

To: Councillor Davies (Chair)  
Councillors Lovelock, Carnell, Ennis,  
Gittings, Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin, James,  
Leng, Manghnani, McGonigle, O'Connell,  
Rowland, R Singh and R Williams

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25 June 2019

Your contact is: Julie Quarmby - Committee Services

### **NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 3 JULY 2019**

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on Wednesday, 3 July 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

	<b><u>WARDS AFFECTED</u></b>	<b><u>Page No</u></b>
<b>1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.		
<b>2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 MARCH 2019</b>		<b>5 - 10</b>
<b>3. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES</b>		<b>11 - 14</b>
Community Safety Partnership - 15 November 2018		
<b>4. PETITIONS</b>		
Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.		
<b>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS</b>		

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Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.

## **6. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES**

To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been subject of Decision Book reports.

## **7. TACKLING KNIFE CRIME**

**BOROUGH  
WIDE**

To receive a presentation on Tackling Knife Crime by Thames Valley Police.

## **8. SINGLE HOMELESSNESS SERVICES AND ROUGH SLEEPING**

**BOROUGH  
WIDE**

To receive a presentation by the Homelessness and Housing Pathways Manager.

## **9. CONSULTATION FOR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019 - 2024 AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024**

**BOROUGH  
WIDE**

**15 - 76**

This report presents an initial review of the council's current Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 and seeks authorisation to commence a consultation exercise on three new proposed themes/priorities to underpin and develop a new Homelessness Strategy for 2019 - 2024. The report also presents the council's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 and seeks authority to consult with partners on the co-production of an action/delivery plan.

## **10. CONSULTATION FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2019 - 2022**

**BOROUGH  
WIDE**

**77 - 120**

This report summarises the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading, 2019-22 and requests authorisation to complete a consultation exercise with stakeholders on the proposed priorities for the strategy.

## **11. CONTRACT AWARD - MINOR WORKS BUILDING CONTRACT 2016 PVCU WINDOW AND REAR DOOR REPLACEMENTS TO FLATS**

**CAVERSHAM;  
SOUTHCOTE;  
TILEHURST  
; WHITLEY**

**121 -  
124**

This report seeks approval for the award of JCT Minor Works Building Contract to replace windows and doors on up to 228 Flats in 22 council blocks starting August 2019 and completing before the end of this financial year as per the current year's programme.

<b>12.</b>	<b>UPDATE ON THE APPROVED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME FOR LEISURE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 2018 - 2020</b>	<b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>	<b>125 - 140</b>
	<p>This report provides an update on the status of the leisure, parks and open spaces schemes funded by Section 106 receipts and funded from the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy approved by Policy Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.</p>		
<b>13.</b>	<b>FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2019/20 AND AMENDMENTS TO THE DELEGATION REGISTER</b>	<b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>	<b>141 - 182</b>
	<p>This report provides the Committee with an annual opportunity to review the Council's Food Service plan. The report also seeks amendments to the Delegations Register to ensure that the legislation is up-to-date and that officers are clearly authorised to exercise powers under Consumer Protection Act 1987, Animal Health Act 1981 and other legislation made under the European Communities Act 1972.</p>		
<b>14.</b>	<b>CLIMATE EMERGENCY</b>	<b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>	<b>183 - 232</b>
	<p>This report outlines the Council's progress to date in tackling climate change, work in progress and sets out the proposed approach to responding to the climate emergency declaration made by the Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019.</p>		

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**Present:** Councillor Davies (Chair);

Councillors Emberson (Vice-Chair), Eden, Ennis, Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin, James, Manghnani, McGonigle, Rowland, Stanford-Beale and R Williams

### 18. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 19. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Community Safety Partnership - 20 September 2018.

**Resolved - That the Minutes be received.**

### 20. PRESENTATION FROM READING BOROUGH COUNCIL TENANTS ON FIRE SAFETY REVIEW, BUILDING CLEANING AND SOCIAL HOUSING GREEN PAPER

The Committee received a presentation from Chris Matta and Molly Haines, members of the Building Cleaning Tenant Group, who updated the Committee on the work the Group had undertaken since they had last presented to the Committee in November 2017. The Tenant Group had been set up in early 2016, and the group worked on an agreed action plan with support of council officers. The Group was made up of six tenants, and several other tenants helped with work such as block inspections. Work in 2018 had included continuing to produce the tenant led newsletter, mystery shops and block inspections, considering feedback from a survey about the work of the group and the newsletter, and working on the new service level agreement for cleaning. Work going forward would include monitoring the new cleaning standards and the new Service Level Agreement; continuing to carry out unannounced block inspections; and considering complaint information from tenants.

The Committee received a presentation from Veronica Kloppe and Pat Watson, members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel TACT (Tenants and Council Together), on the Fire Safety Review they had carried out. TACT was made up of six tenants, who had all received training and had an independent mentor. The Panel aimed to work with Housing Services to provide an independent check and challenge on the services provided. TACT's Fire Safety review had two objectives: the first was to investigate the approach to fire prevention in high rise blocks and the second was to look at the communications between housing services and tenants on fire safety and prevention. TACT had carried out a desktop review, received a presentation from the principal building surveyor to explain

## HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2019

the Council's current approach to fire safety, they had also carried out a survey with tenants living in high rise and large blocks, interviewed staff from the Council, and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. TACT had analysed all the data and had prepared a report for Council managers. The report had made five recommendations and overall TACT had been impressed by the approach taken by the Council and the good relationship they had with the Fire Service. The recommendations had been accepted and an action plan was being worked on.

Sue Timmins, a member of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel TACT (Tenants and Council Together) gave a presentation on the Social Housing Green Paper. The Green Paper, realised by the Government in 2018, had identified five core themes from the consultation that had taken place, these were: safe and decent homes; effective complaints handling; tenant empowerment and strengthening the regulator; tackling stigma; and expanding the supply of housing. Sue talked through the comments that had been submitted in respect of the consultation on the Green Paper. The government were currently considering the consultation results.

### **Resolved -**

- (1) That Chris, Molly, Veronica, Pat and Sue be thanked for their presentations;
- (2) That officers coordinate inviting members of the Committee to tenant housing inspections.

### **21. AWARD OF GRANT FUNDING FROM WARM HOMES FUND**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report to inform the Committee of the award of £337,860 of grant funding from Affordable Warmth Solutions (AWS) to support new gas central heating installations in approximately 100 Council tenanted flats and 50 privately owned leasehold flats currently heated by older, less efficient and more expensive electric storage heaters.

The report stated that AWS was a Community Interest Group that had been set up in 2008 by the National Grid with the aim of addressing some of the issues caused by increasing energy prices and the growth of Fuel Poverty in the UK. AWS had established a £150m Warm Homes Fund designed to support local authorities, registered social landlords and other organisations in reducing fuel poverty amongst some of the most deprived neighbourhoods.

The report explained that in February 2018 the Council had submitted a bid for £377,860 of grant funding and in November 2018 AWS had confirmed an award for the full amount. The award had been accepted by the Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Head of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing. The Warm Homes Fund grant would be matched by £300,000 from other sources, including £40,000 grant funding already offered by Yes Energy Solutions and up to £180,000 from SGN (the gas network

## **HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2019**

provider for South East England). The balance of funding would come from the 2019/20 Housing Revenue Account heating upgrade budget.

The report stated that the funding would be used towards the connection and installation of new efficient gas central heating systems with digital thermostatic controls in 100 Council tenanted flats and 50 privately owned leasehold flats - at no cost to either the tenant or home owner. These systems were easier to use, cheaper, and more flexible than the electric storage heaters they would replace, allowing residents to programme the systems to meet their needs rather than wait for heaters to charge and then release their heat at set times.

In determining the selection of properties that were to be included in the project, the Housing Service would seek to maximise the grant that each property attracted targeting those properties which were least energy efficient and would target properties in areas of greatest deprivation. Specifically, the financial contribution from SGN was maximised where there was no live gas connection currently in place. The final schedule and basis of targeting properties would be agreed with the Head of Service and Lead Councillor for Housing.

### **Resolved -**

**That the award of £337,860 grant funding from the Warm Homes Fund to help tackle fuel poverty by connecting and installing new gas central heating systems in approximately 100 Council tenanted flats and 50 privately owned flats or houses across Reading, be noted.**

## **22. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING UPDATE**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that updated the Committee on the progress made in delivering the Private Rented Section (PRS) Charter and action plan. The update focussed on the following four key areas: Rogue Landlord Enforcement Grant awarded by The Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG); Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme; HMO Licensing; and Enforcement

The report explained that the PRS Charter aimed to build a common understanding of values, standards and requirements in the private rented sector. It further demonstrated the Council's and partners' commitment to improving the sector.

The report stated that the Council had been successful in a bid for funding from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to tackle rogue landlords. The Council had been awarded £100,000, and the funding had to be spent by 31 March 2019. The report provided details of the projects that would be funded with this award of money, which included a stock conditions survey, HMO licensing application system, Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme, raising awareness and a Prevention Fund.

The report provided an update on the Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme, which following stakeholder consultation had been moved to a property based approval scheme.

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The report also provided an update on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing. The extension of Mandatory Licensing had come into force on 1 October 2018 but to date only 8% of the estimated number of properties which should have submitted applications had been received, despite regular and targeted communications.

The report also provided an update on enforcement, stating that the Private Sector Housing Team dealt with in excess of 1500 service requests a year, some of which had required formal enforcement action to be taken. The report detailed the work that had taken place over the past year, including that 68 statutory notices had been served, including two Emergency Prohibition Notices and three Prohibition notices giving a set timescale, four prosecutions had been taken with total fines of £32,152 and two formal cautions had been issued, and five Civil Penalty Notices had been issued, two of which had been Final Notices with fines totalling £1,429 and three Notices of Intention. The report provided case studies that highlighted recent prosecutions.

The report set out the proposed actions for officers over the next 12 months as part of the Council's plan to ensure the safety and quality of the private rented sector.

### **Resolved -**

**That the progress made against the action of the Private Rented Sector Charter and the next steps outlined in the report, be noted.**

### **23. READING FESTIVAL 2018**

James Crosbie, Regulatory Services Manager, and Noel Painting, Festival Republic, gave a presentation on the 2018 Reading Festival. The presentation focussed on the issues of safeguarding and welfare and sustainability.

James highlighted the Council's multiple roles in the planning and regulation of the festival. The Council had received 38 complaints about the festival in 2018, which was down 20% on the number received in 2017. 20 of the complaints had been noise-related. The Festival Licence had permitted a capacity of 100,000 in 2018, an increase of 5,000 on the previous year and would be increased to 105,000 for the 2019 Festival.

In respect of safeguarding and welfare, James explained that the following support had been available on site prior to 2018, an onsite hospital with staff trained in mental health, a first aid point in the arena, a first aid point in White Camp, two welfare tents with trained drugs counsellors/mental health support staff, two street pastor tents offering support, street pastor patrols of campsites, a salvation army tent, a Samaritan tent, anti-drugs messaging and a profiling search policy on wristband exchanges/arena or, entrance. Enhancements for 2018 had included a safeguarding co-ordinator, who had been a trained social worker, communications and reporting had been enhanced, the introduction of safe hubs and a help map and relevant messaging. There had also been back of house drugs testing taking place, more information tents and the introduction of rejection tents.



## **HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2019**

In respect of sustainability, James reported that the Festival had used a number of different methods to communicate the message about sustainability, including ticket wallets, the website, social media, newsletters, programmes, onsite posters and big screen messages and green messenger volunteers. Every campsite had a recycling point which was looked after by green messengers who encouraged campers to separate their waste. The majority of recycling had been separated offsite and had achieved a 68% recycling rate.

Noel gave an overview of Festival Republic's proposals for the 2019 Festival, which included improving the plans and provision for those attendees who arrived on the Thursday evening, including opening the silent arenas that were in the campsites on the Thursday evening, putting the street pastors into the main arena, developing the safe mates campaign with other agencies, more live debriefing with the safeguarding partners on site.

**Resolved -**

**That James Crosbie and Noel Painting be thanked for their presentation.**

### **24. 'READING, PLACE OF CULTURE' (GREAT PLACE SCHEME)**

Further to Minute 13 of the previous meeting, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an updated on the progress in delivering year 1 of 'Reading, place of culture' funded through the 'Great Place Scheme'.

The report, in paragraph 4.1, provided an overview of the significant progress that had been made across all strands of the programme in the first year. The progress had been overseen by a Steering Group of the three core delivery partners, leading on particular aspects of the programme. The report also, in paragraph 4.2, set out the plans for year two of the programme that were already in-train and were seeking to build from the foundations of the first year whilst strengthening connections between the various components and further developing network and collaboration. Across the programme the aim was to develop and deliver sustainable change and impact by the end of the three year period.

Liz Allen, Cultural Development Officer, and Rebecca Lyndsay, National Management Trainee, gave a presentation that provided further details on the delivery of the first full year of the programme and the proposals and plans for year two.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress made in delivering 'Reading, Place of Culture' over the first full year of implementation as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report, be noted;**

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2019**

- (2) That the proposals to further develop the programme of work in the second year of delivery as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report, be endorsed.

(The meeting closed at 9.08 pm)

**Present:**

Cllr Sophia James (Chair)	Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods & Communities, (RBC)
Cllr Jo Lovelock	Leader, RBC
Penny Jones	Thames Valley Police
Anthony Brain	Community Safety Manager, RBC
Cath Marriott	Policy Development, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
Jo Middlemass	Anti-Social Behaviour Team Leader, RBC
Clare Muir	Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager
Carol Kelly	Chair, Berkshire Bench
Rebecca Lindsay	National Management Trainee, RBC
Sarah Gee	Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods, RBC
Vicky Rhodes	Strategic Lead for Early Help, RBC
Melanie Smith	Head of Berkshire, National Probation Service
Simon Hill	Committee Services, RBC

**Apologies:**

Cllr Liz Terry	Lead Councillor for Children, RBC
Cllr Tony Page	Deputy Leader, RBC
Kathryn Warner	Communities Manager, PACT
Nicola Bell	Manager, Willow Project

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

**2. PREVENT DUTY UPDATE**

Clare Muir submitted a report giving an update on the implementation of the Prevent duty in Reading. The report summarised the role of the Prevent Management Group (PMG) and Channel Panel, set out the key areas of the Reading Prevent Action Plan, and provided information on the government's revised Contest Strategy.

The meeting discussed the update and the points raised included the following:

- The number of Prevent referrals in Reading continued to be very low;
- Staff in Children's Services and Education should receive Prevent training;
- The PMG would consider how the prevent element of cybercrime strategy could be strengthened;
- A schools survey a few years ago had provided useful data.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;

- (2) That Vicky Rhodes check the take-up of Prevent training in Children's Services and Education and whether there were any plans for the schools survey to be run again.

### **3. CRIME PERFORMANCE**

Anthony Brain presented the crime performance report as at the end of September 2018.

Anthony explained that the rate of all crimes had increased by 12% year-on-year, and the rate of British Crime Survey crimes had increased by 9%. Burglary had gone down by 6% year-on-year but wounding had increased by 26%, and was now the highest in the Thames Valley.

Anthony noted that the rate of violent crime had increased since TVP had changed their recording procedures following HMIC inspection. Cath Marriott further explained that alongside new recording arrangements there was also now a higher rate of recording in institutions where incidents of violence had previously been tolerated as being 'part of the job'. Notwithstanding these two factors a genuine increase in violent behaviour had also been observed. Anthony tabled a police analysis of violent crime which set out information on crime types, the age of suspects and 'hot spot' locations around the borough.

The presentation also covered the current situation relating to drug-related crime and modern day slavery.

**AGREED:** That the presentation be noted.

### **4. REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP**

Sarah Gee introduced a workshop to review the role and work of the Partnership. She noted that a periodic review was helpful to refresh partnership working, and recognised that the churn of personnel and leadership and pressures on partner organisations presented a challenge to continuing to work in partnership.

Sarah noted that it was a statutory requirement to have a CSP, and that certain partner organisations were statutory partners, but that within those requirements the CSP could consider whether they had the correct membership and seniority. Sarah also outlined the local context for community safety and the potential emerging priorities, for further discussion at the workshop.

**AGREED:** That the outputs of the workshop be reported to the next meeting.

### **5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING**

The remaining meetings for 2018/19 would take place on:

Thursday 31 January 2019

Thursday 25 April 2019

All meetings at 9.30am.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and closed at 10.30 am)

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## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 JULY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	CONSULTATION FOR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019 - 2024 AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR JOHN ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	VERENA HUTCHESON	TEL:	0118 937 4136
JOB TITLE:	HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING PATHWAYS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:verena.hutcheson@reading.gov.uk">verena.hutcheson@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Reading's current Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 requires a refresh due to significant reductions in the utilisation of emergency accommodation for homeless households and significant legislative and operational changes introduced by the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* and subsequent changes to the *Homelessness Code of Guidance*. This report presents an initial review of the council's current Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 and seeks authorisation to commence a consultation exercise on three new proposed themes/priorities to underpin and develop a new Homelessness Strategy for 2019 - 2024.
- 1.2 This report presents the council's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 and seeks authority to consult with partners on the co-production of an action/delivery plan.
- 1.3 Appendices attached as follows:
  - Appendix 1** - Snapshot review of Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021
  - Appendix 2** - Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024
  - Appendix 3** - Consultation Questions for Reading's Homelessness Strategy
  - Appendix 4** - Consultation Planner for Reading's Homelessness Strategy
  - Appendix 5** - Equality Impact Assessment for Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 *That the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to approve the commencement of a consultation exercise on proposed themes/priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024.*
- 2.2 *That the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised to approve the commencement of the consultation on and co-production of an action/delivery plan for Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024.*

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.1 Homelessness Strategy

- 3.1.1 In 2002 the Government amended homelessness legislation through the *Homelessness Act 2002* to ensure a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. In particular this legislation requires that every housing authority district reviews, formulates and publishes a homelessness strategy every five years or the local authority can choose to do this more frequently if circumstances in the district have changed.
- 3.1.2 The *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* was a significant piece of legislation that amended the *Homelessness Act 2002*. The local housing authority now has a duty to relieve and prevent homelessness where households are at risk of homelessness within 56 days. This legislation introduced a Duty to Refer upon certain public and statutory authorities who are now legally obligated to refer any household who is identified as being homeless or at risk of homelessness to the local authority.
- 3.1.3 The revised *Homelessness Code of Guidance* published in February 2018 states that in conducting a review of homelessness and in formulating a new strategy, housing authorities will need to take into account the additional duties introduced through the 2017 Act and that authorities are encouraged to take the opportunity to involve all relevant partners in developing a strategy that involves them in earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness. The *Homelessness Code of Guidance* advises that the housing authority should incorporate the duty to refer into their homelessness strategy and establish effective partnerships and working arrangements with agencies to facilitate appropriate referrals.
- 3.1.4 Reading Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 set out three key themes: (1) Increase the use and accessibility of the private rented sector; (2) Prevent homelessness by supporting people to access housing and to sustain their accommodation and (3) Increase the range and accessibility of information and advice available to enable people to make informed decisions about their housing situation. Reading's current Homelessness Strategy is not due for review until 2021. However, this significant legislative change, coupled with significant reductions in the utilisation of emergency accommodation for homeless households where interventions in the previous homelessness strategy have been successfully delivered, has resulted in the need to review the borough's needs and refresh the council's strategic aims around homelessness.

### 3.2 Rough Sleeping Strategy



- 3.2.1 In 2018/19 the council was awarded £316,500 additional funding by the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) under their Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to achieve the national policy commitment of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it by 2027. To comply with funding conditions to receive an amount of £335,000 in Year 2 (2019/20), the MHCLG stipulated that a Rough Sleeping Strategy be drafted and signed off by senior council officers by March 2019. Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 differs from the Homelessness Strategy in that it is not a legislative requirement; therefore it has been drafted and finalised to meet MHCLG funding requirements.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

##### *Current Position*

##### 4.1 Homelessness Strategy

- 4.1.1 Reading's current Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 requires a review due to significant reductions in the utilisation of emergency accommodation for homeless households and significant legislative and operational changes introduced by the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* and subsequent changes to the *Homelessness Code of Guidance*.
- 4.1.2 An initial review of Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021 has been undertaken (Appendix 1). A full review of the borough's needs will be undertaken alongside consultation on themes/priorities to inform the development of Reading's new Homelessness Strategy.
- 4.1.3 Informal meetings have been held with internal and statutory partners including Housing Needs, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care (Brighter Futures for Children), Community Safety, Berkshire West CCG and Berkshire Health Foundation Trust to inform the initial review and proposed themes for Reading's new Homelessness Strategy.

##### 4.2 Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 4.2.1 To secure Year 2 funding for Reading's Rough Sleeping Initiative to the amount of £335,000 from the MHCLG, officers drafted and attained sign-off from senior management on a Rough Sleeping Strategy by March 2019 (Appendix 2).

##### *Options Proposed*

- 4.3 It is proposed that two separate strategies are published; one for homelessness and one for rough sleeping to ensure that each has robust aims and a focused action/delivery plan for customers that have differing needs. Separate strategies allow for a differentiation in action planning and action plan delivery, where different cohorts require different approaches from partners, sectors and services in meeting their needs.
- ##### 4.4 Homelessness Strategy
- 4.4.1 Further to informal meetings held in April 2019 with internal and statutory partners, the following themes/priorities have been identified for consultation:
- **Priority One** - Intervening early to prevent and reduce homelessness in Reading
  - **Priority Two** - Increasing access to decent, suitable accommodation
  - **Priority Three** - Supporting people who are vulnerable to recurring homelessness

- 4.4.2 It is proposed that consultation on these themes/priorities take place over an eight week period, with a range of stakeholders, including residents across Reading Borough, customers of Housing Needs and homelessness services, internal partners in Adult Social Care, Brighter Futures, and Community Safety; the public and other external partner organisations e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical Commissioning Groups, and commissioned homelessness services. The consultation would take place throughout August and September 2019. Appendix 3 provides detail on the *Consultation Questions for Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024* and Appendix 4 provides the *Consultation Planner for Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024*.

#### 4.5 Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 4.5.1 It is proposed that consultation takes place on the co-production of the Rough Sleeping Strategy's action/delivery plan with cross-sector partners and experts by experience.

#### *Other Options Considered*

#### 4.6 Homelessness Strategy

- 4.6.1 To develop and consult on a fully developed Homelessness Strategy rather than just themes at this stage; however, the council wish to provide opportunity for consultation at the initial stages of strategy development.

#### 4.7 Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 4.7.1 Not to consult on the development of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 action/delivery plan prior to drafting and publication; however, to secure Year 2 funding for Reading's Rough Sleeping Initiative the strategy was drafted without wider consultation with a view that cross-sector partners be consulted with fully in developing the strategy's action/delivery plan.

### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal will contribute to the following Corporate Plan priorities:
- Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
  - To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- 5.2 The proposed decision on this report will contribute to the council's strategic aim to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.
- 5.3 Both the Homelessness Strategy and the Rough Sleeping Strategy contribute to the Community Safety and Health agenda.

### 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1. Initial conversations have been held with some internal and statutory stakeholders regarding the development of themes for consultation on the Homelessness Strategy.

- 6.2. This report seeks authority to consult on themes for the Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024 using the questions set out in Appendix 3. During the period that this consultation is open, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Consultation Planner (Appendix 4).
- 6.3 This report seeks authority to consult with cross-sector partners and experts by experience on the development and delivery of any resulting action plan from the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 (Appendix 2).

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is relevant to the Homelessness Strategy and resulting action/delivery plan. However, where this report is seeking authority to consult on proposed priorities/themes for the Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024 the consultation exercise will inform the Equality Impact Assessment which will be published alongside the final draft documents.
- 7.3 An EIA is relevant to Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 and resulting action/delivery plan and is attached as Appendix 5. In summary, the EIA for Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy has concluded that the decision within this report will not have a differential impact on racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age or people due to their religious belief.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Under Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002, it is a legal requirement for the Council to review, formulate, consult on and publish a homelessness strategy every five years or the local authority can choose to do this more frequently if circumstances in the district have changed. Section 1(5) requires the local housing authority to take their homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of their functions.
- 8.2 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Homelessness Code of Guidance* states that an effective action plan should be developed to ensure that the objectives set out in the homelessness strategy are achieved.
- 8.3 The amended *Homelessness Code of Guidance* published in February 2018 under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 states that additional duties introduced through the 2017 Act should be incorporated into a local authority's homelessness strategy including the involvement of all relevant partners for earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness and establishing effective partnerships and working arrangements with agencies to facilitate appropriate duty to refer referrals.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Consultation with stakeholders will be carried out mostly online and within partnership meetings, however a small number of printed materials will be required which will be funded from within the services current budget.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None

# Appendix 1

## Snapshot review of Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021

### PRIORITY ONE

#### Increase the use and accessibility of the private rented sector

##### Our aim was to:

- Reduce the number of households in B&B and other types of emergency and temporary accommodation
- Reduce the number of households becoming homeless from private rented accommodation

##### What we achieved:

The number of households:

- In emergency accommodation (B&B) reduced from a peak of 178 in July 2016 down to 10 in March 2019
- In emergency accommodation (B&B) have been **sustained at 10 or fewer since November 2018** and no families are being placed in emergency accommodation with shared kitchen or bathroom facilities
- In temporary accommodation reduced from **315 in March 2018 down to 188 in March 2019**
- Substantial increases in the number of cases of homelessness prevented from **321 in 2017/18 to 421 in 2018/19**

##### How did we achieve this?

- ✓ **Launch of the Rent Guarantee Scheme in autumn 2015**  
Alongside the Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS), provides guaranteed rent to landlords to incentivise renting to homeless households
  - Resulted in an increase of property sign-ups and properties procured for use by families at risk of homelessness
- ✓ **Private Rented Sector Offer implemented and rolled out in Reading in 2016**
  - **Over 100 homelessness duties discharged into the private rented sector** utilising the PRSO and prevention fund payments to assist with deposits and rent in advance
- ✓ **Creative utilisation of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to prevent homelessness**  
DHP budget moved from jurisdiction of Revenues and Benefits and into the Income Recovery team in Housing
  - **110 households prevented from homelessness** using £293,819 of the budget in 2018/19
  - **129 households prevented from homelessness** using £275,237 of the budget in 2017/18
- ✓ **Improving standards of property in the private rented sector**
  - **Standardised inspections of all properties secured with homelessness prevention funds** to ensure they meet with required standards
  - **Private rented sector charter developed in 2017** to outline the council's main actions in supporting tenants, landlords, managing and letting agents to deliver a safe, healthy and thriving private rented sector
  - **Additional specialist procurement officer employed** to meet the specific needs of homeless households

### What do we need/want to carry forward to our next strategy?

- Continued and sustained reduction in homeless households placed in emergency and temporary accommodation
- Continued and sustained reduction in the number of households becoming homeless from private rented sector accommodation
- Increase supply of private sector landlords through the Rent Guarantee Scheme for families and single people to prevent use of emergency and temporary accommodation
- Continued use of DHP and the Homelessness Prevention Fund for homelessness prevention
- Continued improvement in private rented sector standards and enhance the Council's offer for landlords in Reading

### PRIORITY TWO - Prevent homelessness by supporting people to access housing and to sustain their accommodation

#### Our aim was to:

- Reduce the number of people who are newly identified sleeping rough
- Reduce the number of formerly homeless people returning to rough sleeping
- Reduce the number of households living in emergency and temporary accommodation - especially bed and breakfast
- Increase the stability of accommodation for households with additional needs
- Reduce the number of families found to be intentionally homeless

#### What we achieved:

- ✓ As per Priority One regarding households living in emergency and temporary accommodation
- ✓ Overall rough sleeping numbers found on our annual snap-shot rough sleeper count reduced from 31 in 2017 down to 25 in 2018
- ✓ Significant reduction in families found to be intentionally homeless where under new legislation prevention is successful before a formal homelessness decision is having to be reached

#### How did we achieve this?

- ✓ Introduction of newly commissioned Homelessness Support Services in September 2018 following a local and national best practice review
  - Including the provision of emergency bed spaces for a No Second Night Out response; supported accommodation for single people/couples/dog owners and tenancy sustainment support for households at risk of homelessness
- ✓ Additional funds secured from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to the amount of £316,500 for 2018/19 and £335,000 for 2019/20
  - Targeted interventions to reduce rough sleeping numbers, sustain former rough sleepers within independent accommodation and to sustain households in the private rented sector
- ✓ Improved support pathways for victims of domestic abuse
  - Sanctuary Scheme support now available through homelessness prevention funds

- Reviewed, remodelled and recommissioned refuge and Domestic Abuse outreach services
- ✓ **Duty to Refer introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**
  - All statutory partners now have a duty to refer anyone at risk of homelessness within 56 days to the local housing authority since October 2018
  - Introduction and roll out of the ALERT referral system and relevant Service Level Agreements to all statutory partners, including the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Companies and prison for referral of households identified as at risk of homelessness
- ✓ **Develop the co-ordination and availability of services for people at risk of homelessness due to financial difficulties**
  - Landlord Liaison Officer role in post for 18 months between 2016 - 2018
  - Specialist money advisor within RGS team from 2018
  - In-house debt advice team with administration of Discretionary Housing Payments placed under this team's remit alongside payment of rent in advance/deposits and use of the Council's Prevention Fund
  - Specialist personal budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants provided by team in housing
  - Creation of the Social Inclusion Team for outreach advice and tenancy sustainment
  - Prevention team identifying charities that can provide financial assistance in crisis
  - Upskilled homelessness prevention officers in debt advice knowledge
- ✓ **Supporting Troubled Families to sustain suitable accommodation**
  - Provision of data, from housing, regarding those at risk of homelessness; in unsuitable accommodation and temporary accommodation to the Troubled Families team to enable early identification and intervention and to assist in mitigating the effects of welfare reform
- ✓ **Avoidance of use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for 16/17 year olds and improved support pathways for young people**
  - Joint protocol between Children's Social Care and housing reviewed and it now ensures that the council is Southwark judgement compliant
  - All emergency 16/17 year old placements are made by Children's Social Care to ensure placements are appropriate and to understand and monitor demand and need
  - Commissioning and use of YMCA crash pad to assist with ensuring that no young person aged 16-17 is placed into B&B
  - Initial needs analysis of young person provision across Housing and Children's Social Care undertaken
- ✓ **Increase in the number of additional units of temporary accommodation**
  - 28 units developed at Lowfield Road site
  - Approximately 40 properties re-purposed at Dee Park whilst properties were awaiting demolition and the area being regenerated
- ✓ **Supporting geographical mobility**
  - Support for households to move to another area via Homefinder UK, Homehunt and financial support (e.g. funding travel for viewing outside of the area)

**What do we need/want to carry forward to our next strategy?**

- Needs analysis and review of accommodation and housing support services and pathways available for young people aged 16 - 24 including those leaving care or custody
- Establish a multi-agency partnership/social inclusion partnership to genuinely co-produce and deliver on the action plan for the next homelessness strategy and rough sleeping strategy
- Explore joint working relationships with Registered Providers regarding those at risk of homelessness
- Continued improvement in support pathways for victims of domestic abuse including joint working and partnership relationships
- Continued support of the Troubled Families programme to ensure households sustain suitable accommodation and to ensure that this practice is embedded into day-to-day practice once the programme has ended



## **PRIORITY THREE - Increase the range and accessibility of information and advice available to enable people to make informed decisions about their housing situation**

### **Our aim was to:**

- Reduce the number of approaches to the Council's Housing Advice Service at the point of a housing crisis
- Fewer households living in emergency and temporary accommodation

### **What we achieved:**

- ✓ New Government data recording methods and system (HCLIC) from April 2018 has resulted in the inability to compare previous year's data; however, despite increases in approaches since April last year, those approaching/referred in crisis has remained largely the same
- ✓ As per Priority One regarding households living in emergency and temporary accommodation

### **How did we achieve this?**

- ✓ **Redesign and additional staffing resource within the Homelessness Prevention Teams**
  - Separate single and families homelessness prevention teams created to provide specialist advice and support to different households
  - Pilot of early intervention specialist team (Resolution and Enablement Team) in preparation for the Homelessness Reduction Act and embedding early upstream prevention ethos
  - Introduction of triage system and specialist frontline Housing Advice Support Team for households presenting in crisis to the council
- ✓ **Introduction of a personalised and enhanced online response for applicants to Homechoice Reading (social housing register)**
  - Introduction of online application form in September 2017 and functions to host targeted campaigns and advice on the online Homechoice website and links to out of area options and other solutions
  - Introduction of daily advertising making the system and service more accessible
- ✓ **Development and dissemination of information for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness**
  - Suite of leaflets developed to inform and publicise available support and advice for households affected by or at risk of homelessness
  - Universal and rolling training programme developed and delivered for internal and external partners on the Homelessness Reduction Act, Duty to Refer, new Homelessness Support Services and eligibility training
  - Housing Needs Outreach Officer single point of contact function
  - Tailored community/voluntary sector training for trustees and volunteers
  - Targeted work and training with Brighter Futures for Children for intentionally homeless households accommodated in emergency accommodation regarding sourcing accommodation

- ✓ **Proactively contact those that we know might be at risk of homelessness (early identification and interventions)**
  - System/software procured to allow identification of households who may be affected by changes to their finances and therefore may become at risk of homelessness due to low income and/or welfare reform changes
- ✓ **Development of information for people being discharged from Prospect Park and Royal Berkshire Hospitals**
  - Discharge flowcharts and a protocol developed for staff prior to Homelessness Reduction Act and Duty to Refer being implemented
  - Duty to Refer mechanism introduced, promoted and training provided
  - Homelessness Partnership Officer based within Prospect Park Hospital teams once a week to provide support and guidance around homelessness/risk of homelessness
  - Communications piece with A&E at Royal Berkshire Hospital in reporting people at risk of homelessness or who are identified as rough sleeping
- ✓ **Work in partnership with Adult Social Care and other services to provide targeted advice for older people living in poor quality accommodation**
  - Sheltered accommodation review and new structure and services implemented in 2017/2018
- ✓ **Introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 legislation**
  - Placed extra duties upon and provided extra funding to the council to prevent and relieve homelessness within 56 days including the introduction of Personalised Housing Plans to avoid housing crisis and focus upon prevention

#### **What do we need/want to carry forward to our next strategy?**

- Continue to provide training for internal and external partners on changes in legislation and support available from housing services and ensure that this training is reciprocated for mutual service understanding
- Continued development and dissemination of information for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including using existing and new online systems as mechanisms to target households with information and advice around homelessness and risks of homelessness
- Targeted advice for older people living in poor quality accommodation
- Implementation of procured system/software to enable identification and interventions for households at early risk of homelessness
- Continued work with households under-occupying social rented accommodation to enable moves
- Continued work with Prospect Park and Royal Berkshire Hospital regarding the Duty to Refer to reach beyond A&E and for homeless households to be identified as homeless at the point of admission, including the co-ordination of discharges

# Reading Borough Council

## Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

## Cabinet Member Foreword

- Cllr John Ennis - Lead Member for Housing
- Cllr Graeme Hoskins - Lead Member for Health, Wellbeing and Sport
- Cllr Tony Jones - Lead Member for Adult Social Care
- Cllr Sophia James - Lead Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities

[PICTURES OF MEMBERS]

## Appendix 2

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Reading's current rough sleeping context	X
What we want to achieve in Reading	X
How we are going to deliver	X
Our priorities	X
Glossary	X

### Executive Summary

Rough sleeping is harmful and those experiencing it will likely be facing multiple disadvantage that they require support with before moving from the streets into long-term independent living. People sleep rough in Reading for various economic, local and individual reasons. This strategy explores these reasons and acknowledges that no single factor is responsible; that they are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, neither are individuals exonerated from their own action or inaction. Many rough sleepers will experience different combinations of issues at times in their lives which result in them sleeping rough. Conversely, where there is no single reason for its cause, there is no single resolution.

Rough sleeping numbers increased year-on-year, both nationally and in Reading, between 2010 and 2017. In 2018, there was a decrease. In Reading this was by 19% from 31 down to 25; nationally this was by 2% from 4751 down to 4677. A reduction in numbers is positive, but Reading will continue to utilise Council funded outreach and accommodation services and monies successfully obtained through bids to the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) *Rough Sleeping Initiative* and *Rapid Rehousing Pathway* funds.

The following principles will underpin the strategy's delivery:

- Knowing there is a long-term, sustainable option for anyone sleeping rough
- Innovation: Creative responses and making the most of existing resources
- Strategic local leadership: Accountability and cross-borough working
- Partnership working: Everyone having an important role

The strategy's key objective is to reduce rough sleeping by half, to 15 individuals or fewer, by 2022 and to eliminate it entirely by 2027 in line with central government targets.

The Council's strategic priorities around rough sleeping are:

- **Priority 1: Early intervention and prevention**  
To prevent those who are vulnerable to sleeping rough from moving towards entrenched and harmful behaviours and lifestyles by intervening as early as possible
- **Priority 2 - Recovery and community integration**  
To ensure that recovery underpins tenancy sustainment as part of a holistic approach to homelessness prevention
- **Priority 3 - Rapid intervention**  
To intervene rapidly when prevention has been ineffective and homelessness is unavoidable
- **Priority 4 - United support and enforcement action in Reading**  
To approach rough sleeping in a way that supports individuals, but that also protects Reading's resident and business community from the effects of any associated anti-social behaviours
- **Priority 5 - Provision of information and alternative ways to give**  
To provide steer to our local communities in how they respond to people who are sleeping rough by providing sufficient and accessible information, support and guidance around how we collectively and individually support vulnerable people

### Reading's current rough sleeping context

#### *Why do we need a Rough Sleeping Strategy in Reading?*

We have no qualms in saying that rough sleeping is significantly harmful to people that are experiencing or have experienced it. It comes with considerable human and financial costs; the ultimate cost being loss of life. Loss of life can happen whilst living on the streets or a short or significant amount of time after someone has been accommodated having slept rough. Although there are many other contributing factors, the short and long term effects of rough sleeping on someone's life expectancy are evident.

People who are rough sleeping will likely be facing multiple disadvantages and experiencing a combination of problems alongside homelessness, including substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health; not to mention stigma, discrimination, isolation and loneliness. They often fall through the gaps in services and our universally accepted processes. This makes it harder for them to address their issues, to recover and go on to lead fulfilling lives. People who sleep rough will consistently or intermittently come in to contact with many services across housing, healthcare, criminal justice, social care, addiction, the voluntary sector and the community. The cost to public services alone is disproportionately high. This is often because services, by their very design and nature, can be inaccessible for our most disadvantaged rough sleepers; consequently they will often access services in an unplanned way and in crisis. It has been estimated that a long-term rough sleeper can cost public services as much as £16,000 a year compared to £4,600 for the average adult<sup>1</sup>. It is vital that we work across sectors to create services that can be person-centred and that are accessible and flexible in meeting the needs of our rough sleeping population. In Reading we must aim to improve outcomes for individuals but also, at a time where all partners are experiencing financial pressures, to reduce costs.

#### *What does our strategy seek to do?*

We have clear and genuine aspirations to halve rough sleeping numbers in Reading by 2022 and to eliminate it by 2027 in line with national targets. The Council cannot do this alone. It must work with its partners and those with lived experience of rough sleeping to drive forward change and align agendas and resources across our statutory, voluntary and community sectors. We will provide strategic leadership to undertake this cross-sector approach so that our partnership is committed to the principles identified in this collaborative strategy. This is also, as reflected in the national targets, a long-term endeavour that requires sustained commitment if we are to achieve our ambition of eliminating rough sleeping on our streets.

Reading's current Homelessness Strategy (2016 - 2021)<sup>2</sup> identifies the overarching strategic principles and objectives that the Council is working towards to address homelessness in a wider context. Our Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 sets out the strategic vision that Reading Borough Council and its partners will adopt to meet the needs of people who are currently rough sleeping; who are at risk of rough sleeping; and who have previously slept rough in Reading. The two strategies are inextricably linked, however, our Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan focus specifically on:

- rough sleepers finding a way off the streets into sustainable accommodation
- helping current and former rough sleepers to rebuild their lives

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417230/150325\\_Addressing\\_Complex\\_Needs\\_-\\_final\\_publication\\_amended.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417230/150325_Addressing_Complex_Needs_-_final_publication_amended.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1235/Homelessness-Strategy-2016-2021/pdf/Appendix\\_1-HOMELESSNESS\\_STRATEGY\\_2016-2021\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1235/Homelessness-Strategy-2016-2021/pdf/Appendix_1-HOMELESSNESS_STRATEGY_2016-2021_FINAL.pdf)

## Appendix 2

- preventing people from returning to rough sleeping and sustaining change and preventing people from sleeping rough in the first place, where possible

Our Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan, which will be the backbone of delivering this strategy, will be developed collaboratively with partners.

### *What our strategy is not...*

Rough sleeping is not a crime nor, by its nature alone, is it anti-social. Within our strategy we do not assume that anyone rough sleeping is connected with anti-social behaviours or criminality such as street drinking or begging. In Reading we know that some people seen begging or engaging in anti-social behaviours and crime are not rough sleepers. We also know that a number of the people seen begging on the streets of Reading have access to accommodation. We recognise that a different, yet interlinked, strategic response is required to tackle these issues effectively. Our Rough Sleeping Strategy does not detail a strategic approach to tackling street based anti-social or criminal behaviours, including begging. However, our priorities include protecting our communities from the negative impacts of rough sleeping whilst remaining focused upon supporting rough sleepers away from the streets. Our strategy is not a Housing Strategy and again, although clearly interlinked, it does not seek to resolve the shortage of affordable housing in Reading - this is addressed through our current Homelessness Strategy and a new Housing Strategy for Reading is currently in development.

### *What legislation and national commitments are in place to support rough sleepers?*

In April 2018 our main housing legislation, the Housing Act 1996, was considerably reshaped by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017<sup>3</sup>. This has redefined how we and all local authorities should respond to people who are immediately homeless or who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. We now have increased responsibilities to prevent and relieve people's homelessness. There is also a legal duty for public bodies, such as hospitals and prisons, to refer people to the local authority's Homelessness Prevention Service when they are at risk of homelessness.

The Care Act 2014<sup>4</sup> introduced an emphasis on the need for services to work collaboratively to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The MHCLG published its own national Rough Sleeping Strategy<sup>5</sup> commitments in August 2018. This strategy has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending rough sleeping entirely by 2027. The MHCLG have provided additional funding to local authorities under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP) for 2018/19 and 2019/20 to help realise their pledge. As a local authority and as part of a wider partnership committed to addressing rough sleeping in Reading, we are committed to working with the MHCLG in striving to achieve this.

### *What do we mean in Reading by the term "rough sleeping"?*

Within our strategy the term "rough sleeping" is used to refer to people who are sleeping or bedding down in the open air. Places where people rough sleep vary widely but can include doorways, streets, benches, parks, sheds, car parks, tents or other make-shift shelters. We acknowledge that rough sleeping is not the only form of homelessness but it is often the most obvious and distressing manifestation of homelessness that people see.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf)



## Appendix 2

The term “hidden homelessness” is often used to describe people who find themselves homeless but where they have managed to find temporary options with family, friends or acquaintances. These options can be short-lived and precarious and can be an early indication that people are rough sleeping intermittently or that they may rough sleep in the future.

Our strategy uses several other technical terms that have been defined within a glossary on page 29.

### *Why do people sleep rough and why Reading?*

People sleep rough for a variety of reasons including affordability of housing and changes to Local Housing Allowance, welfare reform and income benefit sanctions<sup>6</sup>. We note that a number of local authority areas with the highest numbers of rough sleepers nationally are in the South East<sup>7</sup>. St Mungo’s cite lack of affordable housing as a key factor for high rough sleeping numbers. Cuts to local authorities and to services covering mental health, drug and alcohol abuse can also have an impact<sup>8</sup>. Many of those sleeping rough have mental or physical health problems, or have issues with drug or alcohol use. Sometimes people face a complex mix of these factors, on top of more difficult family backgrounds than most. These issues can contribute to someone becoming homeless or it can be exacerbated or caused by it. Many people who become homeless had traumatic experiences during childhood. For some people, these experiences put them at risk from an early age. Some people say that their early experiences led them to become dependent on drugs or alcohol while still in their teens. No one factor is responsible; nor are they exhaustive or mutually exclusive, nor are we saying that individuals are not responsible for some of their own actions or inactions and the consequences that ensue. However, we are able to say that many rough sleepers will experience different combinations of these issues at times in their lives which culminate in them sleeping rough.

### *Reading as the ‘heart’ of Berkshire*

We know that Reading is a place which attracts people who are sleeping rough in the South East. Reading is a wealthy and vibrant town with one of the busiest transport hubs outside of London and many people pass through. Reading is seen as the ‘place to go to sleep rough’ in Berkshire. Rough sleepers are drawn to Reading by the prospect of obtaining illegal substances or undertaking criminal activity. This includes begging which can be lucrative in the area and which is perpetuated by the abundance and generosity of Reading residents, people travelling in to the town for leisure or work and by a strong night time economy.

### *Availability of services*

Reading, in comparison to most neighbouring Berkshire areas, provides more local authority funding towards support services to prevent and relieve homelessness for single people and couples. In addition to outreach, accommodation and support services commissioned by the Council, Reading has substantial faith and voluntary sector provision and support for rough sleepers including a day centre, regular food hand outs and handouts of other provisions. This substantial provision appeals to rough sleepers in and around Berkshire as well as further afield. It can attract and then sustain rough sleepers from other boroughs where they know they can be supported and have a hot meal. This

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/webinar-catchup/budget2015>

<sup>7</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/775089/Rough\\_Sleeping\\_Statistics\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775089/Rough_Sleeping_Statistics_2018.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/6428/All-papers/pdf/161205allpapers.pdf>

## Appendix 2

means that some people sleeping rough in Reading do not have any local links here and this does limit what the Council can realistically do to prevent everyone from sleeping rough from the outset. It also makes reconnections, particularly to surrounding Berkshire boroughs, more difficult.

### *People can be unable or unwilling to secure accommodation*

There are some people rough sleeping in Reading who do not have complex support needs, but do not access accommodation for other reasons. People often find themselves in this situation because their immigration status means that they have No Recourse to Public Funds so they cannot claim Housing Benefit. Whilst they may work in informal or low paid jobs, they might choose to send the money they earn to relatives in another country rather than use it to pay for accommodation whilst in the UK. This can pose exposure to unintended risks, for example getting drawn into drug or alcohol misuse and entering a longer term cycle of exploitation, misuse and rough sleeping.

### *How many people rough sleep in Reading and how does this compare to the national picture?*

To help us identify those who are rough sleeping and enable us to respond to their needs, we commission a Rough Sleeper Outreach Service that assertively responds to referrals; undertakes flexible and varied on-the-street shifts; and who are able to visit 'hotspot' areas in Reading. The St Mungo's outreach service utilises a database that is bespoke to Reading called OPAL and they keep ongoing lists of people who have been found rough sleeping, who are known to intermittently rough sleep or who have been reported by the public or partners as rough sleeping.

Each year we are required by central government to undertake an annual count of the number of people that sleep rough in Reading on 'a typical night'. This figure is provided to the MHCLG who then compile and publish a national snapshot of this data. Since 2016 Reading have chosen to complete a physical count rather than an estimate to be able to include cross-sector partners and be as transparent as possible in our methodology and outcomes. We also monitor the effectiveness of the homelessness services we commission throughout the year.

According to latest national figures, collected in the autumn of 2018 and published in January 2019, the number of people estimated or counted as sleeping rough on a single night was 4,677. This was down by 74 people (or 2%) from the 2017 total of 4,751 and was up 2,909 people (or 165%) from the 2010 total of 1,768 when national monitoring began. Since 2017, the number of people sleeping rough increased by 146 (or 13%) in London and decreased by 220 (or 6%) in the rest of England. London accounted for 27% of the total number of people sleeping rough in England. This is up from 24% of the England total in 2017. Further analysis of 2018's figures can be accessed through the MHCLG's report Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2018, England<sup>9</sup>.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/775089/Rough\\_Sleeping\\_Statistics\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775089/Rough_Sleeping_Statistics_2018.pdf)

## Appendix 2

*Figure 1: Annual national rough sleeper numbers and year-on-year % change since 2010*

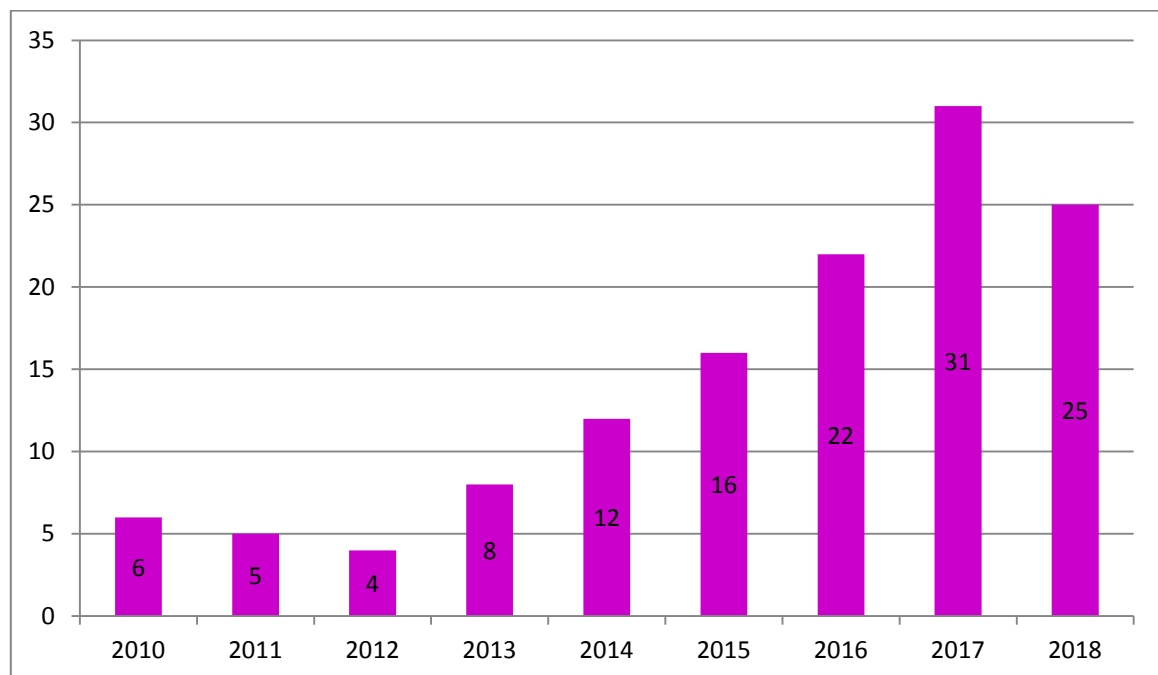
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Nationally</b>	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,139	4,751	4677
<b>Percentage change from previous year</b>	-	+23%	+6%	+5%	+14%	+30%	+16%	+15%	-2%

In alignment with the national picture, here in Reading we have seen year-on-year increases in numbers between 2010 and 2017. Our 'typical night' figure for 2018 showed a reduction from 31 down to 25 (-19%). We know that whilst a reduction in numbers is positive our overall aim, in line with the national aim, is to reduce rough sleeping to zero in Reading by 2027.

*Figure 2: Reading's annual rough sleeper numbers and year-on-year % change since 2010*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Reading</b>	6	5	4	8	12	16	22	31	25
<b>Percentage change from previous year</b>	-	-17%	-20%	100%	50%	33%	38%	41%	-19%

*Figure 3: Graph to show annual rough sleeper numbers for 'a typical night' in Reading since 2010*



## Appendix 2

### *How do our numbers compare with our Berkshire neighbours?*

Reading is one of three Berkshire authority areas to receive money from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) fund. The RSI was launched in March 2018 and has been targeted at 83 local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough, based on 2017's rough sleeping figures. An evaluation of the RSI will be published in late 2019 to help understand the impact of the range of activities in these areas on the number of people sleeping rough. It was mandatory for all RSI funded authorities to undertake a physical, MHCLG verified count, rather than an estimate and for 2018, we compare to our neighbouring authorities as follows:

Berkshire authority	2017 submission	2018 submission	Actual number	Increase/decrease
Reading*	31	25	- 6	- 19%
West Berkshire*	20	18	- 2	- 10%
Slough*	27	29	+ 2	+ 7%
Wokingham	10	7	- 3	- 30%
Windsor and Maidenhead	11	11	No change	No change
Bracknell	6	19	+ 13	+ 217%

\* Denotes Berkshire authorities in receipt of first wave of RSI monies

#### Key

Street count	
Estimate	

### *What do we know about the demography and needs of rough sleepers in Reading?*

#### *Rough sleeper count data*

By looking at trends since 2016, we can say that we have seen a slight increase in the number of women sleeping rough, from five in 2017, up to six in 2018 and that our rough sleeping population are getting older where approximately half of those found were aged 36 or over. Proportionally, those found rough sleeping without a local connection to Reading remained the same at around 3 in 10; with those without recourse to public funds at around 1 in 8 people found.

Rough sleeping has tended to move away from the town centre area and towards outer lying areas of Reading. This could be attributed to agencies in Reading beginning to address begging behaviours and abandoned belongings via a joint support and disruption approach in the immediate town centre. A small number of people were found bedded down on both the 2017 and 2018 count nights. Most of those found on both years had a cyclical experience of rough sleeping where they had held accommodation in the 12 months between counts, but had returned to rough sleeping when that accommodation had broken down.

### *Homeless Health Needs Audit*

Rough sleepers often feel marginalised and experience mental and physical ill health. In 2017, with our statutory and community sector partners, we undertook a Homeless Health Needs Audit<sup>10</sup> with people who were single or part of a couple without dependent children, who were homeless in Reading. This included people who were rough sleeping, sofa surfing, living within supported accommodation, refuges or in emergency accommodation such as bed and breakfast.

Key findings from this snapshot showed that 80% of homeless people in Reading self-reported having a mental health problem with many stating that their homelessness was a contributing factor; that they had difficulty accessing mental health services (due to waiting times, inconsistency, and concurrent substance misuse issues); that they would rather have face-to-face support; and that specialist trauma services would be beneficial. The snapshot showed that people's top three longer-term physical health needs were (1) joint aches or problems with bones/muscles; (2) heart problems or chronic breathing problems; and (3) dental/teeth problems. 73% of respondents advised that they were misusing drugs, alcohol or both. Over half of those who told us they were misusing substances said that they were doing so as a means to cope with their mental health or past trauma in their lives.

Many of our rough sleepers in Reading have a dual diagnosis - this means that they suffer from mental health problems as well as being drug or alcohol dependent. This in turn can affect their ability and motivation to access mental health services whilst they misuse substances. Substance misuse is often linked to criminality and difficulties budgeting or maintaining an income. Most of the referrals we receive into our supported accommodation services are from prison or probation services in a planned way.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/homeless-health-needs-audit>

### What we want to achieve in Reading

Our clear overriding aim is to end rough sleeping in Reading and this must be an approach that *prevents* rough sleeping in the first place, *intervenes* rapidly for those who are new to the streets and provides creative and flexible responses that enable *recovery* and housing stability and *sustainment*.

The health and lifestyle factors of rough sleepers detailed in this strategy have a huge bearing on the services we provide - particularly for those rough sleepers who get stuck in a 'revolving door' of rough sleeping that makes recovery extremely difficult. Some people will abandon accommodation services that are available to them because it's perhaps not the right service or the right time for them to make changes in their life. We recognise that it is unacceptable for someone to keep accommodation where they are putting others at a significant risk of harm through their behaviours, but also that dealing with the issue through eviction will most likely mean a vulnerable former rough sleeper, moving to another supported accommodation unit or back to the streets. We want to stop the cycle of rough sleeping that people get stuck in where it is disheartening, creates and embeds feelings of failure within individuals and supporting staff/volunteers and is an ineffective use of our resources.

Reading has a diverse and committed community that cares deeply about homelessness and rough sleeping. This is demonstrated by the range of peer-led and volunteer-led initiatives that are already operating in the area - such as food handouts, food banks, emergency bed spaces. We hear loud and clear that individuals and groups within our community want to be involved in finding and providing solutions that end rough sleeping and homelessness. Without these groups, many more people would experience and suffer from the harm caused by rough sleeping.

As a Council, we are aware of and want to celebrate the fact that community-led groups are able to offer different types of services and more flexible approaches to supporting rough sleepers than perhaps the rules, regulations, specifications and monitoring arrangements of Council commissioned services are able to offer. Each has its place in preventing, responding to and assisting in the recovery of people who are rough sleeping. Our aim is to build upon existing partnerships and embrace the strengths and capacity of our communities and individual community members in co-producing solutions to prevent and relieve rough sleeping. We intend to work with 'experts by experience' who are people that have slept rough and experienced homelessness and accessed services in Reading. This will enable us, as a cross-sector partnership, to better understand individual customer journeys and experiences and use this learning to inform and improve our approaches and services.

Our actions across services should be a longer-term investment in individuals, not necessarily financially (although important), but in terms of creative, flexible and individual responses that consider that person's childhood and adulthood experiences and their own personal historical context that inevitably affects their current behaviours. We need to understand an individual so that services across sectors can consider and respond to those needs, whether this is unravelling traumatic experiences, addressing feelings of isolation or building resilience to avoid negative relationships and friendships. Services and their funding tend to be short-term, interventional, 'task and finish' and with an 'end-date' in mind from the outset. With the most disadvantaged people that end up rough sleeping, we need to think differently in our approach and develop a more open-ended and 'individually paced' approach to recovery. This approach should work and move with a person's 'present' situation with support available for as long as is required, without

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causing dependency; particularly when it comes to supporting with deep-seated trauma and mental health issues.

We know from experience that investment in the right services and person-centred, bespoke and innovative actions, at the right time, mean that rough sleeping does not have to be inevitable or become an entrenched behaviour. We know that the interconnected health and well-being factors that drive rough sleeping are entrenched and enduring. We know that addressing these interconnected health and well-being factors requires commitment to a genuine cross-sector approach.

We know that fully breaking down these barriers and creating fully formed and effective responses and full resolution before the end of this strategy in 2024 is highly unlikely. However, we will use this strategy to plan and explain what we *can* do to stop people rough sleeping in Reading.

### How are we going to deliver?

To be able to deliver our Rough Sleeping Strategy it is important that we establish and underpin it with some core principles. These principles are intended to provide us, the public, partners and stakeholders, with clarity on how we intend to go about delivering our five priorities.



**Knowing there is a long-term, sustainable option for anyone sleeping rough**



**Innovation: Creative responses and making the most of existing resources**



**Strategic local leadership: Accountability and cross-borough working**



**Partnership working: Everyone having an important role**

#### Knowing that there is long-term, sustainable option for anyone sleeping rough

We recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach to supporting people away from the streets is inadequate. We intend to be person-centred, in how we develop ideas and how we deliver them. We know that we have the support of our partner agencies in the belief that anyone who finds themselves sleeping rough, or at risk of sleeping rough, can make a change and create a long-term, sustainable, safer life within a home and within the community.

We are under no illusions that this will always be easily achieved and we know that it can only happen when an individual is ready to engage with the support available. However, we do know that with a bespoke combination of the right intentions, actions, support and timing people can and will get off and stay off the streets; thus benefitting that individual and the town of Reading as a whole. We need to be tenacious and not give up on people.

#### Innovation: Creative responses and making the most of existing resources

We are committed to investing in and continuing to invest in services that support people who rough sleep and who are at risk of rough sleeping. We aim to provide support and accommodation services that focus on responding to situations at the earliest opportunity and then as quickly as possible if earlier intervention is not possible.

It is important that we clarify our current financial position as a Council. We are under significant funding pressures and these will continue over the lifetime of this strategy. Therefore, strategically, we must ensure that our resources stretch further than ever before and looking towards the future, that we use our resources as innovatively as possible to support as many people as possible in rebuilding their lives away from the streets.

Our services to support rough sleepers and households at risk of homelessness were reviewed and redesigned in line with best practice. In September 2018 we launched new Homelessness Support Services including our rough sleeper outreach service, supported accommodation services and support services to enable people to sustain their tenancies. We've already seen successes in how they are being delivered and we've seen successful outcomes for people engaging with them and we want to build on these. Our services have been designed to offer support when needed, but to enable people to be less reliant on services and to live independently.



### Strategic local leadership: Accountability and cross-borough working

The Council will take a strategic leadership role based on developing and sustaining relationships, influencing, enabling and holding to account where required, necessary and appropriate. We have a clear strategic vision and the actions set out within this strategy are what we consider to be necessary to realise our ambitions in Reading. These actions are far-reaching and will not always be within the gift or necessarily be the responsibility of the Council; however, we have committed to working with partners in identifying where each of their organisations can contribute to the aims and principles within this strategy.

Our response to rough sleeping must be across neighbouring boroughs and with local authorities further afield. Those rough sleeping are not interested in hearing about the boundaries that local authority areas set. In tackling rough sleeping, we must work with our neighbouring councils in ensuring that we are working towards realistic and appealing reconnection offers, to ensure that our supported accommodation resources are targeted at those with a local connection to Reading. There is already some effective joint working across Berkshire boroughs; however, we need to improve this and create a wider partnership that co-ordinates a joined up, communicative response to rough sleeping. This should include identifying and maximising cross-boundary funding bids and opportunities.

### Partnership working: Everyone having an important role

There is a clear imperative for working together - in working with partners across all sectors, we can identify those who are vulnerable more easily; we can provide a joined up response and avoid duplication; crucially we can ensure that people get the right help and achieve better outcomes. The Council are not and cannot be the 'all seeing eye' and gone are the days of the Council being the majority funder of services. However, we can work and *want* to work alongside partner agencies in the private, public, voluntary, community and faith sectors and with the general public in delivering new provisions and helping ensure the most effective use of existing resources. We want to have shared objectives that offer holistic and tailored support for people headed towards, or in the midst of, a homelessness crisis.

Members of the public and businesses are obviously concerned about rough sleeping and are keen to help Reading's rough sleepers. We are ready and willing to advise businesses, the public and charities on how to make a real difference to the lives of rough sleepers should they wish to do so. This will include providing information to help our partners make informed decisions about how they can help - for example through volunteering opportunities and where donations can be best utilised.

There are many groups and businesses in Reading responding to rough sleeping by distributing food, drink, clothing, tents and sleeping bags. We have no doubt that this is done with good intentions, however we do know that these kind and well-meaning gestures can have some unintended consequences. Wherever possible, we want to work with our community in exploring other and new ways to provide supportive, consistent, tailored and co-ordinated responses. We hope that this will include co-producing and meeting gaps in services that the Council do not have the resourcing, or the capacity, to fill.

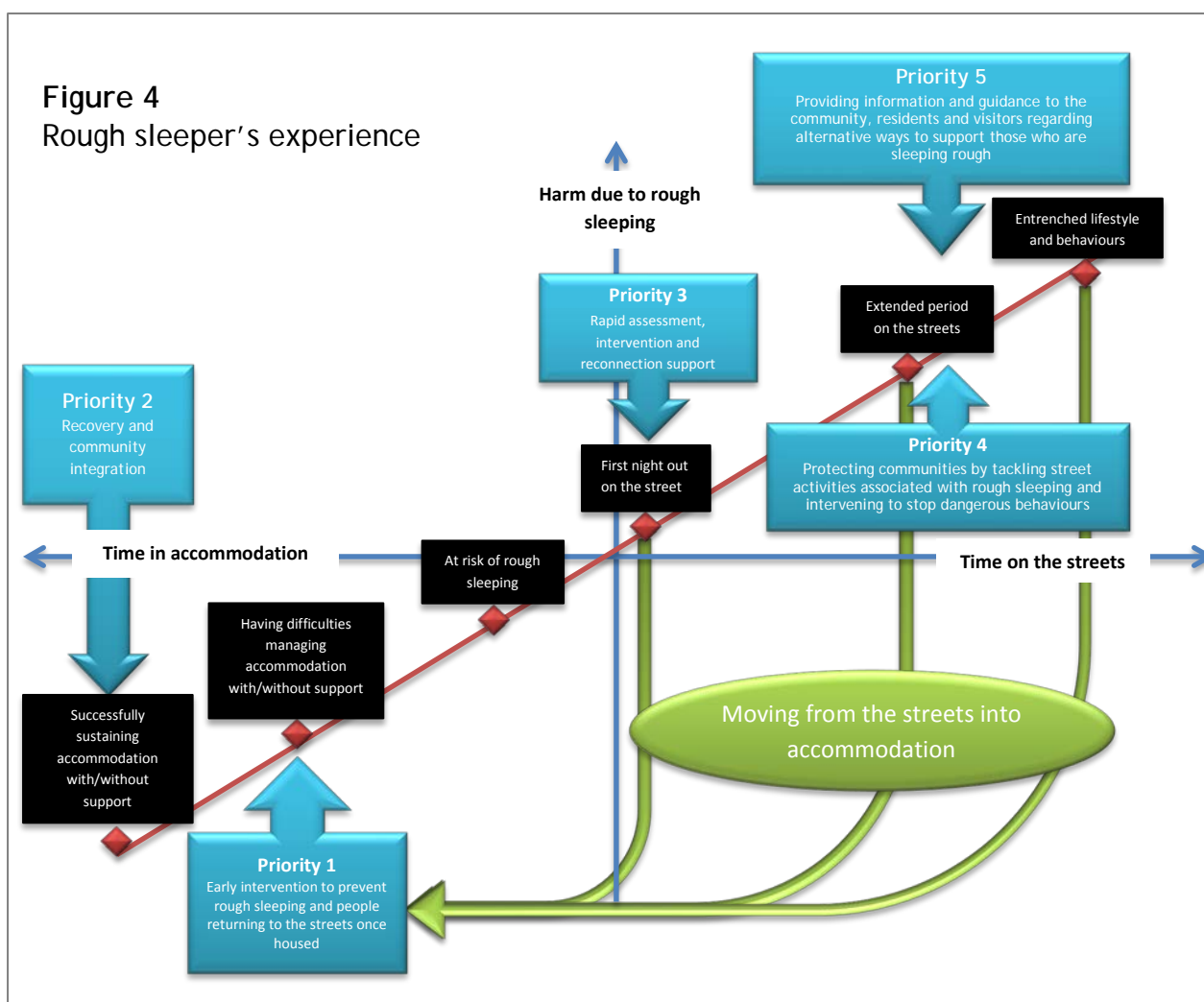
To maintain oversight, we will work with partners to introduce a dedicated cross-partner strategic group with the aim of including experts by experience, members of the public and working alongside businesses to look at additional funding opportunities around organisational social value.

## Our priorities

For anyone who sleeps rough, whether this is short or longer term, it is harmful, dangerous and can lead to more entrenched behaviours and lifestyles. The longer someone remains sleeping on the streets, the more difficult it can be for them to engage with support services; the more likely it is that substance misuse, begging and linked anti-social behaviours will impact on the community. As their needs increase, the more difficult it can be to find suitable housing and support for recovery that can sustain them within accommodation and prevent them from returning to the streets.

**Figure 4** illustrates what we understand to be the journey towards entrenched rough sleeping and associated behaviours. It shows the sometimes cyclical journey of rough sleeping we have referred to previously. It pictorially shows that the longer someone has been sleeping on the streets, the higher the likelihood of harm; that the longer someone travels towards an entrenched lifestyle, the further they travel away from recovery and having the skills and desire to sustain accommodation independently and that once accommodated, former rough sleepers still need support to stop them being at risk of rough sleeping again.

We believe that our ambition to reduce and eliminate rough sleeping can be tackled through a strategy based upon five key priorities. Our intention is for our priorities and responses to have an impact at different key points in a rough sleeper's journey.



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Within the context of Figure 4, our main focus is to prevent those who are vulnerable to sleeping rough from moving towards entrenched and harmful behaviours and lifestyles (Priorities 1 and 2). We aim to intervene as early as possible using tenancy support, recovery and a sense of belonging within a/the community whilst people are within accommodation. This priority is about stopping harmful behavioural patterns from developing/re-emerging and preventing people from being at risk of and returning to rough sleeping.

Should prevention be ineffective and homelessness unavoidable, then we will intervene rapidly at this point with wrap-around services to find an emergency housing solution (Priority 3).

Rough sleeping should be approached in a way that supports the individual but that also protects Reading's resident and business community from the effects of any anti-social behaviours associated with rough sleeping (Priority 4).

Finally, we need to be strategic in the steer we give our community when it responds to people who are sleeping rough in Reading by providing sufficient and accessible information, support and guidance around how we can collectively support vulnerable people (Priority 5). This includes everyone from those supporting rough sleepers as a community-led group to singular members of the public.

### Priority 1 - Early intervention and prevention

Where possible, intervene early to prevent rough sleeping in the first place and prevent people from returning to the streets once housed

#### Overview

We recognise that the best way to tackle rough sleeping is to intervene early. We know that we cannot prevent all rough sleeping in Reading, but we can commit to supporting groups of people who can be identified as being at risk of rough sleeping (or returning to rough sleeping) and intervene earlier.

#### Our objective

We aim to:

- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough on the streets of Reading to 15 or fewer, by our rough sleeper count in the autumn of 2022
- Work in partnership to prevent those discharged from hospital, prison or other institutional settings ending up on the streets of Reading
- Ensure that access to and sustainment of income benefits are not barriers to obtaining accommodation for people who are rough sleeping or vulnerable to rough sleeping through joint working with statutory partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions and our voluntary sector advice providers
- Provide tools and knowledge to the public, professionals and to partners to enable them to identify specific triggers, risk factors and causes of rough sleeping at different points in a person's journey towards rough sleeping to ensure that the right services are targeting individuals at the right time
- Improve access to social care, mental and physical health and drug/alcohol services including:
  - In-reach support and targeted surgeries for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping at the hub and across other Homelessness Support Services
  - Where possible, having flexible and innovative responses to how rough sleepers obtain and access primary healthcare services, including dental health services
  - Breaking down barriers for people who feel that their substance misuse prevents them from receiving support with their mental health
  - Peer support groups for those experiencing substance misuse
  - Early identification, notification and referral to the local housing authority, prior to hospital discharge, for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness

#### Our current approach

In response to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in April 2018 and increased responsibilities to prevent and relieve homelessness for all households, in April 2018 we restructured our frontline response to those approaching the local authority for advice and assistance. We introduced a frontline triage team and separate Homelessness Prevention Teams for families and single people so that officers could offer specialist advice to people with differing needs. Prior to this, we piloted a team to focus on early upstream intervention where people are threatened with homelessness prior to 56 days. This team has remained and the intention is for learnt best practice to be rolled out across the wider Homelessness Prevention Teams. We have a dedicated in-house tenancy sustainment team for people at risk of homelessness who are occupying Council stock and additionally commission floating support services.

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Additionally, from October 2018, a new, easier and compulsory system has been introduced to ensure that statutory services refer all people threatened with homelessness within 56 days to the local housing authority - this is named the 'Duty to Refer' and is via a universal piece of software called ALERT. We have promoted the system widely and so far, we have seen a steady increase in the number of people being referred to us who are at risk of homelessness. In response to these referrals, we have been able to work with households at an earlier opportunity and develop creative personalised housing plans that have prevented several people from becoming homeless who may have otherwise lost their accommodation. We have also developed a new suite of leaflets and information to ensure that the public and partners are aware of the new duties and how we can help.

Following a period of public and partner consultation, we remodelled support and accommodation services for people who rough sleep and households that are at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness in Reading. Collectively we refer to these as *Homelessness Support Services* and these were recommissioned from September 2018. We have introduced several elements of early intervention and prevention within these contracts to ensure that people can be identified as at risk of homelessness as early as possible; to prevent a the 'revolving door' of rough sleeping; and to sustain as many households within existing accommodation as possible in Reading.

Under new contracts, to support our early intervention and prevention approach, we commission:

- A cross-tenure floating support service including a No First Night Out response
- Three weeks of resettlement support from the street outreach team for people moving from the streets into accommodation
- Eight weeks of resettlement support for those moving on from supported accommodation into independent accommodation
- Where accommodation has been earmarked as available, provision of emergency accommodation for up to seven nights for those being released from prison to prevent cycles of rough sleeping - as agreed by our Access Panel
- Services that will develop and introduce a peer support model within their volunteering teams over the contract period for encouraging initial engagement and then building resilience and longer term positive peer relationships. We know that this is key in maintaining a lifestyle away from rough sleeping and in sustaining independent accommodation within the community

Operationally we have introduced and will continue with:

- Weekly multi-agency Access Panels to ensure that those at risk of eviction are identified and a partnership troubleshooting approach to prevention is prioritised
- Monthly multi-agency Exceptions Panel to ensure that people who are not ready to move on within commissioned time frames are given additional time with services to enable their longer-term plan and to avoid returns to the streets
- Eight assessment bed spaces within supported accommodation for up to eight weeks. These are aimed at those who are being released from prison or discharged from hospital who have a history of rough sleeping, where it is uncertain what type of accommodation might ensure they have the best chance of moving away from a cyclical rough sleeping lifestyle
- Funding a part-time post to work with the most multiply disadvantaged individuals in Reading under the nationally recognised Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) initiative which aims to break down barriers and create sustainable solutions for those people who experience repeat rough sleeping and recurring mental health, drug/alcohol misuse, offending and homelessness issues

### Our new commitments

#### We will:

- Recognise the contribution of voluntary and community sector homelessness services in complementing commissioned services; recognising that these services will attract, support and engage with individuals that are harder for us to reach and that in turn, these services will be able to encourage engagement with pre-emptive and early intervention services. This includes developing a suitable and sustainable offer of support and accommodation for people who have No Recourse to Public Funds and those affected by Modern Slavery and exploitation
- Create a robust communication strategy and plan to include information about services available and new developments in an accessible way. Introduce a website and App in Reading that provides relevant and current information to the public, businesses, professionals and partners thus keeping them informed about services available to those rough sleeping and at risk of rough sleeping and enabling them to confidently signpost into these services
- Co-develop and co-produce an early identification/trigger toolkit for partners to assist with identifying if someone might be at risk of homelessness so that they can be referred for support and assistance at the earliest possible and identifiable point
- Roll out, provide training on and promote the Duty to Refer (ALERT) mechanism to non-statutory partners, across all sectors that come into contact with people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping so that there is a standard and simple way for professionals and community groups to refer into the local housing authority. We want to make prevention everyone's responsibility
- Introduce a rolling training offer for our volunteer and community sector partners to ensure that they feel confident and able to signpost into appropriate services in a timely way
- Work with our voluntary and community sector partners to identify gaps in early intervention and prevention services that they might be able to create provision for
- Embed No First Night Out principles internally, throughout commissioned services and into places where the wider community may have contact with people who are sleeping or may sleep rough
- Develop opportunities for people with lived experience of rough sleeping to become involved in how we develop our early intervention and prevention response
- Develop a response that works with our neighbouring boroughs and local authorities further afield so that joint working benefits individual rough sleepers, including identifying and maximising cross-boundary funding bids and opportunities
- Work with partners to create offers of support and accommodation that can engage with individuals with a history of not engaging with services and offers

### Priority 2 - Recovery and community integration

#### Overview

For someone to succeed in sustaining their accommodation we must prevent reversion to former behaviours and detrimental relationships where we know that these can lead to putting accommodation at risk. We know that people have a far higher chance of sustaining their accommodation, for the longer-term, when they are 'underpinned' by recovery and community integration including:

- the right clinical and emotional support in addressing their physical and mental wellbeing at the right time
- a network of strong, meaningful and supportive professional and personal relationships

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- feelings of purpose, including relationships in which they feel able to support others, thus creating self-worth, developing self-esteem and appropriate social networks that are positive, fulfilling and promote emotional resilience
- varied and regular, perhaps even routine, ways to occupy their time, including opportunity for employment, education, training, volunteering and being able to follow passions, interests and ambitions
- feelings of belonging and contributing to their immediate community and wider societal aims

### Our objective

We aim to:

- Provide a holistic approach to recovery that does not solely focus upon clinical, structured and prescriptive interventions, but upon wellbeing and purposeful and meaningful occupation of time for those affected by drug/alcohol misuse; mental health issues; criminal behaviours and/or homelessness
- Work with partners across sectors to introduce peer-to-peer and mutually beneficial relationships including befriending and mentoring to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation
- Focus efforts on recovery at the earliest stage possible to sustain existing life and employment skills and avoid the development of entrenched behaviours

### Our current approach

In addition to the beds we are funding in our preventative and emergency responses to rough sleeping, we also commission supported accommodation as follows:

- 34 bed spaces at Willow House for up to 12 months for people who benefit from a 24/7 supported housing environment and who are usually experiencing homelessness and one or more of the following: mental health issues; an offending history and drug and/or alcohol misuse
- 20 bed spaces at Shepton House for up to 12 months, for people who benefit from access to intensive support, but away from a hostel type environment
- 100 bed spaces for people who are working towards independence but who need a level of support before moving into accommodation of their own
- Housing First accommodation and support for up to five individuals at any one time with a specialist support worker to ensure tenancy sustainment. This offer is aimed at those people who have consistently refused to engage with traditional offers of support and/or accommodation and where previous accommodation options have been unsuccessful resulting in repeat cycle of rough sleeping. The premise is that accommodation is offered first and unconditionally; support is offered and engaged with at that individuals own pace
- Launchpad Reading offer those that use their services, access to a programme of social and educational workshops and classes to encourage meaningful occupation of time

We know that the funding and provision of short-term supported accommodation units alone is not enough to ensure that people are able to move on into and sustain a longer-term home. Our supported accommodation provides people with the skills and motivation to recover, with wrap around support and a short period of tenancy sustainment/transitional support, but once this safety net has been withdrawn it is a sense of belonging and purpose that will ensure longer term tenancy sustainment. Often when people leave support services they feel out on a limb; that their security and support network has been removed and that they have no-one to turn to - they can feel lonely and unable to cope. Our services have an 'open door' policy for people in crisis, but there is a certain shame people feel in having to re-access services they have essentially



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'succeeded' from. Our new commitments seek to provide non-stigmatised access to support through a range of approaches.

As part of new Homelessness Support Services, we have created the concept of a 'Hub' within Willow House and this will provide easy access and a 'one-stop shop' approach for rough sleepers and those accessing supported accommodation for housing advice; drug and alcohol support; health; benefits and employment and social interaction and support.

### Our new commitments

We will:

- Enhance Reading's offer for recovery that focuses on wellbeing and occupation of time by introducing, in partnership with St Mungo's and other sector services, a Recovery College learning programme, based on the principle that learning can be a transformative experience. In a supportive educational environment people will have the opportunity to sample a wide range of subjects and wellbeing activities alongside a diverse group of peer learners. This will be based on two pioneering Recovery Colleges St Mungo's have set up in Bristol and Southwark
- Continue the development of the Hub offer at Willow House to include more statutory services and the 'one-stop shop' concept. This will include developing a robust response for people with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Integrate the Recovery College concept into the wider community to ensure that those on the periphery and at risk of homelessness are not immediately labelled where they are accessing a service 'known' to be frequented by vulnerable people. The aim is to avoid the stigma that can be attached to a homeless community day centre service. This concept has been embedded within Extra Care models of support, where the community and the service are integrated and the boundary between those who have homes and those who do not, is blurred under the one provision and service aims
- Work with drug and alcohol commissioners and West Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide flexible and bespoke responses to those rough sleeping and at risk of rough sleeping

## Priority 3 - Rapid intervention

**When people do end up sleeping rough, provide rapid intervention and reconnection support to ensure that they are offered an appropriate and sustainable housing solution**

### Overview

We know it is inevitable that no matter how much we try to prevent rough sleeping across services, people will still find themselves sleeping rough in the borough. When people do end up on the streets it is crucial that they are signposted and supported immediately.

Early identification and speedy intervention at this point is vital. The public and professionals need to have the knowledge and tools to signpost or notify relevant supporting agencies readily available. It is important that we and our partners have the mechanisms in place to provide the public and professionals with the confidence to refer rough sleepers to appropriate services in Reading. Assertive outreach services are essential in being able to verify and offer immediate support and an accommodation offer to prevent prolonged and sustained periods of time on the streets.

Support from an outreach team must be openly available and unconditionally on offer for those rough sleeping. An offer of housing or support with drug misuse, on one day might



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be rebuffed; the next day or the next week that same offer might be accepted by that person. A refusal at one point in a rough sleeper's journey should not jeopardise their chances of being offered support at another point. We do need to be clear that each person's offer of support will be different and that those without a local connection, or without recourse to public funds, may not always be on board with their offer of reconnecting to accommodation in their borough or country of origin.

People that do not respond to offers of support at the beginning of their rough sleeping journey may require time and support from several partners to overcome their multiple disadvantages and their fundamental and interlocking problems. Ideally this would be whilst accommodated, but this is not always possible due to supply or willingness of the individual to accept an offer. Therefore we must keep partnership working at the heart of any response so that any offer of accommodation encompasses specialist and tailored support over a long period of time to help rebuild individual lives, develop connectivity and their sense of belonging and contributing to the wider community.

### Our objective

We aim to:

- Identify and verify individuals quickly and assess their needs accurately and efficiently
- Offer a personalised and sustainable route away from the streets for every rough sleeper where that offer must be based on their individual circumstances and must be regardless of their local connection or immigration status

### Our current approach

Under new contracts, to support our rapid intervention approach, we commission:

- An assertive rough sleeper outreach team out on the streets of Reading to seek out new rough sleepers; respond to referrals from partners and the public; and provide opportunities for people rough sleeping to engage with an offer of support into accommodation or with reconnection
- A *No Second Night Out* rapid response to rough sleepers by providing up to 10 emergency 'foldaway beds' at Willow House for the rough sleeping team to refer into when they find someone sleeping rough for the first time - this includes a period of up to seven days for people without a local connection or recourse to public funds
- A hub model of support at Willow House which aims to provide a 'one-stop shop' service around housing advice, health and drug and alcohol misuse for those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping

Operationally we have introduced and will continue with:

- An Access Panel that brings managers of commissioned services together to discuss new referrals into services from the streets; priorities for vacancies and any customers that require a multi-agency intervention/problem solving approach to keep them in accommodation or to consider suitable alternatives that prevent them from rough sleeping
- Robust Key Performance Indicators/Quarterly Returns for all Homelessness Support Services to monitor and review services, with our partners, to ensure that they are overcoming barriers and are able to deliver the best services for vulnerable people
- Extra provision during the winter months including the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which is a humanitarian response that provides emergency bed spaces for anyone sleeping rough in the Reading borough when temperatures drop to zero degrees or lower for three or more consecutive nights. We are constantly reviewing the weather during the winter and are able to use our discretion around

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‘feels like’ temperatures and wind chill factor. We work with partners to make decisions regarding when we trigger our SWEP response

- Using Rough Sleeper Outreach Service resource to refer verified rough sleepers into Reading’s faith sector run ‘Bed for a Night’ Winter Shelter between January and March each year
- New ‘follow-me’ referral and assessment paperwork, co-produced with referring agencies, to create a more strength-based focus - so that people can tell their story once
- Staff in commissioned services are trained to offer gender and trauma informed support tailored to individuals and what will make ‘this time’ a success for them in moving from the streets into longer term and sustainable accommodation. We understand that the experience of rough sleepers can be different for each person, but particularly that women, LGBTQ+, migrants, young people and BAME may need different responses and interventions to make their longer-term plan work

For 2018/19 and 2019/20 we were successful in bidding for funds under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to provide additional support and provision to people rough sleeping in Reading. These funds have enabled us to:

- Increase the staffing capacity of the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service to enable them to work with more individuals over a more varied shift pattern including increased capacity to reconnect rough sleepers to accommodation in their area or country of origin. The team are now located at the Willow House hub to provide better interagency working
- Extend winter shelter provision for an additional month so that it now operates from the beginning of January until the end of March and provide extra staffing resource overnight
- Provide *Housing Led* emergency bed spaces so that rough sleepers who have not responded to previous offers can be offered emergency accommodation immediately and for up to six months. A dedicated support worker will intensively support them to establish a suitable and agreeable accommodation or reconnection offer to prevent them from returning to the streets
- Employ additional staff to support with seeking suitable and sustainable move-on offers from supported accommodation so that increased throughput will create vacancies for people who are rough sleeping

For 2019/20 we have been successful in obtaining funds under the MHCLG’s Rapid Rehousing Pathway (Early Adopters) scheme to trial:

- ‘Navigator’ roles who will work intensively with a small group of rough sleepers to navigate them through to independent living. This ensures that they will have consistent support from the same organisation and support worker
- ‘Out of hours’ tenancy sustainment officers to work with clients who find it difficult to maintain their tenancies due to personal/social relationships or being at risk of exploitation

### Our new commitments

We will:

- Under new Homelessness Support Services’ contracts ensure that each rough sleeper has a Multi-Agency Service Officer (MASO) where clients and professionals have a clear understanding of someone’s incremental journey, their end goal and long-term plan for sustainable accommodation and a life away from the streets
- Ensure that commissioned Homelessness Support Services are effective through individual quarterly and overall annual review of services

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- Trial a multi-agency 'Pop-Up Hub' in Reading with a focus on making the right offer of support and accommodation to rough sleepers at the right time. The Pop-Up Hub will offer a very brief, intensive, unconditional cross-sector service in one or more central 'hot-spot' location to try and engage with harder to reach groups
- Increased and continued promotion of the national StreetLink campaign throughout the Reading borough amongst the public, businesses and partners as a mechanism to report those who are rough sleeping
- Enabling Homelessness Support Services to focus on community integration including employment, accessing relevant specialist services and health care and increasing social recovery capital
- Explore all potential funding opportunities to expand existing services or to create innovative responses for rough sleepers in Reading; whether these are local authority opportunities or enabling conversations and submissions from charitable and community sector partners
- Maximise the utilisation of the Council's quota queue for people moving straight from the streets into accommodation. This means that in certain circumstances, it is appropriate and possible for those rough sleeping to move straight into social rented properties, with resettlement support
- Work with partners to explore, establish and enable support and accommodation options for rough sleepers who have No Recourse to Public Funds
- Work with partners to create diverse support and housing solutions for rough sleepers who historically have not engaged with services and support on offer in Reading

### Priority 4 - United support and enforcement action in Reading

Protecting communities by tackling street activities associated with rough sleeping and intervening to stop dangerous behaviours

#### Overview

When someone ends up sleeping rough, it is often due to complex and intertwining reasons: childhood and adult life experiences or trauma and choices made by that individual will all contribute. Rough sleeping is highly likely to exacerbate and amplify any existing needs and behaviours, including anti-social activities.

Our experience is that disruptive enforcement action, alongside and linked to, offers of support and accommodation, can help individuals concerned and drastically reduce the negative effect their anti-social activities can have on the town as a whole.

Any approach that includes enforcement should be personalised and heavily informed by support agencies involved with an individual to ensure that the two are coupled effectively in supporting them off the streets. It should be joined-up, intelligence-led, taking into account a wide range of information when deciding whether to use enforcement or not and what action would be appropriate. The relationship between the Police and other partners is key in coordinating activity and delivering these priorities. Enforcement responses should not be punitive; however, we know that there will be times that we may need to make the difficult decision to take enforcement action against anti-social activities in the interests of individuals, businesses and residents. We have a duty to balance the needs of the individual with the wider needs of the community as a whole and to responsibly assess and manage risks in that context.

#### Our objective

We aim to:

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- Identify individual offending behaviour and associated risk, to enable multi-agency intervention to protect the individual, public and business community
- Provide a jointly agreed coordinated and measured response to offending behaviour
- Ensure that all intervention includes elements of supporting individuals to access services and/or an assessment of the current support they are receiving

### Our current approach

In 2018 we reviewed our approach to tackling the impact of the Anti-Social Behaviour and criminal actively linked to *some* rough sleeping leading to:

- Early identification and removal of abandoned litter and items associated with begging and rough sleeping. This included communicating the approach with known individuals and a warning system to prevent personal items being removed
- A Begging Enforcement Group utilising intelligence on offending behaviour, service engagement and current accommodation/or pathway to access provision, to inform enforcement escalation from warning letter to Criminal Behaviour Order and taking a measured approach
- Ensuring all “enforcement” officers (Police Officers, PCSOs, Town Safe Officer and Business Inclusion District Warden) include signposting to support service at every engagement with individuals
- Identifying those most at risk of returning to street homelessness due to tenancy enforcement action linked to their offending behaviour

Operationally we have introduced and will continue with:

- Our MEAM and Housing First approaches to supporting those who experience multiple disadvantage and who are highly likely to be involved in anti-social activities as well as rough sleeping
- Our Places Solution Group – a multi-agency meeting which includes a problem solving focus on tented or rough sleeping encampments across the town. This group ensures early identification of new encampments with information shared between the ASB Team and St Mungo’s street outreach team; co-ordinated responses to the removal of an encampment jointly agreed with homelessness services prior to eviction or removal of tents or other makeshift shelter and the early removal of abandoned tents and shelters
- Our People Solutions Group – a multi-agency meeting which takes a problem solving case management approach. This group ensures a co-ordinated cross-sector responses to anti-social behaviours to reduce offending behaviour of individuals with chaotic or high dependence lifestyles and that links are made with exploitation groups and Operation Stronghold to protect those at risk

### Our new commitments

We will:

- As part of our wider communications and training plan, provide less obvious internal and external frontline partners who may interact with rough sleepers, such as parks and recreation, with information to share with rough sleepers on the support that is available to them and the consequences of not engaging with offers or behaving anti-socially
- Continue to encourage Homelessness Support Services and wider partners to work with Echo Tango our CCTV operators in the town centre and to adopt the use of TownSafe Radio to improve communications and safety
- Prioritise our Community Safety and Legal responses to encampments in outer-lying areas of Reading

## Appendix 2

- Maintain our focus on hotspot areas in the borough and ensure enforcement action is implemented where required
- Link the current enforcement and planned activity into the Community Safety Partnership priority group focused on Class A drugs, exploitation and county lines activities
- Explore the option to provide rough sleepers with a safe place/storage facilities for their belongings where they are engaging with their MASO and are awaiting accommodation

### Priority 5 - Provision of information and alternative ways to give

Providing information and guidance to the community, residents and visitors regarding alternative ways to support those who are sleeping rough

#### Overview

Reading is affluent and has an attractive shopping and social centre - we know that residents and visitors give a lot of money to those who beg on Reading's streets. Whilst begging and rough sleeping are not mutually exclusive, we do know that some people begging are not sleeping rough or that they might sleep rough whilst accommodation is open to them because they will beg until the early hours of the morning during Reading's vibrant night time economy. Students and visitors will generously give money to people directly when they perceive them as vulnerable, living on the streets and when they are told by people on the streets that there are no other options or support available to them. We feel that one of the fundamental reasons for vulnerable people and rough sleepers being attracted to, and sustained, in Reading is due to the abundant begging opportunities Reading provides.

#### Our objective

We aim to:

- Keep the public, our community groups, professionals and businesses up to date and well-informed of the vast amount of support that already exists in Reading. We need to have a strong, consistently messaged and shared strategy of communication
- Educate the public and groups outside of the homelessness sector regarding how giving to people that are begging can fuel and exacerbate entrenched lifestyles, which may or may not include rough sleeping, by funding drug and alcohol misuse
- Channel our cross-sector energies and resources in the same direction to develop and implement a co-produced alternative means for people to direct their good will and donations that does not perpetuate rough sleeping, anti-social or begging behaviours in Reading

#### Our current approach

Across agencies we need to work together to effectively and widely promote and communicate the type and level of support that is offered as a collective in Reading to those who are rough sleeping. We know there are several groups offering a lot of support - each group, charity or organisation will promote itself very well through local press, their own websites and own social media platforms, however, there is a need for all of this information to be collated, updated, publicised and promoted in one place. We live in a society that wants easily accessible and understandable information. We have the services in Reading that support rough sleepers; we need to tell the public, businesses and all our relevant partners about them.

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In 2016/17 we created a cross-sector/partnership Homelessness Forum in Reading and as a result we shared resourcing and undertook our first Homeless Health Needs Audit in early 2017. However, this Forum lost its strategic and operational path which can be typical where there is no strategy to underpin its aims and direction. We need to develop a new partnership approach with the input, guidance and support of our homelessness sector partners.

### Our new commitments

- Create a truly multi-agency, cross-sector homelessness partnership/social inclusion forum to steer and take ownership of this Rough Sleeping Strategy and subsequently co-developed Action Plan
- Develop an all-encompassing information platform including a website and an App that can provide rough sleepers, those at risk of rough sleeping, the public, businesses, professionals, students and partners with easy access to information about what support is available to those who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping - this will include a campaign that educates about the negative impact of giving money to those who are begging. This commitment must make better use of social media and more informal channels of communication
- Develop an Alternative Giving campaign to sit alongside the provision of information and guidance that would direct people towards opportunities to donate their time or money to charities and community-led projects operating in Reading with those who are homeless. Any proceeds from this campaign would be directed back into all other strategic priorities and invested in those individuals directly affected by rough sleeping



### GLOSSARY

**Access Panel:** a weekly multi-agency meeting chaired and administered by the Council to review new referrals made for supported accommodation and floating support services and to discuss preventative options for people at risk of homelessness.

**ALERT:** a tool provided to all local authorities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. It supports partnership working by providing a secure and easy to use platform for making referrals and notifications under the *Duty to Refer*.

**BAME:** a term used to refer to members of non-White communities in the UK which stands for black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

**Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG):** were created following the Health and Social Care Act in 2012 and replaced Primary Care Trusts on 1 April 2013. They are clinically-led statutory National Health Service bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area.

**Complex trauma:** may be diagnosed in adults and children who have repeatedly experienced traumatic events, such as violence, neglect or abuse.

**Dual diagnosis:** a term used to describe patients with both severe mental illness and problematic substance misuse.

**Duty to Refer:** a legal obligation on certain public/statutory bodies to notify the local housing authority under 213B of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 of anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**Early Upstream Intervention:** an approach addressing contributing risk factors and circumstances that indicate that an individual *may* end up at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping and initiating support and professional involvement as soon as possible. This may involve working with groups that are known to have these risk factors, who may not currently be at risk of rough sleeping presently, but where certain characteristics and/or lifestyle choices suggest that they could be, and carrying out prevention and education with them to prevent risk from developing.

**Emergency accommodation:** in the context of this strategy this means temporary 'fold-out' bed spaces and Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) bed spaces or placements. They are used as part of a *No Second Night Out* response in Reading, located within the Hub at Willow House, to accommodate rough sleepers. Reading's Rough Sleeper Outreach Service determines who can access them, where verification and local connection/reconnection engagement criteria apply.

**European Economic Area (EEA) National:** someone who is a citizen of one of the countries in the European Economic Area, which includes EU countries and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

**Exceptions Panel:** a monthly panel in which managers that provide accommodation based services, commissioned by RBC, discuss barriers to individuals moving on from their services within their contracted timeframes. A solution focused approach is taken in enabling move on and includes developing and reviewing action plans for clients; considering how to overcome move-on barriers and how professionals can be flexible in meeting the needs of individuals to enable a sustainable move-on.

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**Experts by Experience:** people with first-hand experience of rough sleeping and/or homelessness who are able to shape and inform the change and development of services and strategy for rough sleepers and homeless people.

**Gender informed:** considering the experiences, issues and support needs of homeless people specific to their gender and embedding these considerations into practice and methods when delivering support to clients.

**Health and Wellbeing Board:** the forum administered by the Council bringing together key leaders from the health and care system work to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities.

**Homeless Health Needs Audit:** a review, using questionnaires and focus groups, undertaken by groups with an interest in homeless health, including those who have responsibility for improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

**Homelessness:** a broad term which includes people who live in unsuitable housing, don't have rights to stay where they are, or are rough sleeping.

**Hidden homelessness:** a term used to refer to people who would meet the legal definition of homeless if they were to make a formal application, but are not represented in the local authority homeless statistics.

**Homelessness Support Services:** the collective name for services commissioned by Housing Needs in Reading to support households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and that includes the following contracts: Rough Sleeper Outreach Service; Floating support service for early intervention, prevention and tenancy sustainment; Intensive and engaging support: Hub and accommodation service and Working towards Independence accommodation service.

**Hotspot area:** an area where rough sleeping is known to happen frequently and/or where lots of people are known to rough sleep in one specific location.

**Housing Benefit:** can help people pay their rent if they are unemployed, on a low income or claiming benefits. This is being replaced by Universal Credit.

**Housing First:** an evidence-based approach to successfully supporting homeless people with high needs and histories of entrenched or repeat homelessness to live in their own homes. The overall philosophy is to provide a stable, independent home and intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs. Housing is seen as a human right where there are no conditions around 'housing readiness' before providing someone with a home. Secure housing is viewed as a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed. Housing is provided 'first' as a matter of right, rather than 'last' or as a reward.

**LGBTQ+:** often used to refer to all of the communities of people who identify themselves by this term. Each letter represents the following: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning) - the + encompasses all other terms that people may wish to be identified as in terms of their sexuality.

**Lived experience:** a representation of the experiences and choices of a given person and the knowledge that they gain/have gained from these experiences and choices.



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**Local Housing Allowance (LHA):** are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates relate to the area in which you make your claim.

**Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM):** means a coalition of three national charities (Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind) which formed to influence policy and services for adults facing multiple needs and exclusions.

**Market rents:** the amount of rent that can be expected for the use of a property, in comparison with similar properties in the same area.

**Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG):** (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) is a central government department whose job it is to create great places to live and work and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area.

**Multi-Agency Service Offer (MASO):** means a clear overall plan made, in conjunction with clients and the support of providers, which works towards an end accommodation goal. All partners and sectors are made aware of this plan and support the individual to achieve this. The plan may not be to access accommodation in Reading and rather might be to reconnect an individual to their borough or country of origin.

**Multiple disadvantage:** the experience of a combination of problems including homelessness, substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health.

**No First Night Out:** a project working across some local authorities which seeks new approaches to prevent individuals from sleeping rough for the first time.

**No Recourse to Public Funds:** an immigration condition restricting access to public funds, including many mainstream benefits such as welfare and housing.

**No Second Night Out:** means a pledge made within a borough, across agencies, sectors and services, which states that no one who is new to the streets should spend a second night out; no one should make their home on the streets and no one should return to the streets once they have been helped off them.

**OPAL:** is a complete client relationship and service management system for housing and homelessness organisations to use for client contact monitoring and reporting. This includes production of an on-going list of open and on-going referrals for those individuals who have been found rough sleeping, who are known to intermittently rough sleep or who have been reported by the public or partners as rough sleeping.

**Personalised housing plans:** an outline of the steps to be taken to prevent or relieve a person's homelessness where they are homeless or threatened with homelessness and are eligible. The 'plan' should be drawn up by the local housing authority as part of its duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It should be based on its assessment of her/his needs and include agreement on the steps to be taken by the individual, the local authority and any other parties involved in supporting that individual.

**Personality disorder:** a diagnosed condition in which an individual differs significantly from an average person, in terms of how they think, perceive, feel or relate to others.

**Pop-Up Hub:** provide rapid identification and multi-agency intervention to tackle rough sleeping by providing short bursts of intensive activity, targeting known hot spots and

## Appendix 2

offering a rapid intervention for chaotic and excluded people who find it hard to access mainstream services. Usually a hub will link to a town's *No Second Night Out* response.

**Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE):** means an approach which is intended to help staff and services to be able to work more creatively and constructively with clients who are experiencing multiple disadvantage. Services that have developed a psychologically aware approach recognise that clients experiencing multiple disadvantage have certain support needs, often arising from earlier trauma and abuse. As part of this approach, they work within a broadly therapeutic framework, taking into account and responding to an individual's emotional and psychological wellbeing, enabling them to develop clear and suitably consistent responses.

**Quota Queue:** additional priority given to certain groups in housing need, from different social care groups, within the council's Allocations Scheme<sup>11</sup>. The number of individual quotas for each queue is calculated on an annual basis. Single homeless people, including rough sleepers where there are no specific support needs and people moving on from Homelessness Support Services are one of these different community and quota queue groups that can be afforded this priority. A panel determines which individuals are included in this quota.

**Reconnection:** the process by which people sleeping rough, who have links with another area where they can access accommodation and/or social, family and support networks, are supported to return to this area in a planned way.

**Rough sleeping:** a term which refers to people who are sleeping or bedding down in the open air, in places such as streets, doorways, parks, benches or bus shelters, or even in sheds, car parks or tents.

**Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP):** means the protocol which is implemented during times of severe weather, which at the least will be when the Met Office forecasts three nights or more with a minimum temperature of 0°C or below. The Protocol will also be considered in other periods of severe weather and factors such as snowfall and wind chill will be taken into account. During this period anyone who would otherwise have to sleep rough is offered an emergency bed in the communal areas of supported accommodation buildings. The Reading Protocol is agreed annually and with regard to Homeless Link's guidance at <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/guidance-on-severe-weather-emergency-protocol-swep-and-extended-weather-provision>.

**Sofa surfing:** an informal term that describes the practice of a homeless people staying temporarily with various friends and relatives while attempting to find permanent accommodation.

**Street counts:** one of the means of monitoring rough sleeping by counting all the rough sleepers in Reading on a 'typical' night.

**StreetLink:** a national referral service for the public to connect people sleeping rough with local services.

**Supported accommodation:** accommodation commissioned by the council that provides specialist support (to varying degrees) to former rough sleepers and other vulnerable people.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4427/Allocations-Scheme/pdf/Final\\_ALLOCATION\\_SCHEME\\_January\\_2016\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4427/Allocations-Scheme/pdf/Final_ALLOCATION_SCHEME_January_2016_Draft.pdf)

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**Trauma informed:** is a strength based response to the impact of trauma within support delivery by emphasising the physical, psychological and emotional safety of those affected by trauma. This creates opportunities for those affected to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

**Trauma informed approach** means an approach which supports individuals who have experience of sustained exposure to traumatic events and the symptomology arising from such exposure, which is described as complex trauma and is identified as a particular recurring theme amongst homeless women.

## Appendix 3

### Consultation Questions

### Priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy

## Summary

This consultation is seeking views on the following proposed priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy<sup>1</sup>:

- **Priority One** - Intervening early to prevent and reduce homelessness in Reading
- **Priority Two** - Increasing access to decent suitable accommodation
- **Priority Three** - Supporting people who are vulnerable to recurring homelessness

## Question 1

Please can you tell us if you agree or disagree that the proposed priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy are clear?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

## Question 2

Please can you tell us if you agree or disagree that the following proposed priorities should be included in Reading's Homelessness Strategy?

**Priority One** - Intervening early to prevent and reduce homelessness in Reading

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

**Priority Two** - Increasing access to decent suitable accommodation

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the order the priorities are listed does not reflect how important the Council considers each priority to be, it is to ensure each priority has a number and a reference.

### Priority Three - Supporting people who are vulnerable to recurring homelessness

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

#### Question 3

If you disagree with any of the proposed priorities, please tell us which priorities you disagree with and why?

Priority number	Reason why you disagree that this should be a priority for Reading

#### Question 4

Are there any priorities you think have been missed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please tell us which priorities you think we should include and why:

--

#### Question 5

Do you believe there to be any groups who are not represented in the proposed priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please tell us which groups you believe are not represented:

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#### Question 6

Do you have any additional comments?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide details in the box below:

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## Question 7

Are you responding as:

- ☐ A service provider
- ☐ A public sector agency
- ☐ A housing association/registered provider
- ☐ A local business
- ☐ A voluntary community group/organisation
- ☐ A landlord/temporary accommodation provider
- ☐ A member of the public
- ☐ Other

If you have answered 'other' please give us details:

If you are an employee or volunteer, please let us know the name of the organisation, charity or community group you work for or support:

## About you

These questions are optional but will help us to see if there are differences between the views of different respondents and to check that we have heard from a representative sample. All the information you give will be kept completely confidential and secure.

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which age group do you belong to?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18 - 24
- ☐ 25 - 34
- ☐ 35 - 44
- ☐ 45 - 54
- ☐ 55 - 64
- ☐ 65 - 74
- ☐ 75 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you consider that you have a disability, long-term illness or health problem (12 months or more) which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

- ☐ Yes   ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?**

- ☐ White - British
- ☐ White - Irish
- ☐ White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ White - Any other White background (Please specify below)
- ☐ Mixed - White and Black Caribbean Mixed - White & Black African Mixed - White & Asian
- ☐ Mixed - Any other Mixed background (Please specify below)
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Indian Asian or Asian British - Pakistani Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- ☐ Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (Please specify below)
- ☐ Black or Black British - African
- ☐ Black or Black British - Caribbean
- ☐ Black or Black British - Any other black background (Please specify below)
- ☐ Other ethnic group - Arab
- ☐ Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group (Please specify below)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Don't know

If you have answered 'other' please give us details:

**What is your religion or belief?**

- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

If you have answered 'other' please give us details:

**Are you?**

- ☐ Heterosexual/straight
- ☐ Gay or lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

If you have answered 'other' please give us details:

## Appendix 4 - Consultation Planner for Reading's Homelessness Strategy

CONSULTATION PROFORMA			
<b>Name of consultation</b>		Consultation on themes for Homelessness Strategy	
<b>Purpose of consultation</b> Include objectives and whether statutory requirement		To consult with partners organisations, commissioned services, members of the public and service users on themes for the review and update on the Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024	
<b>Lead organisation</b>		Reading Borough Council	
<b>Recurring/one-off</b>		One-off	
<b>Start date</b>		05/08/2019	
<b>End date</b>		29/09/2019	
<b>Lead officer</b>	Verena Hutcheson	<b>Tel. No</b>	0118 937 4136
		<b>E:mail</b>	Verena.hutcheson@reading.gov.uk
<b>Head of service</b>		Zelda Wolfle	
<b>Lead councillor: Cllr Ennis</b>		<b>Date of Cabinet approval:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019	
<b>Other councillor involvement:</b> HNL Committee members			
<b>Cost of consultation</b>		Printing costs for paper copies of consultation questions (x 200 copies)- £50.00	
<b>Staff time involved</b>		15 working days of officer time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producing consultation planner</li> <li>Developing consultation questions and adding to Citizen Space</li> <li>Promoting consultation to stakeholders - meetings, distributing materials, presentations etc.</li> <li>Consultation events</li> <li>Collating responses and summarising (report writing)</li> <li>Answering enquiries about the consultation</li> </ul>	
		<b>Details</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Who are you consulting?</b> give details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geographical area groups</li> <li>Interest groups</li> <li>Equality target groups</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents across Reading Borough</li> <li>Customers of Housing Needs and homelessness services</li> <li>All other internal partner organisations and key stakeholders - Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Community Safety, Public</li> </ul>	August/ September 2019



CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
Name of consultation	Consultation on themes for Homelessness Strategy	
	Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All other external partner organisations and key stakeholders e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical Commissioning Groups, commissioned homelessness services</li> </ul>	
How are you consulting? Give details of:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online survey (Citizen Space)</li> <li>Printed copies available in community locations across borough e.g. civic reception, libraries, partner offices (Salvation Army, Launchpad), primary and secondary health locations (walk-in centre, A&amp;E, GP surgeries)</li> <li>Surveys completed in person with customers where required, for example, commissioned homelessness services (outreach workers, drop-in locations)</li> </ul>	August/ September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> </ul>	Full meetings with partners regarding sector and agency priorities under each theme	August/ September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultative Forums</li> </ul>	Second Street Support Reading partnership meeting	August/ September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library (hard copies must be sent to libraries in advance of the consultation being launched)</li> </ul>	Hard copies	August/ September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBC Web-site</li> </ul>	Online consultation available on RBC website	August/ September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other</li> </ul>	Not applicable	

CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
Name of consultation	Consultation on themes for Homelessness Strategy	
How will the public be able to respond electronically?	The public will be able to respond on the RBC website. The survey will also be advertised on Reading Borough Council social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) Digital access can be enabled in libraries and at Launchpad drop-in if support with this is required.	August/ September 2019
Provide details of your communications plan:		
• media	Social media - Facebook and Twitter (RBC account) Email hyperlink to list of relevant internal and external partners Promote at the bottom of email signature to professionals, partners and the public	August/ September 2019
• posters/leaflets	Posters in local libraries, advertised on screen in Civic reception, posters in Launchpad and the Salvation Army offices in Reading primary and secondary health locations, church/faith locations, community and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. food handouts and day centres), schools, Children's Centres	August/ September 2019
• internal communications	Intranet post and included in Chief Executive's blog to obtain internal staff feedback; Inside Reading	August/ September 2019
• website	Banner on RBC website homepage to obtain public feedback	August/ September 2019
• events	Consultation event for Street Support in August can advertise the consultation will be live	August/ September 2019
Decisions To Be Taken		
•Reporting process	After initial consent to consult on discussion of possible themes to be carried through the Homelessness Strategy, the consultation process will commence. When this has	November 2019

CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
<b>Name of consultation</b>	Consultation on themes for Homelessness Strategy	
	been completed; themes will be reviewed and revised where appropriate - the draft strategy will be presented to Committee to agree authority for publication.	
•Reporting results/outcomes	The results of consultation will be included in the report to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in November 2019.	November 2019
•Agreeing response	Themes will be reviewed and revised where appropriate in readiness for November 2019 HNL and a draft strategy will be presented to Committee to agree authority for publication.	November 2019
<b>Feedback to the public</b>		
• Letter	No - unless specific and lengthy concerns are raised in writing and feedback is requested from officers	November 2019
• Newsletter	Inside Reading (internally)	November 2019
• RBC Web-site	Yes	November 2019
• Event	No	November 2019
• Other	None	

This proforma will be published on the web-site. Please use language and wording understandable and appropriate for the general public.

Please return completed form to Clare Muir in Chief Executives' Policy Unit

In addition you should complete the attached consultation checklist to ensure that you are following good practice when you undertake a consultation exercise. The full Consultation Guidelines are available on Outlook public folders under 'Consultation...'.

## CONSULTATION PLANNING CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS/ STARTING OUT	
Why are you consulting?	To obtain a mixed and varied response on proposed themes for the Homelessness strategy from a variety of groups.
What do you want to find out?	We are aiming to discover which themes different groups believe should be our priority to inform the homelessness strategy.
Have you set expectations (yours, members & peoples)?	The consultation forms part of a review of the current homelessness strategy. We have explained to members and partners that this review and consultation will take place and that new themes will be identified.
Do you know which councillors need to be involved?	Lead Councillor for Housing, Adult Social and Health
Have you got/do you need Member approval?	Member approval to consult will be sought at HNL Committee in July.
WHO TO CONSULT/ HOW TO PLAN THE CONSULTATION	
Who has a stake in the consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Residents across Reading Borough</li> <li>* Customers of Housing Needs and homelessness services</li> <li>* All other internal partner organisations and key stakeholders - Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Community Safety, Public Health, Education</li> </ul> <p>All other external partner organisations and key stakeholders e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical</p>

	Commissioning Groups, commissioned homelessness services, education
Who are your target groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Residents across Reading Borough</li> <li>* Customers of Housing Needs and homelessness services</li> <li>* All other internal partner organisations and key stakeholders - Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Community Safety, Public Health, Education</li> <li>* All other external partner organisations and key stakeholders e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical Commissioning Groups, commissioned homelessness services</li> </ul>
Have you included non-users as well as users?	Yes
How will you ensure representation across groups protected under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Also people on low income?	An EqIA will be completed prior to strategy being taken to HNL in November 2019.
Will your consultation process be accessible and appropriate to all those who should be consulted?	Yes. Questionnaires will be produced in a number of formats and will be available in a number of locations (detailed above) to ensure all groups will be able to give feedback if they desire.
Have you asked the community you are consulting what type of consultation process they think should be used?	No - standard consultation process will be used.
Who already knows about the consultation & how much do they know?	Partners are aware that a review of the Homelessness strategy is taking place and that there will be a consultation on themes later

	in the summer. Informal conversations have been undertaken with key statutory partners to inform initial proposed themes. They are aware of the premise of the consultation but will be given more detail when the consultation goes live in August.
What's in it for the participants?	A partnership approach to our homelessness strategy and the implementation of actions will be key. Therefore, by completing the consultation, participants are assisting the development of the strategy and the resulting actions which will improve the provision for people at risk of homelessness in Reading. This will affect different participants in different ways.
Have you included staff and trade unions to input into the planning of the consultation?	Yes - staff No - trade unions as not relevant
Is a similar consultation already being done/will you be duplicating/can you combine with someone else?	No
<b>CHOICE OF CONSULTATION TECHNIQUE</b>	
Is the choice appropriate for the objectives?	Yes
Is it appropriate in terms of:	
* quantitative - qualitative	Yes - quantitative and qualitative methods to be employed.
* sample size	Yes - to obtain feedback from a wide variety of participants
* sample selection	Yes - varied
Can you do it yourself or will you need outside help and advice? If you cannot resource the consultation from within existing funds you may need to revise your plans.	Yes - will not need external help.
How can the consultation be E-enabled.	Questions will be available in

	electronic format.
<b>PROCESS</b>	
Have you got budget set?	Yes
•What is the cost of staff/time?	£3,000
•What is the cost of bought in goods and services?	£50 - print costs
•What other costs are there?	None
How much time have you got for the consultation?	8 weeks
Have you allowed sufficient time for responses?	Yes - consultation period spans August/September to allow for school holidays to give time to respond.
Is the information and explanation you are presenting easily accessible?	Yes
* Plain English?	Yes
* Translations?	Yes
Do all the consultation points have the documentation and information they need in time for the start of the consultation?	Yes
Are you making appropriate efforts to get to 'hard to reach' groups?	Yes - rough sleepers will be contacted by outreach workers; those in temporary/emergency accommodation; accessing day centres and other community services
What could go wrong?	Limited responses resulting in an unrepresentative consultation.
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	
How will you evaluate the results/findings?	Responses to the consultation will be reviewed and themes confirmed or adjusted as required.
How will you feedback results to those consulted?	The report to HNL committee will be a public document, made available to all who fed back on the consultation.
How will you know if the consultation has been successful?	Key themes will be established and will influence and direct the Homelessness Strategy.



## Appendix 5

### Equality Impact Assessment - Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24

**Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed**

**Directorate:** Environment and Neighbourhood Services

**Service:** Housing

**Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

**Name:** Amelia Johnson on behalf of Verena Hutcheson

**Job Title:** National Management Trainee

**Date of assessment:** 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019

**What is the aim of your policy or new service?**

The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 and resulting delivery/action plan aims to set out the borough's planned strategic actions to address and prevent rough sleeping in Reading. The council aims to enable the delivery of the Rough Sleeping Strategy using a cross-sector co-produced delivery/action plan under the following established priorities:

- **Priority One** - Early intervention and prevention
- **Priority Two** - Recovery and community integration
- **Priority Three** - Rapid Intervention
- **Priority Four** - United support and enforcement action in Reading
- **Priority Five** - Provision of information and alternative ways to give

Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy is clear that a cross-sector approach is essential in achieving the identified priorities. Co-development and co-delivery of the action plan will allow for pooling of resources, expertise and experience to address rough sleeping in Reading which affects all partners and will result in better outcomes for customers and the public.

**Overall context**

In 2018/19 the council was awarded £316,500 additional funding by the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) under their Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to enable national government's policy commitment of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it by 2027. To comply with funding conditions to receive an amount of £335,000 in Year 2 (2019/20), the MHCLG stipulated that a Rough Sleeping Strategy be drafted and signed off by senior council officers by March 2019. Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy differs from the Homelessness Strategy in that it is not a legislative requirement; therefore it has been drafted and finalised to meet MHCLG funding requirements. The Rough Sleeping Strategy will, however, complement the Homelessness Strategy due to the intrinsic nature of the action plan and partner involvement in delivering both strategies.



**Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

Residents of the Reading Borough, in particular rough sleepers.

**What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?**

Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to:

- Reduce rough sleeping by half, to 15 individuals or fewer, by 2022 and to eliminate it entirely by 2027 in line with central government targets
- Create and maintain a genuine statutory, voluntary and community sector partnership working to achieve this target

**Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Main stakeholders would be: Rough sleepers; those at risk of rough sleeping and cross-sector partner agencies who are working with individuals who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

**Equality**

Each year Reading Borough Council conduct a 'Rough Sleeper Count' to count the number of people sleeping out in the borough. This data is fed back to the MHCLG and national outcomes are published annually. As part of this count, the age, gender, ethnicity and nationality of all rough sleepers found is recorded to allow for analysis and ensure that services for rough sleepers are commissioned, designed and accessible for all clients with protected characteristics.

The data for November 2018 is as follows:

Age	No.	%	Gender	No.	%	Nationality	No.	%	Race/Ethnicity	No.	%
Under 18	0	0%	Female	6	24%	British	18	72%	White	24	96%
18-24	1	4%	Male	19	76%	Other EU	5	20%	Black	0	0%
25-35	4	16%	Third gender	0	0%	Non-EU	0	0%	Asian	0	0%
36-49	13	52%	Notknown	0	0%	Notknown	2	8%	Mixed Race	1	4%
50-59	4	16%	<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	
60+	1	4%									
Unknown	2	8%									
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>										

This count data is used in conjunction with on-going and regular monitoring and data collation by St Mungo's, as the council's commissioned rough sleeper outreach service, regarding age, gender, ethnicity and nationality. This monitoring and count data has been considered when composing the Rough Sleeping Strategy and will ensure that the resulting action plan will be fit for all ages, genders, nationalities and ethnicities in order to serve Reading's rough sleeper population fairly and without discrimination.

The Housing Needs team and rough sleeper outreach workers are aware of and monitor pregnant rough sleepers (where applicable) and rough sleepers with disabilities. A rough sleeper's beliefs and religion are noted and collated when officers are informed. All protected characteristics are taken into account when considering the accessibility of services and information and this will continue throughout the development of the action plan with partners. No rough sleepers counted as bedded down during the 2018 had a disability. Rough sleepers engaging with St Mungo's, who consider themselves to have a disability, are encouraged to engage with a care and support assessment under the Care Act 2014 and to engage with an assessment with the local housing authority under the Housing Act 1996 regarding whether the local authority has a duty to provide accommodation.

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes ☒ No ☐

Within Reading's overall rough sleeping cohort, there is an over-representation of White British, males aged 36 - 49 years old; however, this over-representation of White British men over the age of 26 is typical across the country and is consistent with other local authority areas in England outside of London. Those aged 30 - 59 who are White British are over-represented in Reading overall according to most recent Census data<sup>1</sup>.

A report by St Mungo's named *Rebuilding Shattered Lives: The Final Report*<sup>2</sup> substantiates that women made up 26% of people who accessed homelessness services in 2013. This 4:1 ratio of men to women remains an accurate figure across the country. Evidence suggests that women may take more care in hiding themselves whilst rough sleeping; that they may have more opportunities to sofa surf, stay with friends and family; that they may remain in abusive relationships or living in squats or engaging in prostitution which prevents them from sleeping rough. In Reading, women and younger people are often prioritised for housing vacancies sooner due to their perceived vulnerabilities. These factors all contribute to this over-representation in the rough sleeping cohort.

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation and feedback.

Yes ☒ No ☐

There is national and local concern regarding increases in rough sleeping numbers since official monitoring by local authority area began in 2010; hence the national commitment to halve rough sleeping numbers by 2022 and to eliminate it entirely by 2027.

### Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts?

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Professionals working with or for those who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping To include statutory and community/voluntary sector partners	Discussion with partners in a group forum as part of overarching sector conversations regarding a homelessness charter for Reading and overall commitment to end rough sleeping in the borough	By autumn/winter 2019

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3780/2011-Census-Results/pdf/2011-Census-Results.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2017/07/Rebuilding-Shattered-Lives-the-final-report.pdf>

'Experts by Experience' and those who are experiencing or have experienced rough sleeping	Via commissioned Homelessness Support Services; inviting customers and former customers who have experienced rough sleeping or have been at risk of rough sleeping into conversations so that they can influence how the strategy can and will be delivered.	By autumn/winter 2019
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**Data collection and assessment****Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact upon different racial groups and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact due to different gender groups and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact upon rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping due to disability and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact upon different sexual orientation groups and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Age**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact upon any different age groups and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

Is there a negative impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure ☐

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?**

There is no evidence that the publication and co-production and delivery of Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy would have a negative impact upon any different religious beliefs and there is no concern about potentially discriminatory practices in this regard.

**Is there a negative impact?**

Yes ☐

No ☒

Not sure ☐

Decision

1. **No negative impact identified** Go to sign off ☒
2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason** ☐  
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.
3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain** ☐  
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

**How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

Any future review to the Rough Sleeping Strategy and/or how its action plan will be produced and delivered will include a further Equality Impact Assessment.

Signed (completing officer)

Date

Signed (Lead Officer)

Date

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 JULY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	CONSULTATION FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2019-22		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR SOPHIA JAMES	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS
SERVICE:	NEIGHBOURHOODS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	SARAH TAPLISS	TEL:	0118 9373203
JOB TITLE:	STRATEGIC FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	E-MAIL:	sarah.tapliss@reading.gov.uk

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading, 2019-22 (Appendix 1), and requests authorisation to complete a consultation exercise with stakeholders on the proposed priorities for the strategy.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 - Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy
- 1.3 Appendix 2 - Consultation Plan
- 1.3 Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods be authorised to approve the commencement of a consultation exercise on the proposed priorities for Reading's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 After the successful delivery of the 2015-18 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading a refreshed strategy is required. The attached draft strategy for 2019-22 will support the delivery of both the Community Safety Partnership and the Berkshire West Children's Safeguarding Partnership strategic plans.
- 3.2 The draft strategy may be impacted by the outcome of the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 which introduces the concept of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner; and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, plus associated draft statutory 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance' which may change the way this is delivered in schools.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The existing Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading ended in 2018 and therefore a new refreshed strategy is required.
- 4.2 It is proposed that a consultation exercise on the priorities set out in the attached draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22 (appendix 1) is completed from the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019 to the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It would then be submitted to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee with a draft action plan for formal adoption in November 2019. Key stakeholders for consultation will include residents, Adult Social care, Brighter Futures, Thames Valley Police, Health, commissioned services and voluntary sector services.
- 4.3 The priorities within the draft strategy were developed via a series of workshops with members of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (DASG), a sub-group of the CSP. They reflect the group's aspirations to move the practices and approach of partners in Reading forward in specific areas, and it is assumed that the progress made during the previous strategy will be embedded by agencies as part of their 'business as usual' and therefore continued. Data will continue to be monitored by the DASG and any changes in performance or outcomes will be challenged regularly.
- 4.4 The priorities within the draft strategy for 2019-22 are as follows:

**Priority 1 -Raising awareness about domestic abuse with a focus on:**

- **Workforce Development** - *Continue to ensure a knowledgeable and well trained workforce.*
- **Healthy Relationship Education** - *increasing the resilience of Young People to negative relationships and behaviour.*
- **Engagement with marginalised communities** - *Encouraging those experiencing abuse to seek help at an earlier stage*

**Priority 2: Developing a multi-agency approach to working with perpetrators** - *Working with strategic partners to create a perpetrator approach to reduce and prevent repeat domestic abuse.*

**Priority 3 - Improving our partnership response to Coercive Control** -*Training professionals to understand and identify coercive control, so as to increase and better manage disclosures.*

#### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The draft strategy supports the delivery of the following Corporate Plan priorities:
- To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- 5.2 It also supports the delivery of the following Strategic Aims
- To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all
- 5.3 Reducing the impact of domestic abuse has an impact on both the Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety agendas of the Council and partners.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 A consultation exercise on the draft strategy will be completed between the 19<sup>th</sup> August and the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- 6.2 Details of the planned consultation can be found in appendix 2.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (appendix 3) in respect to the draft strategy. It is considered that the priorities within the strategy could have a positive differential impact on groups with the following protected characteristics:
- Racial
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Sexuality
  - Religious belief
- 7.2 No Negative impact was recorded on any group.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Some elements of the strategy may be impacted by the draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 currently progressing through parliament.
- 8.2 The Healthy Relationship programme in schools will be impacted by the legislative changes within the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the draft statutory guidance published in February 2019.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None - the consultation exercise and expected outcomes within the strategy will be delivered within existing resources.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None

# Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading

2019 - 2022

Overseen by the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group

*A sub-group of Reading's Community Safety Partnership*

DRAFT





## Foreword

[Text to come from Lead Councillor]

DRAFT

## WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

*A coherent strategy that tackles domestic abuse effectively needs to be informed by an understanding of the various forms of domestic abuse.*

Domestic abuse and domestic violence are terms used interchangeably by many organisations. However, in line with the Government definition below, this strategy will use the term 'domestic abuse', in order to encompass both violent and non-violent behaviours.

The draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 proposed statutory definition, defines domestic abuse as:<sup>1</sup>

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexual orientation. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- economic
- emotional

**Controlling behaviour:** Controlling behaviour defines acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour:** Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. The significance of this new definition is its intention to be underpinned by statutory guidance, and the rewording of financial abuse to economic.

While the definition outlined is not yet legal, it is used across all Government departments. One of the changes includes the replacement of 'financial abuse' with 'economic abuse', as part of the Government's 'expansive approach' to recognising that "victims may be forced into taking out loans or entering into other financial contracts by [perpetrators]".<sup>2</sup> By changing the term in this way, wider forms of domestic abuse can be identified and addressed.

### Forms of Domestic Abuse

All genders, and those that define as any sexuality, experience domestic abuse in a variety of forms. Domestic abuse can also occur between wider family members when they are living within the same household. In addition to the methods described in the above definition, other forms of domestic abuse include:

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<sup>1</sup> Gov.uk, *Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse Consultation Response and Draft Bill*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-consultation-response-and-draft-bill> (accessed June 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

**'Harmful Cultural Practises':** Abuse in relation to:

- **'Honour' Based Abuse (HBA):** Abuse committed to protect or defend the perceived 'honour' of a family and/or community, although not condoned by any cultural or religious belief. Young women are the most common targets, and become victims after deviating from their community's boundaries of perceived acceptable feminine/sexual behaviour. Victims have been murdered in extreme cases of HBA.
- **Forced Marriage:** A marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress or lack of capacity is a factor. Please note that this is not to be confused with *arranged* marriages, where consent is indeed supplied.

**Domestic Servitude:** Domestic Servitude can occur in some instances of forced marriage, and involves victims being forced to perform all household tasks, including cooking, cleaning and child-care. They may work 10 to 16 hours a day, and are rarely allowed out of the house without a chaperone.

**Inter-Familial Violence/Parental Abuse:** Violence between adult family members.

**Stalking:** Repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following a person.

**Harassment:** The term harassment is used to cover the 'causing alarm or distress' offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as amended (PHA), and 'putting people in fear of violence' offences under section 4 of the PHA. The term can also include harassment by two or more defendants against an individual or harassment against more than one victim.

This strategy does not include our approach to reducing Female Genital Mutilation as this is covered within a separate work stream within Children's Services. It also does not cover child to parent violence where the aggressor is under the age of 16.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

*Tackling domestic abuse continues to be a national priority for the Government. In response, local authorities are expected to outline their approach to reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse in their areas, addressing the particular challenges presented by local demographics.*

In 2016, the Home Office launched its 'Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG)', which intends to transform the delivery of services, make prevention and early interventions the foundation of its approach, and embed an "everyone's business" ethos across agencies, services and the wider public.<sup>3</sup> The strategy reports that domestic violence costs the UK £15.8bn annually, and to meet the challenge the Government have pledged £80m of funding to provide 'core support for refuges and other accommodation-based services'.<sup>4</sup> Although a strategy aimed at addressing violence against women and girls, the principles of the strategy can also be applied to men, boys, and people that define as LGBT+<sup>5</sup>.

### Domestic Abuse in the Law

*While a wide variety of behaviours defined as domestic abuse are universally recognised as destructive, not all such behaviours are illegal. While this situation is changing, it is important for the purposes of this strategy to recognise the current legal boundaries we must operate within.*

In criminal law, domestic abuse is an umbrella term used to refer to a number of different offences against a family member or intimate partner, such as assault. Unfortunately, not all reports to the police can be recorded as a crime, such as verbal aggression towards a partner, and therefore get logged as a 'non-recordable' domestic abuse incident.

However, legislation around domestic abuse is changing. Recent updates include:

**The Serious Crime Act 2015** by the Home Office, which criminalises patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour where they are perpetrated against an intimate partner or family member.

**The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme**, commonly known as Clare's Law, which was introduced in 2012 by the Home Office. This development allows that police to disclose information about a partner's previous history of violence under some circumstances, and where the risk to the victim can be identified as prevailing over the right to privacy of the partner.

**The introduction of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)** in March 2014. These notices and orders were introduced to tackle situations where perpetrators are arrested, but not charged, and are thereby able to return directly to the location of the victim. Prior to these developments, there were no restraints on the perpetrator as bail conditions are not enforceable without an official charge. The DVPNs and DVPOs are designed to provide individuals with temporary respite (to a maximum of 48 hours and 28 days respectively) so that they can make decisions for the future, and potentially apply for a civil injunction, before the perpetrator is able to make contact.

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<sup>3</sup> Gov.uk, *Violence against women and girls* (2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans, plus other identities considered to fall under this umbrella, including but not limited to queer/ questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual*

**Draft Domestic Abuse Bill** - Central Government's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020<sup>6</sup>, Victims Strategy 2018<sup>7</sup> and Female Offender Strategy 2018<sup>8</sup>, provide the back drop for a significant review of the existing response to domestic abuse. In 2017 the Government launched a consultation called 'Transforming the response to Domestic Abuse' and in January 2019 the response to the consultation and draft Domestic Abuse Bill<sup>9</sup> was published.

The document is based around four main objectives:

- Promote awareness - to put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, and raise public and professionals' awareness.
- Protect and support - to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive.
- Pursue and deter - to provide an effective response to perpetrators from initial agency response through to conviction and management of offenders, including rehabilitation.
- Improve performance - to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas, agencies and sectors.

Other legislation that impacts on the development of this strategy is the Children and Social Work Act 2017<sup>10</sup> and associated regulations<sup>11</sup> which require relationships and sex education to be taught in all English schools from September 2020.

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<sup>6</sup> Gov.uk, *Violence against women and girls* (2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020>

<sup>7</sup> Gov.uk, *Victim Strategy* (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/victims-strategy>

<sup>8</sup> Gov.uk, *Female Offender Strategy* (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy>

<sup>9</sup> Gov.uk, *Draft Domestic Abuse Bill* May 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-consultation-response-and-draft-bill> (accessed June 2019)

<sup>10</sup> Children's and Social Work Act 2017 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted> (accessed June 2019)

<sup>11</sup> Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111181997> (accessed June 2019)

## PREVELANCE

*It is the responsibility of all Local Authorities and partners to tackle Domestic abuse and protect local residents from harm. Reading's Community Safety Partnership places value in collaborative working across organisations to collect data and plan strategic approaches.*

### Police reports

The national picture identifies high levels of domestic abuse around the country. The police recorded 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2018, and 598,545 non-crime incidents reported to the police. This was an increase of 23% from the previous year. This in part reflects police forces improving their identification and recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and an increased willingness by victims to come forward.<sup>12</sup> However this doesn't show the full picture, as the Crime Survey for England and Wales show little change to previous years, with 2 million adults aged between 16-59 reporting that they have experienced domestic abuse in the same period (65% women, 35% men).

In Reading there has also been a significant increase in crimes reported in the last year also partly reflecting both a national and local change in practice within the police.

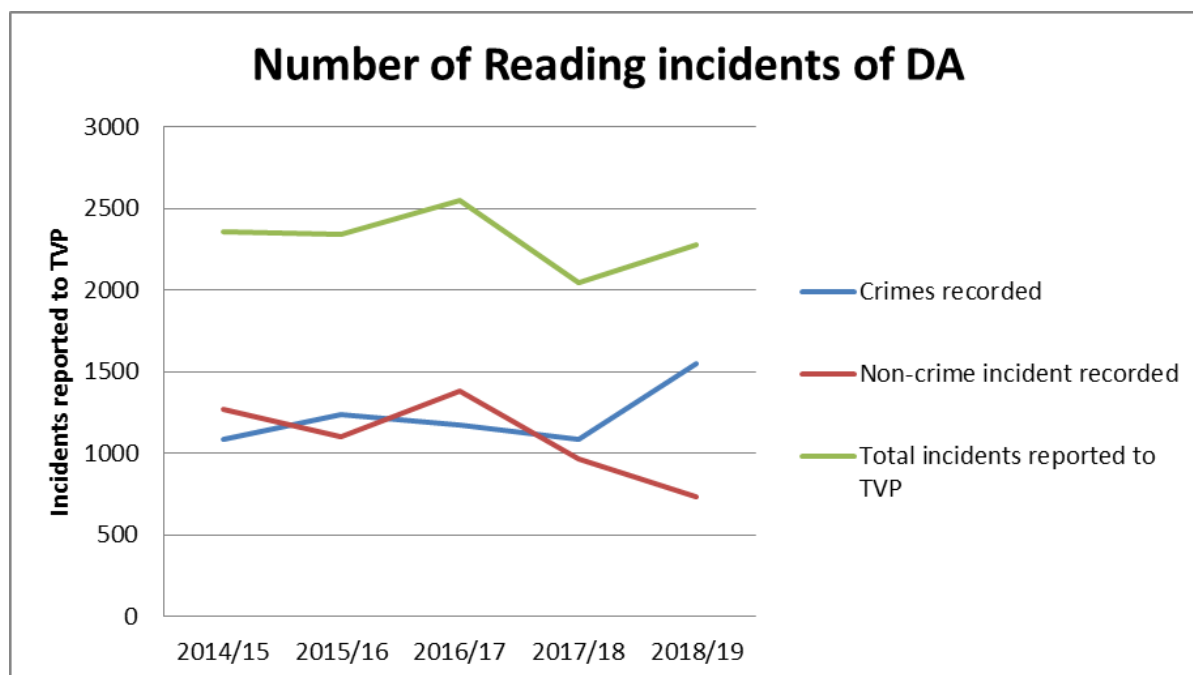
Thames Valley Police Recording	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Domestic Abuse Incidents: Recorded Crime	1086	1240	1171	1082	1547
Domestic Abuse Incidents: Non-Crime Occurrence <sup>13</sup>	1,271	1,102	1,380	963	732
Total	2,357	2,342	2,551	2,045	2,279

### Domestic Abuse Incidents in Reading:

The graph below shows the same data and highlights that although the total number of incidents is 13% lower than 5 years ago, there has been a significant increase in crimes recorded (42%).

<sup>12</sup> ONS, *domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018*, November 2018.

<sup>13</sup> A non-recordable incident of domestic abuse is not regarded as an offence and does not contribute to Home Office statistics. Recordable incidents of domestic abuse are those considered pursuable as an offence.



*Thames Valley Police recorded and non-recorded crime 2019.*

To provide further context the number of crimes recorded per 1000 population during 18/19 is compared to the figure in other major towns in the Thames Valley, the TV average and national average.

	Crimes per 1,000 Households recorded in 18/19									
Thames Valley Police Recording	Reading		Oxford		Slough		Thames Valley		National	
Year	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	17/18	TBC
Domestic Abuse Incidents: Recorded Crime	6.14	9.51	5.07	7.02	9.05	11.2	4.71	6.83	10	
Domestic Abuse Incidents: Non-Crime Occurrence	5.86	4.5	4.95	3.18	9.36	5.29	5.58	3.66	10	
Total	12	14.01	10.02	10.2	18.41	16.49	10.29	11.49	20	

The table above indicates that Reading is experiencing levels of domestic abuse above the Thames Valley average for both recorded and non-recorded crime. This is to be expected as an urban area and is only slightly above the other urban centres in the Thames Valley. However all of the Thames Valley, including Reading, remain significantly below the average for England and Wales.

Domestic abuse consistently represents c.10% of all crimes reported to the police within the Reading area. This matches the Thames Valley and compares to 12% for England and Wales.

## DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY FOR READING 2015-18

In 2015 Reading Community Safety Partnership published a three year Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading which set out the following priorities:

1. Encouraging people to seek support earlier - Improving information, education and prevention.
2. Providing the right response first time - Improving identification, encouraging disclosures and ensuring an appropriate immediate response.
3. Having the right services available - Improving support to move from victim to survivor or to change abusive behaviour.
4. Understanding of the challenges in our town - improving data analysis and community engagement.

This strategy has been successfully delivered by the Community Safety Partnership as summarised below.

### Procurement

A key driver in the 2015-19 Strategy, impacting on all strands of strategic delivery was the requirement to recommission all domestic abuse support services in the town, including support within refuge provision. After an extensive review of current and projected needs this procurement was completed with two new contracts implemented in October 2017, which will remain in place for the life of this updated strategy, 2019 - 22. One contract (£90,000 p.a.) funds the support provided to 15 refuge spaces located in the town (4 specialist spaces for women from the Asian community) and a wider contract (£255,000 p.a.) funds a range of services from providing training for the Reading workforce on domestic abuse; delivering support at the point of crisis; and supporting those who both experience and perpetrate abuse to break the cycle of abuse. A local domestic abuse charity, BWA, deliver both these contracts.

### Priority 1 - Encouraging people to seek support earlier - Improving information, education and prevention.

Increasing professional and public knowledge on the subject of domestic abuse will make it easier for those who are experiencing abuse to access support and broadens their opportunities to do this as early as possible. It will also enable people to make more informed judgements regarding their relationships.

#### Actions completed:

- Improvements to both the Council's and partners' websites have been completed and Police-led awareness raising campaigns have been supported.
- BWA have delivered 33 training course and trained 579 front line staff on domestic abuse (level 1 and 2), and continue to deliver 10 days of training per year
- Training sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group has reviewed the training to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date. The training continues to receive positive feedback. Of the 88 people that attended level 1 training, 47% rated it as excellent and 47% as good, and of the 70 people that attended level 2 training, 63% rated it as excellent and 34% as good. Combined candidates stated that (on a scale of 1-10) their confidence and knowledge had improved by an average 2.8 points.



- As set out in the 2015-18 strategy, Domestic Abuse forums to promote professional development of staff across agencies were re-introduced in 2016 and delivered quarterly. The forums have proven to be extremely popular with between 50-80 staff in attendance at each session, providing training on a specific topic followed by a wider group discussion. The topics have included:
  - 'Why don't they just leave?'
  - The impact of domestic abuse/ trauma on child development
  - Victimless prosecutions
  - Stalking and Harassment
 These forums will remain a key part of our staff development and engagement programme moving forward.
- Introduced an online training programme focusing on DA within LGBT+ relationships.
- Programme to encourage reporting/ appropriate recording of incidents of domestic abuse towards adults with a disability.

#### Outcomes:

- Increased referrals to the MARAC (58% increase since 2015)
- Increased MARAC referrals involving adults with a disability (from 0 - 11% since 2015), reflecting better recognition and recording of incidents.
- Increased use of support agencies with clear referral routes.

#### Further action required:

The partnership has made limited progress in promoting and ensuring a consistent educational offer around healthy relationships for young people in schools and other settings. Supported by the recent change in Government legislation this remains a focus of the refreshed strategy, and is a shared priority with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (previously the Local Safeguarding Children's Board).

### Outcome in focus: Increased referrals to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

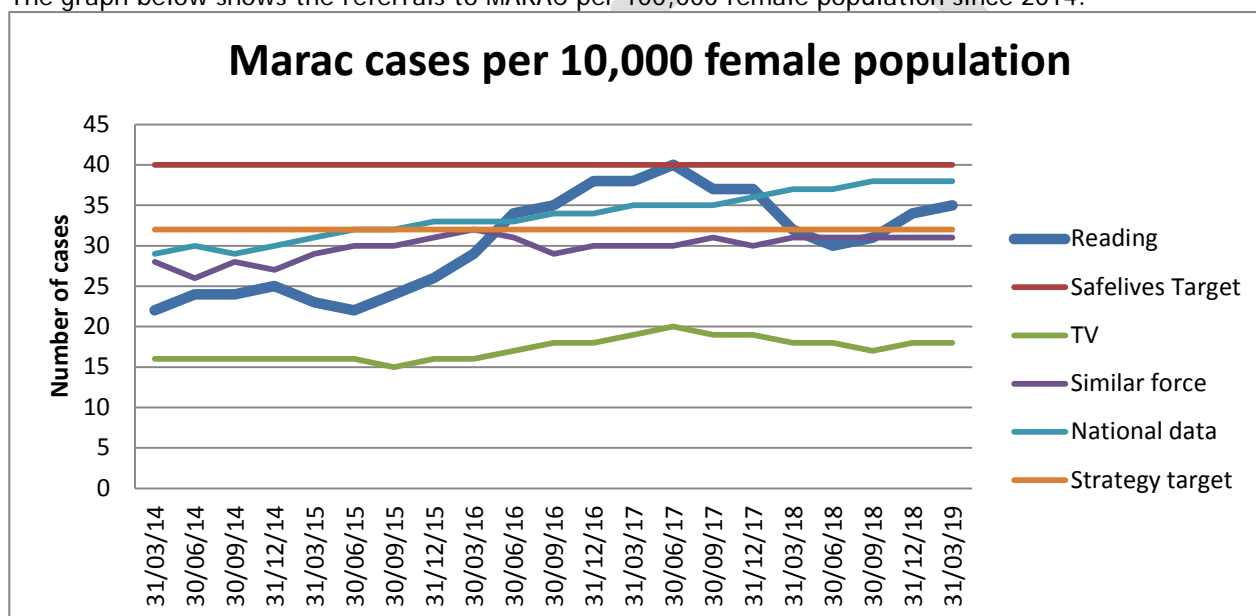
*Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing agencies together at a MARAC and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the individual experiencing abuse is represented, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the individual.*

The Reading MARAC, chaired by Thames Valley Police, aims to review and co-ordinate service provision where the victim is assessed as being at high risk of harm.

Key actions in the previous strategy were to:

- Increase referrals to the MARAC to a minimum of 80% of the Safelives<sup>14</sup> target (of 40 referrals per 10,000 population, which equates to 200 cases a year and 34 per 100,000 female population).
- Increase the referrals from partner agencies *other than* the Police to within the Safelives target (25-40%). This helps ensure that high risk cases that have not contacted the police have access to the additional safety planning at the MARAC.
- Increasing referrals from people who define as LGBT+ and where the person experiencing abuse has a disability to be in line with the Safelives target (5% and 17% respectively).

The graph below shows the referrals to MARAC per 100,000 female population since 2014.



The graph above shows that apart from a small dip mid 2018, the MARAC (high risk) referrals increased to above the Reading strategic target in June 2016 and have remained there since.

The Reading MARAC has seen increases in cases over the past three years for victims with disabilities and from residents who define as LGBT+. Reading is above both the Thames Valley and National reporting levels, highlighting the work that has been done in the area to target under-represented groups. Strategic partners of DASG believe the increase in referrals from these groups can be attributed to improved reporting opportunities and increased training and awareness. Both areas are still below the Safelives target, however, the trend for referrals relating to an adult with a disability indicates significant progress in this area (increased from 0- 11%). The trend for referrals from victims that define as LGBT+ is less encouraging and therefore this will remain a focus for the separate but connected MARAC action plan.

<sup>14</sup> SafeLives is a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse - <http://www.safelives.org.uk/> (accessed June 2019)

Priority 2- Providing the right response first time - Improving identification, encouraging disclosures and ensuring an appropriate immediate response.

Actions completed:

- Delivered a bespoke MARAC training package for Designated MARAC officers.
- In order to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Reading MARAC, the partnership welcomed an audit of practice by BWA in 2017/18. Actions are contained with the MARAC improvement plan.
- Introduced new contract arrangements that enable the local support agency to attend the Children's Single Point of Contact/ MASH on a daily basis (2 hours a day).
- Published referral pathways to support agencies/Police services
- Improved local safeguarding training in relation to DA
- Specialist training for GPs delivered with over 40 GPs attending.

Outcomes:

- Professionals across agencies are equipped to notice the signs of and encourage disclosures of domestic abuse - Reading consistently remains above the SafeLives target in terms of MARAC referrals from partner agencies.
- Increased partnership work between support services and Children's Services, now Brighter Futures for Children.
- Clear referral pathways between GP's and support services, with an average of 2 referrals a quarter.

Further action required:

There remains to be limited referrals to support agencies and the MARAC from people within the LGBT+ relationships.

### Outcome in Focus: Increased partnership work with Brighter Futures for Children

Children who live with domestic abuse are likely to feel that impact all their lives. Not only can the impact of trauma significantly impact the development of young children, there is increased risk of children becoming victims of abuse themselves, an ever-increasing harm to the child's physical, emotional and social development and a strong likelihood that this will become a continuing cycle of violence for the next generation.<sup>[1]</sup> Recognising the high number of Children's Safeguarding Cases where domestic abuse was a concern, there was a focus on improving how children are supported where there is domestic abuse in the home.

The procurement exercise completed in 2017 ensured that commissioned services were able to continue to support children and young people, predominantly in a school setting. It also introduced the requirement for BWA to spend two hours a day minimum within the Children's Single Point of Contact office, supporting social care to triage domestic abuse cases and to provide information to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

In late 2018, Reading Borough Council announced the launch of a new children's services company for Reading, called Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC). The company is wholly owned by, but independent from, Reading Borough Council. The Domestic Abuse Strategy Group will ensure that essential relationships are maintained and built with the staff in this company, in order to continue the collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Unicef - *Behind Closed Doors The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children* (2006)

Priority 3 - Having the right services available - Improving support to move from victim to survivor or to change offending behaviour.

A key focus of the previous strategy was to reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse delivered via three key strands through commissioned services:

Actions completed:

- Services requirements review as part of the procurement of new services resulting in an increased focus in non-accommodation based support, whilst refuge spaces supported remain above average.
- DARIM (Domestic Abuse Repeat Incident Meetings) introduced and embedded.
- Supported the implementation of the Troubled Families Programme.
- Support for people who experience domestic abuse increased via funding from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office.
- Promoted the use of the Sanctuary Scheme to support households who choose to remain in their own home
- The Council has adopted a more proactive approach to early intervention and prevention approach to Homelessness and is able to rapidly facilitate access to private rented sector accommodation; including offering financial assistance where needed with deposits and rent in advance. The Council is no longer placing families in Bed and Breakfast even where an emergency placement is required.
- Choices and self-esteem programme continued and supported 240 people in the financial year 2018-19.
- Perpetrator programme supported c.50 people per year to understand and reduce their offending behaviour.

Outcomes:

- Improved coordination of high-risk cases and cases with multiple incidents.
- Comprehensive support provided for those that have experienced domestic abuse who wish to seek alternative accommodation or remain in their own homes.
- Appropriate services remain available to both those experiencing and those that are perpetrators of domestic abuse in order to reduce incidents.

Further action required:

Support for people that report incidents to the police and pursue them through the criminal justice system still needs to be reviewed and increased. This is critical to increasing the number of successful police and court outcomes.

### Outcome in focus: Use of support services

A key objective of the previous Domestic Abuse Strategy was to ensure that appropriate services were available in Reading at the point of crisis and to break the cycle of abuse. The recent procurement of new domestic abuse services enabled the partnership to shape the nature and focus of that support. Alongside support at 15 refuge places, the services now provided by BWA include those listed below:

- **Helpline:** A 24 hour helpline run by BWA for anyone seeking information and support.
- **Drop in Service:** BWA provide an accessible safe venue for members of the public to 'drop in'. The service offers face-to-face support and access to BWA and external support services.
- **Outreach Support:** BWA provide 1:1 support for people experiencing abuse which includes safety and support planning, and support to access other services such as housing, legal and the criminal justice system.
- **Choices and self-esteem sessions:** These are predominately provided within a group environment to those who have experienced abuse.
- **Support to children and young people:** Direct support for children, predominantly within the school setting, who have been living in a household where there is domestic abuse.
- **Perpetrator programme:** Support to perpetrators to decrease their abusive behaviour.

The table below shows the demand for helpline and outreach services in Reading over the last 5 years:

Service	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Helpline	1,702	2,697	3,239	2,695	2,266
Outreach Support	363	464	597	454	469

86% of the calls to the helpline are consistently only for information rather than requiring any further referrals. This indicates that it is a key tool in enabling those experiencing abuse, or their friends and family, to increase their knowledge of the options available to them and make informed decisions regarding their future. 14% of the calls are referred to other BWA services - from outreach support through to refuge provision.

Outreach support is still BWA's most pressurised service area and partners remain committed to ensuring that only appropriate referrals are submitted. Currently c45% of referrals are self-referrals, 43% of clients are still in a relationship with the perpetrator and the breakdown of risk across all referrals is as follows:

- High risk - 38%
- Medium risk - 20%
- Standard risk - 23%
- Unknown - 19%

165 clients were seen at the drop-in service this year.

109 clients attended the Choices or Self-Esteem course during the financial year 20/18-19 and user feedback of the support sessions remains extremely positive. In 2018/19 100% of those that completed the courses stated that they found them useful and, critically, that they felt safer as a result of it.

It is harder to assess the impact of the support for children and young people (193 engaged with BWA) but 75% of those that completed the course showed an improvement to the question "Do you know what to do when you feel worried/scared/unsure?"

55 perpetrators of domestic abuse worked with BWA during 2018-19, but the outcomes of the perpetrator programme are more difficult to establish. A focus of this strategy is to build on the work of BWA and increase the engagement activity of all agencies with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

BWA also deliver a Thames Valley-wide project funded by the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide additional support for clients with mental health issues, and a separate project to provide specialist support for women from BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) communities.

These services will remain in place for the lifetime of this strategy and remain part of the partnership's key response to supporting those who are experiencing abuse.

Priority 4 - Understanding of the challenges in our town - improving data analysis and community engagement.

Actions completed:

- Data dashboard created and reviewed regularly by Strategy Group
- Prevalence of forced marriage recorded
- DA data published within JSNA
- Stalking and Harassment featured as a focus within Domestic Abuse Forum.
- Successful bid to MHCLG (then DCLG) to obtain funding to support a Thames Valley wide BAMER project.

Outcomes:

- Data now supports evidence based decision making
- Increased awareness of Stalking and Harassment

Further action required:

A consultation with people who define as LGBT+ to ensure services are inclusive and accessible is still to be completed.

**Outcome in Focus: Successful bid for funding to support the Thames Valley wide BAMER project**

In 2017 Officers at Reading Borough Council successfully bid, in consultation with of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and other Local Authorities in the Thames Valley, to the then DCLG to fund the support at four refuge spaces of specialist provision for women from the Asian community (for two years). This was in addition to the four spaces funded by Reading Borough Council as part of the recently award contract to BWA. These 8 refuges spaces in Reading remain the only specialist units within the Thames Valley.

The proposal also requested funding for an additional post to provide advice and support to other refuges and outreach workers/ IDVAs throughout the area, and a strategic resource to review current services and increase the understanding of what individual communities may require in terms of specialist resource throughout the Thames Valley. Both roles would be additional resources in the area.

In parallel, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner were again successful in bidding for Home Office funding for a similar proposal that would be completed in other areas of the Thames Valley. Therefore it was agreed that the two pots of money would be combined and an all-inclusive Thame Valley wide BAMER project was created.

This project is governed by the TV BAMER board chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and due to the efficient use of money is able to fund the following:

- 4 units of specialist Asian refuge provision delivered by BWA
- 6 specialist BAMER outreach and engagement workers across the Thames Valley - West of Berkshire post delivered by BWA
- 1 strategic post to review resources, consult with communities to fully understand the needs of marginalised groups within the Thames Valley and inform future commissioning.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2019-22

Many of the actions and improvements set out in the 2015-18 strategy have now become 'business as usual' for professionals working in Reading. The Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22 looks to build on this and focuses on four priority areas:

**Priority 1 -Raising awareness about domestic abuse with a focus on:**

- **Workforce Development** - *Continue to ensure a knowledgeable and well trained workforce.*
- **Healthy Relationship Education** - *increasing the resilience of Young People to negative relationships and behaviour.*
- **Engagement with marginalised communities** - *Encouraging those experiencing abuse to seek help at an earlier stage*

**Priority 2: Developing a multi-agency approach to working with perpetrators** - *Working with strategic partners to create a perpetrator approach to reduce and prevent repeat domestic abuse.*

**Priority 3 - Improving our partnership response to Coercive Control** -*Training professionals to understand and identify coercive control, so as to increase and better manage disclosures.*



## Priority 1 –Raising awareness about domestic abuse with a focus on:

### a) Workforce Development – *Continue to ensure a knowledgeable and well trained workforce.*

All front line services across Reading Borough Council and partner agencies have the potential to interact with someone experiencing domestic abuse. The Community Safety Partnership is committed to making sure that people in Reading get the right response first time from professionals, and that it does not take the average five contacts with services that national research suggests. Effective training to notice the signs of domestic abuse and respond appropriately will mean that more domestic abuse concerns are resolved at an earlier stage and the impact on those experiencing it and their children will reduce.

Ensuring that all areas of the workforce have an understanding of domestic abuse and are aware of the referral pathways is critical to enabling an effective response. Significant improvements have been made during the previous strategy and these activities will continue. The focus now will be in working with targeted teams across the partnership to increase the training take up, and developing mechanisms to allow a consistent level of training and understanding.

This strand will be led by the training sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group.

### b) Healthy Relationship Education – *increasing the resilience of Young People to negative relationships and behaviour.*

In recent years, there has been both a national and local identification of unhealthy teenage relationships. While this may be due to a variety of factors, such as increasing mental health diagnoses or exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs),<sup>15</sup> the Reading Community Safety Partnership is committed to addressing unhealthy behaviours so that young people are prevented from becoming both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse.

When designing actions to implement a Healthy Relationship Programme, a steer will be taken from the draft statutory 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance'<sup>16</sup> and all ideas for the best approach will be considered. These include:

- Starting the programme in both primary and secondary schools, in order to implement healthy relationship awareness from a young age and prevent harmful behaviours.
- Tackling low self-esteem in both a general and domestic abuse context, following identification of this being a factor that can make a young person more vulnerable to perpetrating and experiencing domestic abuse.
- Ensure the approach and delivery of Healthy Relationship Education in PSHE lessons is consistent across all schools.
- Ensure schools are equipped to receive an increase in disclosures if the programme is successful.
- Ensure that young people not in school have access to this education.

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<sup>15</sup> Parliament.uk *Outline of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*,  
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/506/50605.htm> (accessed June 2019)

<sup>16</sup> DfE, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance* (2019)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781150/Draft\\_guidance\\_Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781150/Draft_guidance_Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education2.pdf)

This stream of work will be delivered by the 'Adolescent Risk' strand of the One Reading Prevention and Early Intervention Partnership.

c) Engagement with marginalised communities - *Encouraging those experiencing abuse to seek help at an earlier stage*

Referrals to the MARAC relating to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women has remained at between 40%-45% throughout the term of the previous strategy. This is higher than the estimated BME population of Reading, meaning that BME women are disproportionately represented at the MARAC. At the same time, BME women are significantly under-represented in take-up of preventative and support services provided in the town. Reading is participating in a Thames Valley-wide project researching the needs of BME women experiencing abuse. The project is chaired by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, which is focused on increasing support for these communities. The findings of this work will inform the further development of this strategy.

As highlighted above, under representation within those accessing support or being referred to the MARAC of people who define as LGBT+ continues to be a concern. This strategy will progress the consultation programme previous outlined to increase the partnership's understanding of any barriers to accessing services people are experiencing.

This strand will be led by the Training sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group

Target Outcomes:

- Increase the take up of level 1 and 2 Domestic Abuse training to ensure all areas of the workforce are aware of the resources.
- Increase the confidence of the workforce in completing DASH<sup>17</sup> assessments
- An increase in the number of young people with an understanding of healthy relationships.
- Increased referrals to the support services from BAMER communities.
- Increase in referrals to support services and MARAC for LGBT+ relationships.

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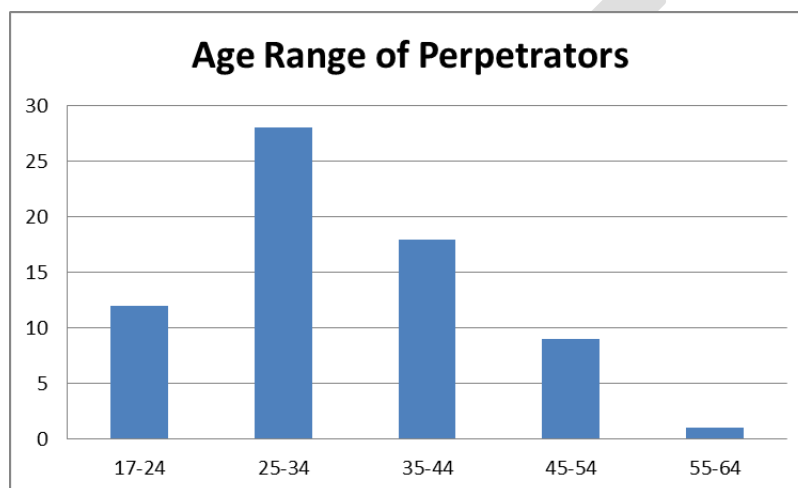
<sup>17</sup> Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Assessments

**Priority 2: Developing a multi-agency approach to working with perpetrators - Working with strategic partners to create an approach to perpetrators to reduce and prevent repeat domestic abuse.**

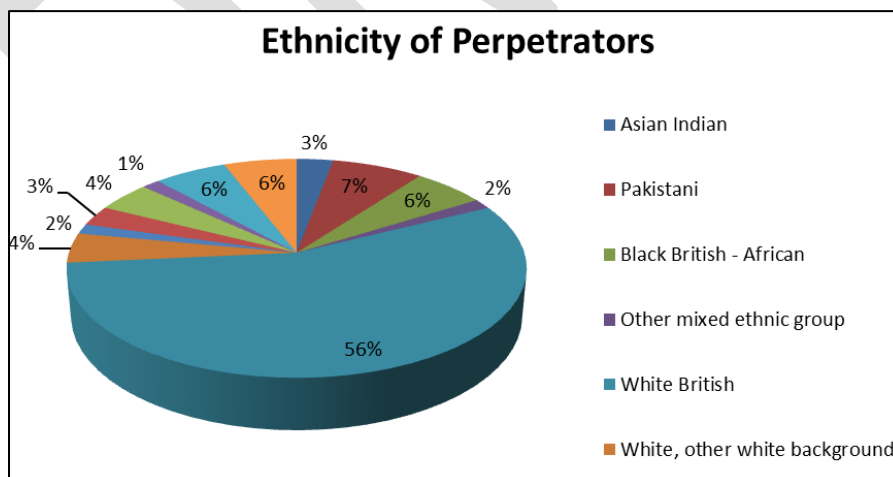
**Perpetrator Profiling**

BWA offer a Perpetrator Programme, and have a range of demographic data similar to that collected for victims. Of the 68 new perpetrators they worked with between April 2017 and March 2018, 97% were male. This profile only represents the perpetrators that access the BWA programme.

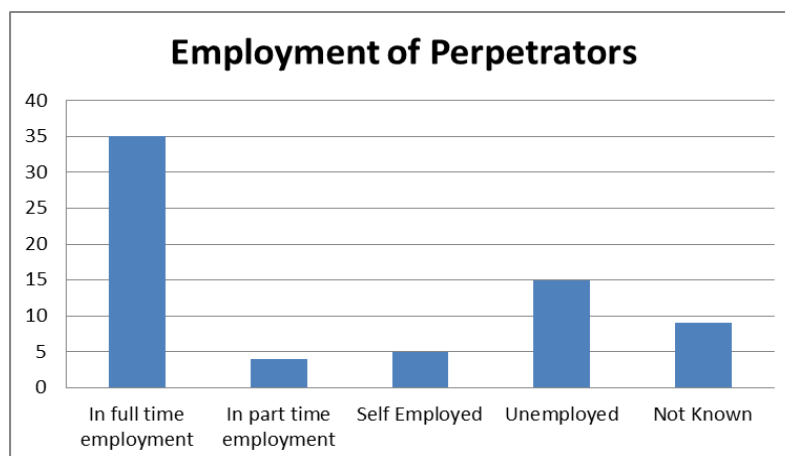
Almost half of perpetrators were between 25 and 34:



Over half of perpetrators were White British:



Over half were in full-time employment:



The profile indicates that the most common types of perpetrators are young men, white British Males, employed, and have underlying issues such as substance misuse (60%). While this profile is generated based on those involved in BWA's Perpetrator Programme, it provides useful insight into the types of domestic abuse perpetrators in Reading.

The Government's Domestic Abuse Bill consultation in May 2018 provided partners with an opportunity to think creatively about how they would work with perpetrators.

It was agreed that the focus will be on implementing an improved local Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme. The IOM is a national and local programme that brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.<sup>18</sup>

IOM helps to improve the quality of life in communities by:

- Reducing the negative impact of crime and reoffending
- reducing the number of people who become victims of crime
- helping to improve the public's confidence in the criminal justice system

A recent report highlighted that only 6 of the 30 perpetrators in the IOM system were perpetrators of domestic abuse. This figure is below the force average across Thames Valley, and due to the prevalence of domestic abuse nationally this figure should be higher. It has therefore been decided that more involvement from partner agencies is needed in the management of domestic abuse perpetrators.

The Multi-Agency approach will be essential for sharing intelligence and increasing the number of offenders on the IOM programme; targeting perpetrators who have not yet been criminalised and who therefore cannot be included in IOM; determining the type of intervention programmes to put perpetrators are linked in with; and monitoring the actions of perpetrators before, during and after interventions in order to evaluate the programmes' impact.

<sup>18</sup> Gov.uk, 'Integrated Offender Management', <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-offender-management-iom> (accessed June 2019)

The IOM approach will be supported by the introduction of the Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) meeting which will replace the DARIM and be delivered alongside the MARAC. The MATAC will be chaired by Thames Valley Police but will be a multi-agency conference with the objective of reducing the risk behaviour of high risk and high volume perpetrators.

Part of the IOM approach includes the disruption of perpetrator behaviour with interventions from the police and criminal justice system.

Improving successful outcomes for identified crimes is a priority, as is increasing alternative police interventions including, but not limited to, Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders and implementing Clare's Law.

This intention is further supported by the Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan 2019/20<sup>19</sup> which includes a focus on domestic abuse including stalking and harassment, and has the following targets:

- An improvement in how quickly domestic abuse incidents are attended.
- An improvement in the arrest rate for attended domestic abuse crimes.
- An increase in the use of DVPNs/DVPOs.
- An increase in the volume of domestic abuse crimes that lead to a positive outcome.
- Consistently effective investigations into stalking and harassment offences.

Successful police intervention will be more effective when linked with the parallel support for victims. Therefore it is necessary to have a clear pathway regarding referrals, and an increase in support to people when a victim/ witness of domestic abuse.

The increase in police outcomes should be supported by an improvement in Court outcomes. In 2017/18, 2,399 domestic violence cases were brought to Thames Valley courts; 958 of which took place in Berkshire specifically. The number of cases taken to court across Thames Valley has increased by 214% (713) since 2013/14. This increase is aligned with the national picture.

The number of successful and unsuccessful cases is detailed below:

	No. of cases brought to court	No. of successful cases	% of successful cases	No. of unsuccessful cases	% of unsuccessful cases
Thames Valley	2,399	1,832	76.4%	567	23.6%
Berkshire	958	725	75.7%	233	24.3%

As outlined, both Berkshire and Thames Valley have similar outcome rates. Of the 233 unsuccessful cases in Berkshire, 11.6% (27) were due to Evidential Issues that prevented the case from proceeding and 52.8% (123) were due to Victim Issues. The same analysis of Thames Valley shows that of the 567 unsuccessful cases, 9.2% (52) were due to Evidential Issues and 53.4% (303) were due to Victim Issues.

<sup>19</sup> Thames Valley Police -Strategic Plan 2019-20 [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/thames-valley-police/priorities\\_and\\_how\\_we\\_are\\_doing/strategic-plan/strategic\\_plan\\_2019-20.pdf](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/thames-valley-police/priorities_and_how_we_are_doing/strategic-plan/strategic_plan_2019-20.pdf) (accessed June 2019).

Overall, both Berkshire and Thames Valley have made positive improvements in the number of cases taken to court and successful outcomes. While the number of unsuccessful cases is proportionally low, 50% are due to Victim Issues, which suggests that more support is needed for victims within the court process, so that they pursue their case through to completion.

This strand will be led by the perpetrator sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group.

Target Outcomes:

- The delivery of a cohesive action plan that outlines how various strategic partners will collaborate to tackle perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Implementation of an Integrated Offender Management approach to domestic abuse perpetrators.
- Improved monitoring of perpetrators.
- Increase in positive police outcomes for domestic abuse Cases.
- Increased use of Domestic Violence/ Abuse Protection Notices and Orders, including in cases of coercive control.
- Increased use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme (Clare's Law)
- A mapped and utilised pathway in to support for victims engaging with the Criminal Justice System.

**Priority 3 – Improving our partnership response to Coercive Control – Training professionals to understand and identify coercive control, so as to increase and better manage disclosures.**

Since 2015, Thames Valley Police have recorded 316 instances of coercive control; only 36 of which were in Reading. Considering both the commonality of coercive control in cases of domestic abuse and the statutory guidance underpinning its identification, the outlined figure is significantly low.<sup>20</sup> The impact of coercive control and psychological abuse cannot be understated, with 94% of victims citing mental health cruelty as more painful to endure than physical violence.<sup>21</sup>

Mirroring other organisations in the South-East, Thames Valley Police has faced the challenge of reduced funding and staffing changes, with many long-standing officers retiring and a younger cohort of officers needing training. It is important that the TVP workforce recognise cases of Coercive Control and ensure that appropriate actions are completed and police outcomes are obtained.

Another factor in low recording of coercive control is its low identification by professionals, even when a DASH form is completed.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that one of the main issues is a lack of training in this area. The Domestic Abuse Training Team has and is continuing to work with GPs and Royal Berkshire Hospital to provide training in Domestic Abuse. However, as coercive control reporting levels are low, training will remain a priority in order to build confidence in professionals to identify and report identified cases.

Improvements to recording incidents within the Police have already started. Previously where multiple crimes are reported at once, only the most serious crime was recorded on the system and then all investigated together. However more recently the recording rules have changed and Coercive Control is always record as a separate occurrence and linked to other crimes that may also have occurred. This will meant that we should see an increase of reports as they're being recorded accurately and separately.

As safeguarding agencies, Domestic Abuse Strategy Group partners have the responsibility to train the public in identifying coercive control so that they can refer themselves and stay safe. Training for professionals is therefore the first action of a two-part plan to train and stabilise coercive control identification, before running an awareness campaign to increase referrals. By focusing on professionals first, the safeguarding sector will be able to efficiently and confidently receive disclosures and provide victims with effective support.

In conjunction with Priority 2, DASG will also aim to improve recording of coercive control and use the multi-agency approach of sharing intelligence to increase the number of coercive control cases taken to court. By requesting evidence collected by partners, the Police can better shape their prosecutions and better record cases of coercive control where the victim does not want to be involved in legal proceedings.

The following case study indicates that coercive control cases can certainly achieve convictions:

Case Study:

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<sup>20</sup> Gov.uk, 'Statutory guidance framework: controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-framework-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-in-an-intimate-or-family-relationship>.

<sup>21</sup> White Ribbon campaign UK

<sup>22</sup> DASH Risk Model, 'Introduction', <https://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/>. (accessed June 2019)

“Mr A was sentenced for offences against his ex-partner Ms B. He was convicted and sentenced on 08.10.2018 for coercive and controlling behaviour within an intimate relationship between 16/05/18-13/08/18. This conviction is to encompass all the offences against Ms B which include 7 other charges of Assault by beating x 5, Criminal Damage & ABH - these were to lie on file as he pleaded not guilty.

Mr A was sentenced to 2 years & 2 months imprisonment, 20 year Restraining Order made for Ms B, victim surcharge £170.

Mr A has had 15 offences of a domestic abuse nature since 2000 and he poses a high Risk of Serious Harm to partners and known adults whom he enters into a relationship with, through abuse, controlling behaviour and violence. Joint working over a period of time with the Police and National Probation Service ensured clear evidence was given to the Court for sentencing under the new legislation of coercive control. Evidence was gathered without the assistance of the victim, who was still under the effects of coercive control and afraid to act against the perpetrator. This is the theme of many of these cases - the perpetrator instils fear into the victim so that they are afraid for their life to leave them.”

By creating a collective understanding of coercive control and improving recording, more convictions like these can be achieved.

This strand will be led by the Coercive Control Sub-group of the Domestic Abuse sub-group.

Target Outcomes:

- Professionals in a variety of sectors/specialisms understand how coercive control works and how they can identify it.
- Build confidence in the referral pathway, so that in the future an awareness campaign can be rolled out to increase coercive control disclosures.
- In coordination with Priority 2, create an intelligence network to share information about cases that involve coercive control.
- Thames Valley Police receive more referrals and record more cases of coercive control.
- Thames Valley Police will have built relationships with partners, in order to request information and evidence to form cases against perpetrators of coercive control.
- Increase number of police outcomes<sup>23</sup> in cases of Coercive Control

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<sup>23</sup> A police outcome is a caution or charge



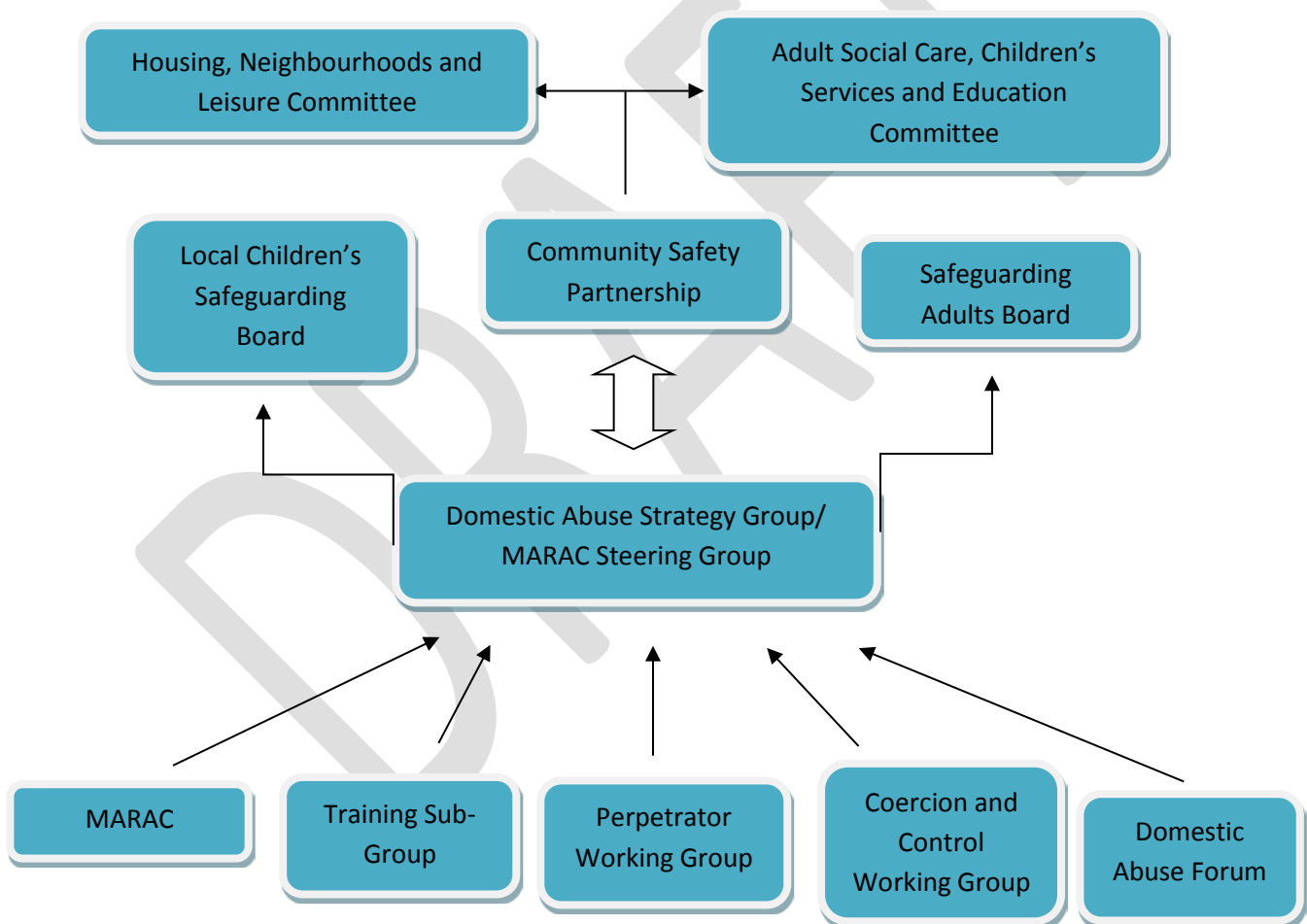
## Implementation and Governance

*Having clearly outlined our strategic priorities and target outcomes, the delivery of the strategy will be achieved through an associated action plan. When implemented effectively, the Community Safety Partnership's Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading will ensure those who experience domestic abuse can access the support they need for a safer life and more secure future.*

The action plan which accompanies this strategy will be implemented by the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group. The Strategy's progress will be regularly reported to the CSP.

### Accountability

The structure chart below illustrates the governance of the strategic approach to domestic abuse in Reading.



As well as touching many lives throughout the town, the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading will also complement other key strategies aiming to improve day-to-day life for residents. These include:

#### Sustainable Communities Strategy for Reading

The Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading directly aligns with the Reading 2030 vision of ensuring residents feel comfortable, safe, secure, and well-housed. The service empowers those experiencing abuse to find safety and security from perpetrators, thereby increasing the amount of choice and control they have over their lives.

#### Community Safety Partnership

The priorities within the Community Safety Partnership's 2019-2022 Strategy are Violent Crime, Modern Day Slavery, and Drugs. The Domestic Abuse Strategy Group is one of five partnership delivery groups which report into the CSP.

#### Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan

The service priorities of Reading Borough Council's 2018-21 Corporate Plan outlines the Authority's commitment to "Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children". This priority directly aligns with the goals of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading.

#### Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership Action Plan

Domestic abuse remains a key focus for the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

#### Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Pathway

Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Pathway for new referrals (cases which are not open to Children Social Care - Brighter Futures) which will be integrated into the Children's Single Point of Access and where appropriate the daily MASH meetings. These are regular local meetings where information about standard and medium risk domestic abuse families is shared between local agencies and multi-agency agreement. By bringing all agencies together and ensuring that wherever possible the voice of the child is represented and a risk focused outcome is achieved.

#### West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board

The West of Berkshire Adult Safeguarding Board is in the process of developing their Strategy for Safeguarding Adults in the West of Berkshire 2018-2021.

Reading Borough Council's actions, as outlined in this strategy, supports the commitment made by the West of Berkshire Adult Safeguarding Board and will work in partnership with them to help vulnerable adults live free from domestic abuse.

## Appendix 2 - Consultation Planner for Reading's Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22

CONSULTATION PROFORMA			
<b>Name of consultation</b>		Consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22	
<b>Purpose of consultation</b> Include objectives and whether statutory requirement		To consult with partners organisations, commissioned services, members of the public and service users on the draft strategy. This is not a statutory consultation	
<b>Lead organisation</b>		Reading Borough Council	
<b>Recurring/one-off</b>		One-off	
<b>Start date</b>		19/08/2019	
<b>End date</b>		13/09/2019	
<b>Lead officer</b>	Sarah Tapliss	<b>Tel. No</b>	0118 937 3203
		<b>E:mail</b>	Sarah.tapliss@reading.gov.uk
<b>Head of service</b>		Zelda Wolffe	
<b>Lead councillor: Cllr James</b>		<b>Date of Committee approval:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019	
<b>Other councillor involvement:</b> HNL Committee members			
<b>Cost of consultation</b>		None expected outside existing budgets	
<b>Staff time involved</b>		10 working days of officer time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing consultation questions and adding to Citizen Space</li> <li>Promoting consultation to stakeholders - meetings, distributing materials, presentations etc.</li> <li>Consultation events</li> <li>Collating responses and summarising (report writing)</li> <li>Answering enquiries about the consultation</li> </ul>	
		<b>Details</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Who are you consulting?</b> give details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geographical area groups</li> <li>Interest groups</li> <li>Equality target groups</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents across Reading Borough</li> <li>Users of commissioned support services</li> <li>All other internal partner organisations and key stakeholders - Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care,</li> </ul>	August/ September 2019

CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
Name of consultation	Consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22	
	Community Safety, Public Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All other external partner organisations and key stakeholders e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical Commissioning Groups, commissioned homelessness services</li> </ul>	
How are you consulting? Give details of:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online survey (Citizen Space)</li> <li>Link shared with all partners</li> <li>Promoted at key sites throughout the borough.</li> <li>Surveys completed in person with customers where required, for example, commissioned services.</li> </ul>	August/September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> </ul>	Full meetings with partners at the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group. CSP	August/September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultative Forums</li> </ul>	DA Forum	August/September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBC Web-site</li> </ul>	Online consultation available on RBC website	August/September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other</li> </ul>	Not applicable	
How will the public be able to respond electronically?	The public will be able to respond on the RBC website. The survey	August/September

CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
<b>Name of consultation</b>	Consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22	
	will also be advertised on Reading Borough Council social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) Digital access can be enabled in libraries and at BWA drop-in if support with this is required.	2019
<b>Provide details of your communications plan:</b>		
• media	Social media - Facebook and Twitter (RBC account) Email hyperlink to list of relevant internal and external partners Promote at the bottom of email signature to professionals, partners and the public	August/ September 2019
• posters/leaflets	Posters in local libraries, advertised on screen in Civic reception, flyers in Reading primary and secondary health locations, church/faith locations, community and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. food handouts and day centres), schools, Children's Centres	August/ September 2019
• internal communications	Intranet post and included in Chief Executive's blog to obtain internal staff feedback; Inside Reading. Internal email.	August/ September 2019
• website	Banner on RBC website homepage to obtain public feedback	August/ September 2019
<b>Decisions To Be Taken</b>		
•Reporting process	The final version of the Strategy will return to HNL in November, a consultation report will be included.	November 2019
•Reporting results/outcomes	The results of consultation will be included in the report to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in November 2019.	November 2019
<b>Feedback to the public</b>		

CONSULTATION PROFORMA		
<b>Name of consultation</b>	Consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22	
• Letter	No - unless specific and lengthy concerns are raised in writing and feedback is requested from officers	November 2019
• Newsletter	Inside Reading (internally)	November 2019
• RBC Web-site	Yes	November 2019
• Event	No	November 2019
• Other	Feedback provided and DA forum, DASG and CSP.	

This proforma will be published on the web-site. Please use language and wording understandable and appropriate for the general public.

Please return completed form to Clare Muir in Chief Executives' Policy Unit

In addition you should complete the attached consultation checklist to ensure that you are following good practice when you undertake a consultation exercise. The full Consultation Guidelines are available on Outlook public folders under 'Consultation...'.

## Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

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The Equality Act 2010 places an 'Equality Duty' on public bodies, to understand the effect of their policies and practices on equality. This involves looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others and considering the effect of what they do on the whole community.

An Equality Impact Assessment is tool which helps you to identify how your plans to introduce new, or change existing, policies, procedures or services will affect groups protected under equality legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.)

It **MUST** be completed before the policy, project or service has been set up or changes implemented so that you can make changes if your assessment identifies groups that could be adversely affected by your proposals.

The assessment covers impacts on employees, existing and potential service users, the wider community and contracted out services.

EqIAs aim to

- stop direct and indirect discrimination from happening now and in the future
- highlight diversity as a strength and an integral part of our work, not just an add-on that you feel you must do
- recognise the fact that we don't all have an equal chance in life, and find ways to address this through your work
- ensure that our services are accessible to everyone in the community. The process is not the most important thing - it's the outcomes that matter.

What should an EqIA include?

An Equality Impact Assessment **MUST**:

- contain sufficient information to show the Council has paid "due regard" to equality duties in our decision-making
- identify methods for mitigating or avoiding any adverse impacts identified.

Assessments do not necessarily have to take the form of one document called an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) but it is recommended and helps you make sure you cover everything and sets out your rationale and evidence in one place.

## What is the Equality Duty?

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Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are—

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Equality Duty explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This



might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) Tackle prejudice, and
- (b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the Equality Duty may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under the Act.

### **When should I carry out an Equality Impact Assessment?**

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You **MUST** carry out an assessment as part of your planning process when you are putting together your proposals for new (or changes to existing) policies, procedures and service (including financial changes) before the decision is made **UNLESS** you have good reason to show that it is not relevant.

Making sure your EqlAs are in place in could save you problems, time and even money in the long run. See the example below where not completing an EqlA properly has caused problems.

#### **Example: Southall Black Sisters judgement**

The judgement by Lord Justice Moses in the case of Southall Black Sisters and London of Ealing was published on 29 July 2008.

Southall Black Sisters (SBS) successfully challenged Ealing Council's decision to end funding their services to Asian and Afro-Caribbean women experiencing domestic violence.

Lord Justice Moses' ruling stresses the need to carry out an equality impact assessment **BEFORE** formulating policies.

Southall Black Sisters won the case and Ealing Council was charged with failing to carry out a proper EqlA and misinterpreting the race equality legislation, subsequently Ealing carried out a full EqlA, including consultation, and had to pay £100,000 because of the case.

## Who needs to see my Equality Impact Assessment?

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The public equality duty means that equality issues must **consciously** influence the decisions reached by public bodies. Equality Impact Assessments **MUST** be provided for all Committee Reports to enable members to have 'due regard' to the equality duty when making decisions. In the Committee Report you **MUST** state whether the duty is relevant to the decision. If it is not relevant you **MUST** state why. If it is, attach the completed EqlA template as an appendix, and summarise its conclusions.

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## So what do I have to do?

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Save this document and follow through the steps on the following pages. You can fill in the details as you go or come back to it as necessary.

For further advice you can contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email [clare.muir@reading.gov.uk](mailto:clare.muir@reading.gov.uk). You can also get further guidance on Equality and Human Rights Commission Website - [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com).



Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Directorate: Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Housing and Neighbourhoods

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Sarah Tapliss

Job Title: Strategic Housing Finance and Development Manager

Date of assessment: 3/6/19

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Residents at risk of, experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

The new Domestic Abuse strategy for 2019/22 will encourage those experiencing domestic abuse to come forward early in order to keep themselves and their families safe. And it will ensure that, when they do come forward, staff are equipped with everything they need to support individuals, including perpetrators, to build a more secure future. Actions within this strategy that affect protect groups will be subject to further consultation and equality impact assessment.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

- Those experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse
- Organisations in the town, statutory and voluntary, supporting residents experiencing domestic abuse or the impact on other family members.
- 

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

Yes

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

No

If the answer is Yes to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

### Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

**Example:** A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

## Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Agencies supporting those who experience domestic abuse or their household, statutory or voluntary. Safeguarding Boards Service Users Domestic Abuse Strategy Group Partners Community Safety Partnership members Reading MARAC Member of Reading Voluntary Action	The consultation will adopt a number of different approaches reflective of the stakeholders whose views are sought. Discussions and meetings with colleagues Targeted emails Attendance and discussion at relevant internal and partner meetings Online survey and information	A period of public consultation will be completed between 19 <sup>th</sup> August and 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2015.

## Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

### **Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups**

The strategy outlines the intention to work with the Thames Valley wide BAMER project. This project should enable the Council to plan more effective interventions - any change of policy or activity would involve further consultation with affected groups.

Is there a negative impact? No

### **Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)**

An improved preventative approach and coordinated response to domestic abuse would reduce the impact on all those experience it. Statistics indicate that domestic abuse affects women more than men and that abuse often escalates during pregnancy.

It has been identified in the strategy that men experiencing abuse are not being referred to support services at a level expected. It is a priority to understand if this is a recording issue and that male victims of abuse are being adequately support, or if there are barriers to accessing services. This will improve the support and interventions available men experiencing domestic abuse in Reading. With this information we can plan more affective interventions if required - any change of policy or activity would involve further consultation with affected groups.

Is there a negative impact? No

### **Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**

It has been identified in the previous strategy that adults with a disability are not being referred to support services at a level expected. Due to actions in the last strategy this has improved but it remains a focus to ensure that adults with a disability are being adequately support, or if there are barriers to accessing services.

Is there a negative impact? No

### **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**

It has been identified in the strategy that adults from the LGBT community are not being referred to support services at a level expected. It is a priority to understand if this is a recording issue and that LGBT victims of abuse are being adequately support, or if there are barriers to accessing services. This will improve the support and interventions available to adults from the LGBT community experiencing domestic abuse in Reading. With this information we can plan more affective interventions if required - any change of policy or activity would involve further consultation with affected groups.

**Is there a negative impact?**

No

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Age**

No disproportionate impact has been identified.

**Is there a negative impact?**

No

**Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?**

AN element of the Thames Valley wide BAMER project is to further understand the prevalence and impact of Harmful Cultural Practices in Reading such as forced marriage and honour based violence, practices that are more prevalent in certain religious communities than others. With this information we can plan more affective interventions if required - any change of policy or activity would involve further consultation with affected groups. With this information we can plan more affective interventions if required - any change of policy or activity would involve further consultation with affected groups.

**Is there a negative impact?**

No - but may be perceived differently.

### Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

1. **No negative impact identified**      Go to sign off

**How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

Any change in practice or policy will be subjected to further specific consultation and equality impact assessment.

Signed (completing officer)      Sarah Tapliss      Date    3/6/19

Signed (Lead Officer)      Zelda Wolfle      Date    3/6/19



## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 July 2019		
TITLE:	CONTRACT AWARD - MINOR WORKS BUILDING CONTRACT 2016 PVCU WINDOW AND REAR DOOR REPLACEMENTS TO FLATS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	JOHN ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING PROPERTY SERVICES	WARDS:	SOUTHCOTE, TILEHURST, WHITLEY, CAVERSHAM.
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE	TEL:	0118 937 3385
AUTHOR:	IAN NICHOLLS	TEL:	73965
JOB TITLE:	BUILDING SURVEYOR	E-MAIL:	ian.nicholls@reading.gov.uk

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the award of JCT Minor Works Building Contract to replace windows and doors on up to 228 Flats in 22 council blocks starting August 2019 and completing before the end of this financial year as per the current year's programme.
- 1.2 All the work is funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 1.3 This work will go through a competitive tender exercise using an approved list of preferred window and door manufacturers to procure works for construction and maintenance of social housing and drive value for money.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.2 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee provide delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing to award a contract for replacement of PVCu windows and rear doors for up to 228 properties starting in August 2019 and completing before the end of this financial year.

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The window and door replacement works have been programmed as part of the Housing 30 year business plan to ensure that homes are maintained in a good condition and continue to meet the Decent Home Standard. The design of the new windows will match the style of the existing windows and comply with the latest building regulations.
- 3.2 This report requests the granting of delegated powers to the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing to award a contract to the successful contractor upon completion of a satisfactory evaluation exercise.

### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

The manufacture and installation work is of a specialist nature and Reading Borough Council through its Building Maintenance Team does not have the capacity to deliver a project such as this in house. Therefore this project will be delivered by an approved PVC-u window contractor from one of the council's preferred PVC-u window manufacturers. The method for selecting the contractor is through an approved list of the preferred window and door manufacturers.

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This project to carry out replacement of first generation PVC-u windows and doors to Council homes and the communal areas within the identified blocks will support the Corporate Plan priority of 'Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs', by providing improved thermal comfort of homes, improved ventilation, security and better escape from fire for those in most need.

### **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Tenants have been consulted on the proposed works and will be kept informed of progress as the works proceed. On completion satisfaction surveys will be issued for tenants to provide feedback on the completed work. If required attendance can be arranged at local tenant meetings to feed back to tenant groups.
- 6.2 Leaseholders in affected blocks are being consulted through the normal leaseholder consultation process in accordance with s20 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 regarding the work to be undertaken to the communal areas of the affected blocks.
- 6.3 The contractor will be required to provide a tenant liaison officer for the entire contract period to ensure tenants are fully informed about the requirements of the project.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The works will be tendered in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules for contracts over £100k but below the EU threshold.
- 8.2 The works will be completed by entering into contract using the Joint Contracts Tribunal Minor Works Building Contract 2016.
- 8.3 Leaseholders will be consulted through the section 20 notice procedure under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 before any tender is commenced and any contract award.
- 8.4 All works carried out will be in accordance with the relevant Approved Documents of the Building Regulations and FENSA certificates of compliance produced for council records.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The budgeted cost of £750,000 is contained within the 2019/20 window and doors improvement programme which forms part of the total Housing Revenue Account budget for maintenance and repair approved by Council on 26th February 2019.
- 9.2 It is intended as far as possible to ensure that the successful tenderers pay the living wage to employees working on Reading Borough Council properties. Tenderers are advised that the Council's current low wage policy expects the payment of the Living Wage rate set independently by the Living Wage Foundation and updated annually in the first week of November each year. The contractor appointed is expected to pay a living wage in accordance with this policy to all staff working on Reading Borough Council contracts.

## **10. Background Papers.**

- 10.1 None applicable.

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## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 JULY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	XX
TITLE:	UPDATE ON THE APPROVED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME FOR LEISURE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 2018-2020		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION
SERVICE:	CULTURE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the status of the leisure, parks and open spaces schemes funded by Section 106 receipts and funded from the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy approved by Policy Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress in relation to the projects funded by developer contributions.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2018 - 2021 'Shaping Reading's Future' sets out the Council's priorities which include keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe and promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.
- 3.2 Reading's Open Spaces Strategy includes a number of objectives that together continues to protect and improve the choice, quality and accessibility of public open space.
- 3.3 The Council's Capital programme was approved as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2019. The programme includes an allocation

to carry out improvements to the open space and play provision in the Borough albeit the projects referred to include those funded from previous year's programmes. Funds secured from developer contributions support the financing of the programme.

- 3.4 In 2018 a full review of all playgrounds was carried out highlighting all investment needs and subsequently a £2.8million programme over five years was developed to fund the current investment gap. £1.6m has been formally approved for 2019-22. Much of this funding is specifically intended to improve further access for all to the Council's playgrounds. Sites earmarked for new investment in fully-inclusive play equipment over this 3-year period include Palmer Park. A report on the programme of work will come forward later in the year.
- 3.5 Not all sites across the Borough are suitable for play equipment. However, where the provision of new play equipment/features is included, the Council will ensure that an appropriate component of accessible play equipment is provided.

#### 4. APPROVED SCHEMES

##### 4.1 S106 SCHEMES:

The table below lists the schemes which were approved by Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure (HNL) Committee in March 2018.

#### PROPOSED LEISURE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

2018-2020 Schemes	Estimated Cost £,000	Ward	Status
Arthur Newbery Park	£26,500	Kentwood	Completed
Baltimore Walk	£6,900	Thames	Completed
Blagrove Rec Ground - Play Area	£4,500	Tilehurst	Completed
Cintra Park - Play and Sports Area	£70,000	Redlands	Completed (Further CIL funding awarded)
Clayfield Copse	£1,800	Peppard	Completed
Eldon Square	£7,800	Redlands	Commenced Spring 2019
Fobney Island Tree Work	£33,300	Whitley	Completed

Forbury Gardens	£50,000	Abbey	Ongoing
Katesgrove School Play Area	£19,500	Katesgrove	Completed
Kensington Road Recreation Ground	£5,000	Battle	Completed
Long Barn Lane Recreation Ground	£4,900	Katesgrove	Completed (Further CIL funding awarded)
Palmer Park	£116,200	Park	Completed
Prospect Park Sports Pitches/Courts	£77,200	Southcote	Completed (Further CIL funding awarded)
Rabson's Recreation Ground Play Area	£14,800	Church	Ongoing
Robert Hewett Recreation Ground	£10,600	Minster	Completed
Thames Parks	£294,100	Abbey, Caversham & Thames	Ongoing
Victoria Recreation Ground	£43,600	Abbey	Commencement Summer 2019
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL:</b>	<b>£786,700</b>		

A more detailed description and an update on the status of each project referenced in the table above, including those which are still ongoing can be found at Appendix 1.

Also in Appendix 1 is an update on S106 schemes that have been added to the portfolio since the report to HNL Committee in March 2018.

#### 4.2 CIL SCHEMES:

Following the public consultation last year on how the allocation of the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy should be spent, Members approved the following open space improvements:

- Avon Place Play Area Improvements (£100,000)
- Ivydene Play Area Improvements (£100,000)
- Cintra Park Play Area Improvements (£95,000)
- Coley Recreation Ground Outdoor Gym (£65,000)
- Prospect Park (£88,000)

- Long Barn Lane Outdoor Gym and Teen Facilities (£155,000)

A more detailed description and an update on each of the CIL schemes referenced above can be found at Appendix 1.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

### **5.1 Improving the quality of sport and leisure facilities supports a number of Corporate Plan aims mainly:**

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.
- Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

### **5.2 Better quality leisure facilities have the potential to increase participation in sports and physical activity with a direct impact on health and well-being of the population thereby contributing to improving achievement against the desired outcomes of the Public Health Outcomes Framework.**

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Where appropriate, consultation and engagement with local communities and interest groups has been undertaken prior to each of the projects funded through S106 payments.**

### **6.2 Ward Councillors have been consulted on all projects within their Ward.**

### **6.3 A public consultation was carried out last summer on how the allocation of the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy should be spent. Approval for the individual schemes was granted at Policy Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.**

### **6.4 Prior to the implementation of CIL schemes, residents, user groups and Ward Councillors will be notified and encouraged to participate in the final selection process of equipment to be installed.**

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.



- 7.2 It is not considered that a further Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required related to the information presented in this report which seeks to update Members on approved projects. It should be noted that an equality impact assessment was completed in relation to the allocation of 15% CIL local Funds as part of the November 2018 Policy Committee report.
- 7.3 As indicated above in Paragraph 3.5, enhancements to play areas and the provision of new equipment will offer inclusive play features that encourage active participation by as wide a range of users as possible. Key partners will be involved at the design stage.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All schemes funded by S106 receipts have been implemented in accordance with the terms of the individual legal agreements.
- 8.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations provides the framework for the use of CIL contributions. The protocol sets out how the allocations of CIL will be administered which is in line with those regulations.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 In relation to play and open space, the Council's approved Capital Programme (February 2019) details funding to complete an extensive programme of replacement and upgrade of playground equipment and additionally a programme of improvement works to parks and open spaces is planned for 2019/20 and future years.
- 9.2 Funds for the enhancements set out in this report are from developer contributions, either Section 106 or 15% CIL. The final application and approval of the individual S106 receipts will be made in the normal way, as part of the financial year-end process. In relation to the future allocation of CIL it is considered that the results from the consultation completed in the Summer of 2018 will remain relevant for a year and that decisions on the allocation of 15% Local CIL for funds received up to March and September 2019 will be informed by the outcomes reported to Policy Committee In November 2018. A further and similar public consultation may be undertaken in July 2020.
- 9.3 It is anticipated that any operational non-capital costs that are associated with individual programmes and schemes will be met within existing approved budgets.
- 9.4 The funds and allocations set out in this report span a number of capital programme years. The 18/19 capital outturn will reconcile the outstanding and yet to complete projects set out in this paper with the Council's 19/20 capital programme and related carry forward requests from the 18/19 programme.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee - 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015

10.2 Policy Committee - 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018

10.3 Reading Open Spaces Strategy (adopted March 2007)

## **11. APPENDIX 1**

### **S106 SCHEMES:**

- 11.1 Outlined below is a brief description of each scheme referenced in the table in Paragraph 4 of this report along with an update on each project. Where the status of a project is classified as "COMPLETED", physical work has been completed, but funding is yet to be applied to each scheme.

#### **ARTHUR NEWBERY PARK (£26,500)**

- 11.2 Originally known as Hare Moor, this 26 acre site in Kentwood Ward was gifted by Arthur Newbery to the mayor of Reading as an open space for the people of Reading in 1932. It is one of Reading's oldest parks and was once part of Kentwood Common. The park slopes steeply down to the north with far stretching views across the valley and River Thames. There is a large and well used children's play area in the hollow in the centre of the park. Additional equipment is needed to cater for the increased use arising from new developments in the locality.
- 11.3 **Update:** Two new items of equipment were installed in the play area last summer. These included a large jeep style vehicle with a slide and a new spring ride both of which have been very well received by the local community. There was a small amount of funding remaining and this enabled some boundary improvements along Armour Hill to be carried out.
- 11.4 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **BALMORE WALK (£6,900)**

- 11.5 This site in Thames Ward is both a through route used by commuters and school children as an off road route to school. It is also a very popular park for dog walking. The area makes a significant contribution to the townscape because of its elevated position and proximity to central Caversham. There is an opportunity to plant and establish trees to replace old and ailing trees before they fail.
- 11.6 **Update:** During the winter months a number of new trees were planted including replacement cherry and crab apple, and new Scots pine and tulip trees.
- 11.7 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **BLAGRAVE RECREATION GROUND PLAY AREA (£4,500)**

- 11.8 This medium sized site in Tilehurst Ward is a popular and well used local facility in the centre of Tilehurst village, next to Park Lane School. The recreation ground is managed by Reading Borough Council as Trustees for the Blagrove Recreation Ground. There are two separate play areas within

the park which cater for differing age groups. The funding will be used to contribute towards new self-closing access gates and safety surfacing.

- 11.9 **Update:** Three new yellow self-closing gates have been installed in the play areas. Their bright colour enables those with visual impairments to distinguish the gates from the perimeter fencing more readily. There was insufficient funding to contribute towards safety surfacing and so the remaining £675 was used to purchase new bin liners.

- 11.10 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **CINTRA PARK PLAYGROUND AND SPORTS AREA (£70,000)**

- 11.11 Situated a short distance to the south and east of the town centre in Redlands Ward, this park serves a large populated area, including local schools and community groups. The park has undergone a number of improvements over the last five years including landscaping, completion of a perimeter path and new outdoor fitness stations. The playground and sports area are now in need of investment.

- 11.12 **Update:** The artificial floodlit pitch has been completely refurbished and includes new perimeter fencing and gates. A new item of equipment has been installed in the play area along with new rubber surfacing which replaced the loose-fill (bark). This is a long term investment as there is no longer a requirement for an annual top up of the loose fill surfacing. Two new yellow self-closing gates have also been installed in the play area. As with Blagrove Recreation Ground above, their bright colour enables those with visual impairments to distinguish the gates from the perimeter fencing more readily. The area between the meeting shelter and the basketball court has been re-landscaped and old fragments of tarmac surfacing have been broken up and laid to grass. A linking path to the ballcourt has also been constructed. Finally, minor changes to the fencing around the recycling area have improved the entrance and car park on the Northumberland Avenue boundary. Further CIL funding has been approved for the park which is set out at para 13.5.

- 11.13 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **CLAYFIELD COPSE (£1,800)**

- 11.14 Clayfield Copse became Reading's first Local Nature Reserve in 1991. The ancient woodland in Peppard Ward was once part of the Caversham House Estate whose landscapes were designed by Capability Brown. It is a much valued local amenity and may dog owners drive to the site to walk. The funding will be used on new tree planting to replace dead and fallen trees and improvements to the car park.

- 11.15 **Update:** Agreed works have been carried out.

- 11.16 **Status:** Project completed.

**ELDON SQUARE (ALSO KNOWN AS KING GEORGE V MEMORIAL GARDENS)  
(£7,800)**

- 11.17 Eldon Square was Reading's first conservation area, designated in 1972. The Gardens, which are listed, are situated within the town centre area in Redlands Ward and are surrounded on three sides by Bath stone detached and semi-detached buildings. They are completely enclosed by Grade II listed railings and contain mature trees, shrubs and a large statue of the first Marquess of Reading who died in 1935. The Gardens are very well used by local residents, including students. Landscape improvements are required to increase security along with low level additional planting.
- 11.18 **Update:** We are in discussion with a residents group who are proposing to support the maintenance of the gardens.
- 11.19 **Status:** Project not started yet.

**FOBNEY ISLAND TREE WORK (£33,300)**

- 11.20 Tree work, including coppicing, to improve access to Fobney Island Nature Reserve and its river habitat is ongoing.
- 11.21 **Update:** Significant work over a two year period has been undertaken within the nature reserve to open up views and improve access.
- 11.22 **Status:** Project completed.

**FORBURY GARDENS (£50,000)**

- 11.23 Capital investment is needed periodically at Forbury Gardens for the Council to meet its contractual obligation to keep the site for 25 years to the high standard to which it was restored in 2004. The fountain has been damaged and the sump and pond need cleaning. The pond also requires re-lining. Repeated damage is being done to the lawns with park users walking across the bull-nosed grass areas at path junctions. Where low fencing was installed, this problem does not occur. Matching low fencing needs to be installed, in a double line of granite setts, at the junction nearest the café where there is constant pedestrian traffic. The stone pillars at the main entrance require specialist stone and flint work and modifications are needed to protect these pillars into the future.
- 11.24 **Update:** The bandstand has been repainted but requires further work to replace a pillar which is full of dry rot. A temporary repair was used to get the stand ready in time for the opening of the Abbey Ruins. The pond walls have been rebuilt into rounded peaks to prevent them being walked on. The sump and the pumping chambers have been re-rendered, the pond relined and the cracked fountain repaired and turned on. There may be a need to explore the connecting chambers as there is the possibility that there is a leak somewhere in the system.

11.25 New low level bow top fencing has been installed around the Verdun Oak and at the entrance to the park (opposite the Courts) as well as around the old cannon mound. The sign at the top of the mound is still to be repainted and the gravel also needs topping up. We are currently seeking quotes for the painting of the gates and railings around the whole site as they are in very poor condition. It is our intention to purchase bird/bat boxes and place them in the gardens as part of a bio diversity project. The flint walls throughout the site require constant maintenance due to the nature of their construction and funding is regularly used for this purpose. Reinstatement works to repair the damage to the edges of lawns throughout the gardens after last year's summer heat is still to be carried out.

11.26 **Status:** Project ongoing.

#### **KATESGROVE SCHOOL PLAY AREA (£19,500)**

11.27 This popular dual use facility is particularly heavily used. Throughout the term time, the school has exclusive use of the play area. During the evenings, weekends and holiday periods, the play area and adjacent hard court area is available for public use. New safety surfacing has recently been installed in the play area.

11.28 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **KENSINGTON ROAD RECREATION GROUND (£5,000)**

11.29 This popular park in Battle Ward has undergone a number of improvements in recent years including an extension to the play area, a new ballcourt, fitness stations and a perimeter path. Further infrastructure improvements including new furniture and boundary enhancements are required.

11.30 **Update:** Enhancements to the boundary were carried out following the relocation of the recycling banks from the car park. This has enabled the creation of additional car parking spaces.

11.31 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **LONGBARN LANE RECREATION GROUND (£4,900)**

11.32 Situated to the south of the town in Katesgrove Ward, this recreation ground serves a population of higher than average deprivation. The surrounding area consists of high density housing and higher than average levels of anti-social behaviour amongst young people. The site has a history of abuse and any new infrastructure needs to be particularly robust. New furniture is required.

11.33 **Update:** Instead of new furniture, new safety surfacing was installed under one of the most popular and well used pieces of play equipment. Once this was carried out the remaining funding was used to improve the main entrance to the park and install a new "welcome to" sign. Further CIL

funding has been approved for the recreation ground which is set out at para 13.14.

**11.34 Status:** Project completed.

**LOUSEHILL COPSE (£40,500)**

**11.35** Situated in Norcot Ward, Lousehill Copse is a small, well-hidden natural woodland surrounded by housing tucked away along Tay Road with mature oak and hazel woodlands. It is designated as a Wild Life Heritage Site and in 1992 became part of West Reading Woodlands Local Nature Reserve. There are a number of pedestrian entrances leading into the copse which contain anemones, bluebells, violets and several species of rare plants in boggy areas. Infrastructure requirements include the upgrade of the path network, habitat and biodiversity improvements along with access improvements.

**11.36 Update:** Work on this scheme started in 2013 (with a then budget of £21,000). Since this time a further £19,500 has become available resulting in the total amount specified above. A significant amount of work has been carried out including the improvement of the footpath surfaces, creation of steps on the steepest slopes within the woodland, enlargement of the pond, installation of a pond dipping platform, clearance of the pond of rubbish, reducing the amount of reeds in the pond, coppicing and creating a clearing to open up views.

**11.37 Status:** Project ongoing.

**PALMER PARK (£116,200)**

**11.38** As Reading's second largest and only park in Park Ward, Palmer Park serves one of the most densely settled areas of the town, there is constant pressure to improve/extend facilities to meet the growing demand from users. Investment options will be developed with the proposals to invest in the Council's indoor sports facilities in mind, and the impact these may have on the open space.

**11.39 Update:** Investment has been as made to both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Last summer the three artificial turf pitches were refurbished and a new internal fencing system separating the pitches was installed. In December new fitness equipment was installed in the gym within the stadium.

**11.40 Status:** Project completed.

**PROSPECT PARK SPORTS PITCHES/COURTS (£77,200)**

**11.41** The sports pitches that double up as tennis courts at Prospect Park and which opened in 2007 have reached the end of their life and are in need of refurbishment. In 2017 the five 3G artificial courts (on the opposite side of

the main drive) were refurbished as they too, had been open for 10 years and had reached the end of their life. Further CIL funding has been approved for the park which is set out at para 13.18.

11.42 **Update:** The sports pitches (tennis and football) underwent a complete refurbishment last summer.

11.43 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **RABSON'S RECREATION GROUND - PLAY AREA (£14,800)**

11.44 In 2010 the playground underwent a complete refurbishment and extension. Situated in Church Ward, it is now the largest and most well used in the south Reading area. This small pot of funding will enable improvements to the retaining log feature in the play area.

11.45 **Update:** The log feature in the play area was replaced last summer leaving some funding for the refurbishment of the tennis court area due to be completed this summer.

11.46 **Status:** Project ongoing.

#### **ROBERT HEWETT RECREATION GROUND (£10,600)**

11.47 This popular park along the Tilehurst Road in Minster Ward is particularly well used by families. Since its refurbishment in 2009 it has attracted large numbers of children with their parents/carers. The internal path network needs resurfacing in places where the roots from some of the mature trees are breaking up the tarmac. In addition new railings along the front of the recreation ground are needed.

11.48 **Update:** Insufficient funding to carry out all the work referenced above necessitated prioritising the most urgent elements required. The replacement of the railings along the front wall adjacent to the Tilehurst Road was given priority and once completed highlighted the poor condition of the brick wall underneath the railings. As a consequence, the remaining funding was invested in re-pointing and re-rendering the wall.

11.49 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **THAMES PARKS (£294,100)**

11.50 The Thames Parks provide the largest single area of publicly accessible open space in the Borough - approximately 80 hectares - which border the River Thames as it flows through Reading. The Thames Parks Plan (adopted in March 2005) provides a strategy for the management of these riverside parks and identifies investment needs for the individual parks. As in previous reports, the ongoing implementation of the Thames Parks Plan remains a priority. It is recommended that these funds are used to continue to



implement the Plan including replacing the house footprint at Caversham Court.

- 11.51 **Update:** Significant riverbank work has been carried along the River Thames including the replacement of the old wooden mooring structure by the Tesco Superstore which is now a robust and durable style of recycled decking. In Hills Meadow an area of riverbank next to the tea barge has been rebuilt and re-profiled. A new electrical supply to the gate has been installed to the tennis courts at Christchurch Meadows and following the planting of a new line of trees outside the tennis courts alongside George Street, a new root barrier has been installed to prevent tree roots from pushing up through the tennis court surface. New tree planting has also been carried out along the Thames Promenade. A new entrance and gate into Kings Meadow has been created/installed next to the new changing pavilion. Work is due to start shortly on new stonework for the house footprint at Caversham Court.

- 11.52 **Status:** Project ongoing.

#### **VICTORIA RECREATION GROUND (£43,600)**

- 11.53 Adjacent to the new Civitas Primary Academy in Abbey Ward, this valued open space is in need of significant landscaping and additional seating.

- 11.54 **Update:** Some landscaping and tree planting has been undertaken. Facilities to support both school and community sport/recreational activity is still to be installed along with potential relocation of the play area to reduce the instance of anti-social behaviour.

- 11.55 **Status:** Project underway.

#### **12. S106 SCHEMES ADDED TO PORTFOLIO SINCE REPORT TO HNL COMMITTEE IN MARCH 2018**

- 12.1 A recent review of unallocated S106 funding highlighted several developments with unspent funds. The following schemes were as a consequence of two separate approved planning applications and date back to 2003 and 1996 respectively.

#### **LORENZO QUELCH PLAY AREA (£3,897.78)**

- 12.2 The play area on Addington Road known as Lorenzo Quelch was installed by the developers of the newest housing (on Addington Road) and subsequently transferred to the Council with a commuted sum for its maintenance. These unallocated funds will be spent on new furniture with the remainder being added towards the ongoing maintenance of the play area.

- 12.3 **Update:** New seats have been installed in the play area and remaining funds will be transferred to the Parks Team as a commuted sum for the ongoing maintenance of the area.

12.4 **Status:** Project completed.

#### **OXFORD ROAD COMMUNITY GARDEN (£3,586.75)**

- 12.5 Following the development of the retail park along the Oxford Road (now containing Lidl and MacDonald's), some of the land to the rear of the site was given back to the Council from the developers as a community garden. The land is owned by the Council's Leisure Department but managed and maintained by the "Oxford Road Community Garden". This is a non-for-profit organisation and income collected from annual subscriptions from local residents is used for general maintenance, purchase of gardening tools, third-party liability insurance for organised working parties on site etc.
- 12.6 **Update:** The funding will be used to assist the volunteer group in maintaining the land and further to meetings and discussion with representatives; it is likely to include tree work, habitat improvements, purchase of equipment and interpretation boards.
- 12.7 **Status:** Project underway.

#### **13. CIL SCHEMES**

- 13.1 The following CIL funded schemes were approved by Policy Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 following the public consultation carried out last summer. This is the first time that the process for the allocation of 15% CIL has taken place.

#### **AVON PLACE PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS (£100,000)**

- 13.2 Situated to the east of the town centre in Abbey Ward, this small play area lies amid a very densely populated area alongside the River Kennet. The site is owned by the Council's Housing Department and the Parks Team are responsible for the maintenance of the play equipment.
- 13.3 **Update:** The play area at Avon Place will be relocated, and an entirely new and larger play area provided at Canal Way. This is being designed primarily for toddler play, although some equipment for juniors will be included, to provide for families with children of a range of ages. Landscaping and furniture is being included to turn this area into a park for local residents. Consultation is being undertaken by the Housing Department.
- 13.4 **Status:** Project underway.

#### **CINTRA PARK PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS (£95,000)**

- 13.5 Following the investment last year in refurbishing the artificial turf pitch at Cintra Park, the play area is now in need of improvement. Last summer, one item of failing equipment was removed and replaced with a modern swing unit. Much of the remaining equipment needs replacing.
- 13.6 **Update:** Options on new equipment are being prepared for consultation with Ward Councillors.
- 13.7 **Status:** Project expected to start next year.

#### **COLEY RECREATION GROUND OUTDOOR GYM (£65,000)**

- 13.8 Coley Recreation Ground is a medium sized park (6.33 hectares) situated within a large housing estate to the south west of Reading's town centre in Minster Ward. There is a perimeter road running around the park and the whole area is overlooked by housing. The park provides a number of sporting and recreational facilities including grass football pitches, changing pavilion, artificial cricket wicket, multi-use games area, tennis court and children's play area. To complement the existing facilities we are looking to install a new outdoor gym to encourage active participation in physical activity all year round.
- 13.9 **Update:** Tendering process underway. Expected completion - autumn 2019.
- 13.10 **Status:** Project underway.

#### **IVYDENE PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS (£100,000)**

- 13.11 This play area is situated in Battle Ward at the western end of Portman Road and serves a very large populated area to the west of Reading's town centre. Whilst in working order, the equipment is old and the whole site is in need of refurbishment and reconfiguration.
- 13.12 **Update:** Tendering process underway. Expected completion - autumn 2019.
- 13.13 **Status:** Project underway.

#### **LONG BARN LANE OUTDOOR GYM /TEEN FACILITIES (£155,000)**

- 13.14 Long Barn Lane Recreation Ground is a neighbourhood park (3.29 hectares) situated to the south of Reading's town centre in Katesgrove Ward. It is surrounded by housing on all sides and despite it being primarily used as a through-route; it is popular with local residents. The park does provide a number of sporting and recreational activities including a multi-use games wall with tarmac surface for football and basketball, a small (fenced) children's play area for toddlers, a BMX track and a selection of items of play equipment for children over 8 years of age. The recreation ground serves a population of higher than average deprivation and higher than average levels of anti-social behaviour.

- 13.15 To support more constructive use of the site, Reading Borough Council is seeking to install additional facilities comprising a new outdoor gym/fitness area to encourage active participation in physical activity all year round with a particular focus on teenagers.
- 13.16 **Update:** A design brief and specification will be prepared in consultation with Ward Councillors in order for manufacturers to submit proposals for public consultation.
- 13.17 **Status:** Project expected to start next year.

**PROSPECT PARK (£88,000)**

- 13.18 This will be the subject of a separate report.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 <sup>rd</sup> JULY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2019/20 AND AMENDMENTS TO THE DELEGATION REGISTER		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR HOSKIN	PORTFOLIO:	HEALTH, WELLBEING & LEISURE
SERVICE:	REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ALL
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an annual opportunity to review the Council's Food Service plan. The plan sets out how the Council undertakes its statutory duties to deliver safe food for Reading's residents and is updated annually in line with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The delegation register requires amendments to ensure that the legislation is up-to-date and that officers are clearly authorised to exercise powers under Consumer Protection Act 1987, Animal Health Act 1981 and other legislation made under the European Communities Act 1972.

Appendix 1 Food Service Plan 2019 -2020

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the Food Service Plan for 2019/20 at Appendix 1
- 2.2 That the delegation register be amended as detailed in paragraph 5.5 below.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent Government department responsible for protecting public health and consumers' wider interests in food. Part of their role is to ensure that local authorities comply with the 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities'. This agreement details:

- Publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services should be published (i.e. the Food Service Plan).
- agreed feed and food law enforcement standards for local authorities

- enhanced monitoring data with greater focus on inspection outcomes and which provides more detailed information on local authority performance
  - an audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice.
- 3.2 The Framework agreement recognises that all Food and Feed officers should be correctly authorised and a documented procedure must be in place for the authorisation of officers based on qualifications, competence and in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.
- 3.3 Food Officers carry out inspections of food premises, undertake food sampling, investigate complaints about food and food premises including infectious diseases or food poisoning cases. Environmental Health Officers consider the hygiene of food premises (including operating the Food Hygiene rating Scheme) and ensure that food is microbiologically fit while Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers consider food standards. Food Standards includes ensuring food is described accurately and not in a misleading manner as well as ensuring food is not chemically contaminated.
- 4. Current Position**
- 4.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Council must submit annual monitoring data to the Food Standards Agency. This data is uploaded to a national database and reviewed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport & Regulatory Services prior to submission. This return is submitted annually in April.
- 4.2 This return also forms the basis of the annual Food Service Plan for the following year which is submitted to this Committee when all the data for the previous financial year is known. This Committee provides scrutiny to the previous year's data and the forward plan.
- 4.3 The Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services has delegated power to authorise suitably qualified officers to enforce the Food Safety Act 1990 and regulations made under it. The delegations are found within the Council's delegations register. Amendments to the delegation register are also found within this report at 5.5 onwards.
- 5. Options Proposed**
- 5.1 The Food Service plan 2019/20 indicates that within the Borough there are over 1400 premises producing, retailing or serving food. The plan details the performance of the food service during the previous year (2018/19) and the plan for 2019/20.
- 5.2 Despite staff shortages arising from a national shortage of competent officers, in 2018/19, the team delivered 100% of Category A-E food hygiene inspections (1164 inspections). It was also able to deliver an inspection rate of 90% of all unrated premises (253 inspections).
- 5.3 Although 100% of all high risk food standards (labelling and compositional) inspections were undertaken; medium, low risk and unrated inspection numbers fell below the targets set internally which were 50%, 10% and 60% respectively. This is an area where targeted action is planned for 2019/20.
- 5.4 In 2019/20 the routine work of food premises and standards inspection, sampling and complaint work will be carried out. In addition this year resource will be directed into the following:

- Reducing the overall number of food hygiene rated 0-2 rated premise by 25%. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme offers a score of 0-5 for food businesses that sell food directly to the final consumer. A 5 rating is very good, a 0 rating is poor and a 3 rating or above is broadly compliant.
- Improving food export health certification in response to a possible increase in demand for certificates if and when we leave the European Union.
- Carrying out one further street compliance project taking a cross-team (Licensing, Food & Safety and Trading Standards) enforcement approach to a collection of poorer performing food retail shops. Last year the service focused on seven retailers on Whitley Street on a single day. Smoked fish was voluntarily surrendered from one premises as there was no evidence of traceability for the products. Other issues which were dealt with included a non-trade legal weighing scales, non-standardised cigarette packets and non-compliant food labels.
- Database verification for food businesses that trade online rather than via a physical premises and who are based in Reading.
- Quarter 1 audit carried out by RBC internal auditors to ensure there is a framework to allow robust and timely inspections of food premises. This is being carried out following the FSA audit in December 2017.

5.5 The following additions are proposed to the Delegations Register. The changes are procedural and reflect a recent review of current delegated powers under food legislation. It is necessary to keep the delegations register up-to-date to allow enforcement action where necessary under food legislation.

(1) Addition of the following delegations to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services:

Power to institute legal proceedings under the following legislative provisions:

- Animals & Animal Products (Examination for residues and maximum residue Limits) (England & Scotland) Regulations 2015
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- Country of Origin of Certain Meats (England) Regulations 2015
- Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014;
- Food for Specific Groups (Information & Compositional Requirements) (England) Regulations 2016
- Genetically Modified Organisms (Traceability & Labelling) (England) Regulations 2004
- Olive Oil (Marketing Standards) Regulations 2014
- Poultry Meat (England) Regulations 2011
- Quick-Frozen Foodstuffs (England) Regulations 2007
- Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009
- Specified Products from China (Restrictions on Placing on the Market)(England) Regulations 2008
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- Animal Health Act 1981;
- Consumer Protection Act 1987

(2) Addition of the following delegations to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services:

Power to exercise functions and to authorise officers to exercise functions under the:

- Animals & Animal Products (Examination for residues and maximum residue Limits) (England & Scotland) Regulations 2015
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- Country of Origin of Certain Meats (England) Regulations 2015
- Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014;
- Food for Specific Groups (Information & Compositional Requirements) (England) Regulations 2016
- Genetically Modified Organisms (Traceability & Labelling) (England) Regulations 2004

- Olive Oil (Marketing Standards) Regulations 2014
- Poultry Meat (England) Regulations 2011
- Quick-Frozen Foodstuffs (England) Regulations 2007
- Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009
- Specified Products from China (Restrictions on Placing on the Market)(England) Regulations 2008
- Animal Health Act 1981;
- Consumer Protection Act 1987

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

6.1 This report supports the following objectives in the corporate plan: Shaping Reading's Future 2018 -2021.

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Keeping Reading's environment, clean, green and safe

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An equality impact assessment is not required in relation to this report or the recommendations.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Food Service plan is written in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework Agreement with the FSA. It sets out how the authority will meet its statutory obligations.

8.2 The amendments to the delegations register in 5.5 must be implemented. These Regulations for the most part give effect to requirements of EU food law either by implementing Directives or providing enforcement mechanisms for directly applicable EU Regulations.

8.3 Other legislation which affects the production and marketing of food to a greater or lesser degree, including (but not limited to) the Animal Health Act 1981 and the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

8.4 The Animal Health Act 1981 is used to reduce/prevent the spread of disease in animals which are used for meat, the Consumer Protection Act 1987 is designed to protect consumers and give them rights when buying goods and services to ensure that they are safe and manufactured in compliance with legal requirements.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Food Service plan sets out the service budget and resources required to deliver the Council's statutory services.

9.2 The financial implications arising from running the service are set out below:



	2018/19 £0	2019/20 £0
Employee costs	432,700	471,700
Supplies & Services	37,100	37,100
Transport	2,500	2,500
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>472,300</b>	<b>511,300</b>
Fees and charges	25,600	-25,600
Primary Authority Work	66,000	66,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>91,600</b>	<b>91,600</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>380,700</b>	<b>419,700</b>

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Food Service Plan 2018/19



**Reading**  
Borough Council  

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Working better with you

# Food Service Plan 2019-20

Drawn up in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's Framework  
Agreement (April 2010)

## **1. FOOD SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 1.1 The council has a statutory duty to enforce food law, overseen and audited by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The council must produce a plan setting out how it will deliver its functions. This document aims to discharge the duty for Reading Borough Council and has been written in accordance with the FSA Framework Agreement, which is based on statutory Codes of Practice.

It is the council's aim to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough.

- 1.2 Key to the way the service is delivered is consideration of the five principles of good regulation:

- Targeting, via risk based approach
- Proportionality
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Transparency

### **1.3 Objectives**

To ensure that standards required by legislation are met and that preventative health measures are adopted and maintained by businesses.

To achieve the key aims, the following objectives have been adopted:

- To prevent unsafe food reaching the public through the application of mandatory duties and discretionary powers.
- To ensure food is correctly labelled and complies with appropriate compositional requirements.
- To direct resources to the highest risk food premises and activities and to improve standards by the effective use of the enforcement powers available.
- To ensure a consistent approach to food inspections by officers.
- To ensure that officers are qualified, adequately trained and competent.
- To highlight bad practice in food businesses.
- To ensure consumers are given information as to the hygiene conditions at food premises in the Borough through the use of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- To encourage and facilitate the training of food handlers and proprietors of food businesses.
- To encourage and facilitate the improvement of food safety and food standards by the use of a paid service for bespoke advice.

- To proactively respond to changes and proposals for improvement in UK and EU legislation.
- To promote the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme.
- To work with our partners including Public Health England.

#### **1.4 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

1.4.1 The Council has a number of priorities which sit within the Corporate Plan 2018-21. The delivery of the Food Service plan links to the following priorities:

- ***Securing the economic success of Reading*** by:

Encouraging the adoption of good practice at all stages in the food production chain and

Providing guidance and advice to potential and existing food businesses

- ***Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children*** by:

Minimising the incidence of food poisoning and food borne illness

- ***Keeping Reading's environment, clean, green and safe*** by:

Ensuring that all food and drink offered for sale meets hygiene, compositional and quality standards

Working with partner agencies to eliminate food fraud.

Preventing the use of prohibited substances or inappropriate substitution of ingredients in food products

Promoting high standards of hygiene in food businesses

Ensuring that all food and drink offered for sale is safe for human consumption.

Ensuring that all food businesses comply with relevant statutory requirements

Ensuring that all food businesses operate with the benefit of relevant licensing, approval and consent arrangements

Developing collaborative working arrangements to minimise the risks to health associated with the consumption of contaminated, poor quality or unsafe food and drink.

To achieve this aim, the Food & Safety Team and Trading Standards Team will:

- Inspect all food premises and businesses in accordance with the adopted risk assessment and re-inspection programmes

- Participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in order to enable members of the public to make informed choices about where they eat or purchase food
- Initiate appropriate enforcement action to secure compliance with the relevant legal requirements
- Prepare and implement sampling programmes for food that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed;
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities relating to the enforcement of Food Safety legislation
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities in relation to the control of spread of communicable disease and food poisoning.

1.4.2 There are 2 specific KPIs linked to food which are:

% of Public Protection (Food Safety, Health and Safety and Trading Standards) high risk businesses inspected when due or complaints responded to within service standard time.

% Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law

1.4.3 The Council also recognises the risks associated with failing to deliver this plan and this is detailed in the Directorate's risk register.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Profile of the Authority**

2.1.1 Reading Borough Council was created as a unitary authority in April 1998 and figures from the last census indicate it has a population of 155,698. Unemployment (those claiming job seekers allowance) in the town is below the national average at 3.5%; 14% of the town has a main language other than English and the age group with the highest numbers is 25-34 years old.

The town centre is one of the largest in the South of England, attracting many shoppers and visitors to the area. Reading has a University as well as a college. Many of the small food businesses around the University do the bulk of their trade during term time.

2.1.2 Manufacturing industry has declined over the years and the area is now the centre of high technology within the Thames Valley. There are no large food manufacturers in the town.

2.1.3 There is excellent access to the road system via the M4 (East/West) and the nearby M3 and A34 (North/South). The Rail station has undergone a major upgrade and was re-opened in 2015 with 9 through platforms and 6 terminus platforms. Sometime after December 2019 the Elizabeth line run by Transport for London (TFL) will connect directly to Reading giving direct transport links to Central London and Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the East of London.

2.1.4 Businesses in Reading utilises its good transport links and close proximity to Heathrow Airport to transfer their raw ingredients and products. There are also UK distribution centres for Waitrose frozen products and Tesco ambient products within the town, further highlighting its excellent geographical location and communication links.

- 2.1.5 Reading is a market town, the market operating four days per week, and has a flourishing twice monthly Farmers' market where producers from the surrounding locality sell their own produce. There are also 2 weekly food markets as well as an annual chilli festival and specialist food festival.
- 2.1.6 The town hosts a number of festivals and cultural events which bring visitors and itinerant traders to the area. The most significant music festival is Reading Festival which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest festival in the UK after Glastonbury.

## **2.2 Organisational Structure**

- 2.2.1 The Council has an approved constitution setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. A copy of the Council's constitution is available at:  
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/constitution>
- 2.2.2 The Scheme of Delegations sets out who is responsible for making decisions, including the authority for the service of enforcement notice. A copy of the Scheme of Delegations is available at:  
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3769/Delegations-Register/pdf/180720DelegationsRegister.pdf>
- 2.2.3 The Council operates a Committee Structure, with the Food & Safety Team reporting to the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure (HNL) Committee. The councillor with responsibility for Food & Safety is the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport.
- 2.2.4 Appendix 1 sets out the Team structure of Regulatory Services.
- 2.3.5 The officer with lead responsibility for food matters and whose contact details have been notified to the FSA) is Lisa Richards, Licensing, Food & Safety Manager. There is also a Principal EHO role, Aoife Gallagher who shares the Lead food officer role.

## **2.3 Scope of the Food Service**

- 2.3.1 The Food & Safety Team deals with food safety, some aspects of food standards relating to caterers, infectious disease, special treatments, safety at sports grounds licensing and health and safety at work. Trading Standards has responsibility for activities such as food standards, fair trading, product safety, metrology, animal health, animal feed, petroleum and consumer advice.
- 2.3.2 Both the Food & Safety and Trading Standards teams are active leads in the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme. The Environmental Health Staff provide assured advice for Food Hygiene and Safety while the Trading Standards team provide advice on Food Standards.
- 2.3.3 The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager is responsible for managing the topic area of food within Regulatory Services. Approximately 50% of the Food & Safety Team is directed at official controls for food safety and approximately 20% of the Trading Standards Service is directed at food standards work.
- 2.3.4 The service is based at:  
Regulatory Services

Reading Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Reading  
RG1 2LU

Tel: Food Safety Enquiries      0118 937 3787  
Food Standards Enquiries    03454 040506

E-mail: [consumerprotection@reading.gov.uk](mailto:consumerprotection@reading.gov.uk)

Website [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk).

The office is open Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1700 hours. The emergency 'out of hours' telephone number is 0118 937 3737 where there is a duty officer available to deal with emergency only food matters as appropriate.

## **2.4 Demands on the Food Service**

- 2.4.1 There are annual variations on demand based on a broad range of factors. The Borough has seen the overall number of businesses increase and there is a relatively high turnover, particularly in the takeaway sector. The table below details the number of food premises contained in each category:

Type of premises	Number of Premises
Primary Producer	0
Manufacturer/Packer	14
Food Importer/Exporter	3
Food Distributor/Transporter	18
Supermarket/Hypermarket	36
Small Retailer	233
Retailer Other	101
Restaurant, Café, Canteen	313
Hotel , Guest House	35
Pub, Club	119
Takeaway	169
Caring Establishment	159
Schools, Colleges	69
Mobile Unit	70

Restaurant, Caterer Other	114
Total	1453

- 2.4.2 There are 8 businesses which have received approval under one or more of the product specific regulations namely fishery products, live bivalve molluscs, minced meat & meat preparations, milk products and cold store/rewrapping plant. This is broken down to: 1 meat, 4 fish, 1 bivalve molluscs and 2 cold store and rewrapping establishments. These premises are inspected in line with their risk rating. One establishment has fish and bivalve molluscs approval.
- 2.4.3 The UK is destined to leave the Political area of the European Union by a date currently set at 31 October 2019. The leaving process is commonly called Brexit and the Food Team is kept abreast of national developments through the Council' Emergency Planning team and national guidance from national agencies such as FSA. The impact on the service is three fold depending on whether the UK leaves using a deal which is agreed by both UK and European Politicians whereby the issues indicated below will be dealt with as part of the deal or whether there is no deal. In this scenario the UK will be considered a Third Country such as US, Australia, Africa etc. In order to protect the service, two Senior EHOs have been allocated the task of keeping abreast with developments and implementing any emerging changes within the team. The three emerging issues which must be considered are:
- (a) Much of the regulation is European based and implemented into UK law via The European Communities Act 1973. This Act will no longer be in force when the UK leaves the European Union and the laws will need to be implemented via new domestic legislation.
  - (b) Importation of food from Europe: The UK obtains a large quantity of its food from either other European Countries or from Third Countries who use another European Country as their Border Inspection Post. Where there is no deal any food from other European Countries will need to be given more thorough checks either at the port of entry in the UK or if the entry port becomes overwhelmed at the first destination point within the UK which could be Reading.
  - (c) Exportation of food to Europe: Any food leaving the UK for Europe in the case of no deal will be required to be accompanied by export certificates similar to the food which is currently exported outside Europe. Three businesses within UK have currently indicated to Animal Plant Hygiene Agency (APHA) that they will be carrying out this activity. Reading BC will need to provide export certificates to businesses who wish to export fish, composite foods (foods containing a small amount of food of animal origin such as biscuits containing milk) or product not of animal origin.
- 2.4.4 There are approximately 7 outdoor events per year, mainly during May to September, where Food & Safety staff and/or Trading Standards staff attend and carry out inspections including food



inspections and food sampling. These events occur during weekdays and weekends.

- 2.4.5 The Borough is multi-cultural and contains a wide range of food premises managed and run by many diverse ethnic groups. Many retail premises target these populations and many registered home caterers prepare food dishes from their home countries. There are an increasing number of food brokers and the Council is endeavouring to identify them.
- 2.4.6 Many businesses operate outside office hours and in which case will be inspected during those periods.
- 2.4.7 The service has seen a rise in businesses that trade online as part of a High Street model. There is also a trend for customers to order food online from via Facebook, Amazon, Deliveroo and Just Eat and have it delivered to their house thus the customer has no idea where the food is produced or where the wrapped food is stored. There is also a rise in businesses advertising food online where a single High Street premises is shared by a number of businesses.

## **2.5 Enforcement Policy**

- 2.5.1 The Council has previously adopted the Enforcement Concordat, which has subsequently been updated to the Regulators Compliance Code. The Corporate Enforcement Policy is attached as Appendix 2. This policy is supplemented by specific food law enforcement policy that can be found in Appendix 3 of the Food Service Plan.
- 2.5.2 The Regulators' Code sets out the following main provisions:
- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow
  - Regulators should provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views
  - Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk
  - Regulators should share information about compliance and risk
  - Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply
  - Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent

### **3. SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### **3.1 Premises Inspections**

- 3.1.1 The Council's policy is to inspect all food premises that are due for inspection based on the minimum frequency as set by in the Food Law Code of Practice. However resources will always be directed towards higher risk activities and this may result in some lower risk activities being delayed. The aim is to ensure compliance with the legal requirements covering the safe handling and production of food, the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food and of the materials or articles in contact with food.
- 3.1.2 As the designated food authority, the Council discharges its duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and EC 854/2004 by carrying out regular, primary food hygiene and food standards inspections of high risk premises.
- 3.1.3 The number of new premises that register with the Local Authority is approximately 4 per week or about 200 per year making a significant contribution to the number of new premises/ those that have changed ownership on the database.
- 3.1.4 The Food Law Code of Practice rating scheme is used for Food Safety as well as food Standards.
- 3.1.5 For Food hygiene, over 88.5% of premises are rated as 'broadly compliant'. This is when the hygiene, structure and confidence in management scores are less than or equal to 10, 10, 10. This number has started to improve as all businesses are inspected when due and poor performing premises can be given more attention.
- 3.1.6 For Food Standards, over 58.4% of premises are rated as broadly compliant. This figure has risen slightly as unrated catering premises are now more likely to be inspected as the food hygiene areas have been covered. There will be a continued drive during this year to inspect more premises for food standards so therefore increasing the broadly compliant figure.
- 3.1.7 The following targets for food premises inspections due to be visited are:

	Food Hygiene	Food Standards
Category A	100%	100%
Category B	100%	50%
Category C	100%	10%
Category D	100%	-
Category E	80%	-
Category Unrated	80%	60%

- 3.1.8 There are also a number of food hygiene and food standards inspections that have been given a non-inspectable risk (NIR) score. Examples of these premises include for food hygiene, importers based in the Borough where there is just an office and no storage or distribution of the product in the Borough (food broker). Also inspections that are carried out at outdoor events.
- 3.1.9 Category E food hygiene inspections and category C food standards inspections can be carried out via an alternative enforcement strategy or using an official control such as inspection, partial inspection or audit. Where the alternative enforcement strategy is chosen, a visit is made by a Regulatory Support Officer or newly qualified authorised officer who will complete the questionnaire with the business. Childminders are not inspected after their initial inspection and where possible are sent a questionnaire.
- 3.1.10 Officers will have due regard to the FSA guidelines on the importation of food when carrying out routine inspections, will consider traceability of food products and will be mindful of the implications of food fraud or unauthorised (in the EU) ingredients.

#### **Food hygiene**

- 3.1.11 The frequency of food hygiene inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the code of practice. Risk categories may change if food handling activities change, consumer complaints are received or other non-compliance is identified. The number of inspections due in 2019/20 is:

<b>Category/ Frequency</b>	<b>Number of inspections Planned 2019/20</b>	<b>Number of broadly compliant premises due for inspection</b>
A / at least every 6 months	2	0
B / at least every 1 year	53	30
C / at least every 18 months	206	176
D / at least every 2 years	336	322
E / Alternative Enforcement Strategy	73	73
Non Inspectable Risk (NIR)	40	-
Unrated <sup>1</sup>	272	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>601</b>

<sup>1</sup> This number includes an estimate of new premises registering in year.

3.1.12 The service has made a commitment to target a proportion of its resource at those premises that score 0-2 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and to reduce the overall number of 0-2 rated premises by 25%. Improving these premises will reduce the number of high risk inspections required in year and next year.

### **Food Standards – labelling and composition**

3.1.13 The frequency of food standards inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the Code of Practice. The number of inspections due in 2019/20 are:

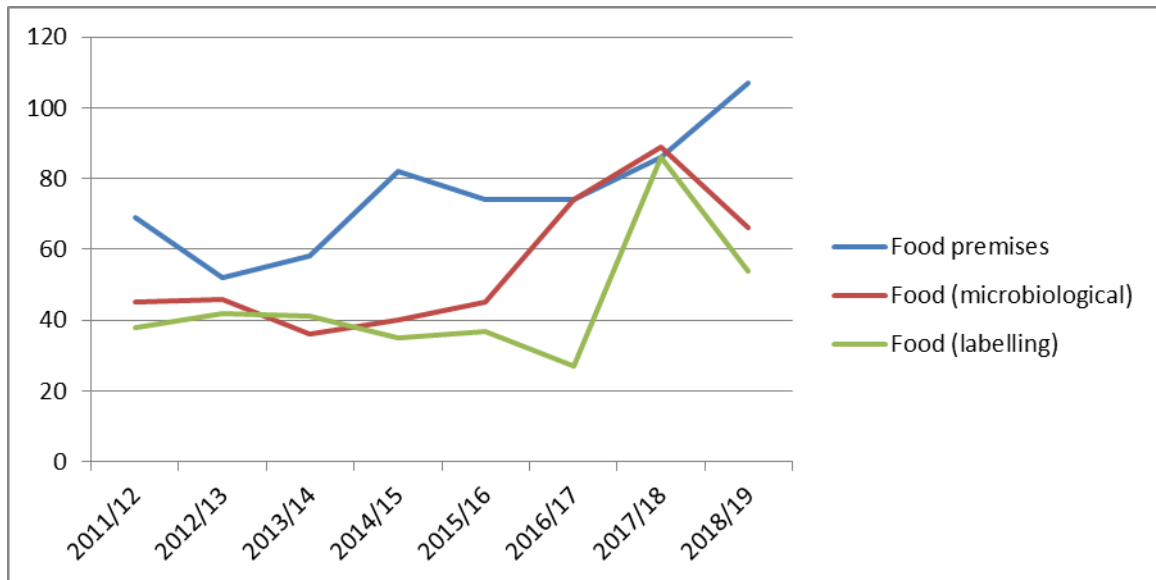
<b>Category/ Frequency</b>	<b>Number of planned Inspections due 2019/20</b>	<b>Number of broadly compliant premises due</b>
A / at least every 1 year	2	1
B / at least every 2 years	179	159
C / alternative enforcement strategy	481	469
Non-Inspectable Risk (NIR)	193	-
Unrated <sup>1</sup>	596	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>629</b>

<sup>1</sup>This number includes an estimate of new premises registering in year

## **3.2 Food Complaints**

3.2.1 There is a documented food complaint procedure. All food complaints are investigated in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, practical guidance and in house procedures. Complaints that are identified as posing an immediate risk to health are responded to within one day. Other food complaints are investigated and responded to within 5 working days. The Primary Authority/home authority principle is employed where the food is manufactured in another borough.

3.2.2 The graph below details the trends for food complaints received since 2011/2012:



3.2.3 Estimates for the coming year suggest the figures for microbiological food will remain constant, labelling complaints are likely to go up whilst the number of complaints about food premises rather than food will continue to increase.

### 3.3 **Primary Authority Partnerships**

3.3.1 Primary Authority Partnerships are run via the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS). The Authority no longer offers a home authority partnership arrangement and has converted all partnerships to Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs). In addition the authority has taken new partnerships where it would have previously not qualified to be the home authority because the location of the businesses head office is not in the local authority area.

3.3.2 There are 26 partnerships predominantly in the hospitality industry of which 14 cover food hygiene and safety and food standards. The most significant and active partnerships are with JD Wetherspoon, Greene King and Stonegate Pub Company.

3.3.3 In 2019/20 we have taken on 1 new partnership which specialises in Sushi. This partnership will fit well with our current portfolio of food businesses as Reading already has one other partner who specialises in sushi. Reading has also worked with the 3 other LAs that have sushi partnerships, FSA and OPSS to set up a specialist working group. It is the aim of the working group to develop consistent national guidance.

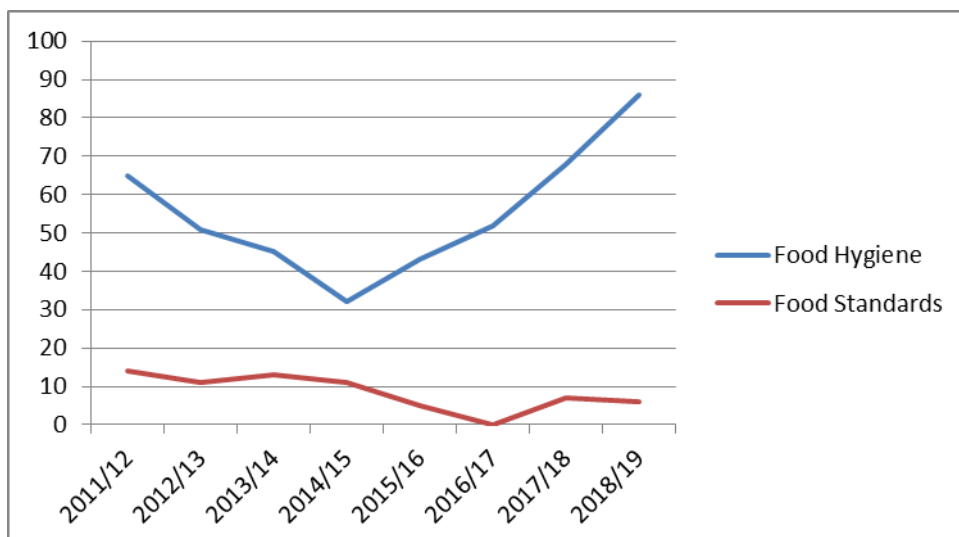
3.3.3 Each partnership has a work plan and officers have regular meetings with the company to discuss enquiries from other councils and progress the work plan.

#### 3.3.4 **Advice to Business**

3.4.1 The enforcement policy states that the Service will provide advice to businesses in the first instance to assist them in complying with the law and to help them maintain high standards of food safety or standards.

3.4.2 Businesses can contact the team, where they will be directed to advice leaflets and other information available on the website. If they food business operator requires further advice, a paid for service is offered.

3.4.3 The number of requests from businesses for advice on food and drink are detailed in the graph below:



3.4.4 The food hygiene advice is so much higher as businesses tend to ask about this first when selling unwrapped food. Any labelling requirements will be less complex and can be dealt with at the same time. Any food standards/ labelling advice will usually be for customers selling wrapped food which will usually have claims made about it such as a health drink.

### 3.5 **Food and Feeding Stuffs Sampling**

3.5.1 Food samples are taken in accordance with the authority's sampling procedure and the joint annual sampling plan. Sampling programmes have been developed and implemented to:

- Assess the microbiological quality of food produced and offered for sale;
- Determine the compositional standards and descriptive integrity of food.

3.5.2 The sampling plan reflects the following requirements:-

- (i) the procurement of samples taken during food hygiene and food standards inspections, taking into consideration the FSA guidelines for imported food and feed controls.
- (ii) specifically targeting foods produced and distributed nationally, from producers and manufacturers based in Reading.
- (iii) in response to consumer and business complaints regarding food standards and food hygiene, and
- (iv) the participation in agreed national, regionally co-ordinated and local sampling programmes and in particular projects concerning imported foods.
- (v) the Rapid Alert System for Food & Feed (RASFF) annual and quarterly reports.

3.5.3 The plan may be changed from time to time during the year to reflect new or changes in legislation and other local or national issues of concern.

- 3.5.4 Food samples are procured in accordance with the Code of Practice and legislation as appropriate.
- 3.5.5 Samples for microbiological analysis are sent to the food examiner at:  
Public Health England  
Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton  
Porton Down  
Salisbury  
SP4 0JG  
Tel 01980 616766
- 3.5.6 In order to maintain best value for its analytical services the Authority has appointed the following Public Analysts;
- (i) Worcestershire Scientific Services  
Unit 5  
Berkeley Business Park  
Wainwright Road  
Worcester  
WR4 9FA  
Tel. 01905 765765  
Email: [scientificservices@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scientificservices@worcestershire.gov.uk)
  - (ii) Hampshire Scientific Services  
Hyde Park Road  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire PO5 4LL  
Tel. 023 9282 9501

### **Food Safety – Microbiological Sampling**

- 3.5.7 Resources are allocated through Public Health England. Microbiological food sampling projects are co-ordinated within the sampling county liaison group. The PHE Porton laboratory carries out the analysis of the samples.
- 3.5.8 For 2019/20 the food sampling budget for microbiological analysis is £6,422.00 which is held on account by PHE. Whilst £2452.50 was spent in 2018/19, a 38% proportion of the budget.
- 3.5.9 The Food Safety service aims to take approximately 60 samples for microbiological analysis during 2019/20 which is in line with the 66 samples taken last year.
- 3.5.10 There are fewer than 13 private water supplies in Reading. Most are considered low risk. The private water supplies sampling officer will discuss sampling requirements with the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and the officer with special responsibility for sampling before this is carried out. 3 of the boreholes are boreholes that supply a large quantity of people. Sampling is carried out by their commercial owners whilst the other 10 boreholes are for single dwellings.

### **Food Standards Quality and Compositional Sampling**

- 3.5.11 The Trading Standards manages a coordinated annual sampling programme through Trading Standards South East Group (TSSE) and a local sampling programme. Any local sampling is shared with TSSE

and other members of the group are invited to also take part in the sampling.

3.5.12 The total budget for food standards and feeding stuff sampling for the year 2019/20 is £9,000.

3.5.13 Local Sampling projects for 2019-2020 include illegal additives in American Drinks, takeaway and online food sales looking at allergens, species or colours.

3.5.14 Sampling projects for 2018/19 included a TSSE co-ordinated project on food supplements where 5/21 samples were unsatisfactory, a project looking at allergen labelling in takeaway food where 3/13 samples were unsatisfactory as well as a local project on acrylamide where 12/29 samples were unsatisfactory.

### **3.6 Investigation of Outbreaks and Control of Food Related Illnesses and Infectious Diseases and Food Poisoning Outbreaks**

3.6.1 The Service investigates all notifiable food poisoning incidents and outbreaks associated with food occurring in Reading. Officers will liaise with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) in the investigation of diseases or outbreaks and where it is necessary to exclude infected persons from work or children from school in accordance with the Berkshire Joint Infectious Disease Outbreak Control Plan (2013).

3.6.2 Investigations into infectious disease aim to:

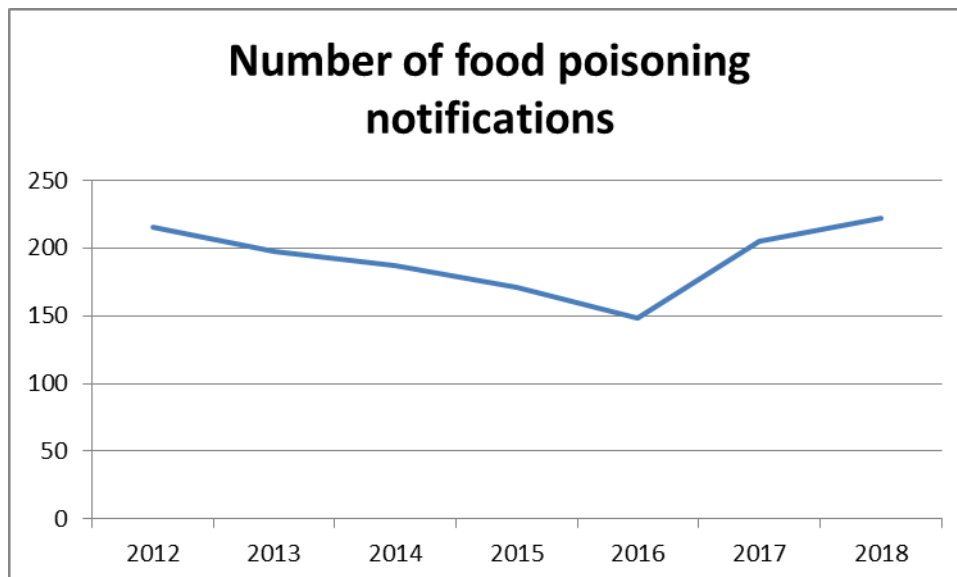
- (i) Determine whether the infected person works with food or cares for others particularly if the others are a vulnerable group.
- (ii) Identify the source of infection
- (iii) Prevent spread or reoccurrence of the infection
- (iv) Take formal action in appropriate cases where breaches of food legislation have contributed to a food poisoning outbreak
- (v) Provide information to affected persons.

3.6.3 The target for response is as follows:

Food Poisoning outbreaks	100% in 1 day
Food Poisoning (cases)	80% in 1 day
	100% in 2 days

3.6.4 The annual number of food poisoning notifications are detailed below:





3.6.5 The forecast projection for 2019/20 year end and thereafter is a further increase in numbers as there are national changes in surveillance patterns centrally as well as the introduction of new PCR techniques within the laboratory that are more sensitive in their detection of organisms. The Local Authority is only called upon for cases of lower risk food poisoning such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium*, *Giardia*, *Salmonella* and *Shigella* as well as to assist TVPHE in finding the source of other cases such as *Cryptosporidium*.

3.6.6 The number of outbreaks is projected to increase as genome typing of bacteria links cases nationwide, which previously had no common themes.

### **3.7 Food Safety Incidents**

3.7.1 All food safety incidents are dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and Practical guidance on food hazards and the procedure for food safety incidents. The team is committed to responding to appropriate notifications of food hazards and working with the FSA and food businesses to ensure that food is safe to eat.

3.7.2 The team will receive Food Alerts (FAFA), Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and allergy alerts via an automated daily or weekly digest email alert. The Lead Food Officer or Senior Officer in charge will determine what action needs to be taken on the Food Alert. Generally such situations are dealt with through voluntary co-operation or surrender of the food.

#### **Food Fraud**

3.7.3 The Council is committed to detecting fraudulent activity. This includes various illegal acts committed for economic gain including false labelling, establishments operating illegally, illegal importation of foods and diversion of meat products into the animal feed chain via the bakery production.

- 3.7.4 Whistle-blower, anonymous complaints or partial information is taken seriously and collated or followed up.

### **3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations**

- 3.8.1 Arrangements are in place to ensure consistency with other organisations and by officers delegated to represent the Council. This is achieved through membership of local specialist groups.
- 3.8.2 The Regulatory Services Manager attends and participates in the Berkshire Environmental Health Managers Group. One of the Berkshire Managers has specialist responsibility for food safety and attends the Berkshire Food Safety Liaison Group once per year.
- 3.8.3 A Senior EHO or Lead Food Officer will attend and participate in the Berkshire/Oxfordshire Food Safety & Health and Safety Liaison Group (BOFSLiG) that will meet 3 times per year. One of the members of this group aims to go to the food sampling group at least once per year to provide strategic direction.
- 3.8.4 The officer with specialist responsibility for sampling attends and participates in the Berkshire Food Sampling Group.
- 3.8.5 The Trading Standards food specialist or lead food officer attends and participates in the Regional Food Focus Group of TSSE which meets 2 times per year.
- 3.8.6 The service has regular contact with professional bodies, the Chartered Institution of Environmental Health and the Trading Standards Institute as well as the national regulators FSA and OPSS.
- 3.8.7 For imported or exported foods, the team liaises with relevant port of entry local authorities where action is required as well as the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).
- 3.8.8 A representative for the team sits on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which covers all festivals and community events within the town and offers support or advice regarding food safety.

### **3.9 Food Promotion/ Projects**

#### **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**

- 3.9.1 The Authority has run and issued awards for good standards of hygiene in food premises since 1975. In 2011 the authority joined the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) run by the FSA. The rating is given at the end of routine or partial inspections in the form of a window sticker including information about the scheme and how their rating is made up. The information is uploaded to the website approximately once every 4-6 weeks. Premises can request a revisit if they are not satisfied with their rating. On payment of a fee another full inspection will be carried out within 3 months.
- 3.9.2 Since 1999 the Food & Safety team has successfully run in collaboration with Festival Republic and Central Fusion, a separate Alfresco Award for the food traders at Reading Festival. In 2011 the award was expanded to encompass the principles of the Food Hygiene

Rating Scheme and a new pink coloured sticker unique to Reading Festival was designed. Each year any traders achieving 5 rating will be given a unique Reading Festival wall sticker for the duration of the festival and nominated for one of three Al Fresco Awards (Bronze, Silver or Gold). All food traders are inspected at the festival. The cost of this work is funded by the festival organisers. The festival organisers and food service contractor take great interest in the total number of traders in each food rating category and traders who achieve two or less are scrutinised before being allowed to return to the festival in the following year. Al Fresco Award winners are given incentives to attend the following year's festival such as a free pitch at the next year event. Since 2016 the Council has also followed the inspection plan set out by Nationwide Caterers Association (NCASS).

#### **Food Hygiene Education**

- 3.9.3 Staff deliver a Level 2 Food Safety in Catering Course on a one-day basis about 6 times per year. The same course is offered to companies, organisations or schools at their premises on request. Courses are also run for specific ethnic minority groups both in English and their own language.

#### **Street Compliance Project**

- 3.9.4 A collaborative Regulatory Services Project led by the Environmental Health Food & Safety team in conjunction with Licensing and Trading Standards focussing on 6 poor performing businesses along a chosen street. Food fitness was assessed along with compliance with alcohol Licensing conditions and any fraudulent alcohol or cigarettes. A small number of food items were detained then voluntarily surrendered by the Food Business Operator as he could not identify what they were, how old they were or his supplier of the food. It is intended to repeat the project on another street during 2019/20.

#### **Food Export Certification**

- 3.9.5 When the UK leaves the European Union there is likely to be an increase in the number of food export certificates required by businesses who operate in Reading and who wish to sell their products to other Countries. Currently no food export certification is required for businesses trading within the European Union. Countries outside of this are deemed as Third Countries and require documentation for certain foods. The documentation is issued by Environmental Health Departments and will verify that the food is fit and the premises and/or food is manufactured or stored in accordance with EU or UK legislation. It is anticipated that there will be a number of businesses who will require this service and processes around the application and issue of certificates must be streamlined.

#### **Database verification**

- 3.9.6 There has been a noticeable increase in businesses that advertise on the internet only and have no visible shop front. They trade either from their homes, by using another food business to prepare food or using cheaper units on an industrial estate. These businesses will advertise through Deliveroo, Just Eat, Amazon and facebook. Food will be ordered online and the food delivered to the customer without the need for the customer to leave the house. These food businesses are hard to

track down and can easily fall below the radar of enforcement authorities especially as it is not always clear where the businesses are based and enforcement can only be carried out on businesses that trade in Reading and inspections can only be carried out on businesses that store their food in Reading. This year the team will have start a project that will be ongoing over the coming years to try to tackle this issue.

#### **4. RESOURCES**

##### **4.1 Financial Allocation**

The net budget for the Food & Safety and Trading Standards sections for 2019/20 is £694,300. This is the cost of providing all the functions of the team, including food safety and standards, safety at sports grounds licensing, health and safety at work, consumer advice, all trading standards functions and the Primary Authority Service.

##### **4.2 Staffing Allocation**

4.2.1 The Food & Safety team is currently staffed by 8.8 full time equivalent (FTE) officers. The team carry out the full spectrum of food hygiene, health and safety, Primary Authority Partnership and certain forms of licensing activities. Officers in the team are broadly multidisciplinary, however certain aspects of their role such as the inspection of high risk premises are restricted based on their competency and qualifications. For example, an Environmental Health Officer who has not reached specific competency criteria will not be able to prohibit a food premises from operating.

4.2.1 As part of the planning process for ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties, it must ensure that it has sufficient staffing capacity to deliver its inspection and enforcement programmes. Based on a percentage of each officer's time being spent on food hygiene activities only and including factors such as maternity, part time working hours, competencies etc, there are currently 3.78 FTE officers available against an estimated need of 5 FTE's. Unfortunately due to national shortages of qualified Environmental Health Officers, the Council has difficulties recruiting to a vacant post in the team. In order to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duties, casual staff have been recruited. This has resulted in the Council being able to deliver its inspection programme in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

##### **4.3 Staff Development Plan**

4.3.1 One to one meetings are held for all officers approximately 6 times per year where professional and personal development is discussed and encouraged. Officers complete annual Training Needs Assessment's to ensure that training needs are identified and they are able to meet their 10 hours CPD as specified in the Food Law Code of Practice.

4.3.2 Due to changes in circumstances of our staff and greater part time working the Council has decided to invest in online training (ABC Food Law) for staff in order to ensure that they meet their CPD requirements.

4.3.3 Consistency training for use of the Food Hygiene risk rating scheme will be undertaken as part of the FSA national consistency exercise.

4.3.4 Courses will be undertaken according to officer specialisms, as the course becomes available and according to the officer training plans.

## **5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The Council does not hold any external accreditation, however it conducts a rigorous monitoring procedure to ensure the national and local performance indicators it has set itself are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted to achieve best value.

The monitoring of the plan is conducted by:

- (i) Monthly monitoring of achievement of targets, actions and time taken by team managers or delegated officers.
- (ii) Submission of food hygiene and food standards statistical returns to the FSA
- (iii) Officers are provided with details of actions not responded to within the specified target times
- (iv) Regular one to one meetings
- (v) Annual appraisals of staff
- (vi) Publication of annual performance achievements
- (vii) Checks of accuracy of improvement and prohibition notices served.
- (viii) Shadowing of staff to check consistency and accuracy of inspections.

5.2 An internal audit of the framework for robust and timely food hygiene inspections will be carried out during quarter 1 of 2019/20.

## **6. REVIEW**

6.1 The annual performance achievement is compared with the target set and any underachievement is explored and the appropriate action taken. The data below details the review of performance:

### **Number of Inspections**

#### **6.1.2 Food Hygiene**

	Planned inspection 2018/19	Achieved inspections a	% achieved
Premise Rating - A	29	29	100
Premise Rating - B	126	126	100
Premise Rating - C	285	285	100
Premise Rating - D	324	324	100
Premise Rating - E	76	76	100
Premise Rating - Unrated	280	253	90
Premise Rating -	71	71	

Outside			100
Totals	1191	1164	

### 6.1.3 Food Standards

	Planned Inspection 18/19	Achieved inspections	% achieved
Premise Rating - A	1	1	100
Premise Rating - B	261	134	51
Premise Rating - C	501	41	8
Premise Rating - Unrated	334	35	10
Premise Rating - Outside	13	2	15
Totals	1110	789	

The number of outstanding food standards inspections has increased over the last few years due to a number of factors including; difficulty in recruiting qualified competent staff due amongst other things to national shortages of qualified officers and other priorities being set to focus on issues such as food fraud. A project to increase the number of inspections is scheduled to start in 2019/20.

### **Formal Actions**

6.1.4 During the period 2017 to 2019 the authority took the following enforcement action:

Enforcement Type	2017/18	2018/19
Voluntary closure	2	2
Seizure, detention & surrender of food	1	1
Suspension/revocation of approval or licence	0	0
Emergency prohibition notice	4	2
Prohibition order	2	1
Simple caution	0	0
No of premises where Improvement notices	15	14

served		
Remedial action & detention notices	0	0
Written warnings (Food Hygiene)	650	655
Written warnings (Food Standards)	30	32
Prosecutions concluded	1	1

### **Food Sampling**

6.1.5 The following shows the number of samples hygiene and compositional taken and unsatisfactory.

	Number of Food Hygiene Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results	Number of Food Standards Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results
2017/18	63	22	46	19
2018/19	65	23	23	13

### **Food Promotional Activities**

6.1.6 During 2018, 150 primary food hygiene inspections were carried out over Reading Festival weekend. An increase of 20 businesses compared to the previous year. At the end of the visit there were the following:

Rating	No businesses 2018	of No of Businesses 2017
5	101	100
4	16	15
3	4	11
2	1	2
1	0	0

The consistent high numbers of 5 rated premises reflects the visibility of the Reading Festival award scheme as well as the financial incentive and prestige of winning an Alfresco Award. The food inspections are also carried out every year and financed by Festival Republic as a commitment to ongoing good hygiene practices.

## **6.2 Variations from the Service Plan**

**6.2.1** The following items were not met in the 2018/19 service plan.

- Some policies and procedures require updating.
- The number of unrated premises inspected for food standards was significantly lower than the target figure. The most significant number of businesses that have not been inspected for food standards are caterers. Caterers are inspected for food standards by Environmental Health staff and not all the staff that inspect unrated premises have the qualification or competence to inspect caterers. All of the unrated food retailers and manufacturers were inspected as these premises are inspected by Trading Standards staff.
- Food Sampling has remained lower than targeted.
- Internal monitoring of officers has not been fully carried out in accordance with the authority's protocols.
- Some competency matrix have not been fully completed or confirmed by the lead Food Officers.

## **6.3 Areas of Improvement**

**6.3.1** Following the FSA Audit in November 2017, an action plan was drafted to ensure that any areas of improvement were fully identified and plans put into place to deliver those improvements. The Action Plan is detailed in Appendix 4



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **FOOD ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

#### **CONTENTS**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Reading Borough Council, as a “food authority”, has a duty to enforce within its area the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 (the Act) (as amended), the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (FSHER 2013), a series of regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 being implemented into UK legislation and other associated legislation. The Council carries out this duty by employing suitably qualified staff who are authorised to enforce the requirements of the legislation listed above. In developing this enforcement procedure, the Council has had regard to the guidance in the Codes of Practice issued by The Food Standards Agency (FSA).
- 1.2 While the Corporate enforcement policy sets out the general approach to enforcement throughout the council, and recommends that specific procedures should be developed to enforce particular pieces of legislation, this Food Enforcement Policy outlines how council officers will enforce Food law.
- 1.3 The policy covers the following:
  - (a) Policy Statement
  - (b) The Approach to Enforcement
  - (c) Practical Arrangements for Implementing the Policy
  - (d) Maintaining a High Quality Service
  - (e) Enforcement Procedure

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 The Council has made effective arrangements to enforce the Act, the FSHER 2013 and all associated regulations and codes of practice, with the aim of ensuring that all food and drink intended for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health and safety of consumers, and is packaged and marketed within labelling and compositional requirements.
- 2.2 Should a member of the public or business wish to seek advice or make a complaint under the provisions of the Act, the Council will provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service for the handling of the enquiry in accordance with the Council’s service standards.

## **3. THE APPROACH TO ENFORCEMENT**

- 3.1 The introduction of the FSHER 2013 formalises the requirement for enforcing authorities to ensure that operators of food businesses produce an effective documented management system for food that takes into account hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) when dealing with food issues.
- 3.2 This has resulted in increased demands on enforcement officers who have to assess the effectiveness of the documented system, and also on the operators of food businesses and food handlers who are now required to demonstrate their knowledge of how to prepare, store and present food in a safe manner so as not to pose a risk to health. A wide variety of statutory and non-statutory guidance exists to assist in the interpretation and compliance of the law.

- 3.3 The Council carries out its duties on a risk rating basis and applies the law in a proportionate and transparent manner. To this end the Council will:
  - 3.3.1 Enforce and execute the provisions of the Act, the FSHER 2013 and associated Regulations.
  - 3.3.2 Register all food businesses as required by legislation.
  - 3.3.3 Inspect food premises with a frequency determined by an assessment of the potential risks guided by the Food Law Code of Practice issued by the FSA.
  - 3.3.4 Make consistent enforcement decisions in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 6 of this policy.
  - 3.3.5 Comply with official guidance issued by FSA and where applicable, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Health (DH).
  - 3.3.6 Liaise with the other food authorities in the area through the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food Liaison Group, and through the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Food Focus Group to ensure a consistent and agreed approach in dealing with food safety and food standards issues respectively.
  - 3.3.7 Participate in an inter authority auditing programme with other Local Authorities in the region for food safety and food standards.
  - 3.3.8 Liaise with the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton Food Sampling Group to agree a national, regional and local sampling programme of microbiological food sampling. Liaise with TSSE, Hampshire and Worcestershire laboratories to participate in regional and where available national food standards sampling programmes. The Council also shares its local sampling programmes with TSSE.
  - 3.3.9 Investigate all cases and outbreaks of food poisoning based on risk and the single case protocol which details which organisation (the Local Authority or Thames Valley Public Health England (TVPHE)) will investigate which each organism. Liaison with the Thames Valley Infectious Disease Group ensures a consistent approach when dealing with individual cases or outbreaks of food poisoning.
  - 3.3.10 Follow the principles of the Primary Authority (PA) scheme as set out in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.
  - 3.3.11 Where a business with an outlet in Reading has a PA in another area then the Authority will search the PA register for any additional information about the business, an inspection plan which directs the inspection, any PA advice given to the business which indicates that this area of the inspection has been approved by the PA. Feedback will be provided to the PA as it directs. Any business with a PA where enforcement is required will be carried out with the knowledge of the primary authority. Depending on the type of enforcement action an enforcement notification will be made to the primary authority register.
  - 3.3.12 Actively promote the PA scheme, engage new PA businesses, allocate officers to work with them who will create a work plan for each

business to achieve their goals. The Authority will work with other enforcement authorities to ensure businesses are protected from inconsistent or unreasonable enforcement, provided with a critical friend and a communication bridge to other enforcement authorities. Where there is a local failure at the business or deviation from the agreed policy, the authority cannot defend the business against enforcement action.

- 3.3.13 Where there is no primary authority for food standards then the home authority principle is applied to complaints and enquiries where food does not originate in Reading.
- 3.3.14 Businesses based in Reading with no PA arrangements will be actively encouraged to have one and only a basic Home Authority service is provided where food is unsafe to stay on the market.
- 3.3.15 Ensure the continued development of all its enforcement officers and encourage officers to keep up to date on food safety and food standards issues.
- 3.3.16 Deal effectively and appropriately with all food incidents including food hazards and food fraud on a localised and non- localised scale to ensure the appropriate persons are notified of incident and the incident is reduced to a safe level.
- 3.3.17 Provide training and education to food businesses to help them comply with their legal requirements and ensure their food is safe.
- 3.3.18 Follow the brand standard guidance for the operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Issue a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) sticker to those businesses that fall within the scheme. Consider appeals of ratings, provide a mechanism for rerating on payment of a fee

#### **4. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF THE POLICY**

4.1 The Council carries out its duties in the following manner:

##### **4.1.1 Pro-active Inspections**

- (a) Pro-active inspections are carried out in the form of a rolling risk-based programme. At the beginning of each financial year, the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager will produce a report identifying those premises that are due for inspection during the year. The percentage of premises that are not broadly compliant at the beginning of the year and at three monthly intervals. Once the Authority has determined the extent of the relative risk and categorised the premises, inspections are made on the minimum frequency basis detailed in 3.1.10 of the food service plan for food hygiene and 3.1.15 of the food service plan for food standards.
- (b) Most food businesses serving open food or high risk food will be given a rating sticker at the end of the visit of between zero and 5 to reflect the food hygiene at the premises based on the code of practice risk rating for hygiene, structure and confidence in management. This information is available on the web and also a sticker on the window /door. New businesses will be inspected and rated as usual. Unannounced re-ratings will be made within 3 months of payment of a fee.

- (c) Category A, B or not broadly compliant C food hygiene and category A or not broadly compliant category B food standards will be inspected using the existing system of inspection, partial inspection or audit approach. The parameters of the risk rating can be changed during an inspection, partial inspection or audit.
- (d) Category C food hygiene or category B food standards premises that are considered broadly compliant for food hygiene or food standards may, at every other inspection date have an intervention such as a verification or surveillance visit rather than a full inspection, partial inspection or audit. At the verification /surveillance visit premises can be moved on to show a new inspection date but the values of the parameters which make up the risk rating will remain unchanged. As a new Food Hygiene Rating assessment cannot be made on these visits, it is unlikely that verification/surveillance visits will be made as a proactive visit.
- (e) Category D food hygiene premises may receive an official control such as a full inspection, partial inspection, audit or verification/surveillance visit and on every other visit a non-official control such as education and advice. As the FHRs score cannot be changed or altered in the way it is made up as a result of a verification/surveillance or non-official control visit then it is unlikely that these forms of proactive inspection will be used unless the business does not fall within the FHRs scheme.
- (f) Category E food hygiene or category C food standards can be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy such as a self-assessment questionnaire. Where the business is still required to have a FHRs score an inspection will be carried out by an authorised officer. Where the business does not fall within the FHRs then a Regulatory Support Officer or a newly qualified authorised officer will visit the premises to assess if the type of food served at the business has changed and complete a low risk questionnaire with the business. Childminders are also not part of the FHRs scheme. These businesses are sent a low risk questionnaire. Any business that does not return its questionnaire is visited by a Regulatory Support Officer. Premises where large quantities of food are prepared or stored or high standards of food control are maintained may be subject to inspection or verification and surveillance visits to ensure the premises has not substantially changed.
- (g) Certain premises that produce meat, fish, dairy or egg based food for other businesses will be covered by the product specific establishment regulations in EC Regulation 853/2004 for food hygiene. These premises are inspected as dictated by the risk rating.
- (h) Food Brokers are inspected for traceability documentation of the food.

#### **4.1.2 Reactive Inspections**

Reactive Inspections of food businesses will be carried out following the receipt of a complaint, which could be regarding a food complaint, for example concerning contamination of a food, complaint about hygiene standards of a food premises or via the notification of a suspected food poisoning.

### **4.1.3 Food Incidents**

There are 3 ways in which the FSA categorises food incidents. These are Food Alert For Action (FAFA) where immediate action will be taken on receipt of the notification; Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and Allergy Alerts where no action is required.

### **4.1.4 Sampling**

Food sampling as agreed by FSA, PHE at Porton, TSSE Group and the Berkshire Food Sampling Group is carried out on a national, regional and local basis, focusing on the specific needs of Reading. Proprietors of those food businesses involved in the sampling programme are informed of the outcome and are required to take remedial action where laboratory analysis of samples show unsatisfactory levels of hygiene. Formal sampling as guided by the FSA Code of Practice will be restricted to occasions where formal action is anticipated.

### **4.1.5 Imported Food**

- (a) As an inland authority for the sale of imported food, the authority could carry out inspection of the food as part of the food premises inspections.
- (b) Imported food may fail to have the correct documentation or labelling or the authorised officer may suspect the food is unfit for human consumption. In cases where there is insufficient documentation or labelling officers will make sufficient reasonable enquiries to ascertain correct documentation and labelling. Where an authorised is satisfied that the food is suspected of failing to meet the requirements of the food safety legislation, the food will be sampled.
- (c) Where sufficient documentation and labelling is produced to satisfy the requirements of the authorised officer the food will be released. Where there is insufficient documentation the action will be taken on a risk to public health based approach.
- (d) Where food fails to meet food safety requirements steps will be taken to ensure it does not re enter the food chain in its current state in the UK.

### **4.1.6 Education & Training**

Officers actively encourage food handlers to participate in food hygiene training to expand their knowledge and understanding of food safety issues. All inspections involve some form of education/training, which is to be provided during on-site discussions concerning food preparation procedures and by offering advice and information on matters requiring attention. We run regular training courses for food businesses in food hygiene. Additionally, where significant changes are made to food legislation the team will work with the Communications Team to update food businesses on legislative changes and local initiatives.

### **4.1.7 Enforcement Action**

To ensure an effective, transparent and consistent approach to enforcement of food safety legislation, officers will follow the guidance in Section 6.

## **4.2 Enforcement in Council-owned food premises**

Any contraventions of food law found at businesses that are owned and run by the Council will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Service and the Service Director who will be required to rectify the defect or deficiency within an agreed timescale where there is a significant breach or ongoing breaches of food law.

#### **4.3 Who will implement the policy?**

4.3.1 Responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager delegated through the Regulatory Services Manager under the authority of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services. Day to day activities are carried out by authorised officers. The Food Lead Officers are responsible for the planning, organisation and subsequent monitoring of all aspects of the policy. Inspections, sampling, investigations relating to food and training will be carried out by officers authorised under the Act and FSHR 2013 and as detailed in the FSA Code of Practice.

4.3.2 Trading Standards Officers, Environmental Health Officers and some Technical Officers in the Regulatory Services Department are authorised to deal with aspects of food legislation in accordance with the competency matrix and authorisation scheme of the Service.

#### **5. MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE**

5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the highest practicable standard of customer service is integrated into all aspects of service delivery within a reasonable cost. All staff will adopt a professional approach, and performance monitoring will be carried out to ensure compliance with agreed targets. The service will also be audited by peer authorities and by reviewing any complaints against the service that may be received.

##### **5.1.1 Professionalism**

- (a) The Council ensures that all authorised officers have access to appropriate professional training and other resources required in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and competence.
- (b) The Lead Food Officers (Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food)) will monitor the performance of authorised officers.

##### **5.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of the policy**

- (a) The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food) will monitor the following aspects of the Policy:
  - (i) Compliance with agreed targets for pro-active inspections
  - (ii) Compliance with agreed targets for reactive inspections/complaints
  - (iii) Compliance with agreed targets for written reports following inspections
  - (iv) The number of requests for service received year to year
  - (v) The number of food incidents received year to year
  - (vi) The number of sampling initiatives carried out year to year
  - (vii) The number of training courses and candidates run year to year

- (viii) The results of course evaluation sheets from year to year
  - (ix) The results of inter-authority auditing
  - (x) The number and nature of complaints made against the service
  - (xi) The results of specific target monitoring i.e. Number of businesses that have implemented a documented food safety management system.
- (b) Specific actions to achieve these aims are detailed in the Food Service Plan.

## **6. ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE**

6.1 Local authorities have a variety of options available to them when implementing food safety legislation. Action can be either informal (persuasive) or formal (compulsory). The various options available are detailed below.

6.2 Any general information, inspection plans, PA advice available on the PA register will be considered before any intervention in a business with a PA. Where formal action is considered because of ongoing local failures then a formal notification through the PA website will be made. In the majority of but not all of the cases, this will negate the need for formal enforcement action.

### **6.2 INFORMAL ACTION**

Authorised officers may use informal procedures if they are satisfied that such procedures will secure compliance with the requirements of food safety legislation within a reasonable time scale.

#### **6.2.1 No action**

In certain circumstances contraventions may not warrant any action. This can be where the cost of compliance outweighs the benefit to public health. A decision to take no action must be recorded in writing and must take into account the public health implications of the contravention.

#### **6.2.2 Verbal Advice**

For minor breaches of the law we verbally advise the offender clearly identifying the contravention and including a deadline by which the action must be taken. This might be done when the authorised officer has confidence in the food business operator that the work would be carried out. Failure to comply would result in more severe enforcement action.

#### **6.2.3 Written Warning and advice**

- (a) During or on completion of an inspection the authorised officer will discuss as far as possible with the operator of the business, any problems that are identified and will explain what is necessary to rectify the problem.
- (b) After all visits to food businesses an inspection report form will be left with the person in charge of the business at the time of the visit. The inspection report form will detail the main findings and make a clear distinction between legal requirements and recommendations.



The form will contain details of areas inspected, person seen at the premises, visiting authorised officer, their contact details, date/ time of the visit and clear contact details regarding an Officers manager to allow a food business operator to take a matter further if they are not happy with the response of an officer.

- (c) In certain circumstances and particularly if the food business operator was not present at the visit to the food premises and it is known that the food business operator is not based at this premises a letter or a copy of the inspection report form will be sent to his office. This is particularly appropriate where there are legal requirements that must be carried out and it is a multi site business.
- (d) Where a letter is sent out after the visit, the letter will detail the hazards identified by enforcement officers during their inspection and the remedial action required. A clear distinction will be made between matters that are legal requirements and those that are recommendations and the measures that are required to secure compliance with the legislation.
- (e) It will be clear from both the inspection report and any subsequent letter that the operator can approach the Section for additional advice/assistance should it be necessary.

#### **6.2.4 Follow up visits**

Where significant breaches of the legislation have been identified during a previous visit to the premises, a revisit will be carried out to monitor progress towards compliance. Wherever practicable, and in all cases where a formal notice has been served or prosecution instituted the revisit will be undertaken by the same officer who carried out the original inspection.

### **6.3 FORMAL ACTION**

- 6.3.1 In deciding what enforcement action is necessary, an authorised officer will have regard to the nature and severity of the contravention and the effects on public health. Regard will also be given to the food safety history of the business and attitude of the food business operator in complying with legislative requirements. Formal action will be instigated where informal action has failed to ensure that a food business operator has performed the duties imposed on them by relevant food safety legislation. A decision on what type of action to take may not necessarily be made at the time of the inspection.

#### **6.3.2 Improvement Notices & Hygiene Improvement Notices**

- (a) An authorised Officer may consider the use of an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice as appropriate in any of the following or combination of the following situations:
  - (i) where there is a history of non-compliance or delay in compliance of food safety legislation;
  - (ii) where formal action is proportionate to the risk to public health; or
  - (iii) where it is believed that for an informal approach is not likely to be effective.

- (b) A Hygiene Improvement Notice gives the food business operator on whom the notice is to be served a minimum of 14 days in which to make a representation in respect of works improvement required. An Improvement Notice sets no minimum time for compliance with the notice and is designed to be used with the Food Information Regulations 2014
- (c) An Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice will clearly detail which regulations have been contravened and what remedial action is necessary. Information will be sent explaining the recipient's right to appeal. The notice will specify the time within which compliance is required. The time allotted will be dependent on the nature of the problem, the public health risks involved and the availability of the solution.
- (d) An authorised officer serving an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice must be satisfied that they have adequate evidence to successfully prosecute for non-compliance should the situation arise.
- (e) The authorised officer will visit as soon as is reasonably practicable following expiry of the time allowed for compliance to check whether the contraventions of food safety legislation have been remedied. If they have not, an offence has been committed and the investigating officer shall prepare a report for the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services.
- (f) The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services will decide whether it is necessary and appropriate to instigate prosecution proceedings in respect of the food business operator subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied as to the available evidence.

#### **6.3.3 Prohibition Procedures: Formal closure of a food premises using Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order**

- (a) Authorised Officers may serve the above notices where there is an imminent risk to public health. The notice will either:
  - (i) prohibit the use of the entire premises or part of the premises;
  - (ii) prevent the use of certain equipment; or
  - (iii) prohibit a particular process or treatment
- (b) The notice and subsequent order will require immediate closure of the premises, or the cessation of a process or use of specific equipment.
- (c) Following the service of an Emergency Prohibition Notice (EPN) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice (HEPN) the local authority must within three days apply to a Magistrates' Court for an Emergency Prohibition Order (EPO) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) respectively. Where an order is not applied for the proprietor may claim compensation for loss of earnings arising as a result of the EPN or HEPN. The food business operator will have one complete day's notice of the Council's intention to make the application to the court. During the closure period frequent checks

will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.

- (d) The EPN, HEPN, EPO, HEPO and accompanying notes will contain the following information:
  - (i) The name of the business and its address;
  - (ii) The matters that are considered to pose an imminent risk;
  - (iii) Details as to how to request that the premises may be allowed to open following the service of the EPO or HEPO;
  - (iv) The circumstances that will entitle the Food Business Operator to compensation for any losses following the service of the Emergency Prohibition Notice or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice.
- (e) The Council will apply to the Court for its costs from the Food Business Operator in making the application and the work carried out beyond that of a normal inspection.
- (f) An authorised officer may serve a Notice seeking voluntary closure of the food business if the officer believes there is an imminent risk of injury to health as in the emergency prohibition procedures and he has confidence in the management of the business that they will not reopen until the imminent risk to health is removed. In these circumstances there is no opportunity for the business to seek compensation from the Council for loss of earnings as there is no need to apply to the court for confirmation of the notice in the form of an order.
- (g) The voluntary closure will be confirmed in writing and frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.

#### **6.3.4 Closure of food business after prosecution & prohibiting the food business operator from managing it - Prohibition Order/ Hygiene Prohibition Order**

- (a) If a food business operator is successfully prosecuted for breaches of relevant food law and satisfactory evidence is provided to the court that the business continues to pose a risk of injury to health, the food authority can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Prohibition Order. If successful, the food business operator and/or manager are prohibited from running a food business.
- (b) If a person is prohibited from managing a food business the information is circulated nationally via the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) to reduce the likelihood of that person setting up business in another area. If the Prohibition Order has been lifted the food authority will notify the CIEH as soon as is reasonably possible.

#### **6.3.5 Inspection, Detention and Seizure of Suspect Food**

- (a) Any food that fails to meet food safety requirements or has not been produced, processed or distributed in compliance with the hygiene regulations may be detained to allow further time for investigation or seized. When food has been detained or seized the food business

operator will be provided with written notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

- (b) The food will be presented to a JP as soon as possible but within two days, when a decision on further action will be made. This two day period may be extended if necessary to ensure that parties attend and be represented if they choose.
- (c) A food condemnation notification will be given to the person in charge of the food when the officer intends to have the food dealt with by a Justice of the Peace (JP).

#### **6.3.6 Suspension/withdrawal of approval or conditional approval**

- (a) Any premises that has received approval under EC Regulation 853/2004 by the Food & Safety Team is given an approval number based on the stem of RG followed by the next numerical value which is notified to the FSA.
- (b) The approval will be suspended or withdrawn if the business fails to comply with the relevant hygiene regulations.
- (c) The business may be given a conditional approval (including approval number) rather than full approval on the first inspection after application. The conditional approval allows the businesses to trade provided if it meets certain conditions within six months. In order to obtain conditional approval the business must meet the structural requirements and produces a commitment to implement the other issues specified in writing within six months of the granting of the conditional approval. When all the requirements have been met an approval will be granted. If the requirements of the conditional approval are not met within six months of the granting of the conditional approval, the conditional approval for the business will be suspended or withdrawn.
- (d) The suspension, withdrawal of approval or conditional approval will be given in writing to the business and an appeals mechanism will be available to the business.

#### **6.3.7 Remedial Action Notice**

- (a) Authorised Environmental Health staff can serve a Remedial Action Notice on a food business operator that operates a food premises that is subject to approval. The notice will provide provision for prohibiting the use of equipment, any part of the establishment, the imposition of conditions upon, or prohibiting or reducing the rate of processing of the food. This Notice may be used in the following situations:
  - (i) When the rate of operation is detrimental to the ability of the business to comply with the regulations;
  - (ii) On a continuing serious breach of the hygiene regulations that gives rise to a risk to public health.

#### **6.3.8 Prosecution**

- (a) Food handlers and the owners of food businesses found to be contravening food safety and food standards legislation will be given reasonable opportunity to comply. However, in some situations the seriousness of the offence may be such that prosecution is

appropriate. The following circumstances may result in prosecution proceedings being brought:

- (i) The alleged offence involve a serious breach of the law such that public health, safety or wellbeing is or has been put at risk;
  - (ii) The alleged offence involves a failure to correct a serious potential risk potential risk to food after a reasonable opportunity to correct the matter;
  - (iii) The offence involves a failure to comply in full or part with the requirements of a statutory Notice;
  - (iv) There is a history of similar offences relating to risk to public health
- (b) In such cases, the Council will consider:
- (i) The seriousness of the offence;
  - (ii) The previous history of compliance with relevant legislation;
  - (iii) The ability of the defendant to establish a due diligence defence;
  - (iv) The availability and capability of witnesses and the evidence available.

#### **6.3.9 Deciding Whether to Prosecute**

- (a) Not every contravention of the law should be prosecuted through the Courts. The Authority will weigh the seriousness of the offence (taking into account the harm done or the potential for harm arising from the offence) with other relevant factors, including the financial circumstances of the defendant, mitigating circumstances and other public interest criteria.
- (b) The Council will have regard to The Code for Crown Prosecutors issued under Section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 in deciding whether to prosecute in any particular case. Thus, before starting proceedings, the Head of Legal Services must be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of a conviction based on the evidence (that is, there must be sufficient admissible, substantial and reliable evidence to secure a conviction). In addition, the Council will balance, carefully and fairly, the various public interest criteria against the seriousness of the offence. These public interest criteria include:-
- (i) the likely sentence (if convicted);
  - (ii) previous convictions and conduct of the defendant;
  - (iii) whether there are grounds for believing the offence is likely to be repeated;
  - (iv) the prevalence of the offence in the area;
  - (v) whether the offence was committed as a result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding;
  - (vi) any delay between the offence taking place and the date of trial;
  - (vii) the likely effect the prosecution will have on the defendant;

- (viii) whether the defendant has put right the loss or harm caused.
- (c) The Council will have regard to the Regulators Code which came into force in 2014 and must be applied to food law. The enforcement approach must be reasonable, proportionate, risk based and consistent with good practice. It must consider the economic impact and minimise costs as well as encourage compliance.
- (d) If a number of offences have been committed and prosecution is deemed to be appropriate, then in selecting the offences for prosecution, regard will be had to the need to reflect the seriousness of the matter and to give the Court adequate sentencing powers to deal with the matter appropriately.

#### 6.3.10 Simple Caution

- (a) A simple caution may be issued instead of a prosecution. The Council will have regard to the guidance contained in the Ministry of Justice circular Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders (November 2013) in deciding whether or not to offer alleged offenders the chance of a formal caution.
- (b) The following conditions should be fulfilled before a caution is administered:
  - (i) There must be evidence of the alleged offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction;
  - (ii) The alleged offender must admit the offence;
  - (iii) The alleged offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give an informed consent to being cautioned.
- (c) If there is insufficient evidence to consider taking a prosecution, then a simple caution must not be considered.
- (d) There is no legal obligation for a person to accept the offer of a simple caution and no pressure should be applied to the Food Business Operator to accept one. If the alleged offender refuses to accept a simple caution a prosecution will normally be pursued.

#### 7. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This enforcement policy will be reviewed annually or when changes in legislation or centrally issued guidance makes this necessary.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 July 2019		
TITLE:	CLIMATE EMERGENCY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLRS ENNIS, HOSKIN, JAMES & ROWLAND	PORTFOLIO:	ADULTS SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION
SERVICE:	REGENERATION AND ASSETS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	BEN BURFOOT	TEL:	72232
JOB TITLE:	SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:ben.burfoot@reading.gov.uk">ben.burfoot@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Council's progress to date in tackling climate change, work in progress and sets out the proposed approach to responding to the climate emergency declaration made by the Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The matters raised in this report and recommendations will form the basis of a report to Policy Committee in July.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### The Committee:

- 2.1 Welcomes the progress made to date by the Council's proactive approach to addressing climate change issues and impacts in Reading, while noting the scale of the on-going challenge.
- 2.2 Resolves to embed the climate emergency declaration across all Council services, activities, plans and other relevant work to ensure a fully integrated and systematic approach to the Council's own response to this challenge. Each Committee will be presented with this report highlighting the amendments to the terms of reference and asked to consider how they can contribute to achieving this agenda.
- 2.3 Agrees that while the Council will lead by example the scale of the climate emergency challenge requires action across all of Reading's communities. To this end the Council will work with and through the long-established Reading Climate Change Partnership and Reading UK to align respective strategies towards ensuring they secure the active participation of residents, businesses and other organisations across the borough.
- 2.4 Asks the Chief Executive to write to the Government and local MPs setting out the urgent need to equip local authorities with the policy framework, powers and funding necessary to deliver this critical agenda.
- 2.5 Agrees that all future Council Committee reports include a section on environmental implications and necessary mitigations and all reports to those committees consider the impact of the decisions they are taking on the council's ability to respond to the Climate Emergency and achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In signing the global Climate Agreement which came into force in November 2016, the UK undertook to aim to limit global warming to one and a half degrees. In line with that commitment, the Council became one of 80 local authorities to sign the UK100 Clean Energy Pledge, an extract of which is set out below:

*We have the ambition of making all our towns and cities across the UK 100% clean before 2050, in line with the commitments made nationally and internationally at the Paris Summit.*

- 3.2 Reading Borough Council has a long standing commitment to action on climate change. A signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2006, it was one of the first authorities to produce a detailed Climate Action Plan. Among other achievements over this period, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Borough have fallen by 41% which is greater than all but 19 of the 405 authorities in Great Britain and that the Council has reduced its own emissions by 53% since 2008.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding this progress and in acknowledgement of the scale of the on-going challenge, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to take action to accelerate a carbon neutral Reading to 2030.
- 3.4 The remainder of this report sets out work in progress and the actions identified to reach a zero carbon position by 2030.

### 4. CURRENT POSITION AND WORK IN PROGRESS

- 4.1 The Reading Climate Change Strategy - "Reading Means Business on Climate Change" has been in place since 2013. It was Reading's second climate strategy and was the first to be launched and owned by the Reading Climate Change Partnership. See the Appendix 4 for the action plan and summary.
- 4.2 The Council is working closely with the Reading Climate Change Partnership in coordinating the development of the new Reading Climate Change Strategy, which will be launched in April 2020. The timetable for this strategy has been brought forward by six months due to the declaration of the Climate Emergency.
- 4.3 Reading's planning policies include a number of requirements on developers in relation to climate change, including CO<sub>2</sub> emission standards of buildings, adaptation to climate change measures and requirements for decentralised energy. The new Local Plan, which is expected to be formally adopted in November 2019, goes significantly further in setting requirements for zero carbon planning on all large residential developments and BREEAM 'Excellent' standard on large commercial developments.
- 4.4 Reading's Carbon Plan 2015-2020 sets out how the Council will reduce its emissions of greenhouse gas from their own operations. The plan includes the target to reduce emissions by 50% from the 2008/9 level. This target was met three years early in 2017/18. The plan also contains a target to generate 20% of the Council's energy from renewable sources by 2020.
- 4.5 The Council has run a SALIX energy efficiency programme since 2008, has installed 13,000 streetlights and circa 7000 solar panels on Council buildings. In addition, the Council helped to set up Reading Community Energy Society, which installs solar panels funded by community share.



- 4.6 The Council's sustainable transport programmes include the very successful and sustainable bus fleet, extended cycle network including a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the river Thames and a number of park and ride schemes.

## 5. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 It has been identified through modelling that the following fundamental actions would be needed to make significant progress towards a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. (more information on modelling is given in Appendix 1)

- i) Widespread retrofitting of private and public housing stock and commercial buildings with insulation and other energy efficiency measures.
- ii) Putting solar arrays on most of the suitable roof space and erecting more large wind turbines.
- iii) Significantly less petrol and diesel powered vehicles on Reading's roads, through more cycling and walking and accelerated uptake of electric vehicles.
- iv) Widespread use of smart technologies for energy storage and connecting to local power grids.
- v) Recycling standards on industry and supermarkets whilst supporting the delivery of increased recycling rates and maximising the potential to generate clean local energy from waste.
- vi) Developing innovative solutions to include district heating systems, ground source heat pumps and the use of rivers and watercourses to generate energy.

- 5.2 The four key technical challenges are:

- i) Low carbon buildings - retrofitting at scale.
- ii) Renewable heat and electricity supply - scaling up renewables.
- iii) Sustainable transport - phasing out petrol and diesel.
- iv) Smart Energy - smoothing out the power.

- 5.4 Internally, a Corporate Task Group will be established to oversee the co-ordination of a Climate Emergency Framework, ensuring its principles and objectives are embedded as part of day to day business and that key projects are taken forward across all Council Directorates.

- 5.5 A cross Committee approach will be established within the Council, whereby all the standing Committees of the Council will report on the relevant elements of Reading's Climate Change Strategy and the Climate Emergency Action Framework. Relevant guidance for the identification of environmental implications and the necessary mitigations that should be undertaken, will be provided in the Committee report templates. The Terms of Reference of the Committees have been amended to include: '*Climate Change Strategy - To contribute to and adopt the relevant parts of the Climate Change action plan.*' A new Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum has also been set up. The draft terms of reference are shown in Appendix 5.

### Indicative Committee Work Programme

- 5.6 The Housing and Neighbourhoods and Leisure (HNL) Committee will oversee all projects involved in the retrofitting of the boroughs housing stock and household level renewable energy. The housing strategy will set out a range of projects which aim to improve the Council's own stock energy efficiency and the work with private landlords and homeowners to reduce energy consumption in private stock. In addition committee would oversee the Leisure contracts and operations of the Council and their use and generation of energy and corresponding carbon emissions.

The Committee will need to consider a wide range of factors relating to these. A list is provided below to guide the Committee on the considerations but this is not exhaustive:

- The carbon footprint of operational facilities
- The opportunity for renewable energy infrastructure
- Travel and transport plans including cycling electric vehicle charging facilities etc
- The sustainable design and construction of new facilities/buildings
- The supply chains and procurement arrangements for services commissioned
- Communication of environmentally positive behaviours to staff and users
- The maintaining and enhancing of natural environments
- The consideration of risks to vulnerable groups (for example fuel poverty)
- The use of natural resources
- Encouragement and support for educational campaigns
- Involvement of service users in the Reading Climate Action Network
- Educational programmes relating to the national curriculum
- The development of key skills relating to a low carbon, clean growth future.

### **Partners and Stakeholders**

- 5.7 The delivery of the scale of change that is needed to achieve a carbon neutral Reading will require a continued internal effort within the Council but cannot be achieved without significant national policy changes and national and local actions by businesses, residents and other stakeholders.
- 5.8 Reading Climate Change Partnership has a broad representation across the business, community and public sectors. This external focus will continue to build a network of dedicated champions who can engage at all levels to influence, persuade and lead by example to bring about the extended involvement of all communities across the borough.
- 5.9 The consultation launch for the third Reading Climate Change Strategy launch took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Six themes were set out at the event, representing the potential chapters of the new strategy. Workshops at the event split the participants into these six theme groups. Theme groups will meet subsequently and together develop an action plan for their theme. Each group has a 'theme coordinator' who will be responsible for the development of their theme action plan.
- 5.10 The six proposed themes of the strategy are:
- > Energy and Low Carbon Development
  - > Natural Environment
  - > Resources and Consumption
  - > Sustainable Transport
  - > Health
  - > Water Supply and Flooding
- 5.11 The event was attended by more than 120 people. Hundreds of ideas for actions within the six themes were articulated. Attendees were invited to consider how to approach implementation from a range of points of view.
- 5.12 Each of the theme groups will reflect on ideas tabled at the event and discuss gaps and delivery approaches, producing a themed action plan by December. They will meet at least two more times over this period and feed into the main partnership.
- 5.13 Ideas that came forwarded included:
- > Renewable energy and whole building retrofit,
  - > Electrically powered shared public and private transport
  - > A safer and extended cycling and walking network

- > Clean air, re-wilding, more tree planting and plants for bees
- > Greater preparedness for climate risks such as extreme weather
- > Waste minimised through re-use and repair
- > A 'circular economy' that re-processes products using renewable energy.

5.14 In the business space this change requires stakeholders including Reading UK, Reading 2050, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and a number of business role models who are able to share best practice and build B2B approaches. The Council will seek to influence partners' strategies and plans to ensure the climate change agenda is fully considered to include, for example, the LEP's emerging Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy. Local start-up companies and SMEs will be supported in bringing forward innovative solutions.

5.15 The national policy framework, broadly set out under the Climate Change Act, remains critical to the delivery of Reading's Climate Emergency work. Grant funding and subsidy payments will be required to support investment in new technologies. Statutory powers to improve buildings for example are crucial in enabling Councils and other parties to drive forward a low/zero carbon pathway.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 In conclusion, the delivery of a carbon neutral pathway by 2030 requires a substantial and sustained effort by all citizens and organisations in Reading. The investment in technology pathways will require innovative new approaches which, in many cases, will rely on the levers of national policy and the resources that are made available through the government's programme on climate change.

6.2 The new Climate Change Strategy will contain the carbon neutral 2030 framework for action. It will contain details of the modelling work and establish a pathway to a carbon neutral Reading. It will outline the specific contributions from a range of different stakeholders.

6.2 The Council calls upon the wider communities and organisations in the Borough to actively engage with the programme and work with the Council and other partners through the Reading Climate Change Partnership and its network, the 'Reading Climate Action Network'.

6.3 Over the next decade, Reading must substantially reduce its use of fossil fuels through the reduction of energy consumption. This will be coupled with a major increase in the amount of renewable electricity and heat generated, which will help to power the widespread electrification of heat and transport.

6.4 The Council and the Reading Climate Change Partnership will play an important part in galvanising action on climate change and in encouraging and supporting local communities and business to change to a carbon neutral pathway in order to play our part in averting the worst effects of climate change.

## 7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

Given the wide remit of this agenda the proposals set out in this report support the delivery of all of the Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe

- Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading
- Ensuring the Council is Fit for the Future

7.1 Amendments are proposed to the current emerging Corporate Plan to fully reference the climate change agenda.

## **8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

8.1 Widespread community engagement is taking place in the updating of a range of Council strategies including the upcoming revisions to the Reading Climate Change Strategy, Housing Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the decisions being made in this report. The individual strategies and projects will be considered separately in due course.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 This report sets out the intended approach to establishing policies, procedures and programmes to meet the objectives set out in the Climate Emergency resolution. Modifications to policies procedures and programmes will be made pursuant to the General Power of Competence contained in sections 1-6 of the Localism Act 2011 and/or additional statutory powers detailed below.

10.2 The following statutes and regulations being the Climate Change Act, the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations, the Energy in Performance in Buildings Regulations 2012, The Heat Network Regulations, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act where relevant will be relied upon to deliver the programme, which is set out in the Reading Climate Change Strategy.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The financial implications of the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and other relevant strategies and specific projects will be reported when specific plans and proposals are brought in due course. Risk Assessments will be carried out for these individual projects.

11.2 The Council spends over £2m per annum on energy and has a capital programme for investing capital in energy efficiency projects. Investment of capital through the SALIX programme, typically meets the 10 year repayment condition, helping to avoid rising energy costs. Other energy projects offer a return on investment.

11.3 It is estimated that over £150m is spent per annum by Reading's residents and employees on energy and fuel. By investing in energy efficiency, renewable

energy generation and electrification of heat and transport, this annual expenditure could be reduced by instead spending on projects which would have the benefit of creating jobs and saving money for all. Where positive business cases are brought forward projects can offer value for money.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Appendix 1: Modelling a Zero Carbon Pathway**

**Appendix 2: Existing Projects**

**Appendix 3: Item 11 Full Council - 26<sup>th</sup> February - Council Climate Emergency Declaration**

**Appendix 4: 'Reading Climate Change Strategy 2013-20 Action Plans**

**Appendix 5 - Draft Clean Air Safer Transport Forum Terms of Reference**

## Appendix 1 - Modelling a Zero Carbon Pathway

- 1.1 Reading Borough Council carried out initial modelling to establish a potential pathway for a zero carbon Reading. This was reported to Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) Committee in March 2018.
- 1.2 The model utilises the Department of Business , Energy and Industry Strategy (BEIS) carbon emissions data for local authorities and converts this to power. It uses standard yield and performance data to calculate the contribution of power to the local networks. It does not take account of the different time of day or year that the power is used/generated.
- 1.3 Whilst the initial model should only be regarded as a rough assessment of what potential there might be in Reading according to our local understanding, it sets out a possible blueprint for technology and infrastructure development that is needed rapidly if carbon neutrality is to be achieved by 2030.
- 1.4 The modelling assumes a very ambitious programme of energy efficiency is carried out in Reading and energy consumption is reduced by just over 50%. It also seeks to calculate the amount of renewable energy installations that could potentially be achieved without taking account of many of the technical and practical challenges associated with this scale of roll out.
- 1.5 The model showed that there is potentially considerable renewable heat potential utilising Reading's rivers, ground and gas from food waste and sewerage waste. Together these could supply a large proportion of the town's heat.
- 1.6 In the scenario modelled, renewable electricity generation would be largely provided by solar panels. This would require a considerable increase in the prevalence of this technology, requiring an order of magnitude change in the number of roofs in the borough which have solar panels installed.
- 1.7 Additional electricity would be needed for heat and the electrification of transport. The model showed that this extra load would mean that even with all the other work to reduce demand and increase renewable supply, there would remain a substantial gap in the amount of clean electricity available.
- 1.8 There are a number of obstacles which could potentially lead to certain technology solutions offering significantly less energy than shown. The pathway would need to have a high degree of flexibility to ensure that, as trials and commercial pilots yield information about the real potential of technologies, the model can be adjusted to ensure that the correct development pathway progresses. Further modelling work will be carried out to establish a range of scenarios and sensitivities using the Government backed recently published 'SCATTER' tool.
- 1.9 The modelling work showed the following four key technical challenge areas associated with delivering a carbon neutral Reading:-
  - i) Low carbon buildings - retrofitting at scale.
  - ii) Renewable heat and electricity supply - scaling up renewables.
  - iii) Sustainable transport - phasing out petrol and diesel.
  - iv) Smart Energy - smoothing out the power.

## Appendix 2 - Existing Projects

The Council has already progressed work in these areas and continues to work on key projects which will help to take this framework forward.

### Low Carbon Buildings

The Council's Carbon Plan 2015-20 outlines its approach to reducing emissions to 50% of 2008/9 levels by 2020. This target was met three years early in 2017/18.

A number of low carbon projects have been progressed over the course of the delivery of the last two climate change strategies. Around 100 SALIX energy efficiency projects have been delivered in the Council estate including a full retrofit of the current civic offices and the town hall.

Over 2000 properties were insulated under the Heat-seeker project in the first climate change strategy and whilst national funding was significantly reduced the Council has continued to provide a fuel poverty service called Winter Watch, which has visited hundreds of homes and assisted in obtaining funding for energy efficiency measures large and small to householders.

The Council was a Green Deal Pioneer, but the national policy was scrapped and no Green Deals were rolled out.

A number of grant funded boiler replacement schemes were installed into Reading social housing stock. Readings own housing stock has a SAP rating of 73%.

Reading was one of the first UK authorities to include zero carbon planning in its new Local Plan. This policy awaits the outcome of the inspection process before it will be adopted. The policy is designed to re-invest funds from large developments where they cannot feasibly achieve zero carbon standards on the site into local projects, including housing retrofit.

The Council is currently planning the refurbishment of the Bennet Road depot. The project incorporates a range of innovative and energy efficiency measures, aiming to reduce the carbon footprint substantially. Modelling is being carried out to determine the business model for investment including consideration of renewable technologies, battery storage and charging for electric Council fleet vehicles.

The Council is in the process of completing a replacement of 100% of the streetlights in the borough with LED lamps. The replacement of 13,000 street lamps will save over 1000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum and reduce electricity bills by approximately £200k per annum.

### Renewable Electricity

The Council has invested in solar PV on 457 Council houses and 46 corporate and community buildings. In total the Council owns around 7000 panels or 2MWp of generation capacity. This amounts to around 1/3 of the solar panels installed in the Borough.

In addition to the above, the Council helped to set up Reading Community Energy Society, which is in the process of installing its second phase of community funded solar panels on local buildings, bringing the total to around 2400 panels or 600kWp of generation capacity.

The Council is planning a range of projects looking at the effectiveness and scalability of different technology combinations, working closely with the University to monitor the performance of the technologies and assist in optimising their performance.

The Council and Reading Transport are working with Reading Community Energy Society to install larger unsubsidised solar PV schemes including the bus depot. Together with the existing solar PV on the bus depot, this will be the largest solar install on a single building in Reading, slightly bigger than the arrays on the Council's civic offices which total 148kWp (~700) panels.

## **Renewable Heat**

The Council has implemented one biomass heating scheme at Cedar Court, with a connection to an adjoining building.

As the grid decarbonises, heat pumps become more sustainable than gas based systems. The most efficient heat pumps utilise the heat resource available in the ground and rivers.

The Council has been successful for the third time in securing Heat Network funding from the Heat Network Delivery Unit. The most recent project outlined feasibility for a district heating network in Reading town centre. A key recommendation was that schemes in the town centre could harness renewable heat from the river, aquifers and ground source heat.

A new project will focus on the development opportunities in the town centre and bringing these into operation. Strategic sites such as Station Hill and the ex-Royal Mail site offer the density and opportunity to deliver schemes with renewable heat.

## **Sustainable Transport**

Reading has delivered a great number of initiatives and programmes under its Local Transport Plan 3 to move towards a more sustainable transport system. Reading Buses has continued to expand its fleet of low or zero carbon buses with a fleet of over 40 sustainable CNG powered buses. These buses are fuelled by compressed natural gas, for which biomethane has been injected in equivalent volumes into the national gas grid from regional sources. Reading has the third highest per person passenger numbers in the UK outside London.

A number of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure projects have been implemented including the new pedestrian and cycle-bridge over the river Thames.

The Council has invested in electric vehicle charging points at the Civic Offices and Depot site. These offer charging facilities for up to ten vehicles at a time.

Two fast-charge units are available to the public behind the Civic Offices.

The Council is in the process of designing the install of a number of charge points in areas of on street parking, where residents do not have access to off street parking and thereby home charging. The charging points will be set into the lamp columns (posts) and made readily available within the trial area.

Reading's licensed (Hackney Cab) taxi fleet have committed to be 100% Ultra Low Emission vehicles by 2030.



## Smart energy systems

The Council has been installing 'smart' Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) on its electricity and gas meters. Over 90% of its energy consumption is via these meters. In 2018, a number of meters were upgraded to AMR under P272 regulations. AMR meters allow the Council to have access to 'half hourly' consumption data.

The Council is currently modelling PV/battery scenarios at its Bennet Road Depot site. Battery storage would be used to smooth out peak energy periods when power on the grid is at its most carbon intensive or 'brown'.

Electric Vehicles can be used as an energy storage facility. As well as controlling when charging occurs, future models will incorporate 'Vehicle to Grid', where cars can export electricity back to the grid. The Council has procured a number of Electric Vans and is modelling future uses of electric vehicles as power providers to buildings and other power uses.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

26 FEBRUARY 2019

**ITEM NO 11 - CLIMATE EMERGENCY - TOWARDS A ZERO CARBON READING - ALTERED**

Reading Borough Council (RBC) believes the world is now clearly in the midst of a climate emergency and that more concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. **As such, this Council commits to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation - in achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.**

RBC has a long standing commitment to action on climate change. A signatory of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2006, the Council was one of the first authorities to produce a detailed Climate Action Plan.

We note that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Borough have fallen by 41% since 2005, which is greater than all but 19 of the 405 authorities in Great Britain, and that Reading Borough Council has reduced its own emissions by 53% since 2008.

Reading is urban in nature and the majority of emissions are from the use of fossil fuels and energy to run buildings and transport. Methane is also harmful to the climate. In Reading, these emissions are primarily from food, human waste and landfill. Gases from the latter two are captured and used to generate energy.

Despite good progress at local level, new evidence continues to emerge about the scale of the likely impacts of climate change. We are now aware through the launch of the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018 that, in order to reduce the risks of severe climate change, all countries must act much more quickly.

This Council was proud to host the Model Climate Conference in December 2018 in this Chamber attended by students from local secondary schools, which coincided with the Katowice Climate Conference (COP24), and resulted in all the participating students stressing the urgency of climate action and pressing the Council, Government and others to act quickly.

RBC notes that we have already set out a number of ambitious policies and actions which will help to pave the way for the delivery of a Zero Carbon future such as:

- 'Zero Carbon Standards' within its draft Local Plan,
- The RBC Carbon Plan
- The forthcoming consultation on options, such as a Clean Air Zone, for improving local air quality and reducing congestion prior to publishing our draft Fourth Local Transport Plan
- The Reading Climate Change Partnership and Strategy - Reading Means Business on Climate Change
- The Launch of Reading Community Energy Society

This Council therefore instructs officers to report to the SEPT and Policy Committees on further potential measures that could accelerate the timescale for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2030, but recognises that this date can only be achieved with substantial policy changes from national government.

**Council also requests officers to ensure that forthcoming revisions to the Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy (and any other relevant policy statements) reflect the urgency of this resolution.**

The Council also calls on the Government to follow the recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change and radically improve the policy framework including, for example:

- detailed and practical proposals for retrofitting private and public housing stock, where the Green Deal failed.
- upgrade social housing energy efficiency to higher standards
- more support for renewable electricity and heat (and not taxing them unfairly)
- more support for establishing renewably powered heat networks
- more support for the smart technologies and storage and connecting to local power grids.
- more support for electric vehicle infrastructure and ownership, whilst incentivising the scrappage of older polluting vehicles
- more national investment in cycling and walking policies, and the expansion of public transport and car clubs using the latest zero carbon technology
- working with local businesses to improve their energy efficiency
- putting solar arrays on most of the suitable roof space and erecting more large wind turbines
- developing local energy storage facilities
- establishing national recycling standards on industry and supermarkets whilst supporting the roll-out of food waste collection and its use for the generation of clean local energy
- building a town centre district energy system which harnesses heat from local rivers or watercourses
- establishing the widespread use of ground-source heat pumps and potentially air source heat pumps
- amending local authority procurement powers to require the delivery of carbon neutral environmental strategies by private sector suppliers

The Council calls on the Government to give Reading as soon as possible the additional powers and funding needed to ensure that Reading is carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to our local MPs, **and to the Prime Minister and to relevant Government departments (DEFRA, MHCLG, DfT, and Treasury)** setting out the above requirements and the need for new legislation and financial support to deliver this radical agenda.

I move this

I second this

.....

Councillor Page

.....

Councillor

## Theme 1: ENERGY SUPPLY

The heavy dependence on fossil fuels to provide energy in the UK has been identified as our most significant impact on global climate change. It is therefore crucial that we consider how our energy is produced, supplied and consumed in order to reduce our impact on climate change and to meet the needs of our society in the long term.

To achieve this, we need to be efficient with the energy we use and find clean and ‘green’ ways of producing heat and electricity. Firstly, we must conserve energy by insulating our homes and reducing our consumption of electricity through switching off and improving the efficiency of our energy consuming devices. Secondly, we must generate a larger proportion of our energy from renewable sources like wind and solar. Thirdly, we must consider the right sort of infrastructure to provide energy locally. This will involve heat networks that provide low carbon heat directly to buildings and a smart grid where the right amount of energy is generated and little is wasted.

**Vision by 2020:** By 2020, Reading will use less energy and have cleaner, greener supplies of electricity and heat. We will have increased the amount of locally generated renewable energy. Local smart grids and power plants (decentralised energy) will start to be developed to offer more responsive, cost effective, low carbon energy to consumers. Smart meters will be installed across the borough to improve monitoring and control of local energy supply. Communities and businesses will work together to reduce their energy consumption and develop low carbon energy solutions.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Reduce energy consumption in Reading
- Decarbonise energy supply of Reading

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
<b>Strategic priority 1: Reduce energy consumption in Reading</b>					
T1SP1.1 <sup>1</sup>	Produce report identifying the commercial and public sector electricity consumption in Reading and identifying key opportunities for energy efficiency		Report	RBC	University of Reading (Technologies for Sustainable Built Environment Centre)

<sup>1</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T1SP1.2	Analyse report which identifies the commercial and public sector electricity consumption in Reading. Identify specific technologies that are commercially viable for increasing energy efficiency.	End of 2017	Report completed	Reading Borough Council (RBC)	University of Reading (Technologies for Sustainable Built Environment Centre- TSBE centre)
T1SP1.3	Develop and support a group of organisations to invest in their own energy efficiency programmes	End of 2017	First event planned for 02/17	RBC; UKCIC	University of Reading; Thames Water; large retail stores
T1SP1.4	- Deliver the Council Energy Plan Programme - Deliver BEEP	2020	- Low carbon Street lighting due for completion in Spring 2017- Delivery of BEEP	RBC	Public sector group
T1SP1.5	Continue to offer schools support on energy efficiency and renewable energy investment	2017-2020	- Encourage uptake of SEELS (SALIX Energy Efficiency Loans) funding for schools - Expansions complete to energy efficient standards - Reinstate Business Energy Management System - Support Energy Performance Certificates implementation and Air Conditioning Certification	RBC	Reading Schools
T1PS1.6	Encourage and increase the number of smart meters and other resource monitoring/ saving devices installed in buildings/households and other energy/resource using facilities across	2018-2020		RBC	University of Reading

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
	Reading. Encourage their use in Green Park, Apex Plaza				
<b>Strategic priority 2: Decarbonise Reading's energy supply</b>					
T1SP2.1	Produce a model that identifies where electricity loads in buildings can be reduced at peak periods		Engineering Doctorate Thesis with Technologies for Sustainable Built Environment Centre	RBC	University of Reading-TSBE centre.
T1SP2.2	Complete heat mapping exercise	August 2017	Completed report	RBC	RCCP/HNDU
T1SP2.3	Develop district energy projects in Reading amongst partners.	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial report on options for specific sites</li> <li>- Business planning for sites or private sector driven through planning/investment</li> <li>- Encourage private sector investment into District Energy Networks in Reading through planning</li> </ul>	RBC	Private sector
T1SP2.4	Disseminate information about complete district energy schemes	March 2016	University of Reading scheme	University of Reading	RBC
T1SP2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce a renewable energy investment strategy to provide 8% of local power, identifying most investable renewable energy in borough.</li> <li>- Aim for 100% of Reading's energy to be produced through renewable sources by 2050</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2020</li> <li>- 2050</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence base complete</li> <li>- Workshops with partners</li> <li>- Report to Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP)</li> <li>- Consider use of solar photovoltaics, solar thermal, ground source heat pumps, wind, anaerobic digestion, biomass and gasification processes, and hydropower</li> </ul>	Thames Valley Energy	RBC

READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T1SP2.6	- Deliver Council Energy Plan Programme - Renewable energy projects to achieve 15% of council energy use by 2020 - Includes Photovoltaic Solar panels and biomass heating.	2020	- 1st Biomass project March 2014 - Solar photovoltaic on housing Aug 2014 - Targets for photovoltaic and biomass TBC	RBC	Reading Sustainability Centre
T1SP2.7	Work with small businesses to encourage uptake of renewable energy	End 2018		RBC, Institute for Sustainability, European Projects	
T1SP2.8	Encourage local communities and businesses to support the development of renewable energy in their communities	July 2014	- Identify potential buildings and locations, and interested parties - Provide technical advice to interested groups	RBC; Reading Voluntary Action, Greater Reading Environmental Network, Transition Town Reading	
T1SP2.9	Create a number of community showcase facilities in Reading and run tours	2018	Identify potential buildings, Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) solar and Green Park wind turbine	RBC	Reading International Solidarity Centre; Green Education
T1SP2.10	- Identify planning sites that are suitable for decentralised energy networks. Implement policy to incorporate district energy into appropriate planning sites. - Incorporate these policies into Local Plan		Shortlist of suitable sites identified.	Reading Borough Council, Thames Valley Energy	Climate Berkshire
T1SP2.11	Produce RBC Energy and Carbon Management Policy		Report to Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport committee March 14	RBC	
T1SP2.12	Build local supply chains for technologies by building local skills and engaging local companies in larger contracts			RBC; Institute for Sustainability	Thames Valley Energy
T1SP2.13	Attract local and inward investment options for renewable energy development			RCCP	RBC

## Theme 2: LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT

The quality of the built environment is of crucial importance to our contribution to climate change, through reducing the amount of energy we use in our buildings. Insulating and improving the efficiency of our existing buildings and building highly efficient new buildings are both critical to reducing our energy consumption and carbon footprint, and to reducing energy costs and addressing 'fuel poverty'. To adapt to climate change and achieve sustainable development, long term economic, social and environmental strategies must continue to evolve and guide the revision of spatial development policies for the future.

**Vision by 2020:** By 2020, Reading will have reduced its energy consumption from buildings through the improved design, construction and refurbishment of existing buildings. Reading will have improved planning policies in place that reduce energy consumption and will have improved processes to ensure compliance in new-build and renovations. Council policies will emphasise local retrofit and renewable energy programmes and other ways to reduce emissions from the local area. Planning policies and standards for buildings will address energy use, and the local effects of climate change. Strategic planning will assess the long-term implications of development trends on reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Continue to develop planning policies that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions directly and indirectly from the borough
- Retrofit energy efficiency measures into Reading's buildings
- Develop and implement adaptation measures to reduce the impact of high and low temperatures

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
<b>Strategic Priority 1: Continue to develop planning policies that support the reduction of green-house gas emissions directly and indirectly from the borough</b>					
T2SP1.1	Ensure new buildings in Reading meet high standards of energy efficiency in design and construction & install the most appropriate on site renewable energy generating technologies; specifically, review available and emerging standards	Annual	- Sustainable planning policies in place -Number of renewable	Reading Borough Council (RBC)	



READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
			installations		
T2SP1.2	Research potential to promote high standards of energy efficiency such as Minergie or Passive House	September 2018	- Find appropriate funding - Develop a study	The Reading Sustainability Centre (TRSC); Tony Cowling	
T2SP1.3	Establish a 'Zero Carbon Homes' mechanism with a local carbon offsetting fund.	September 2019	Planning policies in place and fund established.	RBC	
T2SP1.4	Establish and maintain a local public register of Energy Performance Certificates in the Borough - to track progress and to celebrate success and assist with Home Energy Conservation Action (HECA) report	September 2018 and annual update	Register established	RBC (EST to be commissioned initially)	RCCP to fund bi-annual updates.
T2SP1.5	Derive targets for progress with energy saving measures in Reading - to 2020 and 2030 - in line with Climate Change Committee scenarios and evaluate options for retrofit	Initial draft September 2018	Report with recommendations	RBC	
T2SP1.6	- Continue to review strategic plans for economy, housing, population, industry etc. to ensure they are compatible with local and national emissions targets - Revise strategic plans to manage the amount, type, and location of housing and business development in and around Reading to deliver a low-carbon (and low-cost) economy	Ongoing	Consultation response from RCCP to Local Plan	RCCP	Climate Berkshire; Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
T2SP1.7	Revision of LDF to include policies on density, scale, location and distribution of development to deliver a low-carbon economy.	September 2019	Revision of planning policy documents	RBC	University of Reading
T2SP1.8	Promote research in the area of Energy and Built Environment, Low Carbon development etc.	On going	New research development	University of Reading	RBC

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T2SP1.9	Review policies on 'green roofs and walls' in LDF. Include guidance for developers, planners and public on their costs and benefits so that their relative merits for different policy objectives relating to climate change (and other benefits/dis-benefits) can be taken in to account in design and planning	September 2020	Planning policy review  Revision of Sustainable Design and Construction SPD	Reading Borough Council	University of Reading
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Retrofit energy efficiency measures into Reading's buildings</b>					
T2SP2.1	Review guidance available for householders and businesses on retro-fitting renewable energy and energy-saving technologies, including technologies, financial assistance such as ECO scheme, and standards such as EnerPHit	December 2018	- Regularly updated web pages Information and links on Reading Climate Action Network(RCAN) - Active publicity campaign	Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP)	TRSC; Draught Busters; Tony Cowling
T2SP2.2	HECA report- use information to target energy saving activity and action	March 2019	HECA report	RBC	Housing associations and landlord groups
T2SP2.3	- Develop case studies and show homes networks that encourage renovation and re-use of empty buildings rather than building new homes - Explore links to refurbishments of older buildings	March 2019	Establish specific show homes in Reading through volunteers and/or where funding available - possible link to heritage open days	RCCP	Superhomes network; Reading community groups
T2SP2.4	Renovate existing Council properties to be very low carbon to recognised standards such as EnerPHit.	Ongoing	Report on numbers and standards achieved	RBC	

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T2SP2.5	Evaluate options to encourage retrofit in domestic buildings	March 2019	Report on progress	RBC	
T2SP2.6	Provide service to help house holders - especially those most vulnerable to fuel poverty, and in particular those that are at imminent health risk - to access Energy Company Obligation (ECO) subsidies, energy efficiency improvements, guidance on behavioural change, and other services/funding available	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue Winter Watch initiative</li> <li>- 1 x staff available to provide service</li> <li>- Reach at least 100 households in need</li> <li>- Investigate flexible ECO</li> </ul>	RBC	Energy companies and switching services; Draught Busters; TRSC
T2SP2.8	- Work with landlords, lettings and managing agents to ensure minimum EPC compliance and encourage improvements in the sector	September 2018	Propose actions to encourage early adoption and enforce compliance	RBC	
Ts2SP2.9	Monitor improvements in energy use achieved by retro-fit measures to Council-owned buildings.	Annual	Annual report	Reading Borough Council	
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Develop and implement adaptation measures to reduce the impact of high and low temperatures</b>					
T2SP3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess care homes for risk of heat waves</li> <li>- implement measures to ensure that care customers are not at risk of hot conditions</li> <li>- develop low carbon cooling approaches for care homes</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Inclusion in Business Continuity plans	RBC	

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T2SP3.2	Ensure public spaces and park-areas have sufficient shade and places to rest to reduce risks of over-exposure to sun and potential health impacts, through implementation of Tree Strategy (see Natural Environment chapter and Action Plan)	Ongoing - six-monthly report	- 10% increase in canopy cover target from Tree Strategy - Evidence of CC-aware planning for shade	RBC	Tree wardens

## Theme 3: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment plays a key role in making our urban spaces liveable, both for people and wildlife. In response to climate change, communities of wild animals and plants will have to relocate from places that are becoming unsuitable for their survival to places where conditions are becoming more favourable. The way that open spaces and parklands are managed can have a significant impact on wildlife corridors and habitats and consequently on wildlife's ability to survive. Tree planting, for example, can help mitigate both the 'heat island' effect (where an urban area is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas due to human activities) and the emissions that impact on both climate change and air quality.

The natural environment should be managed and developed to respond to the threat of climate change, including establishing the role of the local community, to make Reading a better place for people and for wildlife.

**Vision by 2020:** By 2020, Reading will have a thriving and interconnected natural environment, with links and stepping stones, such as parks, back gardens and river corridors. Wildlife will be able to live in and move through the urban environment, allowing it to adapt to a changing climate. The people of Reading will be active guardians of our natural habitats, and the community will be more involved in the management of local green spaces.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Improve the quality and connectivity of natural habitats
- Encourage local community groups and businesses to become more involved in the management of local green spaces

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
<b>Strategic Priority 1: Improve the quality and connectivity of natural habitats</b>					
T3SP1.1 <sup>2</sup>	Review the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan and update the plan to take account of climate change	2020	New Biodiversity Action Plan in 2020	Reading Borough Council (RBC)	Nature Nurture, Outdoor Classrooms; Thames Valley Records Centre

<sup>2</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T3SP1.2	Monitor the proportion of Local Wildlife Sites in positive conservation management in line with government guidance on Single Data List 160	Ongoing	- All RBC sites to be in positive conservation management by 2015 - RBC to encourage other landholders to manage their sites	RBC	Other landowners as appropriate. Econet; 'Friends of Parks' groups; Thames Valley Environment Record Centre
T3SP1.3	Keep under review, in light of climate change science: Tree Strategy, Orchard Project, Open Spaces Strategy, Thames Parks Plan and the document 'Reading Waterspace - A Vision for the Thames and Kennet'	Ongoing	Status report. Progress report on each project annually.	Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP)	RBC
T3SP1.4	- Identify areas of grass land of highest habitat value and manage as meadow - Align this action with National Pollinator Strategy; Coronation Meadows Strategy	Ongoing	- Staff training / awareness days - Statement about grass cutting policy on website	RBC	Private individuals and volunteer groups; Department for Environment; Food & Rural Affairs; Coronation Meadows
T3SP1.5	Help facilitate the work of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership in respect of Reading sites	2020	Input to Berkshire Local Nature Partnership	RBC	Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
T3SP1.6	Undertake periodic ecological surveys of Reading's Local Wildlife Sites and review status in line with government and local guidance	Each site is surveyed as a minimum every 5 years	Annual review of surveyed site status	RBC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre; Nature Nurture
T3SP1.7	Periodically update the Berkshire phase 1 habitat map	2018	Periodic review approximately every 5 years, next due circa 2018	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre	RBC; Nature Nurture

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T3SP1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise awareness of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and seek opportunities to engage with landowners and encourage them to manage land in accordance with the objectives for their area</li> <li>- Promote Green Park as a positive case study for its commitment to biodiversity</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Progress report and plan	Berkshire Local Nature Partnership	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre; RBC; Green Park
T3SP1.9	<p>Encourage groups, individuals and organisations to share ecological data with relevant Research Centres so that this information can be used to inform studies into the effects of climate change on biodiversity</p> <p>Promote smart technologies and applications to increase ecological indicators (<a href="http://www.brc.ac.uk">http://www.brc.ac.uk</a>)</p>	Ongoing	<p>Annual report from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to RBC</p> <p>Update information about applications available to monitor ecological data</p>	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre	<a href="http://www.brc.ac.uk">http://www.brc.ac.uk</a>
T3SP1.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess adequacy of control over conversion of front gardens to parking</li> <li>- Align this work to the Royal Horticultural Society's 'Greening Grey Britain' campaign, information on arid and swales planting.</li> </ul>	January 2020	Review of policy to committee with recommendations	Royal Horticultural Society	RBC
T3SP1.11	Raise awareness of the importance of green infrastructure for adapting to climate change and the economic benefits it provides	March 2020	<p>Planning advice</p> <p>Produce a briefing for multi-agency use in publicity</p>	RBC	University of Reading;; Nature Nurture, Reading Outdoor Classrooms

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T3SP1.12	Assess and seek improvement of waterways, river and canal banks as wildlife corridors	March 2020	Identify improvements to managed areas.	RBC	Environment Agency; Berkshire Local Nature Partnership; Canals and Rivers Trust; Thames Valley Record Centre; Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Encourage local community groups and businesses to become more involved in the management of local green spaces</b>					
T3SP2.1	Sustain and grow local wildlife activities, especially for children	Ongoing	Wildlife community events (Estimated 94 meets in 2012)	Econet; Globe Groups	Connect Reading (businesses); Nature Nurture; Green Trees, Forest School Network; Food 4 Families
T3SP2.2	Encourage teaching about wildlife in schools	Ongoing	Provide training and information for teachers; look at expanding Reading's Outdoor Classroom.	RBC/ other partners	Nature Nurture; Green Trees Education; Conservation Volunteers Berkshire; Food4Families, RISC
T3SP2.3	Highlight and publicise guidance on wildlife gardening with assistance from partners	Jan 2020	- Guidance on website - Establish a channel for local expertise sharing	Econet; GLOBE groups (Oxford Road Community Garden & Ridgeline)	Berks Bucks And Oxon Wildlife Trust; Econet; Green Trees, Royal Horticultural Society; Food4Families



## Theme 4: WATER SUPPLY AND FLOODING

A changing climate is expected to mean more extreme weather events such as intense rainfall and floods, heat-waves and droughts. These impacts are predicted to increase over time, with winters getting warmer and wetter, while summers become hotter and drier. Hotter, drier summers will tend to increase demand for water and reduce supply, while more variable winter rainfall may increase the frequency of droughts despite the increase in average rainfall. As well as affecting water supply, this could also have significant impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment.

Action plans will set out measures to adapt to the threats to water supply and the risks of flooding.

**Vision by 2020:** By 2020, supply and demand for water will be managed so as to improve the projected 'supply demand balance', reduce the risks of 'temporary use bans' (e.g. hosepipe bans), and reduce the effects on wildlife of poor water quality and of damage to habitat through drought. The risks from changing patterns of rainfall and extreme weather events will be better understood and people will be well prepared with homes and businesses becoming increasingly resilient.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Manage demand for and supply of water, to reduce the expected impact of water shortages on consumers and on wildlife
- Reduce the risk of damage due to flooding
- Develop an adaption plan for Reading so we can plan for extreme events associated with the changing climate

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
<b>Strategic Priority 1: Manage demand for and supply of water to reduce the expected impact of water shortages on consumers and on wildlife</b>					
T4SP1.1 <sup>3</sup>	Share understanding of Thames Water's - Water Resource Management Plan	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure Thames Water (TW) understand and factor in Reading's growth estimates</li> <li>- Share the good work TW are doing to factor in</li> </ul>	TW	Environment Agency (EA)

<sup>3</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
			climate projections - add links to Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN) website		
T4SP1.2	Ensure plans are in place so that Reading is ready to respond to a drought situation	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure drought resilience options are included in TW's Water Resilience plan</li> <li>- Ensure we are planning for droughts that are extreme enough (factoring in climate projections of more extreme future low river flows)</li> <li>* Incorporate learning from EA lead work on 'Water efficiency in the Southeast'</li> </ul>	EA	TW; Reading Borough Council (RBC)
T4SP1.3	Ensure that Reading's Local Plan is compatible with expected availability of water supplies	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If funding can be found, do a water cycle study as part of current Local Plan development</li> <li>- Now the 'code for sustainable homes' has gone, follow Greater London Authority (GLA) recommendations for water efficiency (see Table 2.1 and 2.2 of Housing Standards document on .gov.uk)</li> </ul>	RBC	TW; EA
T4SP1.4	Share information with homes and businesses about how to get hold of free water saving devices	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make links from TW to RCAN website</li> <li>- Help to promote at RCAN events</li> </ul>	TW	
T4SP1.5	Incorporate water efficiency measures into RBC internal policies	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrange meeting with TW water efficiency manager and RBC</li> <li>- Consider learning from Portsmouth &amp; Southampton retrofit case studies</li> </ul>	RBC	TW

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T4SP1.6	Make sure key organisations in Reading are prepared for the next drought	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate the EA 'incident management' approach to managing drought situations with all partners</li> <li>- Run a drought exercise with all partners, Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and key businesses</li> <li>- Consider linking the above with a Heat Wave Alert exercise (e.g. recent Manchester LRF exercise).</li> <li>- Share the learning on RCAN website</li> </ul>	EA	TW; RBC; LRF
T4SP1.7	Share information and case studies to help homes and businesses reduce water use	2018	Add info and links to RCAN website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EA water efficiency guide</li> <li>- TW recommendations for businesses (e.g. staff engagement)</li> <li>- Case studies, e.g. for Clear Water retro fit</li> <li>- TW water saving calculator</li> <li>- TW Water audits for businesses</li> <li>- RBC Carbon Plan</li> <li>- Info from RBC involvement in 'Liquid Assets programme (2006-8)'</li> </ul>	TW	RBC; EA
T4SP1.8	Help to raise awareness amongst homes and business about 'how will a drought affect me?'	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create identifiable case studies</li> <li>- Signpost to EA and TW information on RCAN website</li> <li>- Develop code of conduct when drought is active</li> </ul>	TW	RBC; EA
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Reduce the risk of damage due to flooding</b>					
T4SP2.1	Raise awareness of the EA Flood Warning service	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase the number of homes and businesses, who are signed-up to receive Flood Warnings, to 70% over the next 3 years</li> <li>- Expand coverage of flood alert/warning service</li> </ul>	EA	RBC

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
			to 100% of properties at risk by 2020 - Signpost on the RCAN website - Link to advice on flood awareness, flood prevention measures, evacuation guides, and information about the Flood Warning service		
T4SP2.2	Make sure that all 3 RBC Flood Plans incorporate the latest flood guidance	2018	- Confirm that work from Peter Brett, which is looking at revised EA flood guidance, is incorporated into Flood Plan revision (Oct 2017). - Update as appropriate: Flood Water Management Plan, Strategic Plan, and Flood Response Plan. - Consult or request advice from EA as appropriate	RBC	EA
T4SP2.3	Implement sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) in accordance with Planning policies and in delivery of infrastructure	2020	- Make sure all applications that need SuDS (which will be automatically triggered by Planning Application System) demonstrate that they have been successfully installed - Monitor the effectiveness of schemes in post-event debriefs - Ensure any learning points are added to appropriate plans	RBC	
T4SP2.4	Review updated flood maps, which are to be revised from 2018	2020	- Add notification to RCAN when they change - Add links to EA flood maps on .gov.uk 'What's in your back yard' - RBC & EA to check if the National Flood Risk Assessment (NARFA) flood bands have changed for homes / businesses in Reading, and communicate as appropriate	RBC	EA

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T4SP2.5	Ensure that drainage design is sufficient to allow for increased intensity rainfall in new developments and infrastructure construction/repairs	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure new EA guidance has been incorporated in RBC planning policy (e.g. for 20%-40% increase in rainfall intensity)</li> <li>- All new development designed to meet this</li> <li>- Agree target to fix percentage of existing problem areas</li> </ul>	RBC	TW; EA; Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE)
T4SP2.6	Share advice on being prepared for an incident	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share/signpost link to the "Thames Valley: Are you ready?" booklet on RCAN website</li> <li>- Link this with EA advice (from T4SP3.1)</li> </ul>	RBC	EA
T4SP2.7	Control and minimise development on the floodplain	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RBC will apply sequential test to confirm no alternatives are available outside of flood zones</li> <li>- RBC to consult the EA as appropriate</li> </ul>	RBC	EA
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Develop an adaptation plan for Reading so we can plan for extreme events associated with the changing climate</b>					
T4SP3.1	Check environmental monitoring networks (e.g. river flow and rainfall) are fit for purpose, well maintained and producing quality assured data	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create map of monitoring</li> <li>- Publish on RCAN with links to EA/Centre for Ecology and Hydrology</li> </ul>	EA	

READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020, ACTION PLAN 2018

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T4SP3.2	Develop the first iteration of an 'Adaptation Plan for Reading'	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use 'pathways-based' adaptive planning techniques pioneered in the EA (TE2100 and Scenario Testing projects)</li> <li>- Include low flow (drought), surface and fluvial flood, and temperature (e.g. heat wave) indicators</li> <li>- Consider high climate change and growth projections</li> <li>- Plan to 2100</li> </ul>	EA	

## Theme 5: TRANSPORT

Every citizen's choice of transport impacts on climate change, as well as road safety, air quality, and noise pollution. An effective transport system is fundamental to building sustainable and thriving local communities. Reading's excellent links to national road and rail networks as well as Heathrow Airport, have contributed towards the town becoming a major population and employment centre within the South East. However, the ability to continue to attract inward investment into Reading, while at the same time reducing carbon emissions, depends on efficient management of the transport network as demand for travel grows. The challenge is to minimise transport's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, through reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport and alternative energy sources, and reducing congestion. The 'Transport' theme considers how people move around, including 'active travel' such as walking and cycling, public transport such as buses and trains and private transport such as cars and vans. It also reviews the infrastructure that allows people to travel, and the impacts of travel choices not only on climate change, but also on other aspects of the environment.

**Vision For 2020:** By 2020, we will have achieved targeted and measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from transport and created an infrastructure network which supports and encourages low carbon travel, while improving air quality. Reading will have a healthier and more active population as more people choose to walk and cycle for short journeys whether to the town centre or other local destinations. The transport network will be less congested and safe for cyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. People will use information which is easily accessible and provided in innovative ways to make smarter choices in the way they travel. Public transport will be efficient, reliable and affordable. Low carbon travel will be the preferred choice for people and goods moving around the town. Reading will have a reputation as a beacon for sustainable travel.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Develop and manage a transport infrastructure which supports low carbon travel options
- Reduce energy use and embodied energy in transport infrastructure
- Reduce the air pollution derived from motor vehicles

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
Strategic Priority 1: Develop and manage a transport infrastructure which supports more low carbon travel options					

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T5SP1.1 <sup>4</sup>	Build pedestrian cycle bridge		Procure, build, monitor use	RBC	Sustrans, landowners
T5SP1.2	Provision of cycle hire scheme	June 2017	Monthly use	Reading Borough Council (RBC)	Various
T5SP1.3	New and upgraded premier cycle routes	Ongoing	New links and new facilities	RBC; Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) partnership	
T5SP1.4	Support electric vehicle charging	2015	Quarterly usage stats	RBC; business	Car park operators
T5SP1.5	Apply best practice (from around UK) to road layouts	Ongoing during resurfacing programme	Reduction in injury accidents	RBC	
T5SP1.6	Improve pedestrian/cycle facilities at local destinations and local environment	Ongoing	New crossings; cycle stands installed; local area enhancements	RBC; LSTF partnership	Community; business
T5SP1.7	To implement MRT routes in South and East Reading	Ongoing	Increase in public transport usage	RBC	Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
T5SP1.8	To deliver Reading Green Park Railway Station	December 2018	Encourage railway usage, reduce A33 congestion	RBC	Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership; Network Rail; Great Western Railway
T5SP1.9	Reallocate road space to public transport and cycling	Ongoing	By road or route	RBC	

<sup>4</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority



Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T5SP1.10	Management of transport related assets	Ongoing	Faults, repair rates, response in extreme weather	RBC	
T5SP1.11	Give appropriate advice for new development to encourage sustainable travel	Ongoing	To be developed	RBC	Developers
T5SP1.12	Develop financial and non-financial incentives to use sustainable travel methods (e.g. challenges, promotions)	Ongoing	Participation, mode shift	LSTF; various	RBC
T5SP1.13	Parking/bus lane enforcement (including camera car)	Ongoing	To reduce illegal usage of bus lanes/parking restrictions	RBC	
T5SP1.14	Promote travel information website and open data server	Ongoing	Measure use and app development	RBC	Media, business
T5SP1.15	Variable Message Signing (VMS) expansion	Complete	Installation of new VMS displays	LSTF partnership	
T5SP1.16	Introduce a 'smart' ticketing system	January 2017	Increase sustainable travel	RBC; Reading Transport Ltd	Various
T5SP1.17	Planned extension of 20mph speed limits/zones as appropriate to local conditions	ongoing	New schemes annually	RBC; Police	
	Improve traffic signal operation		By junction	RBC	
T5SP1.18	Management of transport related assets		Faults, repair rates, response in extreme weather	RBC	

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Reduce energy use and embodied energy in transport infrastructure</b>					
T5SP2.1	Expand low energy lighting and control (e.g. dimming)	Ongoing	Monitor energy use	RBC; LSTF partnership	Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE)
T5SP2.2	De-illuminate street furniture	Ongoing	Monitor energy use	RBC; LSTF partnership	SSE
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Reduce air pollution derived from motor vehicles</b>					
T5SP3.1	Extend park and ride	Ongoing	New park and ride southeast, south & west	RBC; Wokingham Borough Council	West Berkshire Council; LSTF partnership and train operating companies, Business
T5SP3.2	Parking management	Ongoing	Restrictions, enforcement by road or route	RBC	
T5SP3.3	Reduce carbon footprint of public transport		Improve Euroclass and increase number of lower carbon buses to fleet	Reading Transport Ltd	
T5SP3.4	Personalised travel planning (arranging travel plan for individuals)		Take customers through questionnaire - conversations held	RBC	Businesses
T5SP3.5	Social media use for travel planning		More reliable journey planning	Community, business	
T5SP3.6	Journey time monitoring system		Journey time reliability	RBC; LSTF partnership	

## Theme 6: PURCHASING, SUPPLY AND CONSUMPTION

The purchasing, supply and consumption of goods affects climate change in a variety of ways, both directly through the emissions of greenhouse gases from the manufacture and transport of goods, and more indirectly by affecting the resilience of the town to a changing climate by boosting local supply of products and services and the 'green economy'. If we are to meet the challenge, all sectors of Reading's community will need to adopt more sustainable PSC practices and behaviour. This means basing our choice and use of goods and services on maximising benefits to the environment, the economy and society, for both ourselves and the wider community, rather than on a purely private cost-benefit analysis. Over time, the market will respond by offering products that match these preferences. Our consumption of products and food and our business activities also produce waste, which impacts on climate change in numerous ways. 'Zero waste' is the process of using all of our waste as a resource for other purposes, thus avoiding land-fill and improving resource efficiency.

**Vision For 2020:** By 2020, people and organisations in Reading will understand the need for action on climate change and adjust their purchasing, supply and consumption choices accordingly, both individually and collectively. A substantial number of Reading residents and local communities will have made real change to their PSC behaviour, with the results accurately recorded through proven, credible carbon measurement and monitoring techniques. The majority of large (public and private) organisations based in the Reading area, plus a significant number of local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and other small organisations, will have a detailed understanding of sustainable purchasing, supply and consumption principles; they will have formal practice and procedures embedded into their activities. Reading will also have significantly reduced its waste going to landfill, through producing less waste, expanding the market in the recycling and re-use of products, and by generating energy from waste. Surplus material will be viewed as a resource for others to use rather than categorised as waste.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Support and encourage local purchasing and the development of local supply chains
- Promote and encourage new business models focused around the 'circular economy'
- Develop standards and the commitment to sustainable procurement in both the public and private sectors

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
Strategic Priority 1: Support and encourage local purchasing and the development of local supply chains					

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T6SP1.1 <sup>5</sup>	Establish a forum for sharing ideas	March 15, then on going	Forum launch	Reading Voluntary Action	Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)
T6SP1.2	Gather information on best practice		Publish best practice from delivery group on RCAN website	RBC	
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Promote and encourage new business models focused around the ‘circular economy’</b>					
T6SP2.1	Organise regular seminars on key subjects such as circular economy	Ongoing	First seminar; 1 per annum	RCCP	
T6SP2.2	Establish a group of organisations that have an interest in exploring ‘circular economy’ approaches	Ongoing	Group established	Kyocera Document Solutions (UK) Ltd	
T6SP2.3	Investigate ways of collaborating with other groups that aim to build a sustainable future for Reading	2017		Kyocera Document Solutions/ Reading Borough Council (RBC)	Vibrant Reading, Reading 2050
T6SP2.4	Use networks and variable communication methods to inform /encourage reduction, reuse and recycling, peer- to-peer lending and collaborative consumption	2018	Information made available through web and other media		Sue Ryder; Transition Town Reading; Share & Repair café
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Develop standards and the commitment to sustainable procurement in both the public and private sectors</b>					
T6SP3.1	Explore the potential to develop an accreditation scheme with Reading businesses	Mar 15	Initial feasibility	Kyocera Document Solutions (UK) Ltd	Other champions identified through group

<sup>5</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T6SP3.2	Identify examples/case studies (Reading and beyond) of innovative approaches to waste reduction, recycling and reuse	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sign post case studies in RE3</li> <li>- Coordinated waste minimisation activities with Re3 staff</li> </ul>	RBC	WRAP; Community sector
T6SP3.3	Nominate commercial and public sector “champions” in Reading area to highlight best practice		Recruit champions in each sector	RBC	Environment Agency, NHS, Kyocera Documents Solutions UK Ltd, Connect Reading
T6SP3.4	Develop local diverse, flexible supply chains and work with them to improve environmental standards of procurement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RE-Start Local Project</li> <li>- Work with 60 Small and</li> <li>- Medium sized Enterprises to outline public sector opportunities and standards</li> </ul>	RBC	Institute for Sustainability

## Theme 7: EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR

Meeting Reading's targets for minimising the effects of climate change will depend on significant long term changes in everyone's behaviour across the borough, from individuals and communities to businesses and the public sector. How we behave is determined by many factors, such as our habits, beliefs about how we should behave in a given context (social norms), and cultural expectations, as well as by incentives. Although changing our behaviour and habits can sometimes feel challenging and complex, changing our social norms can have great benefits. This can be demonstrated through the popular growth of initiatives such as fair trade and recycling. These initiatives have developed through the communication of consistent and clear information.

Changes in behaviour will contribute to Reading's residents adopting more energy efficiency measures. Reading's workers will need to develop skills in a variety of technical and specialist areas, particularly in the building trade, to enable the development of a 'green economy' -from plumbers and builders to architects and chartered surveyors. Education, communication and influencing behaviour can lead on and support action on climate change.

**Vision For 2020:** By 2020, people and organisations in Reading will understand the reasons for urgent and ongoing action on climate change; we will be aware of what we can collectively achieve and the contribution we can make through our own actions and through influencing others. We will support joined up action on climate change across the public, private and voluntary sectors. People of all ages will be equipped with knowledge and skills that will increase awareness of opportunities within the local 'green economy'.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Integrate sustainable behaviour promotion and practice throughout schools and colleges, homes, businesses and workplaces
- Raise awareness (with the stakeholders mentioned above), of the range of opportunities, initiatives, successes and challenges relating to climate action across Reading

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
Strategic priority 1: Integrate sustainable behaviour promotion and practice throughout schools and colleges, homes, businesses and workplaces					

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T7SP1.1 <sup>6</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage each sector to develop activities to enhance education, communication and behaviour change on climate change</li> <li>- Use opportunities such as funding from RCCP to aid initiatives which support target audiences in taking climate change action</li> <li>- Encourage organisations across the sectors in Reading to become members of Reading Climate Change Action Network (RCAN) and pledge actions on climate change</li> <li>- support them to deliver education and communication outcomes through their action</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Identify opportunities and establish relevant educational resources, activities and support	RCCP	School leads colleges and University of Reading; Workplace employers; landlords, health agencies; RCAN members
<b>Strategic priority 2: Raise awareness (with the stakeholders mentioned above), of the range of opportunities, initiatives, successes and challenges relating to climate action across Reading</b>					
T7SP2.1	- Develop communications messages for the climate change strategy targeted at and tailored to all relevant audiences	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategy delivered</li> <li>- Communications plan delivered</li> </ul>	RBC	Environment Agency (EA), University of Reading, Reading UK CIC
T7SP2.2	- Engage partners in identifying potential communication channels for the various activities within the strategy and agreeing how these can be utilised	Ongoing	Implement communication strategy with relevant organisations to expand participation	RCCP	EA; University of Reading; Reading UK CIC
T7SP2.3	- Identify and support climate change schemes in the borough that meet the Strategic Priorities of the strategy; help to improve image of	Ongoing	Establish list of schemes and their hosting groups and organisations	RCCP	RBC

<sup>6</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
	schemes and enhance uptake				
T7SP2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a website to communicate updates on the action plan &amp; actions that are relevant to the strategy aims</li> <li>- Aimed at individuals/groups with existing interest in environment</li> </ul>	On going	Establish list of schemes and their hosting groups and organisations	RBC; RCCP	Strategy theme leads; RBC
T7SP2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build a '...thriving network of businesses and organisations who will be at the forefront of developing solutions for reducing carbon emissions and preparing for climate change....'</li> </ul>	Ongoing	- Establish list of schemes and their hosting groups and organisations	RCCP Board; RBC	
T7SP2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with the building industry, professional bodies and educational establishments to identify and further develop training or guidance on low-carbon construction and renovation skills</li> <li>- Share existing best practice</li> </ul>	Ongoing	- Inclusion of this target in Economic Growth Plan for Reading 2015-2018 will ensure that report on uptake of training/ apprenticeships in low-carbon construction will be included in reporting for the Economic Growth Plan	RBC; RCCP	RBC; New Directions; Trades Associations; Reading College; Theme leads
T7SP2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage businesses and public sector to incorporate environmental sustainability into appropriate job descriptions, identifying appropriate training where needed</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Assessment of senior management jobs at RBC	RBC; RCCP	Theme leads



## Theme 8: COMMUNITY

Communities can play a central role in developing a more sustainable way of life that reduces the impact that our lifestyles have on the global climate. This can be achieved through individuals being more self-sufficient, sharing resources, campaigning collectively and through a strong local business community. Working with Reading’s existing strong community sector, including a number of environmental groups, will particularly benefit local action taken on climate change. To reduce our ecological impact, prepare for inevitable climate change and build high quality low carbon lifestyles, we will need to reconsider our interpretation of ‘success’ to include factors relating to our overall quality of life. Our quality of life is dependent on much more than increasing our material wealth, as currently dominates our GDP, but on the contribution of our local environment and our social interactions. To this effect, we should be working towards building sustainable communities.

By 2020, people will have an understanding of how their local environment contributes towards a better quality of life; they will have the commitment and community capacity to support each other to lead more sustainable lives. Reading’s neighbourhoods will be places where success is measured by the uptake of life-styles centred on self-sufficiency, sustainable consumption and sharing of resources. Quality of life will include not only wealth and employment, but will also consider physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, as well as the effects of the built and natural environment on their well-being, and the social attachment they feel. People will be empowered to influence local and national decision makers and businesses through well-developed local networks.

### SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Build community activity relating to sustainable communities
- Build community resilience to climate change: collective and individual
- Reduce consumption by building a ‘sharing economy’

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
Strategic Priority 1: Building community activity relating to sustainable communities					

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T8SP1.1 <sup>7</sup>	Support groups carrying out activities supporting sustainable communities in Reading to join Reading Climate Action Network	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groups collated in database and invited to join RCAN and apply for grants - reviewed bi-yearly.</li> <li>- Contact maintained through RCAN newsletter, events, and website updates as well as personal contact where they are a deliverer</li> </ul>	- Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) Board Community and Greater Reading Environmental Network (GREN) representative; RCAN support worker	
T8SP1.2	Provide networking opportunities for community and 'environmental' community organisations by improving links between groups contributing to tackling climate change	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support community events</li> <li>- Communications of local news / activity through RCAN website, newsletter, and social media</li> <li>- Promotion of RCAN grants and news stories of successful projects funded by RCAN</li> </ul>	RCCP Board Community and GREN representative; RCAN support worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key environmental groups (TBC)</li> <li>- Options include GREN, Transition Towns Reading, Econet, Globe Groups</li> <li>- Reading Voluntary Action (RVA)</li> </ul>
T8SP1.3	Investigate approaches to engage wider community on climate change action	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposal presented- August 2017</li> <li>- Funds, paid worker and delivery partner in place - Feb 2018</li> <li>- Program delivery - 2018 - 2020 and beyond</li> </ul>	RCCP Board Community Representative to lead	TBC - approached will be RVA, TTR, GREN, RBC and more
<b>Strategic Priority 2: Build community resilience to climate change: collective and individual</b>					

<sup>7</sup> T = theme; SP = strategic priority

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T8SP2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build uptake of energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy cooperatives</li> <li>- Engage appropriate asset holders and develop local schemes</li> </ul>	Sept 2014 and ongoing	Seek new opportunities to install renewable energy and food growing	RBC; Reading Community Energy Society; Food4Families	TTR; GREN; RVA; GLOBE groups; Food4 Families; Reading Community Energy Society
T8SP2.2	Communal food growing together and learning; continuation of Food4Families; support allotment and food growing activities	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of allotment space in accordance with Allotment Strategy 2011</li> <li>- Establish 15 Food4Families food growing gardens</li> <li>- Establish networks / events that help promote food growing and local food</li> </ul>	RBC; Food4 Families / Reading Food Growing Network	TTR (orchard and bulk buying sub-groups); organisations with buildings/ grounds
T8SP2.3	Continue with current communal food pilot in Whitley where people can learn about growing food, and develop personal skills	March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research viability of city farm site in Reading</li> <li>- Focus on referrals where benefits of growing food are closely linked to improving mental health issues</li> </ul>	Green Health Reading	
T8SP2.4	Map and promote a network of accessible self-sufficient community buildings and projects supporting skill development to become more self-sufficient and resilient to climate change	June 2018 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete mapping exercise of community buildings / projects</li> <li>- Promote facilities / network available through RCAN website via case studies or news stories</li> <li>- Support these projects where possible</li> </ul>	Lead delivery partner sought - RCAN worker; RCCP community / GREN board reps	RVA

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T8SP2.5	Build householders' and individuals' resilience in a number of ways: growing food, generating energy, insulating homes, planting trees, installing rainwater harvesting and composting food/garden waste	Sept 2014 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase numbers of households adopting measures</li> <li>- Design suitable messages / talks to target particular groups of householders - including specific projects</li> </ul>	Draught Busters, Reading Sustainability Centre, Reading Food Growing Network	
T8SP2.6	Influence government policy to favour and link local food growers to commercial organisations	Ongoing	Obtain funding, conduct research (surveys)	University of Reading	RISC, Food Growing Network
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Reduce consumption by building a 'sharing economy'</b>					
T8SP3.1	Build and maintain 'share and repair' movement, increasing skills in the community and reducing waste	March 2015 and ongoing	Identify community champion(s) to create new projects	TTR; Reading Repair Café' Reading Bike Kitchen, Reading community and businesses	GREN; RVA
T8SP3.2	Promote 'donating instead of disposing' and 'repair instead of replace' in Reading's business and residential community	March 2016 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect Reading: no. of items donated to charities from businesses</li> <li>- Repair Café: no. of items repaired instead of disposed</li> <li>- Reading Bike Kitchen: no. of refurbished cycles</li> </ul> (organisations will have their own targets)	Connect Reading; RVA; RCAN	

Ref	Action	Timescale	Target & measure/ milestone	Lead delivery partner(s)	Other delivery partners
T8SP3.3	Support local economy to explore methods used in UK towns and cities to increase local identity and build number of local businesses	December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build research group of interested organisations/ individuals</li> <li>- First meeting</li> <li>- Compile independent business directory</li> <li>- Share findings with RCAN for promotion</li> </ul>	Transition Town Reading	
T8SP3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote Reading's individuality, including its independent businesses and thriving cultural scene</li> <li>- Alt.Reading website: magazine focussing on independents, culture and opinion related to Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jan 2014</li> <li>- TBC</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launch website</li> <li>- Continue to bring together all appropriate local activity in one website to promote the non-corporate side of Reading</li> </ul>	Alt.Reading	

## APPENDIX 5:

### **Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum - Terms of Reference.**

#### **Duties**

- To propose measures to improve air quality across Reading Borough
- To evaluate, improve and promote transport sustainability across the Borough
- To influence Council policy and facilitate the development and direction of the Council's sustainability agenda
- To identify and share best practice in relation to clean and green 'healthy streets' initiatives which promote sustainability, healthy living, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and carbon reduction.
- To identify and develop potential low traffic neighbourhoods.
- To promote and raise awareness of sustainable initiatives within the Borough and to promote improved performance across the Council and its partners
- To extend networking to other relevant organisations and to maintain currency of knowledge and information within the context of transport sustainability and climate change matters.
- To make recommendations to the Council on sustainability and climate change matters.
- Support road safety initiatives, particularly for vulnerable road users;
- To discuss progress and delivery of the Cycling Strategy in order to identify, prioritise and optimise actions to meet the objectives of the Cycling Strategy:
  - ☐ To improve the cycling environment;
  - ☐ To provide better facilities for cyclists;
  - ☐ To influence travel behaviour; and
  - ☐ To develop skills and capacity.

#### **Governance arrangements:**

- The Group will work together to ensure the responsibilities are met. Membership will comprise of officers of Reading Borough Council, community representatives and elected Councillors (see Membership below). The Group is able to co-opt other members onto the group or invite anyone along to the meetings as and when considered necessary and appropriate.
- The Forum will make recommendations to the Council as and when decisions are required. It will report the progress of its work.
- The Forum will endeavour to work within and complement existing national and local policy frameworks
- The group will link with other groups both within the community area and across the wider Thames Valley, where this will help deliver its' objectives.

#### **Membership**

- Officers and Councillors of Reading Borough Council. An RBC councillor will chair the forum. **(the number of councillors to be determined).**
- Representatives of local community, environmental or transport groups who have a constitution and hold an AGM.
- National interest groups

- A quorum will be 50% of members in addition to the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Members are expected to attend at least 75% of meetings annually.

#### Frequency

- Meetings will normally be held quarterly. Additional meetings may be scheduled where necessary.

#### Review

- The Terms of Reference of the Forum shall be reviewed by Full Council at least annually.

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