit company. Today the museum focuses on collecting linked with Reading, its people and environment, and proudly celebrates our town and its diverse history.

The Museum is committed to a cleaner and greener environment by reducing our environmental impact and promoting environmental awareness with visitors, local schools and communities through '[Our Green Stories](#)' - a campaign by Museums Partnership Reading. The Museum collects objects that document environmental change to facilitate discussion, awareness and understanding of environmental issues, including the climate emergency.

Reading Museum has ten galleries displaying a fascinating range of objects from its collections as well as the Sir John Madejski Art Gallery which has a programme of temporary exhibitions. The Museum also hosts the Register Office Ceremony Room. The Museum shop is well-stocked with books and gifts inspired by the museum's diverse collections, often handmade by local artists and craftspeople. The landmark Town Hall, was conceived as a cultural, educational, and civic complex, offers versatile spaces for conferencing, banqueting, concerts, weddings and events, and The Pantry café serves refreshments to visitors. The Riverside Museum at Blake's Lock tells the history of Reading's rivers and hosts community art exhibitions in the summer. The Museum team actively builds

relationships with communities and organisations in Reading to offer a range of services that contribute to the region's cultural life. The Museum manages Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advice service for Windsor and Maidenhead, Reading, Bracknell Forest, Slough, and Wokingham councils. The Berkshire Archaeology team also looks after the management of the Abbey Ruins in the Abbey Quarter.

2.0 Strategic context

The Borough of Reading is home to 178,196 people while around 320,000 live in the wider urban area around Reading, making it the largest conurbation in the Thames Valley. It is the joint second most diverse area in the south east and has some of the most affluent and most deprived neighbourhoods in the Thames Valley¹.

The *Reading 2050 Vision*² is an ambitious description of what Reading can be, with three themes central to Reading's long-term success as a smart and sustainable city: a green tech city, a city of culture and diversity, and a city of rivers and parks. The 2050 Vision sees Reading as '*an internationally recognised and economically successful city region. Where low carbon living is the norm and the built environment, technology and innovation have combined to create a dynamic, smart and sustainable city with a high quality of life and equal opportunities for all.*'

Reading's *Cultural and Heritage Strategy* (2015-2030) gives this cultural vision for Reading:

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

Reading Museum is part of RBC's Culture Service within the Directorate for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services. The directorate is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the strategic framework for Reading's culture and heritage. The Museum is delivering a key part of this vision through its work, partnerships and strategic role in the Abbey Quarter and contribution to other RBC frameworks including the Tackling Inequality Strategy and the Town Centre Strategy.

This Forward Plan supports RBC's Corporate Plan (2022-25) and the draft Council Plan (2025-28). RBC's mission is 'to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success', delivering this vision is grouped into three themes:

1. Healthy environment
2. Thriving communities
3. Inclusive economy

The Museum also works closely with REDA (Reading's Economy & Destination Agency) the economic development and promotional marketing company for the town. REDA manage the official Reading brand and the Visit Reading website, as well as strategic tourism initiatives such as the Great West Way, the St James Way, and the Reading Tourism Group.

¹ <https://www.reading.gov.uk/about-reading/profile-of-reading/>

² <https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050>

3.0 Our Statement of Purpose and Aims

Reading Museum champions our town’s unique identity. We play a leading part in Reading’s development as a cultural community and a place of culture by:

1. actively engaging with our diverse local communities and partners locally, nationally, and internationally
2. providing inclusive opportunities for high quality object-based learning and creativity
3. caring for our collections and Reading Abbey, making them physically and virtually accessible
4. developing innovative and sustainable income opportunities
5. taking action for a healthy environment and working towards net zero

3.1 Our Priorities 2025-2030

Museum priorities	<i>Link to RBC corporate priorities (2025-28)</i>
1. Work in partnership, particularly with Museum Partnership Reading, to enable the active participation of Reading’s diverse communities with our collections and services	Promote affordable housing and more equal communities; Secure Reading’s economic and cultural success
2. Provide inclusive formal and informal learning and training opportunities and resources that inspire our audience especially children and young people and older people	Promote affordable housing and more equal communities; Secure Reading’s economic and cultural success; Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
3. Champion pride in Reading’s heritage through the care and promotion of, and improved physical and virtual access to, our collections, especially the reinterpretation of our Roman gallery	Secure Reading’s economic and cultural success
4. Maximise our capacity by developing sustainable income and fundraising by working with partners and RBC colleagues, and support local economic and tourism development	Secure Reading’s economic and cultural success; Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
5. Take ownership of our environmental responsibility by continuing the ‘Our Green Stories’ campaign and further decarbonising our building and operations	Promote a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading’s carbon footprint

This Forward Plan is supported by the following service policies and plans:

- Access Policy and Action Plan
- Collection Development Policy
- Collection Management Policy and Action Plan

This Plan is also supported by Museums Partnership Reading's annual business plans and MPR Youth Manifesto³. These MPR plans support the outcomes and investment principles of ACE's 2020-2030 strategy 'Let's Create'.

Acknowledgements

The achievements of our previous plan (see appendix A) were thanks to our committed team of staff and volunteers, Reading Borough Council colleagues, and the support of our many partners, including Brighter Futures for Children, the Cultural Education Partnership, the Friends of Reading Abbey, the Friends of Reading Museum (FoRM), Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone, The MERL, Reading Foundation for Art, and the University of Reading.

Our project and development work has been supported by generous grants from Arts Council England (ACE), ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, The Art Fund, Contemporary Art Society, DECUS, The Earley Charity, FoRM, The Happy Museum, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and RG Spaces.

Consultation and Review

This Plan was written following a process of reviewing our previous plans, consultation with staff, volunteers and stakeholders, feedback from our customers and visitors, and the MPR annual business planning process. It replaces the previous Forward Plan 2020-2025.

The Museum regularly evaluates its services and consults with users following the Access Policy and Plan. As part of MPR, we use ACE's Illuminate platform to evaluate the visitors and groups that we have worked with directly, and 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.), and community steering groups and focus groups for partnership projects and initiatives (for example Museums of Sanctuary, Reading's Digital Revolution, Reading Windrush Group, and the MPR Committee). We know there are barriers to engagement, and through the Access Policy and Plan the Museum is committed to actively engaging with Reading's diverse local communities.

The regular review of the Forward Plan is both good practice and a key requirement of the Museum Accreditation Scheme – the UK Standard for museums and galleries, under which Reading Museum has Full Accreditation (Accredited Museum No. 978) from the Arts Council England (ACE). Museums participating in the Scheme must demonstrate effective forward planning approved by their governing body.

The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Museum Manager. The work of staff and public consultation is ongoing and will feed into and inform these reviews and the development and delivery of our priorities. The next Forward Plan will be developed in 2029-2030 and approved by the Council.

³ <https://merl.reading.ac.uk/blog/2023/11/launching-the-youth-manifesto/>

4.0 The Action Plan 2025-2030

1 –Work in partnership to enable the active participation of Reading’s diverse communities with our collections & services

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
1.1 Museum Accreditation UK standard for the service (see 1.2, 3.1, 3.2)	1. Retain Full Accreditation status	mm	museum team	Staff time	n/a	Accreditation Return invite due after 2025	Return submitted to ACE and Accreditation retained	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.2 Access Policy ⁵	1. Policy regularly reviewed, updated, and implemented (Accreditation requirement - 1.1)	vs	Access workgroup	Staff time	n/a	Review in 2030	Policy reviewed, approved and implemented	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.3 Access Plan ⁶ implements the approved Access Policy (1.2) includes audience development, developing a	1. Implement access plan activities for each identified audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people • Adults • Older people 	Access workgroup	collection & learning team members MPR staff e.g. de, vc, pm Wider RBC culture team volunteers	Staff time Budgets and grant funding MPR programmes e.g.	Current core budgets e.g. exhibition, activities and sessions. MPR programme budget.	Ongoing – progress check quarterly Review Access action plan –	Plan delivered – a Measure of Success is identified for each activity with the Access action plan	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

⁴ Abbreviations of roles listed are listed after the end of this action plan table

⁵ Reading Museum Access Policy 2025-2030

⁶ Reading Museum Access Plan 2023-2026, review in 2025

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
programme of activities, events, exhibitions and virtual access for Reading's diverse community. See 1.4, 1.8, 1.11, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 5.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and Higher Education/FE Community groups (esp. under-represented audiences - disabled people, ethnically diverse communities, socially-economically excluded, Sanctuary seekers) 			Museums My Way, Museums on Wheel, Sanctuary.	Charges. Grant funding.	summer 2025		
	2. Deliver a sustainable public programme in our spaces, on virtual platforms and in the community ⁷	ec, vs	Staff, MPR staff, volunteers, partners	Staff and volunteer time	Core and MPR budgets, project funding	ongoing	Programme delivered within staff capacity and budget.	
	3. Collect and evaluate customer feedback incl. Illuminate survey and act on comments	Vs, pm	Staff and volunteers	mm, lm MPR	Staff and volunteer time	Core and MPR budgets	Ongoing	Evaluation methods implemented; feedback informs service

⁷ e.g. Art Gallery, Welcome Gallery, Show and Tell cases, Turbine House, Website (virtual exhibitions, blogs, galleries), social media platforms; MPR community programmes - Museums My Way, Sanctuary and Museum on Wheels

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	4. Review the impact of our digital communications (social media, e-shots, blogs etc) – including how we communicate (e.g. changing platforms, media etc)	de		Staff time	Core and MPR budgets	annually	development; maintain customer satisfaction Review measures of success to ensure impact	
1.4 Museums Partnership Reading (MPR). NPO Consortium with Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), UoR (also see 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.4, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1, 5.2)	1. Deliver MPR Activity and Investment plans 2. Reapply for next NPO round	mm	MPR programme committee, steering group, and staff	Staff time MPR budget	ACE grant	Currently funded until Mar 2027 June – July 2025 apply for next round of NPO funding (decision Mar 2026)	Meet Plan targets and ACE grant requirements Submission of NPO application	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.5 Friends of Reading Museum (FoRM)	Maintain good working relationship with our independent Friends charity, agree joint projects and fundraising support (see 4.4)	mm	Friends' committee	Staff time	n/a	Ongoing	At least one review meeting a year Agree joint projects and fundraising targets	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
1.6 Reading Foundation for Art (RFfA)	Continue to work in partnership with the RFfA following their Collection Development Strategy and within the RBC/RFfA partnership agreement	ec	mm, RFfA trustees RBC – ad, Imm, finance team	Staff time	RFfA acquisition funds	Ongoing	Collecting to agreed Strategy in collaboration with the museum Comply with requirements of RBC/RFfA agreement	3 Inclusive economy
1.7 National collections at University Science Park (British Museum, Natural History Museum, Kew Herbarium etc)	Explore partnership with Reading-based national collections through MPR - development of potential collection, learning, and/or community projects/programmes and volunteering	mm	MPR steering group/staff	Staff time	MPR budget External grants	2025-2030	Attend partnership meetings as required	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
1.8 Anniversaries /celebrations including Jane Austen 250, William the Conqueror millennium	Contribute to partnership programmes for major anniversary events	mm	cc, ec, vs, lo REDA RBC events team UoR events team Culture team External partners (e.g. Jane Austen Museum, British Library etc) volunteers	Staff time Project budgets Grant funding	NLHF etc	2025-Jane Austen 250; 2025 – DEC 60 th (see 1.11); 2026- launch of Central Library and Hexagon; 2026 – university centenary;	Deliver and promote associated programmes dependent on capacity and funding	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
						2027 – William the Conqueror millennium		
1.9 Staff inclusion & diversity development and well-being	1. Staff training and development needs identified through regular 1 to 1s, team meetings and annual reviews	vs	Line managers RBC learning and development team	Staff time	Training budget	Annually review	Staff have skills and knowledge as identified in performance reviews	2 Thriving communities
	2. Continue to develop a workforce that reflects and understands the communities it serves (see 1.3)	mm	MPR, line managers, vc, HR	Staff time	Training and recruitment budgets	Ongoing	Staff complete compulsory training	3 Inclusive economy Team Reading values
	3. Recognise staff achievements through Culture and RBC recognition schemes	mm	Line managers, all staff	Staff time	n/a	annual	MPR annual workforce survey tracks workforce diversity Submissions to recognition awards	RBC Inclusion & diversity Strategy
1.10 Continued collaboration between RBC cultural services	Build on successful collaboration through programming, marketing and operations (see 1.3, 1.8, 1.9, 1.11, 2.1,	ad, Imm, mm	Museum, libraries, theatres, New Directions teams	Staff time	Core and project budgets	Ongoing	Increased collaboration building on current joint services and initiatives (also see	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities

Objective Area	Action	Lead role ⁴	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	2.3, 2.6, 3.3, 3.6,4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.3, 5.4)						individual actions listed)	3 Inclusive economy Team Reading values
1.11 Reading's Digital Revolution project – celebrating 60 th anniversary of Reading's digital economy (links to 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 3.1)	Deliver Reading's Digital Revolution project with partners	cc	mm, project officer MPR, volunteers Partners – DECUS, RG Spaces, National Museum of Computing (TNMoC)	Staff time Project funding	£87K – National Lottery Heritage Fund. DECUS (£20K) and RG Spaces (£5K).	Until end of 2025	Deliver agreed project outputs and outcomes incl. exhibition and programme in 2025	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

2 – Provide inclusive learning and training opportunities and resources that inspire our audiences esp. children & young people

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
2.1 Schools hands-on learning service (session and loan boxes) (also see 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5)	1. Regularly review sessions offer to ensure relevant to audience – incl. revised Roman session and in-person Black History session in refurbished Roman Gallery (3.3)	Lo	ba Casual session leaders as required	Staff time, training and materials	MPR budget Charges to schools	Ongoing Roman and Black history sessions – 2027/28	All sessions reviewed annually Revised Roman /Black history session evaluated and delivered (subject to funding)	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
	2. Ensure Roman project (3.3) delivers a flexible learning space	lo	Project team	Staff time, project budget	External grant funding	2024-2027	Learning team part of project WG and learning requirements are integrated into project specs.	
	3. Continue delivery of service to core Reading area schools including marketing strategy for sessions	Lm	de, Reading Arts marketing team	Staff time, marketing materials, website	Marketing budget	ongoing	Maintain school bookings and income	
	4. Loan boxes – Review toy session boxes	Lm, pm	cc, Windrush community,	Staff time, objects	External grant funding	2025-2027	New boxes created for	

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	and work with community to develop Windrush box; increase use by targeted promotion (e.g. RBC schools in areas of need) link to Roman project 3.3)		MPR, Brighter Futures for Children	collected, box materials			loan (subject to funding) Increase use by Reading schools	
2.2 Share our skills and knowledge – teacher and museum professional CPD (see 1.3, 1.4)	1. Provide teacher INSETs that promote museum services, also link to key projects e.g. Digital Revolution; Romans Reimagined, MPR 2. Share learning (incl. virtual sessions) with other museum professionals e.g. BOBLI learning group, MPR	lm lm	Lo Museum team, MPR	Staff time and materials Staff time	Charges to schools and MPR Budget MPR budget	ongoing ongoing	Number of bookings Events attended	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
2.3 Reminiscence Loans provision (also see 1.3)	1. Maintain delivery of Memory Box service 2. Continue to provide reminiscence	lm lm	mobile library team lo, casual staff	Staff time and materials Staff time	Charges to users Charges to users	Ongoing Ongoing	Number of bookings and income maintained Provide annual training session and	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	<p>training for staff or care homes, social services- including virtual training (more accessible and reduced travel)</p> <p>3. Develop Memory boxes relevant to new generations e.g. 70s, 80s, 90s</p>	lm	cc, collection team	Staff time, collecting new objects and box materials	External grant funding MPR	2027-2030	<p>number of bookings</p> <p>New boxes created to replace older boxes (subject to funding)</p>	
2.4 Volunteering – participation and support (see 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 1.11, 2.7, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 4.1, 4.4, 5.2)	<p>1. Regular review of MPR volunteer policy</p> <p>2. Retain Investing in Volunteer (liV) status for MPR</p> <p>3. Develop new opportunities that appeal to diverse communities and support museum needs (support projects 3.3)</p>	vc	<p>MPR staff collection & learning team</p> <p>Reading Voluntary Action</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>liV application and assessment</p>	<p>n/a</p> <p>Current budgets/ MPR budget</p>	<p>Review Policy Jan 2026</p> <p>Reapply liV 2026-27 (subject to funding)</p>	<p>Policy updated and implemented</p> <p>Retain liV (subject to funding)</p> <p>Volunteer diversity maintained</p>	<p>2 Thriving communities</p> <p>3 Inclusive economy</p>
2.5 Children and vulnerable adult protection	Service protection policy implemented and regularly reviewed ⁸	lo	lm, vs	Staff time	Staff training	Next Review 2027	Policy reviewed and updated; staff	2 Thriving communities

⁸ Reading Museum Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy 2025

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
							trained and aware	
2.6 Reading Cultural Education Partnership - Create Reading (RCEP)	Contribute to RCEP delivery plan and attend quarterly meetings	lm	MPR	Staff time	n/a	2024-2027 (current CEP strategy period)	Museum contributing Partnership's to delivery outcomes	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
2.7 Informal learning opportunities (see 1.3,1.11, 3.3 and 3.4)	Provide informal learning opportunities through the public programme and targeted campaigns and projects Linked to specific target audience in Access Plan – see 1.3	vs (diary co-ordination)	Museum staff and volunteers MPR team Museum, libraries, theatres, New Directions teams	Staff and volunteer time Budgets and grant funding	Current core budgets e.g. exhibition, activities and sessions. MPR programme budget. Charges. Grant funding	Ongoing	Opportunities provided within staff capacity and budget to programme timescales	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

3 - Champion pride in Reading's heritage through the care, promotion and improved access to our collections

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
3.1 Collection Development policy focuses on Reading's sense of identity and the needs of learners ⁹ (see 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 2.3, 5.2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed, following Accreditation guidance Only collect within available resources (including staff time and storage capacity) 	cm	acquisition group	Staff time Staff time Storage capacity. Purchase grants required for acquisitions	n/a Purchase grants - Art Fund, RfA, CAS, NLHF	Review Policy in 2027 ongoing	Policy reviewed and implemented Collecting within policy criteria	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
3.2 Collection Management policy and plans ¹⁰ (see 1.1)	Ensure Collection Policies and Plans are reviewed and implemented	cm	curators, ca, co volunteers (store teams)	Core collection budget (e.g. for licences, materials)	n/a	Policy Review 2028 Plan Review 2028 Plan delivery - ongoing	Collection plans are reviewed, and progress monitored annually	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
3.3 Collection Access – Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading project (see 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver development phase with partners and submit delivery application Secure match funding required 	mm	project manager, Museum and project staff and volunteers	Project budget Staff time Volunteers	NLHF MPR budget	May 2024 to July 2025 July 2025	NLHF delivery application submitted Match funding secured by	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

⁹ Reading Museum Collection Development Policy 2022-2027

¹⁰ Reading Museum Collection Management Policy 2023-2028

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	for delivery phase 3. Implement delivery phase if funding secured				Earley Charity, FORM, Decarbonisation etc	Autumn 2025 to 2027	application submission date Project outcomes delivered, final evaluation report and grant drawdowns submitted to NLHF and other funders	
3.4 Collection Access - improving virtual experiences by delivering projects within Access Plan (see 1.3, 1.11, 3.3)	1. Attract audiences to Online Collections website (see 1.3, 3.3) 2. Explore development of app/web-based collection resources linked to gallery content (see 3.3) 3. Explore development of Bayeux Tapestry virtual experience (gallery/web)	cm de, mm mm	curators, ca, co, vs, lo, de Collection team, MPR (link to Untold strand) Partners- Glasgow University and Education Evolved de, cm, ca, co, lo, vs	Staff time Volunteers Grant funding, MPR Grant funding	n/a tbc AHRC	Ongoing thematic uploads 2028+ (subject to funding) 2024-2027 (subject to funding)	Annual increase in object records accessible on the website Development of mobile/web content to enhance visitor access Project outcomes delivered on time and budgets	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
3.5 Collection Access - improving visitor's gallery experiences by delivering projects within Access Plan (also see 3.3)	1. Bayeux Tapestry gallery refurbishment plan – develop proposals and submit development funding (see 3.4)	mm	project officer, museum team	Grant funding	Identify funding sources	2028 onwards (after completion of 3.3)	Scope project, proposal and cost plan developed	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
	2. Our Green Stories/MPR Green Space minor improvement 24-25 (see 5.2)	cm	Collection staff	Staff time	Core and MPR budgets	2025	Gallery improvement delivered	
3.6 Abbey Quarter- • Ensure benefits of Reading Abbey Revealed project continue and site is well maintained as NLHF requirements • Work with new Reading Prison owner to continue to enhance AQ	Implement ongoing site management/ conservation plan	mm, pa	Culture and Heritage Projects Manager	Staff and volunteer time	Berkshire Archaeology Ruins maintenance budget Grant funding	Annually	Annual maintenance completed Panels cleaned annually	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
	Extend site interpretation, wayfinding and		RBC planning	Grant/ developer funding	NLHF; S106	tbc	Interpretation and public access	RBC public realm

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
heritage • Extend signage and interpretation into neighbouring developments areas e.g. Station Hill, Forbury Road	public access to the AQ's heritage						extended if Prison site is developed (subject to funding)	strategy 2024-2027

4 - Maximise our capacity by developing sustainable income and support local economic development

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
4.1 Maximise retail income	Annual review of retail plan (stock, lines, pricing, suppliers), building on growth of 2020-25 Continue online shop offer and social media promotion	vs	mm, dvs, de vs team volunteers	Staff time	Core budget Project budgets -for specific product development	Annually (March) ongoing	Buying plan update annually - new lines, with increased turnover and net profit Increasing online sales	3 Inclusive economy
4.2 Maximise hands-on learning income (see 2.1)	Maintain income from schools by adapting products and charges to meet customer needs and to respond to changing economic environment (e.g. tight school budgets, cost of living, curriculum change)	lm	lo, ba	Staff time	marketing budget (Reading Arts)	ongoing	Deliver school income targets	2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
4.3 Tourism and destination marketing, and economic development initiatives	Contribute to Reading What's on, Reading Tourism Group and Berkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) - see 1.8, 3.6. (also see 4.1 and 4.2)	mm, lm	Reading Arts REDA MPR staff Culture and Heritage Projects Manager	Staff time	marketing budget (Reading Arts)	2025-2030	Museum participates in partnership tourism initiatives	3 Inclusive economy

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale/ PROGRESS	Performance measure	Corporate Link
4.4 Income generation and fundraising strategy for cultural services	1. Deliver agreed priorities for the Museum esp. contactless donations	mm	Wider culture team	Staff time	Core and project budgets	2024-2028	Strategy implemented	2 Thriving communities
	2. External funding applications for programmes and projects – see 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5	vs mm	gallery team and volunteers museum team – depending on project			Ongoing	Donations increase per visitor Applications submitted	3 Inclusive economy
	3. Support joint initiatives in Town Hall e.g. Christmas market, The Pantry	vs	gallery team			Ongoing	Campaigns and events delivered to time and budget	
4.5 Website development	Work with our web agency to ensure the website is easy to use, well maintained and secure	mm, Untitled	de, lm, museum team, Reading Arts	Staff time	Marketing budget	Ongoing – annually review	Site maintained without service disruption	3 Inclusive economy

5.0 Take environmental responsibility by continuing Our Green Stories and further decarbonising our operations.

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
5.1 Support Reading's environmental and climate strategies	Ensure our policies, procedures and operations are aligned with strategies, including funder requirements (e.g. ACE, NLHF)	mm	MPR pm Museum team	Staff time	n/a	Annual review	Polices and plans reviewed and updated as required	1 Healthy environment
5.2 MPR Our Green Stories campaign (see 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.7, 3.1,	1. Explore stories of the natural world that surrounds us through our collections, including sharing information about how we can all care for the planet to build a more sustainable future.	Pm	Staff and volunteers	Staff time MPR budget	ACE	2023-2027 (may continue if NPO funding secured)	Meet Business Plan targets and ACE grant requirement	1 Healthy environment 2 Thriving communities 3 Inclusive economy
	2. Collect objects that document environmental change to facilitate discussion, awareness and understanding of the issues, including the climate emergency (see 3.1)	cm	Collection and learning team	Staff time	n/a	Ongoing	Collecting within agreed policy	
	3. Support the work of Reading CAN Reading Climate Action	pm, es, vs	museum team	Staff time	n/a	Ongoing	Programme events/activities	

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	Network and contribute to the annual Reading Climate Festival (see 1.3)							
5.3 Town Hall & Museum building improvement project	<p>Make our buildings more energy efficient, contributing to RBC 'net zero' by 2030.</p> <p>Mitigate impact of prolonged heavy rainfall due to climate change causing leaks and risk to building/collections (see 3.3)</p>	Property services manager	Imm, mm	Staff time Capital budget and grant funding	<p>Budget – Property services and decarbonisation</p> <p>Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme</p>	Until 2030	<p>Reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon footprint of Town Hall operation.</p> <p>Building safe and watertight for users, staff and collection care.</p>	1 Healthy environment
5.4 Reduce our operational environmental footprint – consider environmental impact of all our services/operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not using single-use plastic. • Using recycled materials in our family activities. • Source sustainable and local products for the shop – as our retail buying policy. • Promote the use of public transport to our visitors at all our sites. 	mm	<p>Museum team RBC colleagues e.g. IT/property</p> <p>MPR team</p>	Staff time	Core budgets	Ongoing	Reduce unnecessary consumption of resources, esp. fossil fuels. and increase public transport use of staff and visitors	1 Healthy environment

Objective	Actions	Lead role	Additional Support	Estimated Resource	Source of funding	Timescale	Performance measure	Corporate Link
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce carbon footprint of our online platforms and servers e.g. only use power and water hungry AI services when it adds value¹¹; turn off servers out of working hours (7.30pm- 7.30am) 							

Abbreviations:

ACE - Arts Council England
 FoRM – Friends of Reading Museum
 FORA - Friends of Reading Abbey
 MERL – Museum of English Rural Life
 MPR – Museums Partnership Reading
 NLHF – National Lottery Heritage Fund
 NPO – National Portfolio Organisation (ACE)
 RAR – Reading Abbey Revealed project
 RFfA - Reading Foundation for Art
 UoR – University of Reading

ba - bookings administrator
 ca – collections assistant
 cc – community engagement curator
 co – MPR collection officer
 cm - collection management curator
 de – MPR digital editor
 ec - exhibitions & partnerships curator
 Imm - Reading Libraries and Museum Manager
 lo - learning officer
 Im – MPR learning and marketing officer
 mm - museum manager
 pa – principal archaeologist
 pm – MPR programme manager
 vs - visitor services officer
 vc - MPR volunteer co-ordinator

Staff roles-

ad- Assistant Director Culture

¹¹ A single ChatGPT question consumes 15 times more energy than a Google search.

Appendix A 2020-2024 Key Achievements

These are just some of our achievements over the past five years:

- 2020 - 'Best use of Heritage in Placemaking' for Reading Abbey Revealed project- Planning Awards 2020 - the judges were particularly impressed with our use of community participation in consultations to ensure a broad spectrum of people could participate and enjoy a new 'sense of place' within the Abbey Quarter
- 2020 - The online exhibition *Enigma of Arrival: The Politics and Poetics of Caribbean Migration to Britain*, partnership with Barbados Museum and the University of the West Indies, critically acclaimed project featuring in ACE's national round-up, and receiving virtual visit from the Faith Minister
- 2020 - 'Best Family Museum' - voted by users of the Little Ankle Biters website for Berks, Bucks and Oxon
- 2020 - first recipient of the Contemporary Art Society's Rapid Response Fund to commission a new artwork *Oh beautiful world!* by artist Eleanor Lakelin using felled Chestnut Walk timber to celebrate Oscar Wilde.
- 2020-2021 - Cultural Recovery Fund awarded £1.47m to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – The Hexagon, South Street and Reading Museum
- 2021 – completed the major move of reserve collections to more accessible and energy-efficient collection store
- 2021- '1971 Reading Festival – For the First Time' exhibition celebrated 50 years of the famous music festival
- 2021 – launched our Black History session for schools during Black History Month
- 2022 - 150 Years of Reading Football Club exhibition
- 2022 – 'Museums, My Way' launched supporting neurodivergent visitors of all ages, developed with Autism Berkshire
- 2022 - Heritage Access report, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), lists the Reading Museum's website in the UK's top 20 for its online access information among over 3,000 museums and heritage sites.
- 2022 onwards – 'Our Green Stories' launched, a joint campaign with The MERL exploring stories of the natural world and sharing how we can all care for the planet to build a more sustainable future.
- 2022/23 - The total Economic Impact of Reading Museum visitors in 2022/23 was £3.9m – every £1 spent on the museum in 22/23 generated £9 spending in the wider local economy (National and South East regional Annual Museum Survey 2023)
- 2023 - The MERL and Reading Museum strategic partnership, Museums Partnership Reading (MPR), awarded £913K from Arts Council England National Portfolio 2023-2026
- 2023 – 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation, the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management was re-awarded to MPR
- 2023 - 'Best Museum' - voted by users of the Little Ankle Bitters website for Berkshire
- 2023 – the Museum and Town Hall hosted Luke Jerram's Gaia art installation featuring high-resolution NASA imagery of the Earth's surface for Reading Climate Festival 2023
- 2023 - Reading's DIGITAL Revolution project exploring 60 year of our town's IT industry awarded a total of £112K including NLHF
- 2024 – secured NLHF development grant for Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading project including plans of the Silchester Gallery
- 2024 – 'Museum of Sanctuary' award in recognition of our work and ongoing commitment to the UK City of Sanctuary vision
- 2023/24 - visits exceeded pre-pandemic levels, reaching 107,000 visitors (compared to 97,000 in 19/20, and subsequent Covid drops to 8,800 in 20/21 and 61,000 in 21/22).
- 2023/24 - Digital engagement with the Museum's website and social media platforms soared to over 3.3million visits (from 110K visits in 19/20 pre-Covid)

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- 2023/24 - 18,659 school students visited (over 3,200 more students than before the Covid pandemic in 19/20).
- 2023/24 - The Museum shop sales reach over £54K (from £30K in 19/20)