



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Summons and Agenda 24 March 2026

**Chief Executive
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU**



Jackie Yates
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Reading RG1 2LU
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To: All Members of the Council

Email:
committee.services@reading.gov.uk

16 March 2026

Your contact is: Simon Hill / Richard Woodford - Committee Services

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Reading Borough Council to be held in the **Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading**, on **Tuesday, 24 March 2026 at 6.30 pm**, when it is proposed to transact the business specified in the Agenda enclosed herewith.

Yours faithfully

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive Mayor's Announcements.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

9 - 18

The Mayor to sign the Minutes of the proceedings of the previous Council Meeting.

4. **PETITIONS**

Public petitions may be submitted on any matter within the Council's responsibilities, or on issues affecting the Borough or its residents. Submissions should be emailed to committee.services@reading.gov.uk and must be received **no later than 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting.**

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Public questions may be submitted on any matter within the Council's responsibilities, or on issues affecting the Borough or its residents. Submissions should be emailed to committee.services@reading.gov.uk and must be received **no later than 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting.**

6. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions in accordance with Standing Order 10.

7. **COUNCIL PLAN UPDATE**

19 - 60

Report by Executive Director of Resources

Motions

8. **READING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT**

Councillor Dennis to move:

This Council notes the motion passed on 19 March 2024 in support of black women.

Racism, discrimination, and misogyny should not be tolerated in our society. We need more Black women and people from Black, Asian, and other minority communities in public life.

Reading is a diverse and vibrant Borough. We celebrate this diversity and recognise that it enriches our community and our organisation. Racism - whether overt or subtle, individual or institutional - has no place in Reading. We condemn racism unequivocally and commit to playing a leading role in making Reading an anti-racist town.

This Council resolves to adopt the below anti-racism statement and publish it on the Council's website to demonstrate commitment as an anti-racist place to work and live.

Anti-racism statement

It is not enough to simply avoid racism; we must be actively anti-racist. This means identifying and dismantling barriers to equality, challenging injustice wherever we see it, and embedding anti-racist practices into our structures, systems, and culture. Racism can take many forms - from conscious, intentional acts to unconscious bias and systemic discrimination. Without understanding these root causes, we cannot dismantle the structures that perpetuate inequality.

Our principles

- **Action, not words:** Becoming an anti-racist organisation means making real changes in our workplaces and communities.
- **Utilising our influence:** We will use our position, influence and partnerships to drive forward our ambition in making Reading an anti-racist place to live and work.
- **Transparency and accountability:** We will publish progress and invite feedback to ensure lasting change.

Our Commitments

1. Speak Out and Act Together

- Zero tolerance for racism across the organisation and in our partnerships.
- Provide support to victims of racism and take a lead in inclusive community conversations, wherever we are present, to build understanding and unity.
- Challenge racist behaviour and address microaggressions and subtle bias.

2. Change Systems and Structures

- Review policies, procedures, and services to ensure they are inclusive and anti-racist.
- Tackle institutional and structural racism, ensuring leaders exhibit moral leadership.
- Put in place measures to eliminate gaps in outcomes between racial and ethnic groups.

3. Listen, Learn, and Educate

- **Promote racial literacy** by supporting community workshops, public campaigns, and allyship initiatives that build shared understanding of privilege and inequality
- Champion inclusive leadership in the community by

working with local organisations, schools, and partners to embed collective responsibility for equality across all our areas of influence.

4. Celebrate and Amplify Voices

- Actively promote and celebrate the history and achievements of Black, Asian, and other minority communities.
- Foster meaningful relationships across communities to ensure everyone is seen, heard, and valued.

WEBCASTING NOTICE

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

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

Present: Councillor Mpofu-Coles (Mayor);

Councillors Gittings (Deputy Mayor), Asare, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Cresswell, Cross, Davies, Dennis, Eden, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Griffith, Goss, Hacker, Hornsby-Smith, Hoskin, Juthani, Keane, Keeping, Lanzoni, Leng, Lovelock, McElroy, McEwan, McGoldrick, McGrother, Mitchell, Moore, Naz, Nikulina, O'Connell, Rowland, R Singh, DP Singh, Stevens, Tarar, Terry, Thompson, White, Woodward and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors McCann and Williams

41. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

'Today marks exactly four years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The losses felt by families as a direct result of the conflict are unimaginable. I am sure Councillors on all sides of the Chamber will join me in sending our prayers to people who have lost loved ones, and for those who will do so for as long as this conflict continues.

The invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 also prompted a humanitarian crisis which saw hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians forced to uproot and leave their homes to seek safety for their families. Many came here to the United Kingdom and included in that number are many who sought sanctuary in our town. At the time, the empathy and generosity of Reading residents shone through, as we all knew it would. Residents of the town welcomed Ukrainian citizens seeking refuge, embraced them and supported them to become valued members of the town's community.

Just under four years ago, many of you were sat in this Chamber as we agreed a motion which condemned the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and agreed to work with the incredible volunteers at the Reading Ukrainian Community Centre to do everything that we can to support those seeking refuge. That sentiment remains as true today as it was four years ago, and we can only hope that for the people of Ukraine, their sacrifices are not in vain and that peace comes soon.

I would also ask the Council to remember, and pay tribute to, two of our former Councillors who have recently passed away.

Ronald John Williams was a Reading Councillor between 1979 and 1987, first elected to the old Castle Ward and then to Katesgrove. He lived in Tilehurst and worked at the University of Reading.

Chris Harris was a Councillor for Tilehurst between 2007 and 2011. He was a member of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and Parenting Panel, and a Policy Advisor for the Education & Children's Services portfolio in the 2010-11 coalition administration. He

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also represented the Council on the Fire Authority for several years. Chris will be sorely missed, especially for his warmth, sharp wit and sense of humour.

Councillors please will you join me in standing for a minute's silence.'

The Mayor also invited Councillor Terry to pay tribute to Councillor Sarah Hacker, who was attending her last full Council meeting before standing down at the 2026 local elections.

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

43. PETITIONS

Peter Burt presented a petition as follows:

Reading Borough Council – No Budget Cuts

We have had enough of austerity and public spending cuts while the government helps billionaires to get richer and richer.

We call upon Reading Borough Council and other Berkshire Councils to reverse budget cuts, set a needs-based budget, and publicly demand the Labour government to provide adequate funds for local Councils.

RESPONSE by Councillor Terry (Leader of the Council):

I think it's really important that we are clear that we are not in a period of austerity. The early years of austerity following the 2010 General Election saw cash cuts in core council funding, whereas local government is now seeing a growth in funding, with Reading having a £6.2m increase over the next three years on top of the £4.3m we got last year.

The Council did, however, lobby the Government for greater financial flexibilities as part of our response to the provisional funding settlement in December.

The budget presented to Council tonight invests significantly in frontline services, with £4.7m extra for Adult Social Care and £3.8m for Children's Services, with the additional funding being targeted at the areas of greatest need. And this is on top of the more than £10m we were able to invest in those services last year. We also continue to invest in the things that are the highest priority for the people of Reading, including more social housing and improving our roads and public transport.

Reading Borough Council is able to make those investments due to the additional funding we have received and our own prudent management of our finances.

That is not austerity.

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44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions on the following matters were submitted by members of the public:

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Peter Burt	Government Spending on Local Authorities	Cllr Terry
2.	Peter Burt	Council Tax	Cllr Terry
3.	Jo Musominari	School Streets	Cllr Ennis
4.	Sinead Gibson	Deaths and Domestic Abuse	Cllr Rowland
5.	Jacqui Mukono	Accommodation for Survivors of Domestic Abuse	Cllr Rowland
6.	Samuel Fisher	No Cuts Needs Based Budget	Cllr Terry

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

45. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by councillors:

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Councillor McElroy	Council Funding	Cllr Terry
2.	Councillor R Singh	Rough Sleeping	Cllr Yeo

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

46. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE 2026/27 BUDGET

The Director of Finance submitted a report on the robustness of the Council's 2026/27 budget.

The report noted that the process of setting a balanced budget on an annual basis was underpinned by the professional judgement of the Chief Finance Officer, who was legally required to write a Section 25 statement reporting to Council the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Leng and CARRIED:

Resolved –

That the Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Council's 2026/27 budget and indicative budgets for the subsequent two financial years

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2027/28 and 2028/29 or 2029/30 be noted and the opinion contained therein be taken into account in consideration of Items 47-50 below.

47. 2026/27 BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 - 2028/29

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out for approval the 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The report also provided an update on the results of the budget engagement exercise, changes to the Budget arising from the publication of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27 published on 9 February 2026, as well as other changes that had arisen since the Policy Committee had recommended the Budget to Council at its meeting on 16 February 2026 (Minute 59 refers). The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 2 - Summary of the Proposed General Fund Budget 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 3 - General Fund Revenue Budget by Service 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 4 - Detailed General Fund Budget Changes 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 5 - The Housing Revenue Account Proposed Budget 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 6 - The Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Proposals 2026/27;
- Appendix 7 - The General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes 2026/27 - 2028/29;
- Appendix 8 - The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2026/27;
- Appendix 9 - Fees and Charges Proposals from April 2026;
- Appendix 10 - Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget Proposals;
- Appendix 11 - Summary of the Response to the Budget Engagement.

The report noted that the 2026/27 Budget and MTFs 2026/27-2028/29 reflected the changing landscape in which Councils were now operating, including the impact of funding reform and the announcement of a three-year Local Government funding settlement from Central Government. The most significant impacts on the Budget and the MTFs included demand pressures and placement costs in adult and children's social care and Special Education Needs arising from increased demand, complexity and market challenges.

The 2026/27 Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy recommended to Council by Policy Committee on 16 February 2026 had been based on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement published on 17 December 2025, and the report to Council had been updated to reflect announcements made as part of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement published on 9 February 2026. The updates reflected an increase of £1.347m in 2026/27, rising to £2.125m in 2028/29 in the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant which had enabled the removal of previously planned savings in homelessness support services, and confirmation that the Government would fund 90% of the accumulated High Needs Block SEND deficit as at 31 March 2026, subject to the Department for Education's approval of a local SEND reform plan. Based on current forecasts this one-off grant was estimated to reduce the Council's cumulative deficit by £44m, with the Council needing to fund the remaining 10% of the deficit in 2028/29.

The report explained that the underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy was to deliver a balanced and affordable 2026/27 budget, to ensure that the Council's finances were robust and sustainable over the medium term and that, in the longer term, the

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Council's finances were not reliant on the unsustainable use of one-off reserves or funding. The Strategy was informed by the Council's Vision "to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success" as well as the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

The report set out the budget and MTFs assumptions which included Council Tax increases of 2.99% plus an Adult Social Care precept of 2.0% for each year 2026/27-2028/29, delivery of £17.935m of efficiencies and increased income across 2026/27-2028/29, a net draw from earmarked reserves totalling £7.302m in 2026/27, a housing rent increase for 2026/27 of 4.8% in line with approved government policy of CPI + 1% and rent convergence starting at £1 per week in 2028/29 increasing to £2 per week in 2029/30, General Fund capital investment of £140.858m and Housing Revenue Account capital investment of £232.141m over the five-year period 2026/27 to 2030/31, and an initial allocation of £1.500m of transformation funding for each year from 2026/27 to 2029/30 to support delivery of efficiency savings assumed within the MTFs, taking the total transformation funding to £29.229m across the whole life of the Delivery Fund.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Leng and CARRIED:

Resolved -

That, having due regard of the results of the budget engagement exercise (as outlined in Appendix 11 of the report) and Residents Survey, the 2026/27 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-10 be approved, whilst noting the following:

- (1) The Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £199.662m for 2026/27 and an increase in the band D Council Tax for the Council of 2.99% plus an additional 2.00% Adult Social Car Precept, representing a band D Council Tax of £2,223.18 per annum, an increase of £105.66 per annum excluding precepts from Police and Fire, as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report;**
- (2) The proposed savings and efficiencies of £9.657m and increased income and fees and charges of £2.366m, required to achieve a balanced budget for 2026/27 as set out in Appendices 2 and 3;**
- (3) The overall savings and efficiencies of £14.781m and increased income, fees and charges of £3.154m currently proposed within the MTFs, and gross three-year growth changes to service and corporate budgets of £68.401m as set out in Appendices 3 and 4;**
- (4) The budgeted net drawdown from earmarked reserves in 2026/27 totalling £7.302m, as set out in paragraph 10.2;**
- (5) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2026/27 of £58.925m as set out in Appendix 5 and the average increase of 4.8% in social dwelling rents from April 2026, and the move to full cost recovery for landlord cleaning and lighting service;**

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- (6) The allocation of £124.259m Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as set out in Appendix 6;
- (7) The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes totalling £140.858m and £232.141m respectively over the next five years, as set out in Appendices 7a and 7b;
- (8) The Strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver future transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix 8;
- (9) The Fees and Charges set out in Appendix 9;
- (10) The Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix 10.

48. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026/27

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out for approval at Appendix 1 the Capital Strategy 2026/27.

The report noted that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy' (CIPFA) revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021 required local authorities to produce a Capital Strategy on an annual basis which must be approved by Council. The Capital Strategy 2026/27 attached to the report at Appendix 1 met the statutory requirements and had been updated where required. There were no material changes from the Capital Strategy 2025/26.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Leng and CARRIED:

Resolved -

- (1) That the Capital Strategy 2026/27, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) That the updated Action Plan that formed Annex D of the Capital Strategy be noted, together with the associated financial implications.

49. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27

The Director of Finance submitted a report a report setting out at Appendix 1 the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) 2026/27 for approval.

The report noted that the TMSS 2026/27 reflected the Council's Capital Programme 2026/27 – 2028/29 and set out the parameters for the Council's planned treasury activity during 2026/27 under which the Council's Treasury Team would manage day-to-day activity. The report provided information on borrowing, investments, approved investments and counterparties and risk controls and noted that the successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk were central to the Strategy.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Leng and CARRIED:

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Resolved –

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Section 2 to the report;
- (2) That the Capital Prudential Indicators be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Section 3 to the report;
- (3) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2026/27 be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Section 4 to the report;
- (4) That the Borrowing Strategy for 2026/27 be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Section 5 to the report;
- (5) That the Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27 be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Section 6 to the report;
- (6) That the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators be approved as set out in Appendix 1 Annex 1 to the report;
- (7) That the change to the calculation of apportioning interest to the HRA be noted, as set out in Appendix 1 Sections 6.24 to 6.28.

50. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2026/27

The Director of Finance submitted a report seeking approval for the calculations for determining the Council's Council Tax requirement for the year 2026/27 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The report also set out the Council Tax amounts for each property valuation band in the Borough including precepts notified from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The report noted that the calculation of Council Tax involved several stages, and the Local Government Finance Act 1992 required figures to be calculated including and excluding precepts. The Council, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, set its own band D amount by dividing its Council Tax requirement (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report on the 2026/26 Budget - item 47 above refers) by the agreed number of band D equivalent properties (its Tax Base). This calculation was set out in Table 1 in the report. Table 2 showed 2026/27 Council Tax by Property Valuation Band A-G, and Table 3 showed the overall 2026/27 Council Tax by Property Valuation Band Including the Major Preceptors of the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Leng and CARRIED:

Resolved -

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- (1) That the following amounts that had been calculated for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be agreed:**
 - (a) £532,709,000 Gross Revenue Expenditure being the estimated aggregate expenditure of the Council in accordance with section 31A (2) of the Act;**
 - (b) £398,533,000 Gross Revenue Income being the estimated aggregate income of the Council for the items set out in section 31A (3) of the Act;**
 - (c) £134,176,400 Net Revenue Expenditure being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as the Council's Council Tax Requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in section 31A (4) of the Act);**
 - (d) £2,223.18 Reading Borough Council band D Council Tax being the amount at (iii) above (Item R) divided by the Council's tax base 60,353.38 (Item T) calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, representing an increase of 4.99% in the Council's own tax;**
- (2) That the net tax base of 60,353.38 band D equivalent properties (being the gross tax base adjusted for an assumed collection rate) for 2026/27 as agreed by Council on 27 January 2026 be noted;**
- (3) That it be noted that the band D Council Tax for Reading Borough Council was £2,223.18 as shown in Table 2 of the report;**
- (4) That it be noted that, including the Fire and Police authority precepts; the Overall Council Tax by property valuation band was as set out in Table 3 of the report.**

51. AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Further to Minute 20 of Audit & Governance Committee on 20 January 2026, the Director of Finance submitted a covering report on behalf of the Council's External Auditor, KPMG, which had attached their Annual Report, providing a summary of the findings and key issues arising from the 2024/25 audit.

The report had been prepared in line with the requirements set out in the Code of Audit Practice by the National Audit Office and set out a summary of KPMG's conclusions in respect of their audit responsibilities. In relation to the Council's 2024/25 Accounts, KPMG would issue a disclaimed opinion as part of the nationally agreed process to bring audit opinions back up to date. The significant financial statement audit risks identified were valuation of land and buildings, valuation of investment property, management override of controls and valuation of post-retirement benefit obligations, details of which were described in the Auditor's report. There were not any significant inconsistencies between the content of the narrative report and KPMG's knowledge of the Council. In addition, regarding Value

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for Money, the Council was found to have appropriate arrangements in place with no identified significant weaknesses in respect of arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Emberson and seconded by Councillor Terry and CARRIED:

Resolved –

That the Auditor's Annual Report for 2024/25, as attached to the report, be noted.

52. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report setting out for approval at Appendix 1 the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.

The report noted that Council was responsible for ensuring that financial management was adequate and effective and that the Council had a sound system of internal control, which facilitated the effective exercise of the Council's functions and included arrangements for the management of risk. The Accounts and Audit Regulations required local authorities to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement each financial year, to accompany the authority's financial statements. The Annual Governance Statement reflected the latest guidance from CIPFA/SOLACE and was a record of the overall effectiveness of governance arrangements demonstrating how key requirements had been met.

The report explained that the statement covered the period up to the publication of the accounts and sought authority to make any minor amendments that might be needed before then.

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Emberson and seconded by Councillor Terry and CARRIED:

Resolved –

- (1) That the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 be approved;**
- (2) That the Director of Legal & Democratic Services be authorised to make minor amendments to the Statement, in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive, prior to signature by the Leader and Chief Executive.**

53. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out at Appendix 1 the Statement of Accounts 2024/25 for approval.

The report noted that the Council was responsible for approving the annual Statement of Accounts. This included placing reliance on the work of the Council's Internal Audit Team, the external auditor KPMG and the work of the Audit and Governance Committee to focus on

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the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements that were in place, and that any issues arising were managed and resolved by the Council's senior managers.

The report stated that KPMG was expected to issue a 'disclaimed' audit opinion by the statutory backstop date of 27 February 2026 in line with the Government's approach to recovering from the national backlog in audit opinions. Any adjustments identified during the audit had been corrected, and there were no matters arising from the public inspection period which was now closed.

The report explained that the accounts were disclaimed purely as a result of KPMG having insufficient time to provide assurance on 'unaudited' opening balances and split of reserves before the backstop date. A full audit for 2024/25 had been undertaken and there were no significant issues arising.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Emberson and seconded by Councillor Terry and CARRIED:

Resolved –

- (1) That the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts be approved;**
- (2) That the Director of Finance (as S.151 Officer) be authorised to make minor amendments to the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources.**

(The meeting closed at 9.10 pm)

Council

24 March 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Council Plan Update
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director of Resources
Report author	Alex Wylde, Policy and Performance Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Liz Terry
Council priority	All
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Council Plan Update 2026-27 (appended) be adopted. 2. That, if adopted, the Council Plan Update 2026-27 be published on the Council's website.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. A new Council Plan for the period 2025-28 was published in 2025. As in previous years, a review has been undertaken to ensure that the Council Plan remains up to date.
- 1.2. The Council Plan Update proposed for publication is included at Appendix One and a change log at Appendix Two.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council Plan sets out the Council's vision, priorities and objectives for the next three years, together with the projects to deliver them and the measures that we will use to measure our progress. It provides the framework for prioritisation of resources and is used to inform Service Planning and performance objectives for our staff. The activities set out in the Plan are aligned with the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.2. The Council Plan is structured around five components:
 - Vision: which sets out what we want for the future of Reading. This is unchanged from the previous Corporate Plan and is as follows: "Our Vision is to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success."
 - Priorities: the Plan includes 5 high-level areas of focus over the next three years to deliver the vision:
 - 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.
- Objectives: these are the specific outcomes we want to deliver over the next 3 years.
- Projects: these are the activities we are undertaking to deliver the objectives. Progress is reported quarterly to Policy Committee.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): these are the metrics that tell us the progress we are making in delivering our objectives and how well our day-to-day services are performing. Each KPI has an associated target and performance against these is reported to Policy Committee quarterly.

3. The Proposal

3.1. A review of the Council Plan has been undertaken, focusing on:

- Factual updates to sections on key achievements in 2025, resident services, and the Council's budget.
- Council Plan projects – updated to reflect any completed projects, those that are or will become business as usual, or new projects in 26/27.
- KPIs – updated to ensure these are still the correct measures going forward and add results for 24/25. Several KPIs have been updated to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework.

3.2. Updates proposed are set out at Appendix Two. Data and KPI results for 2024/25 have also been updated.

3.3. The Council Plan Update proposed for publication is at Appendix One.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. This Council Plan update will refresh the projects and KPIs used to track delivery of the priorities set out in the Council Plan 2025-28.

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 Council Plan includes priorities related to our commitment to environmental and climate improvements for Reading. It does not, however, seek to replicate in full the commitments and activities that are set out in more detailed plans already adopted by the Council (e.g. the Reading Climate Strategy).

6. Community Engagement

6.1. A public engagement exercise ran from 5 to 23 February 2025 on the vision, priorities, and objectives in the Council Plan, as well as our principles and values. Local partners, including the VCS, were also invited to share their views. A dedicated engagement meeting with the VCS took place on 19 February 2025.

- 6.2. As only limited amendments are proposed, no separate engagement was undertaken to inform the update. Consultation and engagement, including the most recent resident survey, continues to inform service planning.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The Council Plan sets the overall priorities of Reading Borough Council for the next three years and does not in itself introduce any new policies or activities. The Plan aims to reduce inequalities between groups that share protected characteristics and advance equality of opportunity. This is articulated in the Plan's overall vision "to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success" and in the specific programmes of work set out. Individual projects set out in the Council Plan will have separate Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. None.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The Constitution of the Council sets out the policy framework of the Council which includes the Council Plan and performance management framework. The Council Plan includes the Council's equality objectives which we are required to set by law (Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011).

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The Council Plan has been developed in parallel with the budget and only includes projects and commitments that are funded and consistent with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. If agreed at Council, the Council Plan Update will be published on the Council's website.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices –

- 1. Council Plan Update 2026-27**
- 2. Change Log**

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**Investing in
Reading's Future**
Council Plan 2025-28
March 2026 Update



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Welcome from the Leader

Reading remains one of the UK's most successful towns and cities and, in economic terms, it continues to punch above its weight. We know that because studies say so and people want to live, work and visit Reading.

Despite the financial challenges facing every local authority, the Council has a long and proud history of investing in our town. Our priority remains to help Reading fulfil its potential so that all our residents and businesses can share in the benefits of its success. The best way to achieve that is to continue to invest in Reading.

So, we are continuing with the biggest investment in new council housing in a generation. 421 new council homes since 2014 with firm plans for another 420. By 2029 we aim to have built over 800 new council homes and have ambitious plans in progress to deliver even more over time. We are also making substantial investments to existing council properties, creating better and more energy efficient homes for our tenants.

The cost of caring for the most vulnerable members of our community continues to rise due to increased demand and rising costs. In response, the Council is investing a further £4.7 million in Adult Social Care and an additional £3.8 million in Children's Services day to day revenue budgets this year. To reduce costs and improve provision, we are also investing £8.2 million in new facilities and homes for vulnerable adults and older people, two of which will open later this year, and £2.8 million in new council-run children's homes, which will enable us to reduce reliance on expensive external providers. These are major investments which ensure we can continue to support the most vulnerable members of society.

In addition, we are opening four new Best Start in Life Family Hubs. We know that Sure Start made a significant difference to long term positive outcomes for children from the very beginning of their independent lives, reducing hospitalisations, enhancing educational achievement and supporting families.

The opening of the Council's modern new front door and Civic Reception in January 2026 will be closely followed by the opening of a flagship new



Cllr Liz Terry, Leader of the Council

library at the Civic Centre this summer, and work continues on the creation of the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon, building a flexible new performance space for our community which is scheduled to open in 2027.

We are continuing with our record investment in new road surfaces, across hundreds of main roads and residential roads, streetlighting, road safety schemes, new playgrounds and new vehicles to enable us to push on our recycling rates even higher. The Council's recent major investment in modern new leisure facilities and improving existing facilities continues to reap dividends, with Rivermead recently named one of the best facilities in the UK.

Without question, the coming years will see major changes for Local Government, with both Reorganisation and Devolution on the horizon. As a Council we will continue to fight Reading's corner so that we can deliver the biggest possible benefits for our residents.

This Council Plan tells the story of how we intend to achieve these things and deliver the services our residents rely on, whilst ensuring we remain financially sustainable because that is the only way we can continue to invest in Reading's future.

Our Achievements

We are proud of the achievements and investments we have delivered in 2025 and will continue to build on these successes. In the last year we have:



Resurfaced 60 sections of major roads in Reading, with 80% of our residential roads now classified as being in good condition.



Invested £375k in a new skatepark in Whitley as well as delivering new playgrounds for Emmer Green (£350k) and Victoria Park (£462k) which opened ahead of schedule.



Changed waste and recycling collection days for all households in the borough to create a more efficient and reliable service, expand capacity in preparation for kerbside glass recycling, and meet demand from population and housing growth.



Added eight new electric buses to our fleet of 24 new zero-emission double-deckers, using £1.3m in funding from the Department for Transport.



Opened our new Civic Centre customer space in January 2026 with the state of the art Central Library due to open in June 2026.



Approved a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Reading to help tackle anti-social behaviour in the town centre, which will come into force in March 2026.



Received an 'outstanding' rating for Rivermead Leisure Centre from Quest, Sport England's quality scheme for sport and leisure.



Provided 30 Additionally Resourced Provision Places in schools, so that now 269 children with Special Educational Needs are getting the support they need to thrive in mainstream education.





Provided 519 new daily wraparound childcare places, with every mainstream primary school in Reading now offering some form of wraparound childcare.



Brought our children's services (formally Brighter Futures for Children) back in-house which will provide the Council with better direct control of Children's Services and improve collaborative working.



Achieved a 'Good' Ofsted rating for childcare for all Council-run nurseries in Reading and Pinecroft residential home for children and young people was rated as 'Outstanding' in all areas by Ofsted.



Delivered 154 new homes under the Local Authority New Build scheme in 2025 and started work on 30 new affordable homes in Dwyer Road, as well as adding 16 new homes to the housing register at Watchman's Place. This is part of a £37.6 million programme of investment.



Filled 1,407 potholes.



Secured £150k match funding from the DfE to develop a small local children's home for children with complex needs, with a total investment of £1.7 million for 3 additional children's homes.



Submitted a proposal to Government to change the boundary between Reading and West Berkshire and keep the whole of Tilehurst in Reading, following West Berkshire's proposal to join Oxfordshire Councils and form a new Ridgeway Council. This will improve service delivery and address the democratic deficit experienced by residents who use Reading services but pay Council Tax to West Berkshire.



Awarded grants and funding totalling £1.4 million to Reading's Voluntary Sector and community groups, supporting the vital work they do in our town.



Working with partners achieved 294 successful preventions of homelessness.



Provided 4,000 Reading households with cost-of-living vouchers as part of the Council's new Household Support Fund.



Worked with 12 other councils in the region to agree and submit to government an expression of interest to create a mayoral strategic authority (MSA) within the Thames Valley. This will enable powers and funding to be devolved from central government to be exercised at a more local level.

Residents' Survey Results 2025

In 2025 we conducted a survey with a representative sample of 1,000 Reading residents about satisfaction with the Council and the services we provide. Key findings were:

- **63%** were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the way Reading Borough Council runs things overall (compared to 56% nationally)
- **45%** agreed that Reading Borough Council provides value for money (compared to 36% nationally)
- **64%** agreed that Reading Borough Council keeps residents informed (compared to 47% nationally)





Your Services

The Council is proud to deliver a wide range of services for our town, including:



Helping those who are older or living with disability, or physical or mental illness, to maintain their independence and well-being. This includes residential and nursing care, supported living, care at home, and preventative services. In 2025 we provided support to **1,167** residents, with **491** going on to receive long-term support. This included **121** new admissions to nursing or residential care.

Ensuring we have the right school places to meet the needs of our population, including provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Supporting 2,088 children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

Providing fantastic culture and leisure opportunities, including loaning out 484,796 books last year through our libraries and receiving 1,542,342 visits to our leisure centres.



Working with children and families who need support and protecting vulnerable children from harm. Across the year we delivered services to **1,938** children through our early years and youth work. Our children's social care teams work with **3,533** children and undertook over **1,100** child protection enquiries last year resulting in **624** children being placed on a protection plan. We have **294** children in our care, mostly in fostering placements.

Providing Town Centre Services to make it cleaner and safer for residents and visitors, working closely with the Police and the Business Improvement District.

Managing traffic, parking and public transport services across the town and delivering improvements to roads, cycling, and walking infrastructure.

Maintaining 55 parks and open spaces and 58 play facilities for Reading's children – mowing the grass, tending plants and trees, maintaining play equipment, protecting our nature reserves, and maximising rewilding and biodiversity in our parks.

Working with key stakeholders through the Water Safety Partnership to make safety improvements to our waterways.



Looking after streets and neighbourhoods, emptying **6,851,873** bins last year and maintaining **18,500** streetlights and illuminated signs.

Processing over 59,800 tonnes of household waste a year, including 10,000 tonnes of kerbside mixed dry recycling, 5,400 tonnes of garden waste, and 7,000 tonnes of food waste.

Providing nearly 7,000 affordable, good quality Council-owned homes to tenants and providing housing advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness to over 627 households in 2025.

Providing high quality education and training for nearly 1,510 adults a year across 302 courses through New Directions College.

Providing a Public Health and well-being service to help prevent and reduce health inequalities, delivering a range of public health services, including sexual health services and services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse.

Processing over 1,000 planning applications a year, including major developments.

Co-ordinating and influencing the delivery of strategic infrastructure to meet Reading's needs and accommodate its growth.

Supporting thousands of families to say goodbye to loved ones through our burials and cremation service and presenting 2,194 people with their new British Citizenship certificates.

Providing Housing Benefit and Council Tax support and delivering a broad range of advice and support for residents and businesses experiencing financial difficulties, in conjunction with our voluntary and community sector partners.

Managing important internal functions, including the Council's finances, legal processes, and contracts with suppliers, ensuring that the Council as an organisation runs efficiently and effectively.

Providing electoral registration services, registering 15,863 people to vote.

Responding to 415,370 enquiries a year through our Customer Fulfilment Centre, from Council Tax enquiries to housing repairs.



Administering important life events with **8,942** registrations for births, deaths, and marriages last year.

Supporting 175 apprentices and 36 work experience students in 2025 on our corporate programme.

In partnership with health and the voluntary sector delivering 1,794 NHS Health Checks in the community.

Providing temporary accommodation for 484 households.

Our Vision and Priorities

Our Vision is to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success.

To deliver this vision we are focusing on the following five priorities over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28:

Promote more equal communities in Reading



Secure Reading's economic and cultural success



Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint



Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children



Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future



Our Principles and Values

In delivering the priorities set out in this Council Plan, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

Putting residents first

Being accessible, responsive, and working in the interests of Reading residents.

Building on strong foundations

Delivering the core services that create a safer, cleaner, greener Reading, so the town can grow towards an exciting future.

Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities

Recognising Reading's diversity and rich culture as one of our greatest strengths, we will work with all of Reading's communities across all the Council's services.

Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents

Working closely with residents, businesses, and local groups to collectively achieve great outcomes for Reading.

Being proudly ambitious for Reading

Taking pride in Reading's heritage, history, active community, and achievements, and using them to bring people together.

Within the Council we are driven by the values of TEAM Reading:

Work **Together** as one team:

We work together as one inclusive team with colleagues and partners to deliver great services.

Drive **Efficiency**:

We drive efficiency and value for money in everything we do.

Be **Ambitious**:

We are ambitious in our plans and in what we want to achieve.

Make a **Difference** to Reading:

We are here to make a positive difference to all residents, our diverse communities and the businesses of Reading.



Promote more equal communities in Reading



Reading is a successful and prosperous town, yet also contains small areas of deprivation. Life expectancy in the poorest parts of Reading is nearly 8 years lower than in the most affluent areas. There remains a stubborn and significant gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged children and their peers. We want to do more to work with Thames Valley Police and other partners to tackle issues such as crime and antisocial behaviour which remain persistent in some parts of our town.

We want Reading to be a place where inequality within our communities is reduced – whether that be differences in health, access to economic opportunities, or the educational attainment of our children. We will work with partners to ensure that services and support are available to those residents that need them, and that everyone shares in Reading's success.

We will:

- Promote best practice across Reading's schools, helping to improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.
- Reduce inequalities in health and life expectancy through our Public Health service.
- Tackle social and economic inequalities in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.
- Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, working with Thames Valley Police and other partners.
- Work with partners to prevent homelessness.
- Develop and launch our approach to anti-racism for Reading.

Objectives and projects:

Objective	Project
Promote best practice across Reading's schools, helping to improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.	Deliver the Education Strategy to reduce education inequality and increase school attendance and attainment for those groups who experience the most disadvantage.
Reduce inequalities in health and life expectancy through our Public Health service.	Deliver support to help people stop smoking, particularly those working in professions with higher rates of smoking.
	Develop approaches to ensure that health and wellbeing is considered across all policy areas.
Tackle social and economic inequalities in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.	Deliver the voluntary and community sector compact action plan, including small grants funding.
	Develop and deliver our place-based approach to enhance access to education, skills, and training.
	Provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Crisis & Resilience Fund.
Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, working with Thames Valley Police and other partners.	Support the Community Safety Partnership and facilitate Safer Neighbourhood Forums to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
	Support plans to tackle knife crime, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.
Work with partners to prevent homelessness.	Continue work to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Secure Reading's economic and cultural success



Reading is a national economic powerhouse. It is already the principal economic centre of the Thames Valley, a major retail and leisure destination, and a key transport interchange with access to one of the strongest employment markets in Europe. We want to build on the success of the town and ensure that everyone in Reading shares in that success.

Over the coming years there will be significant opportunities to secure additional powers over areas like economic development by working across Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley area through a new Strategic Authority. In December 2025, we submitted a letter to government jointing with 12 other councils in the region expressing our interest in creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority to secure new powers and funding for the Thames Valley.

In our 2025 Residents' Survey, access to affordable and decent housing was identified as a major issue, particularly among young people. House prices in Reading are now 9.5 times average household incomes, making home ownership unattainable for many people. We will ensure that high-quality and affordable new homes continue to be built in Reading, including over 400 new Council homes, along with the infrastructure to support new development.

Vibrant cultural offerings and our town's heritage are integral to the town's success in uniting our communities and encouraging people to visit, live, and work in Reading. We will build on these strengths by delivering exciting new developments like the new Central Library and Studio Theatre at the Hexagon.

We will:

- Deliver new energy efficient council homes and improve tenant satisfaction with social housing.
- Enable the delivery of an average of 825 high-quality new homes a year in Reading, including affordable homes, along with the infrastructure to support new development.
- Promote the economic success of Reading by working with Councils across Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley.
- Maximise the benefits available for Reading from opportunities from the Government's plans to devolve power and funding to local areas.
- Continue to deliver quality cultural and leisure services and facilitate exciting improvements to our cultural offer through grant-funded projects.

Objectives and projects:

Objective	Project
<p>Deliver new energy efficient council homes and improve tenant satisfaction with social housing.</p>	<p>Through the Local Authority New Build programme, deliver 420 new homes at Dee Park and other sites by March 2029.</p>
	<p>Complete the acquisition of Homes for Reading housing stock into the Council by the end of 2027 and re-let the homes to households on the Council's Housing Register.</p>
	<p>Increase the number and timeliness of repairs delivered by our Housing Repairs & Property Services teams.</p>
<p>Enable the delivery of an average of 825 high-quality new homes a year in Reading, including affordable homes, along with the infrastructure to support new development.</p>	<p>Progress an updated Local Plan towards adoption to provide a framework to guide decision making on the planning applications for homes and infrastructure.</p>
	<p>Introduce the Additional Licensing Scheme in the private rented sector to improve housing conditions for tenants.</p>
<p>Promote the economic success of Reading by working with Councils across Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley.</p>	<p>In partnership with other Berkshire councils, facilitate the Connect to Work programme to support residents with long term health conditions into work.</p>
<p>Maximise the benefits available for Reading from opportunities from the Government's plans to devolve power and funding to local areas.</p>	<p>Work in partnership to secure devolution for Reading and the wider area through a new Mayoral Strategic Authority.</p>
<p>Continue to deliver quality cultural and leisure services and facilitate exciting improvements to our cultural offer through grant-funded projects.</p>	<p>Deliver a new Civic Centre, including a new Central Library and improved Registrars and Customer provision.</p>
	<p>Deliver the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon.</p>
	<p>Improve the technology offer and access to library services funded through the Libraries Investment Fund.</p>

Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint



Reading's economic success is driving significant development and population growth. By 2041 the number of households in central Reading is forecast to increase by 161% - an increase of nearly 9,000. This increase in density and population will require a major shift in infrastructure and presents a huge opportunity to reshape the physical infrastructure of our town for the better.

At the same time, we are already beginning to see the effects of climate change – Earth reached its warmest year on record in 2024. This serves as a reminder of the urgency of continuing to reduce carbon emissions so that we reach net zero emissions as soon as possible, as well as taking steps to adapt to a changing climate.

Our vision for the future is a town where it is quick and easy to get around by public transport, walking, or cycling. By designing our infrastructure and public spaces around pedestrians, we can build spaces that are easy to get around, greener and more attractive, with lower levels of air pollution.

We will:

- Deliver improvements to public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure in Reading.
- Keep Reading moving by delivering investment in highways, including roads, bridges, streetlighting and traffic signals.
- Further improve the physical environment of Reading by improving air quality, access to green space, and the quality of public spaces.
- Continue moving towards a net zero, resilient Reading and Council by 2030.
- Deliver major improvements to our waste and recycling service to ensure compliance with new legislation.

Objectives and projects:

Objective	Project
<p>Deliver improvements to public transport, cycling, and walking infrastructure in Reading.</p>	<p>Deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan to improve the reliability of bus services by increasing bus priority.</p>
	<p>Deliver funded active travel schemes to encourage more walking and cycling.</p>
<p>Keep Reading moving by delivering investment in highways, including roads, bridges, streetlighting and traffic signals.</p>	<p>Complete the £8 million programme of work to improve residential roads and pavements.</p>
<p>Further improve the physical environment of Reading by improving air quality, access to green space, and the quality of public spaces.</p>	<p>Adopt the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy to secure funding and improvements to Reading's streets and open spaces.</p>
<p>Continue moving towards a net zero, resilient Reading and Council by 2030.</p>	<p>Develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including charging points, to move away from fossil-fuelled vehicles.</p>
	<p>Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings, operations, and fleet, including investing in solar panels, energy efficiency in our buildings, and electric vehicles.</p>
	<p>Work with partners to deliver the Climate Strategy for 2025 to 2030 to achieve a net zero Reading resilient to climate change.</p>
	<p>Dispose of property and land that no longer contribute towards the Council's objectives to invest in assets and service transformation.</p>
<p>Deliver major improvements to our waste and recycling service to ensure compliance with new legislation.</p>	<p>Introduce changes to the waste collection service in line with the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation.</p>

Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children



Approximately 70% of our net spending on day-to-day services is on adult and children's social care. These services are at the core of what councils like Reading do – protecting and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

We will continue to ensure that those who are older or living with disability or illness are supported to live independently, support children with special educational needs and disabilities, and ensure that Reading's children are protected.

However, the unprecedented levels of demand for these services, along with increasing costs, presents a major challenge for the Council. Our priority for the next three years is to put in place a range of measures to reduce demand and cost, while delivering better outcomes for Reading's children and adults. This includes major investments in three new children's homes and four adult social care settings in Reading.

We will:

- Prevent the escalation of children's needs and reduce the number of children in care through improving our early help offer.
- Reduce the number of children in residential care and reliance on private providers by recruiting more foster carers and opening new children's homes in Reading.
- Improve our local special educational needs and disabilities offer and support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so children receive high quality education locally, and achieve their potential.
- Support those who need social care services to live as independently as possible in their homes with improved wellbeing.
- Improve our offer for unpaid carers, ensuring they are supported to live well and can sustain their caring role.
- Work with our partners in health and the voluntary sector to provide support solutions for adults with complex health and social care needs to improve outcomes.

Objectives and projects:

Objective	Project
Prevent the escalation of children's needs and reduce the number of children in care through improving our early help offer.	Deliver Family Hubs to bring together a range of support services in one place, reducing escalation of need and the number of children entering care.
	Redesign and commission an integrated 0-19 child health programme.
Reduce the number of children in residential care and reliance on private providers by recruiting more foster carers and opening new children's homes in Reading.	Increase the number of in house foster carers to increase the proportion of children in care living locally and with our own carers.
	Deliver an in-house assessment home and children's homes in Reading to ensure that children in residential care remain living in Reading wherever possible.
Improve our local special educational needs and disabilities offer and support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so children receive high quality education locally, and achieve their potential.	Enable more children with special educational needs and disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools and deliver new special school places.
	Promote independent and active travel to school for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
Support those who need social care services to live as independently as possible in their homes with improved wellbeing	Deliver four new adult social care services to support people with complex needs, and enable them to live more locally.
	Support children into adulthood, promoting greater independence and confidence.
Improve our offer for unpaid carers, ensuring they are supported to live well and can sustain their caring role.	Deliver the requirements of our All-Age Carers Strategy action plan, including short breaks for carers.
Work with our partners in health and the voluntary sector to provide support solutions for adults with complex health and social care needs to improve outcomes.	Reduce avoidable hospital admissions and supporting efficient and timely discharge.
	Reduce the likelihood of falls which lead to loss of independence, hospital admission and need for formal care through effective intervention to those at risk.
	Support the development of proactive and effective health and social care support for our residents by developing an integrated Neighbourhood Team working with Health and VCS partners.
	Refresh the existing Home Care and Supported Living Framework to ensure sufficient supply.

Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future



Everything we deliver for the people of Reading depends on ensuring the Council is an efficient and effective organisation that is financially stable, with technology that works, and the right workforce in place to deliver services.

Over the past eight years, the Council has transformed its services and operations, investing in new technology, corporate capability (including HR, procurement, finance, and ICT), and driving savings through different ways of working.

We are proud of the work we do for the people of Reading, and we will continue to strive to deliver better quality services through our ongoing commitment to delivering value for money in everything we do.

We will:

- Deliver good, accessible services for our customers.
- Invest in technology that is secure and helps deliver effective services.
- Use procurement of goods and services to secure greater social value and spend locally.
- Secure best value from all Council spending.
- Be a fair employer with an attractive and competitive offer and a workforce that is representative of the local community.

Objectives and projects:

Objective	Project
<p>Deliver good, accessible services for our customers.</p>	<p>Continue to expand our IT systems to enable residents to access more services online at a time that suits them.</p>
	<p>Review the content of our website to ensure it is accessible and to drive customer self-service.</p>
	<p>Implement an improved telephone system that routes customers effectively and improves the customer data we collect to help continually improve how we support residents.</p>
	<p>Deliver and embed our social care customer front door through enhancing our systems and working with the voluntary sector in providing support.</p>
	<p>Deliver additional cemetery space in order to continue offering a burial service to all residents.</p>
<p>Invest in technology that is secure and helps deliver effective services.¹</p>	<p>Introduce remote technology for staff who work outside of the office to improve efficiency.</p>
	<p>Introduce artificial intelligence to improve customer service and reduce administration costs in line with our strategy.</p>
<p>Use procurement of goods and services to secure greater social value and spend locally.</p>	<p>Deliver the new Social Value Policy with our partners to increase the number of contracts delivering spend and social value in the local area.</p>
<p>Secure best value from all Council spending.</p>	<p>Deliver our three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial savings within to ensure that the Council lives within its means.</p>
<p>Be a fair employer with an attractive and competitive offer and a workforce that is representative of the local community.</p>	<p>Ensure recruitment and selection processes support the Council's move towards ensuring the workforce represents the demographics of the Borough.</p>
	<p>Continue to develop talent within the Council, including through our apprentice and work experience programmes.</p>

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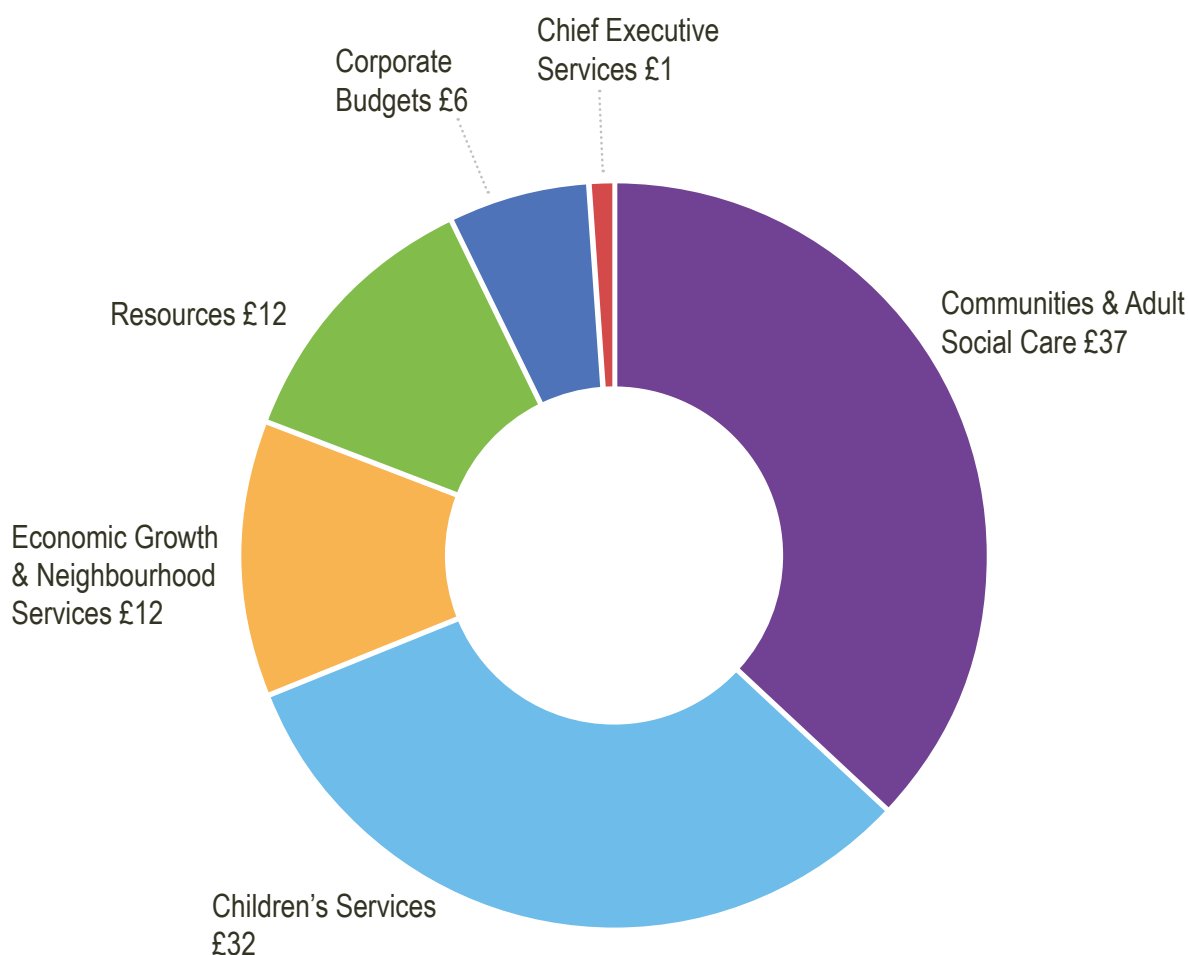
1 The projects against this objective are subject to funding being agreed.

Our Budget

Day-to-day spending

Our projected net budget for day-to-day services ('revenue' spending) for 2026/27 is £199.7 million. This figure takes into account income from ringfenced government grants and service users (in the form of fees and charges). Our net budget for day-to-day services is funded by a combination of Council Tax, Business Rates, and non-ringfenced central government grants. This assumes a 2.99% increase in Council Tax and a 2.00% increase in the Adult Social Care precept.

Every £100 we spend on day-to-day services is split as follows:



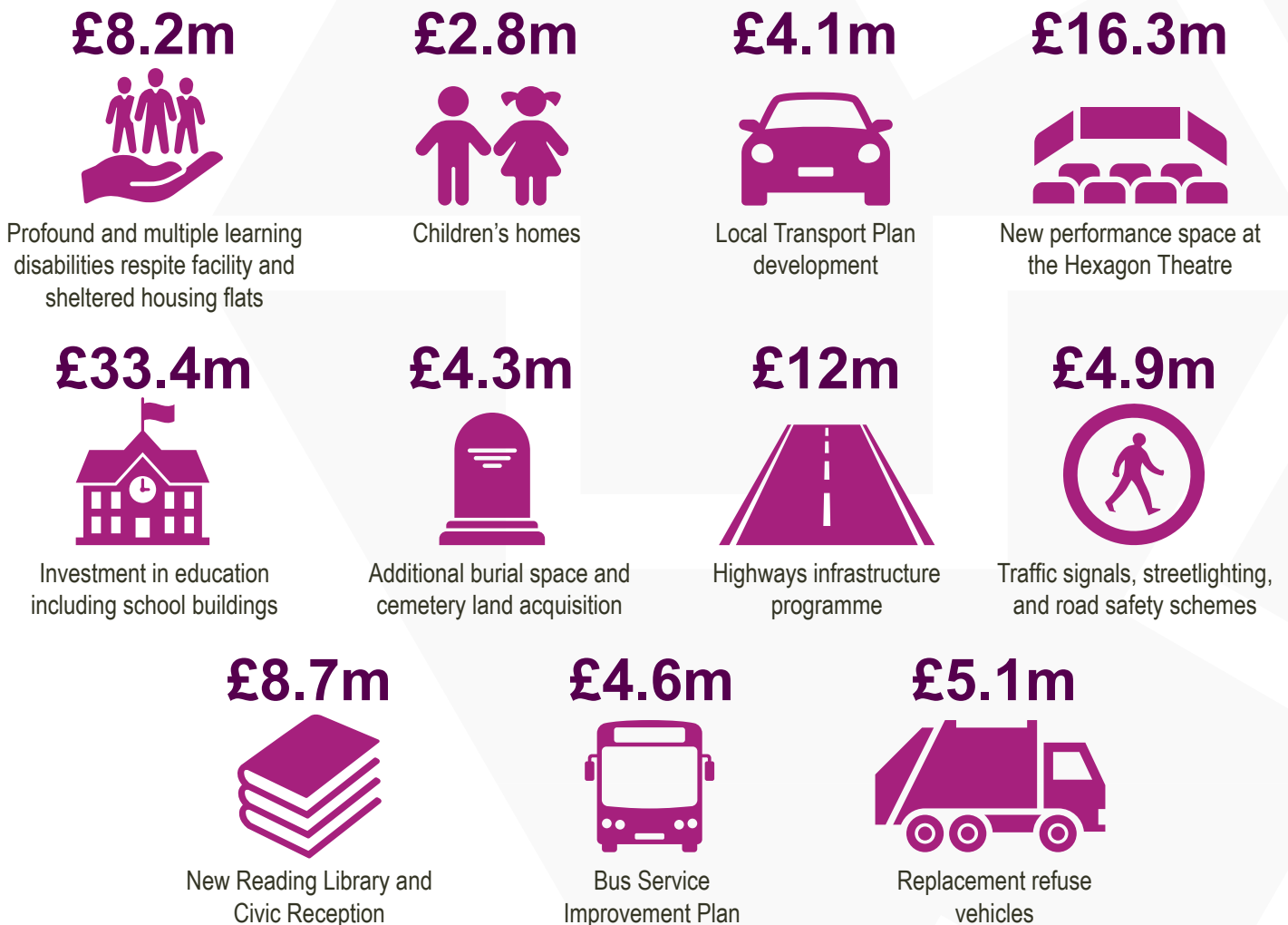
Spending on social housing is managed within a separate ring-fenced budget called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and is funded through rents from Council housing tenants.

Capital spending

Capital spending is the expenditure incurred to make improvements to the Council’s assets, such as investment in improving the energy efficiency of our buildings to reduce our carbon emissions and energy bills, or for the purchase or creation of new assets. Capital spending is funded by grants, contributions from developers, capital receipts (the sale of capital assets), revenue, and prudential borrowing.

Our planned General Fund capital expenditure for 2025/26-2027/28 is £166.8million, of which £60.3 million is funded from prudential borrowing.

Highlights of the Capital Programme over the period of the Council Plan (2025/26 to 2027/28) include:



Capital spending on new social housing or improvements to the Council’s existing housing stock is funded separately by the HRA. The planned capital expenditure for 2025/26-2027/28 is £206.5 million, of which £98.2 million is funded from prudential borrowing by the HRA. This planned expenditure includes £125.4 million on new build and acquisitions, £48.3 million on major repairs (including zero carbon retrofit works) to existing stock and £27.4 million to purchase homes from Homes for Reading.

Annexe: Key Performance Indicators

Promote more equal communities in Reading

Measure	Result 24/25	Target		
		25/26	26/27	27/28
Key Stage 2 gap in percentage of advantaged and disadvantaged pupils who achieve the expected level of attainment in reading, writing, and maths (%)	25%	22%	22%	22%
Key Stage 4 gap in overall Attainment 8 score between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils (Attainment 8 score)	24	18	16	15
Children reaching a good level of development by age 5 (%)	68.4%	70%	72%	75%
Residents setting a quit date who successfully quit smoking (%) ¹	59.7%	60%	60%	60%

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1 KPI amended to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework

Secure Reading's economic and cultural success

Measure	Result 24/25	Target		
		25/26	26/27	27/28
New Council homes delivered (including acquisitions) (No.)	46	202	140	78
New affordable homes delivered (No.)	11	169	169	169
Housing repairs (urgent) completed within 2 working days (%)	70.5%	90%	90%	90%
Physical visits to libraries (No.)	297,871	220,000	350,000	420,000
Planning application decisions for major development made within timescales (% of total)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Participation at our theatres and museums (No.)	371,084	325,000	335,000	380,000

Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint

Measure	Result 24/25	Target		
		25/26	26/27	27/28
Missed bins (No. per 100,000 collections)	93.97	80	80	80
Household waste recycled or composted (% of total)	49%	51%	51%	51%
Corporate carbon emissions (tonnes CO2)	4,660	2,983	TBC ¹	TBC
Air quality (micrograms per meter cubed of nitrogen dioxide µg/m3)	29	25	24	23
Motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance (%) ²	8%	5%	5%	5%
B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance (%) ³	4%	3%	3%	3%
Unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance (%) ⁴	0.5%	0.75%	1%	1%
Trips to/from the town centre made by walking or cycling (% of total trips)	33%	34.7%	35.1%	35.4%
Adults who engaged in active travel at least twice in the last 28 days (%)	TBC ⁵	45%	47.5%	50%
Trips taken to/from Reading using Park and Ride (No.)	131,000	175,000	160,000	170,000
Passenger journeys on local bus services per head	105.8	107	108.5	110
Concessionary pass journeys on local bus services per head	124	124	124.5	124.5
New trees planted on Council owned land (No.)	313	300	300	300

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1 To be confirmed in the RBC 2025 to 2030 Carbon Plan.

2 KPI amended to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework

3 KPI amended to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework

4 KPI amended to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework

5 Sport England have not yet published results for 24/25

Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children

Measure	Result 24/25	Target		
		25/26	26/27	27/28
Children in care living more than 20 miles from Reading (% of total)	33%	25%	23%	21%
Children placed in external children's homes (No.)	40	30	25	25
Special educational needs children supported in mainstream schools (primary) (%)	20.7%	18.3%	18.3%	18.3%
Special educational needs children supported in mainstream schools (secondary) (%)	13.3%	14.1%	14.8%	15.6%
New contacts to the Advice and Wellbeing Hub resulting in a successful outcome and not requiring an ongoing service (%)	87.7%	87%	90%	90%
14- to 18-year-olds that require joint transition planning through SEND/adult social care to inform Care Act assessments and support into adult social care (% of total identified as requiring this planning)	37%	60%	70%	80%
Children looked after (per 10,000 children) ¹	66.7	71	71.2	69.3
Adults whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, for 65 and over (No. per 100,000)	688	619	557	501
Carers supported in last 12 months (No.)	1,082	1,136	1,193	1,253

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1 KPI amended to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework

Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

Measure	Result 24/25	Target		
		25/26	26/27	27/28
Contracts awarded this quarter over £125,000 securing a Social Value offer for delivery (% of total)	New	55%	60%	65%
Customer satisfaction with the outcome of contact with the customer fulfilment centre (% 'satisfied' or 'partially satisfied')	87%	85%	85%	85%
Employees in Council's workforce that are of Global Majority background (% of total workforce)	19%	22%	23%	24%
Senior managers in the Council's workforce of Global Majority background (% Assistant Director or above) (This is a 3-year target due to being dependent on turnover of staff and the small numbers involved)	N/A	N/A	N/A	32%



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Council Plan Update Change Log**General changes**

Section	Change
Welcome from the Leader	Whole section updated
Our achievements	Whole section updated with 2025 achievements and 2025 residents' survey results
Your services	Updated with 2025 numbers
Our Budget	Whole section updated to reflect budget for 2026/27
Throughout document	Minor textual updates e.g. changing references to "next three years" to "period 2025/26 to 2027/28" and updating text on page 16 to reference the devolution expression of interest.

Projects

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
Promote more equal communities in Reading Page 55	Change in wording	Provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Household Support Fund	Provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Crisis & Resilience Fund	The Household Support Fund is being incorporated into the Crisis Resilience Fund from April 2026
	Change in wording	Through the Local Authority New Build programme, deliver 362 new homes at Dee Park and other sites by December 2028	Through the Local Authority New Build programme, deliver 420 new homes at Dee Park and other sites by March 2029	Changed to align with financial year
	Change to timescales	Complete the acquisition of Homes for Reading housing stock into the Council by the end of 2026	Complete the acquisition of Homes for Reading housing stock into the Council by the end of 2027	Changed to reflect revised timescale
Secure Reading's economic and cultural success	New project	N/A – new project	Deliver the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon.	The Studio Theatre at the Hexagon proceeded after the publication of the Council Plan in March 2025. During summer 2025 procurement for a construction partner was carried out and works started in August 2025. The

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
				new theatre is scheduled to open to the public in 2027.
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children	Change in wording	Increase the number of Brighter Futures for Children/Council foster carers to increase the proportion of children in care living locally and with our own carers	Increase the number of in house foster carers to increase the proportion of children in care living locally and with our own carers	Changed to reflect Brighter Futures for Children being brought back into the Council
	Project removed	Implement technology systems to support people to live independently at home.	N/A – project removed	This programme of work will become part of business-as-usual services from April 2026
	Project removed	Deliver four new adult social care services to support people with complex needs replacing existing buildings that are no longer fit for purpose	Deliver four new adult social care services to support people with complex needs and enable them to live more locally	Updated wording to better reflect benefits of project
	Change in wording	Implement our improved carers offer, including employing a dedicated carers lead and delivering carers' breaks	Deliver the requirements of our All-Age Carers Strategy action plan, including short breaks for carers	Updated wording to reflect the publication of the Strategy and the appointment of a dedicated Carers Lead in March 2025
	Change in wording	Improve the process of discharge from hospital to prevent patients being readmitted	Reduce hospital admissions and support efficient and timely discharge	Amended to ensure focus is on prevention of avoidable admission alongside timely and effective discharge
	New project	N/A – new project	Reduce the likelihood of falls which lead to loss of independence, hospital admission and need for formal care through effective intervention to those at risk	Key preventative project for DCASC and partners which is not included in current plan
	New project	N/A – new project	Support the development of proactive and effective health	Key project for DCASC and partners and requirement of

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
			and social care support for our residents by developing an integrated Neighbourhood Team working with Health and VCS partners	NHS 10 Year Plan not included in current plan
Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future	Project removed	Ensure continued good services for children by bringing Brighter Futures for Children (children’s services) back into the Council	N/A – project removed	Project completed on 1 October 2025
	Change in wording	Continue to develop our new IT systems in customer services and housing repairs to enable residents to resolve queries at a time that suits them	Continue to expand our IT systems to enable residents to access more services online at a time that suits them	Change to reflect wider scope covering all services, not only customer and housing repairs

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Key Performance Indicators

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
Promote more equal communities in Reading	Change in KPI	Residents quitting smoking (number as measured 4 weeks after quitting)	Residents setting a quit date who successfully quit smoking (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
	New KPI	N/A	Children reaching a good level of development (%)	KPI to monitor impact of Family Hubs
Secure Readings economic and cultural success	Change in target	New Council homes delivered (including acquisitions) (No.) Targets 25/26 – 73 Targets 26/27 – 89 Targets 27/28 – 83	New Council homes delivered (including acquisitions) (No.) Targets 25/26 – 202 Targets 26/27 – 140 Targets 27/28 – 78	Target re-baselined to reflect latest position
	New KPI	N/A	New affordable homes delivered (No.)	KPI to monitor annual delivery of affordable homes objective

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint	Change in target	Trips taken to/from Reading using Park and Ride (No.) Targets: 26/27 – 200,000 27/28 – 225,000	Trips taken to/from Reading using Park and Ride (No.) Targets: 26/27 – 160,000 27/28 – 170,000	Target re-baselined to reflect estimated total for 25/26 of 160,000 trips
	Change in KPI	Trips taken by bus (individual bus trips starting in the borough, millions)	Passenger journeys on local bus services per head	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
			Concessionary pass journeys on local bus services per head	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
	Change in KPI	Trips to/from the town centre made by public transport (% of total trips)	Adults who engaged in active travel at least twice in the last 28 days (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
	Change in KPI	Residential roads in good condition (not requiring further investigation or work (% total))	Motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
			B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
			Unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children	KPI removed	Older People (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement (%)	N/A – removed	This measure is no longer a required KPI by the Department for Health and Social Care
	Change in KPI	Children looked after (No.)	Children looked after (per 10,000 children)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
	Change in KPI	School places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (cumulative total)	Special educational needs children supported in mainstream schools (primary) (%)	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric
	Change in KPI		Special educational needs children supported in	Amended to align with Local Outcomes Framework metric

Relevant priority	Type of change	Previous wording	New wording	Rationale
			mainstream schools (secondary) (%)	
	Change in wording	Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a plan at age 14 for transition into adulthood at age 14 (% of total)	14- to 18-year-olds that require joint transition planning through SEND/adult social care to inform Care Act assessments and support into adult social care (% of total identified as requiring this planning)	Minor amendment to wording to enable more accurate reporting
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children	New KPI	N/A	Adults whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, for 65 and over (No. per 100,000)	To monitor achievement of objective and project delivery
	New KPI	N/A	Carers supported in last 12 months (No.)	To monitor achievement of objective and project delivery
P 0 59 Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future	Change in wording	Contracts over £125,000 achieving Social Value (% of total)	Contracts awarded this quarter over £125,000 securing a Social Value offer for delivery (% of total)	Minor amendment to wording to enable more accurate reporting
	KPI removed	Resident contacts handled through self service channels (% of total)	N/A – removed	Substantial changes to our digital channels mean it is not currently possible to provide a consistent metric for reporting
	Change in Target	Customer satisfaction with the outcome of contact with the customer fulfilment centre (% 'satisfied' or 'partially satisfied') Targets 25/26 – 90 Targets 26/27 – 90 Targets 27/28 – 90	Customer satisfaction with the outcome of contact with the customer fulfilment centre (% 'satisfied' or 'partially satisfied') Targets 25/26 – 85 Targets 26/27 – 85 Targets 27/28 – 85	Amended to reflect a more realistic target

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