



MUSEUMS PARTNERSHIP READING

Business Plan: Year 2

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Contents

Introduction from the Chair.....	3
1.0 Executive summary	3
2.0 Introduction	4
3.0 Vision and mission	4
3.1 Mission	4
3.2 Vision.....	4
4.0 External context	5
5.0 Progress to date: Year One (Y1)	7
6.0 Aims and areas of work.....	8
6.1 Aims.....	8
6.2 Areas of work	8
Collections.....	9
Digital	9
Volunteering	9
Youth Strategy.....	10
Partnerships	10
Governance	11
6.2 Significant changes for Y2	11
6.3 Planning into Years 3 and 4.....	11
7.0 SMART Objectives and Action Plan Y2.....	12

AIM 1: Reading’s diverse communities are reflected in our audience, workforce, volunteers and programme	12
AIM 2: Enhanced excellence and wider access to our collections.....	14
Aim 3: Our digital activity is sector-leading, with increased opportunities for digital engagement and collaboration.....	16
Aim 4: We work collaboratively with others and actively contribute to placemaking in Reading	18
AIM 5: Increased participation in arts and culture by young people in Reading.....	19
AIM 6: Our consortium is resilient, effective and successful	20
8.0 Resourcing.....	22
8.1 Staffing	22
8.2 Financial and fundraising	22
9.0 Finance	23
10.0 Risk Register	24
11.0 Monitoring and evaluation	25
11.1 Governance	25
11.2 Evaluation.....	25
Annual survey.....	25
Artistic and Quality Assessment.....	25
Audience Finder	25
12.0 Appendices.....	26
12.1 Organisational chart.....	26

Introduction from the Chair

Forming, running and developing any new partnership is a challenge and I am delighted at the progress that has been made in the first year of the 'Museums Partnership Reading'.

Key targets have been met and a really good foundation has been laid to ensure that we deliver on our agreed objectives. There was already a long history and very good working relationships between the two museums and I believe that these have been further reinforced since the Partnership was established. Of course, one of the key issues is how far we can deliver a new entity that is more than 'the sum of its parts' and enables it to present to the wider community in Reading a more joined up, vibrant and even more relevant cultural offering in the future.

We look forward to the formal and public launch of the Museums Partnership Reading in March. Gaining public profile is essential to both the medium-term success but also the longer-term ambitions that are developing from our discussions around the 'forward look'; in other words, looking beyond the term of the current four year funding agreement and also how far we can engage in wider initiatives, both regionally and nationally.

It is a credit to all those involved that the MPR Board was able to be so positive in its support for this business plan and on behalf of the Board I should record thanks to the Steering Group and all those involved in ensuring such positive progress to date.

Paul E Mains BEM

Chairman, MPR Programme Board

1.0 Executive summary

Together in its first year, Museums Partnership Reading (MPR) can point to success in establishing shared working and approach to delivery of Arts Council England (ACE) goals that will enable Reading and its surrounding communities to experience heritage and build a sense of place and identity.

MPR is set to meet or exceed its SMART objectives for Y1.

The plan for Y2 will build on this success. Aims have been renewed and updated (6.1), re-focusing priorities around key strengths and areas of potential for innovation, which have emerged in Y1. While, as planned, Y1 has focused on embedding new joint working practices and developing and testing shared programmes and strategies, Y2 will be marked by a shift in emphasis. The focus will pivot towards areas of demonstrable distinctiveness where we believe MPR can show sector-leading practice that delivers value and benefits for audiences.

These are the areas that have flourished most successfully through our shared working and Y1 programme of development, notably: working with young people and diverse communities, volunteering and digital engagement. We will strive to align our Programme with wider sector priorities, including recommendations in the Mendoza Report, Culture is Digital and the emerging new strategic goals of our key funders, aiming to embed best practice in our organisations and prepare ourselves for the challenges of the future.

Our most significant changes are around a change in our proposed staffing, as well as exciting new developments in our Action Plan.

2.0 Introduction

This Business Plan covers the activity of ***Museums Partnership Reading*** (MPR) in our second year as a Band One National Portfolio Organisation. We are a consortium of Reading's two leading museums: The Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) and Reading Museum.

Our renewed **Aims** (6.0) cover the impacts we wish to achieve over the four-year period of our funding, with an annually updated **Action Plan and SMART objectives** (7.0) which reflect the developing strengths and strategic direction of our partnership.

We believe that our Consortium should be recognised as a model for joint working between University and Local Authority museums to achieve Arts Council England goals. It builds on previous partnership projects between the museums and is shaped by a shared commitment to sustaining our position at the forefront of Reading's cultural renewal and placemaking.

Both museums can point to a track record of experience, commitment and capacity to deliver excellence, particularly in engaging Reading's diverse communities. Through newly reopened galleries, facilities and learning spaces at The MERL, and ongoing redevelopment of Reading Museum and the Reading Abbey Revealed project, the Consortium have an outstanding platform from which to deliver our plans for building our cultural offer around key areas of excellence.

Our first year of activity was focused on consolidating our partnership, running pilot projects, developing longer-term strategies for engaging young audiences and volunteers and determining where our strengths lie. Our more ambitious second year of activity builds on these strengths.

3.0 Vision and mission

3.1 Mission

We create opportunities to experience heritage that build a sense of place and identity for Reading and its surrounding communities. We play a leading part in the transformation of Reading's reputation as a cultural centre.

We:

- exploit the quality and distinctiveness of our collections
- embrace and deliver fundamental change in the scope, diversity and impact of our engagement with audiences
- promote our commitment to engage our common audiences through innovative practice and agile working, including digital, workforce and programme development
- deliver excellence for all our audiences
- seek to ensure our sustainability and resilience.

3.2 Vision

As a partnership we maximise the opportunities of collaboration to increase and extend cultural, creative and learning experiences that will deliver outcomes for people that connect them with their personal histories and identities, improve well-being and foster a sense of place and appreciation of Reading's rich cultural heritage.

By sharing skills and resources we will build and deepen our museums' engagement with Reading's diverse communities through integrated youth, volunteering and partnership programmes, helping secure our Consortium's resilience, sustainability and continuing relevance to the future prosperity of our community.

4.0 External context

Reading has a recorded population of 155,698¹, and since the 2011 census this figure will have grown. The wider conurbation area has a population of c.275k.² Some communities in Reading remain among the 10% most deprived in the country³ with significant pockets of urban deprivation. Roughly 45% of Reading's population is of an ethnicity other than White British.

Reading is described in the [Child Health Profiles](#) as having a level of child poverty that is worse than the England average, with 22.2% of children aged under 16 years living in poverty (as defined in the Child Poverty Act 2010). This means that almost 1 in 4 of the children being brought up in the Borough are living in poverty. 30% of Reading Pupils are eligible for pupil premium. This is the highest level in Berkshire where the average is 20%. The rate of Looked After Children in Reading per 10,000 is 60, which is now the same as the national rate.^{4 5}

Reading's Cultural Education Partnership is part of a borough-wide strategy in addressing the Joint Strategic Needs facing Reading and its young people. MPR is represented and contributes to this Partnership.

While Reading appears to have a similar proportion of children living in poverty as the national average and slightly higher than its neighbouring localities, analysis of data at ward, LSOA and

school level suggest considerable differences amongst the local population...

As an economic area Reading has key strengths in attracting hi-tech industries and the creative sector. Businesses are drawn to the area by the availability of a highly-skilled workforce, access to international transport hubs (including Heathrow Airport), the University of Reading, knowledge-intensive business clusters and a high quality of life. Various large companies site their headquarters in Reading or nearby, including Microsoft, Prudential, Oracle, SSE and Thames Water.⁶

Reading Borough Council (RBC) is a unitary authority, part of the ceremonial county of Berkshire, and operates Reading Museum. In common with many other local authorities, RBC is taking steps towards addressing the sustainability of its future cultural provision. In the past year this includes a major review of services being undertaken by a newly-appointed CEO, significant capital investment in modifying Reading Town Hall in order to increase income yield, and commissioning new research into the potential of Trust or alternative structural arrangements for culture.

The University of Reading, which operates The MERL, is in the process of developing a new Arts Strategy and has secured a new partnership with the British Museum to locate its new Archaeological Research Collection at the University, providing new collection storage and research facilities. As we enter the third and fourth year of our partnership this relationship

¹ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3779/2011-Census-Analysis/pdf/2011-Census-Analysis.pdf>

² <https://livingreading.co.uk/business-facts-and-figures>

³ <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

⁴ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/jsna/children-young-people>

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

⁶ <https://livingreading.co.uk/key-facts>

with the British Museum (BM), we will explore how MPR will work in partnership with the BM to extend high quality learning opportunities for local schools and community groups to benefit from this new and important resource as part of an enriched local offer.

The MERL plays a part in the University of Reading-wide Equal Opportunities Policy and Diversity and Inclusion agenda. In 2017/18:

- The majority of students at the University (63.67%) were aged 20 and under the proportion of mature students (over age 21) upon entry has been steadily in decline
- Women have continued to make up the majority of students at the University
- The proportion of BAME students at the University has increased slightly in the last three years, but at a very low rate. Ethnic minorities represented 30.30% of degree entrants in 2014/15, and this proportion has risen to 30.44 % by 2016/17.⁷

The cultural infrastructure in Reading spans museums, performance and other cultural venues, with ambitious plans to develop additional facilities, including the potential for Reading Gaol to become a leading theatre and cultural space. However, the development of possible timescales for new infrastructure development are likely to be medium- to longer-term and they still need to secure major funding.

There has been renewed interest in Reading's cultural provision in recent years, with a notable commitment from key local stakeholders (RBC,

⁷https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/Diversity/Diversity_and_Inclusion_Annual_Report_Students_31_January_2018.pdf

⁸<https://livingreading.co.uk/the-partners/key-organisations/reading-uk-cic>

⁹<https://livingreading.co.uk/reading-2050>

University of Reading, Reading UK CIC, ⁸ Reading 2050⁹) and through new external investment, joint ventures and collaborations, supported significantly by Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This includes investment in the recent capital renewal of The Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Abbey, and in two three-year arts programmes, Reading International¹⁰ and Great Places,¹¹ which have increased opportunities for cultural engagement. Reading Festival is also well known as the world's oldest popular music festival still in existence and attracts an audience of c.90,000 each year. There are two other NPOs funded by Arts Council England, Readipop and CultureMix, with whom MPR already has a working relationship.

Both of our museums exist within wider networks and we have strong relationships with other museums in our region, including River & Rowing Museum, Slough Museum and other University of Reading museums. We are committed to exploring how these networks can be further developed and what role, leadership or otherwise, MPR might take. Berkshire has recently come under the Hampshire Solent and Berkshire Museums Development Programme, with a new Museum Development Officer.

Progress towards realising a coordinated approach to securing a sustainable, resilient and strategic cultural offer is being made through key local networks. Mainly small-scale community-based arts and heritage organisations are particularly strongly represented on the Arts

¹⁰ <https://readinginternational.org/about-r-i/>

¹¹ <http://readingplaceofculture.org/reading-on-thames-festival-2018-programme/>

and Heritage Forum, Cultural Partnership (Great Places) Board and the Reading Cultural Education partnership. These partnerships have already brought dividends in the form of a successful Cultural Commissioning bid and closer collaboration in joint tourism.

MPR recognise that we operate in a wider arts and cultural context, locally, nationally and internationally. In Y2 MPR will consolidate its leading position within Reading's cultural provision and use this to exploit opportunities to increase the potential of the partnership to engage audiences from Reading and beyond. An example of this will be The Great West Way, a new initiative to develop the visitor economy in our region, which we recognise as an important marketing opportunity to raise MPR's profile. Arising directly out of MPR's interest in developing greater diversity in the sector workforce the Director of The MERL will join a T Level panel for the Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions pathway being established by the Department of Education. This will aim to encourage young people into more technical careers, a goal that aligns with the contribution that the MPR Youth Strategy will aim to deliver. This year has seen important new strategic developments for the wider sector, which provide important context and guidance that informs our business planning for Y2-4 including the Mendoza Review¹², Culture is Digital,¹³ publication of the DCMS Action Plan¹⁴, the strategic review of ACE and the new Corporate Plan published HLF.¹⁵

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mendoza-review-an-independent-review-of-museums-in-england>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-is-digital>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/museums-action-plan-2018>

5.0 Progress to date: Year One (Y1)

In Y1 our strategy has been to focus on two priorities:

- Establishing a successful culture of shared and partnership working
- Identifying the most creative, distinctive and strategic features of our Consortium with the greatest potential for impact for our audiences and in influencing and leading sector practice going forward to Y2-4

The first year of MPR (2018/9) has been marked by considerable progress across all actions set out in the business plan (BP).

This includes:

- Creating and testing new models of joint working (4 new posts, backfill and augmenting 5 existing roles)
- Commissioning consultancy to review current learning provision and practice and help shape future shared programmes for children and young people (Youth Strategy)
- Establishing combined integrated volunteer management across both museums
- Launching new joint exhibition and associated programme and supporting collections management
- Investing in digital development and MPR digital profile – training, marketing and enhanced digital engagement, building on track record of previous ACE project #digiRDG

¹⁵ <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy>

- Building new working partnerships, with UoR projects and expertise, (Silchester, Diversity in Roman Britain and Artlab to support Arts Mark for two local pupil premium schools¹⁶)
- A change in focus for our planned Collections Technician role to a planned Programme Development Officer role in Y2, due to the role not yet being approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (see 8.1)
- Leveraging funding for new projects, including a Cultural Commissioning project for the partnership focusing on those with dementia

6.0 Aims and areas of work

In Y1 we envisaged focusing on developing our joint working and future Programme, laying the foundation for Y2's plans for distinctive and innovative delivery. After careful evaluation we have decided to boost particular areas of our work which better supports our own Aims and Arts Council England's goals. We recognise the importance of continually testing our working practice, extending our ambition and stretching ourselves.

Our Y1 Business Plan was organised according to themes. For the remainder of our NPO funding we will be following the Aims below instead.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

6.1 Aims

These broad aims cover our activity until 2022 and are the main areas of activity within our NPO:

AIM 1: Reading's diverse communities are reflected in our audience, workforce and volunteers

AIM 2: Enhanced excellence and wider access to our collections

AIM 3: Our digital activity is sector-leading, with increased opportunities for digital engagement and collaboration

AIM 4: We work collaboratively with others and actively contribute to placemaking in Reading

AIM 5: Increased participation in arts and culture by young people in Reading

AIM 6: Our consortium is resilient, effective and successful

6.2 Areas of work

We have undertaken a process of review, incorporating feedback from our own organisations, audiences and the input of our Youth Strategy consultants and other stakeholders. We also take into account the separate forward plans and strategic objectives of our two partner museums to ensure we continue to align MPR's aims with those of The MERL and RM.

While we have achieved the main objectives of our Y1 plans, some areas of our programme have been more transformational than others. Our intention is to re-focus some elements of the budget to ensure we invest in capacity in areas of greatest potential for innovation and impact in line with our objectives.

Collections

Our collections are our unique asset and, alongside our communities, are what give us our purpose.

Our partnership has been its most fruitful when collaborating between collections teams and our different projects. Our MPR Collections Officer has been essential in bringing teams together, and we are exceeding our original expectations of what we could achieve both in terms of cataloguing and public engagement. In Y2 we want to expand the scope of our Collections work, incorporating more public communication of our projects through social media.

Our annual exhibition is a primary way for the partnership to work and communicate with audiences. In Y2, a new initiative, *The Brewup*, will involve local tech groups and artists in helping co-produce our public programme and exhibitions. The Collections Officer will also be creating new online exhibitions for The MERL, an exciting new avenue for showcasing our collections.

Digital

We are fostering a culture of risk-taking and agile approaches to how we take advantage of digital technologies and new ways of working.

In particular, the radical approach to social media and content at The MERL has resulted in going viral multiple times, millions of people

engaging in our content, tens of thousands of new online followers, presentations at international conferences and features in the national press. Equally, our work on the digital transformation of working practices, workflows and systems is influencing a wider debate in the sector on how we can best take advantage of digital technologies.

This activity stems from the **Digital Strategy** and **Digital Content and Marketing** strategies developed and published in Y1. This includes an ongoing training programme aimed at making our museums more digitally mature. The focus in Y2 will be on strengthening the content creation and publication processes at both museums, increasing engagement for Reading Museum in particular, and continuing to invest in the global popularity of the MERL Twitter account.

Alongside this, we will continue sharing our learnings and reflections on digital and social media through our blogs, speaking at conferences, training events and individual contacts with others in the sector. MPR will continue to be a partner in Culture 24's Let's Get Real 6, looking at digital social impact, and engaging with One By One, a project exploring digital literacy in the sector. We look forward to working with ACE's forthcoming Tech Champions.

Volunteering

We have made both faster and greater progress in developing integrated Volunteer management across both museums in Y1 than we had predicted, particularly in the range of placement, work experience and skills development we offer, working closely with our already strong practice in community engagement.

We will aim in Y2 to make additional investment in initiatives that through our shared volunteering programme help demonstrate how MPR's contributes to the Creative Case for Diversity. We will focus on opening up opportunities for young people and in targeting under-represented groups and communities in our skills, placement and volunteering programmes. The opportunities created are likely to centre around digital skills and content, enabling young people to apply the skills they learn to create digital content that is relevant to a more diverse audience.

In order to make it easier for us to work with those interested in new skills and experiences at the museums, we will explore creating a shared online portal through Volunteer Makers.

We see this strand as incorporating volunteering in its broadest sense, and includes work placements, internships and future trials of apprenticeships.

Youth Strategy

The action plan of the Youth Strategy will commence as part of the Year 2 business plan. It will address how our museums can best address formal and informal educational needs within Reading, as well as the wider picture of how we can best engage with young people and be of use to them.

It will include coordinated promotion of the best of each museum's existing learning and participation opportunities for young people. New volunteering, placement and participation activities will also be offered via a new online volunteering platform (possibly through [Volunteer Makers](#)).

The Youth Strategy action plan will develop links to and extensions of other elements of the main business plan, such as the joint exhibition for 2019 and the action plan of the Digital Strategy. All activity will be underpinned by the development of a diverse team of casual and freelance learning assistants offering a variety of skills for new programming.

This is a vital area of work and the programme board has agreed to dedicate its February 2018 meeting to it, before it is formally finalised. There will be a detailed Action Plan accompanying the Strategy when it is published in draft form for circulation to the board in early January 2019.

Partnerships

Building on the successful instigation of partnerships with University of Reading academic colleagues in Archaeology and Art, we have additional plans to develop further partnership projects, for example those involving digital products associated with Reading Abbey Ruins, the Reading Great Place Scheme, the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Thames Valley Clinical Trails Unit.

Our successful Cultural Commissioning bid will support our shared work with older people, and exploring the health and wellbeing benefits of arts and culture.

In years 3 and 4 of our programme we expect our work with the British Museum to become more important as they build the Arc outside of Reading. We are already in discussions for plans around audience engagement and tying into University of Reading teaching.

Governance

As a new NPO, our governance is also newly established. We recognise that as we grow we must ensure that our Board reflects the communities we serve and is fit for purpose, particularly in helping shape our future plans.

We will undertake a review of our Board structure and governance in Y2 to make sure that it is as effective in representing and serving our audiences and that our Consortium remains as resilient and sustainable as possible.

6.2 Significant changes for Y2

Evaluation of our programme has identified significant administration burdens on the Programme Manager and Digital Lead, Marketing Manager and Volunteer Coordinator.

Within this Business Plan we are proposing to:

- **Appoint a Programme Development Officer** to support the administration, digital and volunteering strands of the MPR Programme. As part of earlier partnership working on digital engagement, we have successfully recruited from under-represented backgrounds in our workforce. We plan to build on this approach, aligned to a role designed to develop skills and experience in areas such as digital and volunteering for which we expect there to be increasing demand in our sector and will help us support the Creative Case for Diversity.
- **Support an upgrade of our Volunteer Coordinator**, to reflect the additional duties and ambitions in covering both museums of the partnership, around our Volunteering programme.

6.3 Planning into Years 3 and 4

We will strive to be ambitious for our partnership, show initiative and pursue innovation and stretch ourselves where opportunities arise that would help us deliver our aims.

We anticipate that as our partnership develops we will become more focused and successful in engaging more of Reading's diverse communities.

Digital working and innovation will remain at the heart of our programmes, as will engaging diverse and particularly young audiences. We will continue to experiment and develop our capacity and skills, but equally monitor wider sector developments and adopt best practice wherever we can.

We will give priority in Y2 to our 'Forward Look' and to reviewing our vision and plans for Y3 and 4 and for beyond the life-time of our current NPO funding.

7.0 SMART Objectives and Action Plan Y2

AIM 1: Reading's diverse communities are reflected in our audience, workforce, volunteers and programme

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	Timescale
1.1	Establish a new system of volunteer, work placement and internship management between The MERL and Reading Museum.	We will explore and test options for a new web platform and system for managing volunteer applications, allowing us more opportunities to advertise micro-volunteering etc. (e.g. Volunteer Makers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Co-ordinator • Programme Manager* • Programme Development Officer* • Learning and Engagement Manager* • Budget: £1000 	<p>Increase of Young People volunteer numbers by 5%</p> <p>Increase of volunteers from a diverse background by 5%</p> <p>Increase in volunteer satisfaction 10% from annual volunteer survey</p>	2	Q1-Q2
1.2	Pilot a new approach aimed at increasing diversity among volunteers	We will pilot new volunteering opportunities and ring-fence a travel expenses budget aimed at removing barriers to volunteers from diverse backgrounds to see whether it increases engagement. In support of the Creative Case for Diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Coordinator* • Programme Development Officer* • Marketing Manager, The MERL* • Budget: £500 	A KPI will be created based on a baseline from Y1.	1 2	Q1-2
1.4	Begin reporting on volunteer statistics	MPR Volunteer Co-ordinator will report against volunteer satisfaction, diversity, impact and other areas in order to inform future work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Coordinator • Programme Development Officer* 	Two bi-annual reports on volunteer evaluation. [CC]	2	Q2, Q4

1.5	Establish joint volunteer processes	MPR Volunteer Co-ordinator will carry out the Volunteer Action Plan and establish processes that work across the partnership. These will refer to the Voluntary Arts best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Coordinator • Programme Development Officer 	Summative annual evaluation of Action Plan	2	Q1-4
1.6	Autism accessibility	Quiet mornings will be maintained at both museums in the partnership, and supporting online resources created or updated. This will include sensory maps, social stories and 360-degree photography of galleries. The offer will be complementary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • Visitor Services Officer, Reading Museum • Operations Manager, The MERL • Public Programmes Manager, The MERL • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 	Six quiet sessions delivered across both museums by Q4 and evaluated.	5 2	Q1-2
1.7	Garden projects	The MERL Gardening Volunteer will run projects involving volunteers and community groups in learning about growing food and nutrition, and improving wellbeing. We will explore opportunities for bringing together Reading Abbey Gateway garden volunteers with The MERL Garden volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Volunteer Co-ordinator • Learning and Engagement Manager* 	At least one project with a local school piloted and reported on.	5 2	Q1-4
1.8	Community case studies	The Learning and Engagement Manager will finalise the Community Partnerships Scheme at the MERL and showcase it as a case study for the sector in engaging diverse local communities. The MERL and Reading Museum will work together on publishing joint case studies for the wider sector on our work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Engagement Manager* • Learning and Marketing Officer, Reading Museum* 	5 blogs written and published by Q4.	5 2	Q1-4

1.9	Cultural Commissioning project	We will work with older people in their own homes, care homes or hospital settings to combat loneliness or social isolation. The museum partnership will offer reminiscence activities including using old photos, films and artefacts as well as gardening and dance activities to promote positive health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Engagement Manager* 	Project completed and achieving its own KPIs.	2	Q1-4
-----	--------------------------------	---	--	---	---	------

AIM 2: Enhanced excellence and wider access to our collections

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	timescale
2.1	Enhance records on RM website	Collections Officer will continue uploading new records onto the Reading Museum Collections Online portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* • Collections Assistant, Reading Museum • Curators, Reading Museum 	5% increase on established Y1 baseline uploaded/edited on Collections Online by Q4.	1	Q1-4
2.2	Enhance records on The MERL website	Collections Officer as well as the MERL Library and Archive team will continue uploading and amending item records onto the public database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* • Curators, The MERL 	10% increase on established Y1 baseline for online access to additional MERL archive records	1	Q1-4
2.3	Persons and Institutions project	We will establish a shared system for describing persons and institutions relating to Reading. This will end with a public Wikipedia project uploading the research onto Wikipedia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* • Curators, The MERL and Reading Museum • Budget: £500 for Wikipedia trainer. 	100% of entries uploaded to Wikipedia by Q4.	1	Q1-2

2.4	Social media and online content	<p>Collections Officer will widen access and participation with our online collections by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly posting finds on social media • Writing blogs for both museums on collections • Create Online Exhibitions for the MERL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* • Collections Assistant, Reading Museum • MPR Programme Manager* • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 	<p>Four online exhibitions published in Year 2.</p> <p>Increase of 5% for engagement on #RMStore hashtag by Q4 against Y1 baseline.</p>	1	Q1-4
2.5	Offsite Store project	Support removals and organisation of installation of new displays in Reading Museum, support preparation for RM store relocation, including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* 	<p>% of backlog completed to be determined against Y1 baseline.</p> <p>100% of Silchester collections checked and repackaged by end of Q4.</p>	1	Q1-4
2.6	Create collaborative exhibitions	<p>In Y2 Reading Museum will work with groups involved with the Brewup (see 1.1 above) and The MERL to deliver a physical and digital exhibition on the theme of Animals.</p> <p>Preparations for an exhibition and programme on drawing will begin in Y2 for completion in Y3. This will include sourcing of loans and their conservation. The exhibition will require the practical conservation, mounting of objects and graphic production for interpretation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curator of University Art Collections • Exhibitions and Partnerships Curator, Reading Museum • MPR Programme Manager* • Collections Officer* • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 	<p>Two co-produced products, displays or form of digital media delivered in Q3 and Q4.</p>	5 1	Q1-4
2.7	Skills sharing within the partnership	<p>Colleagues across the museums will share best practice relating to collections management and conservation.</p> <p>Collections Officer will receive CPD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* 	<p>Copyright workshop delivered by Q2.</p>	1	Q1-4

Aim 3: Our digital activity is sector-leading, with increased opportunities for digital engagement and collaboration

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	timescale
3.1	Training programme for both museums' workforce based on annual digital skills survey.	A digital training programme will make our partnership a more digitally mature organisation. It will cover both creative and technical skills relevant to our sector. Programme aligned with Culture is Digital report and will adapt to findings from One By One programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • Programme Development Officer* • Budget: £500 	Average of 7/10 satisfaction across all workshops. Increase in skill levels by at least 5/10 by average across all workshops.	1	Q1-4
3.2	Collaboration with local Reading Hackspace	Continuation of the MERL's Test Bed, a growing bed in the garden, and communicating data on environmental conditions to public. In Y2 we will explore working with a local school or community group and Reading Hackspace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden volunteer coordinator* • Learning and Engagement manager* • MPR Programme manager* • £250 	Completed project by Q3 of Y4 with three blogs published.	1	Q1-3
3.3	Brewup	We will work with local tech and art enthusiasts to co-produce public programmes and products. In Y2 this will be focused on the <i>Animals</i> exhibition at Reading Museum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • Budget: £1500 	Will be tied to the specific outcomes and outputs of whatever project is decided on. In Y2 this will be the <i>Animals</i> exhibition.	1	Q1-3
3.4	Adapt and improve the Digital Content and Marketing	Y2 will see MPR follow the Strategy established in Y1, with a focus on creating content which represents both museums and diversifies our appeal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • Programme Development Officer* 	Increase of 15% in social media engagement and Impressions/Reach	5 1	Q1-4

	strategies established in Y1.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 	<p>from Y1 baseline by Q4. Increase of blog views by 10% from Y1 baseline by Q4. 500 views per online exhibition by Q4. MERL Followers grow to 125K by Q4 RM followers to 15K Twitter, 5K Facebook by Q4.</p>		
3.5	Review and implementation of MPR Digital Strategy	The Digital Strategy will be reviewed in light of evaluation of platform data, wider trends and the priorities of our organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager* • Budget: £2500 	Review by Board in Q2.	1	Q1-4
3.6	Dissemination of best practice	We will share our best work with the wider sector in order to encourage best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 	<p>Speaker slot at one conference. Attendance of Museums Computer Group conference. Publication of 5 blogs by Q4.</p>	1	Q1-4
3.7	Explore Google Partnerships.	MPR will make first contact with Google to explore involvement with the Google Arts and Culture platform. A prospective first project is to create virtual tours of each museum to support 1.6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* 	One project will be completed by the end of Q4.	1	Q3-4

Aim 4: We work collaboratively with others and actively contribute to placemaking in Reading

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	timescale
4.1	Contribute to the establishment of Reading as a tourist destination	The MERL Marketing Manager will coordinate between the two museums and other stakeholders within Reading to market the museums as part of Reading's tourist offer, and contribute to placemaking. Initiatives and partners will include the Great West Way and Tourism South East.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Manager, The MERL* • Learning and Marketing Officer* • MPR Programme Manager* • £1000 	We will establish a baseline of group bookings for increasing over Years 3 and 4. We will monitor postcodes of visitors through Audience Finder to establish a baseline of visitors from outside Reading.	2	Q1-4
4.2	Silchester Gallery redevelopment	Development of key messages and consultation with potential users for Silchester Galleries renewal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Officer* • Budget: £250 	We will run two audience consultation sessions by the end of Y2.	1	Q1-4
4.3	University of Reading and Reading Abbey Quarter partnerships	MPR serves as the link between the University and Reading Museum as we explore various funded projects relating to Reading Abbey. These include academic research, digital products, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager* • Reading Museum Manager 	Completed 3D model of Reading Abbey released to public by end of Q2.	1 2	Q1-4
4.4	British Museum Arc	The British Museum plans on relocating its archaeology Store to Shinfield by 2023. We are already in talks with the British Museum through the University of Reading and Reading Museum. We will work with colleagues at the British Museum to ensure we work collaboratively to create projects working with communities in Reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MERL Director • Reading Museum Manager • Director of UMASCS Academic Learning and Engagement 	Confirm details of BM/MPR partnership and pilot activity, deliver and evaluate.	1 2	Q1-4

AIM 5: Increased participation in arts and culture by young people in Reading

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	timescale
5.1	Youth Strategy programme	Staff across the partnership will carry out the recommendations of the Youth Strategy commissioned in Y1, and which is due to be published 11 January 2019. The plan will incorporate other activity in the programme, including the partnership with ArtLab, Code Club and social media campaigns. Our Youth Programme will be the primary focus of Year 2 and will be the main thrust of our public engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Engagement Manager* • Learning and Engagement team, The MERL • Collections and Learning team, RM 	TBD on publication of Youth Strategy in Y1 Q4.	5 1	Q1-4
5.2	Code Club	The MERL will fully establish its Code Club programme from Y1 and in Y2 we will explore whether it can also be established at Reading Museum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Engagement Manager* • Volunteer Coordinator* • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 	Six Code Club sessions run by end of Q4.	5	Q1-4
5.3	Teacher conference teacher relationships	We will run a Teacher conference showcasing the use of collections and programmes at the museums can help support the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Marketing Officer. • £800. 	Conference completed and evaluated by end of Q4.	5 2	Q4
5.3	ArtsMark and ArtLab	Work with the University of Reading's ArtLab to deliver ArtsMark awards for two schools in areas of low participation in HE in Reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Engagement Manager* • Learning and Marketing Officer* • Budget: £8000 	Work with two local schools in areas of low participation in HE to achieve Artsmark awards in Y2.	5	Q1-4

5.4	Lates programme	We will continue offering Lates at both museums. These events are aimed at the 18-35 demographic and are a valuable forum for working collaboratively with others and for communicating with audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MERL Booking Administrator* • Marketing Manager, The MERL* • Public Programmes Manager, The MERL 	Three Lates delivered by Q4.	1 2 5	Q1-4
-----	-----------------	---	--	------------------------------	-------------	------

AIM 6: Our consortium is resilient, effective and successful

Principal area:

No.	Activity	Description	Resource (*=MPR staff)	SMART objective	ACE Goal	timescale
6.1	Fundraising	As our programme develops, we will look to leverage our NPO funding to secure other project grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Director at The MERL • The MERL Director • Reading Museum Manager 	We will raise an additional £15,000 in Y2.	1	Q1-4
6.2	Governance review	The MPR Board will be reviewed to ensure its structure, membership and purpose are best suited to delivering ACE goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • The MERL Director • Reading Museum Manager • Board members 	Written report produced by end of Q2 to be discussed by Board.	1 2	Q1-2
6.3	Annual Survey	The ACE Annual Survey and results from Audience Finder surveys will result in an Action Plan informing activity for Y2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Programme Manager* • Visitor Services Officer, Reading Museum 	Action Plan produced by end of Q2 and implemented over next year.	1	Q1-2

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Manager, The MERL* 			
6.4	Forward Look	We will undertake a 'Forward Look' including reviewing our vision, exiting and potential partnerships and plans for Y3 and 4 and for beyond the life-time of our current NPO funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of the MERL, • Museum Manager, Reading Museum • Board Chair and members • MPR Programme Manager* • Associate Director at the MERL 	Agree provisional 'Forward Look' for lifetime and beyond of MPR's current funding.	1 2 5	Q4
6.5	Create an annual action plan in response to Audience Finder	We will review the data from our surveys each year and make an Action Plan based on the diversity of our visiting audience and their feedback on our activity. Our Action Plan will segment our audiences and create targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPR Steering Group 	-	5 2	Q1

8.0 Resourcing

8.1 Staffing

Year 1 Roles	Contract	Year 2 roles	Contract
1.0 FTE Programme Manager and Digital Lead	4 year (2018-2022)	1.0 FTE Programme Manager and Digital Lead	4 year (2018-2022)
1.0 FTE Learning and Engagement Manager	4 year (2018-2022)	1.0 FTE Learning and Engagement Manager	4 year (2018-2022)
0.6 FTE Learning and Marketing Officer	Rolling 12-month	0.6 FTE Learning and Marketing Officer	Rolling 12-month
1.0 FTE Collections Officer	4 year (2018-2022)	1.0 FTE Collections Officer	4 year (2018-2022)
0.25 FTE Booking Administrator	4 year (2018-2022)	0.25 FTE Booking Administrator	4 year (2018-2022)
0.25 FTE Volunteer Coordinator	To Apr 2019	0.25 FTE Volunteer Coordinator	To June 2019
0.5 FTE Administrator	Rolling 12-month	0.5 FTE Administrator	Rolling 12-month
0.2 FTE Marketing Manager	4 year (2018-2022)	0.2 FTE Marketing Manager	4 year (2018-2022)
0.2 FTE Gardening Volunteer Co-ordinator	4 year (2018-2022)	0.2 FTE Gardening Volunteer Co-ordinator	4 year (2018-2022)
Collections Technician [not appointed]	4 year (2018-2022)	-	
-		1.0 FTE Programme Development Officer [12 months]	Rolling 12-month
-		Upgrade of Volunteer Co-ordinator	4 year (2018-2022)
TOTAL: 5.0 FTE		TOTAL: 6.0 FTE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some changes to the staffing structure are required to achieve our desired programme The failure of the Institute for Apprenticeships to finalise the Museum Technician role has meant we now believe a Programme Development Officer role at a higher grade would be more suitable, and who would concentrate on administrative duties for the Programme Manager and other colleagues. <p>The table above does not include the significant in-kind labour contributed by staff not financed by NPO funding.</p>			

8.2 Financial and fundraising

As lead partner, the University of Reading continues to manage and support the administration of MPR's finances.

We are aware that the ACE NPO funding agreement of the same sum for each year means that for Y2-4, we need to make provision for meeting rising staff costs for posts on extended contracts and the impact of inflation. This will be factored into financial modelling for budgeting. Our plan remains to raise additional funding through sponsorship, crowdfunding and leveraging of new project funding in order to support our programme.

9.0 Finance (as of November 2018)

INCOME	Y1 BUDGET	Y1 FORECAST	Y2 BUDGET	Y3 BUDGET	Y4 BUDGET
Arts Council England grant	249,999	249,999	249,999	249,999	249,999
Arts Council England grant carried forward	0	0	12,762	0	0
Abbey Revealed Volunteer contribution	0	0	7000	3000	0
Cultural Commissioning grant	7500	7500	7500	0	0
Crowdfunding	0	1000	0	0	0
TOTALS	257,499	258,499	277,261	252,999	249,999
EXPENDITURE	Y1 BUDGET	Y1 FORECAST	Y2 BUDGET	Y3 BUDGET	Y4 BUDGET
Staff -salary plus NI/superannuation TOTAL	183,984	170,947	206,840	203,800	204,794
Non staff costs	73,515	73,790	70,421	49,082	46,082
SUM TOTAL	257,499	244,737	277,261	252,882	250,876
DIFFERENCE	0	12,762	0	117	-877

10.0 Risk Register

This Risk Register covers the programme of Museums Partnership Reading only, and is not an exhaustive list of risks facing each individual museum.

No.	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
1	Business Plan not accepted by Arts Council England.	LOW	HIGH	Regular contact with Relationship Manager, close adherence to ACE guidance.
2	Financial failure of The MERL	LOW	HIGH	Regular feedback on UoR strategic direction and finances from The MERL Director.
3	Financial failure of Reading Museum	LOW	HIGH	Regular feedback on RBC reviews and consultations to Steering Group and Board from Reading Museum Manager.
4	Reduction or loss of funding from ACE, particularly in Y4	MED	HIGH	Regular contact with Relationship Manager
5	Unaffordability of programme due to rising staff costs in Y3-4	MED	HIGH	Plan to be created to raise additional funding for activity or staffing to supplement ACE funding
8	Breakdown in relations between partner museums.	LOW	HIGH	Both museums are represented on the Steering Group and tensions within teams to be brought up at earliest moment. Evaluation of MPR to be carried out annually to ensure issues are addressed regularly. A communication plan will keep staff informed and involved, and reduce confusion as to the purpose of the partnership.
6	Key staff leave posts, particularly Programme Manager, Learning and Engagement Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator.	MED	MED	Ensure appropriate systems, workflows and processes are published to ensure easy transition. Regularly review workloads and priorities.
7	The programme exceeds its costs.	LOW	MED	Monthly financial updates from Programme Manager at Steering Group meetings, and updates at each Board meeting.

11.0 Monitoring and evaluation

11.1 Governance

Museums Partnership Reading is overseen by a Board which meets every quarter. Its membership is drawn from University of Reading and Reading Borough Council senior management, as well as key stakeholders including volunteers who represent communities of Reading or have specialist skills of use to the partnership. We recognise the need, albeit that it is a real challenge, to recruit new members to the board so that we can meet the developing needs of the MPR.

A Steering Group meets monthly to ensure that projects are on track, that any grievances are being dealt with and that we are fulfilling the Business Plan. The Steering Group is made up of:

- Director, University Museums and Special Collections Service
- Manager, Reading Museum
- Associate Director – Curatorial and Public Engagement, The Museum of English Rural Life
- Programme Manager and Digital Lead, Museums Partnership Reading

See Appendix 12.1 for our Organisational map.

11.2 Evaluation

Annual survey

Museums Partnership Reading submits the majority of its data through the Arts Council England Annual Survey. At the time of writing the opportunity to submit an Annual Survey has not yet arisen.

Artistic and Quality Assessment

At the time of writing Museums Partnership Reading has not had the opportunity to have an Artistic and Quality Assessment, but expects the Ladybird Exhibition to be evaluated in Q4.

Audience Finder

Audience Finder surveys are the core way in which MPR gathers data on our museum galleries, activities, marketing and learning at our museums. As part of our regular evaluation we will be writing an annual Action Plan in reaction to insights from our annual Audience Finder report, as well as performing a quarterly review.

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Organisational chart

