



**FORMER JOHN LEWIS DEPOT, LETCOMBE STREET, READING
(ALSO KNOWN AS JLP MILL LANE)**

**SOCIAL VALUE REPORT
AUGUST 2024**

savills

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the social value that will be created by John Lewis Partnership BtR Ltd (the ‘Applicant’) through the development proposals regarding Letcombe Street, Reading (‘the Site’).

The Proposed Development includes “Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site comprising erection of a new building for up to 215 build to rent residential dwellings (Use Class C3) together with flexible commercial /community space (Use Class E/F1/F2), residents’ facilities, landscaping, public realm, amenity space, cycle parking and disabled car parking.” The site will also include a community garden, which provides the opportunity for food growing, and educational opportunities for young people for sustainable food practices.

The social value strategy has been prepared by Savills Earth for the Applicant to outline the social value contributions the Applicant proposes to commit to through the Proposed Development. The Savills Earth team have aligned the social value targets against several local strategies such as, Reading’s Local Plan (2019) and Reading’s Social Value Policy, the Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2030), Team Reading Strategy and Reading’s Culture and Heritage Strategy.

The underlying theme of the social value proposed initiatives outlined in this document are all about connecting people through collaboration and innovation to create social impact. The Applicant has already established a relationship with several of the community partners named within this document. Those the Applicant has not yet engaged with will be ahead of the determination period and aligned with the Applicant’s Connections metric to report and measure impact.

It is important to note that the forecasted proposed commitments are preliminary and subject to a successful planning application.

Through the integrated development of this social value strategy JLP has undertaken the following to support this:

- Assembled a team responsible for overseeing the implementation of the social value strategy and cultural strategy, **involving experts in community engagement, social value and culture.**
- Commissioned a **comprehensive community needs assessment** by Savills Earth, to understand the needs and priorities of residents, businesses and community groups.
- **Engaged with Reading Officers** to present the findings to help inform potential partner organisations and establish the key themes that reflect the needs of the community set out below.
- Developed an initial **programme of initiatives and opportunities** set out in this strategy that maximise the social, environmental and economic and cultural benefits that the development proposals will bring.

Health and Wellbeing

- Food4Families, Reading International Solidarity Centre, Incredible Edible Reading
- Reading Cycle Campaign

Employment & Skills

- University of Reading
- Abbey School
- Katesgrove school
- Ethical Reading

Culture and Community

- Elderly Befriending Scheme
- Hoarding Competition

Summary of Community Initiatives

Partnerships with local groups



risc



Reading Elderly
Befriending Scheme



Health and Wellbeing	Education and Skills	Community and Culture
• Collaborating with health and wellbeing organisations to volunteer time, donations and support their operational needs. • Community garden provision • Encourage active travel	• Attending career events. • Educational workshops relating to architecture, sustainability and construction. • Providing support in HR, Marketing and business development.	• Hoarding Competition • Befriending Service • Promoting active and healthy travel with cycling societies. • Educational site visits for undergraduate students.
 	 	 

Providing Space for Community Groups

Following the research conducted in the community audit and community engagement with local organisations and members of the community, it was made clear that there is a need for a dedicated space in Reading, for the benefit of the wider Reading community.

The Applicant as part of the proposed development, will be creating an independently run community focused space. This space will be run by a third-party operator who will have certain social value commitments as part of the lease for example to actively work to employ local people.

We will work with residents and community partners to find the most beneficial use of the space so it can support causes and activities that enhance the sense of community cohesion in Reading.

We envisage this community focused space being an inclusive environment where there will be events and collaborative community projects taking place. It will provide a place that creates opportunities, events and programmes for different groups of people to connect and support one another. Ultimately, we want to create an environment where individuals and families from across the borough come together to connect, share skills, resources and stories that enhance the wellbeing and cohesion of residents within the borough.

This community space also has the benefit of bringing the new community of residents together with the existing community, thereby forging long term relationships for the benefit of Reading as a whole.

A photograph of a park scene featuring a lake, trees, and people. A large green semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the image, with the word "Introduction" centered in white text. The background shows a grassy area with fallen leaves, a wooden bench, and a body of water with ducks. A tall black lamppost stands on the left, and a red brick building is visible in the distance on the right.

Introduction

Purpose of Strategy

The purpose of this Social Value strategy is to serve as a comprehensive plan to ensure that the proposed development project generates positive and sustainable benefits for the local community, environment and economy.

This is outlined in a programme of initiatives and opportunities that will provide sustainable benefits to the local community in the short term, medium term and in the long term.

The purpose of the strategy has several key objectives:

- Build a **shared vision with the local community** to ensure that the development generates **positive and sustainable benefits** for the wellbeing of residents and **surrounding communities**.
- Develop the programme of community initiatives with key local groups **to support local needs, social integration and new connections**.
- Deliver **spaces that host and encourage community engagement** for residents and local community groups.
- Develop **bespoke training and employment opportunities** for residents in Reading, as part of strategic partnerships with local groups.
- Promote **inclusivity and diversity** catering to a diverse range of residents and community groups.

The social value strategy sets out the initial social value initiatives and opportunities that JLP has explored with community partners. Early opportunities to support these groups are being developed with the community partners to implement in the short term, with opportunities set out to be developed following determination of the application and throughout the key stages of the development process.

Key Stages

Short Term – Pre-determination: the social value strategy has been devised ahead of determination to ensure:

- The social value strategy is aligned with local policies and strategies.
- Social value is embedded into the development proposals.
- Creation of tangible social value outcomes for local stakeholders

Medium Term – Pre-Construction: a detailed action plan of social value initiatives to be developed for community involvement in the medium term

- During Construction: delivering on projects during construction

Long Term – Post-completion coordination of continual community engagement and activation when the site is in operation.

Across all three phases, we commit to honouring and developing the partnerships created with local community groups and aim to continually engage with the wider community to provide support and maximise benefits of the spaces offered in the proposed development.



Local context

Local Needs Analysis

The Applicant commissioned the Savills Earth Social Value team to undertake a robust piece of research to outline the social and community landscape of the location where the Letcombe Street site is located, in the form of a community audit.

Using Reading Borough Council’s key strategies and policies, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Indices of Deprivation (IoD), local newsletters and social media, the community audit provides an in-depth insight into the local community agenda. This includes identifying local social challenges, the priorities of Reading Borough Council to improve its borough and the demographics of the people living within the local community.

The community audit also identifies potential organisations for the Applicant to engage with throughout the development process. A social value strategy that is driven by engagement with the local community will create significant social value and community benefit and adhere to principle one of Social Value – Involve Stakeholders, endorsed by Social Value UK. Meaningful community engagement will create tangible social value outcomes for people who live and work in the building, access the building through public routes and the existing community, with the initiatives undertaken having measurable and sustainable impact.

INDICES OF DEPRIVATION

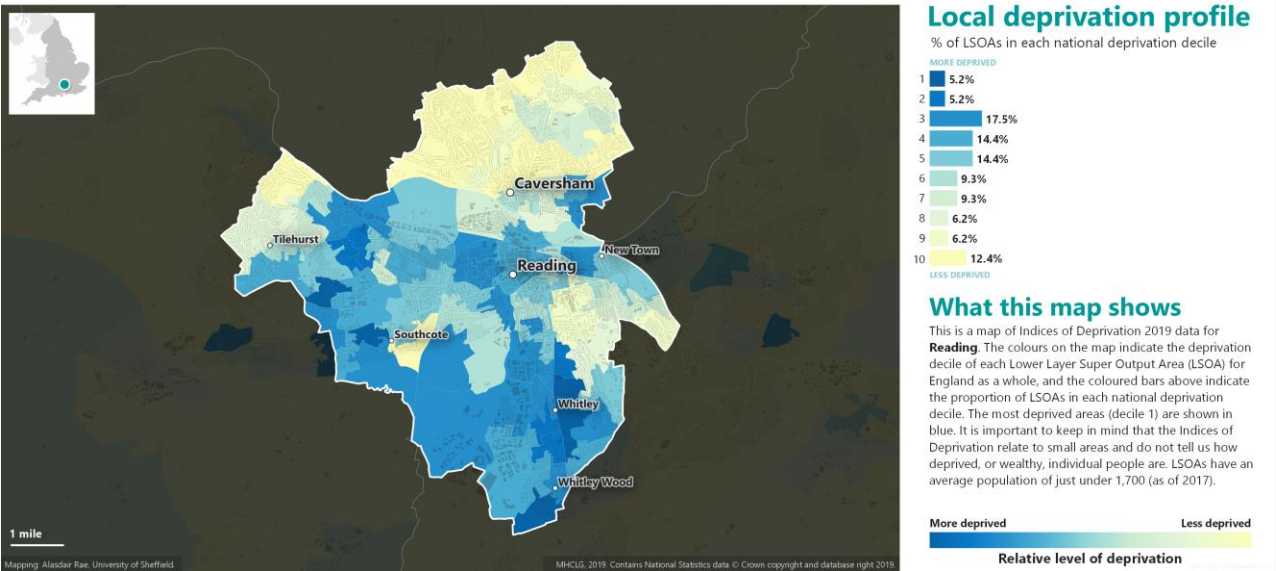
The IoD provides a relative set of measures based on seven domains of deprivation across England, creating an Index of Deprivation (IMD). The latest version was published in 2019.

To access deprivation levels in Reading, the Katesgrove ward and the LSOA, data has been collected from the most recent publication of the Government’s IMD 2019. The map below represents the IoD 2019 data for Reading Borough Council. The colours are representative of the deprivation decile for each LSOA for England, whilst the colour bars to the right indicate the proportion of each LSOA in each national deprivation decile

English Indices of Deprivation 2019

READING

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



The 2019 update of the IMD was released in September 2019. This is the fifth release of the index (2004, 2007, 2010, 2015 and 2019). In order to reflect the broad range of deprivation people can experience, the IMD is based on 37 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains;

- 1. Income
- 2. Employment
- 3. Health and disability
- 4. Education, skills and training
- 5. Barriers to housing and services
- 6. Living environment
- 7. Crime

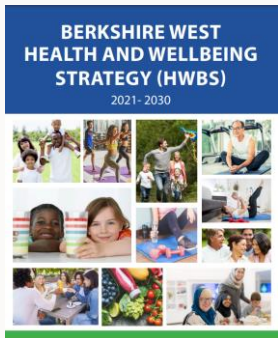
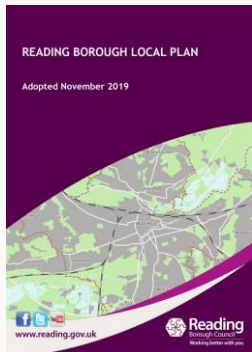
The figures in the table below have been extracted from the data output file provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2019. The file lists the post code entered, the LSOA that each postcode falls within and the deprivation data for that LSOA.

The file provides information on the LSOA codes and the deprivation data for that LSOA. The LSOA code where **the site is located is Reading 011D**. The IMD deciles are measured where one is the most deprived and 10 is the least deprived. Reading 011D ranked 14,240 out of 32,844 LSOAs, **falling amongst the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods in England**.

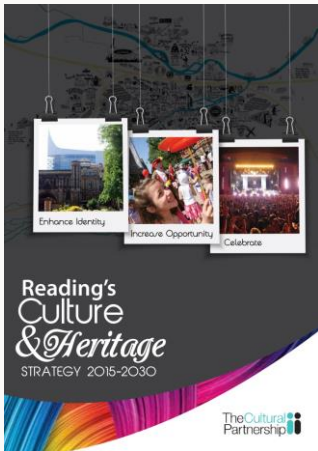
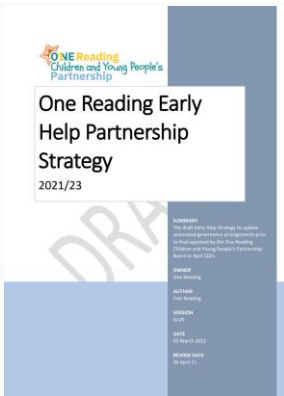
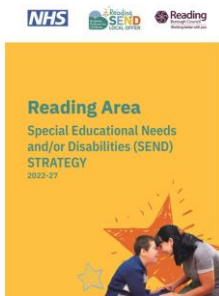
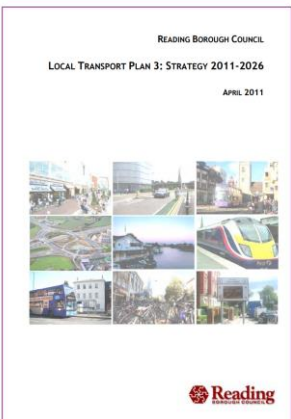
Deprivation Domain	Decile
Income Deprivation	6
Crime Deprivation	5
Employment Deprivation	6
Health and Disability Deprivation	5
Education, Skills and Training	8
Barriers to Housing and Services	2
Living Environment Deprivation	2

Source | Index of Deprivation | 2019

Local Policies and Strategies



Reading Borough Council Tackling Inequality Strategy 2023 to 2026



Team Reading People Strategy

The Council's vision is to help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

Social Value Policy

1. Introduction and Context

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force in January 2013. The Act introduced an obligation on public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts (i.e. contracts for services above the EU threshold limits). To discharge this duty, the authority must consider:

- How what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area; and
- How, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

The Council must consider under subsection (b), above, only matters that are relevant to what is proposed to be procured and, in doing so, must consider the extent to which it is proportionate in all the circumstances.

Whilst there is not an obligation for public authorities to consider social value in other procurements, such as capital works, there is equally no prohibition, provided the process used to procure is fair, equitable and transparent (i.e. in line with the EU Treaty Principles) and the principle of **proportionality and relevance** is applied. In fact, one objective of the Public Contract Regulations (2015) is to enable procurement to be used more strategically, offering new opportunities for social value to be considered throughout the procurement process.

Reading Borough Council's aim in adopting this policy is to go beyond the Act requirements and seek to drive social value in all

Reading's Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy 2023 – 2026

Our Approach

Reading's Community Safety Partnership has taken the decision to combine its Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategies due to the priorities and activities required to address them being so closely linked. In preparing this strategy, extensive work has been undertaken to understand crime levels and patterns and where possible, underlying causes of these issues, which have helped inform the development of the priorities for Reading's Community Safety Partnership over the next three years.

In developing our priorities, we have also taken into consideration other strategies and plans, at both a local, Thames Valley Wide and regional level to ensure that we are aligned and there is not duplication of activity and more importantly, there are not gaps in addressing the issues that we have identified as being a priority.

At a glance – What we know about our Borough

- 174,200 Total estimated population of Reading (Census 2021)
- 67,700 Total estimated number of households (Census 2021)
- 19,741 Total number of crimes (Sep-21 – Aug-22) (122 per 1,000 persons)
- 10 neighbourhoods in Reading are within the most deprived 20% in England
 - 5 of which are within the most deprived 10%
- Reading has a strong economy with a highly skilled workforce, based on technology, professional services and science. Its job density measurement in 2020 was 1.2 jobs per resident aged between 16-64.

Reading's Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategic Assessment

The Community Safety Partnership undertook a Strategic Assessment during the spring and summer of 2022, which has informed us about the crime and anti-social behaviour issues, trends and emerging themes, that have informed the development of this strategy.

The Strategic Assessment highlighted that crime in Reading decreased in 2020/21 by 11% compared to the previous year, reversing a previously persistent upward trend. This reduction is likely to be attributable to nationwide lockdowns and restrictions imposed in response to the coronavirus pandemic to varying degrees throughout 2020/21. However, it is impossible to quantify the level of 'hidden' crime that occurred during this period.

Although Reading is one of the 3 top crime generating CSP areas in Thames Valley Community Safety Partnership, the CSP is consistently around average when its crime levels are compared to other similar Community Safety Partnership areas across the

Identifying the
vision, themes and
objectives

Social Value: Reading Borough Council

Reading Borough Council's approach to social value focuses on and goes beyond The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, as it seeks to include social value in all aspects of procurement and contracting activity in the borough, therefore supporting an inclusive local economy and addressing the climate emergency.

The policy proposes using the National TOMS Framework, for both private and public organisations who seek to embed social value into procurement and management processes as it is a solution that is immediately available and may be applied to any project, so it is a tool which the Council can make immediate use of.

The Applicant is aligned with the Reading Borough Council's Local Plan (2019) visions which is to:

"help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success"

The Social Value Policy is also reflective of the strategic objectives outlined in Reading Borough Council's Local Plan 2019, which will align with the overall vision of the strategy.

The Reading Corporate Plan focuses on three themes:

- Healthy environment
- Thriving communities
- Inclusive economy

The TEAM Reading People strategy is also key to this social value strategy:

T- work Together

E - drive Efficiency

A - be Ambitious

M - make a difference

The Applicant is committed to aligning with and supporting Reading Borough Council to tackle some of the existing challenges within the borough, and specifically, the Katesgrove Broadway ward. These themes along with the TEAM values will therefore provide a benchmarking system to enable the Proposed Development to contribute to the Reading Borough Council's agenda and the creation of tangible social value outcomes for the new and existing community.

Vision, Themes and Objectives

The Applicant is committed to aligning their development with the social value policy themes where possible. Their vision includes *‘designing a beautiful place where individuals would want to live and grow.’* To achieve this vision, the Applicant has placed social value at the heart of the Proposed Development by understanding what community uses the local community wish to see come forward and will endeavour to respond to those priorities.

The themes below will form the basis of this social value strategy and are influenced by Reading Borough Council’s Social Value Policy and the Reading Borough Council’s Local plan (2019);

➤ **Enhancing Health and Wellbeing**



➤ **Improving Education and Training Opportunities**



➤ **Creating a Strong Sense of Culture and Resilient Communities**



The image is a high-angle, wide shot of a large crowd of people gathered at what appears to be a community engagement or consultation event. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, and many are looking towards the center or interacting with each other. A large, semi-transparent green rectangular overlay covers the majority of the image, with the text "Community Engagement and Consultation" centered in white. In the background, there are banners and signs. One sign on the left reads "moxone" and "UNDERSTAND EVERY USER'S JOURNEY WITH INSTANT INSIGHTS". Another sign on the right reads "PRODUCT SCHOOL" and "SILICON VALLEY". The setting appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor space with a paved floor and some structures in the background.

Community Engagement and Consultation

Community Engagement and Consultation

A robust and well thought out community engagement strategy is key to creating social value. The first principle of social value, endorsed by Social Value UK is *involving stakeholders*.

Cratus Group, the instructed communications consultancy for the site, developed a thorough engagement programme ahead of the planning submission. The following pages outline the consultation to date with community stakeholders. Further detail of the pre-application engagement carried out on the development proposals can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), submitted as part of this planning application.

There were three key milestones in the consultation programme which were:

- 23 January 2024: In-person exhibition event, South Street Arts Centre- with 27 attendees
- 30 January 2024: Public webinar
- 7 March 2024: In-person update event, South Street Arts Centre- with 19 attendees

There was also a consultation website that was launched on the 8th January 2024: <https://jlpmillanereading.co.uk/> , feedback forms were submitted through this website, and it was updated as the consultation programme progressed.

Community Consultation

Following the engagement led by Cratus with local organisations, Savills Earth Social Value carried out community engagement with several community groups and anchor organisations to devise potential initiatives that would be beneficial to the organisations and local communities in Reading.

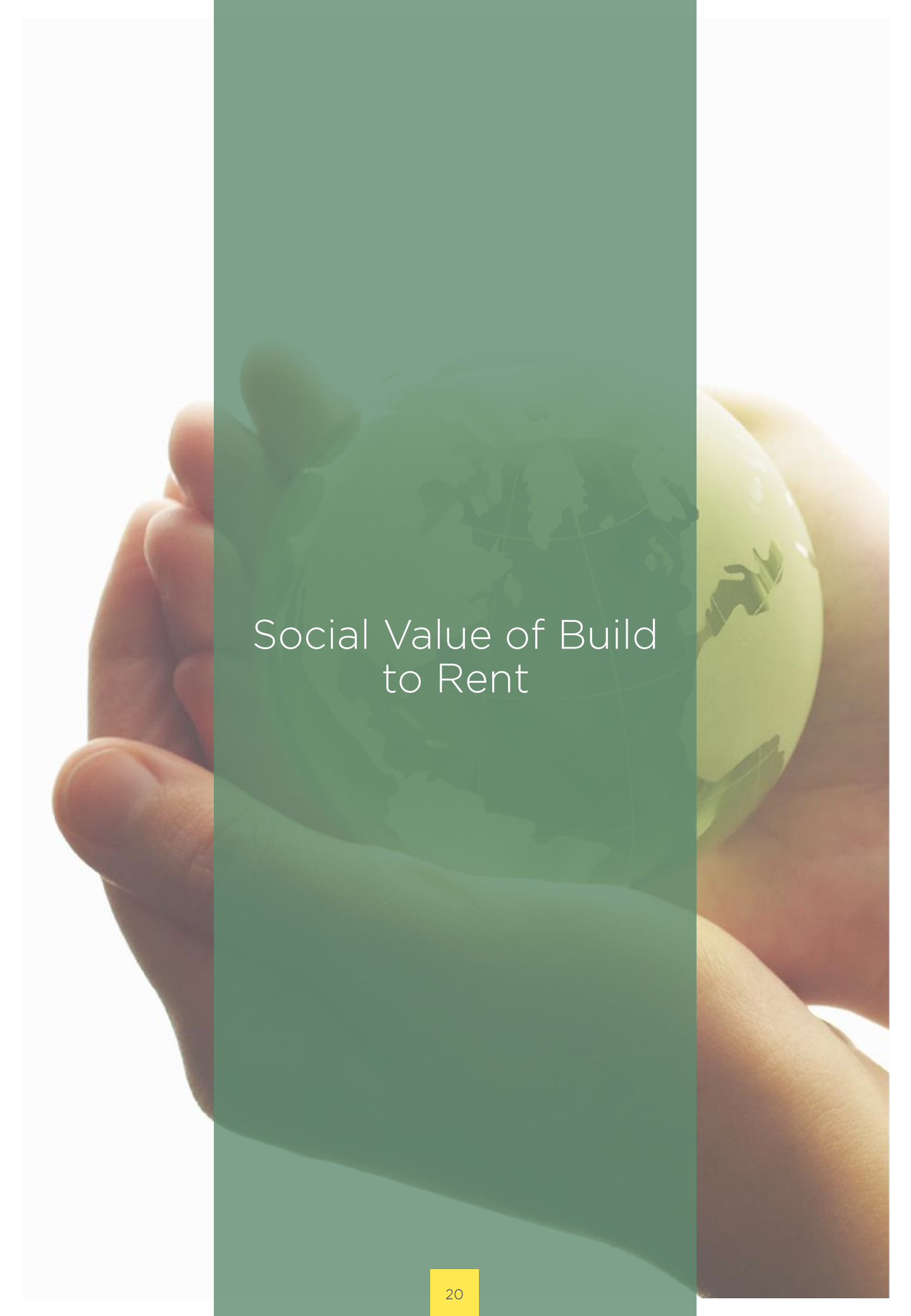
These organisations were all engaged over two phases, with an initial conversation to find out about their work and needs and then a second conversation to agree potential programmes and outputs in the short, medium and long term. These organisations included:

- Abbey School
- Katesgrove School
- Food4Families
- University of Reading
- Reading Cycling Campaign
- Reading Elderly Befriending Scheme
- St Giles in Reading Church
- Reading Civic Society
- Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- AGE UK Reading
- Reading Wellbeing Network

Community Engagement and Consultation

On behalf of the Applicant, the Savills Earth social value team and Cratus Group have mapped out stakeholders to understand their influence and impact within the community. This is important in creating meaningful collaborations with the community. The diagram below highlights some of the community partners the client could engage with to collaboratively create social value.



A photograph of a hand holding a small, light-colored globe. A semi-transparent green rectangular overlay covers the center of the image. Overlaid on this green area is a faint, stylized world map. The text 'Social Value of Build to Rent' is centered in white within the green area.

Social Value of Build to Rent

The Social Value of Build to Rent for Reading

The proposed Build to Rent development will bring forward several community benefits and create social value. This includes:

- Delivering much needed **new homes** to Reading, through long-term rental housing that provides secure, long-term tenancies.
- A range of homes sizes and rental options to **accommodate various household sizes and income levels**, as well as providing affordable homes at Reading Local Housing Allowance Levels.
- Inclusive communities, with BTR meeting the needs of a **diverse range of demographics**, including young professionals, families, and older people.
- An inclusive environment with **accessible design** and provision of wheelchair accessible homes.
- **Security and safety** through on-site staff that operate 24/7 security, concierge and support. As well as well-lit public areas, active surveillance and secure access systems.
- **Quality of living** with well-maintained communal spaces and **modern amenities** including a gym, meeting rooms, dining spaces and co-working spaces.
- Competitive standards of services, including superfast broadband, storage lockers and bike parking. These amenities contribute to the **creation of vibrant, communal environments**, facilitating community engagement and a sense of belonging for residents.
- Landscaping around the site with **improved local biodiversity and play areas** in the public spaces.
- **New public realm, urban greening on a brownfield site** open to the new and existing community and fully accessible by new pedestrian and cycle links across the site
- Overall, the social value of the Proposed BtR development is created in its ability to redefine the rental experience across urban living, **by enhancing feelings of security, inclusivity and a sense of community**.



Social Value Programme: Initial Ideas

Social Value Themes & Initiatives

The social value themes selected for the Proposed Development are based on a community audit of local needs and Reading Council policy drivers, leading to four key social value themes: Health and Wellbeing, Education and Skills, Culture and Community.

Through desk top research and community engagement with local charities and social enterprises, key organisations were identified in the borough whose impact focus matched the social value themes selected and could be partnered with to improve the lives of Reading residents and the local community.

These organisations are:

Health and Wellbeing

- o Food4Families, Reading International Solidarity Centre, Incredible Edible Reading
- o Reading Cycle Campaign
- o Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Education and Skills

- o University of Reading
- o Henley Business School
- o Abbey School
- o Katesgrove School

Culture and Community

- o St Giles Church
- o AGE UK Reading
- o Reading Elderly Befriending Service

Addressing Social Challenges

Following an initial desktop research exercise to research organisations in Reading creating social impact and addressing local challenges, we engaged local organisations to consider how the Applicant can collaborate with them to support their services and increase their impact.

Food4families is an organisation that work with local communities, schools and individuals to help them sustainably grow their own food and improve their wellbeing using the community gardens.

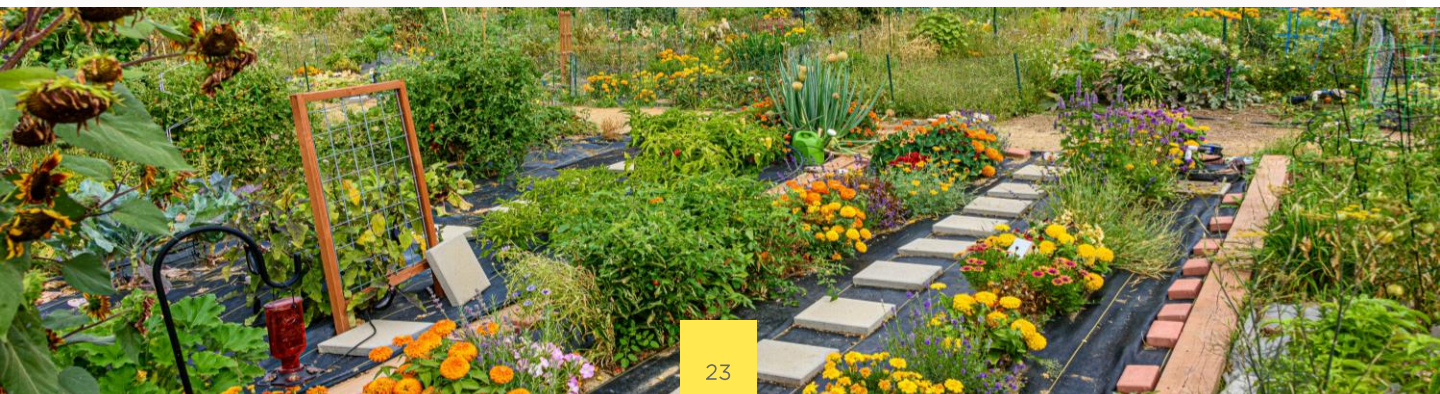
Incredible Edible Reading's mission is to inspire planet friendly food and food growing in Reading.

Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) is a Development Education Centre that works with schools and community groups to raise the profile of global issues and promote solutions for sustainability. Human rights and social justice.

These organisations are all closely linked, and the Applicant proposes to work with them to promote sustainable food and food growing as well as encouraging the use of community gardens to improve wellbeing and community cohesion.

The Applicant could work with these organisations in several different ways such as:

- The Applicant proposes to partner with RISC to include the Mill Lane Project as a case study of community engagement and zero carbon construction methods within their long-term research project.
- The Applicant proposes incorporating community food growing (CFG) into their developments and proposes to RISC a formalised role on the management and maintenance of the community and wellbeing garden at Mill Lane.
- The Applicant proposes working with RISC in to bring local history to life and allow for the JLP project to be used as a case study in zero carbon design.



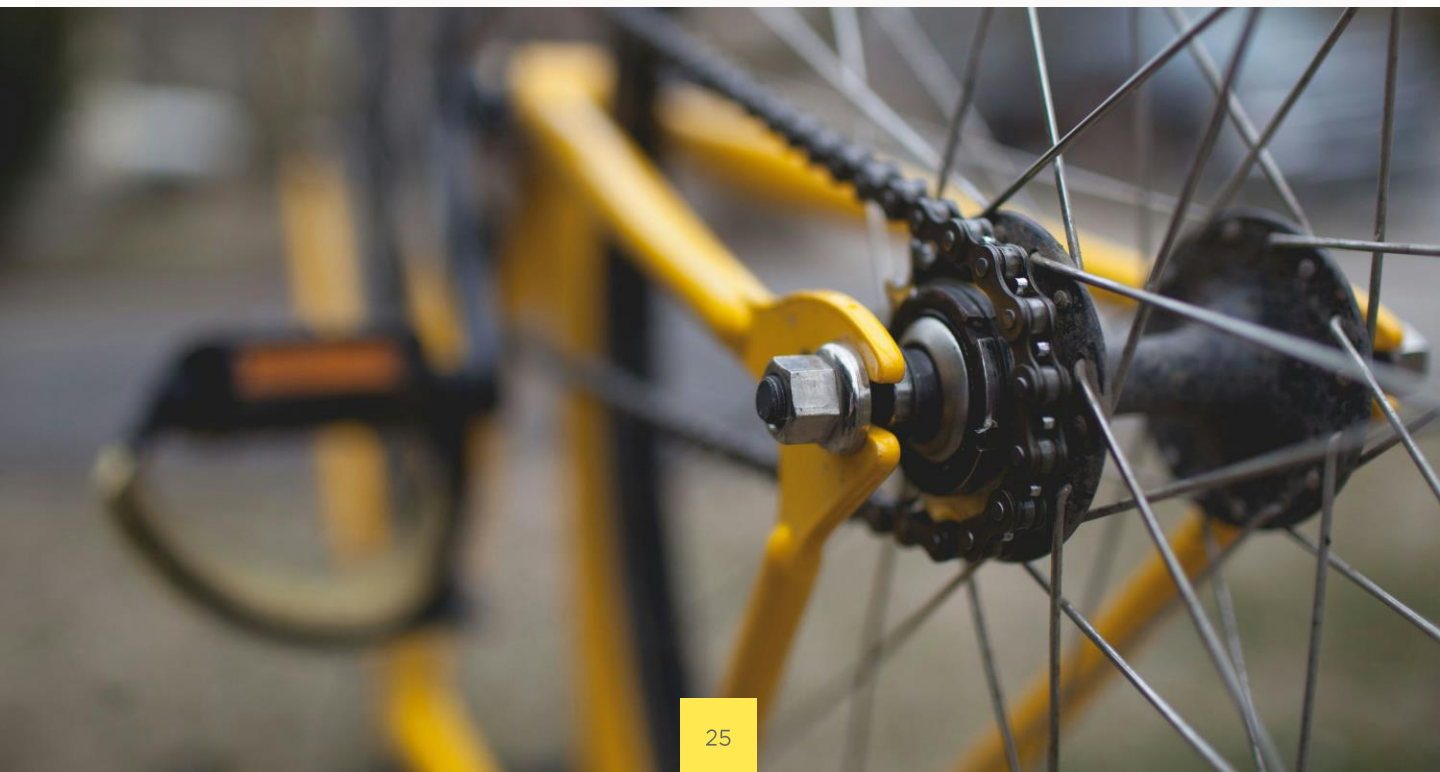
Reading Cycle Campaign

Reading Cycle Campaign is an organisation that campaigns for better facilities for cyclists in Reading. They believe Reading can be a more healthy, efficient and pleasant town if it is made cycle-friendly.

The organisation encourages healthy and active living and green travel, this can be supported by the Applicant through encouraging active travel for those living and working in the area.

The Applicant proposes to work with the Reading Cycle Campaign to offer workshops on green and sustainable travel as well as bike health and safety lessons for young people at and around the site.

- Applicant proposes in the long-term to develop a long term with Reading Cycle Campaign to promote healthy travel and cycling in and around Reading.
- The Applicant proposes to consider donating cycling safety equipment (helmets, reflectors and lights and gloves) for local people in Reading to be distributed by the group.
- Applicant proposes to support and attend events in Reading relating to the Cycle Campaign and active travel in Reading.



University of Reading

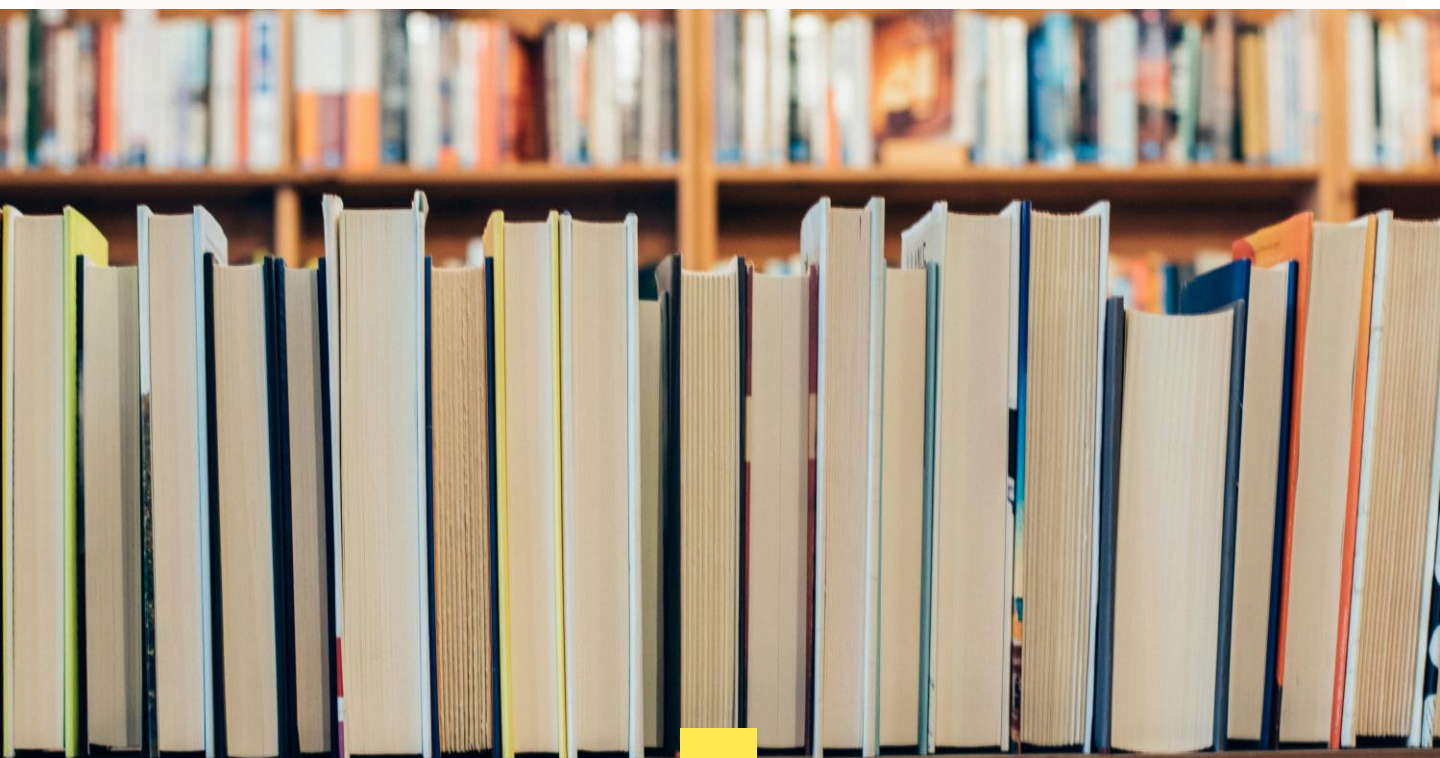
The University of Reading is home to more than 23,000 students from all over the world and their four guiding principles are: *“a genuine love of learning, creating new knowledge, embracing and celebrating diversity of people and ideas, and caring for our environment.”*

The Applicant has an existing corporate relationship with the University of Reading. The BtR team will be looking to find new and innovative ways to support the university and the Pathways to Property programme.

Pathways to Property is a programme connected to the University which aims to widen access to professions in the Real Estate industry by raising awareness about the wide range of career paths in the built environment.

The Applicant proposes to work with the University to help offer training and employment opportunities such as:

- The Applicant proposes attending careers workshops from the Applicant and wider project team, showcasing their opportunities and construction careers.
- The Applicant proposes giving a site visit and educational tour of the Mill Lane development, this could be done as an annual site visit until the completion of the site.
- The Applicant proposes to support on sustainability and the Built Environment events taking place at the university.



Abbey School

The Abbey School was awarded 'Top Independent Day School in Berkshire' in The Sunday Times Parent Power 2023. It is an all-girls community and the school have played a leading role in all-girls education for over 130 years.

The Applicant proposes to work with Abbey school to support the students in the following ways:

- Careers workshops from the Applicant and wider project team – showcasing opportunities and construction careers across John Lewis Partnerships.
- The Applicant proposes to support the school on initiatives such as encouraging more girls into STEM and construction-related careers.
- The Applicant will run an art competition with the pupils where the winning pieces will be exhibited on hoarding surrounding the site, this could be done in collaboration with other local schools.



Katesgrove School

Katesgrove is a large primary school that has recently undergone an expansion and now also includes a nursery. This is the closest state funded school to the site. The School was awarded the Artsmark Gold Award by Arts Council England.

The Applicant proposes to work with Katesgrove school to support the students in the following ways:

- Conducting educational workshops with the Architect working on the Mill Lane development, this will provide an insight into the work of the Architects and educate the pupils on the development sector.
- Attendance and support at employment and career events that are run by the school, the team will provide insight into
- The Applicant will run an art competition with the pupils where the winning pieces will be exhibited on hoarding surrounding the site, this could be done in collaboration with other local schools.



Ethical Reading

Ethical Reading is a not-for-profit social enterprise that is committed to making Reading a better place to live through making businesses and organisations more ethical. The aim is to ensure that ethics is embedded into decision making processes and everyday actions.

The Applicant proposes to work with Ethical Reading in the following ways:

- Attend and support at some of Ethical Reading's events throughout the year.
- The social value project team proposes to run a CPD workshop in relation to social impact measures and frameworks
- Collaborate on the Ethical Reading programmes to deliver workshops relating to Business Ethics, Workplace Wellbeing, Ethics in Education and Sustainability.
- The Applicant proposes to volunteer time to provide support on marketing and social media support.



Reading Elderly Befriending Scheme

St Giles Church is a Church in Reading that has many links with existing community groups e.g. homelessness and mental health organisations..

St Giles Church work closely with Engage Befriending, based at the Quaker Meeting House. Engage Befriending work with older people who are alone or isolated it is a home visiting and befriending scheme.

Social Value initiative that will be proposed with the Reading Elderly Befriending Scheme include:

- Supporting the organisation in finding and advertising for more volunteers and befrienders.
- Attending events throughout the year, to provide support where it is needed.
- The Applicant proposes to developing a long-term relationship with the befriending scheme providing volunteering time annually to support the growth of the organisation.
- Provide CPD workshops in the areas needed by the organisations, such as marketing, business support and HR.

