

To: Councillor Terry (Chair)
Councillors Leng, Barnett-Ward, Eden,
Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, Nikulina,
Rowland, R Singh, Thompson, White and
Yeo

Direct: 
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11 July 2025

Your contact is: **Jemma Durkan - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 21 JULY 2025

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Monday, 21 July 2025 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 - 8**
4. **DELEGATED DECISIONS** **9 - 10**
5. **PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS**

To receive any petitions from the public and any questions from the public and Councillors.
6. **SIMPLER RECYCLING - GLASS COLLECTIONS FROM KERBSIDE** **BOROUGH WIDE** **11 - 24**

This report sets out the kerbside glass recycling options for the Government's Simpler Recycling initiative.
7. **UPDATE ON PROJECTS FUNDED BY 15% LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY** **BOROUGH WIDE** **25 - 36**

This report deals with the 15% of collected Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which should be allocated to the local area in which development takes place and updates on the progress of the projects which have already been allocated funds by the Committee.

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8.	INSURANCE CONTRACT TENDER	BOROUGH WIDE	37 - 44
	This report seeks approval for the award of contracts for insurance for the Council's Combined Liability (Public and Employee Liability), Motor Fleet and Property insurance arrangements.		
9.	FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2025-2026	BOROUGH WIDE	45 - 144
	This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2025-2026.		
10.	MANAGED STORES PROCUREMENT 2025	BOROUGH WIDE	145 - 150
	This report sets out the requirements for a contract to manage and maintain the material stores used by Repairs and Property Services in Housing.		
11.	IMPLICATIONS OF OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSALS	BOROUGH WIDE	151 - 166
	This report provides an update on the implications of Oxfordshire's Interim Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which they have submitted to Government.		
12.	2024/25 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT	BOROUGH WIDE	167 - 266
	This report sets out the provisional revenue and capital outturn positions for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2024/25 as well as performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan.		
13.	READING HAMPSHIRE PROPERTY PARTNERSHIP LTD - COMPANY CLOSURE	BOROUGH WIDE	267 - 272
	This report seeks Policy Committee approval for the closure of Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Lts following the completion of its strategic objectives and the Council's revised approach to property service delivery.		

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ACTING AS SOLE MEMBER OF
BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED**

14.	BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LTD - WAIVER FOR ARTICLES	BOROUGH WIDE	273 - 278
	This report asks the Committee, acting as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Limited, to waive the requirements of the Articles of Association in order to allow the Company to operate with fewer directors until its formal closure, and to authorise the Executive Director of Resources to act as the representative of the sole member of the Company during the closure period.		

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN CLOSED SESSION

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion will be moved by the Chair:

“That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act”

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

17. DIGITAL AND IT NEXT GENERATION OPERATING MODEL PROCUREMENT

BOROUGH WIDE 279 - 286

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Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, Nikulina, Rowland, R Singh, Thompson, White and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors Eden

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 7 April and 21 May 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

3. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr White	GLL Changing Rooms Policy Change	Cllr Terry
2.	Cllr White	Bus Fares Going Up Again	Cllr Ennis
3.	Cllr White	Housing Regulator Slams Reading Council	Cllr Yeo

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

4. ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Further to Minute 44 of the meeting held on 18 December 2024, the Committee considered a report on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), a document setting out how consultation would be undertaken on planning policy documents as well as other planning matters. An Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the draft SCI attached at Appendix 2. The SCI had undergone a consultation exercise from 15 January to 26 February 2025 and the responses received were attached in Appendix 3 to the report. The Committee was recommended to adopt the SCI as attached to the report and once adopted it would replace the current SCI and guide future consultations and planning policy documents.

Resolved –

That the Statement of Community Involvement, as attached to the report at Appendix 2, be adopted.

5. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 9 JUNE 2025

The Committee considered a report on the appointments or nominations to outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2025/26, or longer where required. An updated schedule of outside body appointments showing the Group Leaders' recommendations was tabled at the meeting.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Committee make appointments or nominations to outside bodies as follows:

Organisation	Nomination	Terms of Office
Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE)	Councillor Karen Rowland	1 year
Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE)	Councillor Paul Gittings	1 year
AWE Aldermaston – Local Liaison Committee	Councillor Clarence Mitchell	1 year
AWE Aldermaston – Local Liaison Committee	Councillor Mark Keeping	1 year
Berkshire Local Transport Body	Councillor John Ennis	1 year
Berkshire Music Trust	Councillor Richard Davies	1 year
Berkshire Pension Fund Committee	Councillor Glenn Dennis	1 year
Berkshire Prosperity Board	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership	Councillor Micky Leng	1 year
Brighter Futures for Children	Darren Carter	1 year
Caversham Park Village Association	Councillor Stephen Goss	1 year
Citizens' Advice Reading Trustee Board	Councillor Micky Leng	1 year
Conservation Area Advisory Committee	Councillor David Stevens	1 year
Earley Charity	Councillor Liz Terry	4 years
Earley Charity	David Sutton	4 years
Flexible Home Improvements Limited	Bryony Hall	1 year
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Jan Gavin	3 years (annual confirmation)
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Jo Lovelock	3 years (annual confirmation)
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Ama Asare	3 years (annual confirmation)
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Raj Singh	3 years (annual confirmation)
Homes for Reading Limited	Emma Gee	3 years (annual confirmation)
Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (Non-executive Director)	Councillor Ellie Emberson	1 year
Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (Shareholder representative)	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
Kenavon Drive Management Company	Councillor Richard Davies	1 year
Local Government Information Unit Members Assembly (deputy)	Councillor Alice Mpofu-Coles	1 year
Local Government Information Unit Members Assembly	Councillor Rachel Eden	1 year
Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum	Councillor Paul Gittings	1 year
Queen Victoria Institute	Councillor Karen Rowland	until Charity is dissolved
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Andrew Hornsby-Smith	1 year
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Jacopo Lanzoni	1 year
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Mohammed Ayub	1 year
Reading Climate Change Partnership	Ben Burfoot	1 year

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 9 JUNE 2025

Reading Climate Change Partnership	Chris Maddocks	1 year
Reading Climate Change Partnership	Councillor John Ennis	1 year
Reading Community Energy Society	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
Reading Community Energy Society	Councillor Rachel Eden	1 year
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Meri O'Connell	1 year
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Mohammed Ayub	1 year
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Ruth McEwan	1 year
Reading Hampshire Property Partnership	Michael Graham	1 year
Reading Sports Aid Fund (Mayor ex-officio)	Councillor Alice Mpofu-Coles	1 year
Reading Voluntary Action	Councillor Graeme Hoskin	1 year
REDA - Reading's Economy and Destination Agency	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
REDA - Reading's Economy and Destination Agency	Jackie Yates	1 year
Royal Berkshire Archives Standing Committee	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Governor	Councillor David Stevens	1 year
South East Employers	Councillor Ellie Emberson	1 year
South East Employers	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
South East England Councils	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
South East England Councils (substitute)	Councillor Micky Leng	1 year
South East Strategic Leaders	Councillor Liz Terry	1 year
South East Strategic Leaders (substitute)	Councillor Micky Leng	1 year
Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel	Councillor Karen Rowland	1 year
Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel (substitute)	Councillor Paul Gittings	1 year
Tilehurst People's Local Charity	Councillor Finn McGoldrick	4 years
Trading Standards South-East Ltd	Ian Saville	1 year
Trading Standards South-East Ltd	Rob Abell	1 year
Transport for the South East	Chris Maddocks	1 year
University of Reading Court (Mayor)	Councillor Alice Mpofu-Coles	1 year

- (2) That the appointments or nominations be made on an “or nominee” basis where the organisation in question was willing to accept this arrangement;
- (3) That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Group Leader (if applicable), be authorised to to appoint to any vacancies not appointed to at this meeting or arising mid-year;
- (4) That appointed representatives be requested to report back annually to ensure that information on appointments was kept up to date and to provide reassurance that relationships with outside bodies continued to promote the Council Plan priorities and were of benefit to the external body and (if applicable) the Council.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.59 pm)

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Committee	Date of meeting	Minute number	Item title	Decision	Officer delegated to	Lead Councillor portfolio	Expected timescale for decision
Policy Committee	20/01/25	55(4)	Local Authority New Build Programme Update	That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to bid for Homes England grant funding for all appropriate schemes within the LANB programme and to approve details of the bids;	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Housing	Hexham, Amethyst and Dwyer scheme bids approved and ODN published May 2025. Other schemes as required, currently to 2028.
Policy Committee	20/01/25	55(6)	Local Authority New Build Programme Update	That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, the Assistant Director for Procurement and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to enter into contract with relevant parties to enable delivery of the schemes listed at paragraph 2.1 of the report;	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Housing	The LANB schemes listed in 2.1 of the report are expected to complete by 2028. We will need to reserve this delegation until then, with contracts for each scheme coming forward as required.
Policy Committee	20/01/25	55(7)	Local Authority New Build Programme Update	That the latest position on Dee Park be noted and that the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to procure an appropriate multi-disciplinary team as set out in the report;	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Housing	This delegation refers specifically to the procurement of an multi-disciplinary team to develop and submit a planning application for Dee Park Phase 3. Decision on this expected to be required Q2 2025/26.
Policy Committee	20/01/25	55(9)	Local Authority New Build Programme Update	That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to enter into collateral warranties as required on all phases of the LANB programme.	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Housing	The LANB schemes linked to this delegation are expected to complete by 2028. We will need to reserve this delegation until then, with CWs for each scheme coming forward as required.
Policy Committee	17/03/25	68 (3)	Closing the Gap 2 - Recommission of Community-based Preventative Services	That the Executive Director of Communities & Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to enter into contracts with the successful organisations for three years with the option to extend for up to two years, commencing on 1 November 2025.	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Leadership	Delegation will be exercised on 21 July 2025 when contracts will be awarded followed by a standstill. We will publish contract notices between 29/7/25 and 5/8/25 with a contract Go Live of 1 November 2025.
Policy Committee	17/03/25	69 (1)	Discretionary Licensing in the Private Rented Sector - Implementation Proposal	That the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection be authorised to procure a delivery partner to support the processing and compliance checks for the Council's agreed Discretionary Licensing scheme;	AD of Planning, Transport & Public Protection Services	Housing	Review of tenders expected by October 2025
Policy Committee	17/03/25	69 (2)	Discretionary Licensing in the Private Rented Sector - Implementation Proposal	That the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection, in consultation with the Director of Finance, Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to enter into a 5-year contract plus 2 years to support the delivery of the licence processing and compliance checks element of the Discretionary licensing in the private rented sector scheme.	AD of Planning, Transport & Public Protection Services	Housing	Review of tenders expected by October 2025
Policy Committee	09/06/25	5(3)	Appointments to Outside Bodies	That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Group Leader (if applicable), be authorised to appoint to any vacancies not appointed to at this meeting or arising mid-year;	AD of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer/Returning Officer	Leadership	Delegation may be required at any point during the Municipal Year. Any appointments made using this delegation will be reported under Chair's Announcements at the next available meeting of the Committee and recorded in the Minutes.
Policy Committee	07/04/25	78	FLEXIBLE RESPONSE SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPING / HOUSING FIRST AND COUPLES MOVE-ON ACCOMMODATION 2025/26	That the Interim Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, Housing Needs and Communities, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be delegated to: a) Award a 12-month contract extension with St Mungo's for the provision of a Flexible Response Service for Rough Sleeping up to the value of £0.673m. b) Award a 12-month contract extension with St Mungo's for the provision of Housing First and Couples Move-on Accommodation contract up to the value of £0.337m.	AD of Strategic Housing, Housing Needs	Housing	CPR waiver signed off by Procurement and contracts ready to be issued and signed.
Policy Committee	07/04/25	79 (1)	Disposal of Yeomanry House	That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Property and Asset management to sell the property to Bidder A on the terms set out in confidential appendix;	AD of Property & Asset Management	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	(July 2025) The sale is currently being progressed, documentation is with Legal Services and sale should complete in the next few months.
Policy Committee	07/04/25	79 (2)	DISPOSAL OF YEOMANRY HOUSE	That if the purchaser did not perform to an acceptable timescale the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets, to: a) Agree a revised offer price and terms where appropriate which secure Best Consideration; b) Re-engage with other bidders as appropriate or remarket the property for disposal at Best Consideration.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	This delegation is only required if purchaser does not perform to an acceptable timescale.
Policy Committee	07/04/25	82 (2)	Disposal of 16 Bennet Road	That, in the unlikely event that the proposed purchaser did not complete the transaction to an acceptable timescale, the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets, to agree an alternative disposal to secure Best Consideration.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	This delegation is only required if the proposed purchaser does not complete the transaction to an acceptable timescale.

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Simpler Recycling – Glass Collections from kerbside
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Chris Wheeler, Assistant Director Environmental and Commercial Services
Lead Councillor	Councillor Karen Rowland, Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	<p>That Policy Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the discussion and agreement with our re3 partners that, due to the current contract with FCC Environmental ending in 2031/32, the investment required to upgrade the Material Recycling Facility (£10.25m), would not be cost effective. Therefore, comingling of glass with Dry Mixed Recycling should not be actively pursued at this time. 2. Endorse Option 1a, set out in this report for the separate collection of glass from a box or other appropriate container on a fortnightly collection as the Council's preferred option. 3. Approves the development of detailed business case and delivery plan of the preferred Option 1a for a further decision report to be presented to the Committee in Autumn 2025. 4. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Environmental and Commercial Services to undertake a tender exercise including, in consultation with the Director of Finance, an award of contract of the required vehicles as set out in paragraph 10.2. 5. Notes the current long lead times for vehicle delivery that will impact on the detailed delivery plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The "Simpler Recycling" initiative, is a Central Government reform that aims to standardise recycling across England, requiring all local authorities to collect from the kerbside the same core recyclable materials, including glass, paper, card, metal cans, plastic bottles tubs and trays and food waste, by 31st of March 2026.
- 1.2 Some exceptions are permitted relating to Technical, Environmental or Economic Practicability (TEEP) considerations, but it should be noted that this is in relation to how we adjust services for specific localised issues and do not provide a framework for not offering an element of the requirements. For example, we anticipate it would allow us to offer a communal facility at some locations where individual containers were not practical such as at flats.
- 1.3 **National Context**

Nationally, performance varies significantly between local authorities, with some areas achieving kerbside glass capture rates of over 80%, while others provide no separate collection at all. This inconsistency, often referred to as the "postcode lottery" of recycling, has prompted the UK Government to mandate standardised collections across England under the Simpler Recycling reforms. Therefore, while Reading's existing performance is strong, the proposed change in collection methodology is primarily to ensure compliance with national legislation, rather than to address local shortcomings.
- 1.4 Reading Borough Council implemented a separate weekly Food Waste collection service in 2021 which is now established as the "norm" for residents' household waste management.
- 1.5 Paper is collected within the "Red" Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) wheeled bin collected fortnightly.
- 1.6 However, Glass is currently not collected from kerbside, relying on residents to use one of the 42 bring bank sites throughout the borough.
- 1.7 **Current Glass Recycling Performance**

Glass has been collected successfully for many years in Reading through a well-established network of 42 bring banks across the borough. This system has supported consistent diversion of glass from residual waste. A recent compositional analysis of domestic grey bins found that only 3% of the contents were glass, indicating that Reading residents are already highly engaged and effective glass recyclers, with low contamination rates.
- 1.8 **Retained Role of Bring Banks**

While the introduction of a borough-wide kerbside glass collection service will significantly reduce reliance on bring banks, not all sites will be removed. There are specific areas, particularly near high-density housing, HMOs, or flats above shops, where kerbside collections may be impractical or space constrained. In such cases, retained bring bank locations will continue to play a vital role. Furthermore, where existing bring banks are removed, it is intended that several will be repurposed as dedicated communal property glass collection points, especially in locations where bin store capacity is limited. This hybrid approach ensures service accessibility and operational flexibility while supporting overall compliance with national recycling reforms.
- 1.9 The Council's recycling facility at Smallmead does not have the capability to accept glass as part of our DMR without significant investment and this is constrained by the brief time (to 2031) remaining for the current contract.
- 1.10 The Council is required to evaluate an options appraisal for Simpler Recycling of the potential economic impact to provide Reading residents with an additional kerbside collection of Glass bottles and jars.

- 1.11 While some councils across England are preparing for compliance by 31 March 2026 date, many councils recognise that it will not be possible. One issue is that future funding has still not been confirmed and another is that there are some inevitable supply chain impacts when a national programme is introduced, namely vehicle and container availability.
- 1.12 In relation to recommendation 4, currently vehicle lead times are long, typically 12-18 months. It is therefore recommended to commence this procurement as a matter of urgency. If a different option is chosen later, such as four weekly collections, these vehicles would also be ideal for provision of food waste collection so would provide a replacement for the existing fleet that is starting to show signs of wear and tear.
- 1.13 Reading Borough Council, together with our re3 partners, are moving forward at pace, seeking to ensure that we identify a solution for compliance that represents value for money now and does not build-in costs that are unsustainable for the future.
- 1.14 It should be noted that the proposals suggested are intended to be reviewed alongside a new materials contract post 2031 as this process will allow for an investment in new facilities that may allow a simpler service design in the future. Officers will continue to work with current and potential partners to develop a shared vision and strategy that works for Reading and partners.

1.15 Recommendations Comparison Summary

	Capital	Revenue	Revenue Breakdown	Resident Acceptability	Deliverable to timescale
Option 1a Separate Fortnightly	Lowest	Medium	Capital £1.37m Revenue £0.91m	Medium	Quickest
Option 1b Separate 4-Weekly	Medium	Lowest	Capital £2.16m Revenue £0.81m	Least	Medium
Option 2 Comingled	Highest	Highest	Capital £3.86m Revenue £1.34m	Best	Longest

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The proposal for simpler glass recycling aligns with key national and local environmental policies, including:
- UK Government Resources and Waste Strategy (2018): Emphasises the need to move towards a circular economy, increase recycling rates, and ensure consistent collections across local authorities.
 - Environment Act 2021: Introduces requirements for local authorities in England to collect a consistent set of recyclable materials, including glass, from all households.
 - DEFRA's Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections (2021): Encourages separate, regular kerbside collections of recyclable materials, including glass, to reduce contamination and improve material quality.
 - Reading Borough Council Climate Emergency Declaration (2019): Commits the council to reducing its environmental impact and achieving a net-zero carbon target. Improving recycling services contributes directly to this objective by reducing landfill use and emissions from waste processing.
 - Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy: Supports harmonised and sustainable waste management practices across the region, promoting increased recycling through accessible and efficient systems.
- 2.2 The introduction of a fortnightly kerbside glass collection would ensure Reading is compliant with upcoming statutory duties, while also demonstrating leadership in local climate action and sustainable resource management.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 **Simpler Recycling Initiative.** The UK Government's **Simpler Recycling** initiative aims to standardise recycling practices across England, making it easier for households, businesses, and non-domestic premises to recycle effectively. This reform addresses inconsistencies in waste collection services, often referred to as the "postcode lottery," by ensuring that the same set of materials is collected for recycling nationwide.
- 3.2 **Consistency Across England:** All households, businesses, and relevant non-domestic premises (such as schools and hospitals) will recycle the same core materials, reduce confusion, and improve recycling rates.
- 3.3 **Simplified Collection System:** The default requirement introduces four separate waste streams:
- Residual (non-recyclable) waste.
 - Food waste.
 - Paper and card.
 - All other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal, and glass).
- 3.4 **Flexibility for Local Authorities:** Councils and waste collectors retain the flexibility to determine the most appropriate collection methods for their areas, including the co-collection of certain waste streams where suitable.
- 3.5 **Re3 Partnership Collective Decision.** re3 is a waste management partnership between three councils, Bracknell Forest, Reading, Reading Borough, and Wokingham Borough Councils, who are working together with FCC Environmental to provide residents with efficient and cost-effective recycling and waste management facilities.
- 3.6 Included in the options appraisal are the costs associated with disposal and requirements of the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) base at Smallmead, Island Road, Reading, currently operated through the re3 partnership by FCC Environmental.
- 3.7 Various alternatives for compliance were analysed via modelling, and qualitative scoring, undertaken by the re3 Project Director. The modelling was shared for consultation and review by colleagues across the re3 partnership, with amendments made to reflect council-specific data and operational preferences.
- 3.8 Because the three councils within the re3 Partnership deposited household waste materials into shared facilities operated by FCC Environmental, the decision on whether to have separate or comingled glass collections is a collective one.
- 3.9 Separate glass collections would not incur any alterations or modifications to the MRF infrastructure at Smallmead, however, comingled glass collections within the DMR, would require extensive modification to the material handling and separation machinery at the MRF. It would also require a period of shut down, with recycling exported and affect the composition of materials, affecting value.
- 3.10 Comingled collections are challenging financially and practicably and with the existing re3 contract term with FCC being noticeably short, expiring in 2031, it does not give enough time for the value of investment to be recovered.
- 3.11 For these reasons officers are recommending a separate glass collection alongside our partners from Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Councils within the re3 Partnership. It will be for each Council to determine the frequency of collection most suitable for their area.
- 3.12 **Glass Collection – Options Consideration.** This report seeks to provide information and analysis to enable a recommendation and selection of a preferred collection and frequency option for Glass recycling. The preferred option will then require further, and a more detailed, service delivery proposal to be developed and costed for final Committee approval by Autumn 2025.
- 3.13 The emphasis of the report is the impact on variation of the different collection methodologies and frequencies, having the same equal platform of financial costs and expectations.
- 3.14 The theoretical analysis in this report is to evaluate options for the collection of glass from kerbside and frequencies of those collections being:

- Option 1 - Separate Glass Collection, either a) fortnightly or b) 4-Weekly.
 - Option 2 - Comingled Dry Mixed Recycling Collections to include glass, 4-Weekly
- 3.15 Two configurations of kerbside Glass recycling collections were considered; however, Option 1 has a variation of being collect either fortnightly or 4-Weekly:
- **Option 1a - Separate Glass Collection - Fortnightly**
Maintaining existing comingled DMR collections, providing an additional service to separately collect Glass on the fortnightly basis.
 - **Option 1b - Separate Glass Collection - 4-Weekly**
As Option 1a with separately collected Glass on a 4-weekly basis.
 - **Comingled Glass with all other DMR Collection – Fortnightly**
Keeping the existing comingled collection schedules, allowing glass bottles and jars within the DMR.
- 3.16 As previously stated in paragraph 3.11 above, the option of comingled glass collections within DMR is not being recommended. Therefore, the analysis below concentrates on determining separate collection frequencies being either fortnightly or 4-weekly.
- 3.17 Factors taken into consideration for the options appraisal.
- The comparative bulk density of materials.
 - The number of properties able to be serviced per day.
 - The weight of filled containers and the ability of residents being able to present for collection.
 - Residents' ability to store additional containers.
 - Collection crews' health and safety of repeated lifting/pulling heavy boxes/bins.
- 3.18 Calculations relating to glass bulk density are shown in Appendix A.
- 3.19 We can provide either boxes or bins for containment of glass. With a fortnightly frequency and considering the number of properties in Reading with limited space for waste containers, this would be a box system as standard, with a wheeled bin for communal properties.
- 3.20 From the calculated weight of boxes and wheeled bins and research conducted, there is some concern of resident ability to manually handle containers full of glass. This is mitigated by our assisted collection service and is a factor in considering frequency.
- 3.21 Although research was limited, available evidence suggests that the average household is likely to present around half of a 55-litre box of glass every fortnight. Increasing the collection frequency to every four weeks could result in full boxes weighing up to 20kg, which may pose handling challenges for both residents and collection staff.
- 3.22 Providing residents with two or more boxes, although preventing residents' health and safety lifting issues, would require the collection crew to make several trips to the collection vehicle, significantly impacting the crew's productivity. Therefore, for a 4-Weekly collection frequency, 140-litre wheeled bins would be required as the standard container. This is a challenge as many properties in Reading do not have space for a further bin.
- 3.23 As Glass is non-compactable, a standard Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) is not considered practicable other than for noticeably short periods, as continual use of glass in this type of vehicle will have a major impact on wearing parts of the body. Therefore, for fortnightly collection frequency an 18-tonne Ecopac vehicle, similar in design to our food waste vehicles, would be suitable. For a 4-Weekly frequency of a Macpac 26-tonne, rear loading vehicle would be required due to the higher weight of glass expected to be collected.
- 3.24 Existing Bring Banks
- The introduction of separate glass will give an opportunity to review and rationalise the bring bank network as part of the design phase, this work will be undertaken as part of the

detailed design work set out in recommendation 3 and is likely to result in a significant reduction or reallocation of bring banks.

3.25 Comparison of Comingled vs. Separate Glass Collection

From a purely collections perspective, not accounting for the disposal element of the scheme, as part of planning for a glass recycling service, it is important to consider the benefits and challenges of collecting glass separately from other recyclable materials versus commingling it with mixed recyclables.

3.26 Separate Glass Collection (Recommended Approach)

Benefits:

- **Higher Material Quality:** Separating glass avoids contamination with paper, cardboard, and plastics, preserving the quality of all recyclable streams and increasing market value.
- **Reduces Processing Costs:** Collecting glass separately from other recyclable materials avoids the need for sorting through a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), allowing the material to be sent directly to a specialist processor. These processors have the technology to colour-separate the glass during their reprocessing operations. Separate glass collections result in minimal contamination, making the material easier to reprocess and more readily accepted by recycling facilities, ultimately improving the quality and value of the recycled glass.
- **Aligns with National Policy:** Supports DEFRA's push for consistency and quality in recycling, as outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- **Lower Contamination Risk:** Collecting glass separately from other recyclables—particularly from paper in comingled collections, helps prevent glass breakage, which can contaminate other materials and significantly reduce the quality of the recycling stream. When glass is mixed with paper and other dry recyclables, broken shards can become embedded in the paper, making it difficult to recycle and potentially leading to the rejection of entire loads. Separate glass collection minimises this risk, helping to preserve the quality of all materials and ensuring higher acceptance rates at recycling facilities.

Challenges:

- **Requires Additional Containers:** Households will need to store a separate bin, box, or other appropriate container which may present space issues for some residents.
- **Logistical Complexity:** Separate collection may involve route changes or adaptations to existing collection vehicles.
- **It is a noisy collection, so is likely to have a later start and finish time**
- **There are manual handling and noise control measure to careful consider and manage with glass, being a heavy and noisy material.**

3.27 Comingled Glass Collection

Benefits:

- **Simplifies Household Sorting:** Residents can put all recyclables in one container, which may increase short-term participation.
- **Lower Upfront Collection Cost:** No need to provide or collect a separate bin initially.

Challenges:

- **Higher Contamination Rates:** Glass breakage can spoil entire loads of recyclables, reducing recycling effectiveness and increasing processing costs.
- **Material Loss:** Fine glass fragments can be lost during mechanical sorting, reducing the total volume successfully recycled.
- **Safety and Maintenance Issues:** Broken glass can damage sorting machinery and pose health risks to workers.
- **Requires significant investment in MRF facilities**
- **Value and recyclability of both glass and other recyclables, especially paper and card, will be reduced if comingled collected.**

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 Simpler Recycling supports the Council's strategic aims by reducing waste to landfill and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Increased quality of recycling material encourages circular economy practices, promoting responsible resource use and reduces environmental impact.
- 4.2 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.3 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
- Putting residents first
 - Building on strong foundations
 - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
 - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
 - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 4.4 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective, and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 Collection of household glass at kerbside may facilitate an improved recycling rate and material quality contributing to the Council's climate change targets.
- Separating glass as opposed to comingled recyclables reduces contamination, improving the quality and recyclability of glass.
 - Separate collection increases the likelihood that glass will be recycled into new glass products, rather than being downcycled or landfilled.
- 5.2 Reduction in Carbon Emissions:
- Recycling glass uses ~30% less energy than making new glass from raw materials.
 - Producing new glass involves mining silica, soda ash, and limestone, processes with significant carbon footprints.
 - While glass itself does not decompose or emit methane, improved glass recycling often indirectly reduces pressure on landfill systems.
- 5.3 Although the collection of glass from kerbside will increase the Council's vehicle usage, all efforts will be made to procure vehicles with zero or near zero carbon emissions.
- Adding separate glass collections would increase fuel use and emissions from waste collection vehicles, even if mitigated with route optimisation.
 - Higher Operational and Carbon Costs
 - Manufacture and distribution of additional boxes/bins has an embedded carbon cost.
 - Energy use in reprocessing: While still lower than producing new glass, glass recycling is energy-intensive (especially if collected glass is contaminated or needs cleaning/sorting).

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 This new service will encourage residents to recycle more by removing barriers where some do not have access to transport glass recycling to either Bring Banks or the Household Recycling Facility.
- 6.2 As part of the detailed planning and vehicle design officers will explore the potential for other material stream(s) that it may be possible to collect on this vehicle, such as textiles and or WEE.
- 6.3 A full communications plan will be developed as part of the detailed service design.

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- 7.1 To ensure the Council has considered the impact of the new glass collection service on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010 and taken steps to mitigate any adverse effects. Full list of protected characteristics is shown in Appendix B.
- 7.2 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation of groups that could be directly affected by the introduction of kerbside glass collections

Protected Group	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Older People	May find it difficult to lift and move glass containers	Continue and promote assisted collections; use manageable box design
Disabled People	Accessibility concerns for those with mobility or dexterity issues	Offer assisted collections, accessible information formats, and staff awareness training
People with Limited English	May not understand service changes or collection schedule	Provide translated leaflets, visual instructions, and community engagement
Pregnant Women	Physical strain moving glass containers	Assisted collection offered; targeted communication via health services

- 7.3 Due Regard Consideration
- The service improves access to recycling for all households.
 - Known barriers (mobility, language, information access) have been considered.
 - Proactive measures (assisted collections, inclusive communication) are in place.
 - Ongoing monitoring through customer feedback and complaints will inform future adjustments.
- 7.4 In conclusion, the Council has taken proportionate steps to understand and mitigate any negative impacts of this service change. The introduction of fortnightly kerbside glass collections demonstrates due regard to equality duties under the Equality Act 2010.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 Public Engagement and Communication: Successful implementation of Simpler Recycling will depend on clear, consistent communication with residents. Engagement campaigns will be essential to educate households on the new system and reduce contamination rates.
- 8.2 Operational Readiness: The transition to Simpler Recycling may require changes to collection infrastructure, including vehicle modifications and container replacements. Staff training and scheduling adjustments will also be necessary.
- 8.3 Financial Implications: There will be short-term costs associated with implementation (e.g., new bins, public education), although long-term some savings are expected through

increased recycling rates and reduced landfill charges the overall cost of operating the collection service will be significant.

- 8.4 Equity: Consideration must be given to households with limited space, residents with accessibility needs, and those in communal properties or flats. Tailored support and alternative collection solutions may be needed.
- 8.5 Legal and Policy Compliance: The Council must ensure alignment with DEFRA's statutory guidance under the Environment Act 2021 and any associated deadlines or reporting requirements.
- 8.6 Market Conditions: The effectiveness of Simpler Recycling will also be influenced by market demand for recyclable materials. Ongoing monitoring and partnership with waste contractors will help mitigate risks.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Waste collection authorities are responsible for collecting household waste. They must collect the recyclable household waste streams for recycling or composting or arrange for a private waste collector to do so, where there is a duty to collect waste under section 45(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 45A will apply in England.
- 9.2 The UK Government's Simpler Recycling initiative was published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) on 29 November 2024. The initiative is part of the broader Environment Act 2021, and it introduces standardised collections across the Country, with the same materials being recyclable everywhere regardless of location.
- 9.3 The initiative requires all local authorities to implement the requirements for its residents by 31st March 2026. Accordingly, the Council must take steps to commence collection of all dry recyclable materials and separate weekly food waste collections for residents by this date.
- 9.4 The preferred recommendation for compliance with the initiative would involve a review and modification of existing waste management Contract with FCC Environment Ltd. This exercise must be compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations, 2015 (PCR 2) combining previous public procurement regime. Following a review of the FCC Contract, a new procurement exercise may be required to award a Contract that is compliant with the Simpler Recyclable requirements. Any procurement exercise must comply with Procurement Act, 2023, which came into force on 24 February 2025.
- 9.5 Ann Ntephe, Acting Principal, Corporate and Commercial Team has cleared these Legal Implications.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The addition of needing to collect household glass from kerbside would require additional budget within the Council's Recycling and Waste budget.
- 10.2 Considering the lengthy lead times for vehicles, typically 12-18 months from start of a tendering process, early approval is sought to specify and commence procurement of 5 vehicles to enable an early as possible roll out of the delivery of a glass service. This is estimated to cost **circa £1m** out of the totals laid out below as a partial initial investment. The Spending Review 2025 confirmed that "The Local Government settlement also includes funding for local authorities to deliver Simpler Recycling as part of the Collection and Packaging waste reforms, which will help to stimulate investment in recycling services across the UK. Local authorities will continue to receive additional income through the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging." The total Extended Producer Responsibility funding announced for 2025/26 was £2.763m. Allocations for future years will be announced in due course.

10.3 It should also be noted that a decision to commence procurement of these vehicles does not hinder the council from choosing a different option for collection in the future as these vehicles can be used to upgrade and replace our ageing food waste collection fleet should a different approach be considered more appropriate following detailed planning work.

10.4 Capital Costs (Vehicle and Container procurement, together with contribution to modification to the MRF)

- Option 1a (fortnightly glass) = £1.37m
- Option 1b (4 weekly glass) = £2.16m
- Option 2 (Co-mingled) = £3.86m

10.5 Revenue Costs (Annual)

- Option 1a (fortnightly glass) = £0.91m
- Option 1b (4 weekly glass) = £0.81m
- Option 2 (Co-mingled) = £1.34m

For options 1a and 1b the key cost driver is additional staff and vehicles, for option 2 comingled, the additional revenue costs are as a result of additional running costs of the MRF and lost material value as glass itself collected comingled has a lower value and glass shards affect the quality and therefore value of other materials.

10.6 Financial comparison table for full options.

	Capital	Revenue	Revenue Breakdown	Resident Acceptability	Deliverable to timescale
Option 1a Separate Fortnightly	Lowest	Medium	Capital £1.37m Revenue £0.91m	Medium	Quickest
Option 1b Separate 4-Weekly	Medium	Lowest	Capital £2.16m Revenue £0.81m	Least	Medium
Option 2 Comingled	Highest	Highest	Capital £3.86m Revenue £1.34m	Best	Longest

10.7 These Financial implications have been verified by Stephen MacDonald, Strategic Finance Business Partner.

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 Phase 1: Preparation and Planning (Now to October 2025)

- Set up a cross-service steering group, Involve waste operations, communications, climate strategy, housing, and finance.
- Service audit and legal review to compare current services with Simpler Recycling requirements (e.g. glass, paper, and food to be universal, materials consistency).
- Funding applications to engage with Defra's schemes, notably Extended Producer Responsibility funding.
- Assess infrastructure to review capacity of Smallmead MRF and existing food waste facilities; identify upgrade needs.
- Engage with re3 partners (Bracknell Forest & Wokingham) to coordinate strategy for consistent messaging and procurement opportunities.
- Early internal communications to brief elected members and senior leadership team on next steps
- Commence vehicle procurement process

- Development and delivery of a of a detailed roll out plan, including timescales to achieve compliance, for approval.

11.2 Phase 2: Service Design & Procurement

- Define new collection system to include consideration if residual waste frequency needs adjusting to encourage recycling, while complying with weekly glass, paper, and food waste requirements.
- Procurement strategy by ordering vehicles, together with planning for additional glass waste boxes/bins especially for HMOs and flatted properties.
- Route design and rounds in coordination with re3 fleet and waste transfer arrangements.
- IT & data upgrades to ensure WhiteSpace can track new material streams and produce performance reports.
- Commence resident engagement through the Reading Borough Council website, social media, and local events; focus on contamination reduction and service benefits.
- Recruit and train front-line staff to equip crews and call centre teams with scripts, FAQs, and training on new policies.

11.3 Phase 3: Implementation & Rollout

- Possibility of providing a pilot service with selected Reading wards (e.g. Caversham, Whitley) to test materials distribution and messaging.
- Delivery of new boxes and/or bins, with multilingual instructions and visual guides.
- Full public campaign, where applicable collaborate with re3 partners on unified branding. Use community centres, Reading Buses, libraries, and schools to reinforce messages.
- Go Live - Full borough-wide rollout. Provide real-time issue reporting and feedback channels.
- Monitor KPIs and feedback
Track participation rates, contamination levels, missed collections, and resident satisfaction; adjust as needed.

11.4 Risks and Contingency

Risks:

Delays in container procurement
Long lead times for vehicles
Low participation in flats/HMOs
Confusion over new rules
Operational disruption during rollout

Mitigation:

Early tendering and regional supplier collaboration
Early ordering of vehicles – recommendation 4
Pre-rollout engagement with landlords and residents
Phased comms, visuals, and translations
Staff training and fallback collection plans

12 Background Papers

12.1 There are none.

12 Appendix A

13.1 Calculations below use a bulk density value of glass of 350kg/m³ for the expected additional operating tonnages. The bulk density value was verified by physical weighing of glass filled containers.

13.2 Calculated container weights and capacity.

Option 1a - Fortnightly		Option 1b - 4-Weekly	
55 litre boxes		140 litre wheeled bins	
Container Capacity		Container Capacity	
Avg. weight 55ltr box full	19.3kg	Avg. weight 140ltr bin full	49.0kg
Avg. weight 55ltr box ½ full	9.6kg	Avg. weight 140ltr bin ½ full	19.2kg
Capacity – litre/collection	27.5ltr	Capacity - litre/collection	70.0ltr
Capacity - litre/week	13.8ltr	Capacity - litre/week	27.4ltr

13.3 Calculated property numbers (excluding flats)

Option 1a - Fortnightly		Option 1b - 4-Weekly	
55 litre boxes		140 litre wheeled bins	
Collections		Collections	
Total No. Properties	57,250	Total No. Properties	57,250
Properties collected/week	28,625	Properties collected/week	14,313
Avg. properties/day	5,725	Avg. properties/day	2,863
Vehicles/day	4.0	Vehicles/day	3.0*
Properties/day/Vehicle	1,430	Properties/day/Vehicle	1,430

*Due to weight of collected glass, 3 No. vehicles will be required.

13.4 Calculated crew productivity

Option 1a - Fortnightly		Option 1b - 4-Weekly	
55 litre boxes		140 litre wheeled bins	
Productivity		Productivity	
Avg. properties/day/Vehicle	1,430	Avg. properties/day/Vehicle	1,430
Productive hours	6.5hrs	Productive hours	6.5hrs
Properties collected/hour	220.2	Properties collected/hour	220.2

Avg. time property/minute	3.7	Avg. time property/minute	3.7
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13.5 Calculated tonnages

Option 1a - Fortnightly		Option 1b - 4-Weekly	
55 litre boxes		140 litre wheeled bins	
Vehicle Capacity		Vehicle Capacity	
Properties/day/Vehicle	1,430	Properties/day/Vehicle	1,430
Weight per 55 litre ½ full box/household	9.6kg	Weight per 140 litre ½ full bin/household	19.2kg
Total weight/vehicle/day	13.8t	Total weight/vehicle/day	27.4t

14 **Appendix B** – Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

- **Age:** This applies to people of all ages.
- **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities.
- **Gender Reassignment:** The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** This protects individuals who are married or in a civil partnership.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protects women who are pregnant or have recently given birth.
- **Race:** This includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- **Religion or Belief:** This covers any religion, religious belief, or philosophical belief (including lack of belief).
- **Sex:** Refers to whether a person is male or female.
- **Sexual Orientation:** This covers whether a person's sexual attraction is towards the same sex, the opposite sex, or both.

Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Update on projects funded by 15% local Community Infrastructure Levy
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Council priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	1. That the progress on the projects benefitting from the 15% local CIL allocated be noted.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report deals with the 15% of collected Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which should be allocated to the local area in which development takes place. The report updates on the progress of the projects which have already been allocated funds by this Committee.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 Since 1st April 2015, the Council has operated the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within Reading. This is a levy that is applied to new development, and which is to be used to fund infrastructure to support growth. The collection and spend of CIL is governed by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 2.2 Under the CIL Regulations, where there is no neighbourhood development plan in place and where development was not granted permission by a neighbourhood development order, 15% of CIL money arising must be spent in the 'relevant local area' in which development takes place (this is referred to hereafter as '15% local CIL'). In many authorities, this means passing the relevant proportion of collected CIL to the parish councils or town councils in whose area development takes place, but Reading requires different arrangements.
- 2.3 A CIL Spend Protocol, originally approved at Policy Committee on 16th July 2018 (Minute 26 refers) and amended at Policy Committee on 15th February 2021 (Minute 97 refers) sets out a focus for the use of 15% local CIL as below and subject to the project according with a number of principles:
- Open space improvements/small scale leisure;
 - Local highway improvement projects;
 - Air quality;
 - Community improvements;

- Renewable energy infrastructure;
 - Economic Support;
 - Other measures which help to mitigate the impact the development has on the area.
- 2.4 The protocol further states that allocations of 15% local CIL must accord with the following:
- Support:
 - (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of local facilities and/or infrastructure; or
 - (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on a local area.
 - May be included in the IDP and/or Approved Capital Programme.
 - May enable other funds that would not otherwise be available or offer a financial return on investment, e.g. needed to match or draw grant funding;
 - Address a specific impact of new development beyond that which has been secured through a S106 obligation or S278 agreement;
 - Contribute to the delivery of key development sites in the district to realise the Local Plan proposals.
- 2.5 The process for allocating 15% local CIL is set out in full in the amended CIL Spend Protocol. In summary, the steps are as follows:
- Projects nominated by officers, members, community groups or members of the public, to be made by the end of the calendar year to feed into final allocations in the following Spring;
 - Initial proposals will be discussed with lead councillors;
 - Given that funds are limited the use of 15% local CIL funds will be normally allocated to small scale projects or around £100k or less;
 - Public consultation on the general spending priorities under the local community 15% spend will take place every 3-4 years, at the beginning of the calendar year;
 - The final allocation of funds will be made annually by the Policy Committee, based on the following considerations:
 - Deliverability (timescales, risks, resources required, dependence on external partners)
 - Financial considerations (value for money, additional capital funding required, revenue considerations)
 - Accordance with spending priorities identified in consultation
 - Relationship with identified strategic priorities
 - Degree to which projects meet infrastructure needs arising from or enabling development.
 - Annual progress report to Policy Committee.

3. The Proposal

Current position

- 3.1 Allocations of 15% local CIL totalling £6.017m have already been made towards 61 projects. Allocations were made as follows:

- A first allocation of £1.204m to 23 projects was agreed at Policy Committee on 26th November 2018 (Minute 49 refers).
- Additional funds were allocated towards two of the selected projects by Decision Book in August 2020, bringing the total allocated to £1.339m (Decision Book reference 608).
- A further allocation of £1.557m was made by Policy Committee on 14th June 2021 towards a further 20 projects. Committee also decided to make some minor amendments to some of the existing allocations that did not change the overall amount of 15% local CIL funds allocated (Minute 7 refers).
- A reallocation of £0.035m between two of the projects allocated funds in June 2021 was made by Decision Book in January 2022, which did not change the overall amount of 15% local CIL funds allocated (Decision Book reference 647).
- A further allocation of £1.623m was made by Policy Committee on 7th March 2022 towards a further 18 projects (Minute 80 refers).
- A further allocation of £1.498m was made by Policy Committee on 8th July 2024 towards a further 31 projects (Minute 14 refers)

- 3.2 This report updates on the progress of those projects allocated funds in the allocations above that have not already been reported to Committee as having been completed (or where Committee has previously agreed to reallocate funds away from the project).

Option proposed

- 3.3 It is recommended that Committee note the progress of the projects allocated 15% local CIL funds.
- 3.4 The vast majority of those projects allocated funds prior to July 2024 have now been delivered. There are six projects from previous allocations which remain outstanding (two of which have been combined into a single project), and two of these are expected to be completed during this summer.
- 3.5 A small number of projects allocated in July 2024 have already been completed. The remainder are mainly underway or at the scoping phase.
- 3.6 There are particular issues with delivering network management projects due to a significant number of competing priorities, including projects not funded from CIL, and resources within the team. This was advised for the relevant schemes in the report to Policy Committee in July 2024, which noted that there would be unlikely to be any delivery before the beginning of 2025/26. In particular, the Traffic Regulation Order Rectification project has been the focus of the team's resources. With this project reaching a conclusion, there is scope to progress further network management projects, although those projects funded by CIL will need to be timetabled alongside projects from other sources.

Other options considered

- 3.7 No alternative options are identified.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The projects funded by 15% local CIL contribute to achieving a number of the priorities in the Council Plan 2025-28, as follows:

- ***Secure Reading's economic and cultural success:*** 15% local CIL continues to be used to fund projects that contribute to Reading's cultural success including the High Street Heritage Action Zone project and war memorials and monuments.
- ***Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint:*** 15% local CIL funded projects such as pedestrian crossings, active travel, improvements to bridges and underpasses and water safety help to promote a

healthier and safer environment for all where travel on foot or by cycle is improved. Tree planting and greening of the urban environment through CIL projects helps both to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its effects.

- **Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children:** Improvements to parks and open spaces, including children's play areas, will help to support the health and wellbeing of the population, including children.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 The allocation of 15% local CIL is towards the improvement of infrastructure such as open spaces and play areas in areas where residents live, as well as improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, which should help to reduce the need to travel by car. There would be no implications of any decision in this report.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 No community engagement is required at this stage.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 The Scoping Assessment, included at Appendix 1 identifies no equality implications of the recommended action to note the progress of the projects.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1 There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The collection and application of CIL is governed by the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). Regulation 59F states that, where there are no parish councils, the portion of CIL that would otherwise have been passed to parishes (which, where no neighbourhood plan is in place, is 15%) should be used to support the development of the relevant area by funding:

“(a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or

(b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.”

- 9.2 The 'relevant area' in this instance is the part of an authority's area not covered by a parish council area, which in this case means the whole Borough.

- 9.3 Projects are checked to ensure they comply with Regulation 59F at the point that they are allocated (in line with the CIL Spend Protocol, see paras 2.4 and 2.5 above

- 9.4 Dave Anthony, Planning Solicitor, has cleared these Legal Implications.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications of the recommended action of this report.
- 10.2 As a general background, the summary position with regard to 15% local CIL since CIL was introduced in Reading in 2015 is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of 15% local CIL position

15% local CIL collected up to 31/05/2025	£6.677m
Allocated in November 2018 by Policy Committee	£1.204m
Allocated in August 2020 by Decision Book	£0.135m
Allocated in June 2021 by Policy Committee	£1.557m
Allocated in March 2022 by Policy Committee	£1.623m
Allocated in July 2024 by Policy Committee	£1.498m
15% local CIL remaining unallocated	£0.660m

1. Revenue Implications

10.3 There are no revenue implications of this report.

2. Capital Implications

10.4 There are no capital implications of this report,

3. Value for Money (VFM)

10.5 Value for money was one of the considerations in allocating funds towards the individual projects. The relevant Committee report for each allocation contains more details.

4. Risk Assessment

10.6 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

10.7 Stuart Donnelly (Financial Planning & Strategy Manager) has cleared these Financial Implications.

11 Timetable for Implementation

11.1 The timetable for implementation is dependent on the individual project. More details on progress are within Appendix 2.

12 Background Papers

12.1.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment
2. Progress on projects already allocated 15% local CIL funding

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed:

Update on projects funded by 15% local Community Infrastructure Levy

Directorate: DEGNS – Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Service: Planning, Transport and Public Protection

Name: Mark Worringham

Job Title: Planning Policy Manager

Date of assessment: 10/06/2025

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To report on the progress of projects funded by 15% local Community Infrastructure Levy

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The local community will benefit through a range of capital and other improvements – including highway enhancements, improved leisure/open space enhancements and community enhancements.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

No changes proposed.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The local community, wider public and community groups. Stakeholders will want to ensure that infrastructure provision is made to support the levels of development taking place.

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An equality impact assessment is not required because this report updates on the progress of projects already funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy and does not propose any changes to those projects or alternative uses of those funds.

Signed (completing officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 10 th June 2025
Signed (Lead Officer)	Mark Worringham	Date: 10 th June 2025

Appendix 2: Progress on projects already allocated 15% local CIL funding

NB: Excludes projects already reported to Policy Committee in July 2022 or July 2024 as completed, or where that meeting of Policy Committee agreed to reallocate funds away from the project

Name	Allocation	Scheme description	Delivery date (actual/expected)	Latest update
High Street Heritage Action Zone covering the high streets of the three conservation areas within town centre area	£150,000 (Nov 2018) (previously £50,000 - increase via August 2020 Decision Book) £275,000 (June 2021)	The HSHAZ project has been awarded a grant of up to £806,500 from Historic England to be match funded from S106 and CIL funding and other sources. The Programme aims to make the high street a more attractive, place through physical, community and cultural activities.	March 2025	Completed
Town centre monuments and statues	£70,000 (June 2021) (previously £50,000 – increased by Policy Committee June 2022)	Inspection, cleaning and repairs	To be confirmed	Works to conserve and repair the Maiwand Lion, Forbury War Memorial, Henry Cross, Spanish War Memorial, Joshua Vines Forbury Hill Plaque, King Edward VII statue complete. Officers are considering options for how the remaining funds can be used.
War memorials and public art	£100,000 (June 2021)	Inventory, maintenance and cleaning of war memorials & public art	See above	Now combined with town centre monuments and statues – see above
Skate park at John Rabson Recreation Ground	£95,000 (June 2021)	Installation of skate park. Previous consultation in 2018 proposed that this could be located at Cintra Park, but proposal is now that it be delivered at John Rabson Recreation Ground.	Summer 2025	Also funded from strategic (80%) CIL Skate park is now open for public use with a formal opening event planned for 30 July. Some further groundworks will need to be carried out in the autumn.
Improvements to Victoria Recreation Ground	£231,000 (March 2022)	To provide improved and upgraded play equipment in a new playground adjacent to Hodsoll Road	Summer 2025	Play area and gym now completed and open. Formal opening event to be arranged.
Northcourt Avenue speed reduction	£200,000 (March 2022)	20mph scheme and traffic calming measures to	To be confirmed	Statutory consultations completed and feedback considered at Traffic Management Sub-

		address concerns of speeding on Northcourt Avenue (also to include Wellington Avenue).		Committee in June. Agreement to implement as advertised, so scheme proceeding to delivery planning.
20 is plenty zone on streets around Oxford Road	£200,000 (March 2022)	Introduction of a 20mph zone in residential side streets off Oxford Road. Initial phase(s) of wider desirable zone area.	To be confirmed	Proceeding to investigation and scheme development, commencing with an initial scoping meeting with Ward Councillors.
Gateway area pedestrian crossings (Imperial Way and Basingstoke Road)	£160,000 (March 2022) (originally £150K but increased by Policy Committee July 2022)	Installation of new zebra crossing on Imperial Way (near to Basingstoke Road) and Basingstoke Road (to the north of Imperial Way)	June 2024	Completed
Lulworth Road communal area improvements	£130,000 (originally £110K but increased by Policy Committee July 2022)	Land situated to the rear of the circular parking area on Lulworth Road – move bin store to create childrens play area with improved landscaping and tidy up	March 2025	Completed.
Landscape the verge along the route in front of the Irish Club along Chatham Street	£15,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Scoping options for delivering this project.
Re-landscape the front garden of Somerstown Court	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Letter went out to residents and date for responses now passed. Works programmed to start late July.
Town centre tree planting	£50,000 (July 2024)	-	2025/26 planting season	Survey, scope and related quotes for materials and installation costs required. Walk to identify potential locations in July
Permanent planters on Oxford Road IDR over pass	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Planters sourced, ensuring that these will be sufficient for proposed planting.
Pocket Park biodiversity enhancement at Castle Hill roundabout (NW corner)	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	A project will be brought forward after completion of Circuit Lane pocket park project which will inform the approach.
Repair and cleaning and providing water to George Street allotments	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Quote received from Thames Water for reconnection to mains water, work to be programmed.

Planting green spaces in Battle ward	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Potentially suitable sites identified.
More greenery on the Oxford Road	£75,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	See "Planting green spaces in Battle ward" project
Zebra crossing on Portman Road opposite Milk & More	£85,000 (July 2024)	-	Summer 2026	Resource planning in the context of other priorities and development of the 2022 allocation schemes (refer to section 3.6 of this report). CIL scheme delivery order to be agreed and 'expected delivery date' to be adjusted - currently indicative only. Consider to be a higher priority as it links to a Section 106/Active-travel funded new footpath that has been delivered.
Replacement of carpet on Kensington Park wicket	£8,000 (July 2024)	-	August 2024	Completed
20mph zone for the Amersham Road estate area	£40,000 (July 2024)	-	Summer 2026	Resource planning in the context of other priorities and development of the 2022 allocation schemes (refer to section 3.6 of this report). CIL scheme delivery order to be agreed and 'expected delivery date' to be adjusted - currently indicative only.
Tree planting in Amersham Road and Westfield Recreation Ground	£50,000 (July 2024)	-	As part of tree planting programme 24/25	Completed
Traffic and crossing measures in Emmer Green	£40,000 (July 2024)	-	Winter 2026	Resource planning in the context of other priorities and development of the 2022 allocation schemes (refer to section 3.6 of this report). CIL scheme delivery order to be agreed and 'expected delivery date' to be adjusted - currently indicative only.
Maintenance/refurbishment of Albert Road Park tennis courts	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	July 2025	Fencing and surface work and painting of upper courts complete June 2025. Surface works on lower courts timetabled for July 2025.
Provision of graffiti resistant information boards within the Cowsey	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	2025/26	Project works to include 3 trails with waymarkers, 2 information signs, various community events in partnership with Nature Nuture. Entrance signs installed March 2025. Community events currently taking place.
Replacement of outdated/broken	£15,000 (July 2024)	-	To be confirmed	Quotes for new noticeboards received and ordering in progress.

community noticeboards in Katesgrove				
Removal of the priority flow feature at the junction of Allcroft Road and Redlands Road	£25,000 (July 2024)	-	Winter 2026	Resource planning in the context of other priorities and development of the 2022 allocation schemes (refer to section 3.6 of this report). CIL scheme delivery order to be agreed and 'expected delivery date' to be adjusted - currently indicative only. Consider to be a higher priority as it links to a concern raised in a road safety audit. Recommend developing holistic solution alongside the below scheme.
Amend the width restriction build-outs on Redlands Road to include cycle-through bypasses	£12,000 (July 2024)	-	Winter 2026	Resource planning in the context of other priorities and development of the 2022 allocation schemes (refer to section 3.6 of this report). CIL scheme delivery order to be agreed and 'expected delivery date' to be adjusted - currently indicative only. Recommend developing holistic solution alongside the above scheme.
Add a non-turf cricket pitch and a two net training facility at Cintra Park	£61,000 (July 2024)	-	To be confirmed	Phase 1 – installation of a new artificial cricket wicket – complete March 2025. Phase 2 – batting nets - tied in with the leasing of the pavilion and site use which Active Reading dealing with. Active Reading will need to lead on the planning application for the nets if it proceeds as it will be linked in with the leasing. Currently, there is a shortfall in the budget required for this phase.
Refurbishment of bench at the junction of Southcote Rd and Tilehurst Rd	£1,000 (July 2024)	-	May 2025	Completed
Bath Road/Granville Road underpass enhancement	£26,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Proposal to improve lighting and general clean-up and engage community group for mural. Option still requires agreement.
Enhance the green in the Horncastle Conservation Area	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Vegetation clearance and tidy of area complete July 2025 with any planting occurring in the Autumn
Improving the appearance of the public areas of the Orts Road Estate	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Identified focus on clean-up, landscaping, highway works (including bollards) and environmental measures. All community consultation events now carried out.

Create a biodiversity friendly setting along the Gunther's Brook	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Cost to clear brook exceeds budget. Considering options for delivering this project.
Water safety enhancements including at the Kennet river	£30,000 (July 2024)	-	Summer 2025	Eight emergency throwline boards fitted at locations provided by RBFRS with additional Deep Water/No Swimming signs. Additional signage to be installed late July.
Installation of information board(s) and signage and improving pathway at Coley Water Meadows	£50,000 (July 2024)	-	End of 2025/26	Contractor identified and work programme to be drawn up.
Clean and enhance the underpass from Katesgrove Lane to the County Lock and general enhancement of the area	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Artist sketch has been produced to guide works, which are due to take place during summer 2025.
Infill footpath in Southcote Linear Park along the Holy Brook close to the allotments	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Scoping options for delivering this project.
Repaint and resurface the footbridge over the Kennet between Kennet Walk and Avon Place	£200,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Agreed scope to include removal and replacement of side panels, replacement of anti-skid surface, some lighting improvements and general clean up all within budget. Works to take place during school summer holidays to try reduce disruption. Contractor will try keep bridge open for most of the works.
Installation of additional river safety equipment along Thames Promenade and potentially more exit points	£25,000 (July 2024)	-	Summer 2025	See 'Water safety enhancements including at the Kennet river' project
Improvement of active travel connections to The River Academy	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	To be confirmed	Pedestrian and cycle improvements on Richfield Avenue by the School as part of the planning consent are substantially complete. Study to identify additional works to be commissioned.

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Insurance Contract Tender
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Darren Carter (Director of Finance)
Report author	Paul Harrington (Chief Auditor)
Lead Councillor	Cllr Ellie Emberson (Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources)
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree an open tender procedure be carried out with a view to the resultant insurance contract(s) being in place by 1st April 2026 allowing for an element of both self-insurance and cover by an external insurance policy as set out in 3.3.2 below. 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services to make relevant decisions regarding policy cover, levels of deductibles and award the contract at the end of the tender process to the winning tenderer/s. 3. Delegate Authority to the Director of Finance to approve the runoff insurance cover where appropriate for the decommissioned Children's Company 'Brighter Futures for Children'.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council's current insurance contracts are due to expire on 31st March 2026. In order that the Council can mitigate its potential financial and legal liabilities going forward and transfer some of its potential claims exposure, there is a need to tender for a new insurance contract(s), in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, which came into effect on February 24, 2025. The tender will incorporate the insurance run off requirements of 'Brighter Futures for Children'. The new contract(s) must be agreed and in place for 1st April 2026.
- 1.2. This report seeks approval for the award of contracts for insurance for the Council's Combined Liability (Public and Employee Liability), Motor Fleet and Property insurance arrangements, following a competitive tendering exercise.
- 1.3. The current year's total value of insurance contracts is £1.2 million. We are estimating £8.4m over the 7 years of the contract but this is subject to claims history, numbers of employees, levels of deductibles, fluctuations in the market and insurance premium tax (IPT at 12%), not changing through the course of the contract.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Council operates an insurance programme that balances self-retained risk with external insurance policy protection which is reviewed at each annual renewal. The insurance contracts (policies) have financial implications not only in the cost of the insurance policies, but the level of self-retained risk exposure the Council wishes to accept. The larger the self-retained risk that the Council exposes itself to the lower the policy cost.
- 2.2 There are three options facing the Council - to self-insure entirely, to take an insurance program which allows an element of self-insurance, but also the protection an insurance contract can give, or to transfer all insurable risk via ground up insurance. Based on the current financial climate, the availability and pricing of insurance, and the risk appetite of the Council we recommend continuing with the balanced option.
- 2.3 There are a limited number of insurers that are prepared to quote for local authority business in the UK, especially those authorities with children, adult, and highways risk exposures. Whilst insurers will consider the Council's total risk exposure and claims history when pricing their tender, insurers continue to review their premium ratings across all classes of business to reflect wider market issues.
- 2.4 The outcome of the tender process will be that comprehensive insurance will be in place to protect the Council's financial legal liability whilst achieving value for money in respect of the premium paid including IPT (Insurance Premium Tax).

- 2.5 The level of cover required will depend on the risk appetite of the Council and also the package which the insurers are prepared to offer. Therefore, the exact insurance portfolio will be decided upon the level of exposure we are prepared to accept and the premiums and policies the various insurers are prepared to offer.
- 2.6 The current deductible (self-insurance element) per claim for liability cover is £250,000 for Public Liability and Officials Indemnity Liability, £100,000, for Employee Liability and £25,000 for Professional Indemnity. The current deductible for General Property and Commercial Property insurance is £150,000 and £250.00¹ (paid by the tenant) per claim respectively. The current deductible for Motor and Cyber insurance is £50,000 and £100,000 per claim respectively.
- 2.7 As part of the tender process, it is proposed that alternative quotations are obtained to increase deductibles considered appropriate by the Section 151 Officer. If a larger deductible is chosen, then there will be a higher self-retained risk that would require appropriate funding.
- 2.8 Prior to the tender process we will commission a fund review to recommend the appropriate level of provisions and reserves in the context of self-insured layers of risk, on alternative deductible levels. The key objective of the fund review will be to use actuarial forecasting techniques based on the claims experience, anticipated claims exposure, size of the internal fund and the cost of the subsequent premiums. An informed decision can then be made on the most appropriate deductible based on an optimisation analysis.
- 2.9 It is recommended that the contract(s) be let on a three-year basis with the option to extend for a further two years, plus another two years (seven years). The anticipated cost of the premium and the potential length of the contract make this a major contract under the Council's contract rules and the Insurance Manager will be working closely with Procurement and legal.
- 2.10 The Council's appointed brokers AJG (Arthur J Gallagher) will also be assisting on the tender as the business has to be placed via an insurance broker as (with the exception of one insurer) insurers will only place business via a broker.
- 2.11 As a result of the planned dissolution of Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), it is necessary to maintain the existing Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance policy currently held with our insurer. This policy operates on a 'claims made' basis, meaning that coverage must remain in place for a defined period to ensure protection against any claims that may arise after 1 April 2026 in relation to actions taken while BFFC was operational. Accordingly, authorisation is sought to maintain this insurance for a minimum period of three years post-dissolution to ensure adequate run-off cover and mitigate potential liabilities.

¹The premium costs for commercial properties are recharged to the tenant. This is referred to a Ground-up loss, where the total amount of any loss is covered by an insurance policy

3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 3.1 Having appropriate insurance provision will safeguard the Council's properties, assets and services.
- 3.2 Adequate insurance provision will facilitate the Council remaining financially sustainable to deliver the service priorities covered in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 3.3 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 3.4 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
- Putting residents first
 - Building on strong foundations
 - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
 - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
 - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 3.5 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

4 Environmental and Climate Implications

- 4.1 The Insurance policies do not have Environmental or Climate implications, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulates how these organisations operate.

5 Community Engagement

- 5.1 We have not carried out consultation, community engagement or information as it is not required for this tender.

6 Equality Implications

- 6.1 There are no equality or diversity implications noted in this report.

7 Other Relevant Considerations

Risk management implications

- 7.1 Insurance arrangements are an important part of the council's overall risk management strategy. When considering the mitigation of the risks that the council faces, insurance policies may be used as a risk transfer mechanism. In exchange for a known cost (the insurance premium) the insurance arrangements pick up the unknown future financial responsibility for the insured risks.
- 7.2 Having insurance covers in place provides a known cost which avoids reducing funds available for other council services. Following consideration of the alternatives (e.g. self-insurance) the obtaining of external covers is the recommended option to reduce and manage this risk and allows for an informed and stable view to be taken.

Risk	Mitigations	Risk Score
Increase in insurance premium	Council's existing Insurance Broker will support/ manage the tender to ensure the widest possible selection of insurance providers are engaged in the tender, and to obtain the best value solution in the current insurance market conditions. It may be possible to reduce the cost of the insurance by decreasing the amount of insurance cover. However, this in turn would reduce the amount of financial protection offered to the Council	High
Insurer Failure	Insurance Broker conducts regular review/monitoring of public sector insurance market including credit ratings, financial health, and performance of potential providers of insurance. Insurers are regulated by the Prudential Regulatory Authority, which is part of the Bank of England and promotes the safety and soundness of insurers. The Financial Conduct Authority regulates insurer's behaviours	Low
Procurement Challenge	Tender will be run in accordance with the relevant procurement legislation and contract procurement rules	Low
There is a lack of responses to the tender from insurers	Market engagement would be undertaken to gain market intelligence ahead of re-tendering the contract	Medium
Future break of long-term agreement	Majority of insurers will only deal via an Insurance Broker Intermediary. Council's existing Insurance Broker will manage/support any required future re-tenders. Broker is then able to ensure widest selection of insurance providers are engaged in any future retenders.	Medium

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The proposed procurement is classed as a high value contract under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR). The Contract is estimated to be above the financial threshold for public procurement for services. As a result, a Regulation compliant tender must be undertaken. Officers propose to procure these services through a competitive tender procedure. This tender will be conducted in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 which came into force on 24 February 2025.
- 8.2 The Council is utilising the services of its broker A J Gallagher to carry out the evaluation process on its behalf and will therefore have to be satisfied that this is carried out in a compliant manner.
- 8.3 Local authorities are legally required to hold certain types of insurance, like Employers' Liability Insurance (required by the Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969) and Fidelity guarantee insurance (required by the Local Government Act 1972).
- 8.4 Motor Vehicle Insurance is mandatory for vehicles owned or used by the Council, as required by the Road Traffic Act of 1930.
- 8.5 Ann Ntephe, Acting Principal Lawyer, Corporate and Commercial Team has cleared these Legal Implications.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The current total value of insurance contracts is £1.2 million (£8.4m over life of contract) per annum including 12% insurance premium tax, split across the major policy areas. There are a limited number of insurers that are prepared to quote for local authority business in the UK, especially those authorities with children, adult, and highways risk exposures. Whilst insurers will consider the Council's total risk exposure and claims history when pricing their tender, insurers continue to review their premium ratings across all classes of business to reflect wider market issues.
- 9.2 Current insurance market conditions are such that it is unlikely that any saving in the cost of the Council's insurance programme can be achieved. Increases in insurance rates and property reinstatement costs are driving up the cost of insurance. If these are translated into higher prices through the contracts tendered for, then these additional costs will need to be factored into the Council's financial position for 2026/27 and its medium-term financial position. The contract has financial implications not only in the cost of the contract, but the level of exposure the council wishes to accept. If a larger deductible is chosen, then there will be a greater risk of costs having to be made from the self-insurance fund (reserve).

- 9.3 The Council also retains an insurance reserve for supplementary unknown and unquantifiable risks. The level of reserves maintained must be adequate to reflect the potential risk exposure of the council. To this end regular independent monitoring of the funds is carried out. The latest review (October 2023) provides reassurance that the Council is currently adequately funding the self-retained risk element of its insurance programme. The budgeted annual contribution to that funding going forward is also in line with that being recommended in the report.
- 9.4 An independent analysis will be undertaken by a qualified actuary to ensure that the optimum deductible level is chosen based on the claims experience, anticipated claims exposure, size of the internal self-insurance fund and the cost of the subsequent premiums.
- 9.5 Stuart Donnelly, Financial Planning & Strategy Manager, has cleared these Financial Implications.

10 Timetable for Implementation

- 10.1 Tender is to go live September 2025. Evaluation November 2025. Award decision January 2026. Contract (policies) to commence 1 April 2026

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 There are none.

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
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Title	Food Service Plan 2025-2026
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Katie Heath, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Food & Safety
Lead Councillor	Cllr Rachel Eden – Education & Public Health
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	1. That Members note the content of the statutory Food Service Plan for 2025-2026

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2025-2026 (Appendix 1). The Food Service Plan is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities who undertake official food controls and is detailed within the Food Law Code of Practice set by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Food Service Plan outlines the Local Authorities commitment to development of the food service.
- 1.2. The FSA set a standard template for the Food Service Plan which must be drawn up in accordance with the FSA Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities. The Food Service Plan must include qualitative and quantitative performance reviews of delivery against previous plans and outline how national priorities and standards will be addressed and delivered locally. The Food Service Plan serves to assist Local Authorities in aligning with the principles of good regulation, focus on key delivery issues, provide an essential link with corporate and financial planning, set objectives, manage performance and provide information on service delivery to key stakeholders.
- 1.3. The Local Authority must put in place arrangements for the regular review and update of the Food Service Plan. We find it useful to complete this on an annual basis after the close of year figures have become available (End of April).
- 1.4. It was recommended in a previous FSA Audit that the Food Service Plan be presented to Members.
- 1.5. This Food Service Plan outlines the Food Services key achievements for 2024-2025 and outlines service objectives and work plans for 2025-2026.
- 1.6. The Food & Safety Team would like to draw particular attention to its enforcement achievements in 2024-2025. These are detailed within the Food Service Plan at para 6.4.4 and demonstrates a significant increase in the number of voluntary closures, seizure, detention and surrender of food and Hygiene Emergency Prohibition (formal closures). The authority also initiated legal proceedings under food hygiene legislation

against a persistently non-compliant business and has increased the number of written warnings issued for both food hygiene and food standards in comparison to recent years. The authority has had a number of high-profile enforcement matters publicised throughout the year including condemnation of a large quantity of illegal meat products which gained national attention.

- 1.7. The authority has worked hard throughout the year to realign with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCOP) and has inspected a high percentage of high-risk premises (category A-D). As detailed in Table 1, below, the authority has completed 100% of A and B premises inspections for food hygiene, 99% of C rated premises and 97% of D rated premises. We have however fell short of delivering our targets to inspect our lower risk, E, premises. The authority was unable to realign with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCOP) during 2024-2025. The current backlog is due to a loss of officers in the team in Q3 and Q4, secondment to the Arcus Management Information System (MIS) project and ongoing issues with the implementation of the Arcus MIS.
- 1.8. The authority has continued to liaise, throughout 2024-2025, with the FSA's Performance Management Team. Despite ongoing concerns throughout the year the authority has now provided an enhanced Improvement Plan, detailing how we will realign with the FLCOP and complete all due official controls for food hygiene by the end of 2025-2026. The FSA was encouraged by the authority's performance and annual returns submitted for 2024-2025 and the authority performed better than it expected. The FSA is satisfied with the authority's plans and has acknowledged the hard work of the Food & Safety Team for its progress to date. A copy of the Improvement Plan can be found at Appendix 2.
- 1.9. The Food & Safety Team currently have 4.73 FTE vacant (including an apprenticeship level post) and is working hard to address and overcome these challenges as detailed in appendix 2. An update on the team's recruitment position can be found at 3.1.11. These challenges will need to be overcome to realign with the requirements of the FLCOP and deliver all due/overdue food hygiene interventions for 2025-2006. There is additional work that falls within the remit of the Food Service which is priority and falls outside the scope of the Food Service Plan. Further details on this area are detailed within the Food Service Plan (Appendix 1), including full details on the total number of inspections that are due/overdue.
- 1.10. The Food Service Plan makes reference to Dark Kitchens, these are businesses that operate without a customer facing premises and supply food direct to the final consumer through online aggregators. Known dark kitchens operating within Reading are registered with the authority and undergo the same level of inspection scrutiny as any other registered food business. The authority also seeks to investigate any information or intelligence provided about these businesses, whether currently registered or not. As they provide food direct to the final consumer their food hygiene rating score is also displayed publicly online. Nationally the central competent authority, the Food Standards Agency, liaises with the online aggregators to try and achieve compliance and high standards of hygiene across the businesses they represent.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The FSA is an independent Government department responsible for protecting public health and consumers' wider interests in food. Part of their role is to ensure that local authorities comply with the 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities'. The Agreement details:
 - That publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services should be published (i.e. the Food Service Plan).
 - agreed food law enforcement standards for local authorities.
 - enhanced monitoring data with greater focus on inspection outcomes and which provides more detailed information on local authority performance.
 - an audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice.

- 2.2. The Framework Agreement recognises that all Food officers should be correctly authorised, and a documented procedure must be in place for the authorisation of officers based on qualifications, competence and in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.
- 2.3. Food Officers carry out inspections of food premises, undertake food sampling, investigate complaints about food premises including infectious diseases or food poisoning cases. Environmental Health Officers consider the hygiene of food premises (including operating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme) and ensure that food is microbiologically fit and safe for consumption while Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers consider food standards. Food Standards includes ensuring food is described accurately and not in a misleading manner as well as ensuring food is not chemically contaminated.

3. The Proposal

3.1. Current Position:

- 3.1.1. As part of the Framework Agreement, the Council submits monitoring data to the Food Standards Agency, this is carried out bi-annually. Monitoring data is used to form the basis of the Food Service Plan and review of the previous year's performance. It also informs the forthcoming targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPI).
- 3.1.2. The Food Service Plan 2025-2026 outlines that within the Borough there are approximately 1,611 premises producing, retailing or serving food. There was a further increase of 12% in 2024-2025 of the number of new food business registrations within the borough.
- 3.1.3. Throughout 2024-2025 the Food Service focussed its resources on carrying out priority work in line with internal key performance indicators and to address our most longstanding overdue premises. Details of achieved inspections in 2024-2025 and remaining inspections that have been carried over into 2025-2026 can be found in sections 3.1.14, 3.1.15, 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 of the Food Service Plan. Table 1, below, provides an overview of the completed inspections in 2024-2025 and the number of targets that were met. A comparison against the previous year 2023-2024 is also provided. Overall, the authority considers that it has completed 84% of the total due inspections in 2024-2025.

Table 1

Objective	Priority/Source	Target Set (2024-2025) (%)	Achieved (2024-2025) (%)	Met/Not Met (2024-2025)	Target Set (2023-2024) (%)	Achieved (2023-2024) (%)	Met/Not Met (2023-2024)
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated A (due/overdue)	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	100 100	100	Met	100 100	100	Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated B (due/overdue)	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	80 100	100	Met	80 100	89	Met ¹
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated C	Food Law Code of Practice	100	99	Not Met	100	63	Not Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated D (overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	97	Not Met	100	38	Not Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated E (overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	51	Not Met	100	3	Not Met
Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated A	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	100 100	100	Met	100 100	100	Met
Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated B (due/overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	45	Not Met	100	45	Not Met

¹ There were no remaining B's awaiting inspection at the end of March 24 that were open, trading and available for inspection.

Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated C (due/overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	44	Not Met	100	34	Not Met
Unrated (newly registered) Food Hygiene Premises	Corporate KPI	70	92	Met	70	47	Not Met
	Food Law Code of Practice	100		Not Met	100		

Key –

Risk Rating A – These are the premises presenting the highest risk to consumers either from the methods of processing, distribution reach and clientele served, poor levels of compliance or a combination of the above. Food Hygiene premises risk rated A require an intervention/inspection every 6 months. For Food Standards this is every 12 months.

Risk Rating B – the risk rating is again determined through scores awarded under the categories of processing methods, distribution, clientele served and level of compliance. For food hygiene those premises rated B require an intervention/inspection every 12 months.

Risk Rating C – for Food Hygiene these premises require an inspection every 18 months.

N.B. The risk rating categories are set nationally by the FSA in the Food Law Code of Practice.

- 3.1.4. Please see paras 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 of the Food Service Plan for further details on inspections completed in 2024-2025.
- 3.1.5. From the total number of inspections due and overdue in 2024-2025 the Food Service achieved 70% of the total number of Food Hygiene Inspections due and 41% of the total Food Standards Inspections due. These numbers do not account for premises that have subsequently been closed during the year or new food business registrations received. Considering the number of outstanding premises that were not inspected and including the number of premises that have closed or changed hands and subsequently re-registered as a new business the authority views that it completed 84% of its total due interventions for food hygiene.
- 3.1.6. The breakdown of food hygiene ratings of food premises in the borough as at 30 April 2025 is:

Food Hygiene Rating	Descriptor	Number of Premises
5	Very Good	865
4	Good	258
3	Generally Satisfactory	138
2	Improvement Necessary	30
1	Major Improvement Necessary	22
0	Urgent Improvement Necessary	2

Awaiting Inspection		56
Exempt from scheme		94

N.B. The information in this table has been obtained from our upload to the food hygiene rating website. The total number of premises recorded with food hygiene ratings does not correlate with the total number of food business premises within Reading. Not all premises on our register fall within the scope of regular inspection and are considered outside of scope, these premises do not have a food hygiene rating. It is not currently possible to compare the list of premises within this table and our premises register due to the database.

3.1.9 The Authority has responded reactively in line with the Food Law Code of Practice requirements and has received 382 recorded food related service requests in 2024-2025 including, but not limited to, food incidents and alerts, food hygiene complaints and food standards complaints.

3.1.10 The Food & Safety Team has carried out an increase in enforcement activity throughout 2024-2025; 64 food related notices have been served. Enforcement activity includes closing of premises that present an imminent risk through service of a Hygiene Improvement Notice or Voluntary Closure, Detention, seizure and destruction notices for contaminated food and service of Hygiene Improvement Notices or Imported Food Notices for non-compliant premises/food. A breakdown of the notices served can be found in para 6.4.4 of the Food Service Plan.

3.1.11 We have gone out to advert to fill the vacant posts within the team to bring the establishment up from 4.22 FTE to the 8.95 FTE (maximum allocation). Interviewing is scheduled for mid-July, and we anticipate posts being substantively filled by mid-October, where interviewing is successful. In the meantime, the team has authorisation to increase the number of contractors allocated to clear the remaining backlog of food inspections and maintain our progress. Fully resourcing the team will provide greater resilience to meet the food intervention requirements and wider work remit of the team.

3.2. Options Proposed

3.2.1. The Local Authority is required to deliver all official controls as detailed within the Food Law Code of Practice. The Authority has continued to not meet this requirement in 2024-2025 and the FSA escalated their involvement to stage 2. The FSA has identified two significant areas where further improvement is required. These areas are:

a) Resolve shortfall of resources and deliver the required official controls, with particular regard to Food Hygiene, under the FLCOP.

b) Address issues with the MIS to enable accurate reporting

In response and as required by the FSAs escalation the Authority has produced a detailed improvement plan to address these areas. The improvement plan can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

3.2.2. The Food Service Plan identifies that there remains a deficit of resources to undertake all work allocated to the Food Service. The full remit of the Food Services work is outlined in Appendix 5 of the Food Service Plan and identifies that with all posts filled there remains a deficit of resources to complete all required work. Officers delivering the Food Service are also responsible for delivering a wider remit of work including sports ground safety, health and safety enforcement, accident investigation, special treatment licensing and infectious disease investigation. We will continue to mitigate this, and find efficiencies, working with the FSA to develop ways of working within available resources.

3.2.3. We are continuing to engage with a single contact point at the FSA, and continue working and engaging on the food service plan and improvement plans.

3.2.4. The Food Service will continue to prioritise the following key pieces of work which align with the Council's corporate objectives:

- Carry out a planned inspection programme focussing on high-risk activities first and foremost which keep consumers safe, whilst supporting the business to improve.
- Continue to operate a reactive food hygiene and standards sampling programme to support interventions carried out within Reading's premises and ensure that the food sold is safe to eat and not misleading to the consumer whilst supporting wider national programmes to achieve this across England.
- Continue to advertise our paid advice service for food hygiene and standards within our local community and Reading based businesses.
- Improve digital access to our Food Service through our webpages and enable interaction through social media platforms.
- Undertaking a review of officer authorisations in line with a larger corporate piece on delegations and enforcement to ensure that all officers are appropriately and correctly authorised to carry out their remit of work.
- Ensure that all officers are appropriately qualified, trained with documented competency in line with Food Law Code of Practice.
- Ensure that the service works to correct and up to date standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and to work within the parameters of the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance.

3.3. Other Options Considered

3.3.1. The Food Service has a number of other responsibilities beyond delivery of Food Hygiene and Food Standards Services, this includes but is not limited to investigation of infectious disease, health and safety accidents, sports ground safety work at our designated stadium and regulated stand and registration and inspection of Special Treatments. A number of these work streams are also high priority to ensure the safety of residents and visitors to Reading. A full breakdown of the Service's work responsibilities can be found in Appendix 5 of the Food Service Plan.

3.3.2. The Service continues to risk assess incoming and existing work to focus resources on priority matters.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. The Food Service Plan 2025-2026 supports 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 successes at its core. The Service Plan supports and aligns with the following corporate priorities and the Food & Safety Team Plan has prioritised work activities around these:

Promote more equal communities in Reading	<p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p>
Secure Reading's economic and cultural success	<p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses.</p> <p>Providing a paid advice service for complex and bespoke business needs.</p>

Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint	<p>Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p> <p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses</p> <p>Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain</p>
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children	<p>Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p> <p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses</p> <p>Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain</p>
Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future	<p>Developing our social media and web presence to ensure our services are accessible to all.</p>

4.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

4.3. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. The environmental or climate implications arising from the Food Service Plan 2025-2026 or its implementation is 'Net Nil'. Consideration has been given to the potential implications that could arise from this Plan and there are no additional points outside of general Council working practice that apply.

5.3. The most significant activity from the Plan is inspection activity. The Food Service have access to pooled bus passes and a large number of premises are based within Reading Town Centre where inspections can be carried out by foot. In general, use of public transport and travel by foot or bicycle is encouraged over the use of personal or pool vehicles. Interventions are recorded on paper which requires a copy to be left at the premises at the time of the intervention. The Food Service Plan supports the wider request for mobile working solutions which will reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

5.4. A Climate and Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix 3.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. There is no requirement to consult the community on the Food Service Plan.

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 has been completed and can be found at Appendix 4 to this report. Agreement to and implementation of the Food Service Plan 2025-2026 does not have a differential impact on; racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. The work of the Food Service contributes to positive public health outcomes by ensuring that food businesses operating in the borough are required to comply with relevant food law and are safe places for residents and visitors to dine. The Service investigates incidents of infectious disease, complaints, and food incidents to ensure that businesses are legally compliant and do not pose a risk to consumers. Where businesses are found to be non-compliant a staged enforcement approach is undertaken to reach compliance. The Service also undertakes health and safety investigation work to reduce the risk to employees and visitors' health, safety in welfare, within business.

8.2. The Food Service Plan 2025-2026 has due regard for the relevant legal provisions, Food Law Code of Practice, and other statutory guidance. The Food Service Plan comments upon upcoming regulatory changes where applicable Work streams commented on within the Food Service Plan are prioritised in accordance with public health implications.

9. Legal Implications

9.1. The Food Service Plan is written in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework Agreement with the FSA. No delegation is required to implement the recommendations of this report or the Food Service Plan. The Plan sets out how the authority will meet its statutory obligations. There has been no change to the Public Protection Enforcement Policy or Food Enforcement Policy since consultation with the Legal Team in May 2025.

9.2. These legal comments have been agreed by Alison Beynon.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. The Food Service Plan sets out the service budget and resources required to deliver the Council's statutory services. There are no changes to agreed Revenue budgets as a result of this report, all costs will be delivered within the Approved Revenue budget.

10.2. The revenue Budgets arising from running the service are set out below for information:

	2023-2024 £000	2024-2025 £000	2025-2026
Employee costs	542	527	523
Other running costs	39	39	40
Expenditure	581	566	563
Income from: Fees and charges	-24	-24	-24
Other income	-2	-2	-2
Total Income	-26	-26	-26
Net Cost	555	540	537

10.3. There are no capital implications arising from implementation of the Food Service Plan or operation of the Food Service.

10.4. The current resource allocation does not permit full delivery of the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice and other work allocated to the Food & Safety Team. The Team is therefore focussed on delivering an effective service, focussed on risk, within the approved budget provision.

10.5. These Financial Implications have been agreed with Stephen MacDonald Strategic Finance Business Partner.

Value for Money (VFM)

The Food Service Plan 2025-2026 outlines statutory work required to be undertaken by the Council. The Food & Safety Team Plan, which can be found at Appendix 5 of the Plan, details additional non-statutory work which is required to deliver a fit for purpose service. As part of this, revenue generating activities including expanding our paid advice service for local businesses, have been included within priority work.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Not Applicable

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are None.

Appendices

1. Food Service Plan 2025-2026
2. Stage 2 Improvement Plan
3. Climate and Impact Assessment
4. Equality Impact Assessment



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Food Service Plan 2025-26

1. FOOD SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The council has a statutory duty to enforce food law, overseen and audited by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The council must produce a plan setting out how it will deliver its functions. This document aims to discharge the duty for Reading Borough Council and has been written in accordance with the FSA Framework Agreement (Amendment 5), which is based on statutory Codes of Practice.

It is the council's aim to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough.

- 1.2 Key to the way the service is delivered is consideration of the five principles of good regulation:

- Targeting, via risk-based approach
- Proportionality
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Transparency

1.3 Objectives

To ensure that standards required by legislation are met and that preventative health measures are adopted and maintained by businesses.

To achieve the key aims, the following objectives have been adopted:

- To prevent unsafe food reaching the public through the application of mandatory duties and discretionary powers.
- To ensure food is correctly labelled and complies with appropriate compositional requirements.
- To direct resources to the highest risk food premises and activities and to improve standards by the effective use of the enforcement powers available.
- To ensure a consistent approach to food inspections by officers.
- To ensure that officers are qualified, adequately trained and competent.
- To highlight bad practice in food businesses.
- To ensure consumers are given information as to the hygiene conditions at food premises in the Borough through the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- To encourage the training of food handlers and proprietors of food businesses.
- To encourage and facilitate the improvement of food safety and food standards by the use of a paid service for bespoke advice.
- To proactively respond to changes and proposals for improvement in UK legislation.

- To work with our partners including the UK Health Security Agency.

1.4 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.4.1 The Council has a number of priorities which sit within the Council Plan 2025-2028. The delivery of the Food Service plan links to the following priorities:

Priority	How will we work toward this?
Promote more equal communities in Reading	<p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p>
Secure Reading's economic and cultural success	<p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses.</p> <p>Providing a paid advice service for complex and bespoke business needs.</p>
Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint	<p>Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p> <p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses</p> <p>Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain</p>
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of	<p>Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant</p>

Reading's adults and children	<p>premises and enforcement action where necessary.</p> <p>Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints</p> <p>Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management.</p> <p>Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.</p> <p>Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses</p> <p>Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain</p>
Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future	Developing our social media and web presence to ensure our services are accessible to all.

To achieve this aim, the Food & Safety Team and Trading Standards Team will:

- Inspect food premises and businesses, prioritising and delivering our resources in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice as far as practicable.
- Participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) to enable members of the public to make informed choices about where they eat or purchase food.
- Initiate appropriate enforcement action to secure compliance with the relevant legal requirements.
- Prepare, participate and implement national, regional and local sampling programmes for food that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed as far as practicable.
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities relating to the enforcement of Food Safety legislation.
- Aim to effectively discharge the Council's statutory duties, functions and responsibilities in relation to the control of spread of communicable disease and food poisoning.

1.4.2 The following KPIs are in place for the Food & Safety and Trading Standards teams for 2025-2026:

- 100% of Food Hygiene Premises rated A due before 31 March 26 to be completed.
- 100% of Food Hygiene Premises rated B due before 31 March 26 to be completed.

- 75% of new registrations (those awaiting inspection) to be completed before 31 March 26.
- 100% of Food Standards Premises rated A due before 31 March 26 to be completed.

1.4.3 The Council also recognises the risks associated with failing to deliver this plan and this is detailed in the Service risk register. A local risk register can be found within Appendix 5, the Food & Safety Team Work Plan for April 2025 – March 2026.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Authority

2.1.1 Reading Borough Council was created as a unitary authority in April 1998 and currently has a population of 174,200 (ONS Census 2021). The Unemployment (those claiming job seekers allowance) rate is 4.2% (ONS October 2022) within the town, higher than the national average of 3.8% (ONS February 2023). 77 languages are spoken across Reading. Reading is classed as the 3rd most unequal city in terms of wealth and 5 of our neighbourhoods are within the 10% most deprived in the country.

Reading is an urban authority, and the town centre is one of the largest in the South of England, attracting many shoppers and visitors to the area. Reading is a university and college town, with many of the small food businesses around the University doing the bulk of their trade during term time.

2.1.2 Manufacturing industry has declined over the years and the area is now the centre of high technology within the Thames Valley. There are no large food manufacturers in the town.

2.1.3 There is excellent access to the road system via the M4 (East/West) and the nearby M3 and A34 (North/South). Reading train station continues to provide excellent transport links to the town including the new Elizabeth line (between Reading and London Paddington) which placed Reading on the TFL underground map. A further train station has now opened at Green Park which has created improved commuter access to the high number of businesses in that area.

2.1.4 Businesses in Reading utilise its good transport links and close proximity to Heathrow Airport to transfer their raw ingredients and products. There are also UK distribution centres for Waitrose frozen products and Tesco ambient products within the town, further highlighting its excellent geographical location and communication links.

2.1.5 Reading is a market town, the market operating four days per week, and has a flourishing twice monthly Farmers' market where producers from the surrounding locality sell their own produce. There are also 2 weekly food markets as well as an annual chilli festival and specialist food festival. The town has further seen creation of a street food area that trades across the weekend from Thursday to Sunday.

- 2.1.6 The town hosts a number of festivals and cultural events which bring visitors and itinerant traders to the area. The most significant music festival is Reading Festival which is the 2nd largest festival in the UK after Glastonbury.

2.2 Organisational Structure

- 2.2.1 The Council has an approved constitution setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. A copy of the Council's constitution is available at:

[Constitution of the Council May 2023 \(reading.gov.uk\)](https://www.reading.gov.uk/constitutions)

- 2.2.2 The Scheme of Delegations sets out who is responsible for making decisions, including the authority for the service of enforcement notice. A copy of the Scheme of Delegations is available within the constitution.
- 2.2.3 The Council operates a Committee Structure, with the Food & Safety Team reporting to the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure (HNL) Committee and Policy Committee. The councillors with responsibility for Food & Safety are the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety and the Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health.
- 2.2.4 The Food & Safety Team sits within Public Protection. Appendix 1 sets out the Team structure of Public Protection. Public Protection sits under the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection within the Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services.
- 2.3.5 The officer with lead responsibility for food hygiene matters (and whose contact details have been notified to the FSA) is Katie Heath, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Food & Safety, supported by Rob Abell, Consumer Protection Group Manager and Matthew Golledge, Public Protection Manager.
- 2.3.6 The authority has appointed two lead officers for food standards matters; Katie Heath and Ian Savill, Principal Officer, Trading Standards both of whom are supported by the Consumer Protection Group Manager and Public Protection Manager.
- 2.3.7 Provisions have been made for the outsourcing of public services including the analysis of food and water samples for composition and microbiology. Please see section 3.5 below.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

- 2.3.1 The Food & Safety Team deals with food safety, some aspects of food standards relating to caterers, infectious disease, special treatments, safety at sports grounds licensing, statutory planning, building control and licensing consultation and health and safety at work including accident investigation. Trading Standards has responsibility for activities such as food standards relating to manufacturing and retail, fair trading, product safety, metrology, animal health, animal feed, petroleum and consumer advice.
- 2.3.2 The Trading Standards Team continue to provide assured business advice and support in Food Standards matters through the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme and currently supports 9 partners.

- 2.3.3 The Principal Environmental Health Officer – Food & Safety is responsible for managing the topic area of food within Public Protection. Approximately 72% of the Food & Safety Team is directed at official controls for food safety and approximately 7% of the Trading Standards Service is directed at food standards work (including work allocated through Primary Authority).
- 2.3.4 The Food & Safety Team have continued to experience significant recruitment and resourcing challenges throughout 2024-2025. After successfully filling three FTE in March 2024 and officers commencing in post in May 2024 all officers resigned in quarter 3 and these posts have not, as yet, been refilled. The apprentice post became vacant in July 2024 and a further resignation was received in February 2025. As of 21 April 2025 the team will have five vacant posts.
- 2.3.5 The service is based at:
- Public Protection
Floor 2 South Front
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Reading
RG1 2LU

Tel: Food Safety Enquiries 0118 937 3787
Food Standards Enquiries 03454 040506 (c/o Citizens Advice Bureau)

E-mail: consumer.protection@reading.gov.uk

Website: www.reading.gov.uk.

The office is open Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1700 hours. There is no standard emergency out of hours cover available for Food matters except for the Christmas period where the office is routinely closed. The emergency 'out of hours' telephone number is 0118 937 3737.

2.4 **Demands on the Food Service**

- 2.4.1 There are annual variations on demand based on a broad range of factors. The Borough has seen the overall number of businesses increase and there is a relatively high turnover, particularly in the takeaway sector. The table below details the number of food premises contained in each category at the time of writing this plan:

Type of premises	Number of Premises
Primary Producer	0
Manufacturer/Packer	13
Food Importer/Exporter	8
Food Distributor/Transporter	30

Supermarket/Hypermarket	56
Small Retailer	232
Retailer Other	97
Restaurant, Café, Canteen	313
Hotel, Guest House	29
Pub, Club	108
Takeaway	192
Caring Establishment	146
Schools, Colleges	85
Mobile Unit	51
Restaurant, Caterer Other	251
Total	1611

N.B. Our establishment profile is dated 12 November 2024. It is not possible to run an up-to-date establishment profile for April 2025 due to ongoing data migration and input issues with our new MIS.

- 2.4.2 There are currently 6 businesses which have received approval (including conditional approval) under one or more of the product specific regulations. These premises handle a combination of namely fishery products, minced meat & meat preparations, meat products, dairy products, animal greaves and cold store/rewrapping activities. These premises are inspected in line with their risk rating.
- 2.4.3 There are a number of outdoor events per year, mainly during May to September, occurring during weekdays and weekends. Attendance at these events is determined by risk and the number of food traders likely to be present. The Food & Safety Team attend event Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings regularly and will provide advice and guidance to event organisers regarding food safety matters.
- 2.4.4 Reading Borough Council works in collaboration with Festival Republic at Reading Festival annually. The festival takes place over the August Bank Holiday weekend. During this period the Food & Safety Team attend site and monitor food hygiene and safety inspections, respond to complaints, and conduct sampling in addition to other safety checks.
- 2.4.5 The Borough is multi-cultural and contains a wide range of food premises managed and run by many diverse ethnic groups. Many retail premises specifically cater for these populations and many registered home caterers prepare food dishes from their home countries.

- 2.4.6 Many businesses operate outside office hours and in which case will be inspected during those periods.
- 2.4.7 The service has seen a rise in businesses that trade online as part of a High Street model. There is also a trend for customers to order food online from/via Facebook, Amazon, Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Just Eat and have it delivered to their house thus the customer has no idea where the food is produced or where the wrapped food is stored.
- 2.4.8 The service has also seen a rise in businesses trading as 'Dark Kitchens', where a single premises/business trades as multiple business online. This way of trading has an impact on consumer information and raises questions about listings on the food hygiene rating scheme and requirement for businesses to register.

2.5 Regulatory Policy

- 2.5.1 The Council has previously adopted the Enforcement Concordat, which was replaced by the Regulator's Compliance Code until 5 April 2014, when it was replaced by the Regulator's Code, effective from 6 April 2014. The Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy is attached as Appendix 2. This policy is supplemented by a specific food law enforcement policy that can be found in Appendix 3.
- 2.5.2 The Regulators' Code has six main themes:
- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow.
 - Regulators should provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views.
 - Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk.
 - Regulators should share information about compliance and risk.
 - Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply.
 - Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent.

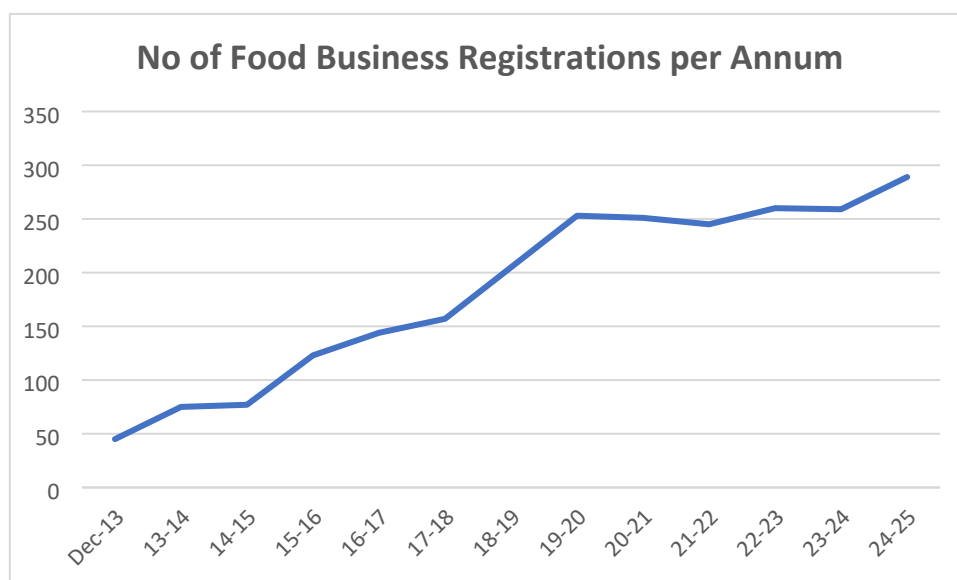
3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Premises Inspections

- 3.1.1 The Council's general policy is to inspect all food premises that are due for inspection based on the minimum frequency as set by in the Food Law Code of Practice. However, resources will always be directed towards higher risk activities, and this may result in some lower risk activities being delayed. The aim is to ensure compliance with the legal requirements covering the safe handling and production of food, the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food and of the materials or articles in contact with food.
- 3.1.2 Due to ongoing resource challenges our inspection services remain impacted and we have been unable to complete all official controls required by the Food Law Code of Practice. There remains a backlog of overdue and awaiting inspections, predominantly lower risk new registrations and E premises. There continues to be an increase in newly registered food premises within the

borough. The Council is continuing to prioritise work, focussing on higher risk (A to D) premises, higher risk unrated premises, premises subject to ongoing enforcement action, reactive work and those presenting the highest risk. The Council continues to liaise with the FSA's Performance Management Team and has worked hard to meet their expectations, they have however fallen short. The FSA have recently escalated their approach to stage 2 and the Council has responded to this with a further improvement plan. This is available on request.

- 3.1.3 As the designated food authority, the Council discharges its duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and Regulation 2017/625 (retained) by carrying out regular, primary food hygiene and food standards inspections of high-risk premises.
- 3.1.4 The number of new premises that register with the Local Authority per year is increasing. There was a 12% increase on new business registrations in 2024-2025 from the previous year. This figure is increasing the number of inspections due each year. The increase in number of premises registering per year is displayed below:



- 3.1.5 The current profile of premises within Reading can be seen at point 2.4.1 above.
- 3.1.6 The Food Law Code of Practice rating scheme is used for both Food Hygiene and Food Standards. The authority is moving over to the new Food Standards Risk Rating Model and has implemented this scoring mechanism from 1 April 2025. At present it is unable to fully transition to the new risk rating model due to errors in its MIS. This transition will be completed once the MIS is correctly working.
- 3.1.7 For Food hygiene, 96% of premises are currently rated as 'broadly compliant'. A premises is 'broadly compliant' if none of the individual scores for hygiene, structure or confidence in management exceed 10. Non broadly compliant premises require follow up revisits, education and enforcement action.
- 3.1.8 The following targets for food premises inspections due to be visited in 2025-2026 can be seen below. These targets have been set to ensure that our

priorities are focussed towards premises that present the highest risk for both food hygiene and food standards. Although there are no corporately set targets inspections of C, D and E premises for food hygiene and B and C categories for food standards will be carried out as resources permit.

	Food Hygiene	Food Standards
Category A	100%	100%
Category B	100%	N/A
Category C	N/A	N/A
Category D	N/A	-
Category E	N/A	-
Category Unrated	75%	N/A

3.1.10 There are also a number of food hygiene and food standards inspections that have been given a non-inspectable risk (NIR) score. Examples of these premises include for food hygiene, importers based in the Borough where there is just an office and no storage or distribution of the product in the Borough (food broker) and inspections that are carried out at outdoor events where the trader is registered outside of the Borough. A review of the NIR premises for Food Hygiene was commenced in 2024-2025 with all premises being contacting to ascertain their food hygiene activity. Due to non-response from businesses this review is ongoing. The borough currently has a large number of NIR premises listed for Food Standards which appears disproportionate compared to those listed for Food Hygiene. The authority was due to undertake a review of the recorded NIR premises for Food Standards in 2024-2025, this was not completed and remains ongoing.

3.1.11 Category E food hygiene inspections and category C food standards inspections can be carried out via an alternative enforcement strategy (AES) or using an official control such as inspection, partial inspection or audit. Following an increase of resources in year this work was commenced for Food Hygiene, with questionnaires being sent to all businesses deemed appropriate within this category. A number of follow-up inspections were carried out where required however a number of premises that failed to respond to the questionnaire continue to await inspection. AES interventions will continue for E rated premises in 2025-2026. Approximately 39% of businesses contacted by questionnaire have responded to this intervention.

3.1.12 Officers will have due regard to the FSA guidelines on the importation of food when carrying out routine inspections, will consider traceability of food products and will be mindful of the implications of food fraud or unauthorised ingredients.

3.1.13 The resource requirements for allocated work are detailed in section 4 below.

Food hygiene

3.1.14 The frequency of food hygiene inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the code of practice. Risk categories may change if food handling activities change, consumer complaints are received, or other non-compliance is identified. The number of inspections due in 2025-2026, including those overdue from previous years is:

Category/ Frequency	Number of inspections Due 2025/2026
A / at least every 6 months ¹	5
B / at least every 1 year	68
C / at least every 18 months	198
D / at least every 2 years	239
E / Alternative Enforcement Strategy	207
Outside the Programme (incl. Reading Festival)	37
Unrated ²	73
Total	827

¹ This number excludes A's that may arise between 01/04 and 30/09.

² This number excludes new premises that will register within the year.

Food Standards – labelling and composition

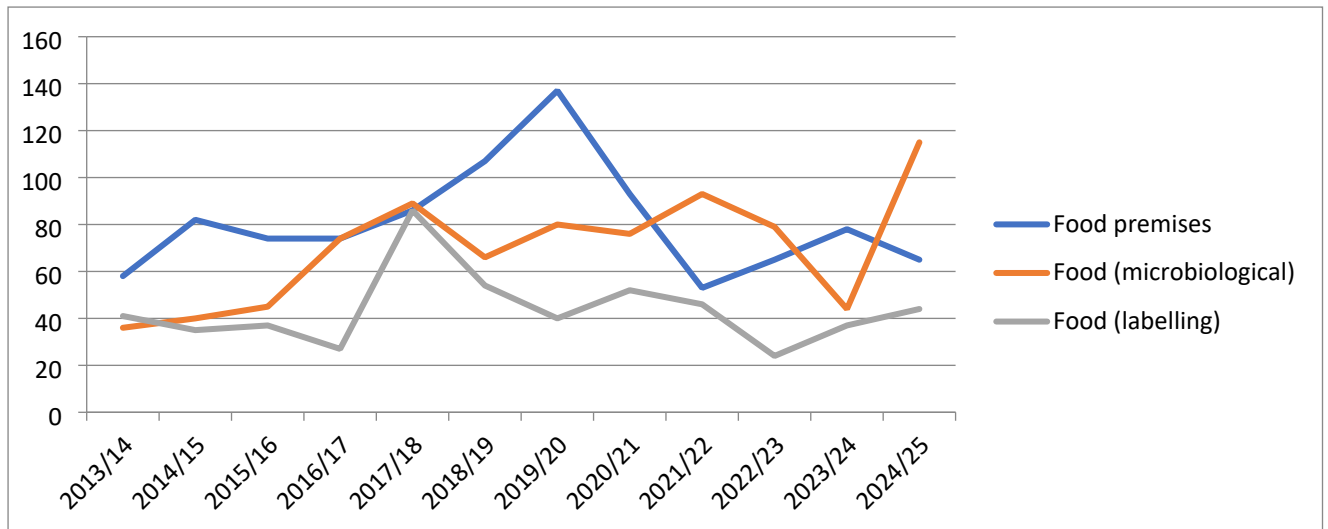
3.1.15 The frequency of food standards inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the Code of Practice. The number of inspections due in 2025-2026, based upon the old risk rating are:

Category/ Frequency	Number of Inspections due 2025/2026
A / at least every 1 year	1
B / at least every 2 years	274
C / alternative enforcement strategy	175
Outside the Programme	105
Unrated ¹	217
Total	772

¹This number excludes new premises that will register within the year

3.2 **Food Complaints**

- 3.2.1 There are documented food complaint procedures. Food complaints are triaged upon receipt and those that require further investigation are investigated in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, practical guidance and in-house procedures. Complaints that are identified as posing an immediate risk to health are responded to within one day. Other food complaints are investigated and responded to within 3-7 working days, depending on issue. The Primary Authority/home authority principle is employed where the food is manufactured in another borough.
- 3.2.2 The graph below details the trends for food complaints received since 2013/2014:



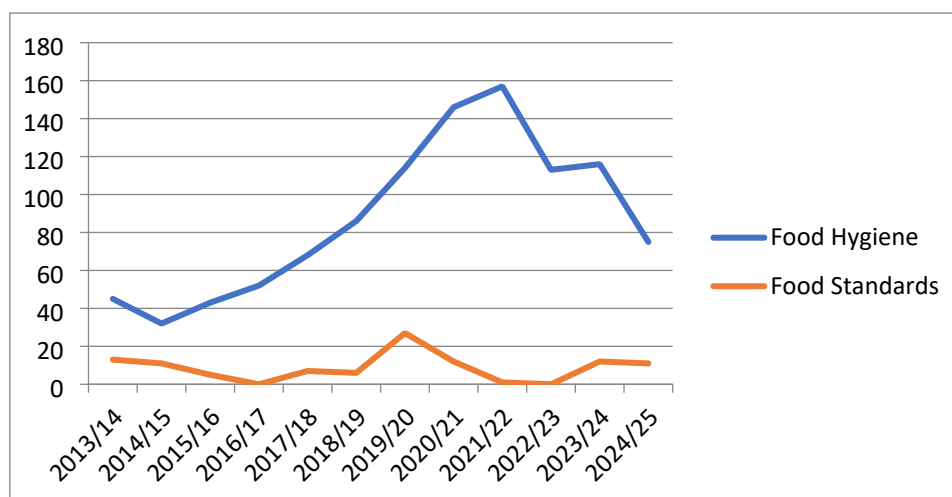
3.2.3 The data shows that there has been a decline in the number of complaints regarding food premises but an increase in the number of complaints regarding food, this is likely due to a change in categorisation of complaints on our database. Overall, there has been an increase in both the number of food hygiene and safety complaints and food standards complaints received by the authority. We anticipate that these will continue to increase.

3.3 **Advice to Business**

3.3.1 The enforcement policy states that the Service will provide advice to businesses in the first instance to assist them in complying with the law and to help them maintain high standards of food safety or standards.

3.3.2 Businesses can contact the Food & Safety Team, where they will be directed to advice leaflets and other information available on the website. If the food business operator requires further advice, a paid for service is offered.

3.3.3 The number of service requests from businesses for advice on food and drink are detailed in the graph below. A substantial amount of business advice is provided during routine interventions and is not accounted for within these numbers:



3.3.4 It is anticipated that the number of requests for food hygiene advice will stabilise and stay broadly the same. Food standards advice requests had declined over recent years, this is believed to be related to differences in our reporting which had focussed on paid food standards advice. Non-chargeable food standards advice has continued to take place across all years and is anticipated to remain similar for 2025/26. The Council continue to advertise our paid food advice services.

3.4 Food Sampling

3.4.1 Food samples are taken in accordance with the authority's sampling procedure and the joint annual sampling plan. Sampling programmes have been developed and implemented to:

- Assess the microbiological quality of food produced and offered for sale;
- Determine the compositional standards and descriptive integrity of food.

3.4.2 The sampling plan reflects the following requirements:

- the procurement of samples taken during food hygiene and food standards inspections, taking into consideration the FSA guidelines for imported food and feed controls.
- specifically targeting foods produced and distributed nationally, from producers and manufacturers based in Reading.
- in response to consumer and business complaints regarding food standards and food hygiene, and
- the participation in agreed national, regionally co-ordinated and local sampling programmes and in particular projects concerning imported foods.
- Information received via the International Food Safety Authority Network (Infosan) distributed by the FSA.

3.4.3 The plan may be changed from time to time during the year to reflect new or changes in legislation and other local or national issues of concern.

3.4.4 Food samples are procured in accordance with the Code of Practice and legislation as appropriate.

3.4.5 Samples for microbiological analysis are sent to the food examiner at:

UKHSA
Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton
Porton Down
Salisbury
SP4 0JG
Tel 01980 616766

3.4.6 Samples for chemical and compositional analysis are sent to the Public Analyst at:

Hampshire and Kent Scientific Services
Hyde Park Road
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO5 4LL
Tel. 023 9282 9501

Food Safety – Microbiological Sampling

3.4.7 Resources are allocated through the UK Health Security Agency. Microbiological food sampling projects are co-ordinated within the sampling county liaison group. The Porton laboratory carries out the analysis of the samples.

3.4.8 For 2025-2026 the food sampling budget for microbiological analysis is £6,422.00 which is held on account by UKHSA.

3.4.9 We will continue to participate in proactive national and regional sampling programmes which align with our premises and priorities. No target for proactive microbiological sampling has been set for this year. Reactive samples will be carried out on a risk basis.

Food Standards Quality and Compositional Sampling

3.4.10 Trading Standards manages a coordinated annual sampling programme through Trading Standards Southeast Group (TSSE) and a local sampling programme. Any local sampling is shared with TSSE and other members of the group are invited to also take part in the sampling.

3.4.11 There is no set budget for Food Standards Sampling. Sampling is purchased through our agreement with HKSS where required.

3.4.12 There has been a decline in available grants and sampling projects ran by the FSA over recent years. Reactive samples will be carried out on a risk basis. Participation in available grants, either directly through the FSA or in conjunction with TSSE will be subject to available resources.

3.5 Investigation of Outbreaks and Control of Food Related Illnesses and Infectious Diseases and Food Poisoning Outbreaks

3.5.1 The Service investigates all notifiable food poisoning incidents and outbreaks associated with food occurring in Reading. Officers will liaise with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) in the investigation of diseases or outbreaks and where it is necessary to exclude infected persons from work or children from school in accordance with the Berkshire Joint Infectious Disease Outbreak Control Plan (2013).

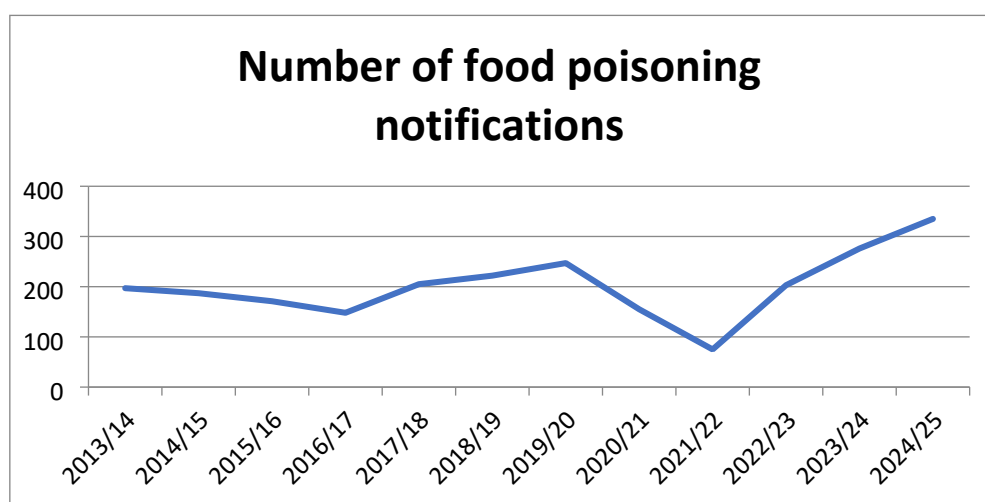
3.5.2 Investigations into infectious disease aim to:

- (i) Determine whether the infected person works with food or cares for others particularly if the others are a vulnerable group.
- (ii) Identify the source of infection.
- (iii) Prevent spread or reoccurrence of the infection.
- (iv) Take formal action in appropriate cases where breaches of food legislation have contributed to a food poisoning outbreak.
- (v) Provide information to affected persons.

3.5.3 The target for response is as follows:

Food Poisoning outbreaks	100% in 1 day
Food Poisoning (cases)	100% in 2 days

3.5.4 The annual number of food poisoning notifications are detailed below:



3.5.5 The Council has seen a further increase in the number of notifications in 2024-2025. There has been a 21% increase in notifications on the previous year. On this basis it is anticipated that reported numbers will continue to rise into 2025-2026. The Local Authority is primarily called upon for cases of lower risk food poisoning such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium*, *Giardia*, *Salmonella* and *Shigella* as well as to assist TVPHE in finding the source of other cases such as *Cryptosporidium*.

3.6 Food Safety Incidents

- 3.6.1 All food safety incidents are dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Act, Code of Practice and Practical guidance on food hazards and the procedure for food safety incidents. The team is committed to responding to appropriate notifications of food hazards and working with the FSA and food businesses to ensure that food is safe to eat.
- 3.6.2 The team will receive Food Alerts (FAFA), Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and allergy alerts via an automated daily or weekly digest email alert. The Lead Food Officer or Senior Officer in charge will determine what action needs to be taken on the Food Alert. Generally, such situations are dealt with through voluntary co-operation or surrender of the food.

Food Fraud

- 3.6.3 The Council is committed to detecting fraudulent activity. This includes various illegal acts committed for economic gain including false labelling, establishments operating illegally, illegal importation of foods and diversion of meat products into the animal feed chain via the bakery production.
- 3.6.4 Whistle-blower, anonymous complaints or partial information is taken seriously and collated or followed up, liaising with the FSA and National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) and other LAs where required.

3.7 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 3.7.1 Arrangements are in place to ensure consistency with other organisations and by officers delegated to represent the Council. This is achieved through membership of local specialist groups.
- 3.7.2 The Lead Food officer or nominated deputy will attend and participate in the Thames Valley Food Safety & Health and Safety Liaison Group that meets three times per year. A member of this group attends the National Food Hygiene Focus Group.
- 3.7.3 The officer with specialist responsibility for sampling attends and participates in the Berkshire Food Sampling Group.
- 3.7.4 The Trading Standards food specialist or lead food officer attends and participates in the Regional Food Focus Group of TSSE which meets 2 times per year.
- 3.7.5 The service has regular contact with professional bodies, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Trading Standards Institute as well as the national regulators FSA and OPSS and will participate in relevant forums as they are available.
- 3.7.6 For imported or exported foods, the team liaises with relevant port of entry local authorities where action is required as well as the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).

- 3.7.7 A representative for the Food & Safety Team sits on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which covers all festivals and community events within the town and offers support or advice regarding food safety.
- 3.7.8 Officers within the team liaise with Planning and Building Control services as a statutory consultee for Food & Safety matters, providing advice to the teams and applicants regarding food safety matters accordingly.

3.8 Food Promotion/ Projects

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

- 3.8.1 The Authority has run and issued awards for good standards of hygiene in food premises since 1975. In 2011 the authority joined the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) run by the FSA. The rating is given at the end of routine or partial inspections in the form of a window/wall sticker including information about the scheme and how their rating is made up. The information is uploaded to the website approximately once every 2 weeks. Premises can request a revisit if they are not satisfied with their rating or lodge an appeal with the Lead Food Officer. On payment of a fee another full inspection will be carried out within 3 months.

Food Hygiene Education

- 3.8.2 The Authority provide written and verbal advice to food businesses and members of the public upon request and information on common matters can also be found on the authority's webpages.
- 3.8.3 The Authority have a paid advice service whereby businesses can pay to receive bespoke food hygiene advice to their business, including a site visit, or bespoke food standards/labelling advice.

3.9 Challenges

Management Information System (MIS)

- 3.9.1 The authority went live on a new MIS in November 2024 however we have been experiencing a number of issues with functionality and transfer of data. The new MIS is not fully functional for recording new Food Hygiene or Food Standards inspections, so an interim arrangement has been made. We also have limited accessibility to premises history. The Food & Safety Team has worked with the project team at all stages of the MIS rollout and has reported all known issues and concerns in a clear and timely manner. We have developed an action plan, which has been shared with the FSA to explain how we are addressing the identified issues, including the resource we are committing. At present, reporting on work completed is challenging as the MIS alone, without additional manual calculations, cannot provide an accurate account of work completed in 2024-2025 and is unable to provide accurate reports of interventions due in 2025-2026. To provide data for this Service Plan and to complete the statutory returns manual data has been provided. However, it should be noted that due

to the inconsistent location of data across the old MIS, new MIS and manual spreadsheets this may have impacted the reliability and accuracy of our data. As noted above it is currently not possible to report an accurate establishment profile for the borough.

Food Standards Delivery Model

- 3.9.2 The authority has been unable to fully implement the new Food Standards Model in 2024-2025 by the due deadline because of the timing of the MIS switchover. Due to the issues noted at 3.9.1 above, the inaccuracies in the new MIS have meant that the authority cannot migrate its data to the new model. The authority, as of 1 April 2025 has commenced use of the new risk rating for interventions carried out in 2025-2026 and will migrate its existing data when it is able to do so. The authority continues to have a large number of overdue interventions and an outstanding backlog of unrated premises (including some premises incorrectly recorded as outside of scope) that still require review and prioritisation.

Food Standards – Unrated and Outside of Scope Premises

- 3.9.3 The authority has a large number of unrated premises awaiting intervention for Food Standards. This is a longstanding backlog, and a further number of premises are listed as outside of scope, including a number of premises that are incorrectly listed. The authority was unable to complete this work in 2024/2025 and it remains outstanding.

FSA Improvement Plan

- 3.9.4 The Council has liaised with the FSA throughout 2024-2025 regarding its delivery against the improvement plan and realignment with the Code of Practice for Food Hygiene. The council has made good progress in completing due interventions, particularly across A-D and unrated categories however the Council was unable to complete all due interventions. The Council continue to work with the FSA's Performance Management Team. Further details of the FSA's correspondence with the Council and the Councils response, including improvement plans, are available on request.

Other Priorities

- 3.9.5 The Food & Safety Team have responsibilities beyond food hygiene and standards. This includes health and safety accident investigation, sports ground safety and special treatment premises. Enforcement of these matters shares the same pool of officers.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The budget for Food & Safety in 2025-2026 is £536,800. This excludes some Food Standards inspection and complaint work which falls under the Trading Standards budget. The Food & Safety budget also covers the provision of other, non-food related work, including safety at sports grounds licensing, special

treatments licensing and health and safety enforcement. Financial provision for legal action as part of our enforcement policy is provided centrally and is not included in the above budget.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

- 4.2.1 The Food & Safety team has an allocation of 8.95 FTE (including management). The Trading Standards Team has an allocation of 6.41 FTE (including management). As at 01/04/25 there were 5.16 FTE allocated to carry out Food Hygiene Work and 1.734 FTE allocated to carry out Food Standards work. Of these allocations, as at 01/04/2025 there were 3.15 FTE filled and undertaking food hygiene work and 1.15 FTE filled carrying out food standards work. Phase 3 of the Public Protection workforce review was out for consultation in March 25 and finalised job descriptions are due to be in place by 1 May 2025 with recruitment being permitted to launch after this. At this time the authority is intending to go to advert for 3.73 FTE of qualified officers and 1 FTE of apprentice.
- 4.2.2 The team carry out the full spectrum of food hygiene, food standards, infectious disease, health and safety, special treatments and certain forms of licensing activities. Officers in the team are broadly multidisciplinary, however certain aspects of their role such as the inspection of high-risk premises are restricted based on their competency and qualifications. For example, an Environmental Health Officer who has not reached specific competency criteria will not be able to prohibit a food premises from operating. This allocation does not include Business Support functions and those officers allocated to carry out that work. There is currently approximately 1 FTE allocated to this work which includes processing food business registrations, inputting and allocating service requests and inputting food hygiene inspections on our MIS.
- 4.2.3 The estimated need for 2025-2026 for the delivery of food hygiene and food standards is 7 FTE and 2.23 FTE respectively. Please see Appendix 5 for further detail on the Food & Safety Teams work priorities and resource requirements.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

- 4.3.1 One to one meetings are held for all officers approximately 6-8 times per year where professional and personal development is discussed and encouraged. An annual review is held with each officer once per year. Training and development needs are included in one to ones and annual reviews. Officers are required to complete 20 hours CPD (30 for Chartered Environmental Health Practitioners) of which 10 hours must be carried out in food related matters as specified in the Food Law Code of Practice.
- 4.3.2 The Council continues to invest in online training (ABC Food Law) for staff in order to ensure that they meet their CPD requirements.
- 4.3.3 Consistency training for use of the Food Hygiene risk rating scheme will be undertaken as part of the FSA national consistency exercise. Additional consistency training is carried out throughout the year, including specific consistency relating to Reading Festival inspections. For 2025-2026 training

will be focussed on use of the new MIS and the new Food Standards Delivery Model.

- 4.3.4 Identified training from 2024-2025 regarding enforcement, including seizure, was not completed and remains outstanding.
- 4.3.5 Courses will be undertaken according to officer specialisms, as the course becomes available, and according to officer training plans and service needs. Cascade training is provided to other staff within the team following attendance at these courses.
- 4.3.6 Newly appointed staff are subject to a Council wide probation scheme and must complete theory and practical training logs within the Team before they are deemed competent and authorised accordingly.
- 4.3.7 Following announcement by the FSA that the competency framework will be reviewed and altered the Council have made the decision not to progress this area of work.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND INTERNAL MONITORING

- 5.1 The Council does not hold any external accreditation; however, it conducts a rigorous monitoring procedure to ensure the national and local performance indicators it has set itself are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted to achieve best value.

The monitoring of the plan is conducted by:

- (i) Regular (minimum bi-monthly) monitoring of achievement of targets, actions and time taken by team managers or delegated officers.
 - (ii) Quarterly monitoring reports and updates to the Group and Service Managers.
 - (iii) Submission of food hygiene and food standards statistical returns to the FSA.
 - (iv) Regular one to one meetings.
 - (v) Annual reviews of staff.
 - (vi) Publication of annual performance achievements.
 - (vii) Checks of accuracy of improvement and prohibition notices served.
 - (viii) Ad hoc shadowing of staff to check consistency and review of inspections.
- 5.2 As part of its wider commitment to customer service the Council is taking part in a council wide customer excellence programme to review and streamline its services and to ensure that they are accessible to all.

6. REVIEW

- 6.1 The annual performance achievement is compared with the target set and any underachievement is explored, and the appropriate action taken.

6.2 The Council has continued to struggle with resourcing and has been impacted by the deployment of the new MIS, it has been unable to realign with the Code of Practice but has seen improved delivery against all categories of Food Hygiene Intervention.

6.3 The data below details the performance that was achieved in 2024-2025.

6.4 **Number of Inspections**

6.4.1 A summary of completed inspections can be seen below:

6.4.2 Food Hygiene

- The authority carried out 850 food hygiene inspections during 2024-2025.
- All 10 'A' premises due were inspected
- All 26 'B' premises due were inspected
- 236 'C' premises were due for inspection in 2024-2025. The authority completed all but 3 'C' premises due.
- 392 'D' premises were due for inspection in 2024-2025. The authority completed all but 9 'D' premises due.
- 391 'E' premises were due for inspection in 2024-2025. 57 of these premises were flagged for an inspection/audit and 293 of these premises were approached through AES interventions, by questionnaire. 112 premises have returned the questionnaire, of these 34 have been allocated to have a follow-up inspection. 41 premises have been confirmed as no longer trading. 154 'E' premises have not yet had an inspection or a satisfactory AES check.
- The authority received 41 applications for FHRS re-rating visits throughout the year, a number of these were carried out to premises that had already received their statutory inspection within the year.
- The authority completed 88 revisits to premises for matters of non-compliance.
- A further 34 inspections and 54 revisits were carried out at Reading Festival, these premises are considered to be outside of scope.
- Throughout the year a number of premises closed or changed hands and re-registered with the borough. 289 new business registrations were received during the year.
- The authority did not complete 30 of the due unrated food inspections that were considered to be open and trading and available for inspection.
- The authority met its KPIs with respect to A, B and unrated premises set internally.
- The authority did not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice with respect to C, D, E or unrated/newly registered premises.

6.4.3 Food Standards

- The authority carried out 408 food standards inspections during 2024-2025.
- There were 2 'A' premises due for inspection which were completed.
- 124 'B' premises inspections were completed.
- 122 'C' premises inspections were completed.
- 207 unrated or newly registered premises were inspected.
- 16 premises categorised as outside of scope were inspected.
- The authority did not complete any revisits to premises for matters of non-compliance.
- Throughout the year a number of premises closed or changed hands and re-registered with the borough. 289 new business registrations were received during the year.
- The authority met its KPIs with respect to A premises set internally.
- The authority did not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice with respect to B, C or unrated/newly registered premises.

6.4.4 Formal Actions

During the period 2019-2020 to 2024-2025 the authority took the following enforcement action:

Enforcement Type	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Voluntary closure	0	1	1	2	4	7
Seizure, detention & surrender of food	2	0	1	2	0	4
Suspension/revocation of approval or licence	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hygiene Emergency prohibition notice	3	0	0	2	2	8
Prohibition order	3	0	0	1	0	0
Simple caution	0	0	0	0	0	0

No of premises where Improvement notices served	11	0	2	5	3	4
No of Hygiene Improvement notices served	21	0	7	12	4	8
No of FIR Improvement notices served	1	0	0	0	0	0
Remedial action & detention notices	1	0	0	0	0	0
Written warnings (Food Hygiene)	910	129	381	621	527	918
Written warnings (Food Standards)	75	35	84	117	101	234
Prosecutions concluded	1	0	0	0	0	0
Prosecutions initiated	0	0	0	0	0	1

6.4.5 Food Sampling

The following shows the number of hygiene and compositional samples taken and the number of unsatisfactory results received across the period 2017-2018 through 2024-2025.

	Number of Food Hygiene Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results	Number of Food Standards Samples	Number of unsatisfactory results
2017/18	63	22	46	19
2018/19	65	23	23	13
2019/20	29	8	30	20
2020/21	42	3	14	4
2021/22	11	0	27	19

2022/23	109	27	13	8
2023/24	132	45	12	8
2024/25	91	17 (3 unknown)	4	3

6.5 **Variations from the Service Plan**

6.5.1 The following items were not met from the 2024-25 service plan and remain outstanding:

- The Council has been unable to achieve the full requirements of official controls detailed within the Code of practice, namely with regard to E premises for food hygiene and B and C premises for food standards.
- The Council has not met fully met its identified objective of reviewing all 'outside of scope' premises for Food Hygiene.
- The Council has not met fully met its identified objective of reviewing all 'outside of scope' premises for Food Standards.
- Internal monitoring of officers has not been fully carried out in accordance with the authority's protocols.
- A significant number of policies and procedures continue to require updating.
- Work to update the Enforcement Plan and officer authorisations was not completed as intended.
- The Council did not complete a review of nor update authorisations for officers. No progress was made with a review or update of the Council's Enforcement Policy or the Food Enforcement Policy.
- The Council has not fully migrated to the new Food Standards Risk Rating Delivery Model.

6.6 **Areas of Improvement**

6.6.1 As identified above we continue to have deficiencies in the status of policies and procedures in comparison to the Food Law Code of Practice. This is an area where improvement is required, including ensuring that the correct policies and procedures are in place and that those in place are up to date.

6.6.2 Further improvement is required in the implementation of internal monitoring procedures to ensure that the council is able to meet the requirements of its protocols and to ensure that officers are appropriately monitored.

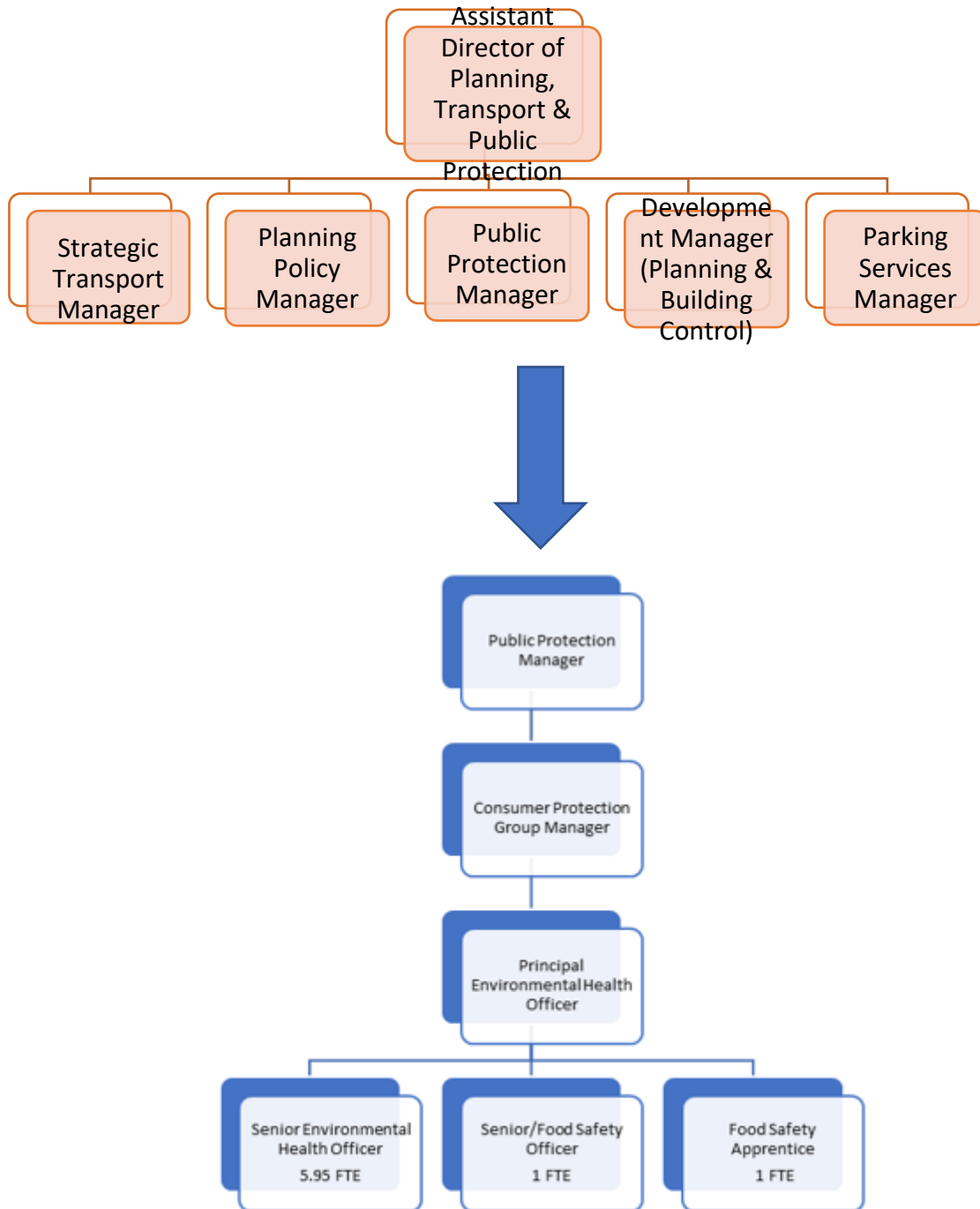
6.6.3 Further improvement continues to be required to review and update authorisations for officers to exercise their powers. Review and update of the Council's Enforcement Policy (Appendix 2) and the Food Enforcement Policy (Appendix 3) is still required.

7.0 **Approval**

- 7.1 This plan, including its appendices, has been agreed by the Acting Public Protection Manager(s) and Acting Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

Appendix 1

Public Protection Structure Chart



APPENDIX 2

Corporate Enforcement Policy

Reading Borough Council Corporate Enforcement Policy

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Reading Borough Council

CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the economic interests and health and safety of the public, businesses and the environment. This Policy sets out what businesses and individuals being regulated by the Council can expect from Enforcement Officers.
- 1.2 This Policy commits the Council to good enforcement policies and procedures.

2.0 STATUS OF THE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

- 2.1 The Corporate Enforcement Policy was first approved by the Cabinet of Reading Borough on 20th March 2006, and was revised in 2009. The current version of the Policy is effective from February 2012.
- 2.2 In addition to this Corporate Policy, some individual Service Areas may have specific Enforcement Policies relevant to their work.

3.0 SCOPE AND MEANING OF ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all the legislation enforced by officers of the Council.
- 3.2 Enforcement includes any action taken by officers aimed at ensuring that individuals or businesses comply with the law. This is not limited to formal enforcement action such as prosecution; it also includes, for example, the inspection of premises for the purpose of checking compliance with Acts of Parliament or Regulations.

4.0 NEED FOR AN ENFORCEMENT POLICY

4.1 A clear enforcement policy ensures that:

- (a) all those who live and work in Reading are able to have a clear understanding of the Corporate Policy covering the Council's enforcement functions.
- (b) all statutory notices issued by the Council are checked by an experienced officer for appropriateness, legal validity, content and technical information;

- (c) any information given to a business, landlord or individual, whether written or verbal, clearly identifies those requirements which are mandatory and those which are advisory;
- (d) any enforcement action is proportionate to the risks involved; and
- (e) officers follow a consistent approach to enforcement.

5.0 LEGAL PROVISIONS

5.1 The following legislation and guidance will be taken into account in the enforcement activities of the Council:

- a) The Enforcement Concordat (adopted by the Council on 14 March 2000)
- b) Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
- c) Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008
- d) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- e) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- f) Criminal Proceedings and Investigation Act 1996
- g) Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- h) Human Rights Act 1998
- i) Local Government Acts
- j) Race Relations Act 1976 and Equality Act 2010
- k) Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- l) Other relevant Acts e.g. Public Health Acts, Housing Acts, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 etc.
- m) The Code for Crown Prosecutors
- n) Home Office Guidance on use of simple cautioning
- o) Local Service Plans
- p) Guidance from the Local Better Regulation Office
- q) Regulators' Compliance Code

Any other relevant Governmental Guidance or professional advice

6.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

6.1 Each case is unique and must be considered on its own merits. However, there are general principles that apply to the way each case must be approached. These are outlined in this Policy, and are based on the Enforcement Concordat, which was adopted by the Council on 14th March 2000. The Concordat is a voluntary Code of Practice developed by the Government in

partnership with local authorities and representatives of consumer and business interests.

The Enforcement Concordat contains the following principles:

- (a) **Standards:** set clear standards for the level of service and performance which the public and businesses can expect to receive;
- (b) **Openness:** provide information and advice in plain language on the legislation and rules the Council applies, and disseminate this as widely as possible;
- (c) **Helpfulness:** actively work with businesses and individuals, especially small and medium sized businesses, to advise on and assist with compliance; and provide an opportunity for discussion and for compliance before formal enforcement action is taken
- (d) **Complaints about the Council's enforcement service:** provide well publicised, effective and timely complaints procedures which are easily accessible to businesses, the public and community groups;
- (e) **Proportionality:** minimise the costs of compliance for businesses by ensuring any enforcement action required is proportionate to the risks; prosecute when appropriate
- (f) **Consistency:** carry out our duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

- 6.2 In addition to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat, the Council is required to carry out its regulatory activities relating to trading standards, environmental health and licensing in a way which is consistent, transparent, accountable, proportionate and targeted, in accordance with the Principles of Better Regulation.

These principles underpin how Reading Borough Council's regulatory services work with businesses. The Council sees businesses - whether compliant or not - as its customers, and builds appropriate relationships. Any advice and support given to customers is authoritative and accessible, focussing on the needs of specific business sectors.

- 6.3 The Council will also have regard, where appropriate, to the priority regulatory outcomes published by the Local Better Regulation Office, which is a statutory body set up in 2008 to improve enforcement and regulatory activity in certain sectors. It has a statutory duty to specify matters to which local authorities must give priority when allocating resources, and is responsible for publishing priority regulatory outcomes, which assist local authorities in focussing their enforcement activities.
- 6.4 The Council is also under a duty to have regard to the Regulators' Compliance Code, which again applies to trading standards, environmental health and licensing, and which is largely based on the Principles of Better Regulation. The Code applies when determining general policy or setting standards, but not to individual cases.
- 6.5 The Council also operates the Primary Authority scheme and will have regard to guidance issued by the Local Better Regulation Office in carrying out enforcement activity within the scope of the scheme.

- 6.6 Further details of the Principles of Better Regulation, the Regulators' Compliance Code, the Primary Authority scheme and priority regulatory outcomes can be found in the relevant Departmental Enforcement Policies.
- 6.7 The Code, the priority regulatory outcomes, the primary authority scheme and the Principles of Better Regulation do not apply to enforcement activity relating to planning, listed buildings, advertisements, protected trees or building control.

7.0 EXPECTATIONS OF BUSINESS

- 7.1 In their own interests, and in order to avoid the need for enforcement action, businesses are expected:
- to be proactive in seeking advice
 - to be open in disclosing information to the Council when required
 - to be cooperative and willing to discuss problems

8.0 OBSTRUCTION OF OFFICERS AND OFFICERS' POWERS OF ENTRY

- 8.1 Enforcement Officers have a wide variety of duties, many of which need them to act as investigators similar to Tax Inspectors, Revenue and Customs officers and police officers. To enable them to act effectively, the law has given strong powers of entry, seizure and inspection. If individuals or companies obstruct officers or do not provide the requested information, the law also imposes punishments. Officers rarely have to use these powers, but for them to be effective the Council will continue to uphold and support them.
- 8.2 Officers will use their powers of entry only when necessary to effect an inspection of the premises or in the process of an investigation. The Council will **always** actively support officers acting in good faith, including prosecuting those individuals who obstruct or assault officers during investigations or inspections.
- 8.3 When the legislation allows, an officer may examine premises and articles, take photographs, remove articles, take samples or require information and may in some instances be accompanied by other persons. In appropriate cases an officer may seek a warrant from a Magistrates' court to gain entry into premises.
- 8.4 An officer will be expected to explain both the justification and the legal basis for the above actions upon demand.

9.0 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND IDENTIFICATION

- 9.1 All enforcement officers are required to carry identification in the form of an "Authority to Enter" card bearing their photograph. If an officer does not show his/her card, he or she may be asked to show it by anyone who is

requested to allow entry. If no card is produced, entry may be legitimately refused. If a member of the public has any doubt about the officer's identity, he/she may telephone the Council on 0118 937 3737 to confirm this.

10.0 SHARED ENFORCEMENT ROLE

10.1 Enforcement officers investigating breaches of the law must consider whether there is a shared or wider enforcement role. In some instances Council Officers from one Section work closely with officers of other Sections, or the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Health and Safety Executive, the medical profession and others. Officers will respect confidentiality so far as it is appropriate to do so, and will not divulge any information which is not relevant to the case in question. However, the Council has a duty to inform certain government bodies of statutory notifications, for example, reporting certain accidents or occupational diseases to the Health & Safety Executive, or notices of intended prosecutions to the Office of Fair Trading.

10.2 If another agency or authority is the enforcing authority for a particular activity, officers will inform them of any contraventions they observe during the performance of their duties; for example, officers must consult the Fire Authority before serving a statutory notice to provide or improve means of escape in a house in multiple occupation. When appropriate, enforcement issues are referred to other agencies. For example:

Health and Safety Executive
Emergency Services
Thames Water
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Other Local Authorities
The Environment Agency, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,
Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and other
Government Departments and Agencies

10.3 Confidentiality, data-protection and information-sharing are covered in detail in separate Council policies with reference to the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

11.0 PROVISION FOR INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

11.1 This enforcement policy has taken into account the interests of consumers and businesses in Reading. Visits to businesses sometimes occur out of normal working hours to cope with their extended operating hours. Similarly, many residents are only available in the evenings and visits are often arranged for mutual convenience. Where possible, interpreters and translators will

accompany officers where business persons, consumers and residents are unable to communicate in English.

12.0 CHOICE OF APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

12.1 Compliance should normally be achieved through informal action such as letters or giving advice. Where this does not result in compliance, or in more serious instances, formal enforcement action will be considered, e.g. issuing a statutory notice, offering a formal caution, or prosecution. The Code for Crown Prosecutors will be taken into account, among other factors, in deciding whether a caution or prosecution is appropriate.

12.2

(a) Informal action includes:

- (i) Educational Courses
- (ii) Giving Advice
- (iii) Visits to Check
- (iv) Warning Letters
- (vi) Consideration Notices
- (vii) Undertakings

(b) Formal Action includes:

- (i) Notice of Intention
- (ii) Works Notices
- (iii) Abatement Notices
- (iv) Improvement Notices
- (v) Works in default
- (vi) Prohibition Notices
- (vii) Control orders
- (viii) Closing Orders
- (ix) Seizure and Detention
- (x) Simple Cautions
- (xi) Enforcement Notices and other Notices under the Town and Country Planning Acts
- (xii) Injunction
- (xii) Revocation of licence
- (xiii) Fixed Penalty Notices
- (xiv) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Contracts
- (xiv) Prosecution

12.3 More information on different types of enforcement action can be found within each Service's enforcement Policy where appropriate.

13.0 WHO DECIDES WHAT ENFORCEMENT ACTION IS TAKEN?

- 13.1 For less serious infringements of the law, decisions about the most appropriate course of action may be made by the enforcement officer(s). Decisions are based upon professional judgment, legal guidelines, statutory codes of practice and priorities set by the Council and/or Central Government.
- 13.2 For more serious offences (where the nature of the offence points towards prosecution, simple caution and/or seizure), decisions about enforcement, may be taken by Enforcement / Investigating Officer(s) and/or senior managers from the relevant Section, and the Head of Legal Services where appropriate.

14.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

- 14.1 All officers are required to adhere to this policy. Managers, including Team Leaders, are required to monitor the implementation of the policy by enforcement officers and make any necessary suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Any variance from the policy should be reported to the appropriate Service Manager who will ensure that it is addressed in the Service Plan, and that the necessary training is given to the officer(s) concerned.
- 14.2 This Policy will be reviewed when there is any significant change in legislation or other circumstances which affect its effectiveness and validity.

15.0 APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS

- 15.1 The Council has published its Corporate Appeals and Complaints Procedures, which can be found on the Council's web-site: www.reading.gov.uk, where copies of this Policy are also available. In addition, most legislation that we enforce has an in-built appeals procedure whenever formal enforcement action is taken. These procedures will be explained as appropriate. Complaints may also be made to the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk).
- 15.2 In addition to the corporate complaints procedure any person can take up their complaint with the Service Manager or Service Director in the first instance, should they so wish. Paper copies of this Policy may also be obtained from the relevant Service Director, and comments on the Policy should also be made to the Director. Copies will be made available on request in Braille, large type or in languages other than English where this is a reasonable requirement.

APPENDIX 3
FOOD ENFORCEMENT POLICY
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Reading Borough Council, as a “food authority”, has a duty to enforce within its area the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 (the Act) (as amended), the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (FSHER 2013), a series of regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 being implemented into UK legislation and other associated legislation. The Council carries out this duty by employing suitably qualified staff who are authorised to enforce the requirements of the legislation listed above. In developing this enforcement procedure, the Council has had regard to the guidance in the Codes of Practice issued by The Food Standards Agency (FSA).
- 1.2 While the Corporate enforcement policy sets out the general approach to enforcement throughout the council, and recommends that specific procedures should be developed to enforce particular pieces of legislation, this Food Enforcement Policy outlines how council officers will enforce Food law.
- 1.3 The policy covers the following:
- (a) Policy Statement
 - (b) The Approach to Enforcement
 - (c) Practical Arrangements for Implementing the Policy
 - (d) Maintaining a High Quality Service
 - (e) Enforcement Procedure

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Council has made effective arrangements to enforce the Act, the FSHER 2013 and all associated regulations and codes of practice, with the aim of ensuring that all food and drink intended for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health and safety of consumers, and is packaged and marketed within labelling and compositional requirements.
- 2.2 Should a member of the public or business wish to seek advice or make a complaint under the provisions of the Act, the Council will provide a prompt, courteous and efficient service for the handling of the enquiry in accordance with the Council’s service standards.

3. THE APPROACH TO ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 The introduction of the FSHER 2013 formalises the requirement for enforcing authorities to ensure that operators of food businesses produce an effective documented management system for food that takes into account hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) when dealing with food issues.
- 3.2 This has resulted in increased demands on enforcement officers who have to assess the effectiveness of the documented system, and also on the operators of food businesses and food handlers who are now required to demonstrate their knowledge of how to prepare, store and present food in a safe manner so as not to pose a risk to health. A wide variety of statutory and non-statutory guidance exists to assist in the interpretation and compliance of the law.

- 3.3 The Council carries out its duties on a risk rating basis and applies the law in a proportionate and transparent manner. To this end the Council will:
- 3.3.1 Enforce and execute the provisions of the Act, the FSHER 2013 and associated Regulations.
 - 3.3.2 Register all food businesses as required by legislation.
 - 3.3.3 Inspect food premises with a frequency determined by an assessment of the potential risks guided by the Food Law Code of Practice issued by the FSA.
 - 3.3.4 Make consistent enforcement decisions in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 6 of this policy.
 - 3.3.5 Comply with official guidance issued by FSA and where applicable, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Health (DH).
 - 3.3.6 Liaise with the other food authorities in the area through the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food Liaison Group, and through the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Food Focus Group to ensure a consistent and agreed approach in dealing with food safety and food standards issues respectively.
 - 3.3.7 Participate in an inter authority auditing programme with other Local Authorities in the region for food safety and food standards.
 - 3.3.8 Liaise with the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services, Porton Food Sampling Group to agree a national, regional and local sampling programme of microbiological food sampling. Liaise with TSSE, Hampshire and Worcestershire laboratories to participate in regional and where available national food standards sampling programmes. The Council also shares its local sampling programmes with TSSE.
 - 3.3.9 Investigate all cases and outbreaks of food poisoning based on risk and the single case protocol which details which organisation (the Local Authority or Thames Valley Public Health England (TVPHE)) will investigate which each organism. Liaison with the Thames Valley Infectious Disease Group ensures a consistent approach when dealing with individual cases or outbreaks of food poisoning.
 - 3.3.10 Follow the principles of the Primary Authority (PA) scheme as set out in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.
 - 3.3.11 Where a business with an outlet in Reading has a PA in another area then the Authority will search the PA register for any additional information about the business, an inspection plan which directs the inspection, any PA advice given to the business which indicates that this area of the inspection has been approved by the PA. Feedback will be provided to the PA as it directs. Any business with a PA where enforcement is required will be carried out with the knowledge of the primary authority. Depending on the type of enforcement action an enforcement notification will be made to the primary authority register.
 - 3.3.12 Actively promote the PA scheme, engage new PA businesses, allocate officers to work with them who will create a work plan for each business to achieve their goals. The Authority will work with other enforcement authorities to

ensure businesses are protected from inconsistent or unreasonable enforcement, provided with a critical friend and a communication bridge to other enforcement authorities. Where there is a local failure at the business or deviation from the agreed policy, the authority cannot defend the business against enforcement action.

- 3.3.13 Where there is no primary authority for food standards then the home authority principle is applied to complaints and enquiries where food does not originate in Reading.
- 3.3.14 Businesses based in Reading with no PA arrangements will be actively encouraged to have one and only a basic Home Authority service is provided where food is unsafe to stay on the market.
- 3.3.15 Ensure the continued development of all its enforcement officers and encourage officers to keep up to date on food safety and food standards issues.
- 3.3.16 Deal effectively and appropriately with all food incidents including food hazards and food fraud on a localised and non- localised scale to ensure the appropriate persons are notified of incident and the incident is reduced to a safe level.
- 3.3.17 Provide training and education to food businesses to help them comply with their legal requirements and ensure their food is safe.
- 3.3.18 Follow the brand standard guidance for the operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Issue a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) sticker to those businesses that fall within the scheme. Consider appeals of ratings, provide a mechanism for rerating on payment of a fee

4. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF THE POLICY

4.1 The Council carries out its duties in the following manner:

4.1.1 Pro-active Inspections

- (a) Pro-active inspections are carried out in the form of a rolling risk-based programme. At the beginning of each financial year, the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager will produce a report identifying those premises that are due for inspection during the year. The percentage of premises that are not broadly compliant at the beginning of the year and at three monthly intervals. Once the Authority has determined the extent of the relative risk and categorised the premises, inspections are made on the minimum frequency basis detailed in 3.1.10 of the food service plan for food hygiene and 3.1.15 of the food service plan for food standards.
- (b) Most food businesses serving open food or high risk food will be given a rating sticker at the end of the visit of between zero and 5 to reflect the food hygiene at the premises based on the code of practice risk rating for hygiene, structure and confidence in management. This information is available on the web and also a sticker on the window /door. New businesses will be inspected and rated as usual. Unannounced re-ratings will be made within 3 months of payment of a fee.

- (c) Category A, B or not broadly compliant C food hygiene and category A or not broadly compliant category B food standards will be inspected using the existing system of inspection, partial inspection or audit approach. The parameters of the risk rating can be changed during an inspection, partial inspection or audit.
- (d) Category C food hygiene or category B food standards premises that are considered broadly compliant for food hygiene or food standards may, at every other inspection date have an intervention such as a verification or surveillance visit rather than a full inspection, partial inspection or audit. At the verification /surveillance visit premises can be moved on to show a new inspection date but the values of the parameters which make up the risk rating will remain unchanged. As a new Food Hygiene Rating assessment cannot be made on these visits, it is unlikely that verification/surveillance visits will be made as a proactive visit.
- (e) Category D food hygiene premises may receive an official control such as a full inspection, partial inspection, audit or verification/surveillance visit and on every other visit a non-official control such as education and advice. As the FHRs score cannot be changed or altered in the way it is made up as a result of a verification/surveillance or non-official control visit then it is unlikely that these forms of proactive inspection will be used unless the business does not fall within the FHRs scheme.
- (f) Category E food hygiene or category C food standards can be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy such as a self-assessment questionnaire. Where the business is still required to have a FHRs score an inspection will be carried out by an authorised officer. Where the business does not fall within the FHRs then a Regulatory Support Officer or a newly qualified authorised officer will visit the premises to assess if the type of food served at the business has changed and complete a low risk questionnaire with the business. Childminders are also not part of the FHRs scheme. These businesses are sent a low risk questionnaire. Any business that does not return its questionnaire is visited by a Regulatory Support Officer. Premises where large quantities of food are prepared or stored or high standards of food control are maintained may be subject to inspection or verification and surveillance visits to ensure the premises has not substantially changed.
- (g) Certain premises that produce meat, fish, dairy or egg based food for other businesses will be covered by the product specific establishment regulations in EC Regulation 853/2004 for food hygiene. These premises are inspected as dictated by the risk rating.
- (h) Food Brokers are inspected for traceability documentation of the food.

4.1.2 Reactive Inspections

Reactive Inspections of food businesses will be carried out following the receipt of a complaint, which could be regarding a food complaint, for example concerning contamination of a food, complaint about hygiene standards of a food premises or via the notification of a suspected food poisoning.

4.1.3 Food Incidents

There are 3 ways in which the FSA categorises food incidents. These are Food Alert For Action (FAFA) where immediate action will be taken on receipt of the notification; Product Recall Notices (PRIN) and Allergy Alerts where no action is required.

4.1.4 Sampling

Food sampling as agreed by FSA, PHE at Porton, TSSE Group and the Berkshire Food Sampling Group is carried out on a national, regional and local basis, focusing on the specific needs of Reading. Proprietors of those food businesses involved in the sampling programme are informed of the outcome and are required to take remedial action where laboratory analysis of samples show unsatisfactory levels of hygiene. Formal sampling as guided by the FSA Code of Practice will be restricted to occasions where formal action is anticipated.

4.1.5 Imported Food

- (a) As an inland authority for the sale of imported food, the authority could carry out inspection of the food as part of the food premises inspections.
- (b) Imported food may fail to have the correct documentation or labelling or the authorised officer may suspect the food is unfit for human consumption. In cases where there is insufficient documentation or labelling officers will make sufficient reasonable enquiries to ascertain correct documentation and labelling. Where an authorised is satisfied that the food is suspected of failing to meet the requirements of the food safety legislation, the food will be sampled.
- (c) Where sufficient documentation and labelling is produced to satisfy the requirements of the authorised officer the food will be released. Where there is insufficient documentation the action will be taken on a risk to public health based approach.
- (d) Where food fails to meet food safety requirements steps will be taken to ensure it does not re enter the food chain in its current state in the UK.

4.1.6 Education & Training

Officers actively encourage food handlers to participate in food hygiene training to expand their knowledge and understanding of food safety issues. All inspections involve some form of education/training, which is to be provided during on-site discussions concerning food preparation procedures and by offering advice and information on matters requiring attention. We run regular training courses for food businesses in food hygiene. Additionally, where significant changes are made to food legislation the team will work with the Communications Team to update food businesses on legislative changes and local initiatives.

4.1.7 Enforcement Action

To ensure an effective, transparent and consistent approach to enforcement of food safety legislation, officers will follow the guidance in Section 6.

4.2 Enforcement in Council-owned food premises

Any contraventions of food law found at businesses that are owned and run by the Council will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Service and the Service Director who will be required to rectify the defect or

deficiency within an agreed timescale where there is a significant breach or ongoing breaches of food law.

4.3 Who will implement the policy?

- 4.3.1 Responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Licensing, Food & Safety Manager delegated through the Regulatory Services Manager under the authority of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services. Day to day activities are carried out by authorised officers. The Food Lead Officers are responsible for the planning, organisation and subsequent monitoring of all aspects of the policy. Inspections, sampling, investigations relating to food and training will be carried out by officers authorised under the Act and FSHER 2013 and as detailed in the FSA Code of Practice.
- 4.3.2 Trading Standards Officers, Environmental Health Officers and some Technical Officers in the Regulatory Services Department are authorised to deal with aspects of food legislation in accordance with the competency matrix and authorisation scheme of the Service.

5. MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE

- 5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the highest practicable standard of customer service is integrated into all aspects of service delivery within a reasonable cost. All staff will adopt a professional approach, and performance monitoring will be carried out to ensure compliance with agreed targets. The service will also be audited by peer authorities and by reviewing any complaints against the service that may be received.

5.1.1 Professionalism

- (a) The Council ensures that all authorised officers have access to appropriate professional training and other resources required in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and competence.
- (b) The Lead Food Officers (Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food)) will monitor the performance of authorised officers.

5.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of the policy

- (a) The Licensing, Food & Safety Manager and Principal EHO (Food) will monitor the following aspects of the Policy:
 - (i) Compliance with agreed targets for pro-active inspections
 - (ii) Compliance with agreed targets for reactive inspections/complaints
 - (iii) Compliance with agreed targets for written reports following inspections
 - (iv) The number of requests for service received year to year
 - (v) The number of food incidents received year to year
 - (vi) The number of sampling initiatives carried out year to year
 - (vii) The number of training courses and candidates run year to year
 - (viii) The results of course evaluation sheets from year to year
 - (ix) The results of inter-authority auditing

- (x) The number and nature of complaints made against the service
- (xi) The results of specific target monitoring i.e. Number of businesses that have implemented a documented food safety management system.
- (b) Specific actions to achieve these aims are detailed in the Food Service Plan.

6. ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE

6.1 Local authorities have a variety of options available to them when implementing food safety legislation. Action can be either informal (persuasive) or formal (compulsory). The various options available are detailed below.

6.2 Any general information, inspection plans, PA advice available on the PA register will be considered before any intervention in a business with a PA. Where formal action is considered because of ongoing local failures then a formal notification through the PA website will be made. In the majority of but not all of the cases, this will negate the need for formal enforcement action.

6.2 INFORMAL ACTION

Authorised officers may use informal procedures if they are satisfied that such procedures will secure compliance with the requirements of food safety legislation within a reasonable time scale.

6.2.1 No action

In certain circumstances contraventions may not warrant any action. This can be where the cost of compliance outweighs the benefit to public health. A decision to take no action must be recorded in writing and must take into account the public health implications of the contravention.

6.2.2 Verbal Advice

For minor breaches of the law we verbally advise the offender clearly identifying the contravention and including a deadline by which the action must be taken. This might be done when the authorised officer has confidence in the food business operator that the work would be carried out. Failure to comply would result in more severe enforcement action.

6.2.3 Written Warning and advice

- (a) During or on completion of an inspection the authorised officer will discuss as far as possible with the operator of the business, any problems that are identified and will explain what is necessary to rectify the problem.
- (b) After all visits to food businesses an inspection report form will be left with the person in charge of the business at the time of the visit. The inspection report form will detail the main findings and make a clear distinction between legal requirements and recommendations. The form will contain details of areas inspected, person seen at the premises, visiting authorised officer, their contact details, date/ time of the visit and clear contact details regarding an Officers manager to allow a food business operator to take a matter further if they are not happy with the response of an officer.

- (c) In certain circumstances and particularly if the food business operator was not present at the visit to the food premises and it is known that the food business operator is not based at this premises a letter or a copy of the inspection report form will be sent to his office. This is particularly appropriate where there are legal requirements that must be carried out and it is a multi site business.
- (d) Where a letter is sent out after the visit, the letter will detail the hazards identified by enforcement officers during their inspection and the remedial action required. A clear distinction will be made between matters that are legal requirements and those that are recommendations and the measures that are required to secure compliance with the legislation.
- (e) It will be clear from both the inspection report and any subsequent letter that the operator can approach the Section for additional advice/assistance should it be necessary.

6.2.4 Follow up visits

Where significant breaches of the legislation have been identified during a previous visit to the premises, a revisit will be carried out to monitor progress towards compliance. Wherever practicable, and in all cases where a formal notice has been served or prosecution instituted the revisit will be undertaken by the same officer who carried out the original inspection.

6.3 FORMAL ACTION

- 6.3.1 In deciding what enforcement action is necessary, an authorised officer will have regard to the nature and severity of the contravention and the effects on public health. Regard will also be given to the food safety history of the business and attitude of the food business operator in complying with legislative requirements. Formal action will be instigated where informal action has failed to ensure that a food business operator has performed the duties imposed on them by relevant food safety legislation. A decision on what type of action to take may not necessarily be made at the time of the inspection.

6.3.2 Improvement Notices & Hygiene Improvement Notices

- (a) An authorised Officer may consider the use of an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice as appropriate in any of the following or combination of the following situations:
 - (i) where there is a history of non-compliance or delay in compliance of food safety legislation;
 - (ii) where formal action is proportionate to the risk to public health; or
 - (iii) where it is believed that for an informal approach is not likely to be effective.
- (b) A Hygiene Improvement Notice gives the food business operator on whom the notice is to be served a minimum of 14 days in which to make a representation in respect of works improvement required. An Improvement Notice sets no minimum time for compliance with the notice and is designed to be used with the Food Information Regulations 2014

- (c) An Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice will clearly detail which regulations have been contravened and what remedial action is necessary. Information will be sent explaining the recipient's right to appeal. The notice will specify the time within which compliance is required. The time allotted will be dependent on the nature of the problem, the public health risks involved and the availability of the solution.
- (d) An authorised officer serving an Improvement Notice or Hygiene Improvement Notice must be satisfied that they have adequate evidence to successfully prosecute for non-compliance should the situation arise.
- (e) The authorised officer will visit as soon as is reasonably practicable following expiry of the time allowed for compliance to check whether the contraventions of food safety legislation have been remedied. If they have not, an offence has been committed and the investigating officer shall prepare a report for the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services.
- (f) The Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services will decide whether it is necessary and appropriate to instigate prosecution proceedings in respect of the food business operator subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied as to the available evidence.

6.3.3 Prohibition Procedures: Formal closure of a food premises using Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice/Order

- (a) Authorised Officers may serve the above notices where there is an imminent risk to public health. The notice will either:
 - (i) prohibit the use of the entire premises or part of the premises;
 - (ii) prevent the use of certain equipment; or
 - (iii) prohibit a particular process or treatment
- (b) The notice and subsequent order will require immediate closure of the premises, or the cessation of a process or use of specific equipment.
- (c) Following the service of an Emergency Prohibition Notice (EPN) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice (HEPN) the local authority must within three days apply to a Magistrates' Court for an Emergency Prohibition Order (EPO) or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) respectively. Where an order is not applied for the proprietor may claim compensation for loss of earnings arising as a result of the EPN or HEPN. The food business operator will have one complete day's notice of the Council's intention to make the application to the court. During the closure period frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.
- (d) The EPN, HEPN, EPO, HEPO and accompanying notes will contain the following information:
 - (i) The name of the business and its address;
 - (ii) The matters that are considered to pose an imminent risk;

- (iii) Details as to how to request that the premises may be allowed to open following the service of the EPO or HEPO;
- (iv) The circumstances that will entitle the Food Business Operator to compensation for any losses following the service of the Emergency Prohibition Notice or Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice.
- (e) The Council will apply to the Court for its costs from the Food Business Operator in making the application and the work carried out beyond that of a normal inspection.
- (f) An authorised officer may serve a Notice seeking voluntary closure of the food business if the officer believes there is an imminent risk of injury to health as in the emergency prohibition procedures and he has confidence in the management of the business that they will not reopen until the imminent risk to health is removed. In these circumstances there is no opportunity for the business to seek compensation from the Council for loss of earnings as there is no need to apply to the court for confirmation of the notice in the form of an order.
- (g) The voluntary closure will be confirmed in writing and frequent checks will be made to the business to ensure that it has not reopened without the permission of the authorised officer.

6.3.4 Closure of food business after prosecution & prohibiting the food business operator from managing it - Prohibition Order/ Hygiene Prohibition Order

- (a) If a food business operator is successfully prosecuted for breaches of relevant food law and satisfactory evidence is provided to the court that the business continues to pose a risk of injury to health, the food authority can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Prohibition Order. If successful, the food business operator and/or manager are prohibited from running a food business.
- (b) If a person is prohibited from managing a food business the information is circulated nationally via the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) to reduce the likelihood of that person setting up business in another area. If the Prohibition Order has been lifted the food authority will notify the CIEH as soon as is reasonably possible.

6.3.5 Inspection, Detention and Seizure of Suspect Food

- (a) Any food that fails to meet food safety requirements or has not been produced, processed or distributed in compliance with the hygiene regulations may be detained to allow further time for investigation or seized. When food has been detained or seized the food business operator will be provided with written notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- (b) The food will be presented to a JP as soon as possible but within two days, when a decision on further action will be made. This two day period may be extended if necessary to ensure that parties attend and be represented if they choose.
- (c) A food condemnation notification will be given to the person in charge of the food when the officer intends to have the food dealt with by a Justice of the Peace (JP).

6.3.6 Suspension/withdrawal of approval or conditional approval

- (a) Any premises that has received approval under EC Regulation 853/2004 by the Food & Safety Team is given an approval number based on the stem of RG followed by the next numerical value which is notified to the FSA.
- (b) The approval will be suspended or withdrawn if the business fails to comply with the relevant hygiene regulations.
- (c) The business may be given a conditional approval (including approval number) rather than full approval on the first inspection after application. The conditional approval allows the businesses to trade provided if it meets certain conditions within six months. In order to obtain conditional approval the business must meet the structural requirements and produces a commitment to implement the other issues specified in writing within six months of the granting of the conditional approval. When all the requirements have been met an approval will be granted. If the requirements of the conditional approval are not met within six months of the granting of the conditional approval, the conditional approval for the business will be suspended or withdrawn.
- (d) The suspension, withdrawal of approval or conditional approval will be given in writing to the business and an appeals mechanism will be available to the business.

6.3.7 Remedial Action Notice

- (a) Authorised Environmental Health staff can serve a Remedial Action Notice on a food business operator that operates a food premises that is subject to approval. The notice will provide provision for prohibiting the use of equipment, any part of the establishment, the imposition of conditions upon, or prohibiting or reducing the rate of processing of the food. This Notice may be used in the following situations:
 - (i) When the rate of operation is detrimental to the ability of the business to comply with the regulations;
 - (ii) On a continuing serious breach of the hygiene regulations that gives rise to a risk to public health.

6.3.8 Prosecution

- (a) Food handlers and the owners of food businesses found to be contravening food safety and food standards legislation will be given reasonable opportunity to comply. However, in some situations the seriousness of the offence may be such that prosecution is appropriate. The following circumstances may result in prosecution proceedings being brought:
 - (i) The alleged offence involve a serious breach of the law such that public health, safety or wellbeing is or has been put at risk;
 - (ii) The alleged offence involves a failure to correct a serious potential risk potential risk to food after a reasonable opportunity to correct the matter;
 - (iii) The offence involves a failure to comply in full or part with the requirements of a statutory Notice;

- (iv) There is a history of similar offences relating to risk to public health
- (b) In such cases, the Council will consider:
 - (i) The seriousness of the offence;
 - (ii) The previous history of compliance with relevant legislation;
 - (iii) The ability of the defendant to establish a due diligence defence;
 - (iv) The availability and capability of witnesses and the evidence available.

6.3.9 Deciding Whether to Prosecute

- (a) Not every contravention of the law should be prosecuted through the Courts. The Authority will weigh the seriousness of the offence (taking into account the harm done or the potential for harm arising from the offence) with other relevant factors, including the financial circumstances of the defendant, mitigating circumstances and other public interest criteria.
- (b) The Council will have regard to The Code for Crown Prosecutors issued under Section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 in deciding whether to prosecute in any particular case. Thus, before starting proceedings, the Head of Legal Services must be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of a conviction based on the evidence (that is, there must be sufficient admissible, substantial and reliable evidence to secure a conviction). In addition, the Council will balance, carefully and fairly, the various public interest criteria against the seriousness of the offence. These public interest criteria include:-
 - (i) the likely sentence (if convicted);
 - (ii) previous convictions and conduct of the defendant;
 - (iii) whether there are grounds for believing the offence is likely to be repeated;
 - (iv) the prevalence of the offence in the area;
 - (v) whether the offence was committed as a result of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding;
 - (vi) any delay between the offence taking place and the date of trial;
 - (vii) the likely effect the prosecution will have on the defendant;
 - (viii) whether the defendant has put right the loss or harm caused.
- (c) The Council will have regard to the Regulators Code which came into force in 2014 and must be applied to food law. The enforcement approach must be reasonable, proportionate, risk based and consistent with good practice. It must consider the economic impact and minimise costs as well as encourage compliance.
- (d) If a number of offences have been committed and prosecution is deemed to be appropriate, then in selecting the offences for prosecution, regard will be had to the need to reflect the seriousness of the matter and to give the Court adequate sentencing powers to deal with the matter appropriately.

6.3.10 Simple Caution

- (a) A simple caution may be issued instead of a prosecution. The Council will have regard to the guidance contained in the Ministry of Justice circular Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders (November 2013) in deciding whether or not to offer alleged offenders the chance of a formal caution.
- (b) The following conditions should be fulfilled before a caution is administered:
 - (i) There must be evidence of the alleged offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction;
 - (ii) The alleged offender must admit the offence;
 - (iii) The alleged offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give an informed consent to being cautioned.
- (c) If there is insufficient evidence to consider taking a prosecution, then a simple caution must not be considered.
- (d) There is no legal obligation for a person to accept the offer of a simple caution and no pressure should be applied to the Food Business Operator to accept one. If the alleged offender refuses to accept a simple caution a prosecution will normally be pursued.

7. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This enforcement policy will be reviewed annually or when changes in legislation or centrally issued guidance makes this necessary.

Appendix 4Food & Safety Team Work Plan Apr 2024 - Mar 2025 - Progress Review

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	Food Hygiene Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2025. Premises inspected in accordance with FSA Guidance on Service return No of A-D premises due/overdue inspection for this year = 818 New registered premises per year = c. 266 Total 1084 inspections due.	<i>Requirement of Food Law COP.</i> <i>Service Plan Priority / Target</i>	<i>Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food.</i> <i>Education of local businesses</i>	<i>Aim:</i> 100% A premises 80% B Premises 70% Unrated premises inspected	A total of 850 proactive inspections were carried out: A - 100% inspected B - 100% inspected Unrated - 93% inspected 289 premises registered during the year.
S	Alternative Enforcement Strategy for E premises Managed project undertaking desk-based assessment of E premises. 391 Premises.	<i>Requirement of Food Law COP.</i> <i>Service Plan Priority / Target</i> <i>FSA Improvement Plan requirement</i>	<i>Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food.</i> <i>Education of local businesses</i>	<i>Aim: All E premises contacted to verify current level of compliance and confirm FHRS remains appropriate.</i> <i>Premises indicating changes in condition will be followed up by an onsite full/partial inspection</i>	Approximately 65 'E' premises were inspected AES interventions, questionnaires were sent out to 293 premises, Physical inspections were allocated to a further 57 premises. 112 premises returned their questionnaire and 34 of these

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
	Estimated 20% on site follow up required - 79 premises.				premises were allocated for follow-up inspection. 41 premises confirmed they were no longer trading.
S	Food Hygiene Revisits and subsequent enforcement of non-compliant premises. Approximately 4% of premises are being found to be non-compliant. Estimate 44 premises. Ongoing non-compliance will require issue of formal notices and potentially lead to prosecution.	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.</i>	<i>Increase in FHRS at re-rate or next inspection. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with. Premises revisited on time in accordance with notice expiry date. Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.</i>	88 recorded food hygiene revisits have been carried out. The current level of non-broadly compliant premises remains at 4%.
S	Ongoing Enforcement including issue of notices. Resulting from ongoing or immediate non-compliance where a risk to public health and safety is presented. Average 16 per annum	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.</i>	<i>Increase in FHRS at re-rate or next inspection. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with. Premises revisited on time in accordance with notice expiry date. Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.</i>	There has been an increase in the number of food hygiene enforcement notices served this year. 64 notices, including subsequent notices to release prohibitions, have been served this year. There has been a decline in the number of Hygiene Improvement Notices issued.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	Approval of Premises Process applications for new approval activities. Inspect and review existing approved premises.	Food Law COP	Approval activities authorised and published. Food products accurately labelled and traceable.	Applications and inspections carried out within SOP timeframe. Full approval awarded after max 6 months or removed.	One premises has been granted full approval this year. One premises has confirmed they are no longer operating.
S	Food Hygiene Re-Rating visits (FHRS) for premises not overdue/due inspection Avg 35 requests received per year	FHRS Brand Standard	Increase in FHRS and improved compliance with FH requirements. Increased consumer confidence in premises	All inspections carried out within 3 months. Applications for premises that are overdue/due inspection will be refunded to business.	41 applications for a food hygiene re-rating visit have been received this year. The majority of these have been completed within the specified 3 months however a small number did fall short of this.
S	Respond to FHRS Appeals Estimate 5 per annum	FHRS Brand Standard	Appeals handled in accordance with Brand Standard. Maintain confidence in Food Hygiene Inspections	Appeals responded to within timeframe. Appeals resolved without moving to Corporate Complaint.	The authority has received one formal appeal of a food hygiene rating this year. This was responded to in time.
S	Food Standards Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2025. No of due and overdue inspections = 1028 New registered premises per annum approx. 266 Total Inspections due - 1294	Food Law COP. Service Plan Priority / Target	Premises subject to standards requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe, correctly labelled food which does not mislead the consumer. Education of local businesses	Aim: 100% A premises	A total of 408 proactive inspections have been carried out this year: A - 2

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	Food Standard Revisits. Approximately 8% of premises have found to be non-compliant. Estimate approximately 104 premises will require revisits and follow up enforcement action due to non-compliance in line with the current risk rating.	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve the level of information provided to consumers and ensure they can make an informed choice.</i>	<i>Increase in compliance and confidence in management at next inspection. Revisits carried out in line with contravention deadline. Notices reassessed for compliant within identified timescale. NC premises will be noted as Compliant on database and Notices will be complied with. Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.</i>	The authority has recorded 0 revisits for food standards matters, far short of the estimated requirement and not in accordance with the number of non-broadly compliant premises identified within the borough. Revisits are not being carried out in line with the Code of Practice.
S	Food, Water & Environmental Sampling (Microbiology) Average 150 samples per annum.	<i>Food Law COP Sampling Plan Local/National sampling programme</i>	<i>Ensuring food offered for sale is microbiologically safe and does not present a risk to health. Reduction in incidence of food borne illness.</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory samples followed up with further intervention and re-sampling where necessary.</i>	The Council has completed 91 microbiological samples this year and participated in a number of nationwide studies.
S	Food Standards Sampling Estimate 50 samples per annum	<i>Food Law COP Sampling Plan Local/National sampling programme</i>	<i>Ensuring food offered for sale is correctly labelled, safe and does not mislead the consumer. Reduction in food complaints and referrals.</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory samples followed up with further intervention and re-sampling where necessary.</i>	The Council has carried out 4 samples in this category, fewer than estimated. The authority did not participate in a grant that it bid to do so.
N S	National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Administration	<i>Discretionary function to take part in scheme. All LA's in England participate. Expectation of Customers.</i>	<i>Enabling consumer to assess food hygiene and safety. Provide consumer confidence in Reading businesses</i>	<i>Premises details uploaded to FHRS website fortnightly. Display of correct premises information</i>	The scheme has continued to be administered with updates to the FHRS website being provided. Due to changes in the MIS and difficulties in recording inspections it was unable to

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
					provide updates to the website between November and January. Updates have now continued following manual recording of inspections.
S	Annual FSA Return (LAEMS) Temperature check returns	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Transparent Food Hygiene and Standards performance.</i>	<i>LAEMS Return or equivalent accurately completed within time limit</i>	The Council has completed all required returns to the FSA and has engaged with the FSA regarding these reports.
S	Drafting, Implementation and maintenance of Policies and Procedures, plus ongoing annual review. Following update and reissue of the new COP in March 2021 a full review and update of all documented procedures must be carried out including drafting and implementation of those not previously in place.	Food Law COP requires each LA to have written policies and procedures in place for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval • Food Business Establishment Database • Food Incidents and Alerts • Authorisation • Control Verification • Corporate Complaints • Food Complaints • Sampling • Equipment • Official food controls and other activities • Enforcement 	Enabling staff to efficiently, fairly and transparently conduct their role and respond to service requests and complaints. Provision of good customer service.	Documented procedures in line with Food Law COP.	No progress has been made with the updating of policies and procedures as detailed within the Code of Practice.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease • Information • Registration • Conflict of Interest • Sampling Policy • Enforcement Policy • Complaints Policy • Contingency Plan 			
N S	Inspection of notified cooling towers and evaporative condensers for the prevention and control of Legionella spp. Est. 1 premises per annum Development, maintenance and implementation of SOPs	HSCWA1974	Inspected, managed and maintained cooling towers reducing the likelihood of legionnaires disease.	All cooling towers registered and inspected. Cooling Towers risk rated 'A' inspected annually.	No Cooling Towers have registered with the authority this year. SOPs have been considered to be up to date and fit for purpose. Inspection of outstanding cooling towers within the borough has not been carried out as intended.
S	Inspection and certification of registering special treatment premises. An average of 28 premises and 66	Local Govt Miscellaneous Provisions Act	Compliant premises. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	Mobile and domestic premises inspected and compliant prior to certificate being issued. Backlog of commercial premises awaiting inspection removed.	8 recorded inspections of Special Treatment premises have been carried out this year in response to applications for new premises/treatments.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
	further operators are registering per year. Backlog of existing premises requiring inspection= 60				No progress has been made on the backlog of premises unless these premises have registered for a further treatment.
S	Special Treatment Revisits. Approx 5% of premises are found to be non-compliant requiring further attention and enforcement action.	Local Govt Miscellaneous Provisions Act Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974	Compliant premises. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	Revisits carried out within timeframe. Legal notices complied with in accordance	1 revisit has been recorded for special treatment premises this year.
N S	Review and replacement of Byelaws for Special Treatments	Byelaws do not conform with national guidance and template. RBC does not have a full copy of the signed byelaws.	Up to date byelaws adhering to national templates. Reduced burden for low risk activities.	New byelaws in place.	A review of the current Byelaws has not been carried out.
S	Investigation of Infectious diseases and outbreaks including: Food borne illness & Legionnaire's disease. (Excl. Covid 19) Estimate 340 cases per year Outbreaks: Estimate 1 per year	National and Local Policy	Reduced incidence of infectious disease and outbreaks including food borne illness	Cases investigated in line with internal SOPs and Thames Valley single case protocol. Outbreaks investigated in line with National Guidance. Service requests responded to within internal standards.	335 cases have been notified to the authority this year. No outbreaks have been reported.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	Statutory H&S return to HSE	National Enforcer requirement for the compilation of statistics and interventions with poor performing authorities	Contribute to national enforcement statistics. Inform and develop future interventions and national policy	Return completed accurately and by deadline.	The statutory return was completed and submitted within the deadline.
S	Sports Ground Safety - Complete SGSA Audit	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Annual audit completed within timeframe. Actions addressed and completed within timeframe.	No audit was required in 2024-25
S	Sports Ground Safety Inspection programme	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Min. 3 during match inspections carried out following risk assessment process. Inspection reports provided within SOP timeframe and enforcement action taken accordingly.	3 matches have been inspected in the recent football season. Follow up reports have been provided however these have not been provided within the identified timeframe.
S	Annual review and issue of Safety Certificate for Reading FC	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Annual issue of Safety Certificate. Annual review of updated Operations Manual.	The Safety Certificate was reviewed and issued in August 24 with a partial review of Operations Manual documents as agreed.
S	Review of Operations Manual and Issue of new Safety Certificate for Palmer Park Regulated Stand Plus initial engagement and sent up of SAG meetings	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Established SAG Meeting schedule Clear and consistent lines of communication. Issue of new Safety Certificate.	This work has not been carried out.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	SAG attendance Reading FC	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and associated legislation	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Quarterly meetings carried out with wide attendance. TOR in place. Meetings Minuted and actions taken within timeframe.	All SAG meetings for Reading FC have been attended. The TOR have been reviewed and meetings have been minuted.
S	Drafting, implementation and maintenance of SOPs for Sports Ground Safety	Requirement of SGSA and sports ground safety regulation. Identified requirement of annual SGSA audit	Improved performance at annual SGSA audit. Officer consistency will improve customer service	Documented procedures for sports ground safety work.	No progress has been made with this area of work.
S	Review and respond to Licensing consultations concerning premises licences, events and street trading. Including attendance at SAG. Approx 140 consults per annum	Statutory consultee	Safer Events	Representation at and contribution to Safety Advisory Group Meetings Proactive review of Event documentation Liaison with Event operators and objection to events where deemed necessary.	141 Licence consultations have been allocated to the F&S Team, these are reviewed and responded to. Specified timeframes have not been met across the team. All SAGs have been attended and contributed to.
N S	Undertake review of FH role in licensing consultations and align team, including draft and implementation of new SOPs	Current procedure does not align with licensing objectives. Inconsistent approach to license reviews.	Improved customer service through officer consistency. Contribution to Public Safety.	New SOP implemented Database actions reflect new SOP	This work has not been completed.
S	Imported Food (Official Controls)	Food Law COP	Food products offered for sale will be legally compliant, properly labelled and safe to eat.	Service requests actioned within timeframe. Targeted sampling	Service requests relating to Imported Food have been actioned. Enforcement notices have been issued for this area of work during the year.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
S	Reactive food & Safety work (service requests) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirty food premises • Microbiological, chemical & labelling • Allergens • Health, safety & Welfare • Business advice <p>This excludes licence consultations and food business registrations which are covered elsewhere in this plan.</p> <p>Approximately 500 per annum.</p>	<p>Food Law COP and FSA guidance on service return.</p> <p>HSWA/EAR</p>	<p>Ensure food on sale is safe to eat, produced hygienically, correctly labelled and does not mislead the consumer.</p> <p>Ensure premises are safe to work in and visit.</p>	<p>All Service requests responded to.</p>	<p>Excluding licensing consultations and food business registrations which are accounted for elsewhere the service has received 498 requests this year. Not all requests have been responded to and targets for number of requests responded to within response time have not been met.</p> <p>77 accidents have been reported to the authority. Not all of these have been responded to.</p>
N S	Paid advice visits - Food Hygiene. Approx 5 requests per year. (Subject to promotion)	<p>Improve food hygiene compliance of businesses.</p> <p>Provision of support and advice to local businesses</p> <p>Income generation</p>	<p>Improved hygiene standards and compliance at first and subsequent inspection.</p>	<p>Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days.</p> <p>Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after first formal inspection</p>	<p>5 paid for advice visits have been received this year.</p>
N S	Food Standards and bespoke labelling advice (paid)	<p>Improve food standard compliance of businesses.</p>	<p>Improved standards and compliance of labelling and consumer information.</p>	<p>Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days.</p>	<p>No requests for bespoke food standards advice have been received this year.</p>

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
	Approximately 5 requests per annum (subject to promotion)	Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Reduction in further interventions.	Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after next inspection. Premises subject to paid advice will require less enforcement action.	
N S	Improve Food Hygiene & Health & Safety presence on RBC website and social media	Modernise and improve communications with customer. Enhance transparency and accessibility of service.	Improved communications to and accessibility of service to customers. Reduction in service requests and enquiries. Improved compliance of food businesses.	Develop H&S page on RBC webpage. Improve complaints service for customers. FSA complaints page removed. Publication of cooling tower register. Food Team posts on corporate Facebook/Twitter Feeds regarding food hygiene & Safety.	Work to improve our website and social media presence has not been carried out as identified. Specific workstreams have continued to be publicised in conjunction with the Comms team.
S	Ensure all officers appropriately authorised and competent. Full review of all staff competency required and new training scheme to be implemented.	Food Law COP.	Service wide review of officer authorisations and delegations Review of officer competencies and skills in line with FSA new competency framework	Competent/authorised/skilled and knowledgeable staff	This work has not been progressed. All new staff have been put on an internal training programme to ensure that they are competent in the requested areas of work before acting unsupervised.
S	Authorisation and Enforcement Policy Review including implementation of new authorisation system for staff	Food Law COP / HSWA Delegations Register. Service Plan Priority	Review the delegations register and ensure officer authorisations are up to date - as part of the corporate review of the constitution and delegations register	Delegations register is up to date There are clear lines of delegated authority for officers to have the	This work has not been progressed.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
				necessary powers and authority	
N S	<p>Servicing of PAPs (Food Standards Only) - Annual work plan, meetings, response to queries & enforcement, review of policies/procedures, issue of assured advice, review and update of published out of date advice</p> <p>Issue of PAP export Certificates</p>		Well managed PAP service compliant with statutory guidance	<p>Level of service aligns with requirement of statutory guidance.</p> <p>PAP advice up to date and reviewed within timeframe.</p> <p>Enquiries and enforcement actions responded to within timeframe.</p>	These PAPs have continued to be serviced as per partnership requirements.
N S	<p>Reading Festival - Delivery of Alfresco Award, H&S monitoring & inspection, SAG Meetings and preparation. Review of Alfresco Award and future festival delivery.</p>	Service Target	Safeguarding RBC residents and visitors	<p>100% of festival food premises inspected and scored under Alfresco rating. Gold, Silver & Bronze nominees made.</p> <p>Non-compliant traders revisited and referred to home authority.</p> <p>Food Team attendance at SAG Meetings prior to and during event.</p> <p>H&S hazards referred to Licensing</p>	<p>Working arrangements on site were amended this year with the Festival employing a separate sub-contractor to carry out food inspections of high-risk traders. The F&S Team carried out visits to low-risk traders, revisits to non-compliant traders and audited contractor inspections.</p> <p>The team carried out 34 inspections and 54 revisits.</p> <p>All SAG meetings were attended. Onsite training was carried out.</p>

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
					Review of Special Effects proposals and safety documentation were carried out before the festival with further onsite inspections completed. All on site update meetings were attended.
N S	Undertake SR review, including response time, and review triage system.	Service requests require prioritisation to ensure that these are effectively dealt with in line with available resources.	Resources directed to highest public health risk. Improve efficiency.	Service requests responded to in accordance with public health risk presented. Increase in service requests responded to within timeframe.	This work has not been progressed.
S	Development, Implementation and Maintenance of Health and Safety SOPs. Training and development of staff in Health and Safety	Health and Safety has taken a backseat for more than a decade. Control measures required to be implemented by businesses during the pandemic have identified gaps in business knowledge and skills and required more focused work in health and safety.	Competent, knowledgeable and confident staff. Improved business compliance with health and safety legislation, safer workplaces.	Documented and implemented SOPs. Staff training records. Staff authorisation.	This work has not been progressed.
S	Food Service Plan	Food Law Code of Practice Service Plan priority	Plan to demonstrate how the council will deliver its functions to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective	Plan drafted and agreed through committee.	The Food Service Plan was completed and presented at Committee in June 24.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
			enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough		
S	Officer Training to ensure competency in all relevant areas of work	Requirement for professional status. Requirement under FLCOP	Competent and knowledgeable officer	Minimum requirements for CDP met.	Officers have continued to work on training requirements and have been provided access to training to meet their CPD requirements. Some areas of identified development have not prioritised as intended.
N S	Proactive project targeting improvement of hygiene standards within businesses	Compliant businesses with high food hygiene and safety standards.	Improvement in compliance and FHRS rating of businesses. Reduction in the number of non- broadly complaint (0-2 rated) businesses in Reading.	Increase in Food Hygiene Rating following proactive project intervention.	This work has not been progressed.
S	Respond to FOI Request	Statutory function - Freedom of Information Act 2000	Customer service Legally compliant Council	FOI responded to and closed within 20 days	All allocated FOIs have been responded to and within the specified timeframe.
N S	Arcus Project - Support to testing and implementation of Arcus MIS for Food Hygiene, Food Standards, Health and Safety and Special Treatments. This excludes the secondment of 1 x Food & Safety Team officer.	New MIS being implemented across Service	N/A	Tested and fully functioning MIS.	The Team has continued to support delivery of this project. The team has had to provide further FTE to the secondment and further staff have been called upon to assist with set up and testing of the system. The required resource is greater than that estimated but has not been recorded.
S	Accident Investigation. Full investigation off and bringing of	HSWA74 - Investigation of accidents	Safer businesses	Regular Case reviews, authorisation to proceed, Work carried out in line with specified time frame for	Significant progress has been made with this case however the amount of required resource was greater than estimated. This has

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
	appropriate legal action following serious health and safety accident and local wholesaler.			internal/external legal representatives.	further impacted the delivery of other official controls in order to complete identified pieces of work, e.g. CCTV review.
	N S Staff completion of Corporate Mandatory training and attendance at corporate updates	Mandatory corporate requirement	Compliance with corporate procedures	Training courses up to date and completed within deadline	All required training has been completed across the team.
	N S Development of internal health and safety policies and procedures including risk assessments. Training of team on new policies and procedures	Corporate requirement	Compliance with corporate procedures	Suitable, sufficient and up to date risk assessments with accompanying procedures in place and implemented	This area of work has not been completed as far as intended. The team have risk assessments in place however these continue to be in the previous format. All H&S meetings have been intended.
	N S Internal training of non-authorized officers to meet standards for authorisation	The team has appointed unqualified officers who do not currently meet code of practice requirements for delivered of official control	Development of staff into authorised officer to carry out a wider remit of work	Appointed officers will be authorised to carry out a greater remit of work in line with the Food Law Code of Practice	This work was progressed as far as possible during the employee's time at the authority. These members of staff have since left.
N S	Internal training of apprentice	The apprentice does not currently meet the requirements of an authorised officer and require development.	Development of staff into authorised officer to carry out a wider remit of work	Appointed officers will be authorised to carry out a greater remit of work in line with the Food Law Code of Practice	The apprentice is no longer in post due to failure to meet probation requirements.

S / N S	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Reason	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	End of Year Update
		Requirement of apprenticeship scheme.			
S	Attendance at regional Food and health and safety liaison meetings. RBC are appointed as secretary for this year.	Good practice, sharing and learning of practices and procedures. Collaboration and networking with neighbouring authorities.	Information sharing, regional and national consistency.	Representation and feedback from each meeting.	All meetings have been attended and contributed to.
N S	Line Management of staff	Corporate and Team requirement	Monitored and improved staff/team performance	Supported, competent staff	All line management requirements have been met.

APPENDIX 5**Food & Safety Work Plan Apr 2025 - Mar 2026**

A detailed breakdown of the work plan for the Food & Safety Team 2025-2026 is available on request. The resource requirements for delivery of this work plan and available resource is summarised as:

Required Resource	Available Resource
Resource required for Food Hygiene Delivery: 7 FTE Resource required for Food Standards Delivery: 2.23 FTE Resource required for Health & Safety Delivery: 1.64 FTE Resource required for other Delivery: 2.06 FTE Total Resource Required: 12.93 FTE <i>N.B. Some areas of work fall into multiple categories, e.g. response to H&S service requests, this has been included within Food Hygiene Delivery.</i> <i>Other delivery includes Arcus MIS, Response to FOIs, generic training, corporate health and safety responsibilities, line management.</i>	Permanent Resource in post as at 01/04/25: 4.74 FTE Temporary Resource in post as at 01/04/2025: 0.35 FTE (contractors in place for Q1) and 0.06 FTE (resigning officer) Expected additional in post resource 2025/2026: 2.48 FTE (if all vacant posts filled, expected start July 2025) Total expected in post resource for 2025/2026: 7.63 FTE Total allocated resource for 2025/2026: 8.95 FTE (F&S Team) 0.45 FTE (TS Team) Shortfall of resource for 2025/2026 against expected FTE in post: 5.3 FTE

Risk Log

The following risks have been identified against the delivery of this work plan:

	Risk	Likely Impact
1.	National Shortage of EHOs	Unable to attract and recruit qualified and competent staff to future vacancies. Unable to locate qualified/competent agency personnel
2.	Part-Time Staff	The Food & safety team comprises predominantly part time staff, this has led to a loss of FTE within the team and has reduced the amount of out of hours working, e.g. to inspect businesses trading at evenings and weekends, visit and inspect events and undertake sports ground safety work, that can be achieved. The

		Council's current overtime payment policy also acts as a barrier to attracting part time staff to conduct out of hours work.
3.	Arcus MIS	The Arcus MIS is not operating sufficiently to allow appropriate and accurate recording, and subsequent reporting, of work carried out by the Food & Safety Team. Secondment to the Arcus MIS project from April 23 until March 25 has impacted available resource to carry out work under the Food & Safety Team work plan. The secondment was extended and the project was not delivered on time by the Project Manager(s). Ongoing issues with the database and required fixes will require further resource from the previously seconded officer and the PEHO in order to make the database fit for purpose and useable for the Food & Safety Team. An estimate of required resource has been included in the work plan above.
4.	Serious H&S investigation	The Food & Safety Team is investigating a serious health and safety accident involving a local wholesaler. This accident has led to life threatening injuries of an employee and the local authority has a duty to investigate this incident. Following triaging it is considered priority to fully investigate this accident and take the necessary enforcement action where approved to do so. This investigation takes resource from carrying out other statutory work actions.
5.	Appointment of non-fully qualified officers	In the event that posts are unable to be filled by qualified officers the team may choose to appoint non-qualified officers who are working towards appropriate qualifications. Whilst officers are achieving their qualifications they cannot be fully authorised and are unable to undertake official control work. They will not be able to contribute to the delivery of all the authority's food hygiene and standard inspection requirements. Additionally, the training of these officers will redirect authorised officers to assist in their training and development. In the event that this takes place the Food & Safety Team strongly recommend that additional contractual requirements are put in place for officers to stay a minimum period following the investment by the authority into their training and development.
6.	Appointment of an Environmental Health Assistant (EHA) undertaking the Environmental Health Apprenticeship	On commencement an EHA will not have suitable qualifications or experience to undertake official control work and will require training and development in order to be able to contribute to the majority of work carried out by the Food & Safety Team. There will be a substantial lead-in time before they are able to contribute to the delivery of work outlined in the workplan above. Similarly, to point 5 the training of an EHA will redirect authorised officers from carrying out work outlined within the plan.
7.	Training and authorisation of existing qualified officers within the organisation.	This has been put forward as a point on the Improvement Plan submitted to the FSA. In order to authorise other qualified officers within the organisation, a training

		programme, including accompanied inspections by authorised officers will need to be carried out with each officer. As per point 5 above this will redirect authorised officers from carrying out some work outlined within the plan.
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Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

No.	What - issue to be addressed	How - Planned action to secure improvement	Constraints	By whom (name)	By when (date)	Food Hygiene Delivery Contribution	Updates	Completed
1	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	Conduct review of market supplement payment to improve recruitment and retention for posts on the service.	This creates a budgetary pressure, and budget must be allocated.	Rob Abell	02/05/25	This will aid recruitment and retention producing outcomes as per below.	Market supplements have been reviewed taking into account the council's position in relation to London authorities (where pay is approx. 10% higher) and feedback from exit interviews from leavers. Agreed to increase Market Supplement from £3200 to £5000 for EHOs and £2000 for Food Safety Officers. These new allowances will be incorporated in the next round of recruitment detailed in Action 2 below.	Yes - Request submitted by RA, via HR for agreement by CMT.
2	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	Conduct a new round of recruitment to fill 5 vacant posts within the Food & Safety Team.	Previous recruitment rounds have shown that we are unlikely to appoint to all posts and may have	Katie Heath & Rob Abell	01/08/25	Appointment of 3 qualified EHOs who can undertake the full remit of work will result	Work force review consultation ended 8/4/25. The staff comments have	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

		<p>These are 3 full time and 1 part time post plus an apprentice post.</p> <p>We will cast our net wide to recruit trainee staff given qualified/ experienced EHO's are scarce.</p> <p>Review recruitment strategy with HR to ensure we maximise chances of success including (e.g.) relocation package, parking, 'golden hello'.</p>	offers refused due to national scarcity.			<p>in a further 432 food hygiene interventions to A-D & Unrated premises per annum.</p> <p>Appointment of Food Safety Officers and/or an apprentice can assist with AES and other work but not inspections due to COP requirements.</p>	<p>now been taken into account and a new EHO/SEHO job description was signed off by HR on 1 May 2025.</p> <p>Approval has been received to recruit to the 5 positions with advertisements planned for w/c 5 May 2025.</p>	
3	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	<p>Reallocate and train other qualified staff within the wider service to meet the competency requirements of the COP to enable them to undertake Food Hygiene Inspections. This will require investment of existing resources from the Food & Safety team, financial resources to provide training to meet CPD requirements and require permissions from other Group/Team Managers.</p>	<p>This will result in an initial decline in meeting the COP requirements for official controls as existing Food & Safety officers are reassigned to train other staff. It is expected, due to the workload of other staff, that there would be low uptake of other officers wishing to carry out food inspections as additional hours. Any follow-up action required by</p>	Rob Abell	01/05/25		<p>No capacity currently to deliver it, but it is in the plan as a measure and can be revisited as situations in the EHO teams changes.</p>	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

			<p>these visits will increase the workload of the Food & Safety officers as enforcement work will be necessary.</p> <p>Wider service unlikely to support as there are priority areas of work demanded of those EHOs in their own specialist areas also.</p>					
4	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	Use budget underspend to continue to offer overtime to qualified and competent officers within the wider service (e.g. EHO's specialising in Environmental Protection and Private Sector Housing Standards work) to carry out food hygiene inspections outside of normal working hours.	<p>No capacity in those teams to release people, so would have to be outside of normal hours. Currently qualified and competent officers are predominantly part time staff and do not wish to work overtime (as it is paid as standard hours).</p> <p>Food hygiene competencies are not adequate. We could work on improving their food competency</p>	Katie Heath / Rob Abell	01/05/25	Estimated to contribute to delivery of a further 30-60 interventions at A-D & unrated premises per annum. Based on each current working officer completing 1-2 additional inspections per month.	We will continue to offer this and review the approach on a quarterly basis.	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

			but not a short-term solution. There is no underspend in the budget, as that has been absorbed by agency staff.					
5	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	Agree to extend contractors and gain an extra contractor.	<p>We have recently agreed an extension to the end of Q1 2025.</p> <p>The F&S team budget cannot currently accommodate this beyond the agreed period. Permanent staff should be in place.</p> <p>Assumed vacancy savings have already been applied to our budget, and additional workforce savings will have to be offered up.</p>	Rob Abell	02/05/25	An extra contractor would contribute an additional 20 interventions per month and start dealing with some of the oldest unrated.	<p>Contracts extended for 2 contractors until end of June with scope to extend further dependant on permanent recruitment process.</p> <p>An additional contractor FTE contractor for 4 months to be appointed.</p>	Yes
6	Resolve shortfall of resources to deliver the intervention programme	<p>Build on AES work already conducted, and questionnaires put in place.</p> <p>Seek advice from the FSA on alternative AES</p>	Last time 60% of questionnaires were not responded to, so extra resource required for non-	Rob Abell/Katie Heath	01/06/25	This will impact on dealing with some category E interventions for satisfactory responses.	Explore how we can better utilise AES approaches.	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

		methods which might be easier to adopt into limited resource. Identify best practice.	responder inspections.					
7	Data migration to new MIS	Retain license for Civica APP for 2 years (less if resolved) for 4 concurrent users. Undertake additional data migration exercises to improve reliability of data held on Arcus to enable reports/returns.	Digital and IT have flagged security concerns with retaining existing system which could shorten period. Limited number of users Completion of return more difficult.	Matthew Golledge	01/04/2025	Official Food Controls Intervention ratings. Reports and returns,	Agreed and adopted from 1 April 2025 to extend Civica FLARE access. Comprehensive plan and task and finish (T&F) group being compiled.	Ongoing
8	MIS configuration	Agree and finalise outstanding configuration of MIS with resource from Digital and IT. Task and finish group to be resourced.	Dealing with project phase as 'business as usual'. Resourcing.	Katie Heath/Digital and IT/Arcus	01/05/2025	Official food Controls Intervention ratings Returns	Meetings with senior managers and IT project team have already been held to set scope and function of T&F to enable that to be set up now. Resource being identified to back-fill. It has been taken out of BAU phase and recognised it is still in a test & fix phase.	Ongoing

Appendix 1 - Stage 2 Food Hygiene Delivery Improvement Plan

9	Data upload	Allocate additional resource to transfer essential data required for official food controls.	Agreement on provision of resource with budgetary constraints	Matthew Golledge/Ade Marques	01/06/2025	Official Food Controls Intervention ratings Returns	T&F to oversee future data uploads and ensure they are more effective than uploads have been previously.	Ongoing
10	MIS efficiencies/improvements	Start attending Local Authority User Groups with Arcus to learn best practice configuration options.		Katie Heath	30/04/25	Improve reliability and efficiency of accessing data and running reports.	Attended first user group meeting and gained knowledge on best practice.	Ongoing.
11	MIS set-up	Create T&F group of service users, SME's' and management oversight. Backfill resource to be identified in plan.		Matthew Golledge/Ade Marques	16/05/25		Initial meetings held, agreement in principle achieved. 3 month progress report to assess interim findings and review.	Ongoing.
12	Support for FSA Return	Seek support from Arcus to enable FSA return to be completed		Katie Heath	24/04/25	Improve reliability and efficiency of accessing data and running reports.	Support provided on Arcus element of return which was submitted	Yes

APPENDIX 2

Project / Proposal Name or Reference:

Date:

Your Name:

Food Service Plan 2025-26		01-May-25	Katie Heath		
1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS					
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT:		CONSIDERATIONS <i>See guidance below on determining whether negative or positive impacts are High, Medium or Low</i>	IMPACT? <i>Use drop down list</i>	GUIDANCE IF NEGATIVE/NIL RATING HAS BEEN AWARDED	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
1	ENERGY USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * More energy will be consumed or emissions generated (by RBC or others) = Negative Impact * No extra energy use is involved or any additional energy use will be met from renewable sources = Nil Impact * Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy sources will replace existing fossil fuel energy = Positive Impact 	Nil	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Energy efficiency measures ▫ Renewable energy ▫ Reducing demand for energy 	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, more energy will be consumed or emissions generated than there currently is.
2	WASTE GENERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * More waste will be generated (by RBC or others) = Negative Impact * No waste will be generated = Nil Impact * Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/recycled will be increased = Positive Impact 	Nil	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Re-usable/recycled goods ▫ Recycling facilities ▫ Reducing/reusing resources 	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, more waste will be generated than there currently is. The Food & safety Team carry out their inspections using paper forms and carbonated report templates. These are returned to the office for shredding after use. The Team is pushing for mobile devices which is being looked into as a project separate to Arcus.
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * RBC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods/people more often/further = Negative Impact * No extra transport will be necessary = Nil Impact * The need to travel, the use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced = Positive Impact 	Nil	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Use of public transport ▫ Reducing need to travel or transport goods ▫ Alternative fuels/electric vehicles/walking and cycling 	It is not envisaged that, as a result of this plan, there will be any increase or decrease in the use of transport.

2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE					
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE ABILITY OF READING TO WITHSTAND:		CONSIDERATIONS <i>See guidance below on determining whether negative or positive impacts are High, Medium or Low</i>	IMPACT? <i>Use drop down list</i>	GUIDANCE IF NEGATIVE/NIL RATING HAS BEEN AWARDED	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
4	HEATWAVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increased exposure of vulnerable people and/or infrastructure to heat stress = Negative Impact * No increase in exposure to heat stress = Nil Impact Reduced exposure of vulnerable people and/or infrastructure to heat stress = Positive Impact 	Nil	Greater need for cooling, ventilation, shading and hydration methods	N/A
5	DROUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact * Levels of water use will not be changed = Nil Impact * Provision made for water management, water resources will be protected = Positive Impact 	Nil	Greater need for water management and perhaps reserve supplies	N/A
6	FLOODING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk = Negative Impact * Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected = Nil Impact * Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk = Positive Impact 	Nil	Consider flood defence mechanisms or alternative arrangements (business continuity)	N/A
7	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact * No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds = Nil Impact * Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced = Positive Impact 	Nil	Greater need for stabilisation measures, robust structures resilient to high winds	N/A
8	DISRUPTION TO SUPPLY CHAINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services is increased = Negative Impact * No change in exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services = Nil Impact * Exposure to supply chain disruption for key goods and services is reduced = Positive Impact 	Nil	Source key goods and services locally as it reduces exposure to supply chain disruption and boosts the local economy	N/A

Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?:

Net Nil

This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation given below.

Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

Low Impact (L)	* No publicity
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
	* No impact on service or corporate performance
Medium Impact (M)	* No impact on capital assets; or relates to minor capital assets (minor works)
	* Local publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
	* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
	* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; waste generation, transport use) by more than c.10%
High Impact (H)	* Relates to medium-sized capital assets (individual buildings or small projects)
	* National publicity (good or bad)
	* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
	* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
	* Affects corporate performance (e.g.: energy; waste; transport use) by more than c.10%
	* Relates to major capital assets (larger buildings and infrastructure projects)

In the box below please summarise any relevant policy context, explain how the overall rating has been derived, highlight significant impacts (positive and negative) and explain actions being taken to mitigate negatives and increase positives. This text can be replicated in the 'Environment and Climate Impacts' section of your Committee Report, though please note you may need to supplement this climate impact assessment with commentary on other (non-climate) environmental impacts:

There are no specific environmental or climate implications to this plan. Payments made to the Council are accepted electronically. Where accepted by the Food Business Operator subsequent correspondence with businesses, following inspection, will be supplied electronically. Applications for new business registrations are encouraged and accepted electronically.

It should be noted that the Food & Safety Team has not yet been set up on mobile devices for conducting inspections therefore proactive and reactive interventions are carried out using paper inspection forms and carbonated paper report forms.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

For advice on this document please contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email Clare.Muir@reading.gov.uk.

Please contact the Project Management Office at pmo@reading.gov.uk for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: Food Service Plan 2025-26
Directorate: DEGNS
Service: Food & Safety, Public Protection

Name: Katie Heath
Job Title: Principal Environmental Health Officer
Date of assessment:

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
1	Screening	Katie Heath		Rob Abell

Scope your proposal

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

This is an updated Food Service Plan to cover the period 2025-2026. It is a document produced by the team annually to meet our statutory requirement for all Local Authorities who undertake official food controls, as detailed within the Food Law Code of Practice set by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

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

By adopting the plan, all stakeholders will benefit from some certainty as to the work being conducted or prioritised for the year, and Reading Borough Council will be meeting its legal duty as well as contributing to strategic aims. It also allows the team to have detailed dialogue with the FSA on expectations and improvement areas identified.

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

The outcome aimed for is stakeholder agreement on the proposed service levels and outputs as detailed in the plan. This includes numerical targets for inspections of food hygiene premises broken down by risk rated level, the same for food standards inspections, prioritisation of newly registered/unrated premises, and sampling activities.

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

Members - To see the level of activity and rationale for priorities set.

Senior Managers - To ensure the statutory requirement is fulfilled. To assess/manage organisational risk in relation to failure points and FSA performance management.

Team members - A clear agreed plan of operation to provide certainty relating to their inspection targets.

Food businesses in the Borough - Context as to the regulatory environment they are subject to.

Residents & visitors - Consumer confidence they can safely eat in the Borough.

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

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

- **Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community or care experience)? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.**

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

Members are being given the opportunity to review the plan and make comment on it, and it is going through the normal scrutiny attached to the Committee process.

The plan references food hygiene/standards inspections to be carried out by the team on premises based on their risk rating. This is an objective tool which does not contain any information relating to protected characteristics. Food businesses are inspected not based on any other groupings, or with reference to demographic profile. Decisions on which premises to inspect are not based in any way on the profile of the business owner, their race, sex, age, or any other protected characteristic.

It is recognised that we have a diverse customer base as we regularly interact with business owners representing a wide spectrum of the community. This service plan does not have a bearing on that. The legislation we advise on and enforce applies across the board equally. Considerations we have in order to meet the customer needs from different sections of the community are taken outside of this food service plan which is focussed solely on quantitative numbers of inspections, rather than the qualitative way that we interact with those businesses.

- **Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.**

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

There are no known public concerns, complaints, consultation responses, feedback or media reports to flag any potentially discriminatory practices or impact.

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

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

The Food Service Plan is completely neutral in terms of potential impact. It details the inspections to be conducted in relation to food businesses without any categorisation, prioritisation or difference in effect based on protected characteristics. It is impartially based on the standardised template under the FSA Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities. No groups are thought to be affected differently to others by way of adopting and implementing this plan. There are no known flags to give any cause to trigger a full EIA.

01/05/2025

X 

Completing Officer
Signed by: Heath, Katie

X 

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consultation

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

[Consultation manager form - Reading Borough Council Dash](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted

Collect and Assess your Data

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

(Please delete relevant ticks)

- Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-

-
- Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on age
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-
-

- Describe how this proposal could impact on the Armed Forces community (including reservists and veterans and their families)
 - Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure
-
-

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on care experienced young people and adults.**
 - **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**
-
-

Make a Decision

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

(Delete numbers below which don't apply)

- 1. No negative impact identified - Go to sign off**
- 2. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

- 3. Negative impact identified or uncertain**

What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale

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

X

X

Completing Officer

Lead Officer

Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Managed Stores Procurement 2025
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Isabelle Robson – Head of Housing Repairs and Property Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Matt Yeo - Lead Councillor for Housing
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That delegated authority is granted to the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Finance, and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Procure and award a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the Managed Stores contract. The contract will be for up to 7 years (5 initial years and then up to 2 further years). 1.2. Negotiate with the successful tenderer to mobilise the contract, vary the contract, extend the contract at the appropriate time, and otherwise contract manage the contract throughout its lifecycle.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The report sets out the requirements for a contract to manage and maintain the material stores used by Repairs and Property Services in Housing and will include details of cross council involvement to achieve value for money.
- 1.2. In order for the Repairs and Property Services teams to ensure homes are maintained to a high standard, there is a requirement for a well-established and well stocked store to be available for use by the operatives and staff within the service.
- 1.3. Delegation is being requested to undertake a procurement process compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and then a subsequent contract award for a term of 5 years with a 2-year extension provision; and to manage all contractual decisions for the duration of the contract. It is proposed that the total lifetime value of this contract is £14m.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council's 5-year Housing Strategy was adopted by Policy Committee in September 2020. The vision for the Strategy is "For all our residents to have the opportunity to live in a good quality sustainable home they can afford within a thriving neighbourhood." The Directorate's 'Supporting the life that matters to you' ethos is aligned with this ambition.
- 2.2. In Annex 3 of the Safety and Quality Standard laid out in the Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards, section 1.4 outlines the requirement for registered housing providers to provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and

planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.

- 2.3. A major component of the delivery of the Strategy, and to allow the Council to adhere to the consumer standard, is the repairs and maintenance of their homes. These repairs and maintenance processes require good quality, economically viable materials using local suppliers who employ local staff to manage the contracts in store.

3. Current position

Managed Stores

- 3.1. The current contract for Housing Repairs and Property Services parts, materials, PPE and uniform is held with Travis Perkins; this contract expires on 31 March 2026.
- 3.2. In preparation for the contract expiry, market evaluations have been conducted, including site visits to existing managed stores by local authorities. The Repairs and Property Services team would like to procure a managed store for parts and materials and the Council has agreed to extend this provision to the Highways and Drainage team working alongside the service to procure a solution suitable to both service areas.

4. Proposal

Option Proposed

- 4.1. Managed Stores allow for a bespoke location with dedicated parts counters and staff, for the RBC trade operatives, surveyors and highways/drainage staff. A bespoke store is a self-sufficient trade counter and storage unit serving solely Reading Borough Council staff as agreed with the winning supplier. It will store materials stipulated in an agreed core materials list and the restocking and management will be the responsibility of the winning bidder.
- 4.2. A secondary option which will be considered as part of the mini-competition, would be for the Council to share a stores site. We will invite bids for this alternative during the procurement process. A shared store will mean Council staff and buyers as agreed, share the counter and storage space with another of the suppliers' customers. These options will be assessed for best value (known as variant bid assessment). Additionally, the procurement will include the ability for Streetscene and Corporate Property to order and collect PPE and other small sundries whilst leveraging commercial economies of scale. This contract will have scope to be spread wider across the Council for PPE and uniform should that requirement be present once the contract has been embedded at the preferential rates set during the bidding and selection process.
- 4.3. There will be a parts-delivery model included in the contract for larger materials and pre-scheduled works carried out by the teams, allowing the supplier to deliver orders to properties and Council sites as necessary.
- 4.4. The civils team currently use Travis Perkins to purchase components from a partner who provide larger, more specialist equipment and materials. Therefore, a key third-party supplier partnership will be held by the winning supplier providing civils materials for the Highways and Drainage operatives.
- 4.5. The opportunity of this procurement reaching out to the wider Council, will enable us to drive down the prices based on material volume, and establish a strong core range with the supplier. It will also allow for robust contract management and provide the Council with strong commercial leverage. The contract will provide future opportunities for construction material savings for refurbishment projects managed by the Repairs and Property Services teams.
- 4.6. A procurement will be undertaken against a specification and a set of evaluation criteria currently in development with the Leadership team in Housing Repairs and Property Services, in conjunction with the Civils team. The evaluation of the bids which follows, will be based on standard price and quality question responses in the requirements

tendered, and the suppliers' submissions. The evaluations will be carried out against a criterion of 50% price and 50% quality

- 4.7. The Repairs Service Improvement Plan has 10 workstreams, this contract is one of the Priority one procurements in the procurement workstream. Priority was given to contracts which were highest value and had the greatest risk. This contract will allow the overall service area to continue delivering repairs and maintenance to tenant's homes and is a contributing factor to improving the service by reducing the time spent in stores and improving the system integration between NEC Housing Repairs and the stores systems directly.
- 4.8. There is a strong Social Value opportunity during the procurement for this contract, and we will evaluate the bidders' offering during the submission evaluations.

Other options considered

- 4.9. There is no provision for continued use of the current Travis Perkins contract as all extensions have been invoked, and the contract will terminate on the 31st of March 2026.
- 4.10. Do nothing – having no contract in place would significantly impact both the ability for the service to continue to be delivered and the cost of purchasing materials for that service delivery. Each purchase would need individual approval without a contract in place, which would be untenable for the service to manage and the costs would be based on market value with no preferential rate.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 5.1 The programme of works and repairs work to Council Homes contribute to the Council's 2025-28 Corporate Plan in terms of securing Readings economic and cultural success by directly impacting the target for housing repairs being met within timescales.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The Repairs, Maintenance and Planned programme of works to Council homes looks to improve the energy efficiency and the insulation of properties wherever possible which extends to purchasing and sourcing efficient effective parts for installation during those works thus reducing the environmental impact.
- 6.3 This procurement will stipulate the main store location is to be within 1 mile of the Council's Bennet Road offices and provide a delivery service for planned and pre-organised works allowing the operatives and staff to minimise the need for extensive travel which will increase emissions.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1 There are no proposed changes to services that will impact on the way the community access and experience services and therefore no public consultation is planned
- 7.2 The repairs and maintenance manager for Housing Repairs, attended various locations of stores managed on behalf of other local authorities which has helped to inform the development of the specification and requirements for this procurement exercise. During those visits a greater understanding of the benefits of a managed bespoke store was gleaned; the ability to track and maintain the core stock in a dedicated location being the most important benefit for the Council. It allows good management of the stock being purchased.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 There are no proposed changes to services that will negatively impact on the way people access and experience services therefore there is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment for the purposes of this report.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1 There are any no other issues to consider relevant to this report.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 A competition will be run with full assistance from the legal team with an allocated resource, who will check terms and conditions and ensure full compliance is achieved. No legal risks are anticipated.
- 10.2 The value of the contract exceeds the relevant threshold for services and the Cirrus Consortium Framework dated 7th July 2023 we anticipate being used has been procured in full compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. A Mini-Competition is being conducted to ensure compliance with the Framework provisions and the Council Constitution. As the Cirrus Consortium Framework agreement was entered into before the Procurement Act has taken effect, the proposed call-off under the Framework remains governed by PCR 2015.
- The value of the contract is over £500,000 per year and therefore it is a key decision. Under 13.3.2 of the CPR's 'A Standing Committee may specifically delegate a key decision to an officer for them to make. In which case, the decision when taken by the officer, should be formally recorded by them'. Delegated authority to award and manage the contracts through their lifecycle following the procurement is therefore being sought from the Policy Committee.
- 10.3 Legal Services have been instructed to support with the procurement and assist with the drafting of contract documents and collate the schedules.
- 10.4 Marina Lancashire, Senior Solicitor has reviewed these Legal Implications.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The budget for the contract is split across the departments within the council and related to the costs that are funded from Revenue and Capital resources.
- 11.2 The largest single area is Housing Revenue Account funded, for parts and materials and PPE used by Housing Repairs and Property Services and the budget forms part of the HRA 30-year Business plan. Smaller allocations being funded by Civils, and Streetscene. The costs for this contract are already being incurred within the budget and forms part of respective departmental current and future spending plans.

- 11.3 These costs will include a management fee from the supplier, which will be apportioned as a percentage fee against the service provision. It is planned that the fee is distributed across the Council departments aligned with their spend totals and to ensure the HRA ring fenced account receives a fair proportion. This apportionment and budget management will be overseen by Housing Repairs and Property services as the Contract owner.
- 11.4 These financial implications have been agreed with Stephen MacDonald Strategic Finance Business Partner (DEGNS and Housing)

12. Timetable for Implementation

12.1 Following delegated authority approval, the timetable below will apply:

Item	Date	Steps
Procurement Board	02/06/2025	Approved strategy at June board
Policy Paper Submitted	11/06/2025	
Specification and requirement completed	18/07/2025	
Policy Committee	21/07/2025	Forward Plan request submitted
Mini Comp published	22/07/2025	Spec, ITT, Eval questions
Mini Comp closed	26/08/2025	
Evaluation complete	16/09/2025	
TER Approved	18/09/2025	
Award contract	22/09/2025	
Standstill completes, confirm award	02/10/2025	
ODN Approved	02/10/2025	
Contract signed (sealing required)	13/10/2025	
Implementation begins	13/10/2025	
Implementation complete	01/04/2026	

- 12.2 In terms of implementation, there are two plans required. If a new supplier were to have the winning bid in the competition, the implementation will be more significant and require IT integration between the new supplier and NEC Housing. We anticipate, should the supplier change, 6 months will be sufficient to make the transition.
- 12.3 If the supplier remains the same, the transition period will be shorter. Improvements will be made based on the changes to the requirements and some IT integration will still be required but with minimal impact.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Not applicable.

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Implications of Oxfordshire Local Government Reorganisation Proposals
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director	Darren Carter, Acting Executive Director of Resources
Report author	Gavin Handford, Assistant Director, Policy, Change & Customer Service
Lead Councillor	Cllr Liz Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	<p>That Policy Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the interim proposals submitted for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire, 2. Agree a formal request be made to Government for a modification of the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire, 3. Authorise the Chief Executive to undertake all necessary activities to inform and evidence the request, in line with the initial proposal as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, and consultation with the Leader of the Council, and 4. Note that the request will be presented to Council for approval prior to submission to Government in November 2025, to align with the reorganisation timetable, thereby enabling the Secretary of State to consider the rationale for a modified boundary.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. On 16 December 2024 the Government published the English Devolution White Paper. This wide-ranging paper set out a range of Policies that the Government is proposing for Local Government. The most significant of these are proposals for devolution to Strategic Authorities covering all areas of England, and for reorganisation of local government in two tier areas to “deliver sustainable and high-quality services.
- 1.2. A report was provided to Council on 28 January 2025 providing a summary of the White Paper and the potential implications for Reading and actions being taken in response. At that meeting, Council resolved to note the key elements of the White Paper and agreed that “the Leader of the Council be authorised to work with other local authority leaders to develop a proposal for a Strategic Authority in line with the criteria in the White Paper” and that this should “in principle, assume an elected Mayor for the new Strategic Authority”. That work is ongoing.

- 1.3. This report provides an update on the implications of Oxfordshire's Interim Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which they have submitted to Government. Whilst the local authorities across Berkshire were not invited to submit any local government reorganisation proposals, two of the options submitted by Oxfordshire include West Berkshire Council joining with all or parts of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, to create a proposed new 'Ridgeway Council'.
- 1.4. The Oxfordshire Councils received a response to their Interim Proposals on 3 June 2025. This feedback reiterated the importance of the proposals meeting the Government's criteria for reorganisation. The feedback did not rule out the inclusion of a cross-border proposal with West Berkshire, but did state they needed to consider the implications for the wider area. Oxfordshire must submit their final detailed business cases for local government reorganisation by 28 November 2025.
- 1.5. There will subsequently be a six-to-eight-week consultation on the proposals by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in due course. It is understood Reading Borough Council will be a consultee.
- 1.6. Over time Reading has grown: the current Borough boundary does not reflect the area people generally recognise as Reading or the way people travel and access services. For this reason, and to protect the Borough's future position (should smaller Unitaries subsequently be required to reorganise), it is recommended that the Secretary of State be requested to undertake a review of the border between West Berkshire and Reading, and agree a modification to the proposed 'Ridgeway Council'.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council has no policy seeking local government reorganisation and was not invited to make any reorganisation submission.
- 2.2. The priority for Government has been to request local government reorganisation proposals from two-tier areas. Those areas have a county council and multiple district councils, with each tier responsible for different types of local government services. The White Paper outlined the Government's intention to reorganise these areas and create unitary councils across the Country, which it states will provide better and more efficient services.
- 2.3. Reading, like all Berkshire authorities, is already a unitary council and provides all local government services for residents, businesses and communities within the Borough. The Council has, to date therefore, focused on working with neighbouring authorities to develop a proposal to deliver the opportunities offered through Devolution and the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority.
- 2.4. Reading Borough Council is a member of the Berkshire Prosperity Board, which brings all local authorities in Berkshire together through a formal Joint Committee. The Berkshire Prosperity Board has six key workstreams which form the basis for the joint Berkshire Economic Strategy. The workstreams align strongly with the proposed mandate for Strategic Authorities included in the White Paper.

3. Implications of Oxfordshire's Local Government Reorganisation proposals

- 3.1. On 5 February 2025, the Minister for Local Government & English Devolution wrote to all Council Leaders in Oxfordshire: Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

- 3.2. The letter was a formal invitation, with guidance, for the submission of local government reorganisation proposals. The letter confirmed that councils could explore options with neighbouring councils beyond those in the invitation letter. Similar letters were sent to all two-tier areas across the country. No letters were sent to Berkshire local authorities on the basis they are already unitary authorities.
- 3.3. Government has set out key criteria for developing proposals for unitary government. This guidance is set out in full in Appendix 1, but in summary states:
- Sensible economic areas which achieve a single tier of government across the whole area (in this case, Oxfordshire)
 - New councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more, although proposals could set out a rationale for a different figure
 - Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money
 - Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, with particular consideration to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness.
 - Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
 - New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements and where no Combined Authority is in place (as is the case in Oxfordshire), the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution
 - New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.
- 3.4. Oxfordshire submitted their interim proposals on 21 March 2025. They comprise three options:
- A single countywide unitary council for the whole of Oxfordshire
 - Two unitary councils covering Oxfordshire plus West Berkshire
 - 'Oxford and Shires Council', covering Oxford City, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils
 - 'Ridgeway Council', covering South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and West Berkshire Council
 - Three unitary councils covering Oxfordshire plus West Berkshire
 - 'Greater Oxford', covering an expanded Oxford City area
 - 'Northern Oxfordshire', covering the majority of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils
 - 'Ridgeway Council', covering the majority of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and all of West Berkshire Council
- 3.5. Maps showing these various options are attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.6. Government provided feedback on the interim proposals from Oxfordshire on 3 June 2025. The feedback confirmed that boundary changes are possible, but existing District areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals. Where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.

- 3.7. Each Council in Oxfordshire can submit a single final proposal, but this must cover the entirety of the reorganisation area. At the time of writing, there is no consensus among Oxfordshire councils on a preferred option. It is therefore reasonable to assume that multiple options will be submitted by Oxfordshire as final, detailed proposals.

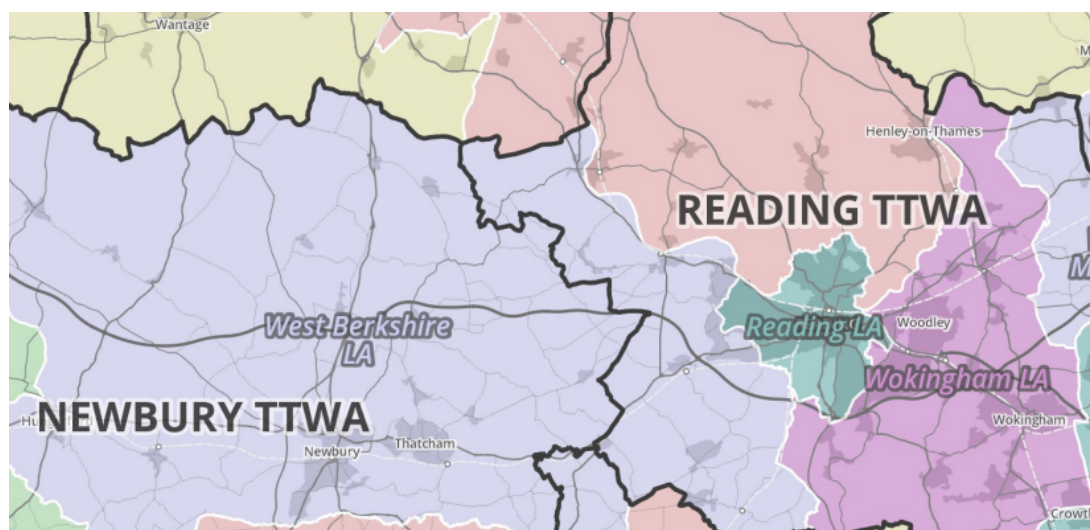
4. Responding to the reorganisation proposals in Oxfordshire

- 4.1. In developing the options that include West Berkshire, there was no engagement or attempt to seek input from Reading Borough Council.
- 4.2. The prospect of the whole of West Berkshire becoming part of a large new unitary council present a number of concerns for Reading:
- The existing boundary between Reading and West Berkshire is out of date
 - The 'Ridgeway Council' boundary does not reflect a sensible economic area to support future growth
 - No consideration has been given to the impact on shared service arrangements across Berkshire

The need for a revised boundary

- 4.3. The local authority boundary between West Berkshire and Reading was established over 100 years ago (1911). Over that time period Reading has changed beyond recognition, growing to be one of the largest towns and economies outside of London. Reading's economy and urban area extend beyond the current boundaries of the Borough.
- 4.4. Moving parts of the greater Reading area into a larger, mainly rural, new unitary council does not align with the Government's criteria for sensible economic geographies.
- 4.5. As the map below demonstrates, the areas to the west of Reading are not in the same economic area of West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire.

Figure 1: Reading Travel to Work Area (TTWA) and Local Authority boundaries



Delivering growth sustainable and high-quality services

- 4.6. A key theme underpinning the White Paper is the need to unlock growth, and Reading is well-placed to help accelerate the new Government's growth agenda. Our workforce ranks 4th in the UK for productivity (Centre for Cities, 2024) and Reading (plus Wokingham) is forecast to be the fastest growing area in the UK over the next 2-3

years, with annual GVA growth of 2.5% (EY, 2024). Greater Reading is home to offices for some of the world's leading technology firms, including Microsoft, Oracle, Cisco, and Nvidia. Reading is also a major retail centre and has excellent transport links to London and the rest of the country.

- 4.7. As the map above demonstrates, Reading's economy does not start/finish at the boundary with West Berkshire. Residents in areas such as Calcot, Tilehurst, Theale, Pangbourne, and Purley on Thames have a strong connection to Reading. Transport routes and employment centres are based in Reading, with over 42,000 commuters travelling into Reading from outside the Borough each day. Retail and shopping facilities are centred on Reading – the only 'major town/sub-regional centre' in Berkshire, according to the ONS.
- 4.8. The White Paper is clear that reorganisation should deliver sustainable and high-quality services. There are numerous services and activities that cross the current boundary between West Berkshire and Reading, particularly education, leisure and housing, with examples of residents in the same street receiving services from different councils.
- 4.9. Education also has a strong overlap across the boundary with higher education centred in Reading (Reading College and the University of Reading). The growth of Reading is interconnected with its immediate surroundings, which is not reflected in the proposed new 'Ridgeway Council' boundary with Reading.
- 4.10. If reorganisation of Oxfordshire proceeds and includes West Berkshire, it will arguably compromise Reading's future position, particularly should Government subsequently require smaller unitary authorities like those in Berkshire to reorganise.
- 4.11. As indicated above, the last boundary between West Berkshire and Reading was set over 100 years ago – any new boundary may last that long again.
- 4.12. Any local government reorganisation involving West Berkshire is likely to have implications for the rest of Berkshire, including Reading due to the number of shared service arrangements that exist between Berkshire councils (for example, Reading hosts the Coroner's Service and Joint Legal Team on behalf of all the Berkshire Councils, and share a Director of Public Health with West Berkshire). At the time of writing, there has been no engagement on how and if these arrangements will continue following reorganisation.

5. Reviewing the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire

- 5.1. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.12 above, it is recommended that the Council makes a formal request to the Secretary of State to modify any proposed new authority that involves West Berkshire by seeking views from the Local Government Boundary Commission for a revised boundary between Reading and West Berkshire.
- 5.2. Government guidance and feedback to interim proposals submitted by Oxfordshire has indicated a preference for reorganisation to be built from existing district council boundaries. However, it has also stated that boundary changes are possible and will be considered where there is a strong justification.
- 5.3. Whilst guidance has stated that any new council should seek a population of 500,000, it has subsequently been stated this is not a hard target, and there is a working assumption that c350,000 is the threshold.
- 5.4. The Ridgeway Council proposal has a current population of between 419,000 (in a three unitary option) and 463,000 (in a two unitary option). A boundary review on the lines outlined at Appendix 3 would not compromise the Oxfordshire / West Berkshire proposal, as it would only impact the five wards which are the urban areas close to Reading's boundary with a population of approximately 32,000. Thus, the remaining population would be between 387,000 and 431,000; both above the working assumption.

- 5.5. To make any review as straight forward as possible it is recommended that parish and ward boundaries are maintained.
- 5.6. In considering a revised boundary with West Berkshire, Officers have looked at the urban areas and transport corridors to the west of Reading. Given Reading's urban nature, to achieve a 'sensible geography' it is recommended that any new boundary does not encompass large rural areas unnecessarily.
- 5.7. As set out earlier in the report, Berkshire Councils have not been invited to submit reorganisation proposals, and the priority for Reading is to focus on the opportunities that devolution and the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority can unlock. Therefore, it is proposed that only the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire is considered due to the latter seeking to partner with Oxfordshire for reorganisation purposes. Reading making its case for a Boundary Review will provide the Secretary of State with evidence to consider a modification to the reorganisation proposals that are submitted by Oxfordshire.
- 5.8. The priority for the Council remains seeking a Strategic Authority that will bring additional funding and powers to the local area, supporting the Council to deliver benefits for all Reading communities and businesses. It is critical that we maintain strong partnerships across Berkshire and avoid resources being diverted on speculative additional reorganisation activity.
- 5.9. The proposed revised boundary to the west of Reading is as set out in Appendix 3. This is an initial proposal to enable Officers to develop the detailed information to support a proposal to the Secretary of State, who will then determine if the reorganisation proposals from Oxfordshire should be modified.
- 5.10. The proposed submission for a boundary review to the west of Reading will be reported to Council for approval in November (either through a rescheduled meeting or an extraordinary meeting).
- 5.11. In order for the Secretary of State to consider the rationale for a modified boundary, should she be minded to agree in principle a new 'Ridgeway Council', the request will be sent to Government in accordance with the deadline for final reorganisation proposals – 28 November 2025.

6. Options

- 6.1. The preferred option, as recommended, is for the Council make a formal request for a review of the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire to be submitted in November 2025. This would ensure that the request is considered alongside the final reorganisation proposals from Oxfordshire.
- 6.2. Alternative options, which are not recommended, include:
 - Making no submission and awaiting any Government consultation to make representations regarding appropriate geography. Under the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act the Secretary of State will need to consult prior to any reorganisation decision. However, consent is not required, and it is recommended that the Council does not wait to make its case, enabling government to be aware of the Council's position as soon as possible.
 - Requesting a boundary review, but for the review to be undertaken following any structural reorganisation. Whilst this may make the initial reorganisation 'simpler' to implement, it will significantly extend the period of disruption should a boundary review then take place. This would delay new councils becoming established and unnecessarily divert resources for an extended period when focus should be on delivering the service improvements and growth that are sought under the Government's White Paper and reorganisation criteria.

- Make a full boundary review submission looking at all areas around Reading. This would not be supported by neighbouring councils and therefore unlikely to be agreed. In addition, it could significantly disrupt partnership work to bring forward proposals for a Strategic Authority, which would delay any benefits from devolution being realised.

7. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 7.1. It is critical that the success of Reading is not impeded, in particular the delivery of sustainable and effective local services and the growth of its local economy and workforce, by implementing reorganisation that does not recognise the natural boundaries and connections of Reading.
- 7.2. The recommendation that the Council make a formal request for a boundary review to counter Oxfordshire and West Berkshire's 'Ridgeway Council' proposal for local government reorganisation, is driven by the principles within the Council Plan:
 - Putting residents first
 - Building on strong foundations
 - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
 - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
 - Being proudly ambitious for Reading

8. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 8.1. There is alignment across Berkshire to tackling the Climate Emergency. It is a key theme in the Berkshire Shared Prosperity Board's priorities and within the proposed mandate for Strategic Authorities under devolution.

9. Community Engagement

- 9.1. As set out in the government guidance at Appendix 1, there is a clear expectation that any local government reorganisation proposals are informed by consultation and engagement with local communities and stakeholders.
- 9.2. It is important, therefore, that any boundary review submitted by the Council in response to any reorganisation proposals should equally be informed by consultation and engagement with local communities and stakeholders.
- 9.3. It is proposed that the Council develop its request for a review of the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire openly and transparently, with significant engagement including:
 - Communications activities to raise awareness of the proposals and why the Council thinks an alternative boundary is necessary
 - Surveys and engagement to seek feedback from residents, business and stakeholders, including feedback on priorities for improvement from an enlarged Reading Council
 - Provision of briefing packs and information to support Councillors and other key stakeholders with community engagement

- 9.4. Beyond our residents and businesses, stakeholder engagement will include MPs, Parish Councils, voluntary and community organisations, and public service partners in relevant areas of greater Reading.

10. Equality Implications

- 10.1. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of developing the proposed alternative boundary.

- 10.2. This will enable the Council to ensure the proposal has given 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.
- 10.3. The communications and engagement activities will provide particular insight in relation to fostering good relations across Reading communities within any revised Reading Council boundary.

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1. Sections 1-7 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provide the statutory powers for the Secretary of State to undertake local government reorganisation to move from two-tier to single tier local government.
- 11.2. Under the Act, the Secretary of State can invite proposals for reorganisation. This took place in January 2025, when letters were sent to Councils in two -tier areas. These letters set out the Government criteria for reorganisation and Oxfordshire submitted its interim proposals on 21 March 2025.
- 11.3. On 3 June 2025, Government wrote to the Chief Executives of the six Oxfordshire Councils to provide feedback on the interim proposals. This confirmed that final detailed proposals must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025.
- 11.4. After receiving reorganisation proposals, the Act allows for the Secretary of State to:
- Implement a proposal as proposed;
 - Implement a proposal with modifications; or
 - Not implement the proposal
- 11.5. The recommendations set out above facilitates the Council making a request to the Secretary of State, for a modification to any reorganisation proposal submitted by Oxfordshire involving West Berkshire Council, based on a revised boundary between Reading and West Berkshire, as set out at Appendix 3.
- 11.6. The Secretary of State is required to consult before making a decision. Feedback from MHCLG has confirmed this will include affected Councils and neighbouring Councils, which in this scenario, would include Reading. It is anticipated that the consultation will also include other government departments and key stakeholders. The consultation will likely run for 6 – 8 weeks. The timing is as yet unclear.
- 11.7. It is also important to note however, that the Secretary of State is not required to secure consent from the affected Councils to implement a proposal.
- 11.8. Michael Graham, Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services has cleared these Legal Implications.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1. There will be a range of workstreams required to support this work, evidence gathering, communications and consultation. This work will also include developing a financial model to understand the financial implications in terms of Council Tax and customer demands under any expanded Reading Council area.
- 12.2. Any commissioning of external studies or support will follow the Council's procurement rules to ensure value for money.

12.3. Any resources and expenditure will be managed within the existing approved budget for 2025/26.

12.4. Darren Carter, Acting Executive Director of Resources / Director of Finance, has cleared these Financial Implications.

13. Timetable for Implementation of Local Government Reorganisation

13.1. The deadline for final detailed local government reorganisation proposals is 28 November 2025.

13.2. There are 21 two-tier areas across England. In almost all cases, multiple interim proposals were submitted from each area.

13.3. As set out above, three options were submitted for Oxfordshire. It is considered unlikely that this will change for the final proposals.

13.4. Therefore, Government will likely have 50-100 detailed reorganisation proposals to review and consult on across all areas. As a result, it is anticipated that any outcomes will not be known until late Spring 2026 at the earliest.

14. Background Papers

14.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government
2. Maps showing the interim proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire
3. Map showing proposed alternative boundary between Reading and West Berkshire

Appendix 1: Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government

Criteria for unitary local government

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
 - a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
 - b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
 - c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.
 - d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
 - a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
 - b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.
 - c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.
 - d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.
 - e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.
 - f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
 - a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
 - b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

- c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.
4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.
 - b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.
 - c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
- a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.
 - b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.
 - c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.
- a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
 - b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

Developing proposals for unitary local government

The following matters should be taken into account in formulating a proposal:

Boundary Changes

- a) Existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for your proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.
- b) There will need to be a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for any proposals that involve boundary changes, or that affect wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation.

Engagement and consultation on reorganisation

- a) We expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.
- b) For those areas where Commissioners have been appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Best Value Intervention, their input will be important in the development of robust unitary proposals.
- c) We also expect local leaders to engage their Members of Parliament, and to ensure there is wide engagement with local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses on a proposal.
- d) The engagement that is undertaken should both inform the development of robust proposals and should also build a shared understanding of the improvements you expect to deliver through reorganisation.
- e) The views of other public sector providers will be crucial to understanding the best way to structure local government in your area. This will include the relevant Mayor (if you already have one), Integrated Care Board, Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority, local Higher Education and Further Education providers, National Park Authorities, and the voluntary and third sector.
- f) Once a proposal has been submitted it will be for the government to decide on taking a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute. This will be a completely separate process to any consultation undertaken on mayoral devolution in an area, which will be undertaken in some areas early this year, in parallel with this invitation.

Interim plans

An interim plan should be provided to government on or before **21 March 2025**. This should set out your progress on developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance. The level of detail that is possible at this stage may vary from place to place but the expectation is that one interim plan is jointly submitted by all councils in the area. It may be the case that the interim plan describes more than one potential proposal for your area, if there is more than one option under consideration.

The interim plan should:

- a) identify any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.
- b) identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.
- c) include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.
- d) include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.
- e) include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.
- f) include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.

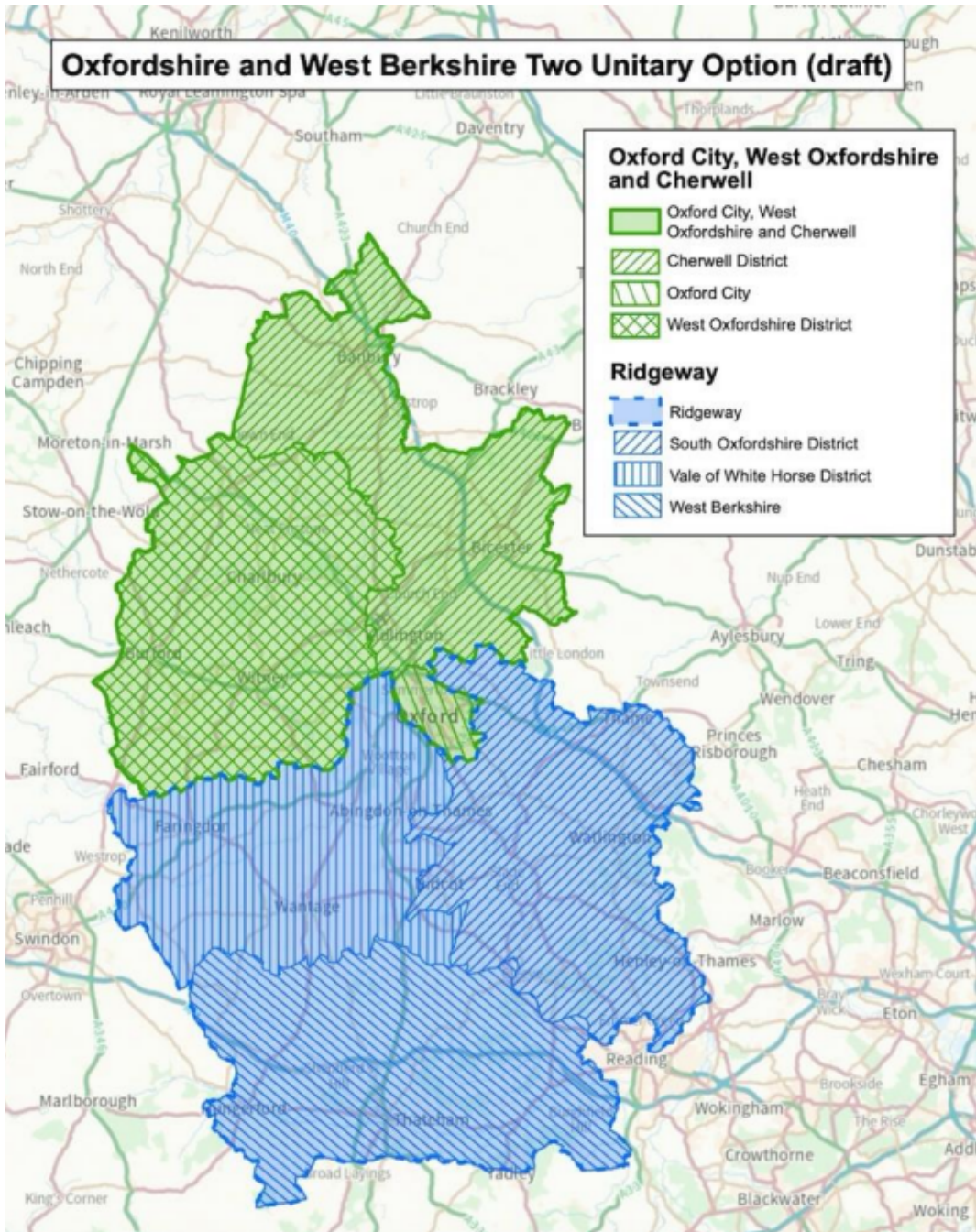
g) set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.

h) set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.

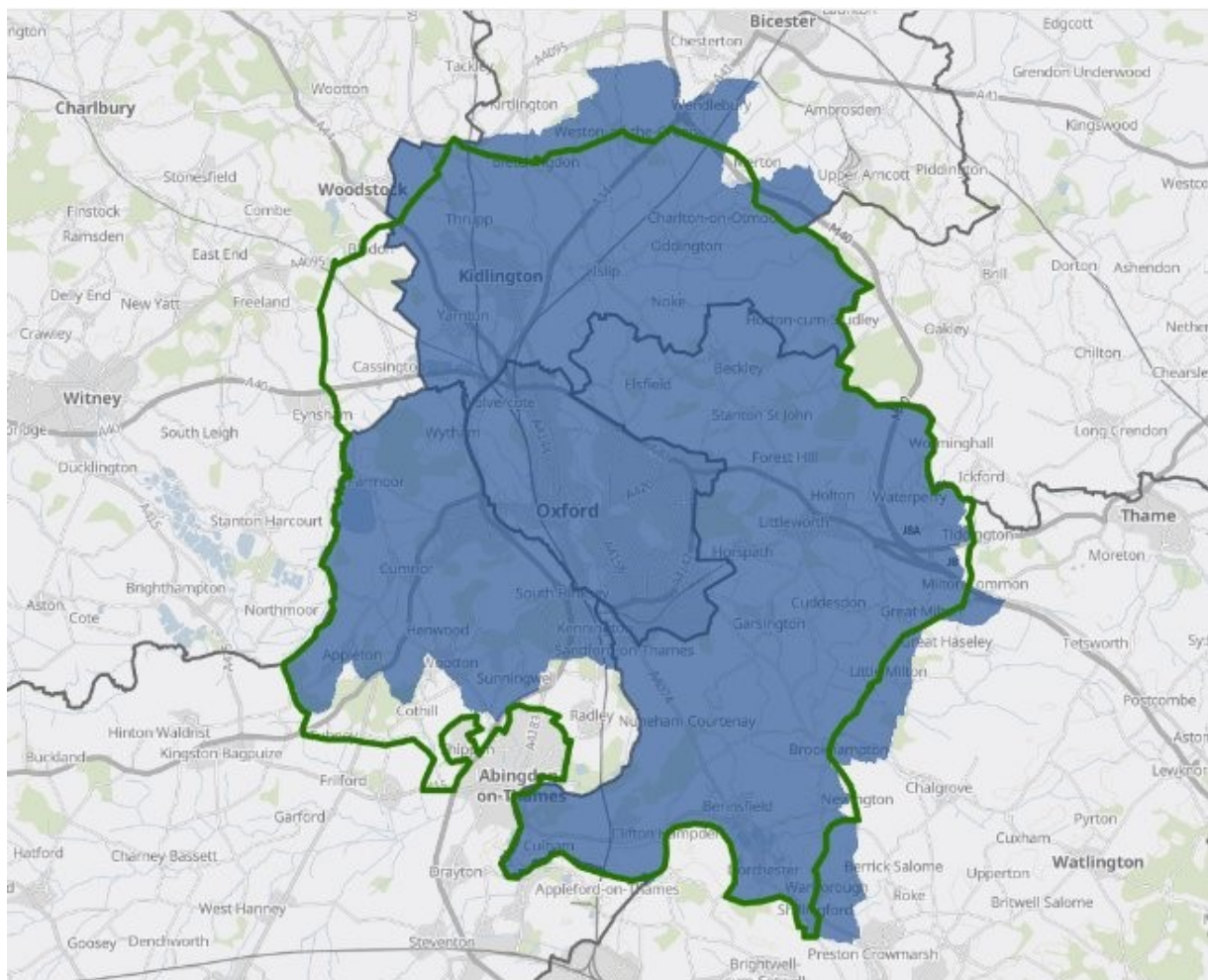
Appendix 2: Maps showing the interim proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire

Single countywide unitary council for the whole of Oxfordshire

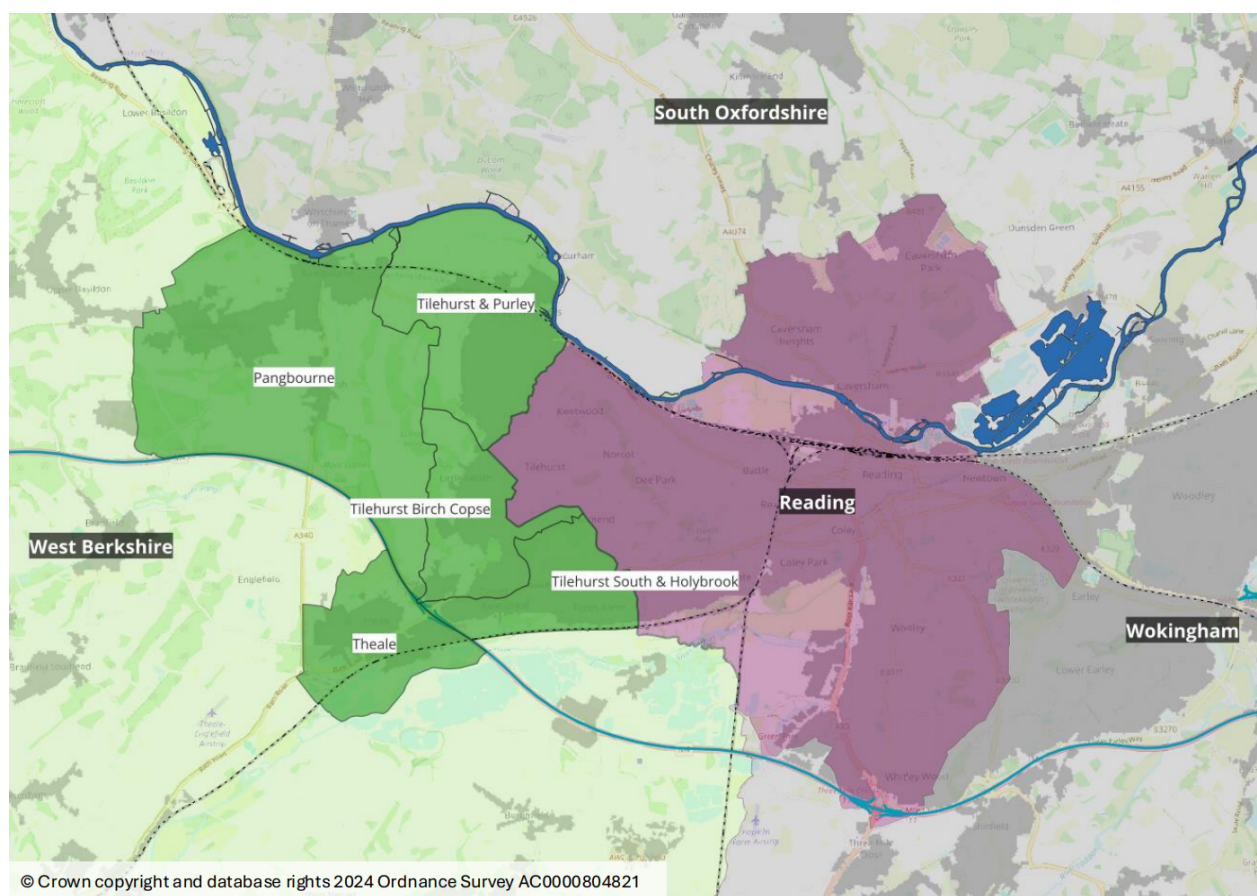
Two unitary councils covering Oxfordshire plus West Berkshire



Three unitary councils covering Oxfordshire plus West Berkshire



Appendix 3: Map showing proposed alternative boundary between Reading and West Berkshire



Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	2024/25 Quarter 4 Performance Report
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Partly open to the public and part exempt - see reasons below
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Darren Carter, Director of Finance
Report author	Stuart Donnelly, Financial Planning & Strategy Manager Gavin Handford, Assistant Director of Policy, Change & Customer Services
Lead Councillor	Councillor Emberson, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Council priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<p>That Policy Committee notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the provisional General Fund revenue outturn position for 2024/25 is an adverse net variance of £9.305m which is an improvement of £1.313m from Quarter 3 (Appendix 1); 2. That the provisional General Fund revenue outturn position includes the outturn position reported by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) as summarised within Section 3 of this report. 3. That £5.451m (73%) of savings have been delivered in 2024/25. A total of £3.116m (inclusive of £1.279m of 2024/25 vacancy factor savings) of savings will be carried forward into 2025/26 (Appendix 3); 4. That the provisional General Fund Capital Programme outturn is a positive net variance of £12.884m against the proposed revised budget of £69.637m (Appendix 4) before the additional net reprogramming of £13.137m of budgets to future years; 5. That £1.717m of Capital Receipts have been used to fund transformation (the Delivery Fund) in accordance with the Capitalisation Directive (Appendix 5); 6. That the provisional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn position is an adverse net variance of £0.528m, which results in a net drawdown from HRA Reserves of £4.076m (Appendix 6); 7. That the provisional HRA Capital Programme outturn position is a positive net variance of £5.485m against the proposed revised budget of £33.721m (Appendix 7) before the net reprogramming of £5.485m of budgets to future years; 8. The Reserves position as at 31st March 2025 as set out in Section 14 of this report and Appendix 8; 9. That the deficit balance on the Dedicated Schools Grant is now £24.904m (an increase of £15.499m);

	<p>10. The performance achieved against the Corporate Plan success measures as set out in Section 16 of this report and Appendices 9 and 10.</p> <p>That Policy Committee approves:</p> <p>11. That the General Fund Revenue outturn balance of £9.305m is funded from the Demographic & Cost Led Pressures Reserve and the Financial Resilience Reserve as set out in Appendix 8;</p> <p>12. That the Council provides £6.393m of additional funding support to Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) over and above the 2024/25 contract sum in respect of their 2024/25 outturn position;</p> <p>13. The amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 11 of this report and Appendix 4) resulting in a revised Capital Programme budget of £69.637m for 2024/25 (before the additional net reprogramming of £13.137m of budgets to future years;</p> <p>14. The amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 13 of this report and Appendix 7) resulting in a revised HRA Capital Programme net budget of £33.721m for 2024/25 (before the net reprogramming of £5.485m of budgets to future years;</p> <p>15. The write-off of debts as set out in Section 8 and Appendix 11 relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Non-Domestic Rates - £790,992.78; b) Housing Benefit Overpayments - £21,619.45; c) Sundry Debt - £125,036.77.
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This report contains exempt information within the meaning of the following paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

And in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because:

Publishing details of debtors who cannot repay debts is unlikely to be viewed as a proportionate action by the Council and could be a breach of the General Data Protection Regulation.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the provisional revenue and capital outturn positions for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2024/25. Further changes are not expected at this stage however the outturn is subject to audit and any material issues arising will need to be adjusted for.

General Fund – Revenue

- 1.2. The budget for 2024/25 was prepared alongside a number of challenging national issues, including another one-year Local Government funding settlement from Central Government, inflationary pressures across all service areas and the impact of the cost of living crisis. Specific pressures included 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 Budget included £7.468m of savings to be delivered in 2024/25

to deliver a balanced budget position, with a planned net drawdown of £3.084m from reserves.

- 1.3. The actual outturn position is an adverse net variance of £9.305m, which is an improvement of £1.313m from the projected outturn position as at the end of Quarter 3 reported to Policy Committee in March 2025. The outturn position is inclusive of net transfers to/from reserves approved under delegated authority by the Director of Finance.
- 1.4. The movements in the forecast between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 are summarised in the following table.

Table 1. Summary of Movements between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (Outturn)

Service	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3 (£m)	Main Reason(s) for Movement
Adult Social Care (all services)	0.220	Increased demand in care package commitments.
Housing & Communities	(0.600)	Additional Winter Pressures Grant and an increased benefit of charging emergency accommodation costs to the Homes for Ukraine grant
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	(0.520)	Strategic Transport (maximising use of grants) Public Protection Income
Environmental & Commercial Services	0.559	Fleet additional vehicle hire and interim maintenance contract including additional unscheduled works. Highways & Civil Engineering works not being eligible to be charged to the Capital Programme
Capital Financing	(0.272)	Final allocations of interest payable and interest receivable between the General Fund and HRA.
Other Corporate Budgets	(0.960)	Housing Benefit overpayment bad debt provision adjustment and Housing Benefit Subsidy adjustments relating to prior years.
Other movements	(0.259)	Other minor movements.
Total	(1.313)	

Overall Position

- 1.5. The actual outturn position is an adverse net variance of £9.305m which is a positive movement of £1.313m from the projected outturn position as at the end of Quarter 3 reported to Policy Committee in March.
- 1.6. The actual outturn position for net service expenditure is £175.137m, inclusive of approved net transfers from reserves of £22.311m, resulting in an adverse net variance of £10.587m, which is a net decrease of £0.081m from the projected outturn position reported to Policy Committee in March. This includes adverse variances of £3.751m within Communities & Adult Social Care, £0.263m within Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, £0.238m within Resources, and £0.092m within Chief

Executive Services. Chief Executive Services is reporting a positive variance of £0.026m and Children's Services Retained by the Council has a positive variance of £0.032m. Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) are requesting additional funding support of £6.393m over and above the 2024/25 contract sum.

- 1.7. The actual outturn position on Corporate Budgets is a positive net variance of £1.025m. This position includes £0.046m of approved net transfers to reserves. The positive variance on Corporate Budgets is a positive movement of £1.232m from the position reported to Policy Committee in March.
- 1.8. The actual outturn position on Funding is a positive net variance of £0.257m which relates to the Business Rates Levy Surplus allocation that was announced by Central Government in December 2024.
- 1.9. Detailed explanations for all service variances are contained within Section 3 of this report. The main variances are summarised below:

Adult Social Care

- 1.10. Adult Social Care is reporting an overall net pressure of £3.615m, which is an increase of £0.220m from Quarter 3 due to increased care packages, and new high-cost placements that are over and above the level previously forecast that could be contained by the Recovery Plan mitigations.

Planning, Transport & Public Protection

- 1.11. There is a total adverse net variance of £0.914m across this service, mainly relating to income shortfalls across Transport services, plus Building Control, Planning and Public Protection. This forecast is an improvement movement of £0.520m from Quarter 3 primarily due to maximising the use of grant funding within Strategic Transportation and an improved income position within Public Protection.

Environmental & Commercial Services

- 1.12. Environmental & Commercial Services is reporting an overall adverse net variance of £0.901m. This is an adverse movement of £0.559m from Quarter 3. The most significant variances being £0.405m within Recycling & Waste Collection and £0.394m within Highways and Drainage, which together have increased by £0.229m from Quarter 3.

Children's Social Care

- 1.13. Children's Services delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is reporting an overall adverse net variance of £6.393m, which primarily relates to Children Looked After placement costs, and is an increase of £0.146m from the position reported at Quarter 3.
- 1.14. The 2024/25 Budget included an increase of £5.941m for placement demand, based on a total number of Children Looked After (CLA) of 276. As at the end of March 2025, there are 275 CLA, which is a decrease of 13 from the end of December 2024. This variance therefore relates to the placement mix and increase in placement costs rather than solely just relating to CLA numbers;

Corporate Budgets

- 1.15. Corporate Budgets are reporting an overall positive net variance of £1.025m, which is a positive movement of £1.232m from Quarter 3. This is comprised of a positive variance of £2.653m relating to Capital Financing, partially offset by adverse variances of £2.225m on Housing Benefit and offsetting positive variances of £0.597m within Other Corporate Budgets.

Reserves

- 1.16. It was assumed within the reserve projections included as part of the 2025/26 Budget and Medium Term financial Strategy 2025/26-2027/28 that the Quarter 3 projected adverse variance on the General Fund of £10.618m would be funded from the following earmarked reserves:
- £5.000m from the Demographic & Cost Led Pressures Reserve
 - £5.618m from the Financial Resilience Reserve
- 1.17. As set out above, the actual variance at Quarter 4 is an adverse variance of £9.305m. It is recommended that the overall adverse net variance of £9.305m is funded as follows:
- £5.000m from the Demographic & Cost Led Pressures Reserve
 - £4.305m from the Financial Resilience Reserve
- 1.18. This fully utilises the Demographic & Cost Led Pressures Reserve and leaves a balance of £10.742m in the Financial Resilience Reserve as at 31st March 2025.
- 1.19. Total General Fund revenue reserves were forecast to be £58.893m as at 31st March 2025 when the 2024/25 Budget was set in February 2024. The actual level of General Fund revenue reserves as at 31st March 2025 is £49.035m which is £9.858m lower than forecast which is primarily as a result of the adverse 2024/25 outturn variance of £9.305m.

Table 2. General Fund Reserve (including Earmarked Reserves) Balances

	Forecast per 2024/25 Budget Setting £m	Forecast per 2025/26 Budget Setting £m	Actual per 2024/25 Outturn £m
Balance 31 st March 2024	(79.201)	(66.145)	(66.145)
Movement in-year	20.308	20.293	17.110
Balance 31st March 2025	(58.893)	(45.852)	(49.035)
Projected Balance 31 st March 2026	(48.717)	(36.796)	(36.706)
Projected Balance 31 st March 2027	(45.775)	(35.624)	(33.177)
Projected Balance 31 st March 2028	N/A	(35.846)	(32.993)

- 1.20. It is currently forecast that reserves will continue to decrease over the next year, with a forecast reduction of £12.329m by 31st March 2026, including the planned use of £4.734m of revenue grants brought forward and £4.457m from the Financial Resilience Reserve (including £2.766m to balance the 2025/26 budget).
- 1.21. Despite these planned reductions, the General Fund reserves continues to increase in line with the policy of being set to 5% of net budget requirement.
- 1.22. The Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve would ordinarily be included within these balances. However, due to a national issue in respect of High Needs Block funding not keeping pace with increasing costs, many Local Authorities have a deficit balance on this reserve. The Council's deficit balance as at 31st March 2025 is £24.904m, an increase of £15.499m from 31st March 2024. As a temporary measure, the Government has issued a statutory override for the Dedicated Schools Grant that excludes DSG deficits from the calculation of General Fund reserves. The Fair Funding Review 2.0, published by the Government on 20th June 2025, set out the Government's intention to extend this override by a further two years until 31st March 2028, with further details to follow in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in the year.
- 1.23. The deficit is forecast to reach £40.373m by the time the statutory override is currently due to end in March 2026 and is forecast to reach £53.165m by 31st March 2027. Council

reserves will not be sufficient to fund this deficit, potentially triggering the need to issue a s114 notice. It is therefore critical that action is taken to address the deficit.

Recovery Plan

- 1.24. At Quarter 1 the Recovery Plan (Officer decisions) initially set out a target of deliverable mitigations totalling £8.081m. At Quarter 2, a further £0.499m of recently approved Member and additional Officer decisions were included, bringing the total target Recovery Plan to £8.580m. The delivery, including mitigating savings, at Quarter 4 is £7.979m, an adverse movement of £0.516m from the Quarter 3 forecast. This position is included within the overall outturn position.

Savings

- 1.25. The original budget for 2024/25 included assumed savings of £7.468m, including £2.768m of savings brought forward from the previous year. A total of £5.451m of ongoing savings were delivered in 2024/25, with £0.180m of non-deliverable savings removed as part of the 2025/26 Budget setting process. £1.279m of vacancy factor savings will be carried forward into 2025/26. This leaves a residual balance of £3.116m to be carried forward for delivery in future years.
- 1.26. This balance of £3.116m will be added to the savings already included in the 2025/26 budget to give a revised savings target for 2025/26 of £17.458m. Included within the £17.458m is £5.942m of new/additional grant that does not need to be tracked via the savings tracker. The revised savings tracker total for 2025/26 is therefore £11.516m. Savings delivery will continue to be monitored and reported on regularly throughout 2025/26.

General Fund – Capital

- 1.27. The provisional General Fund Capital Programme outturn is a £12.884m positive net variance against the proposed revised budget of £69.637m. An additional net total of £13.137m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revenue

- 1.28. The approved Housing Revenue Account budget assumed a net drawdown from HRA reserves of £3.548m. The provisional outturn position for the HRA requires an actual net drawdown from HRA Reserves of £4.076m. This is comprised of a drawdown from the Main HRA Reserve of £3.143m for HRA day to day operational costs and a drawdown of £0.933m from the North Whitley PFI Reserve. The HRA is therefore reporting an adverse net variance compared to budget of £0.528m.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Capital

- 1.29. The provisional HRA Capital Programme outturn is a £5.485m positive net variance against the proposed revised budget of £33.721m. A net total of £5.485m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 7.

Performance

- 1.30. The report also sets out performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan. Data shown reflects performance for the full year.
- 1.31. Of the 48 Corporate Plan Performance KPIs for 2024/25, at the end of the financial year 42% were rated "green", 19% "amber", and 39% were "red".

1.32. Of the 46 Corporate Plan Projects, 11% were “blue”, 67% were “green”, 20% “amber” and 2% “red”.

1.33. The full list of Performance KPIs is attached as Appendix 9 and Projects as Appendix 10.

2. Policy Context

2.1. Council approved the 2024/25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 – 2026/27 in February 2024.

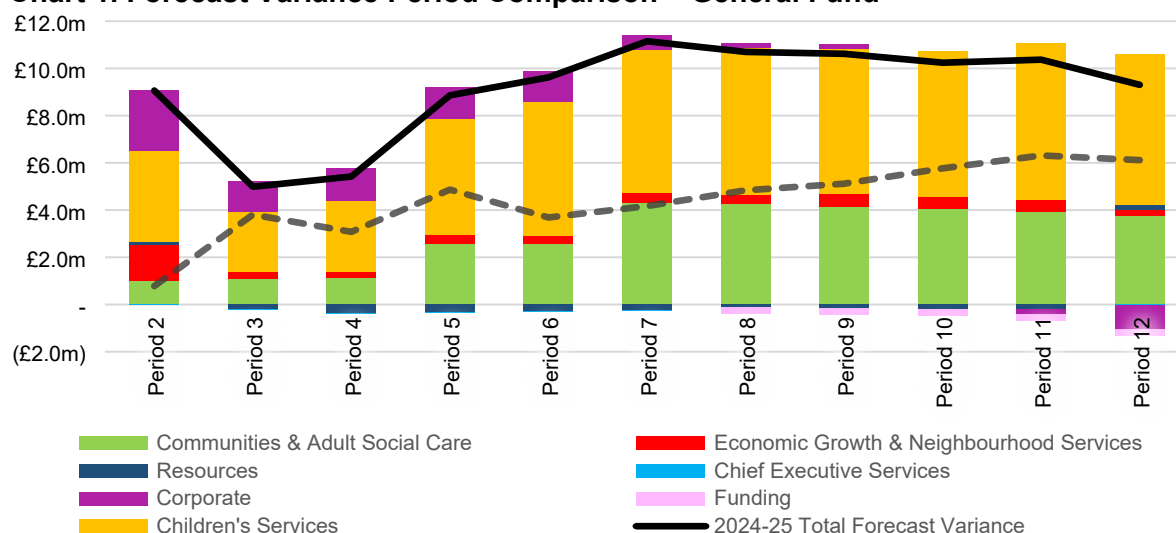
3. General Fund - Revenue

3.1. The provisional outturn position of the General Revenue Fund is an adverse net variance of £9.305m, inclusive of net transfers to/from reserves approved under delegated authority by the Director of Finance.

Table 3. General Revenue Fund Summary by Directorate

	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Communities and Adult Social Care	58.526	62.433	3.907	(0.156)	3.751
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	23.057	27.640	4.583	(4.320)	0.263
Resources	21.677	23.777	2.100	(1.862)	0.238
Chief Executive Services	1.542	1.558	0.016	(0.042)	(0.026)
Children's Services retained by the Council	0.843	0.811	(0.032)	0.000	(0.032)
Children's Services delivered by BFfC	58.905	81.229	23.324	(15.931)	6.393
Total Service Expenditure	164.550	197.448	32.898	(22.311)	10.587
Capital Financing	18.355	15.702	(2.653)	0.000	(2.653)
Other Corporate Budgets	(12.882)	(11.300)	1.582	0.046	1.628
Movement to/(from) Reserves	(2.137)	(23.257)	(21.120)	21.120	0.000
Total Corporate Budgets	3.336	(18.855)	(22.191)	21.166	(1.025)
Net Budget Requirement	167.886	178.593	10.707	(1.145)	9.562
Financed by:					
Council Tax Income	(118.884)	(118.884)	0.000	0.000	0.000
NNDR Local Share (inc Section 31 Grant)	(48.076)	(49.221)	(1.145)	1.145	0.000
New Homes Bonus	(1.255)	(1.255)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Revenue Support Grant	(2.652)	(2.652)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Other Government Grants	(1.193)	(1.450)	(0.257)	0.000	(0.257)
One-off Collection Fund Deficit	4.174	4.174	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Funding	(167.886)	(169.288)	(1.402)	1.145	(0.257)
(Positive)/Adverse Variance	0.000	9.305	9.305	0.000	9.305

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

Chart 1. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – General Fund**Communities & Adult Social Care - £3.751m adverse variance**

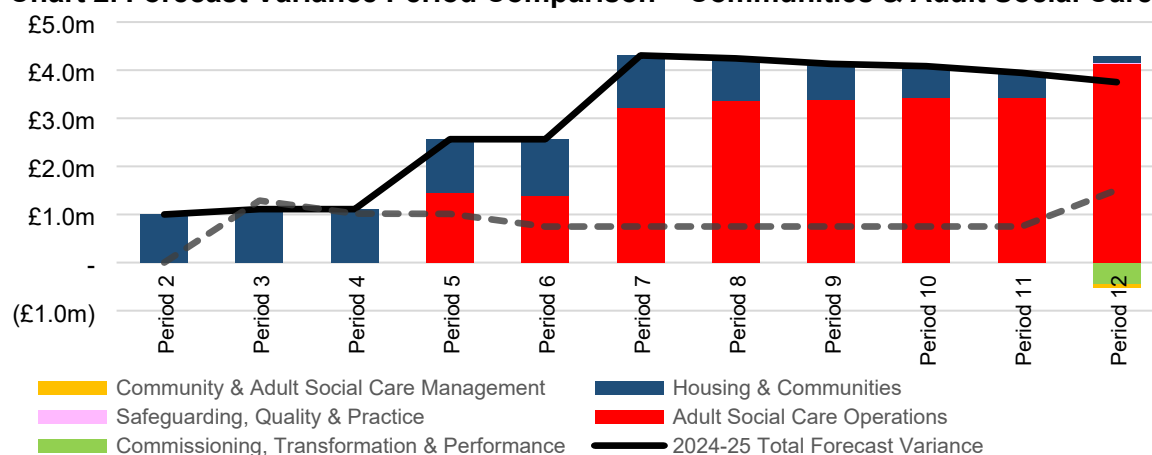
- 3.3. Communities & Adult Social Care's provisional outturn position is an adverse net variance of £3.751m (£3.615m across Adult Social Care and £0.136m within Housing & Communities). This is an improvement of £0.380m from the Quarter 3 forecast, comprised of an adverse net movement across Adult Social Care of £0.220m and a positive movement of £0.600m within Housing & Communities.
- 3.4. An in year recovery plan target of £2.583m was identified in year, and £1.764m of in-year mitigations were achieved (£2.962m full year impact). The remaining £0.819m has been delivered through mitigating in year savings of £0.319m relating to planned staffing vacancies and contractual expenditure, and by utilising £0.500m of one-off grants previously earmarked for additional staffing and project spend.
- 3.5. The following table summarises the outturn position for 2024/25. In previous quarters the combined variances across all of Adult Social Care were shown against Adult Social Care Operations for ease of reporting but are presented individually for outturn purposes. As outlined above, the overall movement across Adult Social Care is an adverse movement of £0.220m from the Quarter 3 forecast which is primarily due to increased care packages, and new high-cost placements that are over and above the level previously forecast that could be contained by the Recovery Plan mitigations.

Table 4. Communities & Adult Social Care Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(3.306)	(4.161)	(0.855)	0.399	(0.456)	(0.456)
Adult Social Care Operations	50.200	55.096	4.896	(0.758)	4.138	0.743
Community & Adult Social Care Management	1.711	1.636	(0.075)	0.000	(0.075)	(0.075)
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	7.182	7.310	0.128	(0.120)	0.008	0.008
Public Health	0.000	(0.158)	(0.158)	0.158	0.000	0.000
Housing & Communities	2.739	2.710	(0.029)	0.165	0.136	(0.600)
Total	58.526	62.433	3.907	(0.156)	3.751	(0.380)

- 3.6. The following chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within Communities and Adult Social Care, for each period to date.

Chart 2. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Communities & Adult Social Care



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

Commissioning, Transformation & Performance - £0.456m positive variance

3.8. Commissioning, Transformation & Performance is reporting a positive net variance of £0.456m. This is due to positive variances within staffing and contracts due to a planned new structure that was implemented during 2024/25 and pending new procurement on Closing the Gap that is due to go live in October 2025.

3.9. The outturn position includes the following net transfers to reserves totalling £0.399m:

- £0.483m transfer to the Better Care Fund Reserve in respect of unspent Better Care Fund Grant;
- £0.046m transfer to the Revenue Grant Unapplied Reserve in respect of various unspent grants;
- £0.130m transfer from the Revenue Grant Unapplied Reserve in respect of streamlining Adult Social Care assessments.

Adult Social Care Operations - £4.138m adverse variance

3.10. Adult Social Care Operations is reporting an adverse net variance of £4.138m.

3.11. There is an overall pressure within placement budgets of £3.917m. There has been an increase in service users from 1,640 at week 1 to 1,755 at the end of the financial year, which is an in-year increase of 115 (an increase of 18 from Quarter 3).

3.12. There is a further adverse variance within Group Homes due to increased maintenance costs and reduced income linked to unusable homes totalling £0.216m, plus a small adverse variance of £0.005m within staffing costs.

3.13. The outturn position includes a transfer from the Better Care Fund Reserve of £0.758m which contributes towards approved additional staffing and the overall demand pressures within Adult Social Care placements.

Communities & Adult Social Care Management - £0.075m positive variance

3.14. Communities & Adult Social Care Management is reporting a positive variance of £0.075m on staffing budgets due to holding vacant posts to support the additional costs incurred by locums through the service.

Safeguarding, Quality & Practice - £0.008m adverse variance

- 3.15. Safeguarding, Quality & Practice is reporting a positive net variance of £0.008m, arising from staffing vacancies within Provider Services. The outturn position includes a transfer from the Better Care Fund Reserve of £0.120m.

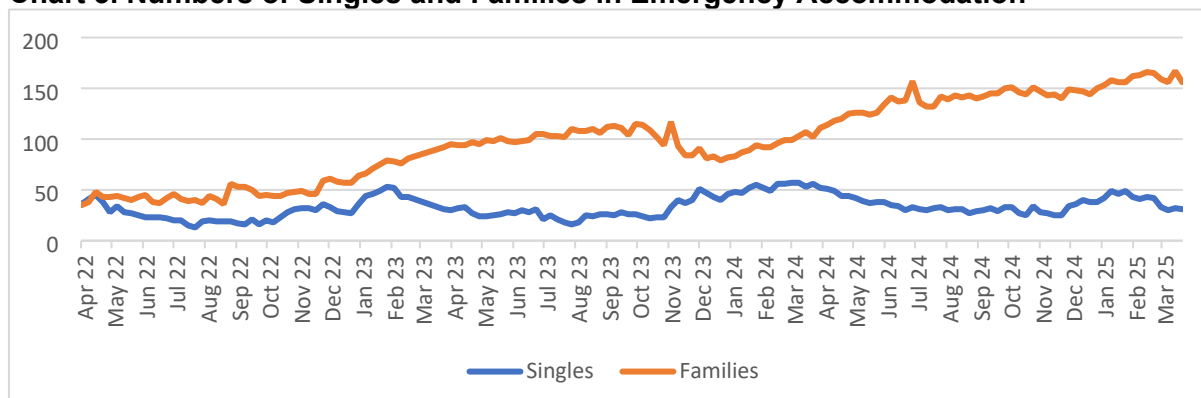
Public Health – Balanced

- 3.16. Public Health is reporting a balanced position which includes a roll-forward of unspent Public Health Grant to the Public Health Grant Reserve of £0.158m.

Housing & Communities - £0.136m adverse variance

- 3.17. Housing & Communities is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.136m, which is an improvement of £0.600m from Quarter 3. This improvement since Quarter 3 is primarily due to further Winter Pressures funding of £0.133m announced in February 2025 and an increased benefit of £0.304m relating to emergency accommodation costs being funded by the Homes for Ukraine grant than had previously been assumed.
- 3.18. The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a significant impact on homelessness budgets because of inflation pressures and decreased supply in the private sector. The number of singles and families in need of emergency accommodation has reached a current level of 187 as at the end of March 2025 (as illustrated in Chart 3 below).

Chart 3. Numbers of Singles and Families in Emergency Accommodation



- 3.19. The forecast pressure primarily relates to the number of families in Emergency Accommodation, which has a higher nightly rate than singles.
- 3.20. The average nightly costs have been reducing from a high of £127.58 in August 2023 down to £88.76 as at the end of March 2025 (as illustrated in Chart 4 below).

Chart 4. Average Nightly Rate per Emergency Accommodation Placement



- 3.21. The Recovery Plan, combined with additional grant funding of £0.325m announced in December 2024, further Winter Pressures funding of £0.133m announced in February 2025, lower expenditure on Temporary Accommodation and a higher recovery of Housing

Benefit have helped to contain the overall net pressure on emergency accommodation to £0.346m. For the whole service, positive variances elsewhere, including £0.187m within Community Safety reduce the overall outturn position to £0.136m.

Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services - £0.263m adverse variance

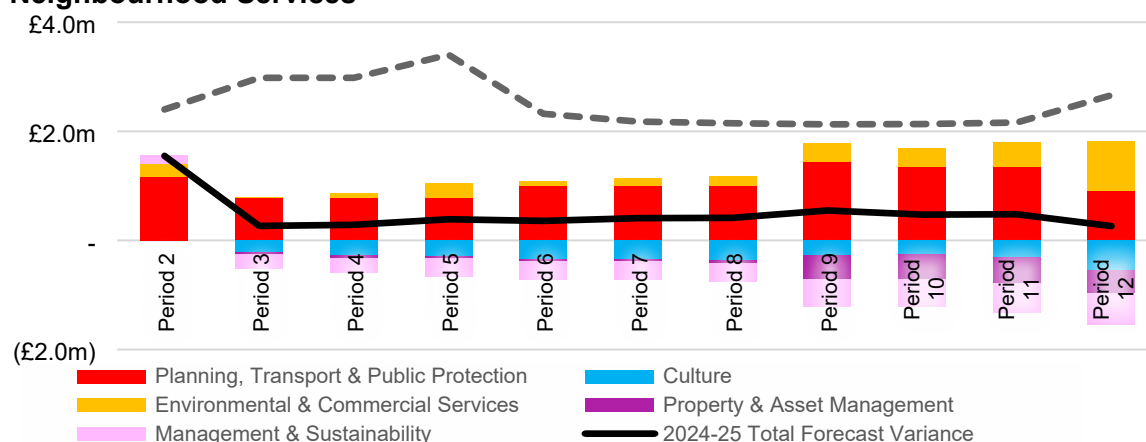
- 3.22. Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services' provisional outturn position is an adverse net variance of £0.263m. This is an improvement of £0.286m from the Quarter 3 forecast.

Table 5. Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	0.070	4.004	3.934	(3.020)	0.914	(0.520)
Culture	3.435	3.054	(0.381)	(0.160)	(0.541)	(0.273)
Environmental & Commercial Services	20.415	21.326	0.911	(0.010)	0.901	0.559
Property & Asset Management	(2.094)	(1.644)	0.450	(0.883)	(0.433)	0.017
Management & Sustainability	1.231	0.900	(0.331)	(0.247)	(0.578)	(0.069)
Total	23.057	27.640	4.583	(4.320)	0.263	(0.286)

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

Chart 5. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services



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

Planning, Transport and Public Protection - £0.914m adverse variance

- 3.25. Planning, Transport and Public Protection is reporting an adverse variance of £0.914m, which is an improvement of £0.520m from Quarter 3 primarily due to maximising the use of grant funding within Strategic Transportation and an improved income position within Public Protection.
- 3.26. Building Control is reporting an adverse variance of £0.177m. There is an adverse variance on income generation of £0.189m. There are other small mitigating items of £0.012m. This income shortfall directly correlates to the lack of staffing and a lack of availability of suitable agency staff to undertake the fee earning work. Recent rounds of recruitment have been unsuccessful in appointing permanent staff and therefore hopes of reducing use of agency staff and their costs not realised. The recruitment challenge has become more significant with a change in legislation which has resulted in professionals leaving the sector.

- 3.27. Planning and Planning Enforcement is forecasting a positive variance of £0.050m. This variance comprises a £0.050m income pressure which is directly related to the number of planning applications, which includes £0.055m of red rated savings (Appendix 3). These have been impacted by successive development risks such as inflation, materials costs, changes in legislation and market factors such as high costs of mortgages. There is a forecast positive variance of £0.100m on staffing budgets which mitigates the above pressure.
- 3.28. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing is reporting an adverse variance of £0.133m. This variance comprises a £0.122m income pressure due to staff recruitment issues and lack of suitable staff to undertake the inspections, partly related to the work undertaken on Homes for Ukraine inspections for which a contribution from the grant received has been assumed to partially offset the pressure. There is an additional adverse variance within staffing and running expenses of £0.011m.
- 3.29. There is an outturn adverse net variance of £0.353m relating to Bus Lane Enforcement income. There is a measurable decrease in penalties being issued due to improved driver compliance. New bus lanes introduced in 2024 are within their statutory warning period so are not yet generating penalty charge notice income, but the warning will expire between April – June 2025. Therefore, income is expected to increase for the new financial year.
- 3.30. Parking enforcement is reporting a forecast adverse net variance of £0.430m. A new contract began in November 2023 which sees an expected rise in the contracted spend but expects a corresponding increase in income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to more than offset the additional spend within the contract. Although income performance is generally stronger than in previous years it is not currently outperforming the increased spend in the contract so there is corresponding expected income shortfall of £0.330m. The contract is relatively young and further monitoring of the performance is being undertaken to examine if performance is likely to improve. Furthermore, there is an additional pressure from the ceasing of enforcement of some of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) areas from March 2024 which equates to £0.100m. There have been some recent adjustments made to the operations of the Enforcement contract to reduce the overnight enforcement which was not generating sufficient revenue to offset the costs of operating the contract. Reductions in the level of cash collection have also been made which will also reduce the base cost going forward. When the new Pay & Display Machines are introduced shortly there will be a further reduced level of cash being taken (lower number of machines in total and many of the new machines are contactless only) which will also reduce the level of cash collection required further reducing costs.
- 3.31. Moving Traffic Enforcement is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.037m following on from the introduction of this scheme during 2023/24. There is an income pressure of £0.269m relating to this scheme, which is an improvement on previous months but remains a primarily red rated saving on the Savings Tracker (Appendix 3). This is partially offset by £0.232m of positive variances across expenditure budgets including staffing costs. This remains an ongoing area of concern into 2025/26. Some sites are generating zero non-compliance and currently there are no other sites where enforcement could be switched out to, although this is under review at present. It should be noted, that across Bus Lane Enforcement, Moving Traffic Enforcement and Parking Enforcement that whilst reducing numbers of (PCN's) being issued has a significant financial impact, it is achieving compliance, which is the goal of all traffic enforcement.
- 3.32. There is an outturn net adverse variance of £0.182m in Off Street Parking income (shown as red rated savings in the Savings Tracker (Appendix 3)). This variance has arisen due to a reduction in usage of the car parks compared to previously anticipated levels, particularly during December – March. In addition, spaces that were assumed to come on-line at the Cattle Market during the year which have not yet been delivered due to difficult site conditions. As reported previously, there have been a number of risks highlighted which have contributed to this pressure e.g. the increased cost of living,

increased levels of working from home and higher fuel costs is leading to fewer visits to town centre. Additionally, further rental spaces to the Royal Berkshire Hospital at Queens Road has not delivered the additional income anticipated due to the Hospital seeking other alternates to support staff feedback about proximity and safety. 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. There have also been ongoing issues around reliability of infrastructure which have impacted Broad Street Mall and Queens Road which have reduced income levels. The decreasing draw of the high street for shoppers is another factor.

- 3.33. Strategic Transportation is reporting a net positive variance of £0.206m. This variance includes a pressure within Concessionary Fares of £0.113m identified during the year end reconciliation undertaken in March 2025. The number of bus trips to be reimbursed has risen significantly and this position is likely to be a greater issue in future years as the repayment levels (trip rate) set by the Department for Transport have risen again for 2025/26 over and above the level assumed when the budget was set so this pressure is likely to reoccur in 2025/26; a business case is being prepared to address the position for 2026/27. This pressure is offset by a net positive variance of £0.319m following a detailed piece of year end work to review eligible grant spend and thereby maximising the use of grants. This is expected to be a one off benefit for 2024/25 but opportunities to maximise grants received to support existing budgeted expenditure is always undertaken.
- 3.34. Other forecast positive net variances total £0.142m across the service. These include adverse variances on premises licence fees income shortfall of £0.032m in respect of Reading Festival (red rated saving) which is largely based on Festival Republic's need for a licence variation, and £0.018m relating to additional costs of the Dog Warden contract. These are fully offset by positive income variances of £0.054m on Consumer protection and £0.049m on Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and other smaller variations totalling £0.089m.
- 3.35. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £3.020m:
 - £2.911m net transfers from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve, including £2.826m from the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Grant;
 - £0.109m from the Transformation Reserve to fund costs incurred relating to Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) rectification.

Culture - £0.541m positive variance

- 3.36. Culture is reporting a positive variance of £0.541m, which is an improvement of £0.273m from Quarter 3.
- 3.37. Culture is reporting a positive outturn variance of £0.540m, which is a positive movement of £0.227m from Period 11.
- 3.38. Reading Play Services within the Leisure Services is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.190m. This was due to income achieved being below what had been budgeted for, including internal income from other services in the council. This is primarily due to the growth strategy has not yet been completed. In addition, there were also vacancies in service impacting on income generation as well as impact of redundancy costs. Some off this has been offset by a better than forecasted positive variance of £0.030m in the Reading Active Park Project due to staff savings and better than planned income through client retention.
- 3.39. The GLL Contract within Leisure Management is reporting a positive net variance of £0.187m. This was due to an improvement in the Energy benchmarking cost exercise, reflecting the lower unit costs and usage as well as pushing back on discretionary spend until 2025/26 and has been used to offset a savings budget in Sport and Culture management budget.

- 3.40. Libraries and Museums is reporting a positive net variance of £0.125m. This includes a £0.025m positive variance within the Sites, Monuments and Records service due to increases in income inflation and a positive variance of £0.060m within Reading Museum relating to business rates and improved levels of income.
- 3.41. Archives & Records is reporting a positive variance of £0.201m. This reflects the updated spend projections agreed by the joint arrangement board as well as an underspend on the RBC joint arrangement sum on the finalised outturn.
- 3.42. Reading Arts & Venues is reporting a total positive net variance of £0.228m. This is arising from additional mitigations identified in the DEGNS Recovery Plan. In addition to this there were further business rates rebates from positive revaluations as well as better than projected ticket sales income.
- 3.43. There are other net adverse variances totalling £0.010m across the remainder of the service.
- 3.44. Included in the figures above is £0.087m of Recovery Plan mitigations from the repurposing of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant.
- 3.45. The outturn position includes £0.160m of transfers from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve relating to various grants.

Environmental & Commercial Services – £0.901m adverse variance

- 3.46. Environmental & Commercial Services is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.901m, which is an adverse movement of £0.559m from Quarter 3. The most significant movements relate to Fleet and Highways & Civil Engineering.
- 3.47. Recycling and Waste Collection is reporting an adverse variance of £0.405m. Changes to staff working conditions, coupled with an increased incident of vehicle failure and spike in sickness absence has led to increased overtime working to recover waste collections to schedule. These issues are being addressed by Management, and it is hoped this problem will subside during 2025/26 once the route optimisation work is fully operational in Summer 2025 with the new collection rounds. The adverse variance for staffing costs is £0.499m. There has been £0.060m of additional cost of preparing for the route optimisation changes but this has largely been offset by underspends on equipment and waste disposal costs, leading to a net adverse variance here of £0.005m. Income has a positive variance of £0.099m due increasing green waste charges and the increase in the Public Realm SLA charges, both included in the Recovery plan. A Business Case approved in February 2025 is planned to remove this pressure for 2025/26 by rebasing the budget allowing additional staffing budgets.
- 3.48. Waste Disposal is reporting an adverse variance of £0.012m. The waste disposal contract inflationary increase has been less than estimated in the budget, creating a £0.125m positive variance, and recycling income is also projected to be higher than budgeted by £0.083m. This has been partly offset by adverse variances of £0.030m on green waste tonnages, £0.075m on residual waste tonnages and £0.075m on other waste types (including composting, POPS). There is also a £0.040m adverse variance due to extended opening hours at Smallmead due to waste collections being delayed or rescheduled.
- 3.49. Highways and Drainage is reporting an adverse variance of £0.394m. Whilst there is a positive variance in expenditure (including the purchases of materials) of £0.111m it has not been possible to meet the budgeted income targets and there is an overall income shortfall of £0.505m. The levels of chargeable work have not been as high as hoped, particularly identified later in the year, and initial research into the budget has shown that the service cannot recharge enough to hit the budgeted target. A considerable amount of work is internal and capital funded and it is not feasible to charge the full amount including

full cost recovery to other services/capital budgets. The review of the spend can only take place at year end. There is work underway to investigate this position and this will continue in 2025/26 and will be reported when available.

- 3.50. Streetscene is reporting a positive variance of £0.570m. Vacancies within the team have created a positive variance of £0.698m which is an increase of £0.098m from Quarter 3. Income has an adverse variance of £0.167m overall but this is a £0.083m improvement from the position reported at Quarter 3 and includes a positive variance of £0.050m from the reworking the Public Realm Service Level Agreement (SLA) as part of the recovery plan. There are other positive net variances of £0.039m across the rest of this area, which is an improvement of £0.226m from Quarter 3 which primarily relates to £0.070m of ash dieback works that will now take place in 2025/26 and £0.030m of costs relating to Caversham Court Wall that have been funded by grant.
- 3.51. Fleet is reporting an adverse variance of £0.264m. Vehicle hire costs are reporting an adverse variance of £0.178m, which is predominantly due to the cost of hiring replacement refuse collection vehicles (commonly 24 vehicles have been on site to undertake 13 waste rounds). The interim maintenance contract has also created an adverse variance of £0.185m, particularly in the last quarter of 2024/25. This additional cost is not anticipated to reoccur during 2025/26 as the new Maintenance contract is now in place. There have also been adverse variances of £0.039m on tyres and £0.022m on electric vehicle charging equipment costs. This is offset by a positive variance of £0.060m on fuel costs and £0.100m on income from recharges across the Council.
- 3.52. Civil Engineering is reporting an adverse variance of £0.288m. Adverse variances are being reported on expenditure on gully and road maintenance (£0.111m), the surface water management plan (£0.074m), streetlighting (£0.325m) and smart cities/Lorawan (a low power, wide area monitoring system) (£0.098m). These are partially offset by expenditure on bridge maintenance being lower than expected (£0.098m). There is a £0.120m positive variance due to the repair and correction of lighting technology which has created a reduction in streetlighting power usage as reported in the Recovery Plan. Income from increased capitalisation of the above costs has created a further positive variance of £0.102m although this was forecast during the year to be significantly higher than the final amount which would have offset some of the costs above. There is work underway across this area and Highways and Drainage to investigate this position and the recharging of costs and this work will continue in 2025/26 and will be reported through Budget Monitoring reports when available.
- 3.53. Network Management is reporting an adverse variance of £0.108m. An increase in costs for the ITS contract, along with CCTV costs from 2023/24 being paid in 2024/25 has created a £0.100m adverse variance. The capital recharge for staff time is expected to also create an adverse variance of £0.100m. It is hoped that the onset of the new ITS contract may reduce some costs in 2025/26, and also when the planned street works permits charges are brought in this should increase income. A positive variance of £0.092m due to vacancies has partially offset this.
- 3.54. The outturn position includes the following transfers from reserves totalling £0.010m:
- £0.009m from the Self Insurance Reserve to fund inflationary increase on insurance premiums relating to fleet;
 - £0.001m from the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve in respect of revenue costs incurred that are eligible to funded by local (15%) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Property & Asset Management – £0.433m positive variance

- 3.55. Property & Asset Management is reporting a positive net variance of £0.433m, which is an adverse movement of £0.018m from Quarter 3.

3.56. Assets Management is reporting a positive net variance of £0.111m:

- Acre Business Park has finalised an adverse net variance of £0.030m: (previously a red rated saving on the Savings Tracker (Appendix 3) and mitigated with removal). This is due to the underachievement of budgeted income resulting from an increase in vacancies on rented units and a delay in the capital works to release more sites for rent but this pressure has been covered in part from the Commercial Properties Earmarked Reserve set aside to cover rental losses;
- The Valuations team is reporting a positive variance of £0.135m, which relates to staff vacancies as well as an additional business rates rebate of £0.014m.
- There were also positive variances from better than forecasted income in Shops and garages and a business rebate in the Retail Market with a net total of £0.058m.
- However, there were also additional maintenance costs in Sundry Properties of £0.052m.

3.57. Facilities management is reporting a positive net variance of £0.193m primarily relating to staffing budgets and the centralisation of the post room and printing which was completed during Quarter 4. Additional heating costs at the Civic centre have also been offset within this position.

3.58. Corporate Maintenance services is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.321m relating to non-rechargeable works on council properties. Detailed investigations have been performed to mitigate the pressure by examining the split of capital works and funding additional unplanned costs from the agreed uses of reserves. However, ongoing costs of urgent reactive repairs has caused a high level of costs within the service which is expected to continue into future years.

3.59. Education Property Development is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.050m. This is due to unbudgeted costs, which were identified at year end as not being able to be charged to the Capital Programme.

3.60. As reported during the year there was an additional £0.500m Dividend rental payment that had been agreed with Reading Transport Ltd which has benefited the Property budgets, this additional income has been built into the 2025/26 Budget on an ongoing basis.

3.61. The outturn position includes the following transfers from reserves totalling £0.883m:

- £0.695m from the Commercial Properties Liability Reserve to fund an agreed rent free period and other rental shortfalls within the Investment Property portfolio;
- £0.178m from the Transformation Reserve to fund urgent and reactive repairs works on Council properties;
- £0.010m from the Abortive Capital Costs Reserve to fund a feasibility study.

Management & Sustainability – £0.578m positive variance

3.62. Management & Sustainability is reporting a positive variance of £0.578m, which is a positive movement of £0.069m from Quarter 3.

3.63. Business Development is reporting an adverse variance of £0.038m. Advertising income has been delayed by planning and contractor issues, and it is not expected to reach the budgeted amount within 2024/25 by £0.058m. This is partially offset by a positive variance of £0.020m on the publicity and media budget.

- 3.64. Sustainability is reporting a positive variance of £0.038m inflationary increases in income have resulted in a £0.023m positive variance and £0.015m of staffing savings.
- 3.65. DEGNS Management is reporting a positive variance of £0.593m. Vacancies and additional funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund Grant have created a positive variance on staffing of £0.167m. Following a review of Business Rates charges for the Council for 2024/25, £0.057m of the provision budget agreed within the MTFS was not required and was released and included in the Recovery Plan. Additionally, the DEGNS Recovery Plan identified £0.369m of mitigations relating to energy budgets as the price of energy secured for the year is at a reduced level than was assumed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The budgets across the council for utility costs now been revised and the excess budget added to this area, so the declared amount also incorporates previous positive variances reported in Libraries and the Crematorium.
- 3.66. Major Projects is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.015m relating to Minster Quarter revenue costs that are not eligible to be applied to the Capital Programme.
- 3.67. The outturn position includes the following transfers from reserves totalling £0.247m:
- £0.113m from the Commercial Properties Liability Reserve to fund an external strategic review of the Council's Investment Property portfolio;
 - £0.068m from the Climate Change Reserve to contribute towards solar and sustainability projects;
 - £0.066m from the Transformation Reserve to fund additional temporary resource relating to the delivery of the Council's Levelling Up Fund schemes within the Capital Programme that is not eligible to be capitalised.

Resources - £0.238m adverse variance

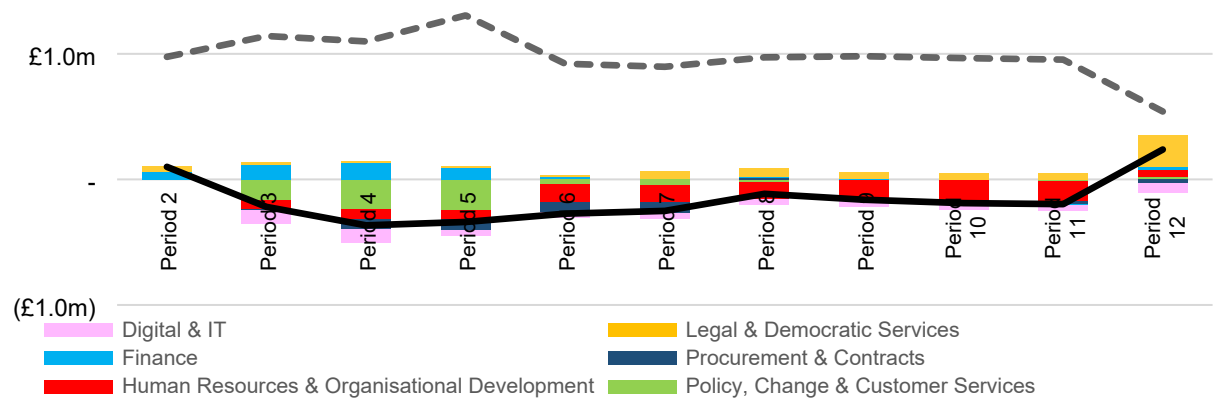
- 3.68. The Directorate of Resources' provisional outturn position is an adverse net variance of £0.238m. This is an adverse movement of £0.400m from the Quarter 3 forecast.

Table 6. Resources Services Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Policy, Change & Customer Services	3.919	4.056	0.137	(0.114)	0.023	0.023
Human Resources & Organisational Development	2.172	2.406	0.234	(0.176)	0.058	0.211
Procurement & Contracts	0.517	0.486	(0.031)	0.000	(0.031)	(0.010)
Finance	5.459	6.773	1.314	(1.297)	0.017	0.013
Legal & Democratic Services	3.370	3.304	(0.066)	0.315	0.249	0.196
Digital & IT	6.240	6.752	0.512	(0.590)	(0.078)	(0.033)
Total	21.677	23.777	2.100	(1.862)	0.238	0.400

- 3.69. The following chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within Resources, for each period to date.

Chart 6. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Resources



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

Policy, Change & Customer Services - £0.023m adverse variance

3.71. Policy, Change & Customer Services is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.023m, which is an adverse movement of £0.023m from Quarter 3.

3.72. The majority of the positive variance is related to a range of factors across Bereavement and Registration. The Bereavement Service reviewed and increased the fees charged in November 2023 and April 2024, which alongside activity levels results in an estimated increase of £0.100m of income, along with savings across premises, staffing and contracted services of a further £0.069m. Activity levels across the Registration Service are also improving anticipated income levels by an estimated £0.070m as part of the Recovery Plan. A positive variance of £0.030m relates to being able to recharge some administration costs to the latest round of the Household Support Fund (HSF), along with a variety of small negative variances of £0.038m.

3.73. The service through the Council's Recovery Plan Actions, following discussion with members, have reduced the Small Grants payments by £0.050m resulting in a further positive variance.

3.74. Delays with some elements of the Customer Experience Programme, for example across the Transport Service is resulting in an adverse pressure on the programme of £0.304m.

3.75. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £0.114m:

- £0.195m from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve, including £0.185m relating to the Syrian Resettlement Scheme Grant;
- £0.130m from the Transformation Reserve in respect of the Customer Experience Programme;
- £0.073m from the Cyber Security Reserve in respect of Customer Journey Optimisation Programme;
- £0.284m to the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve in respect of unspent Afghan Resettlement Scheme Grant.

Human Resources & Organisational Development - £0.058m adverse variance

3.76. Human Resources & Organisational Development is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.058m, which is an adverse movement of £0.211m from Quarter 3. This movement is primarily due to the £0.122m Reed agency rebate and an increase of £0.063m of staffing pressures from Quarter 3.

3.77. This variance consists of £0.141m of additional income at Kennet Day Nursery, partially offset by £0.093m of staffing pressures across the service and other minor cost pressures

of £0.026m. An overall reduction in the number of agency staff being employed across the Council has resulted in the rebate from Reed reducing by £0.122m. The implementation of Recovery Plan actions has resulted in reductions totalling £0.042m relating to learning and development spending and a reduction in advertising costs.

3.78. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £0.176m:

- £0.051m from the Emergency Planning Reserve to fund additional temporary resource;
- £0.049m from the Legal & Taxation Reserve to fund a confidential work programme;
- £0.042m from the Health & Safety Reserve to fund additional temporary resource;
- £0.021m from the Transformation Reserve to fund the Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion programme;
- £0.013m from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve.

Procurement & Contracts - £0.031m positive variance

3.79. Procurement & Contracts is reporting a positive variance of £0.031m, which is a positive movement of £0.010m from Quarter 3.

3.80. There are positive variances of £0.119m relating to holding vacancies for the remainder of the year pending a restructure, and £0.008m relating to a one-off contract income reimbursement as part of the Recovery Plan. These are however offset by a pressure of £0.096m based on an estimated shortfall in the achievement of procurement contract savings against the £0.200m corporate target.

Finance - £0.017m adverse variance

3.81. Finance is reporting an adverse net variance of £0.017m. This is an adverse movement of £0.013m from Quarter 3.

3.82. Staffing pressures of £0.099m have been more than offset by £0.202m of staffing vacancies that were held as part of the Finance Recovery Plan.

3.83. A further Recovery Plan action, considered and approved by Members, increased the court fees for Revenues and Benefits, adding an additional positive variance of £0.073m for the remainder of the year.

3.84. The one-off costs of converting the Revenues & Benefits system from a hosted system to a “software as a service” (SaaS) arrangement combined with a pressure on postage within the service total £0.193m.

3.85. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £1.297m:

- £1.111m from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve in respect of the Homes for Ukraine grant;
- £0.119m from the MoJ Liability Order Reserve;
- £0.090m from the Legal & Taxation Reserve to fund additional temporary capacity within Internal Audit & Corporate Investigations;
- £0.023m net transfer from the Self Insurance Reserve.

Legal & Democratic Services – £0.249m adverse variance

3.86. Legal & Democratic Services is reporting forecasting an adverse net variance of £0.249m, which is an adverse movement of £0.196m from Quarter 3.

3.87. Within Democratic Services there is a total adverse net variance of £0.057m. This variance relates to lower levels of Land Charges activity and related income with an

impact of £0.020m, additional costs in Electoral Registration of £0.055m. This is offset in part by positive variances of £0.018m by vacancies being held.

3.88. Legal Services are reporting a total adverse net variance of £0.192m. This variance consists of external legal costs incurred of £0.134m whilst essential agency cover has added a further £0.058m.

3.89. The outturn position includes the following net transfers to reserves totalling £0.315m:

- £0.408m to the Joint Legal Team (JLT) Reserve in respect of ringfencing the in-year positive variance for future use by the joint arrangement;
- £0.041m to the Elections Reserve to provide a smoothing reserve for elections over a rolling 5 year cycle;
- £0.111m from the Transformation Reserve in respect of funding legal costs relating to the Levelling Up Fund Capital Programme schemes;
- £0.023 from the Legal & Taxation Reserve to fund various exceptional legal related costs incurred.

Digital & IT – £0.078m positive variance

3.90. Digital & IT is reporting a positive net variance of £0.078m, which is an improvement of £0.033m from Quarter 3.

3.91. The variance includes pressures relating to license costs of £0.050m and staffing and recruitment costs of £0.023m.

3.92. These pressures are more than offset by £0.119m of savings identified as part of the Recovery Plan, including switching off servers outside of working hours, reviewing the costs of hosting, contracts, and subscriptions. A further £0.032m of savings have been achieved from the various voice contracts (mobile and other phone facilities).

3.93. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £0.590m:

- £0.459m from the Cyber Security Reserve in respect of Customer Journey Optimisation Programme;
- £0.131m from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve in respect of the Digital Future Councils Grant.

Chief Executive Services - £0.026m positive variance

3.94. Chief Executive Services provisional outturn position is a positive net variance of £0.026m. This is a positive movement of £0.018m from the Quarter 3 forecast.

Table 7. Chief Executive Services Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Executive Management Team	0.909	0.906	(0.003)	0.000	(0.003)	(0.003)
Communications	0.633	0.652	0.019	(0.042)	(0.023)	(0.015)
Total	1.542	1.558	0.016	(0.042)	(0.026)	(0.018)

Executive Management Team – £0.003m positive variance

3.95. The Executive Management Team is reporting a positive variance of £0.003m, which is a positive movement of £0.003m from Quarter 3 on the staffing budgets.

Communications – £0.023m positive variance

- 3.96. Communications is reporting a positive variance of £0.023m, which is a positive movement of £0.015m from Quarter 3, due to additional income via the Lord Lieutenant Joint Arrangement administration fee and a small positive variance with the staffing budgets.
- 3.97. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £0.042m:
- £0.042m from the Transformation Reserve in respect of funding additional temporary capacity for internal communications and staff engagement.

Children's Services retained by the Council - £0.032m positive variance

- 3.98. Children's Services retained by the Council's provisional outturn position is a positive variance of £0.032m. This is an adverse movement of £0.057m from the Quarter 3 forecast.
- 3.99. This variance is comprised of a positive variance of £0.130m following the annual reconciliation process of the Adoption Thames Valley contract which is partially offset by an adverse variance of £0.098m relating to the required repayment of historic Adoption Support Fund grant.

Children's Services Delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) - £6.393m adverse variance

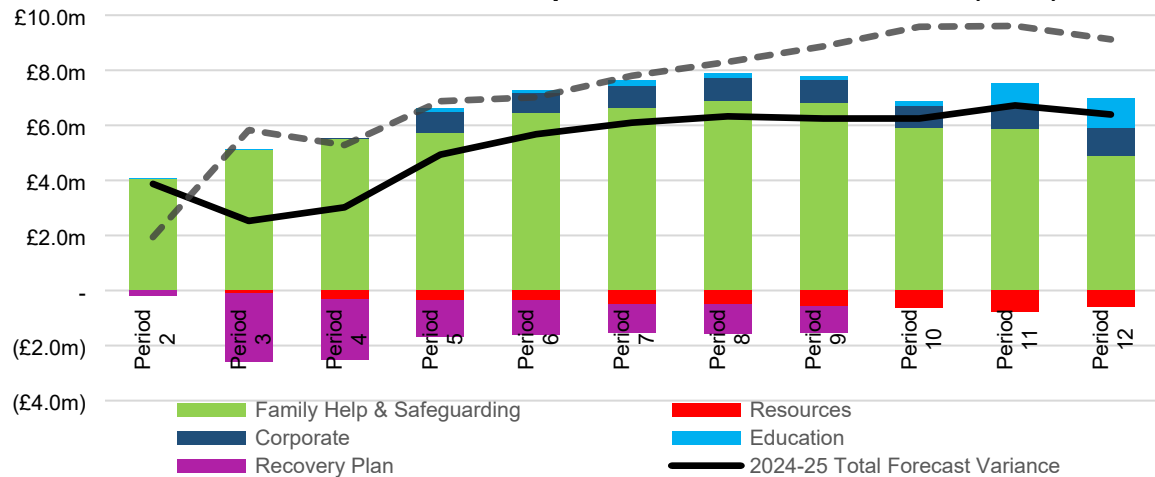
- 3.100. Brighter Futures for Children's (BFfC) is reporting an adverse net variance of £6.393m over the 2024/25 Contract Sum, which is an adverse movement of £0.146m from Quarter 3. The most significant drivers of this change within the last quarter is an adverse movement of £0.872m in home-to-school transport costs, which is partially offset by a £0.775m reduction in the placements and allowance pressure relating to Children Looked After (CLA).

Table 8. Children's Services delivered by BFfC Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services delivered by BFfC	58.905	81.229	22.324	(15.931)	6.393	0.146
Total	58.905	81.229	22.324	(15.931)	6.393	0.146

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

Chart 7. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Children’s Services (BFfC)



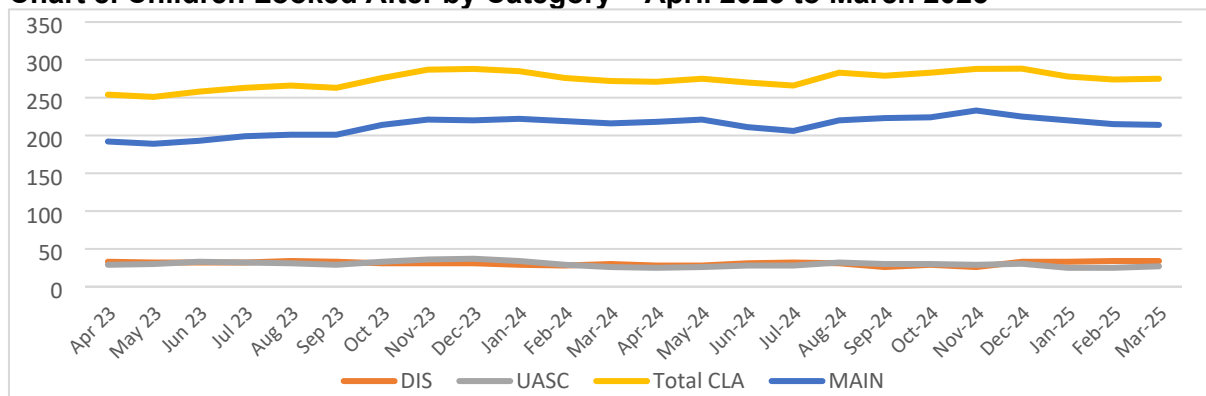
3.102. The explanations for these variances are set out below.

3.103. Family Help and Safeguarding incorporates Children’s Social Care and Early Help budgets. This service had an adverse net variance of £4.888m at Quarter 4. This outturn position includes:

- £5.657m of pressures on external placement budgets which reflects the current profile of Children Looked After (CLA). The number of CLA on 31st March 2025 was 275, a net decrease of 13 since 31st December 2024. This includes 27 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), which are government grant funded. The 2024/25 Budget included an increase of £5.941m for placement demand, based on a total number of Children Looked After of 276. This variance therefore relates to the placement mix and increase in placement costs rather than solely just relating to CLA numbers;
- £0.202m of pressures on staffing costs. This adverse variance is primarily due to spend on agency staffing, whilst the staffing restructure is implemented;
- £0.663m positive variance on other placement-related costs.
- £0.308m of other positive net variances across Family Help and Safeguarding budgets.

3.104. The following chart shows the movement in the number of children looked after since April 2023.

Chart 8. Children Looked After by Category – April 2023 to March 2025



3.105. This chart shows that total children looked after placement numbers have reduced over the last quarter.

3.106. There are 37 children currently living in placements that each cost in excess of £0.200m per annum. These 37 placements have a cost for the year of £12.290m, an average of

£0.332m per placement. These placements, which represent 13% of the total number of children looked after, equate to 57% of the total placement costs for the year.

- 3.107. Resources is reporting a positive outturn net variance of £0.589m, of which £0.212m relates to vacancies within Business Support; £0.188m within Commissioning; £0.042m within Performance Management; £0.070m within the Marketing team and £0.041m within the Information, Advice and Support Service and other minor positive variances of £0.036m.
- 3.108. Corporate Services is reporting an adverse net variance of £1.015m of which £0.874m relates to Joint Legal Team (JLT) legal costs and £0.141m relates to staffing costs and end of year movements.
- 3.109. Education is reporting an adverse net variance of £1.078m, of which £0.963m relates to SEND & School Travel. The remaining net £0.115m reflects various movements but in particular pressures against income for one of our internal nursery provisions.
- 3.110. The final 2024/25 achievement of the in year recovery plan is £1.964m against the original target of £2.480m.
- 3.111. The outturn position includes the following net transfers from reserves totalling £15.931m that relate solely to Education:
- £0.432m net transfer from School's Balances to reflect maintained the school's outturn position;
 - £15.499m transfer from the Dedicated Schools Grant Unusable Reserve. The deficit balance on this reserve is now £24.904m.

Corporate Budgets - £1.025m positive variance

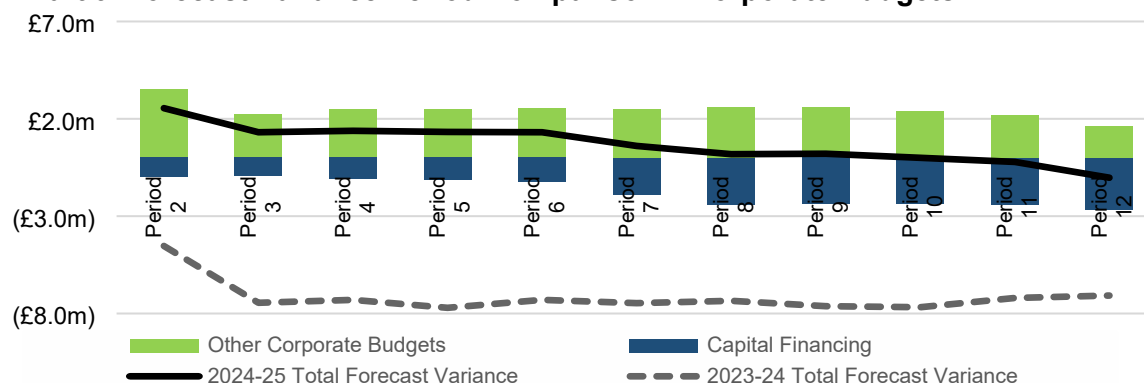
- 3.112. Corporate Budgets are reporting a positive net variance of £1.025m. this is an improvement of £1.232m from the Quarter 3 forecast.
- 3.113. The following table summarises the outturn position for 2024/25.

Table 9. Corporate Budgets Outturn 2024/25

Service	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Movement to/(from) Reserves	Adjusted Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Financing Costs	18.355	15.702	(2.653)	0.000	(2.653)	(0.272)
Other Corporate Budgets	(12.882)	(11.300)	1.582	0.046	1.628	(0.960)
Movement to/(from) Reserves	(2.137)	(23.257)	(21.120)	21.120	0.000	0.000
Total	3.336	(18.855)	(22.191)	21.166	(1.025)	(1.232)

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

Chart 9. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Corporate Budgets



3.115. Capital Financing Costs is reporting a positive total net variance £2.653m, which is a positive movement of £0.272m from the Quarter 3 forecast primarily arising from the final allocations of interest payable and interest receivable between the General Fund and HRA:

- As a result of the slippage on the Capital Programme, reported in the 2023/24 Quarter 4 Performance Report, there is a positive variance of £0.005m relating to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).
- There is a further positive variance of £0.722m on the interest payable budget due to 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.
- There is also a positive variance of £1.926m 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.

3.116. Other Corporate Budgets is reporting an adverse net variance of £1.628m, which is an improvement of £0.960m from the Quarter 3 forecast. The majority of this improvement relates to the £0.578m bad debt provision adjustment to Housing Benefit overpayments and £0.290m of Housing Benefit adjustments relating to prior years as set out below.

3.117. This variance primarily relates to a pressure on Housing Benefit expenditure of £2.225m where Subsidy is not 100% recoverable. This variance is comprised of a pressure of £1.251m relating to unrecoverable subsidy for temporary accommodation and a pressure of £1.809m relating to unrecoverable subsidy for supported accommodation, a pressure of £0.033m on other Housing Benefit expenditure and a positive variance of £0.290m relating to Housing Benefit Subsidy adjustments relating to prior years. There is a positive variance of £0.578m relating to the bad debt provision adjustment for Housing Benefit overpayments.

3.118. There is a positive variance of £0.986m relating to Business Rates refunds covering 2017/18 to 2023/24 on the Town Hall, following a successful appeal. There are additional adverse net variances totalling £0.389m.

3.119. The outturn position includes the following net transfers to reserves totalling £0.046m:

- £0.300m transfer to the Transformation Reserve to fund future improvement and transformation projects, which is funded by settlement of a long-term debt;
- £0.050m transfer to the Legal & Tax Reserve to fund residual legal costs relating to the aforementioned settlement of a long-term debt;

- £0.172m transfer from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve, relating to the residual un-ringfenced Covid-19 grant that has been set aside to fund various recovery programmes managed by Brighter Futures for Children;
- £0.086m transfer from the Hardship Reserve to fund the variance arising on the additional support given to eligible Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants in respect of 2024/25 Council Tax;
- £0.046m from the Transformation Reserve to fund a review of Brighter Futures for Children.

Funding - £0.257m positive variance

- 3.120. Funding is forecasting a positive variance of £0.257m relating to the Council's share of the £100m Business Rates Levy Surplus Account, which Central Government announced would be distributed to Local Authorities by 31st March 2025 as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement published on 18th December 2024.
- 3.121. The net NNDR Local Share consists of the Council's share of retained business rates income and the Section 31 Grant in respect of business rates reliefs introduced by Central Government less the business rates Tariff and Levy. Whilst the retained business rates income and Tariff are fixed amounts and known throughout the year, the Levy is variable and is only finalised post completion of the NNDR3 return to Central Government in April/May at the end of the financial year. Additionally, the Section 31 Grant is paid to the Council on an estimate basis and is adjusted for as part of the same NNDR3 return. It had been assumed throughout the year that both the Levy and the Section 31 Grant amounts would be equal to the budget; however the final calculation has resulted in a positive variance of £1.145m. This variance has been transferred to the Collection Fund Smoothing Reserve to fund potential future year Collection Fund deficits.

4. Requested Roll Forwards

- 4.1. Due to the fact that an adverse variance on the Council's General Fund Budget was previously forecast, which has crystallised as part of this outturn report, no service requests to roll forward funds (except for unspent grants) were considered.

5. Recovery Plan

- 5.1. The following table summarises the Recovery Plan mitigations which are set out individually in Appendix 2.
- 5.2. At Quarter 1 the Recovery Plan (Officer decisions) initially set out a target of deliverable mitigations totalling £8.081m. At Quarter 2, a further £0.499m of recently approved Member and additional Officer decisions were included, bringing the total target Recovery Plan to £8.580m. The delivery, including mitigating savings, at Quarter 4 is £7.979m. This position is included within the overall outturn position.

Table 10. Recovery Plan Quarter 4

Directorate	Approved Target £m	Delivery £m	Variance £m	Mitigations £m	Delivery including Mitigations £m	Adjusted Variance £m
Communities and Adult Social Care	(2.583)	(1.764)	0.819	(0.819)	(2.583)	0.000
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	(1.418)	(1.418)	0.000	0.000	(1.418)	0.000
Resources	(0.783)	(0.698)	0.085	0.000	(0.698)	0.085
Chief Executive Services	(0.030)	(0.030)	0.000	0.000	(0.030)	0.000
Corporate	(1.286)	(1.286)	0.000	0.000	(1.286)	0.000
Children's Services delivered by BfC	(2.480)	(1.964)	0.516	0.000	(1.964)	0.516
Total	(8.580)	(7.160)	1.420	(0.819)	(7.979)	0.601

6. Savings Delivery

- 6.1. The Council had a challenging savings target for 2024/25 of £7.468m to meet current and expected funding pressures. This total was made up of £4.700m of in-year savings as per the 2024/25 Budget & 2024/25-2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy and £2.768m of savings rolled forward from 2023/24.
- 6.2. A total of £5.451m of savings have been delivered in 2024/25, with £0.180m of non-deliverable savings being removed as part of the 2025/26 Budget setting process. £1.279m of vacancy factor savings will be carried forward into 2025/26. The residual £3.116m will be carried forward for delivery in 2025/26. Further details regarding the delivery of savings are set out in Appendix 3.
- 6.3. The following table summarises the final savings delivery for 2024/25:

Table 11. General Funds Savings Tracker Summary

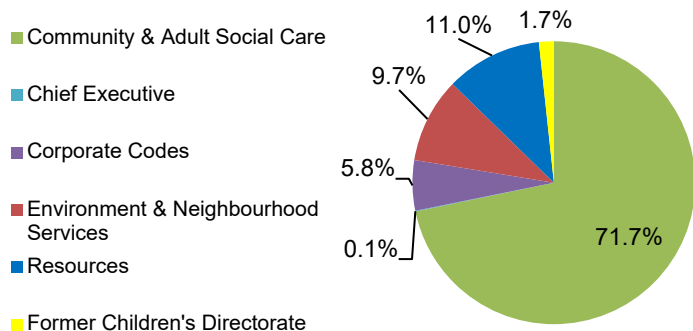
Directorate	Savings Target 2024/25	Savings Delivered 2024/25	Non-Delivered Savings 2024/25	Savings Removed at 2025/26 Budget Setting	Vacancy Factor Savings	Savings Carried Forward to 2025/26
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Communities and Adult Social Care	(1.135)	(1.135)	0.000	0.000	(0.354)	(0.354)
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	(4.387)	(2.870)	(1.517)	0.000	(0.524)	(2.041)
Resources	(1.197)	(0.697)	(0.500)	0.180	(0.389)	(0.709)
Chief Executive Services	(0.012)	(0.012)	0.000	0.000	(0.012)	(0.012)
Children's Services Retained by Council	(0.005)	(0.005)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Corporate	(0.016)	(0.016)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Council Services	(6.752)	(4.735)	(2.017)	0.180	(1.279)	(3.116)
Children's Services Delivered by BfC	(0.716)	(0.716)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total	(7.468)	(5.451)	(2.017)	0.180	(1.279)	(3.116)

7. Debt Performance

- 7.1. Total General Fund overdue sundry debt as at the end of 2024/25 is £7.856m, compared to £8.859m at the end of Quarter 3. In addition to this, the General Fund also has £4.530m of current debt and £1.164m of deferred debt which is not yet considered overdue. A breakdown of this debt by age and directorate is provided below.

Chart 10. Split of General Fund Debt by Directorate and Days Outstanding

Split of General Fund Debt by Directorate



Split of General Fund Debt Balance by Days Outstanding

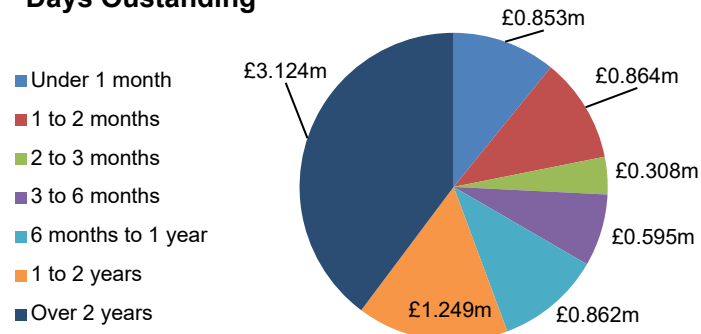
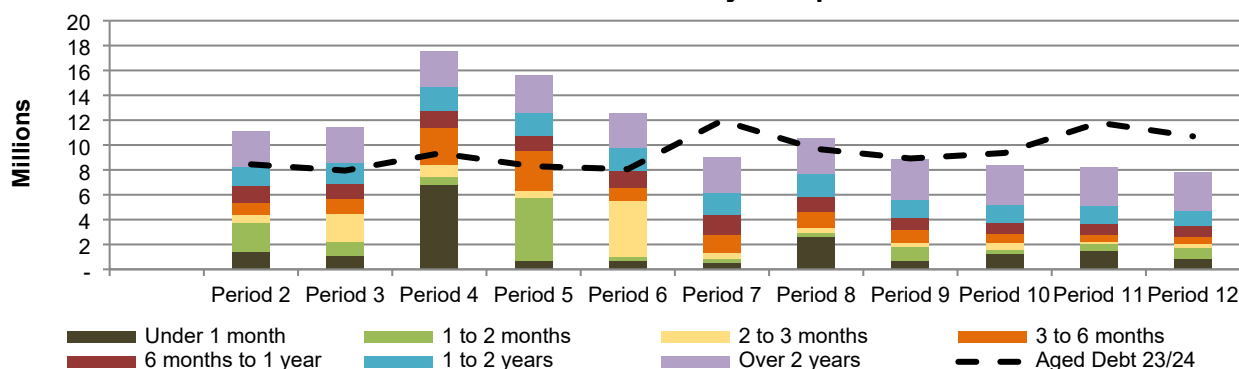


Chart 11. Overdue General Fund Debt Monthly Comparison



8. Debt Write-Off

- 8.1. Having complied with the requirements of the Council's Debt Management Strategy, all recovery activity has been exhausted and the Director of Finance recommends that the total amounts submitted to the Committee for write-off for cases above £20,000 are:

- Non-Domestic Rates - £790,992.78
- Housing Benefit Overpayments - £21,619.45
- Sundry Debt - £125,036.77

- 8.2. The list of specific debts requested to be written-off are set out in Appendix 11. It is considered that information contained within Appendix 11 contains exempt information under the meaning of sections 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and therefore cannot be made public.

- 8.3. The write-offs will be contained within the existing respective bad debt provisions. These bad debt provisions are reviewed annually to take account of the likely levels of bad debt write-offs and the potential for any recovery of debt that has been previously written off.

- 8.4. The cost of non-domestic rates write-offs is shared between the Council (49%), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (1%) and Central Government (50%).

- 8.5. Statutory Benefit Subsidy Orders specify that Housing Benefit Overpayments, subsequently not recovered, have to be mostly paid for by the Council through loss in

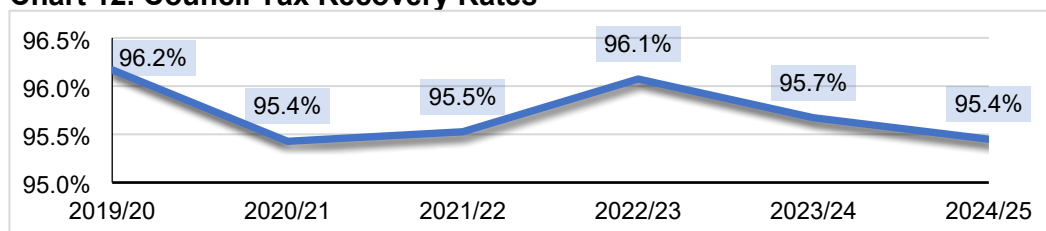
Central Government subsidy. Most Housing Benefit paid out under the General Fund is claimed back from the DWP through the annual subsidy claims. The subsidy rules are designed to act as an incentive for authorities to minimise error and overpayments and to maximise recovery of recoverable overpayments. It is therefore financially prudent for Local Authorities both to minimise the incidence of overpayments and to seek to maximise recovery of overpayments.

- 8.6. The standard rate of reimbursement for Housing Benefit paid is up to 100%, reducing to 40% for identified overpayments caused by claimant error and either 100%, 40% or down to 0% for those caused by Authority error if certain thresholds are exceeded. Overpayments caused by fraud are reimbursed at 40% and given the cause of such overpayments, there is an expectation that the overwhelming majority of cases should be considered recoverable from the persons who have either committed or significantly contributed to the fraud. The Council is entitled to keep 100% of the income collected from overpayments recovery in addition to any subsidy claimed.

9. Collection Fund

- 9.1. 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 2024/25.
- 9.2. Council Tax collection rates are behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to pre-Covid-19 pandemic rates (2019/20) and 2023/24 collection rates at the same point last year. This is a similar trend across Berkshire and is likely related to the cost of living crisis. For context, a 0.22% decrease in collection is worth approximately £0.313m for 2024/25.

Chart 12. Council Tax Recovery Rates

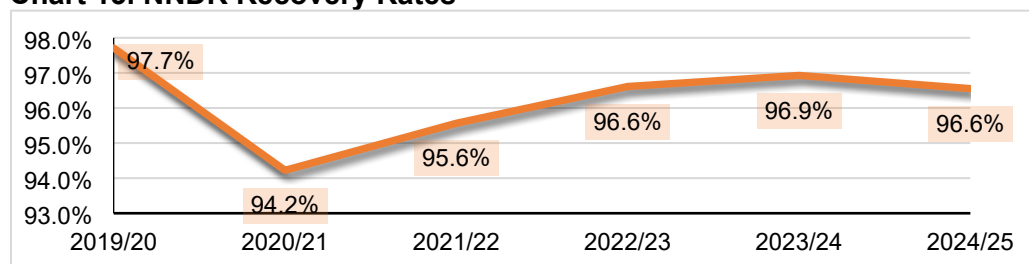


- 9.3. The following table shows the collection performance levels for Council Tax across Berkshire:

Table 12. Council Tax Collection across Berkshire

Council Tax	Comparison to 2023/24	Comparison to 2019/20
Bracknell	↓ 0.30%	↓ 1.10%
Reading	↓ 0.22%	↓ 0.72%
RBWM	↓ 1.33%	↓ 1.35%
Slough	↓ 0.40%	↓ 2.44%
West Berkshire	↓ 0.12%	↓ 0.05%
Wokingham	↓ 0.16%	↓ 0.40%

- 9.4. Non-Domestic collection rates are behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to pre-Covid-19 pandemic rates (2019/20) and 2023/24 collection rates at the same point last year. For context, a 0.38% increase in collection is worth approximately £0.560m for 2024/25.

Chart 13. NNDR Recovery Rates

- 9.5. The following table shows the collection performance levels for Non-Domestic (Business) Rates across Berkshire:

Table 13. Business Rates Collection across Berkshire

Business Rates	Comparison to 2023/24	Comparison to 2019/20
Bracknell	↓ 12.27%	↓ 2.45%
Reading	↓ 0.38%	↓ 1.16%
RBWM	↓ 1.17%	↓ 1.03%
Slough	↓ 1.50%	↑ 0.22%
West Berkshire	↑ 0.25%	↑ 0.23%
Wokingham	↑ 0.21%	↓ 1.18%

10. Delivery Fund

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. £1.717m was spent in delivering 2024/25 savings and transformation. Including previous years, a total of £20.301m has been invested from the Delivery Fund to assist in delivering identified savings and transformation proposals as at 31st March 2025.
- 10.3. Further details on the Delivery Fund are set out in Appendix 5.

11. General Fund - Capital Programme

- 11.1. The General Fund Capital Programme for 2024/25 has an approved budget of £69.591m. The following amendments are requested to be formally approved, which would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £69.637m. These amendments are set out on an individual scheme basis in Appendix 4.
- 11.2. The provisional General Fund Capital Programme outturn position is a positive net variance of £12.884m against the proposed revised budget of £69.637m.

Table 14. General Fund Capital Programme Amendments

General Fund Capital Programme	£m
Revised Approved Budget 2024/25	69.591
Budget Movements Between Schemes – See Appendix 4	0.000
Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions	3.544
Budgets from above reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years	(2.884)
Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments	(0.614)
Proposed Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25	69.637
Additional Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years	(13.137)

- 11.3. Budget Transfers requested between schemes are set out within Appendix 4.
- 11.4. A total of £3.544m of additional budgets across eleven schemes (as set out in Appendix 4) that are fully funded by grants and contributions are requested to be formally added into the Capital Programme with £2.884m requested to be reprogrammed into future years. This includes:
- £2.500m for the SEN High Needs provision capital allocations scheme, to be fully reprogrammed into 2025/26;
 - £0.665m for the Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector) scheme, £0.284m of which to be reprogrammed into 2025/26;
 - £0.379m across nine other schemes, £0.100m of which to be programmed into 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 4.
- 11.5. A total of £0.614m of budgets are requested to be reduced as set out in Appendix 4.
- 11.6. A net total of £13.137m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4. This includes:
- £1.224m for the Highways Infrastructure Programme to be reprogrammed from 2025/26 into 2024/25 where works were carried out earlier than anticipated due to favourable weather conditions;
 - £1.368m to be reprogrammed from 2025/26 into 2024/25 across nine other schemes to reflect the actual level of expenditure incurred in 2024/25;
 - £1.522m to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years for the Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre scheme to reflect the revised spend profile for the scheme;
 - £1.427m for the Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects) scheme to reflect the actual level of expenditure incurred in 2024/25. A £0.934m variance had already been reported at Quarter 3 2024/25 and forms part of this request;
 - £1.377m from 2024/25 into future years for the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) grant to RTL scheme where payment of the second tranche of funding has yet to be requested;
 - £0.866m from 2024/25 into future years for the Electric Vehicle Charging Points scheme;
 - £0.827m from 2024/25 into future years for the Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund (school) scheme;
 - £0.780m from 2024/25 into future years for the S106 individual schemes list scheme;
 - £0.638m from 2024/25 into future years for the Leisure Centre Enhancement scheme;
 - £0.598m from 2024/25 into future years for the Provision of additional Children's Homes scheme;
 - £0.555m from 2024/25 into future years for the SEN High Needs provision capital allocations scheme;
 - £0.538m from 2024/25 into future years for the Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement scheme;
 - £6.601m to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years across all other schemes.

12. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revenue

- 12.1. The approved Housing Revenue Account budget assumed a net drawdown from HRA reserves of £3.548m. The provisional outturn position for the HRA requires an actual net drawdown from HRA Reserves of £4.076m. This is comprised of a drawdown from the Main HRA Reserve of £3.143m for HRA day to day operational costs and a drawdown of

£0.933m from the North Whitley PFI Reserve. The HRA is therefore reporting an adverse net variance compared to budget of £0.528m.

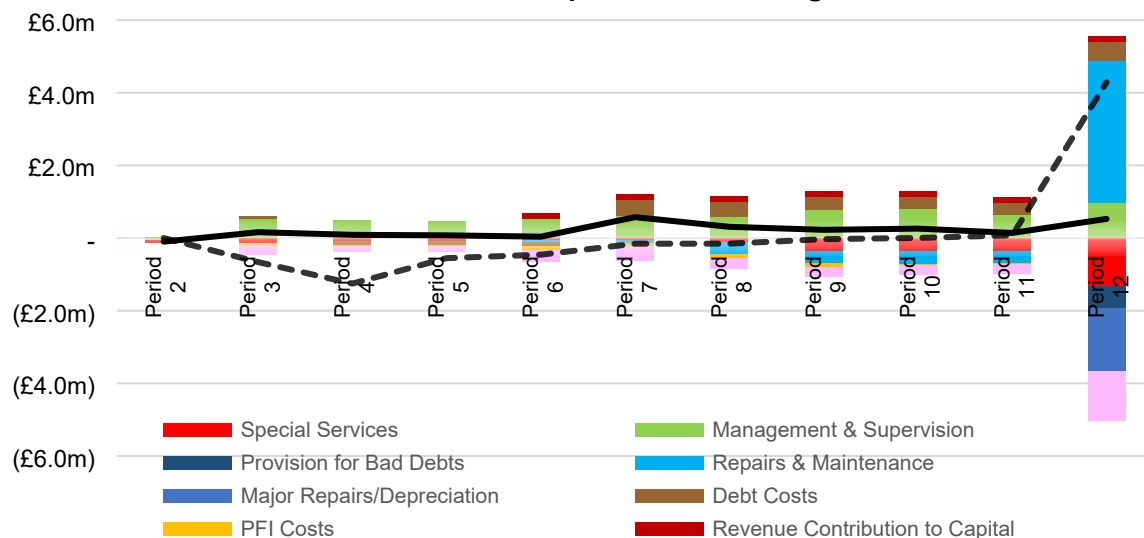
12.2. The breakdown of the net variance is set out in the following table and explained below.

Table 15. Housing Revenue Account 2024/25

	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Increase/ (Decrease) from Quarter 3 £m
	£m	£m	£m	
Management & Supervision	10.052	11.039	0.987	0.200
Special Services	5.153	3.826	(1.327)	(0.978)
Provision for Bad Debts	0.891	0.294	(0.597)	(0.597)
Repairs & Maintenance	8.755	12.648	3.893	4.238
Major Repairs/Depreciation	14.503	12.770	(1.733)	(1.733)
Debt Costs	7.009	7.535	0.526	0.177
PFI Costs	8.254	8.234	(0.019)	0.075
Revenue Contributions to Capital	0.000	0.158	0.158	0.010
HRA Income	(51.069)	(52.429)	(1.360)	(1.091)
Over/(Under) Budget	3.548	4.076	0.528	0.301
Movement to/(from) HRA Reserve)	(3.093)	(3.143)	(0.050)	0.177
Movement to/(from) North Whitley PFI Reserve	(0.455)	(0.933)	(0.478)	(0.478)
Total Movement to/(From) HRA Reserves	(3.548)	(4.076)	(0.528)	(0.301)

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

Chart 14. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Housing Revenue Account



12.4. Management and Supervision is reporting an adverse variance of £0.987m. Although there is a positive variance on payroll due to vacancies, there are additional costs of the Repair Task Force and housing digitisation project as well as an increase to the contribution towards the General Fund Central Support Recharges which were reviewed as part of the Recovery Plan process.

12.5. Special Services, which include sheltered housing schemes, is reporting a positive variance of £1.327m, which is primarily due a settlement payment received in January 2025 of £1.450m relating to Cedar Court, which will be carried forward as part of the main HRA balance to fund any potential future legal costs. This variance is partially offset by £0.123m of adverse net pressures across the rest of the service including the legal costs incurred relating to Cedar Court.

- 12.6. Provision for Bad Debts is reporting a positive variance of £0.597m based on the arrears on HRA rents being lower than the levels assumed in the HRA 30 year Business Plan.
- 12.7. Repairs & Maintenance is reporting an adverse net variance of £3.893m. This variance is mainly due to a higher proportion of in-year expenditure being revenue repairs works, rather than major/improvement works which are treated as capital, a high volume of works completed in the latter half of the year, plus significant cost inflation. There was a corresponding reduction in the planned HRA Capital Major Repairs schemes within the Capital programme of which a total of £5.945m has been reprofiled during 2024/25 (including outturn adjustments) into later years of the programme. The split of the expenditure between HRA Revenue and HRA Capital has been examined as part of the Repairs Task force and as part of refresh of the 30 year HRA Business plan for 2026/27.
- 12.8. Major Repairs/Depreciation is reporting a positive variance of £1.733m. This is due to a review of HRA housing stock asset lives which was undertaken in conjunction with the Council's external valuers during 2024/25. The increase in residual asset lives has resulted in a lower depreciation charge than was assumed within the 2024/25 HRA Business Plan. Unlike the General Fund, depreciation is a real charge to the HRA and is moved to the Major Repairs Reserve and is available to be used on capital expenditure instead of the HRA borrowing for its capital requirements. This positive variance partially offsets the adverse variance on Repairs & Maintenance.
- 12.9. There is reporting an adverse variance on Debt Costs of £0.526m due to higher interest rates than were expected in the HRA Business Plan (based on September 2023 figures) and a revised split of interest paid between the General Fund and HRA as a result of slippage on the Council's General Fund Capital Programme which affects the proportion the HRA bears.
- 12.10. PFI costs is reporting a positive variance of £0.019m due to the rate of inflation being lower than expected in the approved HRA Business Plan.
- 12.11. There is a reported adverse variance of £0.158m on Revenue Contribution to Capital as a charge has been made to finance the remainder of the Housing Management System project spend incurred in 2024/25.
- 12.12. HRA Income is reporting a positive variance of £1.360m. Dwelling Rents are overachieving against the budget by a total of £0.488m (1.11% more than budget). In addition, there is an overachievement on Service Charges of £0.049m. Other Income is also forecast to overachieve against the budget by £0.812m primarily due to £0.099m of right to light compensation received and £0.372m of solar energy income received at the end of the financial year backdated to cover previous years. Finally, there is a positive variance of £0.011m on Interest income due to a higher interest rate in the HRA compared to the assumptions in the HRA Business Plan.
- 12.13. The overspend represents only 0.1% of the gross budget of the HRA. By using a detailed financial model for the 30-year business plan, we are confident in the robustness of the budgets for future years however the HRA is subject to significant variations in Rent collected, inflation and Interest rates. There has been a further review of the recharges which previously were more ad hoc variable charges but are now more predictable going forward into 25/26. There will also be a further review of repairs budgets between Revenue and Capital to align the budgets more accurately with expected spend.

13. Housing Revenue Account - Capital Programme

- 13.1. The HRA Capital Programme for 2024/25 has an approved budget of £33.684m. An additional budget of £0.037m, funded by HRA revenue contribution, is requested to be formally approved, which would result in a revised Capital Programme budget of £33.721m, as set out in Appendix 7.

13.2. The provisional HRA Capital Programme outturn position is a £5.485m positive net variance against the proposed revised budget of £33.721m. A net £5.485m of budget is requested to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 7. This includes:

- £1.762m to be reprogrammed from 2024/25 into future years for the New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 – 4 scheme;
- £1.468m for the Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund scheme;
- £0.816m for the Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults scheme;
- £0.605m for the Acquisitions from Homes for Reading scheme;
- £0.834m of net reprogramming across all other schemes.

14. Reserves

14.1. The impact of the 2024/25 outturn position on the Council's reserves, as proposed in Appendix 8 is set out in the following table.

Table 16. Reserves Summary

	Balance as at 1 April 2024	In-Year Transfers (To)/From Reserves	Proposed Transfers (To)/From Reserves (Service Requests)	Proposed Transfers (To)/From Reserves (Outturn)	Balance as at 31 March 2025	Projected Balance as at 31 March 2025 per 2025/26 Budget Setting	Movement
	£m	(To)/From £m	(To)/From £m	(To)/From £m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund Reserves							
Minimum Balance	(8.394)	(0.511)	0.000	0.000	(8.905)	(8.905)	0.000
Earmarked Reserves	(57.751)	8.316	0.000	9.305	(40.130)	(36.947)	(3.183)
Total General Fund Reserves	(66.145)	7.805	0.000	9.305	(49.035)	(45.852)	(3.183)
Housing Revenue Account Reserves	(36.912)	4.076	0.000	0.000	(32.836)	(33.825)	0.989
Total Revenue Reserves	(103.057)	11.881	0.000	9.305	(81.871)	(79.677)	(2.194)

14.2. The Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve would ordinarily be included within these balances. However, due to a national issue in respect of High Needs Block funding not keeping pace with increasing costs, many Local Authorities have a deficit balance on this reserve. The Council's deficit balance as at 31st March 2025 is £24.904m, an increase of £15.499m from 31st March 2024. As a temporary measure, the Government has issued a statutory override for the Dedicated Schools Grant that excludes DSG deficits from the calculation of General Fund reserves. The Fair Funding Review 2.0, published by the Government on 20th June 2025, set out the Government's intention to extend this override by a further two years until 31st March 2028, with further details to follow in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in the year.

14.3. The deficit is forecast to reach £40.373m by March 2026 and £53.165m by 31st March 2027. It is therefore critical that action is taken to address the deficit.

15. Impact on 2025/26 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

15.1. The provisional outturn figures, as set out above, will have the following impact in 2025/26 and future years:

- Overall General Fund Reserve balances of £45.852m were assumed as part of 2025/26 budget setting. Based on the provisional outturn there is therefore an overall net increase of £3.154m;
- £2.017m of non-delivered 2024/25 savings have been rolled forward into 2025/26. These savings were assumed as delivered in the 2025/26 base budget setting and require delivering.

16. Corporate Plan Performance

Summary

16.1. 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."

16.2. 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

16.3. 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.

16.4. The Corporate Plan update, agreed in March 2024, includes 48 KPIs and 46 projects which underpin delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. 3 projects were reported complete at the end of the first quarter and one at the end of quarter three. These are included in Appendix 10. Of the 48 KPIs, 31 are annual measures.

16.5. The full list of Performance KPIs monitored in year is attached at Appendix 9 and Projects as Appendix 10.

16.6. The table below provides a summary of the status of the KPIs and projects at the end of the Financial Year 2024/25.

Table 17. Performance Overview

	Status %			
What	Red	Amber	Green	Complete
Key Measures	39	19	42	N/A
Key Projects	2	20	67	11

Corporate Plan KPIs

16.7. The KPIs are rated as follows:

- Green – at or above target
- Amber – within 10% of the target
- Red – 10% or more off target

- 16.8. The table overleaf shows performance against the target (red/amber/green) for the measures published in the Corporate Plan for 2024/25, compared to previous quarters.
- 16.9. The year-end figures include the 31 annual measures which were included in the KPI set for 2024/25.
- 16.10. A new Council Plan has been agreed and reporting against these measures and projects will commence in July.

Table 18. Summary of Performance against target KPIs

Status	Year end 2023/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Year end 24/25	
	%	%	%	%	No.	%
Green	40	37	26	35	20	42
Amber	23	17	30	22	9	19
Red	37	46	44	43	19	39
Total	100	100	100	100	48	100

- 16.11. Further details are provided in Appendix 9.

Corporate Plan Projects

- 16.12. Projects are rated as follows:

- Blue - Complete
- Green – on track
- Amber – at risk
- Red – off track

- 16.13. The following table shows the RAG status for the Corporate Plan projects:

Table 19. RAG Status of Corporate Plan Projects

Status	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 - Year end 24/25	
	%	%	%	%	No.	%
Complete	0	7	0	9	5	11
On track	68	56	65	61	31	67
At risk	32	37	35	28	9	20
Off track	0	0	0	2	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	46	100

- 16.14. Further details are provided in Appendix 10.

17. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 17.1. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 17.2. Delivery of the Council's budget is essential to ensuring the Council meets its strategic aims and remains financially sustainable going forward.

18. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 18.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). The Council's Corporate Plan monitors progress in reducing the carbon footprint of both the Borough and the Council.
- 18.2. There are no specific environmental and climate implications to report in relation to the recommendations set out in this report.

19. Community Engagement

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

20. Equality Implications

- 20.1. 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.

21. Other Relevant Considerations

- 21.1. There are none.

22. Legal Implications

- 22.1. 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.
- 22.2. Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, has cleared these Legal Implications.

23. Financial Implications

- 23.1. The financial implications are set out in the body of this report.
- 23.2. Stuart Donnelly, Financial Planning & Strategy Manager, has cleared these Financial Implications.

24. Timetable for Implementation

- 24.1. Not applicable.

25. Background Papers

- 25.1. There are none.

Appendices

- 1. General Fund – Revenue Outturn 2024/25
- 2. Recovery Plan 2024/25
- 3. Savings 2024/25
- 4. General Fund – Capital Programme Outturn 2024/25
- 5. Delivery Fund 2024/25
- 6. Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Outturn 2024/25
- 7. Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme Outturn 2024/25
- 8. Reserves Position as at 31st March 2025
- 9. Corporate Plan Performance KPIs 2024/25

10. Corporate Plan Projects 2024/25
11. Debt Write-Offs

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Appendix 1 - General Fund Revenue Outturn 2024/25

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000	Movement to/(from) Reserves £000	Adjusted Variance £000
Service Areas					
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(3,306)	(4,161)	(855)	399	(456)
Adults Social Care Operations	50,200	55,096	4,896	(758)	4,138
Communities & Adult Social Care Management	1,711	1,636	(75)	0	(75)
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	7,182	7,310	128	(120)	8
Public Health	0	(158)	(158)	158	0
Housing & Communities	2,739	2,710	(29)	165	136
Communities & Adult Social Care	58,526	62,433	3,907	(156)	3,751
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	70	4,004	3,934	(3,020)	914
Culture	3,435	3,054	(381)	(160)	(541)
Environmental & Commercial Services	20,415	21,326	911	(10)	901
Property & Asset Management	(2,094)	(1,644)	450	(883)	(433)
Management & Sustainability	1,231	900	(331)	(247)	(578)
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	23,057	27,640	4,583	(4,320)	263
Policy, Change & Customer Services	3,919	4,056	137	(114)	23
Human Resources & Organisational Development	2,172	2,406	234	(176)	58
Procurement & Contracts	517	486	(31)	0	(31)
Finance	5,459	6,773	1,314	(1,297)	17
Legal & Democratic Services	3,370	3,304	(66)	315	249
Digital & IT	6,240	6,752	512	(590)	(78)
Resources	21,677	23,777	2,100	(1,862)	238
Executive Management Team	909	906	(3)	0	(3)
Communications	633	652	19	(42)	(23)
Chief Executive Services	1,542	1,558	16	(42)	(26)
Children's Services retained by Council	843	811	(32)	0	(32)
Children's Services delivered by BfC	58,905	81,229	22,324	(15,931)	6,393
	164,550	197,448	32,898	(22,311)	10,587
Corporate Items					
Capital Financing	18,355	15,702	(2,653)	0	(2,653)
Other Corporate Budgets	(12,882)	(11,300)	1,582	46	1,628
Movement in Reserves	(2,137)	(23,257)	(21,120)	21,120	0
	3,336	(18,855)	(22,191)	21,166	(1,025)
Total Expenditure	167,886	178,593	10,707	(1,145)	9,562
Funded by					
Council Tax Income	(118,884)	(118,884)	0	0	0
NNDR Local Share (inc Section 31 Grant)	(48,076)	(49,221)	(1,145)	1,145	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,255)	(1,255)	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	(2,652)	(2,652)	0	0	0
Other Government Grants	(1,193)	(1,450)	(257)	0	(257)
One-off Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	4,174	4,174	0	0	0
	(167,886)	(169,288)	(1,402)	1,145	(257)
(Positive)/Adverse Variance	0	9,305	9,305	0	9,305

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
DCASC - 1	ASC Operational Teams	Permanent recruitment - To lead a recruitment refresh for approx 35 vacant posts (some pending start dates) across DCASC to recue high cost agency cover, and remain within budget.	No	0	Staffing	60	60	0
DCASC - 2	ASC Operational Teams	Direct Payment reviews - targeted reviews of 75 clients who had underspends against their Direct Payment budgets in 23/24, with their aim of adjusting the Direct Payment budgets in line with the clients' current needs. Value based on the volume of recouped unspent monies in 23/24.	No	Ongoing	Placements	350	157	193
DCASC - 3	ASC Operational Teams	Extra Care voids - targeted reviews of 16 clients residing in Supported Living whose needs could be met more cost-effectively in Extra Care, with a view to moving them into the current voids in our Extra Care provision. Value based on an analysis of how these clients care needs could be met within an Extra Care setting, compared to their current costs.	No	Ongoing	Placements	90	0	90
DCASC - 4	Commissioning & ASC Operational Teams	Targeted Supported Living reviews - Through a combination of Commissioning and Operational work, we propose to review the volume and configuration of hours in a selection of Supported Living group environments with a view to using a combination of TEC, the Independent Living Project and negotiation in order to drive efficiencies. If this work is successful, we plan to deliver it on a greater scale in 25/26 to support continued savings delivery. Value based on the level of in-year savings delivered by the TEC and Independent Living projects in 23/24.	No	Ongoing	Placements	90	111	-21
DCASC - 5	Legal Services	Transfers of Care - transfer of funding responsibility from RBC to RBWM/ICB for a high-cost placement which we are paying for but which is not our funding responsibility. Value based on the full cost of care being assumed by another body & backdated to the start of the financial year.	No	Ongoing	External Funding	164	208	-44
DCASC - 6	ASC Operational Teams	Routine reviews - right-sizing of care packages across all teams arising from BAU annual reviews (including explorations of implementing TEC where possible in order to reduce support hours). Value based on historic levels of reductions achieved through routine reviews	No	Ongoing	Placements	700	603	97
DCASC - 7	Commissioning & ASC Operational Teams	Targeted Double-Up reviews - There are 151 clients with double-up Home Care packages, with care costs for the provision totalling £100k per week. We propose using the under-utilised staffing hours in CRT to deliver reablement and/or TEC assessments to reduce double handed packages to single where possible. Value based on achieving a 20% reduction against these costs (£20k per week) and adjusted to show the effect for 10 weeks in-year (allowing for the time taken for reviews to be completed and the likelihood that many reviews may not equate to savings).	No	Ongoing	Placements	200	93	107
DCASC - 8	LDA Team / BFFC	Transitions - joint work with BFFC to reduce the care package costs of the 30 clients who will transition to DCASC in 24/25 through a variety of methods (including explorations of implementing TEC including AutonoMe where possible in order to reduce support hours). Value based on a 10% reduction against the MTFs pressures for 24/25 (£144k) plus an additional £395k to be delivered by drawing on TEC, existing enablement, supported employment, volunteering opportunities where possible.	No	Ongoing	Placements	539	436	103
DCASC - 9	ASC Operational Teams	CHC CONTRIBUTIONS: DCASC applications - progression of CHC funding applications for all 34 remaining clients whose weekly costs amount to £39k and who we believe may be eligible for CHC funding (incl. challenging 4 cases where CHC funding may have been wrongly refused by the ICB). As of 15/07: 13 cases are complete; 12 cases are having applications progressed; and 12 applications need to commence (4 of which are new cases identified in July). Value based on the level of savings achieved in 2023/2024.	No	Ongoing	External Funding	200	32	168
DCASC - 10	BFFC / LDA Team	BFFC applications - there are 11 clients scheduled to transition to DCASC in 24/25 with weekly care costs totalling £37k / £1.9m, who BFFC have identified as potentially being eligible for CHC funding (though the ICB have declined applications in 2 cases). We propose helping BFFC to submit applications and/or challenge previous decisions. Value based on securing CHC funding for approx. 10% of these care costs.	No	Ongoing	External Funding	190	64	126
DCASC Total						2,583	1,764	819

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
DEGNS - 1	Culture - Libraries	Reprofile of libraries business rates budgets	No	Ongoing	Other	30	30	0
DEGNS - 2	Culture - Reading Arts & Venues	Reprofile of Town Hall business rates budgets	No	Ongoing	Other	90	90	0
DEGNS - 3	Culture - Berkshire Archaeology	Reprofile of budgets	No	Ongoing	Other	10	10	0
DEGNS - 4	Culture - Royal Berkshire Archives	Reprofile of budgets	No	Ongoing	Other	25	25	0
DEGNS - 5	Culture - UKSPF grant	Repurposing of UKSPF grant towards core functions	No	One Off	External Funding	87	87	0
DEGNS - 6	Culture - Reading Arts & Venues	Impact of delay of Studio Theatre	No	One Off	Other	20	20	0
DEGNS - 12	PTPP - Parking Services	Introduction of enforcement on 5 new BSIP Bus Lanes	Funded by BSIP including staffing until becomes self sustaining	Ongoing	Policy Change	10	10	0
DEGNS - 13	PTPP - Strategic Transport	Contracted Bus Service Income	No	One-off	Other	50	50	0
DEGNS - 14	PTPP - Strategic Transport	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Compound Income	No	One-off	Other	10	10	0
DEGNS - 16	PTPP - Public Protection	Coroners Joint Apportionment	No	Ongoing - Changes over 3 years as part of transitional arrangements	External Funding	56	56	0
DEGNS - 17	PTPP - Public Protection	Coroners Removals Contract	No	Ongoing	Other	54	54	0
DEGNS - 18	PTPP - Public Protection	Pavement Cafe Licensing. This is off the back of amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 whereby the fee cap for a pavement licence application is increasing. It will no longer be capped at £100 but instead be capped at £500 for first time applications and £350 for renewal applications. Proposal is £500 for new licenses over 10 chairs (£350 renewals) / £350 up to 10 chairs (£200 renewals) / £300 2 tables and/or 6 chairs (£100 renewals)	No	Ongoing	Fees & Charges Review	8	8	0
DEGNS - 19	PTPP - Public Protection	Street Trading Pitches	Yes	Ongoing	Other	6	6	0
DEGNS - 22	PTPP - Planning DM	Stop postage to neighbouring consultees	No	Ongoing	Printing & Postage Savings	7	7	0
DEGNS - 23	PTPP - Planning DM	<p>Fees & Charges increase. Pre-App Planning application fees are set by central government. In December 2023 planning application fees were increased by 25% for most application types and by 35% for Major applications. The high percentage increase was justified by government as was the first increase since 2018.</p> <p>We have tried to keep our pre-app fees in line with but less that planning application fees to encourage advice being sought so in comparison with the new fees our pre-app fees were very cheap for the work carried out and number of officers involved and therefore justified a quick review.</p> <p>Having advised Planning Applications Committee in early July of our intention the fee increase for pre-app was implemented in mid July. The increase to pre-application fees is by 12.5% for smaller schemes and by 25% for larger commercial applications. For the very large developments the fees are calculated by negotiation based on the number of officers involved and time taken and are also expected to rise by 25%. We are also promoting the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPA.s) to provide a fee based service agreement.</p> <p>Other charges</p> <p>The most recent fee for miscellaneous enquiries and tree advice was £32.00 set in October 2023 and introduced in April 2024. On further analysis of the work involved in providing this information it is clear this charge does not reflect the time taken in many cases, so this fee is proposed to increase to £50. This appears to be a big increase but with most recent planning histories and decisions and other information to be found on our website most customers can find what they need for free. However, some mainly customers or solicitors request information that requires investigation or research into older files or just do not have the time to do the searches themselves. Having taken into account officer time (some can take 1 hour plus) and resources needed to do this £50 is a reasonable figure to seek. We are also looking to increase fees for S106 enquiries, again to more accurately reflect the time taken to do these tasks.</p>	No	Ongoing	Fees & Charges Review	35	35	0

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
DEGNS - 29	Environment and Commercial	Waste Disposal Inflation level	No	Ongoing	Reduced Inflation	75	75	0
DEGNS - 30	Environment and Commercial	Bulky household waste review of service. Cease from 1st Jan. It is proposed to retain £10k of this saving (full year impact) to fund targeted neighbourhood initiatives that will be delivered in identified areas of the borough to address known fly-tipping hotspots, with community group engagement and participation.	Communication Costs - One off	Ongoing	Service Change	30	30	0
DEGNS - 32	Environment and Commercial	Streetscene Vehicle reductions - total of 5 vehicles removed - revenue maintenance/Fuel plus Capital Receipt in addition	No	Ongoing	Other	18	18	0
DEGNS - 33	Environment and Commercial	Updating of current Housing SLA for Streetscene to reflect full costs incurred	No	Ongoing	Other	100	100	0
DEGNS - 34	Environment and Commercial	Reduction in applications of weed killer to footways and kerb channels from 4 per annum to 3 per annum.	No		Other	13	13	0
DEGNS - 35	Environment and Commercial	Review of Capital programme to delay/remove vehicle purchasing	No	Ongoing benefit to Capital financing budget	Other	5	5	0
DEGNS - 36	Environment and Commercial	Road Marking additional income	No	Ongoing	Other	2	2	0
DEGNS - 37	Environment and Commercial	Street Lighting Efficiency Saving	No	Ongoing	Service Change	140	140	0
DEGNS - 39	Property & Assets	Fees & Charges review including - Retrospective Consent, Compound and Scaffold Licenses, Service Charges at Acre Business Park, St Marys Service Yard, Planning Viabilities, and rent reviews, including community buildings (previously separate line DEGNS-40/41) High value areas to be prioritised.		Ongoing	Fees & Charges Review	10	10	0
DEGNS - 44	Property & Assets	Examine Capital funding options around using DFE Grant to fund typically non Capital works for decanting, Feasibility works etc. Darren consulted and in agreement with progressing.	No	Ongoing	External Funding	20	20	0
DEGNS - 46	Property & Assets	Exercise of Corporate Landlord - Centralising all FM staff and RBC building related budgets ie Stationary, Post Room, Printing, Cleaning Consumables, Fuel costs, sanitary etc. Work with finance to move budgets and calculate saving. Explore option of making all buildings cost neutral as minimum - income to cover building running costs, enabling budgets to be removed/given up as savings.	PM Resource required to support delivery	Ongoing	Other	20	20	0
DEGNS - 47	Management & Sustainability	Business Rates Inflation budget adjustment. 2024/25 Business rates inflation budget allocated out to service budgets to meet expected level of Business Rates, residual budget remaining so is a saving opportunity.	No	One off but likely to reduce level of growth required in 2025/26	Inflation	40	40	0
DEGNS - 48	Management & Sustainability	Energy Budgets savings. Budget increase agreed in 2024/25 was set using the Utility growth rates expected for 24/25 at the time, actual agreed rate from West Mercia Energy is now lower so the benefit can be released. Figures take account of (i) undeliverable £96k in solar savings which will be re-profiled in a new revenue budget bid to align with when the investment is expected to happen (ii) £25k in-year savings anticipated from project to make better use of Building Management Systems.	No	One off but likely to reduce level of growth required in 2025/26	Reduced Inflation	326	326	0
DEGNS - 49	Management & Sustainability	Re-forecasting of solar Feed-in-tariff to reflect inflationary increases not currently in budget	Periodic maintenance of solar systems required to maintain performance and therefore the income stream	Ongoing	Inflation	20	20	0
DEGNS - 50	Management & Sustainability	Energy Post funded from reserves not recruited to in 24/25	No	One-off	Staffing	30	30	0
DEGNS-NEW	Environment and Commercial	Green Waste – no additional free bin from January 2025	No	Ongoing	Fees & Charges Review	15	15	0
DEGNS Total						1,418	1,418	0

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Approved members & Officers Decisions								
Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
DOR - 5	Finance	Remove agency capacity in AP saving £6k per month	No	One-off	Staffing	12	15	-3
DOR - 7	Finance	<p>Increase Council Tax & Business Rates Summons and Liability Order costs. The costs are currently listed as 2 items, Council Tax Summons Cost (£111.00) and Business Rates Summons Cost (£157.00).</p> <p>The first amendment proposed is that we separate the costs into their individual elements as follows:</p> <p>Council Tax Summons Cost £71.00</p> <p>Council Tax Liability Cost £40.00</p> <p>Business Rates Summons Cost £87.00</p> <p>Business Rates Liability Cost £70.00</p> <p>Also proposed is an increase to costs as a result of a number of factors, these include: increases to the costs we incur (staff pay awards, print, postage etc) costs having been held at the current value for a number of years a reduction in the number of liability orders obtained, resulting in the cost per case increasing due to fixed costs (our costs are determined in line with common practise, by calculating and aggregating the reasonable costs and expenses incurred over the previous twelve month period in relation to costs incurred in obtaining a liability order, and dividing that figure by the number of summons and liability orders over the previous twelve months to provide an average figure.)</p> <p>The proposed increased fees are calculated as:</p> <p>Council Tax Summons Cost £99.50</p> <p>Council Tax Liability Cost £43.00</p> <p>Business Rates Summons Cost £106.50</p> <p>Business Rates Liability Cost £70.00</p> <p>Each case also incurs a £0.50 Magistrates fee at the Summons stage. This is a fee fixed by the magistrates court which we collect from the resident and pay to the court.</p>	No	On-going but dependant on number of orders awarded and no legislative changes.	Fees & Charges Review	73	73	0
DOR - 14	Finance	5 x posts held vacant to fund vacancy saving and additional short-term cost of agency	No	One-off	Staffing	202	202	0
DOR - 45	Procurement	Collection of income from CCS for using frameworks	No	One off	External Funding	7	8	-1
DOR - 24	PPCS	Defer PBP expenditure, which was subject to a discussion with members and following their steer a decision was taken to remove this saving.	No	One off (but could be ongoing subject to Member decision)	Other	22	0	22
DOR - 26	PPCS	Temporary reduction in small grants	No	One off (but could be ongoing subject to Member decision)	Service Change	50	50	0
DOR - 28	PPCS	Additional Registration Service income	No	Ongoing	Other	70	70	0
DOR - 29	PPCS	Grave digging contract efficiencies / vacancies	No	Ongoing	Staffing	40	40	0
DOR - 31	DTaC	Reduction of cost for Hosting Procurement	No	Ongoing	Other	68	36	32
DOR - 32	DTaC	Review with Agilisys of potential double-charging following deep dive into consumption costs	No	Ongoing	Other	18	18	0
DOR - 35	DTaC	Removal of batch processing CCN from main supplier agreement	No	One off	Other	30	30	0
DOR - 37	DTaC	Termination of subscription, which followiwn review will now be achieved during 2025/26 and beyond, with no saving during 2024/25 due to the notice period required.	No	One off	Other	6	0	6
DOR - 38	DTaC	Switch off servers overnight.	No	Ongoing	Other	35	35	0

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
DOR - 40	Legal and Democratic Services	Review use of temporary staff, locum lawyers, cease some work, replace some locum lawyers with other arrangements etc.	None - but depending on the staff released there may be additional costs elsewhere in the system to cover work and lost income.	Ongoing	Staffing	0	0	0
DOR - 41	HR&OD	Defer 360 degree pilot to 25/26	No	One off	Other	13	13	0
DOR - 42	HR&OD	Cancel subscription to Jobs Go Public for the year commencing Sept 24	No	One off	Other	12	12	0
DOR - 43	HR&OD	Deferral/re profiling of a number of L&D interventions and removal of a proportion of L&D 'contingency'	No	One-off	Other	17	17	0
DOR - 44a	HR&OD	Kennet Day Nursey - measures to address operating loss. 2024/25 charges: from 1 January 2025 - 3 years + £63.20 (£57.50 RBC) and under 3 years £65.20 (£59.50 RBC). The KDN could increase it's charge by approximately 10% to bring into line with the RB Hospital Nursery fees for 2024/25 and a further increase of an estimated 5% in April 2025 to align the fees with the estimated 2025/26 fee rates. In addition a charge of 45p per hour will also be introduced for consumables (meals, formula milk, special activities) and the minimum number sessions per week will be increased from 3 to 4 in line with practice applied across other nurseries locally.	No	Ongoing	Fees & Charges Review	40	11	29
DOR - 44b	HR&OD	Kennet Day Nursey - measures to address operating loss	No	Ongoing	External Funding	60	60	0
DOR - 45	Finance	Stop printing council tax leaflet		Ongoing	Printing & Postage Savings	8	8	0
DOR Total						783	698	85
CEX - 1	Communications	Your Reading Newsletter review of printing & distribution and cover design costs	No	Ongoing	Printing & Postage Savings	30	30	0
CEX Total						30	30	0
CORP - 1	Corporate	Business Rates Refund for Town Hall 2017/18-2023/24 following successful appeal	No	One off	Other	986	986	0
CORP - 2	Corporate	Review of recharges between General Fund and HRA	No	Ongoing	Other	300	300	0
CORP Total						1,286	1,286	0
BFFC - 1	Section 17 payments	Links to tighter control on spend. £48k on transport when children attend school out of borough, and other transport costs for potentially attending family time, expert appointments etc. Review of the children that attends school outside of borough will be undertaken. Procedure for one off payments to be reviewed. Guidance to be issued re Sect 17 spend and financial assessment form to be distributed and used before allocation of funds	No investment required	One off	Placements	10	10	0
BFFC - 2	Pinewood and Cressingham	Alternative plan required at Pinewood and Cressingham to replace combined OLA income generation shortfall of income of £163k. Income is generated through selling one bed in Pinewood and this is already accounted for - £70k built into the forecast. Cressingham has limited opportunity to generate income but will be reviewed to ascertain if any further income can be generated.	No	One off	Other	10	0	10
BFFC - 3	Translation and Interpretation Services	Review of SLA and options for more cost effective provision. Scope to reduce spot purchase and make better use of SLA. Potential savings of 44% based on the biggest spend which is in face to face translation. Option to also look at new technology - Google Translate etc., this is happening via the service review as part of the re-procurement of the translation contract, which BFFC are a part of. Budget for 24/25 is £149k. 44% equates to £65,560 saving per year. Social workers now need director approval for any spot purchase, therefore it is anticipated that this saving will be made across the remaining 9 months of the year since this has been implemented. Please see tab 3 for details of savings calculations.	No investment required, this will be an ongoing saving.	Ongoing	Other	49	0	49
BFFC - 4	Health Funding income	Potential opportunities for increased health income from LDD and external residential placements Links to review of 35 highest cost placements review. BFFC is challenging health colleagues re the process in considering health contributions through ICB and CCC panels and is awaiting follow up from the ICB on a number of children who require health funding - from BFFC's perspective. This challenge is ongoing. One 50% contribution has been agreed thus far for one child. 17 children post review which could be considered for health contribution. 8 children to be presented to October health panel (pending health confirmation of dates). 9 children for a future health panel.	No	Ongoing	Placements	475	243	232
BFFC - 5	Unconditional grants	Potential for release of funding. Total unconditional grant carried forward 1st April 2024 is £276k. Also option to review any new unconditional grant funding. See grant schedule. Unconditional funding against Parental conflict can be released: £26k	No	One off	External Funding	134	0	134
BFFC - 6	Conditional grants	Review of planned usage of grant to see if any scope for more cost effective application of grant. Total conditional grant b/fwd. 1st April 2024 is £0.780m. See grant schedule.		One off	External Funding	27	0	27
BFFC - 7	Business Support	Increased efficiencies potential. Additional savings required to meet the overall target for 24/25. A total of £246k has been identified for savings and this will be delivered - currently £184k is already achieved. Opportunity to link with RBC on tech developments and AI. Deadline for review - 31st August.	No	Ongoing	Staffing	246	246	0

Appendix 2 - Recovery Plan (2024-25)

Approved Members & Officers Decisions

Reference	Service	Overview of Activity	Investment Required?	One-off or Ongoing	Category	Estimated Overspend Recovery		
						Target (£000s)	Delivered (£000s)	Outstanding (£000s)
BFFC - 8	Primary Mental Health	Review of primary mental health worker staffing and associated mental health budgets. Full year saving of £300k - £25k per month saving possible from January 2025. Other staffing savings account for the balance of £29k savings.	No investment required, this will be an ongoing saving.	Ongoing	Staffing	105	105	0
BFFC - 9	Edge of Care	Increased savings above current Transformation saving target of £190k assumed in 24/25 budget - this will be a mix of savings and cost avoidance, which will be reported separately.		Ongoing	Placements	33	33	0
BFFC - 10	Review of 35 most costly placements	Review of all 35 placements completed - deep dive review options for alternative provision, health funding, return home etc. has been undertaken. Current assessment of existing placements is : - 1 move to foster care - 3 case formulation required - 3 return home - 6 targeted for foster care - 7 review current package of support - 10 to remain in current placement	No investment required	Ongoing	Placements	1,118	1,073	45
BFFC - 12	Contract savings	Savings from contract review of services up for re-tender and other savings. Some of this will be part year savings depending on when the contract end date is. Thus far 4 contracts have been decommissioned in 24/25, totalling £85k. Part year effect is £51k.	No investment required, this will be an ongoing saving.	Ongoing	Other	85	51	34
BFFC - 13	Commissioning Restructure	Savings from staffing savings. Proposed restructure of 2 RG8 posts to 2 RG6 post plus vacancy savings. Wider restructure to take place.	No investment required, this will be an ongoing saving.	Ongoing	Staffing	60	60	0
BFFC - 14	Communications / Compliance / IASS	Savings from one post deletion (IASS - £22K) and vacancy saving from Comms (£26K). Additional savings of £15k on fostering marketing budget. This equates to £48k of savings in P3.	No investment required	Ongoing	Staffing	48	63	-15
BFFC - 15	Discretionary DSG spend	Consideration of any areas which could reduce/redirect DSG discretionary spend within the constraints of DSG regulations to generate savings. Analysis has identified cost avoidance but not cost savings, supporting staffing of MASH and Early Help support	No savings identified at this stage	Ongoing	External Funding	0	0	0
BFFC - 17	Review of agency spend	Review of agency spend in Together for Families and other areas to limit use of agency staff to essential areas. Reduce agency SWs through 24/25 to achieve primarily permanent workforce. Consultation relating to contact service will allow Sect 17 children to be allocated to FSW - which can free up 2 x SWs posts - these can be agency SWs and hence a cost saving. Cost saving £5k per month per agency social worker would be £40k. This is possible due to the reduction in caseloads already being achieved through a CHIN review that will close about 130 children to CSC. This consultation is to conclude at the end of October 2024 and would impact from November 2024. Full year impact would be £120k.	No	Ongoing	Staffing	40	40	0
BFFC - 18	Vacancy management	Holding of vacancies for 6 weeks. This is largely covered by the existing BFFC vacancy target. Within 24-25 MTFs, BFFC added in a vacancy factor of 2.5% to most BFFC payroll budgets (excluding front line social worker budgets) that reduced the payroll budget by 380k. The additional saving of £40k represents additional vacancy management stretch on posts as a one off saving in 2024/25.	No	One off	Staffing	40	40	0
BFFC - 19	Fees & Charges increases	Scope for in-year increases reviewed and no savings opportunities identified. Nurseries increased rates to benchmarked borough-wide rates in 2024 and increased income is ensuring cost avoidance and a balanced budget on historically at risk of overspend budgets. Review of traded services including Educational Psychology Services has not identified potential increases as current rates are in line with market rates.	No	NA	Fees & Charges	0	0	0
BFFC Total						2,480	1,964	516
Grand Total						8,580	7,160	1,420

Appendix 3 - Savings 2024/25

Directorate	Saving	Savings Target 2024/25 £000	Delivered Savings 2024/25 £000	Undelivered Savings 2024/25 £000	Savings Removed as part of 2025/26 Budget Setting £000	Vacancy Factor Savings £000	Savings Carried Forward to 2025/26 £000
DCASC	Adult Social Care Provider Payment Efficiency	(777)	(777)	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Increase in fees and charges - Housing & Communities	(4)	(4)	0	0	0	0
DCASC	Vacancy Factor - Adult Services Operations	(95)	(95)	0	0	(95)	(95)
DCASC	Vacancy Factor - Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(57)	(57)	0	0	(57)	(57)
DCASC	Vacancy Factor - Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	(115)	(115)	0	0	(115)	(115)
DCASC	Vacancy Factor - Community & Adult Social Care Management	(23)	(23)	0	0	(23)	(23)
DCASC	Vacancy Factor - Housing & Communities	(64)	(64)	0	0	(64)	(64)
DCASC Total		(1,135)	(1,135)	0	0	(354)	(354)
DEGNS	Introduction of Moving Traffic Enforcement under TMA Powers	(370)	(110)	(260)	0	0	(260)
DEGNS	Increased revenue from on-street Pay and Display	(150)	(150)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Increased income from Parking Enforcement	(160)	0	(160)	0	0	(160)
DEGNS	Extend Residents Parking permit areas	(10)	0	(10)	0	0	(10)
DEGNS	Increase off street parking charges	(87)	0	(87)	0	0	(87)
DEGNS	Parking Services Income Review	(86)	0	(86)	0	0	(86)
DEGNS	Parking Services Income Review (2024/25)	(676)	0	(676)	0	0	(676)
DEGNS	Discretionary HMO Licensing	(150)	0	(150)	0	0	(150)
DEGNS	Increase in charges for pre-planning application and planning fees	(55)	0	(55)	0	0	(55)
DEGNS	Proposed Fee Income Reading Festival	(43)	(10)	(33)	0	0	(33)
DEGNS	Concessionary Travel	(969)	(969)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Vacancy Factor - PTPP	(156)	(156)	0	0	(156)	(156)
DEGNS	Arts Fundraising campaign	(65)	(65)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Revenue impact of new contract for borough leisure facilities. Leisure Contract Costs Utilities and Inflation	(436)	(436)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Covid19 income pressure on the Town Hall and recovery plan*	(30)	(30)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Covid19 income pressure on the Hexagon and South Street Theatres and recovery plan*	(145)	(145)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	New Directions College	(36)	(36)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Hexagon - Replacement of PA and Sound Desk	(38)	(38)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Vacancy Factor - Culture	(125)	(125)	0	0	(125)	(125)
DEGNS	Increase in fees and charges - Culture	(33)	(33)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Increase income on green waste due to additional uptake in years 1-3 and fee increase in years 2-3	(75)	(75)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Purchase of Electric Road Marking Machine	(17)	(17)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Vacancy Factor - Environmental & Commercial Services	(139)	(139)	0	0	(139)	(139)
DEGNS	Cemetery Machinery	(18)	(18)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Increase in fees and charges - Environmental & Commercial Services	(5)	(5)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Increase in fees and charges - Property & Asset Management	(24)	(24)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Vacancy Factor - Property & Asset Management	(80)	(80)	0	0	(80)	(80)
DEGNS	Acre Business Park	(89)	(89)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS	Vacancy Factor - Management & Sustainability	(24)	(24)	0	0	(24)	(24)
DEGNS	Corporate Solar Programme	(96)	(96)	0	0	0	0
DEGNS Total		(4,387)	(2,870)	(1,517)	0	(524)	(2,041)
DOR	New customer services model	(337)	(33)	(304)	0	0	(304)
DOR	Implementation of QGIS	12	12	0	0	0	0
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Policy, Performance & Customer Services	(96)	(96)	0	0	(96)	(96)
DOR	Income generation opportunity - Cremation & Cemetery Service	(47)	(47)	0	0	0	0
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Human Resources & Organisational Development	(59)	(59)	0	0	(59)	(59)
DOR	Traded Services with HR&OD	6	6	0	0	0	0
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Procurement & Contracts	(12)	(12)	0	0	(12)	(12)
DOR	Procurement & Contracts savings - Resources Directorate	(200)	(104)	(96)	0	0	(96)
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Finance	(105)	(105)	0	0	(105)	(105)
DOR	Legal Support for Enforcement Work	(100)	0	(100)	180	0	80
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Legal & Democratic Services	(63)	(63)	0	0	(63)	(63)
DOR	Digital & ICT Transformation	(142)	(142)	0	0	0	0
DOR	Vacancy Factor - Digital, Technology & Change	(54)	(54)	0	0	(54)	(54)
DOR Total		(1,197)	(697)	(500)	180	(389)	(709)

Appendix 3 - Savings 2024/25

Directorate	Saving	Savings Target 2024/25 £000	Delivered Savings 2024/25 £000	Undelivered Savings 2024/25 £000	Savings Removed as part of 2025/26 Budget Setting £000	Vacancy Factor Savings £000	Savings Carried Forward to 2025/26 £000
CEX	Vacancy Factor - Communications	(12)	(12)	0	0	(12)	(12)
CEX Total		(12)	(12)	0	0	(12)	(12)
Retained Children's Services	Children's Services Retained By Council	(5)	(5)	0	0	0	0
Retained Children's Services Total		(5)	(5)	0	0	0	0
CORP	Reducing mileage expenses through increased use of alternatives e.g. online meetings	(16)	(16)	0	0	0	0
CORP Total		(16)	(16)	0	0	0	0
BFFC	BFFC Contract	(500)	(500)	0	0	0	0
BFFC	Cressingham Childrens Home	(100)	(100)	0	0	0	0
BFFC	Increase in in-house foster carers	74	74	0	0	0	0
BFFC	Development of Edge of Care	(190)	(190)	0	0	0	0
BFFC Total		(716)	(716)	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		(7,468)	(5,451)	(2,017)	180	(1,279)	(3,116)

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustment s £000	Budgets reprogram med (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
General Fund										
Community & Social Care Services										
Adult Care and Health Services										
ASC Digital Transformation	251						251	216	(35)	35
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	941						941	1,260	319	(319)
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	1,192	0	0	0	0	0	1,192	1,476	284	(284)
Housing & Communities										
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	0						0	0	0	0
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal Encampments	35						35	0	(35)	35
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	40						40	0	(40)	40
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,197		665			(284)	1,578	1,578	0	0
Foster Care Extensions	325						325	71	(254)	254
Private Sector Renewals	250						250	177	(73)	73
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	1,847	0	665	0	0	(284)	2,228	1,826	(402)	402
Community & Social Care Services - Total	3,039	0	665	0	0	(284)	3,420	3,302	(118)	118

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustment s £000	Budgets reprogram med (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services										
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection										
Air Quality Monitoring	7	19	15			(15)	26	19	(7)	7
Active Travel Tranche 2	20						20	9	(11)	11
Active Travel Tranche 3	250						250	81	(169)	169
Active Travel Tranche 4	74	(9)	9				74	24	(50)	50
Active Travel Tranche 4 extension	0		50			(50)	0	0	0	0
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	90						90	85	(5)	5
Bus Service Improvement	11,184	17					11,201	11,396	195	(195)
Local Transport Plan Development	472	16					488	182	(306)	306
National Cycle Network Route 422	0						0	0	0	0
Reading West Station	340						340	197	(143)	143
South Reading MRT (Phases 1 & 2)	17	(17)					0	0	0	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	0						0	(4)	(4)	4
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	10						10	3	(7)	7
CIL Local Funds - Community	274				(9)		265	66	(199)	199
CIL Local Funds -Neighbourhood Allocation	0						0	0	0	0
S106 individual schemes list	988	(130)	10				868	88	(780)	780
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0						0	0	0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	18						18	0	(18)	18
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	866						866	0	(866)	866
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) grant to RTL	4,736						4,736	3,359	(1,377)	1,377
Clean Bus Technology	98						98	98	0	0
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour change	36						36	21	(15)	15
Transport Demand Management Scheme	0						0	0	0	0
Rogue Landlord Enforcement	0						0	0	0	0
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total	19,480	(104)	84	0	(9)	(65)	19,386	15,624	(3,762)	3,762
Culture										
Leisure Centre Enhancement	1,934						1,934	1,296	(638)	638
Development of facilities at Prospect Park/Play	19						19	19	0	0
Reading Football Club Social Inclusion Unit to SRLC	0						0	0	0	0
Small Leisure Schemes	153	10					163	163	0	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	1,496						1,496	1,789	293	(293)
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	6,231						6,231	4,709	(1,522)	1,522
Abbey Quarter restoration works	0						0	0	0	0
High Street Heritage Action Zone	140						140	131	(9)	9
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	30						30	30	0	0
Hexagon lighting & emergency lighting replacement	114						114	146	32	0
Hexagon replacement of PA System	360						360	362	2	0
New Directions Ways into work	0						0	7	7	(7)
Shared Prosperity Fund	385	(10)					375	64	(311)	311
Library Improvement Works	100						100	90	(10)	10
Tilehurst Library Works	2						2	2	0	0
Culture - Sub Total	10,964	0	0	0	0	0	10,964	8,808	(2,156)	2,190

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustment s £000	Budgets reprogram med (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
Environmental & Commercial Services										
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	318						318	246	(72)	72
New Capital Bid - S106 Kenavon Drive Landscape	0						0	6	6	(6)
Victoria Rec	418						418	458	40	(40)
Thames Path works in Kingsmeadow	0		128				128	0	(128)	128
Restoration of historic Wall at Caversham Court Gardens	40						40	0	(40)	40
Forbury Gardens Bandstand	0						0	0	0	0
Ecological Works	0						0	0	0	0
John Rabson skatepark	10						10	7	(3)	3
Tree Planting	50						50	50	0	0
Highways Infrastructure Programme	5,791						5,791	7,015	1,224	(1,224)
Chestnut Walk Improvements	0		13				13	13	0	0
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	70						70	23	(47)	47
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	509						509	393	(116)	116
CIL Local Funds - Transport	275				(1)		274	29	(245)	245
Highway Signals Capital Bid	200	(19)					181	(11)	(192)	192
Invest to save energy savings - Street lighting	760						760	757	(3)	3
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	75						75	34	(41)	41
Pedestrian dropped kerb facilities with tactile pavers	205	5					210	210	0	0
Pedestrian handrails	111	(5)					106	54	(52)	52
Pumpin Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	38						38	24	(14)	14
Reading Station Subway	450	107			(107)		450	440	(10)	10
Town Centre Improvements	117						117	122	5	0
Cattle Market Car Park	0						0	0	0	0
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	331	(281)					50	11	(39)	39
Network Management Programme	0	283					283	256	(27)	27
Digitised TRO's	50						50	0	(50)	50
Eastern Area Access Works	0						0	0	0	0
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	50	14					64	17	(47)	47
Oxford Road Corridor Works	0		35			(35)	0	0	0	0
Traffic Management Schools	0						0	0	0	0
Western Area Access Works	0						0	0	0	0
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	1,306						1,306	1,191	(115)	115
Replacement Vehicles	1,270						1,270	984	(286)	286
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	12,444	104	176	0	(108)	(35)	12,581	12,329	(252)	257

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustment s £000	Budgets reprogram med (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
Property & Asset Management										
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	30						30	23	(7)	7
Corporate and Community Buildings	800	(8)	105				897	1,336	439	(439)
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFFC Family Contact Centre - Development for Community Use	22						22	0	(22)	22
Katesgrove Community and YOS Refurbishment - Development for Community Use	5						5	7	2	0
Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0						0	0	0	0
Acre Business Park	0	8					8	8	0	0
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	857	0	105	0	0	0	962	1,374	412	(410)
Management & Sustainability										
Renewable Energy	0						0	0	0	0
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	150	(12)					138	87	(51)	51
Salix Re-Circulation Fund	250	12					262	262	0	0
Corporate Solar Programme	50						50	0	(50)	50
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	450	0	0	0	0	0	450	349	(101)	101
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	44,195	0	365	0	(117)	(100)	44,343	38,484	(5,859)	5,900
Resources										
Customer Digital Experience	0						0	0	0	0
Universal Digital Systems	0						0	0	0	0
IT Future Operating Model	2,758	144					2,902	2,617	(285)	285
ICT Tech Refresh	0						0	0	0	0
Democratic Hybrid AV	144	(144)					0	0	0	0
Re-Procurement / Reimplementation of Finance System	0						0	0	0	0
Education Management System	77						77	77	0	0
Cremator Procurement	100						100	124	24	(24)
Burial Chambers	80						80	0	(80)	80
Additional Burial Space	2						2	(7)	(9)	9
Cemetery Land Acquisition	0						0	0	0	0
Resources Total	3,161	0	0	0	0	0	3,161	2,811	(350)	350

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustment s £000	Budgets reprogram med (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)										
Additional School Places - Contingency	50						50	0	(50)	50
DFC	436		14				450	450	0	0
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	100						100	56	(44)	44
Asset Management	414						414	229	(185)	185
Children in care Emergency Provision	0						0	0	0	0
Civitas- Synthetic Sports Pitch	24						24	0	(24)	24
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	121						121	0	(121)	121
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety (Schools)	495	58					553	244	(309)	309
Fabric Condition Programme	980						980	618	(362)	362
Green Park Primary School	60						60	0	(60)	60
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	350						350	284	(66)	66
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	4	(2)					2	1	(1)	1
Katesgrove Primary Trooper Potts Building	56	(56)					0	0	0	0
Meadway Early Years Building Renovation	0						0	0	0	0
Modular Buildings Review	500						500	497	(3)	3
Pinecroft Children who have complex health, physical,sensory,disabilities & challenging behaviour	2						2	0	(2)	2
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	260						260	257	(3)	3
Provision of additional Children's Homes	670						670	72	(598)	598
Children's Home for Children with Disabilities	0						0	0	0	0
Early Years increase to 30 hours provision	270						270	6	(264)	264
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund (school)	5,263						5,263	4,436	(827)	827
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate Double Glazing Programme	786				(497)		289	0	(289)	289
SCD Units	25						25	0	(25)	25
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	310						310	100	(210)	210
SEN Norcot	0						0	0	0	0
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	1,500		2,500			(2,500)	1,500	945	(555)	555
The Heights Temporary School	351						351	0	(351)	351
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	2,270						2,270	1,732	(538)	538
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	15,297	0	2,514	0	(497)	(2,500)	14,814	9,927	(4,887)	4,887
Corporate										
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects)	3,144						3,144	1,717	(1,427)	1,427
Loan To RTL (Bus replacement programme)	0						0	0	0	0
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100						100	312	212	0
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	500						500	0	(500)	500
Minster Quarter	155						155	200	45	(45)
Corporate Total	3,899	0	0	0	0	0	3,899	2,229	(1,670)	1,882
General Fund Total	69,591	0	3,544	0	(614)	(2,884)	69,637	56,753	(12,884)	13,137

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Proposed Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 £000	Proposed Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £000	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Proposed Total 2026/27 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2026/27 £000	Total Revised Budget 2024/25 to 2026/27 £000	Total Budget Re- programmed into 2027/28 £000
General Fund											
Community & Social Care Services											
Adult Care and Health Services											
ASC Digital Transformation	251	(35)	216	131	35	166	0	0	0	382	0
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	941	319	1,260	6,998	(319)	6,679	1,264	0	1,264	9,203	0
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	1,192	284	1,476	7,129	(284)	6,845	1,264	0	1,264	9,585	0
Housing & Communities											
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal Encampments	35	(35)	0	25	35	60	25	0	25	85	0
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	40	(40)	0	0	40	40	0	0	0	40	0
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,197	381	1,578	1,197	284	1,481	1,197	0	1,197	4,256	0
Foster Carer Extensions	325	(254)	71	275	254	529	200	0	200	800	0
Private Sector Renewals	250	(73)	177	250	73	323	300	0	300	800	0
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	1,847	(21)	1,826	1,747	686	2,433	1,722	0	1,722	5,981	0
Community & Social Care Services - Total	3,039	263	3,302	8,876	402	9,278	2,986	0	2,986	15,566	0

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Proposed			Proposed			Proposed			Total Revised Budget 2024/25 to 2026/27 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2027/28 £000
	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 £000	Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £000	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Total 2026/27 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2026/27 £000		
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services											
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection											
Air Quality Monitoring	7	12	19	0	22	22	0	0	0	41	0
Active Travel Tranche 2	20	(11)	9	1,180	11	1,191	0	0	0	1,200	0
Active Travel Tranche 3	250	(169)	81	1,900	169	2,069	0	0	0	2,150	0
Active Travel Tranche 4	74	(50)	24	0	50	50	0	0	0	74	0
Active Travel Tranche 4 extension	0	0	0	0	50	50	508	0	508	558	0
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	90	(5)	85	20	5	25	0	0	0	110	0
Bus Service Improvement	11,184	212	11,396	4,834	(195)	4,639	0	0	0	16,035	0
Local Transport Plan Development	472	(290)	182	1,900	306	2,206	900	0	900	3,288	0
National Cycle Network Route 422	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reading West Station	340	(143)	197	0	143	143	0	0	0	340	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 1 & 2)	17	(17)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	0	(4)	(4)	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
South Reading MRT (Phases 5 & 6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town Centre Street Trading Infrastructure	0	0	0	70	0	70	0	0	0	70	0
Construction of Green Park Station	10	(7)	3	0	7	7	0	0	0	10	0
CIL Local Funds - Community	274	(208)	66	0	199	199	0	0	0	265	0
CIL Local Funds - Neighbourhood Allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S106 individual schemes list	988	(900)	88	0	780	780	0	0	0	868	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	18	(18)	0	0	18	18	0	0	0	18	0
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	866	(866)	0	0	866	866	0	0	0	866	0
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) grant to RTL	4,736	(1,377)	3,359	0	1,377	1,377	0	0	0	4,736	0
Clean Bus Technology	98	0	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	0
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour change	36	(15)	21	0	15	15	0	0	0	36	0
Transport Demand Management Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rogue Landlord Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total	19,480	(3,856)	15,624	9,904	3,827	13,731	1,408	0	1,408	30,763	0
Culture											
Leisure Centre Enhancement	1,934	(638)	1,296	661	638	1,299	976	0	976	3,571	0
Development of facilities at Prospect Park/Play	19	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0
Reading Football Club Social Inclusion Unit to SRLC	0	0	0	1,534	0	1,534	0	0	0	1,534	0
Small Leisure Schemes	153	10	163	0	0	0	0	0	0	163	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	1,496	293	1,789	6,786	(293)	6,493	9,851	0	9,851	18,133	0
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	6,231	(1,522)	4,709	7,183	1,522	8,705	0	0	0	13,414	0
Abbey Quarter restoration works	0	0	0	165	0	165	0	0	0	165	0
High Street Heritage Action Zone	140	(9)	131	77	9	86	0	0	0	217	0
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	30	0	30	362	0	362	10	0	10	402	0
Hexagon lighting & emergency lighting replacement	114	0	114	0	0	0	0	0	0	114	0
Hexagon replacement of PA System	360	0	360	0	0	0	0	0	0	360	0
New Directions Ways into work	0	7	7	59	(7)	52	0	0	0	59	0
Shared Prosperity Fund	385	(321)	64	0	311	311	0	0	0	375	0
Library Improvement Works	100	(10)	90	395	10	405	0	0	0	495	0
Tilehurst Library Works	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Culture - Sub Total	10,964	(2,190)	8,774	17,222	2,190	19,412	10,837	0	10,837	39,023	0

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget		Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget		Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget	Total Revised Budget	Total Budget
	2024/25	2024/25 Budget Changes	2024/25 Quarter 4		2025/26	2025/26 Budget Changes	2025/26 Quarter 4		2026/27	2026/27 Budget Changes	2026/27 Quarter 4	2024/25 to 2026/27	Re-programmed into 2027/28
	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environmental & Commercial Services													
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	318	(72)	246		300	72	372		0	0	0	618	0
New Capital Bid - S106 Kenavon Drive Landscape	0	6	6		31	(6)	25		0	0	0	31	0
Victoria Rec	418	40	458		55	(40)	15		0	0	0	473	0
Thames Path works in Kingsmeadow	0	0	0		0	128	128		0	0	0	128	0
Restoration of historic Wall at Caversham Court Gardens	40	(40)	0		388	40	428		0	0	0	428	0
Forbury Gardens Bandstand	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Ecological Works	0	0	0		21	0	21		0	0	0	21	0
John Rabson skatepark	10	(3)	7		342	3	345		0	0	0	352	0
Tree Planting	50	0	50		50	0	50		50	0	50	150	0
Highways Infrastructure Programme	5,791	1,224	7,015		6,900	(1,224)	5,676		3,000	0	3,000	15,691	0
Chestnut Walk Improvements	0	13	13		29	0	29		0	0	0	42	0
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	70	(47)	23		47	47	94		0	0	0	117	0
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	509	(116)	393		600	116	716		0	0	0	1,109	0
CIL Local Funds - Transport	275	(246)	29		1,200	245	1,445		0	0	0	1,474	0
Highway Signals_Capital Bid	200	(211)	(11)		803	192	995		0	0	0	984	0
Invest to save energy savings - Street lighting	760	(3)	757		0	3	3		0	0	0	760	0
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	75	(41)	34		0	41	41		0	0	0	75	0
Pedestrian dropped kerb facilities with tactile pavers	205	5	210		0	0	0		0	0	0	210	0
Pedestrian handrails	111	(57)	54		0	52	52		0	0	0	106	0
Pumpkin Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	38	(14)	24		0	14	14		0	0	0	38	0
Reading Station Subway	450	(10)	440		0	10	10		0	0	0	450	0
Town Centre Improvements	117	0	117		0	0	0		0	0	0	117	0
Cattle Market Car Park	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	331	(320)	11		326	39	365		326	0	326	702	0
Network Management Programme	0	256	256		0	27	27		0	0	0	283	0
Digitised TRO's	50	(50)	0		250	50	300		0	0	0	300	0
Eastern Area Access Works	0	0	0		199	0	199		0	0	0	199	0
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	50	(33)	17		654	47	701		150	0	150	868	0
Oxford Road Corridor Works	0	0	0		299	35	334		0	0	0	334	0
Traffic Management Schools	0	0	0		431	0	431		100	0	100	531	0
Western Area Access Works	0	0	0		128	0	128		0	0	0	128	0
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	1,306	(115)	1,191		0	115	115		0	0	0	1,306	0
Replacement Vehicles	1,270	(286)	984		200	286	486		0	0	0	1,470	0
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	12,444	(120)	12,324		13,253	292	13,545		3,626	0	3,626	29,495	0

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget	Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget	Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget	Total Revised Budget	Total Budget Re-programmed
	2024/25 £000	2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Quarter 4 2024/25 £000		2025/26 £000	2025/26 Budget Changes £000		2026/27 £000	2026/27 Budget Changes £000		
Property & Asset Management											
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	30	(7)	23	60	7	67	335	0	335	425	0
Corporate and Community Buildings	800	536	1,336	900	(439)	461	1,000	0	1,000	2,797	0
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFFC Family Contact Centre - Development for Community Use	22	(22)	0	0	22	22	0	0	0	22	0
Katesgrove Community and YOS Refurbishment - Development for Community Use	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0	0	0	150	0	150	0	0	0	150	0
Acre Business Park	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	857	515	1,372	1,110	(410)	700	1,335	0	1,335	3,407	0
Management & Sustainability											
Renewable Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	150	(63)	87	603	51	654	0	0	0	741	0
Salix Re-Circulation Fund	250	12	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	262	0
Corporate Solar Programme	50	(50)	0	1,903	50	1,953	0	0	0	1,953	0
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	450	(101)	349	2,506	101	2,607	0	0	0	2,956	0
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	44,195	(5,752)	38,443	43,995	6,000	49,995	17,206	0	17,206	105,644	0

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Proposed			Proposed			Proposed			Total Revised Budget 2024/25 to 2026/27 £000	Total Budget Re-programmed into 2027/28 £000
	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Total 2024/25 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Approved Budget 2025/26 £000	Total 2025/26 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £000	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Total 2026/27 Budget Changes £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2026/27 £000		
Resources											
Customer Digital Experience	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Universal Digital Systems	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IT Future Operating Model	2,758	(141)	2,617	964	285	1,249	0	0	0	3,866	0
ICT Tech Refresh	0	0	0	436	0	436	689	0	689	1,125	0
Democratic Hybrid AV	144	(144)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Re-Procurement / Reimplementation of Finance System	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education Management System	77	0	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	0
Cremator Procurement	100	24	124	707	(24)	683	0	0	0	807	0
Burial Chambers	80	(80)	0	0	80	80	0	0	0	80	0
Additional Burial Space	2	(9)	(7)	164	9	173	166	0	166	332	0
Cemetery Land Acquisition	0	0	0	430	0	430	2,070	0	2,070	2,500	0
Resources Total	3,161	(350)	2,811	2,701	350	3,051	2,925	0	2,925	8,787	0
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)											
Additional School Places - Contingency	50	(50)	0	900	50	950	350	0	350	1,300	0
DFC	436	14	450	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	0
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	100	(44)	56	0	44	44	0	0	0	100	0
Asset Management	414	(185)	229	312	185	497	0	0	0	726	0
Children's care Emergency Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civitas Synthetic Sports Pitch	24	(24)	0	0	24	24	0	0	0	24	0
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	121	(121)	0	0	121	121	0	0	0	121	0
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety (Schools)	495	(251)	244	300	309	609	560	0	560	1,413	0
Fabric Condition Programme	980	(362)	618	3,100	362	3,462	919	0	919	4,999	0
Green Park Primary School	60	(60)	0	0	60	60	0	0	0	60	0
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	350	(66)	284	2,262	66	2,328	100	0	100	2,712	0
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	4	(3)	1	0	1	1	28	0	28	30	0
Katesgrove Primary Trooper Potts Building	56	(56)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meadway Early Years Building Renovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modular Buildings Review	500	(3)	497	250	3	253	900	0	900	1,650	0
Pincroft-Children who have complex health, physical,sensory,disabilities & challenging behaviour	2	(2)	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	260	(3)	257	0	3	3	0	0	0	260	0
Provision of additional Children's Homes	670	(598)	72	831	598	1,429	0	0	0	1,501	0
Children's Home for Children with Disabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,138	0	1,138	1,138	0
Early Years increase to 30 hours provision	270	(264)	6	0	264	264	0	0	0	270	0
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund (school)	5,263	(827)	4,436	0	827	827	6,153	0	6,153	11,416	0
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate Double Glazing Programme	786	(786)	0	0	289	289	0	0	0	289	0
SCD Units	25	(25)	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	25	0
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	310	(210)	100	0	210	210	163	0	163	473	0
SEN Norcot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	1,500	(555)	945	2,199	3,055	5,254	1,990	0	1,990	8,189	0
The Heights Temporary School	351	(351)	0	0	351	351	0	0	0	351	0
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	2,270	(538)	1,732	0	538	538	0	0	0	2,270	0
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	15,297	(5,370)	9,927	10,154	7,387	17,541	12,301	0	12,301	39,769	0

Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

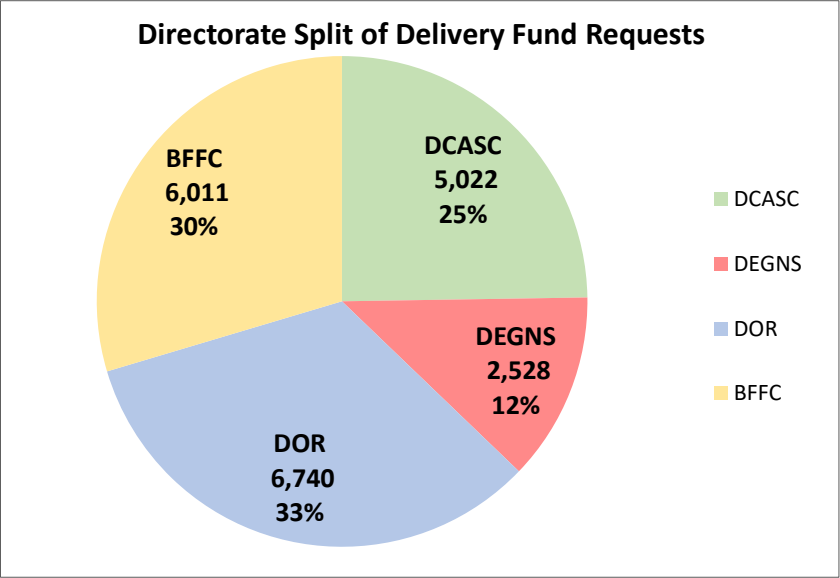
Scheme Name	Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget		Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget		Approved Budget	Proposed Total	Revised Budget		Total Revised Budget	Total Budget Re-programmed
	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25		2025/26	2025/26	2025/26		2026/27	2026/27	2026/27		2024/25 to 2026/27	into 2027/28
	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000		£000	£000
Corporate														
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects)	3,144	(1,427)	1,717		1,500	1,427	2,927		1,500	0	1,500		6,144	0
Loan To RTL (Bus replacement programme)	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100	0	100		100	0	100		100	0	100		300	0
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	500	(500)	0		1,500	500	2,000		0	0	0		2,000	0
Minster Quarter	155	45	200		523	(45)	478		0	0	0		678	0
Corporate Total	3,899	(1,882)	2,017		3,623	1,882	5,505		1,600	0	1,600		9,122	0
General Fund Total	69,591	(13,091)	56,500		69,349	16,021	85,370		37,018	0	37,018		178,888	0

Section 1: Summary of resources by Directorate

Table 1 summarises the Delivery Fund programme totalling £20.301m over the 8 year period (2017-2025)

	Number of schemes in 2024/25	Approved resources (£000)								
		17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Total	21	1,319	3,182	3,287	3,256	3,040	1,268	3,233	1,717	20,301

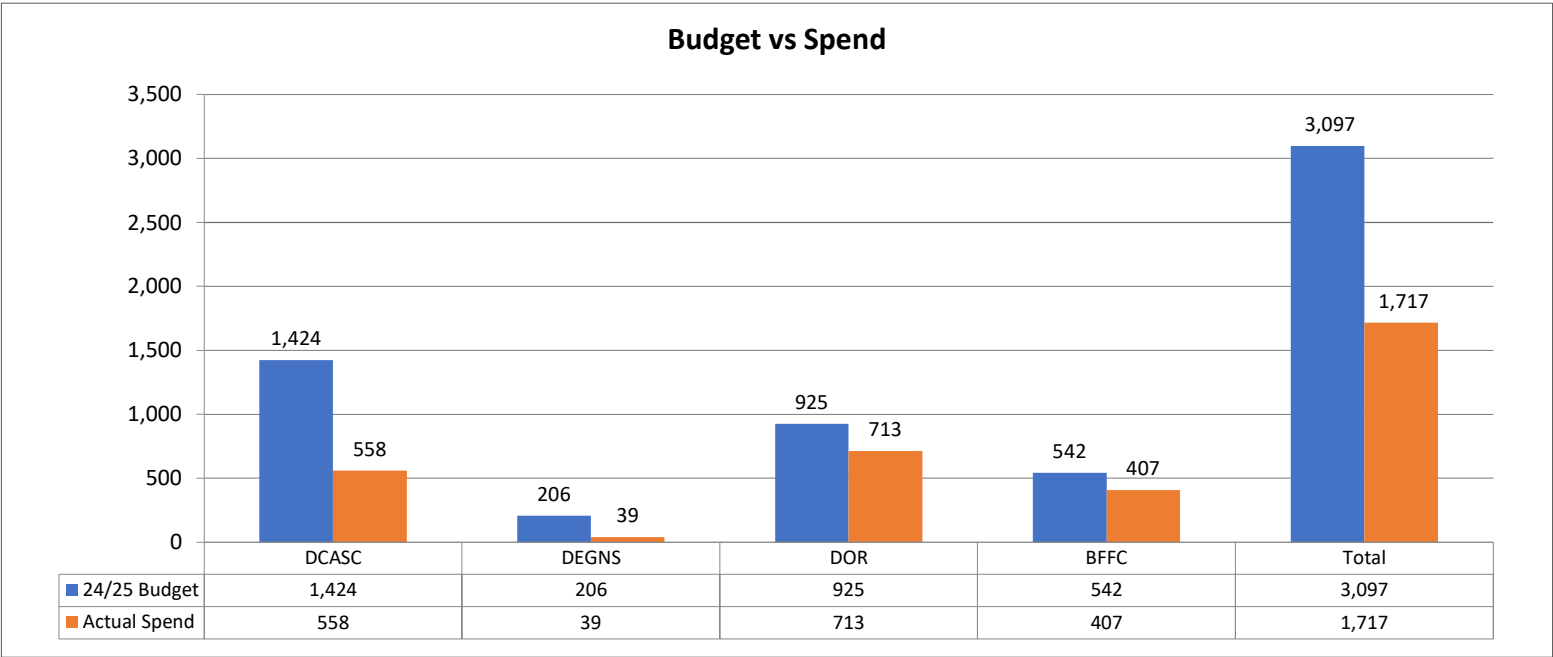
TABLE 1										
Directorate	Number of schemes in 2024/25	Approved resources (£000)								
		17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
DCASC	6	462	802	844	119	639	417	1,182	558	5,022
DEGNS	5	50	379	1,131	600	44	52	233	39	2,528
DOR	7	755	909	581	1,034	946	525	1,277	713	6,740
BFFC	3	52	1,093	731	1,503	1,410	274	541	407	6,011
Total	21	1,319	3,182	3,287	3,256	3,040	1,268	3,233	1,717	20,301



Section 2: Outturn Position 2024/25

Table 2 shows the 2024/25 budget (including unspent funds from 2023/24). These are requests that have been approved by CMT.

TABLE 2						
Directorate	24/25 Budget	Outturn	Variance	Requested Roll Forward	25/26 Resources	Revised 25/26 Resources
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
DCASC	1,424	558	(866)	866	180	1,046
DEGNS	206	39	(167)	167	126	293
DOR	925	713	(212)	166	633	799
BFFC	542	407	(135)	135	528	663
Total	3,097	1,717	(1,380)	1,334	1,467	2,801
Contingency	47	0	(47)	93	33	126
Grand Total	3,144	1,717	(1,427)	1,427	1,500	2,927



Appendix 6 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Outturn 2024/25

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
Management & Supervision	10,052	11,039	987
Special Services	5,153	3,826	(1,327)
Provision for Bad Debts	891	294	(597)
Repairs & Maintenance	8,755	12,648	3,893
Major Repairs/Depreciation	14,503	12,770	(1,733)
Debt Costs	7,009	7,535	526
PFI Costs	8,254	8,235	(19)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	158	158
Total Expenditure	54,617	56,505	1,888
Dwelling Rents	(43,929)	(44,417)	(488)
Service Charges	(1,004)	(1,053)	(49)
PFI Credit	(3,997)	(3,997)	0
Interest on Balances	(1,947)	(1,958)	(11)
Other Income	(192)	(1,004)	(812)
Total Income	(51,069)	(52,429)	(1,360)
Net (Surplus) / Deficit	3,548	4,076	528
Contribution to / (from) HRA Balances	(3,093)	(3,143)	(50)
Contribution to / (from) North Whitley PFI Reserve	(455)	(933)	(478)
Total Contributions to /(from) HRA Reserves (Operational)	(3,548)	(4,076)	(528)
HRA Revenue Reserves	Opening Balance £000	Movement £000	Closing Balance £000
Housing Revenue Account	(27,388)	3,143	(24,245)
Housing Revenue Account	(27,388)	3,143	(24,245)
HRA Earmarked Reserves			
North Whitley PFI Reserve	(9,524)	933	(8,591)
Total HRA Earmarked Reserves	(9,524)	933	(8,591)
Total HRA Revenue Reserves	(36,912)	4,076	(32,836)

Appendix 7 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2024/25 £000	Provisional Outturn 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000	Additional Budget reprogramming (to)/from Future Years £000
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)										
Disabled Facilities Grants	595						595	623	28	(28)
Housing Management System	148			37			185	158	(27)	27
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal	8,528						8,528	12,493	3,965	(3,965)
Major Repairs - Zero Carbon Retrofit works	4,429						4,429	0	(4,429)	4,429
Acquisitions from Homes for Reading	5,000						5,000	4,395	(605)	605
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	1,186						1,186	815	(371)	371
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	2,351						2,351	883	(1,468)	1,468
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	2,572						2,572	1,756	(816)	816
New build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	8,875						8,875	7,113	(1,762)	1,762
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	33,684	0	0	37	0	0	33,721	28,236	(5,485)	5,485

Appendix 7 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Outturn (2024/25 to 2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved	Proposed	Revised	Approved	Proposed	Revised	Approved	Proposed	Revised	Total Revised	Total Budget
	Budget	Total	Budget		Total	Budget		Total	Budget		
	2024/25	2024/25	Quarter 4	2025/26	2025/26	Quarter 4	2026/27	2026/27	Quarter 4	Budget	Re-
	£000	£000	2024/25	£000	£000	2025/26	£000	£000	2026/27	2024/25 to	programmed
		Changes			Changes			Changes		2026/27	into 2027/28
			£000			£000			£000	£000	£000
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)											
Disabled Facilities Grants	595	28	623	812	(28)	784	600	0	600	2,007	0
Housing Management System	148	10	158	0	27	27	0	0	0	185	0
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal	8,528	3,965	12,493	14,041	(3,965)	10,076	12,087	0	12,087	34,656	0
Major Repairs - Zero Carbon Retrofit works	4,429	(4,429)	0	6,877	4,429	11,306	3,500	0	3,500	14,806	0
Acquisitions from Homes for Reading	5,000	(605)	4,395	10,750	605	11,355	9,450	0	9,450	25,200	0
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	1,186	(371)	815	0	371	371	0	0	0	1,186	0
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	2,351	(1,468)	883	1,670	1,468	3,138	0	0	0	4,021	0
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	2,572	(816)	1,756	16,782	816	17,598	500	0	500	19,854	0
New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	8,875	(1,762)	7,113	32,862	1,762	34,624	3,641	0	3,641	45,378	0
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	33,684	(5,448)	28,236	83,794	5,485	89,279	29,778	0	29,778	147,293	0

Appendix 8 - Reserves Position as at 31st March 2025

		Balance 31/03/24	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Current Balance	Proposals per 2024/25 Outturn £000s	Balance 31/03/25
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s
General Fund Balance	Minimum level of unallocated reserves, 5% of net revenue budget	(8,394)	(511)	0	(8,905)	0	(8,905)

Earmarked Reserves - General Fund

Planned Future Revenue and Capital Spending Earmarked Reserves

Capital Financing Smoothing Reserve	To smooth funding of the Capital Programme across the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy	(6,722)	0	6,722	0	0	0
Climate Change Revenue Reserve	To allow for revenue investment to address the climate emergency	(222)	0	68	(153)	0	(153)
Communications Reserve	To allow for investment in communications strategies and engaging with the public	(126)	0	20	(106)	0	(106)
Elections Reserve	To provide a smoothing reserve for elections over a rolling 5 year cycle.	0	(41)	0	(41)	0	(41)
Hardship Fund	To fund hardship relief	(433)	0	86	(347)	0	(347)
Health & Safety	To fund a temporary Risk Management Officer	(71)	0	42	(29)	0	(29)
IT and Digital Reserve	To replace IT and digital equipment that has passed its useful life to improve operational efficiency	(2,591)	0	2,591	0	0	0
Ministry of Justice	To fund overpaid liability orders	(119)	0	119	0	0	0
Project Management Office	To fund temporary support to the Project Management Office	(163)	0	0	(163)	0	(163)
Redundancy Reserve	To fund costs of redundancy	(241)	0	241	0	0	0
Revenue Grant Unapplied Reserve	To hold Revenue Grant balances where the conditions for use have been met but relevant expenditure has not yet been incurred	(11,459)	(666)	4,992	(7,133)	0	(7,133)
Transformation Reserve	To allow for potential slippage in the delivery of capital receipts to fund transformation as well as funding transformation projects.	(1,551)	(300)	702	(1,149)	0	(1,149)
Planned Future Revenue and Capital Spending Earmarked Reserves		(23,696)	(1,006)	15,582	(9,120)	0	(9,120)

Specific Risks Earmarked Reserves

Abortive Capital Cost Reserve	To provide for the cost of feasibility studies that do not progress into capital schemes	(101)	0	10	(91)	0	(91)
Commercial Property Liabilities Reserve	To manage urgent liabilities associated with the Council's property	(2,776)	0	808	(1,968)	0	(1,968)
Cyber Security Risk Reserve	To mitigate against potential cyber security risks	0	(2,591)	532	(2,059)	0	(2,059)
Demographic & Cost-Led Pressures Reserve	To provide for potential cost pressures arising from demographic or other demand led services	(5,000)	0	0	(5,000)	5,000	0
Emergency Planning Reserve	To cover for unforeseen emergencies not budgeted for	(1,000)	0	51	(949)	0	(949)
Energy Reserve	To mitigate against fluctuations in energy prices	(500)	0	500	0	0	0

Appendix 8 - Reserves Position as at 31st March 2025

		Balance 31/03/24	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Current Balance	Proposals per 2024/25 Outturn	Balance 31/03/25
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Legal and Taxation Reserve	To meet potential one-off legal or tax liabilities	(226)	(291)	162	(354)	0	(354)
Pay & Inflation Reserve	To mitigate against potential additional pay & inflationary pressures	(3,000)	0	1,330	(1,670)	0	(1,670)
Pooled Investment Fund Reserve	To mitigate against any fluctuations in the fair value of pooled investments	0	(1,200)	0	(1,200)	0	(1,200)
Schools Deficit Liability Reserve	To fund potential deficits of schools that may become academies in the future	(1,301)	0	0	(1,301)	0	(1,301)
Self Insurance Reserve	To meet estimated liabilities in connection with internally-held risks related to the Council's Insurance programme	(3,182)	(562)	698	(3,046)	0	(3,046)
Specific Risks Earmarked Reserves		(17,086)	(4,643)	4,092	(17,638)	5,000	(12,638)
Budget Stabilisation Earmarked Reserves							
Collection Fund Smoothing Reserve	To provide for the potential downturn in the economy that would reduce the level of Business Rates/Council Tax	(3,557)	(2,092)	2,884	(2,765)	0	(2,765)
Financial Resilience Reserve	To provide the Council with financial resilience in respect of implications from future local government funding reform including the business rates reset	(8,236)	(7,322)	511	(15,047)	4,305	(10,742)
Budget Stabilisation Earmarked Reserves		(11,793)	(9,414)	3,395	(17,812)	4,305	(13,507)
Ringfenced Earmarked Reserves							
Better Care Fund Reserve	To meet costs relating to the Hospital Discharge Scheme	(1,877)	72	394	(1,411)	0	(1,411)
Public Health Reserve	The Public Health Grant is ring-fenced so any underspend is carried forward and spent in future years	(1,519)	(178)	0	(1,698)	0	(1,698)
Joint Legal Team Reserve	To fund JLT specific invest to save projects	0	(408)	0	(408)	0	(408)
Schools Balances	Schools are able to carry forward any underspends on their budgets	(1,780)	0	432	(1,348)	0	(1,348)
Ringfenced Earmarked Reserves		(5,176)	(515)	826	(4,864)	0	(4,864)
Total Earmarked Reserves - General Fund		(57,751)	(15,578)	23,895	(49,435)	9,305	(40,130)
Total General Fund Revenue Reserves		(66,145)	(16,089)	23,895	(58,340)	9,305	(49,035)

Appendix 8 - Reserves Position as at 31st March 2025

		Balance 31/03/24	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Current Balance	Proposals per 2024/25 Outturn	Balance 31/03/25
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves							
HRA	Cumulative HRA balance which is ringfenced to support the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock and to fund the provision of new council housing.	(27,388)	0	3,143	(24,245)	0	(24,245)
North Whitley PFI	To provide a smoothing reserve for PFI payments	(9,524)	0	933	(8,591)	0	(8,591)
Total Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves		(36,912)	0	4,076	(32,836)	0	(32,836)
Total Revenue Reserves		(103,057)	(16,089)	27,970	(91,176)	9,305	(81,871)

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Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
Foundations	Residents' Survey: Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things overall	%	70	60	60	Red	This is the same result to the previous year and compares with 55% in the national Local Government Association (LGA) survey of other councils.
Foundations	Residents' Survey: Agreement that the Council provides value for money	%	50	42	47	Amber	This is up 5% since the previous year and compares with 38% in the LGA survey.
Foundations	Number of self-service transactions via My Account self-service	No.	280,000	303,993	266,041	Amber	Following the continued roll out of the Arcus CRM platform we have seen a drop off in Granicus form submissions figures in line with those replacement new processes going live in Arcus and therefore being unpublished from the Granicus platform, as we would expect.
Foundations	Payment of invoices within 30 days of receipt of a compliant invoice	%	90	78	80	Red	During Q4 2024/25 just over 13,000 invoices were paid within 30 days of the invoice date - an average of 79.9%. (The total for the entire year 2024/25 was 80.4%). The data for the last three individual months are Jan 25 (75%), Feb 25 (83%) and Mar 25 (81%).
Foundations	Customer satisfaction in the Customer Fulfilment Centre	%	90	76	87	Amber	We are seeing ongoing improvements in customer satisfaction, regularly achieving monthly averages between 80% and 90%. During the winter of 2024/2025, customer satisfaction experienced a temporary dip due to staff turnover, illness, and the process of integrating new team members. Housing services were particularly affected during this period and resilience was brought in to stabilise the service whilst enhanced training was delivered.

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							Subsequent investment in training has enhanced the employee experience, leading to a positive uplift in customer satisfaction. For the 2025/2026 period, our goal is to further elevate the customer experience by implementing improvements within our Housing and Revenue services.
Foundations	Percentage of responses to Freedom of Information Act requests within 20 days	%	95	73	74	Red	In 24/25 recorded 1043 received however we know this is not the full total as we do not have the full data for July 24 as this is when the Council went live with the new Arcus system. The response rates not improving is disappointing, the Customer Relations Team (CRT) now have access to collating data, can track and report on cases. We have asked the supplier to improve functionality to allow for live real time reports which can go to managers to track their own cases. Solutions are being explored through system improvements and temporary resource for Customer Relations Team (CRT). Sending overdue reports to Assistant and Executive Directors on a Monday so that this is at the top of their inbox at the start of the working week. More FOI training and Comms are planned to raise more awareness around the importance of responding on time as soon as we resolve the resourcing and system issues.
Foundations	Percentage of responses to	%	90	70	66	Red	1364 complaints received by the organisation with 66% being responded to

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
	complaints within agreed timescales						on time. Housing & Communities received 526 of these and 65% if this 526 were about Repairs. Repairs back-office issues, coupled with the system and resourcing issues has impacted response rates. The Housing Ombudsman new code has also put pressure Housing & Communities to respond within 10 working days. The issues with Arcus and resource in CRT are shared with Corporate Management Team. Solutions are being explored through system improvements and temporary resources for CRT.
Foundations	Black and Minority Ethnic employees in Council's workforce	%	20	19	19	Amber	The overall proportion of Global Majority, a collective term for non-white employees in the council's workforce, has increased on the previous year, however this has decreased in recent months. Targeted work is planned with services where the GM representation is lowest.
Foundations	Gender pay gap (mean) for Council's workforce	%	0.05	0	0	Green	For the second year running the council can report a zero-pay gap.
Foundations	Ethnicity pay gap (mean) for Council's workforce	%	2.0	-0.4	0.7	Green	The ethnicity pay gap has increased slightly from last year where it was -0.4%. This is considered normal fluctuation which occurs based on the snapshot date.
Healthy Environment	Percentage of actionable (40mm depth) potholes repaired within 28 days	%	99	94	98	Green	In total 1590 potholes were repairs in the 2024-25 financial year. 98% were completed on time.

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
Healthy Environment	Percentage of residential roads in 'good condition' (not requiring further investigation or work)	%	80	80	85	Green	106 roads resurfaced. 2024/2026 contract tender awarded to Kiley Bros. Ltd. Phase 1 delivery commenced mid- October, contractor returned Spring 2025 to complete remaining roads. 105 sites in total.
Healthy Environment	Food waste recycled (percentage of household waste)	%	16	12	11.5	Red	Food waste as a percentage of household waste' will decrease if either the food waste tonnes go down or the total household waste goes up. Putting more effort into food waste collection can also conversely result in lower tonnages (because people may reduce their waste as a result).
Healthy Environment	Percentage of total household waste recycled	%	51	50	49	Amber	The provisional recycling rate for quarter 4 2024/25 is 46.2%. This compares to 46.9% last year. The full year recycling rate is 49.3%. Recycling rates tend to be higher in the first half of the year. This is the result of additional garden waste generated in the spring and summer.
Healthy Environment	Percentage of fly-tipping incidents investigated resulting in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution	%	26	10	20	Red	The percentage of fly-tipping incidents investigated resulting in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or prosecution is dependent on evidence of the waste source being available. Therefore, the percentage may fluctuate due to public awareness of investigations and enforcement procedures or willingness to provide witness statements. Investigations may still be taking place, but evidence may not be available to allow for enforcement action to be taken. Data from November onwards incorporates report numbers from all avenues of

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							customer reporting - i.e. call centre, website, love clean reading. Data prior to this did not incorporate numbers from LCR - hence the perceived significant increase in reports and investigations. The alignment of Arcus, Love Clean Reading and Whitespace has allowed for a greater oversight of reports and associated activities. During 24/25 there were 2,229 Incidents, 1,004 investigated and 200 FPNs issued.
Healthy Environment	Active travel trips to/from the town centre (mode share)	%	36	34	33	Amber	The town centre count is undertaken on a single day (usually in May), and so it is subject to variance based on a number of factors, such as weather. Whilst the model share for Walking & cycling have reduced slightly based on these figures, they are consistent with recent years, and still represent a larger proportion of individual movements than private cars etc. Undertaken on a single day (usually in May), and so it is subject to variance based on a number of factors, such as weather. Whilst the model share for Walking & cycling have reduced slightly based on these figures, they are consistent with recent years, and still represent a larger proportion of individual movements than private cars etc.
Healthy Environment	Public transport trips to/from the town centre (mode share)	%	41	42	42	Green	The town centre count is undertaken on a single day (usually in May), and so it is subject to variance based on a number of factors, such as weather. The number of public transport journeys remained

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							consistent with previous years; however this should be considered alongside the total number of public transport journeys, which have increased by approx. 3.3m (2m increase in bus, 1.3m increase in rail) within the last 12-month period.
Healthy Environment	Car trips to/from the town centre (mode share)	%	22	24	25	Red	The town centre count is undertaken on a single day (usually in May), and so it is subject to variance based on a number of factors, such as weather. It is also possible that reduced (better value) parking fees within the town centre are conflicting with the Local Transport Plans ambitions.
Healthy Environment	Total number of trees on Council owned land	No.	15,500	15,198	15,511	Green	313 new trees. Replaced 34 dead trees and 9 felled trees. 31 different native species were planted.
Healthy Environment	Carbon footprint (Reading) – total carbon emissions (tonnes CO2)	tonnes CO2	345,000	480,000	Not available	Red	Data for borough emissions for 2023 is due to come out in June/July. We are expecting these emissions to increase from 2022 as grid electricity carbon intensity increased due to lower levels of renewable energy and post energy-spike contingencies.
Healthy Environment	Carbon footprint (Reading Borough Council) – total carbon emissions (tonnes CO2)	tonnes CO2	3,145	5,150	4,660	Red	Figure quoted in kT (000's tonnes) from data reported by Government for 2022 calendar year, converted to tonnes for consistency. There is a 1.5-year data reporting lag with figures typically published in June each year. Note the previous year figures also changed as there are inventory changes (2021 showing as 496.7 kTonnes in 2022 dataset rather than 480.1 in 2021) - Reduction since 2005 baseline -54%

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
Healthy Environment	Air quality (micrograms per meter cubed of nitrogen dioxide µg/m3)	µg/m3	32	26	29	Green	This is the annual average across our monitoring sites for the 2024 calendar year.
Inclusive Economy	Borough bus usage	No.	18 Mil	17.5 Mil	19.5 Mil	Green	Bus usage has continued to increase / recover since the pandemic, with a further 2m additional passengers using services within Reading within the last 12-month period. It should be noted due to the reporting cycles, the 19.5m figure reported was for the period ending March 24 (as this data released in November 24). The Councils Bus Service Improvement Programme is continuing to support improvements to services, bus priority and reduced fares, which will have all been contributory factors to the passenger increase.
Inclusive Economy	Borough Park & ride usage	No.	200,000	106,000	131,000	Red	Park and Ride usage has seen a marginal increase within the last 12 months. Whilst all park and ride sites sit within Wokingham Borough, most of the trips from these sites are serving Reading, and so these figures are used for the purpose of this target. We have worked with Wokingham to support their relaunch of the Winnersh Park and Ride Services, and continue to use BSIP funding to subsidise lower fares, demonstrating the Councils commitment to P&R.
Inclusive Economy	Borough rail usage (all trips)	No.	11 Mil	13.0	14.3	Green	Rail usage has also continued to grow/recover, with a further 1.324m passengers within the 12month report

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							period. It should be noted that like bus passenger figures, the reported 14.324m passenger journeys relate to the 12month period ending March-24, with this data only becoming available in late 2024. The Council delivered Reading Green Park Station in May 2023, and the addition of this station on the network will be contributing to this increase in passenger number.
Inclusive Economy	Number of affordable homes delivered	No.	169	224	11	Red	There are continued challenges with securing fully policy-compliant affordable housing on private sites for reasons of viability, which are likely to continue to impact on meeting affordable housing needs. However, the exceptionally low level of affordable housing delivery in 2024-25 is likely mainly an anomaly, as the largest three developments that delivered three quarters of the overall completions this year had already delivered their affordable housing in previous years. In addition, there were no Local Authority New Build completions in 2024-25 as one development is almost complete and others are only just getting underway.
Inclusive Economy	Total (net) completed additional dwellings (new build and conversions)	No.	689	1,021	891	Green	The number of new dwellings completed is a reduction from 2023-24, but that was an exceptionally high year. 891 still represents a healthy level of delivery, well above the requirement of the Local Plan.
Inclusive Economy	Total (net) completed additional dwellings	No.	137	61	107	Red	This is an increase over 2023/24 but still represents only 12% of completed dwellings, reflective continued difficulties on

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Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
	that are three or more bed family homes						delivering family-sized homes on densely-developed sites.
Inclusive Economy	Number of school places for children and young people with Special educational need and disability (SEND) (cumulative)	No.	1,184	453	1,064	Red	There is a projected need for 1,184 specialist places for children with SEND by September 2026, with a milestone target of 1004 places by September 2025, which has been achieved. Proposals are being brought forward to establish expanded additionally resourced provision capacity at secondary phase in two local secondary schools, to create an additional 60 places for September 2025. Plans are progressing to meet need with the establishment of additional all through 180 place special school provision collocated on two primary school sites in Reading.
Inclusive Economy	Percentage of Care Leavers who are not in education, employment, or training for work (NEET) 17 and 18-year-olds	%	21	New	20	Green	Care, Virtual School and Elevate Teams have worked together to identify barriers to accessing education, employment and training for all young people in the cohort with plans put in place and implemented in the autumn term. These plans have helped secure improved performance, and performance is now better than the national average.
Inclusive Economy	Percentage of Care Leavers who are not in education, employment, or training for work (NEET) 19 to 21-year-olds	%	38	New	38	Green	Leaving Care, Virtual School and Elevate Teams have worked together to identify barriers to access education employment and training for all young people in the cohort with plans put in place and implemented in the autumn term. These plans have helped secure improved performance.

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
Inclusive Economy	Suspension Rate for primary and secondary school pupils at maintained schools, per 10,000 students	No. per 10,000	5.7	New	14.6	Red	Actions taken through the autumn term, including work undertaken by the behaviour support service, have made demonstrable impact, with improvement in reducing suspension rates at primary. There remained in the final quarter of the year a disproportionate number of suspensions from a small number of secondary schools. These schools are receiving targeted support and intervention. Adult Social Care, Children's Service and Education Committee have established a Task and Finish Group which is working with schools and officers to identify further partnership action to further reduce the risk of suspension and exclusion.
Inclusive Economy	Key stage 2 - reducing the gap in the percentage of advantaged and disadvantaged pupils who achieve the expected level of attainment in reading, writing, and maths.	%	23	27	25	Amber	Almost all Reading primary schools are judged as effective through inspection and in findings from school effectiveness assurance activities, with evidence that schools are implementing research informed approaches to improve standards, and progress compared to 22/23 gaps. The Annual School Standards report presented to Adult Social Care, Children's Service and Education Committee in the summer term will set out additional actions being taken to reduce gaps as part of our long-term education strategy. Data this year suggests increased support and challenge to schools with outcomes just below or at national averages are making impact.

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							Investment in additional capacity secured through Schools Forum and the Education Partnership Board has strengthened school to school support in Reading. (Data Source - DfE)
Inclusive Economy	Key Stage 4 - reducing the gap in the overall Attainment 8 score between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils	No.	15	24	24	Red	Whilst overall KS4 performance remains strong, there is a significant challenge in reducing the attainment gap at KS4 in Reading. The Annual School Standards report presented to Adult Social Care Children's Services and Education committee in the summer term will set out additional actions to reduce gaps as part of our long-term education strategy. Evidence from School Effectiveness work in weaker performing schools last year suggested that more school improvement capacity needed, particularly in Multi Academy Trusts, to support the implementation of improved curriculum approaches, so that more children meet the expected standard. Liaison with the DfE who hold performance accountability for Trust schools has seen some additional support being provided to local academy schools. (Data Source - DfE)
Inclusive Economy	New Directions College Qualification Achievement Rates	%	95.7	95	91	Amber	2023-24 Qualification Achievement Rates for New Directions College (Education & Training - exc. Community Learning) Achievement rate: 91.3% vs NR 85.1% Retention rate: 96.1% vs NR 91.2 Pass rate: 94.4% vs NR 93.4%

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							Therefore, all markers are above National Rates (NR).
Inclusive Economy	Percentage of people with a learning disability in paid employment	%	6	4.7	3.72	Red	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 have completed the commissioning of a supported employment provision for service users with an LD and Mental Health. We are working with DWP job centre to support people into employment. Small numbers are involved. We are investigating with the provider to see how many people have been supported and how we can count these in the figures where they have been employed.
Inclusive Economy	Participation at Council cultural venues (cumulative)	No.	350,000	362,664	371,084	Green	The visitor numbers across all Cultural venues are buoyant, with increased numbers at Reading Museum Town Hall/ Pantry and South Street. Despite a slightly reduced programme at The Hexagon due to Studio Theatre planning, the venue has retained audience numbers and continued to deliver a busy programme.
Inclusive Economy	Number of physical visits to our libraries	No.	270,000	276,000	297,871	Green	Figure is cumulative, 6% up on previous year, target exceeded by 10%
Thriving Communities	Number of people sleeping rough	No.	10	36	57	Red	Six months prior to the snapshot night, Reading's monthly snapshot figure was on average 42 people (17% increase) and this can be considered the best representation of the picture of rough sleeping in Reading on a typical night. The snapshot figure of 57 submitted to Ministry of Housing

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 Green = at or above target Amber = within 10% of target Red = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for Reading in 2024 was skewed and inflated due to Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) being active. The alternative would have been to delay SWEP or delay the snapshot night. However, the humanitarian response saves lives and the threshold for cold weather had been met. It was uncertain when the cold weather would end, and this risked breaching the 'typical night' criteria. Whilst the figure is inflated, officers are confident that good practice was followed, and it is still congruent with the upwards trend in rough sleeping nationally. March 2025's informal bi-monthly snapshot figure was 32 unique individuals.
Thriving Communities	Percentage of children in care living more than 20 miles from Reading	%	24	32	33	Red	The shortage of local and national foster carers and children's homes has increased our use of placements which are beyond 20 miles. All children in care living beyond 20 miles have been reviewed to ensure that, where appropriate, plans are in place to move them closer to Reading. We are pro-actively addressing the shortage of local foster carers through the regional fostering recruitment and retention hub, the mockingbird support for foster carers and an increase in foster carer fees; the progression of local children's homes and an Edge of Care offer to prevent children coming into care, prevent breakdown of care

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							and return children home where safe and appropriate to do so.
Thriving Communities	First-time entrants (FTE's) to Youth Justice System per 100,000 aged 10-17	No. /100k	190	New	115	Green	The rates of FTEs in Reading are reducing and is below those of statistical neighbours and national. This remains a priority for the Reading Youth Justice Board.
Thriving Communities	Percentage of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	%	11 ¹	New	7	Green	Children are stable in placements when well matched and with good permanence planning.
Thriving Communities	Percentage of Older People (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement	%	87	87.8	90.2	Green	Work has progressed to improve the referral pathway with the hospitals and ensure the right patients are referred into reablement. This has resulted in an improvement in people remaining at home after 91 days.
Thriving Communities	Percentage of new contacts to the Advice & Wellbeing hub resulting in a successful outcome not requiring an on-going service	%	85	88.4	87.7	Green	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 supported to live independently in the community	%	78	74.7	73	Amber	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. We are experiencing a high level of complex needs in the

¹ This target has been corrected from the originally published Corporate Plan target to bring it in line with the BfC contract performance indicator.

Appendix 9: Corporate Plan Performance Measures year end 2024/25 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
							community causing more residents to go into nursing and residential care.
Thriving Communities	Number of NHS Health Checks delivered to residents	No.	3,200 (800 per quarter)	4,526	3,506	Green	<p>The Q4 number shown includes NHS Health Checks delivered to 40-74 yr olds by GPs (1,284), Royal Berkshire Hospital (221) and by the Reading Community Wellness Outreach service (CWOs) (346). Only the 40-74 yr olds data is shown here, so it can be compared to previous quarters and for national reporting purposes.</p> <p>Between Q3 and Q4, NHS Health Checks increased in GP practices from 943 to 1284 (36%) and RBH for the staff Health checks from 182 to 221 (21%), while Health checks under CWOs programme dropped from 470 to 346 (-26%). Over the full year, GP practices delivered 3,506 health checks compared to 4,061 last year, reflecting a 14% annual decrease</p>
Thriving Communities	Percentage of residents who select "the level of crime" as a top three priority for the Council to address, in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership and Thames Valley Police	%	23	25	32	Red	Satisfaction survey of random sample of 1,000 residents in the borough. This is up 5% since the previous year
Thriving Communities	Percentage of Residents who	%	48	New	50	Green	Result from the 2024 survey carried out over summer.

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Corporate Plan Theme	Measure	Units	Target	Actual 23/24	Actual 24/25	Status	Comments
	consider Reading to be "a safe place to live" (based on the annual Community Safety Partnership Survey)						The survey saw an 36% increase in responses compared to 2023.

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Foundations	Create a workforce that is fully representative of the population we serve where all staff feel welcomed and valued for the unique perspective, they bring to Team Reading, and where everyone, irrespective of their background, is supported and empowered to achieve their goals and progress their careers	At risk	The overall percentage of staff of Global Majority background is 18.8%, a slight reduction from 19.0 % in December, which is lower than Reading Census result of 32.4%. Directorate of Resources have the highest Global Majority staff representation at 22.4%, a slight reduction from December, with Directorate for Communities and Adult Social Care at 21.2% which shows a slight increase and Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services at 13.8% which is a slight reduction. As with previous months, the % of Global Majority staff recruited in the rolling year (25.5%) is greater than the % leaving Reading Borough Council (24.8%).
Foundations	Deliver a programme of work to ensure that we get the best value for money for the goods and services that we buy	On track	Procurement Board launched and held monthly. Pipeline Register being finalised for May publication. Quality Assurance Panel launch deferred for formal meeting until increased capacity however premise operating informally via Head of Procurement. Procurement consultation concluded, implementation plan being drafted, recruitment awaiting advertisement and consultations to be progressed.
Foundations	Implement Social Value Strategy and reporting (internal training, link with external organisations and deployment of social value achieved)	At risk	Register soft launch not in consistent use - raised at Procurement board, PTOG and also support from PCCS in data improvement. SharePoint list still in development. Project on hold following resignation of lead officer with 2 further officer vacancies meaning this cannot progress until resourcing in place. All Procurement templates, however, include requirements and strategies are scrutinised to ensure Social Value offer inclusion – all new procurement strategies have met this requirement since Feb 2025. Data will need collation as strategy is being enforced.
Foundations	Implementation of the Information Management Strategy	At risk	Work on the Information Management Strategy Action Plan was discussed with the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) on 17/01/25 and agreed we would use the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) guidance and tracker to look specific tasks/work areas which can be progressed and tracked for reporting to Corporate Management Team and the Information Governance Board. We are in the process of getting the tracker completed into granular tasks for the Data Stewards to work through. We hope to progress this matter in May 2025, the IG Team is one Full Time Equivalent down due to long term sickness absence which has impacted on our capacity to progress this work.

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Foundations Page 250	Implementing the Connected Reading Strategy with the highest priority aims being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making our services better and quicker for customers and staff, enabled by digital technology. • Making our digital services as accessible as possible to all in Reading and helping those who are digitally excluded to become included. • Using digital technology to help the elderly and vulnerable to live as independently as possible 	On track	<p>Case and customer management- The majority of the system has now been implemented. Snagging issues are currently being reviewed. This has not hindered activity to start scaling the platform. The council is currently using the platform to build out a new solution to help manage homelessness.</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence and Robotics: The RBC Policy and Strategy have been published. There is a soft launch of an AI tool Copilot chat planned for May 2025.</p> <p>Hardware Rollout: In this period, we were preparing for the roll out of windows 11 as part of the next rollout of devices.</p> <p>Adult Social Care Digital Programme, this is currently ongoing and on track, with the service carrying out groundwork to ensure the output from the programme can be supported in Business as Usual.</p>
Foundations	Maintain the externally assessed standard for 'Achieving Customer Services Excellence' including the implementation of the new Customer and Case Management System	On track	<p>Achieving customer services excellence: This annual accreditation was maintained in 2024/25, with additional 'compliance pluses' awarded.</p> <p>Case and Customer Management System: The system is moving from the delivery phase to the continuous improvement / ongoing development phase. This will see the dedicated project team stand down and the system managed and developed using business as usual processes. Work is underway to ensure the benefits of the new system are fully realised, including enhanced reporting.</p> <p>There has been significant go live phases for customer facing forms and processes in the last quarter. Hypercare, increased support and attention, has continued for corporate governance (Complaints and FOIs) and Regulatory Services, which went live in Q2 and Q3. Work is continuing to resolve some data issues for Regulatory Services.</p>
Healthy Environment	Commence delivery of the Simpler Recycling Programme for residents to improve borough recycling performance	At risk	<p>Route optimisation work has completed to enable the Recycling & Waste Service to plan for delivery of the requirements of simpler recycling legislation. Whilst progress could be considered 'green', the project has been flagged as 'amber' as the resources required to meet legislative requirements are not yet known and their cost/affordability, may present a barrier to success that will need to be considered in context with available government grant and the</p>

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
			broader financial position of the Council. Reports are currently being drafted on the options available, to enable detailed planning to be undertaken in the first half of 2025/26.
Healthy Environment	Decarbonise the Hexagon theatre through improved heating and lighting.	On track	The Environment Agency has informed RBC that the Abstraction Licence for a Groundwater System Heat Pump (GSHP) has been approved. The GSHP decarbonisation works have been tendered as part of the overall Studio Theatre tender with a contractor now on board - Feltham.
Healthy Environment	Deliver £8m of investment in resurfacing roads and pavements	On track	2-year delivery programme (2024/25 & 2025/26). Phase 2 completed mid- April 2025. Phase 3 commences 27th May 2025. This will deliver over 800 major and residential roads treated since the Council investment commenced with the initial £9M investment and subsequent £8M investment. The programme will continue until the end of 2026/27 financial year.
Healthy Environment	Delivery of Capital Education Property Development Programme	On track	Projects and programme progressing as per the intended timescale. The flat roofs at Park Lane Junior, Geoffery Field Infant, Geoffery Field Junior and Caversham Primary were refurbished. Windows at New Bridge were refurbished in this period. A new fire detection system for Manor Primary School and a new fire alarm for Norcot Primary was installed. Geoffery Field Junior had a boiler replacement while Whitley Park boiler room refurbishment was completed.
Healthy Environment	Implement the Climate Emergency Strategy, including delivering over 150 actions to contribute to the overall vision to mitigate and adapt to climate change	At risk	The Implementation of the Climate Emergency Strategy depends on the input of a many partnering organisations. Across this large number of actions, resources and government policy framework has proven insufficient to consistently deliver all actions in line with the ambitious programme. Note annual report which is published at November Strategic Environment Planning & Transport Committee each year.
Healthy Environment	Implement the Local Transport Plan (LTP)	On track	The "implementation" of the LTP, is through the delivery of various programme workstreams, including BSIP and Active Travel. In both cases, individual projects are progressing well, and additional funding has been secured to meet wider aspirations of the LTP.
Healthy Environment	Retaining our position on the 'A' list' for bold leadership on climate change following an	Complete	Reading features on the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) 'A' list for the fourth consecutive year and joins only 19 other UK towns and cities to have made the

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
	assessment by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)		grade this year. CDP is a global non-profit organisation which holds the world's most comprehensive data on how companies, cities, states and regions measure, understand and address their environmental impacts. It is widely recognised as the gold standard of environmental reporting. To appear on the 'A' List, a local authority must publicly disclose a town-wide emissions inventory, have published a climate action plan and provide evidence of climate actions taken and their impact.
Healthy Environment	The allocation of £1.6 million Community Infrastructure Funds and commencement of the approved schemes	At risk	£1.6 million of Community Infrastructure Levy funds were allocated to 18 local projects in March 2022 by Policy Committee. Work has completed on 15 of the projects, whilst the remainder are currently underway or are in the preparatory stages, other than one project which is awaiting the completion of other projects. A further allocation of CIL local funds agreed by Policy Committee in July 2024. Different projects are at different stages, and some of the remaining projects still have question marks about delivery.
Healthy Environment	Deliver the next phase of our fleet electrification and decarbonisation programme and publish our Electric Vehicle Strategy	Complete	The planned purchase of electric vehicles has been completed.
Inclusive Economy	Adoption of a new Town Centre Strategy	Off Track	Strategy was paused due to resource issues.
Inclusive Economy	Bring forward the Minster Quarter site for development and using the £2m brownfield development grant	On track	Lawyers have been finalising the Development Agreements and Leases ready for signature. The developer's investment board has approved the contract documents in readiness for exchange with the council subject to resolution of some minor items including appendices.
Inclusive Economy	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.	On track	Jan - Mar: Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), Creative Lives and BBC Radio Berkshire worked in partnership to spotlight people being creative in their everyday lives in 2024. As part of the project, they held two outdoor Writing for Wellbeing workshops in Whitley GrowAllot, a community allotment just over 2 miles from Reading Green Park station. Reading Museum run monthly Sanctuary Craft Club for Sanctuary seekers and their families. The Sign Awards 2025- the High Street Heritage Action Zone mural at the corner of Oxford Road and Russell Street won the gold medal in the traditional sign category. The judges said that admired this beautifully executed, old-school

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
			hand-painted job. A true display of craftsmanship, skill, and diligence. Reading's Digital Revolution Exhibition launched on 17 March. Exhibition, STEAM programme and events until December. As part of the Roman project's development stage, we have installed a new interactive intervention in Silchester Gallery. Using two of the 3D-modelled replicas made for us by ThinkSee3D alongside the original Roman objects that were chosen by young people including Berkshire Vision. We are trialling different methods of displaying replicas for handling. What's on Reading Cultural Champions Celebration event took place on 26th March. Over 2000 voted for event of the year and over 100 people from across the creative sector joined the event to celebrate the people and organisations that make Reading the vibrant place that it is.
Inclusive Economy	Complete Reading West Station Upgrade	Complete	Works are complete and the new station facilities opened on 19 March 2024.
Inclusive Economy	Continued delivery of South Reading Mass Rapid Transport	At risk	Construction progressing, overall scheme completion delayed because of unforeseen ground conditions and utilities. However, we are aiming for sectional completion to minimise impact of delay, with the final completion currently planned for October 2025. Arrangements are in place to minimise risks associated with increased network during Reading Festival.
Inclusive Economy	Deliver key improvements to the library service, including plans for the Central Library.	On track	Service performance good, visits were up strongly on last year c10%, and overall issues up again c1.7%. Procurement progressing with LUF and LIF items. Final element of LIF1 project at Tilehurst tested and in place to enable self serve hire. Design for new library continues.
Inclusive Economy	Deliver our Reducing Inequality Strategy through a place-based approach to improving skills education and training.	On track	The Tackling Inequality Strategy (TIS) Action Plan will be reviewed by Social Inclusion Board in May 2025. The Place Based Pilots in the south of Reading are delivering the approved projects to support the programme objectives, with further projects being considered by the Programme Sponsors for delivery. A review of the Place-Based Pilots was conducted in early 2025 to determine priorities for the forthcoming year.
Inclusive Economy	Develop and implement adult skills, employment support and training programmes	On track	This quarter, we are pleased to report continued positive developments across our programmes. Following New Directions College's Ofsted inspection just before Christmas, the college was officially graded Good, as expected. This outcome reflects the

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Page 254			dedication of our team and the positive impact of our work with learners and partners. The Cedar Court Project has continued to progress well, benefitting both learners and residents. We are now recruiting for the next term and have received a strong level of interest. Recruitment for the British National Overseas Hospitality programme has also been positive, with the programme due to launch after the Easter holidays. We are confident that, with this momentum, we will meet our overall targets by the end of the academic year. Although recruitment for the Roots to Reading programme, delivered in partnership with Thames Water, postponed due to low intake, we are continuing to actively promote it and are optimistic.
	Inclusive Economy	On track	We are completing our final outreach self-employment /employment clinics currently finishing in Whitley and moving to Southcote Community Centre. Started in January 2023 a total of 72 outreach sessions will have been held (up to June 25). Over this time between 600 – 700 individuals will have been engaged in conversation about being self-employed or job seeking. Evaluation is taking place as to any changes to be made to the next programme. We are just completing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grants to start-up businesses. During the last 2 years of UKSPF we have supported 57 business start-ups, 39 with grant funding. We have also completed the Creative pathways programme funded by UKSPF. 100 adults and 600 students attended a hands on get in to film exhibition at Green Park. 48 adults working in trades have had training to apply their trades to the film sector. Ground works have been running a programme for 15 adults training on the job in groundwork and environmental improvement projects. The Education Business Partnership Careers Programme in schools is well under way targeting the lowest performing schools. This was supported by RBC Parks and Gardens staff.
	Inclusive Economy	On track	Implement and subsequently expand a new apprenticeship and work experience mentoring scheme Work experience scheme (as revised during 24/25) remains 'business as usual'. Apprenticeships offered to new joiners is currently 2.1%

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Inclusive Economy	Shape the 3-year delivery plan 2022-25 for Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy	At risk	Delayed due to competing workload priorities. Plan to deliver for the next quarter.
Inclusive Economy Page 255	Start work to deliver significant improvements to our culture and customer offer with major works to the Hexagon and the Civic building where we will be reprovisioning the Central Library and redesigning customer provision to create a more modern and efficient offer	On Track	Civic works are progressing well. Enabling works are complete and the main works contract has been signed. The new Employer Agent has been appointed. Decarbonisation works are on target to complete in May 2025. Initial piling has been conducted and the steel frame design is progressing. Agreement was reached on the final cladding option. Fixed site hoarding with graphics and signage has been erected successfully. Registrars have been relocated to their new permanent location and the Customer Fulfilment Centre has been moved to their new temporary location. Detailed design work continues for the new library and customer areas, including internal aspects such as furniture, fixtures and fittings. A revised tender was released for the new Studio Theatre contractor, following the previous tender returns being unaffordable. A re-design has reduced the footprint of the new building whilst retaining its public and performance spaces. The tender also includes the decarbonisation works to the main theatre. Feltham have been appointed contractor and works are planned to start as scheduled on 14 th July 2025. Approval given by the Environment Agency for a water abstraction license, allowing the planned Ground Source Heat Pump to proceed, as part of the decarbonisation works. The Rights of Light agreement is signed and the Deed of Release has been initiated. The Courts have formally confirmed the Judicial Review has been withdrawn.
Inclusive Economy	Support the development of an Economic Development Strategy for Reading led by Readings Economic & Destination Agency (REDA)	On track	A brief agreed and a consultant commissioned to assist the work. REDA has met with DEGN and CMT to confirm this and start to explore the key issues to be included, involvement of officers and input by the members. A timeline of development is being developed with a view to reaching the Policy Committee in November /December. The Strategy will align with the Berkshire Economic Strategy and define specific interventions to tackle Reading specific economic development issues. The prosperity Board has commissioned a mapping exercise to look at economic development capability across Berkshire authorities. This is with a

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
			view to looking at options to deliver the Berkshire Economic Strategy. REDA included in the interview process to identify Reading capabilities.
Thriving Communities	Continue delivery of the new Council homes programme	On track	Site preparations continue towards works commencing on site to deliver new homes. Whilst we have been successful in our delivery to date, it is worth noting that the construction sector continues to face significant challenges. Market conditions impacted by world events, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the war in Ukraine and Brexit. We have seen shortages of materials and skilled labour impacting, as well as inflationary pressures impacting on the delivery of new homes. Many suppliers have had to slow or stop production and lead in times for building materials and services are much longer than we have previously seen. We have two schemes that have recently started on site and a third scheme which we expect will soon commence on site.
Thriving Communities	Create a co-produced Adult Social Care Strategy	On Track	The strategy development has commenced with a steering group set up and research on other Local Authority strategies completed.
Thriving Communities	Deliver the five implementation plans in collaboration with statutory, voluntary and community partners which cover 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	On track	A paper on recent activity and progress against the key Performance Indicators was submitted to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board on Friday 14th March 2025. Most indicators for each implementation area are green, with four amber indicators across all areas. Progress against actions continue to be reviewed to ensure they continue to meet local need.
Thriving Communities	Deliver zero carbon initiatives within Council homes including using Passivhaus principles to design new homes, retrofit energy efficiency measures and develop more low	On track	The principles of passivhaus local authority new build homes have been embedded within our delivery programme. We have a number of schemes designed to deliver low energy homes that have either recently commenced on site or are about to commence on site.

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
	carbon energy sources for existing RBC Housing		
Thriving Communities	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	On track	Our combined early help offer, is delivered through family hubs in Reading. 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. The family hub programme will benefit from Project Management Office support commencing from May. The pilot hub is due to launch in June 25.
Thriving Communities	Develop a preventative occupational therapy function at the Adult Social Care Advice and Well Being Hub	Complete	The Team Manager has been in place since April 2024 and has been working to recruit OTs and Assistant OTs. While there remain a few vacancies, the team is now fully operational, with processes and procedures in place. The team is now running as business as usual.
Thriving Communities	Develop an unpaid carers strategy and increased short breaks provision in partnership with carers and partners	On track	A Carers Lead has been appointed and will be taking forward the Carers Strategy. The Short Breaks pilot will be going to tender in the coming month.
Thriving Communities	Develop our refreshed Early Help strategy with the One Reading Children & Young People's Partnership, strengthened by a shared overarching strategy to tackle child poverty	On track	The Early Help Strategy was signed off by the One Reading Partnership in October 2024. The strategy is in its early stages of go live and we are working with the One Reading Partnership on how we drive this work forward together.
Thriving Communities	Development of a voluntary sector-led Adult Social Care Front Door	On track	The Civic based part of the service (in procurement terms, previously referred to as Lot 1): Local Connector Service, delivered by British Red Cross, is now fully staffed. Performance and Service User feedback reporting has been developed, and positive feedback received. The Community based part of the VCS Front Door service model (in procurement terms, previously referred to as Lot 2): Community Based Service proposal has been agreed by Directorate Leadership Team and a Procurement plan has been developed. Specification iteration process is on track and aiming for invitation to quote in June with Contract Award 2025.
Thriving Communities	Implement RISE, our new inclusion support service, which will help develop inclusive practice across all Reading schools	On track	The RISE team's connections with schools across the borough have embedded throughout Q4. The RISE Team is now in a transition phase of building structures throughout that can demonstrate the impact RISE has on individual children within our system, which will link with our SEND partners.

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Page 258			<p>We will be moving to targeting our work towards individual children identified with the highest need, and that will form the basis of our time allocation model. These children will be identified via a joint planning meeting between the Educational Psychologists, the SEND Team and RISE.</p> <p>Schools continue to report that they are more able to meet the needs of cohorts of children with increased need, which has been strengthened by the launch of the updated Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) and Graduated Response (GR) documents, which have been shared widely. We continue to see a plateauing of Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) requests, indicating the success of this approach.</p> <p>RISE's involvement within the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project alongside Children and Young People Integrated Therapies (CYPIT), Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Reading Family Forum colleagues has almost concluded. Following the school visits, the SENCo Conference, which was free-to-attend for all schools, focusing on Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), was successful. We are now collaborating with our colleagues to create a pool of video resources. Similarly, we are securing a resource to provide ongoing implementation support funded by PINS.</p> <p>RISE have focused on increasing its presence in secondary settings, which has been facilitated via the secondary network. A SEND Consultant will be focusing on work with secondary schools, from Q1. We are also investing in screening tools, for SLCN, mental health and sensory needs, which we hope to be administered more widely in our secondary settings.</p> <p>RISE Regulation (an extension to the RISE Team funded outside DBV), which focuses on reducing suspensions and exclusions, continues to receive positive feedback from schools.</p>
	<p>In partnership with GLL, continue to deliver investment in the borough's leisure facilities, including improvements at South Reading Leisure Centre, and finish and open the new swimming pools at Rivermead Leisure Centre</p>	Complete	<p>Officers and Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) have shared their proposals for the demountable. The RBH Physiotherapy Department has also expressed interest in the site.</p> <p>GLL was given approval to spend £415k on track improvements. These works were anticipated at the start of the leisure contract and were budgeted for. The track replacement works commenced in April and are expected to last</p>

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
			approximately eight weeks. The track will be closed during this period, and clubs have arranged to use alternative facilities during the closure.
Thriving Communities	Implement the VCS action plan to build our relationship with the VCS and increase capacity within the sector.	On track	The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Compact Action Plan is being delivered by the Council and VCS partners. Regular engagement with the VCS has continued, including monthly Voluntary Information Network meetings, meetings between VCS leaders and the RBC Leader & CEX, and direct engagement on specific issues. An update on the VCS Compact Action Plan was provided to Social Inclusion Board in March 2025. The Compact is due for review by the end of 2025, and discussions have already begun with VCS leaders on this and its alignment to the Government Civil Society Covenant and the new Council Plan.
Thriving Communities	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	On track	All three homes are in the design phase of work; an interim programme lead has been recruited and a permanent job advert for a service manager to be the Responsible Individual for all three homes launched 16th April.
Thriving Communities	Launch Community Wellness Outreach (CWO) Programme including NHS Health Checks	On track	The project extended into Q1 2025/26 but the Integrated Care Board have agreed to extend for a full year until the end of June 2026. There have been 2,780 checks (as at end of February 2025), which represents 53% of our target. 95% of people agree that they have a better understanding of CVD risk after talking with the Nurses at the check. In February 91% of appointments were booked / 9% were drop-in. Outcomes of checks have continued to be consistent each month; 69% very high/high body mass index (BMI), 23% very high/high blood pressure, and 24% with high blood glucose levels (a pre-indicator of diabetes) and 6% high cholesterol. The team have further increased the reach to ethnically diverse groups, with 58% of people attending being from ethnically diverse backgrounds, 52% from Asian/Black background, who have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes. The age range was widened for these community-based checks and 7% of people seen were above 75 yrs and 32% were below 40 years of age and enabling early intervention to prevent development of heart disease and diabetes. In February there was a significant increase in the number of people requiring help with translation, 33 compared to 18 in January. Attendance due to GP communications was 49%, 51% attendance due to combination of other

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

Blue = Complete, Green = on track, Amber = at risk, Red = off track

Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
			approaches. GP referral\Family or Friend\ Invited by a Community Group continue to be the three largest contributors to those who attended. Community Wellness Outreach 'Give It A Go' programme of 7 sessions (one introductory and 6 physical activity) and membership to Better Leisure for 10 participants continued throughout February 2025 with positive feedback received and case studies started.
Thriving Communities Page 260	Set up a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) to enable us to procure good quality and cost-effective emergency accommodation	At risk	The tender invite for the procurement for the provision of block emergency accommodation closed on 06/01/25. All supplier submissions have been evaluated, and property inspections have been undertaken to ensure suitability of use against quality standards. Contracts expected to be in place with successful suppliers by the end of May 2025 and will run for 12 months. The new Procurement Act 2023, implemented in February 2025, removes the option of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS), but introduces new routes to market. Therefore, further scoping is required to set the direction for emergency accommodation procurement. Meanwhile, the new contracts aim to stabilise the market, allow for post tender and overall market engagement, and aim to ensure the cost-effectiveness of Housing Needs' future approach to procuring emergency accommodation.
Thriving Communities	Strengthen corporate parenting activity of the Company and Council through a refreshed Corporate Parenting strategy and implement the learning from the Care Leavers' Review and review of our Corporate Parenting Panel	On track	This project is continuing to progress and the work/offer for Care Leavers is continued.
Thriving Communities	Collaborate with our partners and GLL new leisure provider to increase rates of physical activity and attendance at borough leisure centres	On track	GLL initially reported a year-end participation figure of 1,298,590; however, following a review by their Intelligence Team, this was adjusted to 2,467,663. The significant uplift was due to Play Football data previously being excluded. Play Football are an organisation that manage football bookings on behalf of GLL at Rivermead.
Thriving Communities	Year 1 delivery of the Community Safety Actions through the delivery groups as set out in the Plan	On track	The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Delivery Group is working with Circles Southeast on bringing into Reading Schools programmes on VAWG as part of Op Vigilant.

Appendix 10: Corporate Plan Projects Q4 2024/25

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Corporate Plan Theme	Project	Q4	Comments
Page 261			<p>The Culture Team has facilitated delivery of the Fake News sessions on behalf of the CSP on 19th and 20th March to 6 schools and viewed by 466 pupils at year 6, 7 and 8.</p> <p>A second run of self-defence training was delivered at the University on 26th March and was very successful. The day was a tremendous success, with participants fully engaged and leaving the session feeling more confident and empowered. In addition to the self-defence training, there was an excellent turnout for the session on How to Receive Disclosure, where staff and SOAR's psychotherapist, provided invaluable guidance on how to respond when someone shares their experience of domestic violence or an attack.</p> <p>Officers are working on setting up the new CSP Performance Group, which will report into the CSP and are engaging with partners to find a suitable chair from the partnership. The Performance Group will monitor crime data and trends and develop response plans to consultation outcomes, including the annual Community Safety Survey.</p> <p>The task and finish group set up to understand the increase in violence on Sunday evenings is complete, with analysis concluding that there was no specific rationale as to this spike.</p> <p>The Wren and Prospect Schools received a visit in March from Breaking Barriers, a theatrical performance designed to raise awareness around consent to young people.</p> <p>A new Data set has been created to track levels of knife crime in Reading involving under 18s. This will be reported into the Serious Violence Steering Group. The Activities and Programme Group has produced Olly's Plan and supporting the delivery of activities to prevent serious violence.</p>

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Policy Committee

Confidential Financial Annex



21 July 2025

Title	2024/25 Quarter 4 Performance Report
Report author (name & job title)	Stuart Donnelly, Financial Planning & Strategy Manager Gavin Handford, Assistant Director of Policy, Change & Customer Services
Lead Councillor (name & title)	Councillor Emberson, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services & Resources

This report contains exempt information within Appendix 11 which is within the meaning of the following paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

And in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because:

Having applied the public interest test, it is in the Council's interests not to publish this information to protect the Council's financial and commercial position.

The confidential appendix (Appendix 11) is attached.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd – Company Closure
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Michael Graham, Monitoring Officer
Report author	Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Liz Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Policy Committee notes that the Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd is no longer required to meet the Council's property service needs. 2. That Policy Committee, acting as 49% shareholder of Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd, approves the closure of the Company following completion of all outstanding projects and contractual obligations. 3. That Policy Committee delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services to act as the shareholder representative with full authority to approve the Board resolution for the formal closure of Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd and to deal with all miscellaneous and consequential matters. 4. That Policy Committee notes that the closure process will commence following the Board resolution and completion of final accounts, with formal dissolution expected this summer.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report to the Policy Committee is in its capacity as shareholder of Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd (RHPP) (the Company).
- 1.2. This report seeks Policy Committee approval for the closure of RHPP following the completion of its strategic objectives and the Council's revised approach to property service delivery. Hampshire County Council has indicated that it is no longer able to supply the necessary capacity required to Reading BC through the Company. This decision has required Reading BC to seek alternative suppliers to meet its redevelopment and property needs.
- 1.3. RHPP was established in 2014 as a joint venture between Reading Borough Council (49% shareholding) and Hampshire County Council (51% shareholding) to deliver professional property services efficiently and cost-effectively.
- 1.4. Following a review of Hampshire's ability to continue to provide the professional services which have been delivered since 2014, notice was served on Reading BC to

terminate the Service Contract. As Hampshire County Council withdraw from providing these services to the Council there is no longer a need for the Company.

- 1.5. All outstanding projects and contractual obligations will be completed before closure commences. Handover of projects has been taking place since September 2024 with a view to ceasing most involvement from December 2024, however some projects did continue past the originally notified date. The closure process will be managed in an orderly fashion with all invoices having been processed for last financial year 2024-25 and year end accounts up to 31 March now in preparation.
- 1.6. It is anticipated that the Company will formally close once all final accounts have been approved and filed with Companies House. This is expected this summer.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Reading Borough Council and Hampshire County Council established a Shared Service Agreement for the delivery of professional property services in 2006 under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, whereby one local authority can place their staff at the disposal of another for the purpose of providing services.
- 2.2. Due to increased demand for services, particularly relating to the Primary School Places Programme, the authorities then established Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Limited in 2014 as a public-to-public partnership.
- 2.3. The partnership was established to enable the use of additional private sector capacity in capital projects and to provide professional property services including education capital programmes, historic building work, modular buildings, and condition surveys. Hampshire Property Services established a number of Professional Services Frameworks which were available to Reading BC through the partnership.
- 2.4. RHPP has successfully delivered numerous projects over its operational period, including education infrastructure, decarbonisation programmes, fabric improvement works, and mechanical and electrical upgrade programmes.
- 2.5. Following changes in Hampshire County Council's strategic priorities and service delivery models, a review was undertaken to assess the continued need for the partnership arrangement. Unfortunately, HCC considered that it was no longer able to offer the support to Reading BC, and contractual notice was given to Reading BC.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Board of Directors of RHPP comprises officers from both Reading Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, with governance arrangements set out in the Articles of Association.
- 3.2. The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services have served on this Board. There has been a vacancy on the Board since Frances Martin left the Council. With the subsequent strategic review by Hants and the termination of the Service Contract it was not considered necessary to make a further Reading BC appointment. Michael Graham, Assistant Director is the sole director for Reading BC at this time.
- 3.3. The partnership has successfully achieved its original objectives of:
 - Delivering cost-effective professional property services
 - Providing specialist expertise when required
 - Enabling flexible resource allocation based on workload
 - Generating demonstrable savings and value for money

Options Considered

- 3.4. No other options have been considered other than to close the Company. Without Hants CC providing support to Reading BC through the Company, it will be dormant. There will be an administrative burden to keep the Company open. It is highly unlikely

that Hants CC will seek to re-establish this partnership in the current context of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. (It should be noted that Hants is a priority area and has been invited to submit proposals for Devolution).

3.5. The recommended approach ensures that:

- All contractual obligations are met
- Final accounts are properly prepared and audited
- Closure is managed in compliance with all legal requirements

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

4.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

4.3. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

4.4. The closure of RHPP supports the strategic aim to "Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future" by:

- Streamlining governance arrangements
- Reducing administrative overhead
- Enabling more direct control over property services
- Aligning service delivery with current strategic priorities

4.5. The orderly closure ensures that all contractual obligations are met and that the Council's reputation as a reliable partner is maintained.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

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

5.2. The closure of RHPP will not have significant environmental implications.

5.3. Any ongoing environmental initiatives will be transferred to appropriate alternative delivery mechanisms.

5.4. The Council remains committed to its carbon reduction targets and environmental objectives.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. The closure of RHPP will have minimal direct impact on Reading residents as property services will continue to be delivered through alternative arrangements.

- 6.2. All ongoing projects will be completed, with new professional services contracted, ensuring no disruption to essential infrastructure and services.

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 (EqIA) is not relevant to the decision.
- 7.3. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation. Reading Borough Council has also agreed locally to add care experienced young people and adults to the list of people with protected characteristics to be considered in any the EqIA, but none of these groups will be affected by Hants CC withdrawal of Property Services and the closure of RHPP.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The closure of RHPP must be conducted in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and the Company's Articles of Association.
- 9.2. Board resolution will be required to approve the closure, followed by shareholder approval. Hants CC has already given a Shareholder Approval and the final sign-off is delegated to a Cabinet Member.
- 9.3. All statutory requirements for company dissolution will be met, including filing of final accounts and completion of Companies House procedures.
- 9.4. Legal advice has been obtained to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and contractual obligations. The Council has ensured that insurance remains in place through the Company and the Council for the projects which have been delivered through this partnership.
- 9.5. As part of the transition plan, all documents relating to the partnership projects have been transferred to Reading BC. This ensures that Reading BC will have access to all the relevant records for the future.
- 9.6. Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services has cleared these Legal Implications.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. There are no direct financial implications of closing RHPP. The costs of providing new professional services to Reading BC's building projects have been met from the usual Service and Capital budgets.
- 10.2. Professional fees for closure activities will be borne by Hants CC as part of the partnership arrangement.
- 10.3. Stephen MacDonald Strategic Finance Business Partner (DEGNS) has cleared these Financial Implications.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. The Council will via the Board approve the final accounts. It is expected that the Company will be able to be closed this summer.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

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Policy Committee

21 July 2025



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Brighter Futures for Children Ltd – Waiver for Articles
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mike Graham, Asst Director for Legal and Democratic Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Liz Terry, Leader of the Council
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Policy Committee notes that the Brighter Futures for Children Ltd service contract will end on 30 September 2025 with Children's Services transferring to the Council from 1 October 2025. 2. That as of 1 October 2025, and until the Company closes or a further decision is made by Policy Committee, the Council acting as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Ltd waives the following requirements of the Articles of Association: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. to appoint Independent Non-Executive Directors and a Non-Executive Board Chair 2.2. the minimum number of Directors, and the minimum numbers of Directors in each category 2.3. the quorum for a Directors meeting can be reduced from three to two 2.4. for an Independent Non-Executive Director or a Non-Executive Chair to always be present at Board meetings 2.5. for the meeting Chair to be either the Non-Executive Board Chair or a nominated Independent Non-Executive Director (Chair Nominee) 3. That Policy Committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources, to act on behalf of Policy Committee (as the representative of the sole member of the Company) from 1 October 2025 and deal with all company closure matters which are the responsibility of the members of the Company, in particular, to agree to the closure of the Company following the signing of the final accounts. 4. That Policy Committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources, to act on behalf of Policy Committee (as representative of the sole member of the Company) from 1 October 2025 in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillors for Children's Services and Education, to deal with any other miscellaneous matters, including Reserved Matters, which arise whether about the closure of the Company or otherwise.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report to the Policy Committee is in its capacity as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Ltd (BFfC).
- 1.2. This report asks Policy Committee to make decisions as the sole member (the “shareholder” function) regarding appointments to the Board of Directors in anticipation of the company closure.
- 1.3. On 28 January 2025, Council resolved to bring Children’s Services back in-house and end the BFfC service contract.
- 1.4. Since that time, consultation with the Board has taken place and a project plan initiated for the transition. As a result of this, acting under Council delegation, the Acting Executive Director of Resources has decided that the service contract will end at 23.59 on 30 September 2025 with staff transferring to the Council, and Children’s Services running in-house with Reading Borough Council from 00.00 on 1 October 2025.
- 1.5. In consultation with the Board, it is now expected that the non-executive directors will retire on, or shortly before, 30 September 2025. This will leave a gap in the governance arrangements for the Company. This paper seeks to address this by allowing the Company to operate with fewer directors until its formal closure.
- 1.6. It is planned that the company will close once all the formalities for filing of final accounts have been completed following year end (March 2026).

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. In August 2016, an Ofsted inspection report found the Council’s Children’s Social Care Services to be ‘inadequate’ and the Secretary of State for Education directed the Council to develop an alternative delivery model by September 2017.
- 2.2. The decision to outsource Reading’s Children’s Services (Social Care and Education) was made by Council on 16 October 2018. Council approved a set of recommendations to transfer the delivery of Children’s Services to BFfC, a separate company limited by guarantee of which the Council would be the sole member.
- 2.3. Delivery of the Council’s Children’s Services was established with a seven-year contract with BFfC which came into effect on 30th November 2018 and would otherwise expire on 1st April 2026.
- 2.4. Following a planned contract review in 2024 and the Council decision in January 2025, BFfC were given notice of the future for the contract by 31st March 2025. The company have agreed the earlier termination date of 30 September 2025.
- 2.5. Policy Committee now needs to consider some ancillary issues arising from the planned termination of the Service Contract and the subsequent closure of the Company.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Articles of Association (company constitution) have always envisaged a balanced Board with (i) a number of Executive Directors including a Managing Director (ii) an independent non-executive Chair (iii) a range of Non-Executive Directors and (iv) a Council Nominated Director.
- 3.2. Board composition was last reported to Policy Committee on April 2024 when the redundancy of the Executive Director for Resources role required some alterations to the Articles of Association.
- 3.3. Now we have a board made up of:
 - 3.3.1. an Independent Non-Executive Chair
 - 3.3.2. a company Executive Director – the Executive Director of Children’s Services
 - 3.3.3. Three Independent Non-Executive Directors

3.3.4. a Council appointed Director – the Director of Finance

- 3.4. Once the Service Contract finishes on 30 September 2025, the role of the Board will be considerably reduced. Essentially, the only role for the Board will be to oversee the preparation of the final accounts, filing these accounts at Companies House and then overseeing the formal closure process. The Independent Non-Executive Directors and Chair have indicated that they will retire on or shortly before 30 September. This will leave the Company with two Directors to oversee the formalities for the closure of the Company: the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Council nominated Director, the Director of Finance.

3.5. Options Proposed

- 3.6. In its capacity as the sole member of the Company, Policy Committee is asked to approve the arrangements to allow for the Company to deal with the final accounts and close efficiently and effectively with just two Directors:
- The current Articles of the Company, which specify a number of provisions to have a balanced board with Independent Non-Executive members etc, need to be disapplied. The easiest way to do this is for the member of the company (the Council acting through Policy Committee) to waive these requirements.
 - The Board will need a member approval in order to agree the Board resolution to close the company. The simplest way to achieve this is to delegate an officer to be the member representative and to agree to the formal closure of the Company.
- 3.7. No further options have been explored at this time.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
- Putting residents first
 - Building on strong foundations
 - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
 - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
 - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 4.3. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 4.4. The delivery of improved services to Children in Reading is covered by the Brighter Futures to Children Business Plan which was last approved by Policy Committee on 11 March 2024. The plan is published on the [Brighter Futures for Children website](#). The Company's vision 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.
- 4.5. Ensuring stability of the Board during this transition period and proper governance for the Company in the run up to its formal closure is key to ensure that the Council's decision to bring services back in house can be realised.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. There is nothing within this report which is relevant to the Council's climate change policies.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. There is no consultation or community engagement required on this proposal, nor has any been carried out voluntarily to help the report author consider the views of external parties in preparing 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 the decision. An EIA has not been carried out.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The Articles of Association of a Company form a statutory contract between the members of the Company, and its Board. In this case, there is only one member of the Company as the Council has 100% membership of BFfC which is a company limited by guarantee (as opposed to a company limited by shares). The Council, acting through Policy Committee is therefore entitled to waive the provisions of the Articles, which would in other circumstances provide a safeguard for the members about the running of the Company.
- 9.2. It is also open to the Council and sole member, to alter the Articles of Association to ensure that they reflect the reality of a Board consisting of two council officers acting as Directors. Given that the only business of the Company is now to safely complete the formalities for a closure of the Company, it is considered disproportionate and unnecessary to undertake this exercise.
- 9.3. Otherwise, all the relevant points have been addressed in the body of the report.
- 9.4. These Legal Implications have been approved by Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 10.2. These financial implications have been approved by the Strategic Business Partner

11. Timetable for Implementation

- If councillors are minded to support these recommendations then the requirements for a Board with a full complement of Independent Non-Executive Directors will cease on 1 October 2025.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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