



Jackie Yates
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU
0118 937 3787

To: Councillor Brock (Chair)
Councillors Page, Barnett-Ward, Emberson,
Ennis, Hoskin, Leng, McElroy, McEwan,
Mitchell, Robinson, Rowland, Terry,
Thompson and White

Direct: 0118 9372303

13 January 2023

Your contact is: Simon Hill - Committee Services (simon.hill@reading.gov.uk)

NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 23 JANUARY 2023

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Monday, 23 January 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES

5 - 14

4. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

To receive any petitions from the public and any questions from the public and Councillors.

5. DECISION BOOKS

6. THAMES VALLEY POLICE

To receive presentations from the Thames Valley Police Chief Constable and Police & Crime Commissioner.

7. TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY (2023 TO 2026)

BOROUGH WIDE 15 - 50

This report presents the Tackling Inequality Strategy, which articulates how the Council will focus its activities to reduce inequality on issues and in areas where it is most needed by driving attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment.

CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| 8. | BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE WEST INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP | BOROUGH WIDE | 51 - 68 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|

This report seeks approval for the Council's involvement in the newly formed Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership (BOB ICP) and asks the Committee to appoint representatives to the BOB ICP Joint Committee.

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE ACTING AS SOLE MEMBER OF BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| 9. | BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED - RESERVED MATTERS: PROPOSED RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PAYMENT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE TOGETHER FOR FAMILIES SERVICE | BOROUGH WIDE | 69 - 88 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|

This report, submitted to the Committee in its capacity as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Limited, seeks approval for a proposed approach to recruitment and retention payments to Qualified Social Workers in the Together for Families service.

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 3

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Brock (Chair);

Councillors Page (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Emberson, Ennis, Leng, McElroy, McEwan, Mitchell, Robinson, Rowland, Terry, Thompson and White

Apologies: Councillor Hoskin

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Brock declared a prejudicial interest in Item 40 on the grounds that he was a Director and Vice-Chair of REDA and the report recommended awarding funding to that organisation.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

| | <u>Questioner</u> | <u>Subject</u> | <u>Reply</u> |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Cllr Thompson | Cost of Living Vouchers | Cllr Brock |
| 2. | Cllr McElroy | Cricket at Cintra Park | Cllr Barnett-Ward |
| 3. | Cllr White | Ensuring School Meals Remain Tasty and Nutritious | Cllr McEwan |
| 4. | Cllr White | Traffic Light Outages | Cllr Page |

(The full text of the questions and responses was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

38. 2022/23 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the projected revenue and capital outturn positions for 2022/23 for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Accounts as at the end of Quarter 2 (September 2022), as well as performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Financial Monitoring for Quarter 2
- Appendix 2 - Capital Programme for Quarter 2
- Appendix 3 - Corporate Plan Measures for Quarter 2
- Appendix 4 - Corporate Plan Projects for Quarter 2

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

The report stated that the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position at the end of Quarter 2 included a projected adverse net variance on service expenditure of £3.509m. This variance was offset by a projected £4.776m positive net variance on Corporate Budgets, of which £3.627m related to the unallocated Corporate Contingency, resulting in a projected overall positive net variance of £1.267m. The forecast adverse variance on services included net pressures totalling £1.232m within Adult Care and Health Services relating to care cost pressures; £1.389m within Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, primarily relating to ongoing income shortfalls in Car Parking and Planning as an ongoing impact of Covid-19; £1.437m within Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), relating to pay, inflation and demand pressures; and a total of £0.158m across Resources and Chief Executive Services. Detailed explanations for these variances were set out in the report. The pressures were offset by positive net variances within Corporate Budgets, specifically £1.908m on Capital Financing Costs as a result of the 2021/22 Capital Programme outturn position and £3.627m on Corporate Contingencies.

The report explained that £1.935m (19%) of budgeted savings had been delivered to date in this financial year, with a further £5.020m (49%) of savings on track to be delivered by March 2023. £2.084m (20%) of savings were currently categorised as non-deliverable and £1.185m (12%) categorised as at risk of delivery. There was therefore a potential impact on the 2023/24 budget should these savings not be deliverable on a recurring basis and they would be reviewed as part of the 2023/24 budget setting and 2023/24-2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy processes.

The report sought approval for amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme, following a review during Quarter 2. The amended Capital Programme was now forecasting a positive net variance of £1.201m against a proposed revised budget of £80.027m in 2022/23. This variance related to £1.151m of the Delivery Fund that had not yet been allocated to specific proposals as at the end of Quarter 2 and a forecast positive variance of £0.050m on approved Delivery Fund allocations.

The report also noted that the Housing Revenue Account was projecting a positive net variance of £2.662m as at the end of Quarter 2, which resulted in a forecast contribution to HRA reserves of £0.508m. The HRA Capital Programme was forecasting an adverse variance of £0.060m against a revised budget of £27.828m in 2022/23.

The report also set out performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan and key projects and initiatives helping to deliver the Council's mission and priorities. In Quarter 2 the target had been achieved for 54% of the measures of success and performance was within 10% of the target for 29%.

Resolved -

(1) That it be noted that:

- a) **The forecast General Fund revenue outturn position as at the end of Quarter 2 was a positive net variance of £1.267m;**

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

- b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was projecting a positive net variance of £2.662m as at the end of Quarter 2, which results in a forecast contribution to HRA reserves of £0.508m;
 - c) £1.935m (19%) of savings had been delivered (blue) to date in this financial year, with a further £5.020m (49%) of savings on track to be delivered (green) by March 2022. £2.084m (20%) of savings were currently categorised as non-deliverable (red) and £1.185m (12%) categorised as at risk of delivery (amber);
 - d) There was a total £4.065m Delivery Fund available for 2022/23 (inclusive of 2021/22 approved carry forwards). At Quarter 2, £2.914m of this funding has been allocated out to approved schemes;
 - e) The General Fund Capital Programme was reporting a positive net variance of £1.201m against a revised budget of £80.027m;
 - f) The HRA Capital Programme was forecasting an adverse variance of £0.060m against a revised budget of £27.828m;
 - g) The performance achieved against the Corporate Plan success measures was as set out in Section 12 of this report and Appendices 3 and 4.
- (2) That the BFFC Contract Sum for 2022/23 be increased by £0.707m in order to fund the additional pressure arising from the 2022/23 pay award;
- (3) That the amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 11 of the report and Appendix 2) be agreed, resulting in a revised budget of £80.027m;
- (4) That the amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 11 of the report and Appendix 2) be agreed, resulting in a revised budget of £27.828m;
- (5) That spend approval be given for the Capital Programme Schemes set out in Table 10 totalling £0.880m and paragraph 11.9 totalling £0.162m.

39. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2025/26 UPDATE

The Director of Finance submitted a report providing an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) prior to public consultation on the Council's proposed Budget. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Summary of Interim General Fund Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26
- Appendix 2 - Summary of General Fund Budget Changes 2023/24 to 2025/26
- Appendices 3a and 3b - General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes 2023/24 to 2025/26
- Appendix 4 - Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy
- Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment

The report noted that the updated MTFS had been developed to reflect the changing landscape in which local authorities were now operating including the economic effects of the conflict in the Ukraine and uncertainty created by Brexit and a change in leadership of the UK Government. The MTFS reports for the previous two years had been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which had increased costs and reduced levels of income. Although the situation had improved, income levels had still not returned to pre Covid-19 levels in a number of cases. The updated MTFS proposed further re-profiling of income targets to later years, although not on the scale previously required. Initially the impact of lost income had been offset by grant funding from Central Government, but this was no longer the case. It was noted that the high levels of inflation currently being experienced might subdue economic activity and in turn a further reduction in income levels to the Council.

The report explained that there were significant pressures in the social care system and that the updated MTFS included an increase of just over £4m in the budget for Adult Social Care services for next year to fund the impact of those cost pressures, including the ongoing commitment to fund care providers at a level that allowed them to pay staff at the rate recommended by the Living Wage Foundation rather than the lower national living wage rate set by central government. In addition, an initial assessment had been undertaken of the financial impact of Adult Social Care funding reforms, which were included as cost pressures in year 3 of the MTFS following the announcement to push back the reforms to 2025/26. The MTFS also assumed that the Business Rate reset originally assumed to happen in 2022/23 would not now happen until 2024/25 at the earliest. The proposed budget also included an increase in the Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) contract sum for 2023/24 of £2.2m. This included inflationary increases and a growth pressure in respect of Home to School Transport that had previously been assumed to be absorbed by BFFC. Bids for additional discretionary funding had not yet been agreed and negotiations are ongoing.

Appendix 3 attached to the report set out the draft capital programmes, the financing cost of which would be included in the revenue budget. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities had published a consultation on changes to the capital framework for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP proposed to become effective from April 2023 onwards. The outcome of this consultation was still outstanding and the draft MTFS assumed that the changes would not be implemented.

The report outlined other considerations in drafting the MTFS including the impact of the Environment Bill proposals on Waste Operations which was included as a cost pressure in Year 3, and the removal of the 1.25% increase in employers National Insurance contributions and other funding in respect of the Health and Social Care. A general Council Tax increase of 1.99% and an additional Adult Social Care precept of 1% were assumed across each of the three years. There was an estimated funding gap of £2.394m in 2023/24 which would need to be addressed to comply with the legal requirement to set a balanced budget.

The report explained that a period of public consultation on the budget would commence on 19 December 2022 and conclude on 19 January 2023. Following the conclusion of the consultation a further report would be submitted to the Committee on 20 February 2023

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

recommending approval of a balanced budget to Full Council in order that it could approve its budget, associated Council Tax level and precept for 2023/24 at its meeting on 28 February 2023.

Resolved -

That the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in the Appendices to the report be noted, including:

- a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £158.825m for 2023/24 and an assumed increase in the band D Council Tax for the Council of 1.99% plus an additional 1.00% Adult Social Care precept, or £54.71 per annum representing a band D Council Tax of £1,884.43 per annum as set out in paragraphs 12.1 to 12.3 of the report;
- b) the proposed service savings and efficiencies of (£3.7m) and additional income of (£1.5m) currently proposed in 2023/24 and set out in Appendix 2;
- c) the overall savings currently proposed within the MTFS of (£9.6m) (of which changes to income, fees and charges was (£3.0m));
- d) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 3;
- e) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes as set out in Appendices 3a and 3b;
- f) the Strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver future transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix 4.

40. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS - UPDATED REPORT AND SKILLS FOR GROWTH PROPOSAL

Further to Minute 11 of the meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee held on 7 July 2022, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on progress made by REDA with the implementation of planning policies concerned with promoting Employment and Skills Plans (ESPs) and seeking approval for the associated delivery framework and action plan. Attached to the report at Appendix A was an outline 18-month delivery plan for supporting Economic Growth Nov 2022 - Apr 2024.

The report noted that REDA (formerly Reading UK CIC) was the Borough's preferred economic development partner, managing all aspects of ESPs through both delivery plans and programmes funded by S106 contributions, as set out in the Borough's Supplementary Planning Document 2013. The report set out the outcomes of this work to date which showed that REDA had a strong track record of delivering benefits to the local community through using S106 developer contributions, including over the last 18 months providing

support to 1,700 local people helping them move forward in the jobs market or into self-employment. Partnership with both public and private sector partners would continue to be central to delivery of the programmes with match funding and support-in-kind from companies and organisations including Hammerson, Abbey Rotary Group, Reading Business Network, Hilton Reading, Activate Learning, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and the University of Reading.

The report explained that REDA's Skills for Growth Group had identified the following priority areas: Start up in the Community; Sector-focused Careers Advice for Schools; Employment and Employability Support (particularly targeted at over 50's, single parents and other key cohorts); Developing the New Skills employers will need - creative skills, green skills, engineering and construction and Supporting Skills at the heart of Reading's Economy including construction, technology, hospitality and healthcare. The framework for ESP delivery would respond to known demand where skills shortages were a regional issue; training would match residents to available local jobs and enterprise opportunities with a particular aim to upskill and retrain to enable residents to access better paid, better quality work with an eye on emerging skills. In addition, the framework would invest in programmes of support to prepare local people for new and emerging job opportunities from developing sectors: supporting the development of a more environmentally sustainable economy and training for jobs in the emerging 'green economy', and providing aspirational support for people to secure work in the rapidly developing creative production sector, much of this enabled by the development of studio space of national significance on Reading's borders.

The report explained that the proposed programme would feature a greater level of outreach activity through council services and the community and voluntary sectors to ensure it was more accessible and targeted. This could include using neutral and more user-friendly spaces such as libraries and community centres. Specific groups targeted would include schools in more deprived wards, the over 50s, women and people from minority ethnic communities. Access to opportunity would ensure those with supported employment needs as well as the longer term unemployed were reached. Much of this work would involve working closely with New Directions (the Council's own adult education service), statutory agencies and voluntary organisations dedicated to supporting specific communities through adult employment support, sector skills training and government led programmes such as Multiply.

Appendix A to the report set out the detail of the programmes to be delivered between 2022 and 2024 continuing the work to support local people into self-employment, develop sector skills, and find good quality work against a backdrop of rising costs and austerity. A total of £236,500 of S106 developer contributions was proposed to be allocated across the delivery programmes of Future Skills / New Job Growth, Start Up in the Community, Job and Recruitment Support, Core Skills and Up-Skilling and Small Business Development.

Resolved -

- (1) **That the proposed delivery framework for targeted employment and skills outcomes for all parts of Reading's community, as enabled by**

Section 106 Employment and Skills Plans and Financial Contributions, be approved;

- (2) **That the action plan tailored to the needs of the local economy following the impacts of the cost of living crisis and cost of doing business crisis on residents and small business, and the allocation of £236,500 of S106 developer contributions to support the delivery of the action plan, be approved;**
- (3) **That the Council continue its commitment to close partnership working to support REDA (the trading name of Reading UK CIC) and its partners to manage and deliver this programme to ensure the sustainable economic recovery of Reading.**

(Councillor Brock declared a prejudicial interest in this Item on the grounds that he was a Director and Vice-Chair of REDA. He left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision.)

41. DRAFT RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval to undertake community involvement on a Draft Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to provide detailed guidance on proposals for conversion of dwellinghouses to flats or to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). The results of the public consultation would inform the development of a final version of the SPD for adoption. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2 - Draft Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document

The report noted that an existing Residential Conversions SPD dating from 2013 remained in effect, but that its age and the fact that it pre-dated the Local Plan could affect its weight in decision-making, and there were some issues that had arisen from its implementation that required addressing in a revised version. A new draft Residential Conversions SPD for consultation was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the revised version of the SPD was based on the existing SPD but with some important changes and updates. The main changes from the existing version included: clarification that, within the Article 4 area, the 25% threshold applied to the total number of residential buildings as opposed to residential dwellings; a new, criteria-based approach to proposals for conversion to both flats and HMOs outside the Article 4 area, including a threshold that the proportion of residential buildings within 50m of the application site that had been converted either to flats or an HMO would not be expected to exceed 50%; reference to avoiding a situation where a residential dwelling was sandwiched between two HMOs; general updates to policy references and alignment with the Local Plan.

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

The draft SPD would be subject to a consultation which was intended to take place between 19 December 2022 and 13 February 2023. Responses received would be considered in preparing a final draft SPD for adoption.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Draft Residential Conversions SPD, as attached to the report at Appendix 2, be approved for consultation;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the SPD that did not alter the policy direction prior to consultation.

42. ALLOCATION OF S106 FUNDING FOR READING STATION SUBWAY SCHEME 2022/23

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking spend approval for £205,761.05 for a Reading Station Subway Refurbishment capital scheme to improve north/south access across the station. It was anticipated that the scheme would be funded from the secured Section 106 contribution, however some additional funding might be required from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Bridges & Carriageway Capital award for 2022/23. Appendix 1 to the report set out a summary of the relevant S106 contributions.

The report noted that it had been a long-standing desire of the Council and cycling groups to enable safe cycling along the subway, as this prohibition and the surrounding rail infrastructure and strategic road network were significant cycling barriers between the north and south sides of the station and beyond. The Council had commissioned a feasibility report on allowing cycling as part of a scheme to remove the lowest ceiling panels using S106 funding. The proposed scheme would remove the vulnerable low level ceiling panels, secure and protect the Network Rail Services, increase the headroom clearance and include minor repairs to floor and wall tiles, along with improved signage. There was also a separate proposal to replace the lighting to reduce energy consumption and enable remote monitoring and control the lighting units.

The report explained that the proposed scheme would provide improved head room clearance, which although below national guidelines, would enable the Council to accept the position and allow cycling through the subway if the Cycling Prohibition Order was revoked. The Traffic Management Sub-Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2022 (Minute 20 refers) had agreed a consultation on revoking the cycling prohibition to create a shared use (pedestrian/cyclist) facility. The outcome of the consultation would be reflected in the final design of the scheme. The scheme was not dependent on the outcome of the consultation to revoke the cycling prohibition, as the works to remove the low sections of ceiling panels were still required to ensure that a viable long-term solution was delivered. The scheme design was currently being finalised and works were provisionally scheduled to commence in early 2023.

Resolved -

- (1) That spending approval be given for the Reading Station Subway Refurbishment scheme;
- (2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety and Director of Finance, be authorised to finalise details of the scheme and programme within the overall approval given;
- (3) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy & Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the approved scheme and works programme.

43. HOUSING BENEFIT WAR PENSION AND ARMED FORCES COMPENSATION DISREGARD POLICY

The Director of Finance submitted a report reviewing the arrangements for Housing Benefit made in respect of Section 134 8(a) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, entitling local authorities to modify any part of the Housing Benefit scheme to provide for the disregarding of prescribed war disablement pensions or war widow's pensions. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard Policy.

The report explained that prior to the introduction of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, there had been a statutory £10.00 per week disregard on War Disability and War Widows pensions in calculation of income for means tested social security benefits including Housing Benefit. The Social Security Administration Act 1992 had allowed councils to disregard up to 100% of war pensions above the £10.00 per week disregard and the Council had agreed to disregard war pensions in full at some point in the 1990s. From April 2004, the Government had agreed to subsidise 75% of the discretionary disregard councils made if the amount did not exceed 0.2% of the total Housing Benefit subsidy received. This meant that the Council only paid for 25% of the discretionary disregard.

In 2021 a number of councils had been asked by external auditors to provide evidence that they had passed resolutions disregarding War Pensions and War Widow(er) Pensions from Housing Benefit. Many councils no longer had the original documentation confirming the disregard and the auditors had agreed to accept the historic position but insisted that councils re-affirm their policy. The report therefore recommended that the Committee re-affirm the discretionary regards for War Pensions and War Widow(er)'s Pensions in order to safeguard the finances of war pensioners and war widow(er)s. Adoption of the policy had already been factored into the budget projections and operation of the Benefits Service and the administration of claims in 2022/23.

Resolved -

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 DECEMBER 2022

That the Council continue to disregard the whole of any incomes prescribed in the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (War Pension Disregards) Regulations 2007 and that the Housing Benefit War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard Policy attached at Appendix 1 be approved for the 2022-23 subsidy year and subsequent years.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.49 pm)

Agenda Item 7

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| TO: | POLICY COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 23 JANUARY 2023 | | |
| TITLE: | TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY (2023 TO 2026) | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | LIZ TERRY | PORTFOLIO: | CORPORATE SERVICES & RESOURCES |
| SERVICE: | DIRECTORATE OF RESOURCES | WARDS: | BOROUGHWIDE |
| LEAD OFFICER: | MARK REDFEARN | TEL: | 07890910532 |
| JOB TITLE: | SOCIAL INCLUSION & VCS PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER | E-MAIL: | mark.redfearn@reading.gov.uk |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Tackling Inequality Strategy which articulates how the Council will focus its activities to reduce inequality on issues and in areas where it is most needed by our residents, so that it can achieve its ambition and deliver the successes we want for everyone within the borough. The strategy will do this by driving attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment for people in the areas of the borough where need is greatest.
- 1.2 Appendix 1: Tackling Inequality Strategy
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To agree the objectives and content of the Tackling Inequality Strategy

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25 'Investing in Readings Future' sets out the vision for Reading to reach its potential and to ensure that everyone living and working can share the benefits of our town's success.
- 3.2 The specific scope of the Tacking Inequality Strategy is to go beyond our existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents in our most deprived areas of the borough.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Within Reading there is a mismatch between its economic success and the benefit of this which is realised by residents within some of our communities. Reading can be an unequal area in terms of wealth and life experiences, having some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived localities in the whole of the Thames Valley.

- 4.2 The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation from 2019 showed that Reading has 5 areas within the Borough that are in the 10% most deprived nationally compared to 2 in 2015. A total of 24 areas have at least 1 indicator which is in the 10% most deprived in the country.
- 4.3 The initial finding from the 2021 Census shows a similar picture, with areas in the south of the borough (Whitley & Church wards) showing the greatest prevalence of household deprivation relating to education, employment, health, and housing.
- 4.4 This consistent picture of resident's experiences of deprivation within the borough sets out a case for the Council taking a more holistic as well as a more targeted place-based approach to addressing the underlying determinants of deprivation.

Tackling Inequality Strategy

- 4.5 Tackling inequality in Reading means delivering a more equitable society and improving people's standard of living and participation in economic, political, social, and cultural life.
- 4.6 The purpose of tackling inequality in Reading is to provide additional focus on those who can't achieve this equity and share the benefits of its success by supporting our residents to obtain the education, skills, and abilities to realise their potential to improve their day-to-day lives and grasp opportunities.
- 4.7 We know that the inequalities experienced by our residents are often evident within specific areas of the borough, and that to support our residents we also need to make changes to where they live to create a healthy and nurturing environment for them.
- 4.8 The Tackling Inequality Strategy focuses on how the Council will support these specific communities within the borough and on how improved educational attainment, skills, and training can achieve long-term sustainable change for current and future generations.
- 4.9 This new strategy for the borough has been developed over the past four months using a broad range of deprivation and exclusion analysis conducted during 2022, which has been presented and considered by the Council's Social Inclusion Board. To support this analytical review, Council Members and Officers conducted 'walkabouts' in the Whitley and Church wards with the purpose of understanding the issues that residents are experiencing in the most deprived areas of the borough.
- 4.10 The development of the strategy has also been heavily supported by the input of key stakeholders and their strategic ambitions for improving the quality of life for residents, including Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College, and the Reading Economic Destination Agency.
- 4.11 The Tackling Inequality Strategy Commitment is:
 - Our Tackling Inequality Strategy prioritises issues and areas where it is most needed by our residents, so that we can achieve our collective ambitions and deliver the successes we want for everyone within the borough to share in Reading's success.
 - We will do this by driving attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment for people in the areas of the town where need is greatest.
 - We will always be mindful of the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how these can contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements within the borough.

- The strategy develops and complements existing strategies, work, and partnerships aimed at closing the gap between the life experiences of our residents and achieving the vision laid out in our Corporate Plan of making Reading a more equal place to live by bringing the opportunities of growth and achievement to all Reading's communities.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The key objectives of the Tackling Inequality Strategy are to create strong self-sustaining communities by improving residents' skills and abilities to enable them to access employment opportunities which match their ambitions. Our local economy needs to be strong so that there are the good jobs that our residents want, or the markets to sustain small businesses and the self-employed.
- 5.2 These activities are supported by taking a holistic approach to improving areas of the borough to create a positive environment for growth and achievement.
- 5.3 These objectives relate specifically to the Corporate Plan themes of Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy.
- 5.4 Delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is based on utilising the principles of partnership working and identifying opportunities to work differently to deliver more effective and efficient services for our residents.
- 5.5 Working effectively with our partners will be critical to the work to tackle inequality. To help our residents obtain the skills and abilities to realise their potential, will require the Council to work closely with key partners such as Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College and the Reading Economy & Destination Agency, along with our schools, colleges and businesses who are also focused on securing outcomes for residents that provide opportunities for learning and development.
- 5.6 Central to our delivery of this strategy is the establishment of area-based projects which enable Council services, local partners, our voluntary and community sector, and our residents, to come together as part of the multi-disciplinary project team and utilise all available resources to deliver the changes needed for our residents to realise their potential.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Place-Based approach within the Tackling Inequality Strategy will take a holistic approach to identifying improvements, which will include environmental elements such as air quality; biodiversity/wildlife; greenspace/natural habitats; landscape/visual impact; natural resources; noise/disturbance; and waste management.
- 6.2 Specific carbon emission reduction activities could relate to the development of new facilities within communities which are more actively used by the local community, and energy efficiency improvements within people's homes. The creation of more suitable local employment opportunities for residents would reduce the need to travel.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The purpose and focus of the Tackling Inequality Strategy are derived from a comprehensive analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation statistics which show that within Reading there are some areas that are within the bottom 5% of the country for education, skills, and training, and for income deprivation affecting both children and older people.
- 7.2 These pockets of substantial deprivation exist within broader areas of the borough which are within the bottom 10% and 20% of areas of the country for overall deprivation.

Life expectancy data from the Office of National Statistics shows a life expectancy in Reading's most deprived area is ten years lower than in its most affluent.

- 7.3 The most recent Census data shows that Reading currently has a younger than average population. However, the proportion of older people is predicted to increase, with the proportion aged 60+ rising from 16.8% in 2019 to 23.1% by 2043. Approximately 13% of Reading residents have a long-term limiting illness, any analysis shows that working-age adults who are disabled are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than those who are not (38% and 17% respectively). The latest Census data also shows that the proportion of Reading residents from ethnic minority groups (including White minorities) has now risen to 46.5%, from 34.7% in 2011, and that the most common languages spoken in the borough after English are now Polish, Nepalese, and Romanian.
- 7.4 This information and analysis direct the focus of the Tackling Inequality Strategy on improving skills and attainment in areas of the borough where they are most needed, and the necessity to build on this data with the individual experiences and aspirations of our residents to tell us what needs to change within our communities to improve their outcomes and life experiences.
- 7.5 During the development of the Strategy, a number of community engagement sessions were held with local residents to explore what issues are important to them and how life in their area supports their ambitions. To complement these engagement sessions, Council Officers and Councillors conducted 'walkabouts' in the Whitley and Church wards to obtain a direct experience of the areas.
- 7.6 Delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is heavily based on conducting community engagement activities to understand residents' particular needs and aspirations so that services for them can be tailored to be more effective. This engagement approach is complemented by a strong commitment to collaborative working with local partners and other stakeholders to develop mutually reinforcing service improvements.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Tackling Inequality Strategy is focused on exploring all issues which may limit residents' abilities to participate and enjoy the benefits of living within the borough, including all the protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act (2010), and residents belonging to the Armed Forces community.
- 8.2 By its very nature, the Tackling Inequality Strategy details how the Council will work to improve inclusivity within the borough, with a strong element of delivering improvements by engaging directly with residents to understand their individual circumstances, needs and aspirations.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from the recommendations

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The financial implications of the Tackling Inequality Strategy are presented below:

Revenue Implications

| | 2022/23 £000 | 2023/24 £000 | 2024/25 £000 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Previously Agreed Budget Allocation | £75 | £200 | £250 |
| Expenditure | £75 | £200 | £250 |
| Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Income | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Net Cost (+)/saving (-) | £75 | £200 | £250 |

Capital Implications

| Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line | 2022/23 £000 | 2023/24 £000 | 2024/25 £000 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Proposed Capital Expenditure | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Funded by Grant (specify) Section 106 (specify) Other services Capital Receipts/Borrowing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Funding | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Value for Money (VFM)

10.2 The activities of the Place-Based pilots within the strategy and commitment to collaborative working with key partners are all predicated on an aspiration to identify more efficient use of resources in delivering services for residents.

Risk Assessment

10.3 Failure to implement the tackling inequality agenda within the Borough and reduce levels of inequality is included within the Council's Strategic Risk Register. Identified issues to be mitigated include lack of resources, focus and coordination of internal teams, deficit of community infrastructure to support local delivery, and lack of effective community engagement leading to inappropriate interventions. Mitigations are in place for each element of the risk and are being actively monitored.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Social Inclusion Analysis 2022

Appendix 1 Tackling Inequality: Strategy

Reading Borough Council

Tackling Inequality Strategy

2023 to 2026

Contents

- 1. Introduction - our vision for Reading**
- 2. What is Tackling Inequality in Reading?**
- 3. Delivering Equality**
- 4. Tackling Inequality Outcomes**
- 5. Priorities, Action Plan & Monitoring Framework**

Appendix

- Tackling Inequality in Reading Borough Council Strategies and Activities**
- Reading Profile: Data Overview of Reading**
- Place-Based Working in Reading**

1. OUR VISION FOR READING

Over the last two decades Reading has grown into one of the most vibrant and economically significant urban centres in the country. It has been consistently recognised as an area with a good quality of life and excellent prospects for economic achievement and growth.

However, there is a mismatch between this outstanding economic success and the benefit to residents within some of our communities who are missing out on the opportunities this success should bring them. Reading can be an unequal area in terms of wealth and life experiences, having some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived localities in the whole of the Thames Valley.

The most recent national analysis of deprivation (IMD 2019 & 2021 census) highlighted that within Reading there are some areas that are within the bottom 5% of the country for education, skills, and training, and for income deprivation affecting both children and older people. These pockets of substantial deprivation exist within broader areas of the borough which are within the bottom 10% and 20% of areas of the country for overall deprivation. Life expectancy data from the Office of National Statistics shows a life expectancy in Reading's most deprived area is ten years lower than in its most affluent.

The Council intends to close the gap between the life experiences of people in the most affluent and most deprived areas of Reading. The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25 'Investing in Reading's Future' sets out the vision for Reading to reach its potential and to ensure that everyone living and working can share the benefits of our town's success. Delivery of this vision is focussed on three interconnected themes of Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities, & Inclusive Economy.

22

Beyond the Corporate Plan, this priority to tackle inequality is central to how we want to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, how we want to provide high quality homes and sustainable communities, how we want to invest in our businesses and the potential in our residents, how we want to celebrate our culture and how we want our behaviours to protect our environment, now and in the future. To find out more about the breadth of action to tackle inequality in this way, summaries of the Council's key strategies and plans are set out at Appendix 1.

The specific scope of this Tackling Inequality Strategy is how to go beyond our existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents in our most deprived areas. The key focus is supporting and guiding our residents to become more self-sufficient, built on a bedrock of valued educational attainment, strong skills and practical knowledge that enables them to realise their potential through accessing suitable employment opportunities. We will deliver this through an innovative and targeted place-based approach to addressing the underlying determinants of deprivation within the Borough that adversely affect Education, Skills, and Training. We will take a holistic approach to working with our partners and shaped by engagement with our communities to understand the root causes and action needed to remove barriers to achievement.

We know that making sustainable change takes time. Our Tackling Inequality Strategy is a long-term commitment by the Council to give the people and places within the borough the skills and resources to make these changes and to embed them in our communities.

(Details of the full corporate plan can be found here: [Council Corporate Plan – 2022 to 2025 - Reading Borough Council](#))

2. WHAT IS TACKLING INEQUALITY FOR READING?

Tackling inequality in Reading means delivering a more equitable society and improving people's standard of living and participation in economic, political, social, and cultural life. The purpose of tackling inequality in Reading is to provide additional focus on those who can't achieve this equity and share the benefits of its success by supporting our residents to obtain the education, skills, and abilities to realise their potential to improve their day-to-day lives and grasp opportunities. We know that the inequalities experienced by our residents are often evident within specific areas of the borough, and that to support our residents we also need to make changes to where they live to create a healthy and nurturing environment for them.

In tackling inequality, we also need to consistently be mindful of how our residents' individual circumstances and characteristics can affect their experiences of living in Reading. We know that Reading doesn't stay still and that the changing personal experiences of our residents is a key part of this. A good example of this are the latest results from the 2021 Census which show that the proportion of Reading residents from ethnic minority groups (including White minorities) has now risen to 46.5%, from 34.7% in 2011, and that the most common languages spoken in the borough after English are now Polish, Nepalese, and Romanian.

We also know that Reading currently has a younger than average population. However, the proportion of older people is predicted to increase, with the proportion aged 60+ rising from 16.8% in 2019 to 23.1% by 2043. Approximately 13% of Reading residents have a long-term limiting illness, any analysis shows that working-age adults who are disabled are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than those who are not (38% and 17% respectively).

We must ensure that our engagement, support, and opportunities for our residents is flexible enough to respond to individuals' diverse and changing circumstances and recognises their potential to achieve a sustainable future. A profile of Reading Borough is presented in Appendix 2.

Our Tackling Inequality Strategy Commitment:

- Our Tackling Inequality Strategy prioritises issues and areas where it is most needed by our residents, so that we can achieve our collective ambitions and deliver the successes we want for everyone within the borough to share in Reading's success.
- We will do this by driving attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment for people in the areas of the town where need is greatest.
- We will always be mindful of the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how these can contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements within the borough.
- The strategy develops and complements existing strategies, work, and partnerships aimed at closing the gap between the life experiences of our residents and achieving the vision laid out in our Corporate Plan of making Reading a more equal place to live by bringing the opportunities of growth and achievement to all Reading's communities.

3. DELIVERING ON TACKLING INEQUALITY

The Council will deliver its Tackling Inequality Strategy to achieve improvements in the lives of our residents through focusing activities to remove barriers and support the development of education, skills, and training in our most deprived areas. Education in schools and our Adult and Community Learning College (New Directions) and other settings plays the key role, but there are many other council services that can be more focused on improving social mobility through in our most deprived areas. Adopting a place-based approached, which engages closely with residents and partners, will give further focus to these activities.

A Place-Based Approach

Many issues resonate across the Borough and the Council's and partners' response to them can be similar no matter where in the Borough they are needed. However, deprivation is specific to certain areas and there will be local as well as generic needs and therefore solutions that need to be found to raise attainment.

Each area of the borough has its own inherent strengths and opportunities for improving the lives of the people who live and work in that area. The Council's approach to developing its Tackling Inequality strategy is to understand these inherent aptitudes and how to focus its activities, supported by partners, as required by each area. Raising attainment in an area isn't just about giving it a facelift or putting in one or two new facilities. It is about understanding how an area works for the people and their many reasons for being there.

A place-based approach uses a clearly defined and understood geographical area to focus skills, knowledge, and resources to a common goal. It is crucial in this approach that everyone who has a stake or an interest in the area can contribute and share their experience and perspective about what future they would like to see. This enables the place-based work to deliver improvements for everyone and not just from a single perspective, which in turn creates more sustainable and embedded change than other approaches.

Aims and outcomes will be tailored to each area and developed with partners and stakeholders. The Strategy therefore does not set out interventions that residents should expect to see. It is, however, helpful to indicate the types of interventions that may be identified. An area may see some or all of these, as well as other interventions identified through the place-based approach:

Targeting Services and Resources - this is where the Council and other stakeholders focus their efforts and resources in tackling a specific issue or challenge to raising attainment. This could include things like increasing educational activity for children and adults, removing the barriers to residents to access skills development such as transport, or increasing the availability of out-of-hours education services. A Place-Based approach is a good way to clearly manage and direct activities and in turn to measure its impact.

Regeneration - this aspect focuses on the physical assets and infrastructure within an area and how they support positive outcomes for residents, often with a strong element of improving the economic vibrancy and sustainability of the area. Improving educational attainment and the skills residents possess to deliver a self-sustaining future requires good local facilities that can adapt to the different ways that residents need to use them. It is also

important that local facilities support the economic vitality of an area so that there are good employment opportunities for a more skilled and capable workforce. Regeneration can be big, developer-led regeneration schemes like a new housing estate but can also be smaller approaches such as improvements to local shops, or improved play and leisure facilities in an area. Within this type of activity, it's crucial that the local community are a key stakeholder who is directly engaged with the development of the proposed changes.

Community Development - it is important to recognise local people as an invaluable source of knowledge, strength, and commitment with an area. Connecting and engaging with a local community helps to create solutions that are tailored more accurately to the needs and aspirations of an area and avoids making decisions based on assumptions about an area. In this context, Place-Based change represents a real opportunity to break out of historic cycles of behaviour and unsuccessful interventions within an area. This approach will be crucial in tackling multi-generational experiences of low attainment and narrow employment opportunities, especially in creating strong support networks within communities that harnesses local skills and capacity and enable residents to play a positive role in securing a better future.

Devolution - the approach places more responsibility for decision-making in the hands of those within the area, with the expected benefits of seeing decisions taken with improved local knowledge and a greater level of commitment and buy-in from the local area. Devolution also encourages more engagement and participation in change projects/activities from local stakeholders who can see a more direct influence in the means of delivering change and the outcomes it wants to achieve. An investment in the skills and ambitions of an area provides more opportunities for residents to take control of the delivery of services and facilities within their communities, creating an environment where communities are using their own capacity to deliver increased attainment and positive outcomes for residents. Reading Borough Council is leading the exploratory work around the devolution of the Adult Education Budget as part of the Berkshire County Deal. Devolution of AEB could specifically deliver more skills and community learning opportunities for adults aged 19+ throughout the Borough.

Systems Based Change - this approach focuses on the interrelationships between council services, other statutory services, local businesses, and voluntary and community organisations, and how these relationships impact on a specific area. This approach enables holistic or joined-up solutions to be identified for an area, along with the removal of any unintended or unwanted outcomes of historic silo-based activities. This approach would identify the positive contributions between these different organisations which reinforce educational achievement and improved life chances, and those elements which are hindering these outcomes, and which need to be altered or removed.

Tackling Inequality Engagement

The Council collects and holds a lot of data about the outcomes for residents across the borough, including the attainment of children in school, what jobs people have, how much crime gets reported, and what type of homes they live in. What is essential when looking to reduce inequality within the borough is that we build on this data with the experiences of our residents to tell us what needs to change within our communities to improve the outcomes and life experiences of our residents.

We know that residents will have examples of positive and negative experiences of living in Reading. It is the scale of the impact of these experiences that determines their ability to participate fully in the economic, political, social, and cultural life within the borough. We also know that more examples of negative experiences can be felt by residents in specific areas of the borough.

The Council wants to put individuals and communities in control of making changes to their lives. To do this, we will focus the conversation with communities on understanding the experience of their lives and working with communities to realise their potential and deliver the improvements they want to see.

We know that tackling inequality can mean something different for each resident of the borough. For some it could mean a small change to the opening times of a community centre or starting a new course at one of our leisure centres, but for others it could mean working much more closely with a broad range of council officers to tackle longstanding issues that are concerning them about their lives or their neighbourhood. It can also mean addressing years of longstanding prejudices or stereotyping of individuals and communities to focus on their skills and potential for achievement.

We know that building a positive relationship with our residents where they feel safe and confident to be open with us can take time, and its crucial to our successful engagement with our residents that we take this time so that we can know them well enough to understand and empathise with their personal life experiences.

We also want our residents to be an integral part of the changes we make together to improve their lives. Its vitally important that our residents remain invested and connected with the services and activities that are making a difference to them, so that these remain relevant for them in the future. We know that building a positive relationship with our residents where they feel safe and confident to be open with us can take time, and it is crucial to our successful engagement with our residents that we take this time so that we can know them well enough to understand and empathise with them.

It's not always easy for our residents to take the time to engage with the Council about their lives or the area in which they live. Most of us have very busy lives already, which have been made even more complicated as we navigate our way out of the Covid pandemic and into an immediate future dominated by the rising cost of living. It is crucially important that our residents have the confidence that what we do will make a difference to them that they value and shows in turn, how the Council values them.

There isn't a one-size fits all solution to tackling inequality. Some activities that promote equality will happen quickly and have an immediate impact for our residents, whereas others will be more complicated and require more time to deliver. We also need to be realistic that we can't do everything we would want to across the whole borough at the same time, and we will need to focus our activities on specific issues and areas of the borough that make a real difference for our residents.

Working with Partners

There are some things which the Council cannot achieve on its own and we need the skills and resources of our partners to deliver them for our residents.

Working effectively with our partners will be critical to tackling inequality. To help our residents obtain the skills and abilities to realise their potential, will require us to work closely with key partners such as Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College and the Reading Economy & Destination Agency, along with our schools, colleges and businesses who are also focused on securing outcomes for residents that provide opportunities for learning and development. Our local economy needs to be strong so that there are the good jobs that our residents want, or the markets to sustain small businesses and the self-employed.

Working with our partners can also mean investing in them to create more capacity to support our resident's educational attainment and improved life chances. It is within this context that the Council actively commissions services from the voluntary and community sector within its Closing the Gap programme to provide a strong local voluntary and community sector infrastructure, enhance resilience, independence, and wellbeing for residents, and to help people get out and stay out of poverty. Whether commissioned or not, our voluntary and community sector partners have important specialist knowledge, insight, skills and expertise that can inform and improve Council services.

Whether it's engaging with businesses and employers to help stimulate new jobs, or training and skills providers to ensure people have the right skills to access them; with health services, on shared priorities to ensure people are well and active, or can access the care they need if they are not; with the police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour that undermines and disrupts our neighbourhoods; or with the voluntary and community sector on the services and support they provide to support residents with the cost of living crisis and build resilience and wellbeing across our communities; partnership working will be key.

Everything the council, and its public, voluntary and private sector partners does has the potential to make positive change for the people who live in the borough; but this potential is maximised when partners work jointly to address overlapping issues and challenges.

Arrangements for Delivery

This strategy and linked action plan bring together and highlight the council's work on tackling inequality in a single document and coherent work programme, ensuring there is clarity of focus on council-wide work on this important agenda. The strategy is approved by the Policy Committee

Delivery of the Tacking Inequality Strategy will be managed by the Council's Social Inclusion Board which is chaired by the Chief Executive and comprises senior council managers and key local delivery partners.

Central to our delivery of this strategy is the establishment of area-based projects which enable Council services, local partners, our voluntary and community sector, and our residents, to come together as part of the multi-disciplinary project team and utilise all available resources to deliver the

changes needed for our residents to realise their potential. These area-based projects are not quick fixes, they are long-term commitments that recognise the time needed to align our efforts and expertise to create the right environment for positive change. More detail on the specific arrangements for place-based working is presented in Appendix 3.

Our progress in achieving our tackling inequality ambitions will be available for everyone to see. The Council's Policy Committee will monitor ensuring that scrutiny of strategy delivery is public and everyone in the borough can be confident that positive changes are happening.

Beyond the work of Reading Borough Council, there is scope for a huge number of different ideas and activities to improve the equity for people who live and work in Reading, extending well beyond the specific focus of the actions associated with this strategy. We hope that our approach and commitment to tackling inequality will inspire other organisations to consider how they can focus their work on tackling inequality in Reading through connecting with our residents to understand their needs and aspirations, and how they can help people realise them in all areas of the borough.

Everyone will be able to find out details of the Council's Tackling Inequality Strategy and its current priorities at a dedicated page on the Reading Borough Council website (www.reading.gov.uk)

4. OUTCOMES - WE KNOW WE'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

For our Children and Young People:

- Additional learning needs for children are identified early and education provision responds to meet these needs
- All Reading children are included, engaged in learning and barriers to achievement removed
- Young people in Reading with the greatest need are supported to achieve positive destinations and futures
- Local schools work in partnership to realise the potential of all Reading children

For Post-16 Learning and Achievement

- Delivered learning programmes that meet the needs of local communities and businesses and support local economic development and skills priority plans.
- Provided an outstanding quality of education that is rated good by Ofsted and is highly valued by learners, local communities, and employers.
- Improved equality of access to learning for learners from different communities across all parts of Reading, including those who are digitally excluded and/or suffer hardship.
- Built strong and effective partnerships with local employers, sector bodies, business associations and stakeholders, that lead to improved outcomes for our residents.
- Leading by example by providing work experience and apprenticeship opportunities within the Council's workforce

For the Borough

- Reading's economy has recovered from the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, is more inclusive, and all local people can access the skills, training, and jobs they need
- Ensuring social value is at the heart of the Council's procurement and investment practices to support improved life chances for residents
- Measures of inequality between groups and communities - such as life expectancy and unemployment - are declining.
- Relationships between partners in the town - businesses, local institutions, the voluntary sector and the Council - are stronger and more productive.
- Our residents tell us they are more satisfied with Reading as a place to live, and with the services and value for money delivered by the Council.

5. PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN & MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The Social Inclusion Board has identified the following mutually reinforcing priorities for the first year of the Tackling Inequality Strategy to enable the Council to take a more holistic as well as a more targeted place-based approach to addressing the underlying determinants of deprivation within the Borough:

Area Focus - South Reading Area Pilots

2019 IMD analysis shows a consistent picture of deprivation in the South Reading area. However, the South Reading area has significant positive local resources to build on, including schools, churches, open space, community centres, leisure centre, and local retail facilities, providing scope for an asset based, community development approach to improving tackling inequality.

Our priority is to establish two area-based pilots within the South Reading area focusing on the areas within the Whitley and Church wards to focus our activities and resources where they are most needed.

Raising Educational Attainment & Improving Life Chances

 2019 IMD Data for the **Education, skills and training domain** shows that 4 LSOAs, all within South Reading, are in the most deprived 5% nationally.
 Brighter Future for Children have identified ten schools with multiple weaknesses in outcomes and key data (covering EYFS, phonics, KS1, KS2, attendance and exclusion) and are developing a targeted programme of work to support these schools to improve outcomes.

Ensuring that our residents develop the necessary skills and confidence they need to make positive choices and achieve their ambitions is the key to making sustained improvements to tackling inequality within the borough.

TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

1. IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, SKILLS, AND LEARNING

Early identification of additional needs, aligned with a wide range of provision

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Agree partnership action to deliver the priorities of the SEND Strategy 2022-2027 | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Establish clear pathways and provision from early intervention through to specialist provision | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Improve Sufficiency of SEND placements | Brighter Futures for Children |
| With health partners, develop integrated working to identify and respond to children's additional needs | Brighter Futures for Children |

Ensuring all Reading children are included, engaged in learning and barriers to achievement removed

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| With Reading schools, understand and take action to improve attainment and reduce attainment gaps | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Coordinate education and wellbeing recovery action to support children's learning | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Promote attendance and remove the barriers to engagement in education using trauma-informed and relationship-based approaches, including targeted work to prevent exclusions and reducing the number of Children Missing Education | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Targeted School Effectiveness intervention with priority schools | Brighter Futures for Children |

Promoting positive futures for all Reading young people, focusing on those most in need

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Identify young people at risk of NEET and take targeted action to prevent them becoming NEET | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Develop and promote a wider range of EET opportunities and possible futures for all Reading young people | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Reinvigorate the 16-19 partnership, building relationships with HE and FE providers | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Broker strong partnerships between businesses and schools to harness Reading's economy for the benefit of young people | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Promote enrichment, cultural and leisure opportunities for primary and secondary pupils to help children develop their interests and skills | Brighter Futures for Children |

Local schools work in partnership to realise the potential of all Reading pupils

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Reading's leaders of education, working with the community and businesses, deliver an Education Vision and strategy promoting education, skills and opportunities for all pupils. | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Targeted school effectiveness support to Reading community schools ensures quality education for all pupils | Brighter Futures for Children |
| Peer to peer school support ensures consistent quality across all of Reading schools | Brighter Futures for Children |

To provide outstanding adult (age 19+) skills and community learning that meets the needs of learners, communities, and local businesses.

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Establish an Adult Skills and Community Learning Strategy for Reading that links to the Berkshire County Deal and the work being undertaken to devolve the Adult Education Budget. | New Directions College |
| Contribute to the development and delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and where appropriate, bid for structural development funds. | New Directions College |
| Offer bespoke provision for adults with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities with a focus on developing pathways to employment. | New Directions College |
| Offer/commission provision for adults with mental health conditions that will support their recovery and enable them to progress to further learning or employment. | New Directions College |
| Offer/commission family learning activities which promote the development of basic skills and parental engagement in education. | New Directions College |
| Celebrate Adult Learner success throughout the year and via the annual Adult Learning Awards. | New Directions College |

2. SOUTH READING PLACE-BASED PILOTS

Whitley & Church Place-Based Pilots: Area Based approach to improving attainment, skills and outcomes for residents who are not realising their potential, supported by long-term improved economic sustainability

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Agree Terms of Reference | Social Inclusion Board |
| Map current resources available in each ward area | Social Inclusion Board |
| Develop baseline paper for each ward area | Social Inclusion Board |
| Develop engagement activities with residents in each area | Social Inclusion Board |
| Develop resource allocation proposals | Social Inclusion Board |
| Develop place-based monitoring framework that measures multiple outcomes for accredited learning, non-accredited learning, and community/civic engagement. | Social Inclusion Board |
| Identify local community champions | Social Inclusion Board |
| Establish New Directions College as a centre of excellence for adult and community learning. | New Directions College |

3. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Emerging Skills & Jobs

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| New Directions College to build and deliver foundation level talent pipelines into jobs within key emerging sectors across Berkshire, including Film and Production Industries and Green Skills. | New Directions College |
| Employer led employment Opportunity and Support for every Reading student with strong focus on development of skills needs from emerging sectors (Low Carbon Economy and Creative Film Sector Jobs) | REDA |
| Co-ordinating and supporting new developer led S106 Employment and Skills Plans to meet local priorities | REDA |
| New Employment Opportunities for Residents emerging from Developer ESPs | REDA |

Start Up Reading and Small Business Support

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Start Up and Employment Advice and Guidance in Community Setting | REDA |
| Supported Ways into Self-employment through training | REDA |
| Introduction to Self-Employment Taster Events | REDA |
| Workshop and Mentoring Programmes by business owners | REDA |
| Creating Strong Local Business Pathways and Growth Support to help business survive and grow local employment including skills and training | REDA |

Core Skills for Local People

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| New Directions College to deliver a service that is effectively aligned and connected to local projects and programmes of work linked to improved economic and social outcomes and skills for adults. | New Directions College |
| New Directions College to deliver provision that addresses foundation level skills gaps and meets the needs of unemployed and underemployed adults. | New Directions College |
| Deliver Multiply (national Numeracy skills development project) to over 1000+ adults in Reading until 2025, providing innovative numeracy courses that promote skills development and progression to further learning. | New Directions College |
| Work with local FE and learning providers to build strong learning and skills pathways and avoid duplication, to ensure equality of access to high quality learning provision across Reading. | New Directions College |

Employment And Employability

| Intention/Aim | Owner |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| New Directions College to build on the successful employability opportunities that are created in partnership with local employers, key stakeholders such as REDA and JCP i.e. Sector Based Work Programmes linked to specific employers/sectors and targeted at specific learner groups. | New Directions College |
| New Directions College to grow the delivery of Apprenticeships and technical/vocational education that meets the skills gaps within key sectors and is responsive to employer demand. | New Directions College |
| New Directions College to offer the National Skills Fund and Lifetime Skills Guarantee to Adults across Reading looking to secure their first full L3 qualification. | New Directions College |
| New Directions College to offer bespoke provision for adults with Learning Disabilities/Difficulties, with a focus on developing pathways to employment. | New Directions College |
| Post Covid and Cost of Living Crisis: Access to employment opportunities for all our residents through a range of jobs and skills events around the Borough, working with National Careers Service, New Directions and JCP to provide recruitment support and soft skills | REDA |
| Ensuring our workforce has the skills that employers need and where there are jobs waiting to be filled - including construction, hospitality, digital and healthcare. | REDA |

TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY - MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Achieving positive sustained change within the lives of our residents is something which we know can take years to realise. As a result, much of the monitoring information relating to activities to tackle inequality has been done on a local authority basis, with results reported annually, or even sometimes after a few years.

A significant amount of this type of analysis is already undertaken to understand the impact of the Council's Corporate Plan across the borough. This will be used as part of the monitoring framework for the Tackling Inequality strategy as this includes monitoring success in improvement of educational attainment, skills, and learning, and how we are creating improved communities with better economic prospects for our residents. Details of the Council's Corporate Plan and its monitoring framework can be found here:

[Council Corporate Plan – 2022 to 2025 - Reading Borough Council](#)

Whilst we will be continuing to examine and review this type of data to understand the impact of our activities, the monitoring framework for the Tackling Inequality Strategy will also include the development of data which can be reviewed and analysed throughout the year to determine any specific issues or improvements which have been realised.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving Educational Attainment• Promoting School Attendance & reducing School Exclusions• Supporting children & families at most risk• Impact of additional school support• Apprenticeship starts and completions• Community-Based / Adult Learning - rates of participation and success• Employment Support• New Jobs Created / Employment Outcomes• Supported Employment Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting New Businesses and Reducing Business Failures• Community-Based Activities• Community Facilities Availability & Usage• Receiving Benefits and Direct Financial Support• Youth Crime / Offending• Supporting Cultural Diversity• Actively Supporting Improved Health |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

APPENDIX 1 - TACKLING INEQUALITY IN READING BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The [Local Plan for Reading](#), which runs to 2036, sets out the council's approach to housing, employment, transport, leisure and the natural environment, providing an overarching framework for development on issues that are crucial building blocks of tackling inequality, as well as linked to other council strategies highlighted below. The theme of socially inclusive communities runs throughout the local plan's objectives.

| Theme | Social | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Council strategy | Brighter Futures for Children business plan for 2022-25 | Berkshire West Healthy and Wellbeing strategy | Housing strategy, Empty homes strategy, Preventing homelessness strategy | Customer experience strategy | Community safety and serious violence strategy |
| Summary of existing approach | Getting the right start in life, good quality education and aspiration are all key drivers of tackling exclusion, and this plan therefore prioritises early help services and support for families as well as supporting education settings to offer high quality teaching for all, including a focus on those requiring bespoke or specialised support. | Jointly agreed by RBC, West Berkshire and Wokingham councils, the strategy is fundamental to tackling exclusion, recognising that health and wellbeing are foundations of both individuals' ability to fulfil their own potential and prosperous societies. It sets out priorities to reduce health differentials between different groups, focus on early years support and promote good mental health and wellbeing for all. | Housing supports the economy, prevents homelessness, helps create vibrant and sustainable communities and provides a foundation for the health and wellbeing of residents; therefore, ensuring everybody can access good quality, affordable housing in safe and welcoming neighbourhoods is a key pillar of our ambitions for tackling exclusion. | The way we respond to, and support residents is central to how the council takes an inclusive approach to its own services and meets the specific needs of different groups of residents in their dealings with the council. Our customer excellent strategy sets out how we will ensure residents can engage with us in the different ways that suit them best. | The council's new community safety and serious violence strategy, currently being developed, will include priorities aimed at reducing violence in the areas with the worst crime rates, improving work with communities to target anti-social behaviour and hate crime, and tackling knife-crime and county line activity, all of which typically impact neighbourhoods with higher levels of income deprivation and undermine people's sense of place and wellbeing. |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Ongoing/ planned activity | <p>Engage health partners to identify and reach families to access support and learning opportunities before school age.</p> <p>Build on the establishment of the Reconnect team to identify and support young people at risk (e.g. from extra-familial harm) and those disengaged from their families or support circles.</p> <p>Work with parents from pre-birth onwards to increase their resilience and confidence to parent better.</p> <p>Provide community support through a team of family support workers.</p> <p>Champion our most vulnerable children and young people by challenging barriers to educational access, lack of aspiration and inappropriate outcomes, working with RBC to drive up attainment and skills linked to inclusion.</p> <p>Work to identify circumstances in which young people may become NEET (Not in Education,</p> | <p>Use information and intelligence to identify the communities experiencing poorer health outcomes and ensure the right services and support are available to them. Ensure services and support are accessible to those most in need.</p> <p>Work to provide support for parents and carers during pregnancy and the early years.</p> <p>Increase the number of two-year-old who experience disadvantage accessing nursery places.</p> <p>Implement the Berkshire West Future in Mind transformation plan for CYP mental HWB, including raising awareness of services, improving waiting times and developing services that bridge the gap for those on waiting lists, and build a Berkshire West 0-25yo comprehensive mental health offer.</p> <p>Work with the communities and the VCS to re-build mental resilience and tackle the stigma of mental health.</p> | <p>Deliver 671 new homes per year, with a strong focus on affordable housing including 200 new rented affordable council properties by 2025 and large-scale town centre build to rent schemes accessible to local people. Ensure good quality, energy efficient private rental properties through increasing take up of Reading Rent with confidence scheme, private sector licensing and development of a private sector action plan.</p> <p>Working with residents to agree priorities for deliverable / affordable improvements to their neighbourhoods, including physical improvements, improvements to services such as cleaning, water management and grounds maintenance, and communications to encourage residents to look after their areas.</p> | <p>We will create a consolidated customer fulfilment team able to deal with a range of different issues, removing the need to pass customers on to different teams, accessible by a single phone number.</p> <p>We will use digital processes, including AI and robotic process automation, to enable self-service and automation where possible.</p> <p>Create a golden record of our customers so all their data is held in one place, removing the need for them to repeat information and enabling us to better predict customers' needs based on the shared data we hold.</p> | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | <p>Employment or Training), working with partners to ensure young people are accessing a range of opportunities.</p> <p>Focusing on support and measures to make sure children are properly engaged in learning, continue to be included in school activities and are not disadvantaged.</p> <p>Use the Virtual School model to work in partnership with schools to help children looked after achieve their full academic potential.</p> | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|

| Theme | Economic | | | Cultural | Political |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Council strategy | Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2025 | Powered by People: Reading's economic recovery and renewal strategy 2021-24 | UK shared prosperity investment plan | Culture and heritage strategy 2015-30 | Consultation and engagement approach |
| Summary of existing approach | <p>Evidence suggests that more vulnerable people in our societies will be most impacted by climate change; yet conversely, the transition to a carbon neutral future provides an opportunity to harness skills and employment opportunities across the green economy and can therefore be a pillar of our approach to tackling inequality.</p> <p>The strategy sets out how the ambition of making Reading carbon neutral by 2030 can deliver a cleaner and more inclusive economy, and communities that are cohesive and engaged in a shared agenda.</p> | <p>The post-Covid reading recovery and renewal strategy has three priorities; an Inclusive Reading (employment, skills, and training for all), smart Reading (a resilient economy, businesses and city centre fit for the future) and Destination Reading (a great place to live, work and do business).</p> <p>With a focus on ensuring employment opportunities and skills development, the strategy sets out a framework for the council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan.</p> | <p>Our UKSPF investment plan sets out our proposed activities across the themes of communities and place, business support and people and skills. The plan will make a direct contribution to the ambition of reducing inequality in Reading through targeted interventions in areas most in need of support for economically inactive people, including through adult learning and skills development, business start-up support and building community infrastructure.</p> | <p>Culture and heritage can support tackling inequality through their contribution to jobs and the economy and, where they are accessible to everyone in the borough, through the role they play in stimulating people's enjoyment of place and sense of cohesive identity.</p> <p>The strategy recognises the role of cultural opportunities in combatting inequalities; and aims to increase participation and engagement in culture and heritage and use events to celebrate Reading's identity and diversity.</p> | <p>Underpinning all of the council's strategies and work programmes, our consultation and engagement demonstrate our commitment to taking a socially inclusive civic participation by actively seeking the input and views of local residents to co-produce our priorities, plans and service activity.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Reducing fuel poverty by targeting retrofitting at those most in need / referral mechanisms for those in poor health and/or fuel poverty.</p> <p>Ensuring that services, leisure facilities and employment opportunities are located close to where people live and/or in locations easy to access by sustainable transport services.</p> <p>Increasing the amount and quality of green space to enable residents to benefit from improved physical and mental health; mapping nature recovery priorities against indices of deprivation data to support people and wildlife where it's most needed.</p> | <p>Ensuring employment opportunities and support for every Reading student, including work experience and placements, virtual internships and business mentoring.</p> <p>Promoting employment opportunities through jobs and skills fairs/sector events.</p> <p>Launching Kickstart broker scheme enabling employers to access funding to create jobs for young adults on UC. Reskilling courses for growth areas for target cohorts. Support for digital upskilling and reducing digital exclusion.</p> | <p>Intensive business support programmes for businesses at the start-up, running and growing stages to boost community enterprises, create jobs and offer a route out of low pay.</p> <p>Using the Berkshire Opportunities skills and employment portal to address post-Covid employment/skills challenges.</p> <p>Provide employment support for economically inactive people; intensive, wraparound one-to-one support to move people closer to mainstream provision and employment. Support local residents to develop the skills and abilities to access opportunities in the growing film and media sector in South Reading.</p> <p>Improve the pavilion at Whitley Wood Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Providing support and capacity development for the events and festivals programme.</p> | <p>Annual residents survey, our citizen's panel provides regular survey and focus group insight into to the council's work consultation processes ensure regular community input on a range of service and ward based issues 48 ward councillors working closely with and representing their communities, to ensure that the voices of all residents can be heard (eg ward surgeries, regular correspondence etc)</p> |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

APPENDIX 2 - What We Know About Reading 2022

Reading is the principal regional and commercial centre of the Thames Valley, a major retail and leisure destination, with a thriving night-time economy.

Reading has a compact service economy which specialises in business and insurance services and has some of the finest high-tech business parks in the South-East, with many international companies such as Microsoft and Oracle choosing Reading as their home.

The town is a major transport interchange, continuing to benefit from its strategic location on the M4 corridor and proximity to Heathrow Airport and London. Reading is also home to the University of Reading and Reading College, with a large percentage of the local working population highly skilled.

However, prosperity has brought its own problems, with pressure on infrastructure, communities, and the environment. The high cost of living and the high cost of housing have had a significant impact on local communities. Although Reading can undoubtedly demonstrate success and wealth, the town also contains wards amongst some of the most deprived in the country.

Currently 174,200¹ residents and 67,700 households live within the Reading borough boundary, while around 233,000 people live in Reading's greater urban area². The population is estimated to increase by 3.2% by 2043³, and the number of households is predicted to rise to 69,119 by 2043.

Reading has a very diverse population, with 46.5% now belonging to a Black and Minority Ethnic community, the third highest proportion in the South-East after Slough and Oxford.

Reading has a generally younger population; however, the proportion of older people is predicted to increase, with the proportion aged 60+ predicted to rise from 16.8% in 2019 to 23.1% by 2043.

Reading's continued success has further increased demand for housing, resulting in higher than national average prices, with the median house price almost 3 times higher in 2020 than 2000. Because of this, the property market has become increasingly inaccessible to those on low incomes, due to the shortage of affordable housing.

Over the last 20 years, Reading has developed from an economy based on trading and manufacturing into a centre for leading edge information communication technology (ICT) companies and is now one of the largest insurance and business service centres in the country. Reading is now a major retail centre, with a significant evening economy.

Reading has a highly skilled workforce, however there is a disparity between the workforce and the skills and earnings of Reading residents, with in-work poverty increasing in certain areas. In terms of occupation profile, Reading has a higher proportion of residents in professional occupations than the national average.

In terms of unemployment, the claimant count rate (proportion of working age population claiming JSA or Universal Credit) is currently 4.1% (August 22)⁴, compared with 2.9% for the South-East and 3.8% nationally. This has increased from 2.6% in August 2019 pre-covid. The average gross annual salary for workers in Reading in 2021 was £36,500 for residents and £34,222 for workers⁵, both higher than the national and regional averages.

Although the pace of change in Reading has been rapid, there is a clear mismatch between outstanding economic success and the level of benefit to local people, leaving a significant gap between Reading's most and least prosperous neighbourhoods. Reading has, within a small geographic area, some of the most affluent and the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of the Thames Valley.

According to the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Reading is ranked the 141st most deprived out of 317 local authorities in the country. However, there are five areas in Reading within the most deprived 10% nationally for overall deprivation and four areas which are in the bottom 5% for deprivation relating to education, skills and training.

In general terms, Reading tends to score better than the national average for most health measures, although this hides problems within particular communities. One of the most significant health-related statistics is that life expectancy is 6.8 years lower for men and 7.8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Reading than in the least deprived areas⁶.

Crime and the fear of crime have become more significant issues as Reading's evening economy has grown over recent years. However, Reading has an average crime rate, when compared to similar areas.
⊕

Reading is a major population and employment centre within the Southeast, benefiting from proximity to London and Heathrow, and with excellent links to national road and rail networks as well as to Heathrow Airport. Such connectivity is represented by Reading's status as a regional transport hub, international gateway, and a major transport interchange. As with most other towns and cities in the UK, Reading experiences congestion on many of its main routes during the week, with the commercial success of the town adding to weekend congestion.

Reading has one of the UK's busiest railway stations, catering for 17 million passengers a year, with a further 4 million interchanging passengers. Reading attracts many trips from surrounding communities. In the AM peak period (07:00-10:00), 30,000 people arrive and 24,000 people leave the Reading area.

APPENDIX 3 - TACKLING INEQUALITY THROUGH PLACE-BASED WORKING

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PILOTS - 2023/25

Objective

To support the delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy by piloting place-based working within the Church and Whitley Wards.

Place based approaches

Place based working approaches use clearly defined and understood geographical areas to focus skills, knowledge, and resources to a common goal. Crucial to the success of this approach is that everyone who has a stake or an interest in the area can contribute and share their perspective about how best the desired outcome might be achieved.

Place-based approaches can involve:

- **targeting** services and resources deployed either by councils and/or other stakeholders
- utilising and building local **community** skills, knowledge, and commitment from residents
- **regeneration** approaches to assets and infrastructure
- **devolution** of decision making to local communities, with greater engagement and participation at neighbourhood level, and
- **systems based** change, focusing on the interrelationships between council services, other statutory services, local businesses, and voluntary and community organisations, how the relationships impact on a specific area and removing silos

Previous LGA research has identified five elements that form the basis of placed based approaches, which should be considered at the strategic and locality level:

- Developing creative ways of working which involve partnership approaches to overcome departmental and organisational silos.
- Strengthening capacity and social capital in the locality to support self-help and independence.
- Building on existing resources by adopting an asset-based approach.
- Reducing the demand for services through early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Actively engaging communities.

These principles are incorporated within the proposed approach for the RBC pilots of placed based working set out below.

Reading placed based pilots: proposed approach

The place-based pilots will cover two areas of the Borough: Church and Whitley Wards and the new approach will be piloted over a period of twenty-four months.

The aim of the pilots is to test whether by taking a more holistic, targeted and co designed approach to the deployment of Council, community, and private sector resources; residents in our least affluent Wards can be better supported to improve their life chances. There are three areas of activity for the pilots all of which are important:

- Coordination and visibility of internal service delivery within the pilot areas.
- Engagement, sharing of intelligence and coordination of agreed activity with key external partners and agencies in the pilot areas.
- Community and resident engagement.

Coordination and Visibility of Internal Service

This involves ensuring that services are delivered in a coordinated, joined up, place-based way, rather than being arranged in organisational silos. This does not necessarily mean changing what services are delivered, but, through understanding service linkages and what each team is doing in the pilot area it may change how and when they are delivered.

There is already a huge depth of intelligence and knowledge about the two pilot areas spread across the organisation. Working together with a focus on place will create the opportunity for service areas - education, adult skills, social care, housing, environmental and cultural etc. to come together to:

- Share intelligence about the areas including their assets, strengths and challenges,
- Identify which partners we already work with in the areas,
- Share and coordinate work programmes to enable more impactful delivery,
- Trouble shoot internal blockages/service delivery issues; and
- Agree and facilitate new activity to deliver the pilot's objectives.

Engagement and Coordination with Key Partners

Proactive positive engagement with key partners working in the area - Head Teachers, GP surgery, voluntary and community sector, faith leaders, community associations etc. has the potential to significantly enhance the impact of place-based working by similarly sharing information and intelligence, aligning activities and codesigning solutions to issues.

Community Engagement

Our residents and communities are all different in terms of ethnicity, lived experience, access to facilities, community resilience etc. Understanding their views - issues and aspirations as well as the community's strengths will help target activity, facilitate codesign and improve wellbeing.

Place Based Pilots - Detailed Objectives

To support the delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy by piloting place-based working within the Church and Whitley Wards. Specifically, this will include:

- Promote and develop collaborative working between Council departments and services, to increase visibility and coordination of service delivery, to share intelligence and programming information and identify and implement opportunities for improvement.
- Engage with key local partners to share intelligence, understand issues, and promote a collaborative and coordinated approach to addressing 'common' problems.
- Proactively engage with residents to understand their perspective and concerns and facilitate codesign to inform service delivery.
- Facilitate a local, targeted approach to delivery of services which both directly and indirectly support improved education, skills, and training outcomes as well as employment.

- Identify and develop local community champions to promote and imbed sustained change and strengthen community resilience.
- Utilise the skills and resources available within the Voluntary and Community Sector to facilitate the development of new opportunities and models to meet local needs.
- Consider how features of a public health approach can be incorporated into placed-based working to improve wellbeing within the pilot areas.
- Promote activities and outcomes to residents in the area.
- Agree an Action Plan and metrics for evaluation of the pilot and provide regular update reports to the Social Inclusion Board.
- Share and identify approaches that work and make a tangible difference to residents' lives.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: Tackling Inequality Strategy
Directorate: Directorate of Resources
Service: Data, Intelligence & Policy

Name: Mark Redfearn
Job Title: Social Inclusion & VCS Partnerships Manager
Date of assessment: January 2023

Scope your proposal

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

Tackling inequality in Reading means delivering a more equitable society and improving people's standard of living and participation in economic, political, social, and cultural life.

The purpose of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is to provide additional focus on those who can't achieve this equity and share the benefits of its success by supporting our residents to obtain the education, skills, and abilities to realise their potential to improve their day-to-day lives and grasp opportunities.

We know that the inequalities experienced by our residents are often evident within specific areas of the borough, and that to support our residents we also need to make changes to where they live to create a healthy and nurturing environment for their self-improvement.

Our Tackling Inequality Strategy Commitment is:

- Our Tackling Inequality Strategy prioritises issues and areas where it is most needed by our residents, so that we can achieve our collective ambitions and deliver the successes we want for everyone within the borough to share in Reading's success.
- We will do this by driving attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment for people in the areas of the town where need is greatest.
- We will always be mindful of the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how these can contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements within the borough.
- The strategy develops and complements existing strategies, work, and partnerships aimed at closing the gap between the life experiences of our residents and achieving the vision laid out in our Corporate Plan of making Reading a more equal place to live by bringing the opportunities of growth and achievement to all Reading's communities.

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

This new strategy is aimed at all residents within the borough who are unable to achieve a self-sustained high quality of life. The focus of the strategy is to work with our residents to improve their educational attainment, learning and skills to support their long-term

achievements, and to prioritise those areas of the borough with the highest levels of deprivation.

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

The specific scope of this Tackling Inequality Strategy is to go beyond the Council's existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents in our most deprived areas.

The key focus is supporting and guiding our residents to become more self-sufficient, built on a bedrock of valued educational attainment, strong skills and practical knowledge that enables them to realise their potential through accessing suitable employment opportunities. We will deliver this through an innovative and targeted place-based approach to addressing the underlying determinants of deprivation within the Borough that adversely affect Education, Skills, and Training.

We will take a holistic approach to working with our partners and shaped by engagement with our communities to understand the root causes and action needed to remove barriers to achievement.

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

This strategy is focused on supporting residents living within the most deprived areas of the borough, with the initial activities delivered in areas identified as consistently having the most acute and highest levels of deprivation with the borough.

Engaging with residents in these areas to understand their specific needs and aspirations is a key element of the approach to implementing the Tackling Inequality Strategy.

Outputs and learning from the Tackling Inequality Strategy will be available to all Council services to be utilised across the whole of the borough.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

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

- **Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community)?**

No. The Tackling Inequality Strategy is focused on exploring all issues which may limit residents' abilities to participate and enjoy the benefits of living within the borough, including all the protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act, and residents belonging to the Armed Forces community.

- **Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be?**

No. By its very nature, the Tackling Inequality Strategy details how the Council will work to improve inclusivity within the borough, with a strong element of delivering improvements by engaging directly with residents to understand their individual circumstances, needs and aspirations.

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.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

The Tackling Inequality Strategy objectives do not focus on any specific resident groups and are applicable to all residents with protected characteristics and part of the armed forces community within the borough.

It is specifically stated within the Tackling Inequality Strategy that in tackling inequality we need to consistently be mindful of how our residents' individual circumstances and characteristics can affect their experiences of living in Reading. We know that Reading is constantly changing and that the personal experiences of our residents is a key part of this.

The strategy also states that the Council must ensure that our engagement, support, and opportunities for our residents is flexible enough to respond to individuals' diverse and changing circumstances and recognises their potential to achieve a sustainable future.

The initial focus of the strategy on those areas within the borough with the highest levels of deprivation does not mean that improvements delivered in those areas will not be available or applicable to the rest of the borough. Identified service delivery improvements will bring benefits to all operating practices, and specific elements of learning will be shared to ensure that the achievements of the strategy resonate across the whole of the borough.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| TO: | POLICY COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 23 JANUARY 2023 | | |
| TITLE: | BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE WEST INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | CLLR RUTH MCEWAN | PORTFOLIO: | EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH |
| SERVICE: | SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH | WARDS: | BOROUGHWIDE |
| LEAD OFFICER: | MELISSA WISE | TEL: | 0118 9373445 |
| JOB TITLE: | ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH | E-MAIL: | MELISSA.WISE@READING.GOV.UK |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Reading Borough Council's involvement in the newly formed Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership (BOB ICP).
- 1.2 The BOB ICP will cover the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area. Reading Borough Council falls within the BOB ICP. The founding members of the BOB ICP worked together to agree the terms of reference for the new partnership board before its first meeting on the 28th October 2022. The founding voting members are:
 - Reading Borough Council
 - Buckinghamshire Council
 - West Berkshire Council
 - Oxfordshire County Council
 - Wokingham Borough Council
 - The BOB NHS Integrated Care Board
- 1.3 In addition to the Founding Members listed above, it is proposed in the BOB ICP Final Draft Terms of Reference to invite wider health and social care system partners into the membership of the ICP. This will include:
 - Two other elected members from Buckinghamshire Council
 - Two other elected members from Oxfordshire councils (to include at least one elected member from a City/District council)
 - One representative from an acute NHS provider*
 - One representative from a mental health NHS foundation trust*
 - One representative from the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

- Two representatives from primary care; one to be a GP*
- The Directors of Public Health for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West
- One representative from Healthwatch
- One representative from the BOB VCSE Alliance
- One representative from the Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network (AHSN)
- One representative from care sector providers (with no direct financial interest)
- One representative of child and adolescent mental health
- (*these four members from NHS providers must between them cover the three Places)

Also, in attendance as non-voting members will be:

- ICB Chief Executive Officer
 - One Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)**
 - One Director of Children's Services (DCS)**
(** each to be from different Place)
- 1.4 The proposed membership of the ICP from Reading Borough Council is:
- (a) Leader of the Council Councillor Brock
(b) Nominated Deputy Councillor Terry
- 1.5 The BOB ICP development is under consideration by the other councils in the Berkshire West area. Wokingham noted the Terms of Reference and agreed their representatives to the ICP through their Executive on 24th November. West Berkshire took it to their Executive on 3rd November.
- 1.6 Appendix 1: Draft Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Terms of Reference

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The involvement of Reading Borough Council in the new joint committee of the Integrated Care Partnership that covers the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area is approved.
- 2.2 The final draft Terms of Reference for the BOB ICP joint committee be noted.
(See Annex 1)
- 2.3 The appointment of two councillors of Reading Borough Council to the BOB ICP joint committee is approved.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Partnership working, integration of services and the development of joint strategies are approaches to improving outcomes for residents that are already well established within work programmes of health and social care organisations. Much of the current work in Berkshire West is overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Boards in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham.

- 3.2 The creation of ICPs is not intended to duplicate existing arrangements like this but provide opportunity to strengthen the alignment of the ICS and Health and Wellbeing Boards. The ICP strategy will take account of the Health and Wellbeing Boards' Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWS). establish greater integration within the larger system area.
- 3.3 Commissioning arrangements within the NHS have changed to enable the creation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). The Reading and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups no longer exist and have now been replaced by the BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- 3.4 Integrated Care Partnerships are required to publish an integrated care strategy to set out how the assessed needs in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the areas covered by the partnership can be met through the exercise of the functions of the Integrated Care Board, partner local authorities or NHS England.
- 3.5 Development of the BOB integrated care strategy has now been completed and is being consulted on as described below in paragraph 7.1. Six working groups were set up within a framework with the following themes: Start Well; Live Well; Age Well; Promoting Healthy Lives; Health Protection and Improving Access to health services. It is anticipated that the BOB ICP strategy will be published early in 2023.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 **Current Position:** To date Reading Borough Council and its Leadership have actively engaged with the BOB ICP and adopted a process of constructive participation.
- 4.2 **Proposed:** To approve and formalise the involvement of Reading Borough Council in the new joint committee of the Integrated Care Partnership that covers the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West including the appointment of 2 Councillors of Reading Borough Council to the committee.
- 4.3 No other options are to be considered.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Integrated Care Systems have four main aims:
1. To improve population health and healthcare
 2. Tackle inequalities in outcome, experience and access
 3. Enhance productivity and value for money
 4. Help the NHS to support broader social and economic development
- 5.2 The establishment of Integrated Care Partnerships within the new ICS structures provides greater opportunities to integrate health and care services for residents in Reading and Berkshire West. It is anticipated that this will drive a systemwide focus on collaboration and prevention leading to a positive impact on health and wellbeing outcomes across the life-course. It will provide further opportunity to

prevent and reduce health inequalities and drive the most rapid improvement of health amongst those with the greatest need.

5.3 Involvement in the BOB ICP and its integrated care strategy will contribute to the following strategic priorities of Reading Borough Council:

- The Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan and its themes of Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy.
- The TEAM Reading principles of working together; driving efficiency, supporting the council's ambitions and making a positive difference.
- The Berkshire West and Reading Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its five priority areas of reducing the differences in health between different groups of people; supporting individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives; helping children and families in early years; promoting good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people and promoting good mental health and wellbeing for all adults.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this decision. It does not influence whether Reading moves closer to the objective of a net zero carbon Reading by 2030 and will not make vulnerable service users resilient to future climate change impacts. Neither will it have implications for the environment and biodiversity.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Whilst the formulation of the Integrated Care Partnerships is already determined the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership has begun the consultation about its strategy priorities. This opened on 13.12.22 and closes on 27.1.23. Reading Borough Council are actively engaged in the consultation process and a response will be submitted.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision and will not have a differential impact on racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief; and the Armed Forces community.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 established Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) as legal entities and created new NHS bodies called Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) statutory bodies that are responsible for planning and funding most NHS services in the area. Within this legislation all ICSs are required to establish new partnership forums called Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). These statutory committees bring together a broad set of system partners. This includes local government particularly social care and public health, the voluntary, community

and social enterprise sector (VCSE), NHS organisations and others to develop a health and care strategy for the area to integrate the services that they plan, purchase, and provide for local residents.

- 9.2 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are geographically based arrangements that bring together providers and commissioners of NHS services with local authorities and other local partners to plan, co-ordinate and commission health and care services. They gained formal legal status on 1st July 2022.
- 9.3 The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) is formed in accordance with Section 116ZA of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as introduced by Section 26 of the Health and Care Act 2022. The ICP is a statutory joint committee of the BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the local authorities in the ICS who are responsible for adult social care: Buckinghamshire Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough Council.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The establishment of the ICS and its associated structures aims to allow greater integration of services with a stronger focus on prevention. This may include changes to the current arrangements where Reading Borough Council within Berkshire West and the local NHS commissioning body, now the Integrated Care Board, pool some of their budgets through Section 75 arrangements. Any such changes will be subject to separate approval processes.
- 10.2 The BOB ICP Terms of Reference set out working arrangements with an expectation that all members and partners will contribute through ‘in kind’ support from the ICB along with access to partner’s expertise. If the ICP needs to commission additional input or external support, then the statutory partners will agree how this is to be funded.
- 10.3 The final draft terms of reference state that the secretariat and administrative functions for the ICP will be provided by the ICB.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Appendix 1: BOB ICP Terms of Reference

This page is intentionally left blank

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

Terms of Reference

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Establishment | 2 |
| 1.1 | Statutory Joint Committee..... | 2 |
| 1.2 | Terms of Reference and Review | 2 |
| 2 | Aim, Accountability and Reporting, and Authority to Act | 2 |
| 3 | Principles | 3 |
| 4 | Duties..... | 4 |
| 5 | Chair, Membership, Attendees, Sub-Groups..... | 5 |
| 6 | ICP Meetings..... | 7 |
| 6.1 | Frequency and Chairing: | 7 |
| 6.2 | Attendance, Conflicts of Interest and Quorum..... | 7 |
| 6.3 | Voting, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Transparency: | 8 |
| 7 | Secretariat and Administration | 9 |

1 Establishment

1.1 Statutory Joint Committee

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (each a “Place”) (“BOB”) Integrated Care Partnership (“ICP”), is formed in accordance with s.116ZA, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“LGPIHA”) (introduced by s.26, Health and Care Act 2022). The ‘responsible local authorities’ (s.103, LGPIHA) within the BOB Integrated Care System (“ICS”) area are Buckinghamshire Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough Council (each an “LA”, and together “the LAs”).

The ICP is a statutory joint committee of the BOB Integrated Care Board (“ICB”) and the LAs (each a “Founding Body” and together “the Founding Bodies”).

1.2 Terms of Reference and Review

These ICP Terms of Reference (“ToR”) will be reviewed at least annually and more frequently if required. Any proposed amendments will be submitted to the Founding Bodies for approval.

2 Aim, Accountability and Reporting, and Authority to Act

2.1 The overall aim of the ICP is to deliver the expectation set out in the joint declaration between NHS England and the Local Government Association (March 2022) that it shall ‘drive the direction and policies of the Integrated Care System (ICS)’.

2.2 Specifically, the ICP will also help deliver the four ICS aims:

| ICS aim | Description |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improve outcomes | Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare |
| Reduce inequalities | Tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access |
| Provide value | Enhance productivity and value for money |
| Support the local area | Help the NHS support broader social and economic development |

2.3 **Accountability and reporting:** The ICP is accountable to the Founding Bodies and shall report to them on a regular basis on how it discharges its responsibilities.

2.4 **Authority to Act:** As a statutory joint committee of the Founding Bodies the ICP is authorised to:

| Authorised activity | Description |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Create Committees and Task Groups | Create committees and/or task and finish groups (together “sub-groups”) to take forward specific programmes of work as considered necessary. The ICP shall determine the membership and terms of reference of any such sub-group. |
| Seek information | Seek information that reasonably relates to any item of business of the ICP from any employee or member of a Founding Body. The Founding Bodies shall consider such requests having regard to the normal FOI exceptions and commercial or political sensitivity. |
| Commission reports | Commission reports it deems necessary to help fulfil its obligations. |
| Obtain advice | Use independent professional advice and secure the attendance of advisors with relevant expertise if it considers such necessary to fulfil its functions, provided this is in accordance with any procedures of the ICB for obtaining legal or professional advice. |
| Investigate activity | Investigate activity within these ToR. |

3 Principles

In everything it does, the ICP shall uphold the ICS principles:

| Theme | ICS partnership principles from the ICS design framework |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improved outcomes focus | Improved outcomes: Focus on improving outcomes for people, including improved health and wellbeing, supporting people to live more independent lives, and reduced health inequalities. |
| Subsidiarity | Triple aim, cooperation and subsidiarity: Support the triple aim (better health for everyone, better care for all, and efficient use of NHS resources), the legal duties on statutory bodies to co-operate and the principle of subsidiarity (that decision-making should happen at the most local appropriate level). Support for place: Ensure place-based partnership arrangements are respected and supported, and have appropriate resource, capacity and autonomy to address community priorities, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Distributed leadership | <p>Distributed leadership: Come together under a distributed leadership model and commit to working together equally.</p> <p>Professional, clinical, political and community leadership: Draw on the experience and expertise of professional, clinical, political and community leaders and promote strong clinical and professional system leadership.</p> |
| Collective accountability | <p>Collective accountability: In discussion, operate collective challenge for shared and individual/organisational contributions to joint objectives.</p> <p>Risk/benefit sharing: Enable sharing of risks, benefits and support.</p> <p>Transparency: Agree arrangements for transparency and local accountability, including holding formal meetings in public with minutes and papers available online (“Meetings”).</p> <p>Consensus: Partners will use their reasonable endeavours to seek a consensus between them, including working through difficult issues where appropriate.</p> |
| Innovation and continuous learning | <p>Transformation: Contribute to the transformation of health and care services</p> <p>Innovation: Enable opportunities to innovate, share best practice and maximise sharing of resources across organisations (additional).</p> <p>Continuous learning: Create a learning system, sharing evidence and insight across and beyond the ICS, crossing organisational and professional boundaries.</p> |

4 Duties

The ICP’s duties are to:

| Duties | Description |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop the Integrated Care Strategy | <p>Develop an Integrated Care Strategy for the ICS (“Strategy”), with the agreement of all partners, and submit that Strategy to the Founding Bodies and NHS England.</p> <p>The Strategy will take account of the three Place Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs).</p> |
| Use data | <p>Base the Strategy on the best available evidence and data, covering health and social care (both children’s and adult social care) and addressing the wider determinants of health and</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | wellbeing including for example, employment, environment and housing issues. |
| Engage stakeholders | Agree a plan for consulting and engaging the public and communicate to stakeholders in the development of the Strategy. |
| Enhance relationships | Work with the structures in Places (e.g. Health and Wellbeing Boards (“HWBs”) and Place Based Partnerships) to enhance relationships between leaders across the health and care system in order to consider best arrangement for its local area. The ICP will seek to complement, but not duplicate, the work of the HWBs and to provide an opportunity to strengthen the alignment of the ICS and HWBs. |
| Review progress | Monitor delivery of the Strategy. Challenge all partners to demonstrate progress in reducing inequalities and improving outcomes. |
| Seek assurance | Seek assurance that the Strategy has been developed in an inclusive and transparent way and elements of the strategy have been co-produced with people with lived experience and expertise from professional, clinical, social, political, and community leadership. |

5 Chair, Membership, Attendees, Sub-Groups

| Arrangement | Description |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair | The Chair will be elected by the Founding Bodies for a one-year term which may be renewed once (i.e. a maximum of two years). References to Chair in these ToR are to the Chair of the ICP or to the Chair of a Meeting (if different) as the context requires. |
| Deputy Chair | A Deputy Chair will be elected by the Founding Bodies for a one-year term which could be renewed once (i.e. a maximum of two years). The Deputy Chair shall be from a different founding member body or Place to the elected Chair. |
| Membership | <p>Founding Voting Members (six):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identified representative of the ICB • An identified elected member from each of the LAs (five) <p>Other Voting Members (17):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two other elected members from Buckinghamshire Council |

-
- Two other elected members from Oxfordshire councils (to include at least one elected member from a City/District council)
 - One representative from an acute NHS provider*
 - One representative from a mental health NHS foundation trust*
 - One representative from the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
 - Two representatives from primary care; one to be a GP*
 - The Directors of Public Health for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West
 - One representative from Healthwatch
 - One representative from the BOB VCSE Alliance
 - One representative from the Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network (AHSN)
 - One representative from care sector providers (with no direct financial interest)
 - One representative of child and adolescent mental health (**these four members from NHS providers must between them cover the three Places*)

In attendance (non-voting)

- ICB Chief Executive Officer
 - One Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)**
 - One Director of Children's Services (DCS)**
- (** each to be from different Place)*
-

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Substitutes | Each ICP member (“Member”) shall identify a named substitute or substitutes (each a “Substitute”) to attend a Meeting if they are unable to. Where relevant, references in these ToR to ‘Member’ include a Substitute attending in place of that Member. |
| Other attendees | Only Members have the right to attend Meetings, but the Chair may invite relevant staff and individuals to attend a Meeting (for all or part of it) as necessary in accordance with the business of the ICP. Such attendees will not be eligible to vote. Opportunities will be created for members of the public to attend and be given opportunity to speak at selected Meetings. |
| Stakeholder Participation | It is anticipated that task and finish groups - alongside dedicated workshops, dedicated public meetings and other methods – will be used for broader stakeholder participation and to include views and needs of patients, carers, and the social care sector. |

6 ICP Meetings

6.1 Frequency and Chairing:

| Description | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting frequency | The ICP will meet at least three times a year. |
| Virtual Meetings | The ICP shall aim to meet physically in person, but may meet virtually or in combination of physical and virtual attendance (to include any method agreed by the Chair) and in such circumstances Members attending virtually will be counted towards the quorum. |
| Extraordinary Meetings | Extraordinary Meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chair. |
| Notice | A minimum of five working days' notice should be given when calling any Meeting unless the Chair authorises otherwise in exceptional circumstances. |
| Chair role | The Chair is responsible for agreeing the Meeting agenda and ensuring matters discussed meet the objectives as set out in these ToR. |
| Procedure in chair absence | In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, or if the Chair and Deputy Chair have a precluding interest, the remaining Founding Voting Members present shall elect one of their number to chair the Meeting. |

6.2 Attendance, Conflicts of Interest and Quorum

| Description | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attendance | Members are expected to make every effort to attend, and be prepared for, Meetings. It is expected that each Member or a Substitute will attend all Meetings. |
| Substitutes | Where a Member is unable to attend a Meeting, they should advise the Chair and secretariat and arrange for a Substitute to attend. |
| Behaviour and Conflicts of Interest | All Members shall behave in a manner complying with the Principles of Public Life (the "Nolan Principles"). All Members must register any material interests with the ICP Register of Interests. Any Member who has a material interest in a matter under discussion must declare the same and the Chair will determine how this will be managed. |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Quorum | <p>The quorum for a Meeting is one third of the Voting Membership (eight) including at least one Member from each of the Founding Bodies.</p> <p>If a Meeting is (or becomes) inquorate the Chair may: (a) adjourn or postpone the Meeting, or (b) agree that the Members present may (continue to) discuss matters on an informal basis if they so choose (but no decisions may be taken).</p> |
| 6.3 Voting, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Transparency: | |
| Voting | <p>Only Voting Members may vote, each having a single vote. The results of any vote will be recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>Decisions will be guided by national policy and best practice and will be taken by consensus wherever possible, but the Chair may always call a vote.</p> <p>Any decision will require a majority of the Founding Voting Members and a majority overall of the Voting Members in favour.</p> <p>If there is a majority of the Voting Members in favour, but not a majority of the Founding Voting Members in favour, a proposal will be reviewed so as to seek to address the concerns of those Founding Voting Members against it.</p> |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Members must demonstrably consider the equality, diversity and inclusion implications of decisions they make. |
| Meeting transparency | All Meetings will be held in public, and papers made available online unless an exemption provision applies to any item of business (in which case the determination of 'exempt information' will be guided by the definitions contained in the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A, for example personal data and the financial or business affairs of any person). |

7 Secretariat and Administration

The ICP will be provided with a secretariat by the ICB, which will undertake administrative functions including:

- clerking Meetings;
- the preparation of agendas and Meeting papers;
- maintaining the Register of Members' Interests;
- the preparation of minutes;
- maintaining a record of attendance; and
- monitoring relevant legislation and national guidance keeping Members updated on pertinent issues/areas of interest/policy developments.

Version Control

| Version | Date | Changes |
|---------|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| V1 | dd/mm/yy | Initial version agreed by Founding Bodies |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Named Members and substitutes

Understanding of proposed named Membership as of 21 October 2022. Where we have not commenced process of identifying Member actions to take this forward are suggested (*in red italic*).

| Member category | Named Member | Named substitutes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Founding Voting Member – Buckinghamshire Council | Cllr Martin Tett/Cllr Angela Macpherson | |
| Founding Voting Member- Oxfordshire County Council | Cllr Liz Leffman | |
| Founding Voting Member – Reading Borough Council | Cllr Jason Brock | |
| Founding Voting Member – West Berkshire Council | Cllr Graham Bridgman | All other Executive members |
| Founding Voting Member – Wokingham Borough Council | Cllr Clive Jones | Cllr David Hare |
| Founding Voting Member - ICB | Javed Khan OBE, Chair | |
| Two other elected members – Buckinghamshire Council | Cllr Martin Tett/Cllr Angela Macpherson +1 | |
| Two other elected members – Oxfordshire Councils | Cllr Tim Bearder Cllr David Rouane | |
| Representative from an acute NHS provider | <i>Chair of either Oxford University Hospitals or Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust tbd</i> | |
| Representative from a mental health NHS foundation trust | Martin Earwicker, Chair Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust | |
| Representative from the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust | Professor Sir Keith Willett CBE (Chair) | |
| Two representatives from primary care; one to be a GP | <i>ICB to source a GP from Bucks or Oxfordshire depending on acute trust member</i> <i>ICB discussing second member with leads for Pharmacy, Optometry, Dental</i> | |
| Directors of Public Health for each place | Dr Jane O'Grady (Buckinghamshire) | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | Ansaf Azhar (Oxfordshire) Tracy Daszkiewicz (Berkshire West) | |
| Representative from Healthwatch | Peter Miller, Cahir Buckinghamshire Healthwatch | |
| Representative from the BOB VCSE Alliance | William Butler, Chair | |
| Representative from the Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network (AHSN) | Gary Ford, Chief Executive | |
| Representative from care sector providers (with no direct financial interest) | <p><i>LAs to agree approach to identify, suggestions to date</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>From a not-for-profit provider eg Order of St Johns</i> - <i>Go via Care Associations to nominate a member</i> | |
| Representative of child and adolescent mental health | <p><i>ICP to determine what perspectives required (eg clinical, provider, user, carer, voluntary sector etc) which will then determine approach</i></p> | |

In attendance non-voting

| Member category | Named member | Named substitutes |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| ICB Chief Executive Officer | Steve McManus | |
| One Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) | <i>LAs to agree on DASS/DCS members and substitutes</i> | |
| One Director of Children's Services (DCS) | <i>LAs to agree on DASS/DCS members and substitutes</i> | |

Agenda Item 9

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| TO: | POLICY COMMITTEE (ACTING AS SOLE MEMBER FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN) | | |
| DATE: | 23 JANUARY 2023 | | |
| TITLE: | BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED - RESERVED MATTERS | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLORS: | CLLR JASON BROCK CLLR LIZ TERRY CLLR HOSKIN | PORTFOLIOS: | LEADERSHIP CORPORATE SERVICES & RESOURCES CHILDREN |
| SERVICE: | N/A | WARDS: | BOROUGHWIDE |
| LEAD OFFICER: | JONATHAN HOPKINS | TEL: | 07890 436495 |
| JOB TITLE: | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS | E-MAIL: | Jonathan.hopkins@reading.gov.uk |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Policy Committee in its capacity as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Ltd (BFFC) on an element of the work of the HR Taskforce Group - established in July 2022 and consisting of the Director of Children's Social Care (DCSC), Head of HR and Executive Director of Finance and Resources (EDFR) - and formed to focus on recruitment, retention, and conversion of agency workers to permanent hires, and to seek the Committee's agreement to a proposed approach to recruitment and retention payments to QSWs in the TfF service.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Policy Committee in its capacity as sole member for BFFC agree the recommended approach of implementing a recruitment and retention (R&R) payment for QSWs working within the TfF service to create a stable team of permanent hires, by recognising the market pressures that prevents the team from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers at the normal graded salary for the role.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In October 2018 the Council approved the formation of a separate Company for the delivery of Children's Services in Reading; Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFFC). The Company subsequently began delivery of services in December 2018.
- 3.2 BFFC is a company limited by guarantee without share capital and its sole member is Reading Borough Council. The Company's Articles of Association set out its obligations in terms of reporting to the Council as Sole Member as well as the matters which are reserved to the Sole Member. The employment of a new Executive Director is listed as a reserved matter in the Articles, hence this report requesting the Committee's consideration and agreement as sole member.

- 3.3 The recruitment of qualified social workers (QSWs) in local children's services remains a national issue and for many directors of children's services, it is the biggest barrier to improvement. As record numbers of social workers continue to leave the profession, the high level of reliance on agency social workers within a very small regional and national pool has become the norm. This places significant pressure on children's services generally and within the Together for Families (TfF) service at BfFC particularly in terms of both budget and service pressures.
- 3.4 It is also recognised that the level of resilience and expertise for QSWs in the TfT service is higher than other service areas. This is mainly due to the risk levels of children open to this service that necessitates QSWs navigating between child protection and court work. Regrettably, there are fewer QSWs with the necessary skills, experience and resilience attracted to the role under the current pay offer.
- 3.5 The priorities of the HR Taskforce Group (as per 1.1 above) are to:
- reduce agency spend on QSWs by stabilising the TfF workforce
 - improve the recruitment of QSWs through 'growing our own' programmes
 - improve the retention of SWs through targeted support, bespoke training and addressing caseload and other concerns which impacts recruitment and retention
 - convert the high number of agency staff to permanent recruits through our ambition to be an 'employer of choice'
- 3.6 As part of the HR Taskforce's work, it was identified that it is particularly difficult to recruit and retain permanent QSWs in the TfF service. The attached Report provides further pertinent detail.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The recommendation from the HR Taskforce is to implement a recruitment and retention (R&R) payment for QSWs working within the TfF service to create a stable team of permanent hires, by recognising the market pressures that prevents the team from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers at the normal graded salary for the role.
- 4.2 The implementation of this scheme needs approval from this Committee. In addition, trade unions and colleagues and employees in the children's social care team will be consulted.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 In Spring 2021 the Council refreshed its Corporate Plan, incorporating a number of major change projects under 3 themes:
1. healthy environment
 2. thriving communities
 3. inclusive growth

- 5.2 This proposal aligns with the delivery of the BFFC Business Plan, which forms part of the Thriving Communities theme.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

6.2 There are no environmental or climate change implications arising from this report.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Not applicable

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 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.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is submitted as appendix A to the main report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Please see attached background paper.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Please see attached background paper.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Attached Proposed RR Payment for TFFt SWs Paper.

This page is intentionally left blank



Proposed Recruitment & Retention Payment for Social Workers in the Together for Families Service

For decision

For discussion

For information

SUMMARY

Proposal for Recruitment and Retention Payment to SWs in Children's Social Care Together for Families Service

OWNER

HR Task Group

- Kit Lam, EDFR
- Maria Young, Director of CSC
- Shella Smith, Head of HR

VERSION

1.0

DATE

06 December 2022

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Executive Summary | 3 |
| 2. Recruitment and Retention Payment..... | 4 |
| 3. Financial Impact of Proposal..... | 5 |
| 4. Consultation and Communication | 6 |
| 5. Recommendations..... | 7 |
| Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment | 8 |

1. Executive Summary

The recruitment of qualified social workers (QSWs) in local children's services remains a national issue and for many directors of children's services, it is the biggest barrier to improvement. As record numbers of social workers continue to leave the profession, the high level of reliance on agency social workers within a very small regional and national pool has become the norm. This places significant pressure on children's services generally and within the Together for Families (TfF) service at BfFC particularly in terms of:

- a) budget pressure given the high cost of agency staff compared to permanent staff with a differential of c£30k per worker per annum
- b) service pressure as it continues to be a significant barrier to stabilising the service and impacts on our ability to achieve the necessary service improvements that is sustainable

It is also recognised that the level of resilience and expertise for QSWs in the TfT service is higher than other service areas. This is mainly due to the risk levels of children open to this service that necessitates QSWs navigating between child protection and court work. Regrettably, there are fewer QSWs with the necessary skills, experience and resilience who are attracted to the role under the current pay offer.

In July 2022, a HR Taskforce group consisting of the Director of Children's Social Care (DCSC), Head of HR and Executive Director of Finance and Resources (EDFR) was formed to focus on recruitment, retention, and conversion of agency workers to permanent hires. The priorities of the HR Taskforce and BFFC senior leaders remain to:

- reduce agency spend on QSWs by stabilising the TfF workforce
- improve the recruitment of QSWs through 'growing our own' programmes
- improve the retention of SWs through targeted support, bespoke training and addressing caseload and other concerns which impacts recruitment and retention
- convert the high number of agency staff to permanent recruits through our ambition to be an 'employer of choice'

As part of the HR Taskforce's work, it was identified that it is particularly difficult to recruit and retain permanent QSWs in the TfF service. This is evidenced by the higher turnover rates and the higher ratio of temporary to permanent current staffing levels in the TfF service compared to the other teams with QSW, as illustrated below:

| Social Worker Turnover | Temp | Perm | Total Turnover |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Children Looked After + Leaving Care Team | 100% | 30% | 36% |
| CSPOA | 50% | | 20% |
| CYPD Service | 33% | | 11% |
| Fostering Team | 100% ¹ | 13% | 22% |
| Together for Families | 100% | 33% | 64% |

¹ Temp turnover of 100% is 1 person

| Social Worker Current Staffing | Perm | Temp | Total | % Temp | % Perm |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Children Looked After + Leaving Care Team | 10 | 1 | 11 | 9% | 91% |
| CSPOA | 3 | 2 | 5 | 40% | 60% |
| CYPD Service | 6 | 3 | 9 | 33% | 67% |
| Fostering Team | 8 | 1 | 9 | 11% | 89% |
| Together for Families | 27 | 25 | 53 | 47% | 53% |

The QSW role within the TfF service has been assessed as insufficiently differentiated to pursue job evaluation that would push the grading to a higher pay band. The recommendation from the HR Taskforce is therefore to implement a recruitment and retention (R&R) payment for QSWs working within the TfF service to create a stable team of permanent hires, by recognising the market pressures that prevents the team from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers at the normal graded salary for the role. It will not apply to newly qualified social workers undertaking their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYEs) until they have successfully completed the programme.

The scheme will need approval from:

- BFFCs Finance Committee and Board (approved on 24 Nov 2022)
- the Council's Policy Committee

In addition, we will consult and communicate with trade unions and colleagues and employees in the children's social care team.

An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix A) has been completed which considers the people management impact on services within BFFC and RBC. This highlighted no significant risks.

The recruitment and retention payment would go live subject to approvals and funding being in place (likely Feb/Mar 2023) and would apply to all qualifying employees in the TfF service. The scheme would be reviewed in 12 months' time to determine whether the recruitment and retention payment for new entrants is still needed going-forward.

2. Recruitment and Retention Payment

The rationale for this proposal has been developed by the HR Taskforce which includes the Head of HR. The group is assured that the rationale to support the recruitment and retention payment would not create any employment implications in terms of equal and fair pay claims from the wider teams. The scheme would be reviewed in 12 months' time to determine whether the recruitment and retention payment for new entrants is still needed going-forward, i.e., if the TfF service is stabilised there would not be the need to continue with the scheme for new entrants.

The proposed recruitment and retention payments are:

| TfF service QSWs | Golden Hello | R&R (12 month) payment | R&R (24 month) payment |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| QSW – existing | - | £3k | £3k |
| QSW – new recruits | £5k | £3k | £3k |
| QSW - existing agency converting to perm | £5k | £3k | £3k |
| QSW - new agency converting to perm | £5k | £3k | £3k |
| QSW – internal transfer to the TfF service | - | £3k | £3k |

Conditions:

- Golden Hello payment is subject to all new entrants (including former agency workers) meeting the person specification criteria, passing the required pre-employment checks, signing a BFfC permanent contract of employment and successfully passing the 6-month probation period
- R&R payments after 12 months and 24 months are paid subject to satisfactory performance. R&R will not be made to those who are subject to formal capability or disciplinary procedures
- Golden Hello and R&R payments are non-pensionable

It is critical that the recruitment and selection process for experienced QSWs is robust and supported by a clear understanding of the conditions associated with any payments. The TfF service, HR and Finance Teams will need to work closely to ensure the payments are only made to those eligible and meeting the given criteria with clear reporting in place to BFfCs Executive Directors Meeting (EDM).

In addition, agency hires converting to permanent employees and new recruits to the service will be placed within the existing pay scale, dependent on career stage experience.

3. Financial Impact of Proposal

The proposal is only applicable to QSWs within the TfF service. There are four teams each comprising 12 QSWs (total of 48). Estimated costs based on September establishment:

| TFfT QSWs | Golden Hello | R&R (12 month) payment | R&R (24 month) payment |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| YEAR | Immediate | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| QSW – existing | - | 21 * £3k = £63k | 21 * £3k = £63k |
| QSW – new recruits | - | 3 * £3k = £9k | 3 * £3k = £9k |
| QSW - existing agency | 24 * £5k = £120k | 24 * £3k = £72k | 24 * £3k = £72k |
| TOTAL (MAX. COST) | £120k | £144k | £144k |

This does not consider the costs savings associated with non-direct costs such as the recruitment process, recruitment advertising etc.

BFfC are engaged with RBC to explore funding of this proposal through either a one-off increase in contract sum (growth bid) or through Delivery/Transformation Funding. Given that the cost of agency is currently generating an overspend position on the 2021/22 budget of c£500k, this proposal is intended to minimise and mitigate the ongoing unbudgeted overspend within the CSC pay budget going-forward.

4. Consultation and Communication

Meetings will need to take place with key stakeholders to gather feedback and comments on the scheme. The scheme will potentially result in overlaps with the pay rate of senior team members; however, these can be objectively justified as a result of the significant recruitment and retention challenges relating to the appointment of permanent QSWs in the TfF service. Furthermore, the scheme will be reviewed after 12 months and will be discontinued if the TfF service is stabilised with more permanent QSWs in post.

Current pay rates:

Newly Qualified Social Worker (post ASYE)
RGSW5 – SCP 26 – 28
£30,984 - £32,798
Market Supplement: £8,000
Total £38,984 - £40,798 (RGSW5)

Experienced Qualified Social Worker
RGSW6 – SCP 28 – 33
£32,798 - £37,568
Market Supplement: £8,000
Total £40,798 - £45,568 (RGSW6)

Consultant Practitioner
RGSW7 – SCP 33 – 39
£37,568 - £43,570
Market Supplement: £6,000
Total £43,568 - £49,570

Assistant Team Manager
RGSW8 – SCP 39 – 42
£43,570 - £46,662
Market Supplement: £6,000
Total £49,570 - £52,662

Team Manager
RGSW9 – SCP 43 – 48
£47,665 - £53,287
Market Supplement: £6,700
Total £54,365 - £59,987

It is not proposed that any adjustment is made outside of QSW scheme as presented.

5. Recommendations

BFfC Board approval was given on 24 November 2022. Policy Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed Recruitment and Retention proposal.

It is also proposed that if approved, the scheme would be implemented for a 12-month period subject to a review thereafter to:

- determine the impact of the scheme on recruitment and retention
- assess whether the scheme needs to continue for a further 12-month period depending on the level of 'need' to attract new entrants into the team
- consider any negative impact that may arise such as disenchantment from existing permanent staff and negative reactions from neighbouring LAs

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

BFFC Proposed Recruitment and Retention Payment for Social Workers in the Together for Families (TfF) Service

Directorate: Resources

Service: HR and Organisational Development

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Sheila Smith

Job Title: Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development, RBC and Head of HR for BFFC

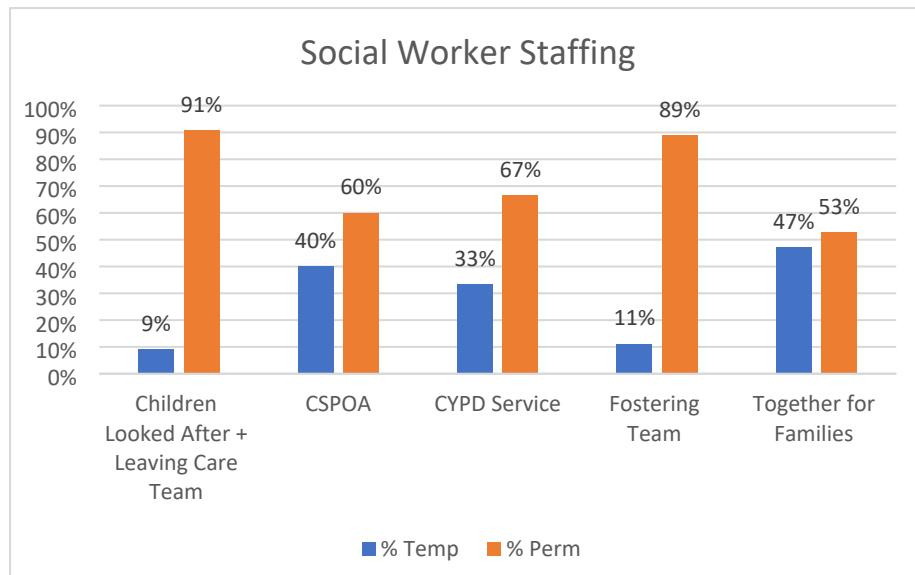
Date of assessment: 13 December 2022

Scope your proposal

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

The recruitment and retention of qualified social workers (QSWs) in children's services remains a national issue. As record numbers of social workers continue to leave the profession, the high level of reliance on agency social workers within a very small regional and national pool has become the norm. This places significant pressure on children's services generally and particularly within the Together for Families (TfF) service at BfFC. It is recognised that the level of resilience and expertise for QSWs in the TfT service is higher than other service areas. This is mainly due to the risk levels of children open to this service that necessitates QSWs navigating between child protection and court work. Regrettably, there are fewer QSWs with the necessary skills, experience and resilience who are attracted to the role under the current pay offer.

The data clearly highlights that it is particularly difficult to recruit and retain permanent QSWs in the TfF service. This is evidenced by the higher turnover rates and the higher ratio of temporary to permanent current staffing levels in the TfF service compared to the other teams with QSW, as illustrated below:



| Turnover | Temp | Perm | Total Turnover |
|-------------------------------------------|------|------|----------------|
| Children Looked After + Leaving Care Team | 100% | 30% | 36% |
| CSPOA | 50% | | 20% |
| CYPD Service | 33% | | 11% |
| Fostering Team | 100% | 13% | 22% |
| Together for Families | 100% | 33% | 64% |

The target set for the proportion of QSWs (FTE) who are permanent is 85%. We currently have only 53% of posts permanently filled within the TfF service.

The proposed change is to introduce a recruitment and retention payment for all permanent QSWs employed within the TfF service at BFFC, where there is significant and unmanageable levels of turnover as outlined in the report. This is being taken as one of several steps to mitigate against the historic recruitment and retention challenges and is supported by a range of additional measures to help recruit and retain permanent staff.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

New and existing QSWs in the TfF service, including current agency workers who are appointed to a permanent, qualifying position.

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

We are hoping to see:

1. A marked improvement in the number of applicants who apply for and remain in permanent QSW positions in the TfF service, thus increasing the proportion of permanent QSWs to meet our target of 85% permanency.
2. A reduction in QSW agency numbers and spend.
3. Improved retention rates for QSWs to reduce the risk of service disruption to children, families and young people.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Existing permanent QSWs have expressed concerns that agency workers are paid more than them for the same type of work. This has resulted in some choosing to leave permanent employment to receive increased financial benefits.

Some agency workers have expressed a desire to move to permanent roles but have voiced concerns around pay. They would welcome the option to move into permanent roles if the pay gap was reduced.

The company senior leadership team – have been consulted on the proposals and provided with opportunities to comment on the scheme before referring to company Board Members.

Company Board Members – who have overall responsibility for approval of any scheme before referral to Reading Borough Council. They have raised concerns with regards to the vacancy levels and requested options to improve recruitment and retention of QSWs

Reading Borough Council – to ensure there are no adverse effects that could occur due to the introduction of this scheme and to assess the implications against the Council's workforce.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

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.)

BFFC's main business is to provide excellent services to children, young people and families. The core area of work is related to the delivery of services via key frontline workers which is wholly but not exclusively delivered by QSWs. As such, low levels of permanent QSWs can result in a fragile workforce if we have to rely on the use of agency workers to deliver these critical services. Agency workers are not employees; therefore, they are able to leave the company at very short notice leaving little to no time to seek alternative arrangements to maintain continuity to our children. This can result in unallocated caseloads posing a risk to the children, young people and families if there is no QSW allocated to a case and must be avoided. In addition, children have sadly become accustomed to the allocation of different QSWs which is both unsettling and prevents them from having continuity of service during what is already a difficult time in their lives.

The most recent gender pay gap analysis confirms that the majority (86%) of BFFCs workforce is female which is a typical finding when compared to similar providers in the social care field. In terms of comparator groups in BFFC, since most of our workforce is within the social care field, we do not have any comparator groups in relation to gender that would be disadvantaged by the introduction of this scheme and it is therefore likely to be advantageous to female workers.

There is historical evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties for QSWs, particularly in the TfF service. Experience and local data strongly suggest that demand for QSWs remain high, with additional challenges in the areas of Children's QSWs. As a result, many similar service providers have implemented separate schemes designed to attract and retain QSWs to ensure continuity of service to prevent high caseloads which can lead to overload. This is an area where QSW will make decisions whether to take up employment if caseloads are too high which can place them at

CLASSIFICATION: OFFICIAL

professional risk if they are unable to manage the number of cases in terms of volume and complexity. This is a differentiating factor from Adult QSWs.

The scheme will potentially result in overlaps with the pay rate of senior team members; however these can be objectively justified as a result of the significant recruitment and retention challenges relating to the appointment of permanent QSWs in the TfF service. Furthermore, the scheme will be reviewed after 12 months and will be discontinued if the TfF service is stabilised with more permanent QSWs.

The Council employees QSWs within Adult Services. However, the level of permanency is much higher, with less agency workers covering established QSW posts than in BFFC. Of the permanent QSWs in Adults, the majority are women. This means that there is unlikely to be a risk of a successful equal pay claim from a Council QSW, using a BFFC QSW in receipt of a recruitment and retention payment as a comparator, as they are also predominantly women.

There is no evidence to suggest that race or age in relation to QSWs in BFFC or the Council would give rise to discrimination should the proposal be agreed. There is no correlation between age or race ff employees and receipt of the proposed recruitment and retention.

Beyond the gender, race and age analysis, it is very difficult to do a meaningful analysis on disability, sexuality, and religious belief as disclosure rates for these protected characteristics are low for both Council and BFFC employees and therefore the data is less reliable. As such, it is not possible to confirm whether there is potential discrimination within these groups, but we have no reason to believe this would be the case.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

Neither the Council or BFFC has evidence that the proposed recruitment and retention payment for QSWs would create discrimination for staff on the grounds of gender. The proposal does create opportunities for a cohort of staff (the eligible group) however the proposal is objectively justified by the business needs of the Company.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Signed (completing officer) | Shella Smith | Date 13 December 2022 |
| Signed (Lead Officers) | Shella Smith | |
| Date 13 December 2022 | | |

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 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| BFFC Service Managers and staff | Face to face meetings or via Teams | February 2023 |
| Agency social workers currently employed by BFFC | Face to face meetings or via Teams | February 2023 |
| Trade unions | Face to face meetings or via Teams | February 2023 |

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.

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

Is there a negative impact? No

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

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

Is there a negative impact? Only 2.8% of the current workforce of BFfC identify as disabled so it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions with such limited data, but it is not considered highly unlikely that there will be a negative impact.

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

Is there a negative impact? A high proportion of the current workforce of BFfC have chosen not to disclose their sexual orientation so it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions with such limited data, but it is considered highly unlikely that there will be a negative impact

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

Is there a negative impact? No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

Is there a negative impact? A high proportion of the current workforce of BFfC have chosen not to disclose their religion belief so it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions with such limited data, but it is considered highly unlikely that there will be a negative impact

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)

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.

N/A

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

As part of ongoing governance arrangements, including reporting to EDM

Signed (completing officer) Shella Smith Date 13 December 2022

Signed (Lead Officers) Shella Smith

Date 13 December 2022

This page is intentionally left blank