



CULTURE AND COMMUNITY AT MINSTER QUARTER

CULTURE, INCLUSIVE, SAFE, INSPIRE, LEARN, ENJOY



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

LEVELLING UP FUND DELIVERY PLAN
NEW PERFORMANCE SPACE AT THE HEXAGON THEATRE
NEW READING LIBRARY AT THE CIVIC CENTRE

SUMMER 2022

MINSTER QUARTER: GUIDING PRINCIPLES



CULTURE

Listen, dance, play and experience in the *heart of Reading*

SAFE

An opportunity to enliven the *heart of Reading* and create a safe hub for cultural activity and nightlife

INCLUSIVE

A place for everyone to learn, experience and enjoy in the *heart of Reading*

INSPIRE

Animate, enliven and excite in the *heart of Reading*

LEARN

A hub for learning and self-improvement in *heart of Reading*

ENJOY

Insert joy and entertainment in the *heart of Reading*



RECONNECTING READING'S CULTURAL HEART

Our 2050 vision for Reading is one of a place of culture and diversity.

A successful Levelling Up Fund bid would enable the creation of new cultural facilities to act as a catalyst for regeneration of Reading's 'Minster Quarter'.

Our aspiration for this neglected brownfield area, adjacent to the core retail zone and home to Reading's historic Minster, is for it to be re-cast as a thriving new community with arts and culture at its heart.

Minster Quarter will be a transformative, mixed-use regeneration of a key gateway to the town centre, benefiting the more deprived communities to the south and the diverse communities of the Oxford Road to the west and north.



CULTURE FOR READING

LUF BID EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years Reading's economy has done well. But despite appearances, it faces challenges of its own 'north/south' deprivation divide, a lack of social mobility, poorer educational outcomes, higher crime rates and an acute shortage of housing - especially affordable housing. Five areas of Reading are within the most deprived 10% areas of England and Wales (IMD 2019), compared with two in 2015 which suggests that deprivation is increasing.

Our Levelling Up proposal will establish a new cultural quarter for Reading and provide an anchor for the regeneration of the Minster Quarter. This area on the edge of the core retail area and home to Reading's historic Minster is earmarked as a residential led, mixed-use scheme that will transform an underused brownfield site lacking investment since the 1970s into a thriving new community with arts, culture and learning at its heart.

Increased footfall arising will boost the viability of future development phases, increase retail values and occupancy in the neighbouring Broad Street Mall, and stimulate wider residential, retail and public realm improvements. Our plans for Minster Quarter will lead to greater engagement in Reading's cultural offer, improved well-being, increased town centre spend; and improved access to housing, greater socio-economic diversity, improved community cohesion and access to job opportunities.

The two key elements of Reading's cultural infrastructure bid to the Levelling Up Fund - the Hexagon Campus and New Reading Library - are essential to delivering these ambitions, boosting local pride, learning, enjoyment and economic recovery post-pandemic, as well as unlocking land for new homes. The bid represents an opportunity to place these cultural and public institutions at the heart of this new community whilst also serving existing ones.

The bid comprises two catalyst projects for culture-led regeneration;

HexBox (Hexagon Campus)

As part of a wider Hexagon Campus the extension of the Hexagon Theatre will include a new arts, community and performance space, the HexBox, accessible to schools and community groups, providing a focal point for new and existing communities and a platform for diverse programming. The HexBox will meet identified need for more performance and rehearsal space in the town, whilst improving public perceptions of a neglected area around the Hexagon Theatre

Reading Library

Relocation of the current Central library to Reading's Civic Centre, a few minutes walk to the Hexagon Campus - will inspire residents, boost literacy rates and create a hub for support services, whilst releasing the current library site for new homes.

Creation of the Hexagon Campus and relocation of the Central Library will release valuable land for housing on the current site, reduce anti-social behaviour associated with both locations, and provide improved facilities for learners across Reading, whilst being co-located with other relevant services.

PROJECT 1 HEXBOX



PROJECT 2 READING LIBRARY



| Cultural Investment | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Project 1 - HexBox | Project 2 - Library |
| Creative/curated/ community sports Vision / Programme | Identified as a key part of Readings Cultural Strategy 2015-2030 which recognises the need for ‘cultural hubs and creating new cultural spaces ensuring that Reading’s cultural offer grows and celebrates its sense of place’. | Library Services Strategic Priorities 2022-2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Supporting our communities as we recover from the pandemicHelping children and young peopleImproving access to online servicesSupporting improvements in health, wellbeing and literacyBringing arts, culture and heritage to library spaces |
| Range of programmes (e.g. public libraries programmes going beyond culture, such as business support, health and well- being, literacy) | Plans will reinvigorate and increase capacity of the town’s cultural and learning infrastructure. Having a council owned neutral space for community events will increase community cohesion and blend the opportunities that the arts offer to diverse communities, at a price they can afford | Reading library already supports a range of wider literacy programmes, Readings LUF projects will ensure that the improved visibility and accessibility of the space can increase access to learning, community support and thus improve literacy levels for children, those with SEN and refugees or asylum seekers. In addition, the co-location of services alongside community events and support activities will increase community cohesion and building links between council staff and local organisations utilising the space. In turn, this increases the take up of corporate volunteering. |
| Practitioners track record | Experienced team leading the management of the venue, track record in successfully running venues and generating income required to fund activity. Established relationships with nationally recognised promoters, orchestras and producers to ensure programme is diverse and appropriate for the space. | The library team has longstanding experience of running existing space, and has relocated two standalone libraries within Reading since 2018. We have good relationships with local cultural and heritage practitioners and with funders. We are also now integrating the museum and library service and would also be programming the space as a venue. Reading library is currently co-located with the local Community Voluntary Sector (Reading Voluntary Action) and the Elevate Hub for young people NEET, and RBC are keen to utilise their property portfolio in community engagement. |
| Level of demand. | There is a shortfall in the number of venues able to accommodate live music in Reading, constraining it’s cultural growth. There is also a lack of spaces for community and amateur use of an equivalent size. There is a healthy demand for live events, demonstrated by the already successful programme at existing venues, however these are at a different scale to the HexBox space. Opportunities for local schools and colleges to use the space, either in partnership with local arts groups or to put on their own performances (a number of private schools locally may be interested in this option) could generate ongoing income through joint Arts Council bids or through the rental of the space by performing arts companies. | Modernised provision and increased opening hours due to collocation with other public services would increase users to Reading Library from 206K at the current Reading library to 300K per annum. In addition, it would ensure the visibility of existing Reading Borough Council services would increase and vice versa. This could help to remove barriers for those accessing one service but unaware of the other. This is in line with our vision for MECC (Making Every Contact Count) an initiative which the local Royal Berkshire Hospital and our public health teams have pushed through to be available to the voluntary sector. The space could be used to roll out similar training, again increasing community resilience and cohesion. |
| Improvements to provision of public spaces and community facilities | The HexBox project will enhance the approach to the Hexagon Theatre from Dusseldorf Way and Queens Walk making it more accessible for users. Alongside increased footfall, other public realm improvements will make it feel safer and more welcoming. | The library relocation will rationalise and repurpose redundant space in Civic Centre, reducing operational costs. It will improve the public realm in front of the Civic Centre and approaches along Bridge Street and to and from the Oracle, a major town centre retail and leisure destination. The new location will not suffer from the same community safety and ASB issues as the current location. |
| Audience/participant/ user engagement benefit – reach/diversity/depth of engagement/user development | A fully flexible and fit for purpose event space will provide huge benefits to audiences and users. Creating a dynamic and attractive destination will bring visitors to what was a neglected part of the town centre. Excellent accessibility will provide the opportunity for cultural engagement in live events for audiences who have been unable to visit in the past. Connectivity to local non profit organisations, schools, charities, arts organisations and creative industries will support user engagement and participation. | Our Partners Brighter Futures for Children may operate their Youth Hub from the building as well as adult learning provider New Directions utilising the space to deliver courses and outreach. Co-locating with Civic functions will allow for better access to public services in a one stop shop arrangement. |
| Added value that this project would bring (particularly for upgrades). | The project would increase users to the Hexagon by at least 15% and improve commercial returns due to added flexibility in programming. Further more it will meet identified need for more performance and rehearsal space in the town, whilst improving public perceptions of a neglected area around the Hexagon Theatre. In addition the project would complement the £2m Brownfield land release grant secured to bring forward homes at Minster Quarter and ensure there is provision for community spaces (i.e. a cafe alongside the library, and hot desking for people to access the internet) before the build is fully complete, ensuring community cohesion and access from the start. | Relocation of the Centre Library will release valuable land for housing on the current site, reduce anti-social behaviour associated with the current site, and provide improved facilities for learners across Reading, whilst being co-located with other relevant services |
| Local levels of engagement / demand | Geo-demographic profiling, audience feedback and income analysis through box office systems, Purple Seven marketing software, Audience Finder insights, social media interactions and audience surveys. Net Promoter Score captured for attendees to support monitoring of satisfaction. | Engagement by the community with the services that the Library offers would increase due to the co-location of the RBC frontline services. Increasing the visibility of Library services (i.e. Rhyme Time, the VISA service etc) will likely increase engagement in these services as potential ‘customers’. |

MASTER FUNDING PROFILE

| Projects | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Total | % |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----|
| HexBox | £675,799.00 | £2,569,566.00 | £10,454,635.00 | £0.00 | £13,700,000.00 | 61 |
| Reading Library | £711,940.00 | £890,520.00 | £6,884,982.00 | £112,558.00 | £8,600,000.00 | 39 |
| Total | £1,387,739.00 | £3,460,086.00 | £17,339,617.00 | £112,558.00 | £22,300,000.00 | 100 |

| Funding Mix | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Total | % |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----|
| LUF | £1,275,452.00 | £3,172,018.00 | £14,716,530.00 | £0.00 | £19,164,000.00 | 86 |
| Local Authority | £112,287.00 | £288,068.00 | £2,623,087.00 | £112,558.00 | £3,136,000.00 | 14 |
| Totals | £1,387,739.00 | £3,460,086.00 | £17,339,617.00 | £112,558.00 | £22,300,000.00 | 100 |

DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Ownership | Reading Library will be delivered within the Civic Centre building with a small extension. The building and wider site is owned freehold by Reading Borough Council. The HexBox will be located adjacent to the existing Hexagon Theatre on land also in RBC ownership. No third party ownerships or consents are required. |
| Procurement | For the library, Reading Borough Council is utilising it's partnership arrangement with Hampshire County Council through which cost consultancy, project management and design team will be provided. With regards to procurement of a contractor both projects will follow a two stage procurement. This will be supplemented by a library specialist who will be procured immediately through release of ready prepared tender documentation once funding award is made. For HexBox, RBC will procure a multidisciplinary team with experience in arts and culture venues to design and project manage delivery. Procurement documentation will be prepared in advance and get underway immediately on grant funding award. |
| Design | Both schemes are at outline design stage. Reading Borough Council is prepared to carry out elements of additional design and engagement work 'at risk' prior to funding award. We will also undertake further building and site surveys to inform detailed design work. |
| Stakeholder support | <p>The bid has the support of a wide range of stakeholders and letters of support are provided with the bid. The bid has formal support from Matt Rodda, MP for Reading East.</p> <p>The projects are essential in realising our 2050 vision for Reading to be a town of culture and diversity. The Vision engagement reach 21,000 residents and 350 businesses. It has been followed up Library consultations which have informed our Reading Library project in regards of offer and location. In addition, a wide range of stakeholders have been engaged throughout both projects. For the library these include Brighter Futures, our children's services providers for Reading and New Directions, Reading's Adult and Community Learning provider. For the HexBox, various local music providers, cultural partners and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.</p> <p>Other supporters for the package bid include the University of Reading, our two Business Improvement Districts for whom the enhancement of culture, leisure and night time economy are essential to supporting the high street, adjacent landowners including Broad Street Mall, whose new owners AEW are highly supportive of both projects and Hammersons, owners of The Oracle shopping centre.</p> |
| Approvals | The schemes are complaint with Local Plan policies CR4 - Leisure Culture and Tourism in Central Reading, OU1 - New and existing community facilities, CR12D – West Side Major Opportunity Area Hosier Street, as well as being supported by the recently adopted Minster Quarter Development Framework which has Supplementary Planning document status. In addition, conversations with the LPA have been ongoing since project inception with pre application discussions informing the design. |
| Technical/ Other constraints | A structural survey of the Civic Centre has confirmed that the building is capable of taking the loading associated with the library books. Further surveys will be carried out for the HexBox to confirm the structural integrity of the concrete podium it will link onto. These key surveys will be undertaken during the summer of 2022. |
| Contractor | The proposed route for the construction and fit out contracts for both projects will be through a 2 stage procurement from an approved framework. Our preferred route is the Southern Construction Framework which comprises seven contractors in the SE region who deliver an effective, collaborative construction procurement vehicle for all public authorities in the South of England. |
| Scope for early delivery | Use of HCC/RBC partnership means design to RIBA3 can follow on immediately following funding award. In addition, the Library relocation project will be phased to ensure continuity of public facing services. The first phase of the physical works will require internal relocations within the building to create space for the new reception area at ground floor. These moves will be carried out in February and March 2023. Additionally, following appointment of multidisciplinary professional team in Autumn, further design and survey work will commence on HexBox in December. |
| State Aid/ Subsidy Control | Both projects will be designed by, delivered, owned and operated by Reading Borough Council and legal advice is that no subsidy control issues arise from the bid or the package projects. |

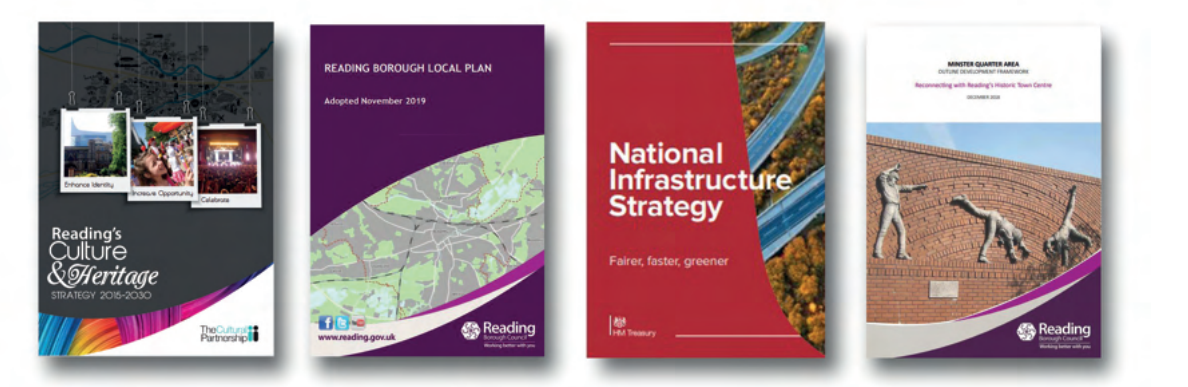
BENEFITS AND IMPACT

| Benefit | Impact |
|--|---------|
| Total investment value | £22.3M |
| Associated construction jobs supported | 150 |
| Localised spending per annum | £52M |
| Associated jobs supported | 350 |
| Hours of Volunteering per annum | 160+ |
| Performance space created | 772m2 |
| Library and learning space created | 1,415m2 |
| Increased footfall per annum | 1m |
| No of homes released | 46 |

STRATEGIC RISKS

| RISK | MITIGATION |
|---|--|
| Levelling up funding approval not forthcoming - fees incurred by Reading Borough Council to date are abortive. | Continual liaison with key stakeholders and continual review of emerging guidance on funding compliance. |
| Impact on supply and prices due to inflationary pressures - pressure on budgets with value-engineering required. | Materials pricing will be monitored and UK-sourcing maximised. |
| Wage inflation above allowances - status of the construction market creates higher than expected tender price inflation prior to Reading Borough Council letting the main contract for the works. | A suitably qualified quantity surveyor will be appointed and asked to report regularly on status of the market and the impact this might have on the project. |
| Tender returns exceed set budget - pressure on budgets with value-engineering required. | A suitably qualified quantity surveyor will be appointed and asked to carry out regular cost checks and pre-tender estimates prior to commencing procurement activities. |
| Client changes after design fix - pressure on budgets with value engineering required. | Strict change control procedures will be introduced, including sign-off at project board. |
| Insolvency of key subcontractor / suppliers - delays to programme / cost push. | Their financial stability will be monitored monthly. Large items of plant / equipment will be sourced directly. |
| COVID19 - delays to programme / cost push | Government guidelines will be monitored closely and adhered to. We will ensure supply chain have appropriate contingency plans in place. |

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGY



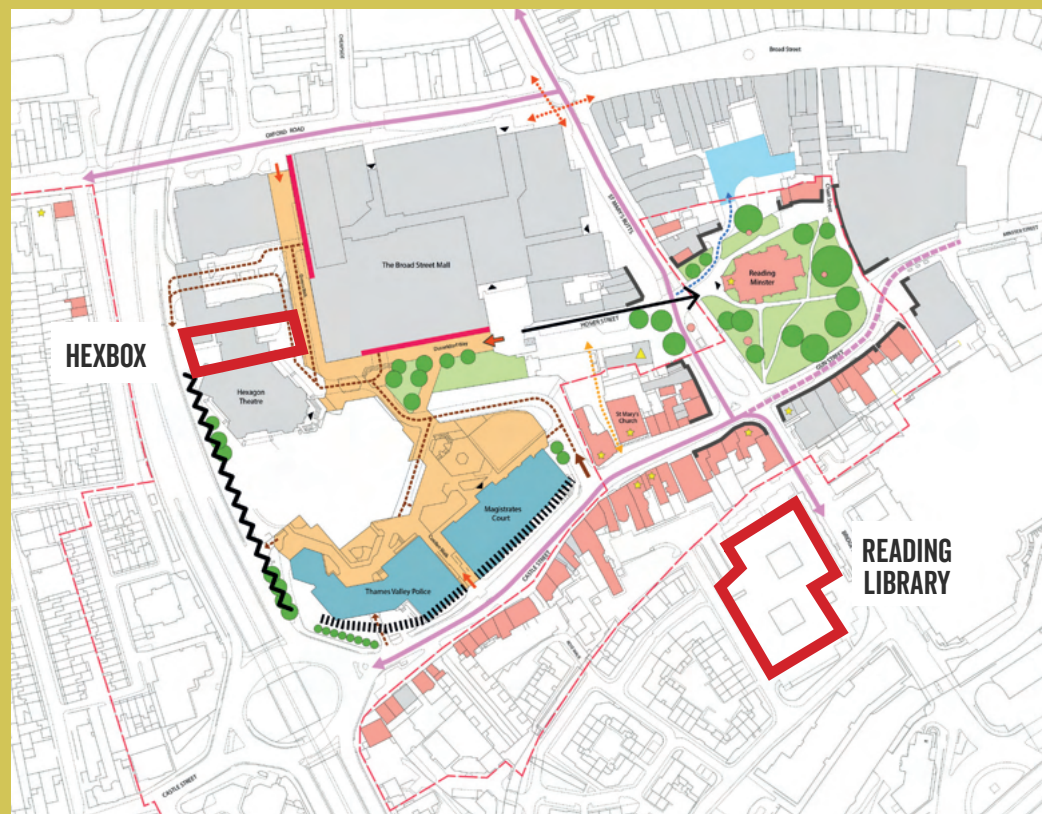
CULTURE FOR READING

MINSTER QUARTER MASTERPLAN

The Minster Quarter Area will be a distinctive and high-quality, high density, mixed use area within Reading's Central Core. The area will portray a unique character and sense of place retaining the historical associations of the area and its wider environs, providing high quality public realm, both through the enhancement of existing public spaces adjacent to the site and the provision of new spaces that provide a setting and focus for new development.

Reading's Levelling Up Fund bid proposals provide an anchor for the regeneration of the Minster Quarter, and the increased footfall arising will boost the viability of future development phases, increase retail values in the neighbouring Broad Street Mall, and stimulate wider residential, retail and public realm improvements.

Our plans for Minster Quarter will lead directly to greater engagement in Reading's cultural offer, improved wellbeing, increased town centre footfall and spend; and indirectly to improved access to housing, greater social-economic diversity, improved social cohesion and improved access to job opportunities.



RELATED INVESTMENTS

MINSTER QUARTER DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT 1: HEXBOX

PROJECT 2: READING LIBRARY



PROJECT 1 HEXBOX

“ We feel the new building will enhance and rejuvenate the area attracting more people to this part of the town centre. This also opens up opportunities for cultural organisations to work in partnership with the new venue and contribute towards increasing footfall for businesses in the area encouraging more family activities in Reading. ”

MARY GENIS, FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CULTUREMIX ARTS LTD

“ This is well overdue! I hope that Reading manages to secure funding and that perhaps we could finally have an entertainment centre that is good enough for the local population. The Hexagon as it stands now, is too small and not accessible even though the location is good. ”

REBECCA P, READING RESIDENT

PROJECT 1 HEXBOX

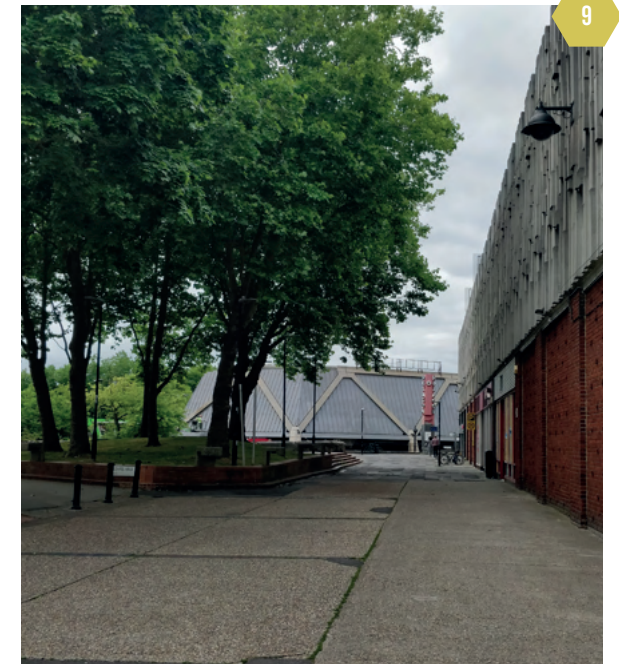


Since the demolition of the nearby Civic Offices, The Hexagon has become increasingly isolated and experienced falling passing footfall. We aim to create a new cultural 'campus' by adding a sister venue, the HexBox, to the existing regionally important Hexagon Theatre: a new arts, performance and community hub that will host a wide variety of performances - including live music - and provide a focus for the new community that will soon establish itself in the Minster Quarter regeneration area.

This new destination will help regenerate brownfield land, boost passing footfall to the site and Broad Street Mall, support unmet demand, realise additional income streams, while providing a spatial anchor and focal point for the community. This new space will also allow for a more diverse and varied programme that will help expand the audience type to those who are less well served.

The new venue will be designed to improve the physical linkage between the Hexagon and surrounding developments, regenerate brownfield land, boost footfall, inspire residents and support learning and skills. It will also enable a more varied programme to engage a more diverse audience, and support a safe, inviting, and enjoyable night-time economy which releases the potential of the burgeoning arts scene.

"A new venue in Reading would provide emerging artists and musicians with a flexible space to hone their craft, develop their fanbase and increase access to cultural opportunities for the local community. In the aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the development of new Grassroots Music Venues is exactly the type of innovative urban planning that demonstrates a



commitment to fostering a resilient and sustainable town with culture at its heart." Music Venues Trust.

"The Council's plan to develop a new performance space at the Hexagon and dramatically improve public access to the wider Hexagon complex demonstrates the Council's commitment to building the cultural offer for its residents and ensuring communities have access to world-class facilities in order to experience and participate in culture. The new venue's capacity is perfect to develop further and widen the diversity of programming, attracting new promoters and including

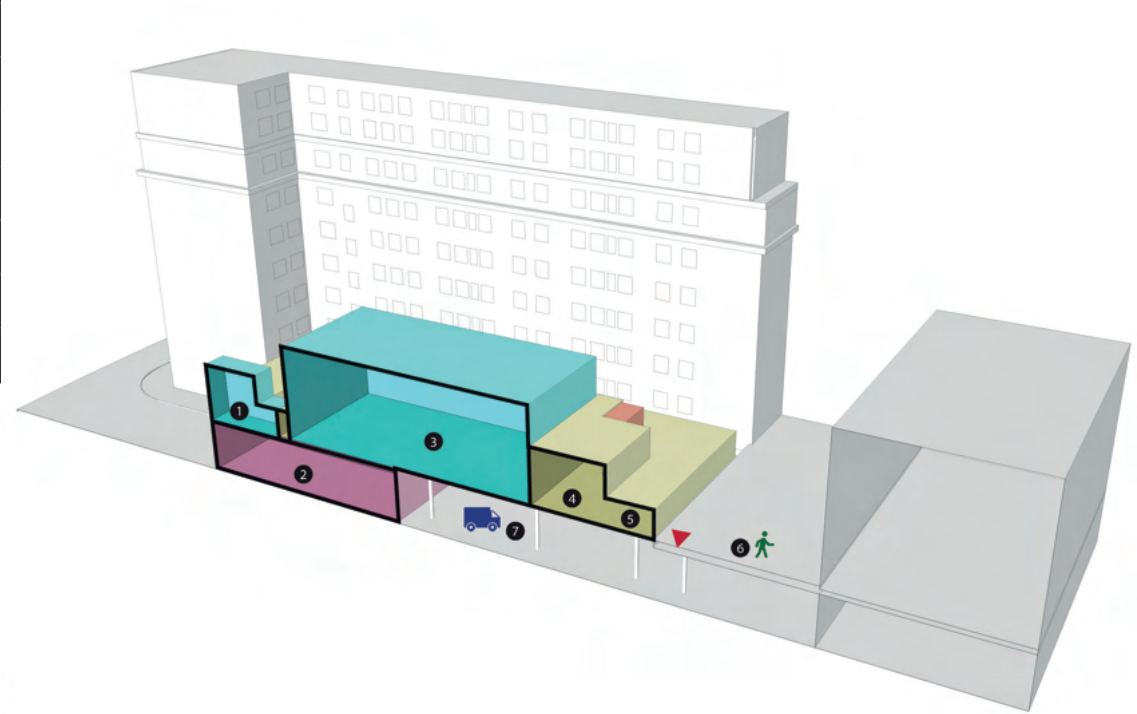
opportunities for communities to utilise the creative space and grow the number of amateur performances." Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The programme at The HexBox will be 70% professional 30% amateur/community, focussed on live music, comedy, professional theatre, spoken word (talks/book launches etc) amateur theatre/music, schools events and local arts and community groups. There are strong relationships with promoters/local arts groups, producers and unmet demand for a live music space at this size. In Year 1 we expect to deliver 200 ticketed events in the HexBox to an audience of 21,000.



PROJECT 1 PROGRAMME

| Milestones | 2022 | | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | | 2025 | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Surveys and investigation work | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Feasibility design/ cost (Stage 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detail Design (Stage 3) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Procurement (Stage 4) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction (Stage 5) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fit out | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



PROJECT FUNDING

| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------|----------------|-----|
| LUF Funding | £619,762 | £2,356,498 | £9,587,740 | £0 | £12,564,000 | 92% |
| Other Public Sector Funding | £56,037 | £213,068 | £866,895 | £0 | £1,136,000 | 8% |
| Total | £675,799.00 | £2,569,566.00 | £10,454,635.00 | £0.00 | £13,700,000.00 | |

CRITICAL PATH/ KEY MILESTONES

| Work Activity | Estimated Date |
|---|----------------|
| Concept Design | Feb 2023 |
| Appoint contractor for 1st stage of tender under PCSA agreement | March 2023 |
| Planning submission | May 2023 |
| Planning approval | Sep 2023 |
| Detail design | Sep 2023 |
| Mobilisation | Nov 2023 |
| Site start | Jan 2024 |
| Completion onsite | March 2025 |
| Building open to public | April 2025 |

PROJECT COSTS

| Construction costs | HexBox £m |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Build costs | £4.6 |
| Other allowances / Abnormals | £1.7 |
| Contractor preliminaries | £1.0 |
| Overheads & profit | £0.4 |
| Design risk | £0.4 |
| Construction contingency | £0.5 |
| Inflation | £0.9 |
| Other build costs | £- |
| Professional fees | £2.2 |
| Allowance for other fees / surveys | £0.4 |
| Fixtures and fittings | £0.3 |
| Global project contingency | £1.3 |
| Total | £13.7 |

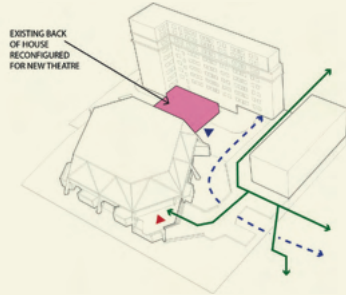


Artist's impression of HexBox foyer

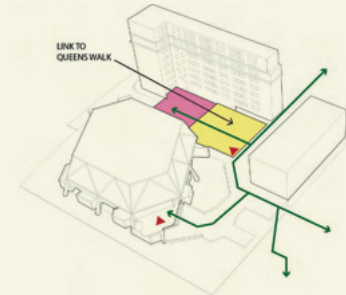
PROJECT 1

HEXBOX - CONCEPT DESIGN

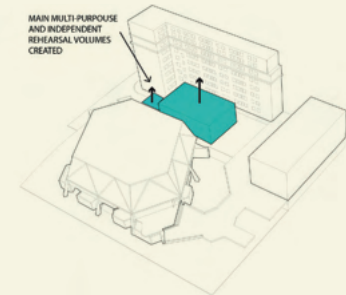
1. RECONFIGURE EXISTING HEXAGON BACK OF HOUSE



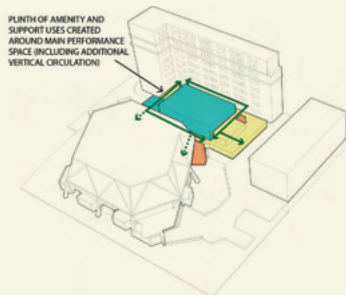
2. EXTEND PODIUM



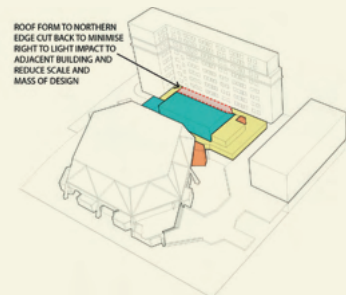
3. NEW STUDIO THEATRE & REHEARSAL ROOM



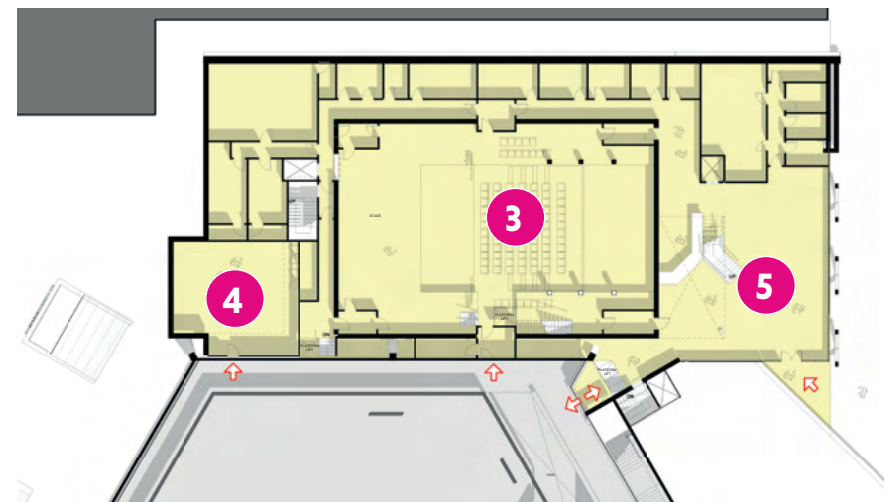
4. LEVEL ACCESS AND NEW LIFT AND STAIR CORE



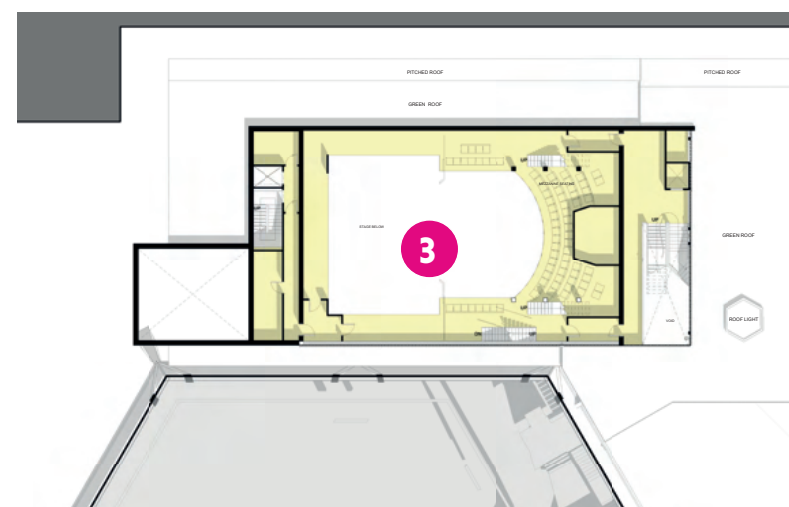
5. BUILDING MASS RESPOND TO CONTEXT



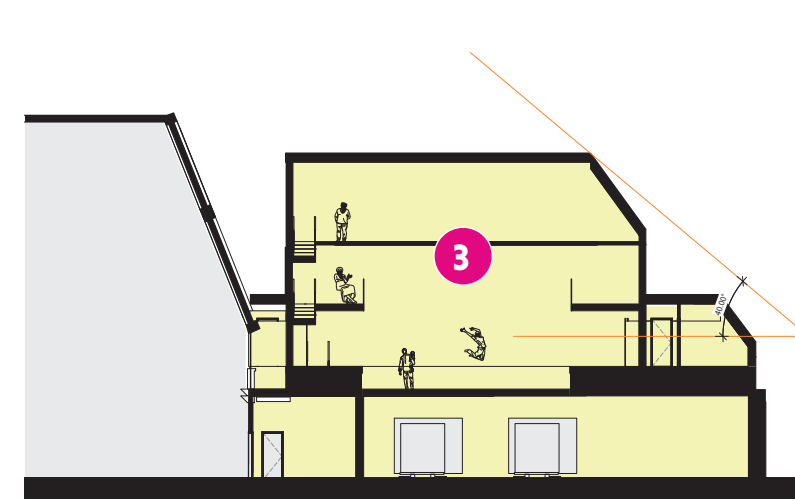
Lower Ground Floor Plan (Hexagon Theatre Loading Bay)



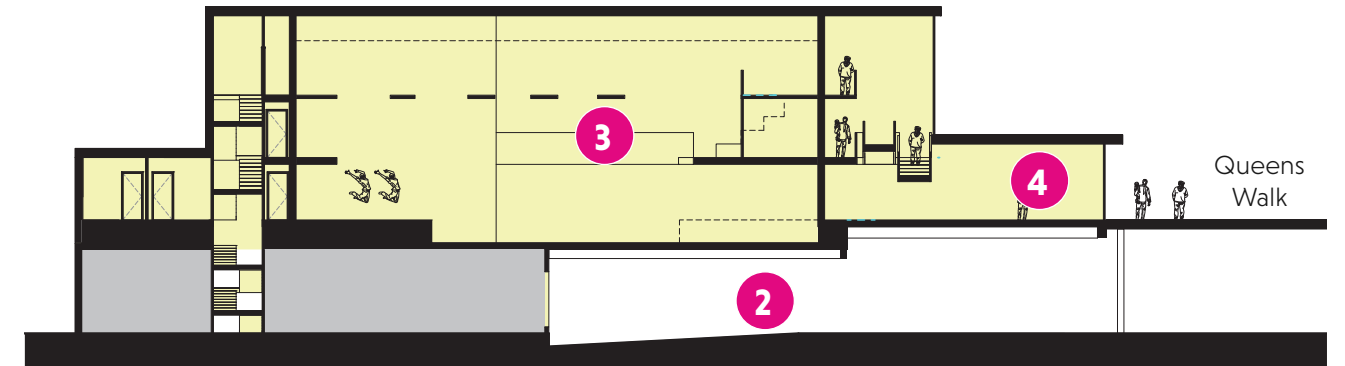
Ground Floor Plan (Podium Level)



First Floor Plan



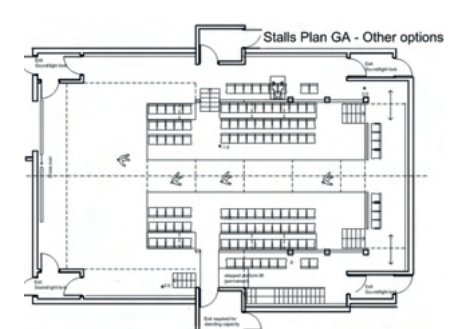
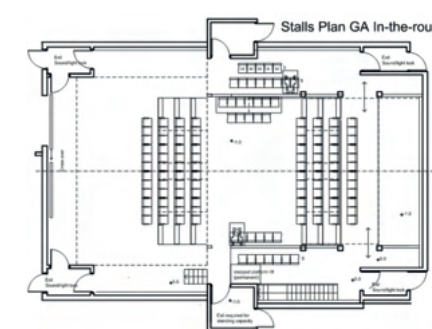
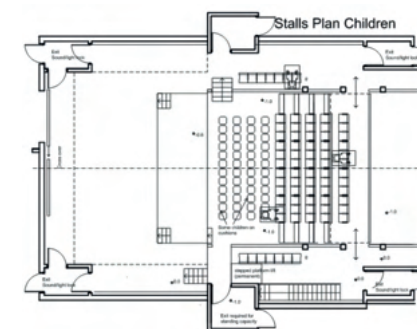
Cross Section



Long Section

Key

- 1 Reconfigure existing Hexagon Theatre loading bay to provide additional articulated lorry get-in
- 2 New loading bay and stage access for Studio Theatre
- 3 160 seat Studio Theatre
- 4 Rehearsal room
- 5 Level access foyer and atrium space



Multifunctional layout of Proposed Theatre

PROJECT 1 DECARBONISATION STRATEGY

Reading secured recognition as an international 'A' list city for 'bold climate action' in 2021 and our commitment to net zero is reflected in our Levelling Up proposals, with high sustainability standards in our proposed designs, incorporating:

- high level of sustainable design (well insulated/ air-tight/ minimize cold bridging through robust detailing and high quality construction techniques)
- decarbonised heat supply
- renewable energy generation.

Significant investment in low carbon infrastructure forms part of our local funding contribution, reinforced by the robust plans for sustainable mobility in our related bid for a package of green transport projects.



URBAN REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The Hexagon Theatre is located in a region of Reading with a number of new developments and refurbishments proposed and is likely to undergo significant change in the near future. As an early phase the new proposals for the Theatre and surrounding public realm provides the opportunity to improve visitor experience, wayfinding and safety and potentially shift perceptions of this currently neglected corner of Town.

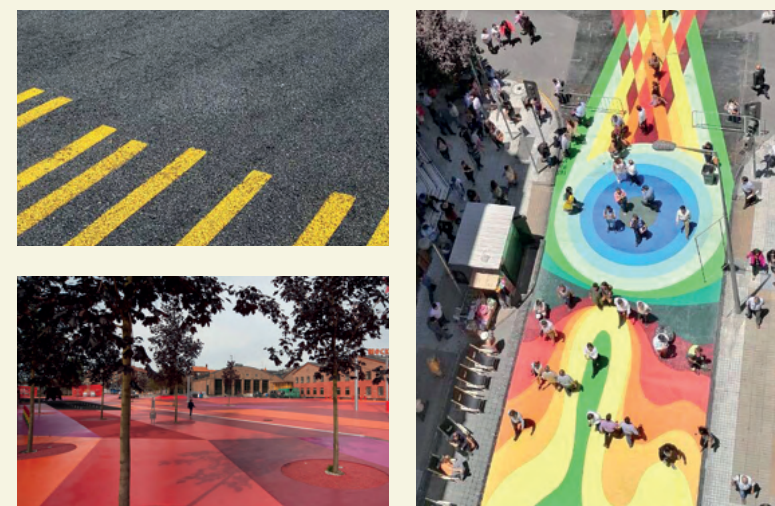
Meanwhile uses are already popping up close by. Food growing and biodiversity projects are underway at Lavender Place Community Gardens and the recently opened Blue Collar Yard is a popular food and drink destination.

At this point in time a more flexible approach to public realm is proposed that supports three core principles:

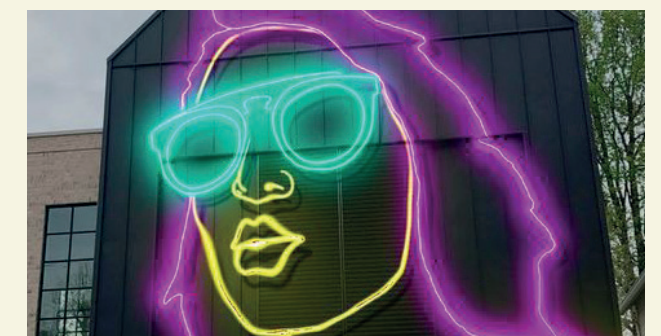
1. Improve Wayfinding and Intuitive Navigation
2. Increase Greenness and Biodiversity
3. Curate Identity and Sense of Place

A series of precedent images on the following pages illustrate the look and feel of the public realm proposals. From this more long term public realm interventions can be introduced as neighbouring proposals are introduced that build on the three core principles.

Introducing exciting public art and more greenness alongside improve sight lines, wayfinding and lighting will provide a dynamic and evolving urban context fit for a revitalised and distinctive theatre.



- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 Existing trees retained | 4 Public art opportunity | 8 St Mary's Butts |
| 2 Improved planting - biodiverse rich species | 5 Bold Signage/public art | 9 The Hexagon |
| 3 New planting areas | 6 Improved surface treatment | 10 Blue Collar Yard |
| | 7 Improved temporary surface treatment | |



PROJECT 2 READING LIBRARY

“I think that moving the library is also an excellent idea. The existing central library has too many floors and the entrance is dark and unwelcoming.”

“Co-location of libraries with other services and council facilities can be incredibly powerful, with the mutual benefit of bringing more users to each service within the building...a new or refurbished library can bring an enormous sense of pride to the place...As the membership body for public libraries and ACE funded Sector Support Organisations, we will be pleased to support your plans.”

(LIBRARIES CONNECTED)

PROJECT 2 READING LIBRARY



Due to spatial shifts over time, Reading's 'Central' Library is no longer in the centre of the town and the location is blighted by poor access and anti-social behaviour. The existing Central Library on the Kings Road is well-used but is located in a dated building which is set over a series of floors which make accessibility difficult without significant investment. Our proposals represent a major opportunity to solve these issues and create a cultural hub - adjacent to communities in the 10% most deprived in the country - by relocating the Library nearer to the Hexagon Campus and increasing its focus on digital skills, events and learning.

Our proposal to integrate the Central Library within the existing Civic Centre, which will undergo a rationalisation of office space due to success of flexible hybrid working model, offers an opportunity to bring together services that target those in most need of support, reduce running costs and cut greenhouse gas emissions whilst releasing much needed brownfield land for housing on the current library site.

There are concentrated pockets of poor literacy in Reading which impacts social cohesion, access to the jobs market and isolation. The single most powerful weapon the council has against poor literacy - and the later life problems this can bring - is a well-placed, strategic library service, tasked with supporting early intervention - with the new Central Library as its flagship.

Through increased opening hours, an accessible location collocated with other services we hope to drive higher library membership and increase visits by up to 50%. Reading Library will help deliver on our strategic priorities for the library service.

Supporting our communities as we recover from the pandemic

- To be the trusted place in communities
- To support the economic recovery by hosting events, activities and services, enabling people to come back together



Helping Children and Young People

- To provide a quality programme of events and activities that help develop creativity and a love of reading
- To ensure that the voice of children and parents is part of service planning improving access to online services
- Work to support digitally excluded communities online
- Provide physical spaces that allow quality digital experiences with fast fixed networks and fast wifi
- working to encourage innovation

Supporting improvements in Health, Wellbeing and Literacy

- Working with agencies in Reading to support targeted interventions and projects that will improve physical and mental health
- Focused work to reduce social isolation
- A key agent in public health messaging across age groups and socio economic status to reduce health inequality and support communities

Bringing arts, culture and heritage to library spaces

- Support Reading's cultural community to realise ambitions, by hosting, providing space and audiences to support artists and producers to stay in Reading
- Ensure library programming sits alongside wider Cultural programming in Reading



PROJECT 2 PROGRAMME

| Milestones | 2022 | | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | | 2025 | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|----|----|--|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Surveys and investigation work | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Feasibility design/ cost (Stage 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detail Design (Stage 3) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Procurement (Stage 4) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction (Stage 5) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fit out | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

PROJECT FUNDING

| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-----|
| LUF Funding | £655,690 | £815,520 | £5,128,790 | £0 | £6,600,000 | 77 |
| Other Public Sector Funding | £56,250 | £75,000 | £1,756,192 | £112,558 | £2,000,000 | 13 |
| Total | £711,940.00 | £890,520.00 | £6,884,982.00 | £112,558.00 | £8,600,000.00 | 100 |



EXISTING READING LIBRARY

CRITICAL PATH/ KEY MILESTONES

| Work Activity | Estimated Date |
|---|----------------|
| Concept Design | Feb 2023 |
| Planning submission | June 2023 |
| Planning approval | Sep 2023 |
| Appoint contractor (traditional 2 stage tender) | Oct 2023 |
| Mobilisation | Nov 2023 |
| Site start | Jan 2024 |
| Completion onsite | March 2025 |
| Building open to public | April 2025 |

COST PLAN

| | Library £m |
|--|------------|
| Construction costs | |
| Build costs | £3.9 |
| Other allowances / Abnormals | £0.0 |
| Contractor preliminaries | £0.9 |
| Overheads & profit | £0.2 |
| Design risk | £0.5 |
| Construction contingency | £0.4 |
| Inflation | £0.5 |
| Other build costs | £0.2 |
| Professional fees | £0.9 |
| Allowance for other fees / surveys / etc | £0.3 |
| Fixtures and fittings | £0.6 |
| Global project contingency | £0.2 |
| Total | £8.6 |



FLEXIBLE LECTURING, GATHERING AND EXHIBITION SPACE AT NEW READING LIBRARY

PROJECT 2

READING LIBRARY - DESIGN

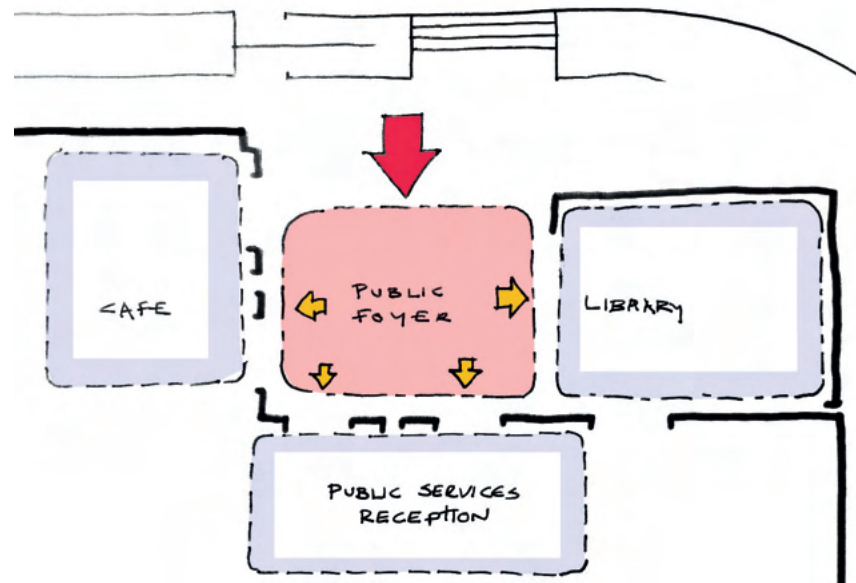
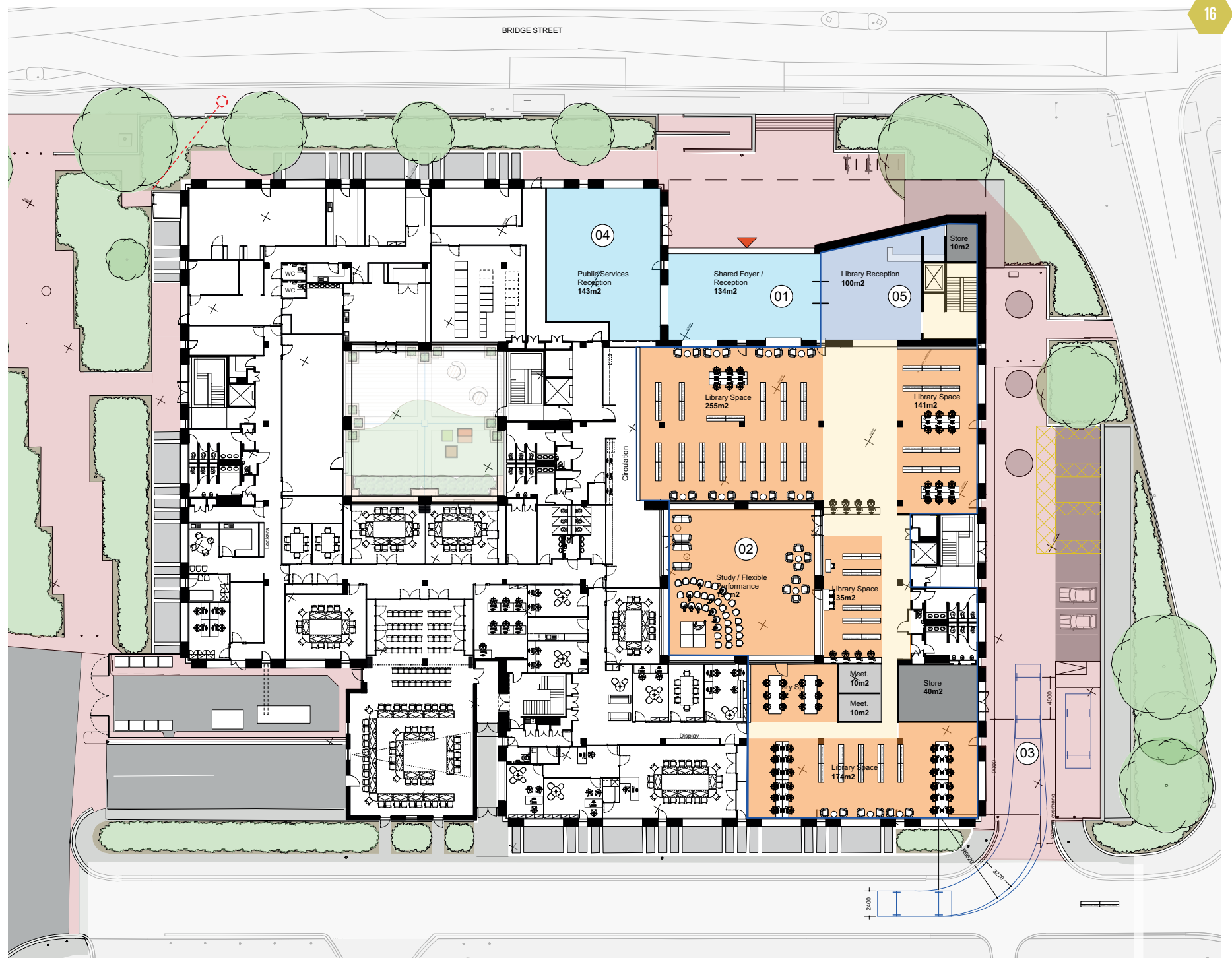
Reading Library - A new Central Library

Our proposal to integrate the Central Library within the existing Civic Centre offers an opportunity to bring together services that target those in most need of support, reducing running costs and cutting greenhouse gas emissions whilst also releasing much needed brownfield land for housing on the current library site. The single most powerful weapon the council has against poor literacy - and the later life problems this can bring - is a well-placed, strategic library service, tasked with supporting early intervention - with the new Central Library as its flagship.

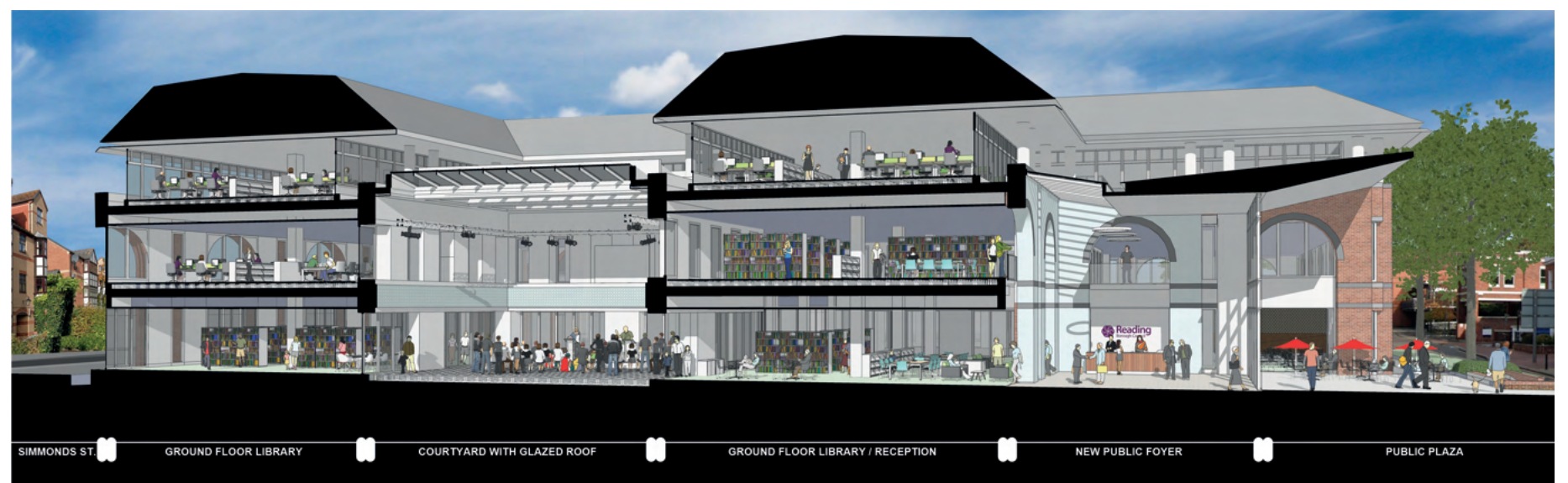
This new c1770m2 Library will have modern facilities, upgraded equipment and enhanced digital connectivity, including 50 public computers with superfast broadband and workspaces. Through increased opening hours, an accessible location collocated with other services we hope to drive higher library membership and increase visits by up to 50%.

“I see this as a once in a generation opportunity to offer a much-needed boost to the cultural and learning offer within our wonderful town, investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life for our local community by supporting our town centre and high street regeneration.”

ANDY BRIGGS, GENERAL MANAGER, THE ORACLE SHOPPING CENTRE



SPACIAL DIAGRAM OF CIVIC CENTRE ALTERATIONS



PROJECT 2 DECARBONISATION STRATEGY

Reading secured recognition as an international 'A' list city for 'bold climate action' in 2021 and our commitment to net zero is reflected in our Levelling Up proposals, with high sustainability standards in our proposed designs, incorporating:

- high level of sustainable design (well insulated/ air-tight/ minimize cold bridging through robust detailing and high quality construction techniques)
- decarbonised heat supply
- renewable energy generation.

Significant investment in low carbon infrastructure forms part of our local funding contribution, reinforced by the robust plans for sustainable mobility in our related bid for a package of green transport projects.

CHANGING PLACES TOILETS

The Library works will complement proposals to install a Changing Places toilet at the Civic Centre as a public venue so that everyone, regardless of their access needs or disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, can use a toilet facility with dignity and in hygienic conditions.

People with profound and multiple learning disabilities or with physical disabilities often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places toilets.



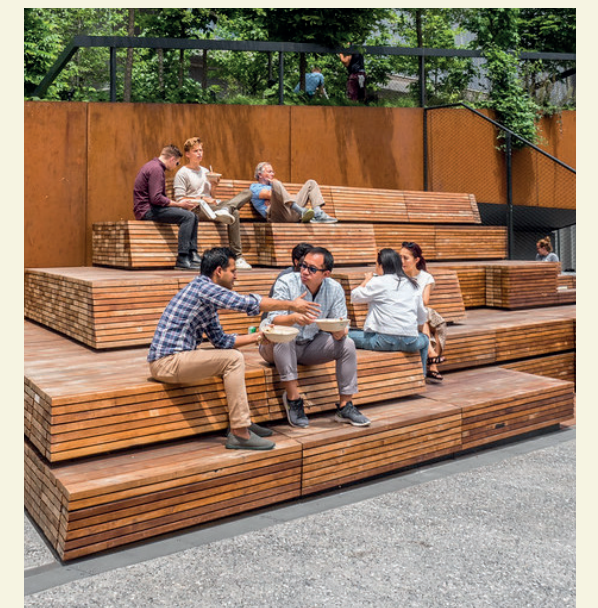
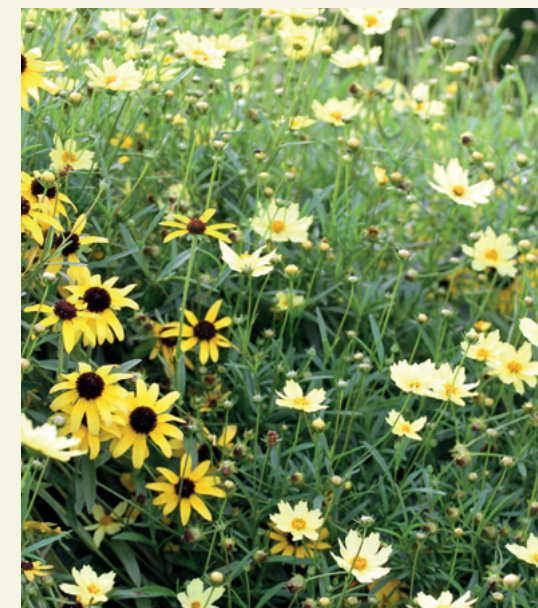
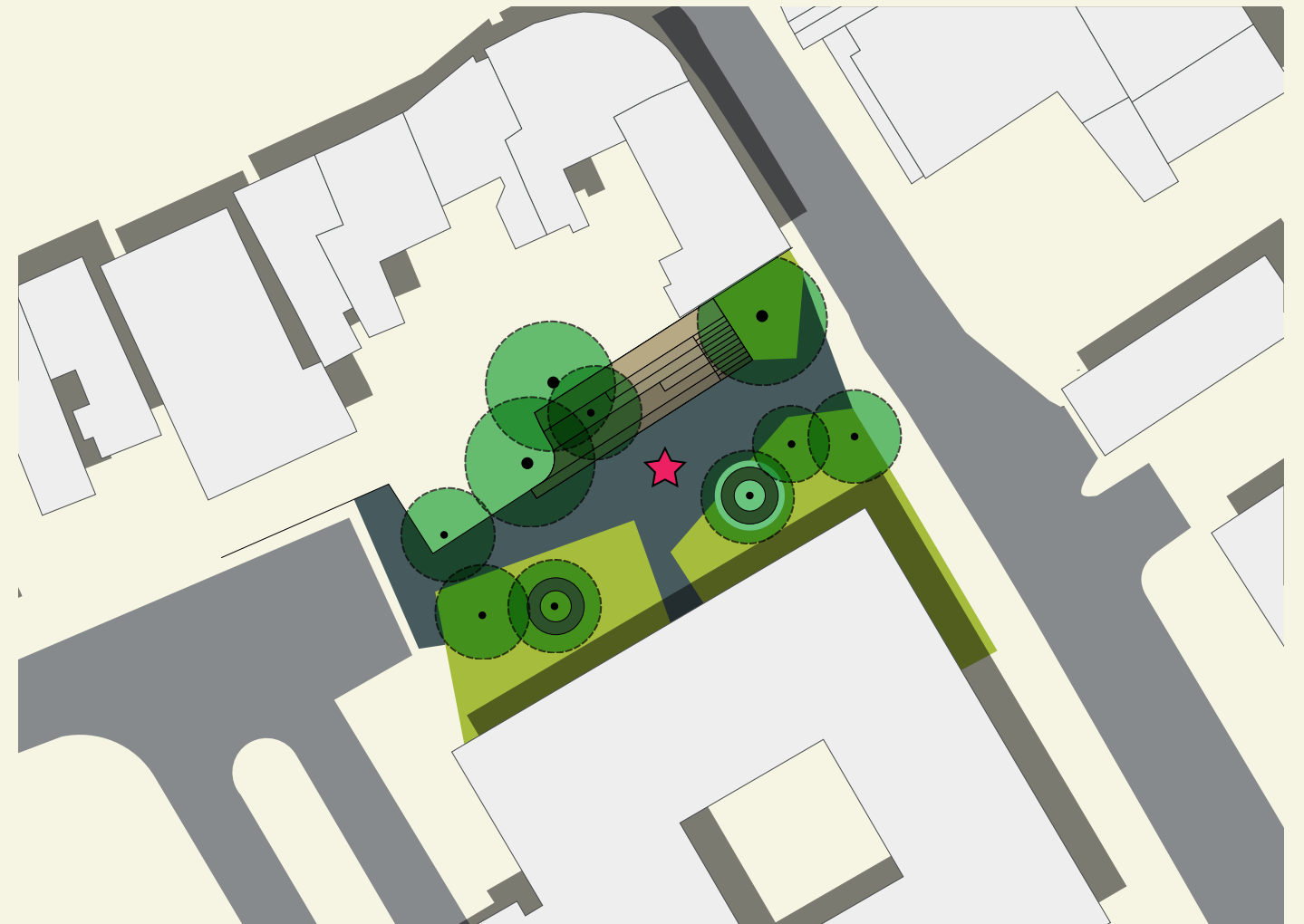
URBAN REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The pocket space outside the library provides an opportunity to create an outdoor Reading Garden set amongst seasonal planting and retained mature trees and directly linked to Library.

A cascade of seating, south facing, overlooks the space and library encouraging people to sit, stop, ponder and dwell in the garden.

Located under part of the park is a culverted brook. Perhaps at a future date this could be reopened to further enhance the space.

- Existing & New Trees
- New Wildflower Planting
- Cascade of Seating
- Art and Sculptural Features
- New surface treatment



RISK REGISTER

P - Probability, S - Severity, O - Overall

| Risk | P | S | O | Mitigation | P | S | O |
|--|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|
| Proposed project not in line with strategic priorities | 2 | 2 | 4 | The project is well aligned with Reading Borough Council's local priorities, including Local Plan, corporate plan and cultural strategy. It is a focal point for Minster Quarter Development framework. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Ability to achieve early spend | 4 | 3 | 12 | Procurement documentation for Multi-disciplinary design team will begin in advance of funding award to expedite appointment. | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Ability to deliver during 2021-2024 funding period | 3 | 3 | 9 | RBC has control of land and site. Timing of funding award out of RBC control. Detailed programme worked up. | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Security of match funding | 3 | 4 | 12 | All match funding secured | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Control of cost overruns | 4 | 3 | 12 | Suitable project contingencies and inflation allowed for in cost plan. Design team will keep under constant review and value engineer as necessary | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Market does not respond as anticipated | 3 | 3 | 9 | Early engagement has occurred through project development with local artists/performance organisations and programmers to build a realistic programme for the new venue. | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Procurement / Legal Issues / Subsidy controls threaten scheme delivery | 3 | 3 | 9 | PCR regulations will be followed, appropriate construction frameworks with capacity have been identified. No state aid issues associated with Council built, owned and operated venue | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Stats Infrastructure Services Capacity insufficient | 3 | 4 | 12 | Comprehensive stats review at next design stage and early engagement with providers | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Hexagon Specific Risks | | | | | | | |
| Site management issues associated with adjacent development schemes | 2 | 2 | 4 | Existing relationships with adjoining landowners will aid cooperation on wider MQ site. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Structural issues to podium increase time and cost | 3 | 4 | 12 | Surveys will be carried out early to inform design to allow for prompt changes if required | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Design scope exceeds budget available | 3 | 3 | 9 | Clear client brief and strong governance and controls will be in place to keep to budget available | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Planning determination not achieved by required date | 2 | 4 | 8 | Policy compliant. Pre application discussions have occurred during project development and issues for early consideration identified. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Library Specific Risks | | | | | | | |
| Impact on operation of other council services at Civic Centre during works | 3 | 3 | 9 | Relevant stakeholder representation on Project Boards along with strong communication with contractor and management planning. | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Changes to client brief | 3 | 3 | 9 | Programme of client review and sign off gateways to be implemented. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Impact on existing service provision for library users | 2 | 2 | 4 | Reading library will remain operational until Reading Library operational. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Client brief does not deliver a modern, innovative library provision | 3 | 3 | 9 | Ongoing learning from exemplar projects and use of specialist library consultant to ensure relevant and quality outcomes. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Sustainability accreditation does not meet expectations | 3 | 3 | 9 | Qualify assumptions at RIBA 2 t. Engagement with end users to understand requirements and high-light options available to meet sustainable agenda. | 2 | 2 | 4 |

