

Councillors Eden (Chair), Gavin,
Khan, Vickers and R Williams

To all Members of the Access &
Disabilities Working Group

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13 March 2015

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**NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY
19 MARCH 2015**

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on **THURSDAY
19 MARCH 2015** at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading.

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	-
2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	-
Councillors to declare any personal and prejudicial interests they may have in relation to the items on the agenda.	
3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2014	1-4
4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	-

5. TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT JUNCTION OF BROAD STREET AND WEST STREET -

Simon Beasley - Network and Parking Services Manager
6. PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AND SENSORY NEEDS EVENT - 18 FEBRUARY 2015 - FEEDBACK -
7. DISABILITY PRIDE - VOLUNTEERS -
8. ISSUES LIST - a look at the progress with the ongoing 'Issues List' (please see form printed at the back of the agenda papers)
10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS -
11. DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS -

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 25 June 2015 at 2pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU.
12. NEW BUS PRESENTATION AND DEDICATION IN MEMORY OF PETE RUHEMANN

INFORMATION ITEMS - PLEASE SEE ATTACHED:

COPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET 2015 - 2018

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE INFORMATION

Present:

Councillors Eden (Chair), Gavin, Khan and R Williams.

Also in attendance:

Carol Marengi	Chain Action & Stroke Association
Rebecca Norris	Healthwatch Reading
Keith Seville	Member of the Public (Carer)
C Poole	Member of the Public (Carer)
Diane Goodlock	MS Society
Trish Wright	MS Therapy Centres/Readibus
Laxmi Kachwaha	Readibus
Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Jenny Turner	Readibus/Arthritis Care/Crossroads
Bob Bristow	Reading Association for the Blind
Malcolm Lewis	Reading Welfare Rights Unit
Emily Hodges	RBC - Project Manager
Karla Vickers	RBC - Project Manager
Jean Champeau	RBC - Senior Licensing Officer
Nina Crispin	RBC - Consultation and Engagement Officer
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Amy Bryan	RBC - Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillor Vickers	
Sian Hooley	Berkshire PHAB
Alan Fleming	Enrych Berkshire

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Eden reported that she was considering introducing timed agendas for future meetings. If anyone had any comments on this they should contact Councillor Eden.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

3. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Jean Champeau, Senior Licensing Officer, attended the meeting to talk to the Group about Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle licensing and enforcement. Jean confirmed that passengers should not be overcharged for being a wheelchair user or disabled and if anyone was over charged then they should make a complaint to the Licensing Section. Taxis were fitted with meters which must be used whilst driving in the Borough of Reading and the driver must only start the meter when the journey starts, not whilst passengers were getting into the vehicle. Journeys in Private Hire Vehicles were based on the price quoted from the controller when

the journey was booked. All drivers must wear a valid badge detailing that they were licensed to drive the vehicle.

If anyone was overcharged or was refused a journey because of being a wheelchair user or because they were disabled then a complaint should be submitted to Licensing Section either by email licensing@reading.gov.uk or telephone 0118 937 3762 providing as many details as possible.

In answer to a question Jean confirmed that drivers were required to carry assistance dogs unless the driver had a medical exemption certificate, which should be clearly displayed. The Working Group agreed that it would be helpful if a 'what you can expect' document was produced by officers that could be circulated to the Group.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That officers be asked to produce a note on what people could expect when using taxis and private hire vehicles in Reading.

4. CARE ACT

Karla Vickers and Emily Hodges, Project Officers, attended the meeting to talk about the Care Act consultation that had recently been launched.

Karla explained that The Care Act updated over 60 years of law around adult social care in England. The changes affected how Councils supported people with care and support needs (whether they received support from the Council or not) and carers. A summary sheet explaining the changes made by the Care Act was tabled at the meeting. For those already using adult social care services, there would be no automatic changes to the support received but changes were likely to be noticed in the way the Council worked with you are your review or if your needs changed.

Karla and Emily also explained that most of the changes would come into effect in April 2015 and they covered assessment, eligibility, care planning, carers, the local care market, safeguarding and prevention. The reforms to the way care was funded would come into effect from April 2016. A formal consultation had been launched on 17 November 2014 and would close on 16 February 2015 on the Council's proposals.

Following a question on Extra Care Housing Councillor Eden suggested that a site visit be arranged to Cedar Court, the Council's newly opened Extra Care Housing in Basingstoke Road. A member of the Group asked the Chair to find out the professions of the people who owned care homes in Reading.

AGREED:

- (1) That Karla and Emily be thanked for their presentation;
- (2) That a site visit to Cedar Court be arranged;

- (3) That the safeguarding hotline number be circulated to the Group;
- (4) That enquires be made into the professions of owners of care homes in Reading.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION - STATION HILL 'AMPHITHEATRE'

Helen Bryant, Access Officer, reported on a planning application that was due to be considered at the Planning Applications Committee on Wednesday 10 December 2014. The application was for the site located to the north of Thames Tower and extended up to Station Square and Reading Station. The proposal was for a general paving surface and a curved stepped landscape (amphitheatre) to the north western corner. The amphitheatre would be formed adjacent to the current step and ramp arrangement of the Station Square improvements and sought to tie into the landscape proposals for the Station Hill application. The amphitheatre would be formed of double height steps to allow people to sit within this new plaza and form a viewing area.

Helen reported that she had submitted a representation on the application as she had concerns regarding the access arrangements of the proposal. If anyone else who had concerns or issues to be raised regarding the scheme they could submit comments and/or attend the Committee meeting.

A member of the Group talked about the Sub-Group that had previously met between Group meetings to consider planning applications and that something similar to this could be set up again. Councillor Eden said it could be investigated if a user-led group could meet to consider planning applications at the pre-application stage.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That the feasibility of a user-led group meeting to discuss planning applications be investigated.

6. DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH

Helen Bryant, Access Officer, reported that UK Disability History Month was taking place from 22 November to 22 December 2014. Councillor Eden reported that there was an event at RISC on Monday 8 December 2014.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

7. ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - 21 NOVEMBER 2014 - FEEDBACK

Following the meeting on 21 November 2014 with Rob Wilson MP, Councillor Eden reported to the Working Group that she would write to Rob Wilson MP regarding the issues he said he would respond to the Group on.

AGREED: That Councillor Eden write to Rob Wilson MP on the outstanding issues from the meeting held on 21 November 2014.

8. SPECIAL SHOPPING EVENT - FEEDBACK

It was reported that the shopping event, which had been held on 1 December 2014, had been a success and many shops had taken part this year and Shopmobility had setup a stall in Broad Street for the event.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

9. NARROWING THE GAP EVENT - FEEDBACK

Those members of the Group who had attended the Narrowing the Gap event reported their feedback to the Group. It was reported that there had been very positive discussions on engaging communities and preventing loneliness.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

10. DISABILITY PRIDE DAY

Councillor Eden asked that anyone who would like to volunteer to help set up a Disability Pride Day contact her.

AGREED: That anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the organisation of a disability pride day contact Councillor Eden.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Healthwatch

Rebecca Norris, Healthwatch Reading, reported that there would be a review starting soon regarding the Reading NHS walk-in centre in Broad Street Mall and feedback on the centre was welcomed.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Readibus

Councillor R Williams reported that the next new Readibus would be dedicated to Pete Ruhemann.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Adult Social Care User Panel

Lisa Bamsey reminded the Working Group that anyone who had experience of care and support services could join the Adult Social Care User Panel.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Access & Disabilities Working Group would next meet on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 2pm.

(The meeting opened at 2.04pm and closed at 4.10pm)

PLEASE USE THIS FORM TO RECORD ANY ACCESS OR
DISABILITIES ISSUES THAT YOU WISH THE COUNCIL
TO INVESTIGATE

FILL IN AND HAND IN AT THE ACCESS AND
DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MEETING

Name:

Contact Details (if you wish the Council to let you know the
progress with your enquiry - a telephone number or email address
would be useful):

Issues:



***New bus presentation & dedication
in memory of Pete Ruhemann***

The ReadiBus Board and staff warmly invite you to join
Pete Ruhemann's family

on

**Thursday 19th March 2015
between 4.00pm and 5.00pm**

**(following the Access & Disabilities Working Group
meeting that day)**

at the Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

- * Light refreshments 4.00-4.30pm in the Council Chamber
- * Welcome by the Mayor of Reading, Cllr Tony Jones
- * Bus dedication on the Civic Offices forecourt at 4.30pm



ReadiBus is supported by Reading Borough Council

.....
RSVP: Please reply by 12th March 2015 to:

Helen Wightwick, ReadiBus, Cradock Road, Reading RG1 0JT, or by email to
helen@readibus.co.uk, or on 0118 931 3406 (24 hours)

Corporate Plan

2015 - 18

Helping to narrow the gaps in Reading



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

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1 Our vision and ambition

We will narrow the gaps in Reading to ensure that everyone can benefit from its success

At the heart of Thames Valley Berkshire, Reading is a thriving and diverse town with a significant economic presence. Reading's population and economy continues to grow and the needs of our residents and businesses are changing which impacts on the services we provide.

Not everyone in Reading can access all the opportunities that are available though. Some people are being left behind and we want to stop this happening.

The next few years will see significant changes as we plan and cater for increasing demands for some services whilst other services will need to continue to change so that we can survive with significantly less funding for our services. We forecast that the reduction in income from the Government will now be even worse than we had predicted. As we move into a new financial year for 2015/16 we will receive 27% (£9m) less Revenue Support Grant funding from Government compared to 2014/15.

Despite the £56.8m we have already saved and the loss of over 600 employees - we expect that we still will need to save a further £28.8m from our budget between 2015-18. This will be a further cut of 25% in the money we currently have available.

In the context of this serious financial position, we have reviewed our service priorities and outlined these within our new Corporate Plan. The service priorities provide focus and ensure we continue to prioritise all we do to help narrow the gaps within Reading.

We have based the actions within this Plan on what we have been told by residents and businesses through our Let's Talk activities and other consultations and events as well as data and information we collect that tells us about what things are like within Reading.

ABOUT READING

9% increase
in residents
since 2001

159,200
people live
in Reading



Population to
increase by
24% by 2050
to 193,065



0-4 year
olds have
increased
by X5

Employment rate:

78.1% - one of the
highest in the UK

2,300
Children in
poverty

67,000
employed in
the private
sector

16,800 employed
in the public
sector

28% of
residents
don't own
a car

High weekly
earnings: £606/
week

Highly skilled:
42.6% of
residents have
NVQ 4
or above

63,000 households
- an 8% increase
since 2001

Increasing ethnic diversity
- 35% of the population
are from Black & Minority
Ethnic Groups

26%

Residents living
in private rented
homes has
increased

Ranked in top 10 European
cities for Foreign Direct
Investment

7 miles
of river
frontage

650,000 sq. ft. of new or grade A
refurbished office space under
construction

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

700
services

46
councillors

Income from
Government will
reduce by 27%
next year

 **£56.8m**
saved to date

6,900
Council homes

£124.9m
net budget

£13.6m

of savings plans
being delivered
between 2014-18

Investing **£64m** in
expanding primary
schools

750,000 people
visit our leisure
centres each year

2,000
employees

£28.8m

of additional
savings required
between 2015-18

48 % of Reading buses
are very environmentally
friendly, the highest
proportion in the UK

Over 50% of
budget spent
on Adult and
Children's Services

2013/14 carbon footprint 31% lower
than baseline emissions in 2008/09

2 Narrowing the Gap

Our population has grown by 9%¹ over the last 10 years and Reading is an increasingly diverse place. We are home to some 159,200² people comprising around 63,000 households.

We want to be able to help residents and businesses thrive in Reading. The economy in Reading has recovered from the recession better than most areas of the UK. It is performing well and is expected to continue to grow further. The reality, however, is that some residents are not benefitting from this positive outlook.

Despite the high levels of employment, prosperity, educational attainment, and good health enjoyed by many people within Reading there are gaps where some residents are left behind; find it difficult to get work that pays enough to cover day-to-day essentials and to secure decent housing. They may be less able to maintain good health or, through no fault of their own, face difficulties in leading an independent life that the majority of residents enjoy.

Our priority for 2015-2018 remains to narrow the gaps within Reading. We continue to focus our spending plans to help children, young people and adults earlier so they can seize the opportunities on offer within Reading. Our aspiration is to narrow the gaps in Reading to ensure that everyone can benefit from its success. We will continue to collaborate with partners and businesses in the town to work with us to achieve this vision.

Children, young people and families

Reading has a high proportion of children and young people aged 0 to 18, representing 20.3% of its total population. There is substantial pressure for school places especially for 4-5 year olds but in time this growth will move through to the older age groups. We will make sure that there is a school place for every child that needs it and work towards more parents getting their first preference. Last year we approved a £64m primary school expansion programme.

49.4% of the school population belongs to an ethnic group other than White British compared to 25% in England overall. An increasing proportion is bilingual with 30% of pupils speaking English as an additional language, with 150 first languages in the area. 18.8% of children in Reading live in poverty and 30% of Reading pupils are eligible for pupil premium, the Government grant to school to counter disadvantage.

¹ ONS Census 2011

² ONS Mid-year estimates 2013

Educational attainment levels for children who live in poverty and children from some ethnic minorities are lower than the average for Reading. Closing the gap in attainment for vulnerable and disadvantaged children is vital to ensure equality of life chances later on. We want to ensure that all children and young people access educational provision, and that there is regular school attendance of all pupils, in order that all young people access the very best education opportunities available to them.

We have higher than the regional average for young people not in education, employment or training. Particular 'at risk' groups include young offenders, teenage parents, and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Through our City Deal programme called 'Elevate' we will provide more job and training opportunities for 16-24 year olds and a joined-up offer of support across agencies.

Some young people experience parallel problems around housing, poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, dysfunctional family backgrounds, domestic abuse and leaving care. We will provide preventative and targeted services to support and safeguard these young people and their families.

In supporting young people, Reading Buses as our municipal bus company has introduced a Solo fare that ensures young people under the age of 19 travel at a lower fare. Our Local Sustainable Transport Fund grant from the Department for Transport also supported an initiative to reduce fares on all bus services in South Reading, leading to a 9.3% increase in passengers and long term 21% fare reduction.

Quality Care

4,100 older or disabled people are supported by Adult Social Care. Adult Social Care is already the Council's biggest single budget. Whilst Reading has a relatively young population, the older people it cares for have a higher than average level of need. The over 65 population, and particularly the over 85 population, is expected to rise steadily in Reading. Additionally by 2020 approximately 25% of people who pay for their own care are likely to have run out of funds and will be eligible to have their care paid for by the Council. In addition we need to implement the changes introduced by the Care Act as well as the wider integration of Health and Social Care under redesigned funding allocation processes such as the Better Care Fund. We are a better Care Fund pathfinder. Our plans include breaking the cycle of people being avoidably admitted to a care home from hospital by assessing them in their own home, with health and social care support, rather than in the disorientating hospital environment. We will also establish a single team to oversee care plan design and management and patient transfers between different parts of the system.

We plan to maintain quality, reduce costs and meet the increasing need as our population changes. Our Rehabilitation model has been cited as regional and national best practice. We have opened the Cedar Court Extra Care housing scheme this year - a housing solution to maximise independence alongside meeting

care needs. We will also be developing additional extra care housing and nursing care on the site of the previous Arthur Clarke and Alice Burrows sites.

We were the first local authority in the south East (outside London) to sign up to the Unison Ethical Care Charter. This is being applied within our new frameworks for purchasing care services so that through our commissioning processes we will be able to improve services both for service users and the workforce.

Neighbourhoods

Despite Reading's economic prosperity there is a widening gap between neighbourhoods. The starkest statistic is that life expectancy is 9.2 years lower for men and 6.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Reading than in the least deprived areas. Where we live, and the quality of our immediate environment has a huge impact on our quality of life and wellbeing. This includes the physical environment - the cleanliness of our streets, places for children to play, green spaces. How we feel about our neighbourhood and whether we feel safe, have a sense of community and get on with our neighbours is important. We are changing the way we work to 'Think Neighbourhood' designing and joining up our services around the needs of neighbourhoods, engaging and enabling local residents and targeting resources so that we can improve outcomes for the most deprived areas.

Reading's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has also achieved significant year on year reductions in crime levels, and is committed to continuing to work alongside our communities in reducing crime, nuisance and anti-social behaviour with a focus on the issues that matter most to them at a neighbourhood level. Priorities vary across areas but examples of this work include tackling burglary hotspots and speeding reduction initiatives. Reducing Domestic Abuse in the town also remains a priority.

Housing

Reading's relatively strong economic position and vibrant town centre means the town remains an attractive place to live. Property prices continue to rise, and are now at their highest since the summer of 2008. As a result there is a high level of pressure on the housing we have in the town. This pressure is particularly acute on more affordable housing options both in the Private Rented and Social Housing sector. National economy, policy and legislative changes have had a significant impact on Housing. We have seen a steep increase in homelessness figures this year.

Maximising the development of social housing in the town, and ensuring that social housing remains an affordable, stable option for local people, is a key priority. The town has a higher than average number of properties in the Private Rented Sector so driving up quality and ensuring we have the right mechanisms to secure this accommodation for local people is a key part of our approach to support residents to access suitable housing.

A proactive approach to preventing homelessness and helping people and families to manage through welfare reform changes is also critical. We have seen homelessness increase by 700% since 2009 with a sharp increase this year. Insulation is generally poor in older properties in Reading with 27% of stock being pre 1919. The improvement of housing conditions and helping those in fuel poverty remain a priority.

The Council has embarked upon a Council House building Programme that will create at least 1,000 new homes across the town over the next 30 years to help mitigate some of these impacts and the erosion of the housing stock through Right to Buy.

Health

The health of people in Reading varies across our neighbourhoods compared to the national average. Reading is characterised by extremes of wealth and poverty in a small geographic area. Patterns of inequality are complex with poor health outcomes for some communities. In some of our most deprived neighbourhoods there are clear links between poverty and health. We need to close this health gap.

We will help people achieve good health as early as possible in life - intervening later can be less effective without good foundations and so a focus on promoting and protecting health in the early years will be critical.

Long term conditions such as Cancer and circulatory diseases cause relatively high numbers of deaths in people in Reading aged under 75, particularly for people living in deprivation, who may smoke, have a poorer diet or low levels of physical activity. Support to make healthier choices - around smoking, substance misuse, sexual health, diet and physical activity - will be a key priority in order that we can empower people to have greater control over factors that can improve their health and wellbeing and help avoid long term conditions. Chronic health conditions like Diabetes or Dementia reduce people's quality of life and ability to enjoy active later years. Providing appropriate access to sexual health services, stop smoking services, promoting local awareness of screening services and uptake of the NHS Health Checks programme will be key elements of our approach. This will ensure people have early access to the support which will mitigate against the impact of long term health conditions.

Through our Integration Programme, including the Better Care Fund plan, Health and Social Care will work to address these health inequalities in our communities to ensure that the people of Reading are enabled to achieve the best outcome for their particular health condition. We will work with communities to help them take control of issues that impact on poor health and well-being.

Going Digital

The opportunities afforded by going digital and on-line services are huge. We can reduce the cost of our services by delivering as much as we can on-line. Reading is at the heart of the UK IT industry and businesses need workers with IT skills. Resident and community groups can build and share resources by communicating on-line. There are a minority of residents who are not benefitting from the digital age. Mostly, they are older people but also people on low incomes, people with few qualifications and disabled people. Where possible we will use digital technologies for providing information and doing business with customers. However, we will do all we can to ensure people are not left behind by supporting customers to self-serve, continuing to offer free public access IT in our facilities and will work with partners and volunteers to offer IT support and training in community settings using computers, email, social networking, online shopping and banking so that people can access better deals.

Balancing the Budget

We have tackled substantial Government budget cuts that we have faced since 2010. On the whole, we have carefully managed the reduction in our income from Government in ways that have not impacted on frontline services by concentrating on changing the way we work and by delivering efficiencies. However, the loss in Government grant combined with service pressures has reduced our capacity to deliver services for residents and businesses and our ability to help those who need our help. It has also put a lot of pressure on the remaining staff as the Council has reduced the number of staff it employs significantly to make savings.

We are now finding it harder to find further efficiencies of sufficient scale to meet the forecast loss in income from Government considering the savings that have already been achieved and the number of staff lost. We continue to find efficiencies where we can to protect services, but in the context of prioritising our service delivery to ensure residents and businesses get what they need, we still have to make substantial savings and generate additional income.

In addition, Reading's population continues to grow. The number of residents has increased by 9% since 2001 to 159,200 people. This comprises around 63,000 households. The population is forecast to increase by a further 24% by 2050 to 193,056 residents. This growth, whilst welcome to continue to create a vibrant and thriving town, impacts on our services. The process of balancing our budget over recent years has seen some major reductions:

- Staff posts have been cut by 622 including senior and middle management roles;
- We have already achieved £56.8m of savings over the period 2011/12 to 2013/14; and
- The Council has agreed to £13.6m of savings for the period 2014 -18.

We are forecasting that we still need to find savings of approximately £28.8m between 2015-18.

3 What we'll do to help narrow the gaps

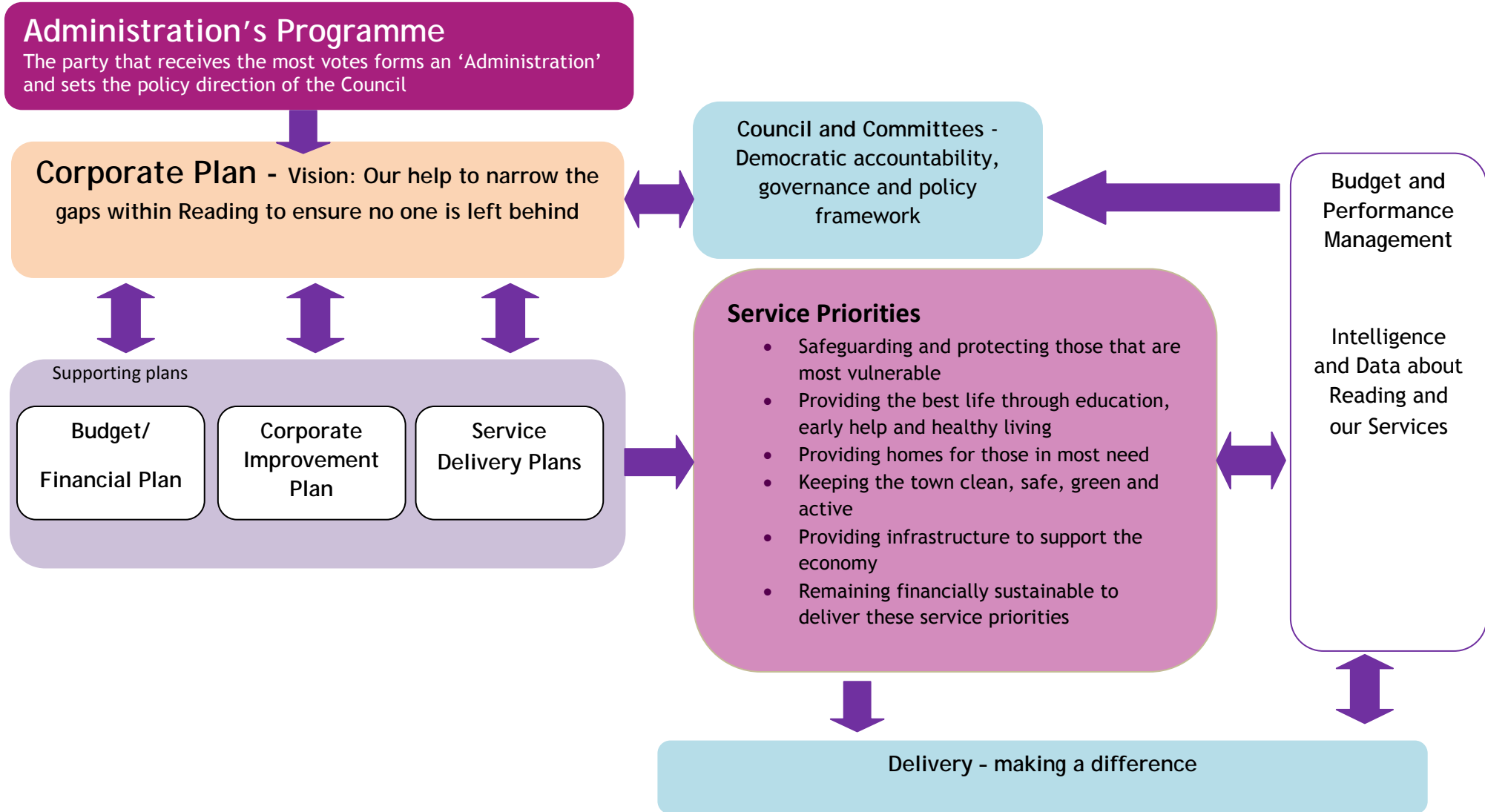
Turning the key issues within Reading into our service priorities

We have considered the issues that affect our services and we are going to focus our efforts to help narrow the gaps within Reading around 6 service priorities.

- 1 Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable
- 2 Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- 3 Providing homes for those in most need
- 4 Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- 5 Providing infrastructure to support the economy
- 6 Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

The action plans overleaf explain our work to help narrow the gaps to meet these service priorities.

How it all fits together



Our service priority 1: Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable

Why this is important for Reading:

- We want to ensure that all vulnerable residents are protected and cared for
- We want to enable people to live independently and also provide support when needed to families
- We want to ensure care and support provision is effective and of good quality
- We want to prepare young people leaving care for independence
- We want to uphold the Children in Care Pledges for those in our care
- We want to provide support services to children and young people at the point of need
- We want to promote resilience for children, young people and adults who are at risk of harm
- We want to provide high quality and stable placements for those children and young people who cannot return home
- We want children and young people to remain within their own families wherever possible

Progress so far - Adult Services:

- Opened Cedar Court providing 40 new 'extra care' housing flats for older people, offering a modern approach to living independently in the community
- Our rehabilitation model cited as regional and national best practice
- Agreed a 3 year Adult Social Care Strategy in September 2014
- Completed Supported Living Accredited Provider List
- New Home care provider list in progress
- Developed a Market Position Statement with local care providers setting out our priorities for care and support

Progress so far - Children's Services

- Secured the agreement of Thames Valley Police for a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- Embedded the Signs of Safety approach to all work
- Reduced the number of children in care
- Increased the number of children who were adopted
- Turned around 259 Troubled Families under the National Government Scheme and met the Government Target of identifying 345 families
- Re-offending rates have reduced for young people under 18
- More care leavers supported to attend University in 2014 than ever before

Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
<p>We have a high number of Delayed Discharges from the Royal Berkshire Hospital</p> <p>Residents' experience when leaving hospital and ensuring they get appropriate support is not as good as we would like</p>	Deliver an extra care scheme at the former Arthur Clarke site in Caversham	Less older people will require a hospital admission	Head of Adult Care	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent admissions to residential and nursing homes • Increase the % of older people (65+) who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital • More people choose to use personal budgets and direct payments • Higher levels of satisfaction from service users • % of adults who use social care service who say that those services made them feel safe and secure • Healthwatch report on patients experience when leaving hospital
	Deliver a nursing scheme at the former Alice Burrows site	Decrease in Older People's admissions to hospital	Head of Adult Care	2016	
	Deliver the Better Care Programme	Decrease in length of stay in hospital Decrease the number of avoidable winter deaths	Head of Adult Care	2016	
	Deliver the Adult Social Care Strategy 2015-18	Continual improvement in the client pathway for health and social care	Head of Adult Care	2016	

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
Areas of improvement for children's services following Ofsted inspection and self-assessment activity	Deliver the Children's Services Improvement Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and timely assessments • Sufficiency of placements • Appropriate staffing ratios with managed caseloads • Clear pathways for Children in Need • More care leavers will secure apprenticeships, further education or University places Reading's looked after children exceed national average measures for Early Years, Key stage 2 and Key stage 4	Improved outcomes for children and young people	Head of Children's Services	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children in care • Number of children on a child protection plan • Number of children subject to Common Assessment • Number and timeliness of adoptions • Number of Single Assessments • Number of re-referrals • LAC Key stage 2 and Key stage 4 attainment • Less placement moves
Ensuring targeted and universal intervention is appropriate	Early Help Review to ensure the offer for children and young people will be targeted at need and 'joined up' as part of a whole system approach to delivering good outcomes for children and young people	Ensuring service delivery is targeted effectively to narrow the gap	Head of Children's Services	2015	Decrease the assessed level of threshold risk and support required in more cases stepped down Increase number of closed cases which made significant change in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult Worklessness ○ NEETS ○ Domestic Abuse

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental Health ○ Substance Misuse ○ Housing Situation
Organisations involved with children and young people in Reading improve information sharing to keep them safe	Deliver the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Children and young people are safe	Head of Children's Services	June 2015	Co-location of agencies in single hub completed
Our commissioning of care services needs to be better aligned to the future needs of people and the Care Act	Work with partners to deliver the Market Position statement	More effective and safe quality services	Head of Commissioning	2017	Implementation of Ethical Home Care Charter Commissioning plans to deliver the Market position statement

Our service priority: Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living

Why this is important for Reading:

- Not everyone has the same opportunities to get the best life in Reading so we need to ensure that any gaps are narrowed through improved educational attainment, health, getting involved with sports and activities in the town and via our approach to Early Help
- We want to create more local job and training opportunities with fairer access for all with a focus on 16-24 year olds and over 50's who are disproportionately impacted by worklessness
- Whilst we have a highly skilled workforce overall there remains a significant cohort of low and unskilled people. We need to address this both to reduce levels of poverty and hardship and to support the needs of our businesses and economic growth
- As the economy picks up the numbers of residents out of work are reducing but those unable to access jobs have more complex needs and more intensive interventions are required
- Reading has a higher percentage of residents reporting good or very good health than either in the South East or nationally (Census 2011). However, there are geographical differences. We want to ensure that the gaps in health inequality are reduced
- The rate of sexually transmitted infections, TB and teenage pregnancy is significantly worse than the England average

Progress so far:

- Increase in educational attainment and a 6% improvement in KS2 in 2014
- On average, significantly more young people achieve 5 or more A*-C grades in their GCSE exams than the national average
- Young people whose first language is not English achieve as well in Reading as their peers
- Secured a 'City Deal' with Government which provides additional resources on reducing the numbers of young people out of work
- Our adult learning service, New Directions, is rated 'Good' by Ofsted and achieved 79% success in exam results for the last academic year with 65% of its part-time learners coming from the most deprived parts of the town
- Over the last 10 years, all-cause mortality rates have fallen. The early death rate from heart disease and stroke has fallen and is now close to the England average
- Reduced the rate of Teenage Pregnancy
- In line with the Children and Families Bill 2013 the Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan with its accompanying statutory requirements is in place
- Development with partners of a bid to fund a digital volunteer scheme, initially based at Central Library

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
We don't have enough school places from September 2015	Deliver the £64m Primary Schools Expansion Programme	More places will be available in local communities for families to consider when applying for their children	Head of Education	2015/16	Every pupil offered a primary school place on national offer day with increasing proportion of families getting a school of their preference
Gaps in educational attainment - the general educational quality in Reading is considered below the England average, at Key Stages 1 and 2	Prepare and deliver a new Education Improvement Plan	Improved educational attainment increases the future life chances for young people	Head of Education	2017	Increasing proportion of schools are judged good and outstanding Pupils exceed national average measures at all Key Stages and are comparable with other top quartile local authority areas
Reading has a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than the South East and other Berkshire authorities. Those in receipt of school meals, on average, do less well	Prepare and deliver a new Education Improvement Plan	Young people living in poverty will have a better chance to access a wider range of options in their futures	Head of Education	2017	Educational attainment at Foundations Stage, Key Stage 2 and GCSE for those children having free school meals is closer to Reading average than the national average
On average, attainment by young people from Black and Mixed race heritage at Key Stage 2 is lower than that of their peers. This gap continues through to GCSE level	Prepare and deliver a new Education Improvement Plan	Young people from Black and Mixed race heritage will have a better chance to access a wider range of options in their futures	Head of Education	2017	Educational Attainment at Key Stage 2 and GCSE

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
We have a higher number of young people not in education, employment or training than the national and south east average	Deliver the City Deal Elevate to provide more job and training opportunities for 16-24 year olds	More young people will be economically active and living independently	Head of Economic & Cultural Development	2017	The percentage of young people 16-19 (up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties/disabilities) who are known to be in Education, Employment or Training is at least as good as the South East Average Number of work experience placements, apprenticeships and sustained employment for 16-24 year olds
	Central Library to become a community and learning hub	Improved information, advice and guidance for job and training opportunities for 16-14 year olds	Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods	2015	
Child Poverty reflects the national average with just under 1 in 5 children living in poverty but considering the wealth and opportunities in Reading we want to make in-roads into this further	Deliver the Tackling Poverty Strategy	Reducing child poverty Increase benefits take up	Head of Customer Services	2015	No of children in low-income families
The rate of Tuberculosis (TB) at 32.8 is significantly worse than the England average of 15.1 (per 100,000 population)	Deliver work on Tuberculosis prevention in Reading through supporting CCGs, Public Health England and TB service Deliver and evaluate TB awareness	Narrow the gap to the South East average	Consultant in Public Health	2017	The rate of TB in Reading

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
	campaign/programme for earlier detection and intervention				
The rate of excess winter deaths are significantly higher than the England average	<p>Deliver the Winter Watch programme with partners to ensure this support reaches those who need it most</p> <p>Promote flu vaccinations to all at risk groups</p> <p>Disseminate relevant health messages and advice</p> <p>Work cross tenure in the private sector to ensure compliance with Energy Performance Certification and the Housing, Health & Safety Rating System in the private rented sector</p>	Continue to decrease the number of people who die in the winter	<p>Head of Adult Social Care</p> <p>Consultant in Public Health</p> <p>Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services</p>	2018	<p>Office of national statistics data on aging population and total winter death attributed mortality</p> <p>Improved health & warmer homes</p> <p>Number of grants given to owner occupiers to improve thermal efficiency of their home</p> <p>Private Stock Condition Survey to be carried out in 2018 which will provide a valid comparison of the improvement across the sector</p>
The rate of conceptions for girls aged 15 to 17 is higher than the England average	New sexual health (Genital Urinary Medical) contract for 1 April 2015 with the preferred provider with priority aim to reduce unwanted pregnancies by ensuring that young people	Reduced conceptions for girls aged 15 - 17 and young people are better informed	<p>Consultant in Public Health,</p> <p>Head of Education, Head of Children's Services</p> <p>(Partnership led</p>	2018	Quarterly conception rate figures

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
	<p>have information and advice about risky behaviour Through Early Help Services improve our early identification of young people who need specialist sexual health provision and ensure they access the Youth Outreach Nurse Specialist (YONs) Review our Condom distribution provision and target distribution points in wards with highest rates of teenage pregnancy and STIs in 16 to 24 year olds</p>		<p>approach as detailed in the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy)</p>		
<p>Levels of Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD) mortality are higher than the England average</p>	<p>Provision of lifestyle interventions including weight management, increasing physical activity, access to stop smoking services and safe alcohol consumption programmes, particularly targeting people living in areas of deprivation Continue to provide NHS Health Checks to enable earlier interventions to improve health status</p>	<p>Contribution to reducing the burden of CVD on Reading residents</p>	<p>Consultant in Public Health, Head of Economic and Cultural Development, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services</p>	<p>2018</p>	<p>Number of 4 week quitter and smoking prevalence Percentage of eligible population offered an NHS Health Check who received the Health Check Commission services that will enable residents to make healthier lifestyle choices to improve their health</p>

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
Physical activity within adults and young people is lower than the regional average	Review our leisure offer and how we promote and publicise	People are more active and healthier Physical activity within adults and young people equals the regional average	Head of Economic & Cultural Development	2015	Physical activity levels measured through annual survey
Some residents are digitally excluded and not able to access the internet and online services	Deliver the Digital Volunteers scheme with partners	Increase the number of people who can access the internet confidently and decrease digital exclusion	Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods	Spring 2015	Number of residents helped at Central Library to access the internet

Our service priority: Providing homes for those in most need

Why this is important for Reading:

- There is significant housing need within Reading with nearly 10,000 people on the Council housing register
- We need more homes within Reading as the population grows
- We need to increase access to more decent and affordable homes, including building Council homes
- Property prices and rents have been increasing significantly with some of the highest prices in the UK outside London
- The rate of family homelessness is worse than the England average

Progress so far:

- We have more than an 8 year housing land supply
- Launched a Council House building Programme to create at least 1,000 new homes
- Refurbished and reopened Jimmy Green Court to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households
- Reducing the number of days a council property is empty
- New energy efficiency measures, including installing solar panels on some of our council housing stock and a pilot programme installing external insulation for some council homes
- Delivered 370 affordable homes
- Started a major £7m refurbishment of Hexham Road flats
- The number of non-decent homes in the private sector has reduced by 40% between 2006 and 2013
- In consultation with council tenants agreed a new set of Local Offers (service standards), set targets for these and monitor them through our tenant quality panels

Providing homes for those in most need

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
<p>There is not enough affordable / social housing supply for the demand - circa 10,000 people on Council Housing register</p>	<p>Deliver our Council House building programme</p> <p>Support Registered Providers developing Social Housing in the town</p> <p>Improve access to affordable, quality-checked private rented housing for households who are homeless</p> <p>Further improve advice to tenants and private landlords to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Completing a remodel and refurbishment of flats at 2 Wensley Road for homeless households</p> <p>Complete Dee Park regeneration</p>	<p>Homes provided for people who need them the most</p>	<p>Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Phase 1 2015/16-2020/21 deliver circa 250 new homes</p> <p>2015/16</p>	<p>Number of Council Homes Built</p> <p>Number of vetted private rented sector properties secured per year for Council placements through re-launched scheme</p> <p>Total number of additional properties secured to meet housing need (private sector, new build LA or RSL, and other</p> <p>Number of Empty (void) Council properties</p> <p>Number of Council Homes relet</p>

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
Between 300-500 privately owned homes recorded on the Council Tax register as having been empty unoccupied and unfurnished for 6 months or longer (Long Term Empty properties)	Identify LTEs and work with Council Tax and owners to bring high priority and problematic properties back into use	Helps to meet housing demand and reduces the number of nuisance properties in neighbourhood	Head of Planning, Devt. & Regulatory Services	2015	Number of high priority/ problematic empty homes brought back into use annually
Overcrowding in accommodation cross tenure is higher than the national and south east average	Continue to promote the Council's under-occupation scheme to free up larger homes for those in need. Encourage partner housing providers to adopt similar schemes Plan and deliver a programme to extend existing Council homes where viable/to better meet needs	Best use of affordable housing in the town	Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods	2016	Number of under-occupiers supported to move through the Council's incentive scheme
Despite a significant improvement in the condition of homes in Reading since 2006 there are still 12,200 (23.4%) homes in the private sector that fail to meet the requirements of the decent homes standard	Launch a new campaign and materials to raise awareness about the advice and services available to landlords and tenants Increase the identification of sub-standard properties and vulnerable groups most at risk from rogue landlord activity, to ensure support is focused on those in most need	Improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector, support to landlords and targeting of vulnerable tenants	Head of Planning, Devt. & Regulatory Services Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods	2018	Reduction in number of Private rented sector homes that fail to meet the requirements of the decent homes standard

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
<p>Fuel poverty has increased from 5,600 2006 to 6,695 households (10.97%) which is worse than the England average: 10.40% and South East of England average: 7.8 %</p>	<p>Support the Governments fuel poverty strategy by draught proofing and insulating homes and providing funding to do so as well as continuing to provide grants to bring homes to a decent standard Extend Winter Watch scheme all year around to target fuel poor homes (see excess winter deaths under Health) Improve affordable warmth through income maximisation and money advice</p>	<p>Reducing fuel cost for the poorest residents Lower domestic energy bills and reduced energy debt</p>	<p>Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods and Head of Planning, Devt. & Regulatory Services</p>	<p>2017</p>	<p>Reduction in households living in fuel poverty No of people referred to Winter Watch and other funded fuel poverty programmes</p>
<p>Increase the number of residents assisted to repair, adapt and improve their homes through the Home Improvement Agency contract</p>	<p>Through the Home Improvement Agency contract continue to improve the quality of life and promote independence for residents cross tenure through the provision of major and minor adaptations and Handihelp services To assist residents in the private sector to improve their homes through the provision of grants and loans</p>	<p>Helping older people, people with disabilities, and vulnerable people to live in safety and with dignity in their own homes</p>	<p>Head of Planning, Devt. & Regulatory Services</p>	<p>2015/16</p>	<p>Number of residents assisted to repair, adapt and improve their homes</p>

Our service priority: Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active

Why this is important for Reading:

- The town must remain clean, safe and green to ensure we retain and attract residents and businesses and remain an attractive place to live, work and visit
- We will continue to work to improve neighbourhoods and the environment
- We want to build capable communities for local people to become more involved and help themselves
- We will need to continue to reduce our carbon footprint
- We need to have places for leisure pursuits and to promote active lifestyles and well being
- We need to continue to reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill and improve recycling rates through implementation of the Waste Minimisation Strategy

Progress so far:

- Introduced Love Clean Reading and embedded within our Neighbourhood delivery model
- Partner secured for Kings Meadow Pool in order to bring the listed pool back into use
- Installed solar panels on schools, council and community buildings
- Launched Reading Climate Change Strategy 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' by Reading Climate Change Partnership
- Our 2013/14 carbon footprint was 31.1% lower than the baseline emissions in 2008/09, 10% ahead of target, which is significant progress to meet the 50% reduction target by 2020
- The Reading Bus fleet is one of the cleanest and greenest in the country, directly contributing to addressing our Air Quality Management Area
- The number of car thefts and robberies are down, and a focus on reducing burglaries has paid off, with figures falling by 31%, from 1,540 to 1,060

Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
Increase recycling rates from 34.43% to the national average of 41.5%	Introduce a Waste Minimisation Strategy to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for food waste collection Review the collection of bulky waste Investigate options around the size of wheelie bins Increase community participation in recycling 	Increase recycling and reduce landfill Protect our budget from financial pressure	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015 & ongoing	Increased recycling rate Reduce amount of waste sent to land fill
Crime has fallen and Reading is 5th overall in our comparator group of 15 councils but is above average for shoplifting; crime remains a priority concern for the community	Continue with crime prevention and tackling the fear of crime Consult on and publish a new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Consult on and publish a new Domestic Abuse Strategy Update Community Safety Partnership data and review priorities, in particular to gain a better understanding of online and hidden crime	People feel safer	Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods	2015/16	Reduction in shoplifting Reduction in concern about crime
We have reduced the carbon footprint of council operations by 31% since 2008 but the Council needs to reduce this to at	Implement the Energy, Water and Carbon Management Strategy. Includes a range of renewable energy projects including installing solar panels	Reduce the energy and water consumption and carbon footprint of the Council's operations.	Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services	2015/2016 phase 1	Carbon emissions and water consumption from council premises and operations

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
least 50% of 2008 levels by 2020. Further monitoring of water is needed	on Council housing and improving energy efficiency of Council buildings				
Narrow the gap to the national average (5.3%) of deaths in over 25s linked to air pollution	Implement measures to reduce levels of larger particulates (PM10) Nitrous oxides and most harmful smaller particulates (PM2.5) as part of the Air Quality Action Plan including a Smoke Control Area Study and promoting an alert scheme to warn vulnerable residents of poor air quality	Reducing respiratory illness through the Air Quality action plan	Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services	2018	Mortality attributable to air pollution

Our service priority: Providing infrastructure to support the economy

Why this is important for Reading:

- Reading needs to maintain and improve its connectivity to support businesses and residents
- We need to ensure that barriers to economic growth are reduced and access to and from the town regionally, nationally and internationally is improved, as it is vital to retain and attract business growth
- Reading needs to improve the profile of its wider cultural offer
- Reading has a successful economy that has been buoyed by significant investment in new and refurbished commercial premises. We need to ensure that Reading remains attractive as a location for business and for employees to secure further inward investment
- Transport in Reading will better connect people to the places that they want to go: easily, swiftly, safely, sustainably to support the economic prosperity of the Reading area

Progress so far:

- Completion of the £900m Reading Station improvements which see 15 million people use the interchange each year
- We have secured significant external funding via bidding processes to secure Local Sustainable Transport Funding and Pinch Point funding to deliver transport infrastructure funding across the town
- We have introduced the ReadyBike cycle hire scheme providing 200 bicycles at 29 docking stations
- Crossrail announced during 2014 to be coming to Reading in 2018/19
- Delivered a pilot project working with Guide Dogs and Microsoft on the 'Cities Unlocked' project to provide enhanced digital information to help people with sight loss to access public transport and navigate through the public realm
- Western Rail Access to Heathrow announced in 2014 to be coming to Reading in 2019/20
- Funding secured for a new train station at Green Park on the Basingstoke line, subject to rail industry processes
- Continued partnership working with Reading Buses who have seen a significant increase in passenger journeys - in Reading last year it was 17.7 million. The number of bus trips per year per head of population in Reading was 111 which is the 4th highest in the country excluding London. The average for the south east was 41.
- Supported the economic development company Reading UK CIC that helped secure a renewed Business Improvement District for the town centre
- Stage 1 approval from the Heritage lottery fund (HLF) for the restoration of the Abbey Ruins

Providing infrastructure to support the economy

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
Reduce carbon footprint	Build new Park & Ride facilities at Mereok and Winnersh	Reduce congestion	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015	Passenger journeys
Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to keep pace to support economic growth, housing provision and access to services	Build the new pedestrian and cycle crossing over the River Thames	Reduce Congestion	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015	Pedestrian / Cycle surveys
	Deliver the A33 pinchpoint project	Removes a traffic bottleneck	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015	A33 corridor journey time & Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) monitoring
	Enhance and support bus priority measures	Improve journey time reliability and attractiveness of public transport	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015 & ongoing	Passenger journeys / bus journey times
	Deliver the Reading Bridge strengthening scheme	Ensures that a major road bridge in Reading remains in use for the longer term	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015	Reduced structural monitoring and maintenance spend
	Deliver a new train station at Green Park	New station and interchange facilities proposed on Reading to Basingstoke railway line	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2017	Direct rail service to Green Park, with associated economic benefits
	Cow Lane improvements	Removal of height and width restriction at Cow Lane bridges as	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2015/16	Reduce congestion at Cow Lane

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
		part of Reading Station upgrades scheme			
Only 20% of street light is modern LED lanterns	Replace ageing Streetlights partially or fully with LED type technology which is more energy efficient	Reduce energy consumption, maintenance and improved light quality	Head of Transportation & Streetcare	2018/19	Against three year programmed installation period
A low level of awareness of, and understated reputation for, the quality of the town's cultural offer and heritage assets	Restore the Abbey Ruins and Gateway Support the delivery of a 'Year of Culture' for Reading in 2016	Enable the preservation and re-opening of an iconic heritage site and facilitate the development of an 'Abbey Quarter' Raise the profile of and enhance the cultural offer of Reading and the town's reputation	Head of Economic & Cultural Development Head of Economic & Cultural Development	Stage two submission 2015 Works completed 2017 2016	Implementation plan Number of visitors Customer feedback Number of events and attendances Visitor numbers

Our service priority: Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

Why this is important for the Council:

- We need to change our service offer to ensure we deliver core services within our reduced budget so that the Council is financially sustainable and can continue to deliver services across the town
- Provide our services from appropriately located, safe and energy efficient buildings and seek to maximise the potential for underused council property
- Co-locate our services with partners to have better joined-up neighbourhood services and 'Community Hubs' so that residents have better access to services
- We need to ensure that our financial systems and practices are robust because of the amount of money we have saved from the Council and changes to demand-led services
- We need to streamline and update even further our internal systems and procedures
- We need to ensure that our staff teams have the support and skills required for their work
- We need to ensure our staff can self-serve to reduce paper for internal processes
- We need to redesign services and drive digital changes to maximise the shift towards cheaper channels to reduce cost
- We need to maximise the income we generate whilst protecting as far as possible the cost of services to those who are on low incomes

Progress so far:

- We have saved nearly £56.8m over recent years
- We have been reshaping our workforce to streamline our management and teams
- We have moved out of the civic centre to a refurbished office that uses 45% less space and is predicted to use 75% less energy providing better facilities for the public, councillors and staff
- We are piloting electronic payslips
- Secured over £15m of capital receipts in 14/15 and secured additional revenue from assets

Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

Key actions:

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
We have a projected funding shortfall of £28.8m over the next 3 years	Prepare a series of options for Councillor's to consider to ensure we deliver core service priorities and make the necessary savings	The Council will remain financially viable and meet its statutory duties	Managing Director	July 2015	Committee approving the options Delivering the required changes
	Secure significant capital receipts from property assets and identify further assets for disposal	Ensuring assets are maximised and supports the delivery of Council priorities	Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services and Chief Valuer	2015 and ongoing	Reducing overall assets and level of capital receipts secured
Backlog of compliance and maintenance in relation to Council stock	Ensure planned improvements to public buildings	Deliver services through safe, energy efficient buildings	Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services	2015 and ongoing	Measure performance against compliance and condition requirements
We need to reduce red tape and simplify our internal systems and process even further We need to ensure that support services reflect the needs of frontline services and also frontline services deliver their	Deliver the Corporate Improvement Plan which includes improvement plans for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Human Resources • Legal Services • IT • Property • Communications • Training & Development 	Increase productivity and efficiency Ensure service delivery is supported	Heads of Service	2015 and ongoing	By delivering the milestones within the Plan

Where are we now - what the gap is (Baseline position)	What we'll do to narrow the gap	The difference this will make	Who will do it	When it will be done by	How we will measure progress
operations within our systems and guidelines consistently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services • Commissioning and procurement 				

4 How we will do it

Our responsibilities

We are responsible for ensuring that our business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We also have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which our functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging this overall responsibility, we are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of our affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of our functions and include arrangements for the management of risk.

Political Leadership

Our councillors are elected by residents of the Borough every four years to represent them in taking decisions about council services and funding. Reading is divided into 16 wards and 46 members are elected to represent them. The Councillors make decisions that set the policy direction of the organisation. The party that receives the most votes forms an Administration and sets the policy direction for the Council. The Council appoints a Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Lead Councillors, Chairs of the Committees and Mayor at the Annual General Meeting. There are nine Lead Councillors who have particular responsibilities or 'portfolios'.

The Council and the Committees shape what services are delivered and how Reading develops and grows. The Council is responsible for approving the priorities for the Council each year through the Corporate Plan supported by the resources in the Council's Budget and Financial Plan. The Council and Committees also develop policies, make constitutional decisions and decide on local legislation.

Good decision-making

Councillors sit on a variety of committees - open to the public - that oversee and guide the different functions of the organisation. We reviewed our governance arrangements and approved a move to a committee system of governance in 2013. This created four cross-party committees whose membership is proportionate to the representation of each political party on the Council. These committees are:

- Policy Committee;
- Adults, Children's and Education Committee;
- Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee; and

- Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee.

In the new committee arrangements the four standing committees also carry out overview and scrutiny exercises. There are also Committees for Audit & Governance, Licensing, Planning and Personnel. All the committees set goals and guidelines for the operation of services. In addition, a Health and Wellbeing Board has been set up as a committee of the Council.

Constitution

Our Constitution sets out the roles of, and relationships between the Council, the committees involved in making our policies and officers. The Constitution also sets out the responsibility of each group or individual for making particular types of decisions or for directors' decisions relating to particular responsibilities. Under the Constitution, all decisions that we make or that are made on our behalf must be made in line with the principles and frameworks set out in the Constitution.

The Constitution also sets out how members of the public can get involved in the decisions we make (under the 'Access to Information Rules'). We have a legal responsibility to carry out consultations before we make certain decisions.

Our approach

We deliver our services by working to the values of being:

- Fair
 - tackling inequality and promoting residents rights
 - ensuring residents are part of decision making
 - ensuring our staff have the right support
- Caring
 - putting residents at the heart of what we do
 - working with residents to look after each other
- Enterprising
 - unlocking the power of our communities
 - acting now to create a better future

Day-to-day operations

The day-to-day work is carried out by Officer's within the Council. Their direction comes from Council and the Committees. Officers are employees of the Council and are non-political and ensure that the work is carried out as decided by Council and the Committees.

Some officers have statutory duties that they must uphold. Our Managing Director is 'Head of the Paid Service' and is responsible for the organisation's efficient management. The role also involves giving Members strategic advice on policy-related issues, drawing on the experience and expertise of the organisation as a

whole. There are also statutory roles for the s151 officer, monitoring officer and to do with adult and children's services. All officers must provide objective, comprehensive and impartial advice to Councillors so that they can reply upon this to make decisions.

Through our recruitment and learning and development we ensure that officers must have the right skills and experience to ensure that governance is strong and they understand the requirements of legislation and how this needs to be considered when making recommendations to councillor's and when delivering services.

Delivering on what we say

Beneath the Corporate Plan there are arrangements to ensure that we deliver the service priorities. These are included in the:

- Budget/Financial Plan outlining:
 - How the Council's resources will be used to deliver the Administration's priorities within a challenging financial environment;
 - The options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term for the Council to ensure services can be delivered for residents; and
 - How the Council will deliver savings solutions as a result of government grant reductions and service pressures which means that the shape of council services will continue to change.
- Corporate Improvement Plan outlines all our improvement plans for the services that support delivery including Finance, HR, Legal, ICT, Commissioning and Procurement etc.; and
- Service Delivery Plans are prepared for each service area and outline the key tasks that contribute to meeting the service priorities within the Corporate Plan with timescales, lead officers, and how we will measure the impact of the work.

Reshaping the Council

We are working in a rapidly changing landscape that presents opportunities, risks and challenges. Because of the Government's plans to cut public debt, all local authorities are having their funding reduced. We are also seeing service pressures and new responsibilities. As a result, we know that we need to rebalance our service delivery to meet new needs and opportunities and also be realistic about what we can and cannot do moving forward. Because of this we started to reshape the Council in 2013, moving to a more decentralised and flatter structure. In some cases the Council's Reshape programme has led to new ways of working and we continue to reduce management posts and costs whilst reviewing all staffing structures to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Capacity and Resilience Review

During the autumn of 2014 we undertook a capacity and resilience review. We reviewed the council's management structure to ensure the organisation was fit for purpose and has the right capacity in the right places for services being delivered for adults, children and young people.

The number of over 65's with long term health conditions is increasing and the Council was last year handed additional responsibilities by Government for Public Health. The need for joined up working in the areas of health and adult social care has become ever more apparent, particularly the need for ongoing integration with public health providers. At the same time major changes in Government legislation - like the introduction of the Care Act and the Better Care Fund - mean this is now a significant area of pressure. That is also the case for children and young people, who now represent 20% of all Reading residents. That brings with it an obvious pressure on school places and additionally the need to look after and keep vulnerable children and young people safe. Changing inspection regimes by both Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are also bringing additional demands in both these important areas.

We assumed responsibility for Public Health functions in April 2013 and the initial priority was for a safe landing of these services. The aim now is to ensure that Public Health is more embedded within our way of working and has more emphasis on early intervention, prevention and community development.

To ensure there is sufficient resource in these key areas of work, we are now splitting the current role of Director of Education, Adult & Children's Services into two new Director roles:

- Corporate Director of Children, Education & Early Help Services; and
- Corporate Director of Adult Care & Health Services.

Moving to a revised service offer in 2015

It is clear that because we will need to reduce the amount of money we spend on services by at least 25% over the next few years that through the course of 2015 options will need to be prepared for the Administration to consider to further prioritise the council service offer based on what it can afford. Attempts will be made to safeguard as many services as possible but the scale of funding reduction means that services will be significantly altered. Service and Budget Options will be developed through the spring so that they can be considered by committee in the summer with public and staff consultation to follow.

5 Paying for what we will do

Where does the money come from to deliver council services?

Each year the Council is required to set a budget for day-to-day expenditure for the financial year starting on 1 April. This is called the revenue budget and it is the amount of money the Council needs to provide services during the year. It is a legal requirement for the Council to set a balanced budget within its Budget Framework by 17 March 2015.

This total amount of funding we have comes to us in four ways:

- Central Government Grant;
- Council Tax;
- Business Rates; and
- Income from fees, charges and rents.

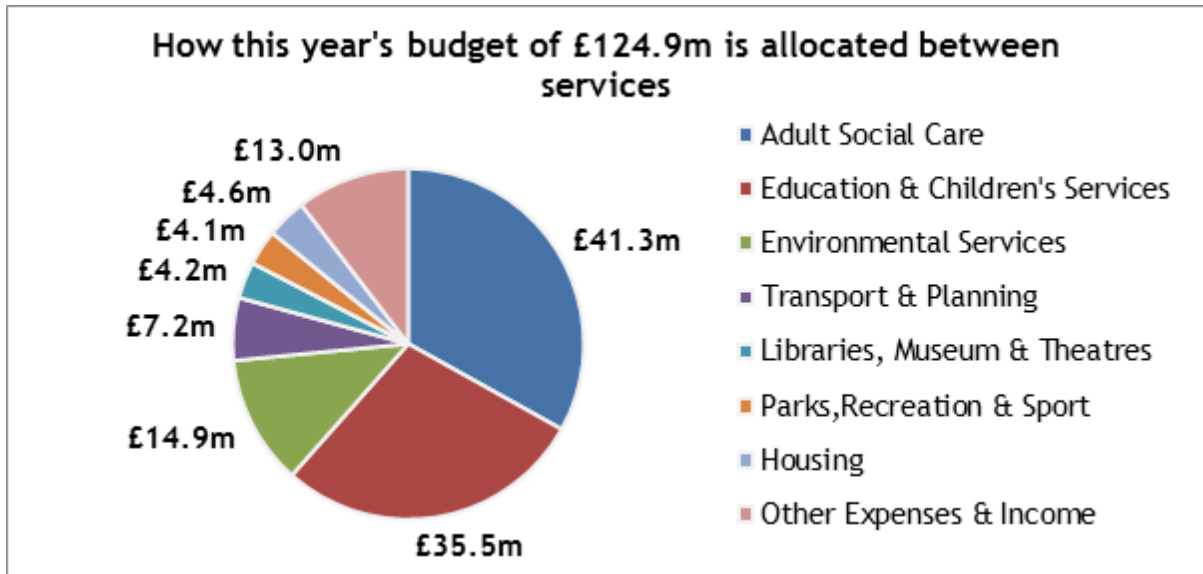
Two-thirds of this funding goes straight to schools or is for other ring-fenced purposes, so we cannot generally use to fund services. The gross budget also includes the Housing Revenue Account, which is used for council housing income and expenditure. This money can only be used for services to Council tenants and improvements to Council homes.

The funding the Council has a choice about and where it is spent, including the statutory services that we are required to provide by law, makes up the net budget. The net budget of the Council will be approximately £124.9m in 2015/16. This will need to be reduced by about 25% by the 2017/18 financial year after allowing for inflation and further reducing government grant.

Where we are spending the funding that we have

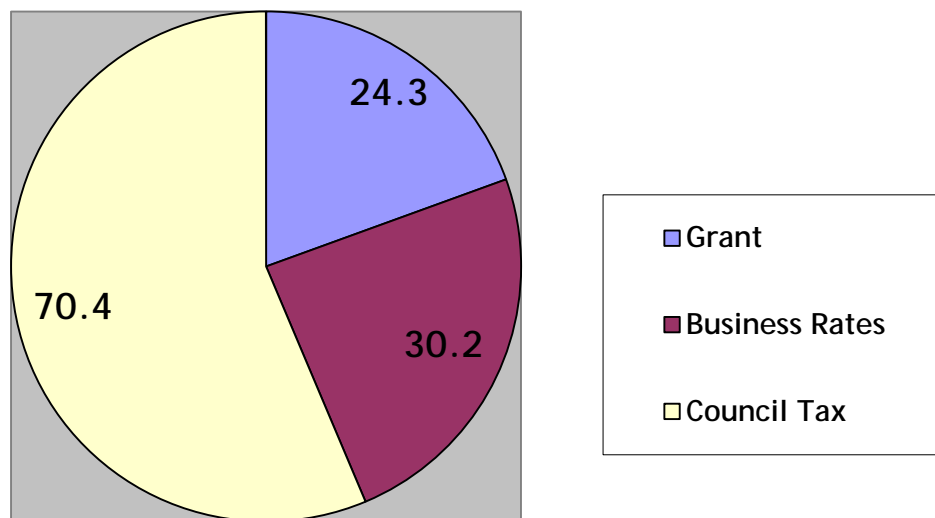
The vast majority of the funding that we have is spent on providing services that we are required to provide by law. These are called statutory services such as caring for children and determining planning applications.

The chart overleaf shows the breakdown of where our net budget is spent. As can be seen over half of this is spent on providing services to adults' and children across the town.



The net budget of £124.9m of the Council is funded through a mixture of grant, retained business rates and council tax. The graph shows the split of these funding sources:

Funding of Budget Requirement 2015/16 (£m)



Reducing income

The Treasury proposed, at the 2010 Spending Review, to reduce funding of local authorities by 26 per cent (£7.6 billion) in real terms, between April 2011 and March 2015 (excluding police, schools and fire). Including Council Tax, the overall reduction of local authority income was forecast to be 14 per cent in real terms and further reductions have since been announced.

The latest Local Government Association estimate is that there have been funding reductions arising from the 2010 spending review of 28% in real terms. The 2013 spending round imposed a further cut with the effect that in reality local government as a whole will have faced a 40% cut by the end of 2015/16. The LGA has calculated councils across England will receive 8.5 per cent less funding from government to run local services in 2015/16, when council tax, ring-fenced funding, and the element of the Better Care Fund that is attributable to the NHS is removed from the calculation.

The Local Government Finance System was changed substantially in 2013/14 with the localisation of half of business rate income. The table below shows our Revenue Support Grant (or equivalent for years prior to 2013/14) loss:

	RSG (from 2013/14) £m	Change from previous Year	Percent change
2011/12		*-£5.5m	- 7.6%
2012/13		*-£3.1m	- 4.3%
2013/14	40.3m	*-£6.9m	-14.6%
2014/15	33.2m	-£7.1m	-17.6%
2015/16	24.3m	-£8.9m	-26.8%
Total		-£31.5m	

*changes in formula & other grants as reported in budget reports 2011-2013

As a result of the reduction in government grant and service pressures, over the last three years the Council has already made substantial savings of £56.8m to balance the books. £13.6m of savings for future years have already been agreed by Council in February 2014 and Policy Committee in September 2014.

Despite the savings we have already made, and those that have already been agreed by committee, further reductions in Government grant are forecast as follows:

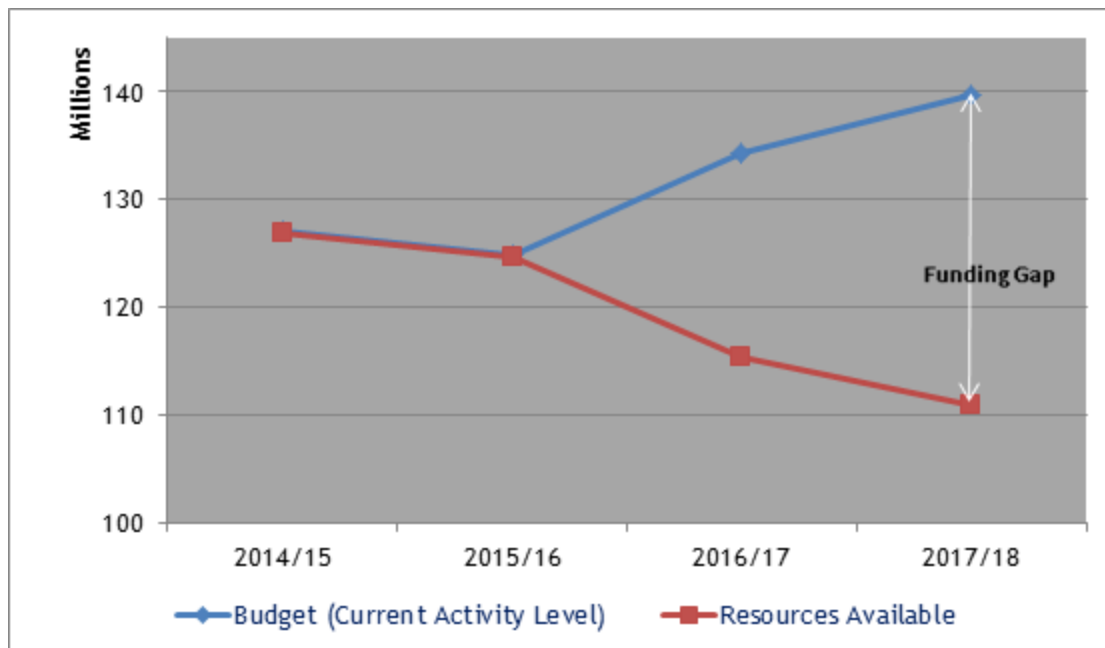
Year	Range	
	Lower	Higher
2016/17	£13.8m	£17.6m
2017/18	£10.0m	£13.5m
Total	£23.8m	£31.1m

There is a range of grant reductions forecast as the Government has a wide range of choice over how it implements the Autumn Statement. To offset these Government grant reductions, our ability to raise income from other sources is very limited as:

- We cannot raise Council Tax above a 2% increase because of the referendum limit introduced by the Government;
- We do not get all the benefit of the Business Rates that are generated in the town with three quarters being paid to the Government; and
- There are limits to what we can increase fees and charges by.

In addition to the reductions in Government grant we have annual inflation costs and also service pressures that we need to provide enough money for. We therefore forecast the budget gap, taking a middle view on Government reductions, for 2015-18 to £28.8m. We forecast that the money we will have available to pay for all services will reduce to approximately £110.9m (net) by 2017/18 as shown in the graph below.

Projected 3 year budget gap 2015-18



The Council’s Financial Planning Response

Because our options to raise additional income are limited, and our grant is being reduced, we will have to plan to further focus our service priorities so that they can be paid for within the remaining money we will have available. Our forecasts will continue to be reviewed as more information is available and will be updated through the course of the financial year.

Our plan covers a rolling period of three years but will be reviewed at least annually by Policy Committee/Council. Updates will reflect the changing nature of our service delivery and changes in funding.

Because central government has not published details of the amount of grant after 2015/16 either at a national or individual authority level that is an area of uncertainty, but following the Autumn Statement the direction of travel is clear.

Our financial planning assists in:

- Helping improve the financial management of resources, both revenue and capital;

- Maximising use of resources available to the Council;
- Ensuring that the Council provides value for money and continues to deliver efficiency gains;
- Allowing the continued development of longer-term budgets and strategic thinking;
- Reviewing the Council's policy on the use of reserves, ensuring the position continues to be sustainable and that there are sufficient resources over the medium term; and
- Responding to external pressures on services, including changes to the responsibilities of the Council and funding reductions.

Each year we agree budget guidelines for developing the detailed budget for future years. In the context of our 3 year financial plan, we agreed guidelines for 2015/16 at Policy Committee in September 2014, and the detailed budget has been built in line with those guidelines including making appropriate allowances for inflation. However, since that time a local government pay award has been agreed that will cost slightly more than the guidelines allowed for. An additional £180k has been built into the budget to meet this cost.

Reducing Council income at a time when we have rising demand for some services and a need to maintain our statutory responsibilities is creating some real pressures and tensions - so getting the balance right is a real challenge. Policy Committee at its September meeting approved a further phase of savings and income proposals totalling £8.7m over 3 years and authorised officers to take the action necessary to implement these changes, subject to any necessary consultation. Consultation has now been completed and the savings as agreed by Policy Committee have been built into the Council's budget and service plans over the next 3 years.

In addition to those savings the budget report proposes £0.6m of further savings which taken with the earlier agreed measures enable us to bridge the financial gap for 2015/16 and contribute to required savings in following years. The total saving that have been developed over time and are now included in 2015/16 are £8.1m, made up as follows:

Savings agreed	Value (£k)
Policy Committee/Council - February 2013	163
Policy Committee/Council - February 2014	3,375
Policy Committee - September 2014	3,985
Proposed Policy Committee/Council - February 2015	584
Total	8,107

Because of their early development many of these have already been implemented. However, there is an on-going need to secure additional savings for future years and currently we estimate that £28.8m additional savings will need to be implemented by 2017/18.

Whilst moving to a rolling three-year financial plan last year has helped us improve our longer term budget management and make sure we provide sufficient scope to pay for the things that we must do for people such as provide sufficient school places, cleaning the town, collecting and recycling refuse and caring for those that are vulnerable, in view of the size of the financial challenge, there are going to be some difficult choices about service provision in the coming years.

We expect the government following the general election to publish a summer consultation that should remove some of the uncertainty about grant where at present we have a fairly wide range of estimates for possible grant after 2015/16 depending upon the choices government makes. All estimates are significantly lower than this year's grant and lower than our own most recent published forecast as effectively the Autumn Statement made a further cut to central government grant funding.

Service Budget Pressures

In the context of reducing resources the Council also faces various budget pressures. These are closely aligned to delivering the priorities within this Corporate Plan, and can be summarised as follows:

Corporate Plan Priority	Service Priorities	£'000
Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable	Additional children's social work staffing, including the new director, and commissioned services to better meet the needs of vulnerable children	1,017
Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living	Facilitates children getting to school, as this is a transport cost pressure	100
Providing homes for those most in need	There is additional homelessness demand for which we need to provide a budget for accommodation	650
Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active	Improved private rented sector and grass cutting activities	145
Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities	About half of this arises from the need to ensure various income budgets (including transport enforcement) are realistic given the latest projections; with the remaining dealing with cost pressures arising from fall out of smaller grants, energy costs and the need to ensure that we operate our buildings safely	1,548
Total		3,460

Financial Plan Forecast

The table below summarises the main changes to our revenue spending plans for 2015-2018 identifying the resources that we have available to fund our spending and our savings programme.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Budget Requirement (previous year):	126,793	124,867	115,409
Changes between years:			
One off measures from previous year	317	1,543	
Grant Changes	- 133	-	
Pay Award and Increment (& NI change)	2,102	1,972	1,972
National Insurance Change (2016/17)		2,735	
Non pay inflation	2,325	2,125	2,125
Regulatory change		150	25
Capital financing cost	- 900	2,660	4,408
Pressures			
Service Pressures	3,460		
Draft Budget before Savings	133,964	136,052	123,939
Agreed Savings measures	- 8,107	- 3,110	- 3,253
Savings measures under development		- 18,991	- 9,803
Use of Balances	- 1,493		
	124,364	113,951	110,883
NNDR & Related Grant Changes	503	1,458	
Budget Requirement	124,867	115,409	110,883
Funding of Budget Requirement			
Estimated Government Grant (RSG)	24,295	16,240	10,361
Estimated NNDR Local Share	29,373	30,107	30,860
Estimated Council Tax Income	68,461	69,062	69,662
Collection Fund Council Tax Surplus	1,888	-	-
Collection Fund NNDR Surplus	850	-	-

Reserves and Provisions

We hold reserves as a contingency for unexpected events or emergencies and service changes that we know will happen in the future. The Head of Finance reports to Council each year about the level of reserves, and also sets out the provisions held for known future liabilities. Where the liability is uncertain in value, we must put in place a strategy to match the provision with our estimate of the liability at the time we expect to have to pay it. Our uncommitted reserves plans are at minimal levels historically, though do provide:

- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities or to smooth some expenditure requirements - known as earmarked reserves;
- A degree of financial flexibility over the year and between years; and
- Maintain some contingencies against unbudgeted expenditure or unexpected events.

We must retain adequate reserves and provisions so that the costs of unexpected budget pressures and known liabilities can be met without adverse impact on the achievement of key objectives. The approach for reserves is based on a thorough understanding of the organisation's needs and risks.

Reserves fall into two categories, general and earmarked. The General Reserve is available to support future revenue and capital programmes, unexpected major incidents and loss of funding and is at £5m. Earmarked reserves are set up to provide for specific liabilities.

The reason for planned movements in the Reserves and Provisions is explained in detail in the Head of Finance's statutory report to Council on the adequacy of balances. The use of the prudential reserve planned for 2015/16 in part was as per the 2014/17 budget plan, and this revised plan uses the remainder to help compensate for some additional budget pressures that have recently emerged. The forecast capital financing line in the 3 year plan table above reflects the revised approach.

6 How we will communicate and involve you

We welcome views from the residents and businesses as part of the constitutional process. These views will be considered through formal and informal consultation processes, attendance at local meetings or contact with a local ward councillor.

Trades unions are consulted on issues that affect staff.

During the last year we have continued to work hard to communicate (and receive feedback on) our aims for the community. We have done this in a number of ways, including:

- Our 'Working Better With You' initiative, which aims to improve the way we engage with residents, building lasting relationships and finding ways of working better together for the benefit of Reading;
- The 'Let's Talk' consultation meetings - talking to schools and parents about the sites for extra schools and classrooms. Consulting with residents on modernising day care services and improving residential services; and
- Using social media as a tool for communicating with the community on important developments and working on plans to develop the council's website.

We get regular and detailed information on what people think about the quality of each of our services and we use this feedback to improve services. Through our 'Working Better With You' initiative, we have been providing opportunities for Reading people to get involved in the decision-making process so their views play a major part in helping to set spending priorities.

For the last three years we have devoted our annual Council community events to identifying priorities and actions that we, our partners and residents can take together to address the issues that concern everyone: 'Building a Better Future for Young People', 'Tackling Poverty' and 'Narrowing the Gap'. The outcomes of those events are reflected in this plan.

Further information

If you would like to receive further information about the work of your Council then log onto www.reading.gov.uk or alternatively please contact us on 0118 937 37 87 or you can follow us via Facebook and Twitter. Videos about our activities can also be found on YouTube.



Corporate Plan 2015-18

Helping to narrow the gaps in Reading

Civic Offices
Reading, RG1 2LU
0118 937 37 87

www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE INFORMATION

Details of Taxis (hackney carriage vehicles) and private hire vehicle companies can be found on the Council's website or in local newspapers. When calling a private hire company provide to the controller your pick up point, your destination and time you wish to be picked up. It is important to let the controller know if you require to be at your destination at a specific time to ensure they can get you there on time.

Always ask for a price for your journey from the controller before you travel.

Taxis have meters fitted in them which they must use whilst driving in the Borough of Reading, the driver must only start the meter when the journey starts, not while loading or unloading.

Private Hire journeys are on the price quoted.

Taxis and Private Hire operators cannot charge extra if a passenger is in a wheelchair or is disabled in such a manner that it takes longer to board the vehicle than an able bodied person.

If you are not happy with the price quoted shop around.

All drivers must wear a valid badge detailing that they are licensed to drive either the taxis or private hire vehicle they are driving.

If you are unhappy with the services or the price quoted or charge made, e-mail the licensing section on licensing@reading.gov.uk or tel. 0118 937 3762.

If e-mailing, please provide as much detail as possible e.g.

Date of the booking or incident

Time of booking

Details of the company you booked with.

As much detail of the journey if you took the journey

Vehicle registration and plate number (every vehicle should have a plate fixed on the rear of the vehicle with a number normally 4 digits)

Description of the driver plus badge number if possible.

Once we have your complaint we will investigate and supply you with our findings and any action taken.