

Dear Applicant

Thank you for the interest you have shown in this position and in our school.

Please find enclosed the following items:

- Application Form
- Declaration of Convictions Form
- Guidance notes on completing the Application Form
- Job Description and Person Specification
- Career Grade Criteria (if applicable)
- Our Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy
- Summary of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment

When completing your application form please pay particular attention to the Person Specification, as criteria from this will be used at the shortlisting stage. You should be able to demonstrate on your application form that you meet both the Job Description and the Person Specification.

PLEASE DO NOT ENCLOSE A CV - To conform with our Equal Opportunities Policy we **only** consider applications on our standard form. This is to ensure that we give all candidates fair treatment. In addition, to ensure equality, we will detach your personal details before shortlisting takes place.

If you are successful at interview, the post you are applying for may require a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure. A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the Police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It can be used by employers and voluntary organisations to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures are provided by the Disclosure & Barring Service, an executive agency of the Home Office. Please see the guidance notes for further details.

What happens next?

- A panel of at least two people will select a shortlist, based on the information provided on your application form and any extra documents supporting.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview and advised of any special arrangements, tests or presentations for the interview.
- If you have not heard from us by the interview date, please assume you have been unsuccessful. If you would like feedback on why your application was unsuccessful please contact us.

References

It is the policy of Reading Borough Council and this school to request references for all shortlisted candidates before the interview, unless requested otherwise. One of your references **MUST** be your current or most recent employer. Because of the nature of the work in a school we may wish to make further enquiries of previous employers, in addition to the two references given. No offer of employment will be made without the receipt of two or more satisfactory references and employment cannot commence without medical clearance and where applicable an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.

Qualifications

If you are shortlisted for interview you are asked to ensure that you bring with you any original relevant certificates of qualification, as set out in the Person Specification, copies of which will be taken at interview.

Right of Appeal

We have enclosed a copy of our Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy. If you feel you have been discriminated against for any of the reasons set out in this document, please let us have written details of your complaint within 10 working days. This should be addressed to:

Chloë Callard, School Business Manager, Oxford Road Community School, 146 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PJ

Your completed application form should be returned to Chloë Callard no later than the closing date shown in the job advert.

Working in a School

The nature of the work within our school involves access to children, meaning that we are very careful to carry out as many relevant pre-employment checks as possible before appointing individuals to jobs within the school.

In addition to those outlined in the Summary of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment we will also be undertaking the following checks where relevant:

Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 - we are required to ask you to declare if you would be disqualified from working in childcare under this legislation. Childcare applies to certain age ranges in the school, and if you do need to declare you will be asked to do so at offer stage should you be successful in your application, and any offer will be subject to that check.

Prohibition from Teaching check or any other sanctions imposed by, for example, the General Teaching Council.

Right to work in the UK - under immigration regulations.

Qualifications - as set out in the person specification.

Yours faithfully

Chloë Callard
School Business Manager



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

GUIDANCE NOTES

Please read these Guidance Notes carefully before completing the application form. The application form is the first step in the recruitment process, which may lead to an interview and the possible offer of a job. It is therefore important that you complete the application form in full. We do not accept CV's and therefore the information that you supply on the application form is the only information that we consider when deciding whether you should be shortlisted.

[If you are responding via e-mail, please return your completed application form to the e-mail address that appears on the advert for the job you are applying for.](#)

PLEASE NOTE: If you are shortlisted for interview, you will be asked to sign the declaration on your application form and declaration of convictions form at the interview.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

(a) General Information

- (1) Please read the job description, person specification, advertisement and any other papers carefully, before filling in the form, and use this information to make your application relevant to the post.
- (2) Please use **black ink** or type your application form - this helps when the applications are photocopied.
- (3) **Do not send a CV with your application** - we believe that asking all applicants to complete an application form ensures fairness and consistency in our recruitment process.
- (4) Do not submit the same application form for more than one job. Tailor each application to fulfil the requirements for a particular job. Please endeavour to keep your application form neat and tidy - the application form provides our first impression of you.
- (5) The selection criteria used for shortlisting are the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience required to do a specific job. No assumptions will be made about these criteria. It is therefore vital that you tell us how you meet the selection criteria.
- (6) If you wish to include additional sheets to support your application, please do so, ensuring that they are fixed securely to the application form. Please make sure you mark each sheet clearly with your application form number and the job reference number, but **not** your name, as personal information is kept separate during the shortlisting process.
- (7) Please return the application form by the closing date advertised.

- (8) Candidates with a disability who can show that they meet the minimum requirements of the person specification are guaranteed an interview. If you need the application form in a different format please contact us.

(a) The Application Form

- (1) **Personal Details** - In accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act, the information you provide on the application form will be used solely for the purpose of the recruitment procedure and will not be used or passed on to any third party for any other reason. We appreciate it is not always convenient to contact you at your workplace, therefore please indicate if this will be acceptable. If you have a personal e-mail address and would like us to contact you by this method please provide your address clearly in the space provided.
- (2) **References** - In order to speed up the process of appointment we will make a request for references before we interview you, unless you specify otherwise.
- (3) **Recruitment Monitoring** - The school and Reading Borough Council operates a policy of equal opportunity and fair treatment for employment and development. To assist in monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, and for this reason only, applicants are asked to give details of their ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status and any disability. The information you provide is used solely for monitoring purposes. It will be treated as confidential and will be detached from your application form on receipt. The information will not be seen by those who decide on the list of applicants to be invited to interview.
- (4) **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006** - it is a criminal offence to employ a person aged 16 or over who is subject to immigration control unless that person has current and valid permission to be in the UK and that permission does not prevent them from taking a job; or the person comes into a category where employment is allowed.
- (5) **Education, Qualifications & Training** - Please include all your education, qualifications & training, both informal and formal. You may be asked to produce certificates confirming qualification at interview or at a later stage.
- (6) **Present/Recent Employment** - Starting with your present employer, please complete this section in date order, beginning with your most recent job and listing all work undertaken, paid and voluntary, since leaving school. Please account for any breaks/gaps in or between employment, education and training. Please continue this section on a separate sheet if necessary.
- (7) **Skills, Abilities, Knowledge & Experience** - This section is the most vital part of the form. You may be one of many people applying for a job, so your application needs to stand out by showing your suitability against the person specification. You should provide *examples* of how you meet the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience identified, these can be non-work based if necessary.

Some key words that may be in the person specification are:

Experience: What have you already done - where, when and how long?

Knowledge: What do you know and how do you apply what you have learnt to your present job or the one that you are applying for?

Ability/Skills: What can you do?

Managerial and Supervisory Skills: What responsibility have you had for people or particular areas of work?

Clerical and Administration: Have you got experience of filing, photocopying, office administration?

Numeracy: Can you deal with figures or use a spreadsheet? Are these skills at a basic, intermediate or advanced level?

Literacy: How good are you with words? What experience have you had in writing letters, reports, memos etc.

Information Technology: What experience have you had of computers, word processing, spreadsheets etc?

Interpersonal: How well can you deal with people on a one to one basis, teams or in a group etc? What are your organisational skills and dealing with deadlines like?

Communication: Tell us about your communication skills - presenting, persuading, negotiating, counselling, selling, use of other languages etc.

- (8) **Relationship with Council/Councillors** - Canvassing of Councillors or officers in relation to this appointment will disqualify you.
- (9) **Disclosure of Criminal Convictions** - You will be required to complete a Declaration of Criminal Convictions and you should return this with your application form. The type of form will depend on the post for which you have applied.

The following posts are exempt from Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 2001 and you will be required to provide a list of all convictions, cautions and reprimands and also undertake a Disclosure check:

- Posts, which provide accommodation, care, leisure and recreational facilities, schooling, social services, supervision or training to people aged under 18. This includes teachers, caretakers, youth workers, social workers.
- Posts which provide services to elderly people, those with a mental illness or learning disability, physically disabled people, alcohol mis-users, drug mis-users or the chronically sick
- Health service appointments
- Posts which involve the administration of justice e.g. police officers
- Certain professions which have legal protection e.g. lawyers, doctors, dentists, nurses, chemists and accountants
- Posts where national security may be at risk e.g. in the civil service

A **Disclosure** is a document containing information held by the police and the DBS. It can be used by employers to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures are provided by the Disclosure & Barring Service, an executive agency of the Home Office.

You may be asked to complete or obtain one of the following Disclosures:

Basic - this will show all convictions which are not 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 and can be obtained directly from the DBS.

Standard / Enhanced - you may be asked to complete an application form for a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure because you will be working with children or vulnerable adults; or will be working in an establishment that is wholly or mainly for children or vulnerable adults, or will be working in healthcare; or have applied to be a foster carer, adoptive parent or childminder. There are also a number of other specified positions and professions for which a Disclosure can be required.

Standard Disclosures contain details of all convictions held on the Police National Computer (PNC) (including 'spent' convictions - i.e. those that happened some time ago and normally no longer need to be revealed as specified in the ROA 1974) plus details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings.

Enhanced Disclosures are for some posts involving greater contact with children or vulnerable adults and some other specific roles. All Enhanced Disclosures involve an extra level of checking with local police force records in addition to checks on the Police National Computer (PNC).

Enhanced Disclosures with a barred list check are for posts working in regulated activity, which gives a higher level of access to children or vulnerable adults, plus some specific roles such as foster parents. In addition to the records checked for an enhanced disclosure, an additional check against the lists barring people from working with children or vulnerable adults will be included.

The disclosure of a criminal record will not debar you from appointment unless the selection panel, having considered carefully the following factors, determine that the conviction renders you unsuitable for appointment. The factors to be taken into account are:

- (a) The responsibilities of the position,
- (b) The vulnerability of children or adults supported,
- (c) The nature of the offence(s),
- (d) The circumstances of the offence(s),
- (e) The number and pattern of offences (if there is more than one),
- (f) How long ago the offence(s) occurred,
- (g) The age of the offender when the offence(s) occurred.
- (h) A comparison between the declaration form you complete at the application stage, and the disclosure certificate will also be made, to check for inconsistencies.

Information received on the disclosure will be kept in strict confidence. Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.

If you are successful in your application and a DBS check is carried out, the disclosure certificate will be issued to you by the DBS. It is then important that you bring the original in to the school so the details can be recorded as confirmation that the check has been completed.

If you have registered with the DBS Update Service, with your permission and if you are applying for a role that falls within the same workforce (e.g. a teacher moving between schools) as your last disclosure, we may be able to complete a quick online check rather than a full new check.

A copy of the Disclosure & Barring Service's Code of Practice is available from the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT - GREEN BOOK

(These notes are for guidance only. All employees will receive their own individual Written Statement of Terms and Conditions).

1. Salary

Your salary will be stated in your offer of employment. You will be paid monthly in arrears, by credit transfer into your personal Bank or Building Society, Giro or Trustee Savings Bank Account. You will be paid on the **25th day of each month**, unless it falls on a weekend or bank holiday, when it will usually be paid on the preceding Friday.

Most posts are paid on a grade, which has several salary points. Subject to satisfactory performance a salary increment is awarded on the 1st April each year providing at least six months service has been completed and the top of the grade has not already been reached. Further information will be available at interview.

2. Hours of Work

The normal full time hours are 37 hours a week, although some appointments are offered on a part time or job-share basis.

The Council currently operates a flexi-time scheme, which lets you choose, within certain parameters, when you start and finish work, and when to take your lunch break. Some employees, because of the nature of their work, cannot be covered by the scheme and may have to work fixed hours. Further information is obtainable from the Directorate Personnel Team or at interview.

3. Annual Leave

The annual leave entitlement of all employees is determined by reference to the appropriate National Conditions of Service or to alternative local arrangements, which may be agreed from time to time.

In addition to Bank Holidays, the majority of staff have an annual leave entitlement of:

24 days (under 5 years continuous service)

29 days (over 5 years continuous local government service)

() 32 days (over 10 years continuous Reading Borough Council service)*

() Applies to certain posts only*

The leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March. You will have a pro-rata entitlement for each completed calendar month if you start during the leave year.

4. Period of Notice

Posts graded up RG4 spinal point 28: 1 month's notice required
Posts graded at RG5 spinal points 28 to 34 2 month's notice required
Posts graded RG6 to RG10 : 3 month's notice required

5. Occupational Sick Pay

The Council operates an Occupational Sick Pay scheme, in accordance with the Local Government Services National Agreement (formerly APT&C and Manual). Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

During 1 st year of service	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2 nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3 rd year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4 th and 5 th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Entitlement is conditional on employees meeting the full criteria of the national scheme. Details will be made available to employees on appointment.

6. Relocation

Relocation assistance may be available to externally appointed employees, whose home is not within reasonable daily travelling time/distance of the Council offices. Further details will be made available on request.

7. Pension Scheme

The Council provides a contracted out pension scheme, under the Local Government Pension Regulations 1995. By virtue of the Social Security Act 1986 you may exercise a choice between this scheme, an appropriate personal pension scheme or the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS).

You will be admitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme automatically **UNLESS YOU STATE OTHERWISE.**

Employees previously in the Local Government Pension Scheme may transfer. We advise that you seek independent financial advice before opting to transfer.

Employees will contribute a percentage of their annual salary towards the Local Government Pension Scheme, the percentage is dependant on salary level. There is no default retirement age. Employees who wish to retire shall give formal notice to the Council in accordance with the minimum periods set out in this document above, and access their pension (if appropriate) in accordance with the terms of the relevant pension scheme.

8. Probation Period

All new employees are appointed subject to a probation period of six months.

During your probation period you are required to establish your suitability for the post. On completion of a satisfactory probation period your appointment will be confirmed.

9. Interview Expenses

The school will reimburse reasonable interview expenses. Normal expenses will be based on 2nd class rail fare or actual car mileage. Please request an Interview Expenses Form when you attend an interview.

10. Transport

We are moving towards a more balanced staff transport strategy that encourages staff to use public transport and bicycles instead of cars. We offer interest free loans for railway season tickets to get to work and loans to buy a bicycle. However, if you need your car to do your job, we provide car loans in line with national conditions of service.

11. Maternity / Paternity / Parental Leave

All pregnant employees will be entitled to some form of maternity benefits regardless of their length of service; this includes permanent, part-time, temporary and casual/relief staff. Individual entitlements will depend on the length and status of your employment. Adoption, parental and paternity leave are also provided.

12. Staff Consultation / Employee Relations

The Council is committed to involving employees in discussions about issues that will affect their team, section, establishment, Directorate or the Council as a whole, before decisions are made.

The Council encourages employees to join a recognised trade union. The recognised trade unions are currently the GMB, TGWU and UNISON.

Offers of Contract are Dependent on the Following

Appointments are subject to a number of relevant checks, including the following:

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

Any appointment is subject to satisfactory documentation demonstrating an entitlement to work in the United Kingdom, as required by the above Act.

Medical Clearance

All appointments are subject to medical clearance. If you are an external applicant you will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire. The Authority's Independent Medical Adviser will confirm the employee's fitness for the post. In a small number of cases a medical examination may be necessary.

Criminal Records Check

A previous conviction does not necessarily mean that an application will not be considered further and the Council will take into account the nature of the offence,

how long ago, what age you were when it was committed and any other factors which may be relevant. Failure to declare a conviction may, however, disqualify you from appointment, or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy subsequently comes to light.

References

No offer of employment will be made without the receipt of two satisfactory written references.

OUR VALUES

We will learn from what we do, and develop.

We will be open and honest.

We will value and respect diversity.

We will take responsibility for ourselves.

We will work together.

We will meet high standards.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT

POLICY AND STRATEGY

POLICY STATEMENT

In Reading Borough Council, we recognise the importance of equality of opportunity in employment and the need to set an example as an employer. We value and respect diversity within our workforce and the local community. Diversity within our workforce helps us understand the needs of our customers better and plan and provide services to meet those needs. We will therefore incorporate equality principles in all of our employment policies and practices and ensure that they are carried out fairly.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Reading Borough Council's main objective is to provide quality services to all sections of the community and to strive for continuous improvement. To achieve this, we aim to:

- Create a workforce profile, which matches the different communities we serve
- Help all employees develop an understanding of what equal opportunity means for them in doing their jobs
- Carry out regular monitoring to ensure that our objectives remain on course.

STRATEGY

In order to achieve the objectives we have:

- Built equality into our organisation's values
- Set standards, to which all employees must adhere
- Established responsibilities for employees and managers
- Reviewed and continue to review our policies and practices regularly
- Built equality into our planning and monitoring processes and review action regularly
- Identified three groups against which to monitor the success of equality in employment, these are people from black communities, women and people with disabilities
- Established workforce targets for both the whole workforce and employees at a senior level based on the representative levels of these groups across the local community
- Established workforce targets for employees in services based on the particular community they serve

STANDARDS

1. Every employee will be treated fairly at work and will not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or any other grounds, which cannot be justified.

2. Employees will be selected and promoted only on the basis of their knowledge, experience and skills.
3. Every employee will be given equal access to training and development in relation to their jobs and personal need subject to the objectives and priorities of the service, division/organisation learning and development policy
4. All of the Council's employment procedures will be applied fairly and appropriately according to the circumstances.
5. Applicants and employees will be treated fairly under the Council's Recruitment and Selection procedure and will only be selected on the basis that they have the necessary knowledge/experience/skills to do the job. Criteria for selection will therefore be justifiable and necessary for satisfactory job performance.
6. All employees will be entitled to review their progress and development through supervision meetings, appraisals and team meetings.
7. Reading Borough Council supports Positive Action in recruiting and developing employees to ensure that any disadvantaged or under-represented groups can compete on equal terms.
8. Reading Borough Council will ensure these standards are maintained by regular monitoring of division/service/team objectives and action plans. These will be tied in with monitoring service delivery objectives and reported at regular intervals through our democratic processes.

Employee Rights

You have a right:

- Not to be discriminated against;
- To challenge all discrimination and bullying, including abusive and offensive language/behaviour and to bring this to the attention of the Council;
- To make a complaint when you have grounds to feel you have been unfairly treated;
- To suggest equalities service improvements and be taken seriously.
- For your culture, and identity to be respected and valued;
- To be valued and supported by your manager and colleagues;
- For your contributions to be acknowledged and respected.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees:

1. Develop an understanding of the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy objectives for both employment and service delivery. This should be done with managers and colleagues to establish what it means for each individual employee.
2. Treat each other fairly in accordance with the policy and standards
3. Tell colleague(s) where their conduct is causing offence to them or another colleague
4. Provide support to an individual receiving less favourable treatment and, if necessary, inform another member of staff who is able to take the appropriate action.

Managers:

1. Ensure that all their employees are aware of the policy objectives and standards and understand how to apply them day to day

2. Ensure that these are discussed as part of the induction process
3. Ensure that all employees have the opportunity to improve their job skills and develop skills to meet the wider needs of the service, directorate or organisation.
4. Ensure that all personnel procedures are carried out in accordance with the policy and standards.
5. Take action when standards of conduct and behaviour do not comply with the policy.
6. Take prompt action to stop discriminatory treatment as soon as it is identified. This will include using the disciplinary procedure where an employee knowingly commits a discriminatory act, induces others to commit such an act or victimises those who have complained of harassment.
7. Before acting, consider the most appropriate way. Challenge behaviour in a sensitive way proportionate to the nature of the conduct identified.

Personnel Service:

1. Draw up, progress and monitor action plans in conjunction with directorate senior management
2. Provide advice, assistance and/or training
3. Ensure equality principles are built into training and development
4. Ensure equality principles are built into procedural reviews
5. Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and the progress towards meeting the objectives.

ACTION PLAN - EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT

We will draw up an annual action plan for equality in employment, which will be part of the larger corporate equality plan for the whole authority. The objectives will be translated into appropriate actions and target dates in directorate service plans.

Reference documents: Training and Development Policy, Recruitment & Selection Policy / Procedure, Harassment Procedure, Corporate Values, Equality Action Plans.

Living and Working in Reading – also go to teachinreading.org

Reading Borough Council is a progressive and successful unitary local authority in the Thames Valley, providing a wide range of quality services to the local community. We care about the people who live in Reading and about those who work for us.

Services for people

As a council, we aim to provide high quality and cost-effective services to our customers which:

- meet the needs of all groups in the community
- contribute to protecting and improving the environment
- promote Reading as a place in which people are proud to live and work.

Our aims for Reading are

- to develop Reading as a green city with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley
- to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all
- to establish Reading as a learning city and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit

To meet these aims, we have to meet the changing demands and growing expectations of the people who live in Reading and our local businesses, in the face of reduction in local government funding. To focus its efforts, each service sets out each year the key targets which its staff will work to meet. These targets are monitored actively to ensure that they are achieved in time and to budget.

The Government's 'Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act', which became law on April 1st 2000, means that all Councils must make sure that they are offering 'Best Value' in all of the services that they deliver. Each service is, therefore, reviewed within a five-year timescale to make sure it offers the best, most cost effective delivery to our customers.

The Oracle Shopping and Leisure centre and the pedestrianisation of the Town Centre push Reading into the top ten regional shopping centres in the country. The Oracle was judged by the British Council of Shopping Centres to be Best New Shopping Centre in the UK in 2000.

To achieve our aims, Reading Borough Council recognises the need to employ people who are well trained and keen to meet our customers' needs.

Reading - A great place to live

Reading - the county town of Berkshire - is at the heart of the fastest growing area in the South of England. The town is located in the Thames Valley with the River Kennet running through its centre and it's surrounded by beautiful countryside and many attractive villages

and smaller towns. It is a bustling shopping and administrative centre just 25 minutes by train from London.

Travel

Reading main line railway station is centrally located and serviced by several major and regional railway services.

By car, there are three junctions on the M4 servicing Reading and the M25 is only 20 minutes drive away. There are direct routes to Oxford and Birmingham and the South coast ports are accessible in 90 minutes by road. Both Heathrow and Gatwick airports have speedy links by coach and rail respectively.

In Town

Reading Buses, wholly owned by the Council, provides one of the best bus services in the country with an all-town network of frequent services and reasonable fares, on modern buses. There is also a fast, non-stop bus and coach service to and from London and two park and ride locations.

Shopping

The town is now one of the top ten regional shopping centres in the country and has a variety of shops and a four-day street market. There are good neighbourhood shopping centres and edge of town superstores. The Oracle shopping and leisure centre provides a wide choice of shops, plus a range of leisure facilities in an attractive riverside setting right in the heart of the town centre.

Leisure

Reading is a recognised national leader in the provision of play facilities for children. Our facilities include five leisure centres, each with their own pool, one other leisure centre, 350 hectares of park with excellent children's playgrounds, athletics and cycling tracks and water sports on the Thames and local lakes.

Arts and Culture

The Hexagon is the Council's main entertainment centre - a home for top international stars, drama and cinema, as well as a bar and lunchtime restaurant. The refurbished Town Hall offers concerts, lectures, community, leisure and conference facilities, with a coffee bar in the basement and a pavement café in the summer.

The Council also runs a performance venue and meetings centre at 21 South Street.

The Reading Museum, in the Town Hall, has recently reopened following refurbishment and now provides new galleries dedicated to Reading Abbey, a local history gallery, and the Museum's Silchester Collection, together with a full-scale facsimile display of the Bayeux Tapestry.

There are also two multi-screen cinemas, a local fringe theatre, live music and plenty of places to eat out.

Reading Takes Special Care

Reading Borough Council cares for the entire community, aiming to make Reading a superb place to live and work, so that everyone benefits from the improved environment. We have:

- free bus travel for pensioners and people with disabilities, and the 'Readibus' special service for those who find it hard to travel

- “Your Reading” - provides a discount on Council Leisure facilities for all Borough residents and Council staff and free facilities for the elderly, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.
- For younger members of the community, mobile sport and play centres, holiday playschemes and after schools clubs
- Centre Plan - which brings together everyone providing services in the town centre to work in partnership to make it a safe and attractive place
- A local Agenda 21 programme to encourage businesses, groups and individuals to work together to take positive action on environmental improvements in Reading
- An economic development strategy, with the vision of keeping Reading at the centre of a thriving and prosperous local economic region, with a sustainable and renewable local economy

Our Values

Our Values project - a result of senior management's desire to create a new identity for the new authority resulted in a number of values statements which characterise Reading Borough Council. The values are about the way we behave towards colleagues and the public. They're not a separate initiative, but are incorporated into everyday life at Reading. They are:

- Be open and honest in our dealings with colleagues and the public
- Learn from what we do, encouraging innovation and creativity
- Work together to achieve the best results
- Value and respect the diversity within our workforce, services and community
- Take responsibility for what we do and how we do it
- Set high standards and support people in meeting them.

Refreshment facilities

The Council has coffee areas and vending machines throughout the civic offices and Fountain House and a morning sandwich round. The Civic Offices and Fountain House are situated in the Town Centre, very close to a number of snack bars and eating-houses.

Staff Transport

We are moving towards a more balanced staff transport strategy that encourages staff to use public transport and bicycles instead of cars. We offer interest free loans for railway season tickets to get to work and loans to buy a bicycle. However, if you need your car to do your job, we provide car loans in line with national conditions of service.

Training and Staff development

We are committed to training and developing our staff. This includes the training necessary to do the job, as well as training to help staff develop their future careers and we offer a management development programme for the Council's managers. The Council is currently striving for IIP status.

No Smoking policy

Smoking is not allowed in any council buildings or vehicles.

Occupational Health

We have an Occupational Health Advisor who is available in the Health Centre on Mondays and Thursdays to check, at the request of managers, the health, safety and welfare of all our employees.

Equal opportunities

In practice, this means that whoever you are, all that counts is your ability to do the job. This is important to us and a copy of our policy is included in the pack. We have many positive steps to ensure our policy works, for example:

- we have an agreed procedure for recruiting staff which ensures that only criteria necessary to do the job are considered
- when you join us, we make sure that you have every chance to develop your skills and abilities
- for people with mobility disabilities, we have installed special lift facilities and automatic doors
- we will consider making special working arrangements for people with other disabilities to help them work for us and to contribute to the community
- if you can't manage full-time work due to domestic commitments for example, we will consider flexible working arrangements including job share opportunities
- we have generous maternity, paternity and adoptive leave arrangements.