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

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1 March 2024

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NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 11 MARCH 2024

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Monday, 11 March 2024 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 - 22**
4.	**PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS** To receive any petitions from the public and any questions from the public and Councillors.		
5.	**THAMES VALLEY POLICE**		

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

6.	**BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN BUSINESS PLAN** This report, submitted to the Committee in its capacity as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFfC), sets out for approval the BFfC Business Plan and Contract Sum.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**23 - 48**

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7.	**2023/24 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING REPORT** This report sets out the projected Revenue and Capital outturn positions for 2023/24 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Accounts as at the end of Quarter 3 as well as the performance against the measures of success set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**49 - 142**
8.	**ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW CONSULTATION UPDATE** This report sets out the findings of the Allotment Survey 2023 and proposes increases in allotment rents and reductions in discounts to be implemented in April 2025.	**BOROUGH WIDE**	**143 - 152**

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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**.

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Present: Councillor Terry (Vice-Chair, in the Chair);

Councillors Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Hoskin, Leng, McEwan, Robinson, Rowland, Thompson and White

Apologies: Councillors Brock and Mitchell

43. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44. MINSTER QUARTER CENTRAL – SELECTION OF DEVELOPER

The Committee considered a report setting out the outcome of a procurement exercise and programme of work to select a developer to deliver the Minster Quarter Central regeneration scheme and recommending the appointment of the highest scoring bidder. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Evaluation Criteria applied to Minster Quarter Best and Final Offers
- Appendix 1a – Quality and Commercial Questionnaire
- Appendix 1b – Pricing Evaluation Summary
- Appendix 2 – High Level Risk Register
- Appendix 3 – Broader Minster Quarter – Key sites
- Appendix 4 – Minster Quarter Board and Governance Framework
- Appendix 5 – Development Site Plan
- Exempt Appendices:
    - Appendix A – Minster Quarter Central Recommendation Report from Eddisons
    - Appendix A1 – Strategic Objectives and Development Principles
    - Appendix A2 – Evaluation Score Card
    - Appendix A3 – Moderation Evaluation Schedule
    - Appendix B – Tender Evaluation Report
    - Appendix C – Minster Quarter Section 123 Report
    - Appendix D – Land and Title Matters at Minster Quarter
    - Appendix E – Land and Title Plan – Unregistered Land
    - Appendix F – Development Agreement and Lease – Summary

The report noted that, at its meeting on 11 July 2022 (Minute 13 refers), the Committee had agreed a strategic vision for Minster Quarter Central, supported by a set of minimum requirements and development principles against which bidders could be assessed and which formed the parameters within which a suitably experienced bidder could work to deliver a mixed-use regeneration scheme.

The report set out the results of final negotiations over summer 2023, which had enabled shortlisted bidders to bring forward their Best and Final Offers. These offers and the associated development schemes had been subject to detailed evaluation and scoring. An overview of schemes and their respective evaluations were set out in the Recommendation Report prepared by the Council's Commercial Adviser, Eddisons, which was attached at Exempt Appendix A.

The report recommended appointment of the highest scoring bidder, based on a well-designed scheme that could be further enhanced through collaboration, community engagement and pre-planning application advice. The selection was also based on a commercial offer and land value, which included an assessment for achieving a viable scheme that could secure commercial funding on the open market. It was also proposed to formally designate a nominated 'reserve' bidder, who could provide a substitute should the Development Agreement and Lease not be concluded and signed with the highest scoring bidder within six months of the Committee's decision.

The report summarised the key points of the proposed Development Agreement and Lease and set out issues, including land and title matters, that would need to be addressed in the coming months to secure and facilitate the development pathway once contracts had been exchanged.

Resolved -

(1) That Appendices A-F, which included exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), be taken into account in consideration of the report and recommendations;

(2) That the following be noted:

a) the conducting of the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation procurement process in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015;

b) the outcome of the comprehensive assessment of Best and Final Offers from bidders set out in the restricted Appendix A and summarised in section 4 of the report;

c) the key benefits and outcomes of the highest scoring bidder's scheme, summarised in Exempt Appendix A;

d) the Development Agreement Summary, referred to in section 7 of the report and set out in more detail in Exempt Appendix F;

e) the consultation with Civic Board at key gateways through the procurement process;

f) the governance arrangements in place to guide the delivery of the programme moving forward, as set out in Appendix 4;

g) that the existing open spaces on the site were to be replaced by an enhanced public realm with an offering of arts and culture and that appropriation and disposal would be required;

(3) That the former Civic Centre and Civic Car Parks A and B be declared as surplus to requirements;

(4) That Bidder B be appointed for the Minster Quarter Regeneration on the basis that they could best deliver against the Council's required key outcomes and that their bid represented best consideration within S123 of the Local Government Act 1972;

(5) That Bidder A be recommended as reserve bidder, should the Council be unable to complete the Development Agreement within reasonable timescales with Bidder B, in which circumstance a report would be submitted to the Committee to confirm the appointment;

(6) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Procurement and Contracts, Assistant Director of Assets and Property Management, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services, Assistant Director of Culture, Director of Finance, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader, be authorised to:

(a) Make required arrangements and complete necessary documentation to notify the award of the contract to Bidder B;

(b) Designate Bidder A as recommended reserve;

(c) Take any steps to finalise and enter into the Development Agreement, the leases, any ancillary documents, and any required agreements with Bidder B, including but not limited to, negotiation and finalisation of all legal documentation and terms for proceeding; or, required to give effect to the above;

(d) Subject to satisfactory conclusion of the Development Agreement and the relevant conditions being satisfied, dispose of land in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972;

(e) Make stopping up orders as necessary to support delivery of the Minster Quarter Central programme;

(f) Take necessary steps and carry out the required statutory advertisements for appropriation and disposal of the open spaces on the site and consider any objections received on the understanding that a further report would be submitted to the Committee for decision; and

(g) **Apply for and accept any third-party funding to help support the delivery of Minster Quarter Central subject to the funding conditions being acceptable.**

45. TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY UPDATE

Further to Minute 48 of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 the Committee received a report giving an update on progress of implementing the Tackling Inequality Strategy. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a Tackling Inequality Strategy Action Plan Update and at Appendix 2 a map showing Local Community Assets within Whitley & Church Wards.

The report noted that the Tackling Inequality Strategy 2023 – 2026 outlined how the Council could go beyond its existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for residents in all areas of the Borough. The key focus of the strategy was to support residents to become more resilient, building on a foundation of educational attainment, strong skills and practical knowledge that enabled them to realise their potential through accessing suitable employment opportunities. Within the first year of the new strategy, the Council had worked with Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College, and the Reading Economic Destination Agency (REDA) to deliver a broad range of activities to support Reading residents with the skills and learning to improve their financial resilience.

The report explained that the Strategy was being delivered through a targeted place-based approach to address the underlying determinants of deprivation within the Borough that adversely affected Education, Skills, and Training. This place-based work had commenced in Church and Whitley wards, identifying a broad range of opportunities to improve residents' individual and collective quality of life. To enable the maximum benefit from the resources committed to the programme it was proposed to request to reprofile the expected spend on the allocated budget, in order to extend the delivery of the pilots into 2025/26 within the existing approved resources.

Resolved –

That the progress in delivering the Tackling Inequality Strategy objectives and the intention to extend the two Place Based pilot projects and request to reprofile the budget as part of year end processes be noted.

46. BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LTD – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR

The Committee, acting in its capacity as sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFfC), considered a report on the appointment of a Director to the BFfC Board.

The report noted that, at the meeting held on 20 February 2023 (Minute 56 refers), the Council had appointed Mike Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, as the Council-Nominated Director of BFfC. It had been expected that this arrangement would last until the Council had appointed a new Executive Director of Adult Health and Care Services. Since that time, the Council had restructured and created the Directorate of

Communities and Adult Social Care. The expanded role and responsibilities of the new Executive Director meant that it was inappropriate to appoint the post holder to the Board of BFfC at this time.

The report explained that the Council had therefore, with the agreement of the BFfC Board, approached the former Executive Director of Adult Health and Care Services, Seona Douglas, to resume her role as the Council-Nominated Director which she had been previously appointed to from 2018-2022. The Committee were asked to approve the appointment and waive the requirement in the Articles of Association that the Council-Nominated Director be an officer of the Council.

The report also set out the current composition of the Board and noted that Calvin Pike would retire as a Non-Executive Director on 25 January 2024.

Resolved –

(1) That Seona Douglas be appointed as the Council-Nominated Director for Brighter Futures for Children Limited from 1 January 2024 to 1 January 2025;

(2) That the Chief Executive be delegated to finalise the terms and conditions of appointment;

(3) That the requirement in the Articles of Association that the Council-Nominated Director be an officer of the Council be waived;

(4) That the retirement of Calvin Pike as Director be noted.

47. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 48 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

48. HOMES FOR READING

The Committee, acting in its capacity as shareholder of Homes for Reading Limited, received a report seeking approval to consult on the proposed closure of Homes for Reading and for the company's properties to be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a review of Homes for Reading carried out by external advisers and at Appendices 2-4 draft correspondence and consultation documents.

The report explained the reasons for the proposed closure and that it would be carried out on a phased basis as existing tenancies concluded, with the properties to be relet at sub-market levels. This would allow for the orderly transfer of properties to the Council, repayment of the outstanding debt and a managed winding-up of the Company.

Resolved -

(1) That the Board and Tenants of Homes for Reading Ltd be consulted on the possible closure of the Company and a transfer of the properties into the Housing Revenue Account;

(2) That the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to respond to all consultation responses and to finalise the decision on behalf of the Council if there were no significant points raised which did not need, in the view of the Director, to be reported to the Committee for final decision;

(2) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to implement the closure of the Company and a transfer of the properties into the Housing Revenue Account if finalised by the Director of Finance (under resolution 2 above).

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.)

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.15 pm)

Present: Councillor Brock (Chair);

Councillors Terry (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Hoskin, Leng, McEwan, Mitchell, Rowland, Thompson and White

Apologies: Councillor Robinson

49. PETITION

Callum Harling, on behalf of Mike Harling, presented a petition about tackling accidents on Kings Road and Cemetery Junction. Councillor Brock, Chair of Policy Committee on behalf of Councillor Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, responded to the petition.

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

50. BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN - APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

The Committee considered a report, in its capacity as sole member for Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFfC), seeking approval for the appointment of Buzzacott LPP as the new external auditor for BFfC.

The report explained that BFfC had conducted a procurement process to appoint a new audit firm and following a careful selection process of written bids and presentations, a selection panel recommended to the BFfC Board that Buzzacott LLP be appointed as the new external audit firm for BFfC. The BFfC Board had approved the recommended appointment at their meeting on 21 December 2023.

The report noted that the appointment of external auditors was a “Reserved Matter” within the Articles of Association agreed between the Company and Council, and therefore sought the Committee’s formal approval of the appointment of Buzzacott LLP as the Company’s new external auditors.

Resolved –

> **That the appointment of the new external audit firm, Buzzacott LLP, as Brighter Futures for Children’s external auditor for an initial term of two years, commencing as soon as possible and covering the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial statements, be approved.**

51. ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE - BERKSHIRE PROSPERITY BOARD

The Committee considered a report seeking to establish a Joint Committee, to be known as the Berkshire Prosperity Board, to enable Berkshire local authorities to collaborate and help deliver economic ambition.

The report explained that establishing a Joint Committee and sharing common goals across a functional economic area would provide Berkshire local authorities with exciting new opportunities for collaboration on economic development. It would also provide more flexibility and influence than a single council would have on its own and enable local authorities to speak with one voice to Government and other agencies/organisations to secure funding to help get key projects and initiatives off the ground. Through collaborative working the Berkshire local authorities would benefit from:

- Working together to create a shared vision of inclusive and sustainable economic prosperity through working together to address challenges and meet opportunities whilst retaining the sovereignty of each local authority.
- Having a strengthened case to Government and private investors for funding and greater investment for strategic projects across Berkshire.
- Acting as a vehicle to commission the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and others in response to the Government's review of Local Economic Partnerships.
- Having a stronger, collective voice in lobbying Government and other agencies. Taking a collaborative mindset in targeting external bodies effectively for the benefit of Berkshire.
- Advantageously positioning Berkshire in readiness for potential devolution proposals to benefit from additional responsibilities and funding opportunities. Setting up a Berkshire that is better able to efficiently, seize future opportunities and adapt to challenges.
- Working on six shared themes: health and inequalities, education and skills, affordable housing, sector development, strategic infrastructure and net zero.
- Transform Berkshire`s productivity through, responsive, agile collaboration.

The report explained that the core members of the Committee would include Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The detail of the draft Constitution and structure of the Joint Committee was provided at Appendix A, Functions and Procedure Rules for a Joint Committee; Appendix B, Responsibilities of the accountable body; and Appendix C the draft governance structure.

Resolved –

That the following be recommended to Council:

(1) The establishment of a fully constituted Joint Committee (to be known as the Berkshire Prosperity Board) from May 2024 to deliver a Berkshire-wide vision for inclusive green and sustainable economic prosperity;

(2) The proposed constitution for the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix A to the report; and

(3) the responsibilities of the accountable body set out in Appendix B to the report.

Resolved -

(4) That the draft Governance structure set out in Appendix C be noted;

(5) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council be delegated to reach a legally binding Agreement between the member Authorities setting out the supporting arrangements and responsibilities between the Authorities, particularly that between the Lead Authority, known as the Accountable Body and the other member Authorities.

52. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023-25

The Committee received a report to consider the results of the 2023-24 review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in Reading, also to consider changes to some Polling Places for future local and Parliamentary elections.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (the 2013 Act), and the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (the 2006 Act), did not provide for councils to review constituency or ward boundaries (these responsibilities sat with the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)), and the regular review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations by councils must therefore take place within the existing constituency and ward boundaries. The report provided information on changes that had been made to the location of some of the Polling Places in the Polling Districts, to reflect changes brought about by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of 2019/20 and changes made as a result of the Covid Pandemic.

The report explained that the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places. The last review had taken place in 2018/19 (the 2019 review) and the results had been reported to Council on 26 March 2019 (Minute 26 refers).

The current compulsory review had to be started and completed between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive). The notice of the current 2023-24 review had been published on 1 November 2023, on the Council's website, at the Civic Offices, and in the Council's libraries. The deadline for responses was 1 December 2023.

This year's review had attracted seven responses which was a significant decrease from the 37 responses generated by the 2019 review. The comments were set out in the schedule at Appendix A to the report. The Returning Officer's written submission to the review process, which commented on the existing Polling Stations, any new Polling Stations and new Polling Districts that may be used based on proposals made in the review, was attached to the report at Appendix B. A plan of the new (2023) Polling Districts was also provided at Appendix C to the report.

Resolved –

That the following be recommended to Council –

(1) That the results of the consultation on the 2023-24 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Appendix A), and the Returning Officer's written submission (Appendix B), be received and noted;

(2) That the changes to Polling Places made since the 2019 review, to accommodate the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE's) 2019-20 review of ward boundaries in Reading, implemented in 2022 and set out in para. 3.22 of the report, be noted;

(3) That the impact of the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries, and the changes to Parliamentary Constituencies covering Reading made in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020, be noted, in particular those arising from the Act basing the new Parliamentary Constituencies on the pre-2019-20 review ward boundaries; and that the necessarily consequent creation of the additional Polling Districts listed below to deal with the anomalies arising be approved:

a. Polling District BC in Battle ward to serve the even numbered properties on the west side of Wantage Road which will vote in Battle Library Polling Station

b. Polling District JC in Norcot ward to serve houses (even numbers) to the south of Cockney Hill and Cheddington Close which will vote in St Michael's Primary School

c. Polling District BB in Battle ward to serve Stone Street, Tidmarsh Street, Pangbourne Street, Ivydene Road, Ledbury Close which will vote in the Emmanuel Methodist Church;

(4) That the following changes be made to the number of Polling Stations at the Polling Places listed below:

a. Battle Polling District B – Battle Library – establish a second Polling Station

b. Battle Polling District BA - Emmanuel Methodist Church - establish a fourth Polling Station

c. Norcot Polling District JA – St Michael's Primary School – establish a second Polling Station;

(5) That with regard to the responses to the public consultation on the 2023-24 Polling Districts and Polling Places Review, set out in Appendices A and B:

a. On Caversham ward District CA, the Returning Officer consulted with the Caversham ward Councillors about the proposal to utilise Our Lady and St Annes Caversham Church as a Polling Place to replace New Bridge Nursery School which presently hosts two Polling Stations. The Caversham ward Councillors wish the Polling Place to remain at New Bridge Nursery School

b. The position and response concerning Abbey Polling District AB in light of the proposed closure of Reading Central Library be noted; and in this regard, having received the views and reference of the Abbey ward Councillors, and their preferred location as an alternative Polling Place being Abbey Baptist Church be implemented by the Returning Officer after 2024 elections

c. it be noted that the anomaly to locate all the properties in the range 37-91 Lowfield Road in Emmer Green ward Polling District GB was corrected in 2022

d. no change be made to the location of the Polling Place for Whitley Polling District PC, where the Whitley ward Councillors had been consulted and wished to retain the Polling Station at 100 Longwater Avenue

e. the Returning Officer having consulted with the Church ward Councillors, regarding the use of Tyndale Baptist Church as an alternative Polling Place for Church Polling District E in anticipation of the temporary closure for refurbishment works at the Guide and Scout HQ making the building unavailable for elections in 2024 implement their decision to utilise the Tyndale Baptist Church as the Temporary Polling Place;

(6) That the following changes to Polling Districts be agreed:

a. Wantage Hall and St Georges Hall be moved from Redlands ward district LD into Redlands ward district LA

b. Numbers 1,3,5,7,9 Whitley Park Lane be moved from Redlands ward LC into Redlands ward district LD

c. Katesgrove HC Polling District be abolished and all properties in it be moved into Katesgrove ward H Polling District (Katesgrove School);

(7) That the Returning Officer be authorised to implement all appropriate actions arising from the review and discussed in the report, in consultation where appropriate with affected ward Councillors.

53. 2024/25 BUDGET & MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 - 2026/27

Further to Minute 42 of the meeting held on 13 December 2023, the Committee considered a report setting out for recommendation to Council the 2023/24 Budget and 2023/24-2025/26 Medium-Term Financial Strategy and updating the Committee on the results of the budget consultation exercise, changes arising from the publication of the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) as well as other changes that had arisen. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 – 2026/27
- Appendix 2 – Summary of the General Fund (GF) budget proposals 2024/25 – 2026/27
- Appendix 3 – General Fund Revenue Budget by Service 2024/25 – 2026/27
- Appendix 4 – Detailed General Fund Budget Changes 2024/25 to 2026/27
- Appendix 5 – The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals 2024/25 – 2026/27
- Appendix 6 – The Dedicated Schools Budget proposals 2024/25
- Appendix 7 – The General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes 2024/25 – 2026/27
- Appendix 8 – The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2024/25
- Appendix 9 – Fees and Charges proposals from April 2024
- Appendix 10 – Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget Proposals
- Appendix 11 – Summary of the Response to the Budget Engagement
- Appendix 12 – Summary of the Results of the Residents Survey 2023

The report explained that the underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy was to deliver a balanced and affordable 2024/25 budget, to ensure that the Council's finances were robust and sustainable over the medium term and that, in the longer term, the Council's finances were not reliant on the unsustainable use of one-off reserves or funding. The Strategy was informed by the Council's Vision: "to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success", as well as its Corporate Plan themes of Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy.

The report set out the budget assumptions which included: Council Tax increases of 2.99% plus an Adult Social Care precept of 2.0% for each year 2024/25 to 2026/27; delivery of £8.465m of efficiencies and increased income across the period; a net draw from earmarked reserves totalling £3.084m in 2024/25; a housing rent increase for 2024/25 of 7.7% in line with approved government policy of CPI + 1%; General Fund capital investment of £190.519m and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital investment of £142.612m over the 5 year period 2024/25 to 2028/29; and £1.587m of transformation funding for 2024/25 to support delivery of efficiency savings assumed within the MTFS, taking the total transformation funding to £21.729m across the whole life of the Delivery Fund.

The deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block was anticipated to be £12.000m by 31st March 2024. The Council was one of 55 local authorities taking part in the Department for Education's Delivering Better Value programme. The aim was to support local authorities and their local area partners to improve the delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability. Reading had been awarded a grant of £1.000m to support the implementation of new programmes of work. Further details were set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.12 and in Appendix 6 of the report.

The report stated that the Council was not immune to national issues. The 2024/25 Budget and MTFS 2024/25-2026/27 reflected the changing landscape in which Councils were now operating and was based on another one-year Local Government funding settlement from Central Government. The most significant impacts on the Budget and the MTFS included inflationary pressures across all service areas and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, in particular high-cost placements in children's services arising from increased complexity and market challenges, the cost of temporary accommodation arising from increased homelessness presentations due to landlords moving out of the private rented sector and mortgage costs increasing and increased waste disposal costs.

The report had been prepared with reference to the following documents: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2026/27; Update Report agreed by Policy Committee (13th December 2023); Autumn Statement 2023 – HM Treasury (22nd November 2023); and the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 – DLUHC (5th February 2024).

Items 53-55 were considered together for recommendation to the Council meeting on 27 February 2024.

Resolved –

That, taking due regard of the results of the budget engagement exercise and Residents' Survey (as outlined in Appendices 11 and 12), that Council be recommended to approve the 2024/25 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-10, noting the following:

a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £167.886m for 2024/25 and an increase in the band D Council Tax for the Council of 2.99% plus an additional 2.00% Adult Social Care Precept, representing a band D Council Tax of £2,016.88 per annum, an increase of £95.86 per annum excluding precepts from Police and Fire, as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report;

b) the proposed efficiency and invest to save savings of £3.862m together with additional income of £0.781m in 2024/25 required to achieve a balanced budget for that year as set out in Appendices 2 and 3;

c) the overall savings proposed within the MTFS of £8.465m (of which increases to income, fees and charges is £1.202m) and three-year growth changes to service budgets of £32.053m as set out in Appendices 3 and 4;

d) the budgeted net contribution to earmarked reserves totalling £3.084m, as set out in paragraph 5.20 of Appendix 1;

e) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2024/25 of £54.106m as set out in Appendix 5 and the average increase of 7.7% in social dwelling rents from April 2024;

f) the allocation of £99.317m Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as set out in Appendix 6;

g) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes totalling £190.519m and £142.612m respectively over the next five years, as set out in Appendices 7a and 7b;

h) the Strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver future transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix 8;

i) the Fees and Charges set out in Appendix 9 of the report; and

j) the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix 10.

54. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024-25

The Committee received a report setting out for recommendation to Council the draft Capital Strategy 2024/25, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report noted that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021 required the Council to prepare a Capital Strategy report which set out the Council's capital requirements arising from policy objectives, as well as the associated governance procedures and risk appetite of the Council.

The Strategy provided an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services; along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It showed how revenue, capital and balance sheet planning were integrated and set out, among other things, the Council's approach to asset management planning, development and monitoring of the Capital Programme.

The figures in the various tables, most particularly the Capital Programme itself had been updated to reflect the latest position consistent with the MTFS report (Minute 53 above refers). The Action Plan at Annex C to the Capital Strategy had been refreshed and the Director of Finance would keep this under review during the year and bring forward any changes that may be required. Also, the Terms of Reference for the Capital Programme Board, introduced in December 2022 to increase oversight of the Capital Programme and its delivery, were included at Annex B.

Progress against actions still outstanding were reported on the face of the Action Plan along with revised target completion dates. The progress against the Action Plan had not been what was anticipated when set. However, a number of significant steps forward had been made, including strengthening staffing arrangements in the Directorate of Economy, Growth and Neighbourhood Services, especially within Property and Asset Management. The Capital Programme Board under the leadership of the Director of Finance had been established to drive improved programming and delivery.

Items 53-55 were considered together for recommendation to the Council meeting on 27 February 2024.

Resolved –

(1) That the Council be recommended to adopt the Capital Strategy as attached at Appendix 1 to the report;

(2) That the updated Action Plan at Annex C of the Capital Strategy (Appendix 1), together with the associated financial implications, be noted.

55. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (2024/25); MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY (2024/25); ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2024/25)

The Committee received a report setting out a Treasury Management Strategy for endorsement and recommendation to Council. The Strategy required approval before the start of the new financial year in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 and the CIPFA Prudential Code for capital finance in local authorities (2021). The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) set out the parameters for the Council's planned treasury activity during 2024/25 under which the Council's Treasury Team would manage day to day activity, and that the successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk were central to the Strategy. Included in the TMSS alongside the Treasury Management Strategy were Capital Prudential Indicators, a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, a Borrowing Strategy, and an Annual Investment Strategy.

The CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Code also required the Council to prepare a Capital Strategy report which set out the Council's capital requirements arising from policy objectives, as well as the associated governance procedures and risk appetite. The Capital Strategy included non-treasury investments and was reported separately from the TMSS (Minute 54 above refers). The CIPFA Treasury Management Code 2021 further broke down non-treasury investment into: Investments for service purposes – taken or held primarily for the provision and purpose of delivering public services (including housing, regeneration, and local infrastructure), or in support of joint working with others to deliver such services; Investment for commercial purposes - taken or held primarily for financial return and were not linked to treasury management activity or directly part of delivering services.

The report explained that in December 2023, the Government had launched a further consultation on proposed changes to the capital framework for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and a new consultation relating to additional flexibilities to use capitalisation without the requirement to approach Government (further details are set out in Sections 7 and 8 of the report respectively). As the outcome of these consultations had not yet been announced, the MRP Policy, set out within Appendix 1 to the report, and the Council's use of capitalisation and capital receipts had all been based on the existing guidance and legislation. Depending on the outcome of these consultations, and any proposed implementation dates of any new guidance, there might be a requirement for amended policies to be brought back to Council for approval in advance of February 2025.

Items 53-55 were considered together for recommendation to the Council meeting on 27 February 2024.

Resolved -

That Council be recommended to approve:

a) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1, section 2;

b) The Capital Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 1 section 3;

c) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1, section 4 (noting the potential requirement for a revised MRP Policy to be brought forward once the outcome of the current MRP Consultation has been announced);

d) The Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1, section 5;

e) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1, section 6;

f) The Prudential and Treasury Management indicators as set out in Appendix 1, Annex 1.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.57 pm)

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Policy Committee

11 March 2024

Title	Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) Business Plan
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Darren Carter – Director of Finance
Lead Councillor	Cllr Jason Brock
Corporate priority	Thriving communities
Recommendations	It is recommended that Policy Committee, in its capacity as sole member for BFfC: 1. Approves the contract sum for 2024/25 of £58.839m 2. Approves the company's business plan as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is a wholly owned company of 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.

1.2. The Business Plan appended at Appendix 1 has been submitted by the Company in response to its obligation to agree an annual Business Plan and contract sum, a matter reserved to the Sole Member.

2. Policy Context

2.1. The Council has 100% ownership of BFfC, which is run by a senior management team reporting to the Company Board of directors. In turn, the Board reports to the Council (Policy Committee) as its sole member.

2.2. The agreement of the BFfC Business Plan is a reserved matter, requiring the approval of Policy Committee in its capacity as sole member.

3. The Proposal

3.1. The detailed business plan is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. On 27th March 2024 the Council refreshed its Corporate Plan, incorporating a number of major change projects under 3 themes:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Growth

4.2. The BFfC Business Plan, aligns with and contributes to delivery of the Thriving Communities theme.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1. There are no environmental and climate implications arising from this report.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. No community engagement has been carried out or is required in the creation of or as a result of this report.

7. Equality Implications

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

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

7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

9.1. The agreement to the Business Plan for BFfC is a reserved matter under the Articles of Association for the Company. This requires agreement to the Plan via Policy Committee acting as sole member for the Company.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. The proposed Contract Sum for BFfC for FY2024/25 as stated in this report has been provisioned for within the MTFS and agreed at Council on 27th February 2024.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. These are contained in Appendix 1.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. The Brighter Futures for Children Business Plan

Brighter Futures for Children

Business Plan
2023-2026

Our three-year vision and detailed one-year business plan for 2024-25

Contents

Introduction

The past year has been the most financially challenging since the establishment of Brighter Futures for Children. This business plan outlines how the Company will address the key financial pressures in 2024-25 while continuing to secure further improvements in the quality of our services and outcomes for children and young people. We know that here in Reading we are experiencing similar challenges to those faced by other children's services across the country. Most local authorities are reporting unprecedented increases in costs for placements and school transport, together with a surge in demand from families needing services.

Although these challenges may be reflected nationally, we recognise that our business plan must focus on BFfC's commitment to developing a local and coherent approach for Reading. Pivotal to this is the development and delivery of our transformation programme.

Through this transformation programme we will:

- Reduce the escalation of children's needs by developing family hubs
- Reduce the number of children coming into care, and the number of children in residential care, by developing an edge of care offer
- Increase the number of internal foster carers
- Develop an in-house residential offer to reduce dependency on expensive external providers.

In addition to the challenges this plan highlights many achievements in the last year, some of which have been reflected in Ofsted reports. These include an 'Outstanding' rating for one children's home, 'Good' for our Independent Fostering Agency, Voluntary Adoption Agency and our other children's home and some very positive feedback from an Ofsted focused visit looking at arrangements for children in care.

The focused visit identified that children in care 'receive child-focused support from committed social workers' and commented positively on the recent work undertaken jointly with the Council to improve corporate parenting arrangements. Improvement in the quality of our direct work with children is also reflected in reports from our external auditors. Over the past two years this audit activity has identified steady progress in the quality of practice and noted the positive impact of our new practice handbook.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will continue to be a high priority over the coming years as we implement our detailed plans to improve the local offer through additional provision in mainstream Reading schools and the work of the newly established Reading Inclusion Support in Education Service (RISE). These developments, and others, are focused on improving the range of locally available provision and securing better value in this important area of high demand.

The work to ensure better value in SEND and the priorities in the transformation programme are focused on managing resources more effectively at a time of increasing demand and pressure on children's services budgets. We recognise that the effective delivery of these plans will be central to the management of the most pressing financial challenges in 2024/25 and beyond. I want to acknowledge the vital support received from Reading Borough Council for our transformation programme, in response to the financial pressures in 2023/24. The Company is fully committed to working closely with Reading Borough Council as we develop and implement our plans to improve the financial stability of children's services.

Di Smith, **Executive and Board Chair, Brighter Futures for Children**

National and local context

National context

The demand for statutory children's services continues to increase and represent significant pressure and challenge on children's social care, which is a national trend that is mirrored in Reading.

Nationally:

- The growth in child poverty and cost of living crisis estimates that between 2015 and 2020, 8.1% of children entering care were linked to rising child poverty (NIHR, 2021)
- There has been a 11% reduction in foster carers
- There is a lack of placements for children in care, with rising placement costs (CMA, 2022). High costs of unregistered placements for children with the most complex needs and an increase in Deprivation of Liberty orders for children requiring high levels of staffing ratios (Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, 2023) for children to reduce risks to themselves and/or others
- The impact of the supported accommodation reforms requiring providers of post 16 years provision to register with Ofsted (CCN, LIIA and Newton, 2023)
- Rising numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children through the National Transfer Scheme, reflected in local authority quotas rising to 0.1% of their child population and a lack of government funding to fully meet the cost of meeting the needs of the subsequent increase in unaccompanied care leavers (Safeguarding Pressures Phase 8 (2022)
- The growth in demand for mental health support (NHS Digital, 2022) with inadequate children's mental health services impacts on the number of children coming into care and the burden of cost increasingly falling on the local authorities.

Local context

In Reading, up to October 2023, although there had been a reduction in the total number of children looked after since 2018, numbers of children looked after have started to rise and the number of referrals into children's social care has continued to increase, leading to more children open in the service. Some children and families are presenting with multiple needs that escalate more quickly than pre-pandemic. Post-COVID, some neuro-diverse children also present with greater behavioural challenges that parents are unable to meet, contributing to the increase in children coming into care. Post-pandemic, children on child protection plans are presenting at higher levels of risk, escalating to pre-proceedings and proceedings, becoming looked after. There has also been a reduction in the number of children returning home from care.

There has been an increase in the proportion of children in care being placed in residential provision. This is due to a combination of a higher number of older children with complex needs entering care and a local and national reduction of foster placements. This means that the number of Reading children placed in more costly residential provision has more than doubled from 22 in 2017-18 to 47 in 2022-23, with a corresponding reduction in Reading children placed in foster care, falling from 206 in 2017-18 to 176 in 2022-23.

Like other local authorities, the combination of these factors and inflationary pressures is driving up our placement spend, which, combined with an increase in the cost of school transport, has placed overwhelming pressure on our budgets and remains a significant challenge.

This business plan details how we will address these challenges which are reflected in our strategic priorities for 2024-25 and beyond.

Our immediate challenge and focus

As we enter our sixth year of service delivery, the landscape that many local authorities operate in is extremely challenging, where real-time funding is falling while costs are rising and the demand for services is growing.

We know that there are still many children who have not recovered from the negative impact the pandemic brought, and many remain disengaged and are harder to reach. The number of referrals that relate to children and young people's mental health, domestic abuse and families in crisis continues to be perpetuated by an ongoing economic crisis which further compounds inequalities.

We are seeing a notable increase in the number of contacts and referrals, with a shift in age profile to older children, with increasingly complex needs. Some of these children can no longer live with their family and require foster or residential care.

The number of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who need to be supported continues to rise.

The demand and cost pressures around placements, however, represents our biggest and most urgent concern and priority. In the delivery of our statutory responsibilities, it is one that we must address at greatest pace given the magnitude of the financial impact that it continues to have on Brighter Futures for Children and Reading Borough Council.

If we are to grasp these challenges locally, we know that we must adopt a system-wide approach to transform how we work with children, families, and delivery partners in Reading. We have identified the key strands of our most urgent areas of focus through a **transformation programme** to:

1. reduce escalation of children's need by developing family hubs
2. ensure that children are supported to remain living with their families, wherever possible and that when they do need to come into care it is for the shortest time possible, through an edge of care offer
3. address the lack of local children's residential care and foster carers by growing the number of internal foster carers and planning to develop in-house residential care.

In Reading, in December 2023, the children's services budget will overspend by £8.3m in 2023-24 which represents 18.7% of our contract sum from Reading Borough Council. We have recruited a transformation programme lead to support our operational delivery teams in the development, implementation and delivery of this work to reduce both demand and spend. As we implement our transformation programme over the next year to address these challenges, further financial support through additional contract sums will be needed from Reading Borough Council to manage these pressures that we expect to continue into 2024-25.

We will also continue to address areas of our business plan where we know we need to do more work to be able to deliver our overall key priorities, and are firmly committed to the following underpinning principles:

- Earlier prevention, less intervention
- Our practice framework, which focuses on relationship-based, strength-based, trauma-informed, systemic and restorative practice and focusing on the whole family
- Evidenced-based focus and evaluation of impact and outcomes for children and their families.

Our strategic objectives for 2023 - 2026

Brighter Futures for Children has delivered children's services in Reading since December 2018. As we embark on 2024/25 it will represent the third delivery year of our 2022-25 business plan.

Our culture, values and ways of working are well established. Our strategic approach is clear and well defined to achieve better outcomes for children, young people, and their families in Reading.

Our focus remains on ensuring our practice continuously improves, with a shift to delivering newly integrated family help services that prevent children and families' needs from escalating so they do not require statutory intervention.

We continue to be firmly committed to our vision, which is to protect and enhance the lives of the children of Reading and help families find long-term solutions to ensure children lead happy, healthy, and successful lives. In doing so, we have continued to listen to children and work in partnership with families and partner organisations to prevent children's needs escalating through a number of fora including the ONE Reading Children's and Young People's Partnership, Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership, the ICB Children's Board, SEND fora and Reading Education Partnership Board.

To achieve our strategic objectives for 2023-26, we set key priorities based on what success would look like by putting our children and young people at the heart of what we do.

Priority 1: *We will work together and across local partnerships to provide the right support and services at the right time to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and their families.*

Priority 2: *We will deliver effective family help services to prevent the escalation of need at a later stage, while contributing to increased resilience across the partnership to meet children's need at the earliest opportunity.*

Priority 3: *We will deliver a sustainable Children's Social Care service through practice rooted in relationship-based and timely statutory engagement with families.*

Priority 4: *We will support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so that children receive high quality education, and achieve their potential.*

To help us achieve these, we identified three enablers that are critical in supporting the delivery of our priorities:

Enabler 1: Building a stable workforce of permanent staff

Enabler 2: Improved quality and ways of working

Enabler 3: Resources aligned to priorities and delivering value for money

Throughout each year, we chart our progress and achievements against that year's priorities and enablers to ensure we remain focused on our strategic direction.

Our key priorities and enablers for 2024-25

We have reviewed our business plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose and meets our current demands and challenges as we know the reality of children's lives is shifting, as are the difficulties they face.

Pivotal to our priorities and workstreams over 2024-25 is the delivery of a transformation programme to address the pressing challenges we face around children's social care placements and demand. This will be fully aligned to our defined priorities, ensuring our enablers support our operational and delivery teams to allow us to deliver our services with greater impact, so we are better placed and ready to respond to help those most in need.

Transformation programme

For 2024-25 we will prioritise the delivery of our transformation programme focused on:

- **Development of family hubs**: Working with the partnership to develop and define our combined early help offer, delivered through family hubs. Targeting the areas of greatest need, family hubs will meet need at the right time in the right place and prevent escalation and the need for statutory services, including children's social care.
- **Creation of an edge of care offer:** Preventing children entering care; ensuring that when children do enter care it is for the shortest possible time; stepping children down to family-based care; preventing placement breakdowns and returning children home where it is right for the child. This will reduce the number of children in care and the number of children in residential care.
- **Increasing the number of internal foster carers:** Implementing the DfE-funded regional fostering recruitment hub in partnership with other LAs across the South East to increase applications and approvals of foster carers; developing a Mockingbird carer support hub to improve retention of foster carers and commissioning local foster placements. This will increase the number of children who can remain living in family-based care in their local communities and reduce our reliance on residential and out of borough care.
- **Development of an in-house residential offer:** Exploring the development of an assessment home and a children's home in Reading. Closely aligned with our developing edge of care offer and our in-house foster carers, this would support our ambition to ensure that when children enter care it is for the shortest possible time and that children remain living in Reading wherever possible.

We have identified these strands to be most urgent to better manage demand at the front door, the increasing number of children in care and the lack of local care placements for children.

Despite the many challenges we continue to face, we will continue to build on what we have achieved so far to cover more ground, increase our pace, and continue to improve outcomes for our children, young people and their families.

Priority 1: *We will work together and across local partnerships to provide the right support and services at the right time to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and their families.*

- Develop, with the ONE Reading Children & Young People's Partnership, our refreshed early help strategy so we have a shared understanding of Reading's universal early help offer and the impact it is having for Reading's children and families, strengthened by a shared overarching strategy to tackle child poverty.
- Manage new contacts and referrals at the 'front door' so children and families receive a timely and proportionate response, ensuring resources are expertly deployed where support or services are required. This will be achieved through targeted deployment of our Partnership Hub, increased multi-agency information sharing and enhanced partnership working.
- Our response to safeguarding adolescents in disadvantaged groups ensures they belong and feel safe in school, at home and the community.

Our aim is to embed an effective, efficient, and consistent approach, where we provide support and services in line with our improved practice framework and agreed thresholds and our partners do the same, so '*early prevention, less intervention*' becomes just that for children, young people and their families in Reading.

Priority 2**:** *We will deliver effective family help services to prevent the need for escalation at a later stage, while contributing to increased resilience across the partnership to meet children's needs at the earliest opportunity.*

- Develop a family hub model for Reading, focusing on creating a more seamless family help offer that is targeted at the areas of greatest need providing the right help at the right time.
- Develop an edge of care offer targeted at preventing children from entering care; ensuring that when children do enter care it is for the shortest possible time; stepping children down to family-based care; preventing placement breakdowns and returning children home where it is right for the child.
- Develop effective preventative approaches to reduce the number of children entering the youth justice system.
- Mental health continues post-pandemic to be an issue at both national and local levels. In response, we will prioritise developing a more joined up, coherent offer in Reading which includes strengthening the transition for children from early years to primary school including children with SEND. This supplements those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic through the increasing take up of 2-year-old funding programmes.
- Deliver effective support for children and families through universal services by developing a system to enhance SEND support to under 2-year-olds in the private, voluntary and independent sectors to increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development.

We continue to maximise opportunities to secure government funding in Reading, to continue with initiatives such as the Holiday Activity Fund, the Better Together Partnership and Household Support Fund to deliver preventative services and support families with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Priority 3: *We will deliver a sustainable Children's Social Care service through practice rooted in relationship-based and timely statutory engagement with families.*

- Urgently increase the number of local placements for our children in care to ensure as many of our children as possible remain living near their local friends and family networks. This includes work to improve the recruitment and retention of local foster carers, implementation of the DfE-funded regional fostering recruitment hub and a Mockingbird carer support hub, commissioning local placements and developing a business case for our own in-house residential care provision.
- Strengthen the corporate parenting activity of the Company and Council through a refreshed Corporate Parenting strategy informed by what children tell us, while implementing learning from the Care Leavers' Review and review of our Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Enhance our care leavers' offer for 18-25-year-olds, engaging with the Council and partners to support care leavers to realise their ambitions.
- Improve consistency and quality of management oversight and supervision of practice by embedding the practice framework across all practitioners, managers and senior managers and developing our learning and development offer to managers and aspiring managers.
- Increase our focus on strengths-based audit and quality assurance activities and peer moderation to reflect our learning and child-centred approach to service delivery. This includes how we collect and meaningfully use feedback from children and families to better understand what makes a difference for children.

Priority 4: *We will support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so children receive high quality education, and achieve their potential.*

- Ensure a financially sustainable education system through a strategic approach to school organisation, the delivery of action plans for schools facing financial difficulty, and rigorous management of the High Needs Block Deficit Management Plan.
- Deliver our SEND partnership strategy priorities: identifying and responding to additional educational needs early, improving our range of placement options and through RISE (Reading Inclusion Services in Education), our new inclusion support service, developing inclusive practice across all Reading schools.
- Improve attendance and prevent suspensions and exclusions through targeted work with priority schools and communities, combined with developing an improved alternative provision local offer, through our AP school and strengthened commissioning arrangements.
- Embed research informed pedagogy and graduated approaches in settings, through effective school to school support, to improve outcomes of children in underperforming groups, reduce education inequality and reduce variation between schools.
- Support, in partnership with New Directions College, the Council and the Local Economic Partnership, the development of skills and opportunities for young people most at risk of being NEET (not in education, employment or training).

- Continue to support our school system leaders' mental health and well-being to provide resilience and sustainability across the education landscape.

Enablers

We have three enablers which we know are essential to achieve our strategic aims and deliver our priorities. These enablers strengthen our infrastructure and support our people by:

Enabler 1: *Building a stable highly skilled workforce of permanent happy staff*

- Continue to deliver the activities within our workforce strategy that focuses on three key components: attract, develop; and retain.
- There will be a greater focus on strengthening our learning and development offer, empowering our aspiring managers and leaders by giving better guidance, support and professional development opportunities, and creating career pathways for progression.
- Develop an agile and diverse workforce with a wide range of talent and a broad range of knowledge and skills to better support us to deliver our services and secure the best outcomes for our children, young people, and their families.
- Create an environment that develops and promotes a real commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, which is reflected in not only our policies but also our everyday working practices.
- We need to continue to improve the stability of our workforce, across service areas where vacant posts remain hard to fill or where turnover is too high

Enabler 2: *Improved quality and ways of working*

- Ensure focus and proportionality in all we do to make best use of our limited capacity and resources
- Embed a performance culture by routinely focusing on our key metrics to ensure we deliver better results in the areas where it matters the most
- Ensure our work is centred on engagement and participation of our children, young people and families by being able to 'tell the story', which evidences quality, impact and improved outcomes
- Ensure improvement work, strategies, action plans and activity are continuously reviewed to remain fit for purpose and can meet changing need

Enabler 3*: Resources aligned to priorities and delivering value for money*

- Reduce the current deficit and budget pressures on the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block through our High Needs Block Deficit Management Plan (high needs funding supports provision for children with SEND). The plan includes developing the range and sufficiency of local provision for children with SEND in mainstream schools, increasing the number of Additionally Resourced Provision places in mainstream schools and increasing the number of local special school places to avoid the use of independent non-maintained special schools. Through enhanced support and advice in schools through Reading Inclusion Services in Education (RISE), reduce the need for EHCPs by identifying and responding to additional learning needs at the earliest stage. We will promote young people with an EHCP to transition to independence through more effective inclusion support and advice

- Implement the 'Delivering Better Value' programme which is funded by the Department of Education (£1m) by developing and implementing a new RISE service to improve outcomes for children with SEND. RISE will bring closer integration between education, health and care colleagues to increase the quality of 'ordinarily available provision' and 'graduated response' across all Reading schools; to increase school confidence and competence in supporting children with SEND through training and specialist support; to increase parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of all children, and to improve the educational experience of children with SEND in mainstream schools
- Deliver sustainable efficient school transport, through promoting independent and active travel, maximising use of public transport routes and reviewing high-cost travel plans
- Develop a more informed understanding of the profile of our children looked after and, reporting monthly, use this to better understand how needs drive activity and spend
- Transform our family help offer by targeting need where it will have the greatest impact. This will be done by creating family hubs to deliver services across the partnership for 0 – 19-year-olds in line with the Government's Family Hub initiatives outlined in Stable Homes Built on Love. The family hubs will ensure that the most vulnerable children and families are having their needs met at the right time
- Improve contract monitoring and undertake a review of the service level agreements between Reading Borough Council and the Company to remove any duplication and to realise greater cross-working efficiencies
- Contribute to Reading Borough Council's contract review of the Company.

Evidencing better outcomes

We will deliver our priorities for 2024-25 by clearly evidencing how these improvements are achieved. We track our progress and performance through our reporting systems that capture positive outcomes for children, young people and their families through a variety of mechanisms:

- A dashboard with monthly data sets which encompass all performance areas from family help through to statutory services
- Audit activity which provides assurance and learning in relation to the quality and impact of our services for children and families
- Collating our achievements quarterly and reviewing the impact
- Reporting on what children and families have told us so that we can measure the impact of our involvement
- Routine monitoring and reporting on key performance indicators to Reading Borough Council to ensure the Company is delivering to the expectations as set out in our service delivery contract
- Tracking the performance of our key priorities and enablers in our business plan against detailed plans and actions

- Our annual accounts and reports reference our key achievements for that financial year
- Production of our Family Help and Safeguarding Self Evaluation Framework
- Production, with health partners, of our Partnership Safeguarding Self Evaluation Framework for children with SEND
- Service level annual reports.

Our financial plan

Brighter Futures for Children is an independent company, but we are acutely aware of our financial responsibilities to Reading Borough Council. The Company is facing significant financial challenges in two areas, and we will continue to work closely with Reading Borough Council as we develop the plans required to move onto a stable financial footing.

Firstly, there is a forecast overspend of £8.3m in 2023/24 on those activities funded by the contract sum provided by Reading Borough Council. This overspend is wholly attributable to demand and cost pressures in placement costs for children looked after and school travel costs. These pressures are a national issue, but we need to develop a Reading solution. The Company is unable to fund that overspend from its own reserves and so will need financial support from Reading Borough Council to remain a going concern. Those costs are forecast to continue in the medium term and so we have submitted business cases for a significant growth in the contract sum for 2024-25, as detailed in the following sections of this business plan.

Alongside that request for growth, we have submitted plans to mitigate some of those costs and to deliver efficiency savings across the next three years. As we implement our transformation programme to address these pressures, we expect to see a positive impact from this work phased towards the end of 2024-25 and beyond. Our edge of care programme will deliver £0.116m in 2024-25 and £0.970m in the subsequent two years. The programme to increase the number of in-house foster carers will yield net savings of £0.064m in 2025-26 and £0.107m in 2026-27. As a result of these programmes, we will be able to demonstrate the level of cost avoidance from supporting children to remain at home and by preventing placement breakdowns that result in escalation of cost.

Secondly, the deficit on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecast to increase significantly in the coming years due to supply and demand pressures. Without concerted effort, the scale of the deficit would put at risk the future financial viability of Reading Brough Council. The work we are doing with the DfE's Delivering Better Value programme is forecast to deliver significant financial mitigations but on its own that is not enough. Joint work is already underway between BFfC and RBC to devise a deficit recovery plan for the High Needs Block that will initially target a balanced in-year budget and will then seek to repay the cumulative deficit. We will use a partnership approach to the development of the plan, informed by the Reading Partnership SEND strategy, where working closely with our partners, including families, is critical to our success and outcomes.

Reading Borough Council

Funding from Reading Borough Council is for the delivery of statutory and non-statutory services for children's services. This covers children's social care, early help, adoption and fostering and preventative services and education services. The funding also provides for costs relating to service level agreements (SLAs) that is recharged to us and property costs.

	2024/25*	**2025/26***	**2026/27***
RBC Funding Streams	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Core contract sum	52.123	52.331	52.401
SLAs and property costs	6.716	6.716	6.716
TOTAL	**58.839**	**59.047**	**59.117**

* *The contract amount is being finalised with Reading Borough Council. As our planned transformation work develops and progresses over 2024-25, we will need to further reflect cost savings against future year contract sums which are not yet fully recognised.*

Government grants

Government grants are administered by Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council, and include the following key grants:

Dedicated Schools Grant: including Schools (administered by Reading Borough Council), High Needs, Early Years and Central Blocks (administered by Brighter Futures for Children).

Supporting Families: a national programme to help vulnerable families.

Pupil Premium Grant: allocated by the Virtual Head for children looked after.

Youth Justice Grant: source of funding for the Youth Justice Service.

Holiday Activity Fund: for food and activities for children and young people in receipt of pupil premium free school meals.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children: for accommodation, social work, and administrative support for this cohort.

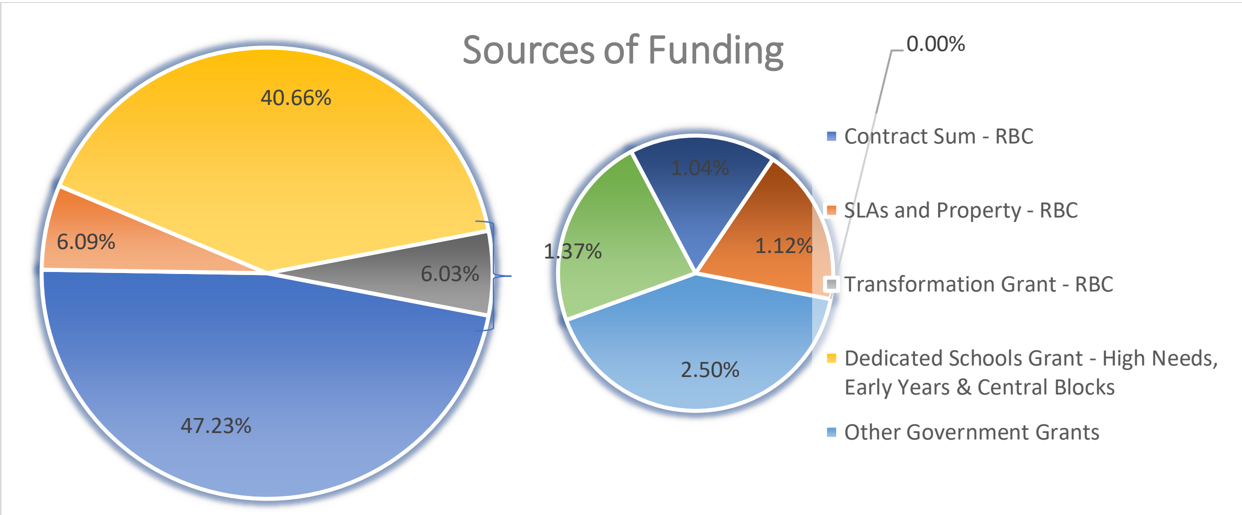
Other income sources

Other income sources include service level agreements with schools for education services, partnership contributions, health funding, selling of placements to other local authorities, fees and charges and other miscellaneous income.

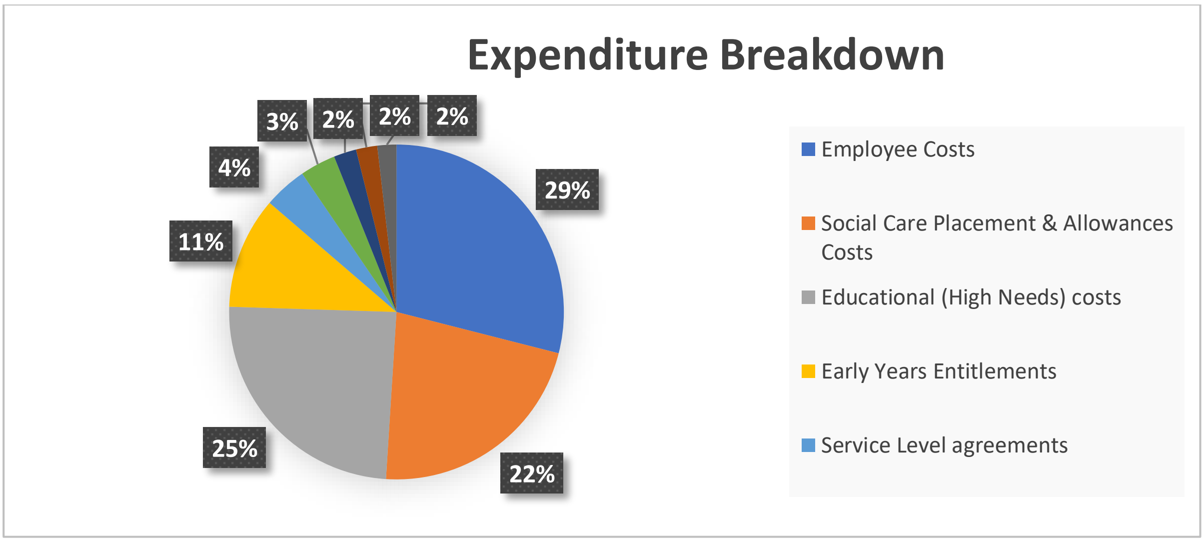
Summary income and expenditure for 2024-25

A summary of the income and expenditure are set out below:

Summary of income:	**£m**	**%**
Contract Sum from RBC	52.123	47.23
SLAs and Property from RBC	6.716	6.09
Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs, Early Years & Central Blocks	44.864	40.66
Other Government Grants (incl. Pupil Premium and Youth Offending Service)	2.757	2.50
SLAs with Schools	1.514	1.37
Partners' Contributions	1.146	1.04
Miscellaneous fees and charges	1.232	1.12
TOTAL	**110.351**	**100.00**



Summary of expenditure:	**£m**	**%**
Employee costs	31.969	28.97
Social care placement and allowance costs	24.317	22.04
Educational (High needs) costs	27.030	24.49
Early year entitlements	11.918	10.80
School Transport	3.801	3.44
Other commissioned services	2.417	2.19
Other running costs	2.033	1.78
SLAs	4.608	4.18
Property	2.261	2.05
Gross Expenditure	**110.353**	**100.00**



The expenditure breakdown shows the budget allocation for social care residential placements and school transport. Combined, these budget areas total £28.118m (25.48% of the overall expenditure budget), which also represents the areas of highest volatility and risk. The delivery of the transformation programme is critical to what we have planned to achieve within the overall contract sum provided by Reading Borough Council.

Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Budget setting

The contract sum is in the process of being finalised with Reading Borough Council with a budget submission of £52.123m for 2024-25 being proposed (excluding any amounts approved for transformation work or changes to service level agreements):

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Net operating budget	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Previous contract sum (excluding RBC SLAs)	44.714	52.123	52.331
Pay inflation and increments	0.920	0.605	0.616
Contract inflation	1.263	0.434	0.442
Placement Pressures	5.941	0.000	0.000
Demography	0.000	0.304	0.099
Contract sum savings	(0.600)	(0.100)	0.000
Transformation savings (note 1)	(0.116)	(1.034)	(1.077)
Contract Sum excluding RBC SLAs and property costs	**52.123**	**52.331**	**52.411**

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Note 1 – transformation savings breakdown			
Edge of care	(0.116)	(0.970)	(0.970)
Increasing number of in-house foster carers		(0.064)	(0.107)
Transformation savings	**(0.116)**	**(1.034)**	**(1.077)**

The income and expenditure by service directorates for 2024-25 as shown below:

Budget by service directorate:	**Payroll**	**Running costs & contracts**	**Other income**	**DSG Funded**	**Grant income**	**Total**	*Change from 2023-24*
	£m	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**%**
Education	7.593	45.615	(2.278)	(44.147)	(0.680)	6.102	*7.64*
Family help & safeguarding	19.338	25.432	(0.996)	(0.112)	(2.076)	41.616	*20.81*
Finance & Resources	4.276	0.415	(0.433)	(0.381)	-	3.878	*9.07*
Corporate Services	0.762	6.920	(0.215)	(0.223)	-	7.243	*(6.64)*
Budget by directorate	**31.970**	**78.382**	**(3.922)**	**(44.863)**	**(2.756)**	**58.839**	***14.41***

Funded by:	
Contract sum	52.123
SLA and property	6.716
RBC contract funding	**58.839**

Budget assumptions and risks

The net operating budget includes funding to support pay inflation, contract inflation and placement pressures from Reading Borough Council. The Company is responsible for delivering agreed savings to support other pressures not funded by Reading Borough Council such as pay increments, agency staff and school transport.

The key financial risks underpinning the budget plan relate to demand pressures and our ability to meet demand locally. Specifically, in Reading, these are:

- Placement pressures for children looked after due to rising numbers and a lack of local provision
- Pressures on the High Needs Block due to increasing EHCPs, specialist school placements, and a lack of local specialist provision
- Demand for school transport.

Children Looked After

Placements represents the single largest pressure in terms of funding and is underpinned by the following numbers of children looked after over the next three financial years:

Number of CLA:	**Target number of CLA**	**Estimated number of UASC**	**Target number of unmitigated CLA less UASC ***	**Budgeted number of CLA**
2024-25	286 – 306	36	**250-270**	**270**
2025-26	294 – 314	36	**258-278**	**268**

2026-27	300 - 320	36	**264-284**	**266**

The transformation programme outlined above will **mitigate the increase in placements and cost through a reduction in the target number of CLA and a revision in the distribution in placement type.*

Our targeted and budgeted numbers of Children Looked After are for Reading children and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). The DfE and Home Office National Transfer Scheme Guidance have set a target of 0.1% for the number of UASCs that LAs will care for, making the Reading target 36 young people.

This will be **mitigated** through:

- Implementation of the transformation programme outlined above
- Improved recruitment and retention of local foster carers
- For 2024-25 we will be applying for capital support in relation to providing a residential children's care home within Reading. The children's home would provide local medium to long-term care for children. The home would ensure that more children in care live locally and protect the Council from the spiralling cost of residential care in the private market, by providing care at a cost at least equal to, and likely below, the average cost of an external current residential care placement.

High Needs Block

A High Needs Block (HNB) deficit management plan has been created owing to the significant current and projected deficit of £6.710m in 2023-24. The key pressures on the HNB have been identified as growth in pupil numbers (19% more education, health and care plans (EHCPs) than January 2023) and a significant increase in the number of children being placed in expensive Independent Non-Maintained Schools

This will be **mitigated** through:

- The creation of additional SEND provision within Reading mainstream schools (known as 'Additionally Resourced Provision' (ARP): reducing the number of children with EHCPs placed in the independent non-maintained sector (INMSS) and decreasing the amount of top-up funding paid on EHCPs
- Implementation of DfE Delivering Better Value funded RISE service
- Implementation of our SEND commissioning strategy
- Reduction of reliance on Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) placements for children with an EHCP who have been permanently excluded
- Reduction in use of alternative provision (AP)
- Securing consistent and increased funding from Health partners.

School Transport

The growth in EHCPs and number of children attending specialist provision outside of Reading has also resulted in a growth in pressure on school transport which sits outside of the High Needs Block. The financial pressure forecast for 2023-24 is £0.766m.

This will be **mitigated** through:

- The mitigations identified above for the HNB
- Consultation and clarification of the post 16 school transport policy
- Consultation on the provision of transport to Chiltern Edge School
- Review of transport provision as part of children's annual EHCP review
- Provision of independent travel training to promote independence

Appendices

Appendix 1: Our achievements in 2023-24

In 2023-24, we reframed our priorities to respond to the changing landscape, recognising that the reality of children's lives is continually shifting as are the difficulties they face.

Our work over the last year consolidated what has been achieved to date and built on delivering more services and support with greater impact by increasing our momentum and pace, responding on a timely basis to those most in need, ensuring quality is firmly rooted into our practice and culture, and greater collaboration, co-production and partnership working.

Some of our key achievements over the last year include:

- Our children's centres continue to provide a range of group and individual activities. Our parenting programmes reached over 100 parents from January to October 2023. Family workers have supported over 1000 children; midwifery services have delivered 2,500 appointments from our children's centre sites and Well Baby and Baby Dimensions groups (run by health visitors) supported 113 children in the first six months of the year. Our speech and language course has supported 40 children to date with 100% showing improvements during that period.
- Our youth summer programme reached 103 young people from a range of backgrounds, engaging them in a variety of activities they would not have otherwise been able to access.
- Through the Holiday Activity Fund, we supported 2467 (47%) out of 5235 eligible children in Reading, to redeem their vouchers from the booking system. 1085 (44%) booked and children attended 6543 sessions. This worked out as an average of six sessions per child.
- We have undertaken a full review of the 'front door' to better understand the reasons for the increase in contacts and referrals from 1632 in August 2022 to 1798 in August 2023. This led to some immediate changes including the need to complete more multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) information sharing that better informs proportionate decision-making.
- We moved to a model of 'Family Help & Safeguarding' in December 2023 by integrating our early years services into our education service and joining our early help and children's social care services to create a new Family Help and Safeguarding service to provide more seamless services for children and families and reduce duplication or gaps.
- Our enhanced practice framework was launched, supporting good practice through a trauma informed, systemic and strength-based approach and is underpinned by a refreshed robust audit programme. External and internal audits, partnership audits and peer reviews have evidenced continued improvements in practice over the last year and have supported us to target our efforts into the areas of practice improvement and leadership that will make a difference for children and families most quickly.
- We have successfully implemented 'Mind of My Own' to ensure children's views are actively sought and heard, to inform the work we do and that their views remain central to all our work. We have re-established and reinvigorated our Care2Listen and Care2HaveFun groups for children in care, running fun holiday and after school activities; delivering a summer Skills for Life programme for care leavers; involving children in the delivery of training to social workers

and in the development of the Corporate Parenting Panel. In October, Care2Listen won the Participation Award at the National Coram Voice Awards 2023.

- We continue to work jointly with Reading Borough Council to develop our corporate parenting offer so that it reflects our ambitions for children looked after and care leavers. Care experience was recognised formally as a protected characteristic by the Council in October 2023, with a further commitment to extend council tax relief on a sliding scale to care leavers up to age of 25yrs from 2024/25.
- Our children's homes for children with disabilities, Pinecroft and Cressingham, received Outstanding and Good Ofsted gradings respectively. Our voluntary adoption agency was graded Good in terms of overall experiences and progress and how well children, young people and adults are helped and protected, and the effectiveness of leaders and managers was graded as Outstanding.
- In our Ofsted focused visit on children in care in September 2023, inspectors found that most children are brought into care at the right time and that their voices are heard. They noted that children have access to advocacy and understand their rights. Disabled children's needs are understood, they live in settings that meet their needs and benefit from stable relationships with their social workers. Unaccompanied children are supported well on arrival and are engaged in education. Our children have secure contacts with important people in their lives and that they live in safe and supportive homes with their siblings, where possible. Family options for care are explored well. Children's education and health needs are well met, and additional support and activities are provided for children through the Virtual School when children are not in school. Overall, Ofsted found that senior leaders have made improvements to services for children in care and plans are clear about what is needed to make further process.
- We revised the 2023 Placement Sufficiency Strategy for children looked after to ensure it remains fit for purpose in a changing context and landscape and we completed a residential tender to increase the number of local residential care placements and ensure as many of our children who need to live in residential care can remain as close to Reading as possible.
- In partnership with other local authorities across the South East, we were successful in securing DfE funding for a Regional Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub and a foster carer support hub (Mockingbird). Both will go live in 2024.
- We have improved the permanency of our social workers in the Together for Families service from a rate of 44% in September 2022 to 69% by October 2023 by growing our own social workers through our ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year of Employment) programme and recruiting from overseas.
- Our Mental Health Support Team has supported the delivery of whole school approaches to reach more than 1,500 children, staff and parents in 36 school settings. Evaluations of mental health surgeries evidence a 96% increase in staff feeling more knowledgeable and skilled. The high volume of interventions ensure that our mental health and emotional wellbeing offer remains consistently strong for our young people to access specialist services, particularly for those at risk of exploitation and those not attending school due to emotional health and wellbeing concerns. It has been shortlisted as 'medium team of the year' in the national LGC Awards 2024.
- A wide range of additional school places for children with SEND were created for the academic year 2023/24, ensuring all children can access an appropriate place. 90 Additionally Resourced provision places were created in mainstream schools; Oak Tree special academy school opened

after last year's delay, and currently provides an additional 25 places; Thames Valley special academy school satellite provision at Ridgeway Primary school is providing an additional 12 places from January 2024 for reception and KS3 children; and Hamilton special academy school is providing an additional 7 places in Year 7.

- We have led, on behalf of Reading Borough Council, a successful bid securing a £1m grant as part of the Department for Education's (DfE's) 'Delivering Better Value' (DBV) programme. Our proposals to develop inclusive practice for children with SEND through a new advisory and support service, named 'Reading Inclusion Services in Education' (RISE) went live in January 2024.
- We have grown the involvement of Reading children in participation and democracy activities. All Reading schools are now engaged with Reading Youth Council, with a doubling of the number of members. Reading Youth Council has successfully championed campaigns on behalf of Reading children and young people, including attending Reading Borough Council committees to influence policy decisions, active involvement in Reading's Climate Action Network and Climate Action festival, and attending the Houses of Parliament representing Reading as UK Youth Parliament members.
- We have reviewed the information and data that is produced throughout the Company to shift the balance of effort from data production to managing resources, impact and performance outcomes. Our greater use of Power BI as a self-serving tool supports our staff to gain deeper data insight. The implementation of a new education management system (Synergy) also supports our improvement work.

Strong governance oversight allows us to pause and reflect at each stage of our journey to ensure our work remains focused and outcome driven. We continue to strive to deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families in an ever-changing and challenging environment.

Appendix 2: Governance

Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) became operational on 3 December 2018. It is a Company limited by guarantee. The Company is wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council and is governed by an independent Board, executive committee and senior leadership team, to ensure operational autonomy.

1.1 The Board of Directors

The Board Chair and Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) bring professional skills and expertise from different sectors. A representative of Reading Borough Council sits on the Board as a Non-Executive Director and the Executive Directors, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the company, are Board Members and, with the Board Chair, are registered as the Company's directors at Companies House.

The Board is responsible for setting the strategy for Brighter Futures for Children; driving high performance and quality; ensuring that the contract objectives are met and promoting the interests of children and young people throughout Reading.

Members of the senior leadership team and specialist areas such as health & safety and staffing & personnel report to the Board and attend parts of the Board meetings as required. They present updates to the Board and ensure there is connectivity across the Company in terms of operational delivery and appropriate challenge against set targets.

1.2 Board Committees

The Board operates through committees to monitor progress in detail and report back to the full Board:

Audit and Risk (ARC) provides oversight and independent assurance over the adequacy of, and compliance with the Company's financial and other internal control frameworks, risk management arrangements, audits in relation to external audits, internal audits and other assurance audits, and overall governance framework.

Finance Committee has oversight on matters relating to the management of the Company's finances.

Quality Assurance and Improvement (QAIC) monitors both quality and performance across all strands of the organisation. There are sub-committees of the QAIC which oversee, monitor and challenge the performance, quality and impact of the Education services delivered by Brighter Futures for Children and the quality of provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Committee provides oversight and monitoring so the Company can fulfil its obligations as an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA).

Adoption Committee monitors our work as a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA).

1.3 The Executive Directors' Meetings (EDM) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Executive Directors' Meeting (EDM) typically takes place fortnightly to oversee the corporate and strategic direction of the Company. This meeting is chaired by the Chair of the Board. The EDM includes the Executive Directors of the Company.

The remit of EDM is oversight of Board agenda and reports and strategic decisions relating to:

- risk
- finances
- organisational restructures etc
- complex or urgent issues requiring a steer/resolution from EDM
- approval of strategy.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meets fortnightly to provide cross company leadership with a focus on shaping and delivering the strategic priorities of the Company. It is chaired by the Executive Directors, and includes all senior operational and corporate leads, to discuss and report on the performance of the day-to-day operations of the Company.

The remit of SLT is:

- Strategic and operational planning
- Shaping the culture and behaviour of the organisation
- Identifying and managing risk
- Organisational delivery and performance and financial management
- Compliance.

In addition, the operational and corporate (finance and resources) leaders meet (separately) for fortnightly management meetings.

Appendix 3: Brighter Futures for Children Contractual KPIs

KPI ref	Description	KPI category*	Mar-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target
1	Timeliness of contact decision making. Decision within 24 hours	1	**81%**	>=85%	>=85%
5	% children in care (CLA) who have been looked after for 2+ years in the same placement	1	**70%**	>=71%	>=71%
8A	% care leavers who are not in education employment or training (NEET - 17-18 year olds)	1	29%	20%	20%
8B	% care leavers who are not in education employment or training (NEET - 19-21 year olds)	1	39%	39%	38%
16	% Education, health care plans completed within 20 weeks	1	71%	>=70%	>=70%
3	% of children who become subject of child protection plan for second or subsequent time within the last two (2) years	2	10%	<=10%	<=10%
4	% of referrals which are re-referrals within 12 months	2	26%	<= 23%	<= 23%
6	CLA who have experienced 3+ placements in last 12 months	2	8%	<=11%	<=9%
7	% of CLA placements more than 20 miles from Reading (i.e. from home address of child)	2	26%	<=25%	<=25%
9	Voice of the child (measured as CLA aged over 4 who attend or contribute to their own reviews)	2	97%	>=90%	>=90%
14	Education: % Pupils provided with a school place on offer day (primary)	2	99%	95%	95%
15	% Pupils provided with a school place on offer day (secondary)	2	99%	95%	95%
17	Number of first time entrants to Youth Justice System per 100,000 aged 10-17	2	196	190	190

KPI Category

Category 1: KPIs are the most important in the portfolio. They are the most closely managed, where potential risk of failure must be escalated immediately to the BFFC board for formal resolution.

Category 2: KPIs are important to achieve, and must be actively managed. Potential risk of failure must be escalated promptly to the SLT for resolution. The Council may request formal resolution at board level if they feel risk of failure is sufficiently urgent or important that informal resolution is inappropriate.

Policy Committee

11 March 2024

Title	2023/24 Quarter 3 Performance and Monitoring Report
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author (name & job title)	Stuart Donnelly, Financial Planning & Strategy Manager Gavin Handford, Assistant Director of Policy, Performance & Customer Services
Lead Councillor (name & title)	Councillor Terry, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Corporate Services & Resources
Corporate priority	Our Foundations
Recommendations	**That Policy Committee notes:** 1. That the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 3 is an adverse net variance of £5.117m which is an adverse net movement of £1.432m from Quarter 2; 2. That £1.392m (17%) of savings have been delivered (blue) to date in this financial year, with a further £2.368m (29%) of savings on track to be delivered (green) by March 2024. £3.067m (38%) of savings are currently categorised as non-deliverable (red) and £1.291m (16%) categorised as at risk of delivery (amber); 3. That the General Fund Capital Programme is forecasting a positive net variance of £1.407m against the proposed revised budget of £50.129m; 4. That there is a total £4.790m Delivery Fund available for 2023/24 (inclusive of 2022/23 approved carry forwards) of which £0.195m has been brought forward from 2024/25. At Quarter 3, all of this funding has been allocated out to approved schemes; 5. That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is projecting a positive net variance of £0.030m as at the end of Quarter 3, which results in a forecast drawdown from HRA Reserves of £2.469m; 6. That the HRA Capital Programme is forecasting to spend to budget against the approved budget of £33.564m. 7. The performance achieved against the Corporate Plan success measures as set out in Section 12 of this report and Appendices 5 and 6. **That Policy Committee approves:** 8. The proposed amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 8 of this report and Appendix 4a and 4b), which would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £50.129m for 2023/24, £108.809m for 2024/25 and £53.576 for 2025/26; 9. The proposed amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in Section 11 of this report and Appendix 4a and 4b), which would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £33.564m for 2023/24, £47.985m for 2024/25 and £54.370 for 2025/26;

1. Executive Summary

General Fund - Revenue

1.1 The General Fund Revenue Budget is forecasting an overall adverse net variance of £5.117m as at the end of Quarter 3, consisting of £12.741m of net pressures within service expenditure budgets which is partially offset by a positive net variance of £7.624m across Corporate Budgets. The overall forecast variance is an adverse net movement of £1.432m from Quarter 2.

1.2 The adverse net movement of £1.432m includes £1.889m of additional recovery plan mitigations that have been identified/delivered since Quarter 2. The £1.889m of newly identified recovery plan mitigations are set out individually in Appendix 1.

1.3 Children's Services delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is now forecasting an overall adverse net variance of £8.869m; an increase of £1.850m from Quarter 2. The majority of the movement from Quarter 2 relates to increased pressures within children's social care placements, which includes a net increase of 22 in the number of Looked After Children. More detail is set out in Appendix 2.

1.4 Non-delivery of savings continues to be a concern with only 46% of savings currently showing as on track or delivered. The impact of the 2024/25 budget proposals has removed, reduced or re-profiled £2.792m of the £3.067m of red rated savings. The Savings Tracker which lists progress against each individual saving is attached as Appendix 3.

1.5 As has been previously reported, all budgeted contingencies have already been released and factored into the Corporate Budgets forecast.

General Fund - Capital

1.6 The provisional General Fund Capital Programme outturn is forecasting a positive net variance of £1.407m against a proposed revised budget of £50.129m in 2023/24. This variance entirely relates to the Delivery Fund. The Capital Programme is set out in more detail in Section 8 and Appendices 4a and 4b.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Revenue

1.7 The approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget assumed a drawdown from HRA reserves of £2.499m. At Quarter 3, the forecast revenue outturn position for the HRA is a positive net variance of £0.030m. Therefore, a drawdown from HRA Reserves is forecast of £2.469m rather than the originally budgeted £2.499m.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Capital

1.8 The HRA Capital Programme is forecasting to spend to budget against the approved budget of £33.564m in 2023/24. The HRA Capital Programme is set out in more detail in Section 11 and Appendices 4a and 4b.

Performance

1.9 The report also sets out performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan.

1.10 Of the 26 Corporate Plan Performance Measures monitored monthly or quarterly, 38% are currently "green", 31% "amber" and 31% "red". 54% have improved since Quarter 2 of 2023/24, whilst 38% have worsened.

1.11 Of the 47 Corporate Plan Projects, 66% are currently "green" and 34% "amber". The status for 1 project is currently outstanding and 1 project is no longer proceeding: procure and implement crowdfunding solution to support projects delivered by the voluntary and community sector.

1.12 The full list of Performance Measures is attached at Appendix 5 and Projects and Initiatives as Appendix 6.

2. Policy Context

2.1. The Council approved the 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 – 2025/26 in February 2023.

3. General Fund - Revenue

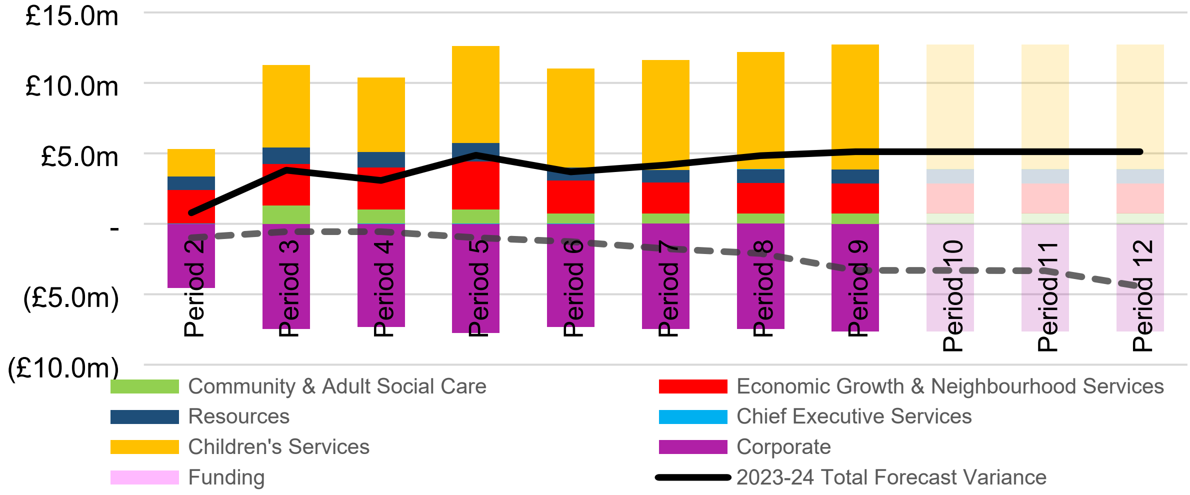
3.1. The forecast outturn position of the General Revenue Fund is an adverse net variance of £5.330m as at the end of Quarter 3, which is a net adverse movement of £1.645m since Quarter 2, and is broken down by Directorate in the following table:

Table 1. General Revenue Fund Forecast by Directorate 2023/24

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Community and Adult Social Care	50.485	51.235	0.750	0.002
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	17.858	19.986	2.128	(0.193)
Resources	18.555	19.536	0.981	0.060
Chief Executive Services	1.592	1.605	0.013	0.038
Children's Services retained by Council	0.838	0.838	0.000	0.000
Children's Services delivered by BFfC	51.430	60.299	8.869	1.850
Total Service Expenditure	**140.758**	**153.499**	**12.741**	**1.757**
Capital Financing	17.601	14.880	(2.721)	(0.468)
Contingencies	4.108	0.000	(4.108)	0.000
Other Corporate Budgets	(4.164)	(4.020)	0.144	(0.325)
Movement in Reserves	6.108	5.169	(0.939)	0.468
Total Corporate Budgets	**23.653**	**16.029**	**(7.624)**	**(0.325)**
Net Budget Requirement	**164.411**	**169.528**	**5.117**	**1.432**
Financed by:				
Council Tax Income	(111.086)	(111.086)	0.000	0.000
NNDR Local Share	(28.489)	(28.489)	0.000	0.000
New Homes Bonus	(1.453)	(1.453)	0.000	0.000
Section 31 Grant	(15.183)	(15.183)	0.000	0.000
Revenue Support Grant	(2.487)	(2.487)	0.000	0.000
Other Government Grants	(1.498)	(1.498)	0.000	0.000
One-off Collection Fund Surplus	(4.215)	(4.215)	0.000	0.000
Total Funding	**(164.411)**	**(164.411)**	**0.000**	**0.000**
(Positive)/Adverse Variance	**0.000**	**5.117**	**5.117**	**1.432**

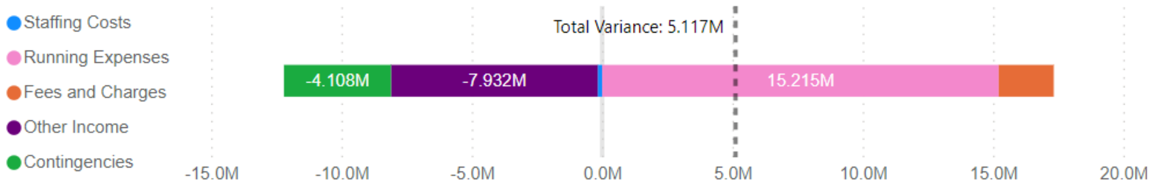
3.2. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by directorate, for each period to date.

Chart 1. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – General Fund



3.3. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for the Council by high level category:

Chart 2. Split of Total Variance – General Fund



<u>Community & Adult Social Care - £0.750m adverse variance</u>

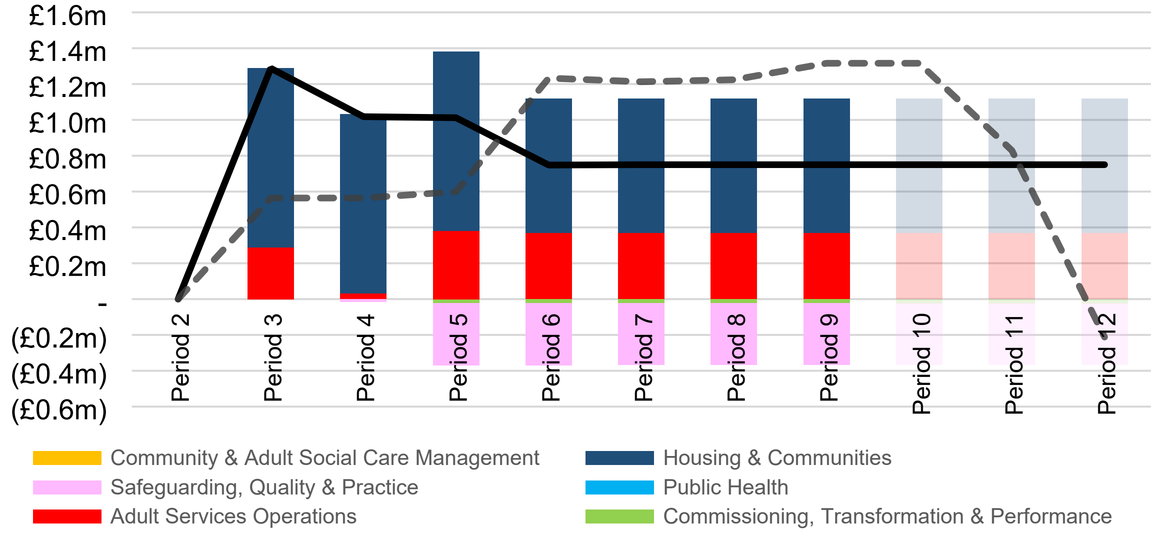
3.4. Community & Adult Social Care is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.750m at Quarter 3, which includes £1.563m of identified recovery plan mitigations. The forecast position is an adverse movement of £0.002m from Quarter 2 and is summarised by service below.

Table 2. Community & Adult Social Care Services Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	2.573	2.549	(0.024)	0.000
Adult Services Operations	41.049	41.417	0.368	0.000
Community & Adult Social Care Management	1.418	1.418	0.000	0.000
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	3.536	3.192	(0.344)	0.002
Public Health	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Housing & Communities	1.908	2.658	0.750	0.000
Total	**50.485**	**51.235**	**0.750**	**0.002**

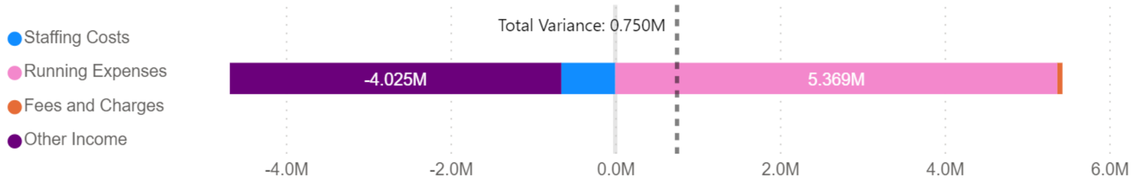
3.5. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within Community and Adult Social Care, for each period to date.

Chart 3. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Community & Adult Social Care



3.6. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Community and Adult Social Care by high level category:

Chart 4. Split of Total Variance – Community & Adult Social Care



3.7. The explanation for these forecast variances is set out below.

Commissioning, Transformation & Performance - £0.024m positive variance

3.8. Commissioning, Transformation & Performance is forecasting a positive net variance of £0.024m, which is unchanged from Quarter 2, due to a forecast overachievement of income within the Deputies service.

Adult Services Operations - £0.368m adverse variance

3.9. Adult Services Operations is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.368m, which is unchanged from Quarter 2.

3.10. There is an overall forecast pressure within placement budgets of £1.671m. This forecast is based on the latest committed placement spend data, mitigated by forecast grant funding and client contributions to care.

3.11. The commitments in year for placement costs started at £42.026m at Quarter 1, which included a provision for all known pressures, grant funding and client contributions. The commitment at Quarter 3 is £43.514m, which is an increase of £1.488m (this is included within the overall forecast pressure on placements of £1.671m). This reflects the increase in service users from 1,562 at week 1 to 1,638 at week 39, which is an increase of 76.

3.12. The recovery plan identified £1.319m of in-year mitigations to partially offset these placement pressures. Mitigations have already been achieved in-year totalling £0.788m which have contained the placements pressure to £1.671m. A further £0.531m of further mitigations are forecast to be delivered by the end of the year, reducing the overall forecast pressure to £1.140m. Additional grants have been received in year of £0.772m, linked to hospital discharge, and health funding. These have been used as per conditions against the additional placement costs. The recovery plan and the additional grant funding limit the overall forecast pressure to £0.368m.

3.13. The recovery plan includes cost reducing schemes within the directorate, aiming to:

- Reduce waiting lists;
- Review all care packages to deliver best service;
- Minimise costs;
- Work with Health to increase Health Contributions to care packages;
- Initiate the Front Door Programme.

Safeguarding, Quality & Practice - £0.344m positive variance

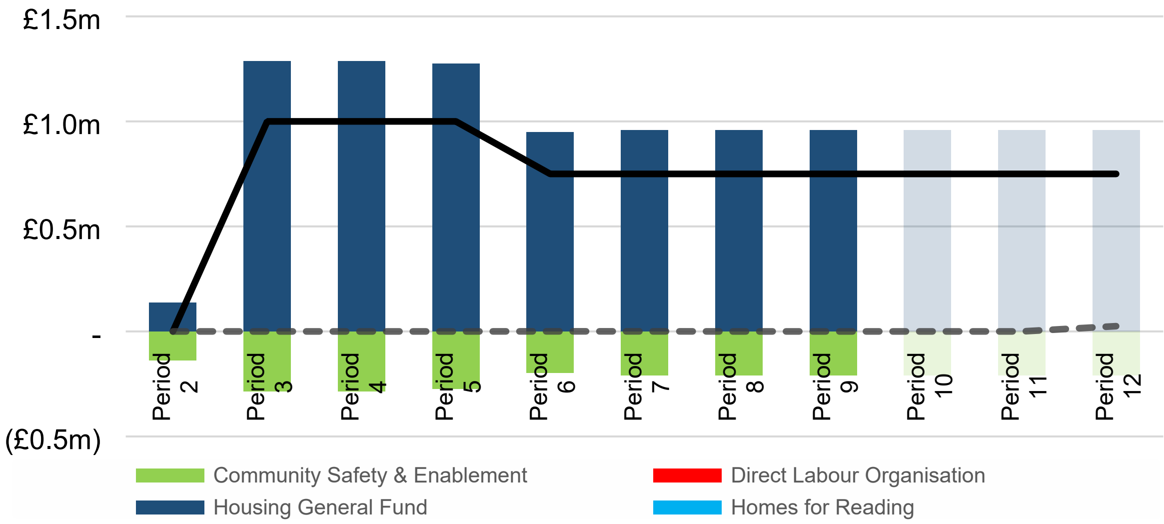
3.14. Safeguarding, Quality & Practice is forecasting a positive net variance of £0.344m, which is an adverse movement of £0.002m from Quarter 2. This variance consists of a positive variance of £0.323m due to staffing vacancies and a £0.021m positive variance due to an increase of income in provider services.

Housing & Communities - £0.750m adverse variance

3.15. Housing & Communities is forecasting a £0.750m adverse variance for the year, which is unchanged from Quarter 2. This forecast includes £0.244m of identified recovery plan mitigations.

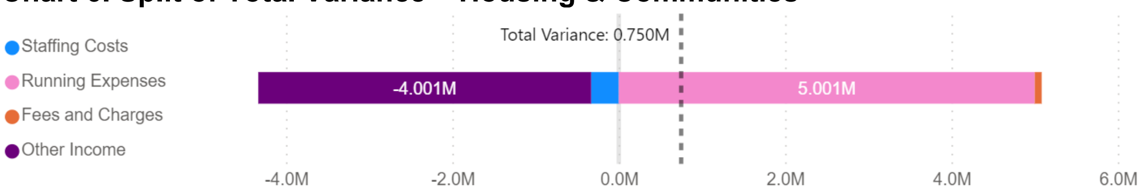
3.16. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance across Housing & Communities for each period to date.

Chart 5. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Housing & Communities



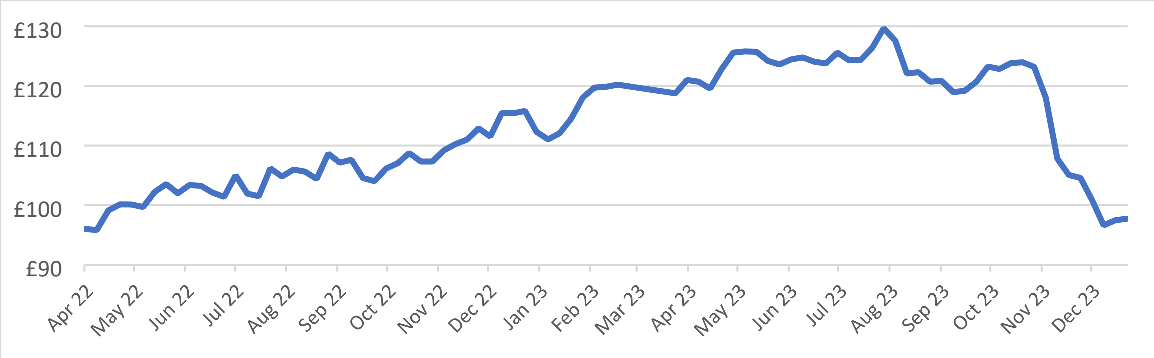
3.17. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Housing & Communities by high level category:

Chart 6. Split of Total Variance – Housing & Communities



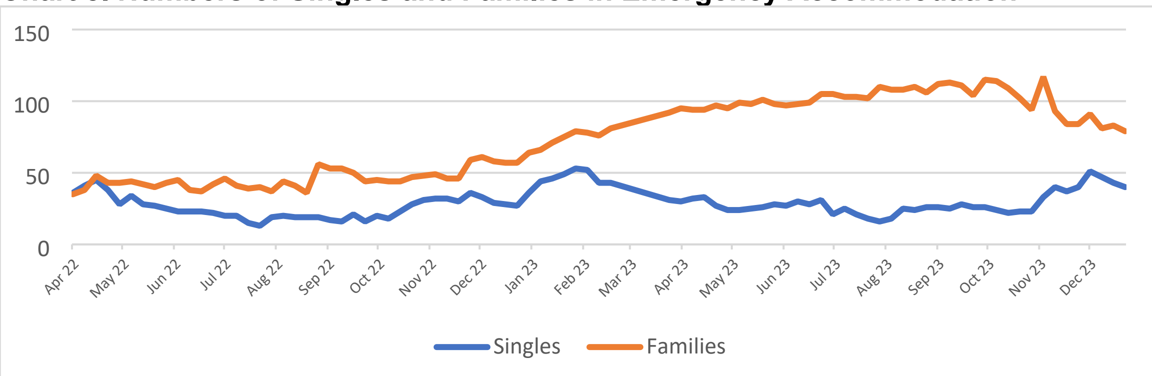
3.18. The cost-of-living crisis has had a significant impact on the Homelessness budgets. Private sector evictions have been steadily rising following on from the Covid restrictions being released, with additional cost of living pressures placed on the sector. High Inflation pressures have been seen in the cost of Emergency Accommodation, the average nightly rate in April 2022 was £90 and increased to highest levels of £130 in August 2023, before dropping to £98 in December 2023 (as illustrated in Chart 7 below). There has also been a reduction in the number of available properties to use.

Chart 7. Average Nightly Rate per Emergency Accommodation Placement



3.19. This area is a demand led service, and numbers of families in particular in emergency accommodation have been rising since April 2022; the total number of singles and families in April 2022 was 71, rising to a total of 119 in December 2023 (as illustrated in Chart 8 below).

Chart 8. Numbers of Singles and Families in Emergency Accommodation



3.20. If the high numbers of placements and the high cost of placements seen between April 2023 to October 2023 did not change, an adverse variance of around £2.300m would have been expected. The efforts to target both the numbers of placements and the nightly costs have achieved significant reductions to this pressure and this has been evidenced in the monitoring. However, even with these mitigations having been successful, the remaining pressure is currently thought to be around £0.750m that will not be able to be offset. In previous years there have been one-off grants given by Central Government in order to offset these pressures; these figures currently assume that no additional funds will be made available in 2023/24. However, a recent announcement of potential funding has been made and this is being examined to identify if any benefit will be forthcoming in 2023/24 or of the benefit will arise in future years. Further information on this forecast pressure will be provided in future reports.

Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services - £2.128m adverse variance

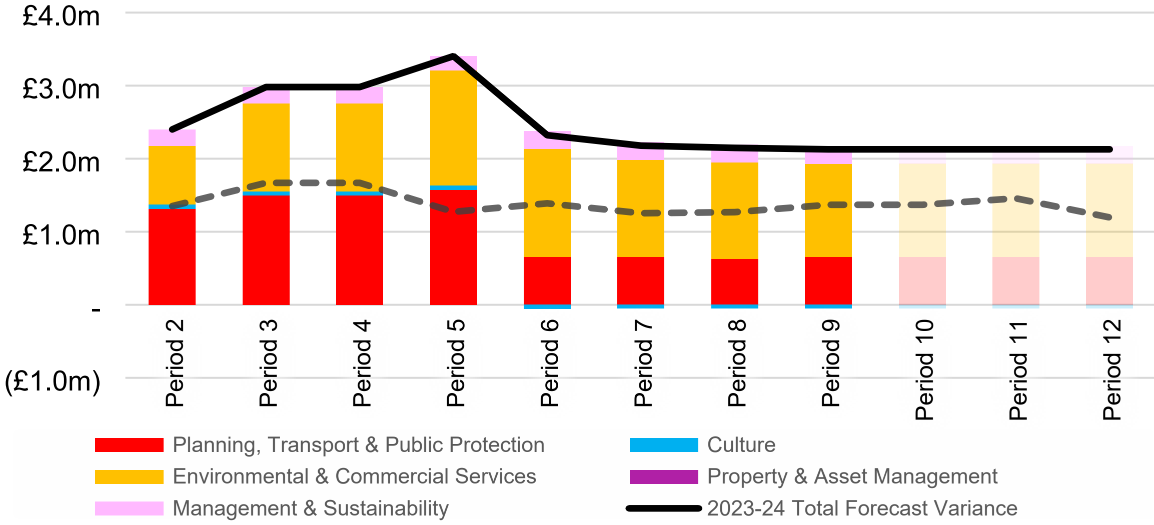
3.21. Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' is forecasting an adverse net variance of £2.128m at Quarter 3, which includes £1.291m of identified recovery plan mitigations. The forecast position is a net improvement of £0.193m from Quarter 2 and is summarised by service below.

Table 3. Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	0.515	1.170	0.655	0.000
Culture	3.059	3.011	(0.048)	0.007
Environmental & Commercial Services	16.848	18.123	1.275	(0.200)
Property & Asset Management	(3.164)	(3.164)	0.000	0.000
Management & Sustainability	0.600	0.846	0.246	0.000
Total	**17.858**	**19.986**	**2.128**	**(0.193)**

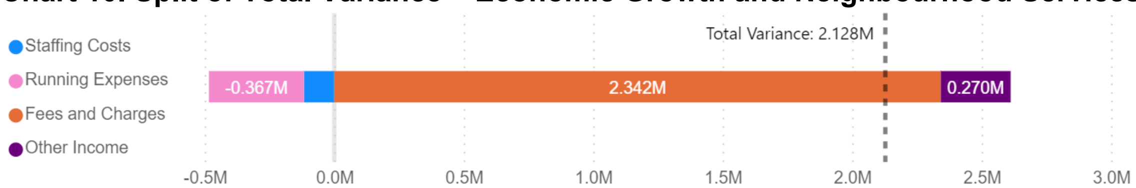
3.22. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, for each period to date.

Chart 9. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services



3.23. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services by high level category:

Chart 10. Split of Total Variance – Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services



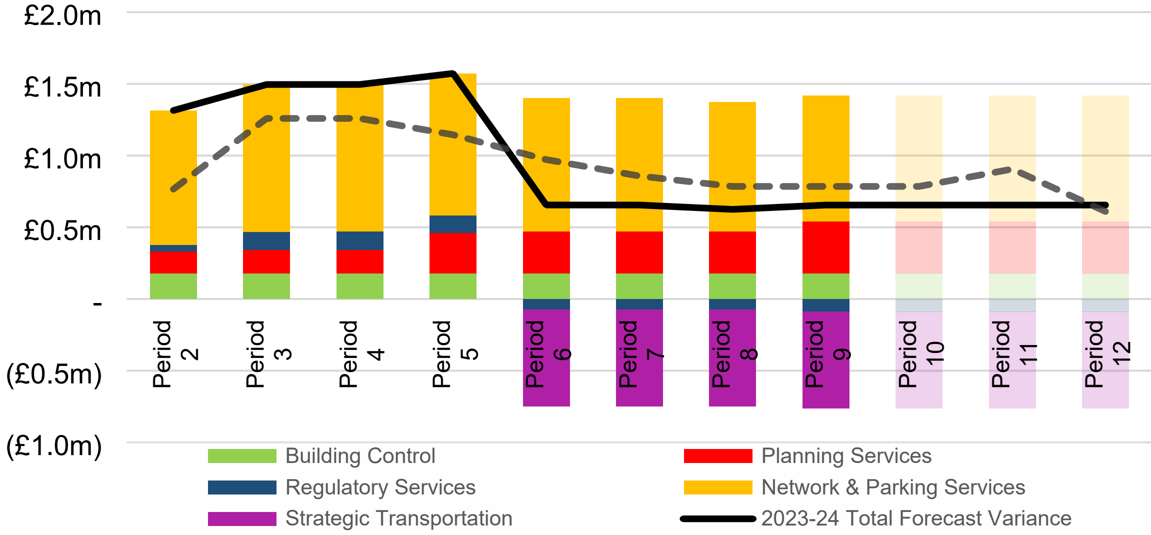
3.24. The explanation for these variances is set out below.

Planning, Transport and Public Protection - £0.655m adverse variance

3.25. Planning, Transport and Public Protection is reporting an adverse variance of £0.655m, which is unchanged from Quarter 2. This forecast includes £0.890m of identified recovery plan mitigations.

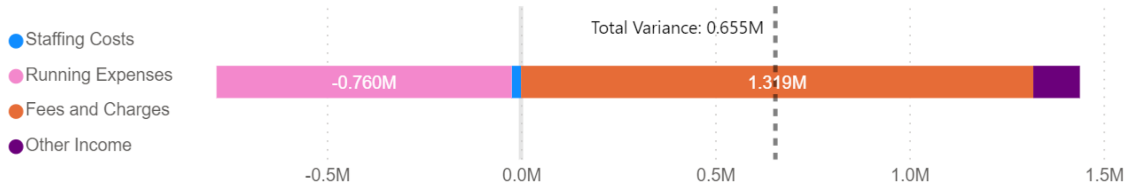
3.26. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance across Planning, Transport and Public Protection for each period to date.

Chart 11. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Planning, Transport and Public Protection



3.27. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Planning, Transport and Public Protection by high level category:

Chart 12. Split of Total Variance – Planning, Transport and Public Protection



3.28. These shortfalls are arising from a combination of post covid impacts and economic challenges associated with inflation, the effect of high interest rates on business, the availability of skilled professional staff and the support provided for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

3.29. The net positive variance on all Off-Street and On-Street Parking Services is £0.174m. This variance consists of a net £0.246m overachievement of income, partially offset by £0.072m of running cost pressures. The variances relating to the Off-Street and On-Street Parking income is explained further below.

3.30. Based on year-to-date activity levels in parking and traffic enforcement, income levels as at Quarter 3 continue to rise above those in the same period last year and the recovery continues to gain momentum year-on-year, particularly for Off-Street Car Parking - the most material Parking income stream by budget. Table 4 below shows the position since 2019/20 (the baseline year before the impact of the Covid Pandemic).

Table 4. Off-Street Car Parking Income Trend

Financial Year	Budget	Actual/Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
2019/20	(4.244)	(4.333)	(0.089)
2020/21	(4.734)	(1.183)	3.551
2021/22	(3.668)	(2.933)	0.735
2022/23	(4.126)	(3.540)	0.586
2023/24	**(5.304)**	**(4.441)**	**0.863**

3.31. The equivalent figures for On-Street parking are set out below and shows that activity levels have moved beyond recovery and the continuing positive performance of this area has offset the off-street parking pressure.

Table 5. On-Street Car Parking Income Trend

Financial Year	Budget	Actual/Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
2019/20	(1.440)	(1.821)	(0.381)
2020/21	(1.994)	(0.893)	1.101
2021/22	(1.760)	(2.003)	(0.243)
2022/23	(1.952)	(2.761)	(0.809)
2023/24	**(1.957)**	**(3.066)**	**(1.109)**

3.32. Overall, there is therefore a net positive variance of £0.246m on income across Car Parking (Off-Street and On-Street combined) as the recovery trend continues, however the recovery is at a slower rate of increase in income compared to 2021/22 and 2022/23. Examination of the rebasing of budgets between these areas is being considered and will be approached as part of the wider view of new proposals being brought forward in the budget setting process for 2024/25 in this area. This figure includes the in-year benefit of increases to Parking Charges of £0.069m as identified in the Recovery Plan.

3.33. Risks remain with Off-Street parking where the ongoing cost of living crisis, working from home and high fuel costs has led to fewer visits to town centre and renting spaces to Royal Berkshire Hospital at Queens Road has not delivered the income anticipated due to the Hospital trialling other arrangements. Town Centre car parks are subject to competition from providers such as the Oracle, who currently undercut the council's tariffs and have newer facilities. The decreasing draw of the high street for shoppers is another factor and in the next period, there may be a measurable impact with the loss of another high street shop, Wilko.

3.34. There is a net adverse variance of £0.552m relating to Bus Lane Enforcement income, where some equipment issues (which are now resolved) led to a temporary reduction in the amount of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued, as well as additional leasing costs. There is also a measurable decrease in penalties being issued due to better compliance. The new Civil Enforcement contract in place from November 2023 should help the position moving forward into 2024/25. It should be noted, that whilst reducing numbers of PCN's being issued in bus lanes has a significant financial impact, it is achieving compliance, which is the goal of all traffic enforcement.

3.35. There is an adverse variance of £0.270m within Residents Parking where the income is not expected to exceed the amount achieved in 2022/23. There was additional income budget added to this area within 2023/24 which does not appear likely to be achieved, partly as the trend following Covid is for the consolidation of household vehicles meaning that fewer people are renewing permits for additional cars.

3.36. There is a net adverse variance on income within the Special Parking area of £0.228m, linked to challenges in recruiting additional Civil Enforcement staff. This is currently anticipated to reduce for 2024/25 when the new contract is in place, with all staff in place, new hours of operation and new equipment securing a high rate of issue.

3.37. The Building Control income shortfall of £0.187m directly correlates to the lack of staffing and a lack of availability of suitable agency staff to undertake the fee earning work. A new round of recruitment aims to both provide statutory cover and support fee earning work.

3.38. Premises licence fees are forecasting an income shortfall of £0.098m. Within this, the largest element relates to a shortfall of £0.075m in respect of Reading Festival which is largely based on Festival Republic's need for a licence variation which was not required in 2022/23.

3.39. Planning applications and planning fees are forecasting an income shortfall of £0.274m. This area is market driven so it is difficult to control the level of fees particularly as the level of fee is statutorily set. Following on from the Covid recovery the supply chain issues around costs, availability of construction materials, skills shortages in the construction and design industry, and the impact of changing legislation (Building Safety Act in particular), is impacting on commercial viability and therefore delaying the planning application process.

3.40. There has also been an impact arising from when development triggers have been activated, meaning that there has been a shortfall in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 5% income of £0.145m.

3.41. Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) is forecasting an income shortfall of £0.132m. There was a requirement to inspect homes under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Whilst this has been largely completed, there has been a direct correlation with the generation of a backlog of inspection and enforcement work which has been the priority for officers. As a result, work on generating new enforcement leads on unlicensed HMOs and prioritising work to potentially deliver a new discretionary licensing scheme has fallen behind. The Council receives income under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and some funds were diverted into this area in 2022/23. As part of the 2023/24 recovery plan, £0.148m has been applied within this forecast to cover the staffing costs of inspecting the properties and a contribution towards the related shortfall in income.

3.42. These pressures are partially mitigated by a positive variance on staff costs due to vacancies arising within the service and lack of suitable agency staff of £0.059m and an additional £0.162m within Running Expenses, as well as an overachievement of £0.163m income from Private Hire driver's licences.

3.43. In order to further mitigate pressures within the service, consideration has been given under the directorate's recovery plan to Concessionary Fares which was agreed in 2022/23 to be reviewed after 6 months. This has resulted in an in-year mitigation of £0.650m which has now been included within the overall forecast.

3.44. The recovery plan work also reviewed budgets within Community Transport, and a further mitigation of £0.023m of inflationary growth has been identified as not being required in-year and has also been included within the overall forecast.

Culture - £0.048m positive variance

3.45. Culture is forecasting a positive variance of £0.048m, which is an adverse variance of £0.007m from Quarter 2 and includes £0.276m of identified recovery plan mitigations. The forecast variance is comprised of the following elements:

- £0.030m positive net variance is forecasted in Leisure and Recreation. Across Active Reading there is a net pressure of £0.128m, comprised of £0.195m flowing from the delayed café opening and less than predicted usage at the Ranger Station, partially offset by a range of staffing and running cost savings totalling £0.067m within the Education Play Team. Additionally, there are further positive variances totalling £0.155m relating to the management fee for GLL in Leisure Centres, pavilion works and the holding of staffing vacancies. In addition, there is a positive variance of £0.003m within the Park Service.

- £0.184m adverse net variance is forecast in Arts and Theatres and the Town Hall. Within the Town Hall there is a £0.050m pressure within salaries including staff cover and agency spend for catering staff. Additionally, there is an £0.084m pressure due to income levels not recovering post pandemic mainly due to the reduction in uptake of formal catering. There is also a £0.050m income pressure from the Concert Hall driven by low ticket sales.
- £0.130m positive net variance is forecasted in Libraries and Museums primarily due to a £0.110m business rates rebate, along with other mitigating actions contributing £0.024m, both identified through the recovery plan. This is net of a reduced level of rent from the top floor of the library of £0.011m, which includes

the application of £0.045m of Covid grant as identified in the recovery plan. In addition, one area of the service has a further £0.007m underspend on salaries due to vacant hours.

- £0.072m positive net variance is forecasted in Archives and Records which was identified as part of the recovery plan work.

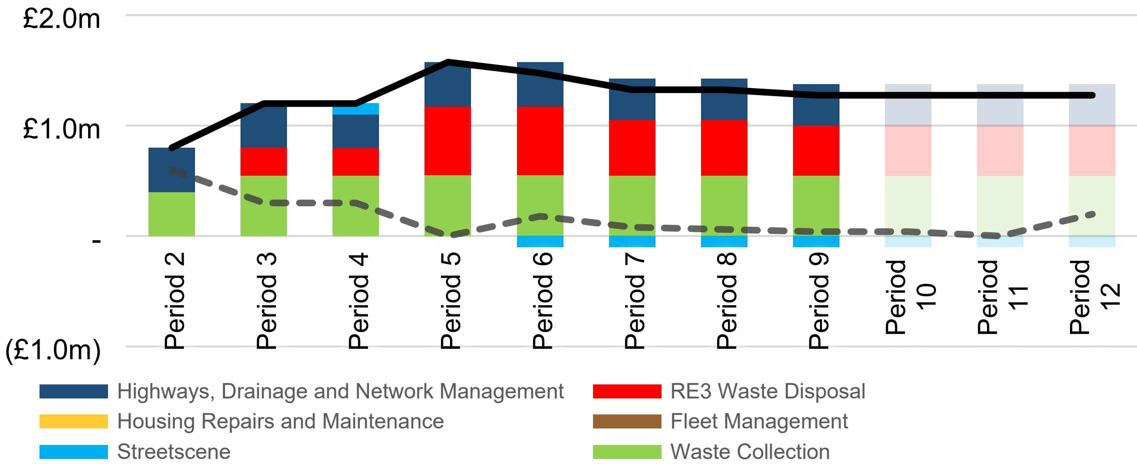
3.46. As laid out within the GLL Leisure contract, a utilities Benchmarking exercise is underway. This exercise is likely to generate an additional £0.737m pressure due to the increases in energy costs seen in the past few years relating to 21 months of the contract. Allocations based on estimates were made as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process and the pressure is anticipated to be funded from the Energy Reserve.

Environmental & Commercial Services – £1.275m adverse variance

3.47. Environmental & Commercial Services is reporting an adverse variance of £1.275m and includes £0.125m of recovery plan mitigations. This is an improvement of £0.200m from Quarter 2.

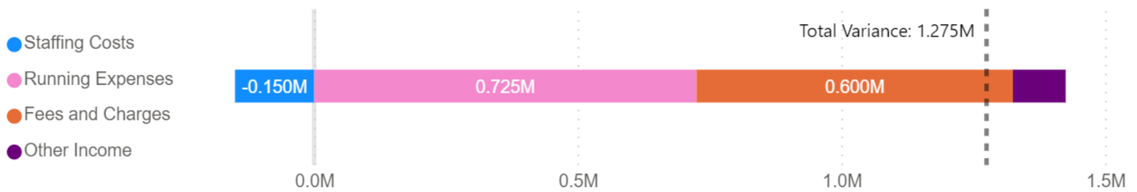
3.48. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance across Environmental & Commercial Services for each period to date.

Chart 13. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Environmental & Commercial Services



3.49. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Environmental & Commercial Services by high level category:

Chart 14. Split of Total Variance – Environmental & Commercial Services



3.50. Recycling and Waste Collection is presently forecasting an overall pressure of £0.550m in staffing. The Staffing Establishment budget is not sufficient to cover the full employee costs of maintaining the required service level. Agency usage, overtime and staff sickness remain high. The service continues to consider measures targeted at the reduction of this adverse variance. Sickness has recently fallen to its lowest level for a long time, and it is hoped that agency usage will reduce in the coming months as part of the recovery plan.

3.51. Waste Disposal is currently forecasting an adverse variance of £0.450m. Waste Collection tonnages were broadly in line with budget overall, however the mix is significantly different. Residual Waste is much higher than budgeted, which is attributable to:

- Food waste tonnages being lower than forecast. The expectation from flats was the same as single households and this is not the case. Additionally, the roll out to flats has been slower than hoped for;

- Deposits at the Smallmead Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) have increased significantly in the year to date;

- Transfers of collected waste from Bennet Road are much higher than anticipated and are returning to pre-Covid levels;

- Green waste has also increased compared to last year and income from recycling is expected to be lower as market prices have fallen.

3.52. Also included within this variance are additional cost pressures relating to Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) additional processing and haulage costs, an expected loss on HWRC income and an anticipated increase in other haulage costs in Quarter 4 of 15%, as the contract is up for renegotiation during the year. A number of projects have recently been instigated across the RE3 partnership to look at composition analysis, participation rates and marketing to increase the use of the food waste and recycling services and to reduce contamination.

3.53. Highways is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.300m due the cost of materials and waste disposal. The inflationary pressure on highways and civil engineering materials has seen items like road surfacing materials increase in price by 40% and other materials by 20-25% which is above the 2023/24 budgeted inflationary increases.

3.54. Civil Engineering is forecasting a positive variance of £0.025m through reduced energy costs for street-lighting.

3.55. Network Management is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.100m, mainly due to a reduced capital recharge for the staffing element of the budget. The current level of staff budget and high vacancy levels does not allow for the size of capital recharge that is required to meet the budget. The completion of the workforce review will hopefully help to reduce this issue with some vacant posts being filled. It is hoped that use of the delivery fund will allow the introduction of street works permits, which will generate additional income to offset the existing shortfall from 2024/25.

3.56. Streetscene is forecasting a positive variance of £0.100m as identified through the recovery plan. There are a high number of vacancies due to turnover and the workforce review, resulting in a forecast positive variance on staffing costs of £0.700m. However, the staffing position has also impacted on the level of income that can be generated and there is a forecast underachievement of income of £0.600m.

Management & Sustainability – £0.246m adverse variance

3.57. Management & Sustainability is reporting an adverse variance of £0.246m, which is unchanged from Quarter 2.

3.58. Advertising income within the Business Development service is forecast to create an income pressure of £0.146m. There are delays to the planning process for new sites and changes to existing sites. There are still contractual and developer delays around new sites which have not yet come online.

3.59. There is also a pressure totalling £0.100m relating to management team staffing costs.

Resources - £0.981m adverse variance

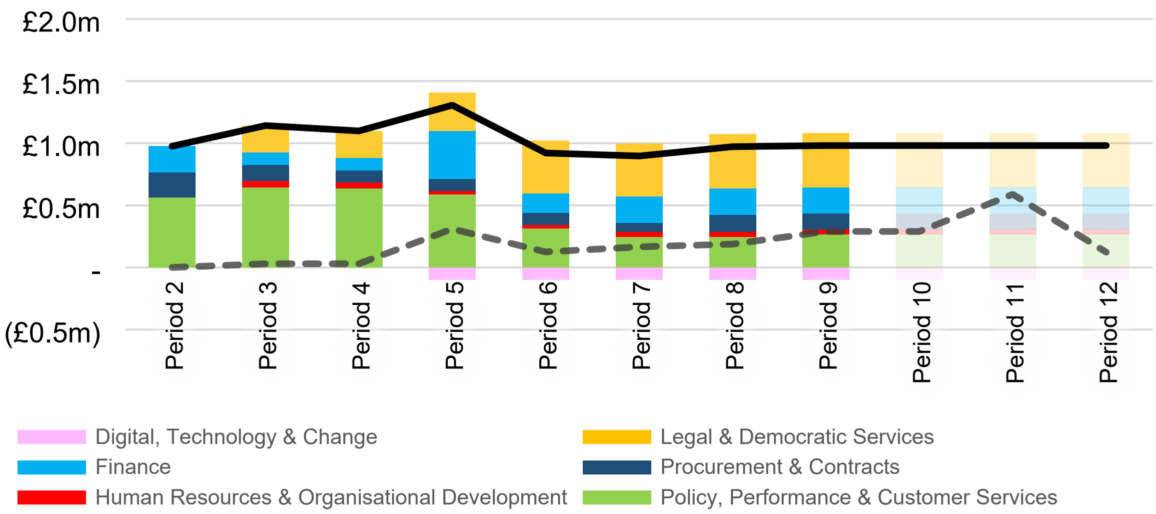
3.60. The Directorate of Resources' is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.981m at Quarter 3, which includes £0.753m of identified recovery plan mitigations. The forecast position is a net adverse movement of £0.060m from Quarter 2 and is summarised by service below.

Table 6. Resources Services Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Policy, Performance & Customer Services	2.306	2.572	0.266	(0.046)
Human Resources & Organisational Development	1.920	1.963	0.043	0.011
Procurement & Contracts	0.382	0.507	0.125	0.030
Finance	4.496	4.707	0.211	0.055
Legal & Democratic Services	2.999	3.435	0.436	0.010
Digital, Technology & Change	6.453	6.353	(0.100)	0.000
Total	**18.555**	**19.536**	**0.981**	**0.060**

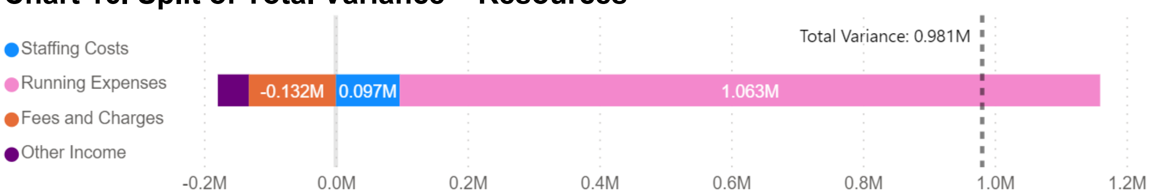
3.61. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within Resources, for each period to date.

Chart 15. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Resources



3.62. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Resources by high level category:

Chart 16. Split of Total Variance – Resources



3.63. The explanations for these variances are set out below.

Policy, Performance & Customer Services - £0.266m adverse variance

3.64. Policy, Performance & Customer Services is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.266m, which is a positive movement of £0.046m from Quarter 2.

3.65. Customer services is forecasting £0.479m of net expenditure pressures primarily relating to corporate cross-council savings of £0.607m from 2021/22 through to 2023/24 still needing to be identified and allocated. The re-profiling of the savings was proposed and agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. One-off offsetting staffing vacancies of £0.128m are helping to reduce the impact of the corporate savings.

3.66. Registrations and Bereavements is forecasting an overall positive variance of £0.130m, consisting of £0.042m linked to an increase in fees and charges from 1st November 2023, and £0.088m of reduced running costs which include holding staffing vacancies.

3.67. Policy and Performance is forecasting a positive variance of £0.112m through a vacancy factor during a restructure, recharges for admin relating to HSF4 and additional fees & charges.

3.68. Directorate Support is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.029m due to staffing costs.

Human Resources & Organisational Development - £0.043m adverse variance

3.69. Human Resources & Organisational Development is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.043m. This is an adverse movement of £0.011m from Quarter 2.

3.70. A small adverse variance of £0.035m is being experienced across the main Human Resources & Organisational Development employee budget, along with a small adverse variance on system costs of £0.008m.

Procurement & Contracts - £0.125m adverse variance

3.71. Procurement & Contracts is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.125m, which is an adverse movement of £0.030m from Quarter 2. This includes £0.180m of expenditure pressures relating to corporate savings targets that are currently not allocated.

3.72. There is a small positive variance of £0.055m across employee and other non-pay budgets through the continued holding of vacancies reported in the Recovery Plan.

Finance - £0.211m adverse variance

3.73. Finance is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.211m. This is an adverse movement of £0.055m from Quarter 2.

3.74. Finance is forecasting £0.212m of expenditure pressures relating to a delay in being able to deliver efficiency savings from procuring the new finance system, which went live at the beginning of December 2023. This pressure is being partially offset by the holding of vacancies of £0.128m which were identified through the recovery plan, along with a small saving in other expenditure of £0.010m resulting in a net adverse variance of £0.074m

3.75. There are additional pressures relating to agency costs of £0.120m within Accounts Payable and Internal Audit linked to sickness and workload pressures.

3.76. Revenues and Benefits are forecasting an adverse variance of £0.017m linked to postal costs and a reduction in court fees offset in part by vacancies.

3.77. A previously reported pressure of £0.100m relating to insurance premiums has been removed from the forecast as part of the recovery plan as this will now be funded from the Insurance Reserve.

Legal & Democratic Services – £0.436m adverse variance

3.78. Legal & Democratic Services is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.436m. This is an adverse movement of £0.010m from Quarter 2.

3.79. The local elections in May 2023 and the recent by-election required additional support to facilitate the new Voter Identification requirements resulting in an adverse variance of £0.220m.

3.80. Employee shortages and the use of agency staff is resulting in a pressure of £0.136m is being experienced linked workload pressures along with associated pressure on the use of expert Counsel of £0.050m.

3.81. Reduced building activity is resulting in a small adverse impact on Land Charges income levels of £0.030m.

Digital, Technology and Change – £0.100m positive variance

3.82. Digital, Technology and Change is forecasting a positive net variance of £0.100m, due to a one-off saving on licences identified via the recovery plan. This is unchanged from Quarter 2.

Chief Executive Services - £0.013m adverse variance

3.83. Chief Executive Services is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.013m at Quarter 3, which is summarised below. This is an adverse movement of £0.038m from Quarter 2.

Table 7. Chief Executive Services Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Management Team	0.897	0.915	0.018	0.018
Communications	0.695	0.690	(0.005)	0.020
Total	**1.592**	**1.605**	**0.013**	**0.038**

Corporate Management Team – £0.018m adverse variance

3.84. The Corporate Management Team is forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.018m relating to recruitment costs. This is an adverse movement of £0.018m from Quarter 2.

Communications – £0.005m positive variance

3.85. Communications is forecasting a positive net variance of £0.005m relating to an administration fee for the Berkshire Lord Lieutenant Joint Arrangement. This is an adverse movement of £0.020m from Quarter 2.

Children's Services Delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) - £8.869m adverse variance

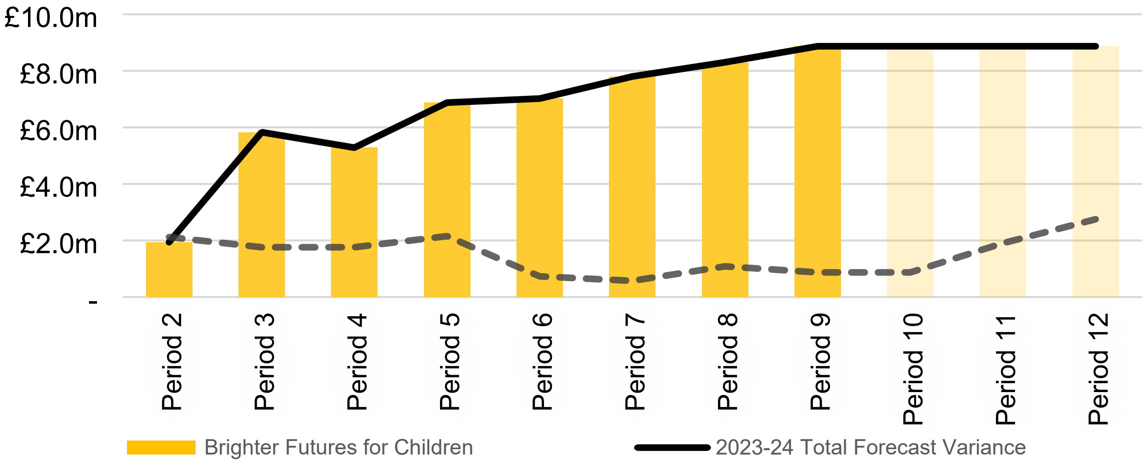
3.86. Brighter Futures for Children's (BFfC) is forecasting an adverse net variance of £8.869m over the 2023/24 Contract Sum at Quarter 3. This is an adverse movement of £1.850m from Quarter 2. More detail is set out in Appendix 2.

Table 8. Children's Services delivered by BFfC Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services delivered by BFfC	51.430	60.299	8.869	1.850
Total	**51.430**	**60.299**	**8.869**	**1.850**

3.87. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within Children's Services Delivered by BFfC, for each period to date.

Chart 17. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Childrens Services (BFfC)



3.88. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Children's Services Delivered by BFfC by high level category:

Chart 18. Split of Total Variance – Brighter Futures for Children Contract

3.89. The main reasons for the forecast adverse net variance of £8.869m are:

- £8.996m adverse variance on children's social care placements;
- £0.798m adverse variance on school transport costs;
- £0.421m positive variance relating to staffing vacancies within Early Help;
- £0.334m positive variance relating to staffing vacancies within Finance & Resources;
- £0.170m positive variance relating to an overachievement of investment income.

3.90. The overall net adverse variance has increased by £1.850m from that reported at Quarter 2. The movement primarily relates to increased pressures on children's social care placements of £1.836m.

3.91. In terms of the movement in placements, this includes a net increase in the number of Looked After Children of 22, consisting of 41 new cases, offset by a reduction in existing cases of 19.

3.92. Further details are included in Appendix 2.

Corporate Budgets - £7.624m positive variance

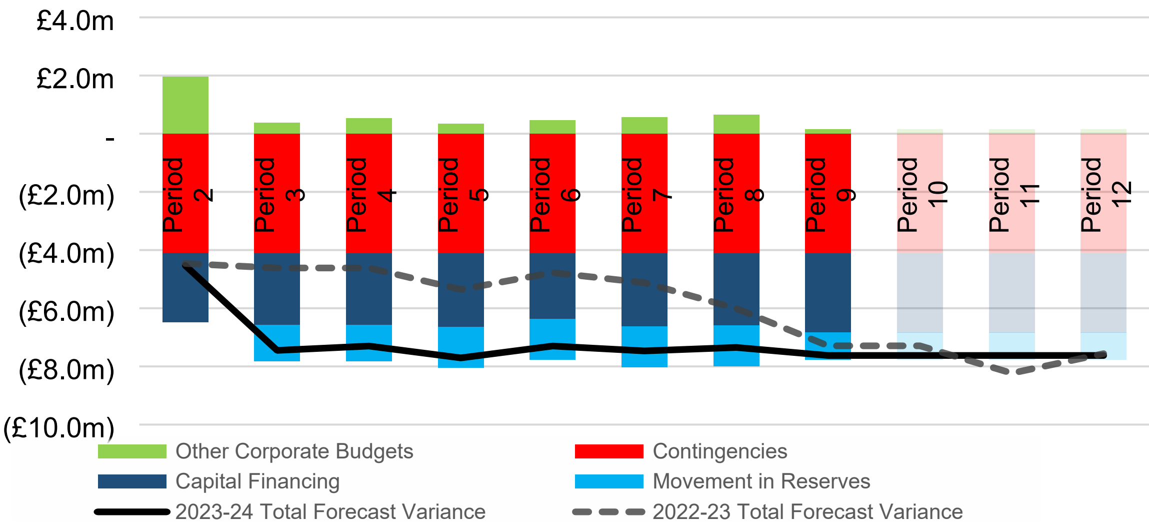
3.93. Corporate Budgets are forecasting a positive net variance of £7.624m at Quarter 3 which is summarised below. This is a positive movement of £0.325m from Quarter 2.

Table 9. Corporate Budgets Forecast 2023/24

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Financing Costs	17.601	14.880	(2.721)	(0.468)
Contingency	4.108	0.000	(4.108)	0.000
Other Corporate Budgets	(4.164)	(4.020)	0.144	(0.325)
Movement to/(from) Reserves	6.108	5.169	(0.939)	0.468
Total	**23.653**	**16.029**	**(7.624)**	**(0.325)**

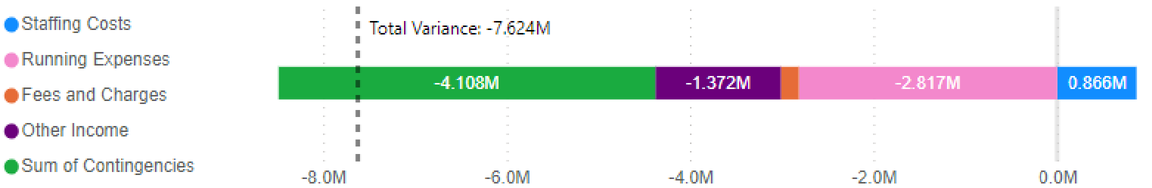
3.94. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within Corporate Budgets, for each period to date.

Chart 19. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Corporate Budgets



3.95. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for Corporate Budgets by high level category:

Chart 20. Split of Total Variance – Corporate Budgets



3.96. Capital Financing Costs is reporting a positive total net variance £2.721m. As a result of the slippage on the Capital Programme reported in the 2022/23 Outturn Report, there is a positive variance of £0.073m relating to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). There is a further positive variance of £1.973m on the interest payable budget which is forecast to arise from a combination of the slippage on the Capital Programme and the Council's strategy of maximising internal borrowing, supported by temporary borrowing where required, in terms of managing the Council's cashflow. Finally, there is a positive variance forecast of £0.675m on the interest receivable budget relating to treasury investments due to a combination of interest rates currently being higher than originally forecast and an improved cashflow position allowing for higher levels of cash balances to be invested.

3.97. The Contingency budget of £4.108m to mitigate against non-delivered in-year savings has not been allocated out to services and therefore contributes a further positive variance.

3.98. Other Corporate Budgets is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.144m. This variance includes a forecast pressure of £0.894m relating to current 2023/24 pay award assumptions and a forecast pressure of £0.600m relating to Housing Benefits, which is predominantly offset by positive net variances of £1.350m within Other Corporate Budgets which is mainly due to the forecast release of all other contingencies.

3.99. The 2023/24 Budget assumes a total net transfer to reserves of £6.108m. The current 2023/24 pay award assumptions outlined previously in the report have created forecast pressures of £0.894m. As a result, a drawdown of £0.894m from the Pay & Inflation earmarked reserve is now anticipated, in addition to a forecast drawdown of £0.045m from the Hardship Fund in respect of one-off funding to support Local Council Tax Support scheme claimants, resulting in a positive net variance on Movement in Reserves of £0.939m.

4. Savings Delivery

4.1. Delivery of the Council's budget is predicated on achieving savings and additional income as agreed as part of the budget setting process in February 2023. Detailed monitoring of agreed savings is tracked on a monthly basis.

4.2. The projected financial impact of any non-delivery of savings has been included in the projected outturn position reported above.

4.3. A total of £7.401m of savings were delivered in 2022/23. The residual £2.823m have been carried forward for delivery in 2023/24, giving a revised 2023/24 savings target of £8.118m.

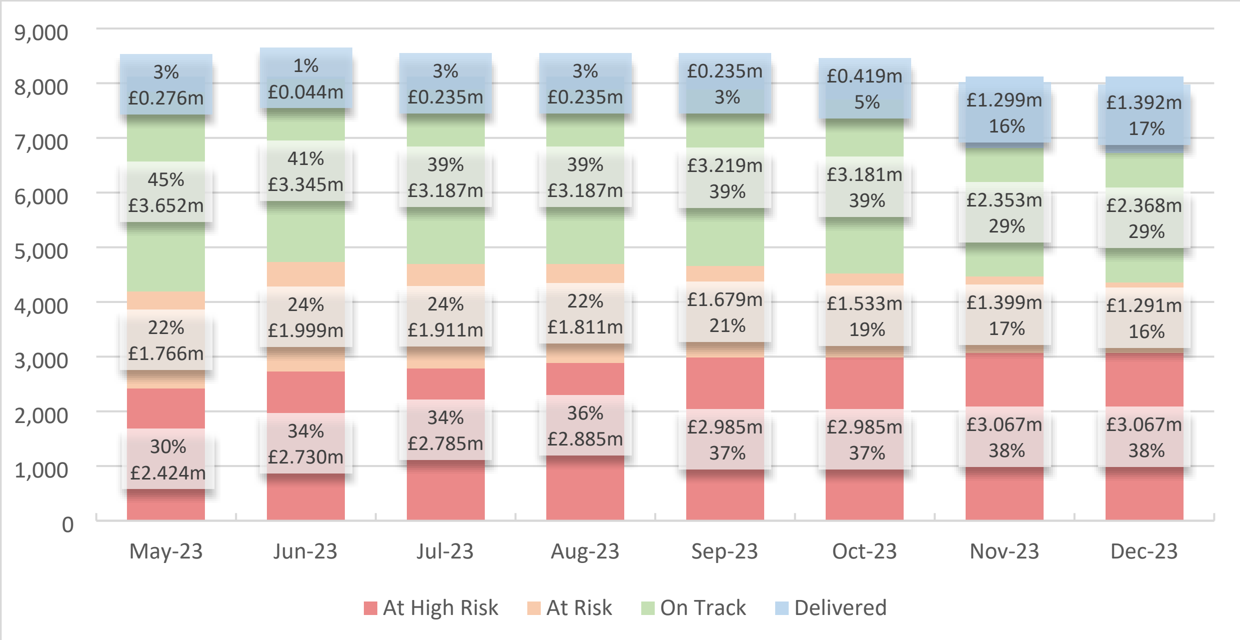
4.4. The following table summarises the current forecast savings delivery for 2023/24 (a breakdown by individual saving is provided in Appendix 3):

Table 10. General Funds Savings Tracker Summary

Service	Savings At Risk £m	Savings Delayed or at Risk £m	Savings on Track £m	Savings Achieved £m	Directorate Total £m
Community and Adult Social Care	0.000	0.000	(0.116)	(0.374)	(0.490)
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	(1.620)	(1.191)	(1.926)	(0.950)	(5.687)
Resources	(0.881)	(0.100)	(0.265)	(0.068)	(1.314)
Chief Executive Services	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Corporate	(0.266)	0.000	(0.061)	0.000	(0.327)
Children's Services delivered by BFfC	(0.300)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.300)
Total	**(3.067)**	**(1.291)**	**(2.368)**	**(1.392)**	**(8.118)**

4.5. The following chart shows the Savings Tracker Summary trend by period:

Chart 21. Savings Tracker Monthly Comparison



4.6. Any savings not delivered in 2023/24 will cause an immediate pressure on 2024/25, unless mitigated with alternative ongoing savings. The impact of the 2024/25 budget proposals has removed, reduced or re-profiled £2.792m of the £3.067m of red rated savings.

5. Debt Performance

5.1. Total General Fund sundry debt as at the end of Quarter 3 is £8.918m, compared to £8.060m at the end of Quarter 2. In addition to this, the General Fund also has £2.301m of current debt and £0.966m of deferred debt which is not yet considered overdue. A breakdown of this debt by age and directorate is provided below.

Chart 22. Split of General Fund Debt by Directorate and Days Outstanding

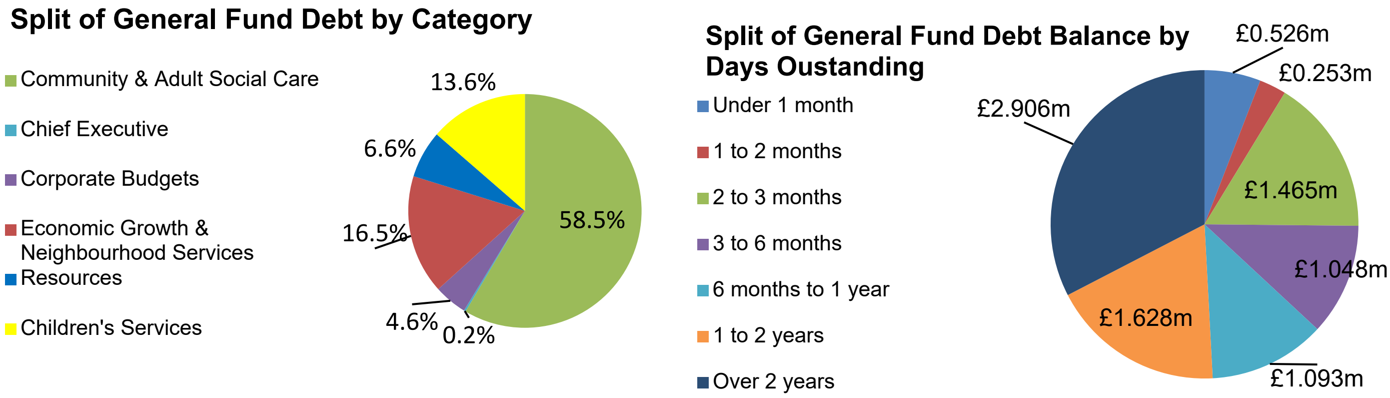
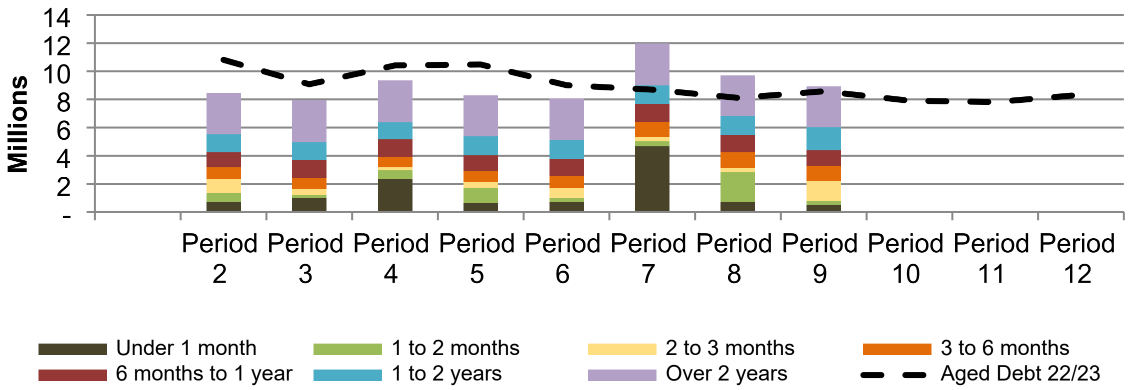


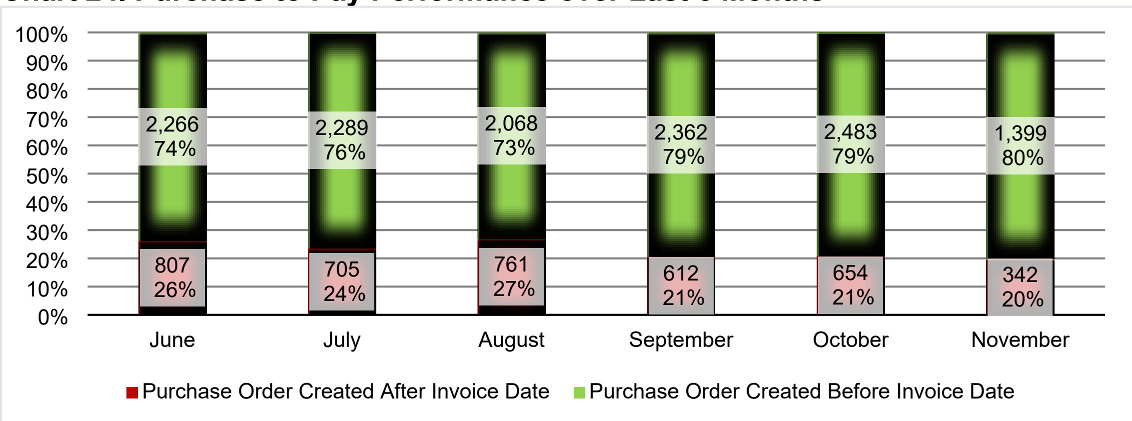
Chart 23. Overdue General Fund Debt Monthly Comparison



6. Purchase to Pay Performance

6.1. The chart below shows the total numbers of Purchase Orders raised before and after the invoice date over the last six months.

Chart 24. Purchase to Pay Performance over Last 6 Months*



*December 2023 data not available

6.2. As at the end of Quarter 3, there were 2,607 open Purchase Orders, with a total open ordered amount of £58.937m.

7. Collection Fund

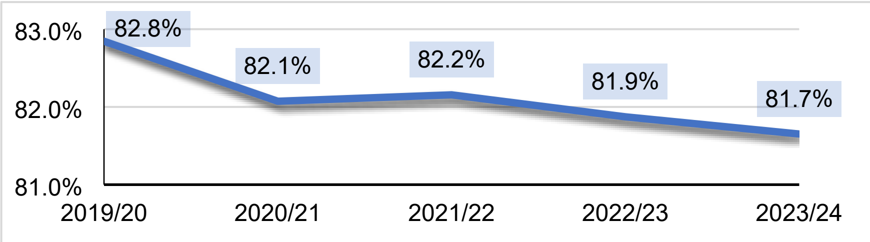
7.1. The following chart shows the Council's collection rate of the total annual debit raised for Council Tax and Non-Domestic (Business) Rates as at the end of Quarter 3.

7.2. Council Tax collection rates are behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to pre-Covid-19 pandemic rates (2019/20) and 2022/23 collection rates at the same point last year. This is a similar trend across most of Berkshire and is likely related to the cost of living crisis. Collection rates for 2022/23 ultimately ended up being only 0.10% behind 2019/20 at the end of the year despite being 0.97% behind at Quarter 3, so the current forecast is that collection rates will continue to improve over the remainder of the year, however whether this will recover in full remains to be seen.

7.3. The 2024/25-2026/27 MTFS Update report presented to Policy Committee in December 2023 assumed that the Council Tax collection rate will be increased from 98.5% back up to the pre-covid level of 99.0% based on 2022/23 performance. The Quarter 2 Performance and Monitoring Report highlighted a risk that the assumed collection rate for 2024/25 Council Tax Base setting purposes may need to be retained at 2022/23 levels based on 2023/24 collection performance to 30th September 2023. Performance has improved during Quarter 3 and the collection rate assumed in the 2024/25 Council Tax Base Setting report (approved by Council on 30th January 2024) and the subsequent 2024/25 Council Tax Setting and 2024/25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

2024/25-2026/27 reports (approved by Council on 27th February 2024), was 98.75%, reflecting the gradual recovery of collection performance through 2022/23 and 2023/24.

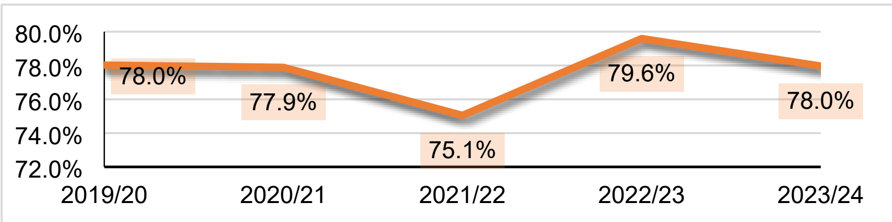
Chart 25. Council Tax Recovery Rates



Comparison to 2022/23	Comparison to 2019/20
↓0.22%	↓ 1.19%

7.4. Non-Domestic collection rates are behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to pre-Covid-19 pandemic rates (2019/20) and 2022/23 collection rates at the same point last year. The performance for 2022/23 is impacted by a timing difference of processing internal transactions relating to the Council properties; in 2022/23 these were processed in Quarter 3 but have been processed in January 2024 (Quarter 4) in 2023/24. Overall collection performance will continue to be monitored but current expectations are that the position will be an improvement compared to 2022/23 by the end of the year as highlighted in the Quarter 2 Performance and Monitoring Report.

Chart 26. NNDR Recovery Rates



Comparison to 2022/23	Comparison to 2019/20
↓1.63%	↓ 0.05%

8. General Fund - Capital Programme

8.1. The General Fund Capital Programme for 2023/24 has an approved budget of £67.090m. The following amendments are requested to be formally approved, which would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £50.129m. These amendments are set out on an individual scheme basis in Appendix 4a.

8.2. Against the proposed revised budget of £50.129m there is a forecast positive net variance of £1.407m. This variance relates entirely to the Delivery Fund, as set out in paragraph 9.2.

Table 11. General Fund Capital Programme Amendments

General Fund Capital Programme	£m
Revised Approved Budget 2023/24	**67.090**
Budget Movements Between Schemes	0.000
Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions	1.460
Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions and Borrowing	0.000
Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments	0.000
Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years	(18.421)
Proposed Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24	**50.129**

8.3. A total of £1.460m of additional budgets across five schemes (as set out in Appendix 4a) that are fully funded by grants and contributions are requested to be formally added into the Capital Programme. This includes:

- £0.866m for the Electric Vehicle Charging Points scheme following the award of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital funding on 30th January 2024. The works is due to commence in 2024/25 so the budget is requested to be re-programmed in paragraph 8.4;
- £0.350m for playground works in Emmer Green as part of the Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide scheme;
- £0.178m for capital expenditure directly incurred by schools and funded by devolved formula capital grant funding;
- £0.040m for additional works to improve the boundary security as part of the Victoria Rec scheme;
- £0.026m for the final works for the New Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded schools – Phoenix College replacement scheme.

8.4. A net total of £18.421m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed between 2023/24 and future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4a. This includes:

- £9.503m for grant funded Education schemes;
- £3.000m for the Highways Infrastructure Programme scheme due to plan changes, following the announcement of additional funding from Network North;
- £1.139m for the South Reading MRT (Phases 1 &2 and 3 & 4) schemes due to factors including delays with a partner;
- £0.866m for the Electric Vehicle Charging Points scheme where work is due to commence in 2024/25;
- £0.662m for the Vehicle Maintenance Workshop scheme where work is due to commence soon and is likely to take six months;
- £0.597m for the Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre scheme due to a revised construction start date;
- £0.530m for the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme to reflect the revised expenditure projections for the current year;
- £0.516m for the Cattle Market Car Park scheme due to revisions to the planned works;
- £1.608m of net re-programming between years across all other schemes.

8.5. In addition, £3.355m for the Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation scheme is requested to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 4b. This scheme has been delayed due to an ongoing feasibility assessment following forecast increases in the level of required works and associated costs.

9. Delivery Fund

9.1. Costs of service transformation and the delivery of future ongoing savings are able to be charged to capital (and financed from new capital receipts) due to the introduction of the Flexible Capital Receipts Regulations. These regulations are currently due to end at 31st March 2025.

9.2. There is a total £4.790m Delivery Fund available for 2023/24 (inclusive of 2022/23 approved carry forwards) of which £0.195m has been brought forward from 2024/25. At Quarter 3, all of this funding has been allocated out to approved schemes and the forecast spend is £3.383m, which represents a positive net variance of £1.407m. A review of any scheme variances will be undertaken as part of 2023/24 outturn processes with any positive variances rolled forward into 2024/25 or returned to the unallocated contingency as appropriate.

10. Housing Revenue Account – Revenue

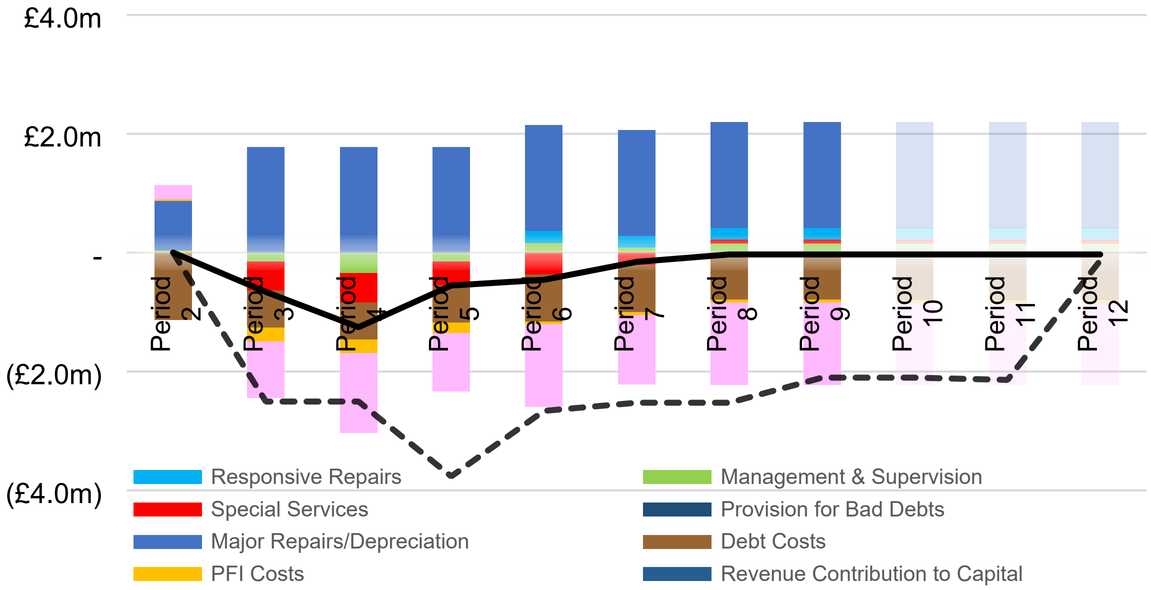
10.1. The approved Housing Revenue Account budget assumed a drawdown from HRA reserves of £2.499m. At Quarter 3 the forecast revenue outturn position for the HRA is a positive net variance of £0.030m. Therefore, a drawdown from HRA Reserves is forecast of £2.469m rather than the originally budgeted £2.499m. The breakdown of the net variance is set out in the following table and explained below.

Table 12. Housing Revenue Account Forecast 2023/24

	Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m	Increase/ (decrease) from Quarter 2 £m
Management & Supervision	8.779	8.939	0.160	(0.006)
Special Services	4.421	4.482	0.061	0.431
Provision for Bad Debts	0.405	0.405	0.000	0.000
Responsive Repairs	4.144	4.341	0.197	0.000
Planned Maintenance	3.488	3.484	(0.004)	0.000
Major Repairs/Depreciation	12.871	14.649	1.778	0.000
Debt Costs	7.148	6.362	(0.786)	0.000
PFI Costs	7.975	7.924	(0.051)	(0.008)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
HRA Income	(46.731)	(48.116)	(1.385)	0.010
Over/(Under) Budget	**2.499**	**2.469**	**(0.030)**	**0.427**
Movement to/(from) HRA Reserves	(2.499)	(2.469)	0.030	(0.427)

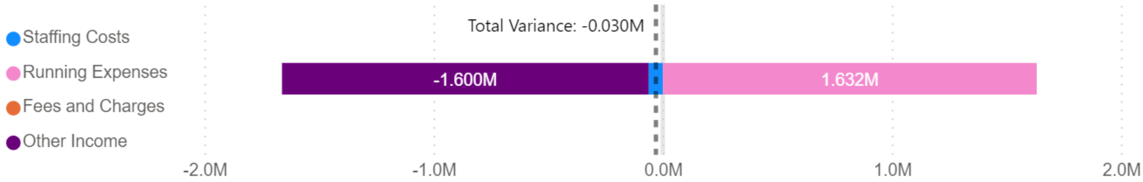
10.2. The following chart summaries the forecast budget variance, split by services within the HRA, for each period to date.

Chart 27. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Housing Revenue Account



10.3. The following chart summaries the overall forecast budget variance for the HRA by high level category:

Chart 28. Split of Total Variance – Housing Revenue Account



10.4. Within Management and Supervision, there is a forecast adverse net variance of £0.160m which primarily relates to increased spend on the provision of power for Caversham Road PODs. This is offset by smaller positive variance on staffing costs.

10.5. Within Special Services, there are a number of vacant posts leading to a current projected positive variance on salary budgets of £0.048m. There is an adverse variance on running costs of £0.162m relating to utility costs. There is also an additional positive variance on income of £0.053m.

10.6. Recruitment attempts to fill the aforementioned vacancies are ongoing.

10.7. Responsive Repairs is currently forecasting a net adverse variance of £0.197m. This variance is primarily made up of a £0.400m adverse variance on major voids, partially offset by positive variances on plumbing and minor voids totalling £0.203m.

10.8. Planned Maintenance is currently forecasting a net positive variance of £0.004m.

10.9. Major Repairs/Depreciation is currently forecasting an adverse variance of £1.778m. This directly relates to the higher external valuation figures seen within the HRA over the past few years. Depreciation is set based on the prior year valuation level. Unlike the General Fund, depreciation is a real charge to the HRA however any increase in the level of depreciation is moved to the Major Repairs Fund and is available to be used on capital expenditure.

10.10. Debt costs are forecast to be lower than budgeted by £0.786m due to less borrowing currently being required within the HRA to meet its capital expenditure.

10.11. PFI Costs is forecasting a positive variance of £0.051m due to minor contractual variances in respect of the payments to Affinity.

10.12. HRA Income is forecasting a positive net variance of £1.385m as set out below.

10.13. Interest income is forecast to overachieve by £1.534m due to a combination of the increases in the Bank of England base rate compared to the assumptions in the HRA Business Plan and as the HRA has a high level of reserve balances, it takes a high share of the Council's overall interest income.

10.14. Additionally, Dwelling rents are currently projected to be overachieving on the budget by a total of £0.109m (0.3% more than budget). Sheltered Housing rents have been moved from Special Services to Dwelling Rents for Quarter 3. This is partially offset by adverse variances on the following income streams due to a delay in the completion of HRA capital schemes resulting in fewer properties coming on stream:

- £0.089m underachievement on service charges;
- £0.169m underachievement forecast on Other Income.

11. Housing Revenue Account - Capital Programme

11.1. The HRA Capital Programme for 2023/24 has an approved budget of £33.564m. No amendments to the Capital Programme are currently requested and all schemes are forecast to be spent in full in year.

11.2. The HRA Capital Programme budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 have been updated to align them with the budgets approved by Council on 27th February 2024 as part of the 2024/25 Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2026/27.

11.3. In addition, the Housing Management System scheme is expected to have a pressure in 2024/25 of around £0.225m relating to phase 2 of the system implementation. This increase will be funded from HRA reserves.

11.4. The full impact of these adjustments would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £47.985m for 2024/25 and £54.370m for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 4b.

12. Corporate Plan Performance

Summary

12.1. This section of the Performance Report sets out progress against the Performance Measures and Projects included in the Council's Corporate Plan "Investing in Reading's Future".

12.2. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision "To help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success" and three priority themes of:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Inclusive Economy

12.3. These themes are supported by the strong Foundations of effective service delivery, improvement and transformation needed to ensure the effective delivery of the ambitious programme set out in the Corporate Plan.

12.4. The Corporate Plan update, agreed in March 2023, includes fifty-seven performance measures and forty-eight[1] key projects and initiatives which underpin delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. Of the fifty-seven performance measures, thirty-one are annual measures that will not be reported on until after March 2024.

12.5. The following sections set out performance against the key measures and projects published in the Council's Corporate Plan and specifically detail:

- Measures where there has been a significant positive shift in performance since the last relevant reporting period.
- Measures where there has been a significant negative shift in performance since the last relevant reporting period.
- Measures where performance against target is red (variance is > 10% of target)
- Projects and initiatives where status reported as red.

12.6. For each of these the explanation and any action taken to get back to green by the service is included.

12.7. The full list of Performance Measures is at Appendix 5 and Projects and Initiatives as Appendix 6.

12.8. The table below provides a summary of the status of the projects and initiatives reported quarterly at the end of Quarter 3 2023/24:

Table 13. Performance Overview

What	Status		
	Green	**Amber**	**Red**
Key Measures	38%	31%	31%
Key Projects	66%	34%	0%

Corporate Plan Measures

12.9. The tables and charts below focus on the movement in Corporate Plan measures between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 for the 26 measures reported quarterly. The following table, shows a summary of the direction of travel where performance is getting better, remains the same or is getting worse compared to the previous quarters:

Table 14. Summary of Direction of Travel

Status	Q4 – Q1		Q1 – Q2		Q2 – Q3	
	%	***No. of measures***	%	***No. of measures***	%	**No. of measures**
Getting Better	38	10	58	15	54	14
Unchanged	8	2	0	0	4	1
Getting Worse	50	13	38	10	38	10
N/A – No Target / Comparison	4	1	4	1	4	1
Total	**100**	**26**	**100**	**26**	**100**	**26**

12.10. The following table shows performance against the target (red/amber/green) for the measures monitored in year:

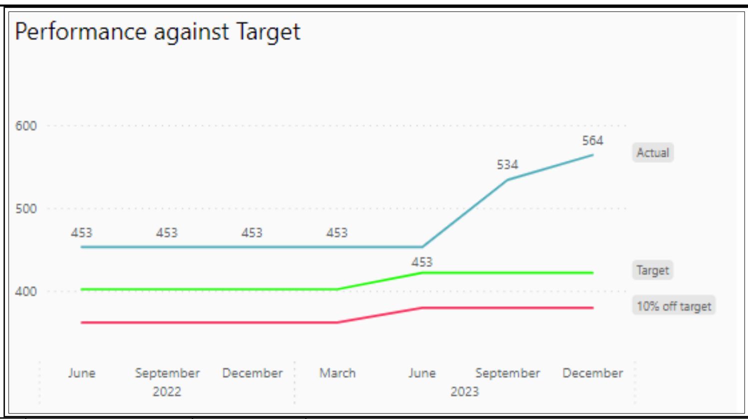
Table 15. Summary of Performance against Target

Status	Q1		Q2		Q3	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Green	13	50	14	54	10	38
Amber	6	23	5	19	8	31
Red	7	27	7	27	8	31
N/A – No Target / Comparison	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**26**	**100**	**26**	**100**	**26**	**100**

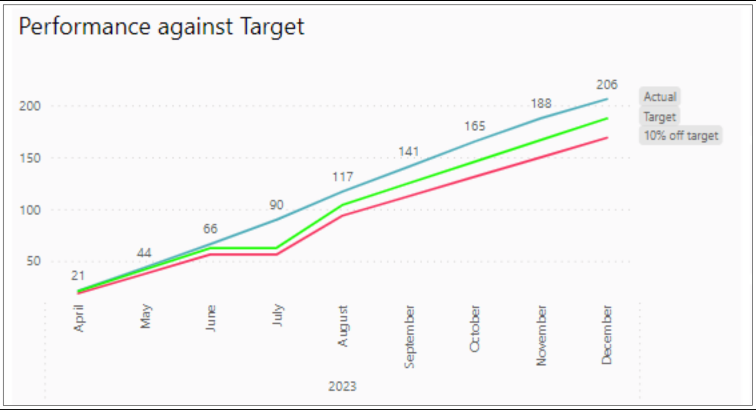
12.11. The following table details measures where there has been notable change since the previous period:

Table 16. Measure Showing Significant Change Since Previous Period

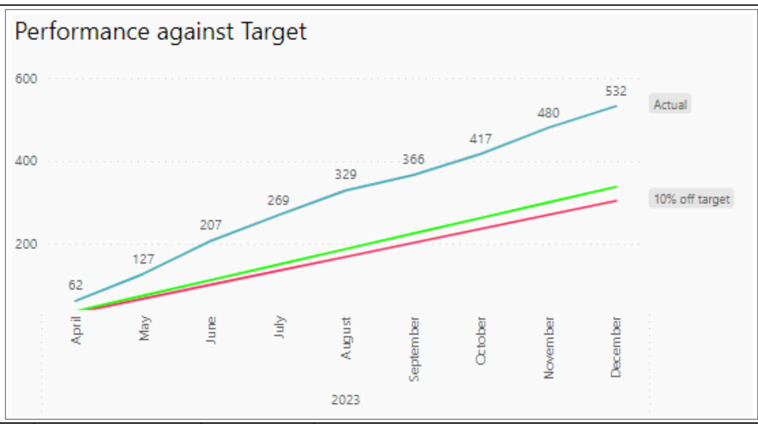
Measures showing notable change since previous period - Positive.



Measure	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
Number of school places for children and young people with Special Education Need & Disability	534	564	422	We continue to increase places to meet the demand through provisioning additional resources in the maintained sector.

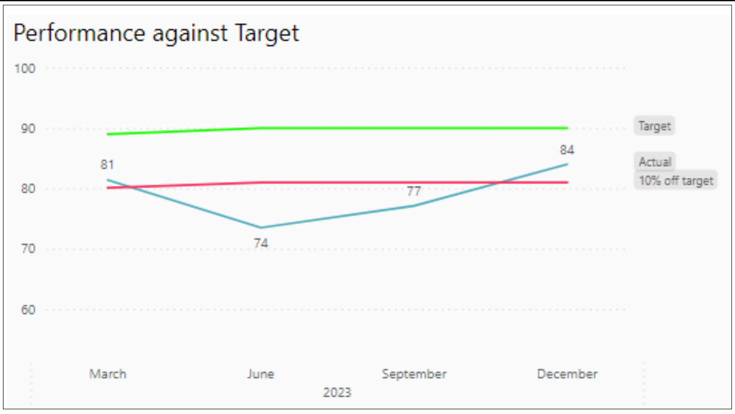


Measure	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
Number of visits to our Libraries (No. (k) per year	141	206	187.50 (Dec 23)	Tracking well to our target of 250 visits per 1,000 population per year



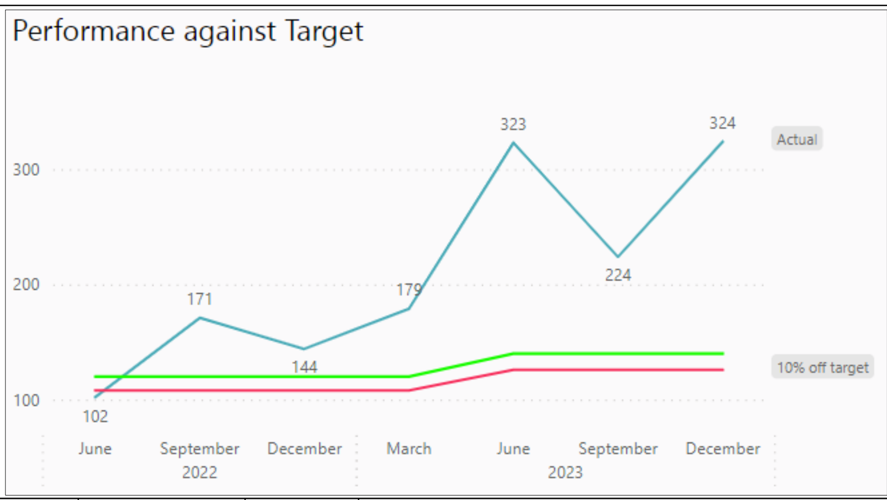
Measure	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	366	532	337.50 (Q3)	Data is cumulative and exceeding target for the quarter by almost 200. This measure has been removed from the Corporate Plan refresh 24/25

Customer Satisfaction in the Customer Fulfilment Centre



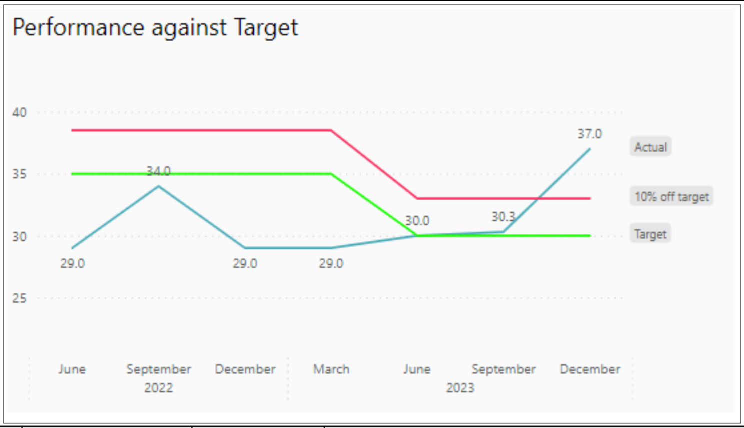
Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
77%	84%	90%	• Performance was disrupted during a period of service restructure, with a number of vacancies including in management roles – these have now been recruited to. • Although below target, this indicator continues to improve each month. • Improvements to the performance management systems within the service continue, including enhancing the use of qualitative feedback. • Stronger recording and reporting are in place, improving the understanding of demand drivers and satisfaction levels

Number of carers supported to maintain their caring role



Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
224	324	144	With the new commissioned service, the number of carers assessments continues to increase

Measures showing significant change since previous period – Negative



Indicator	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
Percentage of care leavers who are not in education, employment, or training for work (NEET)	30.3%	37%	30%	Our cohort of 17-18yr old care leavers are more likely to be in education, employment and training and are within target. However, there has been an increase in the number of 19-21yr old care leavers who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Focused work is underway to breakdown this cohort to better understand what is needed and to ensure that this is addressed in care leavers' individual plans. This measure will be split into two:17-18-year-olds and 19–21-year-olds in the refreshed Corporate Plan published February 24

Measures where performance against target is red

Indicator	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Target	Comments
Percentage of responses to the public on Freedom of Information Act requests made within 20 days	75.6%	73.4%	90%	294 FOIs received in Q3, 51 less than the 345 FOIs received in Q2. Q3 is over the Christmas period when a decline in requests is common. During Q1 and start of Q2 Granicus released a software update which resulted in FOI's being delayed as those that had been responded to by officers were unable to be seen by the Customer Relations Team on the system. Had the update happened as expected the 21 cases that were impacted in Q2 would have been responded to within the target date then the percentage sent out in timescale would change from 75.6% to 80.5%.
Indicator	**Q2 2023/24**	**Q3 2023/24**	**Target**	**Comments**
Direct Payments	21%	21.02%	25%	We have a dedicated DP Officer who works to match service users with Personal Assistants however, service users prefer the council to commission their services for them, but we continue to promote DPs.
Percentage of Care Leavers	30.3%	37%	30%	Our cohort of 17-18yr old care leavers are more likely to be in education, employment

who are not in education, employed or training for work (NEET)				and training and are within target. However, there has been an increase in the number of 19-21yr old care leavers who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Focused work is underway to breakdown this cohort to better understand what is needed and to ensure that this is addressed in care leavers' individual plans. (Chart above)
Percentage of people with a learning disability in paid employment	4.81%	4.75%	5.5%	This KPI remains a high priority in the Transition and SEND groups, proactive work is being undertaken with the Elevate and New Direction College to target residents with LD. We are in the process of commissioning a supported employment provision for service users with an LD and Mental Health.
Youth Reoffending Rate	35.4%	32.8%	28%	Re-offending rates within Reading had historically been beneath our comparators. More recently our reoffending rate has risen although the latest cohort data (Jan 21 – Dec 21) has a rate of 32.8% which represents a decrease and is more in line with the national rate of 31.4% for this period. In Reading, we continue to work with children who offend in order to reduce the scale of further offending, and engagement abilities, risk management processes and wider partnership support plays a part in this.
Cumulative reduction in crime	16% Increase (Q1)	Q2 & Q3 not available	7% Reduction	16% increase against 2019/20 baseline for Q1. Analysis not yet undertaken. National data not yet available for Q2 or Q3.
Food Waste recycled (Percentage of household waste)	11.6%	11.8%	15%	Food waste (from schools and the kerbside) represented 11.8% of household waste in Qtr3 2023/24. This compares to 12.9% in the same quarter last year. Food tonnages have declined whilst total household waste has increased. Lower food waste tonnes compared to the same period last year could be the result of residents having become more aware of the amount of food they were wasting. If lower tonnages are the result of waste reduction, this is a positive outcome. Increased financial pressures may also be causing residents to waste less food. However, we are also aware that some food waste is present in the residual waste, and we need to capture this for recycling. A recent compositional analysis of the residual waste (Sept 2023) showed that less food waste was present when compared to the previously study. However, the amount of food waste remained high.
Participation at Council Cultural Venues (No. k)	39.92	136.13	243.73	Cumulative figure. Annual target 325 visits per 1,000

Corporate Plan Projects

12.12. The RAG status for the Corporate Plan projects[1] is shown below:

Table 27. Summary RAG Status Corporate Plan Projects

Status	Q4	Q1	Q2		Q3	
	%	%	%	No.	%	No.
Green	67	52	51	24	66	31
Amber	31	46	49	23	34	16
Red	2	2	0	0	0	0
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**47**	**100**	**47**

13. Contribution to Strategic Aims

13.1. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website. These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective, and economical.

13.2. Delivery of the Council's budget is essential to ensuring the Council meets its strategic aims and remains financially sustainable going forward.

14. Environmental and Climate Implications

14.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26th February 2019, with the intention of achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. The Council endorsed the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and its vision for a 'net zero, resilient Reading by 2030' in November 2020. At the same time, it adopted a new corporate Carbon Plan for the Council's own operations, including the target of an 85% cut in Council emissions by 2025 enroute to net zero by 2030. The Council's Corporate Plan monitors progress in reducing the carbon footprint of both the Borough and the Council.

14.2. There are no specific environmental and climate implications to report in relation to the recommendations set out in this report.

15. Community Engagement

15.1. Budget-related communications and consultations will continue to be a priority over the next three years as we work to identify savings and efficiencies.

16. Equality Implications

16.1. The equality duty is relevant to the development of the Budget. The specific savings and income proposals included in the budget are subject to consultation and equality impact assessments where required and these are being progressed as appropriate.

17. Other Relevant Considerations

17.1. There are none.

[1] "Procure and implement crowdfunding solution to support projects delivered by the voluntary and community sector" is no longer proceeding, as reported Q2. One project status outstanding for Q2 – currently counted as Amber.

18. Legal Implications

18.1. The Local Government Act 2003 requires that the Authority reviews its Budget throughout the year and takes any action it deems necessary to deal with the situation arising from monitoring. Currently monitoring reports are submitted to Policy Committee quarterly throughout the year.

19. Financial Implications

19.1. The financial implications are set out in the body of this report.

20. Timetable for Implementation

20.1. Not applicable.

21. Background Papers

21.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. **Recovery Plan Quarter 3 (2023/24)**
2. **Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 3 (2023/24)**
3. **Savings Tracker Quarter 3 (2023/24)**
4. **a. Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)**

   b. Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)
5. **Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)**
6. **Corporate Plan Projects and Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)**

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Appendix 1 - Recovery Plan Period 8 (2023/24)

Summary of Budget Monitoring Forecast Movements and Variances

Dir	Service	Q1 Variances	Movements	P4 Variances	Movements	P5 Variances	Recovery Plan	Other Movements	Q2 Variances	Recovery Plan	Other Movements	P7 Variances	Recovery Plan	Other Movements	P8 Variances	Recovery Plan	Other Movements	Q3 Variances	Q3 to Q2 Movement
DCASC	Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	0	- 14	- 14	- 8	- 22	0	(24)	(24)	0	0	(24)	0	0	(24)	0	0	(24)	0
DCASC	Adult Services Operations	288	- 50	238	142	380	0	80	368	0	0	368	0	0	368	0	0	368	0
DCASC	Community & Adult Social Care Management	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	0	- 206	- 206	- 140	- 346	0	(346)	(346)	0	2	(344)	0	0	(344)	0	0	(344)	2
DCASC	Public Health	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Housing & Communities	1,000	-	1,000	-	1,000	(244)	(6)	750	0	0	750	244	(244)	750	0	0	750	0
DCASC Total		**1,288**	**- 270**	**1,018**	**- 6**	**1,012**	**(244)**	**(296)**	**748**	**0**	**2**	**750**	**244**	**(244)**	**750**	**0**	**0**	**750**	**2**
DEGNS	Planning, Transport & Public Protection	1,496	-	1,496	77	1,573	(821)	(19)	655	0	0	655	821	(851)	625	(39)	69	655	0
DEGNS	Culture	60	-	60	-	60	(276)	161	(55)	0	7	(48)	276	(276)	(48)	0	0	(48)	7
DEGNS	Environmental & Commercial Services	1,200	-	1,200	375	1,575	(100)	375	1,475	(25)	(125)	1,325	100	(100)	1,325	0	(50)	1,275	(200)
DEGNS	Property & Asset Management	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Management & Sustainability	225	-	225	- 29	196	0	21	246	0	0	246	0	0	246	0	0	246	0
DEGNS Total		**2,981**	**-**	**2,981**	**423**	**3,404**	**(1,197)**	**538**	**2,321**	**(25)**	**(118)**	**2,178**	**1,197**	**(1,227)**	**2,148**	**(39)**	**19**	**2,128**	**(193)**
DOR	Policy, Performance & Customer Services	643	- 9	634	- 48	586	(333)	2	312	(17)	(50)	245	342	(342)	245	9	12	266	(46)
DOR	Human Resources & Organisational Development	56	- 4	52	- 20	32	0	(24)	32	0	8	40	0	0	40	0	3	43	11
DOR	Procurement & Contracts	125	- 30	95	-	95	(5)	(25)	95	0	(20)	75	105	(40)	140	(20)	5	125	30
DOR	Finance	103	-	103	281	384	(228)	281	156	(10)	65	211	228	(228)	211	10	(10)	211	55
DOR	Legal & Democratic Services	215	-	215	94	309	0	211	426	0	0	426	0	10	436	0	0	436	10
DOR	Digital, Technology & Change	0	-	-	- 100	- 100	(100)	0	(100)	0	0	(100)	100	(100)	(100)	0	0	(100)	0
DOR Total		**1,142**	**- 43**	**1,099**	**207**	**1,306**	**(666)**	**445**	**921**	**(27)**	**3**	**897**	**775**	**(700)**	**972**	**(1)**	**10**	**981**	**60**
CEX	Corporate Management Team	20	- 20	-	-	-	0	(20)	0	0	17	17	0	1	18	0	0	18	18
CEX	Communications	(5)	-	- 5	- 20	- 25	0	(20)	(25)	0	20	(5)	0	0	(5)	0	0	(5)	20
CEX Total		**15**	**- 20**	**- 5**	**- 20**	**- 25**	**0**	**(40)**	**(25)**	**0**	**37**	**12**	**0**	**1**	**13**	**0**	**0**	**13**	**38**
CORP	Capital Financing	(2,472)	-	- 2,472	- 57	- 2,529	0	219	(2,253)	0	(268)	(2,521)	0	34	(2,487)	0	(234)	(2,721)	(468)
CORP	Contingencies	(4,108)	-	- 4,108	-	- 4,108	0	0	(4,108)	0	0	(4,108)	0	0	(4,108)	0	0	(4,108)	0
CORP	Other Corporate Budgets	374	149	523	- 186	337	0	95	469	0	99	568	0	85	653	0	(509)	144	(325)
CORP	Movement in Reserves	(1,243)	-	- 1,243	- 164	- 1,407	0	(164)	(1,407)	0	0	(1,407)	0	0	(1,407)	0	468	(939)	468
CORP Total		**(7,449)**	**149**	**- 7,300**	**- 407**	**- 7,707**	**0**	**150**	**(7,299)**	**0**	**(169)**	**(7,468)**	**0**	**119**	**(7,349)**	**0**	**(275)**	**(7,624)**	**(325)**
Council Total		**(2,023)**	**- 184**	**- 2,207**	**197**	**- 2,010**	**(2,107)**	**797**	**(3,334)**	**(52)**	**(245)**	**(3,631)**	**2,216**	**(2,051)**	**(3,466)**	**(40)**	**(246)**	**(3,752)**	**(418)**
BFFC	Brighter Futures for Children	5,829	- 546	5,283	1,593	6,876	(1,010)	2,200	7,019	0	781	7,800	1,291	(789)	8,302	(23)	590	8,869	1,850
BFFC Total		**5,829**	**- 546**	**5,283**	**1,593**	**6,876**	**(1,010)**	**2,200**	**7,019**	**0**	**781**	**7,800**	**1,291**	**(789)**	**8,302**	**(23)**	**590**	**8,869**	**1,850**
Total		**3,806**	**- 730**	**3,076**	**1,790**	**4,866**	**(3,117)**	**2,997**	**3,685**	**(52)**	**536**	**4,169**	**3,507**	**(2,840)**	**4,836**	**(63)**	**344**	**5,117**	**1,432**

Appendix 1 - Recovery Plan Quarter 3 (2023/24)

<u>Recovery Plan Tracker</u> Q3

Directorate	Service	Lead	Overview of Activity	Estimated Over spend Recovery £			Amount Included in Q2	Amount Included in P7	Amount Included in P8	Amount Included in Q3	Change from P8	Change from Q2	Amount of Target Excluded
				Target	Delivered	Outstanding							
DCASC	Continuing HealthCare/Joint Funding	Sunny Mehmi	To maximise the CHC recharges for applicable adults Possibility of Joint team with BFfC to work across CHC funding	100	0	100	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DCASC	Review Team	Sunny Mehmi	To review packages to reduce the commitment in ASC, ensuring the package is fit for the indivdual needs There are 1543 clients open to DACHS. The Care Act means that we have a statutory duty to ensure that every client has an annual review (and a light-touch review of new/considerably changed care packages; please note we are currently unable to quantify the amount of packages per year that require this) In 22/23, DACHS averaged 126 reviews per month (based on 1381 being completed across April-February), split across: Reviewing Team – 690 (average of 63 per month) of which 62% were simple / 38% complex Other teams – 771 (average of 70 per month); please note that these were reassessments counted as reviews. Assuming the trends & resourcing remained as they currently are, in 23/24 we would see: Reviewing Team – 756 (reviews) Other teams – 840 (reassessments counted as reviews).	519	386	234	519	519	519	519	0	0	0
DCASC	Transitions Project	Sunny Mehmi	To support children under BFfC prior to turning 18, or as soon as they turn 18 to reduce the financial commitment within ASC	100	0	100	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DCASC	Grant Maximisation	Melissa Wise/Claire Gavagan	To review grants within ASC, to see what can be used to support the increase in package costs	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0	0	0
DCASC	DACHS Reset Day	DMT	DACHS Reset Day	100	0	100	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DCASC	Agency to Permanent	DMT	Agency Conversion to permanent recruitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Sickness Absence	DMT	Sickness Absence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	1:1/2:1 Spot Check	Sunny Mehmi Chris Greenway	Ensuring Value for Money – Placement Checking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Direct Payments	Chris Greenway	Direct Payments - increased numbers of DP's/recoups	300	100	200	300	300	300	300	0	0	0
DCASC	Homelessness	Zelda Wolfle	High Numbers of placements into Emergency Accommodation and a hiHigh Numbers of placements into Emergency Accommodation and a higher placement costs are causing a pressure in General Fund Housing. Various plans are in place to help address the current issues, and hopefully reduce demand •Recruitment of 2 temporary Homelessness Prevention Officer roles •Incentive package for residents to find their own accommodation •Incentive package for RGS landlords •Procurement of alternative emergency/temp accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Homelessness	Zelda Wolfle	Offset of costs against Asylum/Refugee budget where applicable	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	0	0	0
DCASC	Homelessness	Zelda Wolfle	Additional Government Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Vacancy factor	Melissa Wise	Only recruiting to essential posts Keeping essential posts open for one month	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
DCASC Total				**1,563**	**930**	**1,178**	**1,563**	**1,563**	**1,563**	**1,563**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Appendix 1 - Recovery Plan Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Recovery Plan Tracker

Q3

Directorate	Service	Lead	Overview of Activity	Estimated Over spend Recovery £			Amount Included in Q2	Amount Included in P7	Amount Included in P8	Amount Included in Q3	Change from P8	Change from Q2	Amount of Target Excluded
				Target	Delivered	Outstanding							
DEGNS	PTPP	Chris Maddocks	Community Transport Review	23	23	0	23	23	23	23	0	0	0
DEGNS	PTPP	Chris Maddocks	Concessionary Travel Review	650	650	0	650	650	650	650	0	0	0
DEGNS	PTPP	James Crosbie	Increase on and off street parking charges	69	0	69	0	0	30	69	39	69	0
DEGNS	PTPP	Matthew Golledge	Application of Homes for Ukraine Grants	148	148	0	148	148	148	148	0	0	0
DEGNS	PTPP		Vacancy management	0	0	0		0	0		0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Donna/Emma/Steve	Appplication of outstanding covid grants to culture operations	45	45	0	45	45	45	45	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon Smith	Unexpected income from Sustrans in 23/24.	10	10	0	10	10	10	10	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon smith	Business rates rebate for 5 library sites.	110	110	0	110	110	110	110	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon Smith	Pause book fund spend	30	30	0	30	30	30	30	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon Smith	Ceasing to staff town Hall reception on Mondays	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon Smith	Reduce hours of Archaeologist	6	6	0	6	6	6	6	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Simon Smith	Vacancy management	0	0	0		0	0		0	0	0
DEGNS	Environment	Trevor Pugh	Vacancy management	100	100	0	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DEGNS	Environment	Trevor Pugh	Street Lights Energy Efficiency Saving	25	0	25	0	25	25	25	0	25	0
DEGNS	DEGNS		Fees and charges review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Culture	Mark Stevens	Revision of Archives forecast	72	72	0	72	72	72	72	0	0	0
DEGNS Total				**1,291**	**1,197**	**94**	**1,197**	**1,222**	**1,252**	**1,291**	**39**	**94**	**0**
DOR	Finance	Darren Carter	A fundamental review has been carried out into all aspect of the finance budget, including updating forecasts for every post across the team and all planned non-staffing spend. It is now proposed to hold 6 vacant posts in order to deliver savings during the remainder of the year and to put a hold on all non-staffing expenditure that that isn't contractually committed	128	128	0	128	138	138	128	-10	0	0
DOR	Finance	Darren Carter	There is a forecast overspend of £100k against insurance premiums. This will now be charged against the insurance reserve.	100	100	0	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DOR	PPCS - Policy	Gavin Handford	HSF4 Recharge	30	30	0	30	30	30	30	0	0	0
DOR	PPCS - Policy	Gavin Handford	Vacancy management (through a restructure)	40	48	-8	40	48	48	48	0	8	-8
DOR	PPCS - Policy	Gavin Handford	Homes for Ukraine - Policy Recharge	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	0
DOR	PPCS - Policy	Gavin Handford	GIS - one off income	5	15	-10	5	5	5	15	10	10	-10
DOR	PPCS - CFC	Gavin Handford	Vacancy management	76	76	0	66	66	66	76	10	10	0
DOR	PPCS - Bereavement	Gavin Handford	Premises and income review on Cemeteries	31	31	0	31	44	44	31	-13	0	0
DOR	PPCS - Bereavement	Gavin Handford	Utilities	40	40	0	40	40	40	40	0	0	0
DOR	PPCS - Bereavement	Gavin Handford	Vacancy management (temporary between appointment)	25	25	-1	25	20	20	25	5	1	-1
DOR	PPCS - Bereavement	Gavin Handford	Fee increase from 1 November	63		63	63	63	63	42	-21	-21	21
DOR	PPCS - Bereavement	Gavin Handford	Review of supplies and services	40	40	0	40	40	40	40	0	0	0
DOR	Procurement	Jonathan Hopkins	Contract Pipeline	100	20	80	100	100	20	20	0	-80	80
DOR	Procurement	Jonathan Hopkins	Vacancy management	5	59	-54	5	5	35	55	20	50	-50
DOR	DTAC	Martin Chalmers	IT spend management	100	100	0	100	100	100	100	0	0	0
DOR Total				**785**	**715**	**70**	**775**	**802**	**752**	**753**	**1**	**-22**	**32**

Appendix 1 - Recovery Plan Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Recovery Plan Tracker

Q3

Directorate	Service	Lead	Overview of Activity	Estimated Over spend Recovery £			Amount Included in Q2	Amount Included in P7	Amount Included in P8	Amount Included in Q3	Change from P8	Change from Q2	Amount of Target Excluded
				Target	Delivered	Outstanding							
BFfC			Vacancy savings / freeze on recruitment	884	884	0	589	589	884	884	0	295	0
BFfC			Cease agency cover	312	312	0	0	0	312	312	0	312	0
BFfC			Freeze on non-statutory and essential services	175	175	0	121	121	175	175	0	54	0
BFfC			Release settlements and redundancy costs	20	20	0		0	20	20	0	20	0
BFfC			Contract savings	24	24	0	18	18	24	24	0	6	0
BFfC			Deep dive of placements	309	309	0		0	309	345	36	345	-36
BFfC			Contributions from Health	648	648	0		0	648	648	0	648	0
BFfC			Reduce or remove transport provided for identified children/routes	235	235	0	150	150	235	235	0	85	0
BFfC			Integrate mangement posts on nursery provision	15	15	0	15	15	15	15	0	0	0
BFfC			Increase bank interest	168	168	0	168	168	168	168	0	0	0
BFfC			Remand income	180	180	0	180	180	180	180	0	0	0
BFfC			Homes for Ukraine	50	50	0	50	50	50	50	0	0	0
BFfC			Additional Income	65	65	0		0	65	52	-13	52	13
BFfC Total				**3,085**	**3,085**	**0**	**1,291**	**1,291**	**3,085**	**3,108**	**23**	**1,817**	**-23**
Grand Total				**6,724**	**5,927**	**1,342**	**4,826**	**4,878**	**6,652**	**6,715**	**63**	**1,889**	**9**

Brighter Futures for Children

Budget Monitoring Report Period 9

☐ For decision ☐ For discussion ☒ For information

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the budget monitoring position at Period 9.

OWNER
Report Author:

BFfC Finance Team

DRAFT
V5.0

DATE
18th January 2023

Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

Contents

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the latest budget monitoring position as at Period 9 (December 2023).

2 Executive Summary - Revised

2.1 The overall position at Period 9 is a forecast out-turn of **£53.801m**, which against a Contract Sum of **£43.933m** represents an overspend of **£8.869m**. This represents and adverse movement of **£0.568m** from the position reported at Period 8.

2.2 The table below summarises the overall position for Period 9 and the change by directorate.

DIRECTORATE SUMMARY	23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn P9 £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month (P8) £000
Education	43,167	43,965	798	53
Early Help and Preventative Services	3,691	3,270	(421)	(1)
Childrens Social Care	30,801	39,797	8,996	472
Finance & Resources	3,727	3,393	(334)	47
Corporate Services	1,045	875	(170)	(3)
Dedicated Schools Grant	(37,498)	(37,498)	0	0
Contract sum	(44,933)	(44,933)	0	0
Total	**0**	**8,869**	**8,869**	**567**

Overall Position

2.3 The main reasons for the forecast overspend of **£8.869m** at Period 9 are:

- **Education** – overspend of **£0.798m** is mainly due on an overspend on Transport which accounts for **£0.668m** of the overspend alongside overspends on the SEN team and nursery staffing in Early Years due to increased cost of agency staff.
- **Early Help** – underspend of **(£0.421m),** which is mainly due to staffing underspends due to vacancies in Children Centres and the Youth Service, which account for **(£0.358m)** of the underspend.
- **Childrens Social Care** – the overspend of **£8.996m** is the most significant element of the overspend in Brighter Futures and is mainly due overspends of **£8.610m** on children's placements and placement related costs and an overspend of **£0.348m** on Child in Need / Section 17 expenses and expenditure on families who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
- **Finance & Resources** – underspend of **(£0.334m)** which is mainly due to staffing underspends due to vacancies in Commissioning, Marketing and Business Support.
- **Corporate Services** – underspend of **(£0.170m)**, which is mainly due to additional banking interest income, due to increased interest rates.

Movement from Period 8

2.4 The main reasons for the adverse movement of **£0.568m** from Period 8 are:

- **Childrens Social Care** – adverse movement of **£0.472m**, due mainly to additional placement costs part offset by staffing forecast reductions and reduced forecast spend on Special Guardianship Orders and CIN/s17 expenses. Further information on the Children Social Care cost and placement movements is set out below.
- **Education** – adverse movement of **£0.053m** due to the additional costs of new transport routes, part offset by savings from other route changes.
- **Finance & Resources** – adverse movement of **£0.053m**, mainly due to the additional cost of interim Head of HR post and a conversion fee for an interim agency finance business partner who has taken on a permanent role in Brighter Futures.

Children Social Care Movement

2.5 In terms of the movement in placements from Period 8 to Period 9 the main changes are summarised below:

- There was a net increase in Children Looked After (CLA) of one in December (10 new children looked after and 9 ceasing to be looked after). However, the forecast includes another 13 children (4 families) in legal proceedings, with estimated placement costs of **£0.235m** in 2023/24. There was a net increase of 1 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC), no net change in the number of disabled children.
- The ten children who became looked after comprised:
  - 2 x Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)
  - 5 children required immediate safeguarding and were subject to either an Interim Care Order (ICO) or an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).
  - 2 siblings – parental illness.
  - 1 remanded to LA accommodation

2.6 In relation to the adverse movement of **£0.472m** on Children's social care, the main factors leading to this movement are:

Item	**£m**
Increase in the forecast cost of mainstream external placements in Corporate Parenting is £0.596m and an increase of £0.222m for Children and Young People Disability Team (CYPDT) placements. The increase in the cost of CYPDT placements includes one off costs such as respite care, additional payments to providers and service user travel.	0.819
Additional remand placement	0.059
CIN / Section 17 expenses – reduced forecast spend following detailed review	(0.144)
Special Guardianship Orders – reduced forecast spend	(0.125)
Staffing cost forecast reductions within Children Social Care in the Children's Single Point of Access (CSPOA), CLA and CYPDT teams	(0.134)
Other movements	(0.003)
Total	**0.472**

MTFS Impact 2024/25

2.7 In the context of the increased forecast cost of placements which has taken place in Period 9, there has been an assessment of the full year impact which this will have in 2024/25 for MTFS purposes. The pressure which had previously been reported based on Period 8 was a potential pressure of **£8.792m**. Following the increased placement costs which have been reported at Period 9, the potential placement pressure for MTFS purposes has increased by **£1.957m** to **£10.749m**. This is based on an extrapolation of the placements who are currently Children Looked After in external residential and external fostering placements or in the legal gateway process and likely to become CLA placements in the near future (13 placements). An adjustment has also been made for CLA who are reaching the age of 18 in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

3 Income and Expenditure Summary

3.1 The table below shows the forecast position by income and expenditure variance and the movement from the previous month.

Table 1: Summary of income and expenditure at Period 9

BUDGET SUMMARY	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000		23/24 Variance YTD £00		23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month P8 £000	Key
Employee Expenditure	25,778	(2,479)		(3,124)		31,591	28,338	(3,252)	(256)	
Agency Expenditure	4,962	4,944		2,275		2,222	5,356	3,134	117	
Other Employee Related Expenditure	736	(81)		(223)		849	559	(290)	30	
Employee & Agency Total	**31,476**	**2,385**		**(1,071)**		**34,661**	**34,253**	**(408)**	**(109)**	
Premises Related Expenditure	304	126		(197)		133	130	(3)	0	
Transport Related Expenditure	3,632	813		(74)		3,666	4,316	650	48	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	11,516	(335)		217		11,526	11,324	(202)	(21)	
Contracted Expenditure	44,352	5,759		4,979		40,238	51,676	11,438	634	
Support Services & Recharges Expenditure	3,350	(2,599)		(234)		5,089	5,239	150	5	
Other Expenditure Total	**63,154**	**3,765**		**4,692**		**60,652**	**72,685**	**12,033**	**666**	
Government Grant Income	(2,205)	1,864		(2,098)		(4,505)	(7,062)	(2,557)	0	
Other Income	(9,186)	385		2,992		(8,378)	(8,576)	(198)	10	
Contract Sum Income	(45,043)	(3,477)		3,891		(44,933)	(44,933)	0	0	
Dedicated Schools Grant Income	(38,197)	(4,921)		3,124		(37,498)	(37,498)	0	0	
Income Total	**(94,630)**	**(6,149)**		**7,910**		**(95,313)**	**(98,069)**	**(2,755)**	**10**	
Grand Total	**0**	**0**		**11,531**		**0**	**8,869**	**8,869**	**567**	

3.2 The explanation of variances which are reflected above are included in the Directorate sections of this report.

4 Children's Social Care (CSC) – Maria Young

4.1 The table below shows the forecast P9 position for Children Social Care and the movement from Period 8. The overall position is a forecast overspend of **£8.996m**, which is an adverse movement of **£0.472m** form Period 8.

Table 2: Overview of 2023-2024 Children Social Care Budget as of Period 9

Departmental & Income and Expenditure Summary (Children Social Care Services)	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000		23/24 Variance YTD £00		23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month (P8) £000	Key
By Directorate	-	-								
Together for Families	7,453	1,137		292		6,792	7,384	592	(148)	
Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption	17,502	1,004		4,621		17,125	23,418	6,293	423	
Childrens and Young People Disability Team	5,291	1,153		914		4,825	6,859	2,034	206	
CSC Senior Management Team	2,160	380		(128)		2,059	2,136	76	(9)	
Total Childrens Social Care	**32,406**	**3,675**		**5,699**		**30,801**	**39,796**	**8,996**	**472**	
By Income and Expenditure	-	-								
Employee Expenditure	10,532	(1,653)		(2,030)		13,866	11,334	(2,532)	(277)	
Agency Expenditure	3,558	3,540		2,021		18	3,152	3,134	117	
Other Staff-related Expenditure	167	(227)		(208)		414	94	(320)	0	
Premises Related	14	(22)		(25)		36	35	(1)	0	
Transport Related	87	9		0		87	69	(18)	0	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	978	(129)		219		1,043	839	(204)	(2)	
Contracted Expenditure	20,840	4,082		5,361		16,920	28,358	11,438	634	
Support Services & Recharges	(131)	89		2		(273)	(218)	55	0	
Government Grant Income	(2,996)	(1,775)		424		(1,211)	(3,753)	(2,542)	0	
Other Income	(645)	(240)		(62)		(100)	(113)	(13)	0	
Total Children's Social Care	**32,406**	**3,675**		**5,699**		**30,801**	**39,797**	**8,996**	**472**	

Overall Position

1. **Together for Families (Overspend £0.592m)**

   The forecast overspend is mainly due to overspends on:

   - Children in Need/s17 expenses – overspend of **£0.169m** due to increased numbers of Children in Need in 2023/24
   - No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) - overspend of **£0.179m** due to increased cost of NRPF packages as a result of increased cost of housing and subsidising families.
   - Together for Families teams – staffing overspend of **£0.357m** due to agency staff.
   - Supporting Families – underspend of **(£0.115m)** due to staff vacancies.

2. **Corporate Parenting (Overspend £6.293m) and Children and Young People Disability Team (Overspend (£2.034m)**

The overspend in these areas largely relates to the placements and placement-related budgets, with a forecast gross overspend of **£11.438m**. This includes spend on UASC and other contracted services within Together for Families totaling **£2.826m.** The overspend on CLA Placements, excluding UASC costs which are largely funded by grant, is **£8.610m**, which is reflected in Appendix 3. Pressures are driven by the net increase of children looked after, complex needs and risks of children and their families and the lack of local placements. Our reliance on the external residential market to meet demand, along with inflationary pressures, have resulted in considerable additional costs.

Key points in relation to placement cost pressures are:

- The main external placements and CYPDT residential placements attributes **£8.421m** (98%) of the **£8.610m** overspend. We currently have 136 external placements (residential and foster care), of which 30 (19%) of those, costing more than £0.200m each, bring a total cost of £9.803m (52.4%) of the total spend on CLA of £18.688m.
- The forecast now includes estimated numbers and costs of future potential Children Looked After currently in legal proceedings. Of the total 19 new placements included in the forecast, 13 are those in the process of becoming looked after. Estimated costs in 2023/24 for these is £0.235m.
- The high reliance on external foster care is continuing, although the internal foster care placements (51 at 31 December including two UASC) and the external foster placements (93 at 31 December 2023) have remained fairly stable.
- To the end of Period 9 the deep dive and placement changes have generated -£0.993 savings, which are factored into the forecast.

The income forecast reflects the estimated Home Office grant income in respect of asylum seekers. This will be updated in Period 10, subject to receiving the outcome of a review by the Home Office in respect of the January submission. It also includes forecast Continuing Health Care income.

As the capital works at Cressingham Respite Home is not yet completed, this has had a negative impact on the planned opportunities to generate income. However, the Home has recently agreed to 'sell' a second bed to another local authority, resulting in an increase in income of about £0.045m this year.

Further information on Care Placement budgets and activity information is included in Appendix 3.

3. **CSC Management Team (Overspend £0.076m)**

The forecast overspend is mainly due to:

- Additional cost of agency Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) covering the cost of staff sickness **(£0.080m)**

Movement from Period 8

The overall movement from Period 8 is an adverse movement of **£0.472m**, which is mainly due to:

1. **Together for Families (Favourable movement (£0.148m)**

- Reduction in overspend of CIN/s17 expenses following detailed review at Month 9 and identification and correction of mis-codings to CLA and NRPF expenditure **(£0.144m)**
- Reduction in CSPOA staffing **(£0.069m)**
- Other adverse movements account for **£0.065m**.

2. **Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship and Adoption (Adverse movement £0.423m)**

- Increase in CLA external residential and fostering placements of **£0.596m** due to cost impact of new CLA placements in Period 9 and additional CLA in the legal gateway process who are expected to become placements before 31 March 2024.
- One additional remand placement **£0.059m**.

- Reduction in forecast cost of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) following a detailed review and correction of anomalies on the Mosaic system **(£0.125m)**
- CLA Staffing – reduction in forecast cost of team due to further vacancy savings **(£0.045m)**
- Fostering allowances – reduction in forecast fostering allowances following further review on Mosaic in Period 9 **(£0.033m)**
- Adoption Allowances – reduction in forecast allowances following Period 9 Mosaic review **(£0.028m)**

3. Children and Young People Disability team (Adverse movement £0.205m)

- CYPDT Residential placements – increased cost of placements of **£0.221m** in Period 9**,** which includes additional respite care for two placements **£0.089m** and one new placement **£0.064m.** Other placement cost changes account for **£0.068m.**
- CYPDT staffing – reduction of **(£0.020m)** due to staff change.

Risks

1. Placement and placement-related forecasts are based on current placements and forecast end dates as agreed with the service. As seen over the last month, we have seen both reducing costs as a result of the placement deep-dive, as well as increasing high-cost placements arising from new placements and escalations. The risk is mitigated by incorporating estimates of new CLA placements in legal proceedings that were not previously recorded.

5 Early Help and Preventative Services – Maria Young

5.1 The table below shows the forecast P9 position for Early Help and Preventative Services and the movement from Period 8. The overall position is a forecast underspend of **(£0.421m)**, which is in line with the position reported at Period 8.

Table 3: Overview of 2023-2024 Early Help and Preventative Services Budget at period 9

Departmental & Income and Expenditure Summary (Early Help and Preventative Services)	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000	23/24 Variance YTD £00	23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month (P8) £000	Key
By Directorate	-	-						
Childrens Centres & Childcare Provision	1,223	(64)	(82)	1,413	1,231	(182)	(21)	
Youth Family Workers and Welfare	1,597	(43)	176	1,841	1,728	(113)	9	
Youth Offending Service	284	(121)	98	393	268	(125)	(3)	
Partnership and Preventions and Supporting Families	(147)	(147)	(289)	0	(15)	(15)	0	
Early Help Management	(17)	(132)	(1)	45	59	14	14	
Total Early Help and Preventative Services	**2,939**	**(507)**	**(97)**	**3,691**	**3,271**	**(421)**	**(1)**	
By Income and Expenditure	-	-						
Employee Expenditure	4,700	238	(46)	5,153	4,795	(358)	(11)	
Agency Expenditure	18	18	100	0	0		0	
Other Staff related Expenditure	8	8	37	0	0		0	
Premises Related	91	(40)	(26)	85	83	(2)	0	
Transport Related	17	(8)	6	14	14		0	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	984	585	302	233	224	(9)	0	
Contracted Expenditure	48	48	20	0	0		0	
Support Services & Recharges	(323)	(21)	(57)	(471)	(471)		0	
Government Grant Income	(2,293)	(1,145)	(477)	(1,215)	(1,230)	(15)	0	
Other Income	(311)	(190)	42	(108)	(145)	(37)	10	
Total Early Help and Preventative Services	**2,939**	**(507)**	**(97)**	**3,691**	**3,270**	**(421)**	**(1)**	

Overall Position

1. **Children Centres and Childcare Provision (Underspend (£0.182m)**
    - Staffing underspend due to vacancies across Children Centres and Children Centre management **(0.182m).**

2. **Youth Family Workers and Welfare (Underspend (£0.113m)**
    - Staffing underspend due to vacancies across the Youth and Family Workers teams **(£0.113m)**

3. **Youth Offending Service (Underspend (£0.125m)**
    - Staffing underspends due to vacancies **(£0.075m)** and additional Probation income **(£0.050m)**

Movement from Period 8 – no material movement.

6 Education Services – Brian Grady

6.1 The table below shows the forecast P9 position for Education and the movement from Period 8. The overall position is a forecast overspend of **£0.798m**, which is an adverse movement of **£0.053m** from Period 8. Early Help areas that moved to Children Social Care have been excluded since Period 8.

Table 4: Overview of 2023-2024 Education Budget at period 9

Departmental & Income and Expenditure Summary (Education Services)	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000	23/24 Variance YTD £00	23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month (P8) £000	Key
By Directorate	-	-						
Director of Education	77	(7)	(134)	103	103	0	0	
Education Access & Support	239	(183)	(407)	427	357	(70)	0	
Virtual School	(30)	(30)	475	0	0	0	0	
School Effectiveness	(0)	(0)	73	0	0	0	0	
SEND & School Travel	4,191	889	(82)	4,107	4,873	766	48	
Early Years	72	72	(115)	5	120	115	5	
Dedicated Schools Grant	38,194	4,917	264	37,507	37,507	0	0	
Education Psychology and Mental Health	809	(140)	(17)	1,018	1,004	(14)	0	
Total Education Services	**43,551**	**5,518**	**57**	**43,167**	**43,965**	**798**	**53**	
By Income and Expenditure	-	-						
Employee Expenditure	6,092	(586)	(455)	7,586	7,603	18	0	
Agency Expenditure	446	446	141	9	9		0	
Other Staff related Expenditure	87	85	28	4	4		0	
Premises Related	29	18	(5)	12	12		0	
Transport Related	3,529	823	(74)	3,557	4,225	668	48	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	9,032	(781)	187	9,886	9,883	(3)	0	
Contracted Expenditure	23,462	1,629	(422)	25,513	25,513		0	
Support Services & Recharges	4,556	4,278	(48)	(208)	(113)	95	5	
Government Grant Income	(1,874)	(174)	839	(1,981)	(1,981)		0	
Other Income	(1,808)	(218)	(132)	(1,211)	(1,191)	20	0	
Total Education Services	**43,551**	**5,518**	**57**	**43,167**	**43,965**	**798**	**53**	

Overall Position

1. **Education Access and Support (Underspend (£0.070m)**

- Education Welfare – underspend on staffing due to vacancies **(£0.030m)**
- Elevate – underspend of **(£0.012m)** due to additional income
- Other variations account for **(£0.028m)**

2. **SEND and School Travel (Overspend £0.766m)**

- **School Transport -** the projected overspend on the School Transport budget is **£0.668m.**

Pressures are driven by the increasing number of children with EHCPs, rising prices from fuel inflation and increasing eligibility for transport. Data shows that transport is required for 30% of pupils with an EHCP. These pressures are exacerbated by the lack of local specialist school places which impact the number and cost of transport routes and the distances required to transport pupils. The projection is based on the total current expenditure of transport extrapolated for current routes until the end of the financial year. The estimated overspend includes £10k in savings this period. Average daily costs to provide transport is currently £22.5k which is an increase of £1,400 (6.6%) since start of the year. The number of routes has increased from 208 to 220 since the start of the year, with an increasing number of children with EHCPs and longer journey routes due to the lack of more local SEND provision driving increased route costs. Cost avoidance is being secured for the longer routes through the implementation of drop off points and combined bus journeys replacing previously planned taxis. Travel training is now being brought in-house and should produce savings within the current financial year. The projection also allows for £0.318m of savings forecast or already delivered, predominantly through tightening of approval process for new transport requests and proactive review and cancellation of taxi routes. Further savings actions are underway but not yet included in the projections through the Savings Plan, including RBC funded transformation work which is expected to see impact before the end of the financial year.

3. **Early Years (Overspend £0.115m)**

- Lodge Nursery – staffing overspend due high number of vacancies and use of agency staff **£0.070m**.
- Surestart Whitley Nursery – staffing overspend due to increased agency costs as a result of sickness **£0.045m.**

Movement from Period 8 (Adverse movement of £0.53m)

1. **School Transport (Adverse movement £0.048m)**

- Increased overspend due to additional cost of new routes **(£0.058m)** part offset by savings on route changes **(£0.010m).**

7 Finance and Resources – Kit Lam

7.1 The table below shows the forecast P9 position for Finance & Resources and the movement from Period 8. The overall position is a forecast underspend of **(£0.334m)**, which is an adverse movement of **£0.047m** from Period 8.

Table 5: Overview of 2023-2024 Finance and Resources Budget at period 9

Departmental & Income and Expenditure Summary (Finance & Resources)	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000		23/24 Variance YTD £00		23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous Month (P8) £000	Key
By Directorate	-	-								
Human Resources	362	(54)		(100)		461	452	(9)	34	
Communications & Marketing	287	(80)		(82)		461	368	(93)	0	
Finance & Audit	416	25		(33)		398	472	74	17	
Information, Advice and Support Service	73	(54)		(23)		133	118	(15)	(5)	
Commissioning	433	(51)		(85)		504	361	(143)	0	
Finance & Resources	145	(22)		1		172	172	0	0	
Performance Management	259	(36)		39		355	367	12	12	
Business Support	966	(48)		(133)		1,243	1,083	(160)	(11)	
Total Finance & Resources	**2,940**	**(320)**		**(415)**		**3,727**	**3,393**	**(334)**	**47**	
By Income and Expenditure	-	-								
Employee Expenditure	3,363	(330)		(477)		4,211	3,868	(343)	30	
Agency Expenditure	138	138		176		0	0		0	
Other Staff related Expenditure	115	34		(8)		101	131	30	30	
Premises Related	0	0		5		0	0		0	
Transport Related	(1)	(9)		(6)		6	6		0	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	242	(144)		(463)		331	310	(21)	(13)	
Contracted Expenditure	(5)	(5)		0		0	0		0	
Support Services & Recharges	(441)	42		(34)		(362)	(362)		0	
Government Grant Income	15	15		(39)		(98)	(98)		0	
Other Income	(486)	(62)		(36)		(462)	(462)		0	
Total Finance & Resources	**2,940**	**(320)**		**(883)**		**3,727**	**3,393**	**(334)**	**47**	

Overall Position

1. **Communication and Marketing (Underspend (£0.093m)**
   - Savings from vacancies in staffing **(£0.072m)** and supplies and services **(£0.021m)**

2. **Commissioning (Underspend (£0.143m)**
   - Savings from vacancy management and additional DSG income **(£0.143m)**

3. **Business Support (Underspend (£0.160m)**
   - Savings from vacancy management **(£0.160m)**

Movement from Period 8 (Adverse movement of £0.047m)

1. **Human Resources (adverse movement £0.034m)**
- Additional cost of Interim Head of HR **£0.034m**

2. **Finance & Audit (adverse movement £0.017m)**
- Conversion fee for an interim agency finance business partner who has taken on a permanent role in Brighter Futures

8 Corporate Services – Kit Lam & Lara Patel

8.1 The table below shows the forecast P9 position for Corporate Services and the movement from Period 8. The overall position is a forecast underspend of **(£0.170m)**, which is which is broadly in line with the position reported at Period 8.

Table 6: Overview of 2023-2024 Corporate Budget at period 9

Departmental & Income and Expenditure Summary (Corporate Services)	22/23 Outturn £000	22/23 Variance £000		23/24 Variance YTD £00		23/24 Annual Budget £000	23/24 Forecast Outturn £000	23/24 Forecast Variance P9 £000	Movement from Previous (P8) Month £000	Key
By Directorate	-	-								
Chair and Non-Executive Directors	207	6		2		201	194	(7)	3	
Operational Directors	634	36		(127)		473	453	(20)	0	
Support Services SLAs	393	(68)		(33)		371	228	(143)	(6)	
Holding Codes and Old Codes	69	(43)		(103)		0	0	0	0	
Total Corporate Services	**1,302**	**(69)**		**(261)**		**1,045**	**875**	**(170)**	**(3)**	
By Income and Expenditure	-	-								
Employee Expenditure	1,091	(148)		(115)		775	738	(37)	3	
Agency Expenditure	802	802		(162)		0	0		0	
Other Staff related Expenditure	359	19		(72)		330	330		0	
Premises Related	170	170		(146)		0	0		0	
Transport Related	1	(2)		1		1	1		0	
Supplies and Services Expenditure	277	132		(27)		33	68	35	(6)	
Contracted Expenditure	6	6		20		0	0		0	
Support Services & Recharges	5,063	(1,637)		(96)		6,403	6,403		0	
Government Grant Income	415	415		(2,845)		0	0		0	
Other Income	(6,882)	174		3,181		(6,497)	(6,665)	(168)	0	
Total Corporate Services	**1,302**	**(69)**		**(261)**		**1,045**	**875**	**(170)**	**(3)**	

Overall position (Underspend (£0.170m)

1. **Non-executive and Operational directors (Underspend £0.027m)**
   - Changes to non-executive and operational director roles.

2. **Support Services SLA's (Underspend (£0.143m)**
   - Additional banking interest due to higher interest rates **(£0.168m)**
   - Additional legal costs **£0.027m**

Movement from Period 8

There has been no significant movement in the forecast since Period 8.

Appendix 1 – Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitoring – Period 9

1. Table 1 contains the original 2023/24 budget as agreed. This is split between the four funding blocks and broken down by the main reporting lines for the DSG. The overall overspend forecast for the year is **£5.571m.**

2. The high needs budget has been set above the allocation by £2.119m from the start of the financial year due to known increased costs arising from additional top-up expenses and increased pupils in February 2023.

Table 1: Summary Budget per Block 2023/24

	Current Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	In Year Variance (£m)
Schools Block	51.473	50.634	(0.840)
Central Schools Block	1.133	1.140	0.007
Early Years Block	13.277	12.969	(0.308)
High Needs Block	28.458	33.050	4.592
Sub Total – Net Expenditure	**94.342**	**97.794**	**3.451**
DSG Allocation - Income	**(92.223)**	**(92.223)**	**0.000**
Balance Over/(Under) Allocated	**2.119**	**5.571**	**3.451**

3. **Schools Block (SB)**

- There would only be a variance on maintained primary and secondary school delegated budget allocations from having a school convert to an academy.
- Falling Rolls funding was re-introduced in June 2022 and a revised policy was agreed at Schools' Forum in March 2023. Any funding required in year will also be met from the Growth fund.
- Any surplus from the Growth Fund at the end of the financial year will be required for future year requirements as set out in the plan brought to Schools' Forum in January 2023. Further details on Growth Funding will be shared at January 2024 Schools Forum. BFfC will propose to continue with Falling Roles funding within 2024-2025.
- De-delegations are contributions to central services and unlikely to have any variance.

4. **Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)**

- Most of the central school services budgets are contributions and the majority will not therefore have a variance. There is a small variance on copyright licenses, as this is a national contract agreed in advance. The small surplus brought forward from 2022/23 will offset this variance.

5. **Early Years Block (EYB)**

- Over 95% of Early Years Funding is relating to the free early year's entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 -year-olds. The budget for 2023/24 is based on the draft Spring 2023 census hours at the set hourly rates laid out in March 2023 Schools Forum paper. The DSG funding due to be received this year is based on an average of January 2023 and January 2024.
- Funding and expenditure is based on actual future take up of places. . In the event of a budget overspend, this would impact the funding rate to providers in the following financial year.
- There is £289k contingency carried forward from 2022/23, noting that the contingency can only be used to fund providers through the Early Years' formula as already set and cannot be used to increase the hourly rates or to change the formula after these have been set for the year.

Nationally, there are significant changes within the early years sector. This includes the increase in unit rates for current 2- to 4-year-olds (the DfE did not increase the DSG block for this in year change but instead created a supplementary fund to all Local Authorities, totaling £971k of additional funding onto of the DSG block). As the additional allocation were not based on current census data, it cannot be confirmed at this stage in terms of future year adjustments. This is the main reason for the Early Years Block showing a underspend of £0.308m.

- Other budgets that fund central spend are mainly contributions as agreed at the budget setting and will not have a variance.

6. High Needs Block (HNB)

- Annual expenditure in the HNB is resulting in an increase to the deficit due to the increasing number of the EHCPs and the increasing need of pupils.
- As top-up/placement fees represent 89.5% of the high needs budget this will be closely monitored throughout the year, including comparing actual number and average cost of placements by each type to the original budget set.
- The Inclusion Fund provides additional funding to mainstream schools with a high percentage of pupils with EHCPs compared to our statistical neighbor average. £484k has been transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs block to fund this. This budget will not be overspent as the funding to schools ceases once the budget is spent. If a surplus, then for the Spring term we will increase funding to allocate 100% of the fund.
- Table 2 shows the High Needs budget compared to actuals per year. The government has increased the High Needs Budget by 44% since 2019-2020. The expenditure for the majority of LAs has increased and for Reading has equated to 82% increase since 2019-2020. This is a national issue, which is recognized by the DfE through the implementation of the Delivering Better Value projects.

Table 2: High Needs Block Allocations

Year	Spending Power (£m)	Actual (£m)	In year (£m)	High Needs Deficit (£m)
2019-2020	18.322	18.167	(0.155)	2.091
2020-2021	18.916	18.957	0.041	2.132
2021-2022	20.947	22.227	1.280	3.412
2022-2023	23.877	25.772	1.894	5.307
2023-2024 (est)	26.340	33.050	6.710	12.017
Increase since 19-20	***44%***	***82%***		

- Table 3 below shows the numbers of EHCPS (with top-ups) and the cost associated from March 2022 to December 2023 (20 months). The increase in EHCPs with Top-ups has increased by 28.6% with the overall costs of Top-ups increasing by 55.9%.

  Current reasons on increases relate to inflation, average of higher needs per EHCP.

Table 3: Compared spend and pupils with EHCPs from March 2022 to December 2023

Type	Mar-22 (£m)	Dec-23 (£m)	Variance (£m)	Mar-22	Dec-23	+/-
Mainstream	2.586	4.883	2.296	481	652	172
Special	9.221	11.772	2.552	462	506	44
Resources	0.961	0.867	-0.095	107	90	(17)
Nursery	0.063	0.140	0.078	6	19	13
Independent	2.388	6.000	3.612	52	104	52
Post 16	1.274	1.584	0.309	156	211	54
Alternative	0.491	1.231	0.740	21	70	49
TOTAL	**16.984**	**26.477**	**9.493**	**1,284**	**1,652**	**367**

- These significant increases is core to an increasing DSG deficit at unsustainable levels.

Appendix 2 – Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management Plan

1. The approach being taken to manage the deficit has been informed by
   - Reading partnership SEND Strategy
   - June 2022 DfE research: High needs budgets: effective management in local authorities, by Peter Gray, Penny Richardson & Paul Tanton
   - July 2021 DfE published Sustainable high needs systems: case studies.
   - Delivering Better Value Project 2023

2. A review of Reading practice against the DfE published research and case studies identifies strong areas of current practice for us to build on in our High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan, and areas which will be monitored through our internal governance, throughout the year.

   - Understanding and engaging with parental expectations
   - Promoting more inclusive practice
   - Linking SEND and school improvement
   - Effective commissioning and monitoring of specialist provision and holding providers to account:
   - Improved quality of local specialist provision:
   - Identification of additional needs in early years leading to reduced requirement for EHCPs:
   - Development of outreach and specialist staffing support for mainstream schools:

3. BFfC with Reading Borough Council will be updating a CIPFA template every quarter to reflect the latest position of the DSG with emphasis on the High Needs Block. This will include actual and forecasted EHCP data, financial top-ups, and other associated costs to support ongoing review and monitoring on the investment of SEN support within Reading Schools.

4. The management plan indicates that by 2029-2030, the difference between an unmitigated pressure (£98m) compared to (£52m).

5. There are many factors that could impact the forecasts, including but not limit to:
   - Changes in EHCPs numbers
   - Changes in total EHCPs within types of provisions (less independent, more resources units)
   - General inflation costs (payroll and other expenditure)
   - The level of need of each EHCP
   - Resources from BFfC, Reading, Health and other organisations supporting schools.
   - Changes in top-up Bandings (nationally and/or locally)
   - Increased funding allocation from government (additional to forecast)
   - Changes to funding or SEND polices.

Appendix 2 Continued: Summary of end of year positions (Un-Mitigated and Mitigated)

All Figures are in £ms

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
DSG position (surplus)/deficit	1.768	1.356	2.164	3.463	10.173	18.204	25.585	32.411	39.476	45.680	52.074
In year net position deficit / (surplus)											
Schools block	0.817	(0.719)	(0.447)	(0.477)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central schools services block	(0.039)	0.039	(0.006)	(0.001)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early years block	(0.160)	0.226	(0.018)	(0.117)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High needs block	(0.455)	0.041	1.280	1.895	6.710	8.031	7.382	6.825	7.065	6.203	6.394
Total net	**0.163**	**(0.412)**	**0.809**	**1.299**	**6.710**	**8.031**	**7.382**	**6.825**	**7.065**	**6.203**	**6.394**
Add brought forward deficit / **(surplus) (net)**	1.605	1.768	1.356	2.164	3.463	10.173	18.203	25.585	32.411	39.476	45.680
Planned year end position (mitigated)	**1.768**	**1.356**	**2.164**	**3.463**	**10.173**	**18.204**	**25.585**	**32.411**	**39.476**	**45.680**	**52.074**
Planned year end position (un-mitigated)	**1.768**	**1.356**	**2.164**	**3.463**	**10.173**	**18.892**	**29.885**	**43.168**	**59.090**	**77.450**	**98.110**

Appendix 2 Continued: Key Mitigations from DSG Deficit Management Plan.

All Figures are in £ms

Key Mitigations/Savings & Pressures	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Reducing Independent placements	0	(1.791)	(3.936)	(6.461)	(8.155)	(10.684)	(12.112)
Less top-up funding due to ARPs funding to replace.	0	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)	(2.000)
Reduction in EHCPs due to improvement in inclusion and support	0	0	(0.700)	(0.700)	(0.700)	(0.700)	(0.700)
Ceasing EHCPs which are not needed (reduces potential forecasts)	0	(0.697)	(0.802)	(0.756)	(0.928)	(1.194)	(1.571)
Commissioning frameworkers/contracts/discounts on bulk placements	0	(0.050)	(0.100)	(0.150)	(0.200)	(0.250)	(0.300)
Reduction in use of ALT Provision (Mainstream) compared to current (less top-ups and reduced provisions)	0	(0.350)	(0.350)	(0.350)	(0.350)	(0.350)	(0.350)
Reduction in ALT Provision (Independent)	0	(0.200)	(0.400)	(0.600)	(0.800)	(1.000)	(1.000)
Health Funding Contribution	0	(0.100)	(0.250)	(0.300)	(0.300)	(0.300)	(0.300)
Total Key savings	**0**	**(5.189)**	**(8.538)**	**(11.317)**	**(13.433)**	**(16.479)**	**(18.333)**
Key Pressures/Investment							
25-26 RISE to be funded from High Needs Block	0	0	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.650
Creation of additional resource units (ARPS)	0.780	4.450	4.450	4.450	4.450	4.450	4.450
Total Key pressures	**0.780**	**4.450**	**5.100**	**5.100**	**5.100**	**5.100**	**5.100**

Appendix 3 - Social Care Placements Analysis

The summary below provides the current forecast as at the 3 January 2024 (Period 9) for placements and other support costs, compared with the Period 8 forecast.

Table 1. Placement and other placement-related costs

Element Type	Cost Code	Forecast Period 8	Budget v Forecast Variance P8	Forecast Period 9	Budget v Forecast Variance P9	Change Period 8 to Period 9
		£	£	£	£	£
Children Looked After Placements						
CYPDT Placements (Residential)	**5087**	**3,335,394**	**1,920,794**	**3,557,001**	**2,142,401**	**221,607**
External Placements:	5400					
- Residential		7,546,574		8,029,915		483,341
- Foster care	5400	4,846,934		4,960,193		113,260
Total external placements	**5400**	**12,393,507**	**5,682,107**	**12,990,108**	**6,278,708**	**596,601**
Remand	5412	**2,952**	2,952	62,566	62,566	59,614
Fostering Allowances	5451	**1,622,737**	-10,263	1,590,103	-42,897	-32,634
Connected Carers	5467	**473,888**	270,288	488,491	284,891	14,603
Total Children Looked After (CLA)		**17,828,479**	**7,865,879**	**18,688,268**	**8,725,668**	**859,790**
Other placements						
Staying Put Arrangements	5463	286,080	56,280	295,124	65,324	9,044
Supported Lodgings	5461	20,800	-20,000	20,800	-20,000	0
Total Other placements		**306,880**	**36,280**	**315,924**	**45,324**	**9,044**
Total All Placements		**18,135,359**	**7,902,159**	**19,004,192**	**8,770,992**	**868,833**
Allowances (not CLA)						
Adoption	5452	484,911	1,811	453,756	-29,344	-31,155
Child Arrangement Orders	5457	188,837	-30,763	190,283	-29,317	1,447
Special Guardianship	5460	2,043,108	-119,192	1,917,703	-244,597	-125,405
Total Allowances		**2,716,856**	**-148,144**	**2,561,742**	**-303,258**	**-155,113**
Other support costs						
Leaving Care Support	5455	1,072,930	-474,570	1,076,554	-470,946	3,624
CYPDT Packages and Short Breaks	5415	210,000	-239,100	210,000	-239,100	0
Direct Payments	5419	468,209	150,809	490,153	41,053	21,944
CLA Expenses	5426	800,000	320,800	810,000	330,800	10,000
CIN & S17 Expenses	5427	700,000	313,400	555,900	169,300	-144,100
No Recourse to Public Funds	5482	210,000	153,000	236,875	179,875	26,875
Total other support		**3,461,138**	**224,338**	**3,379,482**	**142,682**	**-81,656**
Total (Not Including UASC)		**24,313,353**	**7,978,353**	**24,945,416**	**8,610,416**	**632,063**

Key data:

- The table above includes costs of another 13 young people, not included in the CLA numbers at 31 December 2023, who are going through the legal gateway process with current planned/estimated dates of when they will become children looked after and in which type of placement they are likely to be accommodated. The estimated cost in 2023/24 for these is £235,000.

- The tables and graph below show the changes in CLA numbers from November 2022 to December 2023:

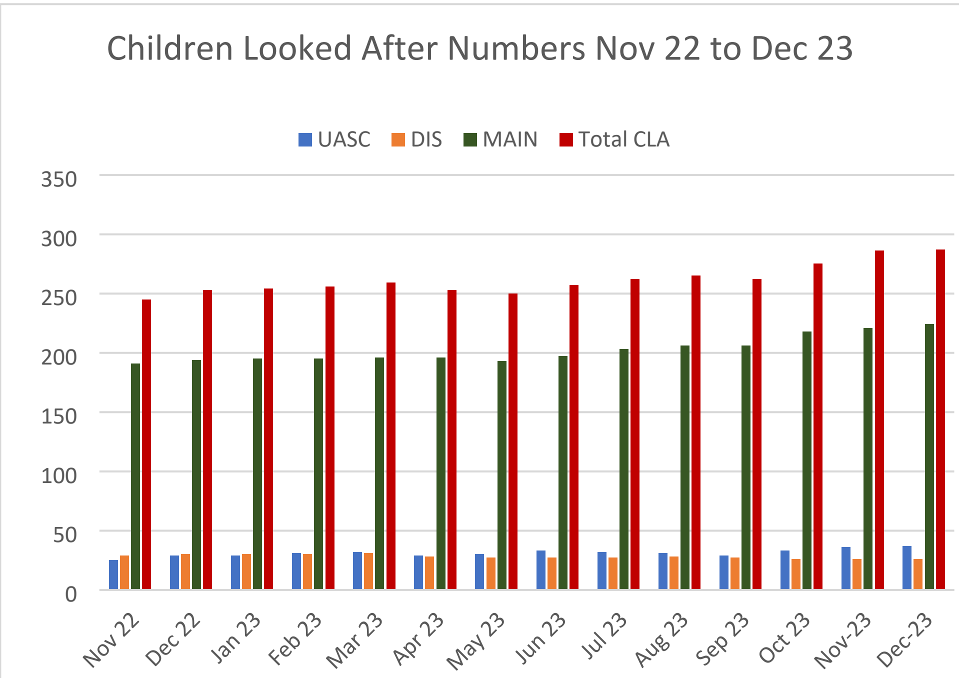
Table 2. Summary of CLA numbers – month by month

Date	MAIN	DIS	UASC	Total CLA	
Nov 22	191	29	25	245	
Dec 22	194	30	29	253	
Jan 23	195	30	29	254	
Feb 23	195	30	31	256	
Mar 23	196	31	32	259	
Apr 23	196	28	29	253	
May 23	193	27	30	250	
Jun 23	197	27	33	257	
Jul 23	203	27	32	262	
Aug 23	206	28	31	265	
Sep 23	206	27	29	262	
Oct 23	218	26	33	275	
Nov-23	224	26	36	286	*
Dec-23	224	26	37	287	**

* Backdated adjustment from 285 to 283 after November report but also includes 3 additional CLA with an end date of 30 Nov 23

** Subject to confirmation

Table 3. Graph of CLA numbers by month



Appendix 4 – Cashflow

Cashflow is being reviewed and updated frequently. The latest cashflow was reviewed on 18th Jan 24. BFfC have agreed with RBC on bringing forward £2m of the contract sum due in February to 24th January and are seeking a similar advance payment for February and a higher advance payment for March to maintain an appropriate level of cash balance. The position will be kept under review.

Cash Flow Analysis and Forecast 2023/24

Date	Item	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24 Selected items	Total
		ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast		
	Opening balance		**-7,409,077**	**-7,586,650**	**-8,788,102**	**-3,790,140**	**-588,545**	**-1,973,447**	**-2,332,664**	**-8,016,452**	**-469,967**	**-1,312,300**	**-1,363,915**		
8th	Contract Sum	-8,230,843				-8,230,843	-8,230,843	-8,230,843	-8,230,843		-6,230,843	-6,230,843	-6,230,843		**-59,846,743**
	Other income														**0**
	BACS	609,700	1,150,000	2,065,000	1,514,000	1,528,000	1,504,211	1,495,409	2,426,997	579,932	1,489,669	1,400,000	1,138,000		**16,900,918**
															0
	Investment										-2,000,000	-1,000,000			**-3,000,000**
	Other income	-255,700	-164,000	-163,000	-352,000	-150,000	-96,089	-277,297	-575,888	-213,526	-235,000	-235,000	-235,000	-500,000	**-3,452,500**
14th	VAT monthly		251,613	251,613		251,613	251,613		251,613	251,613		251,613	251,613		**2,012,904**
15th	High needs payments	1,310,822	1,691,106	1,825,502	1,127,835	1,955,689	1,510,916	1,628,393	1,739,926	2,246,389	1,640,000	2,000,000	3,200,000	3,810,000	**25,686,578**
	Residential placement (cc 5087)	96,323	472,653	180,159	190,797	326,510	155,580	227,598	306,463	282,896	329,505	329,505	329,505	329,505	**3,557,000**
	External Placements (cc 5400)	135,483	1,075,634	1,253,803	775,271	1,014,363	938,480	878,452	1,466,589	719,585	1,183,110	1,183,110	1,183,110	1,183,110	**12,990,100**
	Additional Payment from RBC (Placement overspend)														**0**
19th	Grant 22/23 (outstanding)	-106,250		-234,300	-5,528,775			-996,605							**-6,865,930**
	Contract Sum - brought forward (Dec 23)									-2,000,000					**-2,000,000**
20th	Grant 23/24 (outstanding)			-1,084,887			-399,069	-82,314	-241,003		-768,774	-300,000		-3,513,000	**-6,389,046**
	BACS	1,987,503	620,939	373,076	2,521,142	1,757,188	394,080	1,570,839	2,213,394	135,111	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,000,000		**15,173,273**
	EY payments	1,000,000				1,000,000				2,549,601					**4,549,601**
24th	Contract Sum - brought forward (Jan 24- Mar 24)										-2,000,000	-2,000,000	-4,000,000		**-8,000,000**
25th	Payroll	2,148,169	2,227,724	2,235,425	2,182,580	2,135,075	2,113,918	2,134,603	2,532,859	2,677,084	2,400,000	2,400,000	2,400,000		**27,587,437**
															0
27th	VAT quarterly	847,799			2,044,112			410,619			1,200,000			1,200,000	**5,702,530**
30th															**0**
31st	**Bank balance**	**-456,994**	**-83,407**	**-884,259**	**-4,313,140**	**-2,202,545**	**-2,445,747**	**-3,214,593**	**-442,557**	**-787,767**	**-2,162,300**	**-2,213,915**	**-2,327,529**		
Contract Sum paid 1 week earlier		-8,230,843	-8,230,843	-8,230,843					-8,230,843						**-32,923,372**
															0
4th	BACS	1,278,760	727,600	327,000	523,000	1,614,000	472,300	881,929	656,948	317,800	850,000	850,000	850,000		**9,349,337**
6th / 7th	**balance on 6th / 7th**	**-7,409,077**	**-7,586,650**	**-8,788,102**	**-3,790,140**	**-588,545**	**-1,973,447**	**-2,332,664**	**-8,016,452**	**-469,967**	**-1,312,300**	**-1,363,915**	**-1,477,529**		

Appendix 3 - Savings Tracker Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Service Area	Description	Red £000s	Amber £000s	Green £000s	Blue £000s	Total £000s
Adult Services Operations	TEC: Promoting the use of Assistive Technology	0	0	(21)	(57)	(78)
Adult Services Operations	Efficiency savings secured through Public Health re-procurement	0	0	0	(50)	(50)
Adult Services Operations	Development of an Accommodation Pathway for Vulnerable Working Age Adults	0	0	0	(25)	(25)
Adult Services Operations	Continuing Healthcare / Joint Funding	0	0	0	(200)	(200)
Adult Services Operations	Increase in Extra Care Income	0	0	(95)	(13)	(108)
Housing & Communities	Increase in fees and charges	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Communities	Workforce Review [Housing]	0	0	0	(29)	(29)
Total Directorate of Community & Adult Social Care		**0**	**0**	**(116)**	**(374)**	**(490)**
Transportation	Fundamental Service Review - Parking	0	0	(225)	0	(225)
Transportation	Introduction of Moving Traffic Enforcement under TMA Powers	0	(280)	0	0	(280)
Transportation	Increased revenue from on-street Pay and Display	0	0	(545)	0	(545)
Transportation	Increased income from Parking Enforcement	0	(160)	0	0	(160)
Transportation	Extend Residents Parking permit areas	(10)	0	0	0	(10)
Transportation	Review Public Car Park provision borough wide	0	(200)	0	0	(200)
Transportation	Increase off street parking charges	0	(150)	0	0	(150)
Transportation	Electric Vehicle Charging	0	0	(26)	0	(26)
Transportation	Increase in fees and charges	0	0	(65)	0	(65)
Transportation	Workforce Review [Transportation]	0	0	(14)	0	(14)
Transportation	Increase parking permit charges	(86)	0	0	0	(86)
Transportation	Recovery of reduced parking income due to Covid-19*	(900)	0	(400)	0	(1,300)
Planning & Public Protection	Mandatory HMO Licensing	(75)	0	0	0	(75)
Planning & Public Protection	Discretionary HMO Licensing	(70)	0	0	0	(70)
Planning & Public Protection	Fundamental Service Review - Planning and Regulatory	0	0	(64)	0	(64)
Planning & Public Protection	Increase in charges for pre-planning application and planning fees	(55)	0	0	0	(55)
Planning & Public Protection	Proposed Fee Income Reading Festival	(75)	0	0	0	(75)
Planning & Public Protection	Increase in fees and charges	0	0	0	0	0
Planning & Public Protection	Workforce Review [Planning & Regulatory Services]	0	0	(38)	0	(38)
Culture	In-house management restructuring of Cultural Services	(25)	0	0	0	(25)
Culture	Increase in fees and charges	0	0	0	0	0
Culture	Workforce Review [Cultural Services]	0	0	0	(52)	(52)
Culture	Arts Fundraising campaign	0	(65)	0	0	(65)
Culture	Revenue impact of new contract for borough leisure facilities	0	0	0	(828)	(828)
Culture	Covid19 income pressure on the Town Hall and recovery plan*	(134)	(116)	0	0	(250)
Culture	Covid19 income pressure on the Hexagon and South Street Theatres and recovery plan*	0	(145)	0	0	(145)
Culture	New Directions College	0	0	(36)	0	(36)
Culture	Leisure Activity Review of Filming & Events	0	0	(40)	0	(40)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Increase in Savings - Waste Operations	(65)	0	0	0	(65)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Increase income on green waste due to additional uptake in years 1-3 and fee increase in years 2-3	0	(75)	0	0	(75)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Fundamental Service Review - Parks and Street Cleansing	0	0	(150)	0	(150)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Increased income from traded waste services (previous ref to CIL & IPD not relevant)	0	0	(135)	0	(135)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Increase in fees and charges	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	Additional income from advertising	(25)	0	0	0	(25)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Waste Contract - Budget realignment inline with anticipated expenditure	(100)	0	0	0	(100)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Continued commercial growth of Highways service	0	0	0	(2)	(2)
Environmental & Commercial Services	In-sourcing of Highways Structures Consultancy	0	0	0	(10)	(10)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Workforce Review [Environmental and Commercial Services]	0	0	0	(82)	(82)
Environmental & Commercial Services	Reduced fuel costs due to increase in electrical vehicles	0	0	(132)	0	(132)
Property & Asset Management	Workforce Review [Regeneration and Assets]	0	0	(32)	0	(32)
Property & Asset Management	Increase in fees and charges.	0	0	(24)	0	(24)
Management & Sustainability	Maximising income from digital advertising (roadside)	0	0	0	24	24
Total Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services		**(1,620)**	**(1,191)**	**(1,926)**	**(950)**	**(5,687)**
Policy, Performance & Customer Services	New customer services model	(519)	0	0	0	(519)
Policy, Performance & Customer Services	Additional Service Proposals for Bereavement Services	0	0	0	(7)	(7)
Policy, Performance & Customer Services	Income generation opportunity - Cremation & Cemetery Service	0	0	(137)	0	(137)
Human Resources & Organisational Development	Traded Services with HR&OD	0	0	(28)	0	(28)
Procurement & Contracts	Procurement & Contracts savings - Resources Directorate	(100)	0	(100)	0	(200)
Finance	Efficiences from procuring new finance system	(212)	0	0	0	(212)
Finance	General Fund-HRA Recharge Realignment	0	0	0	34	34
Legal & Democratic Services	Review of counsel use in JLT	(50)	0	0	0	(50)
Legal & Democratic Services	Legal Support for Enforcement Work	0	0	0	184	184
Digital, Technology & Change	Digital & ICT Transformation	0	0	0	(279)	(279)
Digital, Technology & Change	Efficiencies through digitisation	0	(100)	0	0	(100)
Total Directorate of Resources		**(881)**	**(100)**	**(265)**	**(68)**	**(1,314)**
Brighter Futures For Children	BFFC Contract	(300)	0	0	0	(300)
Total Brighter Futures for Children		**(300)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(300)**
Human Resources & Organisational Development	Corporate Contractual Savings	(250)	0	0	0	(250)
Human Resources & Organisational Development	Reducing mileage expenses through increased use of alternatives e.g. online meetings	(16)	0	(61)	0	(77)
Total Corporate		**(266)**	**0**	**(61)**	**0**	**(327)**
Grand Total		**(3,067)**	**(1,291)**	**(2,368)**	**(1,392)**	**(8,118)**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
General Fund										
Community & Social Care Services										
Adult Care and Health Services										
e-Marketplace & Equipment Renewal Portal Software	0						0	0	0	0
Mobile Working and Smart Device	0						0	0	0	0
Replacement of Community Re-ablement Software	0						0	0	0	0
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	455					(242)	213	49	213	0
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	**455**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(242)**	**213**	**49**	**213**	**0**
Housing & Communities										
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	100						100	42	100	0
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal Encampments	13						13	4	13	0
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	41						41	1	41	0
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,197						1,197	519	1,197	0
Foster Carer Extensions	225						225	0	225	0
Private Sector Renewals	175						175	17	175	0
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	**1,751**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,751**	**583**	**1,751**	**0**
Community & Social Care Services - Total	**2,206**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(242)**	**1,964**	**632**	**1,964**	**0**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services										
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection										
Air Quality Monitoring	18						18	29	18	0
Active Travel Tranche 2	805					(18)	787	708	787	0
Active Travel Tranche 3	500					(350)	150	13	150	0
Active Travel Tranche 4	75						75	0	75	0
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	0						0	0	0	0
Bus Service Improvement	2,000						2,000	449	2,000	0
Local Transport Plan Development	400						400	17	400	0
National Cycle Network Route 422	137						137	5	137	0
Reading West Station	2,464					(120)	2,344	331	2,344	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 1 & 2)	394					(377)	17	0	17	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	1,262					(762)	500	64	500	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 5 & 6)	0						0	0	0	0
Town Centre Street Trading Infrastructure	0						0	0	0	0
Construction of Green Park Station	225						225	333	225	0
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	326						326	19	326	0
CIL Local Funds - Community	15					(15)	0	15	0	0
CIL Local Funds - Transport	0						0	(24)	0	0
CIL Local Funds -Neighbourhood Allocation	0						0	0	0	0
S106 individual schemes list	0						0	0	0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0						0	0	0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	0						0	0	0	0
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	0		866			(866)	0	0	0	0
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour change	120						120	0	120	0
Transport Demand Management Scheme	50						50	0	50	0
Rogue Landlord Enforcement	75						75	0	75	0
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total	**8,866**	**0**	**866**	**0**	**0**	**(2,508)**	**7,224**	**1,958**	**7,224**	**0**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Culture										
Leisure Centre Procurement	6,000						6,000	4,297	6,000	0
Development of facilities at Prospect Park/Play	22						22	(8)	22	0
Reading Football Club Social Inclusion Unit to SRLC	0						0	0	0	0
Small Leisure Schemes	273					202	475	0	475	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	825					83	908	481	908	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	1,300					(597)	703	4	703	0
Abbey Quarter restoration works	25					(5)	20	15	20	0
High Street Heritage Action Zone	800					(530)	270	270	270	0
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	0						0	0	0	0
Hexagon lighting & emergency lighting replacement	262						262	2	262	0
Hexagon replacement of PA System	0						0	0	0	0
Shared Prosperity Fund	33						33	0	33	0
Town Hall Equipment	44					17	61	61	61	0
Tilehurst Library Works	38						38	23	38	0
Culture - Sub Total	**9,622**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(830)**	**8,792**	**5,145**	**8,792**	**0**
Environmental & Commercial Services										
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	447		350			(350)	447	226	447	0
New Capital Bid - S106 Kenavon Drive Landscape	31						31	0	31	0
Victoria Rec	12		40			(52)	0	0	0	0
Levelling Up Parks Fund	54						54	0	54	0
Restoration of historic Wall at Caversham Court Gardens	238						238	24	238	0
Forbury Gardens Bandstand	72						72	51	72	0
Ecological Works	21					(21)	0	0	0	0

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
John Rabson skatepark	77						77	0	77	0
Tree Planting	51						51	0	51	0
Highways Infrastructure Programme	6,700					(3,000)	3,700	2,943	3,700	0
Carriageways & Pavements Investment Programme	0						0	0	0	0
Chestnut Walk Improvements	29					(29)	0	0	0	0
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	285					(285)	0	0	0	0
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	699						699	312	699	0
Highway Signals_Capital Bid	234						234	85	234	0
Highways Operational Resilience _ Capital Bid	0						0	0	0	0
Highways Structures Capital Bid	0						0	0	0	0
Invest to save energy savings - Street lighting	428						428	254	428	0
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	75						75	0	75	0
Pedestrian dropped kerb facilities with tactile pavers	240						240	0	240	0
Pedestrian handrails	240						240	0	240	0
Pumping Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	42						42	(34)	42	0
Purchase of Electric Road Marking Machine	86						86	86	86	0
Railway footbridge lighting in West Reading	70						70	48	70	0
Reading Station Subway	406					(392)	14	14	14	0
Smart City Cluster project and C-ITS	0						0	107	0	0
Town Centre Improvements	251						251	93	251	0
Cattle Market Car Park	516					(516)	0	0	0	0
Digitised TRO's	0						0	0	0	0
Eastern Area Access Works	19						19	0	19	0
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	238					(200)	38	1	38	0
Oxford Road Corridor Works	24						24	0	24	0
Traffic Management Schools	33						33	0	33	0
Western Area Access Works	13						13	0	13	0
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	1,312					(662)	650	71	650	0
Replacement Vehicles	4,688						4,688	946	4,688	0
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	**17,631**	**0**	**390**	**0**	**0**	**(5,507)**	**12,514**	**5,226**	**12,514**	**0**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Property & Asset Management										
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	30					5	35	29	35	0
Corporate and Community Buildings	2,025						2,025	1,365	2,025	0
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFfC Family Contact Centre - Development for Community Use	56					(36)	20	20	20	0
Katesgrove Community and YOS Refurbishment - Development for Community Use	41					5	46	46	46	0
BFFC Accommodation Review	0						0	0	0	0
Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0						0	0	0	0
Regeneration Projects	0						0	0	0	0
Acre Business Park	30						30	0	30	0
The Keep building works and improved arts/culture facilities	0						0	0	0	0
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	**2,182**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(26)**	**2,156**	**1,460**	**2,156**	**0**
Management & Sustainability										
Renewable Energy	5						5	5	5	0
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	1,008						1,008	468	1,008	0
Salix Re-Circulation Fund	168						168	14	168	0
Corporate Solar Programme	303						303	0	303	0
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	**1,484**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,484**	**487**	**1,484**	**0**
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	**39,785**	**0**	**1,256**	**0**	**0**	**(8,871)**	**32,170**	**14,276**	**32,170**	**0**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Resources										
Customer Digital Experience	867						867	49	867	0
Universal Digital Systems	2,427						2,427	252	2,427	0
IT Future Operating Model	1,941						1,941	260	1,941	0
Democratic Hybrid AV	190						190	0	190	0
Re-Procurement / Reimplementation of Finance System	202						202	598	202	0
Education Management System	77						77	0	77	0
Cemeteries and Crematorium	0						0	0	0	0
Cremator Procurement	185						185	11	185	0
Cremator	0						0	0	0	0
Burial Land Acquisition	0						0	5	0	0
Resources Total	**5,889**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5,889**	**1,175**	**5,889**	**0**
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)										
Additional School Places - Contingency	50					(50)	0	(1)	0	0
Blessed Hugh Faringdon - Asperger Unit 30 place expansion	0						0	(24)	0	0
Primary Schools Expansion Programme - 2013-2017	0						0	(8)	0	0
DFC	195		178				373	373	373	0
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	1,054					(754)	300	75	300	0
Asset Management	348						348	0	348	0
Children in care Emergency Provision	35						35	0	35	0
Civitas- Synthetic Sports Pitch	5					(5)	0	(4)	0	0
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	0						0	5	0	0
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety (Schools)	500					(225)	275	275	275	0
Fabric Condition Programme	2,900					(1,900)	1,000	801	1,000	0
Green Park Primary School	0						0	(109)	0	0

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	1,000					(200)	800	780	800	0
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	4					(2)	2	1	2	0
Katesgrove Primary Trooper Potts Building	0						0	0	0	0
Meadway Early Years Building Renovation	1					(1)	0	0	0	0
Modular Buildings Review	250					(250)	0	0	0	0
New ESFA funded schools - Phoenix College	0		26				26	26	26	0
Pinecroft-Children who have complex health,	2						2	0	2	0
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	300						300	0	300	0
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund (school)	2,778					(1,778)	1,000	241	1,000	0
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate Double	786					(786)	0	0	0	0
SCD Units	78					(38)	40	40	40	0
School Estate Solar PV Programme	0						0	(7)	0	0
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	300					(240)	60	30	60	0
SEN Norcot	83					(83)	0	0	0	0
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	500					(400)	100	70	100	0
The Heights Temporary School	351					(351)	0	0	0	0
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	2,500					(2,440)	60	36	60	0
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	**14,020**	**0**	**204**	**0**	**0**	**(9,503)**	**4,721**	**2,599**	**4,721**	**0**
Corporate										
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects)	4,595					195	4,790	374	3,383	(1,407)
Loan To RTL (Bus replacement programme)	0						0	0	0	0
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100						100	0	100	0
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	0						0	0	0	0
Minster Quarter	495						495	147	495	0
Corporate Total	**5,190**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**195**	**5,385**	**521**	**3,978**	**(1,407)**
General Fund Total	**67,090**	**0**	**1,460**	**0**	**0**	**(18,421)**	**50,129**	**19,203**	**48,722**	**(1,407)**

Appendix 4a - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Q2 changes £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additonal Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogramme d (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Spend to 31 December 2023 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)										
Disabled Facilities Grants	665						665	243	665	0
Extra care (cedar court)	0						0	91	0	0
Housing Management System	504						504	226	504	0
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal	5,119						5,119	6,506	5,119	0
Major Repairs - Zero Carbon Retrofit works	7,134						7,134	0	7,134	0
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	0						0	0	0	0
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	7,541						7,541	2,106	7,541	0
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	942						942	82	942	0
New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	11,659						11,659	6,693	11,659	0
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	**33,564**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**33,564**	**15,945**	**33,564**	**0**

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
General Fund											
Community & Social Care Services											
Adult Care and Health Services											
e-Marketplace & Equipment Renewal Portal Software	0	0	0	170	0	170	0	0	0	170	0
Mobile Working and Smart Device	0	0	0	150	0	150	0	0	0	150	0
Replacement of Community Re-ablement Software	0	0	0	62	0	62	0	0	0	62	0
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	455	(242)	213	3,513	242	3,755	3,698	0	3,698	7,666	0
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	**455**	**(242)**	**213**	**3,895**	**242**	**4,137**	**3,698**	**0**	**3,698**	**8,048**	**0**
Housing & Communities											
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	100	0	100	3,355	(3,355)	0	0	3,355	3,355	3,455	0
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal Encampments	13	0	13	25	0	25	25	0	25	63	0
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	41	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	0
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,197	0	1,197	1,197	0	1,197	1,197	0	1,197	3,591	0
Foster Carer Extensions	225	0	225	175	0	175	0	0	0	400	0
Private Sector Renewals	175	0	175	780	0	780	300	0	300	1,255	0
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	**1,751**	**0**	**1,751**	**5,532**	**(3,355)**	**2,177**	**1,522**	**3,355**	**4,877**	**8,805**	**0**
Community & Social Care Services - Total	**2,206**	**(242)**	**1,964**	**9,427**	**(3,113)**	**6,314**	**5,220**	**3,355**	**8,575**	**16,853**	**0**
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services											
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection											
Air Quality Monitoring	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0
Active Travel Tranche 2	805	(18)	787	0	18	18	0	0	0	805	0
Active Travel Tranche 3	500	(350)	150	1,887	350	2,237	0	0	0	2,387	0
Active Travel Tranche 4	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	0
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	0	0	0	29	0	29	0	0	0	29	0
Bus Service Improvement	2,000	0	2,000	13,610	0	13,610	0	0	0	15,610	0
Local Transport Plan Development	400	0	400	1,280	0	1,280	400	0	400	2,080	0
National Cycle Network Route 422	137	0	137	0	0	0	0	0	0	137	0
Reading West Station	2,464	(120)	2,344	0	120	120	0	0	0	2,464	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 1 & 2)	394	(377)	17	0	377	377	0	0	0	394	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	1,262	(762)	500	0	762	762	0	0	0	1,262	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 5 & 6)	0	0	0	9,000	0	9,000	5,000	0	5,000	14,000	0
Town Centre Street Trading Infrastructure	0	0	0	28	0	28	0	0	0	28	0
Construction of Green Park Station	225	0	225	70	0	70	0	0	0	295	0

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	326	0	326	326	0	326	326	0	326	978	0
CIL Local Funds - Community	15	(15)	0	584	15	599	0	0	0	599	0
CIL Local Funds - Transport	0	0	0	724	0	724	0	0	0	724	0
CIL Local Funds -Neighbourhood Allocation	0	0	0	477	0	477	0	0	0	477	0
S106 individual schemes list	0	0	0	988	0	988	0	0	0	988	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0	0	0	388	0	388	0	0	0	388	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	0	0	0	18	0	18	0	0	0	18	0
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	0	0	0	250	866	1,116	0	0	0	1,116	0
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour change	120	0	120	100	0	100	0	0	0	220	0
Transport Demand Management Scheme	50	0	50	550	0	550	0	0	0	600	0
Rogue Landlord Enforcement	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	0
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total	**8,866**	**(1,642)**	**7,224**	**30,309**	**2,508**	**32,817**	**5,726**	**0**	**5,726**	**45,767**	**0**
Culture											
Leisure Centre Procurement	6,000	0	6,000	3,244	0	3,244	170	0	170	9,414	0
Development of facilities at Prospect Park/Play	22	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0
Reading Football Club Social Inclusion Unit to SRLC	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,534	0	1,534	1,534	0
Small Leisure Schemes	273	202	475	488	(202)	286	0	0	0	761	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	825	83	908	3,926	(83)	3,843	11,379	0	11,379	16,130	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	1,300	(597)	703	10,679	597	11,276	113	0	113	12,092	0
Abbey Quarter restoration works	25	(5)	20	159	5	164	0	0	0	184	0
High Street Heritage Action Zone	800	(530)	270	186	530	716	0	0	0	986	0
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	0	0	0	320	0	320	0	0	0	320	0
Hexagon lighting & emergency lighting replacement	262	0	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	262	0
Hexagon replacement of PA System	0	0	0	360	0	360	0	0	0	360	0
Shared Prosperity Fund	33	0	33	201	0	201	0	0	0	234	0
Town Hall Equipment	44	17	61	0	(17)	(17)	0	0	0	44	0
Tilehurst Library Works	38	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0
Culture - Sub Total	**9,622**	**(830)**	**8,792**	**19,563**	**830**	**20,393**	**13,196**	**0**	**13,196**	**42,381**	**0**

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
Environmental & Commercial Services											
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	447	0	447	99	350	449	0	0	0	896	0
New Capital Bid - S106 Kenavon Drive Landscape	31	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0
Victoria Rec	12	(12)	0	450	52	502	0	0	0	502	0
Levelling Up Parks Fund	54	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	0
Restoration of historic Wall at Caversham Court Gardens	238	0	238	0	0	0	0	0	0	238	0
Forbury Gardens Bandstand	72	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	72	0
Ecological Works	21	(21)	0	0	21	21	0	0	0	21	0
John Rabson skatepark	77	0	77	275	0	275	0	0	0	352	0
Tree Planting	51	0	51	50	0	50	50	0	50	151	0
Highways Infrastructure Programme	6,700	(3,000)	3,700	6,509	3,000	9,509	6,900	0	6,900	20,109	0
Carriageways & Pavements Investment Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chestnut Walk Improvements	29	(29)	0	0	29	29	0	0	0	29	0
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	285	(285)	0	0	285	285	0	0	0	285	0
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	699	0	699	150	0	150	0	0	0	849	0
Highway Signals_Capital Bid	234	0	234	0	0	0	0	0	0	234	0
Highways Operational Resilience _ Capital Bid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highways Structures Capital Bid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Invest to save energy savings - Street lighting	428	0	428	160	0	160	0	0	0	588	0
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	0
Pedestrian dropped kerb facilities with tactile pavers	240	0	240	0	0	0	0	0	0	240	0
Pedestrian handrails	240	0	240	0	0	0	0	0	0	240	0
Pumping Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	42	0	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	0
Purchase of Electric Road Marking Machine	86	0	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	0
Railway footbridge lighting in West Reading	70	0	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	0
Reading Station Subway	406	(392)	14	0	392	392	0	0	0	406	0
Smart City Cluster project and C-ITS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town Centre Improvements	251	0	251	0	0	0	0	0	0	251	0
Cattle Market Car Park	516	(516)	0	0	516	516	0	0	0	516	0
Digitised TRO's	0	0	0	300	0	300	0	0	0	300	0
Eastern Area Access Works	19	0	19	180	0	180	0	0	0	199	0
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	238	(200)	38	388	200	588	150	0	150	776	0
Oxford Road Corridor Works	24	0	24	275	0	275	0	0	0	299	0
Traffic Management Schools	33	0	33	398	0	398	0	0	0	431	0
Western Area Access Works	13	0	13	115	0	115	0	0	0	128	0
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	1,312	(662)	650	0	662	662	0	0	0	1,312	0
Replacement Vehicles	4,688	0	4,688	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,688	0
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	**17,631**	**(5,117)**	**12,514**	**9,349**	**5,507**	**14,856**	**7,100**	**0**	**7,100**	**34,470**	**0**

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
Property & Asset Management											
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	30	5	35	426	(5)	421	0	0	0	456	0
Corporate and Community Buildings	2,025	0	2,025	1,757	0	1,757	1,000	0	1,000	4,782	0
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFfC Family Contact Centre - Development for Community Use	56	(36)	20	0	36	36	0	0	0	56	0
Katesgrove Community and YOS Refurbishment - Development for Community Use	41	5	46	0	(5)	(5)	0	0	0	41	0
BFFC Accommodation Review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,800	0	8,800	8,800	0
Regeneration Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acre Business Park	30	0	30	570	0	570	0	0	0	600	0
The Keep building works and improved arts/culture facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	**2,182**	**(26)**	**2,156**	**2,753**	**26**	**2,779**	**9,800**	**0**	**9,800**	**14,735**	**0**
Management & Sustainability											
Renewable Energy	5	0	5	658	0	658	0	0	0	663	0
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	1,008	0	1,008	364	0	364	0	0	0	1,372	0
Salix Re-Circulation Fund	168	0	168	0	0	0	0	0	0	168	0
Corporate Solar Programme	303	0	303	866	0	866	784	0	784	1,953	0
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	**1,484**	**0**	**1,484**	**1,888**	**0**	**1,888**	**784**	**0**	**784**	**4,156**	**0**
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	**39,785**	**(7,615)**	**32,170**	**63,862**	**8,871**	**72,733**	**36,606**	**0**	**36,606**	**141,509**	**0**
Resources											
Customer Digital Experience	867	0	867	758	0	758	0	0	0	1,625	0
Universal Digital Systems	2,427	0	2,427	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,427	0
IT Future Operating Model	1,941	0	1,941	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,941	0
Democratic Hybrid AV	190	0	190	0	0	0	0	0	0	190	0
Re-Procurement / Reimplementation of Finance System	202	0	202	0	0	0	0	0	0	202	0
Education Management System	77	0	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	0
Cemeteries and Crematorium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cremator Procurement	185	0	185	812	0	812	0	0	0	997	0
Cremator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burial Land Acquisition	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,641	0	1,641	1,641	0
Resources Total	**5,889**	**0**	**5,889**	**1,570**	**0**	**1,570**	**1,641**	**0**	**1,641**	**9,100**	**0**

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)											
Additional School Places - Contingency	50	(50)	0	300	50	350	300	0	300	650	0
Blessed Hugh Faringdon - Asperger Unit 30 place expansion (SEN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary Schools Expansion Programme - 2013-2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DFC	195	178	373	0	0	0	0	0	0	373	0
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	1,054	(754)	300	0	754	754	0	0	0	1,054	0
Asset Management	348	0	348	306	0	306	312	0	312	966	0
Children in care Emergency Provision	35	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0
Civitas- Synthetic Sports Pitch	5	(5)	0	19	5	24	0	0	0	24	0
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	0	0	0	126	0	126	0	0	0	126	0
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety (Schools)	500	(225)	275	500	225	725	300	0	300	1,300	0
Fabric Condition Programme	2,900	(1,900)	1,000	1,457	1,900	3,357	900	0	900	5,257	0
Green Park Primary School	0	0	0	60	0	60	0	0	0	60	0
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	1,000	(200)	800	695	200	895	282	0	282	1,977	0
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	4	(2)	2	4	2	6	0	0	0	8	0
Katesgrove Primary Trooper Potts Building	0	0	0	56	0	56	0	0	0	56	0
Meadway Early Years Building Renovation	1	(1)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Modular Buildings Review	250	(250)	0	600	250	850	250	0	250	1,100	0
New ESFA funded schools - Phoenix College	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0
Pinecroft-Children who have complex health, physical,sensory,disabilities & challenging behaviour	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	300	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	0
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund (school)	2,778	(1,778)	1,000	3,437	1,778	5,215	0	0	0	6,215	0
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate Double Glazing Programme	786	(786)	0	0	786	786	0	0	0	786	0
SCD Units	78	(38)	40	0	38	38	0	0	0	78	0
School Estate Solar PV Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	300	(240)	60	100	240	340	0	0	0	400	0
SEN Norcot	83	(83)	0	0	83	83	0	0	0	83	0
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	500	(400)	100	1,810	400	2,210	1,810	0	1,810	4,120	0
The Heights Temporary School	351	(351)	0	0	351	351	0	0	0	351	0
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	2,500	(2,440)	60	0	2,440	2,440	0	0	0	2,500	0
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	**14,020**	**(9,299)**	**4,721**	**9,470**	**9,503**	**18,973**	**4,154**	**0**	**4,154**	**27,848**	**0**

Appendix 4b - Capital Programme Quarter 3 (2023/24 to 2025/26)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2023/24 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2023/24 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £000	Approved Budget 2024/25 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 with Quarter 2 changes £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £000	Total Revised Budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2026/27 £000
Corporate											
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects)	4,595	195	4,790	1,782	(195)	1,587	0	0	0	6,377	0
Loan To RTL (Bus replacement programme)	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	2,500	0	2,500	7,500	0
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	300	0
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	0	0	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	0	0	2,000	0
Minster Quarter	495	0	495	532	0	532	0	0	0	1,027	0
Corporate Total	**5,190**	**195**	**5,385**	**9,414**	**(195)**	**9,219**	**2,600**	**0**	**2,600**	**17,204**	**0**
General Fund Total	**67,090**	**(16,961)**	**50,129**	**93,743**	**15,066**	**108,809**	**50,221**	**3,355**	**53,576**	**212,514**	**0**
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)											
Disabled Facilities Grants	665	0	665	688	(88)	600	700	(100)	600	1,865	0
Extra care (cedar court)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Management System	504	0	504	0	225	225	0	0	0	729	0
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal	5,119	0	5,119	8,521	2,711	11,232	18,686	(7,349)	11,337	27,688	0
Major Repairs - Zero Carbon Retrofit works	7,134	0	7,134	11,582	(5,232)	6,350	10,667	(6,567)	4,100	17,584	0
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	0	0	0	0	1,186	1,186	0	0	0	1,186	0
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	7,541	0	7,541	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,541	0
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	942	0	942	12,737	0	12,737	25,156	0	25,156	38,835	0
New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	11,659	0	11,659	15,655	0	15,655	12,593	584	13,177	40,491	0
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	**33,564**	**0**	**33,564**	**49,183**	**(1,198)**	**47,985**	**67,802**	**(13,432)**	**54,370**	**135,919**	**0**

Appendix 5: Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Status	DOT	Corporate Plan Theme	Title	Frequency	Target	Unit	Latest Value	Updated	Previous	Comments
▲	↑	Foundations	Customer satisfaction in the Customer Fulfilment Centre	Quarterly	90.00	%	84.00	12-23	77.10	• Performance was disrupted during a period of service restructure, with a number of vacancies including in management roles – these have now been recruited to. • Although below target, this indicator continues to improve each month • Improvements to the performance management systems within the service continue, including enhancing the use of qualitative feedback • Stronger recording and reporting is in place, improving the understanding of demand drivers and satisfaction levels
▲	↓	Foundations	Deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy	Quarterly	164.40	£ million	169.53	12-23	168.10	
●	↑	Foundations	Number of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice date	Quarterly	85.00	%	87.25	12-23	85.05	The total Invoices paid within 30 days of the invoice date for 23/24 in Q1 85.56%, Q2 was 85.05%, Q3 (October - November only information) 87.25% December KPI stats are being tested as part of the move to the new finance system e5 - bespoke report writing training using a new application Jaspersoft is being provided to RBC staff in January.
●	↓	Foundations	Number of self- service transactions via My Account self- service	Monthly	25000.00	No.	25801.00	12-23	26200.00	Following the recent Google Analytics platform switch in the summer, we identified discrepancies in our KPI reporting in early September. Specifically, the new platform has been incorrectly reporting the number of submitted forms to the Granicus platform. Instead of the expected 20,000 submissions per month, the platform is showing less than 200. We have investigated this issue and following the best practive have implemeted a new google tag to measure form submissions. This will take time to test the implemented methodology. As it differs significantly on what came before we will want to collect and thorough test that data. In the meantime, we have been able to extract an accurate measurement of form submissions based on other variables we are still able to collect. We expect a variance of less than 500 between actual and calculated figures so this should not affect trend analysis greatly.

Appendix 5: Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Status	DOT	Corporate Plan Theme	Title	Frequency	Target	Unit	Latest Value	Updated	Previous	Comments
▲	↑	Foundations	Percentage of responses to complaints within agreed timescales	Quarterly	70.00	%	63.80	12-23	56.50	A total of 302 complaints were responded by BFfC & RBC to in Q3, with 192 (63.8%) going out in the agreed timescale. Of the 302 above, 36 were sent from BFfC with 28 (77.7%) going out in timescale. The remining 268 were for RBC with 166 (61.9%) going out within the agreed timescales.
◆	↓	Foundations	Percentage of responses to the public on Freedom of Information Act requests made within 20 days	Quarterly	90.00	%	73.40	12-23	75.60	294 FOI's received in Q3, 51 less than the 345 received in Q2, and 54 less than the 348 FOI's received in Q1. Q3 is over the Christmas period when a decline in requests is common. During Q1 and start of Q2 Granicus released a software update which resulted in FOI's being delayed. Had the update happened as expected, the 21 cases that were impacted in Q2 would have been responded to within the target date then the percentage sent out in timescale would change from 75.6% to 80.5%
◆	↑	Healthy Environment	Food waste recycled (percentage of household waste)	Quarterly	15.00	%	11.80	12-23	11.60	Food waste (from schools and the kerbside) represented 11.8% of household waste in Qtr3 2023/24. This compares to 12.9% in the same quarter last year. Food tonnages have declined whilst total household waste has increased. Lower food waste tonnes compared to the same period last year could be the result of residents having become more aware of the amount of food they were wasting. If lower tonnages are the result of waste reduction, this is a positive outcome. Increased financial pressures may also be causing residents to waste less food. However, we are also aware that some food waste is present in the residual waste, and we need to capture this for recycling. A recent compositional analysis of the residual waste (Sept 2023) showed that less food waste was present when compared to the previous study. However, the amount of food waste remained high.
●	↓	Healthy Environment	Percentage of actionable (40mm depth) potholes repaired within 28 days	Quarterly	99.00	%	99.25	12-23	99.28	There was an issue with the Asset Management System (WDM) not exporting the data - this has been resolved.

Appendix 5: Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Status	DOT	Corporate Plan Theme	Title	Frequency	Target	Unit	Latest Value	Updated	Previous	Comments
		Healthy Environment	Percentage of Houses of Multiple Occupation that are licensed	Quarterly	43.00	%	43.90	12-23	43.60	1429 Number licences 3rd quarter = 43.9%
		Healthy Environment	Percentage total household waste recycled	Quarterly	52.00	%	47.10	12-23	52.10	The provisional recycling rate for Qtr3 2023/24 is 47.1%. This compares to 48.5% for the same quarter last year. Despite higher garden waste tonnages, other recyclables (including food waste) have declined.
		Inclusive Economy	Cumulative reduction in crime (based on Thames Valley Police crime reporting figures)	Quarterly	7.00	%	16.00	06-23		16% increase against 2019/20 baseline for Q1. Analysis not yet undertaken. National data not yet available for Q2.
		Inclusive Economy	Number of school places for children and young people with Special educational need and disability (SEND)	Quarterly	422.00	No.	564.00	12-23	534.00	We continue to increase places to meet the demand through provisioning additional resource in the maintained sector. A strategic asset based review approach has been undertaken to identify options to develop special school provision through current school sites, which wil be considered by Council in Spring 2024.
		Inclusive Economy	Number of visits to our libraries	Monthly	187.50	No. (k)/yr	206.10	12-23	187.70	Tracking well to target. Some estimations included Cumulative figures
		Inclusive Economy	Participation at Council cultural venues	Quarterly	243.75	No. (k)/yr	136.13	12-23	39.92	NB visits per 1,000
		Inclusive Economy	Percentage of Care Leavers who are not in education, employed or training for work (NEET)	Quarterly	30.00	%	37.00	12-23	30.30	Our cohort of 17-18yr old care leavers are more likely to be in education, employment and training and are within target. However, there has been an increase in the number of 19-21yr old care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Focused work is underway to breakdown this cohort to better understand what is needed and to ensure that this is addressed in care leavers' individual plans.
		Inclusive Economy	Percentage of people with a learning disability in paid employment	Monthly	5.50	%	4.75	12-23	4.75	This KPI remains a high priority in the Transition and SEND groups, proactive work is being undertaken with the Elevate and New Direction College to target residents with LD. We are in the process of commissioning a supported employment provision for service users with an LD and Mental Health.

Appendix 5: Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Status	DOT	Corporate Plan Theme	Title	Frequency	Target	Unit	Latest Value	Updated	Previous	Comments
		Thriving Communities	Number of carers supported to maintain their caring role	Quarterly	140.00	No.	324.00	12-23	224.00	With the new commissioned service the number of carers assessment continues to increase.
		Thriving Communities	Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	Monthly	337.50	No/yr	532.00	12-23	480.00	Data is cumulative to date.
		Thriving Communities	Number of NHS Health Checks delivered to residents	Quarterly	385.00	No. per qtr	907.00	12-23	1194.00	The total number of NHS Health Checks provided in Q2 has been amended to reflect an additional 229 universal Checks not reported by Western Elms Surgery at the time. The total number of NHS Health Checks provided to eligible Reading residents fell in Q3 to 907. This included 850 provided by GPs and 57 provided by RBH Trust to staff who were Reading residents. Of the 850 Checks provided by GPs, 72% were targeted. GPs were asked to reduce the number of NHS Health Checks they provide in Q3 and Q4 to minimise the projected overspend in the PH budget for 23/24. The new Community Wellness Outreach Service started offering targeted NHS Health Checks on 15 December. We anticipate that data will be available for Q4.
		Thriving Communities	Number of stop smoking service users, who have set a date to stop smoking and are still not smoking 4 weeks later, that are routine and manual workers	Quarterly	36.00	No. per qtr	34.00	12-23	43.00	Due to the lag in the stop smoking service data, the Q2 is now confirmed at 43. The figure of 34 for Q3 is a provisional estimate only at this time.
		Thriving Communities	Older People (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement	Monthly	85.00	%	83.30	12-23	83.33	The service continues to deliver good outcomes and performance is currently exceeding target

Appendix 5: Corporate Plan Performance Measures (Monthly & Quarterly) Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Status	DOT	Corporate Plan Theme	Title	Frequency	Target	Unit	Latest Value	Updated	Previous	Comments
▲	↑	Thriving Communities	Percentage of children in care living more than 20 miles from Reading	Quarterly	26.00	%	27.00	12-23	29.00	Proactive action taken to address the challenge of a lack of local care placements (a challenge that Local Authorities across England are experiencing) is beginning to evidence impact, with more children being initially placed in or returning to live with foster carers and in residential care in Reading. The number of children who became looked after and moved outside of Reading some years ago and are settled with long term carers beyond 20 miles continues to have a high proportionate impact on this indicator.
●	↓	Thriving Communities	Percentage of new contacts to the Advice & Wellbeing hub resulting in a successful outcome not requiring an on-going service	Monthly	82.00	%	89.00	12-23	90.00	Staff are supporting residents in a proactive manner, signposting residents to voluntary sector and continuing to use a Strength Based Approach
◆	↑	Thriving Communities	Percentage of service users in receipt of Adult Social Care Direct Payments	Monthly	25.00	%	21.02	12-23	20.81	We have a dedicated DP Officer who works to match service users with Personal Assistants however, service users prefer the council to commission their services for them but we continue to promote DPs.
▲	↑	Thriving Communities	Percentage of service users supported to live independently in the community	Monthly	76.00	%	74.30	12-23	74.20	Community Based provision remains a priority for Adult Social Care and teams are working with residents and families to remain at home as long as possible. Residential and nursing care would always be the last resort based on complexity and need.
◆	↑	Thriving Communities	Youth re-offending rate	Quarterly	28.00	%	32.80	12-23	35.40	Re-offending rates within Reading had historically been beneath our comparators. More recently our reoffending rate has risen although the latest cohort data (Jan 21 – Dec 21) has a rate of 32.8% which represents a decrease and is more in line with the national rate of 31.4% for this period. In Reading, we continue to work with children who offend inorder to reduce the scale of further offending, and engagement abilities, risk management processes and wider partnership support plays a part in this.

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Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Foundations	Embedding the Hub and Spoke structure. Deliver a programme of work to ensure that we get the best value for money for the goods and services that we buy	▲	●	●	→	Procurement Transformation programme commenced in October 2023 and is reporting to the Transformation & Efficiency Board monthly on progress. Several elements of various workstreams have been completed and others are making strong progress.
Foundations	Implement new finance system with improved business processes	▲	▲	●	↑	The new finance system, e5, went live in early December across RBC and BFfC. All financial processes are operating successfully including the transfer of financial data between systems, raising of purchase orders, payment of suppliers and customer billing. The project is now in a hyper care period through to February 2024 when the Finance Systems Team is being supplemented by specialist resources to complete knowledge transfer in system management, resolve support requests and deliver refresher training to end users.
Foundations	Implement Social Value Strategy and reporting	▲	▲	▲	→	An interim Social Value register has now been put in place for Service Areas to record social value promised at tender stage and delivery throughout the contract. This is on the procurement Intranet site so that all can update and that we can accurately report on delivery. The refreshed Social Value Policy is still in development and is being circulated for feedback with internal key stakeholders.
Foundations	Implementation of new customer platform	●	▲	▲	→	Still a challenging timeline due to complexity of data migration from the legacy system and additional resources have been applied to ensure Built Environment and Regulatory Services elements of the project remain on track for delivery in February/March 2024. Supplier side delay on the Customer element of the project has been resolved and plan has been accepted by Customer Experience Board for release of initial implementation in July 2024. Costs have increased but are contained within associated capital budgets and are being closely monitored by the project and the Customer Experience Board alike. A range of opportunities are being identified as the projects progress through the implementation phase and are providing a backlog of next stage work following go-live and feeding into the overall planning for Customer Experience transformation work.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Foundations	Implementation of the Connected Reading Strategy					Case and Customer Management: The Case stream (replacing Civica APP) remains on track for delivery this financial year (minor move of date from February to March to allow additional testing and data migration time); the delay to the discovery phase of the Customer stream (replacing Granicus) reported last quarter has led to the need to split the go-live of that stream from the Case stream; Customer will now go live in summer 24. The current status of work packages of our digital transformation delivery partner (PwC) is as follows: 1) Customer Journey Optimisation – voice automation proof of concept delivered in December and in assessment. Customer Journey Optimisation proposal under review and to be commissioned in January. 2) Adult Social Care System and Process review – scoping study complete; work in progress to scope first implementation stage 3) Adult Social Care Digital Front Door – scoping study complete; work in progress to agree implementation plan 4) Housing Digital Presence – all commissioned work now delivered 5) PMO – PwC work complete; key processes and reports agreed; further development, communication and embedding in progress by internal PMO team, which is now close to being fully staffed. The status of other transformation projects is as follows: Independent Living – Our bid for £1m of NHS funding over 2 years to expand the pilot was successful, and mobilisation of the expanded project is well in progress, funding having been released at the end of December Digital inclusion – All community centres now have public WiFi Microsoft 365 Adoption & Exploitation - a project to build and equip a network of local digital ambassadors is now in its inception stage, with a project manager in place. Progress and plans were briefed to the October 2023 Policy Committee and, on that basis, the programme is considered rebaselined and returned to green status.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Foundations	Implementation of the Customer Experience Programme	▲	▲	●	↑	The Customer Experience Board continues to meet monthly and progress projects and initiatives in the Transformation Programme workstreams. Work highlighted in the last quarters update relating to a deep dive into six service areas and a number of customer journeys was undertaken and has provided additional confidence to support the business case for Customer Experience in the next MTFP. In addition, a voice automation trial was launched before the Christmas break and is currently undergoing a proof of value trial. Two areas make up this trial that seek to automate the reporting of missed bins, and the ordering of a new or replacement waste containers, providing residents who wish to use the telephone channel to access these services the opportunity to do so 24/7, while also reducing demand on mediated contact handled required by the Customer Fulfilment Centre. The proof of value trial will report back findings to the Customer Experience Board at the beginning of February and if deemed successful will lead to the technology being rolled out to other suitable service areas. Work will also commence early February on opportunities identified in the 'deep dive' work completed in conjunction with the Digital Transformation Delivery Partners (PwC). This work will be made up of 8-10 sprints over the next 12 months focusing on Customer Experience improvement and delivering efficiencies across a number of identified customer journeys.
Foundations	Implementation of the Information Management Strategy	▲	▲	▲	→	We are working with the Data Stewards in BFfC and DACHS on the Action Plan work. We also have representation at the meetings from Records Management Unit and Digital, Technology & Change theme. The monthly meetings have good attendance and engagement. We are in the process of setting out working arrangements with the Data Stewards from DoR and DEGNS with the intention of having the first meeting in March 2024. The Data Stewards have completed the Information Asset Register (IAR) and Record of Processing Activities (ROPA) and Privacy Notice for BFfC. The DACHS Data Stewards have completed the Information Asset Register (IAR) and Record of Processing Activities (ROPA). The former DACHS area of work has merged with Housing & Communities (H&C) and are DCASC, the H&C Data Stewards are waiting to be confirmed so that they can join the next meeting in February to start governance work on their service areas.
Healthy Environment	£9 million investment in resurfacing roads and pavements. (Complete) (Further £8m investment project underway)	▲	●	▲	↓	Phase 2: Contract going out in March 2024 with an enhanced road list to incorporate the additional funding received from DfT following HS2 curtailment. This means works will now start later than planned but will include a much larger programme.
Healthy Environment	Climate Emergency Strategy	▲	▲	▲	→	The majority of actions remain green (on track) or amber (progressing but at risk of not being delivered by the target date). Further details are included in the Annual Progress Report for 2022/23 which was produced and presented to SEPT Committee in November 2023 (see https://readingcan.org.uk/about-us/annualreport/). An increasing number of strategy actions have been over-taken by events and the process of reviewing the Strategy and associated action plans for the period 2025-30 has been initiated by the Reading Climate Change Partnership so that a revised Strategy can be produced in the latter part of 2025.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Healthy Environment	Decarbonisation of the Hexagon theatre through improved heating and lighting.	▲	▲	▲	→	Decarbonisation of the Hexagon is focusing on heating and lighting. The replacement of the house and emergency lighting commenced in September 2023 and is scheduled to complete by August 2024, the contractors are working around events programme, with the busy autumn season and pantomime limiting works in Nov and Dec. In December senior officers approved the appointment of RSK Consultants to provide technical support to the GSHP design to help start the appointment process of a bore hole contractor with the aim to carry out bore hole investigations in the Spring. In the interim, Property Services have commissioned a technical report on the Hexagon mechanical plant and heating systems to assess the implementation of GSHP heat delivery system within the Hexagon itself.
Healthy Environment	Delivery of Capital Education Property Development Programme	●	●	●	→	
Healthy Environment	Delivery of over 150 actions to contribute to the overall vision to mitigate and adapt to climate change	▲	▲	▲	→	The latest Annual Report (2022/23) on the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy detailed good progress, with the majority of the 150 actions within the Strategy ranked 'Green' or 'Amber' (see https://readingcan.org.uk/about-us/annualreport/ for details). The reduction of 51% in Reading's carbon footprint between 2005 and 2021 (the latest year for which data is available) is the 8th highest reduction of 374 local authority areas in the UK and Reading's per capita emissions are also the lowest in Berkshire. Whilst Reading's relative performance is strong, however, the Borough's carbon footprint increased by almost 10% between 2020 and 2021 as emissions 're-bounded' following the lifting of pandemic restrictions, and the pace of emissions reduction needs to increase significantly to align with the target in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy of 'net zero by 2030'. The 2022 data (which is drawn from a national statistics dataset for UK emissions within the scope of local authorities) will be published in June 2024.
Healthy Environment	Electrification of fleet	▲	▲	▲	→	2 of the 7 E Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) have been received, with remaining 5 expected at a rate of one per week, completion by second week in March. Long term fleet procurment plan being updated to set out a clear pathway to zero carbon vehicles by 2030.
Healthy Environment	New Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Reading	●	●	●	→	The consultation on the new LTP closed on 11 December 2023.
Healthy Environment	Retaining our position on the 'A' list' for bold leadership on climate change	●	●	●	→	The Council submitted its annual return to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in July 2023. Following external assessment, the Council was advised in November 2023 that Reading had retained it's place on the CDP 'A' list of Councils taking bold climate action, one of only 26 UK local authorities to receive this ranking in 2023.
Healthy Environment	The allocation of £1.6 million Community Infrastructure Funds and commencement of the approved schemes	▲	▲	▲	→	£1.6 million of Community Infrastructure Levy funds were allocated to 18 local projects in March 2022 by Policy Committee. Work has completed on 11 of the projects, whilst the remainder are currently underway, in the preparatory stages or are awaiting the completion of other projects.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Inclusive Economy	Actions arising from the Powered by People strategy	●	●	●	→	Our Outreach in the Community events ran in Whitley through to the end of November and followed from an event at Job Fest. A total of 509 interactions have now taken place. The second Rotary-organised self-employment course ended in December, 16 completed the course and 11 are expected to apply for start up grants. Abbey Rotary will complete two more courses before Spring. The self employment course by Supersonic StartUp runs until February with participants receiving intense one to one support, learners are at 15 at moment. Education Business Partnership has two more sessions to deliver, including at JMA, and is on target to reach 3,860 student employer interactions through 27 events at 7 secondary schools. The new programme is in discussion to align schools support with Green and Screen Skills. DWP will be working with Reading Economic Development Agency (REDA) to deliver at least 2 Job Fairs in 2024 and focus skills support on Over 50's. All delivery is being aligned with Tackling Inequality aims. The Creative Skills task and finish group has been meeting with the aim of aligning Screen Production Skills with other creative industries and skills delivery across Reading, a newly commissioned piece of research on current delivery and the development of Apprenticeships is expected this month. REDA is working with partners including Screen Berks, to develop a local pipeline involving creative skills as a lifetime skills option.
Inclusive Economy	Adoption of a new Town Centre Strategy	▲	▲	▲	→	Stakeholder engagement ongoing. Review of the scope of Town Centre Strategy and updates to key projects being undertaken.
Inclusive Economy	Bring forward the Minster Quarter site for development	▲	▲	●	↑	Recommendation to approve preferred bidder taken at 22 January Policy Committee. Procurement standstill now commences before finalisation of Development Agreement occurs in Spring/Summer 2024.
Inclusive Economy	Complete and open Green Park Station	●	●	●	→	Reading Green Park Station was opened on Saturday 25 May 2023.
Inclusive Economy	Complete Reading West Station upgrade	▲	▲	▲	→	Construction works by GWR's contractor are complete and Network Rail approval processes have commenced.
Inclusive Economy	Continued delivery of South Reading Mass Rapid Transport	●	●	●	→	Main contractor appointed and works due to commence in January.
Inclusive Economy	Create a diverse and inclusive workforce where everyone, regardless of their background, level or vocation, is able to thrive and reach their full potential	●	●	●	→	Personnel Committee agreed the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and plan at their December meeting. The strategy is being launched in January 2024. There is a three year action plan associated with the strategy. A regular review process has been developed involving the Chie Executive and relevant SMEs/staff groups.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Inclusive Economy	Create a workforce that is fully representative of the population we serve	●	▲	▲	→	Progress continues to be made towards this target - data from the recruitment team demonstrates a much more diverse set of appointments being made. Monthly statistics are provided to Corporate Management Team about the demographics of our workforce, including this aspect . NB we are using our 2023 data and are comparing it to the 2021 census data for the borough as this is the most up to date information we can use for comparison purposes. Currently 18.2% of our staff are from a BME background compared to c30% of the Borough's popluation - this is an increase on previous quarters. Annual pay gap reporting showed encouraging results, The Council's gender pay gap is 0.0% whilst the ethnicity pay gap is -0.4%
Inclusive Economy	Deliver our Reducing Inequality Strategy through a place based approach to improving skills education and training.	●	●	●	→	The Tackling Inequality Strategy (TIS) Action Plan is being delivered with 44 Actions being delivered by BFfC, New Directions College and REDA. An update on the TIS delivery is being considered by Policy Committee in January 24. The Place Based Pilots in the south of Reading have identified projects to support the programme objectives which are being considered by the Programme Sponsors for delivery.
Inclusive Economy	Deliver the High Street Heritage Action Zones project objectives.	▲	▲	▲	→	Major issue with main contractor for shop front improvements on Oxford Road. Their essential sub-contractors have closed down their business in December. Main contractors promising things they are not delivering for past two months. We are looking at options with Architects team and Historic England. Likely to terminate the contractrs and try to find alternative contractor(s) to finalise some of the works. Public realm- Installation of the railing on Bedford road completed. Forecourt paving: Works has began on Monday 8th January in the area outside 78-84 Oxford Rd with site set up and setting out followed by removal of the existing surfaces and preparation for installing the new burnt ochre concrete block paving. is completed. Works will now move westwards to the area outside Nos 139-141 completing by the end of March outside 205-209. Meetings with shop owners and tenants have been held early January to ensure stakeholders are aware of the works and can easily contact the Council should they need. Access to properties and shops will be maintained at all times. Ghost sign139-141 Oxford Road: We will need to confirm with highways the type of license we need. But owners are happy with the project. We will need to submit the Listed Building Consent.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Inclusive Economy	Develop adult skills, employment support and implement training programmes	●	●	●	→	We have been working in Partnership with Thames Water creating a tailored program aimed at enhancing the business English skills of refugees living in Reading facilitating their integration into the workforce. This tailored initiative encompasses various components, such as employability-focused modules, individual mentorship from Thames Water professionals, and regular workshops hosted by the company. We have successfully delivered Interview Skills workshops to support British National Overseas (BNO) individuals, supporting them on the path of Employment, and integration. Meanwhile, our ongoing Smile project is going well with the next Hospitality programme due to start next month, expanding our offerings to meet diverse needs. Our Supported Hospitality programme has also grown, with a new cohort which started in January and the September group progressing to higher-level.
Inclusive Economy	Employment and Skills programme delivered via REDA	●	●	●	→	There are currently seven Employment and Skills Plans (ESP's) signed with developers locally, four of these are currently underway - following the completion of Phase 1 of Station Hill with Midgard. Phase 2 with Sir Alfred McAlpine is ongoing. There are at least six other significant plans in the development pipeline. New data is still awaited on some sites and the cumulative ESP output since October remains at 771: 25 apprenticeships, 452 local jobs, 38 work experience opportunities and education support to 256 students. Construction teams have engaged with several local schools including Civitas and Reading Girls, providers including New Meaning and Reading College, the University of Reading and Brighter Futures. ESP contributions continue to support the programme agreed by Policy Committee in Dec 22, outlined under Powered by People as above.
Inclusive Economy	Implement and subsequently expand a new apprenticeship and work experience mentoring scheme	▲	▲	▲	→	• Work experience- action completed already • Apprenticeships: We currently have 80 apprentices at the council -4.6% of the workforce(based on headcount 4.9% if using Full Time Equivalent FTE). We have an internal target for 2.3% FTE of our workforce to be comprised of newly recruited members of staff. We currently have 1.24% (20) with a recruitment campaign launching during National Apprenticeship week 5-11 February. The campaign consists of 10 roles, 4 ringfenced for care experienced/care leavers and 6 open recruitment. Work continues with Service areas to ensure new apprentice roles are included in workforce redesigns.
Inclusive Economy	Revitalisation of the Hexagon & Central Library	▲	▲	●	↑	Planning permission secured in January for Reading Libary and Civic Redesign. Planning application submitted for Hexagon Studio Theatre.
Inclusive Economy	Shape the 3 year delivery plan 2022-25 for Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy	●	●	●	→	Community workshop due to take place in March to understand impact of the statement and to gather any updates needed to the plan.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Inclusive Economy	Work in partnership to further the community and Council ambitions for Reading Gaol				→	Up to 31 Dec no further information on the sale. On January 11 2024, the Government announced it had sold the prison to a not for profit education foundation.
Thriving Communities	Berks West Health & Wellbeing Strategy - Five implementation plans delivering in collaboration with statutory, voluntary and community partners a range of health improvement actions across the five priority areas: 1. Reducing the difference in health between different groups of people; 2 Support for individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives; 3. Help children and families in early years; 4. Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people; 5. Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults				→	A paper on the delivery against the KPIs in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 19.01.24. The report indicates that the majority of indicators on the dashboard for the five priority implementation plans and actions within them are Green and continuing to progress well, with some being amber but progress continues to be made against these action, though progress may be slower. None of the actions are red - evidencing good progress against the 3 year implementation plans. However, because of the good progress the actions within the plans will be reviewed this year in March in addition to actions, where appropriate, that address local need.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Thriving Communities	BFfC have set four key priorities which are based on what success would look like by putting our young people at the heart of what we do, to drive all improvement and initatives: Priority 1: work together and across local partnerships to provide the right support and services at the right time to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and their families. Priority 2: deliver effective early help services to prevent the escalation of need at a later stage while contributing to increased resilience across the partnership to meet children's need at the earliest opportunity. Priority 3: deliver a sustainable Children Social Care service through practice rooted in relational and timely statutory engagement with families. Priority 4: support education settings to offer high quality inclusive teaching and learning to support achievement for all, including those who require bespoke, specialised or SEND support.	▲	▲	▲	→	The rise in demand across early help, children's social care and services for children with SEND continues. The children's transformation programme is now being implemented. The restructure of Early Help concluded in December and phase 2, the development of a Family Hub model for Reading, is due to start in January 2024. This will align with the partnership review of the Early Help Strategy. The DfE funded RISE team, aimed at meeting children with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) earlier is in place as of January 2024. An increase in Additionally Resourced Provision in mainstream schools in Reading has also been achieved and continues, meaning that more children can have their needs met in their local mainstream school.
Thriving Communities	Celebrate Reading's diverse arts, culture and heritage. Use arts, culture, heritage and leisure as a vehicle for delivering placemaking; health and wellbeing; inclusion; economic development and lifelong learning outcomes.	●	●	●	→	Oct - Dec Successful delivery of Black History Month. Launch of small creative grants aimed at giving everyone the opportunity to get involved in creative activities. Theatre show to teach young people about the dangers of knife crime and gangs. Funded Whitley Winter Wonderland to support the launch of the micro grants and will be delivering a day of creative activity in Whitley Wood community centre . Writing a funding bid with Hong Kong Association and Reading Libraries for activities to be delivered in Libraries linked to Cantonese books for children and their families.

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Thriving Communities	Complete the restoration of the crematorium chapels and ancillary facilities	●	▲	●	↑	Works deferred in the capital programme to 2025/26.
Thriving Communities	Continue to deliver investment in the borough's leisure facilities, including improvements at South Reading Leisure Centre and progress on the new Rivermead Leisure Centre.	●	●	●	→	South Reading Leisure Centre - Significant extra work is required to the pool tank. Once the top layer of the concrete was removed, significant corrosion of steel work was found, necessitating replacement works. This could not be seen until the destructive element of the preparation work was completed. There is sufficient time contingency within the programme, the cost impact is an additional 42k. An ODN was submitted in Dec 23. GLL were instructed to continue with works to prevent delays.
Thriving Communities	Deliver 300 new Council homes	●	●	●	→	Works are progressing well on site and we remain on target to deliver the new homes. However, risks continue as HS2, Inflation, Brexit and the war in Ukraine has had an impact on the construction industry. We are seeing issues throughout the supply chain and the procurement of main contractors has proved challenging on a couple of schemes.
Thriving Communities	Deliver key improvements to the library service, including plans for the Central Library.	●	●	●	→	Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Q3 has seen the library design largely finalised. Work ongoing on potential disposal of items and decant Plan of numbers of stock starting to be created and will be finalised in January (Planning granted in January) Non LUF * replacement printers ordered for all libraries * new customer app soft launched, formal to follow in Q4 * new library cards and external branding all now done * Tilehurst self-operating system failed final testing in December, will be replaced in Q4
Thriving Communities	Deliver zero carbon initiatives within Council homes	●	●	●	→	New local authority housing at Passivhaus standards being developed e.g. at Wensley Road
Thriving Communities	Development of a Personal Assistant Market to enable people to live independently at home	●	●	●	→	Completed Project - now Business as Usual

Appendix 6: Corporate Plan Projects & Initiatives Quarter 3 (2023/24)

Corporate Plan theme	Project or activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	DOT	Commentary
Thriving Communities	Development of a voluntary sector-led Adult Social Care Front Door	▲	▲	●	↑	A Prior Information Notice was published December 2023 on Intend and via email distribution lists to ASC networks, which has provided an idea of interest and feedback has informed the final developments of commissioning intensions. The project budget has been agreed to be increased to £300K per year, utilising underspend from this financial year split out to 2024/25 and 2025/26. The tender has been opened for bidding 8th January and closes 23rd February, on schedule as per revised project planning with scheduled contract award end of March. To date 11 organisations have registered an interest on Intend.
Thriving Communities	Embedding outcomes based working and independence skills within Supported Living	●	●	●	→	Project Closed. Managed as part of business as usual.
Thriving Communities	Implement plans to commemorate the Forbury Gardens attacks and install a permanent memorial in the Gardens	●	●	●	→	Complete
Thriving Communities	Implementation of the VCS action plan to build our relationship with the VCS and increase capacity within the sector.	●	●	●	→	A new draft Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Compact Action Plan has been produced following the VCS Assesmbly meeting and input from Reading Voluntary Action. This draft action plan will be considered by the Social Inclusion Board. Regular engagement with the VCS has continued, including monthly Voluntary Information Network meetings and direct engagement on specific issues.
Thriving Communities	Procure and implement crowdfunding solution to support projects delivered by the voluntary and community sector	▲	◆		↓	Project no longer proceeding. Removed in Q2.
Thriving Communities	Review and expansion of the Community Reablement Team to maximise peoples independence	◆	●	●	→	Moved to Business As Usual (BAU)
Thriving Communities	Work with our partners and GLL new leisure provider to increase rates of physical activity and attendance at borough leisure centres	▲	▲	▲	→	GLL recorded 218,087 visits to our leisure centres in the third quarter, taking the total visits YTD to 627,421. The membership base, Swimschool programme and fitness classes continue to grow in numbers. Work has been ongoing between Public Health and GLL to refine the contract specification developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with supporting KPIs to measure and evidence the impact of the leisure contract on improving health and wellbeing, across the life course through promoting healthy habits, with particular focus on physical activity.

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Policy Committee

11 March 2024

Title	Allotment Rent Review Consultation Update
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Chris Wheeler, Assistant Director Environmental and Commercial Services
Lead Councillor	Councillor Karen Rowland, Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	1. That Members note the findings of the Allotment Survey 2023 and approve the proposed increases in allotment rents and reductions in discounts found in **Option B,** Para 1.1. Plotholders will be given 12 months' written notice of the changes in March 2024 and the changes will be implemented in April 2025. 2. That Members approve the proposed Allotment Rent pricing structure.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee of 6th July 2023 approved plans to survey stakeholders on two proposals.

Option A.
- Retain the 10% Your Reading Passport (YRP) General Discount.
- Reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%
- Fix rent increases for 2025 and 2026 to 4%.

Option B.
- Remove the 10% YRP General Discount.
- Reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%.
- Increase rents by approximately 20% to align to benchmarked rent for 2025.

1.2 The Survey was conducted in November and December 2023. Respondents were strongly supportive of **Option B**. The proposals have been guided by the principles of the annual Fees and Charges Setting process and by guidance and case law set out in the report.

1.3 **Option B** will see rents and discounts on Reading Borough Council's allotment sites align with levels within other Authorities as determined through a benchmarking exercise.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Reading Borough Council administer 20 allotment sites throughout the Borough, with 1,321 plotholders current working 1451 plots. All sites have historically been directly managed by the Council, however, in 2021 the allotment self-management project began to develop capacity to allow more allotment site autonomy. Since 2021 the service has also been conducting an overhaul of site infrastructure and administrative systems.

2.2 Under Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, a Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient allotments, to residents who want to cultivate, and harvest produce.

2.3 This proposal aims to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council's finances are sustainable over the medium and longer term. The Council's Vision informs the Strategy: "to ensure that Reading realises its potential – and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success."

2.4 Factors that were considered when proposing and setting new rent/discounts levels are set out in full in paragraphs 4.2.7 to 4.3.6 of the HNL report, "Allotments – Fees and Charges Review," 6th July 2023.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 CURRENT RENT LEVELS

- Rents vary by site depending on coverage of water supply.
- Rental income is also variable depending on whether the tenant receives one of the two available discounts offered.
- Discounts are either General or Concessionary available to tenants with a YRP.

Table 1 below sets out the current (2024) Rent Matrix for plots of 125sqm.

Site Category	Annual Fee	Annual Fee with 10% YRP Discount	Annual Fee with 84% YRP Discount
A. Water supply across site	**£45.00** £0.87p/w	**£40.50** £0.78p/w	**£7.50** £0.14p/w
B. Partial water supply on site	**£32.50** £0.63p/w	**£29.25** £0.56p/w	**£5.50** £0.11p/w
C. No water supply	**£22.50** £0.43p/w	**£20.25** £0.39p/w	**£3.75** £0.07p/w
Tenants on full fee or discount	**891**	**114**	**316**
Total No. of Tenants	**1321**		

3.2 Plotholders with a YRP can claim either of the two discounts, subject to their circumstances, as follows:

- **YRP General Discount (10%)**. Available to adult residents of the Borough.
- **YRP Concessionary Discount (84%)**. Available to YRP holders who are aged 60+, on low income or with a disability.

Of the current 1,321 allotment tenants, 430 (33%) claim one of the two discounts.

Proposed within the Fees and Charges Setting Process for 2024/25, allotment rental income for the calendar year 2024 is projected to be £46,000. The annual cost of providing site infrastructure (fencing, gates, locks etc.) together with water charges and administration costs in a normal year is approximately £85,000.

3.3 SETTING A NEW RENT/DISCOUNT STRUCTURE.

HNL Committee of 6 July 2023 approved plans to seek stakeholder opinion on two rent/discount proposals.

Option A.

- Retain the 10% YRP General Discount.

- Reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%.
- Fix rent increases for 2025 and 2026 to 4%.

Option B.
- Scrap the 10% YRP General Discount.
- Reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%.
- Increase rents by approximately 20% to align to benchmarked rent for 2025.

3.5 Table 2. **Option B** for the recommended increase for plots of 125sqm.

Site Category	**2023 Annual Fee**	**2025 Annual Fee**	**Increase £**
A	**£45.00** £0.87p/w	**£50.50** £0.97p/w	**£5.50** £0.10p/w
B	**£32.50** £0.63p/w	**£37.88** £0.73p/w	**£5.38** £0.10p/w
C	**£22.50** £0.43p/w	**£25.25** £0.49p/w	**£2.75** £0.05p/w
Category	**2023 Annual Fee with 10% Discount**	**2025 Annual Fee**	**Increase £**
A	**£40.50** £0.78p/w	**£50.50** £0.97p/w	**£10.00** £0.19p/w
B	**£29.25** £0.56p/w	**£37.88** £0.78p/w	**£8.63** £0.17p/w
C	**£20.25** £0.39p/w	**£25.25** £0.49p/w	**£5.00** £0.10p/w
Category	**2023 Annual Fee with YRP 84% Discount**	**2025 Annual Fee with 40% Discount**	**Increase £**
A	**£7.50** £0.14p/w	**£30.30** £0.58p/w	**£22.80** £0.44p/w
B	**£5.50** £011p/w	**£22.73** £0.44p/w	**£17.23** £0.33p/w
C	**£3.75** £0.07p/w	**£15.15** £0.29p/w	**£11.40** £0.22p/w

4. ALLOTMENT SURVEY - WINTER 2023.

4.1 All plotholders and those on the waiting list were consulted in the form of an allotment survey. Within the survey the following were considered:
- Adoption of a single discount offered to those in greatest financial need.
- Discounts offered to all categories of plotholders.
- Ensuring people in need would not be excluded from the proposed changes.
- Measures to verify qualification eligibility for Discount.

4.2 Analysis of the survey feedback showed that 550 of the 1321 current potholders 74% were in favour of ceasing the 10% General Discount and 68% were in favour of reducing the 84% Concessionary Discount to 40%. The survey and detailed analysis are shown in Appendix A.

4.3 It is therefore recommended within **Option B**:
- The 10% YRP General Discount is withdrawn.
- That the link between the new discount and YRP is ended.

- That the concessionary discount is reduced from 84% to 40% and eligibility to the concessionary rate is as set out in table below.

Table 3. Concessionary rate eligibility.

	Low-income	Disability	Age
Eligibility Criteria	Any of- Housing Benefit Council Tax Support	Blue Badge Bus Pass	State Retirement Pension Age-linked Bus Pass
Proof required. NB. In addition to name, address, contact details	For HB/CTS - Date of birth, NI No.	Blue Badge or Bus Pass	Date of birth and NI No. and/or Age-linked Bus Pass
Maximum RBC Population	9,000	5,500	15,000
Verification of claims	Customers provide “consent to check” at application stage and in 2024 review of all current tenancies. Periodic SAMPLE checks on in-house datasets (Academy; Blue Badge Digital Service; or the Bus Pass register (ESP)).		

5 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 It is clear from customer feedback that significant majorities experience the Healthy Environment and Thriving Communities themes. Plotholders were asked what their motivations were for having an allotment.

The responses were as follows:

- 84% for outdoor exercise and physical health.
- 83% for mental wellbeing.
- 53% for a sense of community.
- 77% to enjoy or share with others freshly grown food.
- 21% because I have no garden at home.
- 38% to save money on grocery bills.

Feedback on the economic importance of having an allotment was less decisive. The Survey asked how much money people saved per year on their allotments. The responses were:

- 22% saved about £100 p/a.
- 12% saved about £500 p/a.
- 3% saved about £1,000 p/a
- 1% saved about £1,500 p/a.
- 61% did not know how much they saved a year.

Given the National Allotment Society believes that a fully productive allotment can save the plotholder over £2,000 a year on their grocery bills, it is less clear from the survey that Reading plotholders work their plots purely for economic reasons.

5.2 The service aims to meet themes of the ‘Our Foundations’ themes in the following ways. The Allotment Self-Management Project and these themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- **People first.** The effort taken in the 2020 and 2023 Allotment Surveys emphasise how much the emphasis on stakeholder opinion demonstrates how much more the service places ‘People first’.
- **Digital transformation.** The service recognises the critical part that improved data management and digital dialogue plays in modernisation.
- **Building self-reliance.** The central principle of the Allotment Self-Management Project has been to co-produce ways of building on-site autonomy.

- **Getting the best value.** Changing the rent/discount structure has been a service priority since 2017. With a more appropriate rent income, sites and systems can be further improved. This generates better goodwill and volunteer effort on site that in turn saves the Council money.
- **Collaborating with others.** The service has been changing its approach from reactively doing what it could, to working up plans and conducting works in partnership with allotment volunteers. This has for most sites, embedded well and improved the overall allotment experience for users.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The proposals have no direct or immediate sustainable development impacts. However, the Survey does form the starting point for the development of waste minimisation and other environmentally themed policies for the future. It is hoped that this drive will not just be limited to questions of waste but will also include allotment water conservation; herbicide/pesticide use; the use of bonfires; and biodiversity-boosting action.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.1 The Allotment Survey on rents/discounts was not a statutory requirement but was regarded as both good practice and an opportunity to ensure stakeholders are more fully informed of the challenges faced when running an allotment service in a period of extreme austerity. The quantity and breadth of feedback from the Survey has been central to reaching the proposals put forward in this paper.

8 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The survey was mainly conducted via email and online but for those with no email, we sent hard copy forms. Site volunteers distributed further hard copy forms among their fellow plotholders and helped those who needed help to complete the forms. The proposals arising in the report will impact on low-income households but have no differential impact of people because of any specific protected characteristic. The Survey asked no protected characteristic related questions.

9 OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 **GDPR.** As more sites take on more on-site communication, any tenant information shared between the Council and a site committee can only proceed if the customer has consented to the sharing of data.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Section 10(1), Allotments Act (1950) and the principles of “Harwood v Borough of Reigate and Banstead” 1981 have been observed in arriving at a fair rent level. The levels or approval and disapproval suggest that the risk of legal challenge to a change in rent might be slight.

10.2 The proposal includes the introduction of a new Tenancy Agreement. This has the effect of ending the current Tenancy Agreement and starting all current tenants on a new Tenancy Agreement. Section 1 of the Allotment Act 1950 requires that a landlord must give tenants 12 months written notice of end of an allotment tenancy. This provision also applies when introducing “significant” rent increases.

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below: -

11.1 Revenue Implications

This table set out the revenue implications:

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Running Costs Staffing Costs	£27,500 £57,500	£28,500 £59,500	£29,500 £61,500
Expenditure	£85,000	£88,000	£91,000
Income from: Fees and charges	-£39,000 (2023)	-£46,000 (2024)	-£58,000
Total Income	-£39,000	-£46,000	-£58,000
Net Cost (+)/saving (-)	£46,000	£42,000	£33,000

The net cost of the proposal can be funded from (specify service and approved cost centre budget).

11.2 **Capital Implications**
There are no Capital implications.

11.3 **Value for Money (VFM)**
Full details of benchmarking against other allotment providers and against other leisure activities can be found in section 4 of the July 2023 HNL Allotment Report.

11.4 **Risk Assessment**.
Negligible financial risk. Survey confirms backing for the rent increase, however, if there were any disenfranchised plotholders who wish to end their tenancy, this can be resolved by allocation to the several hundred people on the waiting list for allotment plots.

12 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

DATE	
14/3/24	Write to all current tenants giving 12 months' notice of: • Change of the start of allotment rent year from January to April. • Rent levels for April 2025. • Closure of current YRP linked Discounts from April 2025, ending of the 10% General Discount. • Severing link between Discounts and YRP • Creation of single "Concession" of 40% based on eligibility set out in **Option B** para. 3.3 above.
1/4/24	For new tenancy only apply new single "Concession" from 1 April 2024.
12/12/24	Invoice current tenants at 2024 rent levels for Jan-March 2025. Seek confirmation from current tenants they wish to continue to rent their plot and invite tenants to apply for the new Concession where eligible. Update of Site Registers in readiness for April 2025 invoicing.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX A – ALLOTMENT SURVEY

Plotholder opinion was sought through November and December 2023, per section 4 the HNL report, “Allotments – Fees and Charges Review”, 6th July 2023.

- 550 responses were received, including 7 ‘collective site’ responses, and 76 from people on waiting lists.

- This high response rate is a testament to Site Liaison Representatives (SLRs) who broadcast the survey via their own on-site efforts.

- The survey asked for opinions of:
    - The rent/discount proposals.
    - Motivation for having a plot.
    - Ideas to reduce the amount of plot waste generated and disposed of.
    - The success or failures of Allotment Self-Management.

Responses were broadly representative in that all sites provided feedback from at least 30% of tenants and the breakdown of those with discounts reflects the proportion across all tenants.

SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT REDUCTION IN DISCOUNTS

REDUCTION IN DISCOUNTS Of those that expressed an opinion	**AGREE**	**DISAGREE**
Scrap the 10% YRP General Discount?	74%	26%
Reduce the YRP Concessionary Discount from 84% to 40%?	68%	32%
ANALYSIS. 33% of all current tenants have one of the YRP linked Discounts (9% and 24%, General and Concessionary, respectively). Therefore, it is assumed that 36% of respondents disagreed with any erosion of their discounts, but this was not the case. Of those with General Discount who expressed an opinion, 50% agreed to scrapping the General discount and 68% agreed to the proposed reduction in the Concessionary Discount. Of those with Concessionary Discount who expressed an opinion, 66% agreed to the reduction in the Concessionary Discount rate and 71% agreed to the proposal to scrap the 10% General Discount. **CONCLUSIONS.** The assumption that discounts are essential to their beneficiaries is challenged by the feedback of those very beneficiaries. **There is strong support to scrap the General Discount and to reduce the Concessionary Discount to 40%.**		

OPTION A AND OPTION B RESPONSES AND COMPARISON

SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT OPTIONS A AND B	AGREE	DISAGREE
Will OPTION A offer value for money and support service improvement? Retain the 10% YRP General Discount; reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%; and fix rent increases for 2025 and 2026 at 4%.	**64%**	**36%**
(Respondents who pay Full Charge)	(64%)	(36%)
(Respondents who have either Discount)	(64%)	(36%)
Will OPTION B offer value for money and support service improvement? Scrap the 10% YRP General Discount, reduce the 84% YRP Concessionary Discount to 40%; increase rents by approximately 20% to align with benchmarked rent for 2025.	**71%**	**29%**
(Respondents who pay Full Charge)	(72%)	(28%)
(Respondents who have either Discount)	(69%)	(31%)

ANALYSIS.

Prior to analysis of responses to Options A and B, it is worth noting feedback to another question about the palatability and purpose of rent increases. In it we asked tenants to tick as many of the following options that they agreed with.

The Council should:	No	%
1. Increase rent levels in line with inflation each year.	182	33%
2. Increase rent levels to fund improvements in the service provided to plotholders.	164	30%
3. Set a higher rent increase in 2025 to fund improvements, then stick to a lower rate of increase in following years.	150	27%
4. Increase rent levels so that annual rent income covers the annual cost of running the allotment service.	129	23%
5. Not increase rent levels at all.	95	17%
6. Increase rent levels at the same fixed rate for the next 5 years.	52	9%

All options involving increasing rents (i-iii) receive more approval than the “no rent increases at all” answer (vi).

Question 1, 2 and 6 could be interpreted as meaning the same thing. In other Local Authority rent increase surveys, tenants generally prefer planned annual increases set for 3 to 5 years ahead rather than have a new variable rent increase imposed each year.

In this survey, the **Option B** Rent/Discount proposal is most closely aligned with the wording of Question 3 above.

A final but important finding in this sub-question was that 40% of respondents agreed that the “contributions and savings made by Allotment Societies and site volunteers in any increase in rent levels”. Though beyond the scope of this report, the Council should consider how best to reward sites that take on Self-Management roles, through the rent-setting mechanism for 2026/27.

Returning to Options A and B, **Option B** would lead to greater increases in rents and reduced discounts for more tenants than Option A. Despite this, there is 5% more agreement with and 7% less disagreement with **Option B** than Option A. This would indicate that respondents feel the proposed rent/discount changes still offer them value for money and will help continue to improve management and condition of sites.

There are several factors that have led to respondents being broadly acceptive of the need to increase rents and reduce discounts. The survey form contained a clear rationale for the proposals; the service has made major efforts to discuss and explain the situation with Site Reps, at Allotment committee meetings and in discussion with plotholders whilst working on sites. The service is particularly grateful to the Site Reps and volunteers who were more informed of the rationale for change and so able to disseminate the rationale among their fellow plotholders.

CONCLUSIONS.

Proposals to increase rents and reduce discounts will never be universally welcomed by allotment users but the survey found greater levels of support for change than for the status quo. Furthermore, levels of support for **Option B** were greater than those for the less costly (to customers) Option A. It is therefore proposed that **Option B** be implemented.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The doubling of rents proposed in the 2017 budget-setting process was rejected due to its adverse effect on low-income households.

The status quo (do nothing) was rejected as financially unviable at HNL 6th July 2023.

SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT VALUE FOR MONEY & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

VALUE FOR MONEY & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT Of those that expressed an opinion	**AGREE**	**DISAGREE**
Does/will your plot offer value for money at current rent/discount levels?	90%	10%
Have you seen improvements in your site in the last 2 years?	66%	33%

ANALYSIS.

Asking how much plotholders value their plots now helped them to evaluate higher prosed rents and gives the Council an indicator of current customer satisfaction.

We asked about improvements/deterioration seen since 2021 to assess the impact of the Allotment Self-Management Project.

It is encouraging that 90% of respondents perceive having an allotment is currently good value for money and that 66% have noticed improvements on site. The improvement in site conditions and management is not just down to the Council. The efforts of volunteers, site representatives and committees have been critical and are to be commended.

The service should note and/or address the following findings.

- More than 80% of Bulmershe and Caversham Court plotholders have seen deterioration or no improvement in their sites.
- The most commonly suggested improvements desired were around better communication on-site and with the Council; better management of waiting lists; faster letting times and shorter vacancy times; poor tenants being evicted, and their plots cleared; overall tidiness of site; faster responses to requests for repairs; increased community-feel; fewer waste piles and fly-tipping; Committee and Council working together well.
- The most common suggested improvements were for quicker lettings, reduced waiting lists and plot vacancy times; more robust action against tenants who do not

work their plot; fix fences, tracks, parking areas and water supplies; on-site composting bays; more green waste collection; repairs to tracks; routine grass/hedge-cutting; improve site security.

- 70% of tenants who live outside the Borough said they do not get good value for money. Note that discounts are not available to non-RBC residents.
- 95% of those on the waiting list believe that current rents offer good value for money.

“VALUE FOR MONEY” CONCLUSIONS

If ‘good value’ is an indicator of customer satisfaction, the results are positive. Of those who said their plot was good value for money, 203 went on to list improvements they have seen. This relationship was strongest on sites where self-management is most vibrant and weakest on sites with minimal or no aspects of self-management.

There were 299 respondents that suggested further improvements. 160 tenants listed improvements they had seen and suggested further improvements. Although this could suggest that service efforts have been insufficient, it may more likely indicate that they have greater faith their suggestions will be actioned because they have seen evidence of improvement steps taken over the last several years by the Council.